



ASEASUK NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF
SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES
IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

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Newsletter of the Association of
Southeast Asian Studies in the United Kingdom

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NEWS

UK Southeast Asianists

Dr Matthew Cohen (Royal Holloway, University of London) is now Professor of International Theatre at Royal Holloway (effective April 2011). He continues to tour his one-man show *A Dalang in Search of Wayang*, with performances at the Buxton Puppet Festival (in July 2011) and the Indonesia Kontemporer Festival at SOAS (October 2011). He delivered the following paper on 13 May 2011: 'From interpretive to ethnic dance: staging Java and Bali in early twentieth-century America' at the Department of Dance, Film and Theatre, University of Surrey. Matthew is spending the academic year 2011–12 as a Research Fellow at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences, Wassenaar, The Netherlands, working on a book on theatre and performance in modern Indonesia.

Dr Felicia Hughes-Freeland (SOAS) presented the following two papers in 2011: 'Women's impacts on cinema in post-Suharto Indonesia: beyond the "victim-virago dichotomy"?' at the session on 'Female Filmmakers in Asia', Joint Conference of the Association for Asian Studies and International Convention of Asian Scholars, Hawai'i, 29 March–3 April 2011, and 'Japanese-Indonesian hybridity? The case of Didik Nini Thowok's Bedhaya Hagoromo', Asia Pacific International Dance Conference, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 21–5 Sept 2011.

Felicia provided this report on Swansea University: SEANS (the Southeast Asia Network Swansea) no longer exists. Our objective to establish a Southeast Asian Studies research centre was thwarted by

University restructuring and redeployment in 2009 which resulted in the loss of most staff members with Southeast Asian expertise. The remaining Southeast Asian researchers are Gerard Clarke and Alan Collins, both in the College of Arts and Humanities. I chose to resign from the university as of 1 October 2011 in order to concentrate on my research in visual anthropology and Southeast Asian performance and heritage. To this end I am now a Research Associate in the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies at SOAS.'

Professor Janice Stargardt (University of Cambridge) is working on completing the second volume of *The Ancient Pyu of Burma, The Buddhist Archaeology of Sri Ksetra* which is due for publication in 2012. In June 2011 she presented a paper on 'The interaction between early settlers and their environment in south Thailand, 6th–14th century and impact today', at the conference on 'Environmental and Climate Change in India and Southeast Asia: How are Local Cultures Coping?', Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut, Essen, Germany. Janice will be in Dehua, China, 1–5 November 2011, for the conference on Dehua Ceramics in Historical Perspectives at the Fujian Institute of Archaeology.

Dr Karl Hack (Open University) is researching the Malayan Emergency and violence/terror for a book and made two fieldtrips to Singapore (April) and Washington (September) in 2011. His research project on war and memory in Southeast Asia will be published by NUS Press in early 2012 and covers individual, community and state memories and their juxtaposition. He also gave talks on Malayan topics in London, Lisbon, and New York in 2011. Karl is also Academic Consultant to BBC/Open University series on the British

Empire, due to be presented by Jeremy Paxman and screened in early 2012, and writer for the accompanying historical poster on 'Selling Empire'.

Karl presented the following papers this year: 'Between two terrors: the people and insurgency in the Malayan Emergency' at the conference on 'Counterinsurgency: History, Theory and Practice', 22-23 September 2011, Gallatin School of Individualized Study, New York, and was a member of its workshop on writing peoples' histories of insurgency, preparatory to a book to be issued by the New Press; 'Violence and the Malayan Emergency' at the conference on 'Butcher and Bolt or Hearts and Minds? British Ways of Countering Colonial Revolt: A Historical Perspective', Institute of Historical Research London, funded by Brunel University and co-sponsored by the US Marine Corps University Foundation, 15-16 September 2011; and 'Decolonisation in Malaya' at the conference on 'The Decolonisation of the Portuguese Empire in Comparative Perspective, Institute of Social Sciences, University of Lisbon, 20-21 June 2011.

Dr Lee Jones (Queen Mary, University of London) conducted fieldwork in South Africa this summer for his project on international economic sanctions. In December 2011 he will be travelling to Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia for fieldwork on the governance of non-traditional security, specifically transboundary pollution ('haze' from forest fires). Lee's PhD student, Boonwara Sumano, will soon be embarking on fieldwork to study the regional liberalisation of labour movement in Southeast Asia. If anyone can help with contacts or advice on this topic, please email Lee at l.c.jones@qmul.ac.uk

Dr Annabel Teh Gallop (British Library) and Venetia Porter of the British Museum gave an illustrated talk on 'Islamic seals: treasures from the British Library and the British Museum' to the Friends of Cambridge University Library during the installation at Cambridge University Library of the BL-BM travelling photographic exhibition, 'Lasting Impression: Seals from the Islamic World', on 19 May 2011. The exhibition has now opened at the Street Gallery, University of Exeter. At the 3rd International Conference on Aceh and Indian Studies in Banda Aceh, 25-26 May 2011, Annabel presented a paper on 'Two Malay letters from Raffles to Aceh, 1811', on two recently discovered manuscript letters now held in the Instituto Histórico Geográfico Brasileiro in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. During this visit to Aceh AG and Andrew Peacock, as co-Directors of the British Academy funded Aseasuk-BIAA research project, 'Islam, Trade and Politics across the Indian Ocean', discussed plans for the end-of-project International Workshop to be held in collaboration with the International Centre for Aceh and Indian Ocean Studies (ICAOIS) and IAIN ar-Raniry in Banda Aceh in January 2012.

Dr Laura Noszlopy (Royal Holloway) launched an editorial services consultancy in March 2011, specialising in academic dissertations and publications
[<www.katakata.co.uk>](http://www.katakata.co.uk)

Dr Sandra Dudley (University of Leicester) presented the following papers in 2009: 'Sensory exiles in the field: reflections on research with Karen refugees in camps in Thailand', invited research seminar, Department of Third World Studies, University of Ghent, Belgium in October; 'Feeling right, or not, in exile: aesthetics, displaced objects and Karen refugees in

northwest Thailand', invited research seminar, Department of Art History, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, March.

Centre for South East Asian Studies, SOAS

Professor **William G. Clarence-Smith**'s two strands of research are on 'Syrians' in the colonial Philippines c.1860s to c.1940s and rubber in World War II, based on secondary readings. For the former he was on a research trip to Washington DC in August 2011, consulting Philippines documents in National Archives II (College Park) and the Library of Congress Manuscripts Collection. He delivered the following papers in recent months: 'Near Eastern migration to the Philippines, 1860s-1940s,' Zentrum Moderner Orient, Free University, Berlin, Germany, 7 July 2011; 'Equids in Southeast Asia in the *longue durée*,' at conference 'Southeast Asia: the *longue durée*,' Leiden University, The Netherlands, 24–26 August 2011; 'Trends in global history,' at workshop 'Business history as global history,' BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo, Norway, 12 September 2011; 'Betel and areca: commodities in crisis,' at workshop 'Fragility and disconnections of global commodity chains,' University of Konstanz, Germany, 15–17 September 2011; and 'Rubber cultivation in Indonesia and the Congo from the 1930s to the 1950s: divergent paths,' at the conference 'Colonial rule in the Netherlands Indies and Belgian Congo: comparing changing institutions of extraction and development,' University of Antwerp, Belgium, 7–8 October 2011.

Abroad

Dr Chiara Formichi has been appointed Assistant Professor at the Asian and International Studies Department, **City University Hong Kong**. Her current research projects are on: 'Shi'a Islam and 'Alid piety in Southeast Asia', and 'The impact of Mustafa Kemal's secularization of Turkey on Indonesian nationalism' (funded by the British Institute at Ankara, BIAA). Chiara convened the international workshop 'Placing Religious Pluralism in Asia's Global Cities', at the Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, 5–6 May 2011.

Professor Michael Hitchcock (IMI University Centre, Lucerne, Switzerland) has been actively engaged on recruitment visits to Southeast Asia over the last two years. In March 2010 he visited Ho Chi Minh City and Danang, and took time off to do some research in Hué and its environs. In September he visited Malaysia and Singapore, and interviewed the curator of the Soaring Phoenix of the South Temple, which has a UNESCO award. In November he visited northwest and northeast Thailand but his plans to re-visit the sites around Yogyakarta that he researched in 2009 were disrupted by the eruption of Mount Merapi. IMI's agent in Indonesia rapidly arranged a promotional lecture tour for him that took him to North Sulawesi, Sumatra, Bandung and Jakarta.

In connection with the Aseasuk/British Institute in Ankara collaborative research project he visited Istanbul 20–26th March 2011 before going on to a conference organized by the Antalya Tourism Academy. In Istanbul he visited the Topkapi Palace, Museum of Turkish and Islamic Arts, Istanbul Archaeology Museum, Sabanci Museum, Sadberkhanim Museum and the Military

Museum. In the Topkapi Palace he examined John Ayer's catalogue (1986: 527) of the Chinese ceramics, noting that there were references to three items from Vietnam. The most interesting of these is a blue and white vase decorated with a peony scroll design dating from 1450. It has an inscription written in Vietnamese ideographs, which are based on Chinese. The inscription is translated as: 'painted for pleasure by the craftswoman Bui of Nam sach-chan in the eighth year on Thai-hoa'.

In the Military Museum he came across a case devoted to Indonesian weapons dating from the 18th and 19th centuries under the title of Kamalar (Qamas). It contained five kris with their scabbards and one slashing weapon. The weapons were all in good condition and were richly ornamented with jewels, ivory, decorative wooden carving and precious metalwork. It is difficult to provenance kris as armourers often moved to where their patrons were and decorative features were traded between islands. Generally speaking, the scabbards looked as if they belonged to the Malay world (which can also include non-Malays like the Bugis), but there is one that could be Javanese. The visit to the Sadbenkhanim Museum, which is devoted to Turkish material culture, provides some comparative insights into fashion changes in the late Ottoman period. European styles were penetrating Turkey by the late 19th and early 20th centuries, while at the same time in Indonesia, Westerners were adopting elements of local dress. The visit to this museum also set off some thoughts about the role of the fez in Indonesia, a variant of which is still worn there on certain occasions.

¹ Ayer, John (ed.) (1986) *Chinese ceramics in the Topkapi Saray Museum, Istanbul: a complete catalogue*. London: Philip Wilson.

He is currently actively involved in the launch of the *World Culture Forum* in Bali and is helping an Indonesian delegation with their visit to the World Economic Forum in Davos.

EVENTS

Conferences & workshops

27th Aseasuk conference

University of Durham
7–9 September 2012

Organiser: Professor Jonathan Rigg
Email: j.d.rigg@durham.ac.uk

On cosmopolitanism and Southeast Asia: imaginings, mediation and movement

Australian National University
16–18 February 2012
Email: sea-cosmopolitanism@anu.edu.au

Contemporary challenges in transitional Vietnam: insights from Vietnam studies in the UK

British Academy, London
29 February 2012
Contact: Katherine Brickell (Royal Holloway)
Katherine.brickell@rhul.ac.uk

Contemporary issues in Southeast Asia

Southeast Asian Studies Symposium
St Antony's College
University of Oxford
10 March 2012

Themes:
Politics and economy
Society and culture
Human welfare and environment

Contact: Claire Soon
claire@projectsoutheastasia.com

Association for Asian Studies (AAS)

Sheraton Centre Hotel Toronto

Canada

15–18 March 2012

7th Euroseas conference

Technical University of Lisbon

Portugal

July 2013

Contact: Paulo Castro Seixas

pseixas@iscsp.utl.pt

Imperial China and its southern neighbours

Conference at Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre

Institute of Southeast Asian Studies

30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace

Singapore 119614

28–29 June 2012

Email: nscconferences@iseas.edu.sg

Keynote lecture by Professor Wang Gungwu.

This conference will examine questions and problems germane to understanding the relationship between north and south: geographical terminology (e.g. China, Jiangnan, East Asia, the East Asian Heartland, the Extended East Asian Heartland, the Yellow River Valley, the Yangtze River Valley, Southern China, Lingnan); transmission of literary themes and genres; linguistic interactions; artistic and musical interplay; folkloristic motifs; trade and migration patterns; religious missions and pilgrims; etc. The timeframe of the conference covers from the earliest periods of interaction between the Yellow River Valley and the lands to the south up to the end of the Qing Dynasty (1911).

Seminars

Centre of South East Asian Studies

SOAS, Russell Square, Brunei Gallery, B102,
Tuesdays 5:15 pm - 7:00 pm

1 Nov 2011

Felicia Hughes-Freeland (Author)

Less visible than it appears: dance as
resistance in the eye of the state

15 Nov 2011

Farouk Yahya (SOAS)

An illustrated Malay manuscript on magic
and divination in the SOAS collection

29 Nov 2011

Jasni bin Sulong (Universiti Sains Malaysia)

Recent developments in the law of Islamic
inheritance in Malaysia

6 Dec 2011

Nik Haslinda Nik Hussain (Universiti Sains
Malaysia)

Man and land: the fate of customary land laws
during the Light administration in Penang

31 Jan 2012

Trân Thi-Liên Claire (Sociétés en
Développement, Etudes Transdisciplinaires)
Nguyễn Manh Hà and Pham Ngoc Thuân :
cross portraits of two Catholic personalities
of the 20th century

6 March 2012

Sue Guiney (Writer in Residence, SOAS)

Literature for social change: a novel use for a
Cambodian novel

13 March 2012

PJ Thum

Singapore's greatest generation: the Chinese-
speaking and the making of a nation-state

South East Asia Research in conjunction with CCLPS

Thursday 3 November 6–8pm, SOAS main campus, room G2

Professor Thongchai Winichakul (University of Wisconsin and Asia Research Institute)
'Silence of the wolf: the perpetrators of the 1976 massacre in Bangkok, 30 years afterwards'

Exhibitions

Bali – dancing for the gods

Horniman Museum & Gardens
100 London Road
Forest Hill
London SE23 3PQ
16 April 2011– 8 January 2012
http://www.horniman.ac.uk/exhibitions/current_exhibition.php?exhib_id=109

Lasting impressions – seals from the Islamic world

The Street Gallery
Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies
University of Exeter
Stocker Road
Exeter EX4 4ND
3 September–11 November 2011
http://socialsciences.exeter.ac.uk/media/universityofexeter/institutefarabandislamicstudies/docs/exhibitions/Seals_from_the_Islamic_World.pdf

Hajj – journey to the heart of Islam

British Museum
Great Russell St
London WC1B 3DG
25 January –16 April 2012
http://www.britishmuseum.org/the_museum/news_and_press/press_releases/2011/hajj_exhibition.aspx

PROFESSOR TONY STOCKWELL

Professor Tony Stockwell has recently stood down as Chair of the Association's Research Committee. He succeeded Bob Taylor as Chair in 2008 and has served for well over three years. This note is an expression of our enormous gratitude to him for taking on this responsibility when he was extremely busy with other duties. I'm not sure that the large lunch at Bob Taylor's London club had anything to do with it. I know that all Association members were pleased to welcome Tony back into the fold when he agreed to be Chair. His last official position in ASEASUK went back to 1988 when he had then completed five years as our Honorary Secretary.

As outgoing Chair of the Association I would also like to offer my personal and sincere thanks to Tony for taking on this task at a time when he was still occupied with his duties as President of the Royal Asiatic Society. He had also only just stood down as joint editor of the *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*.

During his time as Chair of the Research Committee, Tony and our Secretary Becky Elmhirst, have presided over the British Academy-funded programme of work on 'Integration and Interaction in the South-East Asian Region' with unruffled efficiency and effectiveness. Tony has also ably steered the Committee through some rather difficult times with the reduction in the Academy's grant from 2009. In our changing relationship with the Academy Tony has provided excellent representation on the Association's behalf on the Academy's East Asia Panel. Under his Chairmanship the Association was also engaged in the ambitious Academy-funded project with the British Institute at Ankara on 'Islam, Trade and Politics across the Indian Ocean', examining Ottoman links with the Southeast Asian region. Most recently ASEASUK received the very welcome news that its Research Committee has been given the responsibility of administering a new Academy initiative in selecting and appointing research fellowships in Southeast Asia under the ASEASUK-British Academy ECAF Fellowship programme. It's an expression, I think, of the confidence which the Academy has in Tony and in the Research Committee.

After serving the Association conscientiously Tony can look forward to a well earned rest. Our warm best wishes to him and sincere thanks once again to him for devoting his time and wise counsel to our work.

Terry King

CONFERENCE REPORT

26th Aseasuk conference
Magdalene College
University of Cambridge
9–11 September 2011

This conference was the largest that Aseasuk has hosted with more than 110 participants from the UK, Europe, Asia, Australia and North America. Aseasuk thanks Dr Tim Harper and Dr Christina Skott for organising the conference, helpers Mary-Rose Cheadle and Maddie Lee during registration, the Centre of History and Economics at Magdalene College as well as Alan Fuller and his conference team, and our guest speaker Professor Sir Christopher Bayly at Magdalene College's candlelit dinner.

Aseasuk also thanks the Shan Cultural Association UK for the enjoyable and colourful dance performance at Magdalene College and, publisher Routledge, who was the main sponsor of the conference pack.

The next Aseasuk conference will be at Durham University, 7–9 September 2012, and organised by Professor Jonathan Rigg.

Panel A: Shan culture and Theravada Buddhism

Convenor: Dr Susan Conway, SOAS

Aseasuk thanks the MacArthur Foundation and the British Academy for funding Professor Sai Aung Tun, Yangon University and Nang Voe Seng, Shan Literature and Cultural Association, Yangon, Myanmar. This is the second year that Aseasuk has included a panel on Shan Buddhism and Culture. There were nine papers.

Professor Sai Aung Tun (Yangon University) presented a paper on the history of Shan religious observance which highlighted religious movements that impacted on the belief systems of the Tai Shan. Ancestor worship and spirit propitiation rituals, the study of Daoism and Confucianism among the intellectual class and contact with Mahayana Buddhism through Tibet precluded the introduction of Theravada Buddhism with Pyu, Mon-Khmer, Burmese and Yuan (northern Tai) traditions. **The Ven. Dr Khammai Dhammasami (Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies, Oxford University)** spoke on Tai Shan funeral rituals in Myanmar (Burma) based on *lik-long*, Buddhist poetry written in Shan language in his paper on 'Even the Buddha asks a Shan Saray to save a couple from a ghostly life'. The text *sutta woe-geng* (*sutta* of the Bull), focuses on the importance of the Five Precepts of Buddhism as core ethics and the role of Shan wise men (*saray*). **Dr Susan Conway**'s was on 'Shan astrology, numerology and time-period systems'. It focused on two prescriptions for supernatural power, composed of illustrations, mystical diagrams and incantations (*gatha*) written in indigenous Shan script and Pali. They are currently used by monks and lay experts (*sara*) in rituals that heal, protect and bring good luck. In the current climate of poverty, insecurity and lack of medical care, there has been increased demand for their services.

'A brief history of Sa-thung, a Southern Shan State' presented by **Charles K. Sao** (Independent Scholar) documents the political history of the ruling dynasty of Satung, a small sub-state in the Southern Shan States. Sao Hkun Kyi (ruled 1929–1948) helped organise the First Panglong Conference, pre-cursor of the Second

Panglong Conference when the Shan States were declared a single unified polity. Involvement ended with the last meeting between Sao Hkun Kyi and Sao Shwe Thaik, first President of the Union of Burma, on 4 January 1948. **Farouk Yahya (SOAS)** delivered a paper on 'The rotating *naga*: a comparative study of the Malay and Shan traditions' where in Southeast Asia the rotating *naga* is a popular divinatory technique. The *naga* (a mythological serpent) rotates four times a year (every three months) through the cardinal directions. Its movement and the subsequent locations of its body parts determine whether human activities at a given time will be auspicious or inauspicious. **Jotika Khur-Yearn's (SOAS)** paper was on 'Burmese loan words in Shan Lik Long literature'. In Shan classical poetic literatures of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the inclusion of Burmese words has become a fashion among Shan writers. Shan classical authors known as *Zao Khu Maw* use Burmese words and phrases for the composition of poetic works. This has political undertones in the context of modern tensions between the Shan States and the Union of Burma/Myanmar. The textual analysis is based on *Mahasatipa..han*, written by Zao Amat Long of Mueang Naung in 1875.

Nang Voe Hseng Phayar Yang, (Shan Literature and Culture Association, Yangon) spoke on Tai Shan ceremonial drums used in rituals for ancestor worship, Buddhist festivals, funerals and merit making and also for performance. This paper focused on many forms of Shan drum in the context of history and folk mythology and their role as a model for citizenship and harmonious community relations. **Zuliskandar Ramli's (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia)** presentation co-authored with Nasha Rodziadi Khaw, Nik Hassan Shuhaimi Nik

Abdul Rahman, and Nazarudin Zainun was a paleographical analysis of the Buddhist inscriptions of Bujang Valley. These inscriptions between the Muda River to the south and the Sala River to the north include the Mahanavika Inscription, Sungai Mas Inscription I, Sungai Mas II Inscription, and Kampung Pendiat Inscription, and contain Buddhist stanzas, the majority from the Madhyamika sect of Mahayana. The research is significant to the history of Kedah in terms of the early expansion of Buddhism in Southeast Asia. The final paper was by **Jun Gao (Independent Scholar)** on the influence of Buddhist thought in democratic movements led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Khun Toon Oo. The presentation explored the Burmese tradition of engaged Buddhism and Shan Buddhism, providing an analysis of the influence of Suu Kyi's discourse on Buddhism and Khun Toon Oo's democratic movement in the Shan States, and an analysis of their role in solving the problem of ethnic secession.

Panel B: Emerging scholars

Convenor report: Dr Fiona Kerlogue (Horniman Museum)

By its nature, the emerging scholars' panel always includes a wide range of different topics and disciplinary approaches. Nevertheless, participants found a great many themes in common and there was a lively exchange of views and contact details, making for a very successful gathering.

The first paper was from **Alex Grainger (LSE)**, who examined contested social hierarchies based on resistance era legacies in Baucau district, Timor-Leste. Alex argued that while the state has helped to generate these hierarchies by distributing pensions to those who participated in the resistance

movement, political elites have also used their superior social positions to co-opt and exploit material resources. **Lesley Pullen (SOAS)** focussed on textile motifs in statuary of Java of the classical period, comparing the designs with those found in surviving Indian textiles dated to the 14th century as well as to textiles being produced in Indonesia today. **Muh Arif Rokhman (SOAS)** discussed representations of the relationships between Indonesian and western characters in Galang Lufityanto's novel *Bule Celup* (Dipped White), and the messages suggested by the results of the encounters between the three couples at the heart of the narrative. **Tamara Aberle (Royal Holloway)** analysed recent performances by two Indonesian theatre companies, Bandung-based *Teater Payung Hitam* and Serang-based *TeaterStudio*, investigating whether and in what ways their work could be seen in the larger context of strengthening civil society in Indonesia. **David Blake (University of East Anglia)** challenged recent views on the development of water supply in Southeast Asia. His paper focussed on Thailand and argued that Wittfogel's theory of hydraulic despotism should be reconsidered in the modern context. **Le Tanh (Polish Academy of Science, Warsaw)** took an unusual approach to the question of how national identity in Vietnam can best be formulated, drawing ideas from lengthy travels in the country and using the image of the road as the metaphorical core of his paper. **Veerayooth Kanchoochat (Cambridge University)** examined institutional change in Thailand, proposing that struggles between three competing coalitions have shaped institutional and policy outcomes, resulting in inefficient bureaucratic structures which have had a profound impact on the economic development of Thailand. **Bo Bo's (SOAS)** paper drew its data from historical

documents from the popular press in Burma, showing how the army, political forces and intelligentsia have interacted in forming a nationalist, xenophobic and oppressive state.

Our first speaker on Sunday was **Ofita Purwani (University of Edinburgh)**, who discussed the north alun-alun of the Surakarta and Yogyakarta kratons, revealing how since their transformation from royal to public spaces they have continued to be sites of power and struggle. **Stefani H.S. Nugroho (National University of Singapore)** looked at ideas of the nation culled from interviews with young people in three different sites in Indonesia: Jakarta, Kupang and Banda Aceh, showing how differently people related to the concept of Indonesia, and suggesting some reasons why this might be so. **Daniel Bumke (University of Leeds)** presented findings from his research in West Java and Bengkulu into the changing fortunes of incumbents in Indonesia's local elections, which reveals that while incumbents may have experienced setbacks following institutional changes in 2005, a number of factors have meant that in recent elections they have regained their advantage. Finally, **Kevin H. R. Villanueva (University of Leeds)** considered how language and discourse help ASEAN, as a regional inter-governmental organisation, to open opportunities for non-state actors to influence political action because it represents an alternative socio-political and discursive space.

Panel C: Malay/Indonesian manuscript studies

Convenor: Dr Annabel Teh Gallop (British Library)

The sixth panel on Malay/Indonesian manuscript studies to be held at an Aseasuk

conference was attended by 7 paper presenters, with a strong contingent from Malaysia. **Ruzy Suliza Hashim** (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia) opened the panel with her paper on 'Doxological traditions of Malay court narratives: negotiating faith and royal aura', exploring how Malay scribes combined the conflicting demands of upholding royal prestige within an Islamic milieu, while having to narrate incidents of royal behaviour contrary to Islamic beliefs. A little-known Bugis literary genre was highlighted by **Roger Tol (KITLV, Jakarta)** in his paper on '*Élong*: short Bugis songs', based on published and manuscript sources dating from 1872 to 2008. *Élong* are three-line metrical poems which cover a wide range of topics and often possess a powerful poetic vision. **Awang Azman Awang Pawi (Universiti Malaysia Sarawak)** gave a paper on '*Hikayat Banjar*: the antecedents of Nusantara material culture', focusing in particular on references to textiles, clothing and architecture in this text. **Nor Hashimah Jalaluddin (University Kebangsaan Malaysia)** spoke on 'The portrayal of joys and tears in Malay classical texts: a cognitive semantic analysis', contrasting the conventional image schemas and conceptual metaphors used to depict happiness and sadness in Malay texts. **Annabel Gallop** gave an overview of 'Malay silverware with Jawi inscriptions', based primarily on the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum. **Haji Wan Ali Wan Mamat (International Islamic University Malaysia)** returned to the subject of his MA study at UCL under the supervision of Russell Jones, with his paper on 'Malay palaeography: a preliminary survey'. In view of the paucity of advanced studies of Arabic palaeography, he suggested that Western palaeographic terminology and methodology may be useful models for the study of Malay palaeography. The final paper

was by **Russell Jones (SOAS)** on 'Watermarks in Indonesian and Malay manuscripts, some developments in theory and practice', emphasising the relative importance of words and letters over icons in the study of watermarks in post-1800 European papers, which would account for the majority of Malay manuscripts. Russell also demonstrated some new technological tools for studying watermarks in the form of light sheets which can be inserted between the folios of a manuscript.

Panel D: Heritage tourism and heritage sites in Southeast Asia, with reference to UNESCO World Heritage Sites (WHS)

Convenor: Professor V.T. King, University of Leeds

The three sessions in the panel with ten papers covered all seven countries in Southeast Asia which have UNESCO-inscribed World Heritage Sites (WHS): Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. The panel emerged from a British-Academy/Aseasuk-funded research project entitled 'World Heritage Sites in Southeast Asia: Cross-cultural and Management Perspectives' (which runs from 2009 to 2012). The research team comprises Victor King, Janet Cochrane, Michael Hitchcock, Michael Parnwell, with research assistance provided by Sigrid Lenaerts and Goh Hong Ching, and among others, local researchers coordinated by Dr Kannapa Pongponrat, Mahidol University and Professor Jayum Jawan, Universiti Putra Malaysia. Four of the research team presented papers in the panel, and another member, Michael Hitchcock, was unable to attend but sent in an abstract and a brief paper, and there was also a proposed paper by David Berliner who could not attend. The

possibility of bringing together the papers in an edited volume is currently being explored. The same issues and concerns emerged in several of the papers to do with the tensions between conservation and development and in particular between heritage protection (both tangible and intangible) and the pressures generated by tourism; the influence and role of UNESCO in this process; the effectiveness or otherwise of the management of the sites; the role of national governments and the ways in which they deploy these sites for nation-building and other purposes; the perspectives of the various stakeholders and users of the sites including tourist and visitor views and those of local people; and the advantages and disadvantages of UNESCO inscription for local communities and livelihoods.

Session 1 was chaired by Michael Parnwell. **Annabel Vallard (CNRS and EHESS, France)**, delivered a paper on 'Heritage sites and tourism: through a focus on the textile industry in Luang Prabang (Lao PDR)'. She argued that UNESCO's policies not only impinge on buildings, urban structures or natural and urban spaces but also on the entire 'ecology of relations' between humans, places, objects and materials. It has particular effect on economic activities associated with heritage management and tourism. With her focus on the textile industry in the WHS of Luang Prabang she demonstrated how weaving and its products have undergone considerable transformations through the internationalisation of trade, the emergence of new private workshops of textile production for the world market and through the increasing presence of tourists. Textile production, distribution and consumption have been reconfigured since UNESCO inscription in 1995, providing new economic opportunities from the local to the global

scale entailing processes of cooperation and negotiation as well as rivalries and tensions.

Sigrid Lenaerts (Leeds Metropolitan University and the Living Stone Centre for Intercultural Entrepreneurship, Belgium) on 'Visitors' perceptions of Luang Prabang as a World Heritage Site' examined the results of interviews with international and domestic visitors which were held to better understand their motivations in visiting Luang Prabang and their appreciation of their visit there. A wide range of WHS managerial aspects were discussed with a specific focus on the interpretation of the cultural heritage.

Robert Gozzoli (University of Siam, Bangkok) on 'A holistic approach to Ayutthaya World Heritage Site' discussed the consequences of UNESCO inscription of the former Thai capital in 1991. While the registration certainly produced an increased number of visitors, more recently the site has been marred by a series of problems: deficiencies present on the site with a decline in the tourists' experience as well as conflicts between the Fine Arts Department and local stakeholders. The paper emphasised restoration and interpretation issues, which emerged from onsite fieldwork and revealed actual limits and possible improvements relative to archaeological management, tourist information and interpretation, as well as social and economic development issues. It is argued that this full scale, holistic approach will be particularly relevant for future planning of the WHS, and in creating partnerships and collaboration for anyone involved with the site at a time when there is renewed interest in the city.

Session 2 was chaired by Janet Cochrane. **Adèle Esposito (l'Ecole d'Architecture de Paris Belleville, Paris VIII University)**, and **Philippe Peycam (IIAS)** presented a paper

on 'Angkor and its "marginal" surroundings: a world heritage site as an arena of tactics, competition and connivances'. UNESCO inscription in 1992 established a regulatory institutional framework in heritage conservation, tourism management and urban development. One of the main normative and operational instruments used was that of zoning which created two geographically delineated entities distinguished by status, competent authorities and programmes: (1) an archaeological park which included the most prominent monumental remains; and (2) the remaining territory of the Siem Reap Province. The paper examined tensions between the two zones and criticised a general assumption surrounding the evolution of Siem Reap-Angkor in the last 20 years. The way Angkor is managed is a far cry from the positive model of international collaboration on conservation presented by UNESCO and its national supporters, while the town is not irremediably destined to be the uncontrolled ground for irresponsible private, indigenous initiatives as it is portrayed by the same institutional actors. An intimate knowledge of the field reveals that 'underground' tactics, competitions and connivances preside over the decision-making processes and the implementation of projects both in the park and in the town. In 'Lessons from Vigan: a comparative analysis of successful urban heritage rehabilitation',

Erik Akpedonu (Ateneo de Manila University) demonstrated that the Philippines still has a relatively rich and diverse architectural heritage from the Spanish-American colonial period and the immediate post-war years. It is a unique blend of Malay, Chinese, and Spanish building traditions with US-American overlays and influences from Mexico and Japan. Yet, this remarkable building tradition is little known

within or without the country. Worse, the social, political and environmental conditions for preserving this unique heritage are suffering from a general lack of appreciation, political apathy and disinterest, and an absence of visionary planning and imagination, which has resulted in decades-long neglect and decay. However, the historic core of Vigan in Ilocos Sur stands out as a rare example of comparatively successful urban rehabilitation. A UNESCO WHS since 1998, the ensemble of late 18th to mid 19th century urban stone houses of the Mestizo District has come a long way to its current status as the internationally most well-known cultural tourism destination of the country. The paper sought to identify and analyse the underlying factors that have enabled a successful rehabilitation in Vigan in comparison with other sites in the country where such efforts were less successful, failed, or not even attempted.

Victor King in his paper entitled 'Melaka as a World Heritage Site: cultural politics and identity in Malaysia' argued that as the origin of the Malay-Muslim sultanate system in Peninsular Malaysia and more widely, Melaka has been a crucial element in the Malaysian government's nation-building policies since independence. It symbolises a 'golden age' in the development of Malay civilisation and in that regard the emphasis on Malay and Islamic culture in the construction of a national identity has played an important part in the ways in which Melaka has been represented and developed as a historical site. However, the post-independence focus on the necessity for economic growth and modernisation has generated a tension between the protection and conservation of national heritage and the need to transform urban landscapes to realise modernity and development. This tension presents

particular difficulties for those bodies responsible for the management of a UNESCO-inscribed site with the multivocal heritage discourse and the conflicting political, economic, social and cultural pressures on global heritage.

In her paper 'George Town – one half of the Melaka and George Town, World Heritage Site: the challenges of serial inscription, economics of heritage and cultural tourism', **Gwynn Jenkins** (Architect LLA, Penang) demonstrated that in the three years since inscription, George Town's cultural landscape has undergone rapid change, and the site has been, and still is challenged by development and investment, mainly for the tourism industry and the demands of cultural tourism. High returns for investment have also brought interest in the traditional heritage building stock, predictably by both foreign investors and speculators, and less predictably by the swiftlet-breeding farmers for the birds' nest industry. So lucrative is the latter's investment that, threatened by closure of their farms within the WHS, they took their protest to UNESCO's door. Not long after inscription, an English-language newspaper queried the approval and appropriateness of four high-rise hotel projects in the site. This alarm brought about a joint UNESCO/ICOMOS reactive monitoring mission to George Town in 2009. George Town's Chinese press also ran an article on the near complete destruction of a row of Category II shop-houses to be remodelled as a boutique hotel. In parallel to the physical changes, the few remaining communities that remained after the Rent Control Repeal of January 2000 have been and are being evicted to make way for sales to new owners of boutique hotels, second homes and other tourist-related venues.

In the final session chaired by Victor King, **Michael Parnwell's (University of Leeds)** 'Swimming against the tide of convention: intangible cultural heritage, whale worship and tourism development in and around Hoi An, Central Vietnam' addressed the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (CSICH) (2003) which requires that each State Party should 'take the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage present in its territory' (Article 11a). They should 'ensure respect for the intangible cultural heritage of the communities, groups and individuals concerned' (Article 1b) in a way that is compatible with 'sustainable development' (Article 2:1). Safeguarding involves 'measures aimed at ensuring the viability of intangible cultural heritage' (Article 2:3), and should involve 'the widest possible participation of communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management' (Article 15). The paper examined whale worship among coastal communities in Quang Nam Province, Vietnam, particularly in the vicinity of the UNESCO WHS of Hoi An and the Cham Islands, as an illustration of intangible cultural heritage that has been brought under considerable pressure as a consequence of rapid tourism development. More recently (2009), the Cham Islands (Cu Lao Cham) have been designated by UNESCO a Global Biosphere Reserve under the Man and Biosphere Reserve (MBR) programme. However, as with Hoi An, the enhanced status as a globally significant MBR has brought the local authorities an additional marketing angle to encourage further tourism growth and a means of diversifying attractions to spread the burden of tourism development starting to swamp the Hoi An WHS. There is

an obvious and uncomfortable tension between measures which are intended to protect and preserve heritage and efforts which seek to mobilise heritage values for tourism and local economic development. Whale temples, which are the physical manifestation of the worship of the whale as an ancestor of fishers, are coming under increasing pressure, not so much because they have become a tourist attraction but because tourism development is rapidly displacing coastal communities as the authorities and influential business actors rush to build resorts and villas in seaside areas. The result is a transformational reality which appears to go against both the spirit and the legal provisions of the three UNESCO Conventions to which the local authorities are party.

In 'From Ho Chi Minh Trail to World Heritage: the Phong Nha-Ke Bang Nature Reserve of Vietnam', **Vu Hong Lien** (retired BBC journalist) examines the recent circumstances of the natural site of Phong Nha-Ke Bang, inscribed by UNESCO in 2003. It invokes a peaceful image of a spectacular national park and, yet, not so long ago, this area was the heart of the notorious Ho Chi Minh Trail. Under the UNESCO natural criterion viii the park's importance was stated as follows: 'This vast limestone landscape is extremely complex, with many notable and spectacular geomorphic features, including 65 km of caves and underground rivers.' The park is one of the largest areas of intact forest habitat on limestone karst still found in Southeast Asia but now faces new threats: poaching, indiscriminate stone quarrying and haphazard building of facilities for tourists.

In the final paper by **Janet Cochrane (Leeds Metropolitan University)** in 'It's a jungle out

there: contestation and conflict at Indonesia's natural World Heritage Sites', there was discussion of the consequences for the environment following the process of political democratisation and allied decentralisation of resources after the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998. One aspect was a fragmentation and contestation of control over resources, and the consequent mosaic of administrative areas has challenged sustainable resource management and resulted in the breakdown of coordinated planning and management systems. The tendency towards localism has also meant that countervailing efforts by national government agencies to retain centralised management of resources have caused local resentment, local attempts to claw back jurisdiction over natural resources, and widespread disregard for national-level government institutions. Weak governance has also fostered and been undermined by the spread of various forms of corrupt and nepotistic practices. In the case of natural resources, this is illustrated by struggles over valuable resources and practices such as over-harvesting while frail institutional arrangements continue to threaten the effective management of protected areas. The paper focused on the management of Indonesia's four natural WHS with on-site research carried out into three of the sites in 2009 and 2010: the Tropical Rainforest Heritage of Sumatra, Ujung Kulon National Park, and Komodo National Park.

There were two papers that unfortunately the authors were unable to present. **David Berliner (ULB-Brussels)** on 'The UNESCO-ization of Luang Prabang (Lao PDR)' looks in particular at the pioneering role played by UNESCO conservation experts in turning Luang Prabang into the 'nostalgiascape' it is today and asks how local people perceive

these nostalgic politics on the ground. **Michael Hitchcock (IMI University Centre, Switzerland)** and I Nyoman Darma Putra (**Universitas Udayana**) submitted a paper on 'Prambanan and Borobudur: negotiating tourism, conservation and stakeholders' with its focus on the contemporary management of these sites as attractions for many millions of domestic and international visitors. While one site is Buddhist (Borobudur) and the other is Hindu (Prambanan), they are different kinds of structures with entirely different layouts. To complicate matters there is a third site, Ratu Boku that is on the tentative WHS list for Indonesia, run by the same body that manages Prambanan and Borobudur. Since 1980 a state-owned company has had overall responsibility for these sites, but reforms in 2010 altered this management structure. There are fears that the unclear boundary arrangements could be exploited by developers to build inappropriate structures for tourism within or close to these important sites.

Panel E: Migrant labour policies, regulation and law: past and present

Convenor: Dr Carol Tan (SOAS)

Dinh Vu Trang Ngan (Harvard Kennedy School) co-authored with Jonathan Pincus and John Sender
Patterns of migration and employment on child welfare in Ho Chi Minh City and surrounding provinces

Yuri Hosono (Yokohama National University)

Accepting nurse and certified care worker candidates in Japan: how a bilateral policy decision is implemented at the administrative level

Anisa Santoso (University of Nottingham)

Migrant workers policy making in ASEAN: new viewpoints on the analytical framework of two level games approach

Tobias Rettig (Singapore Management University)

Temporary trans-continental labour migration for WWII: French imperial and post-colonial policies towards vietnamese workers, 1930s to present

Tharapi Than (SOAS)

The movements of commodities along Burma-China, Burma-Thailand borders in the 21st century

Panel F: Laos: historical and contemporary transitions

Convenor: Dr Katherine Brickell, Royal Holloway

The session was a wonderful 24-hour marathon of 12 papers diverse in scope that honed in on historical and contemporary transitions in Laos. Given its size, space does not allow me to explore individual papers in any depth but I do wish to draw out some interconnected key themes that emerged, many of which Jonathan Rigg kindly highlighted in his discussant role to the session at the end of the two days together. The first is economic transition, the role of foreign investment and the change this is having particularly in rural environs of Laos. This was aptly covered in individual papers by **Anna-Klara Nilsson (Uppsala University, Sweden)** and **Wasana La-Orngplew (Durham University)** on the rubber trade. **Pon Souvannaseng (LSE)** extended this economic focus providing a largely theoretical take on the market-based logic of changes occurring in the country

whilst **Robin Lambert (Université de Paris)** vividly brought to life the resultant changes occurring in the urban history of one street in urban Vientiane. Different types of political transformations were also discussed including a detailed analysis by **Richard Taylor** (independent researcher) of governmental power dynamics; the development of Laotian language nationalism by **Junko Yano (Hitotsubashi University, Japan)**; the marginalisation of the Lanten Daoist rituals by **Joseba Estévez (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Germany)** and the significance of political distinctions made by leaders between the plains and mountainous regions of Loas by **Marianne Blache (Sorbonne University)**. The final theme is that of community-level change to, and interpretation of, modernisation through the eyes of women in **Katherine Brickell's** study of employment in Luang Prabang; through the experiences of children in **Roy Huijsmans (University of Amsterdam)** research on the politics of childhood; and through the sounds of community radio in **Mary Traynor's (Cardiff School of Creative and Cultural Industries)** original paper on the history and current direction of media in Laos. In sum, the session illuminated the wealth of work now being conducted in Laos and by scholars from across the world.

Panel G: Colonialism, decolonisation, and post-colonial legacies in commemoration

Convenor: Tobias Rettig

Chair and report: Karl Hack

This panel focused on World War II in Southeast Asia, and the postwar conflicts that followed in Malaya and Vietnam, and on their memory and commemoration.

Agnes Khoo (Leeds) talked about her oral history work with women of the Malayan Communist Party. She shared both the issues of memory this had brought up – as the women recalled events that happened several decades earlier – and themes that arose such as separations (from loved ones, babies, etc), regrets (at party purges), and the importance of recording emotions. She also placed her oral history in the context of vibrant, contemporary Malaysian discussion of the country's communist figures and past.

Marina Mouda (SOAS) continued the theme of analysing memory, by talking about the disjunction between the memory of Ho Chi Minh and his old village dwelling place fostered by the Vietnamese state, and the way locals remember him, his family, and his dwelling place near Hue. She emphasised how secular, state attempts to model him as 'Uncle Ho' from simple peasant stock, contrast with local realities and memories, and how his death without children renders him an imperfect figure for reverence in a society where ancestral halls are important.

Michael Leigh (SOAS) then tore us away from memory, and plunged us back into the actual events of World War II: namely the British defeat and evacuation of Burma in 1941–42. He provided detail on who the British did – or in the case of many Indians in Burma did not – help to evacuate, and on the chaos fuelled by colonial infighting and revolving chair leadership in civil planning. In so doing, he provided fascinating statistical breakdowns of the British colonial population of the time. Discussion was then enlivened by the contributions of Sai Aung Tun. Now Emeritus Professor of History at Yangon University, he recalled witnessing the events described as a child living around Myitkyina, right up in the north of Myanmar.

Tobias Rettig (Singapore Management University) completed the ensemble with an analysis of the commemoration of the Indian National Army (INA), which the Japanese raised mainly from surrendered British Indian Army soldiers. He noted the recent increase in public celebration of the INA in Singapore and Malaysia, and discussed possible reasons for this. He also provided a brutally clear and stimulating chart of 'wartime heroes', noting for each their actions, allegiances, whether they had a monument and if so what.

Taken together, the four papers and the lively discussion they provoked demonstrated just how relevant, and at times raw and controversial, the memory and commemoration of war and postwar conflicts remains in contemporary Southeast Asia.

Panel H: Southeast Asian environmentalism: frameworks, discourses and networks

Convenor: Dr Liana Chua, Brunel University

This panel sought to interrogate different forms and meanings of environmentalism in the context of Southeast Asia. Approaching the topic from different disciplinary angles and over different time-scales, the papers pushed beyond a conventional definition of 'environmentalism' as a predominantly Western, urban/middle-class movement, showing how analogous modes of relating to the environment (broadly defined) could be identified in Southeast Asia – sometimes to surprising effect.

Historian **Jeyamalar Kathirithamby-Wells (Cambridge)** opened the proceedings with a paper on the genealogy of Euro-American environmentalism and its dissemination – but

also transformation – across Southeast Asia in recent decades. Linking 18th–19th century European understandings of the stewardship of nature with contemporary debates about sustainable development, she depicted environmentalism in Southeast Asia today as a multiplicitous, potentially empowering, phenomenon that transcends national, ethnic, class and other boundaries.

Palaeoecologist **Chris Hunt (Queen's University Belfast)** took the panel into the realm of prehistory, with a discussion of three Sarawak-based projects on which he has worked: excavations at Niah, Loagan Bunut, and the Kelabit Highlands. Drawing on his analysis of pollen and other vegetation samples, he showed how, far from being pristine and untouched, the forests in these areas were in fact *artefacts* bearing a long history of human use and management. In conclusion, he discussed how archaeological findings from the Kelabit Highlands were being used as legal evidence in Kelabit land claims, particularly in response to the recent encroachment of logging companies.

If Hunt sought to insert humans back into nature, historian **Greg Bankoff (Hull University)** revealed the impossibility of extracting nature from human society. Expounding on the notion of 'deep forestry', Bankoff argued that scholars might 'think more like a forest' by acknowledging the agentive role of the climate, soil and different animal species (among other things) in shaping the Philippine forests over an extended time period, from prehistory up to the present. Like Hunt, then, Bankoff made a strong case for recognising the confluence – and mutual dependence – of humans and forests across history and social formations.

Liana Chua's paper brought the panel back to the 2000s through a study of the complex and shifting manifestations of 'environmentalism' in a dam-construction project in Sarawak. Based on recent social anthropological fieldwork, it revealed how the Bidayuh inhabitants of four villages around the dam have become entangled in various environmentalist and indigenous rights campaigns. Despite seeming to be in natural sympathy with the environmentalist cause, however, these people also have their own concerns, hopes, agendas and means of apprehending the situation. Drawing on their stories, Chua suggested that environmentalism could be fruitfully studied in terms of processes and effects rather than in terms of shared origins and intentions.

Jonathan Rigg (Durham University) drew together the themes and debates of the four papers in his discussion. This led into an intense and productive question and answer session, during which participants grappled with several related issues, including the potentials (and pitfalls) of multi-disciplinarity, the politics of environmentalism and academic research, the delicate balance between socio-economic survival and sustainability, and the differences between past and present modes of environmentalist thought.

Panel J: Violence and trauma in Southeast Asian memoryscapes

Convenor: Dr Christian Oesterheld, Mahidol University International College, Thailand

This panel was one of the last to convene during the conference, but despite the fact that many conference participants had already left Cambridge, an intensive and constructive discussion followed the three

papers presented. **Napakadol Kittisenee** (Regional Centre for Social Science and Sustainable Development, **Chiang Mai University**) discussed various forms of commemorating World War II in contemporary Thailand, focusing on the way in which memories are inscribed into the memorial landscape of Kanchanaburi in contrast to the war's representation in Thailand's intangible cultural heritage of literature and cinema. **Paul Sorrentino** (**Université Paris Descartes**) took a different turn on memoryscapes by focusing his paper on spaces where memories are constructed: 'Phòng Vong, the "Ghost Room": the dead, science, and the state in contemporary Vietnam'. The last paper of the panel, by **Christian Oesterheld** was concerned with the selective presence of memorial structures in the reconfigured Cambodian memoryscape and discussed its impacts towards the current Cambodian accountability process in the context of the Khmer Rouge tribunals. This threefold conceptualisation of memoryscapes in contemporary Southeast Asia introduced intriguing issues for possible future research, which resounded vividly during the ensuing discussion of the panelist's ideas, well into the time of the closing afternoon tea.

Panel K: Intercultural exchange in early modern Southeast Asia

Convenor: Dr Christina Skott, University of Cambridge

This panel examined the diverse levels of interaction and exchange which took place as a result of European expansion in Southeast Asia in the long early modern era. The nine papers touched on themes ranging from the visual arts, photography, literature and music to anthropology and botany. **Michael W.**

Charney (SOAS) presented a paper on the meeting of the cartographical regimes of the English East India Company and Burmese cartographical approaches and understandings of the world in the late 18th century. In a paper on musical exchanges **David R. M. Irving** (King's College London) examined publications initiated by Protestant missionaries in the Malay world, through an analysis of how cultural exchanges led to the printing of psalms and hymns in Malay. Focusing on early religious images in the Philippines, **Imke Rath** (Universität Hamburg) used the case study of a depiction of the Last Judgment as a reflection of how missionary strategies and conversion processes adapted to local conditions, as it was argued that the conventional scheme of this familiar composition was altered in order to accommodate indigenous religious concepts.

Two papers then looked at exchanges involving the natural world. **Jeyamalar Kathirithamby-Wells** (University of Cambridge) presented a survey of European engagement with naturalia, and *materia medica* in particular, and described a process whereby inter-Asian collaboration and exchange had to give way to a more intrusive European participation. Through the case study of the cultivation of nutmeg, **Nicholas Martland** (British Library) showed how, in the early 19th century, the British settlement of Penang became an important centre for plant collecting and botanical research and horticultural knowledge, thus illustrating the East India Company's attempts to utilise and access regional botanical knowledge.

In a case study of the classification of humans in the work of the Swedish scientist Carl Linnaeus, **Christina Skott** showed how Europe's encounter with the region shaped

emerging European theories of race, and pointed to the ways in which European understanding of the region's diversity was shaped by ambivalent relationships between different ethnic groups.

The panel then moved on to the 19th century, first in a paper on European engagement with indigenous literature, where **Martin Müller** (European University Institute, Florence) examined the evaluation of Malay and Javanese literature as historical sources in the writings of the British scholar-administrator John Crawfurd. **Lim Peng Han** (Loughborough University) described how British sports, such as football and cricket, was transmitted to Malaya, in a case study of cultural transmission and local adaption of European pastimes. **Andrew Jarvis** (University of Cambridge) looked at the activities of two 19th century photographers in Burma, drawing parallels between European photography and the collecting of botanical specimens. The paper also considered the role of local assistants.

Although the panel touched on exchanges on a variety of levels and through varying mediums, it became clear that common themes were found, in particular with regard to the crucial role of intermediaries, and the ways in which Europeans were able to both adapt to and make use of knowledge.

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BOOK REVIEWS



HELLE RYDSTRØM (ed.)
Gendered inequalities in Asia: configuring, contesting and recognizing women and men
Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2010
303pp., ISBN: 9788776940478, £18.99 (pb)

Reviewed by Katherine Brickell
Royal Holloway, University of London

This book brings together the work of 10 scholars writing on Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and India to shed light on 'unequal access to political and religious power; occupation and health facilities, as well as different options when it comes to family life and sexuality' (back cover). What is critically missing from the outset however is reference to, or reflection on, measures of such gender inequalities – statistics which (rightly or wrongly) shape the strategies that international agencies and donors take to alleviate the injustices outlined. It was surprising therefore, that devoted space was not given to comparative discussion of, amongst others, the Human Development Index (HDI), Gender Inequality Index (GII) and Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI). This is especially so given the volume argues that it illuminates the heterogeneity not only of Asian nation-states in respect to inequality but also the common socio-cultural and economic patterns that they share (p. 1). A further reflection on the differences and similarities in the macro-scale challenges and the case studies would therefore have been productive, providing an important component to the introduction or

Maila Stivens' 'state-of-the-art' overview of the field of gender studies in Asia (Chapter 1).

A further point to make is that the balance of case studies in the book is rather uneven which means that as a volume it does not provide a holistic or balanced enough sense of inequalities in 'Asia'. While the title is perhaps deliberately focused on 'Asia' to allow for the inclusion of a sole South Asian chapter on India, the remaining chapters are based on research from countries all in the Southeast Asian region, with three out of a total 10 chapters honing in on Vietnam, and all mainly on women (and thus to some extent replicating Helle Rydstrøm and Lisa Drummond's previous 2006 NIAS published edited collection on *Gender practices in contemporary Vietnam*).

Despite these reservations, Rydstrøm does outline at the start of the book that it is mainly concerned with providing 'knowledge about the ambiguous ways in which women and men craft themselves within and are crafted by the societies in which they live, and how the processes of becoming a woman or man are intertwined with discourses and practices of recognition and justice' (p. 2). The empirically driven chapters do indeed nicely highlight a range of processes by which women are constructed in certain (nationalist) discourses as well as how they interpret and negotiate the inequalities that these are invested with.

Returning back to the themes of inequality which the back cover sets up, the first of these is 'unequal access to political and religious power'. Of particular note here is Chapter 3 by Sidsel Hansson and Catarina Kinnvall which considers the tensions between how women are constructed as symbols of religious and nationalist

discourse(s) in Hindu nationalism yet are increasingly important contributors to the rise in militancy in the Hindutva movement. Chapter 5 by Alexandra Kent on Cambodia also similarly brings into view what is termed 'the gendered politics of insecurity that efforts to recreate moral order and security through religion can be understood' (p. 129). Here Kent effectively highlights the religious careers of two women to demonstrate how in their own ways, and despite the limitations and rigours of everyday codes in the Buddhist religious realm, they are able to achieve a form of spiritual power or authority that allows them to breach such conventional wisdoms and everyday customs.

The second theme, occupation and health facilities is most powerfully brought out in Chapter 2 by Nguyen-vo Thu-huong in a discussion over the consumption of pleasure in the context of Vietnam's integration into the global economy and the treatment of sex workers. Here the intimate connections between class, morality, health and nation are well illustrated. As the author explains, these links 'highlight the embeddedness of the sex worker's dangerous body in the body of the nation, and allow for the targeting of her body in clinical procedures like testing and medication, or even traumatizing and invasive ones like abortion' (p. 57). Lastly, the third theme 'family life and sexuality' is arguably most prevalent in the book and cuts across the majority of chapters. The clearest expression of the tensions between state discourse on the family and the recognition of women's experiences are highlighted in Helle Rydstrøm's own chapter on contemporary Vietnam (Chapter 7). Here the government-promotion of 'happy, progressive and harmonious' families is discussed and tensions drawn with the realities of domestic violence, which clearly compromises this,

idealised vision (p. 179). In sum then, despite a number of limitations to the book I highlighted at the start of this review, *Gendered inequalities in Asia* is largely successful in bringing to light the contested and political nature of inequalities within the particular country settings in which the book is grounded.

DAVID I. STEINBERG (ed.)

Korea's changing roles in Southeast Asia: expanding influence and relations

Seoul: ASEAN-Korea Centre; Singapore: ISEAS, 2010

xx, 380pp., ISBN 9789812309693, US \$59.90 (hb); 9789812309709 (e-book pdf)

Reviewed by V.T. King

University of Leeds

This is an important book for those interested in the location of Southeast Asia within wider sets of relations in Pacific Asia. It emerged from a collaborative project conducted in 2007–2008 between the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore, the Asia Foundation Seoul Office, the Korea Foundation and the Pacific Century Institute. Although those working from a disciplinary perspective in for example, economics and international relations, or in specific multidisciplinary fields such as development studies and cultural and media studies will probably be familiar with some of the literature on Korean-Southeast Asian relations, this is the first time that a single volume in English has brought together materials across a wide range of research on the encounters between Southeast Asia and the Republic of Korea (ROK) or South Korea

(the volume makes reference to but does not consider the Democratic People's Republic of Korea [DPRK] or North Korea).

Most of the contributions are provided by Korean researchers (11 of the 15 contributors; as a technical matter of referencing it should be noted that the volume has opted to transcribe Korean names with personal name(s) first and family name last [for example, Seung Woo Park rather than the Korean convention Park Seung Woo] which may be cause for some confusion). The editor, David Steinberg, is a distinguished scholar of Burmese and Korean affairs, and whilst he has done an excellent job in editing the volume, and has provided a most valuable introduction and conclusion to the volume (which serves to integrate a rather disparate range of interests), it is a pity that at least a co-editor from Korea could not be found, particularly as the Korean Association of Southeast Asian Studies (KASEAS) collaborated on the project, 'whose members are the backbone of Korean knowledge of and intellectual involvement in Southeast Asia' (p. 15). The editor also indicates that only three of the contributions are from Southeast Asians (two Thais and one Singaporean), and one of these is a rather brief keynote address by Surin Pitsuwan, current Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Studies (ASEAN). Interestingly, the editor remarks that the original intention was to have a more even spread of Korean-Southeast Asian contributions, but 'there were few Southeast Asians who considered themselves specialists and who were willing to write on Korea from a Southeast Asian perspective' (p.15). This says much about the character and direction of the relationship. It also means that there is much more in the volume about Korean involvement in and impacts on Southeast

Asia and much less on Southeast Asian research and perspectives on Korea.

Korean scholarly interest in the Southeast Asian region only really began to be established during the 1960s and 1970s with a small number of pioneer studies undertaken primarily in history, language and literature. It was not until the late 1980s and into the 1990s that a mini-boom in research on Southeast Asia took off, particularly in the social sciences, and with a significant number of Koreans pursuing their doctoral work overseas, especially in the USA. Vietnam and Thailand provided the focus of this earlier work. Moreover, it was only in 1991 that KASEAS was founded and its official publication, *The Southeast Asian Review* first published in 1992.

This late start in Korean interest is unsurprising given that it was and still is overshadowed by its major East Asian neighbours – China and Japan – in its relationships with Southeast Asia. The Korean Peninsula was also, like Southeast Asia, subject to the intervention and influence of external powers and for a considerable period of its history was unable to pursue an independent foreign policy. It was subject to longstanding Chinese cultural influence and was part of the subordinate patron-client and trade relations of the Chinese imperium; it was a colony of Japan during the first half of the twentieth century; it was subject to American military occupation in the south and Russian intervention in the north following the defeat of the Japanese (1945–48). It was then the focus of a bitter war in 1950–53 which saw the establishment of two ideologically opposed regimes each supported by superpowers and the territorial division of the Peninsula between two states.

However, economic, political, social and cultural progress in the ROK has been dramatic since the 1960s. The South Korean economy is now ranked eleventh in the world and the ROK is a member of the G-20. Given its wealth, the influence which it buys through investment and development aid, and the political and strategic dimensions of international economic involvement, expressed in such major privately owned and powerful Korean MNCs as Hyundai Heavy Industries, Samsung Electronics, LG Electronics, and DSME, the ROK began to play an increasingly significant role in the Southeast Asian region from the late 1980s. It is therefore not unexpected that several contributions to this present volume focus on economic and political relations: David Koh on the Korean-ASEAN economic and potential strategic partnership; Chung Min Lee on the wider dimensions of East Asian and Southeast Asian security dynamics; Jong-Kil Kim on Korea's trade with and foreign direct investment in Southeast Asia (ASEAN is Korea's fifth most important trading partner, the second destination for overseas construction activities and the third most important direct investment target); Bun Soon Park on the investment of the Korean electronics industry in Southeast Asia; Yul Kwon on official development assistance to Southeast Asia; Seok Choon Lew and Hye Suk Wang on the appropriateness or otherwise of the Korean development model for its southern neighbours; and Yeong-Hyun Kim on labour migration from Southeast Asia to Korea. Nevertheless, some attention is paid to social and cultural relationships as well, in Minjung Kim's chapter on Filipina wives and 'multicultural' families in Korea; two chapters one by Pavin Chachavalpongpun and the other by Joong Keun Kim on the impact of the 'Korean Wave (*hallyu*)' or popular culture (in television, film, music, cuisine and fashion) on

Southeast Asia; and the multidimensional character of Korean-Vietnamese relations by Tae Yang Kwak. Finally, a detailed overview of Korean research in Southeast Asian Studies is provided by Seung Woo Park.

Steinberg, in his editorial introduction, draws attention to the gaps in the volume (p. 15). Obviously in a collective enterprise of this kind (and with constraints of time and resources) it is difficult to provide comprehensive coverage of the field. Nevertheless, given the significance of Korean travel to Southeast Asia it would have been useful to have had a separate chapter on international tourism and another on Korean expatriates or sojourners in Southeast Asia.

One of the most interesting themes to emerge from the book is the ambivalent nature of Korean-Southeast Asian relationships. On the one hand Korean investment, development aid, tourism and the educational sponsorships provided by the Korea Foundation in the region has brought a range of economic and other benefits there. Korean popular culture has also secured a large and enthusiastic audience in the south. However, investment and technology transfer have been selective and, as one might expect, have tended to generate more advantages for Korea. Much of the development aid is tied. Korean cultural insensitivity to Southeast Asians generated by Korean ethnic nationalism has been problematical among some Korean business people and tourists in the region, as well as employers and managers of Southeast Asian labour in Korea itself. Some Koreans who have married Southeast Asians and brought them to Korea have subjected their partners to abuse and exploitation. These tensions and contradictions merit much more attention.

The value and interest of this book are indisputable. We need to know much more about Korea's role and involvement in Southeast Asia and this volume is a solid basis for further work in this field.

Undoubtedly Korean engagement with Southeast Asia will continue to increase and Korean researchers are contributing positively to our store of knowledge on the region. But it is to be hoped that interest and expertise in Korean Studies will also begin to make an impression on Southeast Asian scholarship, particularly with the need to undertake much more work from Southeast Asian perspectives on Korean tourists, sojourners, missionaries, business people, and providers of popular culture in Southeast Asia and on Southeast Asian workers and spouses in Korea.

PHILIP HIRSCH AND NICHOLAS TAPP (eds)
Tracks and traces: Thailand and the work of Andrew Turton
Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010
ISBN 978 90 8964 249 3, €27.50 (pb)

Reviewed by Tomas Larsson
University of Cambridge

This little volume (159 pages) of nine essays grew out of a panel presented at the International Thai Studies Conference held in 2008 at Thammasat University, Bangkok. The authors use the works of anthropologist Andrew Turton as starting points for explorations of a wide variety of facets of Thai society and scholarship. Reflecting the fact that the chapters were written in the shadow of the political crisis that followed in the wake of the 2006 military coup, several of the authors seize the opportunity to reflect

on the contemporary relevance of Turton's writings that grew out of another highly turbulent period of Thai history – the 1970s.

Several of the authors find that Turton's writings continue to offer informative perspectives also on contemporary Thai politics. Of particular interest in this respect is Turton's essay 'Limits of ideological domination and the formation of social consciousness' from 1984, which is found to be of relevance for understanding contemporary phenomena such as the Thaksin Shinawatra government's wars on 'dark influences' and drugs (Paul T. Cohen), the resurgent Thai-Lao ethnonationalism manifested in the 'red shirt' movement (in a chapter by Charles Keyes), and the ongoing ideological battle over the construction of the modern political subject (in a chapter by Jamaree Chiengthong).

The less Gramscian and more Marxist analysis of Thai class struggle found in Turton's 1978 essay, 'The current situation in the Thai countryside' inspires Jim Glassman, who argues that current social and political conflicts are, essentially, a continuation of the class conflicts of the 1970s, with the difference that leftist movements, organisations, and political parties have been 'displaced by right-wing populist political structures' such as the (now dissolved) Thai Rak Thai party and its several reincarnations.

However, not all of the authors make as extensive use of the recent crisis of the Thai state in order to frame their contributions, but rather reflect on continuity and change in other longstanding debates in Thai studies. Anan Ganjanapan and Philip Hirsch explore the ways in which the notion of 'agrarian transformation' has itself been transformed through 'globalisation' as well as the

introduction of new conceptual lenses. Nicholas Tapp seeks to situate Turton's co-edited collection, *Thai constructions of knowledge* (1991), in light of post-structuralist approaches to social analysis. Jonathan Rigg revisits Turton's book, *Production, power and participation in rural Thailand: experiences of poor farmers* (1987). Craig Reynolds surveys the literature on slavery with Turton's essay 'Thai institutions of slavery' (1980) as a starting point. Finally, Volker Grabowsky reviews the subsequent development of the field of 'ethnography of embassy' that was pioneered by Turton in a 1997 article published in *South East Asia Research*.

The volume also contains a very helpful bibliography of Andrew Turton's writings.

In all, this pleasurable volume can be said to successfully serve a dual purpose. Firstly, it situates Turton's writings in relation to recent developments in Thai society. Secondly, it situates them in relation to a broader set of intellectual currents and what we might call the history of ideas in Thai studies. The book provides a welcome introduction to a set of writings that remain highly salient.

ANDREW WALKER (ed.)
Tai lands and Thailand: community and state in Southeast Asia
 Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2009
 272pp., ISBN 978 87 7694 049 2, £16.99 (pb)

Reviewed by Tomas Larsson
University of Cambridge

This book explores notions of community in the 'Tai world' that encompasses Thailand, Laos, Burma, and southern China. It touches on a number of long-running debates in sociology and anthropology (and classics such as Weber, Durkheim, and Tönnies are referenced) and builds on the works of, among others, Katherine Bowie and Jeremy Kemp, in challenging romantic notions of 'traditional' communities, providing resistance to and shelter from the ravages of state and market forces. In one sense the book is somewhat lacking in terms of relevant intellectual foils in the form of contemporary social scientific theoreticians. After all, the Asiatic Mode of Production has few proponents today. But that does not mean that the volume lacks polemical 'edge'. This is, however, reserved mainly for non-governmental organisations, Thai public intellectuals, and, occasionally, state bureaucracies whose 'solutions' to social problems rest on overly simplistic understandings of community.

The book is divided into three sections, bookended by an introduction and a conclusion by the book's editor, Andrew Walker. It is the latter contribution that most clearly succeeds in terms of identifying what's at stake in the strategic manipulation of the meaning of community, by unpicking some of the reasons why advocates of

community rights and empowerment became so disillusioned with the rural population's electoral embrace of Thaksin Shinawatra that they more or less warmly welcomed the 2006 military coup which ousted his government – thus negating the voting rights of the country's predominantly rural majority.

The deeper roots of such loss of 'trust' in the anti-capitalist potentialities of Thailand's rural grassroots lie in a phenomenon that is highlighted in a chapter by James Houghton: the subversion of anti-capitalist, 'community'-oriented NGO-implemented development projects for capitalist purposes by their intended beneficiaries.

In an excellent contribution Craig Reynolds explores the genealogy of the Thai term for community, *chumchon*, and its rise to political prominence during the Cold War, when 'community development' became a central part of the discourses and practices that sought to provide a veneer of political legitimacy to the anti-communist Thai state, as well as to the 'progressive' intellectuals that sought to challenge the legitimacy of the Thai Leviathan.

In a more empirically oriented chapter focused on a religious ceremony in a northern Thai village, Walker posits that the salient local conception of 'community' is represented not by *chumchon* but rather the discursive deployment of the term *suan huam*, which closely corresponds to the idea of a 'common good'. This discussion remains focused on the local community, but it would have been interesting to explore the social and political logic of *suan huam*-thinking at national and perhaps also regional levels. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations is currently in the process of creating an 'ASEAN community', which is one of the

clearest and most ambitious contemporary attempts to politically manipulate and shift the boundaries of 'we'-feeling and solidarity.

In that light, it is interesting to note that the contributions of, in particular, Nicholas Farrelly (on the Shan in the Thai-Burma borderlands) and Antonella Diana (on the Thai Lue in the China-Lao borderlands) emphasise the continued and increasing salience of *national* borders and identities. In contrast, three essays on Laos – by Holly High, Sarinda Singh, and Warren Mayes – in different ways highlight the continuing weakness of the Lao state in both these regards.

RONIT RICCI

Islam translated: literature, conversion, and the Arabic cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011
xxi & 313 pp. ISBN 9780226710884.
Cloth US\$45/£29; e-book US\$7 to \$36

Reviewed by William G. Clarence-Smith

School of Oriental and African Studies

Straddling history and literary theory, this book is a linguistic tour de force, as the author moves effortlessly between Javanese, Malay, Tamil, Arabic and Hebrew texts. Following in the wake of Sheldon Pollock's presentation of the notion of a 'Sanskrit cosmopolis,' Ronit Ricci proposes a parallel and later 'Arabic cosmopolis' in the Indian Ocean. Within these parameters, she focuses on one particular Arabic manuscript, often entitled the *Book of a thousand questions*, and on how it was received and translated, or adapted, in Javanese, Malay and Tamil Islamic

circles from the 16th century CE. At a later stage, it was also printed as a book.

The 'original' *Book of a thousand questions* probably dates from the 10th century CE, but, rather ironically, the oldest known version is a Latin translation, dating from 1143 CE. Ricci refers to later renderings in several European vernaculars, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Sundanese and Buginese. It would have been interesting to know whether there were also Hausa, Mandinka, Swahili, Bengali, Chinese, and other versions, although that might be asking too much, even of a linguist as talented as this author. Javanese texts appear to derive from Arabic ones, whereas Malay and Tamil ones can be traced to Persian exemplars, although Ricci is unsure why this might have been the case.

The plot of the *Book of a thousand questions* remained simple and fairly consistent, at least in the majority of cases. A prominent Jew questions the Prophet Muhammad on a wide variety of matters, and converts to Islam as a result of the Prophet's wise answers. As versions spread and multiplied around the Islamic world, the questions changed in number and content, and the protagonists even mutated, but the basic structure of a text focused on cosmography and conversion remained consistent. Perhaps the best chapter in the book is chapter 3, on Java, where the author shows how the Prophet gradually turned into a Javanese guru, and the questions asked of him by Javanese disciples became enmeshed in increasingly hostile relations between *santri* and Javanist Muslims in the late 19th century. The profound Javanisation of this Arabic text over time is a wonderful comment on how Javanism itself evolved, and this difficult topic is treated with a very sure touch. The chapter on Malay versions is less full, but it reveals a

much greater Arabisation of Malay intellectuals, with passages often left in Arabic. There was also a consistent use of Arabic script, contrasting with the many Javanese versions that were written in Indic script, despite their religious nature.

A valuable general aspect of the book lies in its stress on links between Southeast Asian Muslims and those in South India and Sri Lanka. This crucial relationship is often ignored in favour of the better known connections of Southeast Asian Islam with the Middle East. Moreover, the author rightly insists that influences went both ways, and not just from South to Southeast Asia. Relations between South and Southeast Asian Islam are fortunately being taken much more seriously now, and this book is a major contribution to that process.

Linguists may be more interested in other sections of the book, notably those that deal with how Arabic has affected Javanese, Malay, and Arwi, the Islamic version of Tamil. Whether they will accept that Arabic influenced the grammatical structures of these languages is a moot point, however, as lexical borrowing is much more likely than grammatical adaptations. There are also some interesting passages on the choice of scripts, notably in the Javanese and Tamil cases. The difficulties of writing Arabic characters on palm leaves were a revelation to this reviewer, and there is also information on the most recent discoveries of pre-Jawi writing systems for Malay.

In this extraordinarily rich and seductive tale of cross-cultural communication and mis-communication, to which it is hard to begin to do justice in a short review, there are inevitably some minor blemishes or questionable statements. Criticisms of Islam,

voiced by translators gathered together by Peter the Venerable in 12th-century Europe, may have reflected a fear of censorship, rather than Christian arrogance. There is no substantiation for vague references to the importance of colonial pressures, for the debates detailed in this book appear to have had very little, if anything, to do with Western colonialism. The Sufi order centrally involved in the Banten Rising of 1888 was neither the venerable Qadiriyah, nor the almost as venerable Naqshbandiyah, but rather the misleadingly named Qadiriyah wa Naqshbandiyah, a much more recent 'Neo-Sufi' creation of a Borneo *shaykh*. The term *sayyid* was usually restricted to a descendant of the Prophet through al-Husayn. Tamil renderings of the *Book of a thousand questions* fulminate against homosexuality, but it is not clear whether this also occurs in Javanese and Malay versions, and, if not, why not. It is reported that circumcision was enjoined on the faithful, but it is not made clear whether this referred to both male and female circumcision, as one would expect in Shafi'i Islam. The author cites the 'Arabic custom of refraining from the use of vowel marks', when she must mean short vowel marks.

Although generally well written, in an engaging style, there are occasional postmodern wobbles, for example in repeated and rather wearisome statements about the impossibility of translation. Maps and illustrations are helpful and well presented, but the structure of the book is awkward, resulting in a fair amount of repetition. The strongest chapters are 3 to 5, where the author devotes three straightforward chapters to Javanese, Malay and Tamil receptions of the *Book of a thousand questions*. This structure should have been retained throughout the book,

especially in Part II, where chapters are hard to follow, with some rather abrupt transitions and a considerable danger of losing students. Chapter 6, on the Arabic language, is oddly positioned, and would have been better inserted earlier on. Last but not least, the fascinating discussion of possible Jewish origins of the *Book of a thousand questions* would have been better presented much earlier in the book than in chapter 9, the conclusion, where reference to the *Haggadah* is actually buried in a footnote. However, such stylistic and organisational niggles do little to detract from the impact of this marvellous book, which is truly a joy to read.

TIMOTHY DANIELS

Islamic spectrum in Java

Farnham: Ashgate, 2009

vii + 191pp., map, photos

ISBN 978-0-7546-7626-3, £55 (hb)

Reviewed by Michael Hitchcock

IMI University Centre, Switzerland

This appropriately named volume takes the reader through a broad spectrum of well observed themes in contemporary Yogyakarta set against the background of the reform, *Reformasi*, era in Indonesia. The author notes that wherever they are socially located Indonesians have been challenged by the multidimensional pace of change and have created and expressed a multitude of ideas about what futures might be desired. Islam in particular has not been left untouched by these events and religious organisations have had to re-consider their means of reaching out to and garnering the support of local people. The members of new religious groupings have tried to carry

forward an unsullied concept of change while trying to avoid being embraced by the corrupt and hierarchical social order.

Within the city of Yogyakarta a dominant narrative is the place traditional leaders and palace organised events as the embodiment of a glorious Javanese past and symbols of hope hold for an unknown future. Other debates – commercial, educational and nationalistic – are overshadowed by ceremonial centrality of the palace with what Daniels calls 'its Islamized Hindu-Buddhist culture' (p.158). He argues that elaborate festivities drawn from multiple cultural streams are marketed to tourists while simultaneously socialising locals with manifestations of magical powers and substances, and the figures that mediate them. For the author these festivals and rituals represent the most distinctive Javanese form, *kejawan*, which have been commodified preserving its cultural distinctiveness in the global market. These events may be taken as an expression of a desirable future which combines modernisation and integration into the global market system while retaining some local trappings. It is a pretty familiar view of modernisation that could equally be applied to the monarchy in Britain, but what is interesting about Daniels' book is the detailed analysis of the cut and thrust of these adjustments in the context of Java. In particular he points out that these cultural manifestations simultaneously promote Islamic ideas and a Javanese worldview, with greater emphasis on the latter, providing they do not hinder the implementation of the local version of liberal democracy and the embracement of cultural flows from the developed world.

Daniels helpfully points out that the wide range of Islamic variants has posed problems for insiders and outsiders trying to explain Islam in Java and that many outsiders, including Western anthropologists, have tended to identify the religion with a small segment of pious Muslims. Mark Woodward in his well received book in 1989 helped to correct this position, but, as Daniels argues, he pursued too strongly the notion that Sufi Islam could be detected throughout the range of non-Islamic, *abangan*, cultural practices. He points out that for some locals this represents an accurate picture, but for others it distorts their own interpretation of these practices and assumes that the Islamised versions of the palace hold well across Javanese society. While Daniels' research is clearly up to date and provides a very helpful way of interpreting Javanese forms of Islam, this reviewer believes that Woodward provided a remarkable service in alerting us to the prevalence of Islam in many aspects of Javanese society. It is also possible that with the New Order long gone, insiders are more willing these days to explore in the company of outsiders a greater range of meanings than they felt able to previously.

One very important perspective raised by Daniels is why it is unhelpful to single out something called 'political Islam' as a threat to democracy in the manner of American scholar-administrators of the current era and their Dutch predecessors. Simply put, diverse Muslims with a wide variety of perspectives use Islamic principles to criticise Indonesian society in support of reform and widespread change. Islam is part and parcel of the debate about democratisation and desirable futures though there is a range of ideological positions. The author illustrates this by showing how criticism of traditional Javanese shaman-healers by Muslim revivalists of

either Sufi or *salafi* persuasion has been modified by the process of reform. This criticism is not new, but it has become intensified in the reform period as these branches of the Muslim community strive to stake their claims in the public sphere. On one hand Sufi revivalists try to differentiate correct Islamic mystical and ascetic practices from incorrect ones, while on the other *salafi* revivalists attempt to eradicate all manner of heterodox practices, including many of those observed by traditionalist Sufis.

Some of these differences are aired in the popular sphere as was evident in the huge debate concerning the singer and dancer Inul Daratista and her 'drilling hips'. She took a form of music, known as *dangdut*, a synthesis on Malay, Arab and Indian elements, and added to it sensual hip movements. As Daniels observes, *dangdut* has long been popular in many localities in Indonesia often incorporating flirting and suggestiveness between female performers and male audience members, but it was Inul's appearance on the national stage that increased the following for this entertainment and strengthened the backlash. Many reformist Muslims, often tainted as New Order supporters in the late period of Suharto's rule, criticised Inul's clothing and style of dancing whereas many syncretistic orientated Muslims sprang to her defence. The debate was set against the emergence of a market orientated music form that provided something more modern for younger audiences than traditional art forms while simultaneously being more Indonesian than imported forms of modern music.

What makes this book stand out is the clarity with which it is written. The rather complex topics covered by the author are nuanced in subtle and meaningful ways that help shine

light on Islam in contemporary Indonesia, a country undergoing a remarkable transition. What this reviewer found particularly stimulating were the discussions on entertainment and popular culture that are so central to an understanding on Indonesia today. Equally interesting are the expositions on student theatre and other cultural arts, venues that are not often considered in detail in discussions on Islam. This reviewer took a while to digest the book, but it was fortunate that he had the opportunity to visit Java on two occasions since this monograph came out and was thus in a stronger position to appreciate its quality and topicality. The book concerns Yogyakarta and its environs but it is interwoven with so many broader Indonesian and global references that the setting is beautifully contextualised. It may be located in a series on anthropology and cultural history, but its remit is much wider as it addresses the role of religion, politics and the media at a time of great cultural upheaval.

Woodward, Mark R. (1989) *Islam in Java: normative piety and mysticism in the Sultanate of Yogyakarta*. Tuscon: University of Arizona Press.

DEREK HENG & SYED MOHD KHAIRUDIN
ALJUNIED (eds)
Singapore in global history
Amsterdam: ICAS/Amsterdam University Press,
2011
320pp., ISBN 9789089643247, €44.50 (pb)

Reviewed by P.J. Thum

One of the chief issues with the historiography of Singapore to date has been its insular nature, focusing chiefly on the island and its internal political, economic, and institutional developments. The field of

Singapore history continues to be defined by the book which invented it, Mary Turnbull's *A history of Singapore, 1819-1975*. In her book, Turnbull established the themes of Singapore's dominant historical narrative: themes of progress, innovation, and change under the aegis of a paternalistic colonial and later independent government; the divorce of Singapore from the Malay world and the emphasis on the uniqueness of the Singapore trajectory vis-à-vis the surrounding region; the conceptualisation of Singapore as part of the core-periphery model, which looks at Singapore's relationship with the British empire largely through its vertical relationship with Calcutta and later, from 1867, London; and the narrative structure which focused on political change and the 'big men' of history as the primary actors and motivators.

In recent years, there has been a new surge in the number of studies on Singapore that have begun looking at Singapore history from different perspectives. Amongst the new approaches include subaltern and alternative perspectives, using different disciplines, as well as the re-positioning of Singapore in a global and international perspective. This book exemplifies the latter approaches, by bringing together a range of scholars working in fields such as literature, architecture, and sociology as well as political scientists and historians, who collectively have sought to re-conceptualise Singapore as sitting at the nexus of global and international networks, influenced by global processes that originated from distant parts of a globalising world, and as part of overlapping worlds that interacted and conflicted with each other.

Thus, essays such as Stephen Dobb's on the Singapore River and port in a global context, Loh Kah Seng's on the British withdrawal

from Singapore, and Joey Long's, which internationalises Singapore's decolonisation, are excellent examples of how Singapore history can be broadened and extended. They make clear how events from around the globe, even those unrelated to Singapore, came to have a big impact on the island. Similarly, Ang Cheng Guan's study of global and regional influences on Lee Kuan Yew's strategic thought provides great insight into how distant events, filtered through Lee's perceptions, came to have an impact on Lee's policies.

However, these essays, while excellent, remain limited by their use of English-language sources and reliance on governmental archives to narrate events. Ang also implicitly reinforces the existing 'great men' narrative by placing undue focus on a single, albeit tremendously influential man. Of greater value are the essays which also explicitly use different languages, sources, and frameworks. These include Khairudin Aljunied on the Maria Hertogh riots, which draws upon Malay language newspapers and other sources from across the region to provide a different cultural perspective on the riots and place it within broader social, religious, and political considerations across the Malay and Muslim world. Indeed, the use of newspapers as cultural artefacts and historical sources is a potential goldmine for historical perspective that remains relatively untapped. Torsten Tschacher and Philip Holden both make inroads here by drawing heavily upon print capitalism as both historical actors and as reportage, to investigate the creation of communities and identity.

In a similar vein, and perhaps most unique in this volume, is Lai Chee Kien's analysis of literary and artistic expression and its

relationship with the construction of overseas Chinese identity in Singapore. He draws geography, culture, and time together in a meditation on the significance of the depiction of *rambutans* and its implications for our understanding of Chinese identity. This essay offers ideas on how literary and artistic analysis can be used to extend our understanding of history in powerful new directions.

Jason Lim and Huei-Ying Kuo also make extensive use of Chinese and Japanese sources respectively. They re-position Singapore as part of larger commercial networks, which overlap and interact with social and kinship networks. Both papers vividly depict the extent of the global and regional reach of Singapore's commercial and kinship networks, but also underscore their limitations and Singapore's vulnerability to global fluctuations and events.

Bookending the volume are two essays which extend Singapore historiography temporally. Derek Heng looks backwards to Singapore's much neglected pre-colonial past, while Leong Yew looks at the 21st century and Singapore's attempts to position itself in the modern knowledge economy.

This is an excellent volume which begins to fulfil the great potential of Singapore's historiography and the numerous ways in which it can progress, not just thematically and geographically, but also spatially, temporally, linguistically, and through different fields and disciplines. As Singapore moves into a new era where a majority of its people will be born after 1965, and thus without any conception of the island as anything but an independent city-state, it is vital that its history expands so as to help illuminate the path ahead. This volume is a

wonderful start and one hopes it stimulates historians into pursuing new ways to interrogate Singapore's past, so as to build a better future.

In conversation with ASAD-UL IQBAL LATIF
Wang Gungwu: Junzi: scholar-gentleman
Singapore: ISEAS, 2010
xi, 260pp, ISBN: 9789814311526 US\$39.90 (pb)

Reviewed by V.T. King
University of Leeds

This book is not a biography of Professor Wang Gungwu but a mixed bag. There is a foreword by Professor Ezra Vogel of Harvard University (pp. vii-xi) and an introductory insertion by Professor Tommy Koh, friend of Professor Wang, Ambassador at Large, Special Adviser at the Institute of Policy Studies, and Chairman of the National Heritage Board in Singapore (pp. xiii-xvii). The meat of the book comprises an editorial introduction (pp. 1-8), and interviews with Wang Gungwu (pp. 1-121) and with Mrs Margaret Wang (pp. 121-29) conducted by Asad-ul Iqbal Latif. There are also extended appendices comprising a piece entitled 'In conversation with Professor Wang Gung Wu' by Vaneeta Sinha (pp. 133-61), previously published in the *ISA E-Bulletin* (No. 6, 2007, pp. 27-38), followed by another interview conducted by Alan Baumler entitled 'Rethinking Chinese history in a global age' (pp. 162-90), published in *The Chinese Historical Review* (vol. 14, 2007, pp. 97-113). There is inevitably some repetition here. There then follows a curriculum vitae of Wang Gungwu (pp. 191-203) and a list of his 'Selected Publications' from 1950 to 2010 (pp. 204-50). The volume contains

photographs which capture some of the important moments in Wang Gungwu's life and career. These separate pieces were brought together to celebrate Wang Gungwu's eightieth birthday on 9 October 2010 and to give expression to and mark his distinguished international career as a scholar, intellectual, teacher, mentor and senior academic administrator.

There is no need to rehearse Wang Gungwu's contributions to the study and understanding of Southeast Asian and Chinese history, the relations between China and the regions to the south, and the role, position and development of overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. His career and experience extends from Malaya, Singapore and the United Kingdom in the era of British colonialism (from the 1930s to the 1960s), mainland China (Nanjing) on the eve of the Communist takeover (1947–48), to Australia at a time when the study of Southeast Asia there, and particularly of the Malay-Indonesian world was gaining real momentum (1968–86), to Hong Kong in the last decade of British government before the handover to the People's Republic of China (1986–1995), and then full circle on his return to Singapore in 1996 appropriately as a Professor in the National University of Singapore where he had begun his academic career in the then Singapore-based University of Malaya in the late 1950s. Born in Surabaya, brought up in Malaya, and a citizen of Australia, Wang Gungwu, as an overseas Chinese, educated in English and Chinese, with a deep and broad knowledge and personal experience of Southeast Asia and China, is an international scholar in so many senses; he is someone who possesses enormous cross-cultural and cross-regional experience, and a humane understanding of and optimism about the opportunities and

advantages offered by multiculturalism and 'a multicultural cosmopolitanism' (p. 8).

Anyone who has had the privilege to meet and talk with Gungwu is immediately struck by the power of his intellect, his grasp of global and Asian regional affairs, his command of historical detail and its contextualisation, his trans-disciplinary perspective on history, and his genuine interest in the views of others. He is an excellent listener, calm, measured, thoughtful and extremely courteous – a gentleman scholar. Ezra Vogel captures succinctly Gungwu's approach: '[he] does not simplify history, nor does he beautify outstanding historical figures. He has persisted in seeking to understand history with all its complexities' (p. ix).

As an apt illustration of Wang Gungwu's understanding of these complexities his interviews take us through his own experiences of being Chinese in Malaya, his reflections on Malaysia, Singapore and Australia, on the trauma of the Indochinese wars and the future of Vietnam, on Hong Kong and its semi-detached incorporation into China, on the rise of the PRC, on Taiwan, Japan and India, and on the United States, terrorism and war. We return to Wang Gungwu's long encounter with Chinese history and scholarship and on modes of socio-historical analysis in the interviews with Vineeta Sinha and Alan Baumer.

This volume is a worthy celebration of Wang Gungwu's distinguished career in spite of its rather piecemeal constitution. Perhaps it presages a more sustained, detailed, integrated and critical biographical engagement with the life and work of one of the outstanding local figures in Asian scholarship.

ANDY WEST

Museums, colonialism and identity: a history of Naga collections in Britain
London: Horniman Museum and Garden, 2011
ix+ 209pp., maps photos, ISBN 9781903338049,
£20 (pb)

Reviewed by Michael Hitchcock
IMI University Centre, Switzerland

The Horniman Museum is rightly renowned for its contribution to museum education and the cultural life of South London, but what should not be overlooked is the leading role it has long played in critical museology. This book is therefore a very welcome addition to the series that has deftly placed the Horniman at the centre of debates on material culture, history and ethnography. It is a position that seems to have been abandoned in recent years by some of the national museums with their focus on crowd pleasing blockbuster exhibitions that charm but seldom challenge. Instead of showboating, which would be a temptation with regard to an intrinsically 'colourful' people like the Naga, West takes the reader on a reflective journey to question why these diverse peoples of Assam should be so well represented – perhaps even over represented – in various museums in the UK. In doing so he tells us a great deal about the mentality of the collectors, many of whom had military backgrounds, and the role played by the Naga as cultural strategists. Far from being cut off from or indeed innocent of global forces, the Naga were very much engaged with the external world when these collections were made and indeed many of these peoples were actively involved in major international confrontations such as World War I. It is also a story that is far from over since West rightly

draws our attention to the current situation of the Naga within the modern state of India and one wonders how the presence of significant collections from Assam in the UK will have an impact on those debates.

In a particularly important section of the book West puts a spotlight on the nature of British-Naga relations and asks whether this transfer of goods was simply another aspect of the various kinds of trade that the Naga engaged in or was it a form of colonial exploitation. It is a difficult question to answer since the objects concerned meant different things at different times to the British and the Naga, though the political context and the maintenance of good relations seem to have been factors. The exchange of material culture, while not explicitly part of a formal agreement, seems to have been part of relationship building that evolved over time. One cannot help but wonder that having detected an interest on the part of colonial and military officials in this kind of material culture that certain items if not modified were made in larger numbers than usual to satisfy this demand. After all, ethnographic collections are replete with semi-commodified items that we might hesitantly call souvenirs. Interestingly, West documents occasions when the British actually turned down offers of gifts and actively used gifts themselves, including guns and clothing, to support political initiatives such as the encouragement of the abandonment of headhunting and human sacrifice. It is also worth noting that gift giving was only one among several routes by which Naga material was collected since some items seem to have simply been purchased in local bazaars with the British becoming part of a conventional trade that could well have existed long before their arrival on the scene.

Having clarified how these goods came to be in British hands, West attempts to answer the question as to why there is such an abundance of Naga material culture in the UK and to paraphrase von Clausewitz we might regard these exchanges as war by other means. For the British to have established relatively peaceful relations with peoples as energetic and warlike as the Naga then the exchanges of goods needed to be very significant, but what the colonial power was able to give in return is difficult to assess. Perhaps one of the most important contributions made by the British was the provision of opportunities for individual Naga to amass wealth through easier trade conditions and access to a well recognised currency. With these perspectives in mind it may be useful to see these collections in UK museums as not being the property of specific individuals as donors but as evidence of a relationship through which the British established peace and the ability to administer the Naga territories. Having read this intriguing set of arguments, this reviewer was left to ponder the reasons behind the existence of other collections in the UK and to ask whether or not similar perspectives might be applied to account for them. For example, there are relatively large amounts of material relating to the Iban of Borneo as compared with other Southeast Asian peoples and though the relationship with Britain was not precisely comparable with that of the Naga, there are some parallels. The Iban were after all another headhunting group who inspired fascination and revulsion in late 19th and early 20th century Britain, and who proved difficult to manage, a situation that was further complicated in their case by the presence of the Brooke family. Could it be that there are many collections in the UK and elsewhere that could helpfully be analysed from the perspective of cultural strategy and

political relations, and, if so, how could these nuanced perspectives be interpreted to the average museums visitor? One way to find out the answer to the latter question might be to organise an exhibition on the Naga exploring material culture as relationships following the perspectives outlined by West accompanied by some careful research into visitor reactions. It also might be a way by which the Horniman could bring together its important educational, community and research functions to the benefit of not just history and anthropology, but also for the exploration of museum studies as branch of media and communications. It would also be nice to see an exhibition that critically reviewed why such things came to be in museums in the first place, a welcome respite from the crowd pleasing extravaganzas that have become commonplace in so many museums in the 21st century.

OOI KEE BENG & GOH BAN LEE (eds)
Pilot studies for a new Penang
 Penang: Socio-economic and Environmental Research Institute; Singapore: ISEAS, 2010
 xxx, 288pp., ISBN 978 981 4279 69 7, US\$29.90 (pb)

Reviewed by V.T. King
University of Leeds

This volume emerged from a Penang Outlook Forum held on 1–2 June 2009 on 'Restructuring and Reshaping Penang'. It comprises 12 chapters and an editorial introduction and epilogue, and two forewords (one by the Chief Minister of Penang, Lim Guan Eng on 'A blueprint for sustainable development' and the other by Ambassador K. Kesavapany, Director of ISEAS

on 'Two islands with similar experiences'). As one might anticipate the contributors are primarily in the fields of policy studies, economics, investment, finance, law, planning, administration, business and management and drawn from the academic world, government and the public and private sectors.

The Chief Minister's foreword sets the tone of the volume in that, in recent years, Penang has not been doing as well economically as it did from the 1970s to the end of the 1990s and he argues that the state needs a new blueprint for change in order to transform Penang into 'an international city and state' (p. xiii). For the Chief Minister this requires: clean, efficient and effective political leadership and government; economic restructuring to meet global challenges, and the development of human capital. Ooi and Goh provide a brief editorial overview of Penang's development since the 1960s drawing attention to the Munro Plan of 1964 and the Robert Nathan Report of 1970 under which Penang was transformed from a commercial and primary producer into a vibrant industrial centre (pp. xx–xxx). Then came the Penang Strategic Development Plan (1991–2000) which proposed the continuation of support for manufacturing but with increasing emphasis on higher value-added and knowledge-based industries and a broadening of the economy into finance, education, information technology and medical services. A second Penang Strategic Development Plan (PSDP2) was devised for 2001–2010, though the editors comment that it sets out a very broad range of objectives without indicating particular priorities. They suggest that an analysis of current economic conditions is required, and although Penang is still relatively well placed economically in comparison with some other

parts of the Federation, the fact that it is a small state, relatively distant from the Kuala Lumpur-Klang-Putra Jaya growth corridor, that economic growth has slowed somewhat since the 1990s, and that the state is currently governed by an opposition coalition should be cause for concern.

Policymaking and planning as expressed in this volume are presented as techno-scientific processes based on the analysis of objective data, which usually include economic statistics and other quantitative material, and, although the technical language may defeat the layperson, there are certain strategies and forward plans which seem commonsensical. Strategies must prioritise; governments must plan in increasingly competitive, dynamic, complex and globalised environments; there has to be the development, education and training of human resources and a supporting social infrastructure; there has to be effort to move into knowledge-based and higher value-added activities; policymaking and implementation has to be 'joined up' and there has to be effective interaction and communication between institutions, companies and individuals; states have to market their assets to attract investment and ensure that the physical infrastructure supports sustained economic activity; those responsible for economic growth have to promote and facilitate job creation and make provision for certain areas of social need; and so on. All this is contained (rather unexcitingly) in the current volume.

Lee Kah Choon and Chan Huan Chiang present an overview of past policies and plans as a basis to evaluate present circumstances and possible future action. Poh-Kam Wong and Ho Yuen Ping examine the prospects for innovation-driven activities

and the need for 'indigenous technology entrepreneurship'. Francis Hutchinson, in a very long chapter, looks at industrial policy at the sub-national level, and the importance of the state government in taking a lead 'in articulating a strategy for strengthening RIS [Regional innovation Systems] in consultation with a full range of stakeholders' and in ensuring that information flows effectively between different state institutions (p. 104). Liew Chin Tong and Francis Hutchinson focus on pro-active labour market policies. Chan Chee Khoon investigates the feasibility for the development of state-directed healthcare provision. Goh Ban Lee focuses on the state's role in improving housing conditions. Sin-I-Lin evaluates the prospects for the development of a higher education hub in Penang. Suresh Naryanan, Lim Mah Hui and Ong Wooi Leng consider the ways in which the state can enhance its revenue generation and improve its financial position. Ooi Kee Beng and Goh Ban Lee make proposals for the reform of the local government structure. Nungsari Ahmad Radi and Hamdan Abd Majeed identify the opportunities and challenges in achieving sustainable growth in Penang. Hwa Yue-Yi argues for the importance of labour market data analysis for the formulation and implementation of effective employment policies. Finally, Ajit Singh Jessy makes the case for the embodiment of the principle of social justice in employment and human resource legislation.

What strikes the reader about this collection is that very little is said about the politics of policymaking and implementation (perhaps unsurprising in a forum which is presided over by state politicians) or about the willingness let alone the capacity of state politicians and administrative personnel to

formulate and introduce the policies and strategies proposed in the several chapters. Although referred to in some of the chapters, the issue of the uneasy relationship between the opposition coalition and the National Front-dominated federal authorities and the consequences of this for Penang state funding also require much greater attention. The chapter by Ooi Kee Beng and Goh Ban Lee (pp. 223–43) is the most relevant in this regard.

This volume is full of solid information and contains some useful, though perhaps not unexpected policy proposals, but, given the nature of the political and bureaucratic environment in Malaysia, I suspect that much of this will remain on paper only.

KEN-ICHI SASAKI (ed.)
Asian aesthetics
 Singapore: NUS Press, 2010
 xviii, 309 pp. ISBN 9789971695002, pb \$32

Reviewed by Nick Ford
Mahidol University, Thailand

As scholars of Southeast Asia it is likely that underlying our particular research interests is a broader sense of affinity with the cultures of the region, and part of that feeling of affinity is a rather intangible sense of Southeast Asian aesthetics. Indeed aesthetics underlie, or more correctly tacitly pervade, so many of our research foci, for instance obviously in the arts, architecture, heritage studies, cultural comportment, lifestyles, mass media, and modes of discourse and communication, but also spilling over into so many other areas of our studies.

However Asian aesthetics is rarely addressed directly as a subject in itself. This collection of papers derives from a series of symposia of the 15th International Congress of Aesthetics held in Tokyo in 2001, the first time the congress had been held in Asia. The editor notes that the history of the academic discipline of aesthetics has been one in which Asian scholars have drawn heavily on the study of Western aesthetics, with relatively little Western scholastic attention being given to Asian theories. I wonder how far that could be said of our work as Southeast Asianists, as after all our main focus is upon the Asian realm with a strong emphasis on indigenous agency?

Whilst the editor acknowledges that there have been many monographs on particular subjects in the field, no general view of the wide scope of Asian aesthetics has been attempted before. To seek out the particular qualities and commonalities across Asian aesthetics is the noble, ambitious and extremely challenging task that this volume has set itself.

The volume is structured in five sections that seek to address, in turn, Japanese, Chinese, Korean, Indian and Southeast Asian aesthetics. Each section is characterised by an introductory chapter that provides an overview, followed by a series of more specialist chapters that reflect the philosophical and scholarly interests of their authors. Given our Aseasuk interests in this review I shall focus primarily upon the Southeast Asian section.

The four chapters on Southeast Asia strangely include a chapter on Taiwan, maybe included therein to give the various sections an *aesthetic* appearance of balance in terms of approximate numbers of contributions. The

section also includes the two chapters by architect David Chou-Shulin, of the introductory overview and one titled 'Southeast Asia: Modern, Postmodern or Premodern'. The introductory chapter rightly revisits the diversity and major Sinic, Indic and Islamic influences on an indigenous 'animist' or *semangat* background, providing an interesting and succinct attempt to draw together such wide ranging notions in relation to aesthetics. Chou-Shulin draws in particular upon notions outlined by Tay (*rojak* as an incongruent concoction) and Paras-Perez who described such an overabundance of seemingly disparate elements as maybe the intrinsic aesthetic characteristic of Southeast Asia. As soon as one starts to read such generalisations one naturally reacts by thinking, 'Well, I can see elements of that in for instance the labyrinthine dream-like art of Batuan village in Bali, but certainly not in the clarity, space and balance of traditional Thai art', and we come back to one of the things that is so stimulating about Southeast Asia.

I often think the study of aesthetics is rather like teaching research methodology, rather dry as 'pure' philosophy, but greatly enlivened when related to substantive material. The section on Southeast Asia includes a truly wonderful chapter by Suwanna Satha-Anand (University of Chulalongkorn) titled 'Traditional Thai Buddhist art and modern challenges'. She begins with the question 'If the Buddhist ideal of enlightenment is a state beyond the sensual realm, how can one possibly discuss a Buddhist sense of beauty?' (p. 257). Satha-Anand then elegantly explores this question in relation to how Thai Buddhist art became a tradition which has lasted more than 700 years, and the ways in which modernist Buddhist reform movements in Thailand

offer 'alternative' forms of beauty. The former is explored for instance in relation to Chote Kallyanamitr's basic principles of the way traditional Thai artists faced the challenge of representing the formless ideal in material form – tranquillity, lightness and upward floatingness. The latter is elaborated in relation to the eclectic reformist monk Buddhadasa, who affirmed the joyful and aesthetic quality of an enlightened life. Certainly his forest temple of Suan Mokh is extremely different in form to other Thai temples.

Sath-Anand then goes on to explore the notions of the differences between 'religion art' and 'religious art' and the aim of a 'religious efficacy'. Buddhadasa, while pursuing an active artistically creative life, uses the notion of art primarily as the 'art of living', as seeing beauty in Buddhism in people's lives, rather than Buddhist temples.

Given the significance of Sinic and Indic influences upon Southeast Asia the sections on Chinese and Indian aesthetics are also of interest to Southeast Asianists. Grazia Marchiano's introduction to Indian aesthetics is useful and Chantal Maillard's chapter 'What is meant by "art" in India' is particularly fine.

An ambitious volume such as this yields more questions than conclusions. Ken-ichi and his fellow authors have made a start on the enormously broad and diverse theme of Asian aesthetics. While I'm impressed by those who dare to address the 'big picture', maybe with this particular topic a potentially beneficial way forward would be to explore aesthetics (applying appropriate theory) in relation to more circumscribed areas, by country and artistic domain. The theme of aesthetics could perhaps provide a most

stimulating and fruitful panel at an Aseasuk conference.

JONATHAN COPELAND with NI WAYAN MURNI
Secrets of Bali: fresh light on the morning of the world

Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2010
 424pp. ISBN 9789745241183, £18.99 (pb)

Reviewed by Michael Hitchcock
IMI University Centre, Switzerland

This is the second time that I have been asked to comment on this book as my positive assessment of the pre-publication draft appears in the foreword of the published version. However, what I did not have chance to examine was the overall appearance of the book and, in particular the charming and very accurate line drawings. What I wrote in my original review was that fortunately for the reader *Secrets of Bali* was not in the slightest bit secretive and that the outcome was an accessible and wide ranging guide to the island's culture and history. I also noted that the casual reader could dip into it to answer specific questions, while an enthusiast could read the book from cover to cover with equal pleasure. My viewpoint has not changed with publication, but what has is my realisation that the addition of the drawings brings a whole new feel to the book.

The drawings rely on spare outlines, sometimes with shading, and remind me of the illustrations that were once common in ethnographic treatises until the rise of inexpensive photography and in particular digital photographs. By the early 1990s electronic drawings and diagrams were also becoming quite common in ethnographies of

Southeast Asia and it appeared that the hand drawn illustration had largely fallen into abeyance, though I included line drawings alongside photographs in my book on *Bima, Sumbawa* (Hitchcock, 1996). What this volume shows us is that the drawing is far from obsolescent as an analytical and communicative aid since it guides the eye to key elements of material culture in a way that the photograph cannot. This author is well aware that this kind of debate has been around since the 19th century, but it is refreshing to consider it in the context of a user friendly compendium on Balinese culture in the 21st century.

The drawings work because they focus on key details much in the way that a limited depth of field excludes visual confusion in photography. We may liken this to the very helpful observation by Clifford Geertz (1973), namely that one of the ways of interpreting culture is through the use of what he termed 'thick description'. The drawings in *Secrets of Bali* work in a similar way as they provide us with insights that strengthen our understanding alongside a well informed text. Geertz was largely thinking of 'thick description' in terms of the written word and he was writing before the rise of the critical debates on visual anthropology that appeared in the 1980s. Interestingly, the drawing seemed to slide out of these debates, though it has a very long history in the interpretation of culture. This book serves therefore to remind us that hand drawings can do certain things that other media cannot do so well and this is particularly the case with regard to mythology. The artist can, for example, imagine what a demon or a goddess might look like thus providing the reader with the fullest possible insight. A drawing can also lay out the intentionality of a site's design revealing very clearly the orientation of great

temples such as Pura Besakih, something that this reviewer has tried very hard to capture in photography with limited success. The drawing is not a substitute for the written word in ethnography and what makes this book a delight is how the two work together so well to provide an accessible and very accurate overview of Balinese culture. I would imagine that like one of its forerunners, Miguel Covarrubias' *Island of Bali*, which also makes widespread use of drawings, *Secrets of Bali* will be around for some time. It is a delightful and highly informative book, and it is a pleasure to have this review copy.

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