



# ASEASUK NEWS

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STUDIES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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# ASEASUK NEWS

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## CONTENTS

News .....	1
<i>UK Southeast Asianists; SOAS; PhD/DPhil</i>	
Conference reports .....	5
<i>25th Aseasuk conference; SEALG</i>	
Lectures, seminars, workshops, conferences .....	16
<i>Aseasuk-British Academy Lecture: Dr Jomo K Sundaram; SOAS Centre of South East Asian Studies; St Antony's, University of Oxford; LSE</i>	
Recent publications .....	19
Book reviews .....	21
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Military politics, Islam and the state in Indonesia: from turbulent transition to democratic consolidation</i></li><li>• <i>Muslims and matriarchs: cultural resilience in Indonesia through jihad and colonialism</i></li><li>• <i>Paths and rivers: Sa'dan Toraja society in transformation</i></li><li>• <i>Torture, truth and justice: the case of Timor Leste</i></li><li>• <i>Loan-words in Indonesian and Malay</i></li><li>• <i>Colonialism, violence and Muslims in Southeast Asia: the Maria Hertogh controversy and its aftermath</i></li><li>• <i>Across the causeway: a multi-dimensional study of Malaysia-Singapore relations</i></li><li>• <i>Constructing Singapore: elitism, ethnicity and the nation-building project</i></li><li>• <i>Proper Islamic consumption: shopping among the Malays in modern Malaysia</i></li><li>• <i>Hard choices: security, democracy, and regionalism in Southeast Asia</i></li><li>• <i>Tourism in Southeast Asia: challenges and new directions</i></li><li>• <i>The sociology of Southeast Asia: transformations in a developing region</i></li><li>• <i>Southeast Asia in the global economy: securing competitiveness and social protection</i></li><li>• <i>Gendered politics in Asia: women manoeuvring with dominant gender orders</i></li></ul>	

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## NEWS

### UK Southeast Asianists

The **University of Leeds** now has five professors involved in one way or another with Southeast Asian Studies. **Mike Parnwell** and **Chris Dent** have just been promoted to chairs to join **Joern Dosch**, **Duncan McCargo** and **Terry King**.

Duncan McCargo's is the winner of the Asia Society Bernard Schwartz Book Award (2009) for *Tearing apart the land: Islam and legitimacy in Southern Thailand*. His book was chosen from more than 65 book submissions. The jury of 11 experts across the US and Asia chose it 'for its superb fieldwork and reporting on this critical part of the world'. The jury found the book to offer a significant contribution to our understanding of Southeast Asia, Islam, and insurgency and more broadly, minority movements.

**Dr Felicia Hughes-Freeland (Swansea University)** has been promoted to Reader as of October 2009. Felicia and her colleague Chris Barrows organised the recent 24<sup>th</sup> Aseasuk conference held in September (see conference report). She also delivered a paper at the conference on 'Women's impacts on cinema in post-Suharto Indonesia: beyond the 'victim-virago dichotomy'. At the Association of Social Anthropologists of UK and the Commonwealth's (ASA) conference on Anthropological and Archaeological Imaginations: Past, Present and Future, held at Bristol University in April this year, Felicia co-convoked with Dr Penny Dransart (Lampeter) a panel on 'Monumentalizing the Past, Archaeologies of the Future' where she contributed a paper on 'The seduction of stones: monuments as narratives of

nationhood'. Felicia also gave two papers at the British Museum in June: at the screening of her two films, *The dancer and the dance* and *Tayuban: dancing the spirit in Java*, as well as a gallery talk on 'Javanese dance rhythms in court and country'. Her book *Embodied communities: dance traditions and change in Java* (Berghahn 2008) has been translated by Gadjah Madah University Press (*Kommunitas yang terwujud*, 2009)

**Dr Lee Jones** is now lecturer in International Relations at **Queen Mary, University of London**. Formerly Rose Research Fellow in International Relations at Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford. Lee presented the following papers this year: 'ASEAN's unchanged melody? The theory and practice of "non-interference" in Southeast Asia', at the State of Sovereignty, International Boundaries Research Unit 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference, University of Durham, 1-3 April 2009, and '(Post-)Colonial statebuilding and state failure in East Timor: bringing social conflict back in', Future of Statebuilding: Ethics, Power and Responsibility in International Relations' conference, Westminster University, 9-11 October 2009.

**Professor John Sidel (LSE)** has currently two research projects: 'Republicanism, communism, Islam: transnational motors of 'nationalist' revolution in Southeast Asia' for his book, and 'Policing the boundaries of the faith: persecution of religious deviance within Islam in Indonesia'.

**Dr Paul Hainsworth (University of Ulster)** delivered a paper on 'Britain and Timor-Leste: past, present and future' at the University of Dili, Timor-Leste in July 2009 as part of the Timor-Leste Studies Association's research conference on Understanding Timor Leste.

**Carool Kersten (King's College London)** gave a paper on 'Indonesia's "Young Turks": contemporary Muslim thought below the winds' at the Dialogue Society Seminar, London, 21 April 2009. He also spoke on 'Indonesia's cosmopolitan Muslims and the mediation of cultural Islam' at the Biannual International Forum on Asia-Middle East Studies on Transcending Borders: Asia, the Middle East and the Global Community, Annapolis, US Naval Academy, 16-17 October 2009.

**Dr Hiroko Kawanami (Lancaster University)** is currently at **McGill University** as Numata Visiting Professor in Buddhist Studies. Hiroko's course at McGill is on 'Buddhism in Southeast Asia; sangha and state'. She is also convening a panel on 'Buddhism and international relief work' at the annual conference of the American Academy of Religion in Montreal (November 2009) where speakers will be presenting papers on post-tsunami work in Sri Lanka and Thailand, and relief work in India and China.

**Dr Matthew Isaac Cohen (Royal Holloway)** was a scholar in residence between February and June 2009 at **Sanata Dharma University** in Yogyakarta and was Visiting Associate Professor at **University of Malaya** in Kuala Lumpur between July and September 2009. He has been completing his book 'Performing Otherness: Java and Bali on International Stages, 1905-1952' for Palgrave as an ACLS (American Council of Learned Scholars) fellow. Whilst in Southeast Asia, Matthew was also busy with a string of presentations, one each in Singapore and Malaysia and the others in Indonesia. These were: 'Glocalizing wayang: Javanese shadow puppet theatre in Indonesia, Malaysia, the United States and elsewhere', public lecture, Asia Research

Institute, National University of Singapore, 18 September 2009, 'Traditional-popular performance and the Southeast Asian cosmopolis', public dialogue with arts activist Eddin Khoo, Chai House, Kuala Lumpur, 12 September 2009; and in Indonesia, several in Cirebon: 'Interaksi seni pertunjukan Sunda dan Cirebon', Workshop and Festival of Traditional Arts sponsored by the Department of Culture and Tourism, Kraton Kasepuhan, 18 June 2009; 'Wayang sebagai teknologi: perkembangan wayang di Eropa pada awal abad ke-20', and 'Penelitian luar tentang Cirebon', public lectures at Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri (STAIN, formerly IAIN) on 16 May, 7 and 21 March 2009 respectively; in Yogyakarta: 'Kajian pementasan Jawa dan Bali di luar negeri', Wirobrajan Experimental Theatre Lab, 1 June 2009; 'Seni budaya kolonial dan modern di Cirebon', 'Performing otherness: pementasan Jawa dan Bali di Luar Indonesia, 1905-1952', a video-lecture at Teater Garasi, 6 May 2009, and on 17-18 April and 22-23 May 2009, to the academic public at Sanata Dharma University; public lectures at Universitas Gadjah Mada on 'Magical identification with Bali in interwar France', 3 April 2009 and 'Devi Dja goes Hollywood', 28 March 2009. And finally one in Semarang on 'Practice as research: the law of Java', to postgraduate students, Universitas Negeri Semarang, 2 May 2009.

**Professor Roy Ellen (University of Kent at Canterbury)** has a current project funded by the British Academy, South East Asia Committee: 2009-2010: A comparative study of the sociocultural concomitants of cassava diversity in four eastern Indonesian populations in relation to environmental security (with Dr Hermien Soselisa, Pattimura University, Ambon).

**Dr Adam Tyson's** current research is on Islam and identity in Kedah, northern Malaysia. As of October 2009 he will be a Visiting Lecturer at the College of Law, Government and International Relations (COLGIS), **Universiti Utara Malaysia**, where he presented a paper on 'Challenge to terror: Indonesian approaches', at the Comparative Perspectives on Terrorism and Counter Terrorism conference on 4 August.

**Dr Katherine Brickell (Royal Holloway)** was in Vietnam (June- August 2009), for one element of her British Academy research on gender, labour and domestic life in Hue, with research support provided by the Department of Sociology at the University of Hue and a local Vietnamese NGO, the Centre for Social Research and Development (CSRD). In September 2009, she gave a paper entitled 'Visual narratives of home: material geographies of Cambodian and Polish men' at the 1st International Visual Methods Conference, University of Leeds.

At this year's ASEASUK conference held at Swansea University **Dr Annabel Gallop (British Library)** convened a panel on 'Malay/Indonesian manuscript studies', attended by 11 presenters from the UK, France, Russia, Indonesia, Malaysia and the USA. Annabel gave a paper on 'Malay sealing practice', about the choices of media in which Malay seals were traditionally imprinted. Annabel also participated at the roundtable discussion on the ASEASUK-BIA project on Ottoman links with Southeast Asia when she gave a short presentation on a royal Malay letter from Aceh recently discovered in the Istanbul archives by Dr Ismail Hakki Kadi, the project's research fellow.

#### **Centre for South East Asian Studies, SOAS**

**Dr Mulaika Hijjas (SOAS)** has been awarded a British Academy post-doctoral fellowship for her research on didactic literature for women in the Malay manuscript tradition. Mulaika delivered two papers recently: 'Marriage and sexuality in Malay didactic texts on marriage', at a conference on Narrating on Morality and Sexuality: Continuity and Change in Southeast Asian Literatures, Asia-Africa Institute, University of Hamburg, 17-19 July 2009, and 'Rabi'ah al-'Adawiyya in the Malay world,' at the Malay and Indonesian manuscripts panel, ASEASUK conference, University of Swansea, 11-13 September 2009.

**Dr Chiari Formichi** who obtained her PhD recently at SOAS will be moving to Singapore to take up a post-doctoral fellowship at the **Asia Research Institute (ARI)**, National University of Singapore of NUS to work on the Religions and Globalisation project.

#### **Professor William Gervase Clarence-Smith's**

current research is mainly on a global history of rubber and World War II (1931-45). William delivered the following six papers so far this year: 'Equids as strategic global commodities, 1750s-1940s,' at 123rd Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association, New York, USA, 2-4 January 2009; 'The Hadhrami *sâda* as an Islamic "religious international," c. 1730s-1930s', at a conference on Religious Internationals in the Modern World, Brasenose College, Oxford, 12-13 January 2009; 'Debt and the coercion of labour in the Islamic legal tradition,' at a conference on Debt and Slavery: the History of a Process of Enslavement, Indian Ocean World Centre, McGill University, Montréal, Canada, 7-9 May 2009; 'Cotton textiles on the Indian Ocean periphery, c1500-c1850: de-industrialization

or industrialization?' at Departamento de Historia Económica e Instituciones, Universidad Carlos III, Madrid, Spain, 28 May 2009; 'The battle for rubber in the Second World War: cooperation and resistance', at a workshop on Power and Resistance within Commodity Chains, 1800-2000, Open University, London, 29 June 2009; and 'Betel, tobacco and beverages in Southeast Asia: a critique of the Reid hypothesis,' at a workshop on Plants, People, Consumption and Work: the Social History of Cash Crops in Asia, Eighteenth to Twentieth century, Gadjah Mada University, Indonesia, 13-15 August 2009.

**Dr Rachel Harrison** is currently completing an edited collection of papers on New Frames of Analysis in Thai Literature and working on a monograph on Post-Crisis Thai Cinema. Rachel will be presenting a paper on 'Globalization and traditionalism in post-crisis Thai cinema' at the Council of Thai Studies Conference, Northern Illinois University, 23-24 October 2009

**Dr Russell Jones' (SOAS)** current research is on enhancing methodology for the study and classification of watermarks in Malay manuscripts as an aid to dating them. Russell's book, *Chinese loan-words in Malay and Indonesia* was published this year by University of Malaya Press.

#### **PhD/DPhil**

The following candidates successfully defended their dissertations: **Chiara Formichi** (SOAS) on 'Kartosuwiryo's role in the creation of the Islamic State of Indonesia (Negara Islam Indonesia), 1927-1949' (supervisor: Professor William G. Clarence-Smith); **Lee Jones** (University of Oxford) on 'ASEAN, social conflict, and intervention in Southeast Asia' (supervisor: Professor Andrew Hurrell); **Christopher Button** (SOAS) on 'A reconstruction of Proto Northern Chin in Old Burmese and Old Chinese perspective' (supervisor: Dr Justin Watkins).

#### **ASEASUK Register 2008**

ASEASUK is updating its 2000 Register and invites Southeast Asianists in the UK to provide information on their research and publications. There are now about 120 entries on the database. The form and data protection notice can be downloaded from [www.aseasuk.org.uk](http://www.aseasuk.org.uk).

Completed forms should be sent as an email attachment to [aseasuk@soas.ac.uk](mailto:aseasuk@soas.ac.uk) and a signed copy of the data protection notice has to be posted to ASEASUK, c/o Centre for South East Asian Studies, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG.



## CONFERENCE REPORTS

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25<sup>th</sup> Aseasuk conference  
University of Swansea  
11-13 September 2009

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This conference attended by about 80 participants from all over the UK, Southeast Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia), Europe (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Turkey), Australia and the US, was also the occasion to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Association of Southeast Studies in the UK (Aseasuk). It is the first Aseasuk conference held in Wales. We were blessed with good weather if not with British Rail's usual Sunday engineering works replacement buses for the return journey to Cardiff from Swansea.

Entertainment on Friday evening for delegates was a film, *Chants of lotus* (Perumpuan punya cerita) and on Saturday, Didik Nini Thowok's 'Dwi Muka Jepindo, Bali and Topeng Walang Kekek dance', a medley of three of his compositions. The delegates enjoyed his humorous dances and skill as a female impersonator. Didik uses masks to blend comedic movements which have become identified as his special choreographic style.

Professor Terry King as chair of the Aseasuk Executive Committee made his welcome speech on the Friday evening, followed by another welcome from Swansea University's Pro-Vice Chancellor for Internationalisation, Professor Iwan Davies. For the occasion, Terry has also written *A history of Aseasuk* to record the Association's activities and this booklet was presented to all participants.

Dr Russell Jones gave a special address to Aseasuk members for its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration at the conference dinner on the Saturday evening. Russell delivered his speech with humour, passion and emotion and gave the audience an insight into his own personal engagement with the region. He spoke of the importance of the region and the need to understand it from a range of cross-disciplinary perspectives. He also provided an interesting and thoughtful commentary on the early years of the Association as one of the few senior scholars who was involved in its work from the 1970s. Russell argued for the crucial significance of language and literature studies and the need for the Association to provide a place and an opportunity at its conferences for scholars of Southeast Asian languages to meet together and engage with researchers from other disciplines. Terry King gave a vote of thanks to Russell Jones for his address.

Publishers who participated in book displays at the conference include NIAS Press, Routledge (Taylor & Francis), Cambridge University Press and ISEAS (Singapore).

Aseasuk would like to express fulsome thanks to conference organisers Felicia Hughes-Freeland and Chris Barrow, conference office colleagues Nanale Lewis and Leah Black, student helpers Ramli Dollah and Gillian Rollason, as well as the university's Media Resources and Catering for making this a successful, friendly and enjoyable event.

Below are the reports on the various panels. Unless otherwise stated or that there was more than one convenor for a panel, all reports were provided by the respective panel convenors.

**Panel: Gender and creativity**  
**Convenor: Dr Felicia Hughes-Freeland**  
**(Swansea University)**

This panel took a broad approach to the theme of gender and creativity, and invited proposals about gendered styles of creativity in performance, patterns of gendered creativity in the literature, film, television or other media, the gendering of creativity in everyday life. The speakers presented ethnographic case material from their recent original research into particular societies and groups, and situated these against the changing dynamics of creative processes arising from distinctive local patterns of gender relations and identities.

The first papers explored gender, politics and society. **Mutiah Amini's** (Gadjah Mada University) paper, 'To publish or not publish? Private issues and Javanese women's creativity of the family in the last colonial era', argued against the claim that women are often not seen in Indonesia historiography because they operate in the private sphere. Female letters about family life in 'personal columns' in a newspaper published in Semarang, Central Java between the 1920s and 1940s are evidence that the public sphere is constructed from gendered space, and is mutually implicated in the construction of modernity. The construction and contestation of gendered space was also pursued in **Julian Lee's** (University of Kent) 'Shopping for a real candidate: Aunt Bedah and the Women's Candidacy Initiative's engagement in the 2008 general elections in Malaysia' which explored the strategy of the Women's Candidacy Initiative (WCI) to increase female participation in parliament without joining political parties following the withdrawal of its candidate, Zaitun Kasim, in the 2008 elections. This resulted in the

creation of Mak Bedah, a fictive persona wearing a purple headscarf and sunglasses who campaigned for female participation in the largely masculine public spaces of Malaysian politics, attracting considerable national and international media coverage.

The next papers considered gendered agency in the field of sexuality and work. **Matteo Carlo Alcano's** (University of Milano-Bicocca) 'Slaves of our own making': the 'fabrication' of same-sex identities between Java and Bali' presented an ethnography of migrant Javanese male sex workers in Bali. He explained how they create community using the concept of 'gang' using both physical and symbolic violence to define their identity and to draw a boundary between themselves and other kinds of sex workers. The theme of self-representation in the sexual politics of performance continued in **Sandra Bader's** (Monash University) 'Experiencing the embodied self: re-negotiating gender identities through *dangdut* performances in contemporary Java'. It contextualised the sexual politics of *dangdut* in relation to the polarised images of women during Suharto's New Order, and presented case material about the lived experience of performers, arguing that performance has the power to create life worlds (in a phenomenological sense) to challenge political gender stereotyping. This theme was also explored in Felicia Hughes-Freeland's paper 'Women's impacts on cinema in post-Suharto Indonesia: beyond the "victim-virago dichotomy"?' which argued that such polarisations were being overcome by an increase in female involvement in film production, direction and script-writing. There is a core of urban elite fiction director-producers such as Nia Dinata, Upi Avianto, and Nan T. Achnas, but there is also a resurgence of documentary cinema,

repressed during the New Order, at grassroots level which is also shaping high budget film productions in Jakarta to challenge the male gaze of New Order cinema. **Ben Murtagh's** (SOAS) 'Gay, lesbian and *waria* audiences in Indonesia; strategies and creativities of the resistant spectator' explored cinematic representations on non-normative sexualities in Indonesia. Data from focus groups representing various non-normative sexualities in Surabaya, East Java showed a variation in their responses to the construction of gender in the mainstream Indonesian films. Gender representation and its performance was also the theme of **Margaret Coldiron's** (Reading University)'s paper 'Creativity and the performance of gender in Balinese dance, or how I became a demon king'. Rather than thinking of gender as essential and binary, Coldiron drew on the concepts of complementarity or situated practice to contextualise her argument that gender in performance is a matter of technique; a performer can 'change gender' in one dance by doing the steps in the appropriately gendered manner. This insight was reinforced by Coldiron's own experience of dancing the role of Rawana.

Space does not allow me to explore the discussions provoked by these stimulating papers, but the questions they raised undoubtedly moved the analysis of gender relations and representations in Southeast Asia forward from arguments presented in the past decade. Publication of these papers is being planned, and I also hope that there will be a second larger publication to include some contributions which were submitted but could not be presented at the conference, including two papers on the Philippines, three on Thailand and a further three on Indonesia.

**Panel: Contesting the state: violence, identity and sovereign practices in Southeast Asia**

**Convenors: Dr Laurens Bakker and Professor Frans Hüsken (Radboud University, the Netherlands), and Dr Lee Wilson (Cambridge University)**

*Report by Lee Wilson*

This panel was convened as a preparatory workshop for a new research project, 'State of Anxiety', a collaborative endeavour between Radboud and Cambridge Universities. The workshop brought together a group of emerging scholars to explore the relationship between violence, political identity and the state in Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia. Guerrilla movements, civil militias, community organisations and NGOs are just some of the many kinds of non-state agents whose authority contests or exceeds that of the state within their domains in Southeast Asia. Significantly, the authority of these groups often rests on their potential for violence, not just its enactment. Common to these sites of informal or localised authority are familiar discourses of exclusion and territorial control that are often cited as the hallmark of sovereign relations in modernity. Ethnic and religious identities frequently define the contours of communal relations maintained by these groups. Custom and tradition, often linked to the issue of control of land and natural resources, are offered as principles of local governance and a countervailing force to the authority of the state. Where authority is seen to fail, to be corrupt or linked to crime, community reaction often takes a militant form. The panel thus sought to bring into question notions of sovereignty informed by territoriality and defined by the legitimate use of force in the light of

the complexities of localised and multiple kinds of authority in contemporary Southeast Asia.

**Jacqueline Baker's** (LSE) presentation examined forms of police violence in Jakarta, focusing on the torture and extortion of users of illegal narcotics, to ask to what extent can these types of violence be considered 'of and for the Indonesian the state'? Intriguingly, she attributed increased instances of police extortion to the effects of democratisation programmes that have resulted in the drying up of revenue generated from other illegal activities such as the gambling economy. In his presentation, **Laurens Bakker** explored the status of civil militia groups as legal entities in Indonesia, looking at the ways in which 'concerned citizens' apply violence legally in the name of society. **Graham Brown** (Bath University) and Regina Lim argued convincingly that national identity in Malaysia has been predicated on the threat of violence, originally external to the state in the form of communism and *konfrontasi*. More recently this has transformed, the obvious presence of the state now confronting the perceived internal threat to both state and citizenry presented by the ever present spectre of ethnic conflict. **Chiara Formichi** (SOAS) looked at changing representations of the leader of the Darul Islam rebellion, Kartosuwiryo, who was presented as a threat to the national unity of the Indonesian republic and a terrorist rather than the leader of a religiously motivated rebellion. Chiara argued that the misrepresentation of Kartosuwiryo has in turn spawned new politicised representations of him as a martyr of Islam in post reformasi Indonesia. **Jérôme Tadié** (Institute de recherche pour le développement, France) presented a fascinating insight into the roles of fires in transforming the landscape in Jakarta,

arguing that patterns of interaction between government agencies, political parties and NGOs become manifest in the aftermath of catastrophe. **Kari Telle** (Chr. Michelsen Institute, Norway) presented on the informal authority wielded by civilian security groups on Lombok, Indonesia. Importantly, Kari stressed that it is not just the potential for violence on which the authority of these groups rests, but the ways in which they are able to emulate authoritative forms of communication associated with the state. **Woon Chih Yuan** (Royal Holloway) examined alternative imaginings of violence in the Southern Philippines, arguing that these are contested, and that attempting to mediate these representations at a local level may be a way to build a sustainable peace.

The panel was a great success in that it opened up many of the issues that the 'state of anxiety' project aims to explore over the coming three years. Importantly, it showcased the vitality and talent of a new generation of scholars that are tackling issues of profound importance in Southeast Asian studies. The papers will be published in a special journal issue.

#### **Panel: Malay/Indonesian manuscript studies**

**Convenor: Dr Annabel Teh Gallop (British Library)**

This panel on Malay/Indonesian manuscript studies was a truly international gathering, attended by 11 paper presenters from Britain, France, Russia, Malaysia, Indonesia and the United States. As in previous years, the absence of a panel theme was deliberate, to provide a forum for papers on all aspects of the writing traditions of maritime Southeast Asia.

**Mulaika Hijjas** (SOAS) began the session with her paper on 'Rabi'ah al-Adawiyyah in the Malay world' highlighting the differences of depiction in Malay and Arabic sources of the Sufi mystic Rabi'ah al-Adawiyyah, said to have lived in 8th-century Iraq. The subject of **Hashim bin Musa's** (University Putra Malaysia) paper, '*Itqân al-mulûk bi ta'dîl al-sulûk*, Undang-undang bagi diri kerajaan Terengganu: Islamic influence in statecraft in a traditional Malay state', was the code of laws printed in 1911 by the order of the Sultan Zainal Abidin III of Terengganu, and its relevance to a recent constitutional dispute. **Annabel Gallop** spoke on 'Malay sealing practice', and in particular questioned why lampblack should have been the preferred medium of impression for Malay seals.

**Farouk Yahya** (SOAS), reported on his doctoral research on 'A form of Malay divination: the Five Times (*Ketika Lima*)' which he has found mentioned in over 40 out of 168 Malay manuscripts on divination and magical matters. Another doctoral student from the EHESS, Paris, **Paul Wormser** spoke on manuscript 07.92 of the Museum Negeri Aceh, Banda Aceh of *Kitab min I'tiqad al-Ittihad wa al-Hulul*, the text of which is dated 20 Ramadan 1003 (29 May 1595), and which contains what is so far the earliest known quotation of the Malay poet Hamza Fansuri. The longest part of this session was reserved for **Russell Jones**, whose presentation 'Paper and watermarks: moving forward' was essentially a call for an integrated international project to document the papers of Malay manuscripts, which would ideally result in a website and database.

After lunch (for those not fasting during Ramadan), **Vladimir Braginsky** (SOAS) continued his ongoing study of Urdu influences on Malay literature with his paper

'*Cetera empat fakir*: the earliest translation from Urdu into Malay in a unique Singaporean manuscript'. **Adi Yasran Aziz** (Universiti Putra Malaysia) talked on 'The manuscript of *Undang-Undang Kedah*: A canon of law of an early Malay state'. While this text of 1067 AH (1650 CE) is best known from SOAS MS 40329, Adi Yasran was able to point to some better readings in the Jakarta manuscript PNRI M1.25 and a MS in the Royal Asiatic Society.

In the last session, **Irina Katkova** (St Petersburg Institute of Oriental Studies) introduced the 'The St Petersburg Collection of Malay Letters' formed by N.P. Lihachov and preserved since 1931 in the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, containing documents from Buton, Bima, Palembang, Banten, Cirebon and Makassar. **Uli Kozok** (University of Hawaii) discussed a new project to digitise and unicode the Batak script in 'Digital revitalisation of historic scripts'. The session ended with **Fakhriati** (UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta), whose paper 'An overwhelming heritage in Pidie and Aceh Besar regencies: an elaboration on Acehese manuscripts collected in private hands of the Acehese' presented her project – funded by an Endangered Archives Programme grant from the British Library – to document manuscripts in private hands in two regencies in Aceh.

Mention should also be made of **Revo Arka Giri Soekarno** (Leiden University), who had planned to deliver his paper on 'British Library MSS.Jav.53a: An Old Javanese palm leaf manuscript from Java', discussing the only extant manuscript of the Old Javanese prose text *Tantri Kāmandaka* from the island of Java, and the light it may shed upon the transmission of Old Javanese literature in

Java after the rise of Islam. Unfortunately Revo was not able to attend due to the kafkaesque new procedures for obtaining a UK visa from the Netherlands, and while we were sitting in the Swansea sunshine his passport was still stuck on a desk in Düsseldorf.

The panel brought together a productive mix of 'old hands' and those who had never been to an ASEASUK conference before, and was happy proof that there is exciting new work going on in Malay/Indonesian manuscript studies, despite the small numbers of active researchers.

### **Creating resilient tourism in Southeast Asia**

**Convenor: Dr Janet Cochrane** (Leeds Metropolitan University)

#### ***Panel report by Mike Hitchcock***

Janet Cochrane opened the session with an overview of Resilience Theory arising from the work of C.S. Holling (1973) that helps to clarify the interaction of social and ecological systems. In short, resilience is 'the capacity of a system to withstand a shock or perturbation and still maintain its core function and identity'. **Emma Calgario** (Macquarie University) followed by showing how this theoretical approach could be used to assess vulnerability in two Thai destinations: Khao Lak and Phi Phi island. In particular she discussed the impact of the 2004 Asian tsunami on the tourism capacity of these destinations and described how many investors had sunk their savings into new ventures, leaving them without credit records. **Husein Kusmayadi's** (Trisakti Institute of Tourism and Hospitality) focus was West Java where the increasing

joblessness in rural society was widening social divisions. He discussed the potential social and economic benefits of tourism in the Gunung Ceremai National Park, and the complex religious diversities of the local people.

Returning to mainland Southeast Asia, **Adele Esposito** (Institut Parisien de Recherche Architecture Urbanistique Société) contrasted Siem Reap's colonial experience with the modern surge for development that began in the early 1990s. Despite the launching of a plan for sustainable development in 2004, hotel construction continued apace, leaving hotel owners with quite low occupancy rates, despite some efforts to design very attractive hotels.

The penultimate session comprised reports on a selection of Southeast Asian World Heritage Sites that had been researched by **Terry King** and **Michael Parnwell** (Leeds University), Janet Cochrane, and **Michael Hitchcock** (Chichester University) over the summer. Despite the fact that the presenters had not had a chance to compare their results, some common themes quickly emerged. Authenticated by UNESCO, World Heritage Sites have proved very attractive to second-home owners who have moved into the environs of these attractions. The sites often have complex management systems involving different authorities that impede their effective management, as is especially the case in Indonesia. Interpretative facilities are also often aimed at international audiences and not local ones, despite the importance of domestic tourism. A discussion emerged with regard to how far resilience theory could be applied to cultural heritage, which is often protected because it is irreplaceable, though a modified theoretical position could well be worth pursuing.

**Sin Harngh Luh** (Royal Holloway) returned to the theme of resilience in the closing presentation with a critical look at volunteer tourism, as well as a discussion on resilience in uncertain political and economic conditions.

**Roundtable: Preliminary Ottoman/Turkish-Southeast Asia findings – British Academy funded project: ASEASUK and the British Institute in Ankara**  
**Convenor: Professor Michael Hitchcock (Chichester University)**

The roundtable discussion opened with a presentation by **Ismail Hakki Kadi**, the project Research Fellow at the British Institute in Ankara, which was received enthusiastically by the Southeast Asia specialists in the room. Ismail noted the wealth of material of Malay-Indonesian provenance in Istanbul, including formal letters between rulers and geographical accounts of Southeast Asia, notably a map comparing the Indonesian islands and Anatolia. There were also newspaper clippings relating to flows of students and religious scholars, and reports of Ottoman prisoners of war held in Myanmar (Burma) by the British. There were also records of contact with the southern Philippines during the period of American domination. Some of the Southeast Asian place names mentioned by Ismail were unfamiliar to the audience, which was interesting given their importance in Ottoman eyes.

**Annabel Gallop** responded to Ismail's presentation with an account of exchanges between the Malay courts and Ottoman courts between the 15th and 19th centuries. She noted that letters were often

accompanied by gifts such as pepper and cloth, *kain*, sometimes entrusting them to European and American sea captains to deliver. Interestingly, the Ottoman world was often referred to as 'Rum' after the pre-Ottoman Byzantines who inherited part of the former Roman Empire.

There was a discussion about the wrappings and materials used for these letters with observations by Russell Jones and Michael Hitchcock on what this told us about the intentions of the senders. For example, one the letters appeared to have been wrapped in a supplementary weft fabric (*songket*) emblazoned with motifs that could well have had talismanic properties. **William G. Clarence-Smith** drew attention to the importance of household collections in the hands of Hadrami families, as well as the work of other scholars who could throw light on pan Indian Ocean connections.

**Panel: Environment, sustainability & livelihoods**

**Convenors: Dr Chris Barrow (University of Swansea) and Dr Becky Elmhirst (University of Brighton)**

*Report by Becky Elmhirst*

The aim of this panel was to explore some of the ecological, social and political dimensions of environment, sustainability and natural resource-based livelihoods in Southeast Asia. Five papers were presented, covering environmental themes in Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia, and representing a range of disciplinary perspectives. **David Blake** (University of East Anglia) and **Philippe Floch** (University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences, Vienna) provided a critical analysis of the official and

civil society discourses that construct Northeast Thailand (Isan) as 'poor' and 'dry', and that therefore have justified a series of mega projects aimed at delivering irrigation to farmers in this region. The authors show how wider political forces feed into and shape water resources management discourses, constructing problems and in turn producing the objects and subjects of development. **Jonathan Rigg** (University of Durham) and **Albert Salamanca's** (Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok) paper also focused on Thailand's Northeast, but rather than focusing on development discourses, considered its small-scale effects, reporting on a re-study project that has tracked village-level changes over 25 years. Over this period, the nature, management and transmission of risk has changed as new forms of livelihood mean environmental management and the productive capacity of land are no longer connected to poverty, risk abatement or accumulation. The prevalence of migration and non-farm work has brought considerable 'wealth turbulence' where some families that had been in the poorer cohorts had entered the realm of the wealthy, and the converse had happened to others. **Chris Barrow** reported on British Academy-funded research that he has been undertaking in the Cameron Highlands, Malaysia, with N.W. Chan and T. Bin Masron from Universiti Sains Malaysia, looking at agrarian practices of family farms in a marginal upland environment where environmental degradation is associated with the entrepreneurial farming practices of this group of ethnic Chinese Malaysian farmers. The paper explored the strategies being adopted by farmers as they responded to market pressures, and the potential conflicts between their risk mitigation strategies (e.g. the use of plastic to protect soil) and tourism based on landscape aesthetics. Technological

innovation was also the focus of **Dimitrios Konstadakopulos** (University of the West of England) paper, which looked at factors affecting decisions to adopt green technologies in 'craft villages' in Vietnam in order to mitigate noise, air and water pollution. Principal influences appeared to be customers (e.g. Ikea) rather than other enterprises within these clusters. Knowledge about clean technologies tended to come from the media, or more importantly, from customers themselves, whilst regulatory frameworks had limited impact. Finally, **Anna Katherina Hornidge** (University of Bonn) presented a paper co-authored with Fabian Scholtes on the implications of climate change for everyday life in Toineke Village, West Timor, where local people were adapting to livelihood uncertainties associated with floods. The paper considered different kinds of strategies adopted by people, and noted a deterioration of peoples' capability to act in the face of changing climatic conditions. In contrast to Rigg and Salamanca's findings, the authors suggested that changing environmental circumstances and uneven capacities to mitigate environmental risks were leading to existing patterns of inequality becoming even more pronounced. Connecting all the papers is a sense in which environmental risks and strategies for their mitigation in Southeast Asia are being re-scaled in the face of the challenges and possibilities presented by global scale risks (e.g. climate change), commoditisation and the stretching of livelihoods across space, and the influences wrought by transnational (private sector) environmental regulatory frameworks.



**Panel: Emerging scholars****Convenor: Dr Fiona Kerlogue (Horniman Museum)**

The panel included 11 papers, six from scholars linked with UK institutions, three from mainland Europe, one from Australia and one from the United States.

The first three papers dealt with work on mainland Southeast Asia. **Sylvia Brown** (SOAS) analysed the roles of those in the youth section of the Karen National Liberation movement, especially in relation to the KNU leadership, in the light of fieldwork undertaken in Thailand. The river basin of the Irrawaddy defined the limits of **Marion Sabrié's** (EHESS, Paris) study, which looked at social, economic and environmental aspects of change since colonisation. **Catherine Newell** (SOAS) shared her findings from a wide-ranging and intense examination of Dhammakaya temples, including some surprising details of the founding figures, meditation practices and the relationship with mainstream Buddhism in Thailand.

The second group of papers related to the theme of conflict with the first contribution from **Krisna Uk** (Cambridge), presenting a positive picture of how Jorai people near the Cambodian border have integrated objects and memories from the war into their lives. **Ramli Dollah** (Swansea) discussed from a theoretical perspective the ways in which immigrant groups in Sabah have been constructed as a security threat through use of language and imagery by dominant actors in the region.

**Javier Gil Perez's** (Instituto Universitario General Gutierrez Mellado) study of the methods and ideology of Hiztbut Tahrir

through its internet presence was neatly complemented by **Claudia Nef Saluz's** (University of Zurich) paper, based on fieldwork among student activists in Gajah Mada University, which provided quite a different perspective.

Sunday's papers began with an analysis by **Nicola Frost** (SOAS) of a group in Sydney brought together by their links with Maluku, including recent immigrants, second and third generation migrants and others. **Steve Rodriguez's** (UCLA) paper questioned the fit between the notion of a national park and Indonesian concepts of nature, with particular reference to Ujung Kulon Park in Java. Institutional and governmental methods of tackling corruption during Indonesia's democratic transition were the subject of **Budi Setiyono's** (Curtin University of Technology, Australia) paper.

**Lesley Pullen's** paper questioned the definition of 'tradition' and its usefulness as a concept in the analysis and evaluation of textiles in the context of modern Southeast Asia.

**Publishing: Dorothea Schaefer** (Taylor & Francis) and **Gerald Jackson** (NIAS Press) conducted a very valuable question-and-answer session on how to get material published on Southeast Asia through academic publishers and addressed most of the issues which are raised by potential and current authors with them. They provided information on the kinds of support and guidance that publishers can give and the importance of presenting a manuscript which has both scholarly merit and is conscious of the potential audience and market. A very lively discussion ensued with some members of the audience giving their positive experiences of getting published and working

with academic publishers, and other indicating some of the problems which can arise in seeing a book through to publication.

**Panel: Health, knowledge, power – providers, seekers and places of healthcare in Southeast Asia**

**Convenor: Dr Claudia Merli (University of Durham)**

**Hafiz Khan** (Middlesex University) presented material on a research project conducted together with George Leeson which analysed health issues relating to ageing in a cross-cultural perspective, comparing in particular the situation in Singapore and Malaysia. The study is based on statistical analysis of the largest databank on global ageing, measuring self-reported health (SRH) conditions and activities of daily living (ADL) of adults aged 40–79. From the data obtained it emerges that amongst the socio-economic variables considered, the people who were married reported an overall better health condition. The project is inscribed in a broader consideration of global ageing variations across geographical regions, and of increasing disabilities related to ageing. Of particular importance is the widening gap between life expectancy *tout court* and active life expectancy.

**David Hughes** (Swansea University) examined the intricate history of Thailand's health reform since 2001, showing how political conflict between senior management in the central administration reflected on those managers working at the provincial level. Hughes focused on the redefinition of the role of provincial Public Health Offices through the modification of budget allocation and distribution, apparently favouring local

engagement and entrepreneurial capacity. He analysed the situation with case studies from three provinces in the Northeast. Since 2002 we have witnessed a return to central control and the pre-eminent leadership of traditionalists within the Ministry of Public Health. The variations in local economic resources and limited funding available have determined the impoverishment of health prevention and promotion in the region, limiting health provision of district hospitals to basic treatment and channelling people towards private clinics.

**Claudia Merli** presented an analysis of the recent changes in the group ritual circumcisions of Muslim boys in Satun province, Southern Thailand. The increasing involvement of medical and local political authorities raises questions about the role of different agents, explicitly fostering the large rituals with the aim to provide access to a 'medicalised ritual' and to promote integration and harmony through the social activities surrounding the circumcision proper. The availability of these rituals free of charge is an important element for disadvantaged families choosing to enlist their sons, apparently ignoring the fact that recent health policies included circumcision in the universal coverage, providing it free of charge also in district and provincial hospitals. The group ritual circumcision responds to the families' desire to fulfil the traditional religious requirement while ensuring medical standards and hygienic conditions.

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Southeast Asia Library Group (SEALG)  
Annual Meeting  
Leiden, the Netherlands  
10-11 July 2009

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***Report by Louise Pichard-Bertaux***

This year's SEALG Annual Meeting was held at Leiden University Library. With close to four million titles and 60,000 Oriental and Western manuscripts this library holds the largest collection on Humanities in Leiden. Its collection on Southeast Asia and Oceania is together with the KITLV collection the largest in the Netherlands.

Participants of the meeting came from the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Russia, and the US. Apologies for absence were received from members in France, The Netherlands, and the UK.

**Friday, 10 July**

After a brief get together, Doris Jedamski took the participants on a tour of the Leiden University Library, 'following the book' through the various stages – from acquisition to cataloguing and indexing – before it is placed on the bookshelf, for use by the readers. It was interesting to visit all the departments of the library, including the rare books and manuscripts room. The group then went to the UB Instruction room where Doris gave a talk about the electronic resources used in the library.

Next was the splendid Library of Law Faculty. A new building has been erected, attached to an older one (historic site), giving a great 'allure' to the construction. We were welcomed by Albert Dekker, librarian of the Van Vollenhoven Collection, with a short coffee break and a library tour. The Van

Vollenhoven Collection contains a great variety of publications in many western languages and in Indonesian on modern and traditional non-western law and related topics (with a traditionally grown focus on Indonesia). The holdings are kept in open stacks with the exception of a small sub-collection of colonial, partly rare material.

The conference dinner was held at Annie's Verjaadag in the heart of Leiden.

**Saturday, 11 July**

Our group met at Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde. Dr David Stuart-Fox showed us the collections of the museum library before we went to the museum proper, where the ethnographic collections were viewed with great appreciation.

The annual meeting took place in the afternoon at Leiden University Library where we heard three presentations:

Kathryn Wellen on 'The Library of Congress holdings pertaining to Southeast Asia', Hao Phan on 'The Southeast Asia Digital Project at Northern Illinois University' and Louise Pichard-Bertaux on a detailed overview of 'The Burmese collections in France'.

Following the presentations, participants gave an update on their respective libraries since the previous year's meeting. From Washington to Moscow, and from Copenhagen to Marseille, all the Southeast Asian collections had the same two main problems: lack of money for acquisitions and lack of specialised librarians. In the latter case, librarians who retire or resign are often not replaced. Finally, Doris Jedamski gave the financial report for the year 2008 that had been prepared by the group's Treasurer, Margaret Nicholson.

The next SEALG annual meeting (2010) will be in Gothenburg (Sweden) in collaboration with the EUROSEAS conference that will be take place from 26 to 28 August 2010.

For further information see [www.sealg.org](http://www.sealg.org)

## ASEASUK DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

**Dr Jomo Kwame Sundaram**

UN Assistant Secretary-General for  
Economic Development

Did Southeast Asia learn the correct lessons  
from the 1997-1998 crisis?

**SOAS**

**27 November 2009**

**Brunei Gallery, SOAS**

**6pm**

Organised by ASEASUK in partnership with  
the British Academy and the Centre for  
South East Asian Studies (SOAS).

## CONFERENCES

**Trade and finance in the Malay world:  
historical and cultural perspectives**

University of Frankfurt  
Germany  
17-18 June 2010

Organisers: Department of Southeast Asian  
Studies, University of Frankfurt; School of  
Humanities, Universiti Sains Malaysia;  
and Department of Malay Studies, National  
University of Singapore.

For further information contact Professor  
Arndt Graf, University of Frankfurt.  
Email: [arndtgraf@yahoo.de](mailto:arndtgraf@yahoo.de)

**Engaging the classics in Malay and  
Southeast Asian studies: where to from  
here?**

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS)  
Singapore  
17-18 June 2010

Organisers: ISEAS and Malay Studies  
Department, National University of  
Singapore, with support from Majlis Ugama  
Islam Singapura (MUIS) and Jamiyah

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Terence Chong ([terencechong@iseas.edu.sg](mailto:terencechong@iseas.edu.sg))

**History of medicine in Southeast Asia  
(HOMSEA 2010)**

Singapore  
22-25 June 2010

3rd international conference to coincide with  
IAHA 2010 (International Association of  
Historians of Asia)

Organisers: Department of History, STS  
Research Cluster & Asia Research Institute  
(ARI), National University of Singapore

Paper submissions contact: Laurence  
Monnais ([laurence.monnais-rousselot@umontreal.ca](mailto:laurence.monnais-rousselot@umontreal.ca))  
For conference enquiries: John DiMoia  
([hisjpd@nus.edu.sg](mailto:hisjpd@nus.edu.sg))

**Social justice and rule of law:  
addressing the growth of a pluralist  
Indonesian democracy**  
Diponegoro University

Semarang, Indonesia  
14-15 July 2010

3rd international Yale Indonesia forum  
interdisciplinary conference:  
<http://www.yale.edu/seas/YIF-Semarang2010.htm>

### **SEMINARS & WORKSHOP**

**Centre for South East Asian Studies, SOAS**  
Tuesdays, G52, Main Building, Russell Square,  
SOAS, 17.00-19.00

6 October 2009  
Professor Peter Leyland (London  
Metropolitan)  
The struggle for freedom of expression in  
Thailand: media moguls, the king, citizen  
rights and the law

13 October 2009  
Dr Nicky Garsten (University of Greenwich)  
Debating paternalism: a political reading of  
domestic arguments in two Singaporean  
novels

20 October 2009  
Dr Nicola Frost (SOAS)  
The IKABEMA family: organisation, identity  
and conflict among Moluccans in Sydney

27 October 2009  
Dr Tim Forsyth (LSE)  
Environmental politics and democracy in  
Thailand

3 November 2009  
Dr Roger Montgomery (LSE)  
Farm risk reduction assessment for Nusa  
Tenggara Islands, Eastern Indonesia

17 November 2009  
Dr Peter Sharrock (SOAS)  
Excavations and restoration of the last great  
Khmer temple of Banteay Chmar

**Co-hosted with the Centre for Law and  
Conflict and the Centre for International  
Studies and Diplomacy**

24 November 2009  
Dr John A. Hall (Chapman University School  
of Law, Orange, California)  
The Khmer Rouge tribunal: fragile credibility  
in the face of political interference,  
administrative failure and corruption

1 December 2009  
Dr Mandy Sadan (SOAS)  
How it started: conversations on the founding  
of the Kachin Independence Army and the  
origins of armed conflict in Burma

8 December 2009  
Professor Carrie Tarr (Kingston University)  
Melodrama, modernity and Vietnamese  
national identity in the films of Viet Linh

15 December 2009  
Dr Nick Gray (SOAS)  
An introduction to the music of the Balinese  
shadow play

**Asian Studies Centre**

**St Antony's College, University of Oxford**

Thursdays, Deakin Room, Founder's Building,  
St Antony's College, 17.00 to 18.30

12 November 2009

Krisna Uk (Cambridge)

Living amidst remnants of war in Southeast  
Asia

19 November 2009

Dr Mulaika Hijjas (SOAS)

Heresies and housewives: didactic literature  
for women in the Malay manuscript tradition

26 November 2009

Dr Ben Murtagh (SOAS)

Queen of the Wadam: transvestites and  
transsexuals in Indonesian film from the  
1970s

3 December 2009

Dr Graham K Brown (Bath)

The ethnic Leviathan: public discourse and  
private violence in Malaysia

All are welcome

Convenor: P.J. Thum

For enquiries e-mail: [asian@sant.ox.ac.uk](mailto:asian@sant.ox.ac.uk)  
or tel: 01865-274559

Programme updates :

<http://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/asian/asianlectures.html>

**Workshop: HIV/AIDS in Indonesia:**

**pathologies of power, profit, and policy**

BOX, LSE

12 November 2009

1-5pm

Limited venue space. Contact John Sidel at  
[j.t.sidel@lse.ac.uk](mailto:j.t.sidel@lse.ac.uk) to register interest in  
attending or questions regarding the  
workshop.

Schedule of presentations:

Elizabeth Pisani

Tracking the HIV epidemic in Indonesia:  
what's the point?

Michael Buehler, Columbia University  
ARV medication and rent-seeking in  
Indonesia: the case of Kimia Farma

Dédé Oetomo, GAYa Nusantara

HIV work among Indonesia's gay men,  
transgender people, and other MSM: from  
exclusion to inclusion?

Dewi Ismajani Puradiredja, LSE

Female sex work in Indonesia: implications  
for HIV prevention efforts

Claire Q. Smith, LSE

What are the links between government and  
electoral reform and increasing HIV/AIDS  
rates in Papua?

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS



CLARENCE-SMITH, WILLIAM GERVASE

- The British 'official mind' and nineteenth-century Islamic debates over the abolition of slavery. In Keith Hamilton and Patrick Salmon (eds.), *Slavery, diplomacy and empire: Britain and the suppression of the slave trade, 1807-1975*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2009, pp. 125-42.
- The production of cotton textiles in early modern South-East Asia. In Giorgio Riello and Prasannan Parthasarathi (eds.), *The spinning world: a global history of cotton textiles, 1200-1850*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009, pp. 127-42.
- Entrepreneurial strategies of Hadhrami Arabs in Southeast Asia, c. 1750s-1950s. In Ahmed I. Abushouk and Hassan A. Ibrahim (eds.), *The Hadhrami diaspora in Southeast Asia: identity maintenance or assimilation?* Leiden: Brill, 2009, pp. 135-58.

COHEN, MATTHEW I.

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- A modular approach to understanding the transmission of technical knowledge: Nuauulu basket-making from Seram, Eastern Indonesia. *Journal of Material Culture* 14 (2009): 243-78.

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- *Piagam Serampas*: Malay documents from highland Jambi. In Dominik Bonatz, John Miksic, J. David Neidel, Mai Lin Tjoa-Bonatz (eds.), *From distant tales: archaeology and ethnohistory in the highlands of Sumatra*, Newcastle-upon-

Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2009, pp. 272-322.

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HITCHCOCK, MICHAEL

- (with King, V.T. and Parnwell, M.J.G.) Introduction: 'Tourism in Southeast Asia' revisited. In M. Hitchcock, V.T. King and M.J.G. Parnwell (eds), *Tourism in Southeast Asia: challenges and new directions*. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2009, pp. 1-42.
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- The future. In Retno Sulistianingsih Sitowati and J. Miksic (eds), *Icons of art: National Museum Jakarta*. Jakarta: BAB Publishing, 2006, pp. 286-99.

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- *ASEAN and the norm of non-interference in Southeast Asia: a quest for social order*. Nuffield College Politics Group Working Paper 2009-02. Oxford: Nuffield College, 2009.  
<<http://www.nuffield.ox.ac.uk/Politics/papers/>>
- Liberalism and democratization in East Asia. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 3, no. 2 (2009): 277-83.
- International relations scholarship and the tyranny of policy relevance. *Journal of*

*Critical Globalization Studies* 1, no. 1 (2009): 125-31.

- Democratisation and foreign policy: the case of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Myanmar Caucus. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 27, no. 3 (2009): 387-406.

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- *Chinese loan-words in Malay and Indonesian: a background study*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya. 284 pp [with CD of facsimile edition of *A Chinese-English dictionary of the vernacular or spoken language of Amoy ...* by Rev. Carstairs Douglas and *Supplement to the dictionary of the vernacular or spoken language of Amoy* by Thomas Barclay, 1899].

KAWANAMI, HIROKO

- (with Brac de la Perrière Bénédicte, eds.) Myanmar-Burmese religion. Special issue. *Asian Ethnology* [formerly *Asian Folklore*] vol. 68, no. 2 (2009).
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- [Review article] Contesting convention in Malay-world historiography. *Borneo Research Bulletin* 39 (2008): 269-73.

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- Indonesia's new Muslim intellectuals. *Religion Compass* 3, no. 6 (2009).

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- The Islamist threat in Southeast Asia: much ado about nothing? *Asian Affairs* 39, no. 3 (2008): 339-51.
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- Still striving for modesty: land, spirits, and rubber production in Kajang, Sulawesi. *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 10. no. 3 (2009): 200-15.

## BOOK REVIEWS



MARCUS MIETZNER

*Military politics, Islam, and the state in Indonesia: from turbulent transition to democratic consolidation*

Singapore: ISEAS, 2009.

382 pp. ISBN 978-981-230-787-3

pb S\$49.90/US\$39.90

*Reviewed by John Sidel*  
*LSE*

Over the course of the past ten years, Indonesia, the fourth most populous – and largest majority-Muslim – country in the world, has undergone a definitive transition from centralised authoritarian rule to decentralised democracy. The same period has seen the declining threat of separatist, communal, and religious violence, as well as a commensurate diminution of state violence by the Indonesian Armed Forces (TNI). These shifts over the past decade arguably represent major developments in the regional context of Southeast Asia, if not the broader geo-political order. After all, alternative scenarios – military coups, large-scale communal violence, Islamist takeover – were envisaged by various observers as plausible outcomes quite different from the stable, almost placid, pattern of formal democratic politics and elite continuity seen in Indonesia today. Yet few scholars have treated these transformations as puzzles to be solved or as questions to be debated. Scholarship on Indonesia has instead overwhelmingly focused on the new task of describing and explaining the new patterns of

politics observable across the diverse, sprawling Indonesian archipelago under conditions of a consolidated, if not yet fully crystallised, system of decentralised democratic politics.

Marcus Mietzner's new book, *Military politics, Islam, and the state in Indonesia: from turbulent transition to democratic consolidation*, rises to this challenge with a highly detailed and well documented account of the past decade of Indonesian politics. Mietzner is amply qualified for the task, given the ten years he spent living in Jakarta as a PhD student, consultant, and analyst of Indonesian politics and society. Over the years, he developed a reputation among academic Indonesia specialists for his unsurpassed access to leading politicians, Islamic intellectuals, and military officers in Jakarta, and for his unrivalled knowledge of the political establishment. Thus his new book offers a rich account of the key years of recent Indonesian history based on diverse sources, ranging from interviews to personal memoirs, newspaper reports, and government documents. By bringing his account up to the present, moreover, Mietzner incorporates the first term of current president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono into the narrative of Indonesian democratisation. His book surpasses previous narrative accounts in terms of breadth of coverage and historical depth, richness of documentation and empirical detail.

In analytical terms, Mietzner's book bears the hallmarks of an insider/expert account. His familiarity with key players and embeddedness within the corridors of political power in Jakarta allow him to see how personalities and contingencies affected the ebb and flow of recent Indonesian

history, while rendering him sceptical of more structuralist accounts stressing social forces and institutional interests and constraints. Mietzner throws cold water on Robert Hefner's account of an ascendant 'civil Islam' as the motor of Indonesian democratisation, and he cursorily dismisses the institutional and generational approach to Indonesian military politics put forth by Cornell University scholars like Ben Anderson and Douglas Kammen. Here it is worth highlighting that Mietzner is not only sceptical of the explanatory power of arguments based on the logic of institutional interests – he is pessimistic as to the extent of institutionalisation of power in Indonesia, and concerned as to the country's future in the absence of firmly rooted and developed institutions of democratic governance and civilian control over the coercive apparatuses of the state.

Mietzner's view of current president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono is similarly critical. He shows how Yudhoyono's avowed professionalism and political disinterestedness in the key years of transition from authoritarian rule masked ambition and efforts to position himself to maximum personal advantage. He also notes the extent of Yudhoyono's personalisation of appointments within the uppermost echelons of the military hierarchy, with military academy classmates and cronies, close friends and family members installed in key positions, in a pattern more closely resembling the Suharto era than the administrations of Yudhoyono's more recent (and more democratically elected) predecessors in the presidency. Crucially, Mietzner debunks notions of Yudhoyono as an active proponent of reform. Indeed, he shows how Yudhoyono has dithered and at times actively obstructed efforts to promote reform of the Indonesian

Armed Forces (TNI). Mietzner's account is a refreshing counterpoint to the adulatory depictions of Yudhoyono in the media, and to the largely uncritical coverage found in the academic literature as well.

Beyond the descriptive strengths of Mietzner's account, what of its analytical approach? Throughout the book, Mietzner depicts leading military officers as ambitious opportunists, while simultaneously deriding civilian politicians and Muslim leaders for both their fractiousness and their tendency to draw the military into politics. But beyond this story of diverse personalities and personal interests, a broader and more comparative perspective on democratisation suggests an underlying logic to the pattern of recent Indonesian history. With the shift from authoritarian rule to electoral democracy, after all, the twin notions of 'civil society' and 'the state', each with their own idealised, imagined autonomy from personal and factional interest, invariably fade and blur. At the same time, the rise of electoral politics sees 'civic leaders' and 'professional officers' morph into 'politicians' whose individual identities and self-interestedness can no longer be disavowed. Thus Mietzner's tale of disillusionment is a familiar one to scholars of democratisation in other parts of the world.

Indeed, if one looks elsewhere in Southeast Asia, there are striking similarities between the trajectories of early post-authoritarian politics in Indonesia to date and those observed in Thailand and the Philippines in earlier decades. Two-term Indonesian president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, after all, is not the first retired Army general to entrench himself as national executive and to enjoy a reputation as an honest broker, a protector of democracy, and a proponent of

reform. Former Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces General Prem Tinsulanonda's stint as Prime Minister in Thailand in 1980-88 and Former Armed Forces Chief of Staff General Fidel V. Ramos's term as President of the Philippines in 1992-1998 come to mind as well.

Seen in this light, Mietzner's scathing account of the limitations of reform under Yudhoyono comes as a timely rejoinder to the prevailing celebrations of Yudhoyono's re-election earlier this year to a second presidential term (2009-2014). For if the post-Prem and post-Ramos trajectories of politics in Thailand and the Philippines are any guide, then the Yudhoyono interregnum is likely to be followed by a period of renewed political turmoil in Indonesia, in which the issues and problems only superficially finessed by the current president but substantively left to fester will resurface, with a vengeance, in the years ahead. It is to be hoped that veteran Indonesia-watcher Marcus Mietzner, now based at the Australian National University in Canberra, will continue to track developments in Jakarta and elsewhere across the Indonesian archipelago, and to contribute his deep knowledge of the country and ample analytical skills to the task of chronicling its ongoing struggle for meaningful democracy.

JEFFREY HADLER

*Muslims and matriarchs: cultural resilience through jihad and colonialism*

Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008

224 pp. ISBN 978-0-8014-4697-9

pb US\$39.95

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***Reviewed by Becky Elmhirst  
University of Brighton***

As the author of this book points out, the Minangkabau people in the Indonesian province of West Sumatra have attracted considerable scholarly attention for more than a century, in part for the contradictory coexistence of a matrilineal culture, in which women's power over the house and rice fields is a central cultural theme, and Islamic piety, which brackets women into the private sphere of home and family. Scholars have also been drawn to this region in seeking an explanation for the disproportionately large number of Minangkabau leaders that emerged in Indonesia's turbulent 20<sup>th</sup> century political scene. The book also addresses these two themes: it asks first why the Minangkabau culture in the highlands of West Sumatra produced so many dynamic (and ideologically diverse) first-generation Indonesian leaders, and secondly, how a matriarchate survived in West Sumatra when elsewhere in Asia it was undermined by colonial and national state policies. However, these questions are recast and drawn together in an original and compelling manner, which not only addresses these questions but enables many other intriguing themes to emerge. Jeffrey Hadler draws on a wide range of textual sources to develop an argument which sees these questions as inextricably connected: tensions between Islamic reform and matrilineal customs and

practices meant that in their daily lives, Minangkabau were forced to continually question received cultural definitions around home and family, and through endless rounds of debate were able to envision new possibilities and to develop the flexibility and will to make these possibilities real. This accounts for both the resilience of Minangkabau culture and practices in the face of colonialism, and the fact that West Sumatra was to be a crucible for so many dynamic first-generation political leaders in Indonesia.

The book opens with a history of the Padri War, leaders of which sought to replace the Minangkabau matriarchate with a purified Islam marked by strict adherence to the Quran. The oscillations of this history are illustrated by the author in his focus on the role of Tuanku Imam Bondjol, whose story finally is one of attempts to find a compromise between Minangkabau custom, Islamic law and the intrusions of the Dutch colonial state in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This contested triumvirate is then explored in detail by examining how such contestations play out in three different social and cultural spaces: the house, the family and children's education. In the final chapters of the book, these ideas are developed further as the author discusses the politicisation of gendered morality and of culture in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, framed by the destructive 1926 earthquake and a failed communist uprising. It was out of this foment in West Sumatra that a generation of Indonesian political leaders emerged.

One of the features that distinguishes Hadler's book, and makes for a very engaging read, is his use of a collection of manuscripts catalogued as *schoolschriften* (school writings), written by students and native

assistant teachers in the colonial village schools of West Sumatra in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. What is intriguing about these early forms of auto-ethnography is that they focus on the everyday, intimate domestic negotiations of the period: Hadler sees in these the first sparks of 20<sup>th</sup> century modernity. Moreover, these and the other sources he utilises, allow him to draw a historiography of cultural resilience which places family, domestic lives and the agency of women centre-stage, not only in the story of West Sumatra's cultural politics, but in the unfolding of Indonesia as a postcolonial polity. Whilst there is much in this book that is of interest to historians and scholars whose interests centre on West Sumatra, this study carries a much broader appeal. Firstly, it connects with feminist theorisations of space and power by offering a richly wrought case-study of the ways that the politics of intimate spaces (home, house and family) give shape to wider political frames. Secondly, Hadler's nuanced discussion shows Minangkabau culture as a negotiated balance between Islam and the matriarchate, modernity and tradition that is wary of extremism. His argument that violent Islamic revivalism and foreign occupation effectively sustained matrilineal custom and a relatively egalitarian gender order offers a tantalising glimpse at how we might come to understand similar contestations in a more contemporary context, even if we accept Hadler's closing remark that Minangkabau is a 'hopeful exception'.

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ROXANA WATERSON

*Paths and rivers. Sa'dan Toraja society in transformation*

Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009

xxxii, 510pp. ISBN 978-90-6718-307-9, €34.90

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***Reviewed by V.T. King***  
***University of Leeds***

Roxana Waterson has been contemplating Sa'dan Toraja society and culture for over 30 years since she first embarked on field research in the village of Buttang, Malimbong sub-district, in 1978-79. She has also been fortunate in having had the opportunity to undertake return visits in 1982-83, 2002, 2004 and 2007. It helps explain why she has produced such a large and detailed book, ambitious in its breadth of coverage, comparative scope and historical depth. It requires careful reading in that it represents her mature reflections on this largely Christian minority of South Sulawesi which has become increasingly integrated into the national and global economy. The Toraja are well known beyond the rather particular and often narrow gaze of anthropologists, ethno-historians, missionaries and administrators. With their stunning and rugged mountain homeland, elaborate and distinctive house architecture, effigies of the dead placed in sculptured cliff-face balconies, and lavish funeral rites with animal sacrifice they have also been an object of the tourist gaze and a very prominent element in Indonesia's tourism promotion campaigns for the past three decades. Indeed, Tana Toraja was progressively opened up and displayed to a trans-national audience following the exploratory visits of small numbers of intrepid European and Australian adventure

and backpacking tourists from the early 1970s.

This exposure to international tourism, as well as Toraja conversion to Christianity and the access to education which this gave them, their encounters with neighbouring (and dominant) lowland Muslim populations, and their involvement in long-distant labour migration, have not only served to change and shape Toraja society and culture in particular ways, but also, one might say, to 'construct' a Toraja identity. Their high profile in the Indonesian national media and in the tourism literature has also served to insert certain dominant images of them into the popular imagination. Whether or not this helps explain the high level of scholarly interest in them in that tourists and anthropologists increasingly end up in the same places, there have certainly been considerable numbers of researchers who have followed paths and rivers to what was once the remote highland outposts of Torajaland, among them Kathleen Adams, Terance Bigalke, Elizabeth Coville, Eric Crystal, Hetty Nooy-Palm, Albert Schrauwers, Dimitri Tsintjilonis, Toby Alice Volkman, and Shinji Yamashita. Given this intense outsider interest, it is hardly surprising that increasing numbers of local scholars have also turned their attention to their own communities providing local perspectives on what they value in their own culture and history. Finally, and in spite of the relatively brief period of Dutch colonial administration, there is a substantial European historical-archival and linguistic literature, much of it of high quality and compiled and written by Christian missionaries (most especially Hans van der Veen, Albert Kruijdt and Nicholas Adriani). With this wealth of material, and indeed, the archaeological, anthropological, historical and literary studies which have

been undertaken on other neighbouring South Sulawesi communities such as the Bugis, and which serve to place the Toraja in a broader regional context, it becomes even more understandable that Waterson has had to spend many years in reading and distilling other people's experiences and understandings and her own field material. She admits frankly that 'For years this book obstinately refused to take shape' (p. xiii). I sympathise.

In summarising what the book is about it is best to return to Waterson's own words in the explanation which she gives for her choice of title. She takes two images which have 'salience' for the Toraja themselves: paths (*lalan*) and rivers (*salu*). These, she says, assisted her in thinking and writing about 'continuities and differences, about the endurance of place and the flow of time, about the inroads made by outsiders into the highlands, as well as the outward journeys undertaken by Toraja migrants seeking their fortunes' (p. xiv). Paths, of course, connect and separate and they do so in both a geographical sense, as part of a used, lived in and seen physical landscape and conceptually in terms of life-courses, history and ritual arrangements. In related images rivers 'flow' as do genealogies, discourses, stories, appropriate actions, behaviour and decisions. What Waterson wishes to capture in this concern with movement, connection and separation is 'that sense of open-endedness, of incompleteness, of endless possible choices of routes to follow' (p. xv). She also emphasises, in this long excursion into Sa'dan Toraja history, and in recording their experiences of others and their changing views of themselves, that although there have been dramatic cultural transformations over the past hundred years, 'it is remarkable how certain distinctive elements of a pre-colonial

cultural order have retained their vigour' (p. xiii).

For those who are familiar with Waterson's interests in her earlier publications there are clear connections and developments between them and what is explored in this latest book, particularly in the attention given in Parts Two and Three to 'house society', genealogy and kinship (and their representations), social rank and status, male-female relations, mythical narratives and symbolism, and then in Part Four Aluk To Dolo ('Way of the Ancestors') and especially mortuary and house ritual. What is new here, among other things, is the extent to which and the ways in which she places the Toraja material in a larger body of anthropological work and the meticulous examination of changes and continuities. It is also striking how much Toraja religious life was (and for those elements which remain are) tied in with the physical anchors of house and landscape. What is also especially pleasing in the first part of the book is the discussion of the interrelations between 'social memory' and 'history', an examination of the deployment of myth and genealogy in competition for and statements about precedence, and the effort to situate the Toraja historically and culturally in a broader Austronesian context, in relation to their neighbours, and in their encounters with the Dutch and the independent Indonesian state. There is also an interesting discussion of the changing religious landscape and conversion to Christianity in a national political context as well as 'the dynamics of the [surviving] ceremonial economy' in Part Four.

This is a finely crafted, sensitive and thoughtful ethnography which will stand the test of time. It tells the story of how an ethnic identity emerged and developed as the Toraja

chose (though not always with complete freedom) particular paths and rivers. But for me some of the story, and particularly the huge impact that tourism has had on the Toraja (or at least some of them), appears to be missing in Waterson's account. Or perhaps that story has already been told too often and does not need repeating.

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ELIZABETH STANLEY

*Torture, truth and justice: the case of Timor-Leste*

London: Routledge, 2008

208 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-47807-6, hb £75

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***Reviewed by Paul Hainsworth  
University of Ulster***

Elizabeth Stanley's monograph constitutes a hard-hitting and informed analysis of the mechanisms and practice of transitional justice discourse as applied to the case study of Timor-Leste. As the title of the book illustrates, the practice and question of torture is central to the analysis. The author explores the various tools that have been utilised to address issues of truth, justice and torture in this Southeast Asian territory. Stanley has strong criticisms of the role of the bilateral (Indonesian-Timorese) Commission on Truth and Friendship, the Jakarta-based Ad Hoc Human Rights Courts, and the Dili-based serious crimes process. All these bodies were set up in the wake of Indonesia's bloody retreat from Timor-Leste in 1999 and the author finds that none of them has served to redress issues of justice and human rights violations in Timor-Leste. Instead they are deemed to have entrenched impunity, reinforced existing power relations and left the victims of human rights violations very poorly served.

The author has a more positive view of the contribution of Timor-Leste's truth commission, the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR), set up in 2002 and completing its report in 2005. The CAVR has provided Timor-Leste victims and the people in general with a shared narrative about the territory's history and experiences, whilst at the same time enabling victims to tell their stories and participate in the search for truth and justice in the fledgling nation. As a result, the CAVR has enjoyed the support and respect of many sections of the Timorese population. However, here too, there have been serious problems such as limitations of resources, difficulties for many victims in accessing and participating in the processes of the CAVR, apparent Timorese government sidelining of the findings, and de facto construction of a gendered truth process (in which the voice and experiences of Timorese women is under-recognised). A key theme in the book is the inability of victims to benefit from transitional justice mechanisms due to structural economic and social factors.

The author's critique of the role of transitional justice in Timor-Leste is enriched by her well-incorporated swathe of interviews, notably with victims and relevant others. At times, it appears as if Stanley wants to throw the baby out with the bathwater and dispense with the resort to transitional justice mechanisms in post-conflict societies. She certainly produces a searing critique of them. However, her conclusion calls instead for a better application of the mechanisms, including the ensuring of better conditions for wider participation; more appreciation of context and traditional/indigenous practices; greater emphasis on capacity building; and the dovetailing of the search for justice with redistributive economic programmes. The book is offered as a limited contribution

to the suffering of Timorese victims, as well as a plea for the non-engaged to become more involved in 'the lives of others' – in order to help create a more just and democratic society. Stanley's book deserves to be read and engaged with – it makes a valuable contribution to the literature and practice.

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RUSSELL JONES (gen. ed.)  
 C.D. GRIJNS, J.W. de VRIES (eds)  
 Compiled by the Indonesian Etymological Project, KITLV  
*Loan-words in Indonesian and Malay*  
 Leiden: KITLV Press, 2007  
 vli and 360 pp. ISBN 978 90 6718 304 8  
 €59.50 including DVD with Amoy dictionary and supplement

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***Reviewed by Stuart Robson***  
***Monash University***

Etymology is fun. Those who take an interest in Indonesian/Malay, one of the more important languages of Southeast Asia, will naturally be eager to learn more about its history. And one way to do that is to look at the words which it has borrowed from other languages over the centuries. So in this case etymology means tracing the origins of loanwords that derive from sources outside the Indonesian area (here called Nusantara) – borrowings from within the area, e.g. from Javanese, are not considered.

The loanwords were originally compiled in seven lists, namely: Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, Hindi, Tamil, Chinese, European and Japanese. Of these, Sanskrit, Arabic and European would be the main contributors in terms of numbers. Seeing that so many



sources were involved, it is only to be expected that more than one person was needed to trace, list and explain the items. So it should be stressed that this was a 'team effort', indeed one lasting for many years, from the founding of the Etymological Project in 1973 up to the publication of this work. However, it is probably fair to say that it has been Russell Jones who was the driving force as general editor, and who saw the project through to its completion, and who himself devoted special attention to the Arabic-Persian and the Chinese lists. He has outlived most of the other scholars who contributed, and would want them all to be remembered and given their due.

The work as we have it is a consolidated list, which is built on the preceding lists source-language by source-language; in the Introduction (paragraphs 4.0 – 4.11) some background is provided for each area, forming a basis for further research. It should be noted that Arabic and Persian are closely linked, and it is sometimes difficult to determine from which source a given word came. Out of the European languages, Portuguese and Dutch are particularly interesting, but much of the terminology taken into contemporary Indonesian from 'common' European sources is not very informative. The loanwords from Chinese are excellently researched, complete with Chinese characters, and it is understood that a monograph by Russell Jones on this subject has just appeared in Kuala Lumpur, showing even the precise geographical origins of these words (*Chinese loan-words in Malay and Indonesian, a background study*). The words from Japanese date from World War II and are all obsolete.

How does one recognise a loanword in the first place? Some are obvious, but others less

so, and in some cases a word may be so familiar that we do not realise that it is borrowed, as with *cuci* or *sudah*, which derive from Sanskrit. While the original forms are given, we are not told what the word meant in its original language – surely part of the story. Further, there are of course dubious cases, such as *tata* (rules); does it really come from Sanskrit *tatha*?

A type of loan not considered, but quite interesting, is the loan-translation or calque, where a new term is created using indigenous elements to express the meaning of a foreign term. There are many of these in Indonesian (often not recognised) taken from Dutch, of the type *pengisap debu*, vacuum cleaner, from Dutch 'stofzuiger' (=dust-sucker).

This publication may be regarded as the first step towards a full etymological dictionary of Indonesian/Malay. The significance of this study is that it helps us to see the language in a historical and social context, seeing that each wave of borrowings must have occurred in a particular time and setting, brought by people for particular reasons. Examples are the early Sanskrit borrowings probably in the Sriwijaya period, the borrowings from Arabic and Persian during the time of the establishment of Islam in particular, and the ones from Dutch during the colonial period. But the processes may also be 'out of period'; for example, Indonesian words are still being concocted from Sanskrit, and the influence of the Dutch language certainly continued after the Dutch themselves left. Linguistic history and cultural history are clearly linked.

It is worth mentioning that the Etymological Project in its time spawned the European Colloquia on Indonesian and Malay Studies, which were held every two years, circulating

among various centres in Europe, beginning in Paris in 1978 and ending in Moscow in 1999. These were very valuable as venues for scholars to meet and present papers, while the leaders of the Etymological Project held their meeting on the last day, bringing people together who might not otherwise have had the opportunity.

This book has been produced with loving care and precision, even with a hard cover, and is a worthwhile contribution to the ongoing task of studying the Indonesian/Malay language.

The corpus of loan-words is available now on < <http://sealang.net/indonesia/lwim> >

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MICHAEL W. CHARNEY

*A history of modern Burma*

London: Cambridge University Press 2009.

256pp. ISBN: 9780521617581, pb £14.99

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***Reviewed by Ashley South  
Australian National University***

Michael Charney – Senior Lecturer in the Department of History at SOAS (University of London) – has written the first general history of Burma in half a century. The focus is limited to the colonial period (1826-48) and since, allowing for a concise and compact study.

According to the Introduction, *A history of modern Burma* was written for the ‘nonspecialist audience and for undergraduates who might find the specialised literature too inaccessible’. The author has achieved these objectives admirably. Those seeking a brisk, yet comprehensive, overview

of the modern political history of this fascinating and complex country at last have an adequate reference book. No longer will it be necessary to refer back to classics from the 1950s, to sift important information from questionable analysis in the works of Robert Taylor (*The state in Myanmar*, see *Aseasuk News* no. 45, 2009), or rely on the more anecdotal approach of Thant Myint-U (*The river of lost footsteps: histories of Burma*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux 2006). However, the ‘general reader’ implied in the above quote may come away somewhat disappointed, as the style adopted throughout is rather dry, and fails to capture the passion of Burma's tumultuous political life.

The only quibbles provoked by the book are of a minor, stylistic nature. The phrasing is sometimes a bit odd, and in the final two chapters (covering events since the 1988 ‘democracy uprising’) the chronology is in a couple of places slightly obscure. Otherwise, this is an exemplary survey.

Charney is even-handed in his assessment of key events and historic characters. He sticks mostly to reporting the course of events, taking care to place these within the appropriate regional and geo-political context. Only in the concluding chapter does the author allow himself the luxury of a broader analytical framework. In general therefore, the history recounted here is solidly objective, and should raise few complaints from the broad range of often antagonistic stakeholders which make up the Burmese political scene.

Charney provides a usefully concise overview of the colonial period. He proposes a modified version of the historical periodisation generally adopted by historians of

Burma. He succeeds in demonstrating that the final years of British colonial rule, and the disappointing experience or 'self-rule' under Japanese occupation during World War II, merit consideration as a single 'era of Aung San' (p. 2), during which Burma's modern nationalist politics took form.

The book is particularly strong on the state-socialist period in Burma (1962-88), and the manner in which the Ne Win regime moved to control Burmese society, and suppress dissent. Charney focuses on the relatively 'ideology-rich' nature of the Burma Socialist Program Party's rule, usefully complementing the account provided by Robert Taylor (*op cit*).

For this reviewer, a more sustained emphasis on 'the ethnic question' would have been welcome. However, the lack of detailed attention to this important theme is compensated for in the conclusion, where Charney identifies 'lowland-highland, and thus Burman-minority, bifurcations of the country [as] ... an important determining factor in the trajectory of Burmese history in the twenty-first century' (p.202). He also correctly identifies the junta's expertise in crisis management, and short-term strategising, as key to the longevity of military rule in Burma (pp. 204-6).

A deeper and more specialised history of Burma would need to reference Burmese and minority language sources, which Charney rarely cites in his footnotes or bibliography. Such omissions perhaps explain the 'outsider account' nature of the narrative. However, it is easy enough to find emotionally engaged tracts on Burmese politics. Charney has achieved the much rarer and highly valuable goal of producing a systematic and reliable historical overview.

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SYED MUHD KHAIRUDIN ALJUNIED

*Colonialism, violence and Muslims in Southeast Asia: the Maria Hertogh controversy and its aftermath*

London: Routledge, 2009

208 pp. ISBN 978-0-415-48594-4, hb £75

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*Reviewed by A.J. Stockwell  
Royal Holloway, University of London*

At about noon on 11 December 1950 rioting broke out in the vicinity of Singapore's Supreme Court and spread to the area of the Sultan Mosque. The violence lasted 48 hours and during it 18 people were killed (nine by rioters and nine by the police or military), 173 were injured and much property was damaged or destroyed including well over 100 vehicles.

The innocent victim at the centre of the uproar was Maria Hertogh, the thirteen-year old daughter of Roman Catholic parents, a Eurasian mother and a Dutch father who before the Japanese occupation had served in the army of the Netherlands East Indies. When the Japanese invaded Java her parents were interned but Maria escaped, having been entrusted by her mother to Che Aminah binte Mohamed. The nature of this arrangement was disputed after the war, with Che Aminah claiming, and the Hertoghs denying, that Maria had been handed over for permanent adoption. In 1950, having discovered that his daughter had been taken by Che Aminah to Trengganu, Adrianus Hertogh requested the Dutch Consulate-General in Singapore to initiate court proceedings for her repatriation to the Netherlands. By this time, however, Maria had been brought up as a Muslim; she had changed her name to Nadra binte Ma'arof and

was betrothed to Mansoor Adaabi. The tussle over her custody swung one way and the other. The colonial high court first ruled in favour of her natural parents, later restored Maria to her adoptive mother but rescinded that order on her marriage to Mansoor. She was then escorted by police to a Roman Catholic convent where she remained until 12 December when she was put in a plane for Holland while Singapore burned. Maria did not return to Southeast Asia until 1999 when she visited Malaysia in connection with the filming of a Dutch documentary about the controversy. Maria Hertogh was for ever marked by her disturbed childhood. Marriage to a Dutch soldier brought her many children but also much unhappiness. Acquitted of plotting the murder of her husband, she obtained a divorce and left her children for the United States. By this time she was reported to have lost whatever religious faith she may once have had. Eventually she returned to Holland where she died in July 2009.

The Hertogh riots stand apart from other violent incidents in post-war Malaya and Singapore. The protests that boiled over into violence in December 1950 came from Singapore's Muslims, not exclusively Malays, and were directed against Europeans and Eurasians, not against the Chinese. Moreover, they were not driven by the communist insurgency then raging on the peninsula. Nor did they sit easily within the context of the island's secular, left-wing radicalism which was associated more with labour and, subsequently, student unrest. Perhaps it was because they appeared atypical of the threats to the colonial state during the Cold War, that the story of Maria has frequently overshadowed analysis of the riots. In fact, however, the death toll during the Hertogh affair is estimated to be higher

than that in any other tumultuous disturbance in Singapore between 1945 and 1963. Furthermore, these riots were no mere rocket that quickly burned out but rather a warning shot that altered the course of colonial rule in Singapore, as Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied (Assistant Professor in the Department of Malay Studies at the National University of Singapore) compellingly demonstrates in this revised version of his recent SOAS PhD thesis.

Deftly situating this episode in the socio-political circumstances of post-war Singapore and drawing on an impressive range of unpublished sources in the United Kingdom, Singapore, Malaysia, Holland, Australia and the United States, Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied sheds fresh light on the causes, course and consequences of the riots. He shows how radicals within Singapore's marginalised Muslim community were driven to protest and how protest turned to riot as a result of colonial negligence, particularly in the areas of intelligence and policing. The largest and most original part of the book is devoted to the aftermath of the riots which had taken the colonial regime by surprise and had called into question its legitimacy. Chapter by chapter, the author examines the strategy whereby the British strove to restore their authority. It had five features: (1) instilling fear through arrests, raids, curfews and the use and abuse of the law; (2) surveillance by special branch and other agencies; (3) self-criticism through, for example, the commission of enquiry which identified scapegoats while shielding the higher echelons of the regime; (4) reconciliation in order 'to balance and rule, more than to divide and rule' p.88); and (5) reform of policing, marriage policies, child adoption and education. Although the British by no means had it all their own way in any of

these endeavours, by the end of 1952 they 'had turned the aftermath of the riots to their advantage' (p.126) This detailed and subtly argued case study is a valuable contribution to our understanding of the late colonial regime in Singapore and to the literature on riots in Southeast Asia.

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TAKASHI SHIRAIISHI (ed.)

*Across the causeway: a multi-dimensional study of Malaysia-Singapore relations* Singapore: ISEAS, 2009.

276 pp. ISBN: 978-981-230-783-5, pb US\$29.90

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***Reviewed by Nicholas White  
Liverpool John Moores University***

In 2001, Singapore's former Prime Minister, Goh Chok Tong, commended Malaysia's then Deputy Prime Minister, Abdullah Badawi, for the latter's analogy of Singapore and Malaysia as 'two neighbours living in semi-detached houses, separated by a common wall. What happens to one house will affect the other house'. Yet, as recent disputes between Malaysia and Singapore over water supply, Lee Kuan Yew's memoirs, maritime boundaries, customs facilities, land ownership and reclamation, and pension rights demonstrate, these neighbours living in close proximity can often have strained relations. This interdisciplinary study of Malaysia-Singapore interactions – encompassing history, politics, security, law and economics – is most welcome therefore. There is much repetition between chapters and proof reading leaves a little to be desired, but the volume represents the most comprehensive study of Malaysia-Singapore relations to date, and will prove a vital work of reference for any future studies.

The historical section of the book begins with Tony Stockwell's discussion of the British late-colonial legacy. From wartime planning for reoccupation in 1942 to the achievement of Malaysia (with Singapore included) in 1963, Stockwell shows that the British were 'equivocal and circumspect' (p. 12) in their approaches to merger. The exclusion of Singapore from the Malayan Union of 1946, and the Federation of Malaya which succeeded it in 1948, only served to push the two territories further apart, especially as Malay political dominance on the mainland and Chinese political dominance on the island were increasingly confirmed during the 1950s. Ooi Keat Gin takes up the historical legacies further, arguing that the economic symbiosis between Malaysia and Singapore – epitomised by tin mining and smelting from the mid 19th century – was overshadowed by political divides. He concludes that 'owing to the different approaches of the political leadership in Singapore and Malaysia towards the handling of the contentious issues of communal relations and egalitarian versus positive discrimination, it appears that any attempt at a re-merger must first resolve these differences, if not, the tensions of 1963-5 shall again re-emerge' (p. 48).

Indeed, the origins of the Malaysia-Singapore split of 1965 are examined in more detail by Mohamad Abu Bakar in his chapter focusing on the 1961-63 period. For him, the point of no return came in August 1962 when, after winning the referendum campaign for merger, Lee Kuan Yew began inferring that the People's Action Party (PAP) would spread its electoral web to the mainland, threatening the existence of the Malayan Chinese Association and the delicate conservative communal balance of Federation politics tipped in favour of the Malay electorate. In other words, it was Lee's ambitions for power

on a pan-Malaysian and not merely Singaporean stage which brought the 'Greater Malaysia' scheme down. Albert Lau, meanwhile, reminds us of Singapore-Kuala Lumpur tensions extending further back to the creation of the Federated Malay States in the 1890s and the efforts at decentralisation as a prelude to recentralisation in the inter-war years. But the principal problem of the 1963-65 period for Lau, in contrast to Mohamad Abu Bakar, lay in Kuala Lumpur 'never seriously depart[ing] from its perception of Malaysia as simply an extension of the Old Malaya where political power was rested in a communally-aligned Alliance-led government headed by UMNO, with Malays in charge and given special privileges' (p. 104).

Carlyle Thayer's chapter on political relations provides a useful bridge between the history and political science parts of the book by recognising that 'current relations between Singapore and Malaysia were significantly shaped by the legacy of merger and separation' (p. 81). The 'Malaysian Malaysia' vision of Lee Kuan Yew versus the 'Malay Malaysia' conception of Tunku Abdul Rahman continues to underlay tensions between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur, as does the island republic's ongoing 'sense of geo-strategic vulnerability in a region prone to religious extremism and political violence' (p. 89). Kamarulnizam Abdullah then moves on to explore the ambiguous relationship of Johor with Singapore – he reminds us that some 80,000 Malaysians commute to work in Singapore daily. At the same time, however, Johor is the heartland of Malay nationalism, and has been frustrated by the Malaysia-Singapore water agreements, Singapore's land reclamation schemes, noise pollution from the Singapore air force, and competition between Tanjung Pelepas and the Port of

Singapore. N. Ganesan's chapter on politics and international relations from the Singapore perspective demonstrates the thawing of relations between Malaysia and Singapore after 1967 through the creation of ASEAN and regime change in Indonesia, as well as the threat posed to both countries by communist victories in Indo-China. However, 'the end of the Cold War in Southeast Asia in the 1990s has removed the structural convergence of threat perceptions, and reignited tensions' (p. 149).

On legal questions, Abdul Aziz Bari's chapter is particularly insightful on the constitutional legacies of the Singapore separation for Malaysia. As he points out, the Sarawak political crisis in 1966 did not result in separation because the central government proved 'more high handed this time around' (p. 160) in opting for the declaration of an Emergency. Indeed, after the Singapore split there was an increasingly authoritarian bent in Kuala Lumpur, particularly in its dealings with recalcitrant states such as Kelantan and Sabah, as well as Sarawak. In terms of 'checks and balances', meanwhile, the decision to expel Singapore in 1965 set the precedent of non-consultation of the Conference of Rulers on key constitutional issues.

Thayer's second chapter in the volume begins the section on security. He outlines the increasing separation of Malaysia's and Singapore's armed forces after 1965, and how bilateral defence cooperation has proved 'superficial and trouble-prone, reflecting the continuing deep distrust between the two governments and defence establishments' (p. 170). Only through the Five Power Defence Arrangements after 1971 – involving Australia, New Zealand and the UK as well as Malaysia and Singapore – have common

defence exercises taken place, given that this provides a 'neutral forum for defence cooperation' (p. 172). Ganesan's chapter on Singapore and regional security underscores this sense of unease: 'Singapore's defence initiatives, especially at the local level, are deeply informed by an acute sense of vulnerability' (p. 176). Defence expenditure has recently represented up to 28 % of the island's annual public expenditure. On the other hand, Kamarulnizam Abdullah's second contribution stresses how close cooperation, particularly in intelligence, has recently eventuated in managing the threat of regional Muslim radicalism/terrorism. Yet, at the same time, Malaysia has remained wary of Singapore's 'special relationship' with Washington and the republic's encouragement of a US naval presence in the Straits to combat terrorism and piracy.

Teofilo Daquila's chapter on competition and complementarity opens the economics section of the book. Despite high levels of competition for export markets and foreign investment, Singapore's penchant for bi-lateral free trade agreements and higher average incomes and levels of social development in Singapore, Daquila finds significant trade interdependence. He also emphasises Malaysia-Singapore economic cooperation in the Singapore-Johor-Riau growth triangle, and the future prospects of the Iskander Development Region (IDR) in south Johor. Similar conclusions are reached by Mahani Zainal Abidin: in 2001, Singapore was Malaysia's second largest export destination, and third largest source of imports; since 2000, Malaysia has been Singapore's leading trading partner. Moreover, the IDR represents a chance for the 'private sector and people' to 'respond to the new signal if barriers to free movement of workers, goods and services are removed' (p.

247). This appeal is repeated by Linda Low and Lee Poh Onn in the final chapter which focuses upon the 'tedious and drawn out' (p. 257) negotiations over the supply of Malaysian water for Singapore: 'As both Malaysia and Singapore claim to be pragmatic and flexible, they should see a way through to marginalize the histrionics of history, personality, and politics' (p. 262). If only life was so simple.

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MICHAEL D. BARR & ZLATKO SKRBIŠ

*Constructing Singapore: elitism, ethnicity and the nation-building project*

Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008

xiii, 304 pp. ISBN 978-87-7984-029-4

pb £16.99; 978-87-7694-028-7, hb £50

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***Reviewed by V.T. King***  
***University of Leeds***

Local, expatriate and foreign scholars have been obsessed with the topic of post-independence nation-building in Singapore for many years. Presumably this is in large part due to the obsession of the political elite of this small anxiety-ridden republic which in turn provides ample material for research and because the political and economic project which Lee Kuan Yew and his lieutenants embarked on in 1965 has, against all the odds, been so conspicuously successful. So here we have another book on the construction of the Singapore nation-state.

Much is already known, particularly the intimate relationship which has been forged between the governing elite and the national project and its evolution; they are 'the same thing' (p. 7). Indeed one of the co-authors,

Michael Barr, has spent a good deal of his career focusing intensely on the Singapore story and aside from a string of papers on Singapore politics, society and values, has published a very readable study of the architect of modern Singapore in *Lee Kuan Yew: the beliefs behind the man* (2000). Some of the current book with Zlatko Skrbiš has already appeared (though with some revisions) in several of Barr's previously published papers, so there are no surprises here, and his co-author appears to be there to provide some theoretical ballast on nationalism.

Despite the weariness which some Singapore-watchers experience when they confront another study of the post-independence social and political engineering projects implemented in the city-state, this present book is not without some interest. For those who know David Brown's work on the state, nationalism and ethnicity in Southeast Asia then some of the conceptual framework adopted by Barr and Skrbiš will be familiar. They place Singapore towards the 'modern-civic' end of Brown's spectrum of Southeast Asian nationalisms but not at the extreme end; Singapore's elite have addressed the potentially insuperable problems they faced following the separation from Malaysia and constructed 'a multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-lingual secular state that combines a modern concept of citizenship with practices that essentialise and emphasise ethnic identity, thus making it less "modern" and "civic" than might appear at first glance' (p. 4).

Nevertheless, one of the contributions of *Constructing Singapore*, it seems to me, is in interweaving Lee Kuan Yew's biography and that of his son Lee Hsien Loong and the personal dimension of power with an

examination of the development of certain ideological proclivities and the emphasis placed on elitism, meritocracy and 'constructionism' (constructing and re-constructing Singapore [in infrastructural, policy and ideological terms]). As we know *ad nauseum* the character of Singapore's government is 'technocratic' and 'pragmatic', its objectives 'modernist' in combination with at least an overt emphasis on multiracialism but with the increasing emphasis on Confucian-Chinese cultural values and behaviour. The co-authors also argue that 'the Singaporean version of elitism is substantially a product of the mind and imagination of Lee Kuan Yew' (along with S. Rajaratnam, C.V. Devan Nair, Goh Keng Swee, Tony Tan and George Yeo) (pp. 8, 18, 113). They claim, with some justification that the strength of their book is its basis in detailed and long term archival and oral history research; this is evident in the reasonably detailed discussion of the education system and the various routes to elite status.

To explore this combination of practice and ideology we are provided with a rather standard narrative of 'The Singapore Story' and the ways in which myth construction have proceeded and been altered to meet changing circumstances (as presented, not in Lee Kuan Yew's memoirs carrying the same title but in a CD-ROM produced by the Ministry of Arts and Information under its National Education Project in 1999). This is followed by an explanation of the emergence of the twin anchors of Singaporean nationalism: elitism and meritocracy, and the reasons why Lee Kuan Yew and his advisors were able to embed these so successfully in the citizens' psyche. The formal legitimating myths are also examined in relation to those other informal mechanisms and factors which drive the political system: personal



power, patronage and social networks, gender, ethnic stereotyping, and socio-economic class position.

A question which immediately arises in a book about elites and elitism is what precisely do we understand by the concept of 'elite' and why is this preferable to, for example, an analysis of social class or status? In the introductory sections of the book it was far from clear and perhaps we should have gone back to C. Wright Mills for some conceptual clarity on the 'power elite'. But thankfully we do get some clarity from chapter 4 where there is a discussion of the concept, explored through an examination of 'the culture of elite governance' (though even here there is some fuzziness). Barr and Skrbiš distinguish between an elite 'core' comprising the political and administrative leaders ('a select group of ministers, members of the Administrative Service ... senior members of the SAF and the security services'), and the 'outer circles' made up of 'the talented among all walks of society'; these latter also appear, I assume, as 'other' or 'alternative' elites (communal, economic, academic and religious) (pp. 58, 61). Having introduced the distinction, Barr and Skrbiš tend to lose sight of it in the later chapters of their book.

Much of the book goes in search of the core elite (or 'the apex') through an examination of training and recruiting grounds: the civil service, the Singapore Armed Forces and the education system. Socialisation into nationalist values and conformity to the ideological principles of the government through education at pre-school, primary, secondary and junior college levels, based on the principles of *kiasu* ('afraid to fail'), streaming, bilingualism, emphasis on the sciences and the stratification and diversification of

schools (with cramming, private tutoring, rewards, rising parental expectations, extra-curricular character-building, elite schools, government scholarships) are discussed in chapters 7 to 10. The book also considers post-university vocational training and professional development in the government's urgent requirement to instill loyalty to the nation.

There is an interesting examination of the processes of partially assimilating whilst also stereotyping and disadvantaging the ethnic minorities, particularly the Malays, in the construction of 'new Singaporeans'. Not only is the elite overwhelmingly dominated by Chinese from privileged upper middle class backgrounds, who are university graduates speaking English as a first language with good levels of competence in Mandarin, good in science and coming from 'the Raffles family of schools' but they also happen to be men (pp. 226-27).

We might note that any political system is a combination of formal and informal ideas, structures, processes and elements; their character, importance and permutations will differ in any given case. The degrees and kinds of contradiction and the ways in which the political leaders address them are of course crucial in explaining regime survival. In Singapore incompetence and mismanagement, given the emphasis on meritocracy, are potentially disastrous, especially if failure is seen to be the result of personal power and patronage. To date the elite, though exhibiting clear signs of paranoia, has managed successfully to address the paradoxes, distortions, injustices and dissonances that their policies have generated, particularly in the arena of ethnicity. But because of the very nature of the Singapore state and its society and elite, I

think that we might agree that the contradictions can never be eliminated.

Although Barr and Skrbiš have not told me anything that I did not know in broad outline, they do provide a substantial and interesting evidential base for their study and add a great deal of detail on the inner workings of Singapore's particular 'factory' system of elite production and, in more culturally specific terms, the schooling of its mandarin. I enjoyed reading what they had to say.

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JOHAN FISCHER

*Proper Islamic consumption: shopping among the Malays in modern Malaysia*

Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008

258 pp. ISBN 978-87-7694-031-7, hb £40

ISBN 978-87-7694-032-4, pb £17.99

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*Reviewed by V.T. King  
University of Leeds*

Consumption practices among those who follow a particular set of religious beliefs which constrains certain kinds of behaviour and encourages others have long been a focus of sociological attention since Max Weber's comparative studies of religion and economic action. One might have expected that this would have already become an important topic of investigation for scholars interested in the impact of globalisation and capitalism on Muslim communities in Southeast Asia. Yet there has been surprisingly little detailed research on the interaction between Islam and consumption ('mosque' or 'market', and 'spirituality' and 'commerce') in the region.

This situation has been remedied to some extent with the publication of Johan Fischer's study, which emerged from his doctoral work in suburban Kuala Lumpur embarked upon in 2000-01. Indeed, the book has a doctoral feel about it. Fischer notes appositely in his Preface that there is a large and increasing literature on Islamic revivalism in Southeast Asia, and there has been a very rapid expansion of research on consumption and middle class lifestyles, but very few systematic studies 'of the way in which middle-class consumption is understood as a particular mode of Islamic practice' (p. xi). The promotional blurb on the back cover of the book then claims boldly that 'this is the first book to explore how Malaysia's emerging Malay middle class is constituted through consumer practices and Islamic revivalism'. My impression is, however, that rather more has been done on these themes in Indonesia.

This volume does make an important contribution to our understanding of the responses of socially mobile, religiously committed communities to the opportunities and perils presented by modernisation. It also tells us something about the debates concerning the meanings and practices of Islam within an aggressive, globalised, secularised modernity. In Malaysia this is an especially intriguing issue because it is the Malay-dominated state which has been crucial in generating and shaping a particular kind of modernity in order to address the problems posed for nation-building by a quite radical form of ethnic pluralism. Former Prime Minister Mahathir's manifesto was to promote 'a high-consuming yet Islamic modernity' (p.9), but one which was also designed to counter the growing appeal of revivalist or *dakwah* movements and of the

opposition Islamic party, an appeal which gathered momentum from the 1970s.

To get under the skin of Malay middle class lifestyles, ethnic identity formation and religious preoccupations, Fischer lived in a 14<sup>th</sup> floor condominium in Taman Tun Dr Ismail (TTDI), a western suburb of Kuala Lumpur, about 15 km from the city centre. He carried out a questionnaire survey of 241 middle class households (which included Chinese) and then selected 14 adults from ten Malay households in TTDI for in-depth interviews in their own homes where he recorded 'narratives' of their everyday lives. In addition he conducted 'participant observation' at household celebrations, festivals and social visits, and on 'shopping sprees', and he kept a fieldwork diary for each household as well as a photographic record. The households selected provided a reasonable spread of income, occupation, age, and accommodation types. Interviews were also conducted with four younger Malays from other suburban areas as well as with key informants from the TTDI Residents' Association, Islamic organisations, mosque committees, government departments, academic institutions and newspapers.

The key concept which structures much of Fischer's ethnography is that of 'halalisation' – the identification and certification of those items and areas of consumption within Islam which are permitted and those which are not. This process of religious delineation also serves as a convenient, state-directed means of 'localising' globalised commodities. Valorising certain objects and services at the expense of others is also closely interrelated with the notion of consumption practices which are moderate and not excessive, and with the expression of a lifestyle which is modest, respectable and clean. In this

exercise in 'glocalisation', western commodities, or at least some of them, tend to be viewed negatively rather than positively. Fischer also argues that 'halalisation' is part of the process of nationalising Islam, 'ethnicising' the Malaysian nation-state and encouraging 'shopping for the state'. Nevertheless, I am not entirely convinced that Malay identities generally are being forged through consumption and that this is 'the central focus of the ethnicised state', although for the Malay middle class it may well be the case.

Fischer captures admirably some of the complexity of consumption patterns and the ambiguities in identity formation, and says something about 'gendered' and 'aged' consumption, though he simplifies this picture by making a broad-brush distinction between those informants whom he refers to as 'purist' and those who are 'pragmatic'. He takes us through a range of items of consumption used to express (middle class) class and ethnic identity and explores individual narratives concerning their place in Malay social and cultural lives: food, dress and personal effects, housing, interior household goods and decorations, cars, services (banking and finance) and cultural consumption (particularly reading materials like magazines). Yet I felt the need for more detail. For example, his remarks about the strictures of Islam on women's dress and that usually middle class women also experiment and want to be fashionable tell us very little about what precisely they wear (p. 81). We are also not really given details of what a typical Malay shopping trolley contains, though we are told where they shop and in broad terms which items of food and drink are specifically prohibited. There is a haziness about which western products do find their way into Malay homes (and

stomachs) and how they are accommodated. What about the Malay consumption of the internet where one finds an enormous variety of Islamic websites? What of forms of leisure other than shopping (tourism, pilgrimages, cinema, eating out, television, film, music) given the expanding market in Islamic-derived commodities and services and the commercialisation of Islam?

My plea for more information is not meant as a criticism of Fischer's work. After all his focus is shopping. He has made an important contribution to our understanding of Malay modernity and has given us a research agenda. But in exciting our interest we need to know much more and in more detail about consumption and the expanding role of Islamic-produced and -derived products in national and global economies. We might also look with profit at what is happening in Indonesia and the relations between Malaysian and Indonesian Islam, commerce and consumption.

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DONALD K. EMMERSON (ed.)

*Hard choices: security, democracy, and regionalism in Southeast Asia*

Singapore: ISEAS, 2009

xxi + 313 pp., appendix, index

ISBN 978-981-230-914-3, pb US\$29.90

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***Reviewed by Lee Jones  
Queen Mary, University of London***

As all the contributors to this volume reflect, the 1997-1998 financial crisis produced unprecedented domestic political upheaval in Southeast Asia and propelled ASEAN onto a course of cautious reinvention. It is therefore an extremely pressing task for analysts to

take stock of the last decade and update an increasingly weary literature on ASEAN by probing the relationships between security, democracy and regionalism. *Hard choices* is a collection of loosely but thematically-related essays by ten serious authors who each make interesting, useful and thought-provoking contributions. However, theoretical engagement is relatively sparse and the book would have benefited from an overarching framework to help structure and guide the contributions. Particularly given many contributors' focus on Myanmar, ASEAN's policies towards it, and ASEAN's recent institutional evolution, an early chapter agreeing a collective account of these matters would have left more space for analysis and argumentation.

The book's central chapters contain competing interpretations of the difference democratisation has made and might make to regional politics. On the optimistic side, Mely Cabellero-Anthony and (to a lesser extent) Jörn Dosch argue that democratisation has broken elites' grip over foreign policy, admitting new actors like civil society groups. This, they argue, has produced a new emphasis on democratisation and non-traditional security in ASEAN discourse, suggesting that a role for ASEAN in promoting democracy in countries like Myanmar may not be far-fetched. This message is reinforced by Kyaw Yin Hlaing and Erik Martinez Kuhonta, whose chapters on Myanmar both advocate a more forceful ASEAN line. (However, several of their recommendations have already been tried without success – a fact missed by those who reiterate the traditional view of ASEAN as hidebound by non-interference until very recently.) Kyaw's chapter also provides a useful and original account of Myanmar's internal deadlock,

bravely highlighting the intransigence and weakness of the opposition as a key factor.

On the less optimistic side, veteran ASEAN official Termsak Chalermpanupap provides a highly informative overview of ASEAN's institutional development which will be useful for all students of ASEAN. Termsak stresses the very real limitations to ASEAN's capacity for collective action, warning that the Association is so divided that using certain institutions could spell its demise; gradualism is the only route to successful reform. This contradicts those who, like Cabellero-Anthony, see the mere mention of new discursive terms as cause for hope. Whether ASEAN's new discourse and institutions matter will arguably depend on the outcome of struggles between those who want to use them to create social progress and those who simply want to refurbish ASEAN's tattered reputation with minimal actual change.

Simon Tay and Michael Malley's insightful chapters focus on specific issues – 'haze' and nuclear energy – to demonstrate that democratisation does not (as other contributors imply) automatically produce either more liberal policies or enhanced regional cooperation. Rather, they seem to argue, what matters more than democratic institutions is the forces mediated through them. In the case of Indonesian haze, for instance, venal bureaucratic and business interests currently overrule environmentalist groups, stifling regional cooperation. Democratisation can give vent to illiberal, nationalist and uncooperative sentiments, particularly when dominated (as ASEAN polities are) by cynical oligarchs.

It is disappointing, therefore, that none of the chapters engages in systematic analysis of the

domestic social forces at work in ASEAN states, which would provide many clues as democratisation's likely impact on security and regional cooperation. David Martin Jones comes closest to this in his chapter, but despite outlining the corrupt, oppressive nature of ASEAN's ruling classes, he comes down on the side of the demons, celebrating authoritarianism's capacity to adapt South-east Asian societies to the vicissitudes of 'millenarian capital', claiming Southeast Asians have a 'cultural preference' for such arrangements, and thus ignoring Southeast Asians' own struggles for freedom and justice. It is unclear why Jones felt it necessary to add to his otherwise solid defence of 'pragmatic' regionalism, in recognition of ASEAN's fragility, a ringing endorsement of capitalist authoritarianism. Nor does he explain why ASEAN has committed itself to 'democracy' and 'good governance'.

On balance, the evidence in *Hard choices* seems to favour the pessimist viewpoint. The basis for concluding that civil society has shattered elites' monopoly on policymaking is rather weak. None of the pro-intervention authors sufficiently counter the pragmatist challenge that ASEAN coherence could not withstand the adoption of a more liberal-interventionist posture. However, this is a contingent judgement which should not lead us simply to endorse the status quo. As Kyaw, Tay and Malley's chapters imply, the fate of individual countries and the overall direction and content of ASEAN regionalism depends ultimately on the struggles of ASEAN's own citizens. A clear-sighted analysis of the respective strengths and weaknesses of the forces of movement and reaction, without succumbing to the defeatism of endorsing authoritarianism or the romanticism of believing that democratic institutions alone

imply the victory of civil society (or that ASEAN can do much to create such institutions), is therefore vital for understanding the region's prospects.

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MICHAEL HITCHCOCK, VICTOR T. KING & MICHAEL  
PARNWELL (eds)

*Tourism in Southeast Asia: challenges and new  
directions*

Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2009

368 pp. ISBN: 978-87-7694-034-8, pb £16.99

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***Reviewed by Geoffrey Wall  
University of Waterloo, Canada***

This work is a sequel to an earlier book by the same editorial team (Hitchcock, King and Parnwell 1993). Indeed, a substantial proportion of the contributors are the same and a similar format is adopted with some chapters that provide a regional perspective (mostly by one or more of the editors) and others devoted to a particular country or case study. Thus, the chapters cover a wide variety of scales from the entire region with references to works from elsewhere to put the region in context, to a study of the tiny island of Gili Trawangan in Lombok, Indonesia. However, this book should not to be regarded as a second edition because much has happened in the region over the last 15 years and this is reflected in the text. Indeed, various authors frequently remind the reader of the repercussions of the Asian economic crisis, the Iraq war, SARS and the Bali bombings, suggesting that 2009 is a very different world from that in 1993, requiring a different book because both global and regional tourism have changed. Furthermore, the book has been released by a different publisher from its predecessor.

The volume consists of 16 chapters by 17 authors, most of whom are western academics. Although there are a number of chapters by authors who have been employed within the region, the editors acknowledge that there are few contributors that have a local voice. Is this because there is limited research being conducted in the region by people who live there permanently? Against this, most of the authors have a long history of research in and writing on the region, and their work will be well known to those with even a cursory knowledge of tourism research on Southeast Asia. As a group they have solid reputations for their previous research contributions on the region or parts of it and this is reflected in the generally high quality of their writings in this volume. Many, if not most, of the contributors have been trained as anthropologists and this is reflected in the emphases of the contents, with interest in such concepts as culture, identity and authenticity, but as the book proceeds there is increasing engagement with other themes such as environment and sustainability. Although economic matters are not ignored, there is little economic analysis in the book. Perhaps this will seem odd to those who regard tourism as a business and who recognise that destinations want tourists largely for economic reasons.

The book begins with a lucid introduction by the editors. This is a much more insightful contribution than is the case in many edited books for, in addition to introducing the chapters that follow, it provides a conceptual context by addressing such themes as temporal change; ethnicity, identity and culture; and globalisation. King then provides a valuable assessment of anthropological studies of tourism in Southeast Asia. Most tourism researchers could benefit from

reading these two chapters, regardless of discipline or regional orientation. These chapters are followed by a discussion of hybrid souvenirs, rooted in work in Toraja (Adams), terrorism in Bali (Darma Putra and Hitchcock), Balinese identity in the wake of the bombings (Picard), a succinct overview of tourism policy-making in Southeast Asia (Richter), the role of the private sector in Vietnam's transitional economy (Bennett), pro-poor tourism in Laos (Harrison and Scipani), Japanese perspectives on Asian tourism (Yamashita), prostitution and gender politics on the China-Vietnam border (Chan) and romance and sex tourism mostly in Indonesia (Dahles). To this point the book is guided primarily by an anthropological perspective.

Parnwell then provides a 'political ecology' perspective on 'sustainable tourism' and, in doing so, establishes a broad context for more specific chapters on ecotourism in Indonesia (Cochrane) and, specifically, in Komodo National Park (Borchers) and Gili Trawangan (Hampton and Hampton). The book concludes with some brief observations on issues in Southeast Asian tourism. These include disciplinary perspectives, continuity and change, the importance of intra-regional tourism, global-local interrelationships which lead to the paradox of growing differentiation occurring at the same time as the region is influenced increasingly by international trends and events, and the uncertainties that result from this.

The regional coverage of the work is curious. Seven chapters are devoted primarily to Indonesia and others refer frequently to Bali. On the other hand, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines receive only mentions in passing.

Unlike many edited books that have a cursory introduction and conclusion, the editors have made substantial contributions to this book, not only in some cases by writing individual chapters but, particularly, by providing chapters that introduce concepts, synthesise the literature, and provide a context in which country-wide and more local case studies can be placed. Indeed, several of these chapters are worthy of attention by readers whose interests lie primarily in tourism in other regions. The references for each chapter are gathered into one bibliography at the end of the book and this is a helpful resource for, as I read the book, I came across seemingly valuable sources that I had overlooked or had not even been aware of previously. There is also an index that combines both places and concepts.

The book is nicely produced, well edited and reasonably priced, at least in the paper version. The content is sound and the presentations are generally free of unnecessary jargon. While the focus is on Southeast Asia, tourism is global phenomenon with far-reaching implications for this region as well as for the world as a whole. As such, the work merits the attention of regional specialists, tourism scholars, and all those interested in cultural change and community well-being, regardless of discipline.

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VICTOR T KING

*The sociology of Southeast Asia:*

*transformations in a developing region*

Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008

xvii +352 pp. ISBN 978-87-91114-60-1, pb £16.99

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***Reviewed by Jonathan Rigg  
University of Durham***

After four decades of scholarship, Victor (Terry) King is among the foremost social scientists working on Southeast Asia. He has contributed much both to our knowledge of the region and to the maintenance of Southeast Asian studies in the UK – as members of ASEASUK will be all too aware.

This is a textbook. It does not claim to offer any new approach to our understanding of the region, whether conceptual or applied. Instead, it fills a gap in the available literature for a ‘user-friendly’ introduction to the sociology of Southeast Asia. As King points out in the Preface, students of sociology are not well provided for in terms of up-to-date summary texts and, given the pace of change, anything more than 20 years old will trace the past rather than illuminate the present. It is this challenge that King sets out to address.

There are few – if any – scholars who could have produced a text which is, at once, so forbiddingly well-informed (the bibliography extends to 46 pages) but also gently approachable. King, in effect, takes the student or scholar by the hand and leads them through the maze of theoretical frameworks, regional differences, historical contingencies and transformational processes that comprise the region. King is a master of distillation and summary, a skill

which comes from intimate knowledge developed over many years.

The approach that King adopts is thematic. In turn, he considers modernisation, under-development and dependency, class and political economy, ethnicity and society, patronage and corruption, Asian values and social action, gender, and the urban context. This means that it is possible to take each chapter as a self-contained gobblet of information and argument – no doubt helpful for teachers and their students who might wish to gain an integrated overview of a particular theme. One of the implications of this approach, however, is that King does not have the opportunity to develop an overarching argument.

Only in the conclusion do King’s own views really become evident. He states that, in his view, there is no ‘dominant research style, tradition or perspective’ either in the sociology or anthropology of Southeast Asia (p. 256). By ‘dominant’, I sense he also means ‘distinctive’. He makes a plea for a region-wide vision informed by region-wide research where tendencies towards national specification are tempered by a desire for cross-national and cross-cultural scholarship. This might then lead to conceptual frameworks that transcend national borders and cultural frontiers. He is also aware of the way in which evolving and deepening links require a contextualising of the Southeast Asian region within the larger geographical ambit of East Asia. While there is no doubt in King’s mind that Southeast Asia is worthy of study in and of itself, he is too well read and informed not to have been influenced by ongoing debates over the area studies approach. As he admits, it ‘is by no means clear that sociological analysis of the developing



societies of Southeast Asia should be confined within a regional perspective' (p. 17).

King says that writing this book was an 'arduous' process. I can't say that it shows. As is usual with his work, it shows an enviable fluency of argument and exposition. He also says that he is writing a second, companion text on culture and identity in the region.

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HELEN E.S. NESADURAI & J. SOEDRADJAD  
DJIWANDONO (eds)

*Southeast Asia in the global economy: securing competitiveness and social protection*

Singapore: ISEAS, 2009

247 pp + index; ISBN 978-981-230-823-8

hb US49.90

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***Reviewed by Lee Jones  
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The premise of this collection – the outcome of a 2005 workshop – is that Southeast Asian governments need to attend to the challenges faced by the emergence of other low-wage, relatively low-tech economies (notably, India and China), but also to those posed by the dislocating social impacts of globalisation. Nesadurai and Djiwandono rightly warn that while social protection is often seen as a threat to competitiveness, neglecting it may undermine the conditions necessary for capitalism to operate. The authors thus mostly try to have it both ways, claiming that ASEAN governments can respond to both threats simultaneously by enhancing welfare provision in a way that allows the value-added ladder to be scaled.

The most useful chapters are those by Rahul Sen and Sadhana Srivastava on India, and Liu

Yunhua on China. The former shows convincingly that India and ASEAN's economies are largely complementary, providing wide scope for cooperation and mutual benefit, and implies that India's significance to the region has the potential for serious growth. The latter provides a balanced assessment, noting the boost Chinese demand has provided for ASEAN economies and the benefits accruing from China's WTO-entry-related tariff reductions, but ultimately admitting the serious challenge China poses to Southeast Asia's share of global investment and export markets. Heribert Dieter contributes a critique of the recent penchant for bilateral FTAs, arguing that their complex rules of origin undermine firms' competitiveness. Chew Soon Beng and Rosalind Chew suggest that Singapore's mode of government-labour relations has positively impacted competitiveness, lamenting the more combative stance of unions elsewhere in the region. The remaining chapters consider labour regulations, pensions, and corporate social responsibility (CSR), mostly asserting (not always very convincingly) that enhancing social protections will not undermine competitiveness, and offering policy recommendations.

A grave weakness of the collection is that most of the authors pay insufficient attention to the political aspects of political economy. They tend to note apparently irrational policies, 'inefficiencies', 'capacity' deficiencies, etc., without really explaining why the prevailing arrangements exist. For example, to note the apparent-irrationality of bilateral FTAs is not to explain their proliferation – which arguably is more for political than economic reasons. This shortcoming is often reinforced by the use of quantitative methodologies which do not

seem to capture realities on the ground: counting words in company reports to determine CSR; measuring labour-friendliness using binary assessments of legal regimes, etc. Occasionally the chapters on social protection are forced to note unpleasant realities, such as the domination of pension funds by government officials and appointees with quite different priorities than ensuring the welfare of retirees, but they largely neglect the wider power relations in which social policy is determined and implemented. This means that their policy prescriptions are frequently technocratic and rather other-worldly given the region's political economy and the balance of forces within ASEAN societies. Thanks to its qualitative approach, Chew and Chew's chapter gives the best sense of these realities – which is ironic in light of their celebration of the Singaporean state's authoritarian relationship with workers – who are seen as 'strategic partners' in the government's quest for development, rather than as citizens, let alone people with a legitimate interest in challenging capitalist social relations.

A further weakness is the volume's recurrent obsession with Singapore. As the region's largest trading state, this is partly understandable, but the upshot is the relative neglect of ASEAN's markedly different other economies. Particularly unfortunate is the way the newer, poorer member-states are largely ignored, given prima facie evidence that their economies risk being seriously hollowed-out by China's rise, or being incorporated as low-value processing centres into the wider Chinese economy. The differential impact of the rise of China and India on different Southeast Asian economies is thus left underexplored, which is unhelpful for informing our understanding of intra-ASEAN political differences over this vital

development. Indeed, only Dieter's chapter pays much attention to intra-ASEAN tensions, despite various technical recommendations for regional cooperation which are therefore not underpinned by an assessment of political realities. Finally, much of the data is outdated, being drawn from 2004, or in one chapter's case, 2002; the present global financial crisis – which, after all, began in 2006 – is not mentioned.

Overall, the book's general value is probably limited to the chapters on India and China, which are useful reference points; otherwise it is likely to appeal mostly to scholars concerned with the literature on the chapter's particular topics.

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WIL BURGHOOORN, KAZUKI IWANAGA, CECILIA MILWERTZ & QI WANG (eds)

*Gender politics in Asia: women manoeuvring with dominant gender orders*

Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2008

235 pp. ISBN 978 87 7694 015 7

pb £14.99

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### ***Reviewed by Colette Balmain***

A series of case studies examining the mechanisms which women in the Philippines, Japan, Malaysia, China and Singapore, either confront and challenge or concede to the dominant patriarchal order on a micro-political level, *Gender politics in Asia* is a welcome addition to the fields of both gender studies and Asian studies.

Engaging in discourses around fashion and the female body, motherhood, religion, and consumerism, the case studies are careful to demonstrate the specific manner in which

women engage with gender discriminatory practices – which in themselves are similar throughout Asia as women are still accorded an inferior status within society – as well as stressing the importance of historical and social context as determining the multiple ways in which women in Asia confront and contend with such practices. For example, Mikiko Eto's analysis of community-based movements among mothers in Japan situates a very different female negotiation of prevailing values to that discussed by Cecilia Milwertz and Bu Wei in their chapter on female activism in China. While there are similarities between female activists in China and western feminist movements, the feminist movement in Japan has had much less success, and instead women in non-feminist grassroots and community-based movements are motivated by immediate problems that affect both theirs and their children's lives.

Similarly while religious oppression unites the chapters by Mina Roces on costume and the politics of dress in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Philippines; Alexandra Kent's insightful study of gender roles in the Sathya Sai Baba Movement in Malaysia and Monica Lindberg Falk's analysis of the role of female monks and nuns in Thailand, the mechanisms by which women challenge dominant values around appropriate femininity differ significantly. While female communities with shared experiences construct a political challenge in Philippines and Thailand, Kent's analysis of male and female healers in Malaysia demonstrate the challenge that an individual can pose to the prevailing order. Cecilia Milwertz and Bu Wei's chapter on activism in China and Qi Wang's analysis of the 'Women Mayors' Association' in China highlight the difficulties that Chinese women continue to find in participating in politics in

China constrained within traditional expectations of women as inferior to their male counterparts and their duties within the home. As a counterpart to narratives of empowerment whether determined by a feminist agenda or motivated by reformist concerns, Phyllis Ghim-Lian Chew examines the political role of women in contemporary Singapore in which the feminist agenda takes a second place 'women's preoccupation with security, wealth and job success' (p.209).

While demonstrating the manner in which women in Asia negotiate gender roles within the hegemonic order, the contributors never fall into the trap of appropriating women's experience in Asia through western [feminist] paradigms. Instead, as Qi Wang's chapter on Women Mayors in China clearly foregrounds although western feminism has provided an alternative language for women in China to express their experiences, feminists in China have been careful to distance themselves from 'foreign imperialists.' (p. 129). Through the insistence on the local and the real personal experiences of woman in Asia – based upon empirical data - *Gender politics in Asia* illuminates the manifold ways in which women conquer and in some cases concede to the continuance of gender inequality in the countries discussed. The cases studies provide a timely testament to the fact that for women in Asia – as elsewhere – the struggle for gender equality continues and while in the west third wave or post-feminism seemingly prevails, it is necessary to be reminded that for other women the path to gender equality is still a challenge and may not happen quickly.

The book also and importantly demonstrates the different strategies that women take, some of which may be interpreted as feminist but others are motivated by concerns of

where gender issues are incidental. The book demonstrates the problems inherent in the universalising of female experience by clearly showing the significance of the local and the national in the construction of cultural norms of gender as well as the manifold strategies that women employ in Asia to combat normative hegemonic patriarchy.

While the book covers over a range of Asian countries, allowing the reader to note continuities and contrasts in women's confrontation of gender roles across Asia, it seems odd that there are two chapters on China, interesting as they both are. Another

case study from a different country – for example South Korea or India – would have given the book more balance. A conclusion drawing together the arguments raised in the individual chapters would have been useful to bring a greater sense of coherence to the book as well as suggesting areas of further study. These are however minor criticisms in what is overall an excellent introduction to the subject written in a lively and interesting manner, accessible to a general as well as an academic readership. I would strongly recommend *Gender politics in Asia* as a key text for anyone interested in and/or studying gender roles in Asia.