

Reviews

Paul Clark, *Reinventing China: A Generation and Its Films*, Hong Kong, Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 2005, vii + 257 pp. ISBN: 9-629962-07-1 (hbk); 9-629962-30-6 (pbk).

Beneath the façade of its modest and engaging narrative style, Paul Clark's *Reinventing China* is a pioneering achievement. Other books such as Rey Chow's *Primitive Passions* (Columbia University Press, 1995) and Jerome Silbergeld's *China into Film* (Reaktion Books, 2000) have focused on selected Fifth Generation films. A riveting account of the childhood origins, education, and very early days of the Fifth Generation filmmakers has been written by their former teacher, Ni Zhen (*Memoirs from the Beijing Film Academy*, Duke University Press, 2002). Yet no basic history of the Fifth Generation phenomenon itself had been written before Clark's eminently readable but also reliable and comprehensive work. Reading his account of what is arguably the most important episode in Chinese cinema history and certainly the one that brought Chinese film to the attention of the world, one is immediately struck by how many parts of the picture have not been available to the English-language reader before. Based on many years of primary research, interviewing, and data collection, *Reinventing China* is a mine of information for the scholar and a concise but complete introduction to the topic for the student or general reader.

The book is divided into three parts. Part one, titled "Flashbacks: The Cultural Revolution" covers their childhoods. Part two, is titled "The Beijing Film Academy" and covers their education. The final part, "The Films of the Fifth Generation," is almost twice as long as the first two parts combined, and gives a detailed and thorough account of their filmmaking activities from their very first films through to the dissolution of the Fifth Generation filmmaking phenomenon in the late eighties and early nineties, and on to the present day.

Reinventing China establishes an important point at the outset. Everyone associates the Fifth Generation with Zhang Yimou (whose films include *Red Sorghum*, *Raise the Red Lantern*, *To Live*, and *Hero*), Tian Zhuangzhuang (*Horse Thief*, *Blue Kite*, *Delamu* and more), and Chen Kaige (*Yellow Earth*, *Farewell to My Concubine* and *Together*). In fact, it was a much more diverse phenomenon than this suggests. The term "Fifth Generation" refers to the more than 150 students who graduated from the directing, cinematography, art direction, and acting departments of China's only film school, the Beijing Film Academy, in 1982. They included men and women from all over China. Some were from relatively privileged backgrounds, with parents who were members of the Communist hierarchy and working in the film industry already, such as Tian Zhuangzhuang and Chen Kaige. Others, including Zhang Yimou, came from the very worst

political backgrounds, despised from birth and socially excluded because of the bad political histories of their relatives. To ensure broad (if not precisely representative) coverage, Clark focuses on ten students, eight from the directing department, and two from cinematography (one of whom, Zhang Yimou, has of course gone on to direct). He has known these filmmakers for almost a quarter of a century now, met them repeatedly, and interviewed them often.

The opening sections establish in vivid detail the exceptional formative experiences of the Fifth Generation filmmakers. First, there was the Cultural Revolution. Most Western readers are aware of the sufferings many experienced at the hands of the Red Guards from books like Jung Chang's bestseller *Wild Swans* (HarperCollins, 1991). However, the Fifth Generation were too young to be the primary victims of this revolutionary episode. Instead, they witnessed their parents' sufferings and sometimes even participated as little Red Guards in their persecution. More significant for them personally was the campaign to send youth down into the countryside to learn from the workers and peasants that began in 1968. Not only were they far away from home in impoverished and difficult circumstances, but they also learnt to live and, possibly most importantly, to think independently. This was because what they found down in the countryside was so different from the glorious achievements of the socialist revolution they had been taught about by the propagandistic socialist realist cinema of their childhoods. No wonder they were so determined to overthrow it after they graduated a decade or so later!

Second, there was the relatively free and open education they experienced at the Beijing Film Academy itself. As Clark's interviews establish, when the academy reopened after it had been closed for a dozen years during the Cultural Revolution, teachers and students alike understood the old ways would not do anymore. But they were less certain about what should take its place. As a result, education was an exploration that students and faculty carried out together. And this exploration took place during an era of cultural opening up — not only to all manner of foreign films excluded from China over the last thirty years, but also to pre-revolutionary Chinese cinema.

Of course, the fruits of these extraordinary beginnings are "The Films of the Fifth Generation," which is the title of Clark's third and most impressive section. It must have been tempting to focus only on the films that have been released in the West and are available on DVD with subtitles. But Clark is a rigorous narrative historian, and the huge benefit of this section is its comprehensive coverage and its ability to place the films in the context of both individual careers and social change. Now, coming across a particular film or an essay on a particular film, we have a resource that will enable us to understand its production history and how it was positioned at the time of its release.

For example, Tian Zhuangzhuang's output has been extraordinarily varied. It ranges from almost documentary films about Inner Mongolia (*On*

the Hunting Ground) and Tibet (*Horse Thief*) to break-dancing musicals (*Rock'n'Roll Kids*) and epic histories of the Cultural Revolution (*Blue Kite*). By tracing the histories of each film's production and release, Clark is able to show Tian's creative choices follow a certain logic. For example, following his nationwide vilification for producing unpopular films such as *Horse Thief*, *Rock'n'Roll Kids* made sense as a way of proving his critics wrong. At the same time, it also continued Tian's consistent interest in socially marginalized people.

Similar accounts are given for all of the other nine filmmakers that Clark has selected as his primary subjects: Zhang Yimou, Zhang Jianya, Jiang Haiying, Chen Kaige, Wu Ziniu, Chen Kaige, Hu Mei, Peng Xiaolian, and Liu Miaomiao. In the course of these accounts, it becomes clear that the late eighties marked a turning point for all of them. Their iconoclastic challenge to conventional social realist style had done its job by then. On the other hand, their determination to raise challenging social and political issues ran into a dead end along with the democracy movement and the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. Furthermore, the growing "marketization" — as the Chinese call it — of the Chinese film industry was making a cutting edge cinema with small intellectual audiences less viable with the move away from state funding of film production.

After this point, sooner or later, the filmmakers all changed their practices and the Fifth Generation phenomenon came to an end. Some, like Hu Mei, left filmmaking altogether and found fame and fortune in the new boom medium, television. Others, such as Wu Ziniu, were soon making government-line and government-funded films such as *The National Anthem* and the *The Hero Zheng Chenggong*, very different from his earlier anti-nationalistic (and banned) film *The Dove Tree*. The internationally best-known filmmakers, like Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige, were able to continue with controversial themes by seeking out foreign investment, but then found themselves catering to foreign tastes and condemned for it by critics at home. More recently, they too have turned to more mainstream commercial production.

As well as Tian and the other nine main filmmakers he has interviewed in depth, Clark's third section also includes a section on the production of other major filmmakers of the era. With this in mind, perhaps the best way to see *Reinventing China* is as the extension of Clark's earlier and equally pioneering work, *Chinese Cinema: Culture and Politics since 1949* (Cambridge University Press, 1988). *Chinese Cinema* provided a long-needed foundation for all Chinese film studies in the form of a basic, comprehensive, and reliable narrative history of cinema in the People's Republic up to 1981. (Why Cambridge University Press shot themselves in the foot by not issuing this basic text in paperback has always been a mystery to me, but I am relieved to see that the Chinese University of Hong Kong Press has published *Reinventing China* in paperback.) In many ways, *Reinventing China* is the history of People's Republic cinema in the 1980s. Without wishing to downplay the significance of other filmmakers, the Fifth

Generation phenomenon was the big story of that decade, and with *Reinventing China*, Paul Clark has brought his valuable historical narrative up to the 1990s.

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June Yip, *Envisioning Taiwan: Fiction, Cinema, and the Nation in the Cultural Imaginary*, Durham NC, Duke University Press, 2004, 356 pp. ISBN: 0-8223-3357-0 (hbk); 0-8223-3367-8 (pbk).

The cultural and artistic renaissance that has been experienced in Taiwan since the early 1990s has resulted in an entirely new field of enquiry for scholars interested in the Chinese-speaking world. It has also prompted the publication of a number of original studies on Taiwan's culture, society and modern history. At first glance, this book appears to represent a welcome contribution to such scholarship. By examining the work of Taiwan's nativist authors during the 1960s and 1970s and New Cinema filmmakers in more recent decades, Yip states at the outset that her aim is to "offer it [i.e., Taiwan] as a site where broader cultural themes ... are played out in distinct and provocative ways", and to "highlight a perceptible shift from conceptions of nation and cultural identity based on unitary coherence and authenticity toward alternative models that emphasize multiplicity and fluidity" (11). Unfortunately, however, she falls short of achieving such goals.

The book is divided into seven main chapters. Each of these are structured around particular themes, with the author moving between analysis of film and literature to examine particular issues — in Chapters 1 and 2, the cultural and intellectual debates that led to the rise of *hsiang-t'u* (native earth) literature and, more recently, to the nativist nationalism that has since been transformed into political power for the Democratic Progressive Party; in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, reinterpretation of the past and social memory, and the implications that this has had for ideas of "the nation" in Taiwan; in Chapter 5, the politics of language and "voice" in Taiwan; in Chapter 6, diverging representations of the city and the countryside in cinema and literature; and, in the final Chapter, the increasing difficulty of defining set cultural identities in "postmodern" Taiwan.

However, it is a challenge to appreciate how these separate sections fit into a coherent whole, despite the presence of a number of recurrent themes, such as Yip's argument that traditional notions of nationhood are problematic in the Taiwanese context. Indeed, despite some very sound close readings of literary and cinematic texts, readers may find themselves asking what the book is actually about. This general lack of structural coherence is accentuated by clumsy prose. Colloquialisms and journalese — "hit books"

(2); “hottest fashions” (213) — do not sit easily alongside thick, theoretical musings.

Nor is there anything strikingly new about some elements of Yip’s thesis. Many of the points raised in sections dealing with the rise of *hsiang-t’u* literature — particularly those passages dealing with this genre’s depiction of the urban landscape and the societal changes that arose in rural Taiwan in the wake of rapid urbanisation — have already been examined at some length by scholars such as Jing Wang and Sung-sheng Yvonne Chang. One wonders whether Yip is adding anything novel to this body of existing work. Similarly, an abridged political history appearing from pages 13 to 19 is little more than a catalogue of clichés.

However, Yip does contribute to our understanding of cultural production in Taiwan in a number of areas, with the book’s main strengths being found in those sections in which the author examines the work of New Cinema directors such as Hou Hsiao-hsien. Indeed, her call to think of cinema as a form of historiography challenges us to redefine how we understand the ways in which the past has been rewritten in Taiwan over the last two decades. In Chapters 3 and 4, for example, Yip outlines how official history, social memory and folklore were explored in Hou Hsiao-hsien’s Taiwan Trilogy (the three films, *City of Sadness*, *The Puppetmaster* and *Good Men, Good Women*). Particularly fascinating is her exploration of the ways in which different narrative voices are used in each of these films to deconstruct the differences between official and personal history, and between the private and public realms. Her argument that Hou was not simply retelling past events through these films, but actually encouraging audiences in Taiwan to consider the very ways in which history was constructed during the martial-law years, is convincing and well argued.

Elsewhere, Yip details the “disruption of linear narrative” (177) that occurs in many of Hou’s films, comparing these to the historiography most closely associated with the writings of Walter Benjamin (85-86), and showing how Hou’s concentration on cyclical rather than linear time, as well as his depiction of space and the landscape, draws not only on *hsiang-tu* literature, but also on Chinese poetic and artistic traditions (177).

However, it is unclear how any of this relates to the films of directors such as Edward Yang and Ang Lee, which are suddenly introduced in the book’s Conclusion. The fact that these filmmakers have explored questions of identity in what is an era of increased mobility for many affluent Taiwanese is all very interesting. But it has little to do with the writings of *hsiang-t’u* authors or the cinema of Hou Hsiao-hsien, and its inclusion blurs the issues that are explored in core chapters.

Most problematic of all, however, is that swathes of this book can only loosely be described as scholarship. Many sections — such as the hagiographic appraisal of former president Lee Teng-hui found in the Introduction (6-7) — are more reminiscent of brochures distributed by the Government Information Office in Taipei than academic publications.

Indeed, in early chapters, the author seems to be more determined to promote Taiwan than to analyse cultural production there.

Similarly, frequent generalisations, in which “the Taiwanese people” are attributed with all manner of collective characteristics, are found throughout the book. “The Taiwanese people are exhilarated by the novelty and dizzying pace of current cultural-political change” the author tells us (87), and are “clamoring to make their voices heard”; “today’s Taiwanese have greatly strengthened their international presence” (233) and have “already embraced the new globalism” (246). Who are Yip’s “Taiwanese people”? And by what means is Yip empowered to define and then speak for them? Yip seems to suggest that only Hokkien-speakers who are the direct descendants of ethnically Chinese people living on Taiwan prior to 1945 are entitled to the term, despite the debates in Taiwan over recent years concerning the problems inherent in the use of such exclusionary notions, and despite her own celebration of Taiwan’s social pluralism elsewhere in the book. But even this is uncertain, for virtually no attempt to define or critically analyse the use of such categories has been made. Ironically, in framing her study in such terms, Yip appears to have fallen victim to the same “simple binarisms” — “Taiwanese”/“mainlander”, Taiwan/China, democracy/authoritarianism — that not only saturate so much scholarship on Taiwan, but which Yip herself criticises in relation to the writing of authors such as Hwang Chun-ming (245).

At times, Yip’s attempts to remain true to this wider partisan narrative — one in which a supposedly genuine Taiwanese culture is found only amongst the island’s Hokkien-speaking population, and in which “the Taiwanese people” are perpetually portrayed as victims at the hands of “outsiders” — cloud her grasp of fact. Many of the factual errors found in the book occur at points where the author tries to force the complex contours of Taiwan’s modern cultural history into the symmetrical simplicity of nativist nationalism. For instance, none but the staunchest of Taiwanese nationalists would claim that Hokkien was “the indigenous tongue of the island” (135) — the language (referred to throughout the book as “Taiwanese”) developed in China’s Fujian province, and its speakers in Taiwan largely displaced the island’s indigenous peoples (and their languages) over the course of recent centuries. Similarly, Yip’s claim that, prior to the 1980s, Hokkien “was seldom if ever used in cinematic dialogue” (165) is simply not true. A lively Hokkien-language film industry existed in Taiwan during the 1950s and 1960s. Similar inaccuracies abound.

Elsewhere, the same partisanship appears to have influenced even the author’s choice of text. Take Yip’s repeated argument that Republican Chinese rule in Taiwan in the post-1945 era be interpreted as “colonial”, for instance. Whilst Yip is entitled to make such a claim, she has done so without even acknowledging any of the theoretical literature concerning colonialism and the postcolonial experience in the Taiwanese context. It is astonishing that Yip has barely mentioned the work of scholars such as Leo T. S. Ching and Kuan-Hsing Chen, despite the fact that these and other

theorists have written so extensively on questions of “the colonial” in Taiwan.

A similarly selective approach is employed by Yip when examining political nationalism in post-war Taiwan. Yip is more than ready to refer to the work of Benedict Anderson when deconstructing the Chinese nationalism that was promoted by Chiang Kai-shek’s government during the era of one-party rule (17). Yet she does not seem to think that Anderson’s critique applies to more recent constructs in Taiwan, such as nativist Taiwanese nationalism, and its vision of a politically independent “Taiwanese nation”, which has come to completely dominate intellectual debate in Taiwan over the last five years.

It is not important whether such bias is somehow related to the fact that Yip’s research was partly funded by the Taiwanese American Foundation of San Diego, or whether the author is simply unable to distinguish between partisanship and scholarship.¹ What does matter, however, is that the integrity of the book as a whole is compromised by it. Overall, this is a disappointing piece of work, and one in which genuine contributions to debates on cultural production and representation in modern Taiwan are overshadowed by dogma. One can only wonder how much more inspiring this book could have been if the author had tried to “envision Taiwan” with the same depth of reflection that many of the New Cinema directors she examines have.

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Yomi Braester, *Witness Against History: Literature, Film, and Public Discourse in Twentieth-Century China*, Stanford CA, Stanford University Press, 2003, xv + 264 pp. ISBN: 0-8047-4792-x (hbk).

Witness Against History is an in-depth exploration of the relationship between history and fiction. The book’s main thesis is that Chinese fiction, even when seemingly participating in the making of the modern Chinese nation, in fact displays the inability/impossibility to bear witness “to temporal continuity or historical progress” (207). By carefully examining a wide selection of twentieth-century China’s literary and filmic texts, Braester shows how literature and cinema often resist historical interpretation and challenge — rather than support — the advancement of Chinese modernity, by exposing its contradictions and failures. The author uncovers the means through which fiction has consistently pointed to history’s inconsistencies or

¹ A group which claims, on its own Web site, to be “pro-Taiwan.” See <www.taiwancenter.com/about/index.html>

even “negates all temporal experiences” (185). The book is extremely well-researched and the author’s careful annotations and detailed bibliography make it a very welcome addition to the field of modern Chinese studies; a glossary with Chinese characters, however, was surprisingly not included.

Witness Against History succeeds in offering new insights on some canonical texts as well as offering in-depth reading of previously unexplored material. The author shows confidence in both literary and film analysis and his captivating style creates a cohesive and well-supported argument. His main contribution to the field of modern Chinese studies lies in his provoking redefinition of May Fourth as a more complex movement, his analysis of dissonant messages and, consequently, the re-evaluation of its legacy. Braester argues that while traditionally acclaimed as a main promoter of modernity and historical progress, the May Fourth Movement in fact included anti-Enlightenment elements which upheld a suspicious view of history. To make his case, the author necessarily needs to start from Lu Xun and he does so brilliantly and convincingly. He notes how Lu Xun and, similarly, Gogol apparently promoted a “literature of national redemption, yet their stories reflect a deep suspicion of writing” (48). This suspicion becomes clear in *Diary of a Madman*, as Lu Xun invites us not to trust the witness. From then on, history has been put on trial time and again.

The book’s chapters (divided into two main parts: “May Fourth and its Discontent” and “Wounded Memories”) are organized in chronological order. However, while accepting the inescapability of historical progression as a matter of convenience, Braester questions the critical understanding of the main cultural debates generally associated with each period of time. After re-reading Lu Xun’s *Diary of a Madman*, Braester moves to the analysis of the three different (sub)versions of Pan Jinlian’s story: Ouyang Yuqian’s 1926 play, Wei Minglun’s 1986 opera of the absurd, and Li Bihua’s 1989’s novel (which also was turned into a film by Hong Kong director, Clara Law) in which the witness herself is doubtful of her own ability to perceive and understand history. Braester proceeds to complicate the very idea of 1930s leftist cinema by closely looking at *Song at Midnight*’s unsettling relationship between revolution and monstrosity. After examining how Maoist semiotics (applied to film and drama) effectively silenced “bearing witness against the dominant view of history” (106), Braester concludes with an analysis of post-Mao China and post-Chiang Taiwan. In particular, he focuses on the cinematic parody of public history (Jiang Wen’ *In the Heat of the Sun*, 1995), the move from history to private stories (Cheng Yingzhen’s *Mountain Path*, 1983 and Liu Daren’s *Azaleas*, 1984), the development of splitting narrative voices (Zhang Xianliang’s in *My Bodhi Tree*, 1994), and the ultimate negation of history (Yu Hua’s avant-garde fiction).

As the absence of illustrations already indicates, one should note that the book’s critical angle privileges literary criticism over a film studies perspective. While the book includes three chapters dealing specifically with films, the strength of Braester’s argument lies in his literary analysis. In particular, the lack of a discussion of the cinema of the Fifth and Sixth

generation (a.k.a. urban cinema) is conspicuous, especially since such cinema has undoubtedly contributed to bearing witness against history.

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Sharon A. Carstens, *Histories, Cultures, Identities: Studies in Malaysian Chinese Worlds*, Singapore, Singapore University Press, 2005, x + 314 p. ISBN: 9971-69-312-7 (pbk.).

In this book, Sharon Carstens examines the interplay of culture and the political, economic and social fields among Malaysian Chinese. The volume consists of a number of essentially separate articles exploring a diverse range of topics, from culture and power in colonial Malaya to the impact of growing transnational communication and travel on social identity in modern Malaysia. These articles are joined by a common thematic thread of two interrelated issues: how being Chinese has shaped the responses of the Malaysian Chinese community to political, economic and social developments in the country; and how their experiences in Malaysia have affected the way this community identify themselves as Chinese.

In her analysis Carstens uses a conceptualization of culture that emphasizes both its role in shaping social discourse, and the way in which culture itself is shaped by this discourse. Drawing on the work of scholars such as Gates and Weller in applying Gramscian conceptions of hegemony and ideology to Chinese popular culture, Carstens seeks to show how culture has shaped the social actions of individuals in Malaysia.¹ This has occurred both subconsciously, an aspect of culture which she relates to Bourdieu's *habitus*, and through the conscious utilization of cultural strategies by individual actors in general social interaction.² Throughout the work, Carstens emphasizes the dynamic nature of culture and its interrelation with the wider political, economic and social systems in society. Through skillful use of this sophisticated understanding of culture, Carstens produces a fascinating insight into how changing cultural patterns have shaped and continue to shape the lives of Malaysian Chinese.

The articles detail research conducted using both historical and ethnographic methods. Historical research is based upon a variety of primary and secondary sources, in both English and Chinese. Ethnographic fieldwork has been conducted in several different locations over varying periods of time, including a 25 year ongoing research project in a rural Hakka Chinese

¹ Hill Gates and Robert Weller, "Hegemony and Chinese Folk Ideologies", *Modern China*, 13, 1(1987), 3-16.

² Bourdieu, Pierre, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

community, and shorter-term fieldwork in a variety of urban settings in modern Malaysia.

Carstens begins her work with a historical examination of the famous Chinese leader of the British colonial period, Yap Ah Loy, and the methods he employed in gaining and maintaining his position of power among the Chinese migrant community. Using a detailed examination of the career of Yap, Carstens attacks the ideas of structuralists, who regard cultural attributes relating to region of origin in China, common dialect and religious worship as providing a rigid, predetermined relationship with particular social organizations. Criticizing this approach as conflating culture with social organization, Carstens shows how these cultural features were mobilized, both consciously and unconsciously, in a variety of creative and sometimes contradictory ways as part of general social interaction. Carstens suggests Yap's rise was related to his ability to creatively use cultural strategies, social relationships, political strategies and ideological images to his own advantage as the situation required.

Carstens then examines the changing portrayals of Yap Ah Loy in the years since his death, charting his rise to the legendary status he currently enjoys among Malaysian Chinese. Carstens sees these changing perceptions of Yap as being rooted in a wider discourse on understandings of political power in the Chinese community. From the downplaying of his example by rival anglophile Straits Chinese merchants in the early years following his death, through Yap's rise as a divinely guided hero modeled on the classical Chinese tradition, to a modern version of his story which emphasizes the role of hard work and skill rather than divine providence, Carstens traces the transformations of the perceptions of Yap among Malaysian Chinese in the 86 years since his death. Carstens seeks to show these transformations of the historical narrative of the life of Yap not only reflect changing understandings of power and authority, they have also served to shape the perspectives and the related actions of individuals regarding power and authority in a significant manner, and are thus one of the arenas in which this discourse takes place.

From this largely historical opening, Carstens proceeds to present a number of articles relating to her long ethnographic fieldwork experience working with Chinese in Malaysia. These focus primarily on the role of culture in shaping wider social interaction, and the ways in which culture and identity are changing among ethnic Chinese in modern day Malaysia. Her observations are rich in ethnographic detail and provide a satisfyingly personal insight into the daily lives of her subjects.

Beginning with a small rural Hakka Chinese community in Northern Malaysia, Carstens examines a number of issues relating to changing cultural patterns and their effects on daily life. Examining the issue of ethnic identity, Carstens details the decline in significance of Hakka identity and the concurrent rise of a strong Chinese identity superseding previously significant dialect group divisions. Carstens convincingly demonstrates how this phenomenon, together with a general lack of the emergence of the cross-

ethnic class based ideologies predicted by a classical Marxist analysis, is the result of specific historical, political and social realities of Malaysian life. The growth in the importance of ethnicity-based politics in Malaysia which has relegated Hakka identity to sub-ethnic status has been shaped by pre-existing cultural patterns, both unconsciously replicated and strategically deployed in the political, economic and social spheres. Carstens suggests that the distinctive features of Hakka Chinese culture, in particular the Hakka emphasis on education, may actually be contributing to the loss of social significance of a Hakka identity, and that a conscious effort would be required to maintain a conception of Hakka culture distinct from other Malaysian Chinese.

In a more detailed investigation of the specific issue of gender in the Hakka community, the author examines how a religious celebration that has taken on a gendered aspect for uncertain historical reasons has steadily increased in significance as part of the changing gender roles in the community. The changing status of women resulting from increased educational and economic independence is related to an increasingly formalized structure, and a growth in scale and public significance of the exclusively female aspect of the festival. Carstens emphasizes that rather than merely reflecting changing gender patterns, this transformation of the festival celebration is an integral part of the social discourse through which traditional conceptions of gender roles are being disputed and redefined. Culture is being strategically deployed for specific social ends, in this case by women disputing traditional gender roles through the medium of the festival. At the same time, this interaction, as part of the wider social discourse on gender roles, serves to transform established cultural patterns.

In the latter part of the book, Carstens shifts her attention towards the impact of increased opportunities for travel, communication and media consumption across national boundaries on the Malaysian Chinese community. Her ethnographic focus, while still including her small rural community, also expands to take in Chinese living in large urban centers in Malaysia. Again she emphasizes her recurring theme of how Chinese culture, by both unconsciously shaping individuals action and by providing the possibility for actively deployable cultural strategies, has influenced the impact of these technological developments in Malaysia. She also emphasizes how these developments, as part of wider social, economic and political discourse, have transformed the nature of Chinese culture in Malaysia and impacted on social identity among ethnic Chinese.

Carstens observes how increased opportunities for travel and communication with Mainland Chinese source culture have caused major shifts in attitudes relating to Chinese culture in Malaysia, such as a resurgence in Hakka identity, while leaving the nature of this culture uncertain. The economic and political rise of "greater China" (Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan), coupled with a softening of ethnic tensions within Malaysia and an increased desire for a cultural identity among a growing urban middleclass, have led to an increased assertiveness among

Chinese in promoting their culture as an integral element of Malaysian society. Key issues of inter-ethnic friction relating to education, cultural performance, and the representation of the historical role of Chinese in Malaysia have all found partial resolution for a variety of economic, political and cultural reasons, while ethnic divisions themselves have intensified. Carstens describes how these factors have stimulated the assertion of a stronger ethnic Chinese identity within a multi-ethnic Malaysian state. At the same time, she notes these same factors have made what it means to be Chinese in Malaysia more contested and problematic, as different understandings of Chinese culture have developed along lines of sub-ethnic identity, social class, age group and gender.

Carstens asserts the growth in consumption of transnational media from China, Taiwan and particularly Hong Kong has been shaped by, and has had a profound effect on, Malaysian Chinese culture. The immense popularity of this media is rooted in Malaysian Chinese cultural patterns, particularly relating to language and areas of thematic interest. Consumption of this media serves to stimulate a sense of connectedness with “greater China”, increasing ethnic consciousness in contrast to other groups within the country. At the same time, attraction to and consumption of different media products serve to internally fragment the Chinese community along lines related to sub-ethnic identities, age, social class and gender.

Finally Carstens undertakes a more general examination of social identity among Malaysian Chinese and finds it to be a complex, changing, contextual phenomenon. Again emphasizing both *habitus* and individual agency in the use and transformation of culture as part of wider social discourse, Carstens seeks to show that Malaysian Chinese identity, while firmly established as an emic category in Malaysian inter-ethnic discourse, is itself internally complex, involving multiple dynamic positioning in a constant state of flux, inescapably bound to personal, local, national and global politics.

While generally interesting and thought provoking, the volume is not without its faults. There is a certain lack of cohesion among the chapters of the book, giving the impression of separate articles written over a long period of time. This introduces minor instances of repetition of content, and some internal contradictions. Prognostications on the continued decline of the significance of Hakka culture and identity in Chapter 5, for instance, sit somewhat uncomfortably with the possibility of resurgence in Hakka sub-ethnic identification explored in Chapter 7. While it is relatively easy to deduce the former was written before the latter had occurred, it would add to the overall cohesion of the articles if this was explicitly mentioned.

These minor quibbles aside, this book provides a fascinating insight into the complex interplay between Chinese culture and the wider sphere of social life in Malaysia over the last 25 years. A sophisticated understanding of culture coupled, with rich historical and ethnographic data, produce a wealth of detail concerning the main interrelated themes of the book, how Chinese culture shapes the actions of Malaysian Chinese, and how this

cultural system is itself continually transformed as part of the political, economic, technological and social reformations in which it is embedded. This book is of considerable interest, not only to those with an interest in Malaysian society or Chinese culture, but also anyone with a desire to better understand the complex interrelation of culture and the wider social sphere in a world under profound transformation by globalization.

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Joseph Fewsmith, *China Since Tiananmen: The Politics of Transition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001, xiii + 313 pp. ISBN: 0-521-8063408 (hbk); 0-0521-00105-6 (pbk).

Jonathan Unger (ed.), *The Nature of Chinese Politics: From Mao to Jiang*, Armonk, New York, M.E. Sharpe, 2002, xiii + 333 pp. ISBN: 0-07656-0847-2 (hbk); 0-7656-0848-0 (pbk).

Contrary to the predictions of many analysts after the events of April-June 1989, in the last fifteen years the People's Republic of China (PRC) has developed into a stable and prosperous nation with a government that continues to maintain a high level of legitimacy. Both these books attempt from various angles to answer the question as to why the PRC has survived and prospered, while other communist states have not. For both the two books 1989 is a turning point. Fewsmith's book focuses on intellectual debates within China throughout the 1990s, while the collection of papers edited by Jon Unger contrasts elite politics in the Mao era with that of the Jiang era, looking for patterns to fit existing political science theories and trying to predict future developments.

Although the regime has survived the negative predictions of analysts in the early 1990s, both books still tend to take a very negative view on the longevity of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) government. Both books were published just before the transition of power from Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao between 2002-2004 and both Fewsmith and some of the authors in the Unger book who discuss the Jiang era all incorrectly surmise that this transition will not be a smooth one. In actual fact, Hu Jintao's assumption of the three most powerful roles in Chinese politics: CCP General Secretary in November 2002, State President in February 2003 and Head of the Central Military Commission in September 2004 proved to be relatively straightforward. Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao have shown themselves to be much more adept politicians than most political commentators would previously have given them credit for.

These two books are likely to be of most interest to the specialist reader, rather than students and the general public. Many of the debates will be too arcane for most readers. Yet for the specialist, the debates are well worth considering. In the Unger book a number of essays stand out, notably Susan Shirk's thoughtful analysis of the various possibilities of the power transition; You Ji's well-worded description of how Jiang Zemin, a non-military leader, gained the loyalty of the People's Liberation Army after he was put in power in 1989; and Lucien Pye's thoughtful article on Jiang Zemin's leadership style. Fewsmith's book is well researched with rich materials worthy of consideration, yet seems to lack an underlying logic. The author assembles a series of important events and interesting sources but fails to make much sense of them. As the author implies by the sub-title of the book "The Politics of Transition", China after 1989 was in a state of transition, but what this transition was leading towards is not made clear.

Neither book appears able to conclusively explain why the regime is currently doing so well or how it survived the troubles of the past. In the Unger edited book, none of the esteemed authors can even come to an agreement on the very nature of Chinese politics. But as with much social science research in China, due to the closed nature of the Party-State system, much of the analysis we do on China is close to that of the blind men feeling the elephant. These two books demonstrate how surprisingly difficult it still is to research and analyse CCP politics, from its earliest years and up to the current period. Party history has always been a closely guarded, highly political matter, while present day political affairs are as non-transparent, perhaps even more so, than they ever were in the Mao years. Under such circumstances, the two works under review are as good a surmise as any as to what sort of beast the CCP Party-State really is and what has enabled it to keep going for so long.

*Reviewed by ANNE-MARIE BRADY
University of Canterbury*

Kenneth Henshall, *A History of Japan from Stone Age to Superpower*, second edition Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, xiii + 264 pp. ISBN: 1-4039-1272-6 (pbk).

This book is an ambitious endeavour. It surveys Japanese history literally from the stone age of Jomon Era to the twenty-first century. Most of the standard textbooks on Japanese history, including Marius Jansen's *The Making of Modern Japan* and James L. McClain's *Japan: A Modern History*, begin their tale from c. 1600 A.D.. Incorporating earlier periods, as well as the legendary era as recorded in *Kojiki*, within a concise format is truly welcome; still more so is the book's accessible and readable style. But A

History of Japan is not intended merely as an introductory narrative of Japanese history in its entirety. It assumes (legitimately) that the readers are interested in “how Japan became a superpower” (x). Hence, the book’s secondary aim is to explain how and why Japan achieved its economic success. This explains its partial treatment of the post-Tokugawa era; three quarters of the text are devoted to one and a half centuries of the Meiji, Taisho, Showa and Heisei periods. It is here that the strength of the book clearly lies; Professor Henshall’s narrative of political and economic (not so much social and cultural) history is lucid and reliable.

Having said this, the first quarter of the book discusses the period from the birth of Japan to the end of the Tokugawa shogunal regime. It does not seem to be designed merely as a cursory, ornamental introduction to the making of “modern” Japan as a “superpower”; indeed, Professor Henshall makes frequent references to the pre-Meiji past in his discussion of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But his references are curiously ambiguous; he states, for example, in his chapter on Meiji Japan that “Ito was becoming ever more pragmatic, and was now thinking that he should – *in traditional Japanese style* – not simply confront the foe but learn from it, and to an extent even align with it” and again “*Following a time-honoured tradition* Japan preferred to avoid confrontation with a stronger power if possible” (both 91; emphasis mine). Professor Henshall neither explains what the tradition is nor refers to anywhere else in the book.

The mystery, in fact, is not solved until the conclusion, where he draws together the major threads of Japanese history. Since the book is written in response to the question of why Japan became a superpower, the Conclusion, with the subtitle “Lessons for Aspiring Superpowers”, is crucially important. It maintains that “one of the [Japanese] key traditional values is pragmatism” (192). By this, Professor Henshall means “compromise and flexibility on the way to achieving ... aims and winning ... causes” (193). “Pragmatism” provided the Japanese with “a great ability to ‘Japanise’ the new and foreign.” I am not sure whether “pragmatism” and “Japanising” are terms that describe appropriately the Japanese attitude towards foreign ideas and customs; however, I do not deny that Professor Henshall is here pointing out one of the crucial issues in Japanese history. Indeed, the uniquely Japanese pattern of the reception and transformation of new and foreign ideas has been famously identified by Maruyama Masao in what he called “*basso ostinato*” in the history of Japanese thought.

Professor Henshall’s book is explicitly intended for lay readers as well as students. The neat tables of bullet-points, which at the end of each chapter summarise the key developments of each era, will prove useful to students for revision. The intended readership seems to justify Professor Henshall’s citations of the English-language sources only. I wonder if this was the right decision. Professor Henshall could have made better use of the sources in Japanese, English and other languages and provided a bibliographical essay for an English readership. He is surely well versed in a large body of Japanese scholarship, but I am afraid I rarely see evidence of it in the array of

endnotes. Further, the long bibliographical list, as it stands, will not serve students and non-specialists, who do not have the ability to distinguish influential studies from other specialist works, as a useful guide to the voluminous literature.

References to (if not, reliance on) the English-language sources seem to be responsible for some dubious assertions that occur in places. Professor Henshall, for instance, downplays the significance of Christianity in the state-building process in the Meiji era. After stating that the religion appealed to no more than 1% of the population, he wrote that Christianity “was often ‘Japanised’ by being made more flexible and stressing selected values such as duty and hard work” (87) and singled out Uchimura Kanzo as one such example (213). Professor Henshall is skating on thin ice here, since modern scholarship has revealed the tremendous impact that both the Protestant and Catholic churches had on the Japanese intellectual world, and on education, social welfare and journalism (see, for instance, Iwanami’s *Nihon Tsushi (A History of Japan)* vol. 17). Historians of Japanese Christianity have also shown that Uchimura’s Christianity was essentially Puritan and his claim of “Japanese Christianity” was a quest for the Christian mission on Japanese soil, not a selective reception of Christianity compromised by the Japanese religious and intellectual milieu.

Professor Henshall also asserts without qualification that Tokugawa Ieyasu “chose the little fishing village of Edo” as his military and political base, instead of Odawara, the Hojo family’s former base (52). Recent scholarship in Japan argues otherwise. Some leading historians in Japan maintain that Hideyoshi forced Ieyasu to reside in Edo. Perhaps more importantly, Professor Henshall’s emphasis on the Confucian influence on Japanese government and society is puzzling in light of, for example, Watanabe Hiroshi’s widely acclaimed study of the relationship between Tokugawa society and Confucianism (*Kinsei Nihon Shakai to Sogaku*, University of Tokyo Press, 1985), which largely rejected the wide reception of Confucianism in Tokugawa Japanese society and the bakufu’s reception of it as orthodox ideology. Professor Henshall notes that Confucianism in Tokugawa and post-Tokugawa Japan was “Japanised” (72, 105). However, the Confucian influence on Japan needs to be carefully established by means of comparison to contemporary China and Korea. The epithet “Japanised” describes, but does not explain, the Japanese reception of Confucianism.

Although the book claims to be an accessible introduction to the whole Japanese history, the first part that deals with pre-1868 period is relatively weak. It is not merely a matter of the limited number of pages that the author devoted to this period. Despite the fact that the book is in its second edition, it contains several factual errors. For example, Henshall claims that “upon Nobunaga’s death, Hideyoshi pursued and defeated his lord’s attacker Akechi Mitsuhide. He then made peace with the Mori family” (45). Chronologically, however, the reverse is true: on 4 June 1582, as soon as he heard the news of Nobunaga’s death, Hideyoshi made peace with Mori, who had not heard the news, and then, on 13 June, attacked Akechi Mitsuhide.

The book states that Toyotomi Hideyoshi “denounced Christianity in the Edict of Expulsion of 1578” and “did not actually enforce” it since it was “more of a warning” (47). However, Hideyoshi did enforce the Edict on the daimyos, if not on others. The late Tokugawa scientist Takano Choei claimed to have been “imprisoned and later forced to commit suicide” (67), but he, in fact, fled from prison and committed suicide voluntarily when his refuge in Edo was attacked by pursuers.

Perhaps readers of this book will be left with the question of why Japan, not China and Korea for instance, managed to modernize so quickly from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Professor Henshall’s historical analysis of the emergence of Japan as a military and then economic superpower would have been more persuasive if he had compared the Japanese response to the West’s colonial threat with the Chinese and Korean ones and explored differences in their ideological and social background. Tokugawa Japanese society was ruled and disciplined by warriors, not by literary elites (hence, sociologically, not “Confucian” at all). Many “Confucian” thinkers of Tokugawa Japan were in fact military scientists. Tokugawa Japan was a garrison state. And the leaders of Meiji Japan were from the warrior class. Without grasping the Tokugawa legacy of military discipline, it is impossible to understand why the Japanese in the post-Tokugawa era were so responsive to circumstantial changes, so skilful in surviving national crises, so receptive to social Darwinism and so indifferent to civil liberties.

These criticisms, however, are not to downplay Professor Henshall’s great service to the proliferation of knowledge of Japanese history and the English-language literature in the subject. The book still remains (probably) the only scholarly yet accessible text on the whole history of Japan. The great virtue of the book, however, is that it *is* engaging. It is not a narrative of history derived from an antiquarian interest in past events and culture. The book engages with the contemporary world, in which Japan plays a significant part. Despite misgivings aforementioned, I do not hesitate to recommend *A History of Japan* for students of History and Asian Studies.

Reviewed by TAKASHI SHOGIMEN
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Yang Gui-ja *Contradictions*, translated by Stephen Epstein and Kim Mi-Young, Ithaca, Cornell University East Asia Program, 2005, xiv + 172 pp. ISBN: 1885445261 (pbk); 1885445369 (hbk).

I found myself reading this book slowly, not wanting to finish it. This is not my typical experience when reading something for review, no matter how enjoyable, and the fact that I was pulled into the story so effectively that I

made no notes — mental or written — for points to raise in a review suggests the success of the author and her translators, one of whom — Stephen Epstein — is a friend and colleague. So it is with pleasure and relief that I can say that this volume is worthy of the highest praise, though that too presents a problem, albeit of a different sort, since it is easy to be negative but difficult to sustain more than the briefest of reviews on praise alone. Given the title of this book, however, it is fitting that a reviewer be faced with a contradiction, indeed, one more in addition to the many that the book examines, that provide its structure and that it itself raises.

The first chapter (“Into the World with a Cry”) is prefaced — as are the others — with a motto-cum-overview briefly yet accurately indicating the central idea of the chapter, in this instance an unfortunate but basically true observation that we tend to regard unhappiness suffered by others as part of the natural order of things and thus in the abstract. “Our own unhappiness, though, we can never accept,” and in the first sentence of the novel, the female protagonist/narrator suddenly recognizes that she must change her life because “I can’t go on living like this! I’ve got to make every second count” (2). She has not had some sort of revelation, however (a point she emphasizes), and this realization is not sudden though it is articulated suddenly. She wants her life to have meaning, but the accident of birth has dealt her a dearth of potentiality for a meaningful life. This is something she has gradually realized through the tediousness of her life, and as the story commences, she is not suddenly seeing her life anew but rather admitting to what is there and taking stock of her options.

Her options and her conception of her options are circumscribed, however, by the numerous contradictions that define her family. These points are not easy to discuss without giving away too much of the story, but there is no risk in saying that the main question she confronts is marriage, specifically her need to decide between two very different men, and that in her attempts to work through this decision, we learn about her family — immediate and extended — and see how appearances can be deceiving even as appearances can also at times be all there is — no deeper truth, no grand revelation, no sense of secure knowledge, but merely the recognition that decisions must be made as best as possible. It is the narrator’s grappling with these problems and contradictions that is so interesting and so real, and only a very unfortunate (or fortunate, depending on one’s view) reader will not recognize something in the narrator’s story.

If the core issue is the narrator’s recognition of the need to make decisions, the fuller implications of that recognition only become apparent at the end of the story when she makes a life-altering decision. Her decision, in fact, surprised me at first, but on closer inspection, I see that my surprise means only that I had fallen victim to the deception of appearances. People are nothing if not predictable — except, of course, when they do the unexpected — and I realized that while reading this, I had tended to overlook significant clues for the very simple reason that the story is so well structured that these clues pass by scarcely noticed. Nothing is hidden, and the novel is

seamless. According to Yang's "Afterword" (167-172) the book was written to be published in book form rather than in installments, and during writing it, she took no other assignments. Unity in conception and concentration in execution are evident throughout.

The result is that I was drawn into the story and searched for meaningfulness in the narrator's life. But the real problem and the fundamental contradiction (to my mind, at least) is that her sense of meaningfulness has less to do with making sense of her life — which is what I found myself doing — than with simply making decisions so that she cannot feel, as she does at the outset, that she is passively allowing her life to be shaped by external circumstances. This, of course, is not the same as being in control — a subtle but all-important distinction — and life-altering though her decision might be in the end, her life could just as easily have been altered by making another decision. For her, it is merely a matter of a choice between imperfect alternatives.

There is something curious in this that marks this story as belonging very much to our day and age, and it seems significant that that this novel was the best-seller of 1998. In fact, I was taken aback by Yang's "Afterword" as well as Epstein's excellent "Introduction," which I read after finishing the story per my usual practice, thus unintentionally honoring Epstein's wise request in his first introductory sentence: "We start, in essence, with a stop: please don't read the entire introduction quite yet" (vii). The basis for that request is found in Yang's "Afterword" where she discusses her desire for a "first reader" (171), that is, a reader who encounters the novel with no preconceptions such as one might get from a critic or a translator's introduction.

In reading this novel, I was Yang's "first reader," or at least as close a facsimile as possible, and Yang's success arguably can be judged through my final conclusion (arrived at before reading the "Introduction" and "Afterword") that what matters most in the story is not the content of the narrator's choice but that she chose at all, that the root question is psychological, her sense of herself and how she sees herself in relation to the world. Here the word "world" is of central importance.

One striking thought that occurred to me in passing, about half way through reading the novel, was that while it seemed that the story so accurately reflected a certain marked sensibility I encountered in South Korea late in 1997 when the financial crisis hit, the location of the story was unimportant. With the notable exception of a discussion of personal names (4), both culture and place-specific details are incidental to the story.

That something might at once evoke a specific context even as that specific context seems incidental — irrelevant, even — is a bewildering (dare I say it?) contradiction until one recognizes that one of the chief effects of globalization, for both good and ill, is the increasing priority of the individual's need to make decisions — quite often decisions whose ultimate consequences are scarcely comprehensible. The one thing one cannot do is not make a decision, and the responsibility that this places on the individual

goes a long way in explaining both the vitality of organized religion and the vigor of the self-help industry in a world that is increasingly interconnected and thus ever more difficult to understand.

Yang appears to have had something close to this in mind when writing *Contradictions*, as apparent at the end of the “Afterword” where she describes her motive: “These days, when the world has changed so abruptly and when people are anxious and bewildered, what can a work of fiction give us? I wanted to offer a word of comfort to those who are losing courage and have taken a tumble” (172). Anxiety? Bewilderment? No wonder this story struck a nerve with South Korean readers in 1998, and one expects that it might well strike a nerve with many others as well, for a long time to come.

And on this point, we might pose another question: is it possible that one of the effects of globalization will be simultaneously to limit the variety of narratives even as the sources of those narratives become more numerous? Given translations as good as Epstein’s and Kim’s, is it possible readers will read stories by writers with whom they have not much in common apart from living in an anxiety-ridden and bewildering world, stories that illuminate their own lives in no small part because, for the fortunate, culture and locale are rendered window-dressing on the problems faced by the individual? Indeed, it would be a great contradiction if globalization were to have such effects, thus underscoring the values of humanism and literature — if in an altogether unanticipated way.

Reviewed by GREGORY N. EVON
University of New South Wales

Nanyan Guo, Seiichi Hasegawa, Henry Johnson, Hidemichi Kawanishi, Kanako Kitahara, Anthony Rausch, eds., *Tsugaru: Regional Identity on Japan’s Northern Periphery*, Dunedin, University of Otago Press, 2005, 149 pp. ISBN: 1-877372-08-0 (pbk).

In Japanese scholarship, there is a significant body of literature devoted to local and regional history. While there are notable exceptions, the majority of academic writing about Japan produced in the English-speaking world remains Tokyo-centric. Widely acknowledged as important but under-represented in English, the history and culture of regional Japan – including the so-called periphery – is the subject of a new collection of essays. *Tsugaru: Regional Identity on Japan’s Northern Periphery* is an eclectic collection that not only improves our understanding of the Tsugaru region of northern Japan, but also highlights the importance of regional studies and suggests a variety of ways in which regional identity can be assessed and used to improve overall understandings of Japan’s past and present. The preface to the book states that it “... will contribute to an understanding of

the processes of regionalism and the interactions between the region and the nation state” (9). This is an admirable mandate and the primary reason why the work represents a notable contribution in several important thematic areas.

Tsugaru: Regional Identity on Japan's Northern Periphery begins with a concise, informative history of the Tsugaru district, an area which forms the Western part of Aomori Prefecture at the northern extreme of Honshu, the largest of the Japanese islands. The main body consists of seven essays and the order in which they are presented is effective in giving readers insight into several major features of Japan's region-centre interaction. First is Seiichi Hasegawa's "Establishing Tsugaru Identity through Öura Mitsunobu", an essay that details the origins of the Hirosaki domain of the Tsugaru lords in the sixteenth century by examining debates over genealogy. The chapter looks mostly at Öura Mitsunobu, a pseudo-historical ancestor of the clan, and while this may seem like an obscure beginning to the collection, it is in fact an effective and comprehensive introduction to the initial formation of the Tsugaru region as a distinct political and cultural entity. This immediately immerses readers in the long-continuing process of invention and re-invention of regional identity.

The second essay, "Christianity in the Tsugaru District during the Early Meiji Era" by Kanako Kitahara, represents a significant jump in time from the first. There is, however, thematic coherence in what is another enlightening examination of regional identity in a time of great social change. The chapter looks at the Töögijuku, a school in the Tsugaru region that offered a *yögaku* or "Western knowledge" curriculum taught by foreign instructors from 1872 (37). The school also had a Christian missionary focus and this chapter discusses the implications of the introduction of "Western culture" and the Christian faith to Tsugaru during the Meiji period. Kitahara concludes that at the time "Christianity was not just a religion but rather an embodiment of Western learning. Adopting Christianity would thus make it possible for Tsugaru people to overcome their sense of social isolation and cultural inferiority through education" (49). The role played by Christianity in the quest for "civilization and enlightenment" during the early Meiji period and how striving after this was often conceptualized in terms of regional, not strictly national, progress, is an important element of Tsugaru's history. What Kitahara refers to as "capitalizing on Western culture" is an idea explored through the lens of the Meiji government in most accounts of the period (49). Here, readers are presented with a discussion of how the "modernizing" project was also a challenge to the centre and a means of articulating regional identity in the context of a changing Japan.

Hidemichi Kawanishi's "The Transformation of Modern Tsugaru Identity" is another effective discussion of the development of regional identity. The article makes the important point that the Tohoku region, of which Tsugaru is a part, was considered to be unique, and in many ways, underprivileged, during the period of Meiji central consolidation. Kawanishi's discussion of the way that the region was looked down upon as

“uncivilized” during Japan’s period of “Civilization and Enlightenment” also raises important points about regional variation in Japan’s modernization (53-54). Central reforms and ideologies could not be applied uniformly and this article effectively examines the local and national discourses on the region’s “backwardness” and their consequences for regionalism. The article also covers the transition to 1930s militarism, which was welcomed in Tsugaru as a sign of a new prominence for the region as a major provider of soldiers for the empire (60-61). Defeat brought new insecurities about the region’s “backwardness” and this coverage effectively outlines the transition to the postwar period for readers. There is also an interesting discussion of author Dazai Osamu, a Tsugaru writer who became prominent on the national stage and lashed out against the idea that his home was backward, bringing yet another perspective to debates concerning region and centre.

The significance of Dazai’s writings is taken up as the subject of the collection’s next essay, Roy Starrs’ “Nation and Region in the Work of Dazai Osamu”. Starr discusses Dazai’s work in the context of struggle against the post-Meiji Restoration trend toward centralization and the marginalization of regional cultures. Dazai not only came from the marginalized Tsugaru district but wrote extensively about the region and its relationship with the centre in a body of work that is considered to be one of the finest in Japan’s twentieth century literature. Dazai often took what is described as an “I love thee, I hate thee” approach toward Tsugaru and Starr does an effective job of highlighting this part of his body of work (65-66). This section, punctuated by excellent quotations from some of Dazai’s writings, is an engaging discussion of the conflict between centralization and regionalism.

The next two chapters, Nanyan Guo’s “Osabe Hideo: Interpreting Tsugaru’s Music” and Henry Johnson’s “*Tsugaru Shamisen: Regional, National, and International Cultural Flows*” share similar themes. Osabe Hideo, born in 1934, is an important writer from the Tsugaru region. Tsugaru’s music plays a central role in some of his major works. Osabe has written voluminously on themes relating to WWII. His brother died fighting in the Philippines and it is argued in this article that Osabe’s experience of loss in war gave him a profound dislike of nationalism and ideology (77). Guo ties the negation of nationalism in Osabe’s writings to his interest in local culture and the Tsugaru Shamisen – a stringed instrument important in the region’s folk music (78-79). The article presents a detailed discussion of the development of the Tsugaru Shamisen as well as local folk songs. Osabe wrote stories about these local cultural elements in the 1970s and Guo presents an interesting discussion of how this articulation of regionalism was infused with a “universalist” character by the author. The *shamisen* performances and the themes of the folk ballads were explored as a link to what the Osabe saw as a “universal human spirit” – a thematic focus that both denies nationalism and promotes the importance of local culture (82-86). This is followed by Johnson’s article – a discussion of the instrument’s national popularity as well as the process that had led to it becoming what author the describes as a “cultural emblem” of the Tsugaru region (95).

In the final chapter, *Tsugaru nuri* lacquerware is identified by Anthony Rausche in “Tsugaru Nuri Lacquerware: Nation-State Patronage and the Representation of a Local Craft” as an important “local cultural marker” (99). He discusses how it was first conceived as a status symbol by the local elite during the early modern period and how it has gone on to be considered a national treasure by the Japanese government at present (99). The changes in the perception of lacquerware’s regional role is the important focus of this chapter. Rausche demonstrates how patterns of patronage by the central government and attempts at self-definition within the region have interacted to shape the meanings attached to Tsugaru’s lacquer products.

The final section is Takefusa Sasamori’s appendix, “Performing Arts of Tsugaru: An Introduction”. It is an interesting summary of local performing arts but is more of a supplement than a compliment to the articles that form the body of the text.

Apart from its goal of exploring region-centre interaction the authors also aim at “... providing the reader with a comprehensive knowledge of the Tsugaru district, both general and academic” (22). Space constraints, however, give the work a number of weak points. Overall, the introduction offers a concise and useful history of Tsugaru. It is at times, however, overly vague. The discussion of history and politics in the introduction begins with the formation of the Hirosaki domain in the late sixteenth century (12). Other parts of the introduction discuss the area’s importance in prehistoric Japan; however, readers without prior background are not told of the nature of the region’s interaction during the period of the Imperial Court’s ascendancy or indeed, much about the period of samurai rule. While this information is not necessary to understand the essays that make up the bulk of the volume, it does leave a confusing gap for readers without previous knowledge of the region’s history.

Another oversight lies in the fact that the establishment of the Eighth Divisional Military Headquarters to the south of the major Tsugaru centre of Hirosaki is mentioned only in the context of education in the region (15). The authors miss a valuable opportunity to discuss the connections between the development of militarist nationalism and regional identity. This point is discussed briefly in Hidemichi Kawanishi’s “The Transformation of Modern Tsugaru Identity” but overall, readers are left without a clear understanding of the consequences of militarist nationalism for regionalism and regional identity in the 1930s and 1940s.

While the order in which the essays are presented is excellent and the end result comes close to fulfilling the expressed aim of providing a comprehensive account of the region’s history, the jump from pre-war writings and debates over regional identity to a discussion of Osabe Hideo’s 1970s efforts shows a weakness in the way that the collection is structured. The postwar reconsolidation of central power, the important events of the American occupation, the fact that Tsugaru and similar regions were further peripheralized in an economic sense by the build up of the industrial belt linking Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka are essentially passed over, as are the

consequences of centralized economic nationalism and the beginnings of *Nihonjinron* writings about a “homogeneous” Japan. It is difficult to discuss the development of regional identity in the postwar period without this essential context. *Tsugaru: Regional Identity on Japan’s Northern Periphery* defines the region as peripheral at present but the collection offers little explanation of the differences between the way that Tsugaru has coexisted and interacted with the prewar and postwar Japanese states.

In the end, however, these problems are minor ones – more a product of space constraints than of methodological oversights. *Tsugaru: Regional Identity on Japan’s Northern Periphery*, in its introduction, seven major chapters and appendix, not only gives readers excellent coverage of the formation and change in regional identity in the Japanese periphery and its relationship with the centre, but also important examinations of region-centre conflicts in the works of Dazai Osamu and Osabe Hideo – two of Tsugaru’s most famous authors – as well as an improved understanding of the value and vitality of Tsugaru’s traditional culture and sense of regional identity at present.

Reviewed by MATTHEW PENNEY
University of Auckland

David L. Howell, *Geographies of Identity in Nineteenth-Century Japan*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2005, 261 pp. ISBN: 0-520-24085-5 (hbk).

This important study is a welcome addition to the growing body of work on Japanese cultural geography. By focussing on regional diversity, such studies often have the happy effect of dispelling the old myth of Japan’s “homogeneity”. It is perhaps partly for this reason that this field, which may seem rather arcane at first sight, has actually enjoyed a small boom of late. In Japanese literary studies, for instance, works such as Seiji Lippit’s *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* (2002) and Nanyan Guo et al’s *Tsugaru* (2005) have been able, by applying this approach, to throw new light on much-studied authors and issues. The present work by David Howell, a professor of history and Asian Studies at Princeton, deals with culture in a wider, more socio-political or anthropological sense: the culture of social status and national identity, especially in the context of two groups peripheral to the 19th century Japanese social and national mainstream, the outcasts (*burakumin*) and the Ainu.

Howell uses the concept of “geography” also in the widest possible sense, to include not only the political division of territories but also the ranking of individuals by status within social groups and the discrimination, by a “geography of civilization,” of “civilized subjects of the shogun from

barbarians, both on the peripheries of the state and within the core polity itself” (3). The organizing idea of the work is that these three kinds of “geography” (of political territory, social status, and civilization) all functioned as “*geographies of identity*” that “situated individuals within social groups and social groups within the political structure of nineteenth-century Japan” (3).

But it all began with map-making; the 17th century Tokugawa state’s border drawing, which “led to the formation of civilizational boundaries between the Japanese and the peoples on Japan’s peripheries” (3). This still did not produce a national identity in the modern sense: “the distinction between the state’s subjects and the peoples on the state’s peripheries was marked not by an identification with the nation but rather by a conception of civilization borrowed from China and adapted to fit Japanese circumstances” (3). Even within the core polity, people in early modern Japan tended to identify themselves not as Japanese but as members of a certain social class (samurai, peasant, outcaste, etc.). Thus, argues Howell, “the early modern roots of modern Japanese identity lay in the workings of the status system (*mibunsei*)” (4). But, given the close interrelation among all three “geographies of identity,” Japan’s rapid transition from feudal to modern capitalist society in the late 19th century caused or necessitated a radical transformation in each one of them. In other words, the “redrawing of Japan’s political boundaries” was inevitably accompanied by a “reconception of both its internal social structure (including the status system) and the content of civilization” (4). A good part of the book deals with relations between the Japanese and the Ainu, and thus is able to show “how even a group apparently external to the Japanese nation was transformed by the same processes that transformed the Japanese themselves” (9).

Apart from its focus on “peripheral groups” — an increasingly fashionable topic these days — what makes this work unique is that it deals equally with the two sides of the great historical divide formed by the Meiji Restoration of 1868, thus affording an unusually clear view of both the continuities and the changes involved in the Tokugawa/Meiji transition. Howell’s particular focus in the first instance is on the Tokugawa status system, which has been discussed by scholars before, of course, but which, he feels, has not been sufficiently understood in all of its social and economic dimensions. In the second instance, he analyses the painful but necessary disestablishment of this status system as Japan struggled to “modernize” itself in the early Meiji period. One of the important points Howell makes about the new Meiji nation state, contrasting it with its feudal predecessor, is that it necessarily sought for a far more absolute control over the lives of its citizens, even to the extent of controlling their thoughts: “With the development of schools, the modern military, and the modern imperial institution, the state turned its attention from the active policing of physical appearance to problems of moral suasion and outright indoctrination: this project ... was central to the creation of Western-style modernity in Japan” (17).

But Howell is also firmly convinced that any understanding of the “transitional period” of early Meiji must be based on a thorough understanding of what immediately preceded it: Tokugawa society, and especially the complex status system that, in his view, was its central support. In his in-depth analysis of this system, he provides a number of insights that challenge conventional thinking about early modern Japan. For instance, he points out that the familiar division of Tokugawa society into four main classes (*shi-nō-kō-shō* or samurai-peasant-artisan-merchant), while it may conform nicely to neo-Confucian ideology, actually bears little relation to the legal realities of the Tokugawa regime, which meaningfully distinguished between only two classes: the samurai and the commoners (*heimin*). In other words, all commoners were of an equally low status before the law. Also, although we commonly conceive of the structure of the Tokugawa status system in strictly vertical terms, Howell shows that its horizontal dimension could be equally important. We might even say that, in this feudal society in which, as noted above, the state exercised far less control over the everyday lives of its subjects than does a modern national government over its citizens, and in which many social groups exercised a remarkable degree of autonomous control over their own affairs, the vertical dimension of the status system was to some extent “broken up” by its horizontal dimension. This was true even with the much-despised outcast groups, the “filthy,” “non-human” *eta* and *hinin*. Howell gives the example of a certain Danzaemon, headman of the outcastes in the Edo region, who, because of his high status within his own social group (and no doubt also because of his wealth), “was able to carry two swords and otherwise comport himself in a manner analogous to that of a minor domain lord” (31).

In other words, a man who, judged vertically, was regarded as the lowest of the low, far lower in status than a peasant, was permitted to act like a high-ranking samurai because of his “horizontal status.” What this suggests, of course, is that status in Tokugawa Japan, like so much else in this pragmatic culture, was relative and situational rather than absolute and fixed. Indeed, to demonstrate the “situational character of status identities,” Howell even gives us an example of what he amusingly calls “status transvestism:” a certain peasant scribe who was allowed *temporarily* to assume a surname and carry two swords because he was needed for a job that required samurai status (39-40). This supports Howell’s general principle that “social taxonomy was driven principally by occupation rather than some immutable characteristic such as heredity” (34). Of course, this is a debatable point — one could provide numerous counter-examples — but certainly one must agree with Howell, on the basis of the evidence he gathers here, that the Tokugawa status system was an intricate and variegated structure — or complex of structures — and that the fixed and vertical model of it offered by many past historians must now be regarded as simplistic and inaccurate.

“My hope,” writes Howell, “is that this book will serve as a statement of what held Tokugawa Japan together and how it worked, and what needed

to change and why when Japan entered the modern international order in the latter part of the nineteenth century” (17). These issues are fundamental to an understanding of modern Japan, and this splendid study, as elegantly written as it is exhaustively researched, certainly does them justice.

*Reviewed by ROY STARRS
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Terance W. Bigalke, *Tana Toraja: A Social History of an Indonesian People*, Singapore, Singapore University Press, 2005, xxv + 395 pp. ISBN: 9971-69-313-5 (pbk).

Touted as a tourist mecca, Tana Toraja conjures images of elaborate funeral ceremonies, graves dug into the sides of sheer limestone cliffs, and wooden effigies (*tau-tau*) made in the likeness of deceased loved ones. But of course Tana Toraja is much more than just a tourist destination and, as such, Bigalke's social history promised to fill the large void in my knowledge of the region which persisted despite my having travelled there several times. Having lived and studied in the area south of Tana Toraja, I was also keen to learn about the perception Toraja people have of their southern Bugis neighbours – not generally a favourable one, I was to find out. Moreover, as published sources on Sulawesi are few and far between, the chance to read a recently published account of the area increased my motivating for reading this book.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part explores Toraja in the South Sulawesi world between 1860 and 1904. The chapters included in this part canvass such topics as land and people, coffee, slaves, arms, and power. The second part examines the Dutch in the Torajan world between 1905-1941 and it includes chapters covering resisting and receiving the Dutch, administrative engineering, government and mission encroachment, patterns of religious change, education, organisation, and ethnic consciousness. The final part of the book, entitled “Tana Toraja in the Indonesian World Since 1942,” analyses the Japanese occupation, the Indonesian revolution, social revolution, regional rebellion, religious change, and Toraja after 1965.

The strengths of the book are many. It is well-researched and includes 74 pages of notes and references. There is extensive documentation to back up assertions and a good deal of primary source data is cited, including documents written in Indonesian, English, and Dutch. There is a good index and a sound glossary, although not all indigenous words used are found in the glossary and it is impossible to tell which words are Dutch, Torajan or Indonesian.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book for me was reading about how Bugis are perceived. In Dutch documents, Bugis are portrayed as strong and Toraja as weak: “Nothing and no one was secure from the Bugis. The Torajan did not build their houses on steep mountain peaks for nothing!” (Saathof, 1933, cited 176) The book includes some interesting discussion of missionising efforts, covering, for instance, how some early missionaries administered the sacrament with minimal pre-baptismal instruction – at one point 20 students were suddenly baptised without prior permission from their parents touching off a row that left many influential Toraja embittered toward Christianity (80). But missionaries also had positive impacts for Toraja, for instance in terms of education, and as Bigalke notes, “the modern Toraja elites did not perceived the Dutch as its primary adversary, instead it cast a sceptical eye to the lowlands” (179). Ironically, many Toraja living today in Makassar (the capital city of South Sulawesi) know that Bugis regions are merely stopping off points for tourists making their way to Tana Toraja – the tide of cultural capital has turned in favour of Toraja vis-à-vis their Bugis neighbours; what was culturally peripheral is now central (289).

The book makes brief but intriguing comments on *burake* (13-14). Burake were “allegedly hermaphrodite practitioners who were important in pre-Islamic religions of the lowland kingdoms,” as well as being charged with guarding the *sumanga*’ (life-force, soul power) of living things. Burake embodied a liminal state between male and female and their very beings were tied into the courses of cosmic power. The reason I found this discussion interesting is that the base of power for burake appears to stem from their combination of female and male elements. This has definite parallels with *bissu* ritual specialists in Bugis society, of which I have written elsewhere. Little if anything has been published about burake, though, and it would be great to see more exploration of this identity.

There is interesting discussion on the complex relationships between Christianity and indigenous beliefs and, more generally, about processes of syncretisation (121-128). Funeral rituals among Toraja are elaborate and require the slaughter of large numbers of buffalos and pigs in honour of the dead. The importance of the slaughter made it virtually impossible for Christian missionaries to ban Christians from participating in these rituals. Compromises were thus found; there had to be more equitable distribution of meat between rich and poor, and while the dead could be buried in graves carved into the cliff face, indigenous undertakers (*to'mebalun*) were not permitted to do it.

Despite these positives remarks, I have three major issues with this book: the information contained in it is decades out-of-date; the book purports to be a social history but rarely are people’s voices heard and, moreover, it is a social history that is limited mostly to discussions of war, trade, and revolution; and finally, Toraja after 1965 is covered in one mere chapter, and discussion of tourism, which has had a huge impact on Toraja, is dealt with in barely three pages.

Reading this book I felt duped. One of the primary reasons I was looking forward to reviewing it was to learn about, as the blurb on the back cover states, the history of Tana Toraja from 1870 to the 1990s. Scanning the bibliography, though, I can only find one source published after the 1980s and not even one interview conducted later than the mid-1980s. Throughout the text there are sentences like, “Though actual figures for 1986 were not available at the time of this research ...” (286) – well, no, since the research was done in the 1970s and early 1980s, but there were certainly available statistics at the time of publication (2005). Even a footnote to a 1990s census would have eased my frustration. Bigalke asks the question, “How many Toraja have migrated from the highlands?” In answering this he compares census figures for 1944, 1961, 1984 (281-282) – could he not have given census figures for at least something in the 1990s? In this book, I was expecting new sources, recent oral histories, and fresh ways of looking at things, and it is a tremendous shame that the book was not updated to incorporate new information.

As the title suggests, Bigalke’s book is a social history of Toraja. And like any good historical text, the book was long in the making; the second image in the book is a photo taken by Bigalke of his wife and a group of local people in Ma’kale in 1972 during Bigalke’s first trip to the region. For me, a social history is concerned with people and people’s lives. However, this book is a social history of the elite. In large part, this comes with the territory – not much is recorded about the lives of ordinary people. But oral histories can put people back into the centre of historical narratives. Moreover, this social history dealt overwhelmingly with wars, battles, attacks, and revolutions. What about women, slaves, the non-nobility?

During the period from 1965-2005, the single largest influence on Tana Toraja has arguably been tourism. Indeed, as Bigalke asks without exploring, is tourism for Toraja or is Toraja for tourism? One observer thinks it is definitely the latter, calling tourism the “Rape of the Ancestors” (290). Yet this hugely complex and central issue is dealt with by Bigalke in three pages. How have local people seen their recent past? How have Toraja experienced tourism in the last four decades? Readers are left wondering because the only sources cited (other than outdated statistics) are from foreign observers. For a text claiming to be a social history, people’s changing views of their own traditions are visibly lacking. The book ends on a rather sour note, suggesting that Tana Torajan has, “resumed its status of a vulnerable minority ... and the quest to define and maintain Torajan identity entered a new and precarious phase” (300). I am left wondering, though, how Toraja view this twenty years after Bigalke came to this conclusion.

This is a valuable book if viewed within particular parameters. It is an accessible and well-researched history of Tana Toraja, but it fails to give readers an understanding of the region up to the present, or give readers a real sense of the people who have lived in the area. If viewed for what it is, rather than what it claims to be, it is an important book and of interest to those wanting to learn more about the fascinating world of Tana Toraja.

Reviewed by SHARYN GRAHAM DAVIS

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Vernon L. Porritt, *The Rise and Fall of Communism in Sarawak, 1940-1990*, Clayton: Monash Asia Institute, 2004, 369 pp. ISBN: 1-876924-27-6 (pbk).

This volume documents the rise and fall of the Sarawak Communist Organisation (SCO) in its various guises and incarnations. While the story of communism on the Malayan Peninsula is well known, Porritt has researched a subject that is probably regarded as a side-show to the main counter-insurgency operations in Malaysia. But as the author demonstrates, SCO insurgents were more than a nuisance for the authorities, particularly during the Confrontation with Indonesia.

Communism does not seem to have been as popular in Sarawak as it once was in some quarters in Malaya. To turn around the title of Ted Robert Gurr's famous book (*Why Men Rebel*, Princeton University Press, 1970), why is it that men and women don't rebel? Porritt points to the difficulty that the SCO had in recruiting members. There was no industrial class to draw from and Sarawak's peasantry was not alienated. The high rate of land ownership amongst indigenes and lease arrangements for non-natives meant that even Sarawak's communists were forced to concede in 1961 that farmers were not "suffering from the exploitation and oppression of landlords" (43). In fact, as Porritt notes, farmers were an important bloc that actively opposed the insurgency.

In the 1960s the SCO attempted to use the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) as a front organisation with other left-wing elements to further its cause. Ultimately the SUPP shed itself of its communist faction and emerged as the primary vehicle for Chinese participation in the political process – in this case in alliance with Abdul Rahman Yukab's ruling *Parti Bumiputera*. The development of political participation may also help to explain why communism's appeal faced serious limitations.

Yet, the SCO did have some followers. Porritt puts this down to the role of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) as an exemplary model and inspiration for some Chinese in Sarawak. The author points to the Chinese community's separate schooling system as a vehicle for the spread of communist ideology. The SCO was able to take advantage of this to propagate its membership. (Porritt's identification of an autonomous education system with the promotion of extremism echoes into contemporary times.)

While the SCO drew inspiration from China, as did the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) (also with a largely ethnic Chinese constituency), the two movements followed quite different trajectories. The SCO played no role in the Malayan Emergency beyond a few minor flare-ups. Apparently brotherhood and solidarity did not, on the whole, extend that far. The SCO did, however, become entangled in the Confrontation through their substantial support for the Indonesian side. Sarawak's communists

forged close links with the Indonesian military (TNI) and the Indonesia Communist Party (PKI). One can only marvel at an alliance between the TNI – who many scholars believe participated in the war against Malaysia out of anti-Chinese concerns – and the ethnic Chinese-dominated SCO, fighting side by side. Sustenance from Indonesia gave the SCO a much needed shot in the arm, and made it a far more dangerous entity.

Indonesian sponsorship proved to be a double edged sword. In 1965 when the anti-communist General Soeharto emerged in power in Jakarta, the SCO found itself harassed (in tandem with PKI elements) on both sides of the border. Dayaks on the Kalimantan side of the border massacred so-called suspected communist elements (read: ethnic Chinese) in a pattern of violence against migrant and transmigrant communities that have plagued Kalimantan into recent times.

The SCO and the PKI attempted a common front but they could not survive the onslaught and the loss of patronage in Jakarta. Porritt's figures show that between 1968 and 1974 the SCO took losses of 415 deaths and hundreds more were captured or reintegrated through amnesty, while the Malaysian forces lost 72 (225). In 1990 the last SCO elements signed a peace agreement that mirrored that of the better known signing by the MCP on the Peninsula a year earlier.

This volume is largely a chronological account of events as they occurred between 1940 and 1990 – where the book abruptly stops. There is no 'where are they now?' section to explain what became of the last SCO hold-outs after 1990. In the case of the MCP, its leaders became successful tourist operators and authors, and generally went on to enjoy the fruits of the "economic contradictions" that are capitalism. It would be interesting to know what became of the SCO's once angry young men and women.

In summary, however, Porritt's narrative of communism in Sarawak is an important contribution to understanding the fuller picture of Malaysia's recent past. In reading Malaysia's history, Sarawak and Sabah often get overlooked as periphery regions. As Porritt's book illustrates, East Malaysia can exhibit its own dynamics.

*Reviewed by ANTHONY L. SMITH
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Christina Klein, *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003, xiv + 316 pp. ISBN: 0-520-23230-5 (pbk).

The end of the Cold War has sparked a surge of revisionist history of the period. With the opening of archives in eastern Europe, this "new" Cold War history has been particularly instructive about the Soviet side of the conflict.

But some scholars are also thinking imaginatively about the United States' side of the conflict. One of these is Christina Klein, whose book *Cold War Orientalism: Asia in the Middlebrow Imagination, 1945-1961* illuminates the ways in which various cultural texts — books (fiction and non-fiction), musicals, movies — helped develop popular support for the role United States policymakers wanted to take in Asia after World War II.

For Klein, the familiar containment policy adopted by the United States at the beginning of the Cold War was, in fact, only one-half of the policy pie. Largely unnoticed by Cold War historians was a parallel idea of integration. “U.S. expansion into Asia” in particular, she argues, “was predicated on the principle of international integration rather than on territorial imperialism” (17). Integration actually took two forms: international and domestic. The former envisioned the economic, political, and military integration of the “free world” in opposition to the Soviet bloc, while the latter applied especially to Asians in the United States, opening the way for their integration into the American political and social mainstream through reform of immigration and naturalization laws, for example. In Chapter 1, Klein is especially effective at explaining from historical and political perspectives how containment plus integration effectively forged the Cold War consensus in the United States by co-opting ideas of the left and the right, thereby leaving little ground from which to criticize foreign policy.

Following her explication of United States foreign policy goals in the early Cold War, Klein develops the bulk of her argument in five thematic chapters, each of which focuses on a particular text or texts. Thus, there is a chapter on the ways in which popular periodicals like the *Reader's Digest* and the *Saturday Review* as well as the story of Tom Dooley and novels such as *The Ugly American* promoted acceptance of the Cold War project in Asia among a wide audience; one on Asian tourism focused on James Michener's non-fiction account of his time in Asia, *The Voice of Asia*; another on the phenomenon of Americans adopting Asian children with Oscar Hammerstein's *South Pacific* as its core text; a chapter on the theme of modernization using the Hammerstein and partner Richard Rodgers' production of *The King and I*; and finally a chapter on the integration of Asian immigrants into American society with Rodgers and Hammerstein's version of *Flower Drum Song* and Michener's *Hawaii* as core texts. Klein defends her choice of certain focal texts, arguing they represent a sort of “greatest hits ... of the postwar fascination with Asia” (8). That said, it should also be noted that although Klein focuses on certain core texts, she ranges widely through images of Asia and Asians in American popular culture, not even limited by her defined timeframe of 1945-1961; persons ranging from Pearl S. Buck to Edward Lansdale, from Joseph McCarthy to Jack Kerouac, and from Frank Sinatra to John Woo appear in her narrative.

The chapters on the integration of Asian immigrants into the American mainstream and on modernization are particularly effective. The integration of Asian Americans into the mainstream was important for two reasons during the Cold War. First, their “dual identity” (240) meant Asian

Americans could play a mediating role between the United States and Asian nations, thus helping prevent future “losses” to communism. The same dual identity, moreover, validated the emerging American emphasis on theirs as a nation of immigrants where all the best of the world came together. Replacing the older conception of the American melting pot, dual identity — for a variety of ethnic groups, not just Asians — served the foreign policy purpose of stressing the nation’s connections with the rest of the world and thereby breaking down isolationism. In few areas of American life was this more evident than in the discussions of statehood for Hawai’i in the 1950s. Klein offers a quote from *Newsweek* magazine which captures the significance of Hawai’i for the United States policy on Asia: As “the first state with roots not in Europe but in Asia,” Hawai’i would make the United States look less white “in Asian eyes” and could separate United States efforts in Asia from the European colonialism of the past (223).

The key text for modernization in Klein’s analysis is Rodgers and Hammerstein’s version of *The King and I*, presented on stage (1951) and, especially, on screen (1956). The story is familiar: English school teacher Anna Leonowens arrives in Siam at the invitation of King Mongkut who wants his (many) children to receive a Western education; the King hopes to bring his nation’s customs more into line with those of the West thereby preserving his nation from Western domination. Anna is thus an agent of modernization not unlike the many who the United States deployed in Asia during the early Cold War, and Klein is especially imaginative in her analysis of the song and dance numbers — in her hands a polka becomes a key symbol for modernization and the integration of Asia and the United States. Klein also effectively compares Yul Brynner’s role as the King in *The King and I* with his later role in *The Magnificent Seven* (1960). As the King, Brynner willingly accepts modernization — even when that means that he personally has to die — while in the later film Brynner plays the leader of a band of military commandos who bring modernization to a Mexican village through force; in fact, Brynner’s commando group strongly resembles a group that would become one of the key symbols for the United States’ Cold War policies in Asia, the Green Berets. In short, the two Brynner roles mimic Klein’s analysis of the parallel American policies of integration and containment in the Cold War. Whereas *The King and I* is a model for peaceful Cold War integration, *The Magnificent Seven* stresses military containment.

Some people may find parts of Klein’s analysis less than fully convincing, however, especially her argument that “middlebrow intellectuals, texts, and institutions tried to educate Americans about their evolving relationships with Asia” (7). The key word here is “tried” — the cause-and-effect relationship Klein wants to establish among middlebrow culture, popular ideas about Asia, and United States foreign policy depends heavily upon cultural theory (especially concepts of hegemony and orientalism). Readers who are well versed in and accept the theory will be convinced by Klein’s arguments; others will wish for greater evidence that “education” is,

in fact, what Rodgers and Hammerstein, James Michener, and others “tried” to do. Similarly, it is not clear that audiences responded to these cultural texts in the way that Klein reads them. Sometimes cultural historians seem to forget that the creators of novels, musicals, and films are trying first and foremost to entertain, and hence on some level their productions must correspond with audiences’ desires and expectations.

While this perhaps complicates the picture of Asia in the middlebrow imagination, it is a relatively minor quibble which does not detract greatly from Klein’s achievement in *Cold War Orientalism*. Although an American-centered analysis of popular culture, scholars of Asia will benefit from the book’s analysis of American understandings and approaches to Asia since the end of World War II, and Cold War historians will gain a new perspective on the United States’ side of that conflict. Moreover, Klein ties her analysis nicely into the process of globalization which has followed the end of the Cold War, arguing that globalization is in many ways the culmination of United States Cold War policies of economic, political, and military integration. Finally, even general readers — those familiar with Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals, for instance — may well appreciate this book’s take on their old favourites.

Reviewed by RUSSELL L. JOHNSON
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Joseph M. Kitagawa, ed., *The Religious Traditions of Asia*, London, RoutledgeCurzon, 2002, viii + 375 pp. ISBN: 0700717625 (pbk).

First published in 1989, this book is a collection of seventeen overview articles on the major religious traditions of Asia (South, Southeast, Central and East) which originally appeared in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion* edited by Mircea Eliade in 1987. In many cases it would be hard to choose an author better qualified to write on the tradition in question. So we have Alf Hiltebeitel on Hinduism, Donald Swearer on Buddhism in Southeast Asia, Per Kvaerne on the religions of Tibet, Joseph Kitagawa on Japanese religion and Robert Buswell on Buddhism in Korea. The articles are unrevised from their original publication. The need for revision in the light of scholarship in the intervening years can perhaps be gauged by looking at the equivalent articles in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, which appeared in 2004. Of the seventeen articles published here, seven were replaced with new articles by another author (Collette Caillat by Paul Dundas on Jainism; Khushwant Singh on The Sikhs by Nikky-Guninder Kaur Singh on Sikhism; Peter Hardy by Ali S. Asani on Islam in South Asia; David Snellgrove on Schools of Tibetan Buddhism by Matthew Kapstein on Schools of Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhism; Alexandre Bennigsen and

Fanny Bryan by Shirin Akiner on Islam in Central Asia; Yim Suk-jay, Roger Janelli and Dawnhee Yim Janelli by Francisca Cho on Korean Religion; Morris Rossabi by Michael Dillon on Islam in China). Four were revised by the original author (A.H. Johns on Islam in Southeast Asia; Kvaerne on Tibetan Religions and Bon; Robert Buswell on Buddhism in Korea). Two were revised by other authors (Daniel Overmyer by Joseph Adler on Chinese Religion; Kitagawa by Gary Ebersole on Japanese Religions). The remaining four articles appeared with revised bibliographies (Hiltebeitel on Hinduism; Luis Gómez on Buddhism in India; Swearer on Buddhism in Southeast Asia; Ruth Meserve on Inner Asian Religions). It would not be unreasonable to expect at least the bibliographies to have been likewise revised for the volume under review.

The articles are printed together with the cross-references to other articles in the *Encyclopaedia*, raising the question of how useful they are when abstracted from those articles. Writing on Buddhism in India, Gómez is able to leave aside many details of the life, legend and doctrine of the Buddha (referring the reader instead to the articles on “Buddha”, “Tathāgata”, “Nirvāna”, “Buddhist Dharma and Dharmas”) and to concentrate on the later history of Indian Buddhism and in particular the development of the Mahāyāna. Other articles display a similar emphasis on the historical vicissitudes of these religious traditions, to the neglect of questions relating to, for example, ritual practice or doctrinal development. This is particularly true of the articles on Islam, presumably because of its origin in a region outside the geographical scope of the volume. The result is that while this volume might serve to provide an overview of the history of the religions of Asia, it cannot really stand alone even as a short reference work, or be used as an introductory textbook, and it is difficult to imagine a natural audience for it.

Reviewed by WILL SWEETMAN
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Anthony L. Smith, ed., *Southeast Asia and New Zealand: A History of Regional and Bilateral Relations*, Wellington, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore; New Zealand Institute of International Affairs in association with Victoria University Press, 2005, xiv + 392 pp. ISBN: 0-86473-519-7 (pbk).

This is a substantial book, a welcome one, and in some senses a pioneering one. For the first time we have a survey of the development of New Zealand's relations with Southeast Asia since they effectively began at the end of the Second World War. The emphasis is on the economic and the political, the military and the strategic. Other kinds of relationships are

barely covered. We read little about international students, for example, particularly about those not coming under the Colombo Plan, but, of over twenty years, paying only domestic fees rather than the inflated “full fees” of the last fifteen years. Not much is said of more permanent migration. Nor do we find much about other kinds of “engagement” or their absence, in the media, in the arts, in academe. What we do get, however, is certainly worth having.

The book is the work of several authors, not one: some academic, some practitioner or ex-practitioner. That has advantages and disadvantages. Different kinds of expertise and experience, of information and recollection, can be drawn upon. But there are also changes of tone and emphasis, and, while they are not entirely unwelcome, they do at times go beyond the limit that the differential nature of the bilateral relationships might justify.

Nor are the sources drawn upon quite compatible. Some authors – but not merely the officials or ex-officials – drawn more extensively on the archives than others. It is indeed not clear on what principle documents still within the thirty-year limit have been made available. Some authors make extensive use of them. In one or two cases an author has cited files that are closed, thought outside the limit. Other authors rely mainly on published and secondary sources, or on material obtained under the Official Information Act.

The chapters for the most part proceed country-by-country. This again has advantages and disadvantages. It focuses expertise and proves a narrative and/or topical structure that is partly chronological but also reflects the diversity of the countries and of New Zealand’s relationship with them. In some cases, the relationship dates back to the early post-war years and begins amid arrangements for Commonwealth defence and apprehensions over communism. In most cases, there is an “aid” element, but it may be more or less substantial, and cover different time periods. Such differences offer a justification for the country-by-country approach. There is, even so, rather too much repetition, some of which the editor might have been able to remove. An index could have helped the reader to relate different entries on identical or somewhat similar topics, but there is none.

There is, perhaps, a more serious drawback. A single author might have felt better able, or more bound, to offer more of an overall survey of New Zealand’s policy towards Southeast Asia over the fifty or sixty year period concerned. The several authors make us aware of overall shifts in the Southeast Asian context, from disorder to stability, from poverty to prosperity, from Cold War struggle to globalization, but only rather incidentally. To some extent, we are made aware of shifts on the New Zealand side of the equation, but more by some authors than others.

Such an overall survey, moreover, would usefully be placed within a yet larger international context, not so much, perhaps, in order to add to the understanding of developments in Southeast Asia, as to expand our capacity to comment on New Zealand’s policy making. Its bilateral and regional relationships with Southeast Asia are to be seen in the context of its

relationships with other states and other regions. New Zealand is a small country with a very wide range of connections across the globe. Any study of its policy in respect of a particular region has to take account of that.

So, too, any judgement that might be made on its overall effectiveness. My own impression – from relatively short sallies into the New Zealand records, from long searches in the British records, and from observation – is that New Zealand diplomacy has generally been well conceived and executed. Certainly in areas I have studied its diplomats were notably well informed, and British diplomats found them a useful and not merely a supplementary source. The essays in this book, whether written by them or about them, provide further testimony to their quality. Such summations we should not perhaps expect from a pioneering book such as the present. Dr. Smith and the band he has led offer new material and new insights, provoke thought, provide a good basis for further work in academe and for further experience in the making of policy and its execution.

Impressed overall, I am rather unwilling to indicate which chapters I most enjoyed. That is all the more the case inasmuch as some authors have richer topics than others. The relationship with Singapore, for example, offers a substance we cannot find in the relationship with Burma, while Laos does not get a chapter at all.

Amidst much that satisfies, there are some historical inaccuracies. Singapore did not become “independent” in 1959, as we are told (19). Its foreign and defence policy was still in the hands of the British. Lee Kuan Yew might embarrass them by “speaking out” on West New Guinea, for example: taking up an “anti-colonial” theme helped to boost his leadership. The British, we read (165), “upset Indonesia by announcing the establishment date [of Malaysia] before the [United Nations] opinion survey was completed”. In fact, the Malaysians made the announcement as well as the British, though, as Matthew Jones has reminded us, the Tunku wanted to pursue a softer line.

“A process of decentralization from direct rule was in progress when Japan invaded [Burma] in 1939” (266). The sentence inadequately describes the near-Dominion status that Burma secured under the 1935 Act and the wide suffrage used in its electoral system. Nor, turning to more recent times, does it seem correct to suggest that “ASEAN’s interest in Myanmar’s membership was primarily economic” (278). Surely one objective, if not the main one, was to offer an alternative to intensified links between the ruling military clique and the People’s Republic of China.

The historical account in the chapter on Thailand also makes a shaky start, telling us that when it “opted to side with Japan during WWII with a transit agreement, the allies promptly declared war on Thailand” (332). In fact, it was Thailand that declared war. Britain then announced that a state of war existed, but it made no declaration. The United States ignored Thailand’s declaration. These moves were to be quite fundamental in the relationships that developed at the end of the war.

The “designation” of Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam under the protocol to the Manila Treaty of September 1954 is not well paraphrased. They “could request the protection of treaty members if threatened”, we read (372). In fact, “designation” was unilateral, the British insisting on that because of Anthony Eden’s undertaking in his conversations with Zhou Enlai that the Associated States were not parties to the treaty. No action on their territory could, however, take place except at their invitation or with their consent.

These are perhaps minor points. But in international diplomacy angels and devils often reside in the detail. And that applies as much, if not more, in respect of today’s predominantly economic concerns as of yesterday’s predominantly political concerns, if we can indeed draw such a distinction.

Reviewed by NICHOLAS TARLING
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Margaret Jones, *Health Policy in Britain's Model Colony: Ceylon (1900-1948)*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 2004, xiv + 305 pp. ISBN: 81-250-2759-9 (hbk).

Throughout much of the world what was generally seen as modern, scientific or Western medicine was introduced during the nineteenth century as part of the process of colonialism by Britain and other Western imperial powers. Until the 1960s this medicine was mostly viewed positively as one of the benefits of colonialism, but growing criticism in the West in the 1970s fed into an historiographical debate in which colonialism became seen as having aggravated an already bad health situation in many of these places and colonial medicine was a key tool of empire. Colonial medicine was studied to reveal the nature of power and oppression. More recently, however, enquiry has focused on the impact of colonial medical practice on indigenous societies. Ideas of interaction, resistance and pragmatism have challenged a simple diffusion model through which it was thought that, once people realised the superiority of the new system, indigenous ideas and practices would die out.

Margaret Jones's book is a case study for exploring these controversies in relation to colonial Sri Lanka, or Ceylon as it was known and as she refers to throughout. In view of the nature of the sources available, it is a case study about state activity and focuses on the elites of colonial society. Ceylon was called Britain's “model colony” because it set the pattern for crown colony governance in the nineteenth century. It was a wealthy plantation colony and was the first to achieve responsible self-government in 1931. It even had a universally elected representative assembly. In 1948, it became the first colony to be granted independence.

Jones' aim is to analyse and critique the idea of "colonial medicine" and to do this she asks three main questions. Firstly, what was the policy transfer from the West to Ceylon and what were its implications for understanding the nature of the colonial state? Secondly, how much was this affected by the particular and changing political and constitutional situation to be found in Ceylon? Did health policies enhance health outcomes for the people and what can be said to be the colonial legacy in public health provision left by the British at independence?

She sets out to answer these questions through first surveying, in chapter two, the social, economic, cultural and political context in which health policies were carried out in Ceylon. In chapter three she examines the transfer of policies to Ceylon and the structure and nature of the health services, while chapter four considers the relationship between Western medicine and other medical systems, in particular Ayurvedic medicine, the main traditional system that had been imported from India. The remaining five chapters consider health problems, beginning in chapter five by looking at the transfer of sanitarianism and tuberculosis. The "tropical diseases" of hookworm and malaria are the subject of the following two chapters. Chapter six examines the contribution of the International Health Board of the Rockefeller Foundation and its collaboration with the colonial government in the campaign against hookworm while chapter seven discusses the control of malaria and highlights the country's worst epidemic in 1934-5. Chapter eight focuses on infant and maternal services. Both are often interpreted as part of the hegemonic process of imperial rule, but infant and maternal mortality rates are also used as indicators to assess health outcomes in different countries.

Jones concludes that the record of Ceylon's colonial medical services was a mixed one. They participated in a process of hegemonic control but this did not preclude them from contributing to improvements in health. Returning to her original questions, she suggests policy transfer was more indirect than direct. During the period 1931-48, health policy was mostly the responsibility of locally elected politicians, but conflict occurred between the rights of the individual and the collective good. There was an extensive provision of Western health services staffed by indigenous doctors, but also official recognition for indigenous medicine. The impact on health outcomes was more limited. The low standard of living and environmental problems took their toll. Infectious disease remained the main cause of death, and included both the diseases that were mostly associated with poverty as well as the specifically tropical diseases. There was, however, a growing awareness in colonial Ceylon of the socio-economic basis of much ill health, but like other colonies finance was limited and ratepayers did not want to pay more tax. Nevertheless, in the period after independence, Sri Lanka's health indicators still perform well despite recent decades of civil war.

In interrogating the concept of colonial medicine Jones has separated the medicine from the colonial. This is the book's most significant contribution. In areas such as sewage disposal, clean water and building

regulations she argues that the concerns of Ceylon's government were the same as those in Britain. The issue of state power over the individual led to conflict in both. This, rather than arguments of cultural hegemony or race, dominated in Ceylon. Contextual differences also led to different health services. Divergent political and social development saw, for example, a primary health care system grow in Ceylon unlike that of its neighbours. The system in Ceylon was staffed and organised by indigenous medical officers and geared to the needs of the population as a whole. Access to basic health care was not an issue as in most other developing countries. If good health is seen as universally desirable, then colonial medical services need to be judged not only in terms of colonial power and subjugation but also the medicine that was practised to try and deal with the many and major health problems to be found in these colonies.

Margaret Jones's study of medical services in colonial Sri Lanka is part of the *New Perspectives in South Asian History* series and is a welcome addition to the slowly expanding medical historical scholarship of the twentieth century. Ease of reading is helped by footnotes rather than endnotes and the bibliography of both primary as well as secondary sources is extensive. Its subject, Sri Lanka, is also an acknowledgement by the series' editors that discussion of South Asian history should include studies from throughout the region.

Reviewed by SUSAN HEYDON
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Biswamoy Pati and Mark Harrison, eds., *Health, Medicine and Empire: Perspectives on Colonial India*, New Delhi, Orient Longman 2001, x + 408 p. ISBN: 81 250 2017 9 (hbk).

Those familiar with the field of the history of medicine, particularly the history of medicine and health in South Asia will have already read this collection of papers published in 2001. For those new to the area this is a valuable book offering in the introduction a brief overview of the field as it stood four years ago followed by a cluster of quality papers on a range of aspects of the history of medicine in the sub-continent. This collection is a useful addition to those previously published on imperial/colonial/indigenous aspects of medical and health history with a South Asian focus including those appearing in edited collections by David Arnold, and Roy McLeod and Milton Lewis.¹ It also complements well those addressing traditional medicine, such as in Charles Leslie, ed., *Asian Medical Systems: A*

¹ David Arnold, ed., *Imperial Medicine and Indigenous Societies*, Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1989; Roy McLeod and Milton Lewis, eds., *Disease, Medicine and Empire: Perspectives on Western Medicine and the Experience of European Expansion*, London, Routledge, 1988.

Comparative Study (Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1976). The originality and high standard of papers in this volume has meant that, even four years on, the collection remains an important contribution to the history of medicine.

Patti and Harrison provide a thoughtful introduction which brings together the state of the field by the close of the twentieth century. In it, they detail some of the now established wisdom regarding elements of the medical and colonial relationship evident in British India, while indicating that such views remain open to revision with further research. In so doing, the editors engage with the established positions in the field and suggest further issues for consideration. Historians of South Asian medical history generally agree, for example, that “colonial medical policy privileged the needs of Europeans and the military” (4). Even so, the editors note, the argument put forward by some, that the limits of British medical engagement were a consequence of colonial negligence in safeguarding Indian health, remains open to question since the history of small pox vaccination, plague regulations and efforts at introducing new ideas of sanitation met with resistance and even hostility from the Indian population (4). Such arguments have become part of the fabric of the history of medicine in South Asia and are a reminder of both the complexity of the indigenous/colonial relationship and the political sensitivity of medical issues. Is the failure of colonial governments to control small-pox a mark of colonial neglect, of limited power, of respect for indigenous practices or perhaps a triumph of tradition over the usurpation of sovereignty by a foreign power? From whichever standpoint, the history of medicine intersects with power and in recognition of this the editors also press deeper into the theoretical concepts underpinning much historiographical debate on the nature of colonial/indigenous relations.

Foucault’s notion of power/knowledge is deservedly given first place as a core philosophical concept in the development of medical history both singly and in conjunction with other theoretical constructs such as Gramscian notions of hegemony. Patti and Harrison rightly observe that the writing of medical history has moved well beyond “the commonplace observation that ‘knowledge is power’”. Rather, they explain, power/knowledge tends to be more subtly interpreted as “a demonstration of the ways in which everyday patterns of speech and thought (discourses) have normalised certain forms of behaviour”, so that Western medicine becomes a factor in the narratives informing and constructing colonial and other “post-enlightenment” societies.

This consideration leads to the examination of Arnold’s concept of colonizing the Indian body and his exploration of the power which Western colonial medical discourse came to wield, not only over the bodies of the Indian subject population, but also their minds and aspirations. Even radical nationalists like M.K. Gandhi took up elements of Western medical discourse presenting himself as a tender physician ministering to his ailing people (19). Western notions of hygiene and sanitation also played a supportive role in the conscription of racial and eugenic elements into the development of Indian nationalist consciousness (20). The editors’ reflections on the historiography

and conceptual development of the field raises the valuable question of the uniqueness of colonial medicine. Since, from the 1870s the administration and delivery of public health and medical care increasingly devolved to Indians, the authors explore “what was specifically colonial about ‘colonial medicine’”. Is it more appropriate to write about “medicine in the colonies” than “imperial” or “colonial” medicine? (23). These ideas remain central to the debate on the nature of colonialism, its engagement with medical history and the dynamic power relationship between colonised and coloniser in the ‘post-colonial’ as much as the ‘colonial’ historical context.

Much has changed in the field since the publication of *Health, Medicine and Empire* and, as the editors intended, the essays collected here signal new directions in research more than offer a summation of the old. It is a mark of the quality and timely selection of the essays in this collection that they have proved indeed to “point the way to a major reappraisal” of the relationships between medicine and empire and the character of empire itself (2). The collection, draws together aspects of South Asian medical history both current at the time of publication and previously neglected.

Harrison opens the volume and sets the context of the Indian/imperial relationship with a scholarly and insightful re-conceptualisation of the changing relationship between European and Indian medical systems from the earliest Portuguese contact in the late fifteenth century to the late colonial period. Harrison’s delineation of the changes in the medical relationship over five phases draws on an extensive range of sources, challenging the simplicity of Edward Said’s notion of orientalism when applied to the Indian sub-continent, and offering through medicine a rethinking of the old story of the “triumph of the Anglicists over the Orientalists” as expressed in the increasing assertion of English language and cultural dominance in India from the 1830s.

Contextualised by the Harrison chapter, Rosemary Fitzgerald’s paper signals the opening of missionary archives to the medical historical gaze. As one of the advisers for the establishment of the Mundus Gateway to Missionary Collections in the United Kingdom, Fitzgerald has been a major facilitator of this shift in the field of medical history and her paper on “clinical Christianity” and the increasing role played by medicine in Christian evangelisation from the 1860s offers a frame work for her current research into the history of medical missionary women.¹ Waltraud Ernst and James Mills’ chapters on aspects of the history of the “lunatic asylum” offer a fascinating glimpse of the way both Europeans and Indian patients could use “lunacy” to advantage and even personal gain. The papers complement each other well and are the one point where this collection adds detail to a field already well advanced by both authors.²

¹ <<http://www.mundus.ac.uk/index.html>>

² Waltraud Ernst, *Mad Tales from the Raj. The European Insane in British India, 1800-1858*, London, Routledge, 1991; James H. Mills. *Madness, Cannabis, and Colonialism: The "Native-Only" Lunatic Asylums of British India, 1857-1900*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 2000.

Sanjiv Kakar's chapter on the difficulties of treating leprosy in the Leprosy Asylum and Sanjoy Bhattacharya's explication of the struggle to introduce Jennerian small-pox vaccine across India both reflect the struggle to deliver effectively in two very different treatment contexts the forms of Western medicine available at the time. Both papers also signalled substantial new developments in the history of medicine, particularly the extended monograph examination of a single illness as a means of exploring colonial/indigenous medical engagement in India. Jane Buckingham's *Leprosy in Colonial South India: Medicine and Confinement* (London, Palgrave MacMillan, 2002) linked medicine and law in the colonial encounter with leprosy sufferers in South India. Bhattacharya's recent publication *Fractured States: Smallpox, Public Health and Vaccination Policy in British India, 1800-1947* (New Delhi, Orient Longman, 2005), co-authored with Mark Harrison and Michael Worboys, will be complemented by Bhattacharya's own *Expunging Variola: The Control and Eradication of Smallpox in India, 1947-1977* to be published by Orient Longman and Sangam Books in 2006.

The intersection of religion and medicine is treated by Biswamoy Pati in his examination of cholera and colonial perceptions of disorder in the "holy city" of Puri particularly during the Jagannath festival and by Manjiri Kamat's examination of colonial cholera and plague management during the pilgrim fairs at Scholapur. Both papers bring new archival material to a developing understanding of medicine and epidemic disease in pilgrim centres. Kamat notes how evasion of colonial intervention by pilgrims can contribute to understandings of resistance in the colonial medical context. The final chapters touch on less developed areas of medical historiography. Neshat Quaiser's chapter on the debate between modern medicine "doctory" and traditional Islamic medicine (Unani), engaging with the tensions between tradition and modernity in a context of "colonial domination". (317-8) Anil Kumar brings the field of traditional medicine into contact with British medical concepts in his chapter on the development of the Indian drug industry under the raj. As with others in this collection, these chapters signal new areas of research which are now being realised with substantial monographs by Seema Alavi on Unani and Patricia Barton on pharmacology currently in development.

One area conspicuously absent from this collection, however, is women's and reproductive health. Cecilia Van Hollen's *Birth on the Threshold: Childbirth and Modernity in South India* (University of California press, 2003) and Sarah Hodges' forthcoming monograph *Contraception's Voluntary Empire: Health and Society in India Before the Development State* (Ashgate) exemplify the importance of reproductive health, eugenics and modernity to the current state of the field. Each chapter in *Health, Medicine and Empire*, raises the issue of how members of both the European and Indian population understood the benefits, oppressions, difficulties and challenges of engaging with Western medicine in a colonial context. It is a

reflection of the dynamism of the field that each aspect of this engagement opens more lines of research than it closes.

Reviewed by JANE BUCKINGHAM

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Kavita Philip, *Civilising Natures: Race, Resources and Modernity in Colonial South India*, Orient Longman, New Delhi, 2003, xi + 305 pp. ISBN: 81-250-2586-3 (hbk).

Civilising Natures is an important book, continuing the impressive contribution of Indian scholars to post-colonial studies. Like Ajay Skaria's groundbreaking *Hybrid Histories: Forests, Frontiers and Wildness in Western India* (New Delhi, 2001), Philip pushes historiography in new directions. She does this by tackling an issue underlying all colonial encounters: the relationship between modernity and tradition and the manner in which it is conceptualized, both in the past and today. The author investigates the ways in which colonial societies and historians presented discussions about the introduction of science and modernity to the native peoples of southern India. She demonstrates that these conceptions were moulded by the experience of colonization, both in intellectual and material terms, and how they shaped the manner in which the colonial and post-colonial state treated both Indian peoples and resources. Philip does this by demonstrating the interconnections between discourses about forestry, plantation agriculture, ethnography, missionary activities and cinchona production.

Her point, and a particular strength of the book, is Philip's discussion of the complexity and contradictions inherent in colonial life. These range from exploding the supposed divisions between religion and science, to the so-called universalist aspirations of science which were variously presented by contemporaries as free market humanitarianism to outright plunder. She demonstrates, for instance, how: "Ethnographic 'ways of knowing' legitimated the management and control of tribal populations in ways parallel to the management of natural resources, with the result that natives could be construed as 'natural' resources" (275). Philip shows that modern writers and policymakers are as handicapped as many of their colonial forebears in assuming a radical break between modernity and tradition, a tenet that, she argues, informed a whole range of colonial attitudes and policies that are often still carried on by present governments. Instead of a radical disjuncture between modernity and tradition, Philip argues that aspects of what writers have termed "modernity" and "tradition" combined in often unique and influential ways. Plantation agriculture endorsed by the colonial state, for instance, involved the repression of worker's rights, who experienced many hours of manual labour and poor working conditions. These "pre-modern" elements of control were not evidence of older forms of production or of the inherent backwardness of Indian tribes as has often been assumed. Rather,

asserts Philip, they were “an essential part of the colonial state” (106) and characterize what Philip terms “mixed modernity”.

The author explores mixed modernity by looking at the ways in which attitudes towards nature and natives overlapped and conflicted in different aspects of colonial rule: forestry, missionary activity, hunting and plantation agriculture. Chapter 3 delineates the ways in which foresters enlisted both native peoples and nature into production forestry. The “new structures of representation” foresters employed “redefined personhood through property, identity through labour and progress through the imperatives of global production” (72). In the early twentieth century, foresters portrayed forests as manageable resources, essentially viewing them as gigantic natural factories whose workers required supervision and control. By portraying native peoples as lazy, wasteful and destructive by virtue of their race, Forestry Department (FD) officers, like planters (discussed in chapter 4) employed a moral argument to present themselves as sole possessors of an improving science, one that promised to use the land and its resources in the most efficient and wise manner. Underpinning this moral argument was the European notion that settled agriculture and the efficient use of resources represented the apogee of civilized and modern living, and that the activities of native peoples, which might involve shifting cultivation, did not. Philip shows how colonial officials foisted upon forest and plantation workers repressive controls and unfair labour conditions, which they often justified on the grounds that native peoples were inherently and racially backward and lazy. According to this view, some native peoples, particularly hill tribes, could not be improved since they were not “modern”, and so did not qualify for more equal methods of labour treatment associated with workers in an industrialised, modern society.

In both chapters, Philip shows how foresters and planters employed anthropology as a means of predicting and categorizing labour. Chapter 5 investigates in greater detail the nature and uses made of ethnography. Philip demonstrates that resource conflicts between tribes and colonial states were re-cast “in terms of scientific/inherently-progressive systems of knowledge versus unscientific/inherently-backward systems of resources use” (138). In this period, ethnography was presented as objective and progressive. Yet, as Philip demonstrates, it employed a strict hierarchy that relied upon a progressive and essentialised view of humanity drawn from European thought, one which positioned nomadic pastoralists at the bottom of the rung and settled societies at the apex of civilization and modernity. This conceptualization had important implications for the ways in which native peoples were treated. Policymakers deemed those tribal people who did not conform to European models of development as backward and requiring “uplift” through settlement and work. For instance, ethnographers believed tribal people were unable to appreciate beauty because this was a faculty born of civilized societies. Because native people were so much a part of nature, so the argument went, they were effectively unable to truly appreciate the nature around them. Ethnographers often linked lack of development among

peoples with a lack of sophisticated culture and an inability to labour. To observers, this represented a double failure, notes Philip, both for the individual, who would be unable to labour and therefore unable to gain private property, and the empire, which lost out on productive capacity. Philip also shows the ways in which ethnographic classification posited a link between criminality and savagery. Individual traits were passed onto groups, and certain tribes were classified variously as “loyal” and “martial”, others as “criminal”. Philip illustrates that it was no coincidence that criminal tribes were often forcibly settled, a process that involved their introduction into production labour. Ethnography, as the author notes, “was a system into which different ‘native’ groups were differentially integrated” (202).

One of the main exponents of ethnography was missionaries, the subject of chapter 6, whose activities clearly demonstrate the interrelated nature of mixed modernity. A key objective of the Basel Missionary Society, for example, was not only to inculcate the values of industriousness and hard work among tribal groups, but also to produce a viable and modern workforce. This, in turn, met the demands for labour of forestry and plantation agriculture. Missionary authority, in turn, also relied on planters and foresters opening up new areas which could become mission fields.

Chapter 7 widens the lens, to demonstrate the connections between political economy and science in the commercialization of cinchona (from whose bark quinine is produced). This chapter highlights the ways in which global botanical networks created political and geographical connections across continents, and in turn influenced the material experience of native peoples. The development of this tree involved its transplantation from the Andes to south India. This was justified on the grounds both that Andean natives threatened its existence and that the states in which it grew were powerless to protect and control it. It was also argued that the tree offered important commercial benefits and that its systematic scientific development, moreover, would benefit people elsewhere in the world. In this narrative, only European science, respectful and conservative, could save this plant. This chapter adeptly addresses the interrelationships between global and local natures and natives, European science, geopolitics and commercial interests.

As to the book as a whole, given Philip’s interest in forest history and the nature of history, my one surprise is that she did not engage with the work of Ajay Skaria (mentioned above). Skaria addressed similar issues to Philip: the nature of modernity and contemporary and past writing about it; the application of “history from below” to the study of indigenous peoples; a great interest in ethnology and the activities of the forest department. In a sense, Skaria’s insistence on the importance of recognizing the existence of hybrid histories, or the ways in which non-European peoples can re-interpret colonial history within their own belief systems, can be seen as analogous with Philip’s insistence on acknowledging the creation of mixed modernity. My one minor gripe with Philip’s work is that I felt the author tended to over-quote material. Certainly there is a point to be made that the techniques of

textual analysis employed by Philips requires quotation, but I still felt some of it was unnecessary.

As to the book's worth outside India, I believe it is readily applicable to other colonial societies, such as those in Africa and Oceania. I shall briefly mention its relevance to scholars of New Zealand. Historians of New Zealand have often adopted an approach of "divide and rule" when writing about its history. As recent authors remind us, they have often been loath to integrate aspects of, for instance, religion with science or medicine with conservation, while, until recently, historical writing has been characterized by an overtly nationalist slant.¹ Similarly, discussions of different knowledge systems, most notably those of Māori and Europeans, have often been framed as a debate between tradition and modernity.² The result has sometimes been a quagmire of theoretical genuflections to post-modern scholarship. I thoroughly recommend this book if we want to extricate ourselves from such muddy meanings and ask fresh questions about important historical issues.

*Reviewed by JAMES BEATTIE
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¹ Peter Gibbons, "The Far Side of the Search for Identity: Reconsidering New Zealand History," *New Zealand Journal of History*, 37, 1 (2003), 38-47; John Stenhouse, "God's Own Silence. Secular Nationalism, Christianity and the Writing of New Zealand History," *New Zealand Journal of History*, 38, 2 (2004), 52-71; James Beattie, "Rethinking Science, Religion and Nature in Environmental History: Drought in Early Twentieth-Century New Zealand," "Special Issue: The Frontiers of Environmental History"/"Sonderheft: Umweltgeschichte in der Erweiterung," *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung*, 29, 3 (2004), 82-103.

² This is most simply expressed, for instance, in Geoff Park, *Nga Uruora: The Groves of Life: Ecology and History in a New Zealand Landscape*, Wellington, 1995; a more intellectually stimulating discussion is, Te Maire Tau, "The Death of Knowledge: Ghosts on the Plains," *New Zealand Journal of History*, 35, 2 (2001), 131-152.