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Cover: Hanoi's 1,000th anniversary celebrations on '10/10/10', photo by Jonathan Rigg.

Contents

NEWS

UK Southeast Asianists

Dr Tilman Frasch, senior lecturer at **Manchester Metropolitan University** will be in Myanmar from 1 May to 10 June 2013 to complete research on a revised list of inscriptions from the Bagan period. He gave the following papers: 'Tropische Kühle: Kultur, Komfort und Konsum in asiatischen Kolonialstädten, ca. 1830-1920' [Tropical coolness: culture, comfort and consumption in Asian colonial cities, c. 1830-1920] at the Darmstadt University of Technology's history postgraduate seminar, Germany, April 2013; 'Das "schwarze Loch" von Pagan: Zur Siedlungsgeschichte einer werdenden Hauptstadt, ca. 800-1200' [The 'black hole' of Pagan: On the settlement history of a nascent capital, c. 800-1200] at the German Archaeological Institute, Commission for Archaeology of Non-European Cultures, Bonn, and 'Locations of coolness in colonial Rangoon and Singapore' at the Lancaster University workshop on Public Sphere in Colonial Southeast Asia, both in January 2013; in September 2012 in Ireland: 'Towards "Buddhintern": Asian Buddhist networks before the 19th century' at the conference on Southeast Asia as a Crossroads for Buddhist Exchange, Cork University College, and 'Pilgrims' inscriptions and the question of pilgrimage: the case of Pagan at the 14th conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists (EurASEAA), Dublin; 'Imperial osmosis: enquiring Buddhist connections between Pagan and Angkor in the 12th and 13th centuries' at the conference on Early Myanmar and its Global Connections, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore, and at the Myanmar Historical Research Department, Yangon, February 2012.

Dr Adam Tyson is now Lecturer in Southeast Asian Politics at the **University of Leeds.** His current research funded by University of Malaya is on talent and mobility in Malaysia. Adam will be at the forthcoming 7th Euroseas conference (2–6 July 2013) in Lisbon and will present a paper on 'Everday identities in motion: situating Malaysians across multiple causeways'.

Mrs Jana Igunma (British Library), curator of the Thai, Lao and Cambodian collections reports that the five-year project 'Digitisation of Thai manuscripts from the Thai, Lao and Cambodian Collections at the British Library' ended in November 2012. Sixty Thai manuscripts and the entire Chakrabongse Archive of Royal Letters with more than 8,000 folios were digitised and made available online via the British Library's Digitised Manuscripts Viewer <www.bl.uk/manuscripts>. The majority of the manuscripts included in this project are illuminated Buddhist folding books (*samut khoi*) from Central Thailand dating back to the 18th and 19th centuries. Among the highlights are several manuscripts illustrated with scenes from the legend of Phra Malai, The Ten Birth Tales of the Buddha, a Traiphum manuscript, a Kammavaca and treatises on elephants and cats. The Chakrabongse Archive of Royal Letters contains letters written by King Chulalongkorn, King Vajiravudh and Prince Chakrabongse between 1896 and 1915 while Prince Chakrabongse lived and studied in Britain and Russia. They cover a range of personal and political topics and are an important source for the understanding of the history of Thailand's relations with European countries. In February-March 2013, another project to catalogue the manuscripts in Khmer (Khòm) script held in the British Library was effected in collaboration with visiting scholar, Dr Yohei Shimizu, from Otani University, Kyoto.

Jana presented a paper on 'Representations of the female in Thai manuscript painting', at the 14th EurASEAA international conference in Dublin, in September 2012. She also gave a poster presentation: '*Aksòn Khòm:* Khmer heritage in Thai and Lao manuscript cultures', at the Walailak University international conference on Asian Studies, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Thailand, in February 2013.

Dr Annabel Teh Gallop, curator for Indonesian and Malay collections (**British Library),** gave the keynote addess, 'The early use of seals in the Malay world', at the international conference on 'Seals as symbols of power and authority in Southeast Asia', organised jointly by University of Malaya and EFEO, Kuala Lumpur, 8 November 2012. She also gave a postgraduate seminar in the History Department at University of Malaya on 9 November 2012 on 'Inscriptions on Malay seals'.

Annabel also reports that the travelling photographic exhibition arising out of the British Academy-funded ASEASUK-BIAA research project 'Islam, Trade and Politics across the Indian Ocean' continues to travel around the UK, and is currently at the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter. It will next be shown at the Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centre in London and the British Museum (for schedule see: <http://www.ottomansoutheastasia.org/exhibition.php>). A Turkish version of the exhibition opened in Istanbul in April 2013 and an Indonesian version is in preparation.

Professor Jonathan Rigg (Durham University) undertook a research trip to Thailand in January 2013, working with Professor Buapun Promphaking of Khon Kaen University and Dr Ann Le Mare, also of Durham. The trip was funded from a British Academy grant entitled 'Personalising the middle-income trap' and also included a writing workshop for early career researchers from Khon Kaen, Mahasarakham and Ubon Ratchathani universities. After 20 years in Durham, Jonathan will be leaving in August 2013 to take up a position in the Geography Department at the National University of Singapore.

Dr Carool Kersten (King's College London) made a research trip in February–March 2013 visiting Medan, Danau Toba region, Yogyakarta, Bandung and Bogor for his two forthcoming books on Islam in Indonesia (the first will be published by Hurst and Oxford University Press for UK and US editions respectively and the second by Edinburgh University Press). Carool presented two papers last year: 'Indonesian debates on secularity and religiosity: Islamists, liberal Muslims, and Islamic post-traditionalists' at the Teaching & Studying Religion 2nd annual symposium, Sociology of Religion Group, British Sociological Association, London,13 December 2012, and 'Free-floating gamekeepers or organic gardeners? Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia' at the workshop on The Public Role of Muslim Intellectuals: Historical Perspectives to

Contemporary Challenges, St Antony's College and the Middle East Centre, Oxford University, 30 April 2012.

Professor Victor (Terry) King (University of Leeds/Universiti Brunei Darrusalam) is currently back in the UK after five months as Eminent Visiting Professor at the Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darussalam (UBD). He will be returning to Brunei at the end of May. He presented an address and overview paper entitled 'Human insecurities in Southeast Asia: uncertainty, risk and trust' (10 December 2012, UBD) at the Institute of Asian Studies' and the National University of Singapore's ASEAN Inter-university Seminar on Human Insecurities in Southeast Asia. He will be co-editing a volume arising from this seminar. He also organised and chaired a workshop entitled Borneo Studies: the state-of-the-art and future directions (30 November–1 December 2012, UBD); a major initiative from this workshop is the establishment of a network of research institutions and a website to exchange information and encourage collaboration across Borneo to be coordinated by UBD. He also delivered two papers: 'Introductory remarks: Borneo and beyond: the contribution of anthropology to Borneo studies and the wider world' and 'Identities in Borneo: constructions and transformations'. He will be co-editing a volume based on this workshop with two colleagues from UBD. Arising from the workshop he has submitted a paper to the Institute of Asian Studies, UBD Working Paper series entitled 'Borneo and beyond: Borneo studies, anthropology and the social sciences' (109 pp). He has re-established his links with the Brunei Museum, an institution at which he spent a sabbatical in the mid 1980s, and has edited (and written a Foreword to) the manuscript of Pudarno Binchin (Curator of Ethnography at the Museum) entitled *Singing Siram Ditaan: composition, performance and transmission of epic tales of Derato in Brunei Dusun society*. It is to be published in the Borneo Research Council's Classic Text Series of Oral Literature. Terry also attended the 2nd Southeast Asian Studies Symposium, Project Southeast Asia, University of Oxford, 9–10 March, 2013, presenting a paper on 'Identities in Borneo: constructions and transformations' in the panel Understanding Borneo-Kalimantan through Interdisciplinary Perspectives, and joining a roundtable discussion on the future of Borneo Studies with Professor Michael Leigh (Sydney), Dr Rommel Curaming (UBD) and Dr Sanib Said (UNIMAS). On 11 March 2013 he also examined a PhD thesis by Bernadette Tyas-Susanti on 'Conserving religious heritage through people-involved management: the case of mosques and Chinese temples in the urban coastal area of Java, Indonesia' in the Department of Architecture and Civil Engineering at the University of Bath. Terry is now engaged in editing a book entitled 'UNESCO in Southeast Asia: World Heritage Sites in comparative perspective'; a proposal for publication is currently under review. Terry has submitted a chapter entitled 'Southeast Asian Studies: the conundrum of area and method' which is to be included in a volume with the provisional title 'Methodology in Southeast Asian Studies', edited by Mikko Huotari, Judith Schlehe, and Jürgen Ruland at the University of Freiburg.

Centre of South East Asian Studies, SOAS, University of London

Dr Felicia Hughes-Freeland is working on performance and heritage in Southeast Asia and preparing conference papers, field research and a book proposal on the subject. She was the invited expert at the workshop on Intangible Cultural Heritage: The Midas Touch? (1–2 March 2013), Sinergia research project, Basel and Neuchatel Universities, Switzerland. On 12 March she gave a paper on 'Hybridity and fusion in a Java-Japan dance experiment' at SOAS' Music Department public seminar series.

Professor William Clarence-Smith's ongoing research topics cover 'Syrians' in the colonial Philippines c.1860s to c.1940s, rubber in World War II, and global mules. He presented the following papers: 'Of mules and men: hybrid power in the making of a global world order, c1500-c1945,' at the European University Institute seminar series, Florence, 13 February 2013 as well as at the Imperial and World History seminar, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 25 February 2013;'Mules in the English empire, nineteenth and twentieth centuries,' at the London School of

Economics and Political Science's History and Economic Development Group annual workshop, 23 February 2013; keynote lecture on 'Global slavery: definitions and debates,' at a SOAS film workshop on Silences and Taboos: ethical dilemmas in making African slavery visible on film, 30 January 2013; 'Réflexions sur les impérialismes non-occidentaux,' SFHOM et Outre-Mers, revue d'histoire, centenaire, workshop, Institut d'Études Politiques, Paris, 7 December 2012.

Dr Russell Jones is compiling a corpus of images and names found in the watermarks of Malay manuscripts for an eventual database, and welcomes discussion and collaboration with anyone interested in this field. Email: rumajones26@tiscali.co.uk

Abroad

Dr Lim Peng Han, Visting Research Fellow at the **University of Malaya** delivered the following papers: 'The transformations and development of badminton as a global sport dominated by Asian players, teams, sponsors and brands: multidisciplinary perspectives' at the 8th annual conference of the Asian Studies Association of Hong Kong on Transformation, Development and Culture in Asia: Multidisciplinary Perspectives, 8–9 March 2013; 'The Portuguese, Dutch and English presence in the Malay Peninsula and the planting of Christian missions and Christian schools: Shifting from religious teachings to secular curriculum, 1511-1899' at the workshop on Orders and Itineraries: Buddhist, Islamic and Christian Networks in Southern Asia, c.900-1900, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, 21–22 February 2013; 'A history of Malay secular schools in colonial and post-colonial Singapore, 1819-1985', at the Jalinan-Budi seminar series, Malay Language and Culture Department, National Institute of Education, Singapore, 29 August 2012; 'The Aroozoo sisters and their world of books, libraries and literature, 1940s – 1990s', at the Buildings, Books & Blackboards: Intersection Narratives conference, RMIT University, Melbourne, 28 November–1 December 2012, the combined conference of the Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society (ANZHES), Mechanic's Institutes Worldwide and the 10th Australian Library History Forum.

Dr Keiko Miura (**Waseda University/Göttingen University)** undertook research in September 2012 on the cultural landscape of Bali province that had been nominated as a World Heritage Site in 2011. This trip was made in the context of the research project on wet rice agriculture and related rites in Bali with the Institute of Wet Rice Culture, Waseda University in Tokyo, with which Keiko has been involved since 2004.

Keiko is also in the second phase of research on Angkor for three years as a Fellow of Cultural Property Group, Göttingen University, she has been undertaking research on the illicit traffic of Cambodian artefacts and restitution since 2011. In this connection she made monthly research trips (July to August 2012, and February to March 2013), following two weeks of a research trip in August 2011. Keiko delivered the following papers: 'Cultural heritage, illicit excavation and trade in Cambodia: report on the current state of research', at a research meeting of the Interdisciplinary Cultural Property Research Group, Georg-August-University of Göttingen, Germany, 16 October 2012 and 'Think globally and act locally in Angkor World Heritage Site', at the World Heritage on the Ground: Ethnographic Perspectives workshop, Max-Planck-Institute for Social Anthropology, Germany, 11–12 October 2012.

Robert Taylor is Visiting Professorial Fellow at the **Institute of Southeast Asian Studies** in Singapore. He gave a lecture on 'The emergence of Myanmar against the backdrop of the changing international landscape' at the Myanmar Institute for Strategic and International Studies in Yangon on 28 March. He will be giving a paper entitled 'Myanmar's "pivot" to the shibboleth of "democracy"' at the Cambodian Institute for Cooperation and Peace on 10 May 2013 in Phnom Penh.

Professor Michael Hitchcock (Macau University of Science and Technology) has received a grant for

the project 'Telling the Macau story: developing the total travel experience' (MOP 100,000). He was one of the keynote speakers at the 4th biennial International Tourism Studies Association (ITSA) conference in Bali in August 2012 and spoke on negotiating tourism and culture in the Southeast Asian region.

Dr PJ Thum is currently Research Fellow, Asia Research Institute, **National University of Singapore** and co-ordinator of Project Southeast Asia, **University of Oxford.**

OBITUARY

Dr Leslie Hugh Palmier (1924–2012)*

I'm saddened that the death of Leslie Palmier passed without many of us in ASEASUK being aware of it. It is important that we remember our origins and early history. Therefore this is a belated recognition of the important contribution that Leslie made to the first years of the development of our Association and the continuing role that he played in the realisation of a Southeast Asian Studies presence in the United Kingdom. Leslie was a member of the first elected committee of the Association in 1971, not long after he had arrived at the University of Bath. As we developed our national presence and profile he was a stalwart supporter of our activities and was always a prominent contributor to our meetings and conferences in the 1970s and 1980s.

In the history of the development of British scholarly interest in Southeast Asia Leslie was one of those individuals who, like many others of that generation who entered academic life in the early post-war years, had seen military service. He served in the RAF from 1942 until 1946, and then immediately commenced his university education at the London School of Economics and Political Science from 1946. In his early pre-war years he had grown up in Cairo and studied at the English School there. He was awarded a BSc in Economics and Sociology in 1949 and then undertook postgraduate studies at the LSE where he benefited from the vital role that LSE, through the anthropology seminars directed by Professor Raymond Firth, played in the early development of social science research on Southeast Asia. Firth and his wife Rosemary had undertaken research in pre-war Malaya, and he was then appointed to the Chair in Social Anthropology in 1944 as successor to Bronislaw Malinowski. As an inaugural member of the Colonial Social Science Research Council established in 1944 Raymond Firth was also instrumental in promoting and directing the early post-war British field studies in Singapore, Sarawak and North Borneo. It was within this environment, which included other prominent anthropologists like Edmund Leach and Maurice Freedman who had worked in Southeast Asia that Leslie decided to go to Java in 1951 to undertake anthropological field research.

When I stayed with him in his house in Bath in the mid 1980s I remember him recounting with some amusement, his experiences in Java in the early 1950s, taking lessons in the Malay language in London prior to departure, the long sea journey via Suez to Singapore before his arrival in Jakarta, and then the excitement of living and working in the newly created Republic of Indonesia only a few years after the Dutch-Indonesian conflicts and the Indonesian Revolution had ended. Following his research Leslie submitted his doctoral thesis at LSE. He was awarded his MSc in Social Anthropology in 1956, and his PhD in the same year for a thesis entitled 'Status groups in Java, Indonesia'. He was to revise his thesis as book which was later published by the Athlone Press, University of London. It has since become a definitive work on Javanese social

organisation in the early period of independence. *Social status and power in Java*, appeared in 1960 in hard cover as No. 20 in the LSE Monographs on Social Anthropology series. It was subsequently reprinted with corrections as a paperback in 1969. The book was based on anthropological field research in two small central Javanese towns. It analysed relations of power, status, kinship and marriage among the nobility as Indonesia moved from a Dutch colonial system which, while stripping the Javanese rulers of political power had nevertheless continued to utilise pre-existing concepts of social hierarchy in Javanese society within the native bureaucratic elite, to a system which, when Leslie observed it, was based on independent republican institutions, political parties and electoral politics, and democratic ideals.

As an undergraduate student of Southeast Asian sociology and anthropology in the late 1960s Leslie's pioneering study was recommended to me as a standard work, and one which revealed in detail some of the main characteristics of Javanese social organisation in the 1950s. Though an important piece of research in the British social anthropological tradition which pre-dated American field research in Java, Leslie's work tended to be overshadowed by that of the American cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz, who along with his wife Hildred, and the team from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology produced a stream of publications on Javanese society and culture in the late 1950s and into the 1960s at the time Leslie was publishing his early work.

Nevertheless, Indonesia remained a significant area of interest and research for Leslie on which he built his international reputation and he subsequently published several further well received and crafted books and articles on the country. Among many others he wrote an important paper for *Pacific Affairs* in 1955 entitled 'Aspects of Indonesia's social structure', and perhaps not so widely known he translated D.H. Burger's work from the Dutch which was published in the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project translation series as *Structural changes in Javanese society* in 1956. His later books included *Indonesia and the Dutch* (1962), *Indonesia* (1965), *Communists in Indonesia: power pursued in vain* (1973) and his edited *Understanding Indonesia* (1985).

After his time at Princeton University in the mid 1950s as a Postdoctoral Fellow, Leslie was appointed to a lectureship at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, where he established its Department of South Asian Studies. He then became a Senior Researcher for the United Nations in the 1960s. Eventually he arrived back in the UK in 1969 when he was appointed to the University of Bath as a Senior Lecturer in Sociology and then promoted to a Readership. He remained in Bath until his retirement in 1989. Leslie was very active in and committed to the Development Studies programme there and served as Founder Director of the university's Centre for Development Studies.

During his time at Bath Leslie continued to research and write on Indonesian social class and status relations, and published on the Indonesian intelligentsia and on degree and gender distinctions among Indonesian graduate officials as well as the extent and nature of their exposure to the mass media. However, his main preoccupation during the 1980s was his research on bureaucratic corruption in Asia. He published *The control of bureaucratic corruption: case studies from Asia* in 1985, along with several important papers.

He also played an active role in institutions outside of Bath. He was an Associate Fellow at St Antony's College, Oxford, where he presented papers and participated in seminars and conferences, and he gave papers regularly at the Royal Central Asian Society, later the Royal Society for Asian Affairs in London. These papers were published in the Society's journal *Asian Affairs* and Leslie continued to remain active in the work of the Society following his retirement. His presentations comprised: 'Suharto's Indonesia' (November 1970), 'An actor-manager in politics: Sukarno of Indonesia' (July 1973), 'Indonesia's rejection of tradition' (July 1989), 'The lost Malayan world' (July 1992), 'Leviathans in South East Asia' (November 1996), and 'Indonesia: corruption, ethnicity and the "pax Americana"' (July

2006). Following retirement he also edited and published *Détente in Asia? State and law in Eastern Asia* in the St Antony's College series with Macmillan (1992).

Sadly, Leslie's involvement in academic activities was curtailed when he suffered a stroke in 2006 but he will always be remembered by those of us who knew him through ASEASUK as someone who was unfailingly supportive of our work and mission. I recall his incisive interventions in those early meetings and his thoughtful contributions to our discussions when we were attempting to develop a national agenda for area studies more generally and Southeast Asian Studies specifically. Leslie's presence at our meetings in the 1970s and 1980s was always guaranteed to bring some of our rather more heady aspirations for area studies down to earth. Leslie was a master of the possible. He will be missed by the scholarly community in Southeast Asian Studies in the UK, someone who was an excellent conversationalist, enormously knowledgeable on Indonesia, meticulous and precise in debate and discussion, and a firm and reliable supporter of and distinguished contributor to British scholarly work on the region. Leslie passed away on 10 October 2012.

V.T. King

* Some of the details in this obituary are taken from the notice on 'Dr Leslie Palmier' which appeared in the University of Bath's newsletter on 19 December 2012, along with the photograph.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

CLARENCE-SMITH, WILLIAM

- 2012. The Hadhrami *sada* and the evolution of an Islamic religious international, c.1750s to 1930s. In Abigail Green and Vincent Viaene (eds), *Religious internationals in the modern world: globalization and faith communities since 1750*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 233–51.

ELLEN ROY

- 2012 (with H. L. Soselisa and A. P. Wulandari). The biocultural history of *Manihot esculenta* in the Moluccan islands of eastern Indonesia: assessing the evidence for the movement and selection of cassava germplasm. *Journal of Ethnobiology* 32 (2): 157–84.
- 2012. Cassava diversity and toxicity in relation to environmental degradation: a feature of food security in the Moluccas, Indonesia. In A.-K. Hornidge and C. Antweiler (EDS), *Environmetal uncertainty and local knowledge: Southeast Asia as a laboratory of global ecological change.* Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, pp. 215–42.

FRASCH, TILMAN

- 2012. Tracks in the city. Electricity and mobility in Singapore and Rangoon, c. 1900–1930s. *Modern Asian Studies* 46 (1): 97–118.
- 2012. Saya San – Ereignis und Interpretation eines Bauernaufstandes [Saya San - event and interpretation of a peasant revolt]. In Michael Mann and Hans Werner Tobler (eds), *Bauernwiderstand: Asien und Lateinamerika in der Neuzeit* [Peasant Resistance in modern Asia and South America]. Vienna: Mandelbaum, pp. 171–88.
- 2013. Buddhist councils in a time of transition. Globalism, modernity and the preservation of textual traditions. Special issue on 'Pioneer European Buddhists and Asian Buddhist Networks 1860–1960'. *Contemporary Buddhism* 14 (1).

GALLOP, ANNABEL T.

- 2012. The art of the Qur'an in Java. *Suhuf* 5 (2): 215–29.

HACK, KARL

- 2012 (Kevin Blackburn and Karl Hack), *War memory and the making of modern Malaysia and Singapore.* Singapore: NUS Press.
- 2012. Decolonization and violence in Southeast Asia: crises of identity and authority. In Els Bogaerts and Remco Raben (eds), *Beyond empire and nation: decolonizing societies in Africa and Asia, 1930s–1970s.* Leiden: KITLV Press. Book available online: <http://www.kitlv.nl/book>
- 2012. Framing Singapore's history. In Nicholas Tarling (ed.), *Studying Singapore's past: C.M. Turnbull and the history of modern Singapore.* Singapore: NUS Press, pp.17–64.
- 2012. Everyone lived in fear: Malaya and the British way of counter-insurgency. *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 23 (4–4): 671–99.
- 2012 (with Brocheux, Pierre; El Mechat, Samia; Frey, Marc; Nanta, Arnaud; Randrianja, Solofo and Regnault, Jean-Marc) *Les décolonisations au XX siècle: la fin des empires européens et japonais.* Paris: Amrand Colin.

HITCHCOCK, MICHAEL

- 2013 (and M & D. Barsham). Prophets of nature: romantic ideals of nature and their continuing relevance to tourism today. In A. Holden & D. Fennell (eds), *The Routledge handbook of tourism and the environment*. London: Routledge, pp. 54–64.

HUGHES-FREELAND, FELICIA

- 2013. Embodied perception and the invention of the citizen: Javanese dance in the Indonesian state. In S. Trnka, J. Park and C. Dureau (eds), *Senses and citizenships: embodying political life.* London: Routledge, pp. 246–64
- 2013. Japanese-Indonesian hybridity? The case of Didik Nini Thowok's Bedhaya Hagoromo. In Mohd Anis Md Nor (ed.), *Dancing mosaic: issues on dance hybridity*. Kuala Lumpur: Cultural Centre University of Malaya & National Department for Culture and Arts, Ministry of Communication, Information and Culture, Malaysia, pp. 262–78.
- 2012. Movement on the move: performance and dance tourism. In H. Neveu Kringlebach and J. Skinner (eds), *Dancing cultures: globalization, tourism and identity in the anthropology of dance.* New York: Berghahn Books, pp. 100–20.
- 2011. Divine cyborgs? Ritual spirit presence and the limits of media. In A. Michaels et al. (eds), *Ritual dynamics and the science of ritual: Volume IV*:
  Reflexivity, media, and visuality. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, pp. 277–308)

KERSTEN, CAROOL

- 2013. [review] Mark Woodward, *Java, Indonesia and Islam. International Journal for Philosophy of Religion, Metaphysical Theology and Ethics.* DOI: 10.1007/s11841 -013-0353-5. <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11841-013-0353-5#page-1>
- 2012. *Khilafa* as human vicegerency: religion and state in the thought of Nurcholish Madjid. In Madawi al-Rasheed, Carool Kersten and Marat Shterin (eds), *Demystifying the caliphate:* London: Hurst & Company; New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 165–184.
- 2012. [review] Michel Picard and Rémy Madinier (eds), *The politics of religion in Indonesia. Journal of International and Global Studies* 4 (1): 88–90.

KING, VICTOR T.

- 2012. *Culture and identity: some Borneo comparisons*. Working Paper series, No 1. Brunei: Institute of Asian Studies, Universiti Brunei Darrusalam. 58pp.
- 2013 (and Park Seung Woo, eds). *The historical construction of Southeast Asian Studies: Korea and beyond.* Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- 2013 (and Park Seung Woo). The construction of Southeast Asian Studies and the emergence of a region. In Park Seung Woo and Victor T. King (eds), *The historical construction of Southeast Asian Studies: Korea and beyond,* Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, pp.1–42.
- 2013. British perspectives on Southeast Asia and continental European comparisons: the making of a region. In Park Seung Woo and Victor T. King (eds), *The historical construction of Southeast Asian Studies: Korea and beyond,* Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, pp. 265–323.

- 2013. 'Scholarly viewpoints' on area studies. *International Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies* [USM Penang] 9 (1): 167–80.
- 2013. *Kalimantan Tempo Doeloe*, Indonesian translation of *The Best of Borneo Travel*, originally published by Oxford University Press, 1992, with a new 'Preface'. Delok: Kelompok Komunitas Bambu.

LIM, PENG HAN
- 2013. The diffusion and transmission of cricket among European, indigenous and migrant communities in the British Straits Settlements and Malay States during the late eighteenth and nineteenth century, 1786-1899. *International Journal of History of Sport* 30 (3): 210–31.

MIURA, KEIKO
- 2013. Angkor heno tabi sekai isan wo ikiru (in Japanese) [A trip to Angkor: living in a World Heritage Site]. In Yamashita et al. (eds), *Hito no ido jiten: nihon to asia* (in Japanese) [Dictionary of human movements: Japan and Asia]. Tokyo: Maruzen.

RETSIKAS, K.
- (and M. Marsden, eds) 2013. *Articulating Islam: anthropological approaches to Muslim worlds.* Heidelberg: Springer. 260 pp.

RIGG, JONATHAN
- 2013. From rural to urban: a geography of boundary crossing in Southeast Asia. *TRaNS: transnational and national studies of Southeast Asia* 1(1): 5–26.
- 2013. Agrarian questions and environmental dilemmas redux. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 44 (2): 338–44.

TYSON, ADAM
- 2013. Vigilantism and violence in decentralized Indonesia: the case of Lombok. *Critical Asian Studies* 45 (2): 201–30.

BOOK REVIEWS

ROXANA WATERSON & KWOK KIAN-WOON (eds)
Contestations of memory in Southeast Asia
Singapore: NUS Press, 2012
250pp., ISBN: 978-9971-69-506-4, pb US$30

Reviewed by Karl Hack
Open University

Most previous edited books on Southeast Asian 'social memory' have tended to concentrate on the 'memory' of the epic events of 1937 to 1945. *Contestations of memory* makes the recall of events from the post-war period of 1945–70 its overwhelming focus.

This book's ten chapters do, however include one chapter each on the pre-war and wartime periods. They also cover almost every modern Southeast Asian country, bar Cambodia and Timor Leste. Singapore and Malaysia are particularly well represented, with Indochina just behind. Its tripartite structure includes an Introduction (Part I), five chapters on the top-down construction of 'National' memories (Part II), and four on bottom-up individual and community 'Traumatic memories' (Part III).

The Introduction sets the scene briefly, before summarising the content of the chapters. It confirms that the editors adopt recent notions of social memory as contested and layered, as used by individuals, communities and states to try and negotiate and fortify identity, and as having endless shades of remembering and forgetting.

Three things stand out from the Introduction. Firstly, the editors and the majority of contributors are sociologists, so the collection has the ambition of infusing sociological understandings (done by brief discussions in the chapters on Halbwachs, Barthes, Foucault and other theorists). Secondly, the focus is on social memory as studied through discrete case studies, and the contributors also include historians. So the reader will not be disappointed if they anticipate a good dose of empirically valuable coverage of events. Thirdly, the editors were

interested in including case studies that specifically touched on issues of politics, justice and 'truth'.

The Introduction thus closes with the comments that, 'the problem of memory cannot be uncoupled from the problem of truth.' Yes, the post-modern turn emphasises the plurality of recollections, but they insist that relativism must have limits. Hence, 'The work of deconstructing socially constructed truths, however, is motivated by a quest for truth and subverts itself if the very concept of truth is abandoned. A realistic acceptance of the neverending nature of the search does nothing to diminish its importance' (p. 11). So, how do the chapters in Parts II (National) and III (Traumatic Events) cover these themes and meet the work's aims? First, Part II's five chapters.

Maitrii Aung-Thwin's Chapter 2, on 'Remembering kings: archives, resistance and memory in colonial and post-colonial Burma', covers interpretations of the Saya San rebellion of 1930–31. It suggests British officialdom interpreted events through the lens of an ageing 1914 guide to rebellion, which emphasised Burmese peasants' superstitious, pre-modern dispositions, and incitement by teachers (*saya*) claiming religious and supernatural powers, and *minlaung* (pretender) status for the disinherited Burmese monarchy. By contrast, Legislative Councillor U Saw tried to depict the rebellion as primarily due to more rational economic reasons. This provides a fascinating window on the process of the encoding of lessons by authorities and their hangers-on – the creation of the colonial state's quasi-ethnological 'memory' about the society it ruled in the 'colonial archive'.

Vatthana Pholsana's Chapter 3, on 'Sifting visions of the past: ethnic minorities and "the struggle for national independence"' in Laos' deals with a different sort of state narrative. She emphasises how central state and local narrations of 'heroes' lives can jar, leaving some localities and ethnic minorities feeling that their local representatives' stories are neglected, misrepresented, or alienated from their ownership. She argues that local accounts around heroes such as Ong Keo (died 1910) for Ban Paktai Villagers (in southeast Laos) can therefore seem 'against the flow' of dominant narratives. Even when a local representative is integrated into national narratives, the process could therefore be slightly anxious and potentially unstable for both local and national levels.

Sharon Seah's Chapter 4, meanwhile, deals with 'Truth and memory: narrating Viet Nam'. It describes the way the dominant narrative of the 'American War' marginalises those who fought on 'the wrong side'. Its discursive strategies dictate true/untrue interpretations and who labels such as hero/collaborator/enemy/victims can be ascribed to. She also discusses the danger that citizens fed an over-engineered, over-simplified, over-filtered and excessively amplified narrative of the past may become anaesthetised to it: apathy and ennui enervating the affective power of state sanctioned versions of 'social memory'.

Chapter 6 continues Pholsana and Seah's theme of disputes about who contributed how much during wars of decolonisation. Heddy Shri Ahimsa Putra's 'Remembering, misremembering and forgetting: the struggle over Serangan Oemoem 1 Maret 1949 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia' deals with an iconic moment in Indonesia's struggle with the Dutch. This was the moment when nationalist forces expelled the Dutch from the Republic's capital in a 'General Attack', holding the city for a few hours and so helping to set in train the negotiations which led to independence. During the 'New Order' period (especially 1985–98) Suharto's initiative as the military leader of the 'General Attack' was extolled in film, monuments, texts and commemorative events. Since there have been questions about how far he was actually carrying out Sultan Hamengkubuwono's idea, the chapter asks: how would you correct such a massaged 'social memory'? If it was constructed through docudrama and monuments (and even cartoons, museums and rituals), would full adjustment require re-narrations across a similarly broad spectrum of media and rituals? The chapter also suggests that the dispute matters despite the event's falling salience for the public, as it reflects

broader debates about how far the army, as opposed to civilians, drove decolonisation.

Dayang Istiaisyah's Chapter 5, on 'Textual construction of a nation: the use of merger and separation', also focuses on media, namely newspapers. Her aim is 'the discourse analysis' of newspapers, and of the way they help to constitute/sustain an imagined nation in Singapore. She focuses on the state-controlled *Straits Times* and *Berita Harian* reporting of the race riots of July 1964, and the separation of Singapore from Malaysia on 9 August 1965.

Part II, on 'Traumatic memories', adds four more chapters from what we might term a more democratic, 'memory from below' perspective. Ricardo Jose's Chapter 7, on 'War and violence: history and memory: the Philippine experience of World War Two', gives a useful summary of the varieties and shifts of social memory in the Philippines.

Adeline Low Hwee Cheng's Chapter 8 covers 'The past in the present: memories of the 1964 "racial riots" in Singapore', thus overlapping with Chapter 6. But I confess more of a soft spot for Adeline's themes, which she bases on 33 interviews. She details a disjunction between state-sponsored accounts and popular memories of 1964 riots. Singapore's National Education from the 1980s has emphasised the riots as unveiling a period when society threatened to melt into chaos. This is used as an example of how a strong state and cautious civil society is crucial to stability, and to justify policies such as ethnic quotas in public housing. It also lends itself to an essentialising view of ethnic and ethno-religious groupings

By contrast, many of Adeline's interviewees recall how people came together in 1964 to defend people of all ethnic groups in their own kampongs, with violence highly localised. She also traces the differences of memory by ethnicity (for instance Malays were more likely to frame the riots in terms of an attack on their religious practices). My soft spot comes from having heard similar stories about kampong ethnic solidarity from colleagues, from my own student's oral history projects, when teaching in Singapore between 1995 and 2006, and from my parents (who were living in the Serangoon area at the time).

Kwok-Kian Woon and Kelvin Chia's chapter on 'Memories at the margins: Chinese-educated intellectuals in Singapore', also relies on interviews, focusing on three exemplars of the 'Chinese language intellectual' in Singapore. It achieves two things. It summarises the shift from the Chinese educated being the majority in Singapore before 1955 to their marginalisation within an English-language based system; and it uses its three exemplars to explore the nuances of the Chinese intellectual memory of this process, and attitudes towards its outcomes.

Last but definitely not least is Budiawan's Chapter 10, which discusses the memories of wives of former political prisoners of the '1965 Event' in Indonesia. Its main focus is on how the wives coped both with their husbands' absence, and in some cases their subsequent return from prison. It reveals the double burden of having to cope without their respective husbands, while being marginalised by the state, and then having to readjust to husbands or suffer the shame of having taken new partners. After outlining the case studies of three women, a short discussion follows on the role impact of 'trauma' on people's self-narration of their life, whether orally or in writing.

In summary, this book delivers case studies that will be interesting to social scientists and historians of most of the countries of Southeast Asia, while introducing several interesting approaches to social memory and its contestations.

KEVIN BLACKBURN & KARL HACK
War memory and the making of modern Malaysia and Singapore
Singapore: NUS Press, 2012
476 pp. ISBN: 978-9971-69-599-6, pb US$35

Reviewed by PJ Thum
National University of Singapore and Oxford University

Governments routinely seek to cite history to justify the fulfilment of their policies and their retention of power. The divergent paths of Malaysia and Singapore exemplify this. Despite the two states having a shared and intimate history based on common ancestry, culture, and society, the two states have produced very different narratives of their shared history. These narratives have been contingent upon the priorities, values and interests of a narrow band of elites in both countries, who need to give intellectual depth to the concept of their countries as nation-states, to redefine post-independence boundaries as natural and inevitable, and to suppress and destroy alternative voices and visions for their states.

In their previous work together, Kevin Blackburn and Karl Hack (2004) explored Malayan history (i.e. the shared history of peninsular Malaysia and Singapore) around the Japanese Occupation, asking the question 'Did Singapore have to fall?' This book is in some ways a sequel, looking at how the history of that period has been remembered and misremembered by individuals, communities, and governments; the interplay of memory between all three groups; and how memory has been portrayed, used, and manipulated. It grows out of long experience by both authors into the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, which includes not just archival research into the period itself, but long engagement with its aftermath. The authors have a rich personal experience to draw on, having interviewed survivors and veterans; written numerous scholarly accounts; engaged in vigorous debate over the historical causality and legacy of the Occupation; critiqued and criticised portrayals of the period; and also acted as consultants and advisors to official and personal accounts, commemorations, and re-enactments. They are thus not just scholars striving for accuracy, but people who have been heavily involved in the production of historical memory and heritage. This book is, in many ways, personal.

It is a testament to both that the book never feels that it has to justify the choices that both have made. Instead, what follows is an enthusiastic study of war memory in both Singapore and Malaysia. It demonstrates the malleability of the past, showing how war memory is suppressed or shaped, and how stories take on mythic qualities. In particular, its analytical model of breaking down memory into the level of individual, community, and state is very helpful at deconstructing this process. The book explores the tripartite interaction between the individual's oral history, the wider collective memory of the groups each individual belonged to, and official state-sponsored memories. Each community's memories are also broken into two categories: the portrayal of members of the community as heroes, and as victims. By exploring this layering of memory, it also allows an exploration of the connections between these different but overlapping spheres.

But the book could not be a success without the authors also knowing what has been left out, and they successfully draw upon their extensive knowledge to explore how and why stories have been excluded and/or suppressed. These stories include those who have been excluded from community and official narratives, in particular the communists, the vernacular-speaking, the poor, women, and other subaltern groups.

Such a fascinating synthesis of so much material leaves one with many questions and wanting so much more. One minor point of interest arises out of how the book's analytical model relies upon creating boundaries by defining communities as the politically defined ethnic categories in use in Singapore and Malaysia, and presenting the state as largely monolithic. More about intra-community and internal political battles over memory conflict over war memory would have been fascinating. Did war memory reinforce many of these categories, transcend them, and break them down? How did the

governmental elites arrive at their decisions over the portrayal of war memory, how did implementation differ from visualisation, and why?

A bigger question is the horizontal interplay between individuals, communities, and states. The analysis largely proceeds upwards and downwards, but not sideways: How do individuals interact over these accounts? Are they widely accepted or is there scepticism? How did the Chinese, Indian, and Malay accounts conflict or reinforce each other? How did the official accounts of Singapore and Malaysia interact, and did they affect relations between the states? But these are broader questions which would likely require another book to answer.

Perhaps the most interesting question for this reviewer is how state narratives pass from constructed myth to accepted fact, and how this then impacts future generations of leaders. The vast majority of members of the governments of Singapore and Malaysia were born after the war, although they are not old enough to have been indoctrinated by the narratives constructed in the book. For example, the Singapore narrative undergoes two official shifts in policy: first, a dampening in the 1960s and 1970s as the government looked forward; then a revival in the 1980s and 1990s as the government sought to build shared history. Singapore's current leadership were largely born in the 1950s and so, to some extent, engaged with the first 'dampening' phase in their education. How have they absorbed these narratives, what lessons did they draw, and how has this impacted their policy making? How will leaders who underwent the 1980s/90s education system draw upon these narratives in their own policies? Education and policy influence each other and build upon each other in a continuous cycle. This book outlines the first turn of the wheel but there are many more to come.

Reference

Hack, K. and Blackburn, K. 2004. *Did Singapore have to fall? Churchill and the impregnable fortress*. London: Routledge.

K.S. LOH, E. LIAO, C.T. LIM & G-Q SENG
The University Socialist Club and the contest for Malaya: tangled strands of modernity
Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012
350pp. ISBN 978 90 8964 409 1, €49.95

Reviewed by PJ Thum
National University of Singapore and Oxford University

The Socialist Club of the University of Malaya was founded in February 1953, and the first edition of its newsletter, *Fajar* (Malay for 'Dawn') was published the next month. Its alumni list reads like a veritable *Who's who* of the English-educated members of Singapore's left-wing anti-colonial movement: Sydney Woodhull, James Puthucheary, Poh Soo Kai, Lim Hock Siew, Albert Lim Shee Ping, Tan Jing Quee, Sheng Nam Chin, Koh Kay Yew, and Linda Chen, among many others, all of whom were eventually detained without trial by the Singapore government. *Fajar* itself helped catalyse resistance to the colonial movement when the colonial government arrested its editorial board in 1954 on charges of sedition. The lawyer for the students, DN Pritt, successfully defended the students and they were acquitted of all charges; assisting Pritt was Lee Kuan Yew.

Differing accounts of the *Fajar* trial have since emerged from the various parties involved. As a result, the legacy of the Socialist Club is also contested ground in the battle between the dominant state-sanctioned 'Singapore Story' narrative, which tells the story of Singapore's decolonisation from the point of view of Singapore's ruling People's Action Party (PAP), and other perspectives formed by the members of Singapore's left whose contributions to Singaporean nationalism and decolonisation have been excluded from the official story. This book emerges in the context of broader attempts to widen and enlarge the scope of Singapore history beyond that of the PAP elite, to take into account other actors who made vital contributions to Singapore's development.

The authors attempt to go beyond this, however, to produce a synthesis of two opposing historical narratives: the introduction explicitly states that the

book 'avoids the ideological approach undertaken in most studies, which marks down groups along the political spectrum as "moderate", "pro-communist" etc.' They seek to intervene against what they term as the 'polarisation' of historical perspective in Singapore. However, this word choice does reveal the state of the current flowering of Singaporean historical perspective. Current developments would be more accurately described as a *diversification* of historical perspective in Singapore; but against the monolith of the Singapore Story, with the vast amounts of state resources behind it, all other perspectives are dwarfed. The book exists in this political reality, where all other attempts to write a historical narrative must fight for validity against the state's active rejection of all other perspectives.

The book is an authoritative and objective study of the Socialist Club, and establishes the Socialist Club itself as a valid and relevant object of study, by explicating the relationship between the Club (and its members) and Singapore's development. The book is thus not just an attempt to create a new synthesis of Singaporean historical perspective, but a political statement: that such a synthesis can, and should exist; that perspectives beyond the official state narrative and valid; that these perspectives make important contributions to Singaporean history, identity, and culture and therefore should be nourished; that ideological conflict does a disservice to the multiplicity of perspectives that make up Singapore's past.

Central to this argument is the idea of modernity. The sub-title of the book, *Tangled strands of modernity*, refers to the authors' argument that the aims of the members of the University Socialist Club are essentially modern in outlook, i.e. that they shared a 'basic reflexivity towards social and political life which rejects the future as pre-ordained'. They shared rational 'modernist objectives' with other student groups and politicians to create 'new citizens' and a 'new society' 'based on scientific-rational principles'. The authors hammer home this point: the word modern appears again and again, in various guises, stretched to encompass a variety of meanings and definitions.

The reason for this is that one of the chief ways in which the official state narrative dismisses other perspectives is through its assertion that only via the PAP was Singapore able to become 'modern': economically, politically, and socially. The book successfully challenges this. It opens by deconstructing the definition of modernity. The rest of the book is divided into two parts. Chapters 2 through 7 narrate the growth of the Socialist Club, focusing on its contributions to Singapore's political development and its vision for a modern, socialist Malaya. Chapters 8 through 10 detail the death and destruction of the Club. Chapter 11 extends the narrative to modern day, looking at the memories of the Club in Singapore today.

The book is a wonderful account of a very exciting time in Singapore, placing the Club in its role as one participant of the 'ambitious modernist project undertaken after World War II' in Singapore. The only real weakness of the book is not its own but its context. Its grim, determined desire to escape the realm of the dominant state narrative and to recast Singapore history via the 'modernity' conceptual framework hangs over the book like a cloud. This context reflects the essential tragedy of the narrative: this is, at its core, the story of how a generation of hopeful and intelligent Singaporeans who did so much for their country had their lives destroyed.

CHRISTOPHER M. JOLL
Muslim merit-making in Thailand's far south
Dordrecht, Springer, 2011
xi + 235 pp., ISBNs 978-94-007-2485-3 (e-book) £72; 978-94-007-2484-6 hb £90

Reviewed by Carool Kersten
King's College London

This monograph by the New Zealand-born 'accidental anthropologist' Christopher Joll is based on fieldwork collected, processed and interpreted in the course of a decade of on-the-ground experience in the Cabetigo community of Pattani, the main urban area in Thailand's Far South – a region predominantly populated by people who profess Islam as their

religious tradition and who are historically regarded as ethno-linguistic Malays. Thanks to his many years in the area, Joll has been able to raise incisive questions regarding identity formation and the dialectic role of religious practice in culturally diverse and politically unstable areas such as this frontier between the rest of the Buddhist kingdom of Thailand and the perhaps even more precariously multi-ethnic federal state of Malaysia.

Centred around a 'Muslim economy of merit' (p. 205) which he has teased out from observing and examining what he calls the '*Tham Bun* Conundrum' (p. 3), Joll situates his research project against the background of the existing literature on Muslims in the greater South, which also includes the region inhabited by Thai-speaking Muslims to the north of the four provinces ceded to Thailand under the Anglo-Siamese treaty of 1909. Although merit-making is addressed in these writings, it has never been subjected to an investigation offering a satisfying explanation. Moreover, in the intervening time between research executed in the 1960s and 1970s and Joll's project of the past decade, linguistic aptitude among the local population in both Malay and Thai has increased considerably, creating a very different cultural environment. This engagement with language also led to unexpected insights into the parallels that exist between language ability and religious identity.

Joll's project also has the ambition of making a contribution to the generic field of the anthropology of Islam, offering new perspectives that add to earlier findings by pioneers of that field, such as Clifford Geertz, Ernest Gellner and Talal Asad. Joll sides with a younger generation of anthropologists, including John Bowen and Daniel Varisco, who have criticised tendencies to focus on the exotic aspects of localised practices and dismissing the relevance of the normative dimensions also found in other parts of the Muslim world. Joll emphatically states that dichotomies between, on the one hand, an allegedly universal and normative Islam and local 'Islams' on the other, 'are of limited heuristic value' (p. 9).

After positioning himself within this field of scholarly inquiry, Joll uses the remainder of his introduction to outline the way he executed his research and how he has organised his material. He explains how he moved from semi-structured interviews with a relatively large pool of contacts to a more in-depth approach involving a much smaller core of informants capable of engaging in more substantive exchanges. Spending an extended period of time in the field, even remaining when the security situation deteriorated after 2004, Joll also reflects on his own position as a researcher from a non-Muslim background.

While Joll has no pretension towards comparisons with Buddhist practices of merit-making or contrasting it with notions of sin or demerit, the book's second chapter provides a historical grounding for his project. Surveying how Indic, Islamic and Thai influences have shaped the political, cultural, and religious environment of Pattani, his narrative of the transition from a Sanskrit to Islamic 'cosmopolis' underscores the role of what he calls 'creole ambassadors', adding further layers of complexity as Pattani began absorbing Islamic reformist influences emerging in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries, eventually losing its autonomy and forced to settle into the polity of the modern-day Kingdom of Thailand. The importance of polyglossia is further unpacked in chapter three, in which Joll's account also moves towards the kind of 'thick description' advocated by Clifford Geertz so as to provide the rich ethnographic detail required for anthropological analysis.

Having contextualised the actual subject matter of his research, the 'merit-making rhetoric' discussed in chapter 4 provides the transition from the introductions on the role and significance of history and language to the three chapters in which Joll fleshes out the repertory of 'merit-making ritual performances' (p. 103). He distinguishes two sets of three merit-making elements and three merit-making complexes respectively. The former consists of reading and reciting the Qur'an, compulsory and supererogatory prayers, and charity or *sedokoh* in the Pattani Malay dialect, while the complexes are made up of so-called *tham bun* feasts which have already been the subject of many studies. However, they also include two other *ibadat* or obligatory acts

of worship performed by Muslim the world over: fasting during the month of Ramadan and the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Joll pairs charity and merit-making feasting in order to articulate their operational semblance, while at the same criticising the obsession of earlier researchers with feasting, and their tendencies to isolate it from the context of *ibadat* and its conjunct of good works. The merit-generation brought about by these feasts is amplified by the observance of the fast and performance of pilgrimage, which Joll discusses in the invocatively titled chapter 'Ramadan scales and Meccan multiplications', arguing that these two *ibadat*, shared by Muslims across the world, 'produce enormous amounts of merit through discrete merit-making elements performed during important times and significant places [sic!]' (p. 159).

The final substantive chapter examining the rationales and motivations behind these merit-making acts and performances already offers a conclusion of sorts, as Joll relates them to their importance for the believer's relationship with God and that of the living with the deceased, thus connecting a cosmological triptych of the here-and-now, the transcendent and the *alam al-barzakh* – the Muslim conceptualisation of the condition in which the dead find themselves until the Final Judgment. In the brief final conclusion these findings are then contextualised in terms of language and history, religion and present-day politics. Noting how the integration of the Far South into the contemporary Thai polity coincided with the arrival of modernist, reformist and revivalist Islamic movements, Joll suggests that 'Thailand's southern Malays have […] been simultaneously incrementally Thai-ised and Islam-ised', and that these processes have 'affected merit-making rhetoric, rituals and rationales in Cabetigo in distinct ways' (p. 207).

'Historically grounded, and attentive to linguistic issues', *Muslim-merit making* is a valuable contribution to the growing literature on Thailand's greater south (p. 208). Building on the evolving field of the anthropology of Islam, it provides increasingly subtle insights not just into the religious, linguistic, cultural, and ultimately also political complexities of a sensitive and strategically important region. It also offers broader lessons for how to deal with ethnic co-habitation. Although Joll's concludes his book with the rather modest assertion that he has only tried to explain why the Muslims of Cabetigo do what they do in order to make sense of their own ordinary lives, through its careful reading and interpretation of collected data, this book calls into question received notions from earlier scholarship on South Thailand's Muslims. Such an interrogation will also move forward the anthropology of Islam in general, and thus help develop subfields of both that social science discipline and the study of Islam outside of its usual remit, which is still too much focused on the Middle East. As such the value of this book transcends its immediate subject matter.

OLIVER PYE & JAYATI BHATTACHARYA (eds)
The palm oil controversy in Southeast Asia: a transnational perspective
Singapore: ISEAS, 2012
xxi + 283 pp., ISBN 978-981-4311-44-1, pb US$38.90

Reviewed by Susan M. Martin
Hertfordshire Business School

Since 1997 the expansion of Indonesia's palm oil industry has proceeded at a breathtaking pace, signalled initially by the smog and haze which spread across Southeast Asia from forest fires in that year of both financial and ecological crisis. Since the turn of the century world exports of palm oil have begun to soar upwards from the 1995–99 base level of 12 million tonnes per annum, already a very substantial volume. In the most recent five-year period, February 2008 to February 2013, the corresponding level was 38 million tonnes per annum (<www.fas.usda.gov/psdonline>). Much of this growth has come from Indonesia, which in 2007 overtook Malaysia as the world's leading supplier of palm oil to the biofuels, oleochemicals, food processing and detergents industries of both western and emerging economies.

Such rapid economic growth inevitably raises big questions: who gains and who loses? Is the growth of

the industry being achieved for the benefit of big business and/or the state at the expense of local communities? Are rising incomes for today's participants being gained at the expense of future generations? Pye and Bhattacharya have assembled an excellent collection of well researched and eloquently argued papers exploring these contentious issues. Their focus is on two main themes: firstly, the impact of land seizures and labour migration on communities caught up in the palm oil boom; and secondly, the issue of how transnational advocacy and social movement activists based in both Southeast Asia and Europe can counter the influence of industry lobby organisations and national ministries over major policy decisions such as the European Union's selection of approved biofuels for future use. Although engaged research of this kind runs the risk of becoming dated before the book comes to press, in this case the issues are still relevant. Conflicts over land continue to erupt in Indonesia; labour shortages and the living conditions of migrants remain high on the agenda of politicians and industry practitioners in both Indonesia and Malaysia; and the European Union debate over the appropriate way to measure indirect land use change (and with it the ecological merits of alternative feedstocks for biofuels) remains unresolved. Hence the papers in this volume remain as fresh and as relevant to current controversies as when they were first presented at a workshop funded by the Asia-Europe Foundation and held in Singapore in 2009.

One of the most striking features of this volume is its even-handed approach. The editors acknowledge that the Malaysian palm oil industry, which is long established and has been expanding relatively slowly since the 1990s, is managed in a very different way from some of the newer and less closely regulated sectors of its Indonesian equivalent. A well researched chapter by Teoh Cheng Hai, the founding Secretary-General of the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil, clearly establishes the historical context of the recent Indonesian boom and provides solid evidence of common ground between transnational advocacy movements, longer established international non-governmental organisations such as the WWF, and Malaysian industry participants seeking to differentiate themselves in the global market on the basis of their principled commitment to socially and environmentally responsible business practices. Oliver Pye provides a valuable analysis of alternative perspectives in his subsequent chapter analysing the transnational environmental campaigning around palm oil. Interestingly, Teoh supports Pye's conclusion that Malaysian corporations need to implement 'best practice' not only in their longer established plantations at home, but also in the new ventures they have been launching since the late 1990s in Indonesia and elsewhere.

Four further papers unpack the controversies surrounding such new ventures, whether financed by Malaysian, Singaporean and Indonesian investors or by Dutch and other European banks. Norman Jiwan, Joana Chiavari, Eric Wakker, and Patrick Anderson provide eloquent accounts of the conflicts and policy debates within Indonesia, the European Union biofuels debate, the efforts of non-governmental organisations to promote environmental sustainability, and the involvement of transnational advocacy and social movement organisations in the struggles of indigenous peoples in Indonesia to control developments affecting their customary lands. All four authors clearly value accuracy of information and criticality of analysis, traditional academic virtues which they find essential for effective campaigning too.

Framed by these papers, the remaining contributions (Chapters 4 to 8) provide in-depth research into Southeast Asian experiences. Written by social scientists based in Asian universities and development institutes, these papers cover the broad themes of labour migration, conservation and social justice in a good range of regional contexts. Junji Nagata and Sachicho Arai offer a historical survey of a key region, Riau Province, comparing smallholder and corporate production systems. In contrast, Oetami Dewi gives a vivid account of a failed oil palm initiative: the Indonesian government's 2005 attempt to launch an 'Oil Palm Mega Project', supported by Chinese investors, which would have created a plantation corridor along the Malaysian-Indonesian border in Borneo, if it had not been countered by the WWF and UN-sponsored 'Heart of Borneo' project.

Clearly the expansion of Indonesia's planted area cannot continue at the same pace indefinitely, and further setbacks for ambitious foreign investors may be expected there in future. The possibility of fresh ventures elsewhere in Southeast Asia is raised by Mary Luz Menguita-Feranil in an intriguing paper on the movement of Malaysian investment into the Philippines. Finally, the remaining two empirical papers cover another topic which is likely to grow in importance over the next few years: labour migration and related socio-political problems. As the new Indonesian plantings of the past ten years begin to reach their full yield potential, more people will be needed to harvest the fruit from the top of ever taller palm trees: a highly unpopular task. Malaysia, where the industry expanded earlier, is already experiencing labour issues as explored by Johan Saravanamuttu, who critiques the country's flexible labour regime; and Fadzilah Majid Cooke and Dayang Suria Mulia, who provide fascinating insights into the contrasting media and local community perceptions of Indonesian and Filipino immigrant workers in Sabah.

Overall this is a timely, well balanced and high quality collection of papers which deserves a wide readership, both within palm-oil producing communities in Southeast Asia and among academics and social activists engaged in the struggle for sustainable development.

ADITYA GOENKA & DAVID HENLEY (eds)
Southeast Asia's credit revolution: from moneylenders to microfinance
London: Routledge, 2010
212 pp. ISBNs 978-0-415-44368-5, hb £90; 978-0-415-80997-9, pb £26

Reviewed by Kostas Retsikas
SOAS, University of London

In the same way that Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' and Karl Marx's communist utopia call forth each other, credit and debt are inexorably linked to each other by means of their reciprocal implication. Yet, despite the fact that both the desire for softly regulated markets and for centrally planned economies arise from the same moral ground that always seeks to improve the state of the world (as if there was something terribly, fatally, inherently wrong with it 'in the first place'), life – my life, your life, all our lives – takes on radically different qualities when lived, constituted and imagined on the foundations of private property or by reference to a future return to the commons. The same premise should also hold for credit's relation to debt, and vice versa. The premise could run more or less as follows: one and the same financial product produces radically different affects for it can be conceived both as beneficial and empowering credit and burdensome and sinister debt. Marx (1981: 595) who describes credit as 'fictitious capital' because of its strong affiliation to speculative future seems to have missed, his neo-liberal victors reminded everyone throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the promise future holds and the avenues to prosperity credit opens. However, in our present moment of long dead communist states, but also of the credit crunch, debt collectivisation, sovereign default risk, and fiscal cliffs, things certainly do not look that certain anymore. Yet, reading the current volume in 2012, that is two years after its publication, one wishes that clocks could readily turn back to let's say, 2005, the year designated by the United Nations as the 'International Year of Microcredit'. This was a time full of optimism the spreading of credit, both macro- and micro-, was generating to match its miraculous capacity of delivering us to the long awaited era of plenty, signalling in Fukuyama's (1992) own historic words, 'the end of history'. It is no accident either that 2005 was also the year the interdisciplinary workshop involving economists, sociologists, historians and development practitioners, which the current volume is based on, was held at the National University of Singapore.

Back then, the end of poverty must have been very near indeed. Poverty was no longer defined as a relation between humans mediated by differential access to the products of human labour but as a matter of 'inadequate utilisation of human resources – that is the imperfect matching of markets, raw materials, and technology with the appropriate

human energy' (p. 59). This is precisely the context micro-finance – 'the provision of financial services to the poor' (p. 1) – was designed to intervene into. Micro-finance, readers are told, acts with unparalleled efficiency and efficacy to correct 'asymmetric information problems' in rural credit markets, and to facilitate 'the flow of resources in smaller amounts to people who can most effectively use such funds' (p. 59). The justification for the 'smaller' in the qualification of the funds made available to the poor, the editors explain in their introduction, is related to the principle of proportionality; such funds are 'on a scale appropriate to their needs' (p. 1)! Ouch!

I should not be misunderstood. Neither should the volume for there is a lot going for it. A wide array of micro-finance institutions and institutional credit arrangements in primarily rural contexts is presented and reviewed; diverse case studies taken from Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia are complemented by material on the history of micro-finance in South Asia and Europe; more 'traditional' sources of credit such as kinship relations, savings associations, and pawnshops are discussed next to the activities of charitable faith-based NGOs and commercially driven banking conglomerates; different micro-finance models such as those of Bangladesh's Grameen Bank and the Indonesian People's Credit Banks are compared; knowledge transfers between Southeast Asian and Indian contexts are attested to.

However, there is no escaping that the essential double-sidedness and formidable ambivalence of financial products has indeed escaped the notice of the contributors, along with the effects the financialisation of life might be having in this part of the world, especially as pertains to the lived experiences and perspectives of debtors. Yet, even the latter analytical move might not be sufficient to break with common sense. For this is at least what Philip Goodchild in his wondrous book *The theology of money* amply makes clear when he argues that money itself, and thus all forms of monetary credit, is created as debt overhang as it does not any more correspond to gold reserves, but instead forms a liability decoupled from an asset. His thesis has two very important consequences: firstly, the creation of new money itself means an increase in the overall levels of debt and secondly, that the strict, cross-contextual distinction of creditors and debtors is no longer applicable. A vicious circle is created and perpetuated by transacting creditors/debtors in which the shadow of debt necessitates the seeking of money which drives the economy upwards and onwards which in turn expands debt exponentially: the (micro-) finance 'revolution', indeed!

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MAX M. RICHTER
Musical worlds in Yogyakarta
Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012
xii + 210 pp. ISBN 978-90-6718-390-1, €24.90

Reviewed by Matthew Isaac Cohen
Royal Holloway, University of London

With its two royal courts, many universities, active cultural centres, commercial art galleries and revolutionary legacy, the central Javanese city of Yogyakarta holds a place in Indonesia's national imagination out of kilter with its population of 500,000. It is a site of nostalgia associated with the 1940s' revolution and carefree student days, a centre for traditional Javanism, a major destination for cultural tourism due to its proximity to the ancient Hindu-Buddhist monuments of Prambanan and Borobudur, a melting pot of artists, intellectuals and activists from Indonesia and abroad. Yogyakarta beckons to visitors and invites us to linger with invitations to a never-ending stream of festivals, gallery openings, performances, seminars, public lectures and workshops. It is the sort of place that is hard to leave.

Australian anthropologist Max Richter's musical ethnography is an account of a period of 'deep hanging out' in Yogyakarta between April and

October 2001. He finds through his observation of and participation in the music going on in the streets, university campuses, hotels, bars, restaurants and other public spaces that music offered an important vehicle for 'cooperation, pleasure, and intercultural appreciation' (p. 185) during a period of dizzying political and economic change. At the same time, leaning on the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, Richter uncovers how music making, like other forms of public culture, is a field of contestation over status, influence and sexual access.

As a guitarist, Richter was able to play with bands active in Yogyakarta at the time of his research, and also sat in regularly on informal jam sessions with street musicians and in bars frequented by backpackers. His domicile in Sosrowijayan, an area of the city near the central train station where many of the budget hotels are clustered, brought him into regular contact with Yogyakarta's low life – street musicians, gigolos aiming to bed foreign tourists through impressing them with musical prowess and charm, thickly made up *perek* (*perempuan eksperimental*, or 'experimental women') dancing in sexualised styles in local eateries and bars with the hope (usually vain) of landing a foreigner as a husband. As Richter describes it, he became 'involved' in the '"stay up all night" (*begadang*) lifestyle of musicians and others' (p. 25). His study is strongest when he describes from this insider's perspective the repertoires, styles, presentations of self and social fields of popular musicians. While there are occasional references to Indonesian popular music by Iwan Fals, Koes Ploes, Emma Ainun Nadjib, and the hybrid pop-gamelan genre *campursari* also is referenced, the music that figures most prominently in Richter's study are covers of pop and rock bands like the Red Hot Chilli Peppers, and imported and local versions of blues, reggae, rock and folk-rock. As such the book stands as a study of what Richter dubs grounded cosmopolitanism, cultural globalisation and glocalisation.

Richter stratifies music making into different domains, including the streets, restaurants and hotels and state institutions, such as college campuses and military barracks. The ethnography is strongest when Richter is playing along with or observing street musicians – with careful attention to musical as well as social considerations. He is less able to interpret, however, the more traditional performances such as *jathilan* and *wayang kulit*. A wayang performance by an unnamed puppeteer is described, for example, as an enactment of 'numerous "hero versus bandit" episodes from the Mahabharata Hindu epic' (p. 139). A description of a concert by the neo-ethnic ensemble Kyai Kanjeng, a major musical institution in Yogyakarta, and an account of a visit to the State Institute of Islamic Studies likewise strike this reader as more journalistic than academic. This is perhaps a symptom of the huge diversity of Yogyakarta's musical scene. It is not hard to run into a variety of performances but systematically following up all that is on offer is beyond the scope of the solo researcher. The book does not cover the whole variety of music making in Yogyakarta, emphasising popular genres over other forms. Concerts of classical gamelan music, *tembang* poetry chanting clubs, experimental music, Western classical music etc receive scant mention. Even so, Richter provides a far richer portrait of music in an important Indonesian cultural centre than previous studies and is as such worthy of study.

ROY ELLEN
Nualu religious practices: the frequency and reproduction of rituals in a Moluccan society
Leiden: KITLV Press, 2012
Pp xxiii, 356. Photographs, maps, tables, glossary, index
ISBN 978 90 6718 391 8, €34.90

Reviewed by Roxana Waterson
National University of Singapore

Roy Ellen's research relationship with the Nuaulu of Seram, Maluku, now extends over more than 30 years, during which time he has visited them 8 times, yielding a combined total of 31 months of fieldwork. This long involvement has made it possible, in this latest work, to address some rarely posed questions about the long term rhythms of ritual life and their role in the reproduction of Nuaulu society. The

symbolism and meaning of rituals is a topic which has preoccupied countless anthropologists, especially those working in eastern Indonesia, but it is not Ellen's primary concern here. Indeed, following Whitehouse (2004) and Sperber (1975), he goes so far as to state that 'rituals do not have intrinsic meanings' and that 'it is probably a mistake to try and find meaning in sacred propositions' (p. 7). Instead, Ellen shifts the focus to a consideration of the entire corpus of Nuaulu rites, which are composed of several interlocking cycles, and how these are transmitted and reproduced over time. What keeps the system going? As he notes, if rituals may instantiate any number of meanings, from a purely practical point of view, they 'must at least encode meaning sufficiently to replicate an action on a subsequent occasion, or to ensure successful transmission' (p. 7). Perfect coherence is not required. The transmission of ritual knowledge is a subject that has been relatively little studied, hence this book addresses a gap in the theorisation of ritual. It raises a number of questions about frequency, periodicity, learning, memory, the role of emotional arousal in ritual experience, variation, disorder, sources of change, the scope for innovation or the resistance to it, and even the possibility of collapse. In doing so, it engages with a range of literature, but most particularly with the work of Whitehouse, and of McCauley and Lawson (2002) on ritual's cognitive foundations; it also finds affinities with the approaches to ritual of Barth (1975) and Lewis (1980).

The population of animist Nuaulu today numbers over 2,000 people living in six settlements, though others have converted either to Christianity or to Islam. The question of how an indigenous religion has survived to the present is, in the Indonesian context, already of great comparative interest, given the pressures that have already caused the collapse of so many others. The Nuaulu are already in effect the only still viable animist group in Maluku, and in spite of conversions, the number of practising animists among them has actually increased due to overall demographic expansion. Their animism at least offered them some protection from the ethnic violence in Maluku following the fall of Suharto, which has so polarised Christian and Muslim communities in the islands.

Rituals remain an integral part of Nuaulu social life. Some rites are performed very regularly, especially those connected with agriculture, and rites of passage such as birth rites. Puberty rites for girls must be staged individually at first menses, whereas for boys, initiation rites are performed collectively and on a grander scale. Since they are infrequent and more spectacular, involving higher levels of emotional arousal, these tend to have sufficient salience to become historical reference points in the community. The rituals of building or rebuilding sacred clan houses are another class of vital but less frequent rites, the rarest of all being those connected with the construction of the *suane*, a sacred house shared by several clans constituting a ritual community. These may be staged only at intervals of 30 years or more. Ellen argues that larger and smaller rites, in spite of their differences, do share a number of recognisable elements forming part of a characteristic repertoire. It is the experience of ritual actions that is more crucial than symbolism or doctrine for the reproduction of ritual. Those that are performed very frequently, even if modest in scale and levels of arousal, will be more thoroughly remembered by actors, who can expect to take part in them many times, and perhaps in different roles over time, which will further deepen their understanding of them. It is Ellen's contention that the smaller rites provide a template for ritual processes, from which it is easier to generate and reconstruct what has to be done at those larger ones that are performed only rarely. Consequently, even if innovations occur, they are likely to be of a kind that fits within general expectations of what a ritual should look like.

A number of factors can upset or delay the holding of a rite, but this always has to be set against the perceived danger of ancestral retribution if it is not done. Ancestral displeasure remains an ever ready explanation for misfortune and illness, which are often ascribed to ritual inadequacies. Because of the interlocking nature of the cycles, the necessity or the failure to perform one sort of rite may delay the holding of another and cause a log-jam in the system;

for instance, only elders who have been through a special installation rite are entitled to officiate at certain other rites, so if their investiture has been delayed, this may make it impossible to proceed for lack of the right personnel, creating a situation of 'precarious transmission' (p. 169). The clans have to officiate for each other, and so must co-ordinate their planning. Shortage of resources or ceremonial valuables, especially antique textiles and porcelain, can be another problem. Like other Austronesian peoples, Nuaulu speak of the 'work' of ritual, and much of this work lies in time-consuming preparations, for instance of large quantities of food. It is thus interlocked with everyday economic activity, and often driving it, even if it also sometimes interferes with it. The building of a *suane* is such a long drawn-out process that the ritual work of construction might be viewed as almost an end in itself, the resultant structure merely the artefact of the ritual process. Human life cycles and house ritual cycles are mutually constitutive and caught up in each other. The result is 'a social system in which cycles of rituals articulate and define the whole' (p. 280). In his final chapter, Ellen offers a nuanced and thought provoking account of the tenacity of this system, along with the very real tensions it generates, the ongoing threats to its transmission, efforts at innovation and simplification, and the constant negotiation, both internal and external, that is necessitated to keep it going. As a product of prolonged and dedicated labour also on his part, this book is a fine achievement and should be an inspiration to others to examine the emergent properties of ritual systems in their entirety.

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