

Reviews

Judith L. Richell, *Disease and Demography in Colonial Burma*, Singapore: NUS Press, 2006, 327 pp., ISBN 9971-69-301-1 (pbk.).

As Ian Brown's foreword to this book notes, its author died a few weeks before completing and submitting the doctoral thesis on which it is based. Unfortunately the thesis could not then proceed to assessment, and instead was accepted by the University of Singapore Press for publication. Judith Richell's husband then undertook the challenging task of finishing the typescript, working, if not with completely unfamiliar material, at least without the intimate engagement and interpretative ability of a doctoral student after many years focused on the topic. This information provides not only a tribute to both Judith and Peter Richell for their achievements, but also an explanatory note for the final form of the work, incompletely transformed from thesis to book.

That said, the body of the book presents a thoroughly researched and productive analysis of the interplay of population, disease, and colonial medical response in Burma during the period of British rule from 1852 to 1941. The introductory section points to the distinctive demographic history that Burma shared with most other countries in Southeast Asia (in contrast to the pattern in India, China and Japan): low population density despite high agricultural potential, with negligible population growth into the first decades of the nineteenth century. Both population and agricultural productivity subsequently increased; by 1900, Burma's population had doubled and it was the world's leading rice exporter. Although new interest in Southeast Asia's unusual history of population change arose in the 1980s and produced several major contributions on the region, Richell's *Disease and Demography* constitutes the first readily available detailed analysis of the factors that influenced the specific population dynamics of Burma.

Richell employs sophisticated demographic techniques to establish accurate data on population change, but her stated goal is to go beyond purely mathematical modelling, to embed these figures in social, economic, and environmental contexts and thus clarify the impact of colonialism and modernisation on Burma's development. Of undoubted interest to historical demographers and scholars of South East Asia, this study therefore also provides a valuable addition to the fields of colonial studies and tropical medicine. As an historian of Pacific health, I found Richell's work provided useful counterpoints and comparisons to demographic change and colonial

administration in that very different archipelagic environment.

After outlining Burma's geographical environments and diverse inhabitants, Richell sets about 'numbering the people' (1). To achieve this supposedly 'simple objective' (54), she has first to address the problem common to historical demographers—how can one establish the size of a population in the absence of reliable, consistent censuses or registration of vital statistics (birth, death, and migration rates)? What follows is a complex and comprehensive examination of a range of historical records and statistical sources, in which Richell cross-references data that is rarely complete or consistent, employing wider contexts and evidence and sophisticated demographic techniques to make logical deductions and finally arrive at best estimates of populations, first for the nineteenth century, and then for the period up to 1941. Lack of comparable material forced Richell to limit the geographic and temporal parameters of her study, selecting the central lowlands where the people were most consistently "Burman" in culture, and British control longest-established. This area produced the most data, especially for the key period 1891-1941, during which decennial censuses of Burma were held, the first five as part of the wider Census of India (Burma was administered as a province until 1935). Shifting district boundaries, changing methods and categories of enumeration (for example from religion to ethnicity), and lack of synchronicity all created problems for any longitudinal assessment, but the first independent census, in 1941, perhaps most starkly exemplifies the difficulties of Richell's task—of all its data, only one important page of collated provisional results survived the British retreat in 1942. Nevertheless, in carefully exploring the inherent problems of the censuses, and the effects of migration (Indian, internal, and seasonal), Richell both provides a fascinating insight into the demographer's craft, and achieves her first goal—firm figures for the Burmese population in the study area between 1891 and 1941.

It is the inter-censal rate of change derived from these figures that informs the rest of the book. Burma's average annual increase of 1.07 per cent over this fifty-year period matched its estimated rate for the nineteenth century, but apparently compares unfavourably to growth in neighbouring Siam, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Even more surprisingly, twentieth century rates actually slowed, despite improved infrastructure, increasing agricultural production and medical control over infectious diseases, and freedom from major catastrophe (except the 1918 influenza pandemic). To explain this phenomenon, Richell turns to more detailed demographic calculations of birth and death rates in order to establish more clearly the dynamics of population structure and growth. Despite a forewarning and her attempt to order the material for greatest clarity, this chapter is particularly challenging for the non-specialist reader. Again, erratic and inadequate data created extraordinary problems, requiring highly technical analysis to achieve any coherent, credible result. Richell plunges into the sources, dissecting, discarding, testing, synthesising, and smoothing, to produce figures she can stand by. These refine her earlier assessment of overall growth rates: crude

birth rates remained almost static (4.5-4.79 per cent) for 1901-1931, while death rates increased from 3.25 per cent in the decade 1901-1911, to over 3.7 per cent in the two subsequent decennial periods—this despite the declining impact of major epidemic diseases previously implicated in high mortality.

What factors were responsible for this unusual pattern? Each of the following three chapters addresses a critical period of life (infancy, childhood, and adulthood), with intensive quantitative analysis to establish trends in the vital statistics followed by qualitative analysis of medical and administrative reports and contemporary commentary to discern the influences on morbidity and mortality during each phase. For infancy, for example, scanty data from registration records is transformed into estimated male and female Infant Mortality Rates (IMR—generally accepted as the base measure of a community's health and prosperity), after which Richell explores contributory factors such birthing practices; infant nutrition (the impact of both cultural prescriptions and food availability and quality on maternal diet during pregnancy and breast feeding, the effect of prolonged lactation, and weaning practices); diseases (neonatal tetanus, beriberi, gastroenteric and respiratory diseases, smallpox, and malaria); and the colonial administration's tardy and inadequate responses to a high, and increasing, IMR.

Richell next constructs a profile of the family and childhood in colonial Burma, discerning attitudes towards marriage, children, the position of women, marriage age, fertility control, and family size, to understand general fertility rates. In a section on morbidity and mortality during childhood (ages one to fifteen years) she again highlights the fragmentary nature of available data, and the value of demographic tools such as model life tables to construct estimates of changing mortality rates across specified age groups and across time. Here also, the pattern emerges of increased mortality in the decades after 1911. Contemporary health surveys of schoolchildren revealed high levels of malnutrition, and researchers recognized its synergistic relationship with infection. After considering the impact of various diseases on childhood mortality, Richell concludes that poor nutrition (caused by cultural food preferences, poverty, and the new technology of mechanical rice milling that stripped essential vitamins and protein from a dietary staple) increased childhood vulnerability to mortality from disease, especially measles and malaria.

Although those Burmese fortunate to enter adulthood still had no guarantee of a long life, Richell calculates that they suffered proportionally lower mortality, especially after 1911—a point that emphasizes the increased vulnerability of the young in Burma. Combined with other data, steady changes between 1885-1939 in the seasonality of adult deaths (from summer to an autumn/winter peak) provides further clues as to causal factors of mortality. After discounting urbanization, she explores the role of epidemic cholera, smallpox and plague. Terrifying in the nineteenth century, after 1900 mortality from these diseases declined steadily. Considering 'who died of the diseases and why' provides an opportunity to investigate this

transition, along with the position of Indian migrant labour (disease victim or reservoir?), the influence of commercial interests on morbidity, colonial attitudes and public health activities. Other contributions to mortality are discussed, including famine, yaws and goitre, bowel and respiratory diseases (tuberculosis was apparently introduced with British occupation), and the 1918 influenza pandemic. The last killed perhaps 3.1 per cent of the population, a high proportion adult, and revealed the inadequacies of the British administration's public health organization.

Richell concludes that none of these conditions satisfactorily explain morbidity and mortality patterns, and in her final chapter she pursues more fully earlier tentative suggestions, that chronic poor nutrition and increasing malaria account for the slow rise of Burmese population before World War Two. Each factor is considered intensively from many angles to assess its role as a determinant of demographic change. Ironically, malnutrition's impact increased even as the British expanded rice cultivation almost seven-fold between 1860 and 1940, creating huge surpluses and making Burma into a leading food exporter. Richell demonstrates how this changed the disease ecology of Burma. Associated developments like the new milling technology mentioned above created widespread sub-clinical nutritional deficiencies and increased vulnerability to disease. The re-engineering and extension of irrigation systems, applying techniques perfected in India without regard for Burma's very different environment, created favourable conditions for the spread of the anopheles species that were the primary vector of malaria in Burma. Richell concludes that the rising incidence of nutritional diseases and malaria offset the decline in infectious disease mortality and contributed to the twentieth century's continuing high death rates. Her discussion also exposes a colonial administration preoccupied with protecting its own political and economic interests, one which disrupted the epidemiological balance to the detriment of the subject population, and despite growing knowledge did not have the political will to make necessary changes.

This book may not have been the one Richell herself would like to have published; if she had had time, she might have applied her 'smoothing' techniques to broaden its accessibility. Some sections of complex demographic manipulation challenged and perplexed this non-specialist reader; but the alchemy of drawing together difficult, fragmented sources into a substantive profile of Burma's colonial history creates a richly textured, energetic work. One can only admire her persistence in teasing out the dynamics of the morbidity and mortality of peoples far removed from her in time, space, and experience, while dealing with her own sickness and imminent death, and Peter Richell's commitment to bringing this valuable research to print.

Reviewed by ANNIE STUART
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Nicholas Tarling, *Britain, Southeast Asia and the Impact of the Korean War*, Singapore, Singapore University Press, 2005, xii + 538 pp. ISBN: 9971693151 (pbk).

In this, the third book in what the author himself acknowledges has become a trilogy covering Britain's policy in Southeast Asia since the beginning of the Pacific War, Tarling again draws upon his extensive research into unpublished British records to provide a fascinating and detailed diplomatic history of Britain's engagement in the region from 1950-55. Although it is the Korean War which provides the context for the discussion of developments in Southeast Asia during this period, the war itself is only mentioned in passing. It is the developments themselves concerning, especially, the future of West New Guinea, the conflict in Indochina and its temporary resolution with the Geneva settlement, and the establishment of SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation) which feature predominantly. The focus, therefore, is on British policy towards, and relations with, Burma, Indonesia, the Indochinese states and Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore having received full coverage elsewhere and relations with the Philippines being minimal. The six chapters follow a chronological sequence with these developments and relationships providing thematic sub-sections.

British policy was, Tarling contends, clear and consistent throughout this period. In essence, Britain sought to promote an international political anarchy: a 'world of states' in which although differences in power status would exist, all would enjoy sovereign equality. Britain also accepted that states would pursue varying national interests and would possess a variety of political structures. This approach made Britain much more pragmatic towards the Vietminh, for instance, and it displayed none of the dogmatic anti-communism which characterised (and bedevilled) American policy in Asia generally and Indochina in particular. Britain, Tarling observes, had quickly recognised that the Second World War had led to a 'rapid change' in Southeast Asia and that demands for 'self-government' (440) had to be accommodated and not resisted; an important point of difference with its fellow European colonial powers—France and the Netherlands. Britain, however, tended to oppose references to 'self-determination' as was apparent in its response to the wording of the aims of the 'Pacific Charter' associated with the Manila Treaty.

The advent of the Korean War, which led to a palpable intensification of the Cold War, generated concerns in Whitehall that United States (US) action could alienate some Asian states and that this might prove beneficial to the Soviet Union. Britain, which had been much more accommodating to the newly established People's Republic of China, was particularly concerned about American attitudes towards China (which were now more hard line than ever) and thus it re-emphasised its regional policy of 'accepting nationalism as an antidote to communism' and 'recognising Asian claims to independent statehood' (66). Unfortunately, as Tarling rightly recognises,

the Korean War temporarily suspended the political development of Southeast Asia and postponed crucial decisions.

Ironically, prior to the war, Britain had, as its relative power position declined, sought to encourage an American commitment to the region as the best way of bolstering its position and furthering its interests. The Korean War now led the US, which was not interested in Southeast Asia as such, to believe that it had to demonstrate the strength of the West's position in the wider Cold War competition through a growing commitment to the defence of Indochina. One of the underlying themes of the book is the difficulty British ministers and officials had in managing American policy and the frustration generated by the short-term thinking and desire for quick results which was so prevalent in Washington.

At a time when West Papua is again causing diplomatic friction between Australia and Indonesia, it is particularly pertinent that one of the issues which the book features is the debate over the future of West New Guinea (as it was then termed by the Dutch and others) following the transfer of sovereignty over the remainder of Netherlands Indonesia to the Republic of the United States of Indonesia in December 1949.

The retention of Dutch sovereignty over West New Guinea after the transfer of power to Sukarno posed a dilemma for Britain, America and Australia. 'How was it possible to preserve a friendly relationship with the Indonesian government and yet withhold support for the transfer to it of the remnant of Netherlands Indonesia?' (27) The heightened tension brought about by the Korean War made it more important than ever for Britain that a 'moderate', stable government was in existence in Jakarta. Indonesia, Australia and the West New Guinea issue had, therefore, to be kept in 'cold storage' (77) as Britain's preference was for a 'retention of the status quo' for as long as possible (78). Ultimately, it was hoped that discussions between the Dutch and the Indonesians on West New Guinea could be sufficiently prolonged that a solution acceptable to all parties would eventually be found. Finding a solution that was acceptable to Australia, which believed it had a legitimate claim to be consulted in decisions on the status of West New Guinea and even to a direct role in its administration, was difficult and Britain had to work hard at times to keep the issue in 'cold storage' amidst Australian (and Indonesian) efforts to raise the temperature.

Of the three overlapping circles which Churchill had identified as being at the heart of British foreign policy in the post-1945 period—Europe, the United States and the Empire and Commonwealth—the latter was accorded considerable recognition by Britain and it sought where practicable to involve its Commonwealth partners in the decision-making process and the policies which resulted. It was apparent throughout the period 1950-55 that Britain was especially keen to involve India and secure its support for many of the positions adopted vis-à-vis Southeast Asia. It was also notable how often it was considered that recourse to the United Nations should (or would) occur.

Although, as Tarling notes, Europe would have priority should an international conflict eventuate, Britain did not always see eye to eye with its principal European ally, France, over the situation in Indochina. Indeed, Britain was often highly critical of French policy in, and behaviour towards, the Associated States (Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam). Underlying this friction was the fact that there was a fundamental difference between the loose arrangements of the Commonwealth and the rigid centralisation of the French Union.

For Britain, Indochina was not intrinsically important. Its importance lay in the context of the defence of Malaya—the priority for Britain in Southeast Asia throughout this period. In this regard, Britain's concerns were that the experience of the Pacific War could be repeated with Japanese expansionism being substituted for that of communism. The failure to execute a successful defence of Malaya in 1941 by implementing 'Operation Matador'—a pre-emptive move into Thailand to create strategic depth—made Britain take a keen interest in Thailand. Britain's principal concern from 1950-55 was about Thailand's ability, or will, to resist Chinese expansionism. It was also thought necessary to consider some means by which a 'defensive position on the Kra Isthmus in the latitude of Songkhla' (123) could be established.

To achieve a successful outcome in Indochina in general, and Vietnam in particular, Britain believed that the French had to do two things simultaneously: move towards giving the Associated States meaningful independence and prosecute the military campaign against the Vietminh more vigorously. France's failure to do either of these things was a source of some consternation for British ministers and officials and at times caused friction with their French counterparts. The British view was that France was weak and vacillating and Eden, the Foreign Secretary, went as far as to state at one point in 1954 that: 'The French become daily more helpless and contemptible' (303). Britain, however, ostensibly due to a lack of resources, did its utmost to avoid becoming involved militarily.

Ultimately having no responsibility for Indochina, and thus being in the fortunate position of being one step removed from the problem, Britain was able to be pragmatic and, in retrospect, far-sighted. The British recognised more quickly than the French did that a military solution was increasingly becoming impossible to attain and that some form of negotiated political solution would have to be reached instead. Indeed, in 1953 it was suggested in British policy-making circles 'that a partition might be the outcome in Vietnam, resembling, but also differing from, a partition in Korea.' (266) This, Tarling observes, 'was to become Foreign Office policy in 1954 and was the basis of the Geneva settlement' (266).

The Geneva settlement which eventually emerged was largely influenced by British diplomacy. It was achieved despite serious disagreements at times with Britain's principal ally, the US, which favoured 'united action' over a negotiated political solution fearing that the latter would lead eventually to a Communist takeover of Vietnam. The US,

Tarling notes, never endorsed the settlement. The Americans were ultimately to be proved right although the possibility of this occurring had not escaped one British official who had made the telling comment before the Geneva conference had even convened that the likelihood was that partition would not last long and that eventually the country would probably be reunified under the Vietminh.

By itself, the Geneva settlement was not enough to secure British objectives in the region: Britain also wanted some form of collective defence agreement, preferably a defence treaty. The treaty would, it was hoped, support a settlement in Indochina and prevent Southeast Asia from falling under communist control. Britain, Tarling contends, had long held the view that the region represented an area of weakness in the West's position in the Cold War and that some form of collective defence arrangement was necessary. Although in 1954 the timing was now right for one to be established, securing an acceptable one was problematic.

During the drafting of the agreement which was eventually to become the Manila Treaty, under which SEATO was set up, fundamental differences with the US emerged. The American preference was still for 'united action' over a treaty, and whereas Britain wanted a treaty with a core American commitment that would be accepted and/or joined by Asian powers, the 'US was unwilling to offer the core commitment and sceptical about the Asian powers' (404). Britain and America also disagreed over the inclusion of the word 'Communist' and over the exact area which the treaty would cover. The 'core problem' (408) for Britain here was that the Treaty draft included Pakistan but not India and thus it was theoretically possible, therefore, that as the word 'Communist' was to be omitted (as Britain wanted) the Treaty would cover an 'Indian attack on Pakistan' (409).

The conventional view of SEATO is that it was inspired by the US and was intended to be the Southeast Asian version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Tarling effectively demolishes this erroneous view by pointing out that the US Secretary of State, Dulles, always preferred the term 'Manila Pact' to SEATO (precisely because of its NATO connotations) and saw it as something akin to the Monroe Doctrine: it was a warning with no automatic military commitment. Indeed, the US was most reluctant to see the establishment of significant military machinery under SEATO. Ultimately, Tarling argues, the Manila Treaty satisfied neither the British nor the Australians, while the Americans were also displeased with it. If it was a 'diplomatic triumph' for Eden (as the Foreign Secretary described it himself), then it was an 'empty one' (410). Moreover, it was opposed by many influential Asian powers: India thought it would lead to unwarranted external interference in regional states' internal affairs, China attacked it and Indonesia believed it would actually exacerbate regional tensions.

Though rather different in form, SEATO was not entirely unrelated to a strand of thinking in British policy-making circles which was apparent throughout the period. There are several passing references to discussions about the utility and viability of some form of regional pact or association.

Indeed, in 1951, one official raised the idea of a 'limited regional alliance directed specifically towards peaceful aims i.e. with the principal object of improving the standard of life and the stability of the South-East Asia area' (178). This effectively describes the principal objectives of the Association of Southeast Asia and, of course, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) formed in 1967.

ASEAN's origins lay partly in the desire of regional states to safeguard Southeast Asia from unwanted interference by extra-regional powers. It is the extent of this interference which is the overriding theme of this and the other books in Tarling's trilogy. As the author argues in the Epilogue, during the period covered by his trilogy, 'Southeast Asia and its peoples were exposed, even more than in most periods, to actions and policies generated in other parts of the world that were more crucial to the great powers' (442). The experience of external intervention and the desire to 'limit it, [meant] states began to look to regional collaboration' (442).

British diplomacy, Tarling concludes with some admiration, was skilful and efficient. Given the growing gap between power attributes and ambitions, it had to be. Britain wanted, and thought as a great power it had, the right to influence events. It was often constrained from so doing by its lack of material and financial resources. One cannot help but develop the sense that British ministers and officials were often frustrated by their inability to get others to do what they believed to be right.

Although long and detailed, Tarling's book is very readable. It will certainly appeal to those with an interest in British diplomacy in Southeast Asia, specific events during this period or who want to understand the background to later attempts to promote regional co-operation. In view of the author's dedication to accuracy it was just a pity that the proof reader was not similarly motivated. There are several typographical errors and other written mistakes including the occasional use of 'instance' instead of 'insistence'.

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Nick Knight, *Understanding Australia's Neighbours, An Introduction to East and Southeast Asia*, Cambridge University Press, 2004, x + 248 pp. ISBN: 0521549418 (pbk).

Nick Knight's *Understanding Australia's Neighbours, An Introduction to East and Southeast Asia* is an incredibly interesting and useful text for anyone concerned with this vast and complex region of the world. It is a study which clearly targets an Australian audience, although I think it will be of interest to anyone wanting to better understand the region and Australia's place in it.

Knight positions Australia on the periphery of Southeast and East Asia (a geographic reality) and challenges the reader to question the nature of the relationship Australia has historically had with Asia. Examining the nature of this relationship is something the author rightly points out can be an 'uncomfortable experience' (3) given the island continent's history of excluding Asians and often viewing the region in very negative terms. A central theme of this study is to get the reader 'thinking' (1) about Asia in order to better understand its diversity and complexity. By 'thinking' Knight is referring to the need to go beyond superficial and random observations. He correctly, in my opinion, highlights the role of the social sciences and history in any effort to better understand Asia. This study introduces such issues as orientalism, modernisation theory, democracy and Asian values (as well as many other important themes) in a way that is comprehensible to almost any reader. The book understandably draws heavily on a full spectrum of academic disciplines including history, anthropology, sociology, economics and international relations. Without the tools these disciplines provide to organise and interpret information about the region one will, Knight concludes, be left simply with a 'chaotic jumble of disconnected and superficial impressions' (2). We can only hope that more of our politicians and nation's commerce and business schools that run courses on the region pick this text up as an introductory text!

The study is organised around twelve themes which the author has identified as important to an understanding (or to use his word, 'thinking') of Asia. Knight also says he selected the themes based on their relevance or importance to an Australian readership. These themes are organised into chapters and will not be entirely new to anyone who has been involved in teaching about Asia at a tertiary level, particularly for those teaching introductory units or running courses of study about the region. The chapters reflect the range of academic disciplinary insights needed for the kind of 'thinking' Knight wants us to undertake in our efforts to meaningfully understand and engage with Asia. After discussing his approach and methodology in the 'Introduction: Thinking about Asia, thinking about Australia' the study moves on to introduce the reader to such important themes as, 'The Idea of "Asia": Australia's "Near North"—East and Southeast Asia'; 'Tradition and Modernity in East and Southeast Asia: The family'; 'Tradition and Modernity in Southeast and East Asia: Religion'; 'Colonialism in East and Southeast Asia: How important was the impact of the West?'; 'Nationalism and Revolution in East and Southeast Asia'; 'Nations and Nation-Building in East and Southeast Asia'; 'International Politics and East and Southeast Asia: The Cold War and the Sino-Soviet Split'; 'The Rise and Decline of the Japanese Economic "Miracle"'; 'The Newly Industrialising Economies of East and Southeast Asia: Economic growth and economic challenge'; 'Democracy and Human Rights'; 'Globalisation and East and Southeast Asia'; 'Australia and Asia, "Asia" in Australia'.

Something this study does which I am sure will be greatly appreciated by readers is to introduce into the discussion how the various themes and topics have been taken up or perceived in Australia. So for example, the section of the study which deals with democracy and human rights locates Australia in the discussion. Similarly, the issue of globalisation and its impact on Asia also points out the ways in which Australia shares this experience with Asia (and the rest of the world). The first chapter, in discussing the 'Idea of Asia' clearly lays out the historical and cultural factors which have shaped perceptions of the region with a distinctively Australian focus. The final chapter deals explicitly with the changing nature of Australia's relationship with Asia. For anyone familiar with the debates of the past several decades in Australia about engagement with the region these two chapters provide a considered and timely reminder of where we (Australians) have been as well as providing some direction as to where we should be heading. This direct linking of Australia's experience and awareness of these key themes in the context of Asia is something which I have not seen done previously across such a diverse range of issues. Certainly I have not seen it done this well previously.

One of the most interesting and somewhat unique aspects of this study is the way in which it discusses these undeniably important themes in the context of debates and approaches that have evolved from various academic disciplines. What this means is that the reader is not only informed with 'facts' about Asia but also provided with a framework for understanding the complexity and diversity of ways in which one can think about the region. This approach and structure manage to highlight and encourage a deeper reading and understanding of the often complex themes of this study. For example, Knight's analysis of the Newly Industrialising Economies (NIEs) of the region examines the seemingly spectacular economic growth of the 1970s—1980s by recourse to the different approaches adopted to explain the so-called economic 'miracles' by different analysts. It is a discussion that broaches the full gambit of explanations and theories about the economic successes and failures of the region from economic to cultural and political. Similarly, each section of the book provides the reader with discussion of the central debates, methodologies and theories surrounding issues. The discussion is framed throughout the book in such a way as to present the multiple ways of thinking one can adopt to begin to understand Asia and Australia's relationship to it.

This is not suggest that no positions are taken with respects to key issues raised. There is no sense as a reader that the author is hiding behind a mishmash of theories and explanations so as to not take a position on what are very important matters. For example, it is clear that Knight only sees economic 'miracles' in Asia to the extent that these can be explained by reference to concrete factors, be they economic or cultural. Similarly, when it comes to such issues as democracy and human rights it is clear that the author takes a position on these matters in relation to Asia (and Australia). After discussing criteria for democracy he then applies these to the region,

challenging whether or not democracy can be said to exist in countries such as Singapore and Malaysia (as examples). Having said this, the nature of the discussion and approach used by the author leave considerable room for the reader to form their own opinions about many key issues. The author at no point seems to be pushing any particular dogma in relation to what are sometimes contentious matters. Certainly anyone who reads this study will be better placed to make informed judgements based on the diversity of debate that many of the book's themes have already received and which Knight elucidates so well.

I believe this study to be one of the best I have seen in terms of introducing the Asian region to students and others interested in the kind of engagement Australia has had with Asia, as well as the kind of engagement it must have with the region into the future. Another reason this study is important is because of the way in which it highlights the vital work being done by social scientist from across multiple disciplinary backgrounds on Asia. This study clearly shows the strength of adopting an analysis which takes into account the great wealth of insights to be had from an approach that is based on diversity. It introduces readers to some of the key debates that have emerged from the many disciplines which have been applied to the study of Asia and does this in a way that is accessible to an average reader. Also, this study is a model example of the type of insights that can be gained from adopting a multi-disciplinary approach to understanding and teaching about Asia. It is a book that should be in every library in Australia (and Asia) and should be compulsory reading for anyone in government, education or business dealing with the region.

*Reviewed by STEPHEN DOBBS
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Peter Boomgaard and David Henley, eds., *Smallholders and Stockbreeders: Histories of Foodcrop and Livestock Farming in Southeast Asia*, Series: Verhandelingen Van Het Koninklijk Instituut Voor Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde, 218, Leiden, KITLV Press, 2004, 344 pp., ISBN 9-067-18225-7 (pbk.).

Peter Boomgaard and David Henley's edited collection of Southeast Asian smallholder histories is self-consciously aimed at filling an historiographical gap. It arose from a workshop, which in turn led to a conference stream, and finally to a book. The introduction makes a virtue of obscurity, announcing on its first page that, 'this book is the first coordinated attempt to collect and analyse, for several areas in Southeast Asia, historical data pertaining to ... livestock keeping' (1). Certainly the book keeps that promise, presenting a wealth of detail on small-scale agriculture in Southeast Asia, and publishing the work of a wide range of scholars from different national backgrounds (though all but three are based in Europe).

The topic addressed in all these papers—that of small scale agriculture, whether involving crop plants or animals, in Southeast Asia—is well served by this collection. As several of the authors note, the region does have a deep past that can be tapped by historians—both archaeological and written records are available. R.D. Hill's chapter is an interesting commentary on these sources, noting the lack of interdisciplinary dialogue and the difficulties that confront historians willing to engage with non-traditional sources. These problems include missing archaeological pollen records since crop plants were not allowed to flower, difficulties in distinguishing the pollen of newly cultivated plants from their wild cousins, mistranslated inscriptions as agricultural information failed to seize the imagination of archaeologists, and promising but massive and uncatalogued colonial material. Hill provides a useful base for further work by providing thorough tables of Southeast Asian crop plants, arranged by probable origin. This is a tendency reflected in the rest of the book—all the authors are generous in providing a base for future work and the book provides indexes of proper names, of the plants and animals mentioned, and of geographical regions.

The universal index is the most unified aspect of the book. While a number of the authors attempt to create a unified volume out of the various sections, many of the sections are very specialized. For example, Roy Ellen's chapter engages in an esoteric debate about technological development, and contains a great deal of detail of interest only to the expert. In an unfortunate piece of arrangement, the image of sago processing that would have made the chapter much more accessible to the general reader was placed next to the last page of the conclusion. Jan Wisseman Christie's chapter also contributes to a very specialized field, examining in detail the crop and taxation systems of early Java and Bali and identifying but not pursuing broader links between agriculture, environment and trade. In contrast, David Henley's chapter succeeds in analyzing both the process of growing rice, and why historians might be interested in it. It goes as far as engaging with the work of Jared Diamond and demonstrates the ways in which Diamond's approach to human behaviour and food value was overly simplistic. Henley instead argues that crop choice deals with economics and culture as well as population density and availability.

The solidity of the book as history is questionable in certain chapters. While Monica Janowski's chapter includes very interesting material on twentieth century influences on rice growing and examines the influence of World War II, the advent of Christianity in the area, and the consequences of border struggles, it tends to be anthropological in its interests, data and expression. Similarly J.F. Le Coq, G. Trébul and M. Dufuier's chapter, which deals with the links between politics and productiveness in a specific area in the twentieth century, is unmistakably geographical, from its multiple authorship through to its lists, bullet points and diagrams. While interdisciplinary dialogue is useful and necessary in the field of environmental history the inclusion of these chapters in a book with 'histories' in the title raises interesting questions about where disciplinary lines should be drawn,

and highlights the different writing style used by historians when dealing with topics touching on anthropology and geography.

The book is deliberately divided between foodcrops and livestock, and the chapters on livestock tend to be more accessible to the non-specialist reader. William Gervase Clarence-Smith pushes the narrative potential of his subject to its full extent, concentrating on getting material on horses, who have historically, 'been even more overlooked than bovids and elephants' (189) into print, rather than engaging in analysis of that material. Horses have also attracted the attention of Greg Bankoff, and his chapter, in contrast to Clarence-Smith's, attempts to focus history on the horse itself, rather than on its relationship with humans. The chapter is successful, but that success is not readily apparent—it is impossible to avoid the significance of humans to the experiences of horses, and equally impossible to find sources that accurately reflect the 'lived experience' of animals other than humans. Boomgaard also contributes a chapter on horse history, and as with other authors in other chapters, demonstrates the newness of this area of interest by identifying a problem that has not yet been resolved by historians. Boomgaard's problem in this chapter is the slipperiness of animal breeds, a problem that could be related to Bankoff's desire to see animals in their own terms rather than in those imposed on them by humans. While Boomgaard's chapter is accessible and demonstrates a ready sense of humour, the argument about the connection between horse and human prestige is not fully developed.

Boomgaard also contributes a chapter on the beginnings of 'the cattle era', and again the placement of material in this book is not felicitous. This chapter contains necessary background, such as an explanation of Wallace's Line and pointers to other chapters within the collection. The placement of the cattle chapters before those on horses would have made the collection work more effectively as a book. The chapter itself is disordered but examines interesting ideas about stock types and human status. The next chapter deals with the same themes in a later time period, and is also accessible and generous in providing context. This chapter, by Martine Barwegen, is one of the most successful in the book and provides a coherent analysis of the factors influencing the popularity and spread of cattle in Java. It picks up on interesting and unexpected facts and outcomes, and provides an easy entry into the topic for those unfamiliar with the history of cattle in Southeast Asia. The same time period is selected by D.F. Doeppers. He identifies the recent introduction of cattle into Southeast Asia, the exceptions to this rule, and the methods used to raise them. Doeppers' work deliberately connects his chosen region to the wider world and the broader history of animal affairs.

I have provided chapter analyses because of the difference in tone and general appeal of the chapters that make up this book. The book as a whole is disjointed, despite the attempt made in the introduction to create an underlying logic for the collection. Instead the collection experiences an uneasy slippage between highly specialized and more popular work and

while it does provide very useful material for scholars moving into this area of research its construction from patched-together specialties restricts its applications. As the conference-paper-to-book becomes more common in response to demands for increasing numbers of publications, the problem of combining such chapters into something more than the equivalent of a special edition of a journal needs to be considered, even if that problem proves impossible to surmount.

Reviewed by CLAIRE BRENNAN
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Anthony Reid, ed., *Verandah of Violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem*, Singapore and Seattle: Singapore University Press and University of Washington Press, 2006, 397 pp., ISBN: 9971693313 (pbk.).

This edited volume draws on conference papers presented in Singapore at an Asia Research Institute conference on Aceh (28-29 May 2004). This conference included some of the best known scholars on Aceh, including New Zealander Anthony Reid as editor and contributor, and makes for a fine collection of essays on the problem of violence in that province. The book title, *Verandah of Violence*, is a play on Aceh's popular moniker 'Serambi Mekkah' (Verandah of Mecca), itself a reference to the province's historical role as the main jumping off point for the Haj. The book is dedicated to the Acehnese historian (and conference co-convenor) Mohammad Isa Sulaiman, who perished a few months later in the Boxing Day Tsunami that devastated Aceh and killed 160,000 of its residents—an event that would also provide the backdrop to a renewed, and more robust, peace settlement.

The contributors are varied. They include, for example, the following: Lesley McCulloch, who was once incarcerated by the Indonesian authorities on charges of aiding and abetting the Free Aceh Movement (GAM); Damien Kingsbury who would later show up as a member of GAM's negotiating team in Helsinki; and Kirsten Schulze, who is characterised by Reid as having 'a sympathetic understanding of the position and strategies that the military (TNI) used, with all its flaws, in combating the resistance' (15). The value of this particular volume is to provide a number of perspectives from different political persuasions and different analytical approaches to the problem of Aceh. Yet, all seem to agree that the Indonesian government has, in the past, pursued a heavy handed approach that has proved counterproductive. Even the allegedly 'sympathetic' Schulze says of Indonesia's military approach to the province: 'its [Indonesia's] counter-insurgency strategy was repeatedly undermined by the failure to implement the non-military aspects of any of its comprehensive operations as well as the failure to address the root causes of the Aceh conflict' (265).

Other conclusions are as follows. Anthony Reid notes Aceh's distinctiveness and lack of historical interaction with Java—its pre-conquest connections being with the Malayan Peninsula, the ports of the Indian Ocean, and with the external powers of Britain, France and Turkey. Reid writes that Aceh's forced incorporation into the Dutch East Indies (beginning in 1873) was met with resistance more widespread, bitter and enduring than that of any other part of the archipelago: 'Southeast Asia's first successful guerrilla strategy against modern European arms' (99). Aceh's 'humiliating conquest' (96) made the territory a difficult fit into what would become Indonesia, with, as Teuku Ibrahim Alfian argues, the Indonesian troops later assuming the role of the Dutch in the eyes of many. M. Isa Sulaiman notes the lack of interest in Western countries in the Aceh situation, in stark contrast to East Timor. He documents government use of Acehnese Ulema (religious scholars) to condemn GAM. Ultimately GAM could not win sympathy in either the Western world or the Islamic world. Edward Aspinall challenges the view that Acehnese reactions against Jakarta have their genesis in Soeharto-era oppression—as important as this factor is—and highlights the abuse of human rights from an earlier period. Kingsbury and McCulloch conclude that TNI profiteering has contributed greatly to the conflict, and note the collection of money from an array of business operations, including, it is claimed, illegal logging, narcotics and protection rackets. They cite a TNI source saying: 'If you go to Aceh, you will come back either dead or very rich' (209). Michelle Ann Miller and Rodd McGibbon, in separate chapters, look at the dynamics of Aceh's political autonomy and local body politics. McGibbon argues that the (poor) governance by local elites, sustained by Jakarta, has been a major factor in disenchantment.

William Nessen's chapter—dedicated to his Acehnese friend Abu Kliet, who died in 2003 after he had his throat cut by Indonesian soldiers and was thrown into a river—represents a view that runs close to GAM's own rhetoric. Nessen rejects the hypothesis advanced by a number of scholars that independence sentiment in Aceh was a reaction that grew over time to the abuses of the TNI. Nessen, quoting GAM sources, prefers to see more of an unbroken line of pro-independence support even prior to the establishment of GAM itself in 1976. Naturally GAM need to make this claim in order to push the view that Aceh was 'rightfully' independent all along. Nessen, like GAM, traces the modern independence movement to the early Darul Islam rebellion, noting the transfer of personnel from one to the other. But this view fails to take into account that while Aceh's Darul Islam rebellion in the 1950s stemmed from concern over Aceh's status in the Indonesian Republic, it was not an independence movement in the manner of GAM in a later age. It is not hard, however, to see the political necessity of having to stress continuity with earlier 'precursors' to maintain ideological legitimacy.

And finally there is the matter of Indonesia's democratisation and its impact on the situation in Aceh. Aleksius Jemadu's chapter argues that Indonesia's democratisation with the fall of Soeharto in 1998 barely altered the approaches taken by the military. He cites as evidence the military

practice, well into Indonesia's democratic transition, of arresting civil activists and government critics in the province. The TNI's approach to the Aceh problem under Megawati, while she was president, mirrored that of the Soeharto years. What none of the authors bring out is that far from being opposed by an Indonesian public empowered by democratic choice, Megawati's campaign proved popular with the rest of Indonesia. The predominant view was that Aceh's pro-independence movement represented a substantial danger to the fabric of the Republic and thus should be put down by force if necessary. This tells us that the transition from dictatorship to liberal democracy can involve a time lag—as much for government policy as for public attitudes.

Reviewed by ANTHONY L. SMITH
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Chee-beng Tan, ed., *Southern Fujian, Reproductions of Traditions in Post-Mao China*, Shatin, Hong Kong, The Chinese University Press, 2006, xviii + 190 pp., ISBN 962-996-233-0 (hbk.).

A collection of seven anthropological and sociological studies by a group of modern Chinese or 'overseas' Chinese scholars, this book focuses on Minnan or southern Fujian. The contributors come from departments of anthropology or sociology and from museums in Beijing, Nanjing, Hong Kong, Japan and Fujian itself. All the studies are grounded in the fieldwork that is again possible in China and maintain high standards of scholarship, combining "modern", internationally accepted theoretical approaches with an insider's ability to access, observe, interpret and analyse the communities in question.

The contributors share an impulse to examine cultural aspects of the reproduction of traditions in southern Fujian over the last thirty years. They see this as a way of adding a cultural dimension to the picture of Chinese society that is emerging from recent work on post-Mao economic changes. Many of the studies treat the revival of lineage organizations that have long been the focus of anthropological studies. They highlight the dynamic qualities of Chinese traditions and the ways in which these are borrowed, changed and invented, as well as preserved and revitalised.

The studies reveal a lively interaction between the state, often represented by the Bureau of Culture, and the societies that have grown up in local village communities. Government officials seek to control and direct cultural traditions in relation to the economic and political goals of the state. Conflict and accommodation both occur as ordinary members of the communities enact their traditional religious observances and lineage activities in local temples and ancestral halls. In this complex interaction,

local observances, at the heart of local cultural identities, prove remarkably robust.

The first study, by Wang Mingming, leads off in a way that is common to most of the researchers represented here. He begins by explaining the relationship of his own background to the work he has undertaken. Often writing in the first person, he integrates with his analysis information about the experiences he has had while conducting the research. His prose is peppered with the pinyin versions of many of the key terms which he has translated, a habit that enriches the text and would assist the research of others who might wish to build on his work. His work illumines the complex interaction between official, state approaches to culture, represented by the Bureau of Culture, and the accommodation of local cultures, including those of the overseas Chinese who return to the area. The officials are torn between a desire to suppress 'superstitions' that they sometimes construe as 'a blot on the face of socialism' and their interest in promoting tourism among both overseas Chinese visitors and international tourists. Wang's view of the construction of traditions is informed, not only by the work of Western and 'native' Chinese anthropologists, but also by his own experience as a member of the community and participant in the traditions. He concludes his chapter with a useful critical survey of the literature, intended to draw attention to the various past approaches to the construction of Chinese traditions and to set the stage for a new, nuanced approach that will provide a sound basis for the analysis of issues of traditions and cultural identity.

In his study of the Ding Hui community, Fan Ke challenges the assumption of earlier scholars that lineage systems were economically determined through jointly owned land and property. Fan shifts the focus away from economic factors towards the ways in which literati and popular culture interacted in the Ding community. Over the centuries the Ding, who were originally Muslim, adopted Chinese values and customs, including ancestral cults, lineage organisations and genealogies. Fan applies Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic capital to his analysis of the Ding Hui community and highlights the original ways in which the Ding lineage organisations have worked to revitalise traditions and construct an ethnic identity, taking into account the requirements of state policy.

Pan Hongli's study of Old Folks Associations (Laorenhui) is based on a grounded research approach which draws on anthropological concepts and best practice approaches to fieldwork to construct an informed insider's view of the ways in which traditions are preserved, renewed and creatively interpreted in contemporary China. His study reveals that the LRH have a key role in mediation between the state and society. They are active in day-to-day rural administration in such areas as the organization of medical care, the construction of public lavatories, public sanitation, road construction and cremation. They also mediate in disputes and help to resolve the conflicts that arise in the course of daily life in rural society by combining traditional lineage mediation approaches with an understanding of the law. The LRH

are used by the state to communicate and interact with local society and the state appears to view their power as considerably less threatening than that of the traditional lineage organizations. The local lineages themselves rely on the LRH to help them avoid conflict with the state.

Tan Chee-beng, the editor of the volume from the Anthropology Department at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, looks at religious expression in Fujian villages in the period since 1979. He finds that in the post-Mao period, religion has resumed its central role in the life of the community. Traditional customs such as praying for sons to Songzi Guanyin and the local Bedroom Guardian Spirit have been strengthened since the introduction of the one-child policy forced parents to focus their hopes for the future on fewer offspring. Tan also found a close inter-relationship between popular religious observances and the activities of the lineage organizations. The villagers participate in both kinds of activities, which give meaning to their lives through the affirmation of shared values and also offer hope of improving the material conditions in which they live.

Kuah-Pearce Khun Eng looks at the revival of the communal worship of a mythical black-faced ancestor called Qingshui Zushi Gong in Anxi, a mountainous tea-producing region which benefits from close links to overseas Chinese communities in Singapore. She describes rituals in which villagers and overseas visitors thank the ancestors for the flow of descendants and for any outstanding successes individuals have had. She shows how changes in gender roles have taken place so that women now take leading roles in the public ceremonies as well as running the cottage industries that produce the ritual objects used in the ceremonies. The celebrations cement the bond between the local villagers and their overseas Chinese relations, and their shared beliefs and practices foster the renewal and development of kinship and wider social networks. Kuah-Pearce finds that the officials at village and district level are tolerant of the ceremonies, while county officials are more likely to find fault with the observances on ideological grounds.

Siumi Maria Tam, also from the Anthropology Department at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, focuses on gender and identity among Minnan women whose husbands worked as sojourner labourers in the Philippines. The women either remained in the Jinjiang district of southern Fujian or migrated to Hong Kong, from where they expected it might be easier to join their husbands in the Philippines. Tam's interpretive framework positions the women as agents who reinforced and contributed to patriarchal systems and were at the same time victims of those systems. In the partnerships Tam describes, the identities of both husbands and wives were invested in the maintenance of a family home. The households were supported by often unreliable remittances from the working men. As a result, most of the women found it necessary to undertake agricultural labour as well as all the household chores and childcare. Illiteracy was high among both males and females and husbands and wives often communicated through professional letter writers. The difficulties of the women's lot were exacerbated if the men set up new households with Filipina women, a

situation that many of the men argued was necessary in order for them to legally start a business in the Philippines. Many of the women in this study were separated from their husbands for periods of 10, 20 or even 30 years. Some relationships broke under the strain, but most of the Jinjiang women persevered, working towards the goal of reuniting their families. Tam demonstrates that very substantial numbers of people lived their lives according to this pattern. She estimates that nearly a million Jinjiang natives worked as traders and labourers in the Philippines, with 300,000 resident in Hong Kong.

Tam found that the women in the study were inclined to blame 'fate' for the hardships of their lives, rather than looking at the structural gender inequality of traditional, patriarchal marriage systems. While they may have lacked conceptual frameworks that would have allowed them to question their lot, many of the Jinjiang women developed skills through managing their households that enabled them to become 'breadwinners who commanded resources across generations and managers of kinship and tongxiang networks'(160). They knew themselves to be the possessors of a strong life force (*shengmingli qiang*). They had social and financial skills that enabled their families to survive in very difficult circumstances and they were key contributors to the strength of the multi-site patriarchal system under which they lived.

The book's final study by Ding Yuling from the Quanzhou Maritime Museum in Fujian also looks at the economic activities and gender construction of a group of Fujian women. The women of the fishing village of Xunpu come from a tradition in which women never bound their feet and were expected to be able to carry heavy loads. The work they do in relation to the sea, clearly defined by sex role boundaries, enables them to be active participants in the local economy and brings them recognition from the family, the village and the local society. Women in Xunpu work in shallow waters catching small fish, crabs and clams and cultivating and harvesting oysters while the men go out to sea and work in fishing and sea transportation. Traditionally, the administration of the village was in the hands of the men and the family systems were patriarchal, with women accepting roles within it, rather than questioning or seeking to reform it. Women earned significant income from their work harvesting fish and managed the economies of their households for the benefit of all family members.

Ding's research shows that all the villagers suffered under collectivization after 1949 and even poor people were classified as 'rich fishermen' if they owned their own boats. Wages paid to the women for their labour were dramatically lower than those paid to men. Women were, however, actively engaged in running the collective system. They even joined forces to successfully resist an attempt to force them to give up their traditional hair styles. Now, as a result of economic reforms and the growth in the market for seafood, many Xunpu women have become prosperous. Working in both wholesale and retail sales, their success gives them choices

about how to spend their incomes. They contribute to family projects such as building houses, buying boats and buying food and young women keep their earnings for their dowries. Women over the age of 60 cease work gathering fish, but may still work in the markets or on lineage or religious activities. Their hard work has given them financial and personal power and they wield political influence through their non-governmental Buddhist Society.

The Xunpu women, like many of the subjects of the studies collected here, adapted quickly to rapidly changing political and economic circumstances throughout the latter half of the twentieth century. Between 1949 and 1978 the production brigades were the most basic organizational unit of rural society, replacing village, lineage and religious organizations. After 1978, the production units disintegrated and the individual household again became the basic production unit. During the period of collectivization, women became more active in village political affairs while maintaining their family and kinship relationships. They adapted again to the market reforms of the late 1970s in ways that again raised their status in their communities. Like the women of Jinjiang in Tam's study, Xunpu women did not openly challenge the patriarchal and patrilineal system. They exercised their new rights and enhanced economic and decision-making power within patriarchal family structures. Nevertheless Xunpu women have made the most of the commercial opportunities open to them and have been able to exercise influence in their communities and their families, work towards goals that they themselves define and begin to redefine their gender status.

Through their insightful analysis of religious traditions, lineage organizations, the roles of women, old people and minority ethnic groups and the ways in which these groups in their wider communities have revitalized and reinvented tradition, the studies collected in this book open up new vistas of observation and interpretation of the societies of contemporary southern Fujian. Their themes, approaches and methodologies link them to broader issues of the role of cultural traditions in the construction of identities within Chinese communities and of the interaction of state and society that are of the greatest importance in the study of China today.

Reviewed by ELLEN SOULLIERE
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Benjamin Penny, ed., *Daoism in History: Essays in Honour of Liu Ts'un-yan*, Oxford, Routledge, 2006, xiii + 290pp., ISBN: 0-415-34852-8 (hbk).

This is of a fine collection of essays by scholars from Australia, Europe, Japan and the United States, that make an outstanding contribution to Daoist studies. They honour Professor Liu Ts'un-yan, who, now at the advanced age of ninety, is still working diligently in the field. The eight essays in the collection reflect the long and abiding interest of the honouree in Daoism

from its earliest period down to the Ming period (1368-1644). Their average quality is high, and the volume is beautifully produced and admirably edited by Dr Benjamin Penny of the Australian National University, where Liu himself taught for twenty years.

It is in two parts. Part I begins with Dr. Penny's warm and highly pleasurable account of Professor Liu's life and work, followed by essays by Peter Nickerson, T.H. Barrett, Stephen R. Bokenkamp, Christine Mollier, Maeda Shigeki, Fabrizio Pregadio, and Franciscus Verellen, arranged more or less in the chronological order of their subjects. Peter Nickerson's essay, "Let living and dead take separate path", deals with bureaucratization in early Chinese mortuary rituals, tracing its roots to the Warring States period, and argues, convincingly in my view, that the grave-securing writs of Later Han were a continuation of the mortuary exorcism already in practice for at least four centuries. T.H. Barrett, in a witty essay with a provocative title that follows, 'Preliminary considerations in the search for a Daoist Dhammapada', looks again at the possible Daoist connection with the Buddhist Dhammapada, tentatively suggesting the Ge family—to which the famous Ge Hong, Ge Xuan and Ge Chaofu belonged, to be its originator or early transmitter.

Stephen Bokenkamp examines in 'The Visvantara-jataka in Buddhist and Daoist translation', how the family-centred ethicalism, typical of the medieval Chinese society, came into play in the reshaping of the Buddhist birth stories for a Chinese audience. He highlights in particular the 'familial emotional calibration' in the Chinese retelling of these stories. Christine Mollier deals with the question of demonology in the next essay, 'Visions of evil', outlining its development from the early Warring States period to the mid-fifth century when Daoism became deeply permeated with the eschatological conception of Mahayana Buddhism. The next essay 'Between karmic retribution and entwining infusion', by Maeda Shigeki, is yet another study of the inter-fertilization of ideas between Buddhism and Daoism, focusing on how the traditional Chinese conception of 'retribution across generations' (the sins of forebears being visited on the sinners' sons) became infused with the Buddhist theory of karmic retribution (which is essentially individualistic), resulting in a bifurcation in the later Daoist imagination of the retributive process: on one hand it is asserted to be a matter of the individual, and on the other, it is thought to be passable between family members and down the clan lineage.

Fabrizio Pregadio in 'Early Daoist meditation and the origins of Inner Alchemy', posits an interesting theory that Shangqing meditation texts of the second and third century exerted a shaping influence on the development of Chinese alchemy, both the inner and the external variety. The text of Cantong ji was pivotal in the process. It revolutionized Daoist thinking with a shift of emphasis from the world of gods and demons to the impersonal principles of a correlative cosmology equipped with specialized patterns of abstract emblems: Yin and Yang, the Five Agents, the Eight Trigrams, the Ten Celestial Stems, the Twelve Earthly Branches and so forth. The next

essay, 'The dynamic design' by Franciscus Verellen, concludes Part I. It is a general survey of the illustrations in the Daoist Canon, Zhengtong Daozang, under three headings: (1) 'Visualization', which includes all pictorial aids to verbal descriptions of Daoist rituals and various techniques, narrative hagiographies, and cosmological diagrams; (2) 'Pictorial metaphors', consisting mainly of inner alchemy imageries, and (3) 'Dynamic symbols', which are written graphs endowed with magical efficacy, in the form of 'True Writs' and Fu-talismans, used to represent something invisible and as tokens of authority and empowerment. 'In illustrated scriptures, there is no clear distinction between text and image: the words themselves are graphs and the scriptures as a whole are considered to have the transformative efficacy of the talismans they embody,' concludes Franciscus Verellen, neatly summing up the importance of pictorialism in the Daoist religion and the Chinese culture in general.

The final essay in the collection, which takes up the entirety of Part II, is by none other than the Maestro himself, Prof. Liu Ts'un-yan. Entitled 'Was Celestial Master Zhang a Historical Figure', it addresses the pivotal question of the historical identity of the chief founder of the religion, the Celestial Master Zhang. As it appears here, the essay is in fact an English translation by Benjamin Penny of Liu's lecture in Chinese, delivered at the Beijing University in May, 1998, under the auspices of 'The Tang Yongtong Academic Lecture Series'. It fully demonstrates Liu's skill in the employment of Daoist materials to illuminate subjects of more general interest. The essay can be read, of course, as a close study of a pivotal moment in the formation of Daoism as an institutionalized religion, but scholars of Chinese history in general will also find in it important insights into the Late Han mentality and its violent expression in the Yellow Turban Uprising. The translation is competent, but no match at all for the lively prose of Liu's own Chinese original, which can be found in his *Daojiao shi tanyuan* (Exploring the Origins of Daoism, Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2000). Readers who can read Chinese are strongly urged to study it, at least for the pleasure of Liu's inimitable style.

Reviewed by CHAN MAN SING
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Sarah Schneewind, *Community Schools and the State in Ming China*, Stanford CA, Stanford University Press, 2006, xiv + 298 pp. ISBN 0-8047-5174-9 (hbk.).

This book is the mature fruit of research undertaken in a 1999 Columbia University doctoral dissertation and partially published in *Late Imperial China* (June, 1999). The present volume is a substantial, refined, and very readable analysis of the development and significance of village elementary schools, called 'community schools' *shexue*, in Ming China (1368-1644). It

is also a case study through which the author opens a window on broader issues concerning relations between the late imperial Chinese state and society. The viewpoint underlying this interesting and sophisticated research accords with the perspective taken in the 1980s by some American sinologists, who, writing in response to contemporary developments in China, ‘looked for some kind of civil society or public sphere between Chinese state and society’. Their work ‘demonstrated that [particularly in the Qing period] official and private initiatives were usually intertwined’ (2) in the dynamics underlying the history of state institutions.

Schneewind points to a ‘need for a new way of thinking about the late imperial state and the early modern society it governed’ (2). She holds that her two part study, both of community schools as a dimension of centrally mandated state building, and of the documentary discourse on community schools:

Add[s] up to a theory of the Ming state: that its strength lay in its ability often against the will of the center, to serve as a field...for social cooperation and competition. ...State personnel and those they ruled not only served and thought about the state, but also turned it to their own uses. The Ming state was built from below as well as from above; as people colonized government institutions and documents for their own uses, they lengthened the reach of the state. (5)

In particular, ‘The case of community schools casts doubt on the larger idea that the Ming founder shaped late imperial state and society’ (8). Rather, the author concludes:

That part of the explanation for the strength and longevity of the Ming state and for the loyal sentiments and service of many Ming subjects lies in the very thing that Zhu Yuanzhang tried so hard to suppress with his repeated revisions of state institutions and his massacres of ‘corrupt’ officials and their cronies: the manipulation of state institutions for private benefit. (169)

Schneewind originally undertook to gauge the extent of the Ming founder’s power over society by counting the number of Ming period community schools. In this task the author was aided by Wang Lanyin’s work on community schools, undertaken in the 1930s, a time when, one may note, positive appreciation of Ming history was politically encouraged. On the contrary, as the author notes, post-1949, Marxist and Maoist writers ‘hostile to traditional Chinese education, restrict[ed] their story of community schools to the early Ming failure’ (32).

Schneewind’s own research identified 9,355 such schools named in Ming gazetteers. Amplifying a three-phase evolutionary course through which Joseph McDermott has described the shifting sources (central, local official, and non-official) of initiatives underlying community compacts *xiangyue* in the Ming period, Schneewind proposes a four-phase (early, mid,

high, and late Ming) ‘trajectory’ to articulate ‘patterns of change in imperial policy, in who promoted schools and why, and in writing about schools: patterns that reflect relations between dynasty and bureaucracy and between state and society more broadly (3). She emphasizes that the thing uniformly called ‘community school’ in various types of relevant documents did not have a constant essential nature, uniformly realized in time or space. Thus:

In the early Ming (1368-1430) community schools appear mainly as an imperial enterprise, aimed at teaching boys the law that the Ming founder hoped would prevent social change... In the mid-Ming (1430-1470) they were sponsored most saliently by high officials for security and recruitment, and appear predominantly in memorials, prefaces, and commemorative records... In the high Ming (1470-1530) community schools were founded mainly by resident administrators, were recorded most often in commemorative records and gazetteers, and were sometimes closely connected with attacks on religious institutions... Later in the high Ming period, the schools were taken up as well by higher profile officials, including Wang Yangming, who left records of the orders and curricula they issued... In the late Ming (1530-1644), earlier patterns coexisted with a further downward shift in initiative... to the community itself... (4)

Schneewind further identifies the transitions among her four phases, at least partially, in terms of economic and political dynamics: the onset of economic depression around 1430, after decades of lavish outlays for infrastructure and external force-projection under Hongwu and Yongle; economic recovery around 1470; sudden, drastic, and enduring demoralization among the bureaucracy from around 1530, due to effects of the Great Rites Controversy, provoked when the Jiajing emperor forcefully asserted his authority against influential official opponents.

Schneewind notes that ‘Not only do locally-sponsored community schools appear mainly in the late Ming; they are also concentrated in the southeast: in Fujian and particularly in Guangdong’ (157). Within these two provinces, one might add, were the jurisdictions most directly affected by the growth of private initiatives in response to overseas commerce during the mid- and late sixteenth century. Indeed, ‘The local claim on community schools was part of a larger picture, in which late Ming China’s commercial boom spawned not only intellectual ferment and social changes, but also organizations and institutions’ (139).

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Barbara Barnouin and Yu Changgen, *Zhou Enlai, A Political Life*, The Chinese University Press, Hong Kong, 2006, 397 pp., ISBN - 962-996-280-2 (pbk.).

Zhou Enlai was without doubt one of the towering figures of twentieth century Chinese history. Like so many young intellectuals of his generation, he was drawn to the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) because of his perception that it was the best hope to save the nation at a critical juncture in its history. Quickly rising through the Party ranks, he was a consistently key figure during all stages of the Communist Revolution, and after the establishment of the People's Republic, filling the important positions, amongst others, of political director of the Whampoa Military Academy, head of the CCP's intelligence agency and, for a time, the Red Army, Director in charge of propaganda, one of the leaders of the Long March, and, after 1949, Premier and Foreign Minister of the People's Republic, as well as Vice-Chairman of the Military Commission.

Considering the high profile Zhou had within the Party, charged as he was with overseeing the day-to-day running of the country, and, in essence, if not strictly in accordance with official Party hierarchy, second only to Mao, Zhou remains tantalizingly difficult to pin down. The official line on him is unambiguous—Deng Xiaoping's positive pronouncements in the early 1980s helped solidify the image of Zhou as the loyal and humane Party bureaucrat, an image that lives on in the many hagiographical works that have been published in China since Zhou's death in 1976, and, especially, in the flood of new biographies to mark the centenary of his birth in 1898. Such assessments, however, probably say more about the need for the Chinese establishment to maintain and periodically polish the image of its few remaining "heroes" in order to help shore up its own legitimacy, than anything substantive about the man himself.

More careful scholarship on Zhou reveals him to be something of an enigma, a man of contrasts; he was the sophisticated and charismatic face of China for foreign dignitaries, who were beguiled by his charm and gentle good humour, but, at the same time, he was capable of ruthlessness, calling for the blood of close comrades-in-arms, once their political fortunes had taken a turn for the worse; he was extremely intelligent and capable, working tirelessly to keep the wheels of government turning in even the most difficult political circumstances, yet he also displayed an almost slavish mentality towards Mao, parroting the latest political slogans, or carrying out painful, humiliating self-criticisms when required. Urbane and handsome, Zhou could have had his pick of pretty young women, yet he chose to marry the decidedly plain and somewhat uninspiring Deng Yingchao, apparently, because of his pragmatic assessment that Deng's 'dedication to the revolutionary cause would match and support his own' (33). Added to this list of paradoxes comes the over-arching one—how can someone who has played such a pivotal role in China's eventful modern history remain, in a sense, so elusive, so opaque? Despite dozens of books and articles on the

man (mainly in Chinese), the question remains, who was the real Zhou Enlai, and what were the forces that motivated him through his long political career?

The authors of *Zhou Enlai: A Political Life* make a good attempt to answer these questions, though with mixed results. Barbara Barnouin is a research fellow at the Asia Center of the Graduate Institute of International Studies, Geneva. The late Yu Changgen worked, we are told on the back cover of the book, during the 1960s and 1970s with Zhou Enlai in the Foreign Ministry (though it is unclear in what capacity). The two already have a couple of publications on the Cultural Revolution to their credit, and it shows in this, their latest book, since the period is covered with the surest touch. Though the authors present a more comprehensive description of Zhou's early political activities than I have come across in most other biographies of Zhou, and particularly in terms of his intelligence work as an underground Party leader from the 1920s to the 1940s, the first part of the book, covering Zhou's career prior to 1949, is a little disappointing, consisting mainly of a factual account of key events in early CCP history, with information about Zhou's role in those events tacked on often almost as an afterthought. By the time we get to the last decade or so of Zhou's life, however, he, satisfyingly, becomes more the central focus of the authors' investigation.

Zhou Enlai is not an easy topic for a researcher. Unlike Mao, Zhou did not leave behind voluminous writings on his theoretical ideas. Neither was he a great writer of poetry, from which one might be able to deduce something of the workings of his mind. Nor, in the case of Zhou, do we have someone like Li Zhisui, who, as Mao's physician, was in a position to expose a formerly hidden side of his boss's character and lifestyle. What we do have, mainly, are Zhou's political speeches, carefully crafted to suit the political tenor of the times, together with, it strikes one, equally carefully crafted conversations he had with others (even his last words to his hospital doctors were that they should attend to their other patients, because they were more in need than he). Zhou, a master at self-censorship, rarely revealed his true feelings (at least that we know of), thus rendering the biographer's job more difficult. Neither did Zhou have the kind of personality a researcher can get his or her teeth into. Mao had a larger-than-life personality; he was fiery-tempered, prone to great rages, stubborn, sulky, passionate, mercurial. Peng Dehuai, a big bear of a man, had a bear's stubbornness and courage, and dared to speak out for what he thought was right, even at the cost of his own position. Even Lin Biao holds some fascination as a man greedy for power, addicted to drugs, and, most likely, a sufferer of obsessive-compulsive disorder. Zhou, on the other hand, is invariably described as even-tempered, hard-working, loyal to the Party and its ideals, and happy to sit forever in position number two in the power hierarchy, behind Mao. He is thus the measured bureaucrat par excellence; even his denunciations of his colleagues before and during the Cultural Revolution seem to have been carried out, not in a spirit of revenge or because of a genuine belief in their

“crimes”, but because of a prosaic adherence to Party (generally, Mao’s) imperatives, with a modicum of conventional self-interest thrown in.

As a result, Barnouin and Changgen tend to present Zhou’s actions, and, to a lesser extent, his words, mainly in the form of political speeches, in order to build up a picture of his political life. Unfortunately, at several important junctures, they fail to explain or hypothesise how or why Zhou may have responded to a particular situation, creating some frustration, on the part of this reader, at least. As examples, they do not address such issues as Zhou’s complete failure to help Peng Dehuai at Lushan in 1959, and his leading role in criticising his long-time Party comrade; Zhou’s refusal of an offer from Moscow for a million tons of wheat, at a time when China was in the throes of a famine that was to cost millions of lives, whilst simultaneously exporting grain to Albania and East Germany; Zhou’s vastly different treatments of Poland and Hungary in the 1950s, involving breath-taking double-speak on his part. One is also left asking questions such as why Zhou, an undeniably brilliant tactician and organiser, was apparently completely unaware that by April 1927 the attitude of Chiang Kai-shek towards the Communists had shifted to the point that it threatened their very existence. Why did Zhou appear to be so indifferent to the fate of the secret agents who had served the Party so well before 1949, often at the risk of their own lives and those of their families? The meetings during the early 1950s between Zhou and the duplicitous Stalin are also re-told by the authors in a fairly pedestrian manner, without comment or analysis. We get no sense of Zhou’s response to these momentous meetings, during which he asked for Soviet military assistance in the Korean War (more or less re-buffed by Stalin), and financial aid (Stalin granted far less than China asked for).

Perhaps the biggest lacuna in the book concerns the relationship between Zhou and Mao, who ultimately became the biggest shaper of Zhou’s political career. The authors acknowledge early on the crucial role Mao played, citing him as ‘the most influential person in [Zhou’s] life’ (52). Yet, we actually get little examination of the dynamics between the two men. We are told that ‘[w]hile Mao was a rebel, Zhou Enlai was a highly disciplined Party member who readily adopted official policies,’ (53). Yet, it was, in fact, Mao’s successful, but unorthodox military strategy in the 1930s, which actually went against that of the Party centre, that initially convinced Zhou that Mao was the star to follow. This indicates that Zhou did not always follow Party policy rigidly, and that he was prepared to stick his neck out in the case of the “rebel”, Mao, whom he saw as having the right vision to secure the country for the Communists. Zhou had clearly become convinced during the 1930s that Mao’s approach was the soundest for the task in hand, and that cemented their partnership. But did Zhou ever intuit that the exceptional qualities that made Mao’s line a winning one during times of war and civil war, could be disastrous during a time of peaceful national reconstruction? The signs of possible crisis were certainly there prior to 1949, in Mao’s writings, and in his speeches. And what about once Mao’s approach began to look decidedly shaky from the Great Leap Forward

onwards? How was Zhou Enlai able to reconcile the waste of resources and lives with his continued support of an ageing and increasingly unpredictable and out-of-touch Mao? Was Zhou really Mao's greatest enabler during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution? Is there any evidence that Zhou attempted to form any kind of alliance with other Party moderates against Mao, during the Cultural Revolution in particular, and, if not, why not? And why did Mao perceive Zhou, rather than Liu Shaoqi, to be, in fact, the biggest threat to his position of absolute power, causing him to use Deng Xiaoping as a balance to Zhou in the 1960s and early 1970s?

Zhou Enlai: A Political Life thus still leaves a number of questions unanswered (maybe they can never be definitively answered). But it does debunk the almost mythical saintly status of Zhou, whilst still giving him deserved credit for his very real contributions, amongst other things, to China's foreign relations, and in terms of his mitigating at least some of the excesses of Mao's utopian social movements. It represents one more piece in the puzzle to determine who Zhou Enlai was, as both a politician and a man.

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Henry Johnson, *The Koto: A Traditional Instrument in Contemporary Japan*, Amsterdam, Hotei Publishing, 2004, 19 tables, 200 pp., ISBN 90-74822-63-0 (hbk.).

This is a publication which pleases the eye and the heart. A luxurious edition with high quality paper and illustrations, the book is the product of Johnson's extensive ethnographic fieldwork with instrument makers and performers, both groups of people who have inherited a long line of transmission of material and musical culture of the *koto*—the instrument and its performance. Its production quality and dimensions give it the air of a coffee table book, one which will enhance any *koto* teacher or performer's living or teaching room, and stimulate interest in this wonderful instrument. The book is further enhanced by the inclusion at the beginning of each chapter of striking, little known wood-block prints depicting *koto* performance.

The prospective reader should be warned that the book's focus is on the instrument rather than its music. Many may be disappointed that the book does not deal more directly with *koto* music as such, and may thus be of limited use to the *koto* player and the musicologist. It will on the other hand be most helpful for the person who finds a *koto* in an antique shop and wants to know its real value, and its significance as a piece of material culture.

The introduction states that: 'The aim of my research was to understand the place of the *koto* in its cultural context' (13). The *koto* has been written about by many Japanese and Western writers, but it is hard to find a comprehensive overview. Johnson's contribution is to give a thorough account of the organology of the *koto* and its manufacturing processes. To

this he adds a useful compendium of *koto* notations, a thorough detailing of playing techniques and ornamental figures, and some information about repertoire. This book will therefore be an important complement to existing studies of *koto* music.

Johnson sets out to explain the wide variety of instruments and genres within the broad rubric of *koto* (music): *gaku-sō* (gagaku), *Tsukushi-goto* and *zoku-sō*. His dubbing the latter ‘everyday *koto*’ is most interesting and helpful. His main concern is with the everyday *koto*, and he wisely says *zokusō* traditions in the plural, because of the diversity within that group. According to Johnson, *Gaku-sō* and *Tsukushi-goto* can be thought of as the pre-history to the ‘everyday’ *koto* as commonly known in contemporary Japan, which dates from the seventeenth century.

The first chapter (‘The historical setting’) gives an overview of cultural settings for the *koto* from gagaku to the present and lays out an argument that the *koto* is a symbol of traditional Japan. The next two chapters focus closely on the instrument: its names and types, manufacture and component parts. This is an amazingly comprehensive and authoritative exposition of the organology of the *koto* and is lavishly illustrated with the author’s excellent photographs, diagrams and other illustrations. In line with this focus on the instrument *per se*, attention is given to the traditional symbolic imagery of the instrument, as passed down in the names of parts, emphasizing aspects which are seldom referred to by contemporary practitioners in the transmission process. The author also details other aspects of design and decoration, which are a major way of differentiating grades of instrument, rather than having musical significance.

Chapter 4, ‘Performance traditions’, surveys many aspects of schools (*ryūha*) and licensing systems, to explain the social contexts of *koto* music and its transmission. Starting with a brief historical account of the earlier contexts of court and aristocracy, the chapter outlines the development of the modern *koto* by blind male professionals in the Edo period (1603 to 1867), women and amateur *koto* playing, traditions, lineages and groups, group structure and hierarchy including a discussion of the *iemoto* system, permit systems, and performing names. Chapter 5, ‘Performance’, deals briefly with performance contexts, the performer, notation systems, oral mnemonics, tunings, ornamentation, genres, and *jiuta sokyoku*. The Conclusion recapitulates the author’s themes of tradition and groupism.

There are some concerns which emerge in the book. The first and most serious problem is the use of the word and concept of tradition. The book repeatedly invokes Hobsbawm and Ranger’s concept of the ‘invention of tradition’. Yet the terms tradition and traditional are used uncritically. For example, the word *ryū* is translated as tradition, to convey the idea of *denshō*, or continuous transmission. (It should be noted that the word *dentō* itself is a neologism of the Meiji era, created as the Japanese equivalent of the English word tradition.) Even the title of the book implies a paradoxical discontinuity between modernity and an ancient instrument, whereas the reality is that *koto* music is among the most successfully modernized areas of

Japanese music. The term 'invented tradition' can be appropriately applied to taiko and even Tsugaru-jamisen, but *koto* has suffered no break in its transmission, requiring it to be reinvented. Neither is it something new which is attempting to pass itself off as something ancient. It successfully maintains most of its pre-modern repertoire through chiefly oral transmission without general use of written notation until the Meiji period. *Koto* music has strong continuity with pre-modern practice, while embracing innovation and experimentation, so that its repertoire comprises the seventeenth century pieces such as *Rokudan* and *Kumiuta*, newly composed pieces close to traditional style, and avant garde works composed for *koto* by Western style composers, often in ensemble with Western instruments. The *koto* is the most successfully modernized genre of Japanese music.

Many aspects of the *koto* music and its transmission are modern: the use of electronic tuners, tetron strings, the recording of lessons, the ability to study *koto* in a conservatorium, or through the NHK educational television channel, holding concerts in modern concert halls, electronically mediated musical performance and appreciation, as well as attracting the attention of contemporary composers. Furthermore, there is considerable global interest in *koto*, though not as widespread as tea ceremony or ikebana, or *shakuhachi* or *taiko*. Clearly *koto* is not an anomaly in contemporary Japan, as is suggested by the book's title, a strange survivor. It does not reside in a time warp, but for those who practise and enjoy it, it is a part of everyday life, as Johnson insists. The book's apposite coining of the term *everyday koto* in fact belies the argument for invention of tradition. The frequent references to *everyday koto* transmission, *everyday* traditions of secular *koto* performance, and *everyday koto* performers (93 *et passim*) clearly indicate the standard term *zokusō*, as in 'the two main everyday performance traditions' (100 *et passim*). Yet, strangely, there is no definition of 'everyday *koto*', as if it is self-explanatory. Neither is it found in the index. At other times, the *koto* is dubbed as a 'so-called traditional instrument' (120; 158-9). The author is also at pains to claim elite status for the everyday instrument by asserting at several points an association with the imperial family, which seems contradictory with it being an everyday instrument.

Another problem I have with the book is the uncritical application of the concept of groupism, and the invocation of the terms *uchi* and *soto* (97, 100). This is very close to the widely discredited *nihonjinron* literature which holistically explains away Japanese culture as group-oriented. Groupism is only one way of conceptualizing the *iemoto* system. One should consider also the economic function of this socio-musical structure which supported the arts in premodern Japan, and continues to this day. The rationale of the *iemoto* system was more than anything economic; based on the corporate family (*ie*), it bound together people linked by a common occupation and purpose (the perpetuation of the art), and maintained the economic viability of the professionals by ensuring the financial support of large numbers of amateur pupils. Despite the abuses sometimes associated with this system, it can be seen as responsible for the survival of many

traditional arts into the modern period. These days, the amateur student does not spend their whole life in the *iemoto* environment of *koto* music, but develops multiple identities in musical as well as social activity.

Johnson suggests that the reason for the proliferation of *koto* notation methods is the group system of *koto* traditions and group identity (119). It is true that not only in *koto* music, but also in all genres there is no unified system of notation in Japanese music. The *shamisen* is a case in point, where each school has a different notation system. This is not groupism, but a result of the possessiveness of the *iemoto* identity and claim for monopolistic control over performance, licenses and score publications. *Shamisen* music notation in the theatrical traditions is based on quite different principles from the *jiuta shamisen* notation, which is similar to *koto* notation systems, for the very practical reason that the same people performed both *koto* and *shamisen*.

This leads to the curious omission of a proper explanation of the relationship between *koto* and *shamisen* music, and the relationship with *shakuhachi* in the context of *sankyoku* ensemble playing. The narrow focus on *koto* as instrument creates this blind spot. *Jiuta sōkyoku* is not explained until page 158, and then in less than a page. Basically it is explained as *tegotomono*, which is neither precise nor complete. Much of the *koto* repertoire can be played as *shamisen* music, and vice versa, or has had an additional *shamisen* part created for ensemble performance. Further, the *koto* repertoire has a sub-genre called *sankyoku*, an ensemble of *koto*, *shamisen*, voice, and a third instrument (*kokyū* or *shakuhachi*), which indicates that *koto* music is not independent but inextricably intertwined with *shamisen* music. Little attention is given in the book to the vocal repertoire, which is central to much of the classical repertoire, although admittedly it receives less attention from contemporary composers and performers. The partnership between *shamisen* and *koto* music is so important that all *koto* players eventually learn *shamisen* as they become advanced players. In order to progress to the status of fully licensed teacher, a *koto* player must master the *jiuta shamisen*. The conspicuous development of everyday *koto* music from the seventeenth century is due in large part to its teaming up with the *shamisen*. Both instruments were played by the same blind musicians, who descended from the *biwa* musicians of the medieval period.

Too much is made of the distinction between Ikuta and Yamada schools as a binary division (100). Tanabe's map overemphasizes a geographical distribution of styles. The chart on page 98 on the other hand confirms the idea that Yamada is really a branch of Ikuta. The Yamado-goto has become standard for all schools of *koto* in the twentieth century. Yamada school is distinguished by different shaped plectra (closer to the older *gaku-sō* than Ikuta), by the angle of sitting towards the instrument and by its notation system. It would have been helpful to have a discussion about differences in repertoire, tunings and ornamentation.

A few minor problems should be mentioned. The translation of *shirabe* as investigation (25 et passim) should be melody (according to the *Kojien* dictionary). Should *koten* be translated as old pieces? Why not classical pieces? *Fuki* is not rhubarb, and is better left untranslated. The rank of *kengyō* for musicians did not start with Yatsunashi Kengyō (109), but with the *biwa hōshi* of the medieval heike narrative. The system of oral mnemonics (*kuchi shōga*) is mistakenly attributed to the blindness of musicians (129), but almost all Japanese instrumental traditions developed *kuchi shōga* as a means of oral notation and transmission. It is a pity that the catalogue of *koto* tunings (129) was not tied to the discussion of transcription of pieces. Johnson refers the reader to Koizumi 1977 for an explanation of Japanese scales (134), but himself retains the outdated, inadequate terminology of *in* and *yō* scales throughout the book. He should use the term *miyako-bushi* (as in the quotation from Tsuge in the same paragraph).

This is a pioneering study of the *koto* and its music as it exists in Japan today. It is thoroughly scholarly in its documentation, with ample informative endnotes, a full list of Chinese characters, and an extensive bibliography, as well as a good index. It is the most comprehensive study of the *koto* so far to be published in English and will be an essential reference for any future research.

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Tim Beal. *North Korea: The Struggle Against American Power*, London and Ann Arbor, MI, Pluto Press, 2005, ix + 342 pp. ISBN: 0745320147 (hbk.); 0745320139 (pbk).

North Korea is a totalitarian society ruled by one family. It keeps an outdated and non-functioning socialist economy, which fails to feed its people. Hundreds of thousands of residents flee from the country in search of food and freedom, which is evidence in itself that the regime has failed. Despite such a starving population, the country has been continuously building up its military. In particular, the country has been developing weapons of mass destruction such as missiles and nuclear bombs. Desperate for money, this country smuggled drugs, circulated counterfeit United States (US) dollar bills, and has been selling missiles to other countries. There is a danger that it might sell weapons of mass destruction to terrorist organisations.

This is the popular image of North Korea in the west. The book under review, *North Korea: The Struggle Against American Power*, challenges this popular view, claiming that our views of North Korea are distorted by people and agencies with anti-Democratic People's Party of Korea (DPRK) agendas. The book therefore aims to demonstrate that the western media is prejudiced

and how the US Government, just as it deceived us regarding Iraq's possession of weapons of mass destruction, has manipulated our views about North Korea. Why, then, does the US Government distort facts about North Korea? First of all, the author argues, the US has a 'grudge' against North Korea—the first country that the powerful US did not beat (54). In addition, the current US administration needs a 'demonic and demonised North Korea' (27) for its political agenda. What is the political agenda of the US? Using an enemy like North Korea, the US intends to justify its military expansion and expensive projects like the Missile Defence (MD) in the post-Cold War era. In particular, argues Beal, the US wants to contain China, for which it needs continued crisis with countries like North Korea.

To reveal the hidden agenda of the US, Part I of the book discusses the history of North Korea-US conflict, focusing on the development and demise of the 1994 Agreed Framework. In 1994, the Clinton administration signed the Agreed Framework with North Korea, promising to provide energy and security guarantees to North Korea in exchange for North Korea's abandoning its nuclear programs. In 2000, South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung met with North Korean leader Kim Jong Il. In the same year, high level officials of the US and North Korea exchanged visits. The atmosphere was so encouraging that North Korea declared that the 'Arduous March' was over in 2000 (p.2). However, this hopeful atmosphere changed after George Bush became the President of the US, whose administration accused North Korea of hiding its secret nuclear weapons program.

From the North Korean perspective, the Agreed Framework was good and necessary to overcome the hardship caused by the collapse of the communist bloc in the end of the 1980s. To survive in the post-Cold War world the North Korean Government needed to improve its relationship with the US. Nevertheless, according to the author, North Korea was in constant fear of nuclear attack especially because the US never abandoned its first nuclear attack policy. The joint South Korea-US military drill was also threatened North Korea. In such a condition, North Korean leaders saw nuclear as the answer for both energy and security. Crisis arose out of North Korea's nuclear program, and the Agreed Framework in 1994 was a solution of this crisis. With the heavy fuel oil and Light Water Reactors provided by the Agreed Framework, North Korea did not need to build old Soviet style nuclear power plants, which would produce the material that can be used to build nuclear weapons. However, the Bush administration later abandoned the Agreed Framework, and this pushed North Korea to pursue more extreme policy, explains the author.

Part II of the book deals with various charges the US government has imposed on North Korea—human rights violations, drug smuggling, missile exports, and nuclear weapons development. The author denounces the US for falsely using these allegations to demonise North Korea. First of all, the use of the human rights argument by the US against North Korea is rather hypocritical, says the author. It is because the US itself has a bad record of human rights abuse in terms of executions and imprisonment. Furthermore,

he suggests, the fundamental cause of the human rights problems of North Korea is actually the US. It is because the US economic sanctions and military pressure have exacerbated the sufferings of the North Korean people. How about North Korean refugees in China who are looking for food and chances to defect to South Korea? Is not this a clear evidence of the failure of the North Korean regime and its leadership? Again the author argues that the causes of North Korean defectors are the collapse of the communist block and the US sanctions and military threat, which prevented North Korea from using its scarce resources for the welfare of its people. How about North Korea's exporting missiles to other countries? The author emphasises that selling missiles is not illegal, and North Korea's exports are negligible compared to that of the US weapons trade (171).

In conclusion, the author urges the world not to try to change the North Korean regime because regime change in North Korea will make everything worse. Instead, the US Government should help North Korea to open its economy, suggests the author. By so doing, according to the author, the US can bring genuine peace in Northeast Asia.

The strength of this book lies in its eloquent emphasis on the peaceful alternative—to help North Korea to become a normal country—to the US hardline policy which will push North Korea to the fringe of desperate resistance. In order to reach this conclusion, the author explains the North Korea-US confrontations by analysing the 'hidden political agendas' of the US as an imperial power trying to contain China. Readers learn that the Bush administration's refusal to have direct dialogue with North Korea has escalated the North Korean crisis. While well-known North Korea experts such as Bruce Cumings (*North Korea*, 2004) have enlightened us, North Korean voices have been rarely heard in the West. This book greatly helps us in understanding deeper causes of the current conflicts between the US and North Korea by providing us with a different perspective.

These strengths, however, also turn to weakness in other areas. While looking at the 'hidden political agenda' of the US in its dealing with North Korea, the author sometimes neglects similar agendas in other parties. For example, the author dismisses the US accusations of North Korea that the food aid provided by the world community does not reach the people in need but is diverted to the military and party elite. He does so by quoting the World Food Program (WFP) officials who insist that the food aid is effective. International governmental organisations such as the WFP have their own particular interests and 'agendas' and they need to justify the effectiveness of their aid programs for their organisational survival. Another example is the author's acceptance of the official view of the South Korean Government regarding North Korean defectors. The author argues that North Korean defectors are not trustworthy in what they say about North Korea, accepting South Korea's Ministry of Unification reports which asserts that the main reason of their defection is poverty, not political repression. It is true that North Korean defectors may have good reasons to exaggerate the political repressions in North Korea. Nonetheless, it would be a hasty generalisation,

if not an offence, to claim that North Korean defectors are untrustworthy. In actuality, due to its engagement policy toward North Korea, the South Korean Government is reluctant to take North Korean refugees and it tries to keep them quiet in South Korea.

Another weakness of the book lies in its frequent reliance on internet sources such as the Kimsoft by Lee Wha Rang. While the internet is undoubtedly an excellent source of information, it should be used with great care. Particularly, where more reliable academic works exist, priority should be given to them over internet sources. Such a common practice is violated when the author quotes Lee Wha Rang's internet article for the Northerners who opted to flee to the South in the three years after the Liberation (p.48) when there are more widely accepted works such as *The North Korean Revolution, 1945-1950* (by Charles Armstrong, Cornell University Press, 2003), which is based on a rigorous archival research.

In the book are also a few errors in historical fact. For example, the author states that the well-known patriot Kim Ku lost a leg in 1932 Shanghai, without providing any reference for this statement. To the reviewer it is totally news that Kim Ku was lame. Another example is the author's writing that Roh Tae-woo was elected as president (1988-1992) in 'South Korea's first direct election' (70). This is not true as direct elections, despite problems with corruption, were norm in South Korea through the 1960s until they were replaced with indirect election by Park Chung Hee in the early 1970s.

There are also a few important arguments that are made without detailed explanations. For example, when the author says that North Korea has had bad public relations (217-8), he should have discussed the reasons for such a bad publicity. What the book does not discuss is the fact that North Korea has failed in gaining the heart of the South Korean public particularly those who support the engagement policy toward the North. While emphasising a direct dialogue with the US, North Korea did not help South Korean leaders who pursued the 'Sunshine Policy.' For example, earlier this year North Korea suddenly cancelled the agreed railroad connection between the two Koreas and the former South Korean president Kim Dae-Jung's visit to North Korea. North Korea did not show much appreciation to the South Korean government which has given generous aid and has tried hard to persuade the US to change its hard-line policy toward North Korea. Readers might expect that the book would explain why North Korea did not cooperate with South Korea.

Another important point that the book does not mention is the threats that North Korean missiles and nuclear program pose to South Korea. As the author asserts, the prime purpose of North Korea's missiles and nuclear weapons programs are for self-defence against the US threat. While critical readers would understand this point well, the author does not pay attention to the point that North Korea's nuclear weapons and missiles also pose a clear threat to South Korea. This is particularly true for those South Koreans who remember that North Korea showed hostility to South Korea even when

peaceful dialogues were going on between the two countries. One example is the North Korean infiltration submarines captured in South Korea in 1996 and 1998. This was when South Koreans were building light water reactors in North Korea, in accordance with the Agreed Framework. Cases like this make the South Korean public mistrustful of North Korea.

Despite such shortcomings and errors, this book is very well-written and highly effective in helping readers to understand the current US-North Korea conflicts. Readers are well persuaded to have a more balanced view of the bilateral relationship between the US and North Korea. Most of all, the book's emphasis on a peaceful solution to the dangerous impasse in the US-North Korea is laudable. The author justly insists that the US 'has the power, at relatively little financial cost and at no danger to itself, to bring about over a fairly short period of time an economic transformation in North Korea' (245). After the July 5 2006 missile tests of North Korea, the relationship between North Korea and US worsened, and the US and Japan increased their economic sanctions on North Korea. North Korea's nuclear test on October 9 2006 showed that North Korea is desperate, making the world much less secure than before. Such a result would have been prevented had the US chosen to negotiate directly with North Korea as the author so strongly urges in the book.

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