East Asian Environmental Co-operation: Central Pessimism, Local Optimism  
*Sangbum Shin*  
9

Building Peace or Following the Leader? Japan’s Peace Consolidation Diplomacy  
*Julie Gilson*  
27

Informed Consent and Mining Projects: A View from Papua New Guinea  
*Martha Macintyre*  
49

An Incomplete Arc: Analyzing the Potential for Violent Conflict in the Republic of Vanuatu  
*Abby McLeod and Michael Morgan*  
67

Book Reviews (listed on pp. 4-6)  
87
ABSTRACTS

The East Asian Environmental Cooperation:
Central Pessimism, Local Optimism
Sangbum Shin

This paper examines the regional environmental co-operation in East Asia at the local government level, focusing on the intercity environmental co-operation between the two cities in Japan and China—Kitakyushu and Dalian—as a case. Theoretically, this case demonstrates the dynamic nature of local government level environmental co-operation in the sense that all the three levels—government, local government, and private—are closely interconnected, and the major actors—the central government, the local government, and private actors like NGOs and/or firms—play a role in shaping the outcome of intercity co-operation. Also, in terms of policy implication, this case is important not just for East Asian but also global environmental politics because it is the co-operation between cities in China and Japan—the two most important countries in East Asia that affect regional and global environmental protections efforts seriously. In order to investigate the reasons of success, and the dynamic nature of intercity environmental co-operation, this paper suggests a framework for analysis on the relationship between multiple dimensions of regional environmental co-operation, and then, examines the historical process and the details of the case and explains why this case has been remarkably successful and produced significant outcome. Finally, it draws some theoretical as well as policy implications of this case in terms of possibilities for and limitations of East Asian regional environmental cooperation in the future.

Building Peace or Following the Leader?
Japan’s Peace Consolidation Diplomacy
Julie Gilson

In Japan, debates about the nature of peacekeeping contributions continue alongside questions regarding the relevance of Japan’s constitution in the twenty-first century and the political implications of aid disbursement. This article seeks to illustrate how both Official Development Assistance and peacekeeping operations are being linked through Japan’s “peace consolidation diplomacy.” For historical reasons, the Japanese government has been unable to play a traditional peacekeeping role. At the same time, Japan’s position as leading aid donor has received negative feedback from a recession-bound populous that now views key recipient countries as competitors rather than needy neighbours. As a result, issues pertaining to humanitarian intervention, peacekeeping and aid provision frequently overlap, as Japan searches for a means of playing a constructive international role commensurate with the expectations of the rest of the world and with Japan’s own claim for a place on the permanent UN Security Council. This article examines Japanese debates surrounding the sending of military personnel to crisis areas and the changing provision of aid, against a background of changing concepts of humanitarian intervention, peacekeeping and assistance. It illustrates how the Japanese government utilizes a combined narrative of peacekeeping, humanitarian intervention and aid giving, in order simultaneously to soften the public response to sending peacekeepers and to respond to increasingly targeted international demands for a more substantial Japanese contribution to conflict resolution.
Informed Consent and Mining Projects:  
A View from Papua New Guinea  
Martha Macintyre

Free, prior and informed consent is increasingly perceived as a means of ensuring that people’s human rights are respected and their interests protected. This paper explores issues arising in the context of gaining informed consent about mining projects from people who are citizens of a developing nation. Assumptions about rights, processes of negotiation, scientific knowledge and environmental degradation are often alien to the local people involved. Drawing on anthropological research in Papua New Guinea, the complex interactions between understandings of scientists, environmentalists, corporation managers and indigenous people are examined. The pragmatic problems of ensuring that informed consent is gained and that the human rights of local people are equitably protected are explored and some tentative solutions offered.

An Incomplete Arc:  
Analyzing the Potential for Violent Conflict in the Republic of Vanuatu  
Abby McLeod and Michael G. Morgan

This paper seeks to analyze the potential for violent conflict in the Republic of Vanuatu, a small island state in the South West Pacific. It examines the likelihood of state level conflict and investigates local factors which might contribute to state destabilization. It seeks to redress the relative absence of Pacific conflicts from the international discourse on conflict and conflict prevention.

We argue that while Vanuatu possesses indicators of potential conflict, when violent conflicts have arisen in Vanuatu they have remained small scale and rapidly contained. In exploring this phenomenon, the paper charts factors such as formal and informal dispute resolution mechanisms, ethnic diversity, the availability of small arms and the incidence of violent crime. However, we note that strategies aimed at preventing the outbreak of violence may potentially create policy conflicts with other areas. In particular, we look at the effects of indigenous dispute resolution strategies on gender empowerment, one of the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals and a central premise of Australian Official Development Assistance to Vanuatu.
Asia General

**BUSH AND ASIA:** America’s Evolving Relations with East Asia. Edited by Mark Beeson.  
*Paul Bowles*  87

**ASIAN SECURITY REASSESSED.** Edited by Stephen Hoadley and Jürgen Rüland.  
*Thomas Stow Wilkins*  88

China and Inner Asia

*Malcolm Thompson*  90

**CONFLICT AND INNOVATION:** Joint Ventures in China. Edited by Leo Douw and Chan Kwok-bun.  
*Nicholas C. Howson*  91

**POLITICAL CIVILIZATION AND MODERNIZATION IN CHINA:** The Political Context of China’s Transformation. Edited by Yang Zhong and Shiping Hua.  
*Cheng Chen*  93

**DEBATING POLITICAL REFORM IN CHINA:** Rule of Law vs. Democratization. Edited by Suisheng Zhao.  
*Suzanne Ogden*  94

**DOING FIELDWORK IN CHINA.** Edited by Maria Heimer and Stig Thorgersen.  
*Amy Hanser*  96

*Beth E. Notar*  98

**PRECIOUS STEPPE:** Mongolian Nomadic Pastoralists in Pursuit of the Market. By Ole Bruun.  
*David Sneath*  99

Northeast Asia

**JAPAN’S RELATIONS WITH CHINA:** Facing a Rising Power. Edited by Peng Er Lam.  
*Peter Van Ness*  101

**ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY IN JAPAN.** Edited by Hidefumi Imura and Miranda A. Schreurs.  
*Hiroshi Ohta*  102

**JAPAN REMODELED:** How Government and Industry are Reforming Japanese Capitalism. By Steven K. Vogel.  
*Gregory Jackson*  103

**JAPAN AFTER JAPAN:** Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present. Edited by Tomiko Yoda and Harry Harootunian.  
*Florian Coulmas*  105

**PERSPECTIVES ON WORK, EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIETY IN JAPAN.** By Peter Matanle and Wim Lunsing.  
*George Olcott*  106

**JAPAN’S DUAL CIVIL SOCIETY:** Members Without Advocates. By Robert Pekkanen.  
*Lynne Y. Nakano*  108

**JAPAN’S AGRICULTURAL POLICY REGIME.** By Aurelia George Mulgan.  
*Kyoko Sato*  109
JAPANESE EDUCATION AND THE CRAM SCHOOL
BUSINESS: Functions, Challenges and Perspectives of the Juku. By Marie Hojlund Roesgaard.
Mamoru Tsukada 111

SHINKANSEN: From Bullet Train to Symbol of Modern Japan. By Christopher P. Hood.
Loren Siebert 112

SUICIDAL HONOR: General Nogi and the Writings of Mori Ogai and Natsume Soseki. By Doris G. Bargen.
Harald Salomon 114

Kathryn Weathersby 115

South Asia

INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT IN SOUTH ASIA. Edited by Paula Banerjee, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury and Samir Kumar Das.
Alan B. Anderson 116

TRANSNATIONAL MIGRATION AND THE POLITICS OF IDENTITY. Edited by Meenakshi Thapan.
Linda K. Richter 119

INDIA’S NEW MIDDLE CLASS: Democratic Politics in an Era of Economic Reform. By Leela Fernandes.
James Matson 120

MINORITIES AND POLICE IN INDIA. Edited by Asghar Ali Engineer and Amarjit S. Narang.
Ian Talbot 122

Southeast Asia

Katharine McGregor 123

Josef Silverstein 125

James Ockey 126

Vineeta Sinha 128

A HISTORY OF MODERN INDONESIA. By Adrian Vickers.
Trevor Preston 129

Robert W. Hefner 131

PIRATES IN PARADISE: A Modern History of Southeast Asia’s Maritime Marauders. By Stefan Eklof.
Eric Tagliacozzo 132

Vedi Hadiz 134

Tamara L. Loos 135
Australasia and the Pacific Region

COMPROMISED JURISPRUDENCE: Native Title Cases since Mabo. By Lisa Strelein.  
Jean G. Zorn 137

Anita Jowitt 138

Aletta Biersack 139

EAST BY SOUTH: China in the Australasian Imagination.  
Edited by Charles Ferrall, Paul Millar and Keren Smith.  
Xavier Pons 141

DISPUTED HISTORIES: Imagining New Zealand's Pasts.  
Edited by Tony Ballantyne and Brian Moloughney.  
Toon van Meijl 142

MUSEUMS, ANTHROPOLOGY AND IMPERIAL EXCHANGE.  
By Amiria J. M. Henare.  
Ilana Gershon 144

FROM URBAN ENCLAVE TO ETHNIC SUBURB:  
New Asian Communities in Pacific Rim Countries.  
Edited by Wei Li.  
Wardlow Friesen 146
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# Pacific Affairs

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## — SPECIAL ISSUE —

**EAST ASIAN CROSS-REGIONALISM**

*Guest Editors: Mireya Solís and Saori N. Katada*

| Introduction: | Understanding East Asian Cross-Regionalism: An Analytical Framework | Mireya Solís and Saori N. Katada | 229 |
| Forming a Cross-Regional Partnership: The South Korea-Chile FTA and Its Implications | Sung-Hoon Park and Min Gyo Koo | 259 |
| The Japan-Mexico FTA: A Cross-Regional Step in the Path towards Asian Regionalism | Mireya Solís and Saori N. Katada | 279 |
| Southeast Asian Cross-Regional FTAs: Origins, Motives and Aims | Stephen Hoadley | 303 |
| China’s Cross-Regional FTA Initiatives: Towards Comprehensive National Power | Stephen Hoadley and Jian Yang | 327 |
| Book Reviews (listed on pp. 224-226) | | 349 |

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Pacific Affairs

is pleased to announce the awarding of the fifth

William L. Holland Prize.

This prize is awarded annually for an outstanding paper published in Pacific Affairs during the preceding year that, in the opinion of the Editorial Board, best reflects the ideals of Bill Holland in promoting international understanding of the regions and peoples of Asia and the Pacific.

* The William L. Holland Prize for the best article published in Volume 79 (2006-2007) of Pacific Affairs has been awarded to

Christl Kessler (Arnold Bergstraesser Institute, Germany) and

Jürgen Rüland (Albert Ludwigs University, Germany)

for their article published in Volume 79 No.1, Spring 2006, pp. 73-96

Responses to Rapid Social Change: Populist Religion in the Philippines

Kessler and Rüland’s study addresses a question of significance across Asia and the Pacific — the role of religion as a vehicle for populism and popular mobilization. Their approach is innovative, well-argued and takes their findings well beyond the Christian and Philippine case.

* The William L. Holland Prize recognizes the success of this article and serves to honour the memory of Bill Holland’s dedication to open and accessible scholarship.

The article may be viewed at our website: www.pacificaffairs.ubc.ca
Winners of the fifth William L. Holland Prize

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for their article

Responses to Rapid Social Change:
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ABSTRACTS

Introduction
Understanding East Asian Cross-Regionalism: An Analytical Framework
Mireya Solís and Saori N. Katada

A key feature of East Asian FTA diplomacy remains unacknowledged and, therefore, unaccounted for: the activism displayed in seeking preferential trading relations with countries outside the region. While European and North American countries have also pursued cross-regional trade agreements (CRTAs), East Asia is unique in pursuing extra-regional partnerships before consolidating the regional trade integration process. This framework article identifies the common patterns and fundamental factors behind the East Asian governments’ moves towards establishing CRTAs. After laying out the conventional arguments—ranging from the extra-regional market dependence, the region’s security arrangements, and economic and political motives behind East Asia’s extra-regional interests—the article introduces the novel concept of “leverage.” This notion highlights how cross-regional and intra-regional FTA initiatives are intimately linked: East Asian countries frequently choose an extra-regional FTA partner in order to break regional inertias that hinder integration, to win domestic battles, and to appropriate extra-regional negotiation modalities that they can use in their subsequent intra-regional FTA negotiations. The article concludes with a summary of the findings from the country cases, and the policy implications of East Asia’s porous regionalism, with its heavy doses of cross-regional trade initiatives.

Forming a Cross-Regional Partnership:
The South Korea-Chile FTA and Its Implications
Sung-Hoon Park and Min Gyo Koo

CRTAs have become a main feature of South Korea’s newly found enthusiasm for a multi-track FTA strategy. In this study, we examine the rise of South Korea’s aggressive FTA initiatives, with a special focus on the first cross-Pacific FTA, namely the South Korea-Chile FTA, and draw implications for South Korea’s other RTA initiatives. South Korea’s motivations to pursue CRTAs are complex. These include economic, political and diplomatic/leverage motives. South Korea’s policy departure from its long-standing support for the multilateral trading system began with its FTA negotiations with Chile, a country located on the opposite side of the globe. Aside from the South Korea-Chile FTA, South Korea has been negotiating a number of other CRTAs. Most importantly, South Korea and the US began to negotiate a bilateral FTA in June 2006, the successful conclusion of which will have significant economic and strategic repercussions not only for South Korea but also for its neighbouring East Asian countries. The economic and strategic motivations of the political leadership, as well as the new bureaucratic balance of power centred on the Office of the Minister for Trade, have played a significant role in South Korea’s dramatic rush toward RTAs. Although South Korea’s pursuit of RTAs does not necessarily mean that it has completely abandoned the multilateral trading system, the policy departure is increasingly becoming obvious and significant.
The Japan-Mexico FTA: A Cross-Regional Step in the Path towards Asian Regionalism

Mireya Solís and Saori N. Katada

By most accounts, Japan and Mexico remain distant economic partners with only a modest volume of bilateral trade and foreign direct investment, and a large geographical and cultural gulf between them. By this depiction, the Japanese decision to negotiate with Mexico is puzzling if not downright nonsensical: Why would Japan invest so much political capital in the negotiation of a complex free trade agreement (FTA) with a nation accounting for such a minuscule share of its international economic exchange? Solís and Katada challenge this interpretation of Japan’s second bilateral FTA ever, and demonstrate that far from being irrational or insignificant, the stakes involved in the Japan-Mexico FTA were very high, and that this cross-regional initiative stands to exert powerful influence over the future evolution of Japan’s shift towards economic regionalism. For a number of Japanese industries (automobiles, electronics and government procurement contractors) negotiating with Mexico was essential to level the playing field vis-à-vis their American and European rivals, which already enjoyed preferential access to the Mexican market based on their FTAs. For the Japanese trade bureaucrats, negotiations with Mexico offered an opportunity to tip the domestic balance in favour of an active FTA diplomacy, despite the opposition of the agricultural lobby. Negotiations with Mexico constituted a litmus test, both for the Japanese government and in the eyes of potential FTA partners in Asia, on whether Japan could offer a satisfactory liberalization package to prospective FTA partners to make these negotiations worthwhile.

Southeast Asian Cross-Regional FTAs: Origins, Motives and Aims

Stephen Hoadley

This article surveys the free trade agreement (FTA) initiatives of three governments: Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia. It examines each in a search for motives, not only for negotiating FTAs within the region but also for reaching outside Asia to find negotiating partners. It finds that the presumption of economic gain as the primary motive must be qualified because the markets of many of the extra-regional partners are relatively small in Asian terms, and their trade and investment barriers are already amongst the lowest in the world. This is especially true of New Zealand and Chile, which nevertheless are becoming popular extra-regional partners for Asian governments.

While the national and sectoral economic motives announced by the trade spokespeople for Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia are acknowledged as predominant, this article goes beyond such declarations to explore the explicit and implicit diplomatic, political and bureaucratic aims that could account more fully for these trade negotiation initiatives. In accordance with the conceptual analysis presented by Solís and Katada in this issue of Pacific Affairs, the drivers of FTAs are grouped into three broad categories: 1) economic motives; 2) security and diplomatic motives; and 3) leverage motives. Seven hypotheses derived from these categories are employed to guide this survey of recent FTA initiatives by Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia, and to explore their reasons for engaging with FTA partners both outside and within the Southeast Asian region.
China’s Cross-Regional FTA Initiatives: Towards Comprehensive National Power
Stephen Hoadley and Jian Yang

This article surveys the recent initiation of free trade talks by China. Of particular interest are the motives driving this innovation, particularly as regards negotiations with distant rather than regional partners, known as cross-regional trade agreements or CRTAs. This investigation is guided by the conceptual analysis presented by Solís and Katada in this issue of Pacific Affairs.

The authors find that the initiation of cross-regional preferential trading links allows the Chinese leadership to speed up economic development, to hedge against future trade diversion in other regions of the world, to pursue domestic reform at their own chosen pace, to develop negotiating expertise in a less tense political environment, and to advance core interests in foreign economic policy and security policy by validating the concept of a peaceful rise to power. China’s recent pursuit of cross-regional FTAs is thus significant not only for the economic benefits they promise but also for their enhancement of China’s national power and capacity for international leadership without provoking conflict. As a supplement to China’s diplomacy, cross-regional FTA negotiations must be recognized as an important new element of China’s long-term international strategy.

BOOKS REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE

Asia General

GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY IN ASIA: Modernity and Identity in Asia Series. Edited by Takashi Inoguchi and Matthew Carlson. Maxwell A. Cameron 349

NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY IN ASIA: Dilemmas in Securitization. Edited by Mely Caballero-Anthony, Ralf Emmers and Amitav Acharya. David Capie 350

NEOLIBERALISM AS EXCEPTION: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty. By Aihwa Ong. David Ley 352


WHERE EMPIRES COLLIDED: Russian and Soviet relations with Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Macao. By Michael Share. Anna Belogurova 356


ZHOU ENLAI: A Political Life. By Barbara Barnouin and Yu Changgen. Yinghong Cheng 360

CHINA CANDID: The People on the People’s Republic. By Sang Ye; Edited by Geremie R. Barme with Miriam Lang. Michael Dutton 361
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRINGING THE WORLD HOME: Appropriating the West in Late Qing and Early Republican China.</td>
<td>Theodore Huters</td>
<td>363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISPLACING DESIRE: Travel and Popular Culture in China.</td>
<td>Beth E. Notar</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Northeast Asia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JAPAN’S SECURITY POLICY AND THE ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM: The Search for Multilateral Security in the Asia-Pacific.</td>
<td>Takeshi Yuzawa</td>
<td>367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCAL CITIZENSHIP IN RECENT COUNTRIES OF IMMIGRATION: Japan in Comparative Perspective.</td>
<td>Chikako Kashiwazaki</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIP-HOP JAPAN: Rap and the Paths of Cultural Globalization.</td>
<td>Marié Abe</td>
<td>370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAITING FOR WOLVES IN JAPAN: An Anthropological Study of People-Wildlife Relations.</td>
<td>Paul Waley</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAD YOUTH: Juvenile Delinquency and the Politics of Everyday Life in Modern Japan.</td>
<td>Robin O’Day</td>
<td>373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WOMAN CRITIQUED: Translated essays on Japanese women’s writing.</td>
<td>S. Yumiko Hulvey</td>
<td>378</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENDERING MODERN JAPANESE HISTORY.</td>
<td>Wesley Sasaki-Uemura</td>
<td>379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SENS : The Japanese Remember the Pacific War: Letters to the Editor of Asahi Shimbun.</td>
<td>Tsuneharu Gonnami</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE TWO KOREAS AND THE GREAT POWERS.</td>
<td>Timothy C. Lim</td>
<td>383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A TROUBLED PEACE: US Policy and the Two Koreas.</td>
<td>Gregg Brazinsky</td>
<td>384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MODERN KOREAN SOCIETY: Its Development and Prospect.</td>
<td>Nancy Abelmann</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE DWARF: Modern Korean Fiction.</td>
<td>Janet Poole</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
South Asia

INDIA AND EMERGING ASIA. Edited by R.R. Sharma.  Manish Thakur  389
REGION, CULTURE AND POLITICS IN INDIA. Edited by Rajendra Vora and Anne Feldhaus.  Subrata K. Mitra  390
COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL GEOGRAPHIES OF INDIA. Edited by Saraswati Raju M. Satish Kumar and Stuart Corbridge.  Ilona Moore  391
FORMS OF COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE: Riots, Pogroms, and Genocide in Modern India. By Paul R. Brass.  Marie-Eve Reny  393
SEX-SELECTIVE ABORTION IN INDIA: Gender, Society and New Reproductive Technologies. Edited by Tulsi Patel.  Vibhuti Patel  394
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION FOR THE POOREST AND OTHER DEPRIVED GROUPS: The Real Challenge of Universalization. By Jyotsna Jha and Dhir Jhingran.  R. Sooryamoorthy  396
UNTOUCHABILITY IN RURAL INDIA. By Ghanshyam Shah Harsh Mander, Sukhadeo Thorat, Satish Deshpande, and Amita Baviskar.  Eleanor Zelliot  398
IN THE NAME OF HONOR: A Memoir. By Mukhtar Mai with Marie-Therese Cuny; translated by Linda Coverdale.  Almas Zakiuddin  399

Southeast Asia

SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES: Debates and New Directions. Edited by Cynthia Chou and Vincent Houben.  Jim A. Placzek  401
SOUTHEAST ASIA IN SEARCH OF AN ASEAN COMMUNITY: Insights from the former ASEAN Secretary-General. By Rodolfo C. Severino.  Donald Crone  402
RETHINKING THAILAND’S SOUTHERN VIOLENCE. Edited by Duncan McCargo.  Fred R. von der Mehden  404
HISTORICAL DICTIONARY OF BURMA (MYANMAR). By Donald M. Seekins.  Robert H. Taylor  405

Australasia and the Pacific Region

PACIFIC FUTURES. Edited by Michael Powles.  Michael Goldsmith  406
LEAVING PARADISE: Indigenous Hawaiians in the Pacific Northwest, 1787-1898. By Jean Barman and Bruce McIntyre Watson.  Mike Evans  408
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Civil Society and Interest Groups in Contemporary Japan
Yutaka Tsujinaka and Robert Pekkanen 419

The Restructuring of Vietnamese Nationalism, 1954-2006
Hy V. Luong 439

Christian Evangelical Conversions and the Politics of Sri Lanka
Bruce Matthews 455

What Has Happened to Urban Reform in the Island Pacific? Some Lessons from Kiribati and Samoa
Paul Jones and John P. Lea 473

Correspondence 493

Book Reviews (listed on pp. 416-418) 495
Civil Society and Interest Groups in Contemporary Japan
Yutaka Tsujinaka and Robert Pekkanen

This article probes the extent to which the new literature on civil society should lead to a revised understanding of Japan’s political economy and policymaking processes. We seek to place two literatures—the older work on political economy and the more recent writings on civil society—in perspective.

The article presents a broad analysis of the influence of civil society groups, drawing evidence from the JIGS survey of interest groups, an extensive random sample survey of more than 1,600 associations in Tokyo and also in Ibaraki Prefecture, involving 36 questions and 260 subquestions.

The analysis provides a general overview of the involvement of civil society groups in the policymaking process. We focus on three main aspects. First, we distinguish among the types of groups that involve themselves in policy making. These groups are broken down in the JIGS survey by their predominant activity (e.g., agricultural groups or sports groups) and their legal status. Second, we investigate in which areas groups seek to influence policy. This means both the broad issue area (e.g., agriculture) as well as the groups’ response to a specific list of policy changes over the past decade. Third, we probe the relationships these groups have with other groups as well as with other political actors (e.g., local governments, political parties). Also, we are concerned with the means by which the groups seek to influence policy making—and we include in this category specific information such as whether the groups offered electoral support or provided postretirement posts to bureaucrats.

We find that Japanese associational structure is characterized by the pronounced strength of economic or business organizations compared to other groups. This is true when we look at the number of groups, the size or resources of the organizations and the success that economic groups have in gaining access to policy makers. Our evidence reinforces the picture of high levels of communication and interaction between business organizations and the economic bureaucracy, and the relative exclusion of citizens’ groups.

The Restructuring of Vietnamese Nationalism, 1954-2006
Hy V. Luong

This paper examines the dynamics of the restructuring of Vietnamese discourses on culture and the nation at large over the past half a century, in relation to the process of ritual revitalization in Vietnam since the early 1970s. It is a process culminating in the Vietnamese socialist state’s official embrace of a broader range of past practices as part of Vietnam’s cultural legacy. This recognition extends to the official discourse on the nation, culture and development. The paper suggests that this shift is rooted at least as much in the dialogic relation between the Vietnamese socialist state and local populations, as in the stronger integration of Vietnam into the global capitalist system. The analysis is based partly on field data on ritual revitalization from two northern Vietnamese communities.
Christian Evangelical Conversions and the Politics in Sri Lanka
Bruce Matthews

The twin forces of religion and nationalism are well-known partners in world history. More often than not, the religion in question is adjusted to meet the political claims of adherents in a given situation. Buddhism is no less exposed to this than any other faith, despite its reputation as a religion of peacefulness and personal equilibrium. The case of Buddhism in Sri Lanka is an urgent example of this, as indicated by recent controversy surrounding the conversion of Buddhists to other faiths. Traditionally, Christian evangelical activity has not been as problematic in Sri Lanka, but in the wake of the 26 December 2004 tsunami, which brought unrestricted Western and Korean-based Christian evangelical aid and mission outreach, the subject has suddenly become extremely vexed, the focus of parliamentary debate and proposed government policy. In June 2005, Sri Lanka’s Ministry of Buddhist Affairs brought forward the so-called “Freedom of Religion Act,” which dictates exacting terms that severely restrict conversion to Christianity. In view of the return to civil war conditions between the government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in mid-2006, this anti-conversion bill and one other proposed by the monastic political party, the Jathika Helu Urumaya, have the potential to cause social and political distress if Parliamentary legislation is eventually introduced to curb the outreach of non-Buddhist faiths.

What Has Happened to Urban Reform in the Island Pacific? Some Lessons from Kiribati and Samoa
Paul Jones and John P. Lea

The future for many Pacific island countries is an urban one. Despite a growing awareness of deteriorating physical, social and economic conditions in island capital cities over several decades, progress in reforming outdated urban administrations has been slow. Two recent examples of new approaches are found in the South Tarawa Urban Management Plan in Kiribati, located in Micronesia, and in the Planning and Urban Management Agency of Samoa, in Polynesia. Whilst neither is situated in Melanesia, the most problematic development region in Oceania, both are considered relatively successful examples of urban reform in a small island state. The paper argues that a combination of political will, the ability to attract and absorb externally sourced urban development assistance, and the prior achievement of some basic attributes, such as modest economic growth and gains in environmental management and economic planning, are necessary pre-requisites for urban reform to occur.

BOOKS REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE

Asia General

INNOVATIVE COMMUNITIES: People-centred Approaches to Environmental Management in the Asia-Pacific Region. Edited by Jerry Velasquez, Makiko Yashiro, Susan Yoshimura, and Izumi Ono. Philip Hirsch 495

EMPIRE AND NEOLIBERALISM IN ASIA. Edited by Vedi R. Hadiz. Kuniko Ashizawa 496
CONTROLLING ARMS AND TERROR IN THE ASIA PACIFIC: After Bali and Baghdad. Edited by Marika Vicziany.
Ilan Kelman 498

ASIAN CINEMAS: A Reader and Guide. Edited by Dimitris Eleftheriotis and Gary Needham.
Nikki J. Y. Lee 499

China and Inner Asia

Gaye Christoffersen 501

CHINESE CITIZENSHIP: Views from the Margins. Edited by Vanessa L. Fong and Rachel Murphy.
Sophia Woodman 502

THE SEARCH FOR DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY IN CHINA. Edited by Ethan J. Leib and Baogang He.
Teresa Wright 504

MAO’S LAST REVOLUTION. By Roderick Macfarquhar and Michael Schoenhals.
Kimberley Ens Manning 506

THE CULTURE OF WAR IN CHINA: Empire and the Military Under the Qing Dynasty. By Joanna Waley-Cohen.
Colin Green 508

Robert J. Culp 509

David A. Bello 511

Helen Hok-Sze Leung 513

Northeast Asia

Penelope Francks 514

ONE WORLD OF WELFARE: Japan in Comparative Perspective. By Gregory J. Kasza.
Mutsuko Takahashi 515

Brian Woodall 517

Ray A. Moore 518

A HISTORY OF NATIONALISM IN MODERN JAPAN: Placing the People. By Kevin M Doak.
Michael A. Schneider 520

Joseph F. Kess 521

Michael Ashkenazi 523

Mary Alice Haddad 524

Matthew Mizenko 525
REGIONAL COOPERATION AND ITS ENEMIES IN NORTHEAST ASIA: The Impact of Domestic Forces. Edited by Edward Friedman and Sung Chull Kim. Nobuhiro Hiwatari 527

BETWEEN ALLY AND PARTNER: Korea-China Relations and the United States. By Jae Ho Chung. Samuel S. Kim 528


NORTH KOREA: A Guide to Economic and Political Developments. By Ian Jeffries. Christopher Griffin 531

South Asia


THE CRISIS OF SECULARISM IN INDIA. Edited by Anuradha Dingwaney Needham and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan. Rinku Lamba 534


TREMORS OF VIOLENCE: Muslim Survivors of Ethnic Strife in Western India. By Rowena Robinson. Sarah Ansari 539

Southeast Asia


SOUTHEAST ASIA’S CHINESE BUSINESSES IN AN ERA OF GLOBALIZATION: Coping with the Rise of China. Edited by Leo Suryadinata Henry Wai-chung Yeung 542

REGIONALISM IN POST-SUHARTO INDONESIA. Edited by Maribeth Erb, Priyambudi Sulistiyanto and Carole Faucher. Benjamin Smith 544


VERANDAH OF VIOLENCE: The Background to the Aceh Problem. Edited by Anthony Reid. Shane Joshua Barter 548

Australasia and the Pacific Region

ASIA IN THE MAKING OF NEW ZEALAND. Edited by Henry Johnson & Brian Moloughney. Neriko Doerr 551

THE LIMITS OF MEANING: Case Studies in the Anthropology of Christianity. Edited by Matthew Engelke and Matt Tomlinson. Courtney Handman 553

REMEMBERING PAPUA NEW GUINEA: An Eccentric Ethnography. By William C. Clarke. Ceridwen Spark 554

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418
Civil Society and Interest Groups in Contemporary Japan

Yutaka Tsujinaka and Robert Pekkanen*

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a veritable explosion of new writings on civil society in Japan.1 In some ways, this represents a natural extension of the general rise over the last two decades in interest in the topic among scholars, especially political scientists. In the study of Japan, however, this new vein of literature could force a rethinking of widely accepted views about the nature of Japanese politics, the role of societal actors and their relationship to state power. Accordingly, this article probes the extent to which the new literature on civil society should lead to a revised understanding of Japan’s political economy and policymaking processes.

Let us recall the industrial policy and political economy literature (hereafter “political economy literature”) that reached its heyday in the 1980s and 1990s and painted a very different picture of Japan. Despite substantial

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differences in the views of the authors, two common threads of much of this literature were the primacy of the economic bureaucracy and a limited set of privileged civil society actors, primarily producers’ groups. Although labour unions were most famously excluded, so were women’s organizations, minority groups, many consumer groups, environmental advocacy groups and many others. In fact, ideas such as “bureaucratic dominance,” “patterned pluralism” and “corporatism without labour” are inextricably premised on the exclusion from power of certain political actors. For example, the “pattern” in “patterned pluralism” shows up because some groups are allowed influence and others not. Although authors such as Richard Samuels, Michio Muramatsu and Ellis Krauss, and Chalmers Johnson might disagree on the precise nature of the power relationships among business, bureaucrats and interest groups, the consensus was that economic interests were powerful and represented while others were given short shrift. Japan was a “producers’ society,” not a “consumers’ society,” and almost the only groups that really mattered were economic interest groups.

Yet, at several turns, the civil society literature has urged us to consider a broader range of actors as politically relevant. Jennifer Chan-Tiberghien and Kim Reimann persuasively show how international actors and norms can exercise influence through and on domestic civil society groups. Apichai Shipper examines groups that support foreign labourers and finds that, at least before the state applies itself, they can shape the public sphere. Robert Pekkanen insists that even mundane neighbourhood associations can support policy implementation, among other policy virtues. Jeffrey Kingston, Koichi Hasegawa and Yutaka Tsujinaka recognize the significance of civil society actors.

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Civil Society and Interest Groups in Contemporary Japan

Although studies of civil society have augmented our comprehension of Japanese politics, observers may be left wondering what is going on. Have traditionally powerful economic interest groups been eclipsed by newer civil society organizations, or simply lost their influence altogether? Conversely, while we know of the rising importance of civil society groups, how do they stack up to the economic interest groups that attracted so much attention in the scholarship of the 1980s and early 1990s? In fact, the relationship between newer civil society organizations, such as citizens’ groups (shimin dantai in Japanese), and the older economic interest groups has not been made clear because much of this new literature does not directly speak to earlier analyses of Japanese policy making and polity, which often focused on the role of groups in the making of industrial policy. Studies of civil society seldom challenge earlier understandings of the influence of the bureaucracy, and indeed Robert Pekkanen sees the state and bureaucracy as influential.6 By invoking the idea that other actors have influence, however, these studies at least implicitly raise the issue.

Our argument in this article is not that these recent analyses of civil society are incorrect; many are compelling and have enriched our understanding of Japan. Rather, we seek to place these two literatures—the older work on political economy and the more recent writings on civil society—in perspective. Without such a linking perspective, it is difficult to weigh the relative merits of these conceptions. Do the civil society and political economy strands of analysis of Japan differ in emphasis only because of the interest of the authors, or do they disagree about the relative power of these groups? And, how would we compare the importance of new civil society groups with traditional economic groups? Because of the nature of our evidence, we are able in this article to make some systematic comparisons. We hope this will help to connect current research agendas more systematically with well-developed earlier themes.

This article has two main goals. First, it provides a macro-level overview that covers both economic interest groups and other civil society organizations. We present a broad picture of the influence of interest groups on public policy and policy making in Japan based on statistical analysis of the Japan Interest Group Survey (JIGS), as detailed in the next section. Such an approach naturally has its strengths and limitations. As we discuss the particular methodology employed, we comment specifically on the limitations to our study. In general, however, a survey can complement more detailed studies of particular policy areas. Moreover, a survey of a very broad range of

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6 Pekkanen, Japan’s Dual Civil Society.
civil society actors across issues can provide perspective that is not available through case studies—even excellent and thorough ones—limited to a particular issue area or type of group. Our aim in this article is to provide such a comprehensive survey of the involvement of civil society groups in policy making in Japan in order to address the important questions raised above.

As a second goal, in this article we hope to link the literatures on economic interest groups and civil society and in so doing to place the achievements of civil society groups in perspective. Because the comparative analysis we attempt can systematically detect differences across sectors or types of interests by a multisectoral or macro-level overview, our results show that the traditionally powerful economic interest groups are stronger and more influential than the new civil society groups and citizens’ groups. We do not seek to demean the real and important achievements of civil society—our objective is not to demonstrate the powerlessness of civil society groups (and thus provide a convenient straw man for future graduate students). Instead, we hope our findings here will compare the accomplishments and influence of economic interest groups with other civil society groups in order to provide a comparative perspective on their respective influence in the Japanese policymaking process. In a systematic analysis of Japan, we find that Japanese associational structure is characterized by the pronounced strength of economic or business organizations compared to other groups. This is true when we look at the number of groups, the size or resources of the organizations and the success that economic groups have in gaining access to policy makers.

In this article, we conceive of economic interest groups as a powerful subset of civil society organizations, and the term “interest groups” here should be seen as differentiating those civil society groups that have direct ties to an economic interest. Specifically, we use “interest groups” to refer to economic interest groups such as industry associations, groups representing a specific profession (e.g., the Japan Medical Association), labour unions and agricultural cooperatives (all these types have separate categories in the survey itself). This distinguishes these groups from a larger set of “civil society organizations,” which may advocate for policy change but do not directly represent an economic interest such as that of farmers, workers or automobile manufacturers. Occasionally, in the same sentence we will refer to “interest groups” in contrast to “civil society organizations,” in which case the reader should understand the latter as shorthand for “civil society groups other than interest groups.”

A more detailed description of our methodology follows this introduction. After this, we plunge into the substantive analysis of the article. We focus on three main aspects. First, we distinguish between the types of groups that involve themselves in policy making. These groups are broken down in the JIGS survey by their predominant activity (e.g., agricultural groups, sports
groups) and their legal status. Second, we investigate the policy areas that interest the JIGS organizations. We spend the bulk of our efforts, however, in probing how civil society groups seek to influence. This includes detailing the concrete activities and steps taken to influence policy and specifying the political actors targeted for influence. We also include in this category details such as whether the groups offered electoral support or provided postretirement jobs to bureaucrats and whether they focused their efforts on politicians or bureaucrats. In the conclusion, we investigate the success the groups have in gaining access to political actors. We also draw out implications for the study of interest groups and civil society in Japan and for a more general understanding of Japanese politics.

Methodology: A note on the JIGS survey

The evidence is drawn from the JIGS survey of interest groups conducted by Yutaka Tsujinaka. This extensive survey involved 36 questions and 260 subquestions and utilized random sampling of the Nippon Telephone and Telecommunications Town Page (shokugyoubetsu denwachou), the “NTT telephone book.” The directory listed all groups that held a phone line and did not request an unlisted number. Almost every group that held a phone line was listed in the NTT telephone book. Of course, not all groups necessarily have their own telephone lines, but this method of sampling allows the research to include groups that had not obtained legal status or did not even have their own office. In this way, the JIGS data are more comprehensive than government data and catch many groups that would otherwise be uncounted.

The NTT telephone book is a comprehensive listing of telephone numbers and includes the useful category of “unions and associations” in which most organizations that are not corporations list their numbers. There are no significant competing categories that might siphon off portions of the population of organizations and thus create bias in the survey itself. There are also no categories or types of groups that should be systematically underrepresented in the NTT telephone book. In the 1997 editions used for this survey, there were 21,366 organizations listed in Tokyo and 1,762 in Ibaraki Prefecture (a rural and traditionally conservative prefecture north of Tokyo in the Kanto area); these 23,128 organizations were the population of the JIGS survey. School legal persons (private schools), social welfare legal persons and medical legal persons were excluded from the survey (legal personality refers to officially recognized incorporation as a legal entity). Religious groups such as churches and temples were also excluded, although associations that represent religious groups were included, as were religious groups not involved in a religious mission (e.g., YMCA). Cooperatives were included in the survey. As can be seen, groups that fit common definitions of interest groups were all included, and we hope our specificity about the
data will allow readers with different operating definitions of civil society to still seek insights from this analysis.

The JIGS team employed random sampling and used the postal service to send out questionnaires. Mailed questionnaires hold several advantages. The cost is relatively low compared to other forms of gathering data from organizations. In addition, using such a method allowed us to broaden the sample size far beyond what we could have done with detailed case studies, or even interviews; using these questionnaires, we were able to conduct large-N research. One prime disadvantage to mailing survey questionnaires is that the rate of response can be so low as to call the results into question. However, the JIGS survey enjoyed a very high return rate (40 percent average) and a very high response rate (more than 70 percent). In this survey, the team sent questionnaires to 4,247 organizations (3,866 in Tokyo and 381 in Ibaraki) and had 1,635 returns (1,438 from Tokyo and 197 from Ibaraki). The head of the organization or the person in charge of administrative matters usually answered the questionnaire. The valid return rate was 37.2 percent in Tokyo and 51.7 percent in Ibaraki. We received responses from groups that make up 6.7 percent of all groups listed in the telephone directory in Tokyo and 11.2 percent in Ibaraki. These are quite large samples.

The JIGS survey included questions specifically designed to reveal the policy influence and interests of the target groups. We discuss these results below. Moreover, we can investigate these data along with a fairly detailed profile of the group, including the type of group, its legal status and the size of the group.

Given this methodology, we are confident that the JIGS results are fair and representative of interest groups and civil society groups in Japan—at least as defined by the parameters of the survey. What kind of groups responded to the JIGS survey? In other words, what do we know about the civil society organizations whose influence on policy is the subject of study in this article? We address these questions in the following section.\(^7\)

Surveys similar to JIGS have been conducted in several other countries: Korea, the United States, Germany, China, Russia, Turkey and the Philippines during the 1997–2005 period. For maximum comparability, the surveys are similar in format and methodology to the JIGS survey. Naturally, where necessary the surveys were tailored to local conditions, and response rates and patterns varied across countries. We reference these studies occasionally for illustration, but forgo details in the interest of space and because they are not central to our arguments below.

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\(^7\) Readers might ask what has happened since the survey was conducted. Without systematic data, we can only speculate or at best construct plausible hypotheses. Fortunately, the JIGS team will conduct a second survey of organizations in the near future to examine changes that have occurred.
Civil Society and Interest Groups in Contemporary Japan

Who? What kind of civil society organizations influence policy?

In this section, we provide an overview of the contours of civil society in Japan. We see that economic interest groups are more prevalent as a proportion of all civil society groups in Japan than in other countries. Moreover, comparing Japanese economic interest groups with other types of civil society groups in Japan, we see that interest groups have vastly greater organizational resources, such as finances and staff. Although this alone is far from conclusive, we take it as evidence consistent with the earlier political economy literature’s view of Japan.

Types of Groups

We present first an overview of the distribution of types of groups to demonstrate the dominance of economic groups, both vis-à-vis other types of groups domestically, and also in comparative perspective. Here, the data are broken down by the predominant activity or area of the groups, as self-reported. In the JIGS survey, organizations were asked to identify themselves in one of 11 classifications created by the survey team: agricultural, business, labour, educational, administrative, welfare, professional, political, citizens (shimin dantai), religious and other.

Figure 1 reports the distribution of JIGS groups in Japan and places this breakdown in comparative perspective by providing similar figures for Russia, Korea, the US and Germany. For Japan, the reader will note a large “other” section and perhaps wonder if many noneconomic organizations are hidden in that category. Organizations that self-reported “other” in...
Korea, the United States and Germany. The figure shows the preponderance
of business organizations in Japan and how the share of business organizations
is higher in Japan than elsewhere.

**Distribution of Organizational Resources**

An analysis of the distribution of groups is a necessary step to understand
the structure of civil society in Japan. However, an analysis of the different
resources available to types of groups reveals patterns that cast light on our
animating question of the relative power of interest groups and other civil
society organizations. Of the 11 types of groups in the JIGS survey, business
organizations had far greater access to resources. For example, only 5.1 percent
of citizens’ groups had budgets greater than US$1 million per year, versus
40.9 percent of business organizations. Similarly, 42.7 percent of business
organizations had more than five full-time staff members, but only 18.8
percent of citizens’ groups did. Citizens’ groups are an especially apt category
to compare with business groups when we keep in mind the literatures cited
above on economic interest groups and civil society organizations. “Citizens’
groups” was a self-defined category in the JIGS survey, as indeed it is more
generally in contemporary Japan. The category implies the most independent
type of civil society organizations, perhaps the closest to what North
Americans would consider “real civil society” groups. Resources alone do
not necessarily translate into power in all cases. To compare interest groups
and civil society groups, however, an important first step is to identify the
number of groups and their resources in a directly comparable manner. So
far, our evidence is consistent with the political economy view of Japan.

**What? In which policy issues are civil society organizations involved?**

Now that we have an idea of who the civil society actors are, we turn to
their involvement in a range of issues. We want to determine whether groups
care about policy and policy making, and we investigate this “involvement”
in terms of (1) self-reported expression of interest in an issue, (2) different
activities engaged in on an issue and (3) relationships with various other
political actors. The JIGS survey has a number of questions and subquestions
that allow us to disaggregate this concept and quantify involvement at a
variety of levels. We report in this section on interests and in the next section
on activities and relationships with other political actors.

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Q1 of the JIGS survey were further asked to specify their type of organization. The breakdown of this
“other” category is consistent with the overall JIGS survey. One hundred of the 417 “other” groups
chose not to respond, but “commerce and industry” took the plurality (68) of those who did.
Interest in an Issue

One fairly low threshold of involvement is whether organizations reported an interest in a particular issue. One survey question at this level of involvement broke down 22 areas of policy and asked: “Among national and local public policies, which policy or activity areas are you interested in?” One of the main findings presented in this article is that nearly all of the organizations responded that they were interested in one of the 22 public policy areas. Recall that the organizations we examined were selected randomly from a telephone directory and that they were by no means necessarily well known. Such a result implies strongly that all of these organizations had an interest in public policy. This important finding further implies that civil society organizations in general have an interest in public policy. Moreover, this helps us to compare interest groups and civil society groups. After all, if certain types of groups were not at all interested in policy, lack of access to policy makers might not be important for them. However, the near-universal interest in policy implies that the vastly differential involvement in policy making that we see in the next section is more consequential.

We also were able to investigate the intersection of group type with interest in particular public policy issue areas. In other words, we can see what kinds of groups are interested in which kinds of policies or which kinds of policies interest which groups. One fairly predictable result of this analysis is that organizations were particularly interested in the public policy issues close to their predominant activity. For example, 97 percent of agricultural organizations were interested in agricultural policies, nearly all labour organizations (95 percent) were interested in labour policies and welfare organizations (91 percent) were interested in welfare policies.

A Bigger Public for Some Public Policies

Another less intuitive result is that there are some issue areas in which most groups express an interest. For example, most organizations have policy interests in welfare, environment and finance. A diverse set of organizations showed a high interest in environmental policy (political organizations, 59 percent; citizens’ organizations, 57 percent; business organizations, 44 percent; professional organizations, 42 percent; labour organizations, 40 percent; and agricultural organizations, 40 percent). Generally, in Tokyo, many organizations showed interest in new policies related to civic activities such as welfare, environment, education/sports, international and consumers. Next were policies related to the economy and special interests such as industry, finance, money, international trade and industry, regional development, telecommunication and construction. On the other hand, organizations’ interests toward traditionally state-related policies such as foreign policy, human rights, security and public safety were relatively low. There was a fairly clear hierarchy of how “general” or widespread was the
interest piqued by policies. It is tempting to wonder if some policy areas more clearly provide public goods than others, or if they simply affect more constituencies.

**Specialist and Generalist Organizations**

Looking at organizations instead of policies, we can classify some organizations as “specialists,” because they care only about one type of issue, and others as “generalists,” who care about a broad variety of issues. Generalist organizations show interest in more than five policy issue areas. By type of group, they were most prominent among political (69 percent), labour (61 percent) and business (56 percent) organizations. However, 40 percent of citizen, professional, agricultural and educational organizations, and less than 30 percent of administrative and welfare organizations showed interest in more than five policy areas.

**Geographic Scale of Activities**

Groups active in some issue areas were more likely to be purely local players, while other policy areas (or types of groups) were active on the national stage. To probe the geographic scale on which groups were active, the JIGS survey broke the geographic scale into local level (*shichouson*), prefectural level, regional (multiple prefectures), national and international. The scale of an organization’s activities seemed to have a relationship to the types of issues the group expressed interest in. For example, groups that claimed operation on an international level expressed interest in international cooperation issues (*kokusai kyouryoku*) (67.2 percent) and foreign policy (22.9 percent), but groups that operated only on a prefectural level expressed little interest in international cooperation issues (13.7 percent) or foreign policy (5.2 percent). Groups active on the national level were in general not very interested in international issues. For example, foreign policy (7.8 percent) and national security policy (6.5 percent) are among the least popular policy issues among the organizations surveyed, ranking along with legal and human rights policies (7.7 percent).

We also found that groups that operated on different scales relied on different sources of information. For example, local groups relied more on other groups than any other source of information, followed closely by local governments. On the other hand, groups active on an international scale relied on specialists more than any other information source and very little on local governments.

**How? What means do civil society organizations use to influence policy?**

Interest is one thing, but taking action is quite another. In this section, we use the JIGS data to investigate the specifics of how civil society organizations act in the policymaking process. We also probe the relationships that the
JIGS groups had with other political actors. Here we are able to compare the access that economic interest groups and noneconomic groups had to policy makers. All told, we find that economic organizations had much more contact with policy makers than did other types of civil society groups. Overall, the policy economy models of the 1980s literature seem surprisingly robust.

Activities on an Issue

The JIGS survey detailed how groups try to influence policy making. Although interest in policy issues is universal, only about half of the groups were active in lobbying in more than one issue area. The JIGS survey asked about seven types of activities, and if a group reported activity in one of the issue areas, its answer counted as expressing action or activity on that issue. The activities were contacting the ruling party, contacting the opposition party, contacting the central bureaucracy, holding a mass meeting, running an opinion ad in the mass media, holding a press conference and forming an alliance or coalition with other groups. This list does not include all possible forms of political participation (for example, it excludes protests), but it is fairly broad (see table 1). Nearly half (43 percent) of all civil society organizations were actively involved in policymaking processes as an interest group or a pressure group. Moreover, 10 to 20 percent of the groups showed active support with a clear political party preference on issues related to election campaign, party contact, policy proposal, budget activities and

Table 1:
Type of Political Activity by Percentage of Groups Engaged in It

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of activity</th>
<th>% of groups engaged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political aim</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public enlightenment</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy recommendation</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defending rights</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative relationship with the administration</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobby central bureaucracy through politicians</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobby local governments through politicians</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lobby local or national government through politicians</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact ruling party</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact mass media</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall lobbying</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coalitions with other groups</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mass gatherings</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>paid advertisements</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offer jobs to retiring bureaucrats</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Election campaigning</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mobilize members for voting</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>provide staff support for election campaign</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
advisory council (shingikai) participation. Overall, we find that political and agricultural organizations were the most active in policy making, followed by labour, civic and business organizations. We turn to a more detailed analysis below.

**Relationship to Other Political Actors**

Politics involves working with other political actors. The JIGS survey also asked a number of questions designed to measure the relationship between civil society organizations and other political actors, including the central bureaucracy, local government and local and national politicians, of course, but also with other occasional political actors such as academics, mass media, welfare organizations and other civil society organizations. The question posed to the JIGS groups was, “What kind of a relationship does this organization have to yours? Please answer on a 7 point scale from ‘highly oppositional’ to ‘very cooperative.’” An entity that every JIGS group reported as having a very cooperative relationship to its own scored a perfect 7, and conversely an entity reported as oppositional to all JIGS groups scored a 1. More generally, scores over 4 meant that entities’ relationships with the JIGS groups were more cooperative than adversarial. We review these figures only for groups active at the national level. The only type of group to score under 4 was foreign interest groups. On the other hand, the entity reported as having the most cooperative relationship with the JIGS groups was the central bureaucracy (4.67), followed by academics (4.54), local governments (4.48), mass media (4.44), welfare organizations (4.39), political parties (4.35) and big business (4.29). However, the standard deviation for the bureaucracy was higher than for any other entity (1.19); thus, we need to look at the relationship between the bureaucracy and other individual organizations separately. The organizations most cooperative with the bureaucracy considered themselves administrative organizations (5.15), and next were business organizations (4.91) and agricultural organizations (4.86), followed by professional organizations (4.68) and groups involved in welfare (4.63) and education. Groups that identified themselves as citizens’ groups were much less likely (4.08) to consider their relationship with the bureaucracy as cooperative, followed by political organizations (4.00), which were neutral, and labour organizations, which were the only groups to view the bureaucracy antagonistically (3.36).

**Bureaucrats the Favourite Target for Lobbying**

The introduction pointed out that bureaucratic power was a staple of the earlier political economy literature. Like the new civil society literature, this article is less concerned with investigating that tenet than in the primacy of economic interests. However, we do find some evidence for the continued importance of bureaucrats. The JIGS survey lets us examine the group
Civil Society and Interest Groups in Contemporary Japan

(bureaucracy, political party or courts) targeted by organizations active in various geographical areas to press their claims. A JIGS question asked, “When you try to make your organization’s opinion heard or defend the interest of your organization, which one of the three (bureaucracy, political party and courts) do you think is most effective to contact?” We broke the responses to this question down by the scale of activity for the organizations (local to international). At every level, the bureaucracy was targeted as the most effective to contact by a substantial margin, followed by political parties and the courts. This also provides support for the political economy view.

A closer look reveals a few patterns within those broad trends. For example, organizations active regionally tended to choose political parties more than those with different scopes of activity. Organizations active at city/town/village levels and regional areas targeted the courts more than other organizations. The gap between the administration and political parties becomes the smallest for organizations that operate regionally. The reason organizations covering regional areas did not choose the administration is perhaps because there is no institution to cover such an unconventional area—Japan has no regional governments.

Who Meets Whom?

We also examined in greater detail the relationship the JIGS organizations had with state administrative organizations at the national and local levels. When JIGS organizations and the administration engaged in interaction, who met whom? The survey asked, “When your organization directly contacts the bureaucracy, whom (rank) do you meet?” For contacting the national bureaucracy, we provided four levels to choose from: minister/bureau director, chief, chief clerk and rank and file. Choices at the local level were head, chief, chief clerk and rank and file. If at least one of the positions out of four were chosen, we considered that the organization had contact with the bureaucracy.\(^\text{10}\) These are the results reported as the first question in table 2.

The survey also asked a series of questions regarding the relationships of the JIGS groups with the state administrative organizations and with local government. The questions are summarized in table 2, along with the percentage of JIGS groups that reported such a relationship at either the national or local level. For example, although the first question asked JIGS groups to report interaction with the government at either the local or national level, 72.6 percent of groups had some interaction at one level or the other. We explore these patterns in more detail shortly. What stands out

\(^\text{10}\) The original question asked the frequency of contact, but here we do not break down by frequency. Organizations can be divided into those that had contact and those that did not. Even organizations that did not have much contact are considered as “having contact.”
is the fairly high percentage of groups that reported receiving administrative guidance (44.5 percent). This figure is higher than the number of groups that reported their activities were regulated by the bureaucracy. Of course, groups’ perception of this regulation could vary, but their ability to discern, and therefore report, administrative guidance was likely very high. In addition, the JIGS organizations probably reported quite accurately on topics such as sending their members to advisory committees, offering jobs to retired bureaucrats and receiving grants or subsidies. For these national figures, it is interesting to note that the ratio of groups offering jobs to bureaucrats to groups getting subsidies is about 1:2.

National and Local Contact Patterns

Some organizations had stronger relationships or more frequent interaction with either local government or the national government. In fact, our analysis reveals four contact patterns: (1) contact both the central government and local government, (2) contact only the central government, (3) contact only the local government and (4) contact neither. Contact patterns differed greatly according to area of activity. Organizations active in city/town/village and in prefectural levels tended to contact local governments only, while national-level organizations contacted the state only. Many organizations active on the regional and international levels tended to contact both the national state and local governments. This may be due to the fact that activity areas and (administrative) regions do not match. Less than 30 percent of organizations did not contact either level of government, local or central.
**Direct and Indirect Contact**

Organizations contacted the administration not only directly but also indirectly. In order to grasp how organizations contacted the administration indirectly, we asked, “Whom do you ask to contact the administration?” The choices are (1) Diet members from the local district, (2) Diet members not from the local district and (3) chief of the municipality and local assembly persons. To contact local government, the choices were (1) Diet members, (2) prefectural or city assembly persons and (3) powerful people in the area.\(^{11}\) In general, the most popular answer for indirect contact was “Diet members not from the local district.” However, 24 percent of respondents chose this answer, a much smaller percentage than those relying on “direct contact.” Organizations active at prefectural and regional levels contacted local Diet members, while those active at regional and national levels contacted Diet members not from the district. Organizations active on the regional level also contacted chiefs and local representatives. These results show that in order to influence Diet members, the area of activity needed to be large. Moreover, those that had indirect contact with political parties tended to use politicians (Diet members, local representatives, chiefs). Some organizations attempted direct contact with the administration but also asked politicians to contact the administration. The percentage of indirect contact with local governments through politicians (11 to 23 percent) was not as large as direct contact (46.3 percent). Organizations active at prefectural and city/town/village levels tended to contact local representatives.

The JIGS survey also asked about consultations regarding policy between the government and the JIGS organizations: “Do national and local administrative organizations contact your organization to ask for advice concerning the making and enforcement of a particular policy? If so, please list all the organizations that contacted you.” Among organizations active at the national level (690), 240 (34.8 percent) wrote names of specific organizations that contacted them. Moreover, of those 240 organizations, 62 (25.9 percent) listed more than one organization (maximum 5).\(^{12}\)

Richard Samuels and others who emphasized the close communication between business and government would not be surprised by the results: we see that the dominant pattern of civil society-state contact is that between business and the economic bureaucracy.\(^{13}\) In fact, consultations (45 between

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11 Again, the original question asked the frequency of contact. Organizations that did not have much contact are considered as “having contact.”

12 If an organization answered several related organizations of the same ministry, we did not consider that the organization had close relations with multiple administrative organizations. Because the survey was conducted by free reply model by mail, there were some inconsistencies with the replies. Some were too general but others were very detailed with specific names. Hence, the measurement of this reply cannot be as rigorous as some other responses.

the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry [METI] and economic, business or trade organizations alone) between economic organizations and economic ministries number three times more than all consultations of any ministry to citizens’ groups, political groups and welfare groups combined (14). Moreover, the economic ministries, in particular METI, engaged in contact more frequently than other ministries. They made 83 consultations, versus only one for the Defense Agency, four for the Environmental Agency and 14 for the Ministry of Labour. Similarly, economic organizations engaged in the most consultations. They engaged in 97 consultations with 17 ministries or agencies. We see here the clear dominance of economics in interactions between JIGS organizations and the government.

Another result that stands out is the emergence of “specialists” and “generalists.” Educational groups, for example, are specialists. They engaged in 28 consultations, but most were with the Ministry of Education (86.4 percent), and only with the Ministry of Education did they engage in consultation more than once. Other specialists are agricultural organizations, which have close relationships with the Ministry of Forestry and Fishery and its related organizations. Almost all consultations between agricultural organizations and government involved the Ministry of Forestry and Fishery (91.7 percent). Similarly, economic organizations tended to be involved with METI (68.2 percent of contacts) and welfare organizations with the Ministry of Welfare and its related organizations (66.7 percent). On the other hand, citizens’ groups engaged six times in consultations with separate ministries or agencies. They are “generalists,” and lonely ones at that.

Business groups had more contact with bureaucrats for two reasons. First, they tended to be larger than other types of organizations, especially when compared with citizens’ groups. And, larger groups tended to have greater access to policy makers in general, for the obvious reason that they were more readily seen as influential and important. For example, regardless of the type of group, groups with 30–49 employees were about 10 times as likely to report regular meetings with top bureaucrats (kyokuchou level and above) as groups with fewer than 10 employees. More resources did translate into more access. Second, even controlling for resources, business groups were relatively advantaged. For example, business groups with 30 to 49 employees were almost six times more likely than the average to report frequent meetings with top bureaucrats.

The bureaucracy, of course, is not the only political actor to lobby in Japan. Although many JIGS organizations worked with the local and national bureaucracies, relatively few chose to contact political parties. Figure 2 depicts the pattern in which some groups oriented toward political parties while others worked closely with the bureaucracy. Most organizations interacted only with the bureaucracy (38.2 percent), while almost none chose to work only with political parties (5.4 percent). Of course, many groups contacted the bureaucracy and political parties (34.4 percent). However, this finding
underscores the centrality of the bureaucracy to the lives of JIGS organizations and to the policymaking process in general. To some extent, this finding can also be interpreted as providing evidence for the older political economy literature that stressed the importance of bureaucrats in policy making.14

The JIGS survey also asked groups about their sources of information. Examining data only for groups that operate on a national level, we asked groups to rank from 1 to 12 the most important sources of information for their organization from a list: national bureaucracy, group members, other groups, specialist publication, the mass media, scholars, corporations, local government, local politicians, national politicians, political parties and other sources. The results indicate again the tight connections between business organizations and the government. Business organizations rated the national bureaucracy as their most important source of information. By contrast, for citizens’ groups, the national bureaucracy ranked fifth, and the mass media ranked at the top of the list. In this respect, at least, there appeared to be a closer relationship between business and bureaucracy, with citizens’ groups on the outside, looking in.

Conclusion

We have discussed the wide range of policy interests of JIGS organizations and examined in some detail their activities and efforts toward influencing the policymaking process. How successful have those efforts been? Stated more broadly, how much do interest groups or civil society organizations influence the policymaking process in Japan?

14 See, for example, Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Miracle.*
We begin with some caveats and revisit our discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the JIGS survey. The JIGS survey is not an ideal instrument through which to measure policy change. It measures and reports the perceptions of the organizations, not policy change per se. It also relies on how organizations view the policymaking process, rather than examining through process tracing what happens. In this sense, case studies are superior to the JIGS survey in evaluating the influence of civil society organizations on policy making in Japan. However, the JIGS survey also has some concomitant advantages due to its scope and scale. It covers a wide range of issue areas and organizations. Moreover, taking advantage of the surveys in other countries mentioned above, we can make tentative cross-national comparisons.

The JIGS survey asked groups to report on achieving success in influencing (or changing) policy, but only 14.3 percent of JIGS organizations reported such success. This was lower than in Korea, less than half of what German organizations reported (32.5 percent) in the German version of the JIGS survey and a third of what Russian organizations reported (46.5 percent) in the Russian version. Japanese groups also reported little success (6.5 percent) in blocking policies. Again, this was less than Korean groups (11.1 percent) and much less than the Russian (21.2 percent) and German groups (26.3 percent). At least in terms of groups’ perception of their own success, Japanese groups did not have much influence over policy making in absolute or comparative terms.

Another question in the JIGS survey asked organizations to evaluate other actors’ influence over policy: “How much influence do groups listed below have on Japanese politics? Please rate from the scale of 1 to 7 (7 being the strongest).” Although this necessarily relies on perceptions rather than an “objective” measure of real influence, these groups are often intimately involved in the policymaking process and have a good sense of where the real power and influence lie. In a sense, too, this replicates interviews done in case studies in which researchers ask about who has influence, but it provides insight on a much broader scale. We are able to rank which groups JIGS organizations felt were the most powerful in Japan. We also are able to compare these rankings with similar ones from the JIGS surveys in Korea, Germany and the United States.

The central bureaucracy was perceived as the most powerful entity in Japan, with an average score of 6.32 out of 7. Again, this is less central to the civil society literature’s implied critique of the political economy literature but worth raising nonetheless. The bureaucracy’s only real rivals were political parties (6.12). Women’s groups were perceived as weakest (3.42), barely exceeded by the category of “nongovernmental [NGO] citizens’ groups/residents’ movement groups” (3.48) and welfare groups (3.49). Foreign governments were seen as powerful (5.18), nearly the level of some significant domestic players such as agricultural groups (5.22), the mass media (5.32), big corporations (5.38) and economic groups and managers (5.65).
These rankings are interesting because they reflect the JIGS organizations’ view of the world. However, they are also interesting in comparative perspective. Compared to the other three countries mentioned above, bureaucracy, agricultural organizations, foreign governments, international organizations and foreign interest groups were ranked much higher in Japan. Local government was ranked slightly higher or about the same in all four countries. Mass media, labour organizations, consumer groups, NGOs, civil organizations and citizens’ movement organizations were ranked lower in Japan compared to the other three countries. Women’s organizations and academics ranked slightly lower or about the same. Political parties, economic and business organizations, big firms and social welfare organizations in Japan were ranked at a similar position as in the other countries.

This article has explored the interests, activities and success of interest groups and civil society organizations in influencing public policy making in Japan. Our goal is to place our findings in the context of systematic comparisons with noneconomic organizations and noneconomic ministries. The primary tool has been the quantitative data from the JIGS data. We found that compared to citizens’ groups, the type of group most emblematic of “civil society,” business organizations have much greater resources and access to policy making. Our evidence reinforces the picture of high levels of communication and interaction between business organizations and the economic bureaucracy. Recall, for example, that consultations between METI and economic, business or trade organizations were three times more than the sum of all consultations between all ministries and all citizens’ groups, political groups and welfare groups. Our second main finding uncovered evidence that the bureaucracy remains a powerful actor in Japanese politics, at least according to the perception of civil society actors. The bureaucracy is also central in structuring the political relationships of civil society organizations. Although both our findings seem to support the analyses of the political economy literature, we repeat that we do not see civil society organizations as powerless or insignificant in Japanese politics. Rather, we focus on placing the aggregate strengths, contributions and influence of all sectors of civil society organizations in perspective.

*University of Tsukuba and University of Washington, July 2007*
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The Restructuring of Vietnamese Nationalism, 1954-2006

Hy V. Luong

In 2000, the Vietnamese socialist state organized the first international festival in the former imperial capital of Hue in Central Vietnam. Six years later, at the fourth bi-annual festival, an elaborate and full procession to the imperial heaven-worship site (Nam Giao) from the former royal palace was recreated. In these four Hue festivals, the Vietnamese socialist state played an active role in the revitalization of the ritual space and symbolism of what it used to consider “backward feudalism.” In numerous other localities, with little direct involvement by the state, local festivities linked to once attacked ritual sites (shrines, temples, communal houses, pagodas) have also been recreated. While nationalism remains heightened in the mass media and many local events, the Vietnamese sociocultural landscape has undergone a fundamental transformation in the past two decades as Vietnam has become more and more integrated with the global capitalist system.

This paper will examine the dynamics of the restructuring of Vietnamese discourses on culture and the nation at large over the past half a century. It is a process culminating in the Vietnamese socialist state’s official embrace of a broader range of past practices as a part of Vietnamese cultural legacies and in its official discourse on the nation, culture and development. I would suggest that this shift is rooted at least as much in the dialogic relation between the Vietnamese socialist state and local populations, as in the stronger integration of Vietnam into the global capitalist system. The restructuring of Vietnamese nationalism is also examined partly in relation to the hypothesis

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2 In 2004, it was an incomplete procession to the heaven-worship site, as there was no “King” in the procession.


4 For over two decades, until 1975, there were two Vietnamese states. My analysis focuses only on the dialogic process between local populations and the socialist state in control of North Vietnam until 1975, and of the entire country hence.

5 The Vietnamese socialist state is not a monolithic entity. However, no internal dissent directed at its policy on festivals and local ritual sites was visible in the public arena until the late 1970s at the
on a shift from developmental nationalism to cultural nationalism in Asia and many other parts of the world in the past few decades.6

A Shift from Developmental to Cultural Nationalism?

In the two northern Vietnamese villages where I have conducted in-depth research over the years, what remained of public ritual space after the Franco-Vietnamese War came under state control in the 1950s, and was either dismantled or severely constricted. In both villages, the war-damaged communal houses (đình), which had served as the sites of tutelary deity worship, were completely or mostly dismantled on the order of village authorities. They became warehouses of agricultural cooperatives in the new economic order. The Buddhist pagoda in the village of Hoai Thi (30 kilometres north of Hanoi) was reportedly burnt down during the war, and elderly Buddhist women had to use a make-shift quarter outside the tomb of the village tutelary deity for their prayer sessions. The pagoda in Son Duong, the other village, located 90 kilometres north of Hanoi, while not affected by the Franco-Vietnamese War, was left in dilapidated condition for decades afterwards. In both localities, Buddhist rituals were reduced to simple prayer sessions on the first and fifteenth days of the lunar month. Due to the active intervention of the local government, rituals in the partly dismantled communal house in Hoai Thi were discontinued from 1954 to 1958, and heavily curtailed for the following three and a half decades. The festival procession of the deity on the most important ritual day in the first lunar month was discontinued.

In both villages, the local leadership cited the need for eliminating superstitious ritual practices and for scientific progress, as well as for saving resources for socialist construction and the war against the US.7 Echoing this perspective, a prominent Vietnamese historian suggested that festivals “lured peasants into organizations centering on rituals that wasted a lot of time and resources” and provided “occasions for religious groups to make religious propaganda and for superstitious occupation gangs (spirit media


6 Radhika Desai, Michael Bodden and Gregory Blue, “From Developmental Nationalism to Cultural Nationalism in Asia?” background paper for the conference on Asian Nationalisms, University of Victoria, September 2004.

... fortune tellers) to increase their activities." The attack on ritual sites and traditional rituals was mainly rooted in the ideology of the Marxist-Leninist government, which considered ritual activities not compatible with the objective of state-organized socialist construction and a modern scientific era. The worship of deities, to which traditional festivals were inextricably linked, was considered incompatible with the socialist and revolutionary vision of a new culture.

Among the ritual sites in the rural northern Vietnamese landscape, pagodas were spared frontal attack and dismantling, while communal houses and shrines, unless worshipping anti-foreign resistance heroes, were subject to such measures. Dinh (communal house) rituals and ritual space were subject to a more severe control for three reasons. The dinh and its key participants were the centre of local power in the pre-1945 era, while the Buddhist pagoda was not, and the latter’s elderly female participants were not considered a threat to the power of the revolutionary state. Previously well off, many of the leading participants in dinh rituals had endured state-organized struggles against their “exploitation” of the poor during the land reform campaign in the 1950s. Secondly, the Buddhist pagoda was associated with major life-cycle ceremonies: funerals and remembrance rites in the following two years. Through their prayer sessions for the deceased, the elderly Buddhist women performed important rites that the state could only simplify and could not abolish. In contrast, the procession of the village’s tutelary deity was not associated with any life-cycle events. Thirdly, Buddhism, like Catholicism and Protestantism, was considered an official religion, while other forms of worship were not. This difference was important, as the Vietnamese post-independence constitutions have guaranteed freedom of religious worship, and since the government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam could not afford to alienate the followers of official religions in the context of warfare, despite its explicit rejection of any claim regarding divine and supernatural power.

Throughout the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the only ritual sites condoned by the state other than those of official religions were linked to the worship of anti-foreign leaders like the Trung sisters (first century AD), since the dominant discourse on the nation in the state-controlled media in Vietnam for the first few decades after independence invoked the theme of heroic anti-foreign (specifically anti-Chinese) resistance as a major part of Vietnamese culture and tradition and as integral to national development.

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10 See also Malarney “Return to the Past,” pp. 226-229.
The socialist state’s exhortation to eliminate superstition in rituals for the sake of progress and to save for the war efforts of the imagined national community worked relatively well in the aftermath of the Franco-Vietnamese War in the 1950s and in the face of heightened warfare in the 1960s and early 1970s. In fact, in the summer of 1965, soon after the United States began bombing North Vietnam, the war hit home to villagers in the village of Son Duong (one of my field sites) when two villagers were killed during the US bombing of the village school. Although print media were not accessible to most of the rural population in North Vietnam, the North Vietnamese state-party apparatus seemed to have little difficulty in persuading Son Duong and other villagers to curtail rituals and to save for the front line of the imagined national community. 

As the American bombing of North Vietnam temporarily ceased in 1968, state and party exhortation on ritual elimination or simplification on the basis of war efforts became less effective. A 1971 report of the North Vietnamese Ministry of Culture mentioned that “up to ten thousand people from different provinces and cities have been going to festivals, particularly from the cities of Hanoi, Haiphong, and the provinces of the delta and midlands of northern Vietnam” (Directive 10/VH-VP). By 1978, the Huong pagoda festival near Hanoi had reportedly attracted 300,000 people. In the context of more widespread festival and ritual attendance, the Central Committee of the Vietnamese Labor (Communist) Party issued two major directives on rituals and festivals in the 1970s. It suggested that Cultural Affair cadres needed to ensure that festivals “would cultivate patriotism; mobilize the population to compete in labor and production, to make savings for socialist construction, to fulfill citizens’ duties ... and to get rid of superstitious practices.” Among the list of superstitious practices to be eliminated were divination, spirit medium work, amulet writing, and the sale and purchase of votive paper (Directive 214/CT-TW). Implementing this party policy, the Vietnamese government specifically banned some ongoing festivals considered full of superstitious practices and forbid the restoration of any long-abandoned village festivals. It also called for the strengthening of ideological education through festivals celebrating anti-foreign heroes, specifically anti-Chinese leaders like the Trung Sisters and Tran Hung Dao. The Vietnamese state also encouraged the transformation of spring pilgrimages to famous Buddhist pagoda festivals into sightseeing visits to be done at any time of the year (Decision 36/CP). The Vietnamese state directed local cadres to restrict festival attendance to people in the commune organizing the event, and to find out discreetly the identities of pilgrims and participants from other localities so that the authorities in the

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latter’s home communes and wards could educate them into abandoning prayer and other superstitious practices (Directive 10-VH-VP).

The aforementioned state and Communist Party documents in the 1970s reveal a tension between the official and alternative visions of the Vietnamese sociocultural landscape, despite a widely shared and heightened nationalism due to Vietnam’s constant war footing from 1946 to 1989. Despite the socialist state’s ban on the restoration of long-abandoned village festivals, it was reported in the early 1990s that people had broken fences and organized festivals spontaneously in a number of places, and that even when authorities had banned festivals, people had still discreetly attended them. We do not have reliable data on the extent of fence-breaking festival organization or attendance in Vietnam in the 1970s and 1980s, or a full picture of the local dynamics at that time. It is not possible to ascertain to what extent the rising popularity of festivals and of prayers at the related pagodas or shrines in the 1970s and 1980s might have related to the loss of family members in warfare or the anxiety about their possible loss. But the various reports on the phenomenon of fence-breaking festivals and festival attendance point towards a major tension between the official and alternative visions of the Vietnamese sociocultural landscape. This tension constitutes an integral part of the dialogic relation between the Vietnamese state and various sectors of the population, a tension-laden dialogue that has underlain a fundamental transformation of discourses on the nation as well as of the Vietnamese sociocultural landscape in the following three decades.

In both of my research villages in North Vietnam and elsewhere in the country, major public ritual sites have undergone significant renovation in the past three decades, and ritual and festival activities have considerably intensified. In the village of Hoai Thi (about 30 kilometres north of Hanoi), the dinh had been substantially renovated by 1995, at the expense of over 50 million dongs (almost US$5000), and the padoga was rebuilt in 1996 at slightly higher cost. The renovation was funded primarily by voluntary contributions by villagers, at a cost of about one year’s worth of all villagers’ incomes at the time. The renovation of the dinh and the reconstruction of the pagoda took place without any permits from higher authorities, as officially required by the Vietnamese government. The worship rituals to the tutelary deity at the dinh have since been organized four times a year. The joint dinh and pagoda committee purchased ritual hats and shoes for the 18 to 24 elderly men in the dinh ritual team (doi te). The formal worship ceremony to the village tutelary deity was thus revitalized after a 46-year hiatus. At about the same time, in a major innovation, elderly women

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established their incense-offering team for pagoda ceremonies (đoi dang hương), which mirrored the male ritual team. The women’s team also performed the ceremony four times a year.

In 2001, for the first time in 56 years, the village of Hoai Thi resumed its tutelary deity procession on the tenth day of the first lunar month. Not only was the procession revitalized, it became more elaborate, as over one hundred villagers were organized for the procession, and as the procession went around the village instead of simply moving from the deity’s tomb next to the đinh to the đinh itself.\(^{14}\) In 2002, as I agreed to village leaders’ request to record by videotape the rituals on the festival day, the procession was organized on a larger scale by the local leadership, and included about two hundred participants. Villagers and guests donated about 10 million dongs (about US$700) on the occasion of the village festival in 2001, and about 7 million dongs (about US$500) in 2002. It was a major feat for the village elderly and the village leadership to involve two hundred participants in the tutelary procession in 2002, because the major village festival on the tenth day of the first lunar month was at least as important as the first three days of the lunar New Year for family reunions and festivities—all the descendants who happened to reside within a reasonable distance from the village were expected to return to Hoai Thi for the day and to be accompanied by their spouses and in-laws. Thus, the procession and other public rituals on the tenth day of the first lunar month took place at the same time as villagers were supposed to prepare for the reunions of family and friends and to entertain important guests at home.

In Son Duong, my other northern Vietnamese research village, the village pagoda and shrine have also been extensively renovated in the past decade. The đinh in Son Duong was reconstructed in the spring of 2006, at a cost of about 1.6 billion dongs (US$100,000), which is the equivalent of the sum total of the villagers’ incomes for almost one year. Elaborate processions and festivities were organized in connection with the provincial recognition of the Son Duong pagoda as a cultural site in 2001, and with the completion of the Son Duong đinh in 2006.

Beyond my research villages, the Vietnamese Ministry of Culture reports that in 2001, almost 6000 festivals were organized in the country, and that in the first ten months of 2003 alone, 8297 festivals took place, including 6566 community festivals, 1349 organized by religious organizations, and 372 to commemorate historical events or figures.\(^{15}\) Few of the community and religious festivals received direct state support, while many in the third category did. Most festivals involved offerings to and worship of deities, which

\(^{14}\) Elderly villagers report that pre-1945 processions included only about 40 male participants.

\(^{15}\) Xuan Anh, “Cong tac quan ly le hoi 2002 co gi moi” (What is New in the Management of Festivals in 2002), Lao Dong online, 19 February, 2002; and “Le hoi hay dich vu thuong mai” (Festivals or Commercial Services?), Lao Dong online, 4 January, 2004.
the state used to consider superstitious. On a national level, the state came
to embrace some court rituals of the Nguyen dynasty, including the heaven-
worship procession, as a part of Vietnamese cultural heritage.

The official party and state discourse on rituals and festivals in particular
and on culture in general has undergone a fundamental shift, reflecting a
greater embrace of the past. In 2001, for example, the Vietnamese National
Assembly for the first time passed a law on the country’s cultural legacies.
This law emphasizes the role of cultural legacies in enhancing the “good”
traditions of different ethnic groups within Vietnam and in the international
arena (article 12), as well as in developing a progressive Vietnamese culture
steeped in the “national essence” (mot nen van hoa tien tien dam da ban sac dan
toe) (prologue). The law calls for the state to facilitate the preservation and
promotion of traditional festivals, to stamp out “depraved customs” (hu tuc),
and to oppose the commercialization of festivals (article 25). The decree by
the Vietnamese government in the following year affirmed that deity-worship
processions and deity-offering ceremonies could be selectively organized
(article 10.3, decree 92/2002/ND-CP). The 2001 regulations on festivals by
the Vietnamese Ministry of Culture also affirmed that festivals could be
organized “to commemorate the achievements of national heroes, cultural
literati, and war dead as well as those contributing to the establishment and
defense of the nation; to preserve and to promote the spiritual and cultural
values of different ethnic groups; and to meet the cultural, religious, and
sightseeing needs of the people” (article 2, 39/2001/QD-BVHTT).

In general, as socialist Vietnam has become more closely linked to the
global capitalist system through foreign direct investments, tourism and the
Internet, and as Vietnam has adopted the politics of reconciliation with
China, the official discourse has embraced a wider range of past practices
and allowed for the reconstruction of ritual sites as an integral part of
Vietnamese identity and culture. If during the anti-French, anti-American
and anti-Chinese wars, the Vietnamese Marxist state considered most of those
sites a part of an exploitative and superstitious past, and the related ritual
practices wasteful of resources and antithetical to national construction, in
the past 15 years, it has come to accept many of those sites and rituals as a
part of Vietnamese identity and culture in the age of globalization. This
change does not officially involve shifting to new ground, since in the 1943
“Theses on Vietnamese Culture,” endorsed by the Communist Party, the
Party Secretary General Truong Chinh strongly emphasized “nationalization”
(dan toc hoa) or “an active return to what is uniquely Vietnamese.”

How can we conceptualize the restructuring of the official discourse on
culture and the nation in Vietnam? Can this restructuring be understood in

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terms of the shift from “developmental” nationalism, focused on “expanding the productive forces and expanding material bases and incomes … and making them more equal,” to “cultural” nationalism, centred on “some purportedly crucial axis of common cultural identity … distinguishing ‘the nation’”\(^\text{17}\) On one level, it can be argued that such a shift has taken place over the past decade and a half in Vietnam, in line with developments in other parts of Asia. The Vietnamese socialist state has during this time embraced a considerably greater range of past practices as part of Vietnamese cultural heritage and identity. If at the height of socialist construction, many past sociocultural practices were considered incompatible with modernity and national development, this perspective has undergone a fundamental shift in official discourse in the past fifteen years. There are probably fascinating parallels in the restructuring of nationalist discourses in many parts of Asia over the past six decades.\(^\text{18}\)

However, on another level, any statement on a shift from “developmental” to “cultural” nationalism would need to be qualified, because both culture and development are central to Vietnamese nationalism in the past half a century. First of all, nationalist discourse, no matter whether “developmental” or “cultural,” is always embedded within an existing framework of culture-specific constructs and identities. Ho Chi Minh’s strong nationalist appeals were built upon the culturally specific and Confucian concepts of trung (loyalty) and hieu (filial piety), and their restructured meanings: trung voi nuoc (loyalty to the nation) and hieu voi dan (piety to the people). Furthermore, even at the height of socialist transformation, during what may be considered the era of “developmental nationalism,” the Vietnamese party-state’s nationalist discourse emphasized Vietnamese identity and culture in contradistinction to Chinese ones. It specifically embraced anti-foreign and anti-Chinese heroism in its highly selective reconstruction of Vietnamese tradition, culture and identity. Thirdly, for the past decade and a half, in what we might call the “cultural nationalist” era when the state embraces a broader range of past practices and ritual sites as national cultural legacies, these legacies are considered important for national development (article 9.1 in the 2001 law on cultural heritages). Various party and state documents in the past 15 years also affirm the view that culture is an engine (dong luc) for national socio-economic development.\(^\text{19}\) Nationalist discourse always outlines a vision for the future of the nation, one of development. In emphasizing

\(^{17}\) Desai, Blue and Bolden, “From Developmental Nationalism to Cultural Nationalism in Asia?” p. 5.


both the cultural dimensions and visions for development in all strands of
official nationalist discourse in Vietnam over the last half-century, I do not
wish to deny that there has been a fundamental shift in the past decade and
a half. “Culture” has been more strongly emphasized in the official discourse
on the nation in Vietnam. The dynamics of this restructuring in Vietnam
need to be examined systematically.

The State, Capital, and Local Sociocultural Dynamics

In Vietnam, the shift in the official nationalist discourse towards a more
inclusive embrace of past practices has taken place in the context of Vietnam’s
greater incorporation into the global capitalist system as well as of a dialogic
relation between the Vietnamese state-party apparatus and local populations.
I would suggest that both factors have powerfully shaped the discourse of
the Vietnamese state on the themes of nation and culture.

Since 1990, Vietnam has been increasingly integrated with the global
capitalist system, no matter whether the integration is measured in exports
and foreign direct investments (FDI), the flow of international tourists, or
Vietnamese access to global media. Approved annual FDI increased from
US$599 million in 1990 to US$10 billion in 2006.20 Vietnamese exports also
increased in this period, from US$2.4 billion in 1990 to US$40 billion in
2006.21 International visitors increased from 99,721 to 3.6 million. Of the
total US$60 billion in approved FDI from 1988 to 2006, US$3.3 billion are
for projects in the hotel and tourism sector. The Vietnamese economy
achieved an average annual growth rate of 8 percent from 1990 to 1997,
dropped to an average annual rate of at least 4.8 percent in the 1998-2002
period due to the impact of the Asian economic crisis, and rebounded to an
average of 8 percent from 2003 to 2006.22 In the context of strong economic
growth, the Vietnamese poverty rate declined by 34 percent in the 1993-
2004 period alone. Household welfare in my two North Vietnamese field
sites and in most parts of the country has generally improved, despite the

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20 Approved FDI reached US$7.7 billion in 1996 but dropped to US$2 billion in 1999 in the
context of the Asian economic crisis.

21 Vietnam not only increased the export of primary products (oil, coal, seafood, rice, coffee,
rubber), but it also kept labour costs low to attract foreign direct investments and exported labour-intensive
industrial products such as garments and footwear. These two industrial products made up
24 percent of the value of Vietnamese exports in 2006 (Le Phong, “Xuat nhap khau 2006 va nhung
con so” (Import and Export Figures in 2006), Thoi bao Kinh te Viet Nam online, 22 December 2006,

22 The Vietnamese government reports an average annual growth rate of 6.2 percent from 1998
to 2002, in contrast to the figure of 4.8 percent reported by the International Monetary Fund. This
economic growth was sustained by the stronger flow of overseas development assistance and
international tourism, and stronger investment by the Vietnamese state and domestic private enterprises
in compensation for the declining foreign direct investment; see H. V. Luong, “Postwar Vietnamese
Society: An Overview of Transformational Dynamics,” in Hy V. Luong, ed., Postwar Vietnam: Dynamics
growing socio-economic inequality and the state’s shrinking share of health and educational expenditures (respectively only 21 percent and 48 percent in 1997-98).23

My census of 247 households in the village of Hoai Thi in 2005 revealed an average net per capita income of 7.13 million dongs (US$450) that year. This was equivalent to 2600 kilograms of paddy, which was 4.2 times the estimated per capita income in 1989 in this village.24 Of the village’s net income in 2005, the subsistence-oriented agricultural sector contributed only 22.5 percent.25 Non-agricultural sources accounted for 67 percent of the incomes, mostly from trading activities and construction work; and 10.3 percent derived from remittances and assistance. Of the 627 Hoai Thi villagers in the active labour force, 511 (81 percent) had non-agricultural incomes in 2005. Of these 511 villagers, 97 engaged in the alcohol and hog trade to Hanoi; 32 in other trade; and 140 worked as construction workers or contractors, mostly also in Hanoi.26 These numbers represent important increases from 1990, when out of a population of 755, only 80 villagers were estimated to have engaged in the alcohol and hog trade, and 60 in the construction industry.

Similarly, in the village of Son Duong further north, my 2004 survey of 321 households reveals an average net per capita income of 3.55 million dongs (US$228) a year for the period from July 2003 to June 2004. This was equivalent to 1739 kilograms of paddy, which was 3.9 times higher than the estimated per capita net income a decade and a half earlier.27 Of the net income in 2003-04, agriculture and husbandry contributed only 42.5 percent; another 35.5 percent came from local non-agricultural sources, and remittances and assistance accounted for 22 percent.28 The migration flow from Son Duong village has intensified over the past decade, not only to

25 Of the 439 tons of paddy produced in 2005, villagers sold only 24 percent and kept the rest for their own consumption and as seeds for the following crops. The percentage of sold paddy had increased significantly from 1 percent in 2000. However, paddy production was still geared primarily to villagers’ own subsistence.
26 Of 511 villagers with non-agricultural incomes in 2000, 31 were migrants, and 480 were village residents, for the whole year or a part of the year. Those 31 migrants were counted by Hoai Thi villagers as an integral part of their Hoai Thi household economies.
27 Luong, “Economic Reform and the Intensification of Rituals.”
28 The considerably lower contribution of remittances to household incomes in Hoai Thi reflects the proximity of the village to Hanoi and the daily commute of more than a quarter of the adult local labour force to Hanoi for trading activities. Commuting traders’ incomes do not count as remittances. In contrast, in Son Duong, daily commuting to nearby towns and cities for work was much less frequent. The overwhelming majority of villagers who earned incomes outside the village lived elsewhere as migrants and sent remittances home.
Hanoi, but also to the southern part of Vietnam, and more recently to Malaysia and Taiwan. In general, a growing portion of the Vietnamese rural population has participated more actively in the cash nexus of the market economy in Vietnam and beyond, while international and private domestic capital have played an increasing role in the economy and society. A significant number of Vietnamese have also gained greater exposure to the global capitalist system through television, the Internet, satellite disks, and overseas travel for work or leisure. Within this context, the greater embrace of ritual sites and practices by the Vietnamese state and many sectors of the Vietnamese population has been considered either a tourism-driven commodification of cultural practices and the embodiment of commodified exchanges between ritual participants and imagined deities in the face of market-induced uncertainties and anxieties, or, alternatively, it has been deemed a reaction to capitalist commodification and global homogenizing trends.

I would suggest that such analyses, while containing certain elements of truth, have privileged the global capitalist system over local sociocultural dynamics and the dialogic relation between the Vietnamese state and local populations. In Son Duong and Hoai Thi, neither ritual sites nor public rituals have been commodified as a part of Vietnam’s greater integration with the global capitalist economy. The elderly in both villages, who are primarily responsible for the renovation of ritual space and the revitalization of public rituals, have mobilized their relatives to contribute to ritual activities for the sake of local identities and heritages.

In Son Duong, it is the elderly women, none of whom is in a position of public authority, who have spearheaded the fundraising from their descendants and relatives in order to renovate the village pagoda. They also accumulate savings from the donations that the families of deceased villagers make to them in appreciation of their Buddhist prayer services at funerals. Given the gender-based separation of ritual space, the elderly women’s success in renovating the Buddhist pagoda stimulates the elderly men’s fund-raising efforts to reconstruct the communal house for the latter’s own ritual space. The reconstruction was completed in April 2006, at a cost of about US$100,000.

In Hoai Thi, both elderly men and women spearheaded the fundraising to renovate the communal house and the Buddhist pagoda in the 1990s, and both played a prominent role in revitalizing the procession of the village tutelary deity during the village festival. Of the two most prominent elderly leaders in Hoai Thi in these activities, one, as the first member of the Communist Party in the village and a war veteran, still played an important role in mobilizing resources for the communal house renovation.

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29 Some Son Duong villagers have worked overseas as labourers.
30 See Luong, “Postwar Vietnamese Society.”
role in the local association of the elderly; the other, a retired tailor, was a son of a family that was relatively wealthy before the revolution. Neither of their families was deeply engaged in the market economy of contemporary Vietnam. In their mobilization of local resources for the renovation of ritual sites and a selective revitalization of past ritual practices, those two leaders received widespread support from other elderly men and women in Hoai Thi, including those from better-off and more commercially oriented families. Besides being motivated by local pride and identity, donors of funds for local rituals and ritual site renovation also felt honoured by the inscription of their names, and the amount they donated, on large paper rolls in the communal house and Buddhist pagoda. In the larger context, the ritual sites and practices in both villages have not attracted tourists. Nor do villagers expect to attract domestic or international tourists to village sites or festivals.

To numerous villagers in both Son Duong and Hoai Thi, the rituals linked to the Buddhist pagoda and the communal house, as well as those ritual spaces themselves, serve as important symbols of village and gender identities. The importance of these symbols, however, does not negate the villagers’ commitment to imagining a common Vietnamese identity. Their considerable investment of time and financial resources in strengthening these symbols is underlain by a vision of a Vietnamese nation that can encompass a plurality of local identities, sustained by local rituals and symbolism. This vision constitutes an alternative to the modernist and scientistic vision for the future, espoused by the state in the heyday of socialist construction. In both Son Duong and Hoai Thi, elderly villagers’ considerable efforts to reconstruct their ritual spaces and to reassert their local identities are part of the dialogic process not only with members of surrounding villages, but also with the Vietnamese socialist state.

Needless to say, the increased flow of foreign tourists and the development of domestic tourism in the past decade have helped to sustain festivals in certain localities. The long-established Huong pagoda festival near Hanoi, or the recently established lantern festivals in the UNESCO-designated world heritage site in Hoi An, or the bi-annual state-sponsored festival in the former imperial citadel of Hue, all seem to have been geared, at least partially, to tourists. The state’s partial financial support for the larger festivals in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City and Hue has thus benefited private business and international and domestic capital. But the festivals regularly attracting tourists are few and far between, given the thousands of festivals organized annually across Vietnam. I would suggest that, in most cases, festivals in particular and ritual site renovation and public rituals in general have been organized by local populations as a part of their local identities and heritage. I would also like to add that, from a historical perspective, the revitalization of festivals in socialist Vietnam started in the 1970s at the height of the command economy, when international and domestic capital had no impact on state policies or local initiatives. If the revitalization of festivals in most
localities does not involve the commodification of cultural practices, neither is it necessarily a reaction to capitalist commodification and the global homogenizing trend. In northern Vietnam, the renovation of ritual sites and the revitalization of festivals in the 1970s and 1980s took place well before market-oriented reforms in Vietnam were systematically implemented and before global capital had become visible in the local economy.

I would suggest that we cannot fully explain the shift in the official discourse on culture and the nation in Vietnam without also taking into account the dialogic relations of local populations in Vietnam, both among themselves, and with the socialism-oriented state over the past three decades, although these relations themselves have also been partly influenced by Vietnam’s stronger integration with the global capitalist system. In the late 1970s, while the Vietnamese party-state apparatus continued to exhort the population to save for the front line of the war against China and the Khmer Rouge and as a means of supporting the socialist command economy, provincial departments of cultural services reported that the annual Huong padoga and Hung King shrine festivals, respectively in the northern provinces of Ha Son Binh and Vinh Phu, attracted from 50,000 to 300,000 people. The resurgence in festival attendance preceded a new scholarly discourse on festivals, which emerged in the late 1970s and which began showing some divergence of views among state officials. Festivals seem to have mushroomed in the following decade: a ranking official at the Vietnamese Ministry of Culture reported that they had been restored in many localities before the state became grudgingly supportive in 1989. While not at the forefront of the nation-wide momentum to renovate ritual spaces and to revitalize public rituals, the local initiatives by elderly villagers in Son Duong and Hoai Thi contribute to the grassroots acceleration of this momentum. Many ranking officials and intellectuals at the 1993 policy conference on rituals and festivals pointed out that a policy supportive of festivals would be more responsive to the needs of local populations.

From all of this it appears that the momentum to revitalize ritual practices and festivals in Vietnam has not only been shaped by state discourses and

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32 See Endres, “Beautiful Customs.”
33 Truong Thin, “Bao cão so ket ba nam thuc hien qui che mo hoi truyen thong” [Preliminary Report after Three Years of Implementing the Guidelines on Traditional Festival Organization], p. 10.
policies, but has also powerfully shaped the latter. Kirsten Endres has argued that a new scholarly discourse on festivals, which emerged in the late 1970s and gained momentum in the 1980s and 1990s, played an important role in the restructuring of state policy and vision. I would argue that the scholarly attention to festivals and some officials’ support for their revitalization were responses to their spontaneous re-emergence in the 1970s and their strong momentum in the 1980s and 1990s. In the context of widespread festival revitalization, in 1993, the state acknowledged that festivals commemorating historical figures or deities representing supernatural forces could help to transmit and to maintain the traditional cultural knowledge and “beautiful customs” of the Vietnamese people (article 1, May 1993 Regulations of Festivals by the Vietnamese Ministry of Culture). By 2001, the law on cultural legacies specified that festivals constitute an important part of the national cultural heritage, and that they could help to enhance the “good” traditions of different ethnic groups in Vietnam and to develop “a progressive Vietnamese culture steeped in the national essence” (mol nen van hoa tien tien dam da ban sac dan toc) (prologue, article 12). This law calls for the state to facilitate the maintenance and development of cultural values partly through traditional festivals, while preventing the commercialization of festivals and eliminating “depraved customs” (article 25). In order to maintain the visibility of the nation in the context of considerable diversity in festival and cultural practices, the state has required that at any festival, the national flag has to be flown higher than festival and religious flags (article 10 of 2001 regulations on festivals). At the local level, the head of the administration or his or her appointed official normally heads the festival-organizing committee and delivers the opening speech in order to ensure that local activities are properly framed within the state-sanctioned discourse on the nation and culture.

The socialist state’s embrace of a wider range of past ritual practices and its endorsement of traditional festivals in its new vision of culture and national development help to strengthen the local momentum to renovate ritual sites and to revitalize ritual processions in Vietnam. However, this momentum, which began in the 1970s and 1980s, did not originate with state policies or in response to any global capitalist expansion into the Vietnamese economic and sociocultural landscapes. The Vietnamese socialist state faces a major challenge as it figures out how to incorporate the regional and ethnic diversity of ritual practices within its essentialist notion of culture and its vision of national unity. It is worth noting that the majority of the rural population in Vietnam have access to televisions and, in some cases, can watch foreign

35 Endres, “Beautiful Customs.”
36 The notion of a progressive culture steeped in “national essence” had been officially adopted in the policy documents of the Vietnamese Communist Party in 1998.
channels. For ethnic Khmer in Vietnam, for example, the televised images of ethnic Khmer pagodas and festivals in both Vietnamese and Cambodian television channels might inspire or reinforce a transnational ethnic identity at the expense of a national identity.  

In conclusion, I would assert that the changing notion of culture in the official discourse on the nation in Vietnam over the past half-century is rooted at least as much in the dialogic relation between the Vietnamese socialist state and local populations, as in the stronger integration of Vietnam into the global capitalist system. In the Vietnamese case, globalization has heightened the concern in some circles about cultural identities and traditions, but a power-laden dialogue between the socialist state and local populations on those issues had started long before global capitalism became a powerful force in the space under the control of the Vietnamese Marxist state. I would like to suggest that at least in the Vietnamese case, we should not ignore the dynamics of state/society relations in the restructuring of nationalist discourses.

University of Toronto, Canada, April 2007

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Christian Evangelical Conversions and the Politics of Sri Lanka

Bruce Matthews

Sri Lanka remains a country in considerable political distress. The most visible and serious dimension of this is a continuing low-intensity civil war between the state and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), largely confined to the north and east but steadily moving south into the heartland of the Buddhist majority.1 This has exacerbated ethnic and religious tensions. The majority Sinhalese (15 million or 75 percent of the population) are largely Buddhist (and the armed forces of the state are almost totally Buddhist), and the LTTE are at least in part culturally associated with Hinduism. Although the ethnic conflict should not be described in terms of a religious struggle (the LTTE have a secessionist political agenda and are not promoters of Hinduism), nonetheless the horrendous cost (68,000 deaths, one million people displaced, an economy that has not achieved its full potential) of more-or-less continuous civil war for 24 years (despite an ostensible cease-fire since February 2002) has intensified Buddhist nationalism and arguably made it more bellicose. It should be recognized that with over one million adherents each, Christianity and Islam are also major non-Buddhist faiths in Sri Lanka (Christians comprise about 7.5 percent of the population, Muslims 7.6 percent).2 The Islamic peoples (Ceylon Moors) have had their problems with Buddhist antipathy (e.g., anti-Muslim riots in 1915, and current struggles to have a role in the political destiny of the contested Eastern Province). But Islam is not marked with the stigma of the colonial experience, and has never had the political and social influence associated with Christianity. Further, Islam does not outwardly engage in mission proselytization in Sri Lanka and is no threat to the religious status quo or to Buddhist nationalism. Hinduism likewise appears politically quiescent, though this was not always the case.3 Yet today a religious situation

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1 For example, the devastating attack on 16 October 2006 on a navy transit area occurred not far from Dambulla, an important historical location for the Buddhist faith. Over a hundred sailors were killed.


3 A not uncommon sentiment expressed by the Hindu Maha Sabha in the 1950s was “our enemies are the Christians, not our temporary abduction by the Sinhalese.” Antagonism against Christianity
has arisen in Sri Lanka that is specifically focused on Christianity; the Colombo media have declared the setting a “potential powder keg.” 4 Sri Lanka is, therefore, a case study of a contemporary South Asian nation once again uneasily coming to grips with religious pluralism. As Alexandra Owens has argued, this issue is not restricted to Sri Lanka, and “there is much debate in the international community on how to treat the complex question of proselytism.” 5 Nonetheless, the present uneasy state of inter-religious relationships has come as a surprise to many Christians in Sri Lanka, who thought that relationships between Christianity and Buddhism had long been settled and established in a relatively friendly pluralist environment. The question remains why this anti-Christian phenomenon has assumed such prominence now, and why the momentum to introduce legal measures protecting Buddhism continues to increase.

Several reasons for this trend can be identified. As outlined in more detail below, something of the long colonial experience predating Independence in 1948 lingers in a simmering resentment identifiable among a cohort of Sinhala Buddhist society, who feel bitter about continuing Western and “foreign” influences, including Christianity, which are perceived as polluting a national Buddhist heritage. As well, anti-Christian sentiment is arguably linked in certain instances with a backlash against internationally funded and even entirely indigenous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and “think-tanks.” 6 The passion this issue stirs can be seen in policy statements

was allegedly much stronger in the Tamil areas than the Sinhalese south just after Independence; in-person interview with Rev. James Ratnanayagam, 20 June 2005, Colombo. As recently as 2004, the then minister of Hindu Affairs, T. Maheswaran, and the All Ceylon Hindu Congress promoted the notion of legislation to prohibit conversions. Their enthusiasm for this prospect waned, however, when Ven. Ellawala Medhanada Thero (a Jathika Helu Uruma member of Parliament) proposed a 19th Amendment to the Constitution in November 2004, “to provide for a declaration of Buddhism as the official religion of the Republic; to provide for binding the persons practicing Buddhism to bring up their offspring in the same; to provide for prohibiting conversion of Buddhists; and to provide for a Council to advise the President on such matters.” This was ironically not challenged by the heads of Christian churches. The bill was successfully petitioned before the Supreme Court, which ruled that such legislation would require two-thirds parliamentary support and approval by referendum.

4 The Island, Colombo, 14 May 2005. The then newly appointed prime minister, Mahinda Rajapakse, noted that “the religious unrest currently felt in Sri Lanka is even more serious than racial or ethnic unrest” (Daily Mirror, Colombo, 14 June 2005).

5 Alexandra Owens, “Protecting Freedom of and from Religion: Questioning the Law’s Ability to Protect against Unethical Conversions in Sri Lanka,” in Religion and Human Rights (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, 2006), vol. 1, issue 1. “Finding the proper balance in a community between freedom to manifest a religion and a multitude of other rights, including freedom from forced or unethical conversions, is difficult to achieve” p. 49.

6 Examples of indigenous think-tanks include the Centre for Policy Alternatives, the Law and Society Trust, the International Centre for Ethnic Studies, the Social Scientist’s Association, the Marga Research Institute, the Civil Rights Movement, the Foundation for Co-Existence and the Human Rights Documentation Centre. “International” NGOs include the Asia Foundation, the International Crisis Group, the Asian Human Rights Commission, Save the Children, the ICRC and the International Commission of Jurists, among others.
Christian Evangelical Conversions and the Politics of Sri Lanka

identified with Sinhalese nationalist political parties (notably the Jathika Helu Urumaya, JHU or National Heritage Party) and in frequent opinion pieces and editorials in the Sinhala and English press. Their scorn casts a wide net, enveloping any intellectual or public figure seen as working for peace with the LTTE through negotiation and dialogue. NGOs and their workers and agents are thus viewed by many Sinhala Buddhist nationalists as disloyal and even insulting to the brave soldiers (mee api kolow, which translates as “these are our boys”) at the front.

In a freakish manner, these religious tensions have also increased as a result of the Indian Ocean tsunami, which inundated two-thirds of the coasts of the island on 26 December 2004. An immediate provocation to many Buddhists was the arrival of Christian evangelical missionaries from America and South Korea, who came ostensibly to offer assistance to victims of the tragedy. Most workers arrived on tourist visas, their real intentions not declared. Within weeks, their mission outreach became widely known, in particular the alleged use of financial “allurements” (aleppa) or incentives (unanduwa) for victims in order to convert them to Christianity. It should be noted at once that these “unethical conversions” were also condemned by the mainline Christian denominations, not just by Buddhists; however, most Buddhists are so ill-informed about Christianity that they fail to acknowledge denominational differences. This in turn has led to important initiatives on the part of both the government and the Buddhist sangha (Buddhist monastic order) to limit the activities and outreach of Christian organizations of any kind. The matter of “religious conversion” has been before Parliament on at least four occasions in 2005-2006, indicating how serious a political issue it has become. Although the various bills to proscribe conversions are not headline news due to the recent return to armed hostilities, the topic remains fresh and crucial for informed discussion concerning Sri Lankan public policy on matters of religion.

Important as the tsunami incidents were, they need to be seen in the context of a much older, festering dispute on whether Sri Lanka can ever claim to be Bauddha Rajya, or a Buddhist state. The tsunami merely put into public perspective a situation which Buddhist activists had been anxious about for some time: the curtailing of any conversion activities aimed at the Buddhist community and, by extrapolation, the outreach of all Christian denominations, evangelical or otherwise. It could be argued that in one sense the Buddhist activists exploited the tsunami tragedy, though it should

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7 This is particularly the case with the English-language Sunday Observer and its commentator H.L.D. Mahindapala, whose vitriolic pieces regularly assault the work of all who appeal for negotiations (e.g., 14 May 2005; 11 February 2007, the latter extolling Susantha Goonatilleke’s book Recolonization: Foreign Funded NGOs in Sri Lanka [New Delhi: Sage, 2006], and identifying by name leading Sinhalese peace exponents as “fat maggots feasting on the bleeding wounds of the nation”).

8 By way of example, National Peace Council representatives working in the Polonnaruwa area were vilified and assaulted by “nationalist” activists, 15 December 2006.
again be emphasized that the mainline Christian denominations were just as offended by the *arriviste* evangelicals as was the Buddha *sangha*. As R.K.W. Goonesekere notes, the mainline Christian churches “are also disturbed by the down-to-earth approach, shorn of ritual, to the hearts and minds of people in the name of Jesus Christ.” Despite mainline Christian umbrage, what this has led to is an ambitious strategy on the part of Buddhist parliamentarians (including the government’s Ministry of Buddhhasana or Buddhist Affairs) to control conversions (e.g., all “conversions” will have to be reported to a government officer), and in effect “criminalize” many Christian church activities that may seem to make Christianity an appealing source of comfort and security. Ironically, the long-term victims of this strategy will not be the evangelical organizations but the historic, traditional mainline denominations, who have only recently woken up to the fact that anti-evangelical legislation is exceptionally threatening to their well-being.

In this paper, I propose to examine this topic from three perspectives. First, I set down a historical reference to Buddhist-Christian tensions in Sri Lanka since Independence in 1948. Second, I review recent examples of attempts by certain Christian groups to obtain legal status (“incorporation”) and why these have failed; and third, I address the reaction to proposed government legislation which, if passed, will have serious implications for religious freedom in a country with a long and often distinguished record of religious pluralism. A conclusion offers possible strategies for reconciliation.

Turning to the first point, Christianity has a long and (depending on one’s point of view) contributive history in Sri Lanka. The so-called mainline denominations (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist) have been present on the island for many decades, even centuries. Five so-called evangelical denominations, represented by the National Christian Evangelical Association, have also had a long presence, and are not to be confused with newer, fundamentalist evangelical groups. In one way or another, despite colonial Christian triumphalism, the Christians have worked out an affable relationship with the majority indigenous Buddhist faith. Buddhism deserves much credit for this initial tolerance in the face of strong Christian

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10 The National Christian Evangelical Association consists of the Dutch Reformed Church, the Assembly of God, the Salvation Army, the Calvary Church and the Four-Square Gospel Church. These are not charismatic churches *per se* and rely largely on tithing and internal financial resources.
11 Three celebrated public debates between Buddhist prelates and Christian missionaries marked the stress of competing faiths during the late nineteenth century. The Panadura Debate of 1873 in particular was widely recognized as a victory for the Buddhist position. The 1875 arrival in Ceylon of Col. H.S. Olcott, the Theosophist and exponent of promoting Buddhism in the face of Christian expansion, marked the beginning of a major renewal of Buddhist confidence, an initiative vigorously carried forward by the Anagarika Dharmapala, colonial Ceylon’s most “heroic” champion of Buddhism as a faith and as an integral part of Sinhalese cultural identity. See K.M. de Silva, ed., *History of Ceylon*, vol. 3 (Peradeniya: University of Ceylon, 1973) p. 199.
dogmatism and Orientalism. In post-Independence times, these denom-
inations were not prone to evangelical religious strategies or “allurements”
designed to convert Buddhists, but they were by reputation associated with
the former European occupiers, especially the British raj. Notwithstanding
this, at Independence, there were few indications of the ethnic and religious
communalism that later convulsed the country on several occasions. Ceylon,
as it was then known, had escaped the devastation of the Second World War,
and emerged comparatively well off in terms of commercial infrastructure,
natural resources and an educated, relatively small population of six million.
None of the communal and social distress that affected neighbouring South
Asian states was apparent. Political decisions affecting the two major
communities, the Sinhalese and Ceylon Tamils, were initially (and all too
briefly) worked out through a process of cooperation, with helpful
participation from smaller communities (Ceylon Moors and Eurasian
Burghers)—though this arrangement never had the opportunity to turn
into full-fledged consociationalism. A Westminster-style parliamentary
system was well ensconced, and English was primarily the language of political
debate. Stability seemed guaranteed. But all of this was swept away by the
fiercely competitive and uncooperative nature of emerging Sinhalese political
parties aspiring for power. The 1956 victory of the populist Prime Minister
S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and his communalistic Mahajana Eksath Peramuna
(People’s Front Coalition, the chief partner of which was the Sri Lanka
Freedom Party), with its infamous “Sinhala-Only” Bill, effectively destroyed
decades of fragile but identifiable inter-communal harmony. Although
language, not religion, was the focus of political tension at that time, the
fledgling army—which had until then remained free from communalism
and thus politicization—was an immediate casualty. In the officer corps,
Sinhalese Buddhists replaced both English-speaking Ceylon Tamils and, after

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12 R.L. Stirrat writes that “from the beginning, Orientalist views of non-Western societies were
crucially linked in a series of complex ways with power and domination. Orientalism was part of the
legitimating structure of colonial domination: because the east was caught in a timeless past, the
progressive colonial powers had a duty to rule.” In Sunil Bastian, ed., Devolution and Development in Sri
Lanka (Colombo: International Centre for Ethnic Studies, Konark, 1994) p. 66. See also Edward W.
concerning such things as marriages and legal oaths made by non-Christians, see Vimalananda
Tennakoon, The State and Religion in Ceylon Since 1815 (Colombo: Gunasena, 1970), and A Revised
Edition of the Legislative Enactments of Ceylon, vol. 1, AD 1707 to 1888 (Colombo: H. Ross Cottle,
Government Printer, 1928).

“In the early post-independence phase, some attempts were made by the premier conservative politician
among the Sinhalese, D.S. Senanayake, to forge a measure of unity among the middle and upper
classes of the various groups in Sri Lanka’s multi-communal society … but a rift developed between
the two groups with the enactment of the citizenship laws of 1948 and 1949 … the immediate pretext
for the formation of the strongly Tamil nationalist Federal party in 1949.” See also A.J. Wilson, Sri
Lankan Tamil Nationalism: its Origins and Development in the 19th and 20th Centuries (London: Hurst,
a minor aborted putsch, Sinhalese Christians. These conditions worsened with Bandaranaike’s widow Sirimavo as premier, under whose leadership the Constitution first reflected an attempt to promote the image of Ceylon as *Bauddha Rajya* (“Buddhist state”), with Buddhism proclaimed as “the foremost religion” in 1972. Most former Christian schools (prized for their excellence) were nationalized (some were allowed to continue as “non-fee levying” institutions). Nor was religio-ethnic communalism confined to the Bandaranaike governments. The opposition United National Party similarly embraced openly pro-Buddhist and Sinhala cultural policies, however defined, in an effort to gain political support, reinforcing the place of the faith in the current 1978 Constitution. Its Article 9 gives foremost place to Buddhism while assuming freedom of all religions (though Article 15.7 indicates restrictions prescribed by law “in the interests of national security and public order”). Associated with this, Michael Roberts has shown how widespread an acceptance there is of the ancient accounts of heroic Sinhalese Buddhist victors (as set down in the *vamsas* or early accounts, some as early as the fourth century CE) among the several current generations of contemporary Sinhalese. These generations are linked by a “stream of consciousness” based on the notion of *sāba Sinhalayo* or “real Sinhalese” (people who are “not just Sinhalese in name but in heart”). Similarly, Steven Kemper has persuasively argued that a form of Sinhala nationalism antedates the rise of nationalist movements in Europe by a thousand years, and is therefore not “an imitative response to colonial domination,” but “the production of culture, accommodating foreign influence in the same way it accommodates the local past, reimagining both at the same time.”

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14 Articles 9, 10, 14(1)(e) and 15(7) of the *Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka* provide these key provisions guaranteeing religious liberty, with the caveat of Article 15.7 below: “The Republic of Sri Lanka shall give to Buddhism the foremost place and accordingly it shall be the duty of the State to protect and foster the Buddha Sasana, while assuring to all religions the rights granted by Articles 10 and 14(1)(e) (Article 9). Further, “The exercise and operation of all the fundamental rights declared and recognized by Articles 12, 13(1), 13(2), and 14 shall be subject to such restrictions as may be prescribed by law in the interests of national security, public order and the protection of public health or morality, or for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others, or of meeting the just requirements of the general welfare of a democratic society” (Article 15.7).


Sinhalese nationalist groups, such as the Mawbima Surekeeme Viyaparaya (Movement for the Protection of the Motherland) and the Sinhala Maha Sammatha Bhumiputra Pakshaya (Sons of the Soil for the Great Consensus in Sinhalayê), build on this world view. They are further provoked by incidents perceived as endangering the notion of a Sinhala Buddhist unitary state. A good example of this arose as a direct result of the Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987, seen by Sinhalese patriots as a surrender to India and its interests. This incident—which sparked huge and violent protest and motivated President Ranasinghe Premadasa to abrogate the Accord in April 1989—has not been forgotten. Although the Sinhala-Tamil communal violence that marks modern Lankan history has no direct relationship to Christianity, together, both scenarios have stimulated the Bauddha Rajya sentiment—this despite the fact that Christianity has been increasingly marginalized as a major force in Lankan society and polity since the 1960s. Christianity is still regarded with misgiving by Buddhist activists, as was curiously demonstrated by the vast public attendance at the funeral of the Ven. Gangodawila Soma Thero in December, 2003. Gangodawila Thero was not a leading or ranking prelate, but a militant fundamentalist and strong critic of Christian evangelical activity in Sri Lanka, described in the media as charismatic and “telefluent” (telegenic). He often preached about “the sterile and base nature of Christianity” (kristhiyaniyay athi bavath, pahath bavath). Writing in the left-wing news journal Ravaya, Victor Ivan expressed a common public perception: “Up to the time of the passing away of Ven. Soma, the only idea that was voiced and heard was that some Christian religious institutions were acting in a shrewd and organized manner to convert Buddhists to Christianity. Ven. Soma’s demise, on the other hand, gave a new twist to that idea. It was that this expansionist force was not only converting the people to its own faith but was also taking action to kill religious leaders respected by Buddhists.”

The fact that Gangodawila Thero died while on a trip to Russia aroused suspicions of his untimely end and spawned widespread reaction against not only Christianity, but NGOs and foreign-funded centres. His funeral was given live TV coverage, replete with what Dayan Jayatilleke described as “incendiary oratory … pushing the agenda further from pluralism and power sharing.”

as such in Sri Lanka a thousand years before the rise of the nation-state in the New World and Europe, but something—whether one calls it a set of identities, or practices, a discourse, a relationship between king and his clerics—was there, ready to be transformed.”


18 Sunday Island, 29 February 2004. Elsewhere, Gangodawila Thero’s funeral orations were described as “an Ayodhya of the airwaves” (Sunday Island, 4 January 2004, with reference to the Hindu activist action which tore down the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, 1992). The well-known Buddhist nationalist monk, Ven. Ellawala Medanada Thero (representative of the Jathika Hela Urumaya) repeatedly emphasized that Gangodawila Thero was murdered “and climaxed his perorations
A second focus of this paper is to expand on recent causes for what appears to be anti-Christian legislation, and to examine its consequences. For a country so mired in serious military conflict with the LTTE, it may seem strange that time and energy can be directed to monitoring and interfering with various evangelical Christian activities that outwardly appear quite inconsequential. Apart from the afore-mentioned evangelical relief activity associated with the 2004 tsunami (resented as well by mainline local Christians leaders), it can be shown that the government of Sri Lanka has endured years of intense pressure from militant Buddhists demanding an end to the growth not just of evangelical Christianity, but of both putative Christian expansion in general, and of a perceived sinister Christian agenda. Paradoxically Catholics, Anglicans and Methodists are not growing much in numbers, and are wary of charismatic trends in their own denominations. As noted above, however, most Buddhists cannot (or choose not to) distinguish between mainline Christianity and the newer sects, many of which are theologically quite bizarre and aggressive. This is a sad truth. One result is that since 2003, well-organized Buddhist militants have perpetrated over 200 attacks against Christian churches, though few are ever brought to justice. Well before the 2004 tsunami “conversion” incident, then, there were clear signs of a looming confrontation.

Another aspect of Buddhist-Christian antagonism is a fascinating legal and legislative drama unfolding in the courts and Parliament of the country.
In this instance, three private members’ bills put forward by Christian members of Parliament and designed to gain legal and financial privileges (“Incorporation”) for specific Christian organizations have all been challenged by certain “petitioners” and have ended up not in Parliament, but in the Supreme Court. As well, there are three “Determinations,” or proposed parliamentary bills, put forward by elected Buddhist monks, or by the Ministry of Buddha Sasana Affairs, designed to curtail conversions of Buddhists to another faith. The “Three Incorporations” and “Three Determinations” are only indirectly related, but together they show the tensions underlying religious pluralism in Sri Lanka today. Because of them, widespread attention has been drawn to the existence of a number of “new churches,” most with non-indigenous roots. It is interesting to note that not many of these “churches” have Sinhala names, or seem to want them. After the December 2004 tsunami, another whole new legion of proselytizing groups suddenly appeared. These included well-known organizations such as Franklin Graham’s Samaritan’s Purse and lesser-known ones such as the Antioch Community Church, an evangelical congregation based in Waco, Texas, one of a growing number of evangelical groups that mix humanitarian objectives with religious objectives, yet claim to only be NGOs—an approach older established denominations perceive as unethical. Such Christian organizations are highly individualistic and centre around a charismatic preacher, with little or no organizational links, even with other similar churches. The single unifying factor appears to be their rejection of mainline denominations as adequate representations of Christianity. Meetings are held in houses or rooms, sometimes in the open, with no religious symbols. Pastors are usually employed, married, and wear no distinctive garb. Religious services often continue for hours, with loudspeakers insensitively broadcasting their worship to surrounding communities, disturbing ordinary daily life. Traffic congestion associated with revival-style meetings, processions and rallies has proved obnoxious and offensive to village Buddhist clergy in particular. Certainly the Buddhist sangha perceive these “churches” to be engaged in the conversion of “the poor and gullible”; not a few Christians from the mainline denominations would be in complete agreement.

I propose now to briefly outline the so-called “Three Incorporations” in order to emphasize the objections of the Supreme Court that have so far prevented them from accessing parliamentary approval. The first and second Incorporation requests focused on Christian organizations not associated with any mainline denomination. Thus the bill to incorporate the Christian

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23 For example, the Revival Apostolic Church, Jesus Lives Ministry, Jerusalem Prayer Centre, Gospel for Asia Believers Church, Lord is our Strength Worship Centre, Jesus Never Fails Church, Jesus Lives Church, Living Life Church, Apostolic Church, Heavenly Harvest Church, Zion Church, Agape Church, Christian Family Church, Church on the Rock.
Sahanaye Doratuwa Prayer Centre (10 May 2001, presented by Member of Parliament John Amaratunga) expressed the aim of providing aid “to needy Christians who seek assistance … to enable them to obtain job opportunities, to train persons in various industries.” As is consistent with Sri Lankan parliamentary procedures, the protocol for all private members’ bills requires them to appear in the public domain (i.e., the newspapers) before proceeding to the next step. Bills can be “petitioned” against by critics who argue that they are unconstitutional and thereby need first to be heard by a court of law, which is precisely what happened to this proposal. A petitioner forced the bill to the Supreme Court, claiming that the activities of the clauses, “along with the right to engage in economic and commercial activities, would necessarily result in the conversion of persons of other faiths … through allurement or other subtle means.” The Supreme Court agreed with the petitioner, further arguing that if legislated, the bill “would indeed result in social disturbances” and therefore was inconsistent with the Constitution and would be “required to be passed by the special majority as provided for in article 84 (2) of the Constitution [two-thirds] and approved by the People at a referendum.”

A second incorporation bill, New Wine Harvest Ministries (presented by Mano Ganesan, M.P., in January 2003), had as its general objectives the organization of “gospel and cottage [“deliverance”] meetings, youth discipleship, tract ministry … in order to spread, promote and make known the message of Jesus Christ … [and to] practice activities that would uplift the socio-economic conditions of the people of Sri Lanka … [and] have the power to raise funds, borrow money and hold bank accounts.” Its promoters contended that every religion has the “altruistic objectives to uplift the socio-economic conditions of the people regardless of their faith.” Again, the Supreme Court rejected this incorporation bill as unconstitutional, arguing that “the allurement which would result in the process of uplifting socio-economic conditions would distort the freedom which every person should have to observe a religion or belief of his choice.”

The third bill represented a Roman Catholic organization, the “Provincial of the Teaching Sisters of the Holy Cross of the Third Order of St. Francis (Menzingen) in Sri Lanka.” It was proposed in July 2003 by Joseph Paramaratasingham, a well-known Eastern Province Ceylon Tamil Catholic representing Batticaloa, who was assassinated on Christmas Eve, 2005, by gunmen who some allege were operating under government orders. The bill to incorporate maintained that the Order aimed to “spread knowledge of the Catholic religion … to impart religious, educational and vocational training

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25 Supreme Court Special Determination No. 2/2003 in a matter of a petition under Art. 121 of the Constitution: a Bill titled “New Wine Harvest Ministries (Incorporation).”
to youth ... to serve in nursing homes, medical clinics, hospitals, refugee
 camps ... to maintain homes for elders, orphans, destitutes ... to bring about
 a society based on love and respect for one and all.” But a “petitioner” averred
 that there was provision in the bill not only to evangelize but to “allure”
 persons of other religions by providing material and other benefits (e.g.,
 medical facilities); that it would take advantage of “youth, inexperience,
 physical and mental disabilities”; and, above all, “provide facilities to convert
 children of other religions.”26  The Supreme Court of Sri Lanka agreed. Its
decision noted: “[W]hat is guaranteed under the Constitution is the
manifestation, observance and practice of one’s own religion, and the
propagation and spreading of Christianity as postulated ... would impair the
very existence of Buddhism or the Buddha sasana.... Therefore, according
to Art. 123 (2) and Art. 84 (2) ... this bill would have to pass with special
majority (two-thirds of parliament) and be approved at a Referendum.”27

That all of the three “incorporations” detailed here were found by the
Supreme Court to have some unconstitutional factor may suggest the court’s
various justices were biased in favour of Buddhism. But the same justices
have also shown reluctance to accept the prima facie constitutionality of bills
proposed in July 2004 by Ven. Omalpe Sobitha Thera, and in November
2004 by Ven. Ellawala Medhanada Thero, prohibiting any conversions of
Buddhists (the latter would involve amendment to the Constitution). Both
represented the monastic political party, the Jathika Helu Urumaya. Omalpe’s
bill (“The Prohibition of Forcible Conversion of Religion”) is not an entirely
negative or unbalanced proposal. It notes that the Mahasangha “and other
religious leaders” realize the need to protect and promote the harmony
among all religions “historically enjoyed by the peoples of Sri Lanka,” and
that “both Buddhists and non-Buddhists are now under threat of forcible
conversions and proselytizing by coercion or by allurement or by fraudulent
means.”28  The proposed bill focuses especially on 11 categories of people
considered vulnerable (e.g., welfare recipients, mentally disabled, employees
of specific organizations, police, armed forces personnel, students, refugees,
etc.). The bill went to the Supreme Court, which challenged some of the
provisions, particularly those associated with making it obligatory to report
conversions (or even conversion “ceremonies”) to the Divisional Secretariat.
As it did in the Incorporation hearings mentioned above, the Supreme Court
heard these cases using relevant acts of precedent in other countries facing
anti-conversion legislation (notably India and Greece), as well as references

26 “A Bill to incorporate the Provincial of the Teaching Sisters of the Holy Cross of the Third
Order of Saint Francis in Menzingen of Sri Lanka,” 9 July 2003 (Bill No. 137), Parliament of the
Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. The “Provincial” refers to the provincial Superior of the
Order, Sister Immaculate Joseph, a Sri Lankan citizen and Roman Catholic nun.
to the World Council of Churches policies on evangelism (1956 and 1968), and to a key 2002 *Special Presidential Commission Report on the Buddha Sasana.*29 By consequence, study of these proceedings offers invaluable insight into the complexity of a vastly multifaceted issue pertinent not just to Sri Lanka but, by extension, to other countries confronting constraints on the freedom of religion.30 Notwithstanding the ruling of the Supreme Court on certain aspects of the bill, in April 2006, Ven. Omalpe’s “Prohibition of Forcible Conversion” bill was sent to a 19-member legislative standing committee prior to ultimately proceeding to Parliament for a final vote. The committee appears to be a reasonably balanced selection of parliamentarians, but Omalpe Thero’s bill is stalled until it is revised.31

Unlike the above cited private member’s bills, the third and final “Determination” is the Government of Sri Lanka’s own “Freedom of Religion” bill of June, 2005, which, somewhat ironically, reflects quite the opposite in its aim and context.32 Because it comes from the government itself (introduced by the then minister of Buddha Sasana, Ratnasiri Wickremnayake, now prime minister), this lengthy proposed legislation is of the greatest concern. Its ten clauses cover anti-conversion legislation with uncomfortable thoroughness. Although some aspects of the bill are directly

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30 India’s Constitution Art. 25 (1) guarantees the right to propagate religion, but in 1977, the then chief justice of India’s Supreme Court (A.N. Ray) ruled that “if a person purposely undertakes the conversion of another person to his religion, as distinguished from his effort to transmit or spread the tenets of his religion, that would impinge on the ‘freedom of conscience’ guaranteed to all the citizens of the country alike.” See Sebastian Kim, *In Search of Identity: Debates on religious Conversions in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2005) p. 79. India had long struggled with the question of Christian proselytization, and had come to grips with it in the 1956 Niyogi Report (named after retired Chief Justice Bhawani Shankar Niyogi). The report was provoked by multiple complaints of Christian allurements and, importantly, the perceived denigration of the Hindu religion. The report found that most Christian work depended on foreign money despite the use of local clergy or “preachers” (*pracharak*), and that they used schools, orphanages and hospitals as “tools” of conversion. This in turn led to various Indian states enacting their own anti-conversion legislation (e.g., Orissa, Arunachal and Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu), though such laws have been challenged and/or rescinded in several instances (e.g., Tamil Nadu repealed its anti-conversion law in May, 2004). There are many good studies of this issue, notably Harold Coward, *Modern Indian Responses to Religious Pluralism* (Albany: SUNY, 1987); Aloysius Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation* (NY: Maryknoll Orbis, 1988); Arun Shourie, *Missionaries in India: Continuities, Changes, Dilemmas* (Delhi: ASA Publications, 1994); Sarah Claerhout and Jakob De Roover, “The Question of Conversion in India,” *Economic and Political Weekly,* Delhi, 9 July 2005, available online at <www.epw.org.in>.

31 See “Speaker names committee to study Anti-Conversion Bill,” *Daily Mirror,* Colombo, 6 April 2006.

32 Freedom of Religion supplement of the Gazette of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, “A Bill to protect the freedom of religion enjoyed by the people of Sri Lanka from time immemorial; to encourage mutual cordiality between peoples of all religions; to prohibit the conversion of persons espousing one religion or holding or belonging to one religious belief, religious persuasion or faith, to another religion, religious belief, religious persuasion or faith, by the exercise of force, coercion, allurement, fraud or other unethical means; and to provide for matters connected therewith.” Ordered to be published by the Minister of Buddha Sasana, 24 June 2005.
pointed at maverick evangelical organizations (e.g., Clause 8 provides for the deportation of anyone not a citizen of Sri Lanka, declaring such persons to be “prohibited visitors”), the general tenor of the bill causes much anxiety for mainline Christian denominations, which see in it a direct threat to most, if not all, of their traditional community activities. Arguably the government could bring forward legislation that would have the effect of undermining general freedom of speech, assembly and religion: “attempted conversion” would be criminalized and punishable by up to seven years in prison. The November 2005 presidential election delayed consideration of this bill, but it is still on the order books of Parliament. It would, however, have wide-scale public and *sangha* backing. The proposed bill represents quite precisely a key recommendation in the 2002 *Report of the Buddha Sasana Presidential Commission*: “It should be understood it is the bounden duty of the government, the entire Buddhist population and the Buddhist organizations to protect the Buddha *sasana* by curbing the powerful forces that are against Buddhism.”

President Mahinda Rajapakse entered into a coalition government, with his Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) dependent upon support of the overtly Sinhalese nationalist party, the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna, and even, to a degree, with the monastic political party, the Jathika Helu Urumaya (with which it sought a working rapprochement). It could be argued that President Rajapakse’s Buddhist “credentials” are so well known, and his support for Buddhism so self-evident, that he could continue indefinite delay of the proposed anti-conversion law and not be seriously challenged by Buddhist nationalists.

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**33** “Report of Sri Lanka’s *Buddha Sasana* Presidential Commission 2002, Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations” (unpublished cyclostyled document, Colombo: 2002). This important report claims that although Sri Lanka’s 1978 Constitution is supposed to protect and foster the Buddha *sasana*, in reality, such protection has not been received (12.3). The report claims that there is a “systematic and subtle design for converting Buddhists to other religions” and that violence has erupted in parts of Sri Lanka due to conversion efforts (e.g., “mass prayer sessions in ordinary [Christian] homes and buildings has become a threat to peace”) (Art. 12.80). But it is also important to indicate that the report is critical of some aspects of Buddhist ministry in contemporary society, and that it offers a strategy to lessen religious tensions. Thus, first, social service deficiencies within the Buddhist community are identified as a central reason for conversions, and it recommends that Buddhist organizations and “affluent Buddhists” come forward to alleviate poverty (Art. 12.99). Art. 12.105 presents a quite unexpected dressing-down for monks, asking them to be more proactive in pastoral responsibilities: “When devotees living in the village limits for supply of alms to a temple fall sick, the resident *bhikkhus* of that temple should visit them in hospital or homes, to the extent possible, and bless them for their speedy recovery by chanting *pirith*.” Second, the report thoughtfully advises that an Inter-Religious Consultative Body with representation from all major religions “should be constituted to resolve through discussion any issues that arise” (12.8). Third, and quite remarkably, the report proposes that *bhikkhus* should refrain from party politics and maintain their independence to admonish any political party that comes into power. It recommends a “Code of Practices” to be observed by all political parties, restraining them from enticing *bhikkhus* to engage in party politics (12.23).

**34** President Mahinda Rajapakse’s wife is a Roman Catholic, which ostensibly provides him with a wider understanding of religious communalism than might otherwise have been the case.
To sum up: outwardly, Sri Lanka has a long and relatively stable history of inter-faith sensitivity to issues surrounding religious freedom, but Christian evangelical aid to victims of the December 2004 tsunami brought to a head a long-simmering Buddhist resentment concerning general Christian influence in the country. Paradoxically, the mainline Christian denominations were also shocked by the culturally insensitive and hubristic activities of foreign initiatives engaged in proselytization among traumatized persons. These events came at a time when various Christian members of Parliament were also proposing private member’s bills to make lawful the attempts by certain local Christian organizations to seek approved status for tax and other purposes. Thus various legal initiatives (all with Buddhist proponents) have been taken in an attempt to thwart proposals and to control conversions. Outwardly, these actions appear aimed at only evangelical groups. Ratnasiri Wickremanayake, the government minister responsible for the Freedom of Religion bill, openly declared that the legislation would not affect the “established churches.”35 Even the most prominent Buddhist clerical spokesman, Ven. Omalpe Sobitha Thero, claims not to be against “thoughtful conversion” to Christianity, but against “force, threat, coercion, inducements used by fundamentalists in this country.”36 But mainline denominations are very much threatened as well. Catholics and Anglicans have both issued media releases indicating they have no connection with “evangelical fundamentalists” and that they recognize the risk of deteriorating religious harmony.

It is now possible to suggest several conclusions. First, as argued above, the current enthusiasm for anti-conversion legislation is based to a degree on the perception that new Christian sects, NGOs and organizations have more to offer materially than indigenous Buddhism (or, for that matter, indigenous Christianity). Poor folk of whatever faith are an obvious target for evangelicals. L.P.C. Mendis notes that “there are numerous persons suffering from serious ailments who in desperation go from temples to churches to kovils, mosques or charismatic movements in order to obtain relief through vows and prayers … if they obtain some relief and are convinced of its source they tend to stick to such belief.”37 Thus, poverty and financial stress are likely important features behind at least some conversions to evangelical Christianity. These factors were even recognized by Chandrika Kumaratunge, the president of Sri Lanka at the time, who averred that conversions resulting from charity cannot be realistically prevented by law, and that Buddhist monks should become more actively involved in supporting the poor as part of their social work (punya grama). This would include making available to villagers opportunities in vocational and computer training, and the learning of English. With over 10,000 Buddhist viharas (temples) and

37 *The Island*, Colombo, 1 September 2004.
25,000 bhikkhus (monks), Kumaratunge emphasized the huge potential Buddhism has for support of the needy, but, in order to be effective, the sangha must be more involved in the lives of ordinary people. Historically, the Buddhist sangha has expected the people to come to them as part of a long tradition of clerical liminality. Although this understanding has been challenged (particularly in terms of Buddhist clerical political involvement), it remains a fact that Buddhism as a clerical institution does not have the same notion of an engaged social ministry as that found in other faiths.

Second, new Christian evangelical sects are evidently providing something novel and theoretically exhilarating not only to some Buddhists but even to Christians belonging to mainline denominations. These people look for alternatives to the staid, hierarchical, traditional forms of religion, and are attracted to more charismatic forms of devotion and a sense of belonging. “Conversions” can, therefore, result from those searching for stronger spiritual identity, rather than for material gain.

Third, the aggressive aim of containing or even preventing conversions of Buddhists to another faith appears at variance with Buddhism, giving a picture of insecurity and fear rather than of equanimity, patience and compassion—features traditionally at the heart of the dhamma. These restrictions also seems at odds with a historic multi-faith tradition of sharing the experience of “sacredness” and spirituality at several locations in Sri Lanka, such as the remote jungle location of Kataragama (shared by Hindus, Buddhists and even Muslims), and such sites as Our Lady of Madhu, the Roman Catholic shrine near Mannar, or St. Anthony’s Church, Kochikadde, the latter attracting huge congregational turnouts, including Buddhists and Hindus—not for the purpose of conversion, but for sharing a spiritual space.

38 Daily Mirror, Colombo, 6 August 2004.
39 In a similar manner, Richard Gombrich asks whether Buddhism, as distinct from Buddhists, “is in any sense responsible” for Sri Lanka’s civil war. See Mahinda Degalle, ed., Buddhism, Conflict and Violence in Modern Sri Lanka (London: Routledge: 2006) p. 22. Although a traditional “political science” (deshapalana) can be extracted from the formative Buddhist scriptures, the Pali Nikayas, arguably there is limited provision for political activism within the monastic order. Some would disagree, notably Ven. Walpola Rahula, whose Bhiksuvage Urumaya (1946) remains to this day a classic, scholarly promotion of a politicized sangha. For example, “According to Buddhism, politics is a righteous deed. So is religion. The two can never be separated,” Heritage of the Bhikkhu (New York: Grove, 1974) p. 122. Not unexpectedly, Sri Lanka has a long history of overt monastic interference in national politics, especially in the post-Independence era, a topic best reviewed by H.L. Seneviratne in his authoritative The Work of Kings: the New Buddhism in Sri Lanka (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) Chapter 4 (“Vidyalankara: The Descent into Ideology”, p. 130). The recent formation of the Jathika Helu Urumaya in 2004 as a monastic political party (with nine MPs in the current Parliament) may appear unusual yet still relatively benign, but not the scene of monks brawling on the floor of Parliament, or of monks burning the flag of Norway (a country involved as an intermediary and peace broker in the civil war), or of monks handling military weapons on display at the Deyata Kirula exhibition at Colombo’s Bandaranaike International Memorial Conference Centre (a startling photo of this appeared in the Daily Mirror, Colombo, 6 February 2007).
40 R.L. Stirrat provides a fine review of Madhu and other Lankan Catholic points of pilgrimage (Power and Religiosity in a Post-Colonial setting, p. 52). For a good account of Kataragama, see Paul...
Fourth, often underestimated is a widespread Sinhalese perception that
the LTTE continues to be backed by various Christian denominations. This
is exacerbated by alleged contributions from Christian expatriate Ceylon
Tamils living abroad in places such as London, Toronto or Melbourne, and
by the actions of some of their major clerical and lay leaders. Some Sinhala
Buddhist activists likewise perceive the Sri Lanka Monitoring Mission (SLMM,
a consortium of personnel initially from five Scandinavian countries assisting
in monitoring the 2002 ceasefire regulations, but reduced now to just Iceland
and Norway) as a Western and therefore biased “Christian” type of expedition-
ary force, ultimately a source of resentment and humiliation to a Buddhist
culture and people.

Fifth, it could be argued that the intent of all proposed anti-conversion
legislation emerging from the Buddhist political party (JHU) and its
parliamentarians is aimed at Roman Catholicism in particular, and that
agitation concerning new Christian sects, financial allurements, etc., is but a
disguise for a much bigger and more important target: curtailing the power
of the Catholic church in society and polity. Initially the Roman Catholic
Church supported proposals to restrict “forcible conversions” as long as the
measures were only aimed at evangelicals, but the Church soon became aware
of the far-reaching consequences of such actions. (Anecdotal evidence
suggests Catholicism has lost 80,000 to 90,000 of its former devotees to
Pentecostal or charismatic sects.) The Catholic Church appears to recognize
the inevitability of some kind of anti-conversion legislation, but is working
to soften its scope.

Sixth, as Dayan Jayatilleke rightly argues, a very “real value” of Christian
churches in contemporary Sri Lanka is that they are the only institutions
that span the Sinhala and Tamil communities, and that if compromise and
settlement take place, the churches will have played a role. “Thus,” he writes,
“the threat to the Christian community threatens any chance of peace and

than Buddhist site, see Amarasena Gamage, “Attempt to make Madhu Church a National Basilica on

41 For example, an estimated 10,000 people turned out for the March 2001 funeral of C.J. Eliezer,
a well-known Methodist and Australian Ceylon Tamil figure. Many Tamil Catholic and Anglican priests
are known to be sympathetic to the LTTE cause world-wide. There are reports that on the LTTE
Great Heroes Day (Mavirar Nal), on 26 November, a Roman Catholic priest and Saivite priest might
light the kuttu vilakku (ritual oil lamp) together.

42 Sweden, Denmark and Finland, former SLMM members and present European Union
members, were obliged to remove themselves from the mission when the EU declared the LTTE a
terrorist organization, on 2 June 2006. Further, some privately aver that there is also a complex and
prejudicial Sinhalese caste feature involved, with quiet prejudice against the Sinhalese Karave-Salagama-
Durave (KSD) castes (jatis), residing traditionally between Moratuwa (just south of Colombo) and
Negombo, because of their historic exposure to Christian missionary activity and one-time record of
conversion.
reconciliation on this island.” Jayatilleke further avers that Sri Lanka is in danger of fostering a triple isolationism (island, religion, language) and of failing to see that its multiculturalism is in fact a “bridge” to the rest of the world. This leads us to question where anti-conversion laws might eventually lead. An example sometimes encountered is the widespread allegiance by Sinhalese Buddhists to the Indian guru Sai Baba. How would the law interpret this divided loyalty?

Seventh, parties facing elections might be expected to support unethical conversion bills (politicians are said to especially “like the robe”), but an actual parliamentary vote on this issue would probably see many MPs absent themselves. Such legislation would be extremely difficult to enforce and would likely lead to even more intra-cultural tension. Religious strife is the last thing Sri Lanka needs. A central conclusion of the May 2005 report by Madame Asma Jahangir, the Special UN Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, emphasizes this sentiment: “In my opinion, the provisions of both draft Bills [Omalpe Thero’s and the government’s bill] could result in the persecution of religious minorities rather than the protection and promotion of religious tolerance. The enactment of these Bills could seriously undermine the culture of religious tolerance enjoyed for decades in this country. It could impair the religious harmony that this country can rightly be proud of sustaining even through the difficult period of a civil war.”

Collateral fall-out from such legislation would also tarnish Sri Lanka’s international image, possibly affecting its bilateral relationships with Western nations, particularly the United States (which to date has been relatively lenient on the government of Sri Lanka about its human rights record).

Eighth, there is a need for an inter-religious body at the ministerial level, rather than the present compartmentalized Cabinet ministries for each faith. This was a conclusion as well of the Report of Sri Lanka’s Buddha Sasana Presidential Commission 2002, as indicated above, and part of the successful electoral platform of President Mahinda Rajapakse in the national election of November 2005. Legislation alone will not solve the problem of religious

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44 In-person interview, 23 June 2005, Colombo.
46 Sarath Amunagama, a powerful finance and economic development minister in the government of President Kumaratunge, indicated that there would be concern about the reaction of the US Congress to the proposed anti-conversion legislation, but averred it was “worth the risk.” In-person interview, 14 July 2005, Colombo. Others in government are clearly more wary. Mangala Samaweera, sometime foreign minister in President Rajapakse’s cabinet (he resigned in February 2007), noted that “Sri Lanka cannot afford to antagonize America, an ally who has helped us in our struggle against terrorism, not only in words but also in deed.” See The Island, Colombo, 16 February 2007.
47 The United People’s Freedom Alliance (Eksath Janata Nidahas Sandanaya) manifesto for the November 2005 presidential elections promoted “a virtuous state more attached to religion … while
rivalry. Finding other democratic means to come to grips with inter-faith tensions is surely a preferable option at this point in Sri Lanka’s troubled political and ethnic environment.

This is certainly the conclusion of legal scholars; Alexandra Owens, for example, questions whether the Sri Lanka Supreme Court’s preemptive approach (i.e., banning the incorporation of Christian prayer centres) “serves to generate rather than eliminate religious division.”

Ninth, it is worth questioning how relevant the issue of religious conversion is to contemporary youth. In Sri Lanka there is an obvious loss of generational confidence in the sangha, with its periodic “fasts unto death” strategy and other public displays of umbrage, and with religion in general. Despite this trend, all evidence suggests that there is sufficient religio-cultural sensitivity to keep these concerns alive for a long time. It is possible to conclude that religion, with all of its facets, will continue to remain “the missing dimension of statecraft.”

Acadia University, Nova Scotia, Canada, November 2006

preference given to Buddhism in terms of the Constitution will be consolidated, all other religions, including Hinduism, Islam, Catholicism [sic] and Christianity will be treated on equal footing. A Supreme Inter-Religious Council [will be] established to enable the head of state to seek advice from religious dignitaries led by the Mahasangha.” (The reference to the Mahasangha leadership does not appear in the 2002 Report of the Buddha Sasana Presidential Commission.) In their letter of congratulations (19 November 2005) to Mahinda Rajapakse upon his election as president, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Sri Lanka expressed its hope that the new president would indeed establish the Inter-Religious Council that he proposed “as a means to foster religious harmony.” See “Election Review,” Tamil Times, London, November 2005, p. 8.

What Has Happened to Urban Reform in the Island Pacific? Some Lessons from Kiribati and Samoa
Paul Jones and John P. Lea

Introduction
The importance of towns and cities in the future development of Pacific island states is inescapable. Researchers have underlined many key features of the urbanization process, ranging from the high population growth rates found in Melanesian towns,1 the importance of urbanization as a key driver of national economic growth,2 the effects of high rural-urban migration3 and the increasing urban crime and poverty,4 to problems of urban management throughout the region.5 The national experience has not been uniform, raising the question why urban reform in some limited parts of the region appears to have been relatively successful whereas elsewhere it emphatically has not.

The measure of what constitutes “success” or “failure” in Pacific island development is portrayed in various ways and points to considerable regional differences. In the past, mainstream development agencies like the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have seen it largely through comparisons between national human development indicators.6 More recently,
the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), comprised of 22 member countries, including several that remain colonial territories, has assessed the state of development of the region against the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).\textsuperscript{7} Significantly, MDG Goal 7, to “ensure environmental sustainability,” which includes targets to halve the number of those without safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015, and to have significantly improved the lives of one hundred million slum dwellers by 2020, also includes important urban components. Whilst information is available for SPC member countries on water and sanitation conditions, no records have been returned with regard to the slum dwellers. Yet strategies to overcome the former are inseparable from the latter and the tendency by international agencies to marginalize urban concerns and the consequent assumption that urban poverty is somehow less serious than rural poverty has been identified.\textsuperscript{8}

Others have contrasted the relative stability found in most of independent Polynesia with the detrimental social and economic effects of successive politico-economic crises characterizing conditions in Melanesia. Reilly,\textsuperscript{9} for example, has provided persuasive evidence that the high levels of fragmentation which have occurred in parts of postcolonial Africa, best represented in the Pacific by the considerable ethno-linguistic diversity found in Melanesia, have many parallels with current conditions in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Division between indigenous and Indo-Fijian populations in Fiji has also destabilized that country for almost 20 years.\textsuperscript{10} By contrast, in Polynesia, so the argument runs, almost complete ethnic and linguistic homogeneity has fostered favourable, though modest, economic progress. This status is greatly assisted by considerable temporary and permanent out-migration to Australia, New Zealand and the United States, a route not available to most Melanesians. Further, residents of the Cook Islands and Niue have the right to come and go as they please into New Zealand under an agreement of free association, as do islanders in Micronesian countries enjoying similar arrangements with the United


\textsuperscript{10} Evidence emerging in the immediate aftermath of the fourth and latest military coup in Fiji in December 2006 suggests causes based on new divisions in the ethnic Fijian community itself. Parliamentary bills proposed by the former government, which favoured indigenous Fijians, were judged by the new regime to be “unfair to the island’s ethnic Indian minority.” “EU threatens to withdraw aid,” \textit{Islands Business}, 18 January 2007, available online at http://www.islandsbusiness.com/news.
States.\textsuperscript{11} However, it must be pointed out that this judgement was made before the Tongan riots of November 2006, which destroyed a significant part of the capital’s business district and much investor confidence along with it. In Micronesia such homogeneity is offset by the prevalence of geographically dispersed and isolated small islands and atolls, where the natural resource base provides little opportunity for economic growth to occur or living standards to rise. Thus, the outlook is not encouraging for externally supported policy reforms by major foreign aid donors, such as Australia and New Zealand, which are aimed at improving living conditions in the fastest growing urban centres in Oceania:

\ldots these problems are rooted in the very social structure of the countries themselves, this record of under-performance is unlikely to change any time soon, regardless of external efforts. Deep-rooted patterns of identity and culture are likely to be considerably more resilient than anything Australian policymakers can come up with.\textsuperscript{12}

The view is also expressed that explanations for inter-country differences based on ethnic diversity have been overplayed and neglect certain deeper-seated political and economic issues, such as the increasing evidence of poverty in both rural and urban areas, caused in part by the peripheral status of Oceania in global development:

The relative proliferation of armed struggle in Melanesia probably has more to do with the poverty and inequality which has come to characterise the societies there relative to the rest of Oceania, and is thus as much an economic class issue as anything else.\textsuperscript{13}

This perspective holds out little hope of immediate relief but suggests that certain regional policy interventions directed towards improving the conditions under which development can occur are possible and necessary. The reality is that prospects for national economic growth and development are increasingly centred around Pacific island cities that have, in many cases, changed radically since pre-independence. The underlying causes are complex and their investigation tends to overlook the more specific nature of urban problems and the marked differences present in the region. There is evidence, for example, that the prevalence of notorious gang crime in some Papua New Guinea cities cannot be explained in terms of “poverty,

\textsuperscript{11} Arrangements for offshore guest workers and family reunions relieves some pressure on urban growth in Polynesia, and the flow of remittances back to islander families increases urban incomes. This is unlikely, however, to reduce demand for infrastructure and urban services in the region.

\textsuperscript{12} Reilly, “State functioning,” p. 491.

social disintegration or moral imperatives generated by perceptions of social inequalities,”\textsuperscript{14} but has more to do with problems arising from the encounter between the traditional and rural gift economy (embodied in gang behaviour) and the urban cash economy. This dichotomy and the social disruption it causes might thus be expected to long persist in a country where more than 80 percent of the population is still classified as rural.\textsuperscript{15}

Several attempts have been made since the early 1990s to develop a regional approach to the planning and management of Pacific island towns and cities. In 1993 this issue was discussed at the Asia Pacific Regional Ministerial Conference in Asia and the Pacific, organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). In 1996, a UNDP and United Nations Center for Human Settlements (UNCHS) regional paper was published on “The State of Human Settlements and Urbanization in the Pacific Islands,” and delivered at the UN Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) held in Istanbul. Building on the momentum gained from this conference, a draft Pacific Habitat Agenda and Regional Action Plan for the Pacific was prepared in 1999 and subsequently considered by the South Pacific Forum Economic Planning Ministers meeting held in July of that year. In 2001, the Habitat + 5 Conference gave further weight to the preparation of a Pacific Regional Plan of Action to address current urbanization, urban development and urban management issues. A Pacific Urban Agenda (PUA) was subsequently facilitated by UNESCAP and the Pacific Islands Forum, with the participation of Pacific island representatives, in December 2003 in Nadi, Fiji Islands. The PUA was included in the widely publicized 2005 “Pacific Plan,” coordinated by the Pacific Islands Forum and which is now the subject of regional implementation (see below). A follow-up workshop on the PUA with island representatives, the Pacific Islands Forum, UNESCAP and SPC was held in April 2007, and reviewed progress on implementation of the PUA over the last three years. In 2004, the UN Habitat Asia Pacific office in Japan appointed a Pacific program manager, based in Suva, to work with agencies and donors to achieve better urban outcomes in Pacific towns and cities. This position, vacant since July, 2005, has had no separate programme funding and was orientated towards better cross-sector policy integration and improving efficiencies in existing and new urban projects.

These international initiatives provide the broad context and setting for the national and donor-funded technical assistance projects that are aimed at strengthening and reforming urban management and achieving better and quite ambitious urban development outcomes. Included in the list of goals are better access to land supply, provision of water and sanitation,


\textsuperscript{15} Goddard, \textit{The Unseen City}, p. 120.
improved drainage to reduce the impact of flooding, better roads and power supplies, as well as strengthening land use and environmental planning processes. Prominent recent initiatives include a package of projects based on the South Tarawa Urban Management Plan (STUMP), prepared between 1995 and 2000, and the establishment of the Planning and Urban Management Agency (PUMA) in Samoa, from 2001 to 2003. Both stand out as rare examples of success, projects in which important lessons have been learned. It should be noted, however, that neither initiative is located in Melanesia and thus they do not confront the most difficult and extreme urban conditions found in Oceania. Nonetheless, in one recent overview of urban governance in Pacific island countries, a specific call was made to investigate whether PUMA, one of the successful initiatives, could be replicated elsewhere. The purpose here is to identify and comment upon the urban reform processes introduced in these two projects, by way of contributing to the debate on Pacific island development generally and urban reform specifically.

The use of case studies to illustrate examples of urban reform in a region as diverse as Oceania raises the question of representativeness. Several common features of the urbanization process provide the setting in which reform may take place. Connell and Lea have noted that there are at least four descriptors characterizing urbanization in small independent countries of the kind found throughout Oceania: first, urban issues are increasingly emphasized in discussions about development; second, much urban infrastructure was constructed in colonial times for towns that were smaller than today; third, past living standards no longer match present expectations; and fourth, the countries concerned are small, with a history of limited economic growth, where skilled workers are in short supply and where urban planning is a national rather than local responsibility and is divided among many government departments. A fifth characteristic present in all but the smallest and most economically depressed areas is strong rural/urban migration and the consequent expansion of peri-urban settlements outside the control of formal urban authorities. However, it is the institutions of urban governance that have a responsibility to deliver better managed cities, and their ability to do so rests on many factors, not the least being the scale of growth and the homogeneity of the urban population. The two case studies examined here are placed at the lower end of the crisis spectrum, both through their location in small island states with homogeneous populations and their quite low rates of rural urban migration.

The urban conditions addressed by STUMP (in South Tarawa) are also found in the low-lying atolls of Polynesia (Tuvalu, Tonga) and Micronesia (parts of the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands). Indeed, the circumstances of Ebeye on Kwajalein Atoll and Majuro, the capital of the Marshall Islands, reveal the extreme pressures of urban growth in a setting that is similar geographically but different socio-economically. Kiribati and Marshall Islands cities are located in the same broad region of Micronesia, but their colonial histories are very different and this has influenced approaches towards urban governance. The second case study, PUMA (as established in Apia and Samoa), has relevance for several Polynesian countries that possess very similar ethnic and colonial development backgrounds (for example Samoa, Tonga and the Cook Islands). PUMA is an example of how a reform process has sought to address local urban needs after some 40 years of postcolonial inaction.

Internationally, a consensus is emerging that efforts confined to strengthening existing local government institutions in developing countries has prevented adequate recognition of the potential contribution of other community stakeholders. As pointed out by Donovan Storey, citing the work of Richard Stren, urban management needs to be viewed in terms of wider local governance, rather than restricting it to the institutions of hierarchical local government, as has been the pattern in the islands of the Pacific. This altered perspective is less about regulation and has more to do with collaboration and locally appropriate and often non-hierarchical arrangements. This means embracing so-called non-state actors such as the churches, women’s and environmental groups, as well as the traditional authority recognized in those parts of the cities and towns still held under customary land ownership, such as is the case in South Tarawa and Apia.

Contemporary Pacific towns are not the colonial places inherited at independence, though few of the changes in urban administration that have occurred in them since reflect this fact. However, change is underway, even if specific reference to the urban situation is often hard to find. The “Pacific Plan” sponsored by the Pacific Islands Forum of 14 independent island member countries, plus Australia and New Zealand, is linked to a good governance work programme for 2006-2008, which recognizes the importance of participatory democracy. In addition, the plan includes an initiative to be completed by 2008 to “develop policies and plans for urbanization,” and an attached milestone undertakes to “intensify policies and plans development for consideration of the Forum in 2007, taking into

19 Connell and Lea, Island Towns, pp. 73-77.
account the PUA.”21 Nongovernmental groups have been brought into the identification of community aspirations in Samoa. For example, the O le Siosiomaga Society, an environmental NGO, has canvassed the views of villagers about the MDGs adopted in Samoa and the opportunities for meeting them. But here, where government has made considerable progress in reforming the urban land-use planning and development process, commentary on the goal of environmental sustainability leaves out direct mention of slum dwellers.22

Importantly, the two projects reviewed here, together with the recent national and metropolitan urban sector studies undertaken in Fiji in 2003 and 2004, represent the main examples of urban reform conducted in Oceania in the last decade. Whilst it is usually possible to gain immediate access to project reports in the Pacific, the task of following up what actually happens during their implementation is difficult and relies on the rare occasions when consultants and advisers are involved in the longer term and upon the good offices of islander officials.23

The Urban Pacific

In table 1, the 14 independent Pacific island countries that are members of the Pacific Islands Forum are grouped according to their sub-regional location in Oceania. Listed are the national populations according to the last census (which in almost every case apart from the tiny states of Nauru and Niue are estimated to be larger now than the totals shown), the name of the capital city, the percentage of the population living in urban areas at the last census, and the urban population growth rate. Population growth has generally been higher in the urban than rural areas and it has been estimated that more than 50 percent of the populations of half of the 22 Pacific island countries and territories live in the towns and urban areas even though, overall, only one in four Pacific islanders lives in urban areas.24 This trend towards an urban future for the region contains within it disturbing evidence of increasing poverty and inequality. In a recent study of urban conditions in the three island countries of Fiji, Vanuatu and Kiribati, Donovan Storey has found that poverty is “… poorly measured and understood. The concerns of the poor go beyond income and encompass the desire to have access to

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23 Paul Jones, the first named author, was directly associated with the projects in Kiribati and Samoa from the outset.
urban infrastructure and services and to be able to have a say in urban affairs” and, furthermore, they do not have the means to pay for it. 25 This is the reality that confronts island governments embarking on the process of urban reform.

Urban reform in an atoll town

The Republic of Kiribati gained its independence from Britain in July 1979 and had, by 2005, reached a national population of only 92,500 persons.26 It covers a huge marine territory in excess of three million square kilometres, of which the land component is only 811 square kilometres, with Kiritimati Island, located in the Phoenix Island group far to the east of Kiribati.

Table 1:
Comparative Population Figures for Selected Pacific Island Countries

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Last census</th>
<th>Annual urban growth rate</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National population</td>
<td>Census Year</td>
<td>% urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melanesia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>824,700</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>5,190,786</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>409,042</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>186,678</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micronesia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FSM</td>
<td>107,008</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>92,500</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>50,840</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>10,065</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Palau</td>
<td>19,129</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polynesia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>18,027</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>1,788</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>176,710</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>97,784</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>9,561</td>
<td>2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


urban infrastructure and services and to be able to have a say in urban affairs” and, furthermore, they do not have the means to pay for it.25 This is the reality that confronts island governments embarking on the process of urban reform.

Urban reform in an atoll town

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and southwest of Hawaii, comprising half of that land. Modest economic
growth is underpinned by the sale of fishing licenses, minor copra
production, government activity and a proportionately large amount of
foreign aid. The bulk of the outer island population leads a traditional
subsistence lifestyle based on fishing and copra production. Not surprisingly,
the GDP growth rate is low (approximately 1.5 percent per annum) and
GDP per capita is approximately US$650 to $700, placing Kiribati among
the poorest nations in the Pacific.

South Tarawa, the capital of Kiribati, is built on a series of linked atolls
and islets covering an area of 17.6 square kilometres stretching over some
30 kilometres. Residential density is relatively high in response to an average
islet width of only 150 metres and by the time of the 2005 census the city’s
population of 40,200 represented 44 percent of the national total. Growth
has been rapid, with an inter-censal rate between 1995 and 2000 of 5 percent
per annum, compared with 2.2 percent for 1990 to 1995. By the period
from 2000 to 2005, urban growth had stabilized at 1.9 percent, with major
population gains being made in North Tarawa (which contains the expanding
peri-urban areas of South Tarawa) and Kiritimati Island. South Tarawa
continues to experience major planning and urban management problems
as a result of this population increase and the associated pressures of
urbanization. Symptoms include overcrowding, a rising number of informal
settlements, increased squatting on urban water reserves and government
leased lands, a polluted Tarawa lagoon, rising levels of domestic waste, failing
reticulated water systems, increasing disputes about landownership and
boundaries, rising urban crime and youth unemployment and a general
decline in living conditions.27

Given the above situation, the government of Kiribati approached the
Australian Government Agency for International Development (AusAID)
in 1995 to provide assistance by supporting an institutional strengthening
programme to raise the capacity of urban management and planning
specifically, and land management generally. Building on a new urban
management plan (STUMP 1993-1995), also funded by AusAID, compre-
hensive project aims were directed at transforming the urban environment,
including: improving land administration; facilitating land use and growth
plans for urban development based on STUMP; establishing new processes
for improved urban planning and management; developing land and
resettlement policies; undertaking legislative changes to improve the land
subdivision system; establishing a community education and awareness
programme on land and urban planning matters; and introducing a
geographic information and management system. The three-year project
commenced in June 1997 and concluded in June 2000, focusing strongly on

building capacity in the Land Management Division in the then Ministry of Home Affairs and Rural Development.

The key question of course is the extent to which the project’s aims were fulfilled. Whilst it was considered an initial success by the chief parties involved, namely, government and the foreign aid donor (AusAID judged the local project management arrangements to be best practice), some doubts remain over its sustainability into the new millennium. Much depends on a continuing government commitment to change and reform. Early gains were made in divisional management arrangements, including the preparation of Action Plans, new urban plans were prepared with the Local Land Planning Boards, and land policy was developed and approved to encourage resettlement to Kiritimati Island as a future and secondary growth centre. Work still continues on a basic geographic information system (GIS) to provide the equivalent of land titles, and on a fortnightly community awareness radio programme on land matters. Importantly, an Urban Management Committee (UMC), with a membership drawn from key urban sector government ministries, was established to oversee implementation of the urban management plan. An Asian Development Bank (ADB) water and sanitation project for South Tarawa, completed in early 2006, was one of a number of significant undertakings which built on the work of STUMP.28

By 2005, the UMC was continuing to meet intermittently every six to nine months to address the many issues that continue to arise as high population growth places major economic, social and environmental strains on South Tarawa and Kiribati. In this context, the UMC functions as an overarching body providing strategic direction on resolving settlement issues, especially in respect to providing basic infrastructure and services to accommodate major increases in population. Its main role is to coordinate cross-sector urban management and planning so as to optimize the contribution of these sectors to the economic, social and environmental development of Kiribati. The UMC, like most governance arrangements in a small island state, enjoys strictly limited resources—human, technical and financial—and its cross-sector nature and reliance on other arms of government, including Cabinet, makes it difficult to function effectively. In this instance it is the Land Management Division which provides the necessary supporting secretariat, with UMC recommendations forwarded to Cabinet by the minister for Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development.

In the Kiribati context, the scale of the problems facing South Tarawa appears monumental. They include: dealing with the strength of the prevailing socio-cultural order, with its strong attachments to family land and outer island values; minimal gains in economic growth and few job

28 The name of this project was the Sanitation and Public Health and Environment (SAPHE) Project.
opportunities; and the limited pool of human, technical and financial resources available to address these issues. It has been difficult to get broader planning and urban management issues on the national agenda, given that most of the urban population is preoccupied with the day-to-day household survival needs on an overpopulated atoll, as well as trying to supplement cash incomes with subsistence activities. The recently completed ADB water and sanitation project, while reluctantly seen by many I-Kiribati as necessary and in the “public interest,” has raised many sensitive issues for government. These include protecting public water reserves from squatting and occupation by traditional owners; dealing with land owners affected by civil works and subsequent issues of compensation; and, importantly, general maintenance and human resource issues associated with managing, implementing and sustaining such a major project. Infrastructure requires payment for services and the prevailing trend of non-payment for services, including land rent for subleases in South Tarawa, makes it hard to sustain major urban infrastructure, including roads, water and sanitation systems.29

With circular migration between the capital city and outer islands common, traditional outer island behaviour is still pervasive in South Tarawa. The use of well water and beach defecation, for example, is commonplace among most of the urban population. There is limited economic potential to raise low per capita incomes, living standards and livelihoods, and to address the environmental degradation so often characterizing the areas of hardship and poverty, such as Betio and Temaiku Bight. The growth of the private sector, typically cited as the most progressive engine of economic growth, is strongly constrained by various socio-cultural factors, such as egalitarianism and reciprocity, which permeate everyday family and household living. Private sector development, especially foreign investment, is held back by lengthy procedures, including short-term land leases offered by government, difficulties in accessing land held under customary tenures, as well as access to state lands on Kiritimati Island. Importantly, with only five out of 43 national members of Parliament representing urban South Tarawa, it is difficult to ensure a consistent and sustained approach to resolving urban issues backed by strong political commitment. The reality is that urban reform must compete with the legitimate demands of the rural outer islands, whose concerns dominate the political process. Kiritimati Island, far from the national capital and some 3,000 kilometres to the east of South Tarawa, with only a population of approximately 5,500 persons, has now been touted by government as one of several new island “urban growth centres.”30 Subject to resolving various land-related matters on Kiritimati, such as the increase

29 Outstanding land rent arrears by tenants in South Tarawa who sublease land from the government were in the order of AUD$700,000 in January 2007.
in squatting, and rising rent arrears owed by existing lease occupants, the island is likely to be investigated in 2007 for its suitability as an “economic growth centre” (as opposed to other possible island development models).

Looming behind the immediate urban issues in Kiribati is the future threat of climate change and rising sea levels, of obvious concern to atolls and their coastal settlements. As noted by the United Nations, “All of the human settlement, industry and vital infrastructure of Kiribati, the Maldives, Marshall Islands and Tuvalu lie very close to the shoreline. Some islands are already severely affected with losses not only of shoreline but also of houses, schools and other infrastructure.”31 Kiritimati Island has developable land one to one-and-a-half metres higher than the main western atolls in the Republic, and is thus less subject to the devastation forecasted from sea level rise. This advantage may be a key factor in deciding whether and when to promote Kiritimati’s growth potential, despite its many present development constraints and the fact that the government itself currently emphasizes other development problems.32

A new urban management agency for Samoa

The second significant new urban reform project reviewed here is in Samoa, the Polynesian state which was the first South Pacific island country to gain its independence, in 1962. Physical conditions here are markedly different from Kiribati, with a total land area of 2,944 square kilometers, comprising nine islands, four of which are inhabited by an estimated national population of just over 178,000 (as of July 2003). The economy is based on timber exports and fishing, together with increasing tourism, a small amount of manufacturing and processing and a growing private sector.33 The majority of Samoans (76 percent) live on the narrow coastal plains of Upolu, where the capital Apia is located, and most of the rest reside on the adjoining island of Savaii. The country is successful in regional terms, with both the GDP growth rate, at 5 percent, and GDP per capita, at US$5,600, being among the highest in the South Pacific. Samoa has seen a net outflow of population for many decades, with the result that 200,000 Samoan-born Samoans live outside the island state and contribute as much as 22 percent of national GDP in the form of remittances.34

Since the early 1990s, the increasing urban concentration in Apia, which had acquired just over a third of the national population by 2001, has contributed to a rising share of the national population in Upolu, at the expense of Savaii. Accompanying this growth has been a steady rise in demand for land, infrastructure and services and housing, together with popular concerns about the physical direction of Apia’s urban development into both freehold and customary lands, as well as spreading into the upper catchments.35 The deteriorating state of the urban environment, for example, has led over many years to calls for action in the media: “Here is a small town battling a terminal illness threatening to put her down. Filth and disease are swimming in swamps and puddles everywhere. … The saddest thing of all is that nobody seems to know what to do.”36 Over the last decade, there has been increased awareness about these problems, and there is now a solid waste collection service for all households on both Upolu and Savaii. Significantly, however, sanitation in Apia remains limited to septic tanks, pit latrines and a number of small sewerage treatment plants in commercial buildings.

Until a new body, the Planning and Urban Management Agency (PUMA), was established in early 2002, the historically slow pace of urban growth took place in the absence of a specific legislative and institutional framework. Since the colonial era, a succession of town planning advisory committees had operated for 60 years, and had demonstrably failed to introduce effective planning procedures.37 There were no overarching urban planning and management structures capable of coordinating the service providers and regulatory authorities responsible for Apia’s existing and future growth. A building approvals process offered a basic development control system, but there were no legislative and administrative systems for preparing land use plans and policies, undertaking development and planning assessment or ensuring the hoped-for integration of environmental planning.

These shortcomings, together with rising urban growth pressures, led the Government of Samoa to embark on developing a new planning and urban management system with ADB assistance in July 2001. The two-year project was designed to unfold in two phases: first, the development of preferred institutional options and policy arrangements for the structure of a new system; and second, capacity building, including development of an enabling framework in which land use planning would now operate. The latter included a wastewater and sanitation project in the low-lying areas of Apia and the central business area, made possible by ADB funding. Throughout

35 Two of the five urban catchments are watersheds providing a source of reticulated water supply to the growing Apia urban area, as well as to villages in North West Upolu.
37 Connell and Lea, Urbanisation in the Island Pacific, p. 113.
the latter half of 2001, the government consulted extensively with urban and rural stakeholders to identify needs, issues and concerns regarding possible new planning arrangements. Several common findings emerged, including the need for better popular participation, catering for both freehold and customary land tenure systems, and recognizing the importance of embracing the traditional customs and norms embodied in the term fa’a Samoa. It refers to the Samoan way of life, which emphasizes the maintenance of traditional values, with its social, economic, political and religious dimensions.38 This approach had not been tried in Samoa before; such recognition accepted the fact that previous “[a]ttempts by development funding agencies and aid donors to introduce a planning regime backed by legislation appear never to have investigated why Samoan governments have been so resistant to changes affecting controls over land title.”39

Institutional options for introducing a new planning and urban management system in Apia included various possibilities: a new planning authority or commission, an urban district council, local councils or, possibly, a land use planning division within an existing government agency. The result of consultations and analysis was agreement by the Government of Samoa on March 27, 2002 to the establishment of PUMA (figure 1). The agency was seen as an incremental, step-by-step option, which could evolve in the medium to longer term into an authority or commission. It was to be autonomous and independent but located in the short term within the Ministry of Lands, Surveys and Environment (subsequently changed to the Ministry of Natural Resources Environment and Meteorology (MNREM) in late 2002).40 PUMA would be responsible for both urban and rural planning, with a key focus on management and coordination of urban development, including priorities like dealing with the rapid urban expansion of Apia into the North West corridor containing predominantly customary lands. New offices were opened in Vaiala in Apia in July 2002, with a then staff establishment of 25 situated in five key functional sections: strategic planning; regulation, including environmental impact assessment (EIA) and monitoring; urban services; disaster management; and special projects, including climate change and ozone.41

Since its establishment, PUMA has focused on developing an enabling framework in which to operate and best relate to its stakeholders. Capacity-building activities since late 2002 have included: development of PUMA business and action plans; agreeing on implementation priorities with

40 The name of this ministry was changed to the Ministry of Natural Resources Environment and Meteorology (MNREM) in 2006.
41 PUMA is staffed by a group of well-qualified professionals, all of whom trained in the Pacific region.
stakeholders; preparing housing and land planning guidelines for urban development; developing a physical framework plan and policies for Apia’s growth, as well as protection of coastal infrastructure; development of drainage and sanitation plans as a basis for a current ADB investment project in Apia; development of coastal infrastructure management plans, with the support of the World Bank; and preparing new planning and urban management legislation. Generally, the early transition phase has been unproblematic, primarily because of the incremental approach adopted by the government to raise the profile of urban planning and management. The government has also been astute in ensuring PUMA was supported locally as much as possible, with technical support by the overarching ministry. Also of key importance is the reinforcement provided by selective support from donors and development banks such as the ADB, the World Bank and the UNDP.

A new Planning and Urban Management Act was passed in Samoa in February 2004, and came into force in July 2004, providing the legislative basis for integrated land use and environmental planning, as well as enabling the operation of PUMA and the appointment of a board to oversee

Figure 1: PUMA makes local news when established in Samoa in 2002
program implementation of the Act. The PUMA Board is both the development consent authority for Samoa as well as being responsible for setting work priorities for the agency itself. Following the resignation of the former minister for Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE) to take up a position in the Samoa judiciary, PUMA was moved from the MNRE to the Ministry of Works, Transport and Infrastructure (MWTI) early in 2005. However, it was relocated back to the MNRE in July, 2006, following decisions made after the national elections in early 2006.42 The government of Samoa has clearly made a major commitment to improved urban planning and management outcomes for all stakeholders via the new policy, institutional and legislative arrangements. This situation compares favourably with the experience of other Polynesian states like Tonga, where little progress in urban reform has been made. The fact that it has occurred in Samoa, in spite of potential conflicts with established traditional authority such as the matai (chiefs) and village fono (customary village councils), is a significant achievement, even though it is still early days. While there have been issues of acceptance and understanding by both government and villagers of the new rules, regulations and processes to be applied, PUMA has grown in confidence and is slowly gaining credibility, despite detractors such as some developers, landowners and government ministries. Central questions remain about the extent to which these reforms, as well as several others previously noted, including those in Kiribati, can retain government support and become locally sustainable, and whether they provide a relevant model for possible adoption by other countries in Oceania. Importantly, the changes in Samoa are now institutionalized and a comprehensive legislative framework is in place.

**Lessons from the reform experience**

Evidence thus far suggests that urban conditions in the postcolonial Pacific are uneven, have worsened almost everywhere and are most acute in parts of Melanesia.43 Various features of life in rural Melanesia have transferred to the cities in a way that has not and probably will not occur in the small Polynesian and Micronesian states, where the reform examples illustrated here are situated. Firstly, urban reform only appears on the agenda where there is a strong presence of political will, commitment, ownership and

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42 There were varied reasons for the move to the MWTI but concerns existed over the impact on the community of the new development control and assessment processes contained in the PUMA legislation. With the MWTI itself undergoing restructuring, including creation of a Land Transport Authority (supported by the World Bank), there exists the possibility that PUMA will return to the MNREM.

leadership. As in Samoa, such will and commitment may emerge where there is a groundswell of support from stakeholders and local champions for urban change. Island politicians invariably weigh up the implications of promoting urban sector reforms vis-à-vis the benefits and costs that will be gained by their constituents, many of whom may live outside the city. The latter reality partly explains why the new planning system for Samoa, which was originally devised only for Apia, was ultimately applied at the national level in terms of institutions created and legislation passed. There was a perception that there should be national spatial equity in the new rules and regulations, as well as fairness in bearing the costs and receiving the benefits flowing from the new system. Regardless of other factors, preparedness to implement significant change is what distinguishes both Samoa, and to a lesser degree Kiribati, from almost everywhere else in the island Pacific.

Political will and commitment is also linked to other factors. Urban reform in Kiribati must compete with calls for rural and outer island development. It is hard to include pressing urban issues on the national political agenda with only a small number of current national MPs representing urban South Tarawa, despite the capital accounting for almost half of the national population. The recently completed ADB-funded water and sanitation project in South Tarawa is seen by many I-Kiribati as essential for a growing urban area, but it was reluctantly accepted, given its social and economic implications for change at the local level. Unfortunately, the gains in water supply, for example, have yet to reach much of the population, such as those living in overcrowded Betio. The ADB-supported Fiji urban sector reform of 2003 is another example of a project which included an emphasis on upgrading urban squatter areas and providing low-cost building land in the greater Suva Nausori corridor; it has also struggled with slow progress. One reason for this is that the issue has largely been viewed as one of “urban versus rural development” in Fiji, with benefits flowing to urban constituents, rather than offering a recognition of the interdependence of town and country.

Secondly, financial concerns, coupled with an absence of technical know-how, have dominated attempts to upgrade and improve deteriorating urban infrastructure across Oceania. Although there are many examples of valuable research and support by civil society in Polynesia, urban reform in the region is invariably initiated and undertaken by government itself. Nearly all urban reform in the Pacific, whether it is in Melanesia, Polynesia or Micronesia, has been supported, facilitated and financed by international and local development banks and donor agencies. It is the international development banks, such as the World Bank and the ADB in particular, that have taken the lead in assisting countries that desire to improve their urban outcomes (even if such countries are initially unsure of what these outcomes should be or look like). These banks specialize in infrastructure development (including sites and services and associated urban development policy,
institutional and regulatory reform). Not surprisingly, island governments are cautious in accepting loans for development purposes, generally preferring grant money instead. Whether grant or loan financed, nearly all urban development assistance comes with its own set of preconditions, including caveats on the introduction of user-pays charges, institutional strengthening, legislative change and public sector realignment (including implications for job losses) and the introduction of new rules and regulations whose impacts are often unknown. All this further contributes to reluctance in island countries to promote urban change, despite many citizens seeing such a need as a necessary step in their national development.

Thirdly, countries like Samoa which have achieved a modest level of economic growth, including sustained gains in environmental management and national planning generally, appear most likely to implement a well-planned agenda for urban change. A reason for this is the increasing presence of urban communities that have achieved a better standard of living, plus the activities of local champions, who have traveled and lived elsewhere, typically in Pacific Rim countries like Australia, New Zealand and the United States, and who now seek better urban conditions at home. Day-to-day survival is no longer the dominant preoccupation of many urban (and rural) households and other aspirations, such as the desire for better urban services (and an ability to pay for them), have emerged. With PUMA in existence, a framework is now in place and supported by the new legislation, allowing residents to activate its provisions, including the reporting of illegal developments, and offering the ability to make complaints regarding amenity issues such as noise from churches and night clubs, the location of private shipping containers on public streets, and the like. This economic precondition has not been evident in the Kiribati situation, however, raising questions about the sustainability or otherwise of new urban infrastructure projects there, given the absence of much in the way of community support for comprehensive urban change, including the ability to pay for and maintain assets.

Overall, the urban reform experience has been mixed in Oceania and the question of how to achieve better results and an improved enabling environment is complicated by the additional need to first understand and then revitalize urban policy and institutional and regulatory frameworks. As indicated, understanding why there is a reluctance to start such a process means addressing some complex and problematic issues. Clearly, urban reform includes the interplay of a myriad of issues, concerns and factors, including hitherto intractable factors such as the mobilizing of customary or traditional lands. More often than not, urban infrastructure and service

projects are medium to longer term in length, and last well beyond one term of government. Caution is inevitably shown by island governments when weighing up the social, economic, environmental and political implications of urban change, including assessing the often significant financial costs against benefits for the population and implications for rural constituents. The reality, however, is that the future for many Pacific island states is an urban one, though this fact has yet to be reflected in most national economic development plans and policies. Indeed, it is rare to find the needs of the primate city fully identified and prioritized in such plan documents. How much longer the poor and deteriorating conditions in the towns and cities can be tolerated before the necessary change in outlook occurs is the central question.

University of Sydney, Australia, revised March 2007

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45 See, for example, Government of Kiribati, National Development Strategies.
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**Contents of**
**Volume 7, Number 2, 2007**

- **Articles**
  - Special Issue
  - *Ten Years After 1997: The Lost Decade of Hong Kong*
    - Governance Crisis in Post-1997 Hong Kong: A Political Economy Perspective
      - Tai-lok Lui and Stephen W. K. Chiu
    - Political Opportunities, Social Mobilization and Collective Action: The Re-invigorated Pro-Democracy Movement in Hong Kong
      - Joseph M. Chan and Francis L. F. Lee
    - The Hong Kong Economy under Asymmetric Integration: Structural Transformation or Dissolution?
      - Tsong Shiu-ki
    - Neoliberalization and privatization in Hong Kong after the 1997 Financial Crisis
      - Chen Yun Chung and Pan Ngai
    - Mired Intervention by a Misplaced Diagnosis: The Hong Kong SAR Government's Policies for Alleviating Poverty and Social Exclusion
      - Wong Hung
    - Grassroots Nationalism: Changing Identity in a Changing Context
      - Eric Ma

- **Other Articles**
  - Geographical Changes in Foreign Direct Investment and Impacts on Regional Economic Integration in China: The Case Study of the Pan-PRD Regionalization
    - Li Zhang and Simon Xiao Bin Zhao
  - Living with the State: Ambivalent Autonomy in the Yao Community in Jinxiu
    - Chih-yu Stih

- **Book Reviews**

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HUNGRY FOR PEACE:
International Security, Humanitarian Assistance,
and Social Change in North Korea,
by Hazel Smith


was reviewed by C. Kenneth Quinones in both

Correspondence from the book author, reviewer and the editor follows:

Reading the reviewer’s comments on my last but one book on the DPRK in his duplicated reviews in JAS and Pacific Affairs, the first phrase that came to mind was that rather useful Shakespearian aphorism, “Methinks the Lady Doth protest too much.” The protesting took the form of the reviewer’s ad hominem comments in respect to his, as it happens, not very informed opinions on my experience and background. The “too much” is because the personal comments are used as preface and support for the reviewer’s main contention that an unnamed State department official had been bizarrely treated in my book. This was rather a surprising complaint, given that the official was indeed named in my book (in a footnote) and that official was the reviewer himself. Dr. Quinones’ 2001 guilty plea to federal charges of conflict of interest and making false statements to investigators is a matter of public record (see, for example, the New York Times, 11 January 2002). That guilty plea, in and of itself, does not disqualify Dr. Quinones as an expert on North Korea. He holds a doctorate in History and East Asian Languages, and has knowledge of North Korea. My discussion of this scandal and Dr. Quinones’ role in it, however, evoked a dissembling and dismissive response from him in both reviews. Dr. Quinones should have recused himself from reviewing the book in light of this potential conflict of interest. Readers of the journal and myself could not confidently expect an impartial review of my book from Dr. Quinones in light of these facts.

Dr. Quinones is however entitled to hold whatever personal opinions he likes but what is useful to remind the reviewer about is the epistemological difference between unsubstantiated opinion and professional scientific analysis, the latter of which was absent in the review. Fundamentally it is the job of professional scholars to read the book; fairly represent the arguments; provide non-selective readings of the texts they review; give readers an idea of content and style; and offer substantiated critique of the work. This reviewer appears to have read parts of the book but not its entirety and become fixated on the few pages (p. 170 and p. 279) that deal with his own involvement in the DPRK, out of the 337 pages of text. As a result what I have written is somewhat disingenuously translated in the review in the form
of factual, category and conceptual errors that are too numerous to refute one by one. One example, however, is the assertion that changes in the role and function of the military are not analyzed. They are (pp. 51-52, 64-65, 87-88, 153-155). A category error is the failure to understand that there is nothing contradictory about a health service that is “universal and free” and also “woefully inadequate,” if it has no resources to deliver effective services.

Hazel Smith

I accept responsibility for my actions, and appreciate the time and concern that the editors have invested in this matter. I should have reclused myself. My misstep was procedural, not substantive. When asked to write the review for Pacific Affairs, I should have declined. I was too eager to defend myself against the false statements about me contained in Ms. Smith’s book. Prior efforts to address these with the book’s publisher had gone unanswered. My understanding is that a book review should bring to readers’ attention a book’s merits and demerits. An assessment of a book, like a review, should be based solely on a book’s content. My review does this. It contains nothing harmful to anyone. Ms. Smith’s book, however, contains inaccurate statements about me. This is one of the book’s demerits, among others, and I pointed it out in my review.

I urge Ms. Smith to accept responsibility for her errors of unnecessarily including in her book false statements about me and for refusing to respond to my earlier efforts to address this matter.

C. Kenneth Quinones

Since it is the policy of Pacific Affairs to publish original reviews of books, we have solicited a fresh review of Dr. Hazel Smith’s book which will appear in the next issue of the journal. I remind potential reviewers to respect this policy in order to give book authors the greatest range of professional review.

Timothy Cheek, Editor

Three basic problems define the themes of this book. The first is the problem of environmental sustainability in the context of rapid economic, demographic and urban growth in the Asia-Pacific region. The second problem is the top-down, bureaucratic and overly generalized models applied to deal with sustainable development. The third problem is an assumption—partly dispelled in the book—that communities tend to operate according to rules of inertia rather than innovation, so that communities need to be externally catalyzed or fostered to innovate.

The carefully edited collection is organized in two parts. Four introductory chapters provide the conceptual background for understanding innovation at the community level to effect more sustainable environmental outcomes through better management practices. These are followed by nine case studies from quite diverse geographical circumstances, different types of “community” and various contexts of environmental challenge. The book is thus impressive in its coverage and combination of breadth and depth. A final chapter pulls together key lessons and wisely avoids the pitfalls of seeking to synthesize these into a manual of best practice.

The book deals with the two basic concepts of community and innovation, and it helps prize them apart in order to address key assumptions. The concept of community itself is fundamental, and the tension between community as locality and community as a grouping of common interest is addressed head-on. The editors’ introductory chapter is somewhat reductionist in suggesting that the cases adopt community as those groupings where there is both common locality (for example a village environment) and common interest (for example in establishing rules to manage a collective resource). Fortunately the following chapter unpacks this with a broader discussion of community and community innovation to take into account the more general situation of communities constituting diverse and even conflicting interests. The case study chapters do this in an even more fine-grained and nuanced manner, showing how many different scales, configurations and degrees of flexibility there are in the notion of community in environmental management.
Indeed, the real strength of the book is in the nicely crafted case studies. In addition to providing inspiring but far from starry-eyed examples of innovative grassroots practice in environmental management, the chapters highlight a number of issues. One is the important role of charismatic individuals, for example in hunting bans in Pakistan or in upper watershed management in western China. Another is that most innovation involves multiple levels and diverse stakeholders, requiring the accommodation of diverse and sometimes contradictory interests at levels, including but also well beyond the local community in question. The third is that innovation is in several overlapping dimensions - technological (for example water management in India), institutional (for example river basin management in Australia) and values (for example mangrove conservation in Indonesia).

While the book is consistent and unusually well interwoven for an edited collection, there remains a tension exemplified by the following introductory problem statement:

Now there is even more evidence to suggest that the causes and pressures of any of today’s environmental problems can be traced back, directly or indirectly, to the local level – and to the lifestyles, choices, values and behaviours of local communities (p. 2).

Yet many of the community-based environmental management programs dealt with in this book and elsewhere address problems whose origins are external and supra-local.

Programs in community innovation for environmental management always risk constructing the rural and urban poor as environmental subjects, and by implication suggesting that failure to innovate toward best practice implies a conservatism or delinquency on the part of such subjects. It is clear from the case studies that many of the environmental challenges are produced at levels and locations far removed from the “community” in question. A key challenge, therefore, is to maintain the role of individual and collective agency in better environmental management, while continuing to address structural and underlying causes for the environmental problems at hand.

*University of Sydney, Australia*  

**Philip Hirsch**

**EMPIRE AND NEOLIBERALISM IN ASIA. Edited by Vedi R. Hadiz.**  

This volume is an ambitious one, both in terms of its objective: to examine the overall effect of US primacy in the post-Cold War international order on social and political conflicts in Asia; and in terms of its research design. The
volume deals with the vast geographical scope of Asia, covering three distinctive sub-regions (or regions): Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia and South Asia. Further, it is a multi-disciplinary study, bringing together 17 scholars, in fields including comparative politics, international relations, sociology, anthropology and development studies.

With this rather extensive research scope, the volume seeks to put forward a set of overarching arguments. It argues, as a general consensus among the contributors, that the United States’ international agenda since the end of the Cold War (especially after 9/11) “tends to strengthen anti-democratic impulses in Asian societies,” and it “may well exacerbate and complicate existing domestic social conflicts and struggles” (p. 1). It supports the use of the term “American Empire”—a buzz word in recent political and academic discourse—to understand the current situation.

The volume’s structure is straightforward, divided into two sections. The first section consists of five chapters that provide some theoretical and conceptual perspectives about the nature and driving forces of what most of the contributors agree to call the “American Empire.” The second section directly deals with the volume’s central focus—political and social conflicts in various parts of Asia. Ten chapters of detailed case studies on different states and societies in Asia examine the sources of such conflicts, with specific reference to the presence and behaviour of the United States in the region. Given the expertise of each contributor, many of the chapters in the volume can be appreciated individually as engaging and well-informed essays. In particular, some of the case studies in part 2, such as the comparative analysis of Singapore and Thailand (chapter 6 by Rodan and Hewison) and Sonh Hochul’s work on South Korea (chapter 12), contain an impressive amount of updated empirical data on political and/or social developments in these countries.

Yet despite the attributes of each individual article, as a collection the volume falls a bit short in providing overall analysis and in articulating its central arguments. This is partly because the volume does not provide common definitions for the key concepts, which should be applied across the chapters. (The authors of the conceptual chapters in part 1, for instance, use the term “empire” rather casually and at times interchangeably with another contentious term, “global hegemon.”) Furthermore, each section of the volume stands almost independently of the other. Part 1 does not provide a particular analytical framework, or a set of certain propositions, which the authors of the case studies in part 2 could include in their analysis. Part 2 authors, for their part, do not make much of an effort to include extensive and conscious references to some of the conceptual and analytical discussions made in part I.

Nevertheless, the volume’s attempt to highlight the conjuncture between domestic conflicts in Asia and US primacy in the world is, undoubtedly, a welcome one. The discussions in the volume do lead us to some intriguing research questions, such as why some societies are more likely to be affected by US actions and presence than other societies, and under what conditions
do indigenous factors become more salient than US-oriented factors in relation to domestic political and social conflicts.

Oxford Brookes University, UK  
KUNIKO ASHIZAWA


This volume, comprising 18 single-authored chapters, covers weapons and terrorism issues in the Asia Pacific, from Manila and Bali to Baghdad and Moscow, along with important external influences, notably the USA and the EU. The idea for the book emerged from a 2004 meeting in Beijing on security issues in the Asia Pacific. The connections amongst and influences between state and non-state actors in fighting terrorism were of particular interest—but fighting terrorism within the context of regional and global security.

The authors are researchers and practitioners from an impressive variety of disciplines and geographic areas, including a few based outside the region. Australia is somewhat overrepresented, especially without any New Zealand perspectives. The lack of Chinese specialists, though, is not a concern because a second book focusing on China is in progress.

The book has two parts. Part 1 provides regional contexts, with the editor’s overview followed by a chapter on each of money, EU policy, post-9/11 national legislative responses, and the role of fear. Part 2 addresses specific case studies, emphasizing Pakistan but with other chapters dedicated to each of the Philippines, Japan, an Australian view, and Russian industry. Two chapters are about India and Pakistan while three other chapters cover multiple country case studies.

The strength of the volume is its recognition of history and wider contexts. The editor and authors do not frame terrorism and arms control in the region as emanating from specific events, such as 9/11 (the attacks in the USA), 9/9 (the bombing of Australia’s Jakarta embassy), or 12/10 (the first Bali nightclub attacks). Instead, they rightly analyze longer-term influences, reaching back through history to explain contemporary concerns as emerging from the often-forgotten past.

Similarly, the chapters do not isolate the book title’s topics. Controlling arms and terror is identified as connecting to geopolitical rivalry within and outside of the region, money laundering, and local and international development concerns, amongst other topics. Terrorism is appropriately not defined as a Muslim problem while the arms trade is considered alongside other legal and illegal trade. Narcotics are listed, but there is limited discussion of natural resources, such as illegal logging.
These wider viewpoints ensure that the reader makes important connections. The title connects Bali and Baghdad, highlighting the influence of events in one location on happenings elsewhere. Chapters 6 and 8 link the rise of regional religious fundamentalism with superpower antics in previous decades. The book discusses divisions amongst different religious and ethnic groups as well as cooperation, again emphasizing the complexity of the topics and the need to think beyond media labels and headlines.

A few minor glitches stand out, such as several accented letters being printed as small boxes along with a mysterious mention of Philadelphia being part of the 9/11 attacks (p. 3), perhaps alluding to one hijacked aircraft crashing in Pennsylvania, but nearer to Pittsburgh and Washington, DC than to Philadelphia. Chapter 5 extols the virtues of American weaponry technology and military successes in Afghanistan without providing balancing evidence of Afghan civilians killed during the war and the military setbacks in Iraq. As well, it would be easy to quibble with the book’s organization, including concluding with the Japanese case study rather than a regional overview, although the editor explains the reasoning behind the chapter order in chapter 1.

These small complaints do not detract from the well-thought-out approach to the topic and the presentation of needed, broad and deep insights. This volume provides an important overview of material on and related to controlling arms and terror in the Asia Pacific.

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Ilan Kelman


The publication of Asian Cinemas: A Reader and Guide could not be more timely. Not only has the strong presence of Asian films on the international scene generated an unprecedented amount of critical and popular interest, it has also stimulated a number of new introductory courses on Asian films from within the disciplines of Area Studies, Film Studies and Comparative Literature. In turn, the lack of a reliable textbook on the subject has created great demand for work in this new and booming field. However, this lack itself exposes the difficult conceptual issues and methodological dilemmas endemic to academic approaches to “Asian cinemas.” First, given that “Asia” itself remains such an elusive and contested category, how should we conceive and define “Asian cinema”? Second, if it is possible to treat “Asian cinema” as a nominal term that may encompass a loose collection of diverse national cinemas, how may each of these national cinemas be studied within or against
the frameworks that Film Studies originally developed to tackle films from America and Europe?

Asian Cinemas explicitly addresses these crucial yet often neglected questions. The selection of chapters and the overall organization of the book carefully lay out the main issues. Part 1, Approaching Asian Cinemas, includes three sections: Orientalism and Japanese Cinema, Colonial Encounters, Post-colonial Criticism and Hong Kong Cinema, and Cross-cultural Criticism and Chinese Cinema, each of which contains material that helps the reader locate each national cinema in relation to its geopolitical background as well as the Western scholarly approaches taken to it to date. For example, Section 1, Orientalism and Japanese cinema, chooses not to begin with a chapter on Japanese studio-era and silent cinema, and neither does it include a piece on Kurosawa Akira, usually identified, at least in the West, as Akira Kurosawa (arguably the best-known Japanese director outside of Japan). Instead, it includes Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto’s “The difficulty of being radical: the discipline of film studies and the postcolonial world order,” a seminal work which pinpoints the ongoing tendency in Western film studies to conceptualize Japanese cinema as its all-time Other. Similarly, Section 3, Cross-cultural Criticism and Chinese Cinema, also embodies the book’s “debate-driven” approach by focusing on “Chinese films of the 1980s” as a means of discussing the relations between Western theories and non-Western films. Part 2, Frameworks of Study, presents each distinct national cinema in light of key critical approaches developed by Film Studies: Turkish cinema and national cinema, Indian cinema and genre and popular films, Taiwanese cinema and authorship, and Hong Kong’s Bruce Lee as a case study of stardom. By presenting its material in this manner, each section is designed to let the reader learn about the contexts of a particular period or genre as well as the potentials and limits of the theoretical frameworks used to analyse them.

Through engaging with these specific frameworks, this edited volume provides selective information on several important national cinemas, each of which can be (but not always should be) categorized under the term “Asian cinema.” However, this is where a pitfall arises. This book can inspire and guide those researchers and graduate students already familiar with specialized critical theories, Film Studies and some of the cinemas included in this volume. Yet in order to be useful as a textbook for undergraduate courses, this book needs to be supplemented by other well-written volumes providing more detailed and balanced historical and cinematic introductions to those cinemas. In addition, since it is entitled Asian Cinemas, it is inevitable that this volume will have to face the question of why it has not included any material on films from other countries such as Pakistan, Thailand, the Philippines and South Korea, among others.

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NIKKI J.Y. LEE
**Book Reviews**


Is it possible for China to rise peacefully in Asia? Are there systemic Asia-wide implications of China’s expanding economic and military power as China trades places with Japan economically and with the US militarily? Will this evolve into a new regional architecture in East Asia, or must it inevitably lead to conflict?

After Hu Jintao assumed the presidency of the PRC, he introduced the concept of China’s “Peaceful Rise,” in an effort to distinguish his foreign policy strategies from his predecessors and to provide a counterweight to what the Chinese call the “China Threat Theory.” Eventually the Chinese leadership would replace it with another phrase, China’s “Peaceful Development,” but the content of both remained the same.

There are many books recently published on the implications for Asia of China’s rise. Often they are written by individual scholars who treat the topic narrowly, based on their own specialization and biases. China’s improving relations with Asia are frequently dismissed as a “charm offensive” by authors engaged in polemics that overlook the underlying structural transformations in the East Asian regional economy that China’s long economic boom has spawned.

This book is distinguished from the other volumes by providing an integrated analysis of this transformation by an interdisciplinary group of scholars, employing empirical and detailed analysis. The book’s central theme is that Beijing’s vision of China’s peaceful rise in Asia is realistic, and one that the region could consider as plausible as it adjusts to China’s increasing influence. The editor claims this theme, widely contested throughout East Asia, was the object of two years of discussion and debate by the book’s contributors, which in the end produced a consensus on the theme’s credibility.

What all of the contributors have in common, whether writing on China’s impact on regional systems of finance, trade, manufacturing, educational and cultural exchange, or military relations, is their capacity to visualize China’s peaceful rise in Asia as entirely plausible.

Ellen Frost’s chapter examines China’s increasingly skillful practice of commercial diplomacy in East Asia, using Asia’s new regionalism to conclude free trade agreements (FTAs) with trade partners, arrangements that signify improved political ties. John Ravenhill’s chapter on China-ASEAN economic relations investigates the logical fallacies of the pessimistic view that China and ASEAN have zero-sum competition for foreign investment and export markets. Robert Ross contributed a chapter on balance of power politics in East Asia, further developing his thesis that a new bipolarity is emerging in the region as China and the US establish their separate spheres of influence.
Adam Segal, examining the security implications of China’s economic statecraft, argues there is much overlap with US security interests.

The editors conclude with a chapter on “China’s Peaceful Rise,” an optimistic forecasting of the possibility that China will experience a smooth and peaceful emergence in the region. This includes several assumptions: China’s long economic boom will persist, China’s military ambitions will remain limited and local, and Asia will respond to China’s rise with diverse and complex strategies rather than simple balancing or bandwagoning.

The point of considering the plausibility of China’s peaceful rise is not to predict what the future might hold but to prescribe strategies the US might pursue to adjust to and counter China’s rise. The volume’s contributors are concerned with the perceptible US disengagement from Asia and subsequent displacement by China in the region. US policy in Asia, especially in recent years, has been ad hoc, disjointed and contradictory, heavily influenced by single-issue interest groups and the media’s journalistic treatment of complicated issues. The book’s contributors anticipate that their project might assist in the construction of a comprehensive and integrated American policy for Asia, moving the US policy discussion on China beyond a simple engagement vs. containment dichotomy. This volume is a valuable contribution to the literature on Sino-American relations.

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This edited volume of papers from a conference at Cambridge University fills a notable gap in addressing citizenship in China from the perspective of those at the margins of society, exploring particularly the question of how “cultural citizenship” (often measured through “suzhi,” generally translated as “quality”) conditions access to social goods.

Such a focus on cultural citizenship follows the approach to the subject pioneered in the work of Aihwa Ong on the multiple identities of individuals in the context of global capitalism (e.g., Flexible citizenship: the cultural logics of transnationality, 1999, Durham, NC: Duke University Press). In opposition to the exclusive focus of earlier theorists on citizenship within the nation state, Ong’s work describes how globalization leads to the deterritorialization of national communities and thus unsettles relationships between individuals and states.

While the subject matter of all but one of the chapters in this book is firmly within China’s borders, it still reflects many of the themes emerging from Ong’s approach to citizenship. Norms and values related to global
capitalism are central to the “modernization discourses” (p. 6) that shape hierarchies of differential cultural citizenship in China. Another key theme is the tension between traditional paternalistic patterns of rule and attempts to limit state obligations to make people responsible for their own welfare.

The seven chapters examine particular instances of the formation of Chinese citizens through their interaction with state-sponsored institutions. The subject matter includes citizenship education in rural Jiangxi, through a TV programme on law and as part of the process of integrating “new arrivals” into Hong Kong society; the educational experiences of migrant children in major urban centres and of Tibetan children in minority regions; changing forms of local governance in Shanghai; and the aspirations of young mainlanders to First World citizenship.

Rachel Murphy’s chapter on citizenship education of cadres and farmers shows how neoliberal ideas are combined with campaign-style mobilization reminiscent of the Mao era in efforts to divest the state of its responsibilities for providing social goods while promoting capitalist economic development. This entails stressing the responsibilities of cadres and citizens, while downplaying conceptions of rights as state obligations. Considering both cadre training and education directed at farmers provides an insightful focus on the dynamics of the local state. It points to the dangers of a promised modernity that does not deliver the expected benefits to people struggling to conform to its hierarchies of value.

Yingchi Chu’s chapter analyzes a self-consciously didactic aspect of citizenship education in the PRC through the popular CCTV documentary “Legal report” (Jinri shuofa). The way this programme approached the legal disputes which were its daily fare reveals the conflict between newly created legal frameworks stressing rights and traditional views of justice based on morality, demonstrating a certain elite ambivalence about reliance on the law as a device for regulating society. A similar dynamic is apparent in Nicole Newendorp’s study of how social workers sought to inculcate “responsibility” into mainlanders who had moved to Hong Kong. These new arrivals were exhorted to be self-reliant and to exercise restraint in using the services provided by the state, regardless of their personal circumstances.

The conflict between formal equality and the protection of difference is inherent to the extension of citizenship rights to minorities. Lin Yi’s study of Tibetan middle-school students in Huangnan Autonomous Prefecture highlights how hierarchies of modernity and the fears of the state about ethnic cultural autonomy serve to devalue Tibetan culture, and thus force these young people and their parents into impossible choices that always end up compromising their own heritage so they can “catch up” with “advanced” culture.

Such contrasts point to the fact that citizenship is inherently dynamic, serving as a mechanism of incorporation, a line of exclusion and a site of contestation. Although this book shows how official hierarchies of modernity
are both contested and internalized by individuals, it does not always achieve its aim of observing how state and society are both mutually constitutive and “intertwined” (p. 8). Some of the case studies gloss over the actual processes through which the formation of citizens occurs, with “citizenship” becoming a placeholder for state/society relationships that are left unspecified. For example, in the chapter by Fong on the efforts of Chinese youth to attain First World citizenship through emigration and study it is unclear to what extent the state and its agents are involved in generating such desires.

Overall, this book is a welcome addition to the limited scholarship on citizenship in China. The handful of studies on the subject (notably Changing meanings of citizenship in modern China, eds. Merle Goldman and Elizabeth Perry, Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2002) have mainly concentrated on legal and political rights. With its focus on those struggling to keep up in China’s rush to “modernity,” the Fong and Murphy book points toward stimulating new directions for further research on citizenship.

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SOPHIA WOODMAN


This volume presents fresh and illuminating data and perspectives on democracy in China. In contrast to existing work on the topic, which focuses almost solely on “the spread of liberal democracy, understood in a minimalist, aggregative, electoral form” (p. 1), this may be the first dedicated English-language study of the “more participatory forms of democratic governance” (p. 2) that are emerging in China today.

In Part 1, leading Western theorists and practitioners of deliberative democracy (John Dryzek, James Fishkin and Geoffrey Stokes) review the concept and its practice. Proponents of deliberative democracy emerged in response to the “uncritical and triumphant celebration” of liberal democracy since the end of the Cold War (p. 3). They call for more meaningful public participation in politics, to supplement—and possibly even supplant—existing electoral democratic institutions. Specifically, they propose the creation of institutions and forums wherein citizens actually create policy, following the “best practices” of deliberation.

Part 2 examines “the application of the concept of deliberative democracy to China” (p. 8). Shawn Rosenberg argues that general problems with democratic deliberation are exacerbated by China’s cultural emphases on hierarchy and consensus. Ethan Lieb outlines his proposal for a “Popular Branch” of government in the US. For China, Daniel Bell proposes a neo-
Confucian deliberative branch, “selected by free and fair competitive examinations” (p. 154). Baogang He argues that, despite obvious constraints, genuine deliberation can—and indeed does—occur in contemporary “authoritarian” China.

Part 3 details actual cases of popular deliberation in China. Chen Shengyong looks at traditions of deliberation within China’s pre-revolutionary culture and history. Xu Jilin discusses a somewhat deliberative faculty policy debate at Beijing University. Qingshan Tan assesses the quality of popular deliberation in village-level institutions. Chapters by He, Dong Xuebing and Shi Jinchuan, and Fishkin, He, and Alice Siu discuss various local government-sponsored popular deliberative meetings that have concretely shaped policy decisions—especially in Wenling city (Zhejiang province). Perhaps most notably, in 2005, the government of Zeguo town (in Wenling) sponsored a “deliberative poll” to determine budget priorities. Under the technical advice of Fishkin et al., the local government randomly selected roughly 250 participants, who spent one day reviewing and discussing balanced expert analyses of various infrastructure projects, and then ranked their project priorities (p. 233). Subsequently, the participants’ collective rankings were endorsed as official policy (p. 240). Fishkin et al. believe that this “is the first case in modern times of fully representative and deliberative participatory budgeting” (p. 230). That this occurred in “authoritarians” China is quite astounding.

Despite considerable strengths, the volume has some shortcomings. Organizationally, there is a fair amount of repetition. In addition, the book concludes with a somewhat confusing case study. More substantively, the treatment of Chinese culture is over-simplified, and almost entirely ignores the Maoist period. Further, the authors work from the rather problematic assumption that China is moving in the direction of democratization (eg., pp. 162, 163, 246). Finally, although multiple authors assert that a certain level of economic development/prosperity is required before genuine deliberative democracy may emerge (pp. 190, 224, 241), the causal connection is not adequately clarified.

Nonetheless, the volume includes many thought-provoking findings. Perhaps most interestingly, it suggests that real deliberative democratic institutions may exist even without electoral democracy (pp. 146, 230, 256). In fact, some democratic political reforms (such as deliberative polling) actually may be easier in places like authoritarian China, where the rule of law is not well established, and government officials have greater procedural flexibility (pp. 146, 240). Given this, the authors challenge proponents of democratization in China to stop waiting for electoral democracy to emerge, and to start creating deliberative democracy—today.

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*TERESA WRIGHT*

Mao’s Last Revolution is a triumphant coda to Roderick Macfarquhar’s (1974, 1983, 1997) authoritative three-volume examination of the origins of the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Researched and written in partnership with another accomplished historian of modern China, Michael Schoenhals, Mao’s Last Revolution provides an exhaustively documented portrait of Chairman Mao’s manipulation and near destruction of the Chinese Communist Party during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). The authors’ finest contribution to the study of modern Chinese political history is their commitment to collect, sort and draw upon a wide and corroborating range of primary and secondary sources on this period. As a result, they are able to draw a much more complex and balanced picture of the motivations of Mao and other senior party leaders than we have had before. Extensive use of newly available memoirs and interviews, however, may have also led the authors to overemphasize the importance of personal politics to the detriment of other factors in their accounting of the unfolding events of the Cultural Revolution.

In Mao’s Last Revolution, Macfarquhar and Schoenhals argue that “Officials counted for more than institutions in China” (p. 452). They document with careful detail how Chairman Mao, the Chinese Communist Party’s most important official, launched the Cultural Revolution out of his fear of the party sliding into Soviet revisionism and his deep suspicion that senior leaders such as Liu Shaoqi might try to topple him. Mao’s Last Revolution shows that, despite later denials, Mao was well informed about unfolding political events on campuses and within the party itself. He directed key allies, such as his wife Jiang Qing, to begin the attack on select Beijing-based officials, and he provided timely endorsements to radical students resisting party-led work teams. At the same time, Mao provided very little direction to many of his oldest colleagues, who became increasingly confused and bewildered as to the scope and goals of the Cultural Revolution. Mao’s Last Revolution contends that, ultimately, Mao’s most powerful weapon for purifying the party and cementing his power was his ability to mislead some of his oldest colleagues into taking positions that would, with the aid of increasingly radicalized youth on campuses, lead to their downfall. As soon as his targets were weakened, Mao moved to have them purged from public life altogether. Such was the fate of Liu Shaoqi, one of the most senior victims of the Cultural Revolution.

In their portrayal of Mao the person and the more general elite-level struggles, Macfarquhar and Schoenhals offer a balanced view, not falling prey to caricaturing Mao as evil incarnate—a weakness some critics attribute to Jung Chang and Jon Halliday’s (2005) portrait, Mao: The Untold Story. While the authors do not shy away from revisiting the incredible violence of
the Cultural Revolution and Mao’s direct role in encouraging it (including his apparent praise of Hitler’s desire to kill many people, p. 102), they do not ignore Mao’s role in rehabilitating some of the same leaders he originally purged. For example, Macfarquhar and Schoenhals fully credit Mao, as opposed to Zhou Enlai, with initiating the rehabilitation of select senior party leaders in the aftermath of the Lin Biao aborted coup in 1971. Nor do the authors overlook the culpability of others in Cultural Revolution violence, including Deng Xiaoping’s lesser-known decision to use the PLA against protesting Muslims in Shadian, Yunnan in 1975; and they acknowledge the responsibility of the many societal participants who contributed to the chaos and violence of the Cultural Revolution. Although *Mao’s Last Revolution* is first and foremost a study of elite politics with little reference to societal motivations, the authors’ inclusion of anecdotes about the grassroots (including a middle school student’s testimonial of being paid to kill “enemies” for profit, pp. 204-205) reminds the reader to question a view of political history that negates the agency of everyday participants.

The authors, nonetheless, do tend to emphasize the highly personalized nature of politics of the period. Of course, a focus on the personalized nature of the Cultural Revolution is far from new. However, this power is never fully defined nor theorized by the authors. On the one hand, I would have liked to have seen a greater theoretical accounting of these personal politics, especially the role that marital, extra-marital, and family relations played during the Cultural Revolution. Particularly striking is the credence Macfarquhar and Schoenhals give to recountings of the role of sexual innuendo in power struggles played out at all levels of the party. Do these findings simply confirm Jin Qiu’s (1999) assertion in *The Culture of Power* of the importance of families (and family secrets) in Chinese politics, or are they also perhaps evidence of a particular bias in the memoir and interview sources upon which both Macfarquhar/Schoenhals and Jin Qiu have drawn? As yet unclear is how much of the CCP’s personal politics is based in “fact” or in the repeated accusations and assertions of memoirs based on rumors and half-imagined pasts (the 1966 defamation and defense of Lin Biao’s wife, Ye Qun, being the most bizarre example, pp. 34-35). Macfarquhar and Schoenhals’ repeated documentation of the role of sexual scandals suggests there is the need for further investigation into and understanding of the party family as discourse, especially as recounted in the memoir genre.

On the other hand, the authors themselves provide evidence that personal elements were not the only determining factors in the struggles of the period. In the course of their recounting of Mao’s role in the Cultural Revolution, for example, Macfarquhar and Schoenhals provide important evidence that Mao’s ability to maneuver was stifled by the organizations he created and/or aligned with during the early days of the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, some of the greatest hindrances to Mao’s ability to implement decisions were caused by institutions: a fractious Central Cultural Revolution
Group, the organization Mao established to carry out his revolution; an increasingly militarized central government; and the ministries Mao had to rely on to carry out the complex tasks of running a nation. As a political scientist I would like to have seen a more systematic exploration of the role of these institutions and their relationship to the execution of power.

In the final analysis, Mao’s Last Revolution is a masterful portrait of an extremely complex period and will prove essential reading for future students of the Cultural Revolution. Indeed, until further sources become available, it stands as the penultimate account of elite politics during the most tumultuous decade of the People’s Republic of China.

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KIMBERLEY ENS MANNING


Professor Waley-Cohen’s latest book provides an innovative look at the role played by military culture in the Qing imperial project. This book also helps to de-centre China in our understanding of the Qing by directing our attention to the complex processes by which the Qing emperors sought to establish and preserve their rule over a multi-ethnic empire. As Waley-Cohen points out, one of the difficulties confronting the Qing rulers was the need to adopt different public personas when interacting with different audiences. Their Chinese subjects expected the Qing rulers to conform to Chinese political norms that emphasized wen (the civil); indeed, the adoption of Chinese imperial practices was an important first step in the supposedly inexorable process of sinicization. Yet from the Qing standpoint, Chinese expectations clashed with both the imperative of dynastic self-preservation and the realities of a multi-ethnic empire. The sad fate of the earlier Jin dynasty provided a powerful lesson on the perils of sinicization, and Qing rulers were determined to avoid any erosion of their own martial vigour. Moreover, Qing rulers felt compelled to emphasize their wu (the martial) when dealing with their non-Chinese subjects, and sought to enhance their imperial prestige by laying claim to antecedents dating back to the conquest empires of Chingghis and Khubilai Khan. The need to appear as masters of both the civil and the military pressured the Qing rulers to adopt a Janus-like persona, emphasizing wu when facing Inner Asia and wen while facing China.

The Culture of War in China is a study of how the Qianlong emperor sought to reconcile the conflicting expectations of his diverse subjects. Central to
this endeavour was Qianlong’s campaign to militarize culture through the “injection of military and imperial themes into almost every sphere of cultural life” (p. xii). As Waley-Cohen notes, this was not an attempt to emphasize the martial at the expense of the civil, but rather to balance the two, all with the intention of enhancing Qing legitimacy in the eyes of both Chinese and non-Chinese subjects by creating a “uniquely Qing form of national identity” (p. 26). In addition to a new introductory chapter and conclusion, the heart of the book consists of four chapters previously published as articles. While the introduction provides a succinct overview of the main themes of the book, the second chapter explores the ways in which Qianlong commemorated his military victories over the course of his long reign. Qianlong was determined to control his image, and Waley-Cohen provides a fascinating look at how he carefully constructed the public record of his accomplishments by means of a variety of commemorative media such as stelae, paintings, buildings, written texts and rituals. The third chapter examines the role of religion in the empire-building campaigns of the mid-Qing. While this chapter is somewhat out of step with the book’s emphasis on military culture, it does serve to illustrate both the problems encountered by the Qing rulers in creating a multi-ethnic empire and their resourcefulness in manipulating culture to further their imperial ambitions. The fourth chapter provides a rare examination of the role played by military rituals in the popularization of martial values. The final chapter focuses on the Qing promotion of martial virtues as a means of avoiding the erosion of Manchu military power while simultaneously promoting a new blended culture that could serve as a unifying force within their multi-ethnic empire.

This book is carefully researched and well written. While none of the information is new, having already appeared in various journals, its incorporation into one volume makes it easier for the reader to appreciate the importance of Waley-Cohen’s contribution to our understanding of the Qing.

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COLIN GREEN


Ruth Hayhoe has written a rich and valuable book that captures the history leading to current educational thought and practice in the People’s Republic of China (PRC) through engaging portraits of leading educators and prominent universities. Her extensive past research into the history of
Chinese higher education, as well as nearly three decades of interaction with Chinese scholars, underpin these narratives and reinforce her conclusions.

The book begins with an explanation of the author’s use of “portraits” to characterize both educators and their institutions, stressing the importance of narrative as a mode of understanding. This opening chapter also presents a concise sketch of Confucian and Neo-Confucian approaches to learning and life development, for these have informed both the educational philosophies and the life trajectories of many of the book’s subjects. Nearly all the remaining chapters interweave life histories (based on interviews, published writings and unpublished material) of prominent educators with histories of the institutions at which they studied and have taught. These narratives capture the experiences of two cohorts of educators, one born in the 1910s and early 1920s, who received primary and secondary education before the second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), and one born from the late 1920s onward, who grew up in a context of war, revolution and socialist construction.

Reconstructing these life and institutional histories allows Professor Hayhoe to trace materially how past Confucian, American progressive, or Soviet patterns of educational thought and practice, as crystallized in specific life experiences, have informed scholars’ reconceptualization of education in China’s Reform period (1978-present). This genealogy allows students of Chinese education to grasp the complex intellectual underpinnings of Reform-era education. It will also be valuable to anyone concerned with understanding how academic, scientific and technical circles in the contemporary PRC have been shaped by pre-Maoist patterns of thought and culture. Professor Hayhoe reveals that early twentieth-century echoes in current educational theory and practice result from a reformulation of specific concepts and methods in new conditions by well-placed individuals whose life experiences connect them directly to sishu, progressive schools, or cadre training programmes, where those ideas were once taught. This life-history method could be used productively in other fields to explain how early twentieth-century paradigms have found new purpose in early twenty-first-century China.

The book is also eminently valuable for students of comparative education, for many of Professor Hayhoe’s well-chosen subjects have creatively integrated strains of Confucian, American progressive, and Marxist educational theory to produce new approaches to education. These approaches speak to the current situation of the PRC and provide examples of how foreign paradigms can be integrated into a new cultural context that has distinct socio-economic patterns (e.g., pp. 284-5, 318-9). Just as importantly, Professor Hayhoe demonstrates how Chinese educational scholars are developing theoretical approaches, drawn from multiple
historical influences, that can inform global understandings of modern education. Most striking among these synthetic formulations might be how several scholars creatively integrate elements of Confucian theories of self-cultivation with strategies from American progressive education to stress the need for subjective development of creative individuals who can contribute to society (e.g., pp. 220-4, 286-7, 316-7, 353-4). Professor Hayhoe’s introductions to these scholars’ writings are meant to be suggestive, not comprehensive, but undoubtedly will stimulate many readers’ interest in further exploration of their fascinating work.

Finally worth noting are Professor Hayhoe’s succinct accounts of her own interactions with these educators and connections with these institutions. These accounts enable the reader to situate the author in relation to the book’s narratives. They also document the renewed internationalization of Chinese education over the past three decades, a process in which both the author and her subjects have played prominent roles.

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ROBERT CULP


Baumler’s ambitious revision goes beyond most specialist work to assert that the Nationalists reduced opium, commonly seen as at the root of all Republican China’s evils, to a minor social problem by 1940.

In the first two chapters, covering the Opium War (1839-42) through the Qing dynasty’s 1911 demise, Baumler explains the drug’s evolution as a socio-political problem. The critical shift occurred in the late 1870s, when concepts of addiction, characterizing opium as a mortal social disease, entered China from the West. Chapter 4 examines warlord China’s primary state-building strategy of fiscal exploitation of opium revenues, a position in diametric contrast to the contemporary international consensus that all opium dependency should be gradually eliminated. The development of the current position, which is based on new concepts of addiction, is examined in chapter 3.

The book’s core interest is the Nanjing period (1927-37), discussed in chapters five to eight, when Chiang Kai-shek laboured to subject fellow warlords to central government authority through control over opium, meaning both Nationalist opium monopolization and prohibition in a context of conflicting social attitudes towards the drug. A highlight is the author’s exploitation of the bewildering fragmentation of China to present
a series of comparative regional studies elucidating each regime’s changing relationship to the opium traffic. Chiang’s regime exemplifies state exploitation of opium revenue, while denying it to rivals, although it is not always clear how Nanjing ended its drug dependency. Baumler’s most significant and controversial assertion here is that Chiang’s centrepiece Six Year Plan to Eliminate Opium (1935-40) was successful despite genuine problems. Even the outbreak of war with Japan in 1937, covered in chapter 9, did not mean opium reduction was relegated to the status of a minor concern.

Strong affirmation of the sincerity and efficacy of Nanjing’s opium policies distinguishes Baumler’s work from every other recent major study cited by the author. In contrast to the portrayal of Nanjing as either cynical or hopelessly conflicted about opium, Baumler sees calculated exploitation of both drug revenue and prohibition, largely detached from considerations of morality, especially at the individual level. Baumler concludes that it is unnecessary to see Chiang as moral in order to accept that his regime was sincere about opium control.

Baumler rightly emphasizes structural influences on individual actions. Indeed, the book would have benefited from a more extended application of this approach to a review of the subfield’s burgeoning literature in order to produce a more nuanced employment of the structure of existing scholarship. Several major PRC studies cited by the author, for example, explicitly praise aspects of the Nationalist plan, but provide evidence that a familiar combination of Japanese machinations and Nationalist failings undermined it. Given the book’s radical revisionism, a more explicit engagement with this contrary evidence would have been helpful.

Nevertheless, positions on such issues much depend on one’s interpretation both of Nationalist state sources and of communist anti-opium campaigns. Essentially, Baumler accepts the basic veracity of the Nationalists’ record, and so concludes that, well before its end, the regime had reduced opium to “an ordinary social problem,” much more easily solvable by Nanjing’s communist successors (p. 237).

This conclusion, and its supporting argument, is the central significance of Baumler’s book and the reason it should be read, and critically considered, by all serious scholars in the field. From the perspective of my own work on Qing prohibition before the Opium War, I, for example, would disagree with several of Baumler’s interpretations, especially his emphasis on Republican China’s numerous, radical breaks with past Qing opium practices. Such views, nevertheless, reflect a profession’s, rather than an individual’s, obsession with modernity’s uniqueness and certainly do not negate the book’s implicit rationale for a re-examination of some of the subfield’s axioms.
As China gains more and more prominence as an economic superpower, the pressure it exerts on the geo-political status of Taiwan intensifies. As the recent (and by now familiar) squabble over whether a film like Ang Lee’s *Lust, Caution* should be entered into the Venice Film Festival under “Taiwan” or “Taiwan, China” indicates that, any consideration of Taiwan’s history, politics or culture within a “national” framework would become mired in geo-political arguments. Avoiding the pitfalls of such an unproductive debate, *Cinema Taiwan* by its very title defines its object of study not as a “national cinema” but rather as a “place where Taiwan is located by movies” (p. 8). *Cinema Taiwan* thus understands “Taiwan” not in any geo-political national imaginary but rather as a distinct location that is continually made and remade through a media that is both local and transnational.

One of the book’s distinctive traits is the prominence it gives to films other than the Taiwan New Cinema, a venerable body of films that have dominated critical attention for more than two decades. While the book acknowledges and indeed studies the profound influence and significance of the New Cinema, it devotes more than two-thirds of its space to other films: works of younger directors who arrived on the scene a generation later than the New Cinema auteurs (Berry, Martin); film genres that fall outside of the purview of New Cinema, such as the more explicitly political tradition of “new documentary” (Chiu), and commercialized forms like martial arts epics (Chang, Rist), Hollywood-style thrillers (Chen), and animation (Davis); as well as films produced in Mainland China that portray Taiwan (Chi).

When the book does study works of New Cinema auteurs, it offers provocatively fresh and unorthodox perspectives, such as the extreme close-up looks at, respectively, the precise moment in *Good Men Good Women* when Hou Hsiao-Hsien abandoned his signature static camera movement (Udden) and the opening credits of Tsai Ming-Liang’s *Goodbye Dragon Inn* (Liu). There is also a meticulous study of the discursive twists and turns of local critical reactions to the increased canonization of New Cinema in international film festival circuits (Wu). This article is particularly valuable as it demonstrates both the historical specificity and the transnational character of film reception. It also echoes the brief but astute analysis in the Preface and Introduction of the enabling and limiting consequences of a cinema fetishized by international critical attention.

The book thus reflects not only the diversity of “Cinema Taiwan” but also that of its criticism. True to its editors’ characterization of Taiwan films
as “heterogeneous” and “unsettled” (p. 3), the films studied as well as the methods used to study them resist neat, coherent categorization. Such “diversity and disunity” (p. 5) contribute precisely to the creative and critical vitality of “Cinema Taiwan.” It thus seems perplexing to me that so loaded a metaphor as “civilizing mission”—which inevitably evokes colonial or class-specific endeavours to transform a lesser people—is used in the Introduction to (unconvincingly) cohere this most unpredictable, dynamic, and non-dogmatic cinema. Such a metaphor adds an unnecessarily didactic burden to the book’s subject matter and does neither the cinema nor this most thoughtful and eclectic study justice.

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HELEN HOK-SZE LEUNG


This is a brilliant and beautifully written book which ought to be read not just by historians of Japan, but also by anyone interested in understanding how national political economies around the world, now as in the past, are influenced, for good or ill, by the international monetary system and the financial power structures embodied in it. Given a subject—the gold standard—liable to cause readers to glaze over within a few pages, it is an enormous achievement to have written a history that is at times gripping and which does not shy away from the human triumphs and tragedies that even international finance, it seems, can produce. While providing exceptionally clear explanations of the monetary issues involved, Metzler is not afraid to be at times moving or funny, to sweep across history or to home in on human detail. He thus succeeds, against all the odds, in making monetary history comprehensible, empathetic and relevant.

As well as being a good read, however, the book breaks new ground in two particular areas. For those in the Japan field, it places the political and economic developments that eventually led to Japanese involvement in war in Asia and the Pacific clearly within the context of an international system, dominated at first by Britain and then by the US, with which Japan, as a peripheral industrializing country, had somehow to accommodate itself. Accession to the gold-standard system, as advocated by Inoue Junnosuke, the sometime Bank of Japan governor and finance minister who is the tragic hero of the book, enabled Japan to take advantage of international capital flows at crucial points—international loans financed much of the cost of the Russo-Japanese War and other aspects of Japan’s imperial expansion, as well as large swathes of infrastructure investment in the 1920s—and to gain a
foothold, at least, within the charmed circles of the British and American finance houses that determined a nation’s status in the financial world. But it also meant acceding to the rules of the liberal game—basically, dealing with trade deficits by means of deflationary domestic policies—and somehow bearing with the resulting domestic political costs, as Japan, like other countries, struggled to cope with the financial aftermath of World War I. Inoue paid the ultimate price for his intellectual and moral commitment to the liberal gold-standard system; he was assassinated by a right-wing extremist on Tokyo Station in 1932, while his opponent, Takahashi Korekiyo, took Japan off the gold standard and, as well as launching a “Keynesian” demand expansion programme, began the process of putting in place the banking structures and institutions of state control that were to insulate the Japanese economy from the international financial system, not just in wartime, but also through the postwar economic miracle which, many would argue, they helped to make possible.

Hence, the book is also path-breaking because the moral of the story Metzler tells resonates well beyond prewar Japan’s particular circumstances. It is not difficult to draw out the family resemblances between the Japanese banking crises of the 1920s, involving as they did crony capitalism, moral hazard and international capital flows, and the Asian financial crisis of 1997, or to see in the policy prescriptions of the great international bankers of the interwar years—loans tied to the pursuit of “correct” (i.e., deflationary) budgetary policies—the forerunners of IMF and World Bank structural adjustment packages. What Metzler succeeds in showing is that, in the global economy that existed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as today, the international financial system was a key battleground in the struggle for economic and political power, with profound influence over what might otherwise be thought to have been purely domestically determined outcomes. Then as now, governments had to choose to opt in or opt out, but the suggestion must be that the conjunction of forces that drove Japan to opt out in the 1930s in the long run ensured its position as one of the arbiters of today’s international financial system.

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Penelope Francks


Comparative studies on welfare systems have been swinging between convergence and divergence for several decades. Many books have already been published in this field, ranging from Wilensky of the 1960s to Esping-Andersen since the 1990s. The latter made a breakthrough in comparative
studies with a focus on divergence by introducing the three welfare regimes. Until today, divergence theorists have been so overwhelming that few dare to speak about similarities among welfare states in the industrialized world. In this context it is exciting to see that Gregory J. Kasza entitles his book *One World of Welfare*, implying his scientific ambition to build a bridge between the debates on convergence and divergence of welfare states. Kasza’s study targets Japan’s policies on health, pensions and employment so as to achieve a comprehensive picture of various images of Japan’s public welfare.

Besides, the regional scope of comparison is no longer limited to experiences from the Western industrialized societies. Rather, the non-Western world is attracting more attention than before. In his article of 1997 Esping-Andersen himself attempted to venture into Asia by considering Japan’s location in the three welfare regimes and the possibility of a fourth regime, that is, an East Asian welfare regime. Japan was placed somewhere between the three welfare regimes; East Asia was not given its own welfare regime. However, Japan is not the only case that does not fit too well into any of these regimes. Esping-Andersen once reminded us that he did not intend to draw comparisons between welfare states but instead provided the theoretical framework based on three “d”s (decommodification, destratification and defamilialization) to explain the divergence of welfare provision systems.

Not a few researchers in Japan and beyond regard that country as a welfare laggard and underline “weak” state commitment to welfare and a “distinctive” approach to welfare. Kasza challenges these conventional views with a comprehensive case study on Japan and comparative theories. Kasza scrutinizes the formation of welfare policies in Japan from a historical perspective in relation to the advance of industrialization and the effects of foreign models. War-time (1937-1945) was an important period, with significant impacts on the long-term development of Japan’s welfare. As for the latter half of the twentieth century, the increase of Japan’s welfare spending appears modest compared to the rapid economic growth. According to Kasza (chapter 3), the measurement of welfare spending as a percentage of GDP does not lead to acclaim for those countries with cost-effective programmes, such as Japan’s health care. Cultural determinism is a convenient justification for emphasis on uniqueness, and this temptation towards a closed world is strong when the question is a case from the non-Western world (see chapter 4).

After reviewing non-Western welfare model(s) such as the East Asian model (chapter 5), Kasza continues the discussion by providing critical assessments of regime theory (chapters 6 and 7). For those with an interest in comparative theories, the latter part of this book would be the most attractive. Numerous researchers have already pointed out various inconsistencies, anomalies and imbalances in the typology of welfare regimes. Kasza’s attempt at relocating Japan in welfare regimes touches a sore spot
that regime theory has neglected. Some of the statistics referred to in chapter 6 could be updated, rather than relying on data from the 1980s. Nevertheless, Kasza’s standpoint is clear: scholars should not subordinate their observations to the world of ideal types. Beyond the limited scope of typology on differences, Kasza proposes a broader comparative perspective that could be more meaningful in considering the sustainability of the welfare state. This excellent book merits the broad attention of scholars working in the field of comparative welfare studies in different parts of the world.

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*MUTSUKO TAKAHASHI*

**POWER AND PORK: A Japanese Political Life. By Aurelia George Mulgan.**  

On 28 May 2007, Agriculture Minister Matsuoka Toshikatsu was found hanging by a rope in his parliamentarians’ housing unit. The first incumbent cabinet minister in Japan’s postwar era to commit suicide, Matsuoka had been hounded by allegations of dubious campaign finance methods and influence peddling. Aurelia George Mulgan’s *Pork and Power* was published about a year before Matsuoka’s suicide, but it provides a richly descriptive account of his rise from non-elite government bureaucrat into a powerbroker in the agricultural policy subgovernment. The book is intended to serve as a “counterweight to the tendency among political scientists to try to reduce the detail and variation in political phenomena to numbers or to highly selective illustrations of deductive theory” (p. 3). Mulgan’s findings are mainly based upon secondary sources, rather than interviews with Matsuoka or key insiders. Yet this arms-length approach may be justified, given the cloud of controversy in which Matsuoka was perpetually enveloped.

The first two substantive chapters trace Matsuoka’s path from impoverished farm boy through a lengthy stint as an Agriculture Ministry bureaucrat to his election to the Diet’s Lower House. Mulgan ascribes great significance to the inferiority complex Matsuoka contracted from being a “technical specialist” with a forestry degree from a lesser university in a ministry whose administrative elite is composed of generalist law faculty graduates of Japan’s most prestigious universities. Running unendorsed by either the Agriculture Ministry or the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in his initial electoral foray, Matsuoka managed to eke out a victory in the 1990 campaign and subsequently joined the LDP. Mulgan devotes considerable effort to describing Matsuoka’s oftentimes *sub rosa* strategies for organizing the vote and raising the hefty sums of money needed to pursue a political career.

Subsequent chapters follow Matsuoka’s ascent through the various party, legislative and governmental posts that oversee the agricultural policy
subgovernment. After becoming known as a norin giin, a representative of agricultural and forestry interests, Matsuoka pressed on to gain recognition as a member of the norin zoku, the “tribe” of powerbrokers in agricultural policy. Along the way, Matsuoka threatened to destroy the careers of government officials who refused to accede to his demands, peddled influence for money, and willfully disregarded the law and the opinions of others. A bully with no qualms about the political, social and economic costs of his clientelistic politics, Matsuoka makes for an exceedingly dislikable protagonist. The final substantive chapters recount the relationship with Suzuki Muneo, his diabolical—albeit fictive—“identical twin” and co-master of the agricultural policy realm, and Matsuoka’s disingenuous conversion to the cause of environmental protectionism and support for Prime Minister Koizumi’s reform efforts.

One of Mulgan’s objectives is to portray the power wielded by an LDP back-bencher in affecting policy outcomes. She convincingly shows how Matsuoka represented a clutch of special interests—such as the owners of forestry and meat-packing companies, as well as construction contractors—while invariably claiming credit for the delivery of pork-barrel benefits to his electoral district. By focusing on the political career of an old-style LDP politician, Mulgan also attempts to shed some light on the degree to which Koizumi’s new leadership model has become institutionalized. Yet Mulgan does not connect her analysis of Matsuoka to the scholarly literatures on the rise and role of policy tribalists, vote mobilizing and fundraising techniques of candidates for elective office, and so on. By so doing, she misses a golden opportunity to place Matsuoka’s “political life” in the broader context of Japanese politics. Nevertheless, Pork and Power is such a richly descriptive account of the rise of a particular powerbroker—and a prologue to his fall—that it deserves to be read and should provide plenty of material for those who happen to be in the business of looking for generalizations.

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BRIAN WOODALL


Many studies of the US Occupation of Japan, 1945-52, focus exclusively on major political and economic reforms in this brief period and their influence on Japan’s development as a democratic-pacifist state and a dynamic economy in the postwar period. The implication often is that postwar Japan is a product of American Occupation reforms.
This book offers a different approach, examining the Occupation from a variety of different perspectives. Two things stand out in this study. First, the several authors discuss reforms in areas of Japanese society seldom mentioned by other scholars. They describe and analyze, for example, food policy (Fuchs); managing Japanese fisheries in international waters (Guthrie-Shimizu); labour legislation and gender equality (Toyoda); crime and narcotics, a topic we have heard little about (Friman); educational reform and history textbooks (Nozaki); the reform of Japan’s health care system (Sugita); the political status of Koreans in Japan (Caprio); Japan’s relations with China (Guthrie-Shimizu); and economic relations with the US (Barnhart).

Second, the Occupation period reforms are placed in a broader historical context than is usual. Apparently the editors and contributors agreed to consider the effects of both prewar and wartime governments on policies of the Occupation reforms. This was an excellent decision. Earlier studies often ignored the influence of Japan’s recent past on reforms implemented during the Occupation. Equally important, most of the authors wisely give attention to the long-term effects of these reforms on Japanese society in the decades after the Occupation years.

Personnel continuity of Japan’s bureaucrats is a general theme in several of the studies. It is true that most prewar and wartime civil servants remained in their posts. This was the case in the Welfare Ministry, the Ministry of Education, and other ministries, and this helped resolved critical problems. Space restrictions prevent comments on each of the several studies. I will comment on two topics that have received little attention in previous studies: food shortages and fisheries. The chapters that address these two topics provide excellent analyses of the issues within the context of the Occupation.

Food shortages, for example, slowed economic recovery by creating black markets and caused Occupation authorities to continue relying on wartime practices that made Japan an important market for American agricultural products. Japan’s fishing industry, an important source of food for the country, was greatly restricted because of the breakup of the Japanese empire. Occupation officials and neighbouring countries imposed severe restrictions on areas where the Japanese could fish. Not until the 1950s was Japan permitted by international agreement to fish beyond a twelve-mile limit.

The study of educational reform and history textbooks in Occupied Japan (chapter 5) provides an excellent account of how the Occupation’s democratic reforms involved censorship in the schools and the media. When American policy changed (“reverse course”) in 1948-49, imperialist and ultranationalist bureaucrats, who had been purged, returned to office and restricted debate in school books and classrooms on war responsibility and national identity. The Occupation’s strict censorship to “assure democratic education” was based on the condescending attitude that the “Japanese public received daily reminders of their inferior status” from American officials.
This book, in short, offers a refreshingly new approach to the study of the seven years of the American Occupation of Japan. The authors of each of the studies and the editors are to be congratulated for their successful efforts to look in a new way at this important period of Japanese and American history.

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The expression “Japanese nationalism” typically evokes images of the “official nationalism,” in Benedict Anderson’s phrase, of Meiji-era modernization or the authoritarian nationalism of Japan’s wartime aggression. Kevin Doak offers a highly welcome corrective to the view that nationalism in Japan is simply a handmaiden of the state. This volume brings together ideas Doak has developed over a number of essays. Not simply a collection of those essays, this new work provides a coherent critique of the sloppy thinking that informs many discussions of the topic. He argues that nationalism is fundamentally the principle of constituting the cultural and political identity of a people as a collective subject. Nationality and state may align, as in the conventional examples above. More often, nationality and state, and also different conceptions of nationality, are in some sort of contestation, even open conflict, with each other. Tracing the idea of nationality through elite intellectual opinion in modern Japan, Doak provides an impressive catalog of nationality discourse, deeply engaging Western and especially Japanese scholarship along the way.

For many readers, this volume will be daunting and even unsettling. To convey the nuance of Japanese debates, Doak organizes his discussion under four key Japanese-language terms for understanding nationalism: tennō, the focus of national unity on the quasi-religious monarch; shakai, the social community of modernity; kokumin, the civic unity and sovereignty of the people; and minzoku, the notion of primordial, historical or organic ethnic unity. He tackles the issue of precursors to modern nationalism, but argues that the project of nationalism is not operational until modern discourses formulated, reinterpreted and debated these key concepts. The core of the book, therefore, is its four parallel and interlaced narratives, tracing each concept from the Meiji period until the present. This structure and its array of historical figures and settings will challenge non-specialist readers, who will need to jump back and forth between chapters. The four narratives assume, more than spell out, the critical 1930s controversies, which the author
and others have covered elsewhere but which might be necessary background for readers seeking a one-volume treatment. Readers in search of an institutional or mass cultural history of Japanese nationalism will also need to look elsewhere. The work is, nevertheless, ambitious with wide applicability.

Now, the unsettling part. Doak’s careful analysis highlights conceptual affiliations usually hidden from foreign observers and which are counter-intuitive, given popular vilification of Japanese nationalism. For example, civil progressive thinkers scorned cultural exceptionalist theorists, whether they were prewar cultural nationalists or postwar Nihonjinron advocates, even though both groups shared a deep mistrust of the state in defining their conceptions of society. Populist nationalists on the right and left, in other instances, shared in their antagonism for the seemingly progressive civic nationalism of the postwar “peace” state, which, in their view, imposed a broad unity similar to that demanded by the wartime state. Doak notices these odd alliances, in part, due to his sympathy, in the narrow sense of the term, for nationalism. He notes that nationalism is necessary to fascism, but so too is it essential to democracy. He thus looks upon current nationalist politicians in Japan without the knee-jerk opprobrium of the international news media. Readers will need to judge whether Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, by other characterizations as right-leaning a Gaullist as has served in the post, deserves Doak’s comparatively optimistic portrayal. Many other prominent figures appear differently in the light cast on them. Puzzling through the implications of this perspective is ultimately the book’s reward.

In sum, Kevin Doak has produced a work of deep erudition and complexity.

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MICHAEL A. SCHNEIDER


Public signs occupying urban space in modern Tokyo, a research topic which the author labels the linguistic landscape and which he promotes as a new but promising sociolinguistics sub-discipline. The premise is that a city is not only a place where people talk, but a place where they also write and read and, in this case, do so in a variety of scripts and languages. The language of public signs, that often bewildering array of written messages on public display in Tokyo, in a dazzling variety of languages and scripts these days, constitutes the linguistic landscape of the city, and this book attempts to not only introduce the study of language on such signs but also to show what insights
about multilingualism and language contact can be gained from such research.

An extremely short first chapter of three pages lays out the rationale for the study of linguistic landscapes, as well as a brief synopsis of the succeeding chapters. A second chapter provides a theoretical introduction to the study of language on signs, exploring their semiotic properties and introducing a terminological distinction between the process and the results of linguistic landscape actions. A third chapter, by far the richest chapter in the monograph, provides an overview of previous approaches to language on signs from a variety of settings around the world. The author reviews studies from monolingual, bilingual and multilingual environments from North America, Europe, Africa and Asia, drawing attention to the fact that there are many points of commonality despite differing research environments and research interests. A fourth chapter follows this drift, firmly establishing a link between the theoretical and empirical part of the book, which follows in the fifth chapter. The overall framework for the study of the linguistic landscape is based on three guiding questions that focus on the sign writers, the sign readers, and the dynamics of the language contact situation, respectively. These focal points can be conveniently summarized in the following three questions: Linguistic landscaping by whom? Linguistic landscaping for whom? Linguistic landscape quo vadis? (Where is it going?)

A fifth chapter then analyzes the sample of 2444 multilingual signs collected in the centre of Tokyo in 2003. The data are categorized on the basis of nine critical features, namely, the languages contained, combination patterns, the differences between official and non-official signs, their geographical distribution, availability of translation or transliteration, the order of the languages combined, the visibility of the multilingual nature of the signs, linguistic idiosyncrasies and, lastly, whether there are and what are the differences between older and newer versions of a given sign when they do coexist. Chapter 6 finishes the exposition with a simple six-page summary drawing general conclusions about Tokyo’s linguistic landscape.

There is no question that the author’s presentation of previous studies around the world, and the way in which they reflect the interaction of language contact situations and language policy, is enormously interesting. Equally compelling is the core chapter in the book (roughly half the text at 76 pages) detailing Backhaus’s case study of public signs in Tokyo and the ways in which these reflect the dimensions of multilingualism in that city. The one objection that might be raised is that the author is at times too concerned with demonstrating the scientific basis of the study. Even the average professional reader will simply be satisfied with the fascinating features of the array of signs he presents.

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Joseph F. Kess

Until less than a decade ago, scholarly works on Japanese food were notable by their absence. Cwiertka’s new book is a welcome addition to this literature. The driving thesis of this book is the exploration of the historical and political processes and influences from abroad—nowadays called “globalization”—that have shaped Japanese cuisine. This effect has become most notable in the nineteenth and subsequent centuries, as Japan has become more exposed to the West.

Following a brief introduction in which the author outlines her theoretical framework, subsequent chapters outline the various stages of the transformation of Japanese cuisine from the nineteenth century. These include the influence of the West upon the opening of Japan; urban gastronomy; the influence of war, imperialism and militarism; and the impact of rapid economic growth in postwar Japan. An important chapter concludes the book: the influence of Japanese cuisine and food worldwide. This has been documented by other writers, but alas, mainly in Japanese, so Cwiertka’s addition is a timely one.

This book will find an audience beyond scholars interested in Japanese food. It contains a great deal of historical information about intra-Asian cultural influences. It will thus be of interest to scholars in Asian studies, cultural studies and popular history.

The single most important contribution this book offers is a minute and detailed examination of the effects of Japanese militarism, wars and imperialism on the Japanese diet. Soldiers returning from duty starting with the Russo-Japanese war brought back to their villages and neighbourhoods a familiarity with European-based foods that had hitherto been unknown or largely unavailable to the average Japanese. The demand for beef and Western vegetables—largely an elite and urban phenomenon during the early Meiji period—became widespread following the return of the soldiers. This closely related to the then-government’s ideological position, which supported Westernization at all cost.

I was particularly struck by the use of detailed data from the overseas colonial period, which has been addressed only fleetingly by others. This includes recipes and menus form the Imperial Army, and the examination of the influence of the then radical ideas relating to proper nutrition.

I have one major criticism of this book. While it is extremely detailed in discussing Japanese phenomena, the author makes little effort to connect the Japanese case to other, similar cases worldwide. This theoretical dimension, I feel, would have enhanced the book to a great degree. For
example, the “sinicization” of Japanese cuisine following the Manchurian adventure parallels very closely the rise of *chinoiserie* in the British and French empires at a slightly earlier period. Another important issue the author discusses, but does not put into context, is the interplay between political power relations (e.g., between the Japanese and Chinese empires) and the attitudes towards foreign cuisines. A final chapter, in which the insights gained from the rest of the book are presented against some theoretical framework, would also have been desirable. A final, minor and subjective, quibble is that Cwiertka seems completely uninvolved and dispassionate about the subject of food: specific items aside, the book could have been about industrial development or political ideas, rather than something as fundamental and intimate as food.

Notwithstanding the few weaknesses, Cwiertka’s book is a worthwhile and important addition to the growing corpus of material about Japanese cuisine and its influence worldwide.

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MICHAEL ASHKENAZI

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In this book Ducke tackles the difficult and important question of how Internet usage by civil society groups is affecting democracy in Japan. The author investigates how citizen organizations are using the Internet to affect political outcomes through two issue area case studies: the 2001 history textbook controversy and the 2003 Iraq War debate. Ducke also conducts a comparative study of nonprofit umbrella organizations in Japan, Korea and Germany.

The book’s main finding is that the Internet is currently underutilized by civil society organizations. Most groups employed only very basic technologies such as a simple home page or an e-mail mailing list. Direct personal contact continued to play a major role for networking between groups and for new member recruitment, limiting Internet communication, which tends to be more impersonal. Groups offered different technological features according to their national infrastructure conditions, such as more options for mobile phone users in Japan and greater use of Bulletin Board Systems in Korea.

This book will be most useful for scholars studying the two issue areas that were the subject of the case studies. In both chapters Ducke catalogues the most active actors in civil society and government and shows how they made use of Internet communication technologies. It will also be of some use to scholars interested in the ways that the Internet is affecting citizen...
activities and governance around the world, since it is the only book in English focusing on Internet usage by civil society groups in Japan.

While the overall subject of civil society’s use of the Internet is a very important one, the book does not have a central research question, making the selection of case studies somewhat arbitrary. The case studies themselves are also quite short, leaving the reader feeling like many interesting aspects of the story have been left out. For example, Network 21, a group featured in both the textbook controversy case study and umbrella organizations chapters, is described in less than two pages of text. There is no mention of its sources of funding, approximate membership, number of affiliated groups, etc. It would have been more helpful if the author had picked one event sponsored by the group and described in detail how the Internet was used in each stage, from planning through follow-up.

Although Ducke tries to demonstrate that the success of civic organizations rises with their use of Internet technologies, the author does not control for other important factors, such as organizational size or funding. In the statistical analysis, one is left wondering if success was actually a function of the financial resources and professional staff that enabled sophisticated Internet utilization, rather than the Internet technologies themselves.

The research and book would have been more effective if the author had used the data to offer more insight into the broader debate about the benefits of professionalization in the society sector and its role in democracies (e.g., Theda Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy*, University of Oklahoma Press, 2003, or in Japan specifically: Frank Schwartz and Susan Pharr eds., *The State of Civil Society in Japan*, Cambridge, 2003, Robert Pekkanen, *Members without Advocates*, Stanford, 2006, Mary Alice Haddad, *Politics and Volunteering in Japan*, Cambridge, 2007). In the end, the descriptive account of how different civil society groups use Internet technologies is interesting, but it did not leave this reader with a better understanding of either Japanese civil society or how Internet usage may be changing the nature of democratic politics.

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MARY ALICE HADDAD


Those of us of a certain age remember the Japanese actor Sessue Hayakawa (1886-1973) for his Oscar-nominated supporting role as Colonel Saito in the David Lean-directed film *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957), but few of us are aware that Hayakawa was one of the world’s leading silent film stars from the mid-1910s into the 1920s. Daisuke Miyao’s compelling and essential study of Hayakawa explores the actor’s early stardom with an analysis that
situates him at the crossroads of a variety of cultural discourses that required a constant negotiation of his cinematic and personal identities.

The first chapter of the book discusses Hayakawa’s films from 1914-1915, including his “breakout” film, The Cheat (1915), in which he played Tori, a cultivated art dealer, who befriends and then sexually assaults a white woman, thereby encompassing the two classic representations of Orientalism: a somewhat effeminate man of culture, and an out-of-control barbarian. Playing on a variety of attitudes towards Japan—ranging from the consumerist and exoticist fad of Japanese Taste to the hysteria over the Yellow Peril—this role struck a nerve that propelled Hayakawa into stardom. As the book continues through a consideration of Hayakawa’s films under contract with Lansky-Paramount (1916-1918) and his breakthrough establishment of his own producing company, Haworth Pictures (1918-1922), Miyao presents a brilliant analysis of what came to be the Hayakawa persona: the cultured, genteel, disciplined and honourable (bushido and all that) Japanese gentleman who, while able to demonstrate a certain degree of Americanization (thus speaking to the obsession about the assimilation of immigrants), can never quite shake his essential Japaneseness, which contains a certain amount of primitive violence that can erupt at any moment. (The persisting power of the Orientalist representation of cultivation and brutishness is evident in Hayakawa’s portrayal of Colonel Saito, the erstwhile art student who has a hanging scroll and flower arrangement in his quarters even as he tortures British prisoners of war.) In keeping with cultural stereotypes, some of Hayakawa’s most memorable characters cannot control their desire to possess white women. Frustrated, they assault the women and then they die, both as a displacement of that desire and, for the audience, a removal of the threat they pose. Miyao discusses at length how many of Hayakawa’s roles exploit the fear of miscegenation—characters both charmed and threatened but never won the white women—although there is room for a more expansive consideration of the forbidden attractiveness of such erotic fantasies of the male Other to the female audience. The final chapters of Miyao’s book discuss Hayakawa’s complex and awkward relationship with Japan and its film industry, and touch on various aspects of his post-silent-film career.

One particularly fascinating theme of Miyao’s book is how Hayakawa the person had so little control over Hayakawa the actor despite the best of intentions, such as his ultimately failed aspiration to film “realistic” representations of Japan. The actor was a construct of his producers, the media and the sociohistorical climate of the times, which was consumed with the politics of race, gender, sexuality and class. At the same time, Hayakawa had to contend with the criticism, and the occasional praise, that emerged from the Japanese-American and Japanese audiences, who saw him as both a cultural hero and a traitor. These three elements constitute what Miayo calls Hayakawa’s “triple consciousness”: his negotiations among his American and Japanese audiences, and within his personal identity, with
regard to cultural representation. Accessibly written and replete with impeccable scholarship and incisive analysis, Miyao’s book constitutes a major contribution to film studies, Asian-American studies and cultural studies.

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MATTHEW MIZENKO


The book is a welcome newcomer in the regional cooperation literature of the Asian Pacific. Its distinct strength lies in the choice of countries, the contributors and the analytical angles: the country chapters (part 2) cover all of the Six-Party talk participants; the contributors are mostly scholars working outside the United States; and the focal points are the domestic sources as well as the enemies of regional cooperation. The volume also contains two chapters that set the regional context (part 1) and a chapter on transnational NGOs (part 3) along with an introduction and a conclusion. Since students interested in the political dynamics of regional cooperation are usually not well versed in the domestic sources of foreign policy beyond the one or two countries they specialize in, this volume offers a valuable contribution, even if the chapters are relatively short and preparatory instead of being provocative and controversial.

Despite such usefulness, the book suffers from the inescapable problem associated with an edited volume: the chapters do not speak to each other. The book’s coherence is compromised by the jumbling together of at least four important topics: democracy as the key domestic factor that restrains non-democratic China’s and clouds nascent-democratic Russia’s embrace of regional cooperation; the Taiwan Strait and North Korea as powder kegs that warrant cooperative management separate from the ballooning of investment and trade in Northeast and Southeast Asia; the impact of public opinion, party politics or the NGOs on the foreign policy of democratic countries; and, finally, the Japan historical past problem as a cooperation hindrance across democratized Korea and non-democratized China.

As such, Solingen’s succinct account of ambivalent cooperation in Northeast compared to Southeast Asia (chapter 1) falls short of setting the context of subsequent country chapters and veers into a portrayal of the ASEAN-centred linkage of Northeast and Southeast Asia. Dittmer’s refined account of power shifts among Chinese state agencies and their impact on the evolution of Chinese foreign policy during the Deng, Jiang and Hu era (chapter 5) and Buszynki’s masterful description of the foreign policy impact of Putin’s reconsolidation of the Russian state after Yeltsin’s experiment with
democracy (chapter 7) become overkill if the argument is how the authoritarian Chinese Communist Party’s mobilization of irredentism-cum-anti-democracy mutes or makes superficial Chinese initiatives toward cooperation (chapter 6). In addition, the issue scope of Cheng’s analysis (chapter 3) on the relations among public opinion, party platforms and foreign policy over tension at the Taiwan Strait and the Korean Peninsula does not fully correspond with Hong’s synopsis of how leadership change shifted policy priorities in the relations between the two Koreas (chapter 4) or Lam’s examination of the public opinion and ruling party sources of Japan’s China policy of political assertiveness and economic competition (chapter 8), the latter being played out in Southeast Asia as depicted by other articles as well. Finally, Wada’s personal account of his NGO efforts in promoting a regional community (the Common House of Northeast Asia) (chapter 2) and Lee’s examination of varying degrees of success by transnational NGOs across issues—developmentalism, Japanese war crimes and security—raises the critical issue of Japan’s wartime history, which is nonetheless tangential to the other chapters.

The chapters in the book are rich in detail, informative in description, insightful in analysis, and poignant in argument beyond what can be captured by a short review. Yet, because the three-layer framework—interstate, domestic politics, transnational NGOs—of domestic-regional linkages on economic and security issues presented in the introduction is not equally applied and because the three enemies of cooperation—domestic politics, nationalism and Sino-Japanese rivalry—explained in the conclusion are unevenly corroborated by the empirical chapters, the volume does not realize its full potential. This volume is probably not the final word on Northeast Asian regional cooperation but it goes beyond what is offered by most similar publications, and it does so in fewer pages.

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NOBUHIRO HIWATARI


This book by South Korea’s leading China specialist tracks, explains and assesses the transformation of Sino-South Korean relations, which shifted and mutated, between 1979 and 2004, from Cold War adversity, to rapprochement, to diplomatic normalization, to “comprehensive cooperative partnership.” Relying on a wide range of Chinese, South Korean, and US primary and secondary sources and drawing theoretical insights from international relations and security studies literature, Chung provides an excellent and generally reliable analysis of (1) why rapprochement took place
even before the end of the Cold War, (2) how the rapprochement process, based on and sustained by an expanding functional cooperation, paved the groundwork for diplomatic normalization in 1992, and (3) the strategic implications of China’s rise for Seoul’s foreign policy in general and the ROK-US alliance in particular in the years ahead.

Viewed against a backdrop of contentious rise-of-China debates in the United States, this book offers a refreshingly original, detached, non-American (South Korean) perspective and analysis of China’s rise and the implications for peace and stability in Northeast Asia and beyond. Chung shies away from dichotomized thinking and monocausal explanation. The comprehensive cooperative partnership is considered as much diplomatic and strategic as it is economic and commercial. The author’s treatment of “soft” ideational variables—that the pace and scope of expansion in Sino-South Korean relations were also strongly influenced by shared perceptions and deep-seated cultural norms—is unusual and welcome. In a similar multidimensional vein, Chung sketches out eight scenarios of China’s future and at least ten strategic options for Seoul, including preventive war, distancing/downgrading, neutrality, self-help, bandwagoning, binding, engagement, balancing, containment and issue-based support.

Despite these admirable attributes, several surprising shortcomings and omissions deserve mention. This otherwise well-researched study fails to consult what is arguably the most important documentary source material, a five-volume work on China’s policy toward both Korea from 1949 to 1994: Liu Jinzhi and Yang Huaisheng, eds., Zhongguo dui Chaoxian he Hanguo zhengci wenjian huibian [A Compilation of Documents on China’s policy toward the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea], vols. 1–5 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1994). Volume 5 (1974-1994) is of special relevance for Chung’s study as it includes all the relevant documents for the Sino-South Korean rapprochement and normalization processes, including the text of the August 24, 1992 Joint Communique deserving incorporation as an appendix. It is equally surprising that Chung failed to delve into Sino-South Korean strategic interactions in the context of the six-party process (2003-present). As a result, Chung has failed to capture the strategic realities of Seoul’s position on the North Korean nuclear issue (far closer the Chinese than to the US position) and that Seoul’s main security dilemma has shifted from fear of allied abandonment to fear of allied entrapment by a US strategy that could either suck South Korea into an escalated military conflict or by a repetition of the great-power rivalry of the late nineteenth century that resulted in Korea’s colonization. In addition, Chung has ignored China’s new multilateralism as a cost-effective means of “soft balancing” against the growing military power and unilateral triumphalism of the Bush administration.

Taken as a whole, however, this book makes great headway in enhancing our understanding of the comprehensive cooperative Sino-South Korean
partnership beyond the simple dichotomy of engagement or containment. It should be considered required reading for those concerned about the shape of Northeast Asian regional order to come or interested in joining the debate on the rise of China.

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SAMUEL S. KIM


In South Korea, older approaches to the past have been challenged for some time now. Examples include the parliamentary and public activity regarding “pro-Japanese collaborators,” governmental compensation to families of former pro-democratic activists, museums for Kim Ku, and many more. Each activity may be assessed as being either conducive or destructive to the process of reconciliation through “coming to terms with the past.” By a convincing selection of democratization, globalization, regional integration and nationalism as factors affecting reconciliation, the thought-provoking book under discussion seeks ways of promoting comprehensive reconciliation in Northeast Asia by examining, first, the redress of historical injustices in South Korea, and, in its second part, the South Korean case in an international perspective.

The first two essays deal with the “comfort women” and show how, as a historical phenomenon of gender and structural violence, the issue transcends the boundaries of the postcolonial master narrative. While Chunghee Sarah Soh points to the Korean activists’ unfortunate fueling of ethnic nationalism within Korea, it appears, based on Hideko Mitsui’s piece, that on the international arena they had greater success in advancing their case as a more universalistic one through transnational cooperation. As Soon-Won Park next demonstrates, the process of redefining victimhood under the same comprehensive manner was also the fruit of litigation regarding Korean forced labour of the Second World War. Kim Dong-Choon’s observation of why and how a panic-stricken Korean government was responsible for the massacre of over 200,000 of its civilians in the summer of 1950 concludes by supporting the argument that the Korean War was a “people’s war” rather than an anticommunist struggle. Next, Tae-Ung Baik argues that transitional justice, as manifested in the case of the “Jeju 4.3 Incidents,” has made progress yet is incomplete due to lingering conservative networks and anticommunist perceptions. In the sixth essay Kyung-Yoong Bay demonstrates how democratization contributes to the ability to face the
troubled past of the massacre of innocent Vietnamese by Korean troops during the Vietnam War.

The second part of the book opens with Hong Kal’s focus on the construction of ethnic nationalism in war memorials in Korea and Japan. Kal points out that although the sites are contested, it seems that ethnic nationalism remains prevalent in both societies. Gavan McCormack argues that Japan, as a lackey of US aggressive foreign policies of which a “North Korean threat” is an indispensable axis, disregards its responsibility for historical injustice through a hypocritical attitude towards North Korea. Through a unique comparison between Japan, Turkey and Germany, John Torpey asserts that the extraordinary politicization of history by both (often ethnic) pressure groups and the Japanese government influences the latter’s reticence regarding historical injustice. Chiho Sawada argues that although intersocietal cultural exchange is useful in promoting reconciliation, factors related to form, contents and audience recipience set limits on that process. Andrew Horvat’s examination of the role of Japanese NGOs as transnational nonstate actors, leads him to maintain that they are significantly weak in comparison with Europe, mainly due to the legal and financial constrains of Japan’s state-centred political system. Finally, Wonhyuk Lim highlights the potential that regional economic integration has regarding the reconciliation process, but contends that a strictly commercial rationale and geopolitical considerations remain unhealthy factors.

Curiously, while the critique focuses on South Korea and Japan (and in many chapters also on the US), North Korea is treated incidentally. The editors maintain that democratic values are essential for thick reconciliation (p. 259), and comment that we should wait for the North to become a democracy (p. 5). What exactly is expected of a democratized North regarding “settling the past”? Should the waiting be unconditional? If so, what are the prospects for the reconciliation process and what could be the consequences of North Korea’s neighbours proceeding without her? A fuller analysis of the possible scenarios would have been a welcome addition. Having said that, this volume should inspire stimulating discussions in university courses and it is highly recommended to anyone interested in modern East Asia.

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GUY PODOLER


The pace of developments on the Korean Peninsula since the end of the Cold War has been remarkable, with a range of near disasters, such as the 1994 nuclear stand-off, potential breakthroughs, including the June 2000
Pyongyang Summit, and such catastrophes as the famine that ravaged the North Korean population throughout the late 1990s. In this book, Ian Jeffries does not so much seek to explain these many developments as provide a thorough set of timelines as to their occurrence.

Jeffries’ approach necessarily carries risk, as the decision to present most of the information as a series of timelines means that analytic questions are generally overlooked and the organizational structure occasionally suffers. Jeffries usefully organizes the timelines into specific sub-sections, such as North-South relations and economic comparisons, diplomacy with the United States and Japan, and economic development. But some of these questions deserve more extensive treatment and would benefit from greater analysis than that which providing a handful of quotes can afford. Both the unique importance of historical questions—much of North Korea’s official state history is mythology—and debates concerning the demographic impact of North Korea’s famine on its population today are questions that may have been better treated in discrete chapters.

The organizational weaknesses in the book are best demonstrated in the first two chapters, “Political and Economic Developments” (69 pp) and “Historical, Political, Demographic Aspects” (303 pp). Given their widely divergent sizes, they cannot but seem imbalanced. Many topics covered in the first recur in the second chapter, and the former indeed is written more as an introduction to the book than as an independent treatment. By treating his many topics in separate chapters, Jeffries would have achieved a more consistent set of narratives and a better organized work.

In the third and final chapter, on “The Economy” (100 pp), Jeffries approaches this goal and provides a useful account of North Korea’s chaotic history of economic reform and regress. Although he leans heavily on a small number of sources for his timelines in the preceding chapters, his lists of widely diverging estimates for such basic figures as North Korea’s gross domestic product indicates that the challenge for the scholar of North Korea’s economy is not to find the right statistic, but to instinctively discount all statistics. Focused sections on such topics as the 2002 “reforms,” North Korean agricultural output, and trade with its neighbours provide additional insight into the specific challenges that North Korea’s economy faces if it is to recover from the post-Soviet collapse in production and living standards.

Perhaps the most valuable insight that this book forces on the reader is an implicitly critical reassessment of the seeming golden age of engagement with Pyongyang under the administrations of President Bill Clinton and South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung between 1998 and 2000. The detailed accounting of North Korea’s provocations during this period—and US-ROK efforts to ignore them—leaves the reader wondering not why rapprochement ultimately floundered, but how it could have ever succeeded. Jeffries ends his book in late 2005, providing extensive coverage of how the failure to coordinate policies between Washington and Seoul exacerbated the nuclear
crisis in North Korea. In short, this book provides plenty of grist for any critique of American policy toward the region.

Jeffries’ book is an invaluable resource to any scholar of North Korea’s political, diplomatic and economic development after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Although it does not attempt to provide answers as to why events occurred as they did, it will be an indispensable source for any effort to do so.

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CHRISTOPHER GRIFFIN


This book has been eagerly awaited. It is the second edition of the author’s classic work, published first in 1978, which analyzed the political economy of India between 1947 and 1977. This new edition reproduces the first volume and brings the story up to date with the addition of three chapters, comprising 200 or so pages altogether—sufficient material for a new book in its own right.

Frankel’s first book remains an absolutely outstanding study in political economy. There are few, if any, works to compare with it, offering as it does a richly detailed historical account of the politics of India’s development in the first thirty years of Independence and a lucid analysis of their dynamics, based on a range of primary sources often supplemented by the author’s own interviews with key actors. The central theme is the paradox that underlies India’s political economy—the fact that the attempt was made, through what Nehru once described as India’s “third way,” distinguished from both capitalist and communist paths, to bring about social transformation while avoiding the political costs of a direct attack on the existing social order. As it may also be put, the “third way” aimed to combine directive planning with a politics of accommodation, blending socialist goals and the line of class conciliation that was advocated by Gandhi in order to avoid conflict and the possibility of the disintegration of the national movement. Frankel shows how the outcomes of Indian planning and the subsequent developments of the Indian economy have followed from this central paradox. Her analysis emphasizes in particular the failure to bring about agrarian reform and the way in which, in consequence, the reforming, modernizing aspirations of the Nehruvian state were held hostage by the local land-owning elites, on which the state became ever more dependent. This is not an original line of argument, of course, but the case is made through distinctive “thick” historical description. Frankel’s work actually anticipates more recent research, such as Vivek Chibber’s celebrated study

This new edition is a bit of a disappointment. Frankel’s account of the years after 1977 is rather patchy, a perhaps inevitable result given that Frankel covers a period almost as long as the thirty years she treats in the original in little more than a third of the length of that first book. The three new chapters sketch an historical treatment alongside lengthy thematic passages reporting and discussing the secondary literature. They are also uneven. She treats the story of India’s economic reforms quite briefly, arguing (as has Atul Kohli in his recent writing) that the change in the path of India’s economic development goes back to Mrs Gandhi’s government in the early 1980s, also successfully demonstrating the continuing significance of the failure to address the problems of agriculture and the rural economy, and arguing (as have others) that India is now seeing the emergence of two economies. There is, Frankel writes, “a smaller, yet sizeable affluent economy growing up in larger cities (while) by contrast the larger, predominantly agricultural economy, of landless, marginal and small farmers (offers) little expectation of a better future” (p. 625). But she devotes much of the remainder of the book first to a lengthy “reappraisal” of the career of Indira Gandhi, and then to an extended, useful, but not particularly original account of the rise of Hindu nationalism, of the BJP and of the failure of the state of Gujarat in the vicious attacks on Muslims that took place in 2002. Her treatment of the years after 1977 is nothing like as authoritative or comprehensive, nor as richly illuminating as that of the period up to this time. Frankel’s second comprehensive volume really still remains to be written.

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JOHN HARRISS


It is well worth analyzing the travails of the secular project in India, not only to understand the nature of the crisis that afflicts one of the bulwarks of the world’s largest democracy but also to draw meaningful parallels between this non-Western project for the accommodation of religious diversity, and Western multiculturalism.

What kind of crisis is it that grips Indian secularism? The essays by Ashis Nandy, Upendra Baxi, Partha Chatterjee, Gyanendran Pandey and Gyan Prakash all articulate the nature of the crisis by following a now familiar line of criticism of Indian secularism. This critique chastises the doctrine for its
Book Reviews

... seemingly ineluctable tendency to endorse the domination of the secular/secularizing state over non-state actors, and of majorities over minorities. Drawing on a distinction enunciated by Nivedita Menon, it is in its incarnation as a “principle of statecraft” that the aforementioned contributors chastise the doctrine of secularism. Even as Menon rightly indicates that it is possible to criticize secularism as a principle of statecraft without eschewing the worth of secularism as a value, most of the contributors to this volume tend to ignore the distinction. For critics of Indian secularism, domination is inherent in the very non-dialogical mode of conducting politics that is imposed by secularizing states. The critics’ further worry is that in its bid to advance social stability and social justice, the law-state combination can mitigate the autonomy of individual and community. Akeel Bilgrami’s contribution nicely explores the content of this concern by fashioning a conversation about secularism between liberal secularists on the one hand and multiculturalists/communitarians on the other.

A somewhat puzzling feature of the volume is the absence of a direct, strong and sustained defence of Indian secularism against the charges leveled at it by critics. The inclusion of an essay by Rajeev Bhargava could have provided a helpful corrective in this regard.

Notwithstanding the volume’s weighty focus on the crisis of Indian secularism (including interesting contributions on the way the secular fabric of the Indian polity can be upheld or corroded by goings-on in arenas as diverse as cinema and education), it is possible to discern within it a dialogue between critics and defenders of secularism in India. One set of voices that defends the case for secularism is expressed in the contributions by Shabnum Tejani, Paula Richman and V. Geetha, and Sunil Khilnani. The discussion in the essays by these scholars analyzes the views of leading Indian figures such as M.K. Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar, E.V. Ramasami and J. Nehru and demonstrates the roots of Indian secularism in ways that undermine those critiques of the doctrine that see it primarily as a Western-inspired or top-down doctrine.

Shabnum Tejani’s essay, for instance, examines the Round Table Conferences that took place in 1931-32 and persuasively exposes the inextricable link between secularism and democracy in India by highlighting the way secularism in the Indian context emerged at the nexus of categories of “community and caste, nationalism and communalism, liberalism and democracy” (p. 47). Richman and Geetha present Ramasami’s evocation of the inextricable link between secularism and socio-religious reform in India—an account that serves as a sage reminder of the importance of the instrumentalities of the secular state, and of the rule of law, to protect members of lower castes from Brahmanical domination. By providing a historical analysis of discussions about the place of minorities in the future nation, and of the pragmatic endorsement of the instrumentalities of the secular state to address caste hierarchies and inequalities, these essays serve...
as a poignant reminder of the reasons why secularism is vitally necessary for securing a democratic politics of non-domination in a country such as India. Arguably, one of the strengths of this volume lies in the attention these three essays pay to the indigenously inspired intellectual underpinnings of secularism in India—a fecund arena for discussion that, regrettably, is elided in contemporary debates between defenders and critics of Indian secularism.

A defence of secularism is also offered in the essays by Flavia Agnes and Sumit Sarkar. Agnes’s piece sheds light on the trajectory of events related to the Shah Bano case in the post-1986 period, and argues in favour of an agency-respecting conception of secularism. Sarkar draws attention to the relevance of secularism in terms of its relation to a sense of toleration, coexistence and to the abjuration of communal/sectarian violence.

Altogether, this rich collection of essays put together by Anuradha Dingwaney Needham and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan is a salutary addition to the growing literature on Indian secularism. It reminds us that the main challenge for Indian secularism, and I would say for contemporary Western multiculturalism as well, appears to be one of devising democratic institutions to accommodate religious identity without neglecting the equality interests of vulnerable members of accommodated groups. A further challenge would be to ensure that processes of accommodation do not themselves engender new relations of domination between the secular state and religious groups.

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RINKU LAMBA


In the last decade, a growing number of books have been published on the Partition of 1947 that pay particular attention to the social experience of the violence and displacements in regional specificity. This book claims to embrace this shift in the historiography, and focus on the “little voices,” on “what happened on the ground” and in the “dusty lanes and bylanes of Punjab’s villages and small towns” (p. 13). With Punjab as its focus, and the year 1947 as its time frame, the book presents this history using newspapers as its primary source, since the author argues that newspapers provide a window into public opinion, as well as exposing the forces that shape it. A tightly framed study of this kind could thus shed considerable light on this momentous year in Punjab, but unfortunately much of the writing and analysis in the book remains somewhat muddled, and fails to provide cogent theoretical or historical insight.
Any study of Punjab in 1947 faces a number of difficult challenges. In a society being torn apart by genocidal violence, the partisan nature of the sources themselves would raise problems of interpretation. Newspapers in particular, as the author points out in this book, were partisan. In this respect, he valuably delineates the political sympathies and backgrounds of many of the newspapers he draws upon (largely English and Hindi), and yet there is an odd reliance on these sources for “facts.” What kind of contingent “facts” can one tease out of newspapers? How should we read them to understand their ability to mobilize violence and produce circuits of fear and political meaning? These are important questions that are largely peripheral to this book.

As a result, this book is rich in “facts,” and particularly cartoons published during this year, and should therefore interest other scholars working on the Punjab. (Sukeshi Kamra’s Bearing Witness, published by the University of Calgary in 2002, also examines political cartoons of this period from English newspapers.) Some of the facts in this book that particularly interested me were the complete unpreparedness of the two governments for mass displacement, despite communal violence since March that year, and their unwillingness to embrace a “transfer of populations” even after mass displacements had begun. (My own book, The Long Partition, published by Columbia University Press this year, argues that this agreement on Punjab’s transfer of populations had far-reaching effects and tracks those effects outside Punjab, in north India as a whole.) However, this work falls short of explaining the forces that led to this agreed transfer of populations or its impact on the region. For instance, the author notes that the Ambala Muslims did not want to leave, and that there were discussions of making Ambala an exception to this agreement. But this book does not take us close to the ground to understand the events of Ambala. These “facts” are both sketchy and represent partial points of view, and therefore need to be read carefully and with considerably more analysis.

One could argue that Punjab itself is too large a social landscape to understand with any cohesive detail, and that more city-specific studies, like Ian Talbot’s on Lahore and Amritsar (Divided Cities, published by Oxford University Press in 2006), are sorely needed; such studies take us below the broad sweeping sorrows of Partition, to its micro-histories of social and political transformations.

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Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar

Amongst the most important developments in modern Tamil politics has been the return to prominence, since the early 1990s, of the region’s autonomous Dalit movement. Hugo Gorringe’s detailed study of the internal workings of this movement—focusing primarily on the Dalit Panther Iyakkam (DPI), and based on multi-sited fieldwork amongst rank-and-file activists—sheds critical light on a phenomenon about which reliable information and independent analysis are virtually non-existent.

Against oft-repeated claims that India suffers from a “crisis of governability,” occasioned by the emergence of new political movements organized along caste, religious and ethnic lines, Gorringe argues that the rise of Tamil Dalit activism is better understood as a “democratization of democracy.” For far from threatening government, the Tamil Dalit movement demands simply that the laws of the land be enforced: that the routine lynching of “uppity” Dalits by members of Tamil Nadu’s dominant non-Brahmin castes not continue to go unpunished; that free elections not be subverted in favour of those castes and the parties that represent them; that Dalits not be denied access to jobs, resources and public spaces. Although the movement’s goals are dear to virtually all Dalits, this alone cannot explain their growing support of it. Nor does this support follow automatically from a historically constituted “Dalit identity.” Until recently, as Gorringe observes, only a tiny minority of Dalits embraced the movement. His research, conducted amongst non-participants as well as supporters, explains why this should have been the case. Negatively, there is the fact that Dalit political assertion risks violent reprisals and serious economic and social sanctions. And positively, in a state where elections are determined as much by machine-style patronage as idealism, the enormously wealthy and politically entrenched Dravidian parties have much to offer would-be voters. Gorringe accounts for the movement’s gradual success in overcoming these odds, firstly, in terms of its dogged organizing and superior responsiveness to everyday Dalit concerns, and, secondly, via a dynamic in which the assertiveness of relatively few committed activists has provoked sweeping reprisals against the community as a whole, that have in turn radicalized huge numbers of previously quiescent Dalits.

Another eye-opening aspect of Gorringe’s study is what it reveals about the internal workings of the DPI and similar Dalit outfits. Like most small political parties in Tamil Nadu, the DPI lacks formal mechanisms for ensuring intra-party democracy and, like virtually all Tamil parties, is organized around a single charismatic leader. Given the DPI’s democratic ideology, these facts appear something of a contradiction. By examining the behind-the-scenes
process of intra-party decision making, however, Gorringe discovers the surprising extent of its paramount leader’s accountability to ordinary cadres, whose ongoing support depends on his responsiveness to their direction and continued effectiveness as a champion of their cause. Where the movement falls more seriously short of its stated ideals is in the gap between its robustly feminist rhetoric and its frankly patriarchal setup, an issue to which Gorringe devotes considerable attention. Gorringe’s analysis of the current state of Tamil Dalit politics, enabled by first-hand observations at once intimate and critical, is wholly persuasive. What he does not make sufficiently clear is that autonomous Dalit activism has had a long and continuous history in Tamil Nadu, that independent Dalit leaders had enjoyed a substantial following prior to the rise of Dravidian politics in the 1920s, and that the criticisms present-day Dalit activists level against Dravidianism (that its anti-caste rhetoric conceals an anti-Dalit core) were also made in every generation before them. The present work reveals how the Tamil Dalit movement achieved the comeback that it has, but to understand why it only began to do so at this precise historical juncture would have required Gorringe to delve into the prior history of Tamil Dalit politics—a history that, to this day, remains largely unwritten.

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NATHANIEL ROBERTS


This ethnographic study of Muslim survivors of recent ethnic strife in Mumbai and two major cities of Gujarat (Baroda and Ahmedabad) is notable for the extent to which it allows those involved in the strife to talk for themselves. Not only does Robinson go to great lengths to create the framework in which these survivors can make their voices heard, she also engages directly with her readers by grappling from the outset with the dilemmas posed by such a piece of research. In her introductory chapter, “Inaugurating responsibility” (pp. 13-37), she underlines the extent of the challenges facing ethnographers in relation to how far they allow themselves to become personally involved in their work, and she reflects on what being a Christian Indian may have meant as far as her responsibilities as a researcher were concerned.

The next five chapters—the bulk of the study—are constructed around the themes of the narratives that Robinson has collected. By means of the interviews that she has conducted with Muslim women and men, she allows readers to share in first-hand experiences of this collective ethnic violence.
Her aim is to provide answers to questions about the ways in which memories of violence, in particular, affect everyday lives and lived behaviour—survival strategies—and also to offer a better understanding about what it means to be a Muslim in India at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Of these chapters, the second, “Space, time and the stigma of identity” (pp. 38-77), offers interesting reflections on the physical reorganization of urban spaces that has altered Mumbai since the early 1990s, with similar processes of reconfiguration taking place in the cities in Gujarat. It also explores how the survivors of violence remember and recollect their experiences. Interesting insights are provided about the demarcation of space in cities such as Mumbai, with green and saffron flags increasingly used to mark and inscribe Muslim and Hindu residential as well as religious space. From her interviewees, it would seem as if urban public space has become Hindu space, a trend recognized by NGOs, which have called for the process of the recovery of Muslim rights to use urban public spaces, whether for entertainment, work or even for protest (p. 56).

Chapter 4, titled “I can harden my heart to bear this’: women’s words and women’s worlds” (pp. 113-53), contains particularly revealing insights. In it Robinson explores the extent to which women and men speak differently about the violence that they have experienced. It is widely accepted that communal violence is gendered, but Robinson helps us to understand more clearly how and why this is the case. Women’s narratives, she concludes, are tinged with personal sadness, while those of men are couched in more abstract terms. However, what adds extra value to this chapter is the way in which it demonstrates “differences” between women themselves. Hence, there are variations between the narratives of women interviewed in Mumbai and in Gujarat: the voices of Gujarati women seem “splintered and caught up in images of distress,” while “those from Mumbai showed a greater tendency to mould themselves into fuller and more complete narratives” (p. 140).

Finally, chapter 5, “Fissures in a time of crisis” (pp. 154-93), takes the discussion outside the home into the world of community members and leaders working with the survivors of communal violence, and there seeks to explore the “negotiated intricacies of the ‘real!’” (p. 157). Here we learn about the ways in which the pain of these events has not necessarily brought Muslim communities together, as might be expected, but has led to processes of community fragmentation and increased sectarian antagonisms.

There is considerable academic as well as general interest in the reasons why western India has been gripped by extreme bouts of communal violence in recent decades. Robinson’s study highlights how important it is to also make sense of the “after-shocks” of this violence, and thus represents a welcome, and necessary, addition to our understanding of this subject.

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For the scholar of Southeast Asian Islam, navigating, or often just locating, necessary references from the vast array of primary sources in ten different countries and several languages is a daunting task. This is particularly pressing for researchers who give priority to the use of original and indigenous sources, who attempt on principle to avoid secondary materials and reduce dependence on Western scholarship alone, but who may lack the requisite language skills to go back to the basics. It is for such scholars that this ambitious volume is designed, whose editors and contributors, however, are themselves exclusively Western scholars, including a dozen academic luminaries in the field, each one a specialist in at least one Southeast Asian country.

The collected sources, which form four-fifths of this lengthy volume, are prefaced and contextualized in a preliminary section. This provides a useful chart of significant events in Southeast Asian Islam, whose timeline starts with the birth of the Prophet, and ends with the 2005 Bali bombing. Also attached are maps of local Muslim populations, a guide to common regional transliterations and pronunciations of Arabic, and a particularly impressive 18-page annotated glossary of Islamic concepts, which adds clarity and consistency to such contested notions as Salafism, jihad and terrorism, as well as more esoteric theological ideas. These are followed by a series of relatively brief reviews by specialists, summarizing the Muslim experience in each Southeast Asian country, whose coverage unsurprisingly varies according to each author’s interest, such that the piece on Malaysia focuses almost exclusively on politics, with barely a mention of the significant recent dakwah movements, whereas that on Indonesia highlights the distinctively rich local culture, and its contested relations with Islam.

The key to the utility and credibility of this volume lies in the selection, translation, arrangement and interpretation of the “sources” themselves, culled from a wide range of writings, statements, manifestos, of Muslim scholars, politicians, religious organizations, jurists, women’s and youth groups, poets, activists and journalists, etc, all local voices. The editors provide rationales for the translations from local languages or Arabic, in a bid to preserve authenticity. Given the preoccupation with authenticity, this reader speculates on the methodological and even ethical challenges, whereby non-local, Anglophone scholars set the criteria and presume to represent the indigenous Muslim voice. This paradox is appreciated by the editors, whose solution was to draw upon the advice of a larger team of specialists, including scholars from Southeast Asia. This is the group responsible for the final
selection and classification of the topics, themes and presentation of the final sources, the body of the book. The major themes are grouped as follows: Islamic Culture and Civilization; Shari’ah; State and Governance; Gender and Family; Jihad; Global and Local Interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims; Personal Expressions of Faith. Each of these broad themes is further sub-divided, such that the Shari’ah section covers both the “spirit” and the “letter” of the law and its relationship to secular laws, while personal expressions of faith include reflections of self-professed Sufis, whose tradition has been steadily eroded over the past century under pressures to greater political conformity and uniformity. Several testimonials on different issues by the same individual help to create a more multi-dimensional portrait of the personality, enabling the reader to understand simultaneously their personal piety, their views on Shari’ah law and on ethnicity, as in the case of Philippine leader, Salamat Hashim. A more rounded image of the Indonesian writer, Hamka, emerges with the exposition of his experiences and thoughts on Sufism. In many cases, the editors add their own annotations by way of background.

Occasionally, the representativeness of the sources is unbalanced, such that the bulk of the entries on “Islam, State and Governance” concern Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, while the numerous sections on Shari’ah and law focus heavily on Malaysia, a specialty of one of the editors. However, statements from the little-known Burmese Rohingya and from the pathbreaking Malay Sisters in Islam contribute to the diversity of styles and practices of Islam served in this rich banquet of sources, which is impossible to summarize adequately in the space allotted.

This is principally a reference work for researchers and teachers already familiar with the field, attempting to cover all of Muslim Southeast Asia, and offering a formidable array of materials, not widely available in English and in one location. It also offers a range of perspectives and details on the minutiae of Muslim life, thought to be of interest to the casual reader. As a resource it has no real precedent, and will surely become a required reference for scholars, at least in the English medium.

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JUDITH NAGATA


Ethnic Chinese business has been a contested issue in Southeast Asian political economy. In recent decades, it has also become a hot topic for academic research. There are many reasons for this strong interest in ethnic
Chinese business in Southeast Asia, but one of the most important ones must have something to do with the rise of Mainland China since its open-door reform in late 1978. Many politicians and commentators in Southeast Asia have jumped onto this “Go China” bandwagon, and have turned to the ethnic Chinese businesspeople in their domestic economies as a means of venturing into China. Regrettably, these very same ethnic Chinese have been subjected to considerable domestic discrimination in favour of native elites. It is in these de facto political-economic and intellectual contexts that Leo Suryadinata’s edited book is particularly welcome.

This volume stems from a dedicated workshop held in Singapore in April 2005. It comprises an introduction and 12 chapters. The first two chapters, by John Wong and Sarasin Viraphol, offer some general observations on the rise of Mainland China as a major economic powerhouse for the Asia Pacific region and its implications for ethnic Chinese business in Southeast Asia. The next three chapters examine specifically the dynamic situation of ethnic Chinese business in Indonesia: the rise of economic nationalism and ethnic imbalance and the impact of globalization and China on the country’s ethnic Chinese businesses. This approach of combining both historical and contemporary analyses is repeated in the three chapters devoted to Malaysia. The last four chapters discuss how ethnic Chinese businesspeople in the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand respond to the challenges of globalization and the rise of China as both a place for business opportunities and a significant economic competitor.

Overall, the contributors have made a compelling case that the rise of China means serious business for ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia. But this growing connection with Mainland China has much more to do with the business acumen and experience of these Southeast Asian Chinese than their alleged cultural affinity with China. Indeed, several chapters have offered concrete evidence to confirm that ethnic affinity does not work in favour of Southeast Asian Chinese investing in China. Meanwhile, the rise of China has led to a much greater influx into Southeast Asia of goods made in China and Mainland Chinese as tourists and, to a lesser extent, investors. The long-term impact of the rise of China for Southeast Asian economies remains unclear and contingent on political-economic alliances internal to these economies.

As expected from most workshop collections, this book is fairly uneven in terms of the topical coverage and analytical depth of most chapters. Some chapters are written in the form of personal reflections, whereas others are positioned within specific academic discourses (e.g., anti-essentialist views of ethnic Chinese businesses). I particularly liked several chapters that provided very insightful surveys of the historical development of ethnic Chinese business in respective Southeast Asian countries. I also found refreshing empirical insights in those chapters grounded in original field-based research. Collectively, these historical and empirical chapters provided
an up-to-date understanding of a highly complex and, yet, politically contentious phenomenon in Southeast Asia: the continued dominance of ethnic Chinese in business and commerce. Still, most chapters have not adequately addressed the book’s subtitle, the issue of coping with the rise of China. This weakness calls for much more significant and sustained efforts to research the dynamic transformation of ethnic Chinese businesses in Southeast Asia in a global era.


Indonesia’s “Big Bang” decentralization, passed in 1999 and enacted beginning in 2001, has become a central topic in the country’s political discourse and in the study of Indonesian politics. This volume brings together 14 specialists in a wide-ranging collection of essays on topics related to both the causes and effects of regional autonomy in Indonesia.

As has become clear since 2001, the effects of regional autonomy are somewhat mixed, with positive gains in some areas, such as local representation, being offset by others like increased local corruption. Like the phenomenon itself, the essays in this volume vary in many ways, ranging across most of the archipelago and across many approaches to social inquiry. Some chapters do an exceptionally good job of capturing local dynamics in ways that resonate with broader questions of political development in Indonesia and beyond; others less so.

Chapters by Pratikno, Sukardi Rinakit and Muriel Charras lean toward descriptive accounts of what has transpired during the enactment of regional autonomy and what might transpire in the future, offering somewhat less that is new either empirically or theoretically. Vedi Hadiz’s chapter reiterates other work that he has both sole-authored and co-authored with Richard Robison; Hadiz captures well the “hidden” continuity of power behind a seemingly massive change in institutional structures.

The chapters by Davidson and Faucher, in particular, are analytically sharp and innovative, bringing the best of broad social science frameworks to bear on regional settings and illustrating why area studies has such a strong legacy in modern social science. Faucher investigates the politico-cultural battle in the Riau Islands over what exactly it means to be “Malay,” drawing in discursive approaches to cultural politics, along with a sensitivity to the political economy of resource wealth and the ethnic competition for those spoils. These perspectives frame her obviously intricate knowledge of Riauan
Politics in an impressive way. Davidson draws on years of study in West Kalimantan to situate recent ethnic violence in the context of history, Indonesia’s greater “transition,” and the immense uncertainty engendered by regional autonomy. In doing so, he makes a powerful argument for studying violence as an autonomous form of conflict rather than simply an outgrowth of it as well, he focusses analytically on the incentives for utilizing violence that high stakes and higher uncertainty about the future create for ethnic elites.

Despite some very good chapters, the book suffers from a malady common to edited volumes: a lack of coherence. Several of the chapters read more like uneasy additions from contributors whose work is not really focused on regionalism or regional autonomy; others are light on analysis. On balance, the volume is a useful introduction to newly invigorated regional politics in post-New Order Indonesia and contains some exceptional examples of theoretically rich, empirically impressive writing; such material is always a pleasure to find.

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**Benjamin Smith**


This book is useful to those already familiar with Indonesian law and society. However, it suffers from shortcomings that might mislead the non-specialist reader. The problems stem from the fact that the book is based on a Dutch dissertation written before the Reformasi period began in 1988, yet the material has only recently been published, almost ten years later. The author has inserted some new material in an attempt to update the manuscript, but the book lacks any serious coverage of relevant post-1998 developments. The book is focused largely on the Indonesian Supreme Court as an institution reaching back into colonial history, and is written in the style of a business enterprise history, which improves readability but assumes knowledge of the larger historical framework.

The author reviews, in largely approving detail, the Indonesian judiciary’s consistent strategic goals over time to raise judicial salaries, establish judicial review and make itself more independent of executive branch influence in removing judges’ administrative supervision from the Ministry of Justice (under the so-called single roof system of court administration). But it omits crucial recent developments. For example, in 2003 a new Constitutional Court was created (arguably in the image of the German Constitutional
Court, but received indirectly via the Korean Constitutional Court). The omission of the Indonesian Constitutional Court as a realization of the judicial review ideal prior to publication is problematic as it is, linked with the hidden question of whether the Supreme Court or the new Constitutional Court will come to be considered Indonesia’s leading judicial institution. Similarly, the author traces another prong of the judiciary’s longer-term institutional strategy to establish its independence in escaping management of courts and judges administratively by the Ministry of Justice (a common pattern in traditional Civil Law countries). It acknowledges the Supreme Court’s post-1998 success in gathering administrative and budgetary functions into itself under Reformasi, while admitting problematic aspects of abstract judicial independence arguments in the face of the Indonesian public’s perception, well-documented in opinion surveys, of the judiciary as a generally corrupt institution. Meanwhile, the book omits review of high-profile public accusations of corruption, dating to 2005 and directed against the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, who wrote a laudatory introduction to the book but thus far has resisted attempts at outside investigation, based on claims this would interfere with judicial independence. Meanwhile, his own tenure is extended. In summary, the book is an accurate and detailed statement of the Supreme Court’s historical path from its colonial beginnings through the New Order, but it may mislead the non-specialist, both through assuming extensive knowledge of modern Indonesian history, and because it omits mention of important post-1998, but pre-publication, institutional developments.

The specialist may find the book’s most interesting aspect its intensive use of the late Daniel Lev’s interview notes of individual judges and political figures from the 1950s to 1980s, which are used to document the longer-term decline of the judiciary’s competence and integrity. However, reliance on these notes is itself a problematic issue, to the extent that Lev, as a leading Indonesian law scholar of his generation, never published them himself (and the interviewees presumably thought discussions confidential). Furthermore, using these notes for insights about individuals’ motivations and justifications for actions taken 20 to 50 years ago raises issues about potential interviewee self-justification, interviewer selectivity and the character of scholars’ notes as historical sources. That having been said, the specialist will marvel at the book’s details of personal dealings within the Indonesian judiciary from the 1950s to the 1980s, even while bemoaning insufficient detail from the late New Order period to date.

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This book can be considered a sequel to Watson’s earlier book Of Self and Nation (2000), which analyzed the autobiographical literature of twentieth-century Indonesia in terms of the relationship between the individual and the nation. Of Self and Injustice examines a narrower set of autobiographies: those written by the victims and opponents of the Suharto regime. The book reflects the flooding of such texts into the Indonesian publishing world after the fall of Suharto in 1998.

Watson calls his method a “contextualized close reading” (p. 34). He does not attempt an overview of the entire genre of victim memoirs, preferring instead in-depth treatments of selected texts. By my count, there are by now over two dozen autobiographical texts by political prisoners arrested during Suharto’s anti-communist witch-hunt (mostly concentrated in the period 1965-68). Watson has chosen three for a close reading: the memoirs of Hasan Raid, Moestahal and Sudjinah. He has also taken up the posthumously published essays of Utuy T. Sontani, a dramatist and Communist Party member who stayed in exile after Suharto’s rise to power rather than return home to a certain imprisonment and possible death. The second half of the book shifts to autobiographies of prominent Muslim figures (A.M. Fatwa and Deliar Noer) and young activists (from non-governmental organizations and the Muslim organization Nahdlatill Ulama) who were opposed to the Suharto dictatorship. Although the term “Islam” does not appear in the title, it is a consistent theme of the book. The memoirs of both Raid and Moestahal centre on the complementarity of left-wing nationalism and Islam.

Watson’s style is largely expository, summarizing in English the contents of these Indonesian-language texts and placing them in the broader context of Indonesian literature and history. Extensive quotes from each text are provided in the original and in translation. Behind-the-scenes details about the authors’ lives and how the books came to be composed and published are also included. It is a pleasure to see Indonesian writings receiving this kind of careful, sustained attention. Watson’s commentary on each author is charitable, sympathetic and often wise. For instance, he finds Moestahal’s writing about Sukarnoism dogmatic and formulaic but he recognizes it as a legitimate part of the politics of recognition. For a person who had invested so much of his personal identity in Sukarnoism before 1965 and then saw it “so humiliatingly denied and despised,” a passionate restatement of it is an understandable part of his struggle to restore a sense of self-worth (p. 64).

In reading this book, I felt as if I was at a dinner party where Watson plays a gracious host, ensuring that all of the authors he has invited are given a fair hearing and are not subject to thorough-going lambastings. When
putting them in conversation with each other in the concluding chapter, he emphasizes their commonality as authors of a “counter-discourse” (p. 213) to the “dominant social discourse” of the Suharto years, “a discourse of rising general prosperity depending on acceptance of absolute control imposed from the centre, the suppression of dissent, an acknowledgement of a strict hierarchy of status and power, and a parallel willingness to accept a measure of social exclusion for large sections of the population” (p. 211).

I would have preferred seeing a forum at which the clashes between the authors’ ideas were explored in more depth. For instance, Watson notes that Fatwa and Noer, as members of anti-communist Muslim organizations before 1965, supported the repression of the Communist Party, but he does not describe their attitudes towards the violence. It seems from Watson’s account that both men wrote little if anything about their experiences at the time of the violence and their later reflections on it. The reasons for that silence deserve some consideration. Fatwa was imprisoned in the 1980s and 1990s with many political prisoners of the anti-communist repression he had supported. What did he think of them then?

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John Roosa

VERANDAH OF VIOLENCE: The Background to the Aceh Problem.

Balanced, well-researched studies of the Aceh conflict are difficult to find. This is one of many reasons why Verandah of Violence: The Background to the Aceh Problem is sorely needed. Its core strength is the diversity of its 14 authors in terms of their backgrounds, explanations and even sympathies. The book is also extremely timely. Originating in a conference held in May 2004, compiled after the devastating Tsunami in December 2004, and released after the peace agreement in August 2005, one almost gets the feeling that Verandah of Violence will be the definitive statement on the Aceh conflict.

The first 8 chapters focus on the historical dimensions of the conflict. Historical depth is essential to understanding all conflicts, but this is especially true in ethno-secessionist conflicts, where history is a battleground in which combatants compete for legitimacy. These chapters demonstrate a deep awareness of the shadow history casts over the Aceh conflict. This is especially evident in E. Edwards McKinnon’s chapter, “Indian and Indonesian Elements in Early North Sumatra,” which emphasizes that while geography places Aceh in Sumatra, Aceh has little historical contact with the worlds of Sumatra or Java. The main theme of contributions from Peter G. Ridell, Lee Kam Hing, Ibrahim Alfian and editor Anthony Reid is that the history of the Acehnese
state is tied to the Indian Ocean, the Islamic World, and even the English in the Malay Peninsula—a position the authors are well aware supports Acehnese claims of distinctiveness. A minor criticism is that this narrative largely overlooks groups in Aceh whose identities are tied to Sumatra and Java. Where interior tribes are mentioned, they are said to have been assimilated due to Acehnese imperialism, a story that demands greater attention. Violence against communists, Chinese and other Indonesians is similarly glossed over. These chapters offer more of a history of the Acehnese than a history of Aceh.

Just as the historians are keenly aware of contemporary implications, the chapters on the recent conflict feature historical depth. M. Isa Sulaiman, a tsunami victim to whom the book is dedicated, offers particularly strong arguments on how historical relationships continue to reverberate in Acehnese politics. Michelle Ann Miller provides a rich analysis of both previous and recent special autonomy offers from Jakarta. The leading foreign scholar on the Aceh conflict, Edward Aspinall, argues convincingly that an exclusive Acehnese identity is a result of abuse, committed not only under during the DOM-era (1989-98), but also under Sukarno. In the concluding chapter, “Local Leadership and the Aceh Conflict,” Rodd McGibbon investigates local (provincial) government, concluding that the conflict was a partial product of ineffective, illegitimate provincial leadership. McGibbon’s chapter stands out as particularly original, with clear implications for post-conflict Aceh.

Some contributors offer contradictory views, or more accurately, scrutinize different sides. Taken alone, these chapters might provide only a partial understanding. This is what makes Verandah on Violence so impressive, offering the reader a balanced perspective. Emphasizing the duplicity of the Indonesian Military in Aceh’s economy, Damien Kingsbury and Lesley McCulloch’s chapter explains how the military creates the very conditions that justify its presence. Kristen Schulze goes notably against the grain by criticizing the GAM, leading her to consider issues overlooked by others, such as GAM kidnappings or attempts to eliminate Javanese migrants. In other chapters, though, academic theories seem forced upon sound description, and some lack even sound research. Many claims in William Nessen’s chapter lack any documentation, and what he does provide is uncritical, uncorroborated personal interviews with GAM members. Nessen argues that support for separatism should not be attributed to abuse from Jakarta, as this denies legitimacy to the GAM vision. Demonstrating this requires research into what “the GAM vision” really is, and if it resonates. But Nessen ends up extending the historical scope of the arguments he rejects, making a similar point as Aspinall but lacking the same sophistication.

Verandah of Violence is the definitive collection on the Aceh conflict, offering unrivalled depth and breadth. There remain a few stones left unturned, such as Aceh-minority relations and GAM factionalism. But in
general, Reid’s collection marks the end of Aceh’s separatist conflict and a turn towards reconstruction, rehabilitation and development in the Window to Mecca.

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Because the broad sweep of history in the place called Burma is so intriguing and yet so poorly known, this unusual book should be read by specialists and general readers alike. The author wrote an authoritative and acclaimed academic study of nineteenth-century reforms in the Ava kingdom-state in Mandalay, and its destruction by the British in 1885, called The Making of Modern Burma (2001). Five years later he has produced an epic narrative beginning 3000 years ago with the interplay of Indian and Chinese empires in the Burma space, resulting in a new kind of Buddhism, intensely irrigated rice cultivation, new technologies and legal systems. Large-scale societies were co-evolving through local competition and conflict for predominance in the river-fed plains and their foothills. The presence of Chinese troops on the banks of the Irrawaddy River long before the twentieth century is well detailed. These layered histories include the author’s own family’s lineage, which stretches back to a high official in the nineteenth-century King Mindon’s treasury, and leans forward to Myint-U’s distinguished grandfather, former United Nations Secretary General U Thant. In fact, the confrontational Rangoon burial of that man’s body is a key incident in the histories, connecting the personal and the national. U Thant’s life lay in stark contrast to that of Ne Win, who remained in power for forty years. Ne Win, whose life is closely described by Myint-U, was jealous and suspicious of the success of U Thant: “He saw enemies everywhere” (p. 300). And there were some enemies who aged and suffered by opposing him: some of them, brother officers also trained in 1941-44 by the Japanese for the capture/liberation of Burma, patiently waiting for their turn until 1988, when a new movement for reform was born. Again, this was heavily dependent on students.

At times quite funny, the narrative is very readable for a general public and most interesting for anyone trying to understand why this has so long been a weak state requiring strong (and expensive) military control, and requiring continuous (and expensive) negotiation with alternate power centres like heavily armed war-lords, princes and chiefs on the frontier. The brutality of the British capture of Burma and the stupidity of their destruction of the kingdom-state’s administration left them fully responsible, yet
incapable of governing effectively. The best the British could manage was a kind of wild west profiteering under a commercial law apparatus for rapidly growing British companies until the Japanese invasion in 1942. Myint-U explains how the twentieth century’s longest civil war anywhere began in 1942 between Burmans and Karens (it is not yet fully concluded), and skillfully tracks the rise to power of Ne Win from humble beginnings, setting the stage in 1962 for the continuous rule of a series of ambitious but uneducated senior officers right down to the present. The author’s approach to the painful and dishonourable predicament of Aung San Suu Kyi is sensitive and balanced, does not point to any easy exit, and reminds us that the military government leaders are well prepared for another forty years of isolation if that is what looks best to them and if outsiders continue to promote it. The sweep of the work allows us to look for patterns; the internal situation viewed over the past five hundred years permits Myint-U to describe Burma as “a nation naturally inclined to fracture” (p. 64). Equally remarkable is how the parts and pieces of Burma have evolved together.

Myint-U was doubtless looking for some of his own lost footsteps in this book. The ruptures of the past fifty years have deeply disturbed the study of history, which is now partially being restored both within and outside the country. He recalls his experiences in Rangoon in 1974, on the Thai-Karen border in 1988, on the China-Kachin border in 1991-92, uncovering each time more of the histories. Trained among documents at Cambridge, and living with documents in his work at the UN, Myint-U also brings precious oral history to bear on the themes of his book. The peoples of modern Myanmar are also looking for their lost footsteps, and this book offers a valuable way to find them.

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ROBERT S. ANDERSON


Asia in the Making of New Zealand is an edited volume that combines the approaches of diaspora studies and Asian studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This volume investigates the relationships between Aotearoa/New Zealand and Asia in the past (part 1) and present (part 2). The introduction asserts that Asia is no longer “foreign” to Aotearoa/New Zealand, affecting New Zealanders’ sense of self. The chapters examine the formation of Maori identity in relation to both Pakeha and Asians in the nineteenth century (chapter 1); the influence of knowledge about Asia on New Zealand’s past policy discussions (chapter 2); experiences of Chinese and female Indian immigrants (chapters 3 and 4, respectively); historical transformations of
Asian involvement and its reception in Aotearoa/New Zealand (chapter 5); the heterogeneity of Indian-New Zealanders (chapter 6); the Korean and Chinese diasporas’ links to their (imagined) home countries via media (chapters 7 and 8, respectively); the effects of the flow of Indonesian gamelan into Aotearoa/New Zealand on the New Zealanders’ understanding of Indonesian culture (chapter 9); and the limit of tolerance in liberal multiculturalism regarding Islamic practices (chapter 10).

This volume is a valuable addition to published data on Asia and Asian immigrants and their influence on Aotearoa/New Zealand. Missing, however, are discussions of how the recent Asian presence and their assertion for multiculturalism affect the biculturalist developments and analyses of the current Asian presence from the viewpoints of Maori as well as other minority groups. The exception is the afterword, which critically reviews the volume and urges authors to ask: “As migrants, are they [Asians] beneficiaries or victims of a colonial system?” This is a good question, but I would further urge the authors to ask: What are possible roles of Asians in overcoming “colonialism” in Aotearoa/New Zealand? How can multiculturalism relate to biculturalism to enhance social justice for all?

Theoretically, the chapters are not on even terrain. While some chapters rely on a preconceived framework of Asia and the communities being discussed, others illustrate heterogeneity and the dynamic nature of “Asian communities.” For example, chapter 1 treats the Chinese and the Indians in the nineteenth century in the same framework of “Asians,” although the data clearly shows that the Maori-language newspapers at the time treated Indians and Chinese differently, because of their religion, their relation to the British Crown, etc. Official statistics show that the racial category that lumps the Chinese and the Indians together did not appear until the late nineteenth century (Statistics of New Zealand 1852-1891; New Zealand Official Yearbook 1892-1898). Also, some chapters use “we” to mean Pakeha and white Australians (chapter 5) or Westerners (chapters 9, 10), excluding New Zealanders of Maori, Pacific Island Polynesian, and Asian descent from the concept of “New Zealanders.” In contrast, chapter 6 emphasizes the diversity of Indian-New Zealanders and argues that “we” includes minority groups. The afterword suggests interrogating Pakeha’s own diasporic relations to Britain when discussing its relations to other immigrants. Also, while some chapters risk “othering” Asians by portraying them as being more interested in their original home than in becoming New Zealanders, and missing in-depth discussions of the effects of such a portrayal (chapters 3, 7), other chapters illustrate how heterogeneous minority groups are pressured to fit into the multicultural grid that legitimates only certain cultural differences (chapter 6). In chapter 8, the author comments briefly on how today’s diasporic migrants do not feel the need to separate themselves from the home country in order to feel at home in the host country.
In sum, while overall this volume falls short of in-depth involvement in the complexity of current identity politics, it does provide a wealth of data on Asia and on Asian immigrants in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

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NERIKO DOERR


This edited volume is an engaging and exciting contribution to a growing literature of detailed and ethnographically rich analyses that situate Christian rituals, practices and ideologies as central sites of social life. Such an approach overturns an earlier sensibility among anthropologists, in which Christianity was viewed either as a destructive colonial imposition, a space for traditional culture to continue under new guises, or simply as an irrelevancy. The volume consists of eight case studies, an introduction from the editors, and an afterword.

The authors in this collection examine how local actors produce, or more importantly fail to produce, “meaningfulness” in the Word or the world under a “cultural logic” (p. 19) of Christianity. Each author pays attention to the specificities of local regimes of religious meaning-making while working within a comparative framework that suggests a widespread Christian fixation on “meaningfulness.” A theoretically sophisticated collection on a topic of interest to scholars working in a largely Christianized Oceania, this book contains three contributions devoted to Pacific communities (by Danilyn Rutherford, Tomlinson, and Ilana Gershon) and an afterword from a noted anthropologist of Melanesia and Christianity (Joel Robbins), making it an important addition to the ethnography of the contemporary Pacific.

Many anthropologists in recent decades have taken up a programme of studying institutional power and discipline, following Talal Asad in shunning meaning-based analyses as an unwanted legacy of Christianity. But where does this leave the anthropologist who studies the lives of contemporary Christians, themselves, as this book suggests, taken up with efforts to make meaning? The contributions to this collection split the difference, arguing that one of the main concerns of a comparative study of Christianity is to analyze the institutional and ritual regimes of meaning-making that are central to so many Christian communities. Rather than a fixed or accomplished fact, meaning is seen here as a complex process and one that may be most clearly observed in situations in which meaning-making has failed. As Tomlinson and Engelke write, “[i]n the meaning-saturated world of Christianity, where understanding God’s message becomes paramount,
meanings as a result become slippery in performance” (p. 23, emphasis in original). The articles therefore discuss moments in which local actors or the anthropologists (or both) confront meaninglessness or a lack of fixity in meaning.

Several articles focus on specifically linguistic failures of meaning in sermons and speeches (Simon Coleman on the Swedish Word of Life church; Engelke on the Masowe church in Zimbabwe; Tomlinson on Methodists in Fiji, and to an extent Erica Bornstein on the World Vision charity in Zimbabwe), demonstrating how these are moments of failure by giving detailed accounts of the semiotic, or interpretive, ideologies at work in the communities under study. The other articles address the ways local actors refuse, limit or contest certain forms of Christian meaningfulness. These authors provide histories of transformations that have put meanings in flux (Rutherford on Biak, West Papua, reinterpretations of biblical narratives in light of their millenarian and later separatist aspirations; Andrew Orta on Catholic missionaries’ changing evaluations of Aymara “tradition” in Bolivia) or transformations that have renegotiated the boundaries of the universe of meaning (Gershon on Samoan migrants in New Zealand converting to non-mainline churches; James D. Faubion on a Branch Davidian prophet who maintains a church to which only she now belongs). Joel Robbins provides a compelling afterword that brings these papers together in a discussion which sees semiotic ideologies of meaning-making emerge from the kinds of rupturing transformations of conversion, schism or history that define Christian worlds. This book will be important to scholars of Christianity and of religion generally, as well as to regional specialists of the areas discussed, especially the Pacific.

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COURTNEY HANDMAN

REMEMBERING PAPUA NEW GUINEA: An Eccentric Ethnography.

In 1964 and 1965 William C. Clarke conducted geographical field research among the Bomagai and Angoiang clans who live on the edge of the Central Highlands of Papua New Guinea. In the introduction to his aptly titled book, Remembering Papua New Guinea: An Eccentric Ethnography, Clarke says he chose this site “far east down the Simbai Valley adjacent to a large stretch of uninhabited forest” because “it was the most remote of the Maring communities” (p. 3). At this point the Bomagai and Angoiang had only been in contact with European peoples for six years.
In addition to informing his choice of a PhD field site, Clarke’s longing to connect with people from a place as remote as possible underlies the present text. While the book contains little to nothing about the Bomagai and Angoiang as they are today—Clarke acknowledges that he can only speculate about the present, having not been back to the Simbai Valley since 1977—Remembering Papua New Guinea compellingly represents this early colonial era. A collection of photos and reminiscences, the book presents the memories of an aging American geographer seeking to honour relationships formed, and lessons learned, forty years ago.

On the right of each double-page spread there is a large photo. In each case, the left-hand page accompanying the photo contains Clarke’s reflections. Sometimes there is an obvious relationship between the text and photo, as when Clarke addresses the subject of the photo directly, writing for example, in a letter to Ngirapo, his “keenest teacher,” “sometimes you would amuse yourself by hooking me with a tall tale” (p. 8). At other times, the words and pictures bear a less direct relationship to one another, as when we read Clarke’s ruminations about contemporary Melanesia, while looking at a 1960s photo of a man carrying a pig.

Those in the former category are almost invariably more powerful, partly because it is the “eccentricity” of Clarke’s memories and personal recollections that give the book its primary appeal. It also has to be said, however, that Clarke’s ruminations on more general topics, including gender relationships, exchange and cultural difference, are somewhat simplistic and, at times, too romantic to be convincing.

This is not the case, however, when it comes to his exploration of the Bomagai and Angoiang peoples’ relationships with their land and gardens. Clarke’s work among the Maring involved appraising their agricultural practices, and his deep respect for their intensely interdependent relationship with their environment richly textures the book. Without ever romanticizing the Maring’s relationships with their lands, he conveys a strong sense of their profound knowledge of the places so beautifully represented in his breathtaking pictures of green smoke-filled valleys and forests.

Though the book is at best an introduction to one area of Papua New Guinea, the wealth of colour in the photos gives credence to Drusilla Mojdeska’s claim that after living in Papua New Guinea, everywhere else can seem “somehow flat” (“PNG writing, writing PNG,” Meanjin, 62: 3, 2003, p. 51). This certainly seems to have been the case for Clarke, whose willingness to share his photos will be welcomed by many who have spent time in this spirited, memorable place.

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CERIDWEN SPARK

555
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--- *Special Forum*

**EAST TIMOR’S TRUTH COMMISSION**

*Guest Editor: John Roosa*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>John Roosa</td>
<td>563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Does a Truth Commission Find Out What the Truth Is?</td>
<td>John Roosa</td>
<td>569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History, Nation and Narrative in East Timor’s Truth Commission Report</td>
<td>David Webster</td>
<td>581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The CAVR: Justice and Reconciliation in a Time of “Impoverished Political Possibilities”</td>
<td>Joseph Nevins</td>
<td>593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia’s Changing Regional Architecture: Towards an East Asian Economic Community?</td>
<td>Nick Bisley</td>
<td>603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital Diaspora and National Image Building: A New Perspective on Chinese Diaspora Study in the Age of China’s Rise</td>
<td>Sheng Ding</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Reviews (listed on pp. 560-562)</td>
<td></td>
<td>649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td></td>
<td>719</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACTS

How Does a Truth Commission Find Out What the Truth Is?

John Roosa

This article reviews the data collection methods of East Timor’s Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Reception (CAVR), whose 2,500-page report was released in 2006. The CAVR used four methods for gaining information about past human rights violations: oral statements recorded on tape, surveys designed by social scientists, oral interviews by experienced investigators, and community forums. The CAVR report relies heavily on statistical analyses of the oral statements and the surveys. The findings from such statistical analyses turn out to be of limited significance. The most informative parts of the report that convincingly reveal patterns of rights violations and add to what was already known about East Timorese history are based on the oral interviews and community forums.

History, Nation and Narrative in East Timor’s Truth Commission Report

David Webster

In writing their report, the members of East Timor’s Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Reception (CAVR) were keenly aware of the ways the understanding of history could shape the new nation. Offering a “focus on the past for the sake of the future,” they searched for a usable past. There is an uneasy tension in the report between this quest for a single agreed national narrative of the past, and the search for complexities and an inside, non-elite perspective.

The CAVR report rejects the official Indonesian narrative that asserted Indonesian military occupation was the only thing preventing “civil war.” It equally rejects the international understanding, dominant for many years, that East Timorese independence was a “lost cause.” It presents a counter-narrative of a united people, fighting for freedom amidst repression, until their final triumph. It is framed almost as a Catholic story of original sin, suffering and redemption. An ideologically driven, internally divisive and internationally counterproductive campaign gave way to an apolitical, united struggle able to win international support, the report suggests. The narrative arc runs “from divergence to convergence,” and rests on two key concepts: resistance and unity. Where resistance suggests a message of liberation against overwhelming odds, the imperatives of unity suggest it is important to “play by the rules” of the international system. In some ways this is the dilemma of East Timor as an independent state.

The CAVR:

Justice and Reconciliation in a Time of “Impoverished Political Possibilities

Joseph Nevins

This article provides an overview of, and analyzes, how the final report of East Timor’s Commission on Reception, Truth and Reconciliation (CAVR) treated matters of responsibility for gross human rights abuses, accountability and reconciliation. While the article acknowledges the value of the report, it highlights Chega!’s limitations.
The CAVR did not go as far as it could and should have in analyzing responsibility for atrocities and recommending amends. In making this argument, this article moves beyond relatively conventional analyses of reconciliation that focus on individuals and their attitudes, values and beliefs, and overlook collective and material forms of violence and injustice. Instead, it focuses on state actors, particularly those beyond Indonesia, who aided and abetted Jakarta’s crimes, while advocating a wide-ranging analysis and repair of the associated damage. In doing so, the article contends that reparations for the damage must go beyond the immediate conflict so that those persons, groups or institutions whose privilege in part derived from East Timor’s victimization also provide amends. It thus champions the notion that reconciliation and redistributive justice are inextricably linked.

**East Asia’s Changing Regional Architecture:**
**Towards an East Asian Economic Community?**

*Nick Bisley*

This article examines the current state of East Asia’s regional architecture with a focus on efforts to construct an East Asian Economic Community (EAEC). First, the article considers trends in regional cooperation and assesses the elements which constitute an EAEC and which distinguish it from other forms of regional cooperation. Second, it analyzes the different forms an EAEC might take, and their respective plausibility, and then sets the putative EAEC alongside APEC to consider how it might profitably learn from and relate to this already existing regional organization. The article argues that the revival of East Asian regionalism is driven by efforts to manage the economic and political consequences of globalization. There is a genuine desire in the region for increased economic cooperation and a belief that institutionalized cooperation can bring payoffs although this is not matched by a consensus on how to achieve this end. While unlikely to emerge in the next five years, the article argues that, due to changing political and economic circumstances, and particularly China’s interest in regional institutions, there is reason to be cautiously optimistic about the chances of an EAEC over the medium to longer term.

**Digital Diaspora and National Image Building:**
**A New Perspective on Chinese Diaspora Study in the Age of China’s Rise**

*Sheng Ding*

In the global information age, the Chinese diaspora has been empowered by information and communication technologies, and is increasingly involved in China’s politics and foreign policy. This article examines the role of the Chinese digital diaspora in Beijing’s national image-building efforts, in the context of China’s rise to the status of a global power. While the digital diaspora has helped strengthen China’s international broadcasting power and has contributed to establishing a favourable national image, the increasing opportunities for communication and building connections can expose a “real China” to the outside world, and have harmful effects on China’s image. This article argues that the Chinese digital diaspora represents a double-edged sword.
BOOKS REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE

Asia General

GLOBALIZATION AND CHANGE IN ASIA. Edited by Dennis A. Rondinelli and John M. Heffron.  
Terry G. McGee 649

MULTINATIONAL ENTERPRISES IN ASIAN DEVELOPMENT.  
By Prema-chandra Athukorala.  
Anthony P. D’Costa 650

PUBLIC SERVICE REFORM IN EAST ASIA. Reform Issues and Challenges in Japan, Korea, Singapore and Hong Kong. Edited by Anthony B. L. Cheung  
Bill Chou 652

China and Inner Asia

THE BUSINESS OF LOBBYING IN CHINA. By Scott Kennedy.  
Kjeld Erik Broedsgaard 654

GRASSROOTS POLITICAL REFORM IN CONTEMPORARY CHINA. Edited by Elizabeth J. Perry and Merle Goldman.  
Amy Hanser 655

CHINA’S CAPITAL MARKETS: Challenges from WTO Membership. Edited by Kam C. Chan Hung-Gay Fung and Qingfeng Wilson Liu.  
Nicolaaos Groenewold 657

CHINA SHIFTS GEARS: Automakers, Oil, Pollution, and Development. By Kelly Sims Gallagher  
Richard D. Morgenstern 658

COMPARATIVE EDUCATION RESEARCH: Approaches and Methods. Edited by Mark Bray, Bob Adamson and Mark Mason.  
Barbara Charlotte Schulte 660

THE TRANSFORMATION OF CHINESE SOCIALISM.  
By Lin Chun.  
John Gittings 661

By Frederick C Teiwes and Warren Sun.  
Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik 663

A HISTORY OF THE MODERN CHINESE ARMY.  
By Xiaobing Li.  
Edward A. McCord 664

Anna Belogurova 666

Tim Sedo 668

By David A. Palmer  
David Ownby 670

Josephine Chiu-Duke 671

Northeast Asia

JAPAN IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS: The Foreign Policies of an Adaptive State. Edited by Thomas U. Berger, Mike Mochizuki and Jitsuo Tsuchiyama.  
Davis B. Bobrow 673
SOCIAL JUSTICE IN JAPAN: Concepts, Theories and Paradigms. Edited by Ken-ichi Ohbuchi; translated by Leonie R. Stickland. Takeshi Hamamura 675

FULL METAL APACHE: Transactions Between Cyberpunk Japan and Avant-pop America. By Takayuki Tatsumi. Kumiko Sato 676

SCAMS AND SWEETENERS: A Sociology of Fraud. By Masahiro Ogino; translated by Lotte Lawrence. David Shulman 678


EXODUS TO NORTH KOREA: Shadows from Japan’s Cold War. By Tessa Morris-Suzuki. Marie Söderberg 684

South Asia

NATION STATE BY ACCIDENT: The Politicization of Ethnic Groups and the Ethnicization of Politics: Bosnia, India, Pakistan. By Carsten Wieland. Shelly Ghai 686


Southeast Asia

THE CHANGING DYNAMICS OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN POLITICS. By Jorn Dusch. Sorpong Peou 689


EXPLORING ETHNIC DIVERSITY IN BURMA. Edited by Mikael Gravers. Michael Aung-Thwin 693

DANCING IN SHADOWS: Sihanouk, the Khmer Rouge and the United Nations in Cambodia. By Benny Widyono. D. Gordon Longmuir 695

POLITICS IN MALAYSIA: The Malay Dimension. Edited by Edmund Terence Gomez. Diane K. Mauzy 697

SINGAPORE: The State and the Culture of Excess. By Souchou Yao. K.C. Ho 698


Australasia and the Pacific Region

UNFINISHED CONSTITUTIONAL BUSINESS?: Rethinking Indigenous Self-determination. Edited by Barbara Hocking. Jaap Timmer 702

COLONIAL DISCOURSES: Niuepea Maori, 1855-1863. By Lachy Paterson. Toon van Meijl 703
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