

## Reviews

*West Meets East: Images of China and Japan, 1570 to 1920*, Special Collections, De Beer Gallery, Central Library of the University of Otago, 10 February to 26 May 2006.

It is all too easy from the security of a twenty-first century viewpoint to assume that our contemporaries have a better informed worldview than our ancestors; a view enriched by the combined informative force of satellite media, travel and the world wide web. This is a perspective that ignores the degree to which the entertainment-tempered media communications of today can be compromised by editorial, political or commercial motives. It is also one that ignores the fact that, from the sixteenth century, European excursions into the East, the subcontinent, Melanesia or the Pacific engendered immense public curiosity, and facilitated huge, often publicly sponsored, learning projects. For these three hundred years, and well into the twentieth century, a wealth of learning about the East was brought back to the West, and was eagerly devoured by widespread audiences.

The central medium for this engagement was the printed book. The experiences of European travellers, be they explorers or traders, envoys, missionaries or academics, were conveyed back to their homelands in text and image, and consumed by members of an increasingly literate public. This is not to say the information disseminated in this way was flawless. As the current bibliographic exhibition at the de Beer Gallery amply demonstrates, the printed information on which these audiences founded their knowledge of distant worlds could inform them wrongly, or at least in ways that compromised their understandings as much as they expanded them. Pictures or text could convey simple errors of observation, or perpetuate observations subtly coloured by the complex prejudices encouraged by the position, character or agendas of the author.

Whatever the flaws, this was often also learning informed by academic scholarship, by men of advanced education and privileged position. Their carefully observed and catalogued accounts of their new experiences were motivated not only by personal interests but also by an overwhelming desire to inform. Consequently, though the limitations in their own experiences, or their re-presentations of them, may have encouraged misunderstandings, these shortcomings must be seen in relation to the broader context of the immense body of knowledge they accumulated, and in relation to the powerful force for education, economic, social and political change they generated.

The earliest work in this collection is Abraham Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, published in Antwerp in 1570, and seen here in a 1964

facsimile edition. The flaws in Ortelius's geographic knowledge are clearly evident today in his large map of the Eastern World. The Chinese mainland is shrunk back into itself, perhaps half of its real size. In the map of Japan the island of Honshu is huge and broad, while those of Hokkaido and Kyushu are so tiny as to have been lost in the archipelagos stretching north and south of the central island. South East Asia, Sumatra and Java are huge in comparison with China or the subcontinent. Whatever the shortcomings of these representations however, they have to be balanced against the fact of Ortelius's achievement: the production of the world's first comprehensive atlas in which contemporary geographical knowledge was collated, with most lands by and large in their appropriate positions, and with, then, an astonishing degree of detailed information of settlement and even geomorphology. For audiences today, Ortelius provides fascinating evidence of the ways perceptions of geography can be distorted by the political, and even more, the economic agendas that informed them. The enlarged portions of his map are also, coincidentally, those that contributed most to trade with Europe at the time.

In some of the illustrations that accompany the texts, while artists may well have been motivated to portray the unusual characteristics of these new lands, the visual effect is remarkably reminiscent of Europe. The large fold-out landscape scene on display from the *Atlas Japannensis* of Arnoldus Montanus (1670), presumably a composite of various views, has little to distinguish it from the tilled fields of southern England. Even more strikingly, the 1857 illustration of a 'Foochow Country Woman' from Robert Fortune's *A Residence Among the Chinese*, with short skirt and pinnie and elegantly beribboned hair, might for all the world be a European milkmaid. These confusions are commonplace amongst Europeans' representations of the peoples they encountered in their developing engagement with the wider world. Though they might, in some instances, have been generated by idealized concepts like that of a 'noble savage', they were informed much more substantially by the highly conditioned conventions that informed the drawing skills of the original artists who recorded them, and even more, those of the engravers who translated them into print medium back in Europe. Thus in the illustration of a group of villagers clustered around an outdoor puppet show in volume I of Thomas Allom's *China*, though the subjects of the picture represent a range of Chinese types – mother and daughter, musician, peddler – the arrangement is that of the seventeenth century Dutch genre scene. The picture could as easily be a Harlem street scene.

Not all of the images displayed here were drawn by Europeans. Two stunning albums of colourful watercolours of Chinese experience, *Life in the Chinese Royal Household* (c. 1890s) and *Tea Industry in China* (c.1860s) offer rare views into exotic worlds. Their authors are, in fact Chinese painters, rather than European. This does not, however, ensure authenticity in the accounts they offer. These paintings have been completed specifically for European eyes, for marketing to European travellers, diplomats or traders. The China they represent – in the case of the court pictures one the artist can

never have seen at first hand – is sanitized, clean and uncluttered by any of the paraphernalia of daily life; the finely crafted watercolour focuses on creating impressions of luxurious colour, gorgeous brocade or finely articulated pattern consistent not so much with the reality of their subjects, as with confirming in graphic terms the notions of the exotic which so informed European understandings of the East. These paintings owe as little to Chinese cultural experience as the Dresden-styled willow patterned dinner sets that came to adorn so many European tables.

In a surprisingly few instances, the European vision really does seem fuelled by prejudice or ignorance. One illustration in Athanasius Kircher's *China Monumentis* (Amsterdam, 1667) shows a Chinese scribe, standing at his work table, in an apparently straightforward and informative representation. Squatting lower in the picture, the curve of its back mimicking precisely that of the standing figure, is a monkey – depicted reading from a printed document, and with surprisingly anthropomorphic features.

To dwell on the misrepresentations of these records is to do them a disservice however. For contemporary audiences, and even today, these documents offer enlightening views of exactly how these places appeared at the time, conveying quite faithfully the nature of the experiences they offered their observers. Englebert Kaempfer's *The History of Japan* was a patiently compiled, carefully arranged document. It brought valuable knowledge to interested audiences, and whatever limitations it may have, Kaempfer's account is still available today. Some, like Sir George Staunton's *An Authentic Account of An Embassy from the King of Great Britain to the Emperor of China* (1797) carry the authority of their official function (with both the reliability and the reservations that implies).

Of the Japanese-related texts, some gain authority from Japanese-sourced evidence. Laurence Oliphant employs *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints by Hiroshige to illustrate his *Elgin's Mission to China and Japan* (though ironically his print quality fails to reproduce even a hint of the finesse and subtlety of the hand-crafted original). This need not guarantee authenticity however. The photographic source for the illustration of two young Japanese women illustrated in the M. C. Perry's *Narrative of the Expedition of an American Squadron to the China Seas and Japan* of 1856 has, in fact, been a studio piece, a highly contrived composition quite divorced from a real-life context.

Accounts like Perry's can, in fact, still provide information accurate enough to dispel myths or misunderstandings about the East that survive today. For many, Japan has been understood to have maintained a self-imposed policy of exclusion throughout the Tokugawa period, from 1603 through to the Meiji restoration. This was not really so. Perry's visit, for example, and the establishment of diplomatic relations it implied, was in 1853. The French man François Caron, author of *A True Description of the Mighty Kingdoms of Japan and Siam* could lay ample claim to the 'truth' of his title. He arrived in Japan, at Hirado, in 1619, very early in the Tokugawa

regime. He lived there for some twenty-seven years, learning the Japanese language, living in Japanese style – including the taking of a Japanese mistress, and even, in 1636, visiting the new capital of Edo and meeting the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu.

Certainly however, post-restoration access to Japan at least was encouraged more enthusiastically. The English-speaking writer whose experience this facilitated most significantly was Lafcadio Hearn. During his years in Japan he became completely immersed in its culture, marrying a Japanese woman, and probably coming as close to fully understanding the Japanese cultural consciousness as any Western writer. He is represented in this selection by four volumes, *Japan: An Attempt at Interpretation* (1907); *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* (1905); *In Ghostly Japan* (1906); and *Kottō; Being Japanese Curios, with Sundry Cobwebs* (1902).

The majority of text/image combinations in this selection convey Western accounts of the East. Some give us Eastern insights. Kaika Hasegawa's *Kyōka zuan (Ideas for Elegant Designs)* (1898), a catalogue of fabric design, tells us much about fashionable trends of the day. Another, a woodblock printed album of alternating pages of image and text, conveys *The Chronicles of the Tokugawa Shogun*, in scenes from the life of Yokugawa Yoshinobu, who had resigned in 1867 to facilitate the restoration of the Emperor Mutsuhito (Meiji). The images on display show an audience with Westerners in one, and an extravagant pig hunt in the other – fascinating insights into the lives of the privileged in the early Meiji period. The page of text is under-printed with carefully modulated *bokashi* bands of colour variegated with impressions of the trifoliate *mon* associated with the Tokugawa shogun, and is repeated on his costume as he presides over the hunt.

This woodblock printed album is an excellent example of the melding of the inventive powers of the artist with the skilled craftsmanship of block-cutters and printers. The same is true of the Western works in the collection. Typically, their pictorial information was collected in the East, some as drawings or paintings, some as local art works, others, a little later, as photographs. The task of turning them into printed media was completed later, by teams of craftsmen in Europe. The examples shown here form something of a catalogue of technical invention throughout the three hundred year period covered in the exhibition. The earliest tend to be intaglio prints, in which the ink is transferred from engraved marks on a metal plate. One striking volume, Kircher's *China Monumentalis*, contains pages of text printed from woodblocks, with illustrations later added to each page from engravings. In later works like Perry's *Narrative* we see the introduction of lithography; in the more recent instances photographic sources.

Though the army of craftsmen engaged in the production of these volumes were skilled workers rather than artists, many of these works are today granted the status of art works. In some instances, the polychrome Japanese woodblock prints for example, or the chromolithograph bird illustration of *Ixos Haemorrhous* in Perry's book, the technical mastery is so

sophisticated that the visual qualities of the images belie the processes of their manufacture. In these examples the technical process has become, rather than a tool, a material medium completely integrated into the vision of the artist. In other instances, though the technical processes are cruder, the importance of the works within the world in which they were presented extended beyond that of everyday printed media. These were works that could, and did, change the ways people thought about the world. By virtue of the cultural significance of the functions they performed, together with the elegance of their manufacture, many of these can today legitimately be granted the status of artworks.

For today's audiences, or at least for those of a certain age, the attraction of some of the more recent volumes is as much of nostalgic as academic interest. The sixteen volumes of the *Japanese Fairy Tale* series were published jointly by Japanese and Australian parties during the last years of the nineteenth century. They are distinguished by the paper they are printed on – hand creped mulberry of remarkable softness. These volumes were broadly circulated and samples were still to be found in some New Zealand homes even as late as the 1950s. Their characters, including anthropomorphized animal characters in human dress and roles, offer both a fascinating glimpse into the animism that informs Japanese culture, and intriguing parallels for the children's illustrations of artists like Beatrice Potter. In the Japanese sphere these fashions survive today, in the media based cultural kitsch cuteness of Takashi Murakami's *Hello Kitty* for example.

These texts, so important to audiences of their own times, continue to inform us today, and the presentation of this exhibition facilitates this process. The judicious selection of the works presented is testimony to the curatorial skill and wisdom of Donald Kerr of the Special Collections, University of Otago. He has selected a variety of works large enough to encourage connections, and rich enough to encourage profitable reflection. The process is aided by excellent explanatory notes, and clear presentation. The coloured images we are unable to see in the Chinese albums are helpfully illustrated in a folder nearby. The selection reflects the considerable resources of the University collections, but Kerr has wisely avoided so much other fascinating material – images and texts of the Raj for example – and contained his focus to China and Japan. Besides demonstrating the richness of cultural or literary resources we have at our fingertips, this project has introduced its audiences to unfamiliar material in ways that provoke a degree curiosity and thought corresponding to that of the early authors of each these works. The only disappointment is that a bibliographic exhibition of this kind can not be toured to other libraries, to be shared by a wider audience in the same way as so many recent exhibitions of the visual arts. It certainly deserves the attention it has received here.

*Reviewed by DAVID BELL  
Dunedin College of Education*

*Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles*. Directed by Zhang Yimou, Hong Kong/China/Japan, 107 minutes; *Kekexili: Mountain Patrol*. Directed by Lu Chuan, China/Hong Kong, 92 minutes; *Travellers & Magicians*. Directed by Kyentse Norbu, 108 minutes.

There's no question Asian cinema is gaining in popularity in New Zealand. Previously confined to art house movie theatres in major metropolitan centres, movies in Mandarin and other languages are now making their mark at the multiplex. Ang Lee's breathtaking martial-arts masterpiece *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000) started the trend, but it is only in the last 18 months that things have really taken off. In that time, three films have earned more than respectable box office returns: Hong Kong director Stephen Chow's cartoonish action movie *Kung Fu Hustle* and Chinese director Zhang Yimou's double dose of beautiful and beguiling imagery, *Hero* and *House of Flying Daggers*. Yimou's films even earned more than Russell Crowe prestige picture, *Cinderella Man*, and Oscar winning movie, *Crash*.

As well as box office exposure, accessibility and diversity has improved. Eight Asian films screened at last year's Telecom Christchurch International Film Festival and nine the year before, up from six in 2003. Many of these returned on general release. Bollywood fans in major cities can now enjoy a limited run of India's finest export on almost a weekly basis, while Chinese films are beginning to receive similar treatment. Thanks largely to the International Film Festival, New Zealand cinema audiences are also beginning to realise that Japan doesn't just produce horror films, China only martial-arts movies and that Korean exists as a thriving, active industry.

The Asian star of the recent World Cinema Showcase (known as the mini-New Zealand Film Festival) was Yimou's *Riding Alone For Thousands of Miles*. Representing a major departure from the visually-arresting *Hero* and *House of Flying Daggers*, *Riding* is a far more intimate story, reflective of a trend both thematically and visually in recent Asian cinema.

Aging Japanese coastal fisherman Takada (Ken Takakura) learns that his son is ill in hospital in Tokyo. Although they have not spoken for years, Takada travels to the capital in the hope of seeing him but leaves disappointed. Still eager to improve their relationship, Takada learns that his film-making son had planned to film a performance of China's most famous mask opera, *Riding Alone For Thousands of Miles*. He sets out to complete that mission but finds it may be harder than he initially thought.

If anything *Riding* is the very antithesis of *Hero* or *Daggers*. Gone is the epic, almost melodramatic focus, replaced by this very human drama shot in almost documentary style. Yimou and Zou Jingzhi's script places an ever increasing number of obstacles in Takada's way (an incarcerated leading man, translation problems, government officials, a family crisis) while also playing up the differences between China and Japan and the bureaucracy of the Chinese. The film is laced with plenty of visual and aural humour, most notably via Lingo (Qiu Lin), the hopeless interpreter, and opera singer Li

Jiamin (playing himself). The opera itself is a McGuffin that even Alfred Hitchcock himself would be proud of.

Although stripped of the colourful trappings that heralded both *Hero* and *Daggers*, *Riding* is no less visually powerful. Yunnan Province's vast, stark and grey landscapes perfectly evoke the isolation felt by Takada while his trademark baseball cap is an effective tool for hiding his feelings.

Zhang's work and success is also inspiring a new generation of Chinese film-makers, including Lu Chuan. His latest movie, *Kekexili: Mountain Patrol* screened as part of last year's New Zealand International Film Festival and has recently enjoyed a limited general release around the country. It too showcases very human drama and vast, stark landscapes.

A mountainous region bordering Tibet, Kekexili is China's largest animal reserve and known as the country's last virgin wilderness. Home to the Tibetan antelope, the province is a vast plain situated four miles above sea level, its incredible natural beauty offset by hostile and dangerous terrain. That didn't stop poachers decimating the antelope population in the mid-1980s. In just a few short years, numbers dwindled from one million to 10,000 as the antelope were hunted down for their prized pelts. Enter former army officer Captain Ritai (Duobuji) who in 1993 put together a volunteer patrol group – made up of taxi drivers, herders and soldiers – to try and keep the antelope from becoming extinct. But with no power to arrest, meagre resources and limited firepower their task is not an easy one. And if the poachers don't get them, then the freezing winds, thin air and resulting pulmonary oedema will.

Based on accounts of the real mountain patrol, Kekexili is a fascinating and compelling insight into a part of China we don't often see. Director Chuan's (*The Missing Gun*) fly-on-the-wall style may lend a documentary feeling to proceedings but the story rivals the best Sergio Leone Westerns and James Bond-style action movies. Neither side gives the other any mercy and Duobuji's Captain is a classic laconic, grizzled boss who is relentless in the pursuit of his quarry, pushing his men beyond their limits. That is not to say the film is joyless; far from it. Despite their circumstances, the patrolmen are a spirited bunch, bonding by singing whenever they can and unafraid to strip down to their boxers if it means they can cross the river to confront the poachers.

This taut-tale, a potential three-hour epic coming in at a lean 92 minutes, is greatly enhanced by some stunning imagery captured by cinematographer Cao Yu (*Run Away*). It is the very antithesis of recent colourful Chinese epics, with shades of grey dominating the palette as moody skies and harsh, raw, almost alien landscapes fill the screen. Then there are the images that stay with you hours after you've seen Kekexili; a sea of antelope carcasses and a patrolman slowly drowning in quicksand. Sound is another standout feature of the film, Zai Lao's haunting, sparse score mixing magnificently with the stark sound-effects of the wind and single gun-shots.

Also making full use of his homeland's landscape is Bhutanese director Kyentse Norbu. Originally screened at the 2004 New Zealand

International Film Festival, his *Travellers & Magicians* was the first film to be shot in Bhutan. Now available on DVD, it is the tale of young, bored Bhutanese Government official, Dondup (Tshewang Dendup). The rural outpost he has been stationed to is totally different to the big city he is used to. “Here there’s no movies, no restaurants, and no cool girls,” he complains. He dreams of escaping to join his friend in America where he believes all his dreams will be fulfilled. When an opportunity to escape arrives, Dondup seizes the moment, almost. Narrowly missing the bus to Thimphu, he is further dismayed when he not only finds himself stranded on the side of his road but also discovers that his ghetto-blaster has run out of batteries. He is joined in waiting for transport by an apple seller and a young monk who begins to weave a tale of another young man who sought land far, far away.

Director Norbu’s last film *The Cup*, a tale of two young monks’ desire to watch soccer’s World Cup, was a worldwide smash with its mix of otherworldly charm, delightful characters and universal moments. *Travellers* trades on some of those same assets, Norbu again using non-professional actors – lead Dendup is a Bhutan Broadcasting Service producer and reporter – to winning effect. And this time he even has the added asset of his homeland Bhutan’s breathtaking scenery and unique language (Dzongkha) to add to the mystique and sense of wonder.

Unfortunately Norbu’s story doesn’t quite match the setting. While the main road trip provides great opportunities to meet colourful characters, the monk’s story-within-a-story doesn’t quite reach the same heights and tries to ram home the “grass is always greener” message just a little too hard. Despite that it’s an extremely rare and fascinating opportunity to view a unique corner of the world and meet some of its charming and disarming locals.

*Reviewed by JAMES CROOT,  
The Press, Christchurch*

Mikihiro Moriyama, *Sundanese Print Culture and Modernity in Nineteenth-century West Java*, Singapore University Press, NUS Publishing, Singapore, 2005, 287 pp. ISBN 9971-69-322-4 (pbk).

This very fine publication is a reworking of the author’s doctoral dissertation, written at the State University of Leiden, The Netherlands, in conjunction with the National University of Singapore Press. The author is one of the very few international researchers with an interest in the Sundanese culture of West Java. He teaches Indonesian and Sundanese languages at Nanzan University, Nagoya.

Colonial West Java was a plantation province and one of the most pleasant places in the Dutch East Indies. The scenic highlands of the central



Priangan area offered an agreeable climate and provided relative prosperity for the Native population. There, from the middle of the nineteenth century, the scene was set for the conjunction of Dutch tea and coffee interests and for the Sundanese aristocracy to develop a modernity, driven by a newly instituted colonial education system, as well as the publication of printed books and the emergence of a modern vernacular literature.

There are three centres of gravity in this study: a description of intellectual and administrative infrastructures; the partnership of two key figures, one Native and the other colonial, in the cultural enterprise of modernity; and a close reading of a culturally transitional narrative text, on which the two men collaborated. There are five large chapters.

The first chapter describes the 'discovery' of the Sundanese language by Dutch scholars, missionaries and colonial servants and its recognition as a language separate from that of the Javanese to the east in the island. The epithet of the Sundanese as 'Berg-Javanen' or 'mountain Javanese' was slowly dispelled. In the matter of literature, however, the Sundanese were considered to possess none. Manuscripts were as yet unexamined and the oral performance by a bard to a listening audience was not recognised as a form of literary production.

The second chapter describes the inception of a rudimentary network of Western-style schools in the major centres of the archipelago. The aim was to train teachers and to educate the sons of the Native elites for the role of administrator in the colonial civil service and in commerce. Though the plan had been in force since the turn of the nineteenth century, the first Sundanese school only opened in 1851. Progress was slow; until 1871, schools in West Java were numbered only in tens and their pupils in hundreds. The Sundanese, staunch Muslims, often preferred an Islamic education in a *madrrasah* or *pesantren* for their children.

Meanwhile the printing of books, chiefly in Roman script, was proceeding apace. The publishers were the government Landsdrukkerij, the Christian missionary presses and a small number of privately owned Native firms. By far the most popular printed genre in Sundanese was the once-oral *wawacan*, or narration in verse (not poetry per se). Soon the *wawacan* was used for expository purposes. Its versatility and ubiquity also paralleled the Malay *sya'ir* of the same time.

Those of us who still believe that 'history is chaps' will be fascinated by Moriyama's account in his third chapter of the role played by the chief actors at the beginning of Sundanese print modernity, the Dutchman Karel Frederik Holle (1829-96) and the Sundanese aristocrat Raden Haji Moehamad Moesa (1822-86).

After a career in colonial administration, K.F. Holle retired as the 'richest and most influential Dutchman in West Java', settling on a tea estate in the rich rice-growing regency of Garut in the Priangan. He was also appointed Adviser on Native Affairs to the government and with a melioristic zeal, began work to equip the new schools with suitable reading materials.

Moehamad Moesa received a traditional Islamic education, which included study of the Quran and jurisprudence and a sojourn in Mecca. In 1864, he rose to the post of Hoofd-Penghulu, or chief Muslim judge, of Limbangan, Garut. It was a position of wealth and influence and his life too was an illustrious career, well recognised by the colonial government.

The two men met in 1857 and formed a friendship that was to last thirty years, until Moesa's death. They made tours of the colonial territories together, visited Dutch and Native dignitaries and shared everyday intimacies. Holle, who had converted to Islam, married one of Moesa's younger sisters. From 1861, the men began to produce Sundanese school textbooks, also writing tracts for general use on agriculture and the trades which were printed by the Landsdrukkerij. Moesa could soon boast 14 titles under his own name and thus became the first recognised modern Sundanese 'author'.

There was a dark side to the relationship, however, and this was Moesa's overweening ambition. Using Holle's connections, he ingratiated himself with many Dutch colonial officers (though many also were not impressed with him). He placed his sons and junior male relatives in high positions in the Native branches of the civil administration, securing them with favourable, aristocratic marriages.

Twice Moesa's manoeuvrings misfired: once, during his lifetime, in an incident called the 'Cianjur Affair' of around 1885, when, in a move of blatant cronyism, Moesa attempted to obtain preferment for two of his sons in Cianjur, the Priangan, which, following public scandal fanned by newspaper reports, was corrected by the Dutch. The second blot on Moesa's reputation was posthumous and involved one of his grandsons, Toemenggoeng Soeria Kartalegawa, who had risen to the highest Native rank to become the Regent of Garut. The 'Garut Affair' of 1918, a bloody uprising by farmers aggrieved over forced rice deliveries, showed Kartalegawa's autocratic rule in a very unfavourable light. During the 1920s, Moesa and all of his line became the target of fierce criticism from Marxist nationalists. Such is still the popular image of the man in Sunda today.

In the fourth chapter we meet Moesa's *Wawacan Panji Wulung* (*The Verse Tale of Panji Wulung*) which is read as a test case of print modernity. It first appeared in 1871, to instant popularity and was republished nine times up to 1922, when again, Moesa's heritage became discredited by nationalist and Marxist criticism. The Indonesian Ministry of Education published yet another revised version in 1973 with the aim of preserving this milestone in Sundanese literary history.

*Panji Wulung* derives from a vast cycle of traditional stories about the hero Panji. They are told in the form of *wayang* puppet plays, mask performances, dances and sung poems, and the extant manuscript versions are too numerous to catalogue. Their provenance is Javanese, possibly ancient, or possibly dating from the period from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, though each retelling has been adapted to the interests of its own time and place. It is something of a literary curiosity that Moesa's

*Panji Wulung* was translated back into Javanese under the patronage of Pangeran (Prince) Adipati Ario Mangkoe Negoro IV of Surakarta and published by the Landsdrukkerij in 1879.

The narrative frame of all the tales of Panji is a coming of age story. After exile, wandering, amorous adventures and mighty battles, Panji, the prince unrecognised in his own kingdom, eventually ascends the throne, usually assisted by his younger brothers, who similarly establish their own realms of lesser importance. Here, the literary critic in me cannot fail to draw a parallel between this mythological narrative of courtly Java and Moesa's own struggle to win influence for himself and his family within the colonial Java of his day.

What is modern in such a story? We will not find realistic settings in time or place, nor are the depiction of actions feasible within nineteenth century circumstances. But we will find rationality. The supernatural powers traditionally displayed in heroic battles are played down. Panji himself is a man whose inner thoughts are presented to the reader. He thinks. He takes a stand against the use of magic and the martial arts of invulnerability (these are dismissed as hocus-pocus). In this, he prefigures the protagonist of Sundanese prose novels, who was to appear some fifty years later, around the turn of the twentieth century, in fully nuanced psychology and motivation.

Despite its position as the first 'modern' book in Sundanese, critical judgment of *Panji Wulung* was revised in the 1950s, immediately after Indonesian political independence. These days, it is seen as no more than an old tale imposed by the colonial masters.

Moriyama's final chapter is an important post-script to the coming of the printed book to Sunda. It describes the development of the habit of private reading, 'to redeem the hours of idleness and boredom', so that the Sundanese might take their place among other civilised people who had 'many books'. The materials chosen to widen literacy were most often translations of Dutch tales which stressed the worth of financial prudence and individual effort in life. The story of *Robinson Crusoe*, for example, proved to be a favourite. Again, Holle's melioristic spirit is evident, and Moehamad Moesa is glimpsed in the background once more. It was one of his sons, Mas Kartawinata (1846-1906), and a daughter, Nyi Lasminingrat (1843?-1908), who were key writers in this project.

As the reading public expanded, there was a concomitant change in Sundanese writing. The *wawacan*, even in print, remained associated with oral performance. It carried an impulse to vocalisation (the habit of centuries) while its metrical requirements often involved repetition, synonymy and syntactic inversions. Prose, on the other hand, followed the style of natural speech, and became accepted as the appropriate medium for modern print communication.

While small privately-owned publishing firms mushroomed throughout Java and in the more forward-looking cities in the archipelago, 1908 was a watershed year in cultural history. A famous printing, publishing and

translating body was set up under the auspices of the colonial Department of Education, the *Commissie voor de Inlandsche School- en Volkslectuur* (Committee for Indigenous School and Popular Reading). It replaced the Landsdrukkerij in producing cheap, standardised reading material in the vernacular languages on a scale hitherto unknown in the Indies. Thus, truly modern Sundanese literature was launched.

This book's value lies in its thorough use of colonial documents, its historical sensitivity, and Moriyama's indisputable ease with his Dutch and Sundanese sources. What I liked most in his approach is his juxtaposition of nineteenth century events with contemporary times. He constantly checks the history against current attitudes, supplying anecdotes and personal observations from his regular field trips to West Java. *Sundanese Print Culture and Modernity* will be an indispensable contribution to the post colonial scholarship of Indonesia.

It has been customary in Leiden to publish doctoral dissertations. One wonders why in this case tradition was not observed, but it is Leiden's loss. The book has been well reviewed in the Indonesian press and an Indonesian version under the title *Semangat Baru: Kolonialisme, Budaya Cetak dan Kesastraan Sunda Abad ke-19* has appeared in Jakarta, published by Gramedia and The Resona Foundation for Asia and Oceania. Two thousand copies have sold in Indonesia, and the author has transferred the proceeds to Aceh's tsunami relief. Both books have recently received the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Award in Recognition and Support of Excellent Young Researchers. The presentation ceremony was held in Tokyo, March, this year.

*Reviewed by WENDY MUKHERJEE*  
*Australian National University*

*Malay Nationalism Before UMNO: The Memoirs of Mustapha Hussain*, edited by K. S. Jomo, translated by Insun Sony Mustapha, Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications and Distributors, 2005, 423 pp. ISBN: 967-61-1698-X (pbk).

For a long while the history of the Malay left had largely revolved around the person of Ibrahim Yaakob, the charismatic leader of *Kesatuan Melayu Muda* or KMM (Young Malay Union), Malaya's first political party. Touted as a nationalist and a hero, he was said to be instrumental in instilling anti-colonial feelings among Malays, thereby sowing the seeds of early Malay nationalism in the country. Whilst several works have since emerged to place Ibrahim's role under greater scrutiny and to question his special place in the history of the Malay radical left, *Malay Nationalism Before UMNO: The Memoirs of Mustapha Hussain*, penned by KMM's Vice-President, serves

nonetheless to acquaint readers with information and events hitherto unknown. As the author himself admitted, he had kept silent for more than thirty years until an incident in 1975 led him to end the long self-imposed silence. A letter to the author from Ibrahim dated 20 May 1975, with copies sent to some Malay academics, made several claims and allegations which Mustapha knew were false, but which would clearly put Ibrahim in a very favourable light. More importantly, they would perpetuate misunderstanding and misconceptions about some of the crucial aspects of the period before and after the war. Mustapha knew then that his side of the story must be told so that readers, especially Malaysian, may know the truth, particularly about the momentous events surrounding the Japanese occupation and subsequent surrender, and the years after. It was this need to set the record straight, as it were, which largely informed the writing of the book.

The memoirs, originally written in Malay in 1976, posthumously published some twenty years later and subsequently translated into English by the author's daughter, traced Mustapha's childhood, his early career as a lecturer and involvement in radical left politics, right through to the years leading to independence from British colonial rule. Born and raised in Matang, the town famous for the hanging of two stalwart patriots, Dato Maharajalela and Datuk Sagor, for their supposed conspiracy in the murder in 1875 of the first British Resident J W W Birch, it was little wonder that Mustapha's life and those of his brothers were coloured by this ubiquitous knowledge of the reality of colonial rule. During the tumultuous decades of the 1930s and '40s when nations were struggling to rid themselves of colonial yoke, and inspired by political events in Turkey and the efforts of the young Turks, Ibrahim Yaacob and Mustapha Hussain together with like-minded young men founded the KMM in April 1938. Contrary to popular belief, the memoirs reiterated that neither Dr Burhanuddin Al-Helmi nor Ahmad Boestaman, among the two giants in Malay left politics, was founding members of KMM. As Malaya's first political party, KMM, which saw minimal participation from English-educated Malays and hardly any from the Malay elite, set out as its main objective the independence of Malaya from British rule. Couched in no uncertain terms, this categorical demand for freedom made KMM distinctly different from other Malay associations which, whilst admittedly were not political parties, were nevertheless steered by indigenous, but pro-British, Malays. To achieve its end, KMM set about "educating" Malays to the realities surrounding them. Foremost among these was highlighting the reality of their pathetic plight vis-à-vis the colonial "masters" as well as the non-Malay, non-indigenous immigrants especially the Chinese. Nowhere was this more stark than in wealthy Penang. On a tour of Balik Pulau, the rural part of the island where Malays concentrated, Mustapha and a KMM friend were so moved by the abject poverty of the Malays that they were reduced to complete silence while tears freely coursed down their cheeks. Fired by such realities, KMM thus saw reclaiming Malay *maruah* or dignity and restoring Malays to their rightful place as no less than a sacred mission. It was thus that for Mustapha

and his KMM friends “KMM” stood for *Kesatuan Melayu Merdeka* (The Union of Independent Malaya).

The British grip on *Tanah Melayu* or Malay Land, as the country was called, was challenged when the Japanese imperial energies were channelled towards “liberating” Asia. And it is at this juncture of the country’s history that the memoirs provide particularly fresh insight into the politics of Japanese occupation, Malay nationalism, and the post-war struggle for independence from colonial rule. Mustapha maintained that unknown to him or other senior members of the KMM, Ibrahim pledged KMM support to Japanese wartime activities, and that the latter did so even before the Japanese set foot on Malaya. The Japanese, in turn, provided Ibrahim with enough cash to buy over the daily *Warta Malaya*, a move seen as part and parcel of the overall agenda to liberate Malaya. As events unfolded, Ibrahim, armed with large sums of money that the Japanese had provided for KMM members, flew to Indonesia and started a new life there. Mustapha, quite oblivious of the deal that Ibrahim had made with the Japanese, was left to face the music from several fronts – the British, the Japanese, and his own people, the Malays. Thus began for Mustapha a long ordeal of ostracism, ill health, nervous breakdown, near poverty, incarceration but no less, heroic deeds, accounts of all of which constitute a large part of the memoir.

As Vice President and the most senior member of KMM in the country, the Japanese insisted that Mustapha honour the pledge that Ibrahim had made. Placed in a position where his best, and perhaps only, option was to go along, and determined to oust British colonial power, Mustapha agreed to work with the Japanese to liberate his country. This earned him the labels “*pengkhianat*” or traitor and “collaborator,” a stigma he bore with shame, guilt, but nonetheless stoic strength. It was nevertheless as a Japanese “collaborator” that he was able to help many Malays – soldiers fighting on the British side and civilians alike – from certain death at the hands of the Japanese. He insisted that Malay prisoners-of-war be placed under his charge, and in this way was able to save several lives. Likewise, he was able to provide food to many starving Malays, secure relevant documents to enable them to travel, and help them escape from Japanese detention. When the tide of war changed and the British had the upper hand, and Mustapha’s fate hung in the balance, it was some of these same Malays whom he had helped who petitioned for his release, citing his valiant efforts in helping them escape the wrath of the Japanese, at times at risk to his own life. Letters testifying to the fact, penned by individuals concerned, are appended to the text. Indeed, many a time in the memoirs Mustapha implored his readers to contextualise his deeds and judge him objectively. Sometimes heart-wrenching in his plea, Mustapha bared his soul in the memoirs so that readers could finally be privy to the secrets that he had held in check for more than thirty years. It was little wonder that in 1976 in Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia both he and many of his audience who had stayed put in their seats for six long hours were openly crying after a recital of his pre-recorded experiences.

As the translator claims, even after thirty years, her father's memories of certain events remained fresh and vivid, and it was thus with the confidence of one certain of his facts that Mustapha wrote his memoirs. For example, he pointed out that unlike UMNO, a Malay-based political party that similarly fought for independence, KMM had a constitution drawn up in readiness for when Malaya gained its independence, one that he and Ishak Haji Mohammed, a charismatic KMM member and a born orator, wrote. Further, the memoirs pointed out that Ibrahim's meeting with Soekarno, which the former touted as evidence of his close association with the Indonesian leader, took place not by design, as claimed, but by default when Soekarno made a stopover in Malaya. Similarly, the memoirs put paid to the long-held notion that KMM sought to unite Malaya with Indonesia to form the *Indonesia Raya*. Mustapha maintained that KMM fought for Malaya's independence distinct and separate from that for Indonesia, but that both countries would declare their independence on the same day i.e 17<sup>th</sup> August 1945. Mustapha lamented the fact that Malaya missed out on gaining her independence on the said date due to what he saw was a most unfortunate turn of events when Japan was forced to surrender forty-eight hours too soon, and Malaya reverted to British occupation. Perhaps most telling for Mustapha was Ibrahim's clear displeasure and rebuke on finding out that the former had asked the Japanese to declare Malaya's independence. In the face of this episode, Mustapha wondered if Ibrahim had a personal agenda after all, one that was not quite in tandem with that of KMM. Indeed, the memoirs are rich with accounts of incidents that are seemingly small but are nonetheless significant in throwing light on crucial events of the period as well as the actors involved.

It must be borne in mind that *Malay Nationalism Before UMNO: The Memoirs of Mustapha Hussain* is the outpourings of a man burdened with having to bear for more than thirty years inaccuracies and misinformation, including those about his own role, that were bandied about and perpetuated as historical facts. Against this background, it is perhaps understandable if the book comes across as a one-sided story tailored towards vindicating its author against the very hurtful accusation of *pengkhianat* or traitor. It is perhaps precisely because it is a story of the man left behind to face the music, that the memoirs are able to capture the near impossible situation in which KMM found itself, and to ask that KMM and its members be judged accordingly. Further, to the extent that it is a memoir, Mustapha attempted to corroborate his assertions and counter-claims by furnishing verifications and testimonials from those who were directly involved in the events he recounted, such verifications being included as appendices to the text. It is however regrettable that at crucial junctures in the narrative some verifications are not readily available, with the book content to refer to their existence in the original Malay version, to which this reviewer frustratingly has no access.

Whilst some repetitions and jumps in the narration can sometimes stall the smooth flow of the text and cause minor confusion, they do not however

detract from the larger import of the need to scrutinise anew information long held as historical truths, and the implications of such scrutiny. History, as has often been alluded to, is a site of contestation, and nowhere perhaps is this observation more starkly demonstrated than in the history of early Malay nationalism and the struggle for independence. Through his memoirs Mustapha sought to contest some of the historical constructs that have coloured and shaped our understanding of those events he recounted, as well as to ask, yet again, that crucial question: does a fight to oust a colonial power deserve the pejorative label “treachery”? The least a reader could do is to give Mustapha a full hearing. It is no chore to do so for the book reads like a novel – it is absorbing and cathartic.

*Reviewed by UNGKU MAIMUNAH MOHD. TAHIR*  
*Victoria University of Wellington*  
*The Institute of The Malay World (ATMA)*  
*The National University of Malaysia*

Prue Torney-Parlicki, *Behind the News: A Biography of Peter Russo*, Crawley, University of Western Australia Press, 2005, xii+412 pp. ISBN: 1-920694-49-8 (pbk.).

Torney-Parlicki has written a biography of the Australian Peter Russo (1908-1985), linguist, Asianist, teacher, *Herald*, *Argus* and *Sunday Mirror* journalist and Australian Broadcast Commission commentator, which evokes the controversy surrounding his life, but waxes ambiguously in documenting “Russo’s contribution to Australian public life.” According to Torney-Parlicki, Russo was very much an opportunity seeker in forging a career out of his facility in languages, especially Japanese, and knowledge of culture. His lifelong belief was that he was providing Australians with insight into Asia from the perspective of local or Asian culture rather than from Australian, British imperial or American. The tendency to discover the ‘local’ and ask what he viewed as Western preconceptions, misconceptions and ideologies combined with his drive to secure opportunities in employment and later success and stature in the profession of Australian journalism brought him to the attention of Australian intelligence services. Since his work and life can be seen as enmeshed in unflattering political suppositions concerning his dangerously pro-Japanese or fascist leanings during the 1930s or his pro-Communist sympathies during the Cold War, the author’s portrayal is drawn to affirmations of Russo’s loyalty to Australia. But the nature and effect of Russo’s Asian studies remain unresolved or imprecise.

Russo’s seize-the-opportunity leaning is documented early in the book in terms of his university education and his achievement of a travel



scholarship to Japan. Although Russo would make use of his academic qualifications to gain employment and recognition in Japan, Torney-Parlicki indicates that he never completed his course of study in the Arts in French, Italian and Japanese at Melbourne University. In addition, he only tried for a university travel scholarship to Japan because the travel scholarship for that particular year was for overseas study of Japanese language and he had failed the year earlier to win the scholarship for Italy.

Russo arrived in Japan in the spring of 1931 and immersed himself in Japanese society and Japanese language to overcome his deficiencies in knowledge about both. He also earned additional money through English and French instruction at schools, colleges and diplomatic missions. In 1934, Russo made no mention of his lack of an academic degree when he received an appointment as an English teacher at the lecturer level at a national university, of what was to become Hitotsubashi University. One year later, he became a professor and also undertook the teaching of Italian. The author provides no formidable information on the academic ideas that shaped Russo's understanding of Japanese society in the 1930s, although Russo considered these years to be significant in his development as an Asian expert. There is mention of a friendship with a Japanese colleague, Ueda Tatsunosuke, who taught courses on Anglo-American culture and commercial English, but none of how this friendship contributed to Russo's thinking on Japan's modernization. What books or other resources, including friends, Japanese or Western, influenced his intellectual reaction to his expatriate experience? Torney-Parlicki fails to fill provide these details, referring to the skimpiness of autobiographical resources and the nonexistence of later books or essays by Russo on Asia. The author relates that while in Japan, Russo had indicated a desire to write up his accumulated materials on Asia into a scholarly study, but he never did.

In seeking the roots of the controversy regarding Russo's loyalties, Torney-Parlicki considers his work for the military-dominated Japanese government beginning in 1935. Due to the intervention of Ueda, Russo found himself acknowledged as a Japanese culture expert by the Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai (Society for International Culture Relations), which, in the author's estimation, he probably knew to be an agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was asked to accompany and assist diplomat Katsuji Debuchi on a goodwill tour of Australia and New Zealand and offer lectures on Japanese history and civilization, as well as on the benefits to be gained by fostering commercial relations between the two countries, Japan's lack of territorial ambitions as to Australia, and Japan's legitimate interests in China. The author provides only the titles for the lectures on Japanese culture, such as bushido, gender and the family system. But she recounts the lecture on the Japanese mind wherein Russo argued that the West should try to understand Japanese thinking to release itself from negative attitudes.

When Russo returned to his university position in Japan, he added a job with KBS to his activities. Russo accepted the advisory post on Australia since, according to Torney-Parlicki, he coveted the recognition as an expert

on Asia that the position provided. In fact, with the outset of the China War in 1937 and the need for news of Japan, Russo was able to convert his standing as an expert into a job with the Melbourne *Herald* as a part-time overseas correspondent. Russo initiated the connection by sending articles to the editor and asking if more material was desired. Two years later, with the same positive result, he would make the same approach to the Australian Broadcasting Commission.

In the author's view, Russo's writing for the Australian media was favorable to Japan and in line with what he considered to be both his responsibilities to KBS and with his new found status as an interpreter of Asia for his fellow Australians. The author maintains that Russo would continue to emphasize in his writing the need for Australians to overcome their prejudices and British Empire priorities to consider regional interests. He "sought constantly to educate Australians about a country whose destiny, it seemed to him was inextricably bound to Australia's own." One article, which the author identifies as a 'scholarly' one, argued that the China conflict was pushing Japan southward in search of new markets and resources to revitalize China and if Australia took steps to diminish the disparity of trade between the two countries, Japan would not demand territorial concessions. However, although Torney-Parlicki accepts Russo's understanding that his arguments were based on his "proximity to Japanese policy-making," the author does not identify the policy makers that formed the core of his scholarly journalism. Was Russo among the foreign pressmen with access to high-ranking officials who found their associations recorded in Ministry of Foreign Affairs files? Did Russo move in press and embassy circles to gather his insights on Japanese policy? These are questions that need to be answered if Russo is to be seen as a scholarly journalist at the time gathering information from policy makers.

In the following sections of the book, the author continues her search for the upwardly mobile Asianist whose pursuit of recognition as an authority on the Asian mind and his dedication to interpretations of Asian societies in an Asian context is far more explanatory of his motivations than labels. In this regard, the author is quite convincing, showing that Russo, who on returning to Australia in 1941 to write for the *Herald* on Asian affairs, was subjected to pro-Japanese accusations and who, in the 1950s would be just as easily subjected to official suspicions of another kind. Russo moved to the rival newspaper, *Argus*, in 1946 as its China correspondent, although later working as a columnist and writer of "Behind the News." For Torney-Parlicki, labels do not explain Russo's career goals and ambitions or his unyielding commitment to his Asian perspective, especially his treatment of post-war Asian nationalist movements and his wariness of American hegemony. As the author observes, "in the 1950s [and 1960s] his steadfast refusal to see Asian conflicts in Cold War terms would see that label [of fascist] seamlessly changed to accommodate suspicions that he was a communist or communist sympathizer." In his lengthy employment at *Argus*, "Russo relentlessly criticized Western intervention in Asian independence

movements and in particular, voiced his contempt for American foreign policy.”

In the chapters concerning Russo’s journalism in the 1950s and afterwards, including his continuing association with ABC in the 1960s after the closure of *Argus* in 1957, Torney-Parlicki also seeks to resolve the connection between a very loose and local regional framework and Russo’s impact on Australian political affairs. Although the author maintains that Liberal Foreign Minister Richard Casey, and Labor figures Herbert Evatt and Dr. Jim Cairns came to rely heavily on Russo’s expertise on foreign policy, she is unable to escape ambiguity or to separate Russo’s influence from that of other sources. In the case of Casey, the author documents the discussions between the two, but also explains that Casey held very different views on Australia’s Asian policy than Russo and thought Russo spent too much time blaming the Americans for everything. As for Evatt, the reference is made to the existence of “evidence that he came to rely heavily on Russo for advice on Asian affairs.” But without further elucidation on this statement, the author, then, refers to Russo’s observation that whatever advice he offered was usually discarded the following day. In the epilogue, which serves as the conclusion to the book, the author maintains that Russo “played an important role in explaining and interpreting international events when they happened, and inspiring Australians to think independently about political issues.” But the question remains as to what people the author means in view of her assessment of Australia as sitting in the British Empire camp in pre-World War II or the American camp from the beginning of the Cold War and into the 1960s. In all, the work is a well-written and widely researched biography of Russo’s personality and his family and professional life, but the political significance of his journalism for history remains lost in ambiguity.

*Reviewed by PETER OBLAS*  
*Tokyo University of Foreign Studies*

Bruce Kogut, editor, *The Global Internet Economy*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, The MIT Press, 2003, xvi + 520 pp. ISBN: 0-262-11272-8 (hbk).

The Internet is commonly seen as a global phenomenon that transcends any national borders. *The Global Internet Economy* challenges this view by examining the development and economic impact of the Internet across several countries worldwide. The aim of the book, however, is not to evaluate the effects of information technologies on economic productivity, but to “understand the meaning of a global Internet economy as a cultural and economic force that influenced the organization and institutions of seven countries and a world system” (Kogut, 38).

The book is structured in two parts. The first part, forming the core of the book (chapters 2 to 9), consists of case studies of seven countries – the United States, Sweden, France, India, Germany, Korea, and Japan. The second part of the book deals with cross-cutting themes.

Most readers probably associate e-commerce mainly with familiar business-to-consumer (B2C) online retailers or daily online banking, some consumer-to-consumer (C2C) exchanges like online auctions, chat rooms or other sites for social interactions, complemented by portal sites and search engines. However, the most extensive area of e-commerce is actually the business-to-business (B2B) side, which is more closely explored in chapter 11 that looks at the automotive industry. Additionally, chapter 12 looks at the impact of regulatory policies on the Internet economy in Europe, and chapter 13 at regulatory challenges associated with electronic commerce focusing on the United States.

Because of the leading role of the United States in the development of the Internet, it is impossible to summarize the book without briefly discussing chapter 3 on the United States. But for the purposes of this journal, I will mainly concentrate on the Asian countries in the rest of the review.

It is widely known that the Internet was not born out of the commercial sector, but was built as a communication system between research institutions backed by the US military. E-mail quickly became the main application, but the most important developments that opened the doors for commercial use of the Internet in the 1990s were the invention of the World Wide Web (WWW) and graphical web browsers as a means of easily accessing information on the Internet. While traditional companies in the United States were rather slow in grasping the possibilities of the Internet, new start-up companies were founded that quickly developed e-commerce and software tools. A very high concentration of IT start-ups was established in the San Francisco Bay Area in northern California, USA, now commonly referred to as Silicon Valley. According to *The Global Internet Economy*, this burst of new companies was facilitated by five main factors: the availability of venture capital (VC) financing, equity markets for recently founded firms, namely the NASDAQ, a fluid regional labour market for global talent, relatively low costs of starting and operating a business in the USA, and the proximity of university and research institutions within the region. This “Silicon Valley Model” serves as a benchmark for the remaining country-by-country chapters of the book. In particular, the venture capital financing with a financial market for initial public offerings (IPOs) for small start-up firms is seen as crucial for rapid innovative developments. The flip-side, on the other hand, is that the markets that turned many young entrepreneurs into millionaires over night were evidently a little over-enthusiastic, eventually leading to the crash of the dot.com bubble in early 2000.

In almost all countries discussed in the book, the governments had a monopoly on telecommunication until deregulations in the 1990s allowed private companies to enter the market. The book identifies India and Sweden

as the countries with the greatest institutional and technological changes. In both countries, regulatory loopholes allowed start-up companies to enter the area of telecommunication early. Chapter 6 establishes that India, despite having both a relatively low GDP in relation to many “Western” countries and the lowest number of PCs per capita, managed nevertheless to set itself up as an international provider of software development and IT services through satellite connections to the world which escaped government regulations. Through government investments in a technical education system, India provided a large pool of trained English-speaking software engineers. India’s high tech and IT hub at Bangalore benefited from close ties to Silicon Valley through American venture capital, as well as subsidiaries of American companies that were opened there, and a free exchange of global labour talent between the two. Often, American start-up companies were founded in India first because of low entrance costs there, and only moved to Silicon Valley to be closer to the market and more VC funding after enjoying initial success.

In a similar sense to India, Sweden (chapter 4) lacked formal regulations in mobile telephony and data communications, enabling private entrepreneurs to fill this gap and setting the stage for new wireless technologies and the Internet. The firm Ericsson was one of the main drivers developing wireless technology for a global market, and led the way for many Swedish spin-off companies. Also, the Swedish population showed a high degree of acceptance of new technologies with one of the highest Internet penetrations of all the countries. The success of both Sweden and India can be ascribed to the fact that the IT industry of both countries served a global market using international standards.

In contrast to India and Sweden, the Internet revolution caused the least institutional changes in the far East-Asian countries Korea and Japan. In both countries, the economy was dominated by large corporations engaged in low-cost, assembly-based manufacturing, where innovations are typically of an incremental nature. Other characteristics of these countries are that business relations and employment patterns are undertaken on a long-term basis, with financing principally dominated by banks. In these areas, start-up companies financed by VC played only a minor role. A wide penetration of the Internet occurred relatively late and was mainly driven by mobile phone technologies with broadband internet access. Chapter 8 suggests that less confidence in the old economic system after the Asian crises in 1997 led to an embrace of the new Internet economy in Korea most evident in the capital markets, but that traditional conglomerates regained their dominance after the dot.com crash in 2000 with them taking over many of the newly founded start-up companies. However, the adoption of the new Internet economy brought about rapid growth of the venture capital industry, as well as new found confidence in entrepreneurial enterprises and fundamental changes in the corporate culture with more transparent business practices becoming evident.

Similarly, chapter 9 on Japan observes that a reform of financial markets with three markets for small to medium-sized venture companies was not sufficient to bring about fundamental changes to corporate governance. Not many of the IPOs were start-ups as such, and most of the companies were in the retail sector, not the IT business. Financing in Japan is still mainly bank-centred, and even the venture capital funds rely significantly on bank, securities and insurance financing. These structural characteristics of venture capital firms led to much more conservative investments. The chapter concludes that “the Internet permitted the creation of a new corporate group but did not lead to new corporate forms nor broader institutional restructuring” in Japan (Sako, 324).

Even from this short summary, it is evident that the economic deployment of the Internet depended strongly on the institutional and cultural context of the different countries. Without doubt, *The Global Internet Economy* is a milestone in documenting the historical economic impact of the Internet. It is thoroughly researched and makes remarkable advances towards a comparative study into the interplay between the all-embracing global nature of the Internet, and the ingrained cultural and organizational differences in national systems. At times, though, I found that some of the chapters concentrated too much on the description of technical details and technological advances, rather than the broader theme of the actual economic and social impact of the Internet.

While the approach of a comparative study of several selected countries is interesting and allows for some surprising insights, some of the individual chapters are slightly disconnected. It is mainly left to readers to form an overall impression although it must be said that the editor, Bruce Kogut, did an excellent job introducing the major aims and themes of the book in the introduction (chapter 1), laying the ground work for the country-by-country part of the book (chapter 2), and tying all the findings together in the conclusion of the book (chapter 14). There is ample of room to expand the analysis to other countries such as Ireland, which has been riding the technology wave successfully for some years now, and especially China, which is just now emerging as a global force to be reckoned with. Also, some of the more controversial current issues such as copyright infringements by popular peer-to-peer music and video sharing are only briefly touched on in the conclusion of the book.

Somehow surprisingly, Kogut concludes that “the Internet economy evidenced a clear paradox: it was a remarkable social success, with rapid global penetration, but largely a business failure” (438), while admitting on the other hand that: “a primary effect of the Internet has been to render ‘back-office’ operations, such as customer service, more efficiently. These activities are not captured by the definitions of B2B and B2C but may in fact constitute the bulk of the explanation for the increase in productivity observed in the 1990s” (Kogut, 443).

While it is tempting to consider the future of the economic use of the Internet, the exciting thing about a fast developing technology such as the

Internet is that it is essentially unpredictable. Hence, I find it a virtue of the book *The Global Internet Economy* that it restrains itself to a historical documentation of the Internet's economic impact and does not venture into, often specious, speculations about future developments.

*Reviewed by ANDREAS PENCKWITT*  
*University of Otago*

Anthony DeFilippo, *The Challenges of the US-Japan Military Arrangement: Competing Security Transitions in a Changing International Environment*, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2002, 260 pp. ISBN: 0-7656-1019-1 (pbk.).

In *The Challenges of the US-Japan Military Arrangement*, sociology professor Anthony DeFilippo presents a forceful argument in favour of the abrogation of the US-Japan security arrangement. In his view, the alliance is not only “irrelevant” in the post-Cold War period, but the source of a considerable amount of instability and tension in the region. In his opinion, the world only has to wait before China, Russia, or North Korea launch an individual or collaborative effort to offset the threat posed by the perception of US-Japan hegemony. Not only has the alliance been a manifest failure at preventing the outbreak of regional conflict in the past – witness Vietnam or the launch of a Chinese missile over the Taiwan Strait in 1996 – but DeFilippo argues that the strengthening of the alliance with the 1996 Joint Declaration on Security and the 1997 revised Guidelines, coupled with the two countries' joint commitment to develop Theater Missile Defense (TMD), has the potential to engender even greater instability.

The author takes an especially dim view of the Japanese government's security-policy choices. DeFilippo argues that policymakers committed to enhancing Japan's “international credibility” via the security alliance have ignored public opinion, which is resolutely committed to nuclear disarmament, the UN, and the non-use of force as articulated in Article Nine of Japan's constitution. He makes a frank and passionate argument for the development of a security policy “consistent with national sentiments”, one which prioritizes pursuing peace and disarmament via regional and international institutions.

One thing is clear: this is a book with an agenda. It does not present an objective appraisal of the benefits and disadvantages of the alliance relationship for either partner or for the wider region. Rather, it presents a policy prescription for Japan – not for the US – based on the author's own beliefs about how security policy ought to be made. While DeFilippo is able to show that the Japanese public likes the idea of UN-centered diplomacy, he is unable to provide evidence that this would make Japan safer. Indeed, a

cursory overview of history would lead to the opposite conclusion – the impotence of the League of Nations in preventing the military build-up that led to World War Two comes to mind. While the book's lack of grounding in International Relations theory renders the analysis flawed – there is simply no evidence that building effective multilateral security institutions “will contribute to Japan's protection” as DeFilippo claims – its fifth chapter, which details the Japanese public's views on a range of security-related topics, might be of interest to policymakers and the wider public.

In the first chapter, DeFilippo presents an overview of his argument that the US-Japan alliance has “outlived its usefulness” both for the Japanese public and the wider region. The second chapter describes the processes and rationales behind the strengthening of the alliance, which occurred in a series of steps during the 1990s. He describes how perceived North Korean adventurism served as the catalyst for a redefinition of the alliance, enabling Japanese policymakers to ignore widespread public opposition to the US military presence in Okinawa, and to discount public support for nuclear disarmament and UN-centred diplomacy. Chapter three is dedicated to elucidating the costs of the alliance for Japan; these are both economic – DeFilippo argues that Japan is more susceptible to American demands for structural reform of its economy because of the “unequal” status of the alliance (58) – and political – public protest occurs regularly in Okinawa (65-67), and there are allegedly wider costs in terms of greater instability in the region.

In chapter four, DeFilippo presents a summary of various views on the security alliance, which he has collected from newspaper articles and works by Western scholars. He disposes of the preservationist view by reiterating his argument that the alliance promotes regional instability and prevents Japan “from forming stronger relationships than it presently experiences with those countries in East Asia” (117). After reviewing the sentiments of Japanese nationalist Shintaro Ishihara, who favours an end to the alliance and advocates Japanese rearmament, DeFilippo identifies himself with those on the left, and provides yet another rationale for its abrogation: “the longer the bilateral security alliance remains in place, the more difficult it will be to dissipate Japanese nationalism” (118).

In what is undoubtedly the most valuable part of the book for readers interested in Japan's international relations, chapter five presents a comprehensive summary of the results of public opinion surveys in Japan on a variety of topics, including threat perception; the need to strengthen the alliance; constitutional revision in Japan; and attitudes towards the UN. Interestingly, DeFilippo finds evidence that the *Yomiuri Shimbun* asked leading questions that emphasized the nature of the threat facing Japan when assessing public support for the revised Guidelines.

In the final chapter, DeFilippo reasserts that “there is no valid reason” for Japan to continue maintaining the security alliance today (163), and calls on Japan to “design a new security policy trajectory for itself that centres on nurturing confidence-building measures that provide the foundation for



building an international disarmament regime” (165). Only then will Japan be able to resolve the contradictions inherent in its current security policy, which DeFilippo provides in neat bullet-point form (164-5). He offers practical suggestions for how Japan could go about forging a new security policy after it terminates the US-Japan treaty, which includes establishing the three non-nuclear principles in domestic law, pressing for a verifiable reduction of nuclear weapons, strengthening the United Nations, and working hard to establish “solid bilateral relations with as many countries as possible” (191).

The main argument of the book is that the US-Japan alliance is “inherently destabilizing, as it maintains the Cold war mentality of distrust, suspicion, and exaggerated reaction to other countries’ behaviors and policies” (68). Specifically, by making both China and North Korea feel as though they have been targeted, “the alliance itself is responsible for regional instability” (128). Ultimately, however, DeFilippo is unable to marshal enough evidence to convince the reader that *any* of the regional tensions he mentions in the book are directly connected to the US-Japan relationship. While anecdotal evidence is offered that Chinese and North Korean officials oppose the alliance and assert that it has produced “instability and imbalance in the region” (10), no causal link is developed between these beliefs and regional instability. Throughout the book, the author’s argument consists of identifying sources of tension in the three countries’ bilateral relations with the US and Japan – such as the Russo-Japanese dispute over the Northern Territories, or the resumption of nuclear testing by the Chinese in 1996 – and speculating about how those tensions are compounded by the US-Japan relationship.

Matters are somewhat confused by discussion of recent (post-1996) *improvements* in Japan’s relations with all three countries (see 75-6; 84-5; 182). Even though DeFilippo’s argument depends on his claim that the alliance exacerbates and even causes regional instability, he presents evidence that effectively contradicts this, and then uses this evidence to provide another rationale for its abrogation: that the alliance is simply not needed. After his discussion of the negative reaction of Chinese officials to the 1997 Revised Guidelines for US-Japan Defense Cooperation, for example, it is rather surprising to read that a “discernible improvement was made in the Sino-Japanese relationship” during the first official trip made to Japan by a Chinese premier, Jiang Zemin, in November, 1998 (75). Where his argument does appear solid, however, is when evidence is presented that all three countries – China, Russia, and North Korea – are opposed to the joint US-Japan development of Theater Missile Defense (TMD), sparking concerns that this will spur a regional arms race. This may be likely, but suggests in turn that regional instability may be provoked by a specific *policy* adopted by Japan and the US, not by the alliance itself. Indeed, the author fails to offer any proof that the alliance has contributed to regional instability. Moreover, basic knowledge of Japan’s aggression towards these countries during World War Two and its failure to issue decent apology since suggests

that the US-Japan alliance could well be a secondary factor, masking other more important obstacles to regional stability.

If the alliance really is so destabilizing, why was it strengthened? The author's response is unsatisfying. He invokes a variety of possible explanations throughout the book, ranging from Japan's desire for international credibility; to its decision that it was just "easier" to continue with the Cold War security paradigm than change it; to "cultural norms" dictating a unilateral order that would compel the US to continue the alliance as a means to "retain hegemonic control over the area" (96-7). These different, and in some ways inconsistent explanations, represent a muddled analysis and draw attention to DeFilippo's failure to adequately consider the explanation he dismisses, which is that the alliance was a rational response by both parties to perceived tensions in the region. Normative statements like "it is wrong to assume that other nations need visible military constraints to act within the confines of sociopolitical decency" (68) highlight the fact that this is a publication uninfluenced by International Relations theory. Thus the author characterizes the alliance as a mere remnant of the Cold War, which "presupposes that the behavior of some nations is blatantly hostile, surreptitious, and intended to upset the stability of East Asia" (55). As theorists of International Relations know all too well, such assumptions about the motives of states are not at all particular to the Cold War period, having been a feature of inter-state relations for centuries.

A lack of realism also informs the author's claims that Japan should adopt a policy "consistent with its historical and present interests in global disarmament and a strong UN security system" (118). Even though evidence is cited that the public supports the UN and is rather ambivalent about the Security Treaty, it is a rather large jump to maintain that the Japanese people would thus prefer the security policy based on multilateralism described by the author if given a choice between the two. In the final chapter, DeFilippo makes what amounts to an even more serious claim. He argues strongly that if the treaty were terminated, "the strong anti-nuclear sentiment that pervades Japan" (174) would cause Japanese policymakers to embrace the country's anti-nuclear norms and make nuclear disarmament the centerpiece of its foreign policy. It would not, in other words, cause Japan to develop nuclear weapons of its own. Given that DeFilippo has previously highlighted how policymakers have been able to ignore anti-nuclear norms in Japan for five decades, there is absolutely no evidence that in the absence of an alliance relationship they might suddenly find those norms more compelling. The realist norms that have underpinned Japanese foreign policy for decades, reflecting a genuine sense of insecurity and vulnerability on the part of Japan, would much more likely point to the development of nuclear weapons rather than any committed effort to their non-proliferation.

In conclusion, the strong normative component of the book affects its ability to offer a persuasive critique of the existing US-Japan security alliance. As a result, it is far from clear from this study that Japan, the US, or the region as a whole would be better off without it. A more balanced

discussion of the relationship's advantages and disadvantages would have made for a more useful book, as would an elementary understanding of International Relations concepts, particularly those associated with alliance formation. Flawed insights into Japan's internal politics – the country's Socialists did not cause the LDP's demise in 1993, for instance – do little to enhance the book's credibility.

The most interesting puzzle to come out of the book is *why* anti-nuclear norms in Japan have had so little impact on the country's security policy. This is a phenomenon that needs to be understood before it can be possible to predict when and under what circumstances they might begin to have a greater impact. Comparing Japan with other countries that have experienced anti-nuclear movements and alliances with the US – such as Australia and New Zealand – might be a useful place to start.

*Reviewed by* AMY L. CATALINAC  
*Harvard University*

Stefan Tanaka, *New Times in Modern Japan*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004, 225 pp. ISBN: 0-691-11774-8 (hbk).

The subject of this book is modernity. Japan provides the archive, but Tanaka uses the particularities of Japanese experience to reflect on modernity as a universal phenomenon. The secondary literature Tanaka engages most closely with (Blumemberg, de Certeau, Koselleck, Osborne) could be unfamiliar to those who are not interested in these wider debates, and this means that many of the concepts and some of the language may be new and challenging. But it would be a shame if this meant that Japan scholars did not take this book seriously. Tanaka clearly wants to bring the Japanese experience into those wider debates about modernity, for which he should be applauded, but he also has much to say that will enrich understandings of Japan's modern transformation. Having said that, this is not a book that most undergraduate students will warm to.

Tanaka's subject is the transformation of time during the Meiji period and the role this played in the integration of an archipelago of islands into the nation-state Japan. Tanaka argues that time is the fundamental mechanism of the modern age, and the 1872 edict, which initiated the solar calendar and the adoption of the clock as the standard timekeeping device, was integral to the reconfiguration of society that enabled the Meiji transformation. He argues that this was part of the conquest of space by time that is a fundamental aspect of modernity. The relative independence of local communities throughout the archipelago, often with their own forms of the lunar calendar, and their own spirits, gods and festivals, was fractured as they were

incorporated into unified, abstract time. This initiated a cascade of changes that completely reshaped the way humans interacted with one another.

Tanaka combines his exploration of the time of modernity with a series of reflections on the way in which history comes to play a crucial role in restoring order and meaning to a society newly emptied of prior meanings. It is best to relate Tanaka's views here in his own words, as this will help readers gain some impression of what an encounter with this book involves. He notes that as inherited knowledge and practice was destabilised, 'those pasts that do not readily fit into the rules and structure of the rational are relegated to prior moments of the present, that is, timeforms with their own history that become examples of earlier moments of a Japan as if it had always existed. Thus, the environment filled with plants, beings, ghosts, and spirits that surround people becomes nature, folklore, religion, and so forth; children become known through the category childhood; and icons of spirituality are organized into chronologies of art, architecture, and so on. These objects gain meaning as timeforms, establishing new rules, principles, and essences (the materiality of the state) that organize life of people as citizens, as Japanese, of a national society' (23). In other words, Tanaka argues that history, like time, is one of the technologies of modernity. In the heart of the book he explores the operation of these technologies through an investigation of issues as diverse as geology, ghosts, childhood, art history and architecture.

In the first chapter, 'Discovery of Pasts', Tanaka delves into the implications of the disruption of the heterogeneous temporalities of the Tokugawa era. The chapter revolves around discussion of the significance of the geological work of scholars like Edward Sylvester Morse and Edmund Naumann (best known for founding the Geological Survey of Japan in 1878). Just as the adoption of the Gregorian calendar enabled the integration of the peoples of the archipelago into an emerging international order, so this geological work helped disrupt local or regional patterns of understanding by demonstrating that the archipelago had a history that was part of a unified history of the earth, distinct from the knowledge conveyed through inherited cultural traditions. Tanaka argues this severed nature from human time and 'showed that histories existed independent of what had been accepted as true, the accounts in *Nihon shoki* and *Kojiki*' (42).

In the next chapter Tanaka tries to convey something of the discomfort brought with the rupture of time and the separation of nature from culture. He does this by exploring attempts to bring the abstract world of rationality and science to bear on understandings of the interrelation of ghosts, spirits and humans and on the place of the past in the present. Tanaka examines these efforts to exorcise these ghosts and spirits by focusing on the work of Inoue Enryō, who started the Fushigi kenkyūkai (Mystery Research Society) in 1893/4. Inoue placed the human apprehension of the external world in a developmental framework rather than an eschatological one, so that people's knowledge of ghosts was read as a sign that their knowledge of the natural world had not progressed enough to understand their causes; the ghosts

would disappear once that knowledge developed. A similar transformation occurred with history, as attempts were made to exorcise aspects of the past through the establishment of history as a scientific discipline. In the process, some inherited knowledge would be discarded, some recategorised as literature, folklore or myth. Tanaka focuses here primarily on the work of Shigeno Yasutsugu and Kume Kunitake and their efforts to establish the nation-state as the primary subject of historical research and writing. Margaret Mehl and others have recently explored much of this material, but with his emphasis on the time of modernity Tanaka places it in a slightly different context.

In the following two chapters Tanaka develops his argument about the increasing integration between knowledge and the nation-state. He explores the way inherited experiences and understandings were reconfigured into what he calls ‘an essential time and a chronological time of the nation’ (25). In particular, he looks at the way intellectuals such as Katō Hiroyuki, Miyake Setsurei, and Okakura Kakuzō extracted aspects of the past and reorganised them into transhistorical categories that naturalised them as Japanese characteristics. In distinguishing his approach, Tanaka notes that other scholars (Pyle, Pierson, Gluck) have generally characterised this revived interest in the past as a conservative or nativist reaction: ‘This narrative, which moves linearly from the moment of “opening,” to enlightenment, followed by a retrenchment, is one of the overstatements of our current understanding of history – and the process of modernization in non-Western places’ (86). In contrast, Tanaka argues that this was a necessary result of the severing of the past that came in the wake of the *Ishin*, which ‘forced a reconfiguration of people, objects and ideas into the nation of Japan. This process is the historicization of the archipelago; in this effort to establish the given and created, intellectuals removed different pasts from time, turning the nation into a transhistorical – that is, natural – entity. In addition, history provided the material evidence to prove this timelessness; pasts were transmuted into evidence that demonstrated the nation had existed for a long, long time’ (87).

In the last two chapters Tanaka turns to explore the ways in which this newly created national past was employed to prescribe social norms that might ameliorate the ‘social problems’ (*shakai mondai*) that came with modernity (slums, exploitation, disparity of income, alienation, etc). Here his subject is both the emergence of the study of society, sociology, and the question of citizenship, the education of individuals into the norms and regulations of the nation-state. Tanaka acknowledges his debt to the work of Ogi Shinzō on the transformation of Edo into Tokyo, but develops his own analysis more through an exploration of the significance of particular intellectuals, especially Takayama Chogyū and Inoue Tetsujirō, and their attempts to grapple with the dilemmas thrown up by modernity. These are undoubtedly complex figures and their writings provide a clearly focused way into the debates over the social constitution of the new nation-state, but it is far from clear that this is the most productive manner in which to engage

with these issues. For instance, Tanaka discusses how Inoue ‘used ideas of Japaneseness to establish those “natural extra-political human relations” that localized the social problem,’ and thus sought to constrain citizenship within the socially accepted norms of the nation-state, but his discussion gives little sense of the ways these things were negotiated in practice (167).

These last two chapters are the weakest in the book. In chapter five, ‘Socialization of Society’, Tanaka’s concentration on the discourse generated by the Meiji transformation means he is unable to really grapple with the complexity of the issues underlying the social problems. Similarly, in the last chapter, ‘Socialization of Nature’, he struggles to achieve the coherence of the earlier parts of the book in a discussion that encompasses both the rebranding of the Hōryūji and the social construction of childhood. He uses the Hōryūji to explore the idea of Japan as a museum, itself an analogy for the nation-state, arguing that it was transformed from one among many pre-Meiji temples into ‘an archetype of the spirituality of the national past’ (179). In conjunction with this, he examines the construction of childhood and the rise of children’s literature from the 1890s onwards, as a means of exploring the ways in which the child came to serve as the embodied site for the future of the nation. Both the Hōryūji and childhood, he argues, ‘serve as mnemonics of pasts that symbolize norms that fix the present’ (26).

This is a rich and stimulating book, but I found myself in disagreement with much that Tanaka argues. In emphasising the rupture of the *Ishin*, and of the pursuit of modernity, Tanaka elides the many ways in which the past survives into and shapes the present. Instead, he argues that the power of modernity is such that it reconfigures everything in its image. To advance this argument he reduces history to nothing more than a technology of modernity. For Tanaka, power rests solely on one side of a bifurcated past/present. He does not consider the ways in which inherited knowledge and practice condition the *Neuzeit* (new time), something that comes through very strongly, for instance, in a book like *Empire and Information Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), where Chris Bayly explores similar themes in the South Asian context. This raises another problem I had with the book. There is a sense in which Tanaka has been captured by the ‘leave-Asia’ (*datsu-A*) spirit of the age he writes about. He claims that one of his aims is to advance the discussion of modernity in non-Western societies, but apart from a passing reference to Dipesh Chakrabarty’s *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) there is no engagement with the rich body of scholarship now available on the multiple sites of modernity. Tanaka’s focus is clearly on seeing the Japanese experience in terms of Europe and European scholarship.

Reviewed by BRIAN MOLOUGHNEY  
University of Otago

Roger Goodman, editor, *Family and Social Policy in Japan: Anthropological Approaches*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002, xvii + 237 pp. ISBN-10: 0521016355 (pbk).

For those with an interest in Japanese social policy or societal trends this book will be a stimulating and worthwhile read. It comprises a collection of eight essays that were originally delivered at an international academic conference plus an introductory chapter. Like many conference turned-book projects, the scope of the material is fairly wide ranging and the appeal of the varying chapters will depend on whether the reader is more interested in social policy or applied anthropology.

Roger Goodman, editor and contributor, writes an excellent introductory chapter in which he attempts to unify the entire work and justify the inclusion of every paper. While he doesn't quite manage the latter endeavor, he does succeed in getting the book off to a strong start by meticulously framing the social challenges that currently face Japan and skillfully setting them in an international context. He also examines how anthropology can help us understand social policy better. For the non-anthropologist, or those unfamiliar with Japanese social trends, this chapter is a real goldmine of useful information. For example, we are reminded: "Japan is rapidly becoming the world's oldest ever human population" (12). He also convincingly argues that: "Social and welfare policies in Japan historically have been constructed so as to support the most productive elements of the society rather than to provide a safety net for those who would not otherwise be able to survive" (15).

The main eight chapters offer the reader a broad spectrum of topics literally ranging from child birth (Carolyn Stevens and Setsuko Lee) to death (Yohko Tsuji). I personally enjoyed the chapter "Pinning hopes on angels" by Glenda Roberts in which she examines government policy aimed at reversing Japan's low fertility rate and public attitudes towards it. We are informed that many Japanese believe "childrearing is 'hardship' not 'joy,'" (59) and parents' social wings are clipped more than their European counterparts because "casual babying sitting by teenagers or unrelated others is uncommon" (58). Roberts clinically dissects the Angel Plan, a government policy designed to halt the declining birthrate, and examines its inbuilt contradictions and the mixed public reaction to it. She observes, "Through the Angel Plan and through the windows of its implementation, we can discern a number of conflicting models of how families should be constructed in contemporary Japan, how couples should interact in production and reproduction, and how institutions from daycare centres to corporations should behave to respond to these models" (54). Roberts builds on some of her earlier work, producing an excellent analysis of maternity policy.

In the chapter entitled “Child abuse in Japan: ‘discovery’ and the development of policy’ Roger Goodman charts social awareness and policy surrounding the previously hidden social problem, proving some first-rate reference material. Rather like domestic violence, cases of child abuse in Japan were extremely ‘low’ until the concealed social ill was brought into the public realm. Suddenly, the number of cases exploded, and the state has struggled to deal with the issue. On the other hand, the media has vigorously explored this formerly taboo subject, generating public concern and greater awareness. Putting the situation in context, and based on figures for 2000, the author predicts: “The ‘discovery’ of child abuse is a common experience in many societies. There is little doubt, looking at the experience of other countries, that the number of reported cases in Japan will continue to rise exponentially” (150). Indeed, the number of cases of child abuse hit a record high of 32,979 cases during the fiscal year of 2004, a rise representing an increase of 24 percent, or an extra 6,410 cases, the fiscal year of 2003 and a 83 percent increase from the 18,000 cases Goodman reports in 2000.

In “Reproducing identity: maternal and child healthcare for foreigners in Japan,” Carolyn Stevens and Setsuko Lee investigate the situation of foreign mothers giving birth in Japan. They analyze health and welfare policies, social provisions, and immigration regulations. The authors are concerned that: “Health statistics of foreign mothers and their children in Japan differ from their Japanese counterparts. It is our contention that legal as well as cultural stresses on the foreign mother in Japan make it difficult for her to access the healthcare she needs and leads to higher-risk pregnancies” (92).

I found several problems with this approach, chiefly that it is not entirely supported by the data which in fact shows that infant deaths for Chinese and Korean mothers, the two largest groups of foreigners, are in line with those for Japanese mothers, as generally are those for Western mothers. It is women from developing countries in Southeast Asia that are at greatest risk, but here various pre-existing socio-economic factors must be taken into consideration. I do not believe it is possible, as the authors do, to simply lump all foreign mothers together into one group. On the other hand, the concerns they outline for certain groups of foreign mothers most definitely require further research and the authors deserve to be commended for highlighting these neglected issues.

Stevens and Lee also find maternity clinics rather rigid, regimented and dominated by a “doctor-knows-best” philosophy. While I would not dispute that this description could be applied to quite a number of maternity hospitals, it is definitely not valid for all. Nowadays, a key criteria for Japanese and foreign mothers in choosing a clinic is its philosophy, be it regimented, happy-go-lucky, or something in between. It is not uncommon for women to switch maternity clinics a few times until they find one that best suits their needs. Practically every maternity clinic now clearly details its philosophy on its website. In those parts of Japan with a high concentration of foreigners, such as Hamamatsu with its large Brazilian



community, foreign language information is available and some clinics especially cater for the particular cultural needs of foreigners.

These criticisms aside, this trailblazing chapter, like all the others in this though-provoking volume, raises some critical and often overlooked issues. There are other cutting-edge chapters by Vera Mackie, Leng Leng Thang, Eyal Ben-Ari, Yohko Tsuji and Victoria Lyon Bestor that unfortunately are not covered in this review. Generally, anyone interested in social policy, societal trends or applied anthropology will find this an invaluable book.

*Reviewed by SEAN CURTIN  
Westminster University*

Limin Bai, *Shaping the Ideal Child: Children and their Primers in Late Imperial China*, Hong Kong, The Chinese University Press, 2005, xxiv + 311 pp. ISBN:962-996-114-8 (hbk).

*Shaping the Ideal Child: Children and their Primers in Late Imperial China* is a wonderful book. It is imaginatively conceived, impeccably researched, and very well written. The primary sources — educational primers in imperial China — are the springboard for a wide-ranging study of Chinese perceptions of children, childhood, education, and society. The author Limin Bai makes it clear that the book is about evolving perceptions and social constructions of childhood, rather than the actual treatment of children themselves. Bai writes:

This study examines the possible role of elementary education in shaping traditional Chinese society and culture by seeking a link between Confucian efforts to create the ideal child and to construct a Confucian society. It is from this perspective that I explore the contents of primers and trace their historical origins which, in turn, reveal the Confucian ideal of childhood and elite attitudes to children (xvii-xviii).

The result is a study that makes a significant contribution to two fields: childhood studies and China studies.

First, Limin Bai places her work within the burgeoning international field of the history of childhood. As she writes in the Introduction, the seminal book in the field is Philippe Ariès' *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime* (1960), translated as *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* in 1962. Ariès' account of the "discovery" of childhood from the early modern period in the West includes the now controversial assertion that "in medieval society the idea of childhood did not

exist” (125). Since Ariès, childhood studies have employed “childhood” as an inclusive term, denoting children under the age of 18 years as well as denoting pre-adolescent children only. Many scholars now reject two claims in Ariès’ work. The first is his assertion that childhood did not exist in the medieval period. It is commonly said that Ariès fails to recognize any concept of childhood that is unlike our own. The second related claim is that childhood awaits “discovery”. Quoting Ann Kinney and Thomas Lee, Bai argues that China has a millennia-old history of theorizing childhood so that it is meaningless to discuss when childhood was “discovered” in Chinese history (xiii). Her discussion of ancient Chinese texts on the stages, ages, nature, and development of children make it quite clear that imperial China had a well-developed concept of childhood, an argument already accepted through the work of such scholars as Kinney and Lee. These ancient texts provide the framework for theory and practice over two millennia and for Bai’s analysis of primary texts. Such thorough scholarship gives *Shaping the Ideal Child* a place in the international debate on the parameters of childhood studies in the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. It adds a detailed Chinese dimension to what Hugh Cunningham (*Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500*, 1995, 15) calls “the history of sentiment” in studies of Western childhood.

Bai’s second scholarly contribution is to China studies. She analyses educational primers within the historical, educational, and social context of pre-modern China, ending with the search for a “new type of primer” under Western influence in the nineteenth century.

The book is divided into eight chapters, which together traverse primers over the centuries and cross a range of themes. They are Chapter 1, “The Education of Children: The Chinese Approach”; Chapter 2, “Primers and the Establishment of Confucian Education”; Chapter 3, “The School of Wang Yangming and Ming-Qing Primers”; Chapter 4, “Shaping the Ideal Child: Ritualising the Body”; Chapter 5, “Shaping the Ideal Child: Modelling on Exemplary Deeds”; Chapter 6, “Basic Elementary Training and the Instillation of Morals”; Chapter 7, “Peasant Children and the Confucian Ideal Society”; and, Chapter 8, “Western Influence and an Intellectual Search for a New Type of Primer”.

The organisation is roughly chronological, beginning in Chapter 1 with ancient concepts of childhood as the foundation of the theory of Confucian education and their emphasis on moral education, before returning to this theme in Chapter 6. Chapter 2 focuses on early Chinese primers in a discussion that includes the *San Bai Qian* (*Sanzi jing*, *Baijia xing*, and *Qianzi wen*) as well as the contribution of such major Neo-Confucian theorists as Zhu Xi in the Song dynasty (960-1279 CE). This period saw the focus shift from learning characters to moral cultivation. The following chapter then looks at continuity and change in the later imperial period. Largely due to the Wang Yangming school of thought in the late Ming dynasty, popular primers “were no longer despised by the intellectual community, and many scholars were involved in composing them. At the same time, *San Bai Qian*, was

widely used as a series of primers in the teaching of basic literacy” (49). The final chapter looks at the debate on Chinese education under the Western influence of Social Darwinism in particular. Again, major scholars were involved — Lin Shu wrote a new type of primer and Liang Qichao laid the conceptual framework for a modern Chinese education system. Bai concludes with Liang’s assertion that pre-modern education ruined children and therefore ruined China:

Liang’s charge may be too emotional, but the intellectual milieu reflected in his remarks signalled the imminent end of traditional Chinese education and the birth of the modern school system. (211)

Throughout the book, Bai also sets out a persuasive framework for her thesis, “shaping the ideal child.” The historical framework provides the context for the Confucian approach to education as moral cultivation. Primers emphasize “ritualising the body” (Chapter 4) and “modelling on exemplary deeds” (Chapter 5). The modern Chinese moral emphasis on exemplars such as Lei Feng therefore has a very long history. The rules and rituals around the body are particularly detailed; morals and manners are intertwined in daily life. For example, Bai classifies the ritual content of two major Song dynasty texts under five categories: demeanour of the body, clothing, manners in school, table manners, and behaviour in the bedroom. Many of these rituals inculcate filiality over centuries. Thus, for example:

Children have to look at their father’s feet when their fathers stand before them;

They have to look at their fathers’ knees when their fathers take a seat;

They have to look at their fathers’ faces when they answer their fathers’ enquiries;

They have to look beyond their fathers when they stand before them (74).

Such rules and rituals were expanded over the following millennium, often in poetic form. Hu Yuan of the Qing dynasty presented rules for “standing, walking, sitting ... bowing, kneeling, dressing, eating, greeting, remaining silent, sleeping, defecating, cleaning and wiping” in rhyme:

If you are going to empty your bowels,

You should choose an out-of-the-way place.

It is offensive to leave excrement under the sun;

It is ghastly if you leave excrement in front of the door.

Take your coat off when you are going to the lavatory,

And wash your hands when you return from the toilet (82).

Limin Bai links primers, which shape the ideal child, to the dominant theories that shaped patriarchal Chinese society. Whilst emphasizing continuities, she nevertheless subverts any essentialist notions encapsulated in the terms “Confucian education” or “traditional education.” For a start, the

primers are aimed at elite children over the centuries. Chapter 7 on representations of peasant children and Confucian educators' concern for their moral wellbeing brings this point home to the reader. Furthermore, these elite children are primarily boys. Girls had few opportunities to go to school and "female education focussed on ritual, virtue and various rules designed especially for women" including special primers. Female education is not covered in depth because it "is another research topic in itself" (214). Bai thus describes different, gendered and co-existing "worlds" of childhood under the broad umbrella of Confucian education and points the way for further research.

*Shaping the Ideal Child* presents a complex picture of pre-modern Chinese childhood. It is a remarkable synthesis of a vast topic, a scholarly excavation of Confucian education, and a valuable contribution to the international field of childhood studies.

Reviewed by MARY FARQUHAR  
Griffith University

Nie Jing-bao, *Behind the Silence: Chinese Voices on Abortion*, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005, x + 294 pp. ISBN: 0742523705 (hbk); 0742523713 (pbk).

Nie Jing-bao has drawn on many years of research and publication in the field of medical ethics in China to produce this unique and comprehensive study of abortion and its moral and ethical contexts in contemporary mainland China. Taking as his starting point the perception among Western scholars and even among some Chinese that Chinese citizens accept Chinese Communist Party (CCP) population policy in silence because they have little or no concern for the morality of abortion, Nie sets out to dispel long-standing "myths" about Chinese beliefs concerning fetal life, and demonstrate the plurality and complexity of views that exist in China today.

After an overview of often critical Western views on Chinese attitudes to abortion in chapter one, chapter two "Instructions from above: official positions", gives a history of population policy in the PRC since 1949. It traces the switch from encouraging population growth in the 1950s to strict birth control in the 1980s, outlines the policy as it currently stands, and examines its basis in collectivist and statist ethics. Most importantly for Nie's argument, it identifies Communist party policy and official discourse on abortion as indeed justifying critical claims of United States scholars that "scant attention is paid to the woman's right to choose or the right of the fetus to life, while great emphasis is placed on the interests of abstract collectives and the state." (64) The remainder of the book systematically argues that such CCP abortion policy is not supported by Chinese tradition, is

not supported by the majority of Chinese today, and is ethically and morally unsound.

Chapter Three takes up the argument from an historical viewpoint. While acknowledging studies that have demonstrated that laws on abortion were quite liberal in Imperial China up until the late Qing and Republican period, and the “common belief” that Confucianism supported both abortion and infanticide, Nie argues for acknowledgement of the diversity of attitudes in traditional thought and stresses that Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism all had serious ethical and moral concerns with abortion (according to his argument, a fetus is a person and abortion is killing a person and therefore morally reprehensible [93]). On this basis, he argues that CCP abortion policy is ethically an “historical and cultural aberration” that “latches on to the historical permissive tradition” (93) but ignores the contrasting position. This latter judgment seems coloured by the undisguised aversion to Mao, Marxism and the communist regime that Nie expresses at some point in most of his chapters, sometimes with marginal relevance to the argument at hand. This is something that I felt jarred against the demand of an academic study for strict impartiality, and even detracted (unjustly) from the credibility of this fine study, though it will undoubtedly find resonance with many readers.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 present and analyse the data from surveys and interviews conducted in 1997 to determine the views of contemporary Chinese. A pilot study carried out among overseas Chinese was followed by a questionnaire administered to around 600 people in twelve different categories, as well as in-depth interviews with thirty women. Topics covered issues such as the circumstances under which abortion is acceptable or desirable, whether abortion is killing a human and at what point life begins. Women interviewed were asked to talk about their experiences as doctors or patients. These three chapters form the core of the book and the basis of the discussions that follow on sociocultural and ethical issues in Chapter 7 and on the issues of cross-cultural dialogue and understanding in Chapter 8.

The data from the surveys and interviews supports Nie’s contention that contemporary Chinese attitudes to abortion and the status of the fetus are diverse and often run counter to official CCP policy. Nie has made a tremendous contribution to scholarship in the area by giving a voice to so many silenced women and bringing to light some of the diverse personal meanings and experiences of abortion in contemporary China. However Nie’s use of the survey data also occasionally raises the issue of statistical distortion.

In order to gain survey data from a broad cross-section of society, Nie intentionally drew his sample of interviewees from twelve different social categories. The total of 558 participants included 23 Catholics; 26 Buddhists; 39 Protestants; 57 Chinese medical students; 17 medical humanities scholars; 26 biomedical students, 43 university students; 84, 50 and 43 respondents from 3 different rural villages and 150 city residents from north and south China. This cross-section of social groups enables Nie to make cross-group comparisons that produce some interesting findings and question some long-

standing assumptions – his rural village respondents, for example, showed no more preference for three or more children than the city respondents. In making generalisations about overall statistics, however, Nie occasionally attends insufficiently to the proportional distortion within his sample. This problem of a distorted sample is particularly significant in relation to the data he has obtained in response to the question, “When does human life begin?” (Respondents were asked to select either “conception”, “quickening”, “viability” or “birth.”) This data is important because it impacts directly on the core issue of Nie’s study, that is, individual and general understandings of the ethics and morality of abortion in Chinese society – those people who believe life begins at birth would be less opposed to abortion on ethical grounds than those who believe it begins at conception. Nie’s statistics show that, leaving aside medical humanities scholars, the three groups of rural residents expressed lowest support for the belief that life begins at conception (36, 40 and 36%), and the highest percentage of support for life beginning at birth (37, 42 and 51%). Not surprisingly Catholics showed strongest belief that life begins at conception (87%), also strongly supported by the Protestant sample (64%). By summing the raw figure from each of the twelve groups, Nie derives a total figure of 48% of people who believe that life begins at conception, with 72% holding that life begins before birth (p 107). He then cites these totals in his chapter summary discussion as “compelling evidence” (131) of Chinese moral views and quotes them again in general discussion of Chinese moral views on life in the context of cross-cultural dialogue (245). However while in China, rural residents constitute at least 70% of the population, here they constitute less than 32% of the survey sample. Conversely, Catholics and Protestants constituted 14% of the survey participants, a significant upward distortion of their representation in wider society. This clearly would have a distorting effect on statistics on beliefs about whether life begins at conception or at birth. Likewise 45% of the survey sample were tertiary graduates compared to only 1.6% of the general population according to Nie’s own statistics (259). For this reader, these considerable discrepancies between the representation of these groups in the survey and their proportional representation in the real world makes the citing of overall statistics problematic. They suggest that while Nie’s argument remains valid and his general findings are not questioned, his contemporary evidence is not as strong as he purports. As Nie himself points out, further survey work would substantiate his findings. Of particular importance would be the gathering of a much greater percentage of data from rural participants, from both urban fringes, and importantly a range of more remote areas.

Chapters 7 and 8 pursue the implications of the study’s findings in domestic and international contexts. Arguing that there is no ethical support for coerced abortion in either the Western or in the Confucian moral-political tradition, Nie makes a deeply humanitarian plea for more ethical, historical and sociological exploration, and particularly for more open public discussion to find better ways to resolve China’s population problems. In the international context, Nie sees intercultural communication as benefiting

from greater mutual understanding of each other's internal diversity that will lead to better understanding of what he calls "differences within similarities and similarities within differences" (234). This book with its clear and comprehensive exposition of the contemporary and historical diversity of views on abortion in Chinese culture makes a significant contribution to that project.

It is generally well written in a style clearly accessible to the non-specialist. As such it can be recommended to a wide range of readers from specialists in Chinese ethics, sociology or women's studies, right through to undergraduate students taking general courses on Chinese society and culture.

*Reviewed by ROSEMARY ROBERTS*  
*University of Queensland*

Xiaohuan Zhao, *Classical Chinese Supernatural Fiction: A Morphological History*, The Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, New York, 2005, 401 pp. ISBN 0-7734-6097-7 (hbk).

Among recent publications on the *zhiguai* (accounts of anomaly) fiction, this book is a welcome addition. It is divided into two parts, the first part of which, consisting of five chapters, focuses on the definition and history of *zhiguai*. The second part of the book, comprising three chapters, is a systematic application of the Proppian theory to the body of classical Chinese supernatural fiction and involves comparative studies of Chinese texts and Western theories.

From the perspective of Sinology, the first part of the book provides a comprehensive overview of the development of the genre from the Six Dynasties to the Qing Dynasty. The method of organizing this overview is anthology-based. For instance, to provide the reader with an overall development of the genre during the Six Dynasties period, the author focuses on six anthologies of *zhiguai* compiled at the time; namely, *Lieyi ji*, *Soushen ji*, *Xu Soushe ji*, *Youming lu*, *Shuyiji* and *Yuanhun ji*. This method has been frequently used by literary historians in China. The merit of this method is that the development of a genre can be perceived through a series of representative primary texts, an approach that provides a solid foundation for further analysis. Such a method, however, is not often adopted by scholars in the English-speaking world, partly because it may run the risk of being not sufficiently critical. In my view, an informational overview is necessary on many occasions for outstanding critical works. In this sense, students of Chinese fiction will appreciate the author's informational overview in the book, which makes available a substantial amount of data regarding textual history and historical background in English.

The second part of the book presents a critical study in the entire body of Chinese classical supernatural fiction in the perspective of the Proppian theory. To my knowledge, this is the first systematic effort to employ the Proppian theory, which is structuralistic in nature, as a research tool to analyse the development of classical Chinese supernatural fiction. Obviously, the author's "morphological history" is inspired by Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*. If the method for the first part of the book is traditionally Chinese, that of the second part is basically "modern" and "foreign".

In the context of the twentieth century theoretic orientations, one may also notice that in Proppian terms "morphology" is synchronic rather than diachronic. The approach of the second part of *Classical Chinese Supernatural Fiction* is indeed a synchronic one in accordance with the original method employed. However, because the approach for the first part of it is a diachronic one, the reader will be able to locate the inner relationship between the first and second part of the book. As I understand, the author tries to construct a "morphological history" for the genre, which not only combines the synchronic and diachronic dimensions but also merges the Chinese with the Western. Employing a Western literary theory to analyze Chinese texts is not always an easy task. While a seamless fabric of the Western synchronic and the Chinese diachronic would be the ideal, the current effort made by the author will inspire the development of the scholarship in the field. To sum up, students of traditional Chinese fiction should include this book in their libraries because it is an inspired piece of scholarship with an informative overview of the historical background of Chinese classical supernatural fiction.

*Reviewed by JUE CHENN*  
*University of Canterbury*

Nicola Di Cosmo and Don J. Wyatt, editors, *Political Frontiers, Ethnic Boundaries, and Human Geographies in Chinese History*, London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003, xix + 412 pp. ISBN 0-7007-1464-2 (hbk).

This book, which emerged in part from a 1998 "Convention of Asia Scholars" in Leiden, proposes an ambitious project exploring issues of convergence and divergence within the commonly perceived unity of China, in particular by a focus upon boundaries or 'fractures' in Chinese history. Each of the twelve authors was mandated to identify specific areas, which 'give special meaning to a variety of boundaries' (6), thus ensuring an integrity for the whole, while the topics covered range over almost three thousand years of history before 1900, with brief summaries of the chapters



provided in the editors' introduction. The editors specifically contrast this book with John Hay's *Boundaries in China* (London, 1994), because of its avoidance of an overarching interpretive paradigm. In addition the book is intended for 'general scholarship and the interested public', not primarily for the 'professional Sinologist' (6).

I regret that I find little sense of coherence in the book, beyond the fact that all chapters are about China, and as for the claim of general readership, I fear this will never happen. After a lifetime as a student of China, I have a catholic enjoyment of books about all aspects of this country, but cannot imagine anyone but the most erudite specialists gaining anything from the first two chapters, of which the first, by Edward Shaughnessy on the Zhouyuan in the Western Zhou (no dates given for the non-specialist), seems to have the slimmest relevance to the theme. Several of the other chapters veer in the same direction, with a superabundance of detail suitable only for the expert. This is not to attack the authors' scholarship, but simply to recognise that their scholarship has often served itself rather than being focussed to serve the book. Nevertheless, from that scholarship arises one of the best features of the book, the extensive bibliography attached to each chapter.

The whole book is presented chronologically, which is unfortunate since the first two chapters, on the Western Zhou, and by Vera Dorofeeva-Lichtmann on the *Shanhaijing*, 'Lists of Mountains and Seas' (35), are the least interesting. Dorothy Wong strikes a better note, with a discussion of Buddhist art patronage by nomadic dynasties in the fourth to sixth centuries. Citing wall paintings and figurative art, she shows how the nomadic leaders used Buddhism to avoid being subsumed by the Confucian tradition and ultimately to consolidate state power in new ways. She also explores issues of the meaning of right and left within Chinese art. Marc Abramson's chapter tackles the depiction of barbarians in Tang China, when 'Tang elites viewed barbarians within the empire as both despicable and yet useful' (120). The simplification of notable barbarian traits to 'deep eyes and high noses' (124) is explained, but immediately enriched by discussions of beards and hair, while the links between tomb guardians and barbarians are explored. Wong and Abramson's chapters benefit greatly from copious black and white illustrations.

Three chapters cover the period from the fall of the Tang to the early years of the Southern Song. Naomi Standen carefully shows how slippery were the categories of steppe and sedentary, when dealing with raiders in the tenth century, especially as nomadic raiding southwards was matched by punitive campaigns which 'raided' northwards. In addition pastoral animals were important and frequently present in north China, not simply restricted to their herding by nomads. Irene Leung returns to visual depiction, this time of foreigners in the Song, noting the formal emergence of a new category of art subject, *fanzu*, among barbarian tribes, despite at least seven centuries of previous portrayals. She also shows that painters of nomads were likely to be categorized as animal painters, because of the overwhelming importance of

horses in their art. Sadly the illustrations to this chapter are rather indistinct, so that the arguments from the art works are difficult to confirm visually.

Don Wyatt makes good use of translated passages to explore the emergence of a consciousness of a Northern Song in the years after the loss of north China to the Jin Dynasty. His focus is on three members of the twelfth-century Song elite, Li Gang, Chen Gui and Zhu Bian, and he reveals how defence of the realm was as much a cultural symbolic process as it was a military one. Nevertheless some of the writing is over-fussy and the arguments need to be reviewed with care, especially on the topic of *xinzheng*, the new government before the loss of the north.

Lacking a chapter on the Yuan dynasty, when the boundaries of pre-modern China suffered extreme challenge, the book offers two chapters on the Ming. With the nominal starting point of a rebellion in the 1620s in Sichuan and Guizhou, John Herman explores the Mu'ge kingdom of the Nasu people and its relation to Chinese expansion into the southwest. Although the level of detail is to be admired, the effect is long-winded, especially as the rebellion barely figures until the epilogue, where Guizhou, but not clearly Sichuan, events are explained as more complex than simply Ming corrupt officials provoking unrest. Many of the names are not in the character list and the map is unhelpful. Andrea Riemenschmitter has used the writing of the traveller Xu Xiake (1587-1641) to explore the use of cosmography as one possible elite response to the decline of the Ming dynasty. Her style is dense and often opaque, with footnote 12 as an extreme example, but she labours valiantly to link ritual and individual expression and to explore the new sense of travel for the literati as an external journey, rather than an internal one. She assumes, rather than proves, the refashioning of late Ming scholars into specialists, and some of her background statements on the Ming are doubtful: one did not need a *jinshi* to qualify for office. Nevertheless the shorter second part on Xu's last journey to the southwest is a pleasure to read with its two long translated diary extracts.

Three contributions focused on the Qing round out the book, although the first has a wider scope. Daphne Pi-Wei Lei's chapter is nominally about Ming and Qing plays, highlighting historic figures forced to cross the northern Chinese frontier in Han times, but the writing is very disjointed and full of undigested detail. Although of interest in themselves, several sections have no relevance to the main theme, including the actors' rebellion in the Taiping era. Lei explores the widening sense of the term barbarian, concluding that the Manchus had to some extent been included within China by popular drama, but her insights into gendered nationalism in the Yuan are not explored for later periods. Joanna Waley-Cohen offers a quite interesting and well-written survey of the importance of the military in Qing imperial policy. Although some of the material is well known, the detail provided on the secondary capital at Mukden and the far north hunting area of Mulan is not, nor is the Qing policy of placing war memorials in the Confucian Temple next to the National Academy. The ending is a little flat. With careful and nuanced writing, Nicola Di Cosmo explores the status of the

Kirghiz tribes in Qing Xinjiang from the late 1750s to the 1810s, delineating the necessary but limited role played by tribute practices and the increasing encroachment of Qing influence on Kirghiz leadership through the Qing award of honours. The evidence is largely drawn from Manchu draft memorials of 1806-7, translated and explored with interest, except in the interminable name list on pages 361-2, and is used to complement writings by Hevia and Millward.

All in all, this is a book to be savoured for its parts, but not to be treasured as a whole.

*Reviewed by RICHARD T. PHILLIPS*  
*University of Auckland*

Mark Elvin, *The Retreat of the Elephants: An Environmental History of China*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2004, xiv + 564 pp. ISBN: 0-300-10111-2 (cloth).

Mark Elvin is a well known scholar of China, having contributed extensively to the fields of both environmental and world history. His latest book is a wide-ranging and thought provoking survey of China's extraordinary environmental history, with a particular emphasis given to the thousand years up to 1800 CE. It is rich in primary material and scholarly comment. Indeed, a particular enjoyment of this book for me was its translation of a wide variety of primary documents, from poetry to imperial decrees and official reports.

The title of Elvin's book comes from his observation that elephants' 'withdrawal in time and in space was, so to speak, the reverse image of the expansion and intensification of Chinese settlement.' As Elvin adds wryly, 'Chinese farmers and elephants do not mix' (9). Elvin tells this story over twelve chapters. Structurally his book is divided into three sections: patterns (six chapters, dealing with major themes in China's environmental history, including deforestation and water management); particularities (three chapters looking at smaller case-studies); and perceptions (three chapters). The overwhelming focus of the book (its first nine chapters) is on the material changes that took place in China's environment and its perception and representation. This is both the book's strength and its weakness.

Elvin divides China into ten principle geographical units, each characterised by differences of geography, climate, vegetation, culture and rainfall, features which he describes in the first chapter. Chapters two to five follow the acceleration of China's premodern economic development, all at the elephant's cost. Hunting for ivory and trunks, notes Elvin in Chapter two, was not nearly as important in hastening their demise as the removal of forest cover for human uses. The requirements of farming, land for settlement,

heating, building, and cooking all accelerated forest removal, a process that was remarkably extensive, though varied by region as chapters three and four show.

Elvin argues that three distinct phases characterised this period of two-and-a-half millennia. The first involved a period of 'extensive and enduring human impact on the forests began in the north' (84) in the second half of the first millennium BCE; the second, beginning roughly one thousand years BP, focussed around the medieval economic revolution underway, principally in the lower and central Yangzi valley. The final period, commencing in the seventeenth century and accelerating by the eighteenth and nineteenth, saw the emergence of severe timber shortages in many areas. These periods largely coincide with those presented by Elvin in his earlier landmark book, *The Pattern of the Chinese Past* (London: Methuen, 1973).

Chapter five builds upon the previous ones by seeking to account for China's premodern economic growth. Elvin argues that the most profound landscape changes 'of the archaic Chinese world began ...[with] the military rivalry between early political entities, whether states, proto-states, or tribes', a process that 'gradually grew more complicated' (110). In response to this, slowly but surely land use shifted from nomadism to farming as the area of available land declined, the impacts of this process succinctly summarised in Elvin's phrase that 'fields end freedom' (87). Gradually tribal kin-groups (late Shang and early Zhou) moved towards feudalism (middle Zhou through the Springs and Autumns period); thereafter feudalism developed into rudimentary bureaucracy (later Zhou). Therein, as Elvin notes, the nexus between military power, resource pressure and economic development that characterised the imperial period was established.

One of the most remarkable examples of this nexus of control was the Chinese state's direction of what were sometimes enormous water-control projects. Indeed, for Elvin a salient feature of the Chinese state has been its ability to mobilise private enterprise on a variety of different scales, from the local to the regional and so on. As Elvin shows with water control projects, not only did these transform the Chinese environment but also 'committed a large part of the Chinese economy to a paradoxical relationship with water that was startlingly productive yet relentlessly costly to maintain, protective yet intermittently terrifyingly hazardous' (113). This chapter, in particular, picks up one of Elvin's main arguments that he expressed in *The Pattern of the Chinese Past*: the idea of technological lock-in, whereby a state invested so much capital into establishing and maintaining a system that to withdraw this would not only lead to losses in production but also cause unacceptable social problems. This was the case with Chinese water-control, as Elvin relates both in general and through the specific example of sea defence and water management in Hangzhou Bay, the 'Chinese Netherlands' (141). Requiring ever more costly investments to maintain, Elvin asserts that what had been a significant advantage even up to early imperial times became, soon after, a straitjacket 'that in the end hindered any easy reinvention of the economic structure' (164).

The next section – ‘Particularities’ – focuses on the way in which private initiatives, which increasingly came to drive China’s premodern economic growth, impacted upon the Chinese environment. Chapter seven focuses on Jiaxing, on the lower Yangzi delta, as a case study for what took place over much of China. This chapter describes the processes by which Jiaxing, ‘an environmentally ambiguous world, half saline water and half salt marsh’ (171), was transformed environmentally and economically through the introduction of cash crops and farming, aided both by the construction of sea-walls and desalinisation. As a consequence of these changes, great population growth exploded between the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, but enacted a high environmental and human cost with population pressures accentuating problems of drought, food supply and labour shortages.

Chapter eight discusses the Chinese conquest of the Miao in sub-tropical Guizhou, a gradual, expensive and painful process for the Han states, embroiling them almost constantly in protracted guerrilla warfare over hundreds of years. In this chapter, Elvin ingeniously recreates Miao views of nature, and describes the somewhat ambiguous views of Han Chinese of this area, views that ranged from total revulsion to the development of early tourism and appreciation of its mountain landscapes. He also provides overviews of the main attractions of this area to the Han state: resource extraction (cinnabar, lead, timber) and land for farming.

Chapter nine investigates why women in Zunhua (on the borders with Manchuria) lived almost twice as long as those from Jiaxing (on the lower Yangzi delta). Elvin speculates that people here suffered from few epidemics partly due to the region’s low population density. Moreover, he hazards that cold winters killed off germs while a highly nutritious diet of meat and fruit, allied with fuel surpluses and long rest periods over winter meant that people had a higher standard of living than elsewhere in China, where fuel and food shortages were often an everyday part of life.

The remaining three chapters specifically look at Chinese perceptions of nature. As Elvin notes, beliefs do not always translate into behaviour. Through an analysis of poems, he argues that: ‘The conception of an environment first crystallized toward the end of the fourth century CE’ (335). He credits the poet Xie Lingyun (385-433 CE), whose poem about Hangzhou Bay describes aspects of a real landscape as opposed to a purely imaginary or metaphorical world, as presenting an environment infused with life and layered with meaning. Xie’s poem also emphasises that there was no conflict between environmental transformation and belief in its immanence, a gentle reminder, as Elvin notes, of the dangers of overwriting our current preconceptions about the incongruity of development and conservation.

In Chapter eleven, Elvin contrasts poetical descriptions of nature with ‘those of a scientific cast of mind’ (369). Here, Elvin attempts to divine what observers thought they saw and to explain the theoretical constructions underpinning these observations. Focussing on Xie Zhaozhe’s voluminous *Fivefold Miscellany* of 1608 CE (it ran to some 1414 pages), Elvin explores not only the underlying cultural knowledge that informed this work but also

Xie's methodology. This is the weakest chapter in the book. Essentially what Elvin does is to criticise Xie for not holding to the scientific methods of today. Elvin's views here tie into his wider assumptions that technological lock-in restricted China's economic development.

I much preferred the final chapter, 'Imperial Dogma and Personal Perspectives'. As Elvin notes: 'There was no one view of nature that can be called *the* 'Chinese' view. There was not even a spectrum. Rather [there was] a kaleidoscope of fragments most of which reflected something of most of the other fragments' (413). The first half of this chapter looks at imperial ideology, focussing on the fascinating subject of moral meteorology and underlining the cosmological coherence of the Chinese world view, in which an interdependent Heaven and earth had corresponding social structures. The remainder of this chapter looks at poetry as a source for historians and the multiplicity of different themes they deal with. These range, Elvin notes, from poetry romanticising large-scale developments, such as hydraulic works, to concerns about resource exhaustion, and even panegyrics to the supernatural deities that infuse nature. Elvin detects a three-layered approach adopted by educated Chinese in poetry: an awareness of the contrivance of supernatural beings in the world, a historical consciousness of human involvement in the world and a kind of natural historical tradition that holds up the natural world as a mirror of the human.

In his 'Concluding Remarks', Elvin returns to a central theme of the book: the idea of technological lock-in. He does this by comparing the environments of the lower Yangzi and the Netherlands in a fascinating discussion drawn from Jesuit missionary sources. Basically, Elvin concludes that environmental pressure was much greater in late-imperial China than in eighteenth century Europe, due to costly hydraulic maintenance work and much more intensive land use. Thanks to technological lock-in, Elvin asserts that 'China had reached a moment in time at which the potential for further improvements within the old technology without recourse to an external modern science was virtually exhausted' (470). I find this argument reductionist; it does not allow for any change or innovation on the part of people and is premised on the idea that they are somehow restricted by existing technology and environment. Finally, Elvin concludes that 'the dominant ideas and ideologies, which were often to some degree in contradiction with each other, appear to have little explanatory power in determining why what seems actually to have happened to the Chinese environment happened the way it did' (470).

Where does Elvin's book sit in regard to current debates and scholarship on China's environmental history? Certainly, the study is extremely pertinent, given that environmental problems figure ever larger in China and are likely to be one of the major constraints to the continuation of its remarkable economic growth that has taken place over the last two decades. In terms of scholarship, a great number of works have focussed on recent Chinese environmental problems; relatively few on either its historical

context or specifically on past environmental changes.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, Elvin's book is a very welcome study, ranging as it does from antiquity up to the early eighteenth century. It serves as a useful companion to the collected essays of *Sediments of Time*, edited by Elvin and Liu Ts'ui-jung, and can be read well in parallel with R. Keith Schoppa's outstanding local study of changing environments and attitudes, *Song Full of Tears: Nine Centuries of Chinese Life Around Xiang Lake* (Boulder, Westview Press, reprint, 2002). Elvin has produced a very impressive piece of scholarship on China's environmental history that will prove invaluable to Sinologists and environmental historians alike both for its content and for provoking debate about its challenging arguments.

*Reviewed by JAMES BEATTIE*  
*University of Otago*

Timothy Brook, *The Chinese State in Ming Society*, Oxford, Routledge Curzon, 2005, 248 pp. ISBN: 0-415-34506-5 (hbk); 0-415-34507-3 (pbk).

Timothy Brook is among the liveliest and most prolific of historians of Ming China. His latest book is a detailed and compelling account of events and issues that engaged the members of local elites in Ming society and of the interface between these elites and the state. The book consists of eight essays originally published separately over a number of years. Two essays make up each of four major sections on "Space", "Fields", "Books" and "Monasteries". All of these represent important areas of intersection between the Ming state and society. In his extensive introduction and conclusion sections, Brook draws out from these detailed studies important conclusions about the interpretation of Ming history.

Brook succinctly defines the points at which the state had the greatest impact on the lives of ordinary people. These were the taxation system, which demanded grain taxes and labour levies; the education system, which operated state-sponsored schools in the provinces from 1436 onwards; the justice system, which most subjects of the Ming state earnestly hoped to

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<sup>1</sup> I refer here entirely of English-language sources. He Bochuan, *China on the Edge: The Crisis of Ecology and Development*, United States (n.p.), 1991; Vaclav Smil, *China's Environmental Crisis: An Inquiry Into the Limits of National Development*, New York, 1993; Richard Louis Edmonds, *Patterns of China's Lost Harmony: A Survey of the Country's Environmental Degradation and Protection*, London, 1994; Yok-shui F. Lee and Alvin Y. So, eds., *Asia's Environmental Movements: Comparative Perspectives*, New York, 1999; Judith Shapiro, *Mao's War Against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2001; Vaclav Smil, *China's Past, China's Future: Energy, Food, Environment*, New York and London, 2004.

avoid, and the military system; which was based on a system of hereditary military households.

Brook sets up a productive counterpoint between his two main types of sources. He has used the *Veritable Records (Ming Shilu)*, the detailed daily record of the activities of the court, to illuminate the state's view on local events and controversies. For information on the activities of local social elites, by contrast, Brook has relied primarily on the local gazetteers. His bibliography lists several hundred of these works, which were usually published under the auspices of the local magistrates, dating from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Brook is a leading expert in the use of gazetteers, which were a key source for his 1998 book *The Confusions of Pleasure and culture in Ming China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). He is also the author of a bibliography of Ming and Qing gazetteers which has recently been republished in a second edition (*Geographical sources of Ming-Qing history, second edition*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002). He has mined the gazetteers to extract the details of the eight case studies that make up this work.

The chapters that Brook has grouped under the headings, "Space" and "Fields," show the power of society to shape and to limit the policies of the state. The Hongwu Emperor's (r. 1368-1398) plan to survey the empire into subcounty and *lijia* systems was extraordinarily ambitious. In the emperor's vision of effective local government, the sovereignty of the state extended down to the level of the definition and ordering of local communities, a level of control that contemporary European rulers could never have achieved. Brook demonstrates that the emperor's absolutist policies and practices could not be implemented, however, without the acknowledgement of existing community boundaries and of the interests and networks of the local elites.

Chapters two and three show the interactions of local elites with the magistrates who represented the state and the varying degrees of success they had in gaining the cooperation of these elites over issues such as the provision of accurate information about the location of the most productive fields in the region. Chapter 3 describes the efforts of the state, through its officials, to promote polder agriculture in the Yangtze Delta and the North China Plain. Brook concludes that mobilizing labour for maintaining infrastructure and achieving state goals in agriculture could only be done with the cooperation of local elites in established village communities.

The two studies under the heading, "Books," show how the state tried to maintain libraries stocked with books approved and printed by the court, and how officials reported on books that they thought the court would find offensive. Chapter five links the growth of libraries to the large-scale production and consumption of books. During the Ming, thousands of libraries holding tens of thousands of fascicles, (*juan*), were built. The Ming founder intended that books published under imperial auspices and designed to reinforce his vision of a well-ordered society should be widely disseminated throughout the empire. His descendants, the Yongle (r. 1403-1425), Xuande (r. 1426-1436) and Jiajing (r. 1522-1567) Emperors continued



to sponsor the publication of a wide range of palace editions of approved works. These works formed the core of school libraries that were established throughout the Ming, a total of about 1000 fascicles in all. In libraries where the goal was to have a collection of 10,000 fascicles, the remainder was made up of commercially published works. In the traditional Chinese state, the Confucian system of knowledge was closely bound to the state's exercise of power, and library patronage, according to Brook, was primarily an activity that reflected state power, not local power. Figures of immense national importance, including Yan Song (1480-1565) and Wang Yangming (1472-1529) contributed to the context of library building and patronage.

Chapter 6 engagingly details the efforts of successive emperors to use the officials who represented them in society to censor and control the circulation of books. Brook concludes that neither the Ming nor the Qing had the capacity to implement state censorship in the modern sense of the term. Both the "Books" chapters reveal an ongoing tension between the state's ability to prescribe, control and prohibit reading material and the ability of social and commercial elite networks to circulate reading material of all kinds and to resist central control of their reading activity.

Chapter 7 describes the Hongwu Emperor's intensive campaign to regulate Buddhist monasteries and the clergy, and demonstrates how far-reaching and inexorable the state's power could be. Nevertheless, by the sixteenth century, the support of the gentry for Buddhism, not to mention the patronage of Buddhism by successive emperors and imperial women, had thoroughly undermined the effects of the founding emperor's strictures and the relationship of the state to Buddhism had returned to one of comparative indifference.

Chapter 8 shows how one group of local gentry and common people continued to carry out their religious devotions despite the efforts of the magistrate and other local gentry to control them. From the two case-studies in the "Monasteries" section, Brook draws the conclusion that as long as religious communities did not challenge the state's claim to be the sole source of legitimate authority, and apart from those times when the state was actively campaigning to control them, they could follow their beliefs and pursue their religious practices with relative impunity.

Brook's views of the nature of the Ming state and its relation to society will require many historians to rethink some basic assumptions and habits of mind. For example, he writes cogently of the role of eunuchs as the representatives of imperial interests in the provinces and of the emperor's (in this case, the Hongzhi Emperor r. 1488-1505) clear intention to use the eunuchs as a counterweight to the power of his officials. The tension between the eunuchs "and the regular officials was a feature of the Ming constitution, and one that Ming emperors favoured as a device to retain some control over decision-making and policy implementation within the regular bureaucratic systems" (7). Brook's viewpoint credits the eunuchs with a playing a useful role in the implementation of state power and in the emperor's efforts to balance the claims of the competing groups that acted on

his behalf. This approach makes a refreshing change from widely held views that perpetuate the prejudices of the officials by assuming that eunuchs were almost always more venal, short-sighted and self-serving than the civil officials who also served the emperor. Imperial women also make a brief appearance in the context of the Wanli succession crisis and the patronage of Buddhism by the Emperor's mother, Empress Dowager Cisheng (1546-1614).

Brook calls into question "the emperor fetish," a frame of mind which, he argues, historians of the Ming period have inherited from two quite disparate sources: Ming officials and the Western philosophers and historians who framed the Chinese ruler as an oriental despot. He traces the habit of looking for difference and defining Asian polities as despotic as far back as Aristotle and Hippocrates and through a chain of more modern eminent Western thinkers including Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Montesquieu. He shows how the idea of an Asian despotism impacted on the thinking of Hegel, Karl Marx, Max Weber and Karl August Wittfogel, whose 1957 *Oriental Despotism* was widely influential among scholars of the next generation. The import of Brook's eight studies is to demonstrate the failure of despotism as a model to account for the complex, varied and multi-faceted interactions between individuals, local networks, communities, the wider society and the state in Ming times.

Brook's own view is that by 1500 the Ming state had capacities to govern that were well beyond what any European monarch could aspire to. This was so despite the many practical limitations on the state's claims. It had also developed a great many of the characteristics we think of as early modern. These developments were not the achievements of the imperium and the state in isolation, but rather the result of complex interactions between the state, represented in society by the local magistrates, and local gentry networks. In Brook's view, society had the ability to constrain, limit and sometimes redirect the authority of the state, without challenging its most basic claim to be the source of all legitimate authority. The bargain that was struck in Ming times between the gentry and the state, between social power and political power, endured almost to the end of the imperial era.

All in all, this is a fascinating and very valuable book that addresses major themes in Chinese history while greatly expanding our detailed knowledge of the issues that engaged people at the level of their local communities. It illuminates the conflicts and controversies that kept the state and society in a state of dynamic tension throughout the Ming period and beyond.

*Reviewed by ELLEN SOULLIERE  
Massey University*

Ian Harris, *Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005, 352 pp. ISBN: 0-8248-2765-1 (hbk).

This study of Cambodian Buddhism by Ian Harris is an important resource for anyone studying or teaching the politics, history and religion of Mainland Southeast Asia. The book begins with a description of the arrival of Indic forms of religion in the region during the first centuries CE, the Angkorian period with its complex mixture of Hinayana, Mahayana and Brahmanical religion, and the Medieval period after the fall of Angkor when Theravada Buddhism became dominant in the region. While recognizing that the Buddhism practiced in Cambodia has much in common with the Buddhism practiced elsewhere in Theravada Southeast Asia, Harris notes the many differences that make Cambodian Buddhism unique. Cambodia's literary traditions are considered as well as the world of the *neak-ta*, the ancestral spirits who share Cambodia's religious cosmos along with Brahmanical and Buddhist deities and rituals. Harris makes a careful analysis of the relationship between Buddhism and the State and the elimination of institutional Buddhism under the Khmer Rouge 1975–1979. He documents the gradual re-emergence of Cambodian Buddhism under Vietnamese-backed socialism between 1979 and the signing of the Paris Peace Accord in 1991. The renovation of Buddhism since the country's occupation by UNTAC forces, which culminated in United Nations-sponsored national elections in 1993, is also described. The book ends with a discussion of the complex relationships between Cambodia's political parties and the Buddhist Sangha.

*Cambodian Buddhism: History and Practice* has been carefully researched, and the bibliography is thorough and up-to-date. The main contribution of the book is the previously unpublished and inaccessible information that Harris presents about Cambodian Buddhism during the colonial and post-colonial period. In Chapter 5, Harris explains the origins of the sectarianism that characterizes Cambodian Buddhism. He documents many of the splits that took place in the Cambodian Sangha during the colonial period, and provides valuable biographical information about Cambodia's prominent modernist monks of the twentieth century such as Ven. Chuon Nath and Ven. Huot Tath. Another of the book's strengths is that Harris includes French secondary sources on Cambodian Buddhism. Particularly useful is Harris' discussion of the work of François Bizot on Cambodia's esoteric Buddhism, published in French by the *École Française d'Extrême-Orient*, important research that until recently has been ignored by many Anglophone scholars.

There are several useful appendices in the back of the book listing Cambodia's monastic hierarchies, a chronology of Buddhist activities in the region, and a list of acronyms essential for deciphering Cambodia's recent history. The photographs of contemporary murals from Wat Kompong Thom, a Buddhist temple in Kompong Thom province, depicting Buddhist

hells populated by Khmer Rouge soldiers, (196-7) are wonderful, and deserve to be reproduced in colour.

The book is not without faults. On the cover is a reproduction of a photograph taken by the author of a badly damaged statue of an emaciated Buddha in the ancient Buddhist temple Vat Sambok, in Kratie Province. This appears to be a modern statue, made from painted cement on a steel armature, depicting Siddhartha Gautama after a period of intense fasting, prior to the Enlightenment. The emaciated Gautama is not a common iconographical motif in Cambodian Buddhism. However, there is an incense holder in front of the statue suggesting that the image is in active worship despite its damaged state. The image of a rotting, emaciated Buddha is powerful as a book cover on Cambodian Buddhism, but in fact, the statue is never discussed in the book, and the reader never learns why the statue is damaged, or what it signifies for devotees today at Vat Sambok.

Another problem with the book is both that words are sometimes transliterated the way they are pronounced and sometimes according to the way they are spelled in Khmer. This can obscure the meaning behind the word as well as confuse the reader. For example, on page 74, the word for a novice monk is written as it is pronounced in Khmer: *samne*, but on page 112, Harris glosses “novice monk” using the Pali word *samanera*. Another example is on page 77, where the word for the ceremony in which donations are raised for the Buddhist temple is transliterated *bon pgah*, a transliteration that makes it difficult to guess at the origins of the term, or find the words in a Khmer dictionary. A more appropriate transliteration would be *punya* (Sanskrit: merit) *pkha* (Khmer: flower). This inconsistency reflects a lack of consensus among Cambodian scholars on how to transliterate between Khmer and Roman characters;<sup>1</sup> however it would be useful for authors to stick to one system per book.

The captions on the photographs on pages 54 (Shrine of Preah Nang Cek and Preah Nang Cam, Siem Reap city) and 69 (Shrine of Neak Ta Khleang Moueng, Bakan District, Pursat Province) have been switched. The first photograph depicts a painted cement statue of the famous general Khleang Moueng and his wife, while the latter shows two wooden Buddha images in *abhayamudra* presently located in a shrine in the centre of Siem Reap town.

In conclusion, this book is an ambitious, but thorough history of Cambodian Buddhism. It is an essential resource for anyone working on contemporary Southeast Asian history, and indispensable for scholars of Cambodia.

*Reviewed by ELIZABETH GUTHRIE*  
*University of Otago*

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<sup>1</sup> See M. Antelme, “Note on the transliteration of Khmer,” *Udaya*, 3, 2002, 1–16.

Mridula Ramanna, *Western Medicine and Public Health in Colonial Bombay 1845-1895*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 2002, xii + 270 pp. ISBN: 81 250 2302 X (hbk).

A number of earlier inquirers have dabbled in the many volumes in the Maharashtra State Archives that are concerned with the medical history of the colonial city of Bombay before the high drama and the tragedy that marked the plague of the last years of the nineteenth century. One or two have sunk somewhat deeper shafts. But almost all of these investigators have been from the West; some have had their agendas fairly firmly in place before they arrived in India. Mridula Ramanna is a scholar who lives and works in the city that is now known as Mumbai. She, too, has sunk her deep shafts here and there in the Bombay archives. (Two of the articles that resulted from this work are apparently in the intriguingly titled *Radical Journal of Medicine*, a journal that the New Zealand library system, at least, has proved quite unable to locate.) But Mridula Ramanna would also appear to be the first person who has had the time - and, more importantly, the energy and the intelligence - to survey systematically virtually the whole of the available material.

In many ways Mridula Ramanna succeeds admirably in her attempt at overview. She makes considerable efforts to place her archival work in context; she has, for example, read widely in the Indian press. She has - and this is often a test of real understanding - a keen eye for the brief apt quotation. Her book is well written and well produced. It is presented as part of a new series from Orient Longman, "New Perspectives in South Asian History", and it whets one's appetite for more.

Yet this volume is not an unqualified success. Part of the trouble may lie in its author's decision to deal with matters topically rather than chronologically. One result is a first chapter that begins somewhat tediously with potted biographies - admittedly very carefully researched - of both British and Indian "medical practitioners" in the city. The book lacks a strong sense of development over time. But other results of the decision to write on topics are to be found in fine chapters on the working of the Contagious Diseases Acts and on "Facilities for Women."

Almost inevitably there is rather more here on the British than on Indians. But there are hints - admittedly more in the Introduction than in the main body of the text - that the author is not totally without an agenda so far as the British are concerned. It is not as "radical" an agenda as might perhaps be expected from the title of the journal mentioned earlier. Seemingly, Ramanna wishes to counter the poor report that writers such as the tendentiously anti-imperialist Ira Klein have given the British in the sphere of Indian health. Was the British record "quite so negative", she asks. The present reviewer is one of those who have merely dabbled in the material with which she is very familiar; furthermore, he is not particularly interested in the problem of the nature of imperialism. But he sometimes found

Mridula Ramanna's characterisations of British officials a little surprising. For example, one of her heroes is T.G. Hewlett, who reigned as the city of Bombay's Health Officer for the middle part of Ramanna's period. Hewlett may indeed have been the toast of some members of Bombay's non-official European community. But his programme for "cleansing" the city was expensive, and by the 1880s the remnants of that programme did not sit well with Lord Ripon's notions about the supposed virtues of 'local self-government' (about which, strangely, Mridula Ramanna does not have a great deal to say). Ramanna herself quotes a Chief Secretary who asserted that Hewlett was "egotistical". Furthermore, Hewlett was a protégé of Florence Nightingale, sometimes a useful stimulus in Indian "sanitary" matters, but a person who was often mistaken in her ideas about a country that she never visited. T.S. Weir, Health Officer from 1873, may have had, as Ramanna claims, a "brilliant" career in Dublin before going out to India, but the Indian Medical Service allowed him to stay in the same post in Bombay for far too long. In the late 1890s plague revealed him as prolix and muddled on paper, over-hasty and overbearing in many of his relations with Indians, and possibly over-inclined to take leave in Poona (Pune) when there was work to be done down in Bombay. It may be added that plague also revealed the windiness - by this time, anyway - of an extremely vocal critic of the official line on that disease, Thomas Blaney. Blaney was a popular private practitioner, of Irish ancestry but one who had trained entirely in India. He had long played an important role in municipal politics, and he figures quite prominently in Mridula Ramanna's account.

It is the complexities of the interface between Western medicine and Indian ways that are in real need of further exploration. The vital role of the Indian "Hospital Assistant" as an intermediary between two civilisations could have been emphasised more than it is here. And it must be said that Mridula Ramanna is a little too content to follow her British sources on such matters as "ignorant dais" (midwives). Perhaps she could have enquired somewhat more deeply when she found Indians - such as the mothers who walked five or six miles with their children in order to have them vaccinated against smallpox - not acting entirely according to British stereotype. The important role of "traditional" Indian ideas about "charity" in the fund-raising for the building of a number of Bombay's government-managed Western-style hospitals deserves more investigation than it gets here. So, too, do the reasons why, apart from a desire for "upward mobility", some Indians took up the study of the medicine offered by the foreigner. Most of the Indian medical graduates in Bombay were the product of a local institution, the Indian Medical Service-dominated Grant Medical College. The best of these graduates were very good doctors, and, in private practice, they made a good living. But why, it may be asked, did so many such people spend so much of their time not in medicine but in municipal politics? Was it, perhaps, Blaney who set the example? Or were there deeper reasons, hinted at by David Arnold when he asserted, at the end of *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in nineteenth-century India* (1993) - admittedly

another book with an agenda - that after 1914, at least, "India's emerging elites" were to take up Western medicine "as part of their own hegemonic project"?

Of course, a work which tackled all or even some such matters would have been a good deal longer than Mridula Ramanna's present tightly-written volume. We must be thankful for the extremely useful account that she has given us, and fervently hope that this very articulate scholar can become a little more expansive, a little more adventurous - and perhaps a little more "radical" - in the future.

*Reviewed by I. J. CATANACH*  
*University of Canterbury*

J. Lourdasamy, *Science and National Consciousness in Bengal, 1870-1930*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 2003, xii + 257 pp. ISBN: 81-250-2674-6 (hbk).

J. Lourdasamy has written an elegant, useful, and interesting study of the place of science in Bengal at a time when colonial rule was at its height and when nationalist (and Bengali) sentiment was on the rise. Many historians characterize this era as a time of acute and painful tensions. On the one hand, Indians were constrained and controlled by powerful colonial officials who were both reluctant to allow Indians access to positions of responsibility and loathe to fund scientific activities that would not result in immediate benefits. Yet, despite the government's hesitation to help scientific institutions, Indians felt that they had to continue to petition and plead for government patronage. On the other hand, ever greater numbers of educated Indians were articulating visions and notions of self-governance and self-reliance and were eager to create institutions that were 'Indian' and independent of government supervision and manipulation. It was in this strained atmosphere that Indian scientists and educators had to operate. Lourdasamy focuses on four eminent men who embodied the difficulties of the times and struggled to find a way for Indians to learn about and participate in science. His study is well-written and provides a good review of their contributions to the development of modern Indian science.

The book's central historiographical point stems from the observation that these four men did not invent or engage in a 'hybrid' or 'syncretic' science, half Indian and half European. Although at least one was interested in researching ancient Indian science, all four firmly believed that science was universal and did not express a national character. What was noteworthy about their case, though, was that they were caught between two opposing forces - colonial rule and Indian nationalism. Lourdasamy's central contribution, then, is to explain their awkward predicament (he uses the apt

term 'double identification' to suggest their in-between position). He explains how their pragmatism helped them to balance the need for government support and the desire to free research and educational institutions from colonial interference. That they were successful in building a scientific community in Bengal is a testament to their scientific abilities, enormous tact, and clear understanding of the role of science in a modern India.

Having situated the scientists within the colonial-nationalism tension, Lourdasamy then provides a useful chapter outlining the history of nineteenth-century scientific education, bodies and journals, and reformers in India. The information may be familiar to colonial historians, but it nevertheless provides a necessary context for understanding the obstacles that later Indian scientists faced – specifically, the lack of government patronage, the discrimination, even prohibition, against Indians as scientific researchers and teachers, and the difficulties in stimulating interest in science within the Bengali elites. As with all the chapters, the writing here is clear, readable and free of jargon and, as a result, the chapter would make a good overview for students just beginning to learn about science in nineteenth-century India.

The next four chapters focus on the men Lourdasamy calls the 'protagonists': Mahendra Lal Sircar (1833-1904), Jagadis Chandra Bose (1858-1937), Prafulla Chandra Ray (1861-1944), and Asutosh Mookerjee (1864-1924). Lourdasamy's approach is to detail their careers and demonstrate how they managed to establish high reputations for themselves by conducting research, teaching science, building chemical foundations or shaping educational institutions. As with the introduction, the principal contribution of these chapters is to suggest the paradoxical and strained nature of their professional lives. Throughout their careers these men had to contend with a largely indifferent Indian population who were nevertheless increasingly interested in seeing Indians establish control over scientific and educational institutions. At the same time, these men recognized that the colonial government's patronage and support (for example, in allowing for extended research sabbaticals to Europe) was essential if science were to find a foothold in Bengal. Yet this government discriminated against them in many ways, sometimes refusing, for example, to allow them to hold certain positions or receive a fair wage.

Lourdasamy examines first the professional life of Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar. He is best known for founding the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science (IACS) in 1876. The Association was Sircar's attempt to provide an institution where Indians themselves could teach science, independent of the West. He also wanted Indians to conduct research and thereby become scientists. All of this was done in the face of 'widespread apathy' to such a project by Bengalis and within a colonial context that, despite some liberal pronouncements to the contrary, discouraged Indians from becoming more than low-grade technicians. The central point Lourdasamy makes in this chapter is the one that runs throughout the book: that Sircar's Association exemplified the 'paradox, whereby a project with



*self-reliance* as its avowed cardinal principle, constantly had to look up to the very agency against which it defined itself.' Lourdasamy also notes the further paradox that the Association relied quite heavily on the support of a European science educator, Father Eugene Lafont of St. Xavier's College, who gave frequent lectures at the Association.

Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose, the second man to be examined, was a teacher of physics at Presidency College and a renowned and internationally-acclaimed scientist. He had a deep interest in the philosophy of Indian science, and, as Lourdasamy explains well, was curious to find connections between inanimate things and animate life. In 1917 he founded the Bose Institute which, with its journal, would further the cause of science within India. Yet, here as with Sircar, Bose's dream of an Indian scientific body was constrained by colonialism: '... by careful diplomacy, persuasion and deftness, Bose managed to set up an institute born of Indian initiative, under Indian administration and serving the cause of science in India, but supported by the British.'

Sir Prafulla Chandra Ray, or P. C. Ray as he is often called, was an ascetic and a friend of Gandhi, a chemist, a historian of Hindu chemistry and the author of an autobiography, *Life and Experiences of a Bengali Chemist* (1932). He was also interested in making science practical and so founded the Bengal Chemical and Pharmaceutical Works Ltd. Lourdasamy outlines well his remarkable professional life although, as with his other three mini-biographies, more information on his personal life might have been helpful, especially since his asceticism seems to have been so much a part of his work.

The fourth scientist that Lourdasamy examines is Sir Asutosh Mookerjee. Although adept at mathematics, his major contribution to Indian science was as the influential Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University and the principal organizer behind the founding and the success of the University College of Science, at precisely the height of the 'swadeshi' ('indigenous, self-reliant') movement that included everything from clothing to education. Mookerjee was therefore in a precarious position, having accepted a post within the colonial government at a time when there was widespread Hindu dissatisfaction with the government's partition of Bengal and the attempt to impose reforms on the university that would theoretically see its power increase over education. Pressures were indeed brought to bear on Mookerjee – Lourdasamy tells the story of when Lord Lytton in 1922 asked Mookerjee to remain the Vice-Chancellor in exchange for his support for the government's policy (Mookerjee contemptuously rejected the offer) – but throughout his career Mookerjee was able to support nationalist aspirations for greater autonomy in scientific education while still not alienating the dominant political power.

Lourdasamy's book is a contextual examination of four remarkable Indians who, against many odds, helped to promote scientific learning and education in Bengal. The outline or even the details of their lives may be relatively well known to historians of science but, by writing four mini

biographies, Lourdasamy has made it easier for others interested in this period and subject to recognize their significance within the scientific world. Moreover, Lourdasamy does an admirable job of showing how Bengali elites were torn between two increasingly oppositional forces. As Indians they were sympathetic to the demands for greater responsibility and autonomy in all spheres of life, but as scientists they also recognized the need to maintain cordial relations with the colonial government in order to secure opportunities for research, positions, and funding. It was a nearly impossible position to be in, but their perseverance and talents resulted in notable successes.

*Reviewed by IAN J. BARROW  
Middlebury College*