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## Book reviews

Birgit Bräuchler (ed.), *Reconciling Indonesia; Grassroots agency for peace*. London: Routledge, 2009, xxi + 241 pp. ISBN 9780415487047. Price: GBP 80.00 (hardback).

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This volume grew out of an international conference entitled *In Search of Reconciliation and Peace in Indonesia and East Timor*, which was held at the National University of Singapore (Asia Research Institute) in July 2007; it contains selected, multi-disciplinary contributions, which are focused on contemporary reconciliation processes. The contributions deal with contemporary, post-Soeharto Indonesia, but also with the violence of 1965, in various regional settings (Aceh, Java, Lombok, Sulawesi, Ambon, Moluccas). They describe reconciliation processes from the perspectives of various Indonesian cultures, with an emphasis on the role of grassroots agency dealing with conflict. Various types and scales of conflict are considered: a terrorist attack, state-sponsored violence, communal violence, localized small-scale conflicts. The authors include activists from grassroots organizations, as well as scholars from all over the world with backgrounds in diverse disciplines: history, political science, peace and conflict studies, cultural anthropology.

Most chapters make use of fieldwork data, and draw on personal experience of the activities of grassroots organizations. Inevitably given the diversity of contributors, the quality of the contributions varies. Most are highly empirical, but in some cases the application of theory to fieldwork data leads to new insights. Academic and activist authors alike write mostly from emic perspectives, seeking meaning in local symbolic structures and autochthonous world views. In the past, incomprehension of local cultures has often been an important cause of failure in peace-building endeavours.

Particularly since the fall of Soeharto in 1998, Indonesia has acquired a high profile in the field of conflict studies. Indonesian experience confirms that even in conflict situations, cultural and ethnic identities are complex phenomena which manifest themselves in different ways on different social levels and in different areas of social life. In peace-building and reconciliatory justice, cultural symbols and rituals play important roles. Reconciliation processes therefore need to be embedded in local traditions and to be adjusted to local understandings of justice. This volume is rich in illustrations of the

principle that in order to help resolve conflict, it is essential to compare international norms regarding rights and justice with their local counterparts.

The first part of the volume comprises an introduction by the editor followed by a paper by Annette Hornbacher on the culture of reconciliation. Hornbacher concentrates on Balinese perceptions of terrorism, conflict, and peace, dissecting local discourses on the Bali bomb attacks and on the events of 11 September 2001. She emphasizes the importance in these discourses of a specifically Balinese concern with the re-establishment of a stable balance between good and evil, as opposed to the Western project of an all-out 'war on terror'.

The second section of the book focuses on the relationship between reconciliation and various kinds of cultural performance, including rituals and ceremonies intended to restore peace. Barbara Hatley concentrates on theatre performances and their role generating social solidarity and communal integration. Kari Telle examines an oath-taking ceremony among the Sasak, who use it to restore damaged social relationships. Birgit Bräuchler describes, on the basis of a Moluccan example, how *adat* can be a resource for rebuilding relationships as well as a source of conflict.

The third part of this volume connects reconciliation with issues of human rights, power and gender. Leena Avonius analyses the role of the traditional justice (*peusijuek*) mechanism in post-conflict Aceh. Jeroen Adam concentrates on the implications of legal pluralism in contemporary Ambon. Y. Tri Subagya's paper focuses on female agency in reconciliation in Poso, Central Sulawesi. Women, he argues, have been vital actors in the peace process partly because the ways in which they perceive the Poso conflict are different from those found in the mainstream (male) discourse.

A fourth section includes contributions on education, civil society, and religion. Grace Leksana looks at history education, and the difficulties involved in reforming it in such a way that it promotes peace and reconciliation. Priyambudi Sulistiyanto and Rumekso Setyadi focus on civil society and grassroots reconciliation in Central Java, and particularly on the role of the Yogyakarta Islamic NGO Syarikat, of which Setyadi has been an active member. The last article of the volume, by Katharine E. McGregor, argues with reference to this same NGO that an understanding of Islamic theology is an essential prerequisite for anyone wishing to make a contribution to conflict resolution in Indonesia.

*Reconciling Indonesia; Grassroots agency for peace* is a fascinating read for scholars, social activists, human rights activists, and anyone else with an interest in present-day Indonesia.

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Elizabeth Fuller Collins, *Indonesia betrayed; How development fails*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007, xv + 265 pp. ISBN 9780824831837, price USD 26.00 (paperback); 9780824831158, USD 56.00 (hardback).

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The Reformasi that put an end to Soeharto's presidency has transformed Indonesia's socio-political configuration at both national and local levels. In the new configuration, elites develop new political networks in order to control natural resources and political power. In *Indonesia betrayed*, Elizabeth Fuller Collins sets out to describe the challenges faced by Reformasi activists and their NGOs in the post-Soeharto period. In nine chapters she depicts the dark side of development, which she portrays as a process in which 'asymmetries of power lead to outbreaks of violence and corruption', while the economic force of globalization 'increases the gap between the rich and the poor' (p. 12).

In her endeavour to place concepts like development, civil society, and democracy in their real Indonesian contexts, Collins draws on her own experiences during more than a decade of engagement with NGOs and development in South Sumatra. Throughout the book she displays both a deep understanding of, and a systematically critical attitude toward, development projects in the South Sumatra. In Chapter 3 she presents case studies of land disputes involving oil plantations (two cases) and industrial forestry (three cases) In Chapters 4, 5, and 6 she describes, respectively, three cases of disputes involving environmental issues, three cases involving workers' rights, and five cases involving corruption. These case studies, narrated chronologically and in considerable detail, will be very valuable for those wishing to learn about the activities of Indonesian NGOs at local or grassroots level. Unfortunately, however, Collins does not always indicate clearly why NGO campaigns were successful in certain cases, but not in others – information which would be of value to future NGO activists.

Thanks to the new press freedom of the Reformasi era, today's NGOs operate in a more favourable environment than their predecessors in so far as 'their protests are reported in the local press' (p. 115). Other than this, however, no significant distinction appears to be identified in this book between NGO activities today and under the New Order. This is consistent with Collins' conclusion that under Reformasi NGOs have continued to achieve very little, largely for the simple reason that 'corporations and the elites that own them still stand above the law' (p. 115).

Chapter 7 shows how the political configuration has changed at the local

level since 1998. In this chapter Collins uses two elections of *bupati*, in Musi Banyuasin and Ogan Komering Ulu, to characterize the new politics in South Sumatra. She notes that although the politicians concerned are former New Order bureaucrats, in the Reformasi era they have adopted several new strategies: 1. establishing new networks with national elites and local businessmen in order to control 'natural resources and lucrative government projects' (p. 134); 2. employing former student activists as campaign organizers in order 'to maintain a facade of popular support' (p. 134); 3. deciding not to rely on political parties as instruments of mobilization (p. 151); and 4. cultivating ties with influential Islamic leaders at both local and national level (p. 151). Collins admits that the development policies of the two *bupati*, based on the New Order corporatist model, have benefited the poor as well as the rich. Yet at the same time she argues that if 'a real change' is to take place, 'the model of corporate development that widens the gap between the rich and poor must be challenged' (p. 151).

The theme of Chapter 8 is Islam, politics, and development. Here Collins examines the history of Islamic politics during and after the New Order in relation to the question of whether Islam is or is not compatible with democracy. 'Thus far in the post-Suharto era', she notes, 'the appeal of *dakwah* and radical Islamic organizations has diminished' (p. 170). But she remains apprehensive that if the new Indonesia fails to address the needs of the poor, the view that Islam is the only way to 'establish a more just social order' will become more attractive (p. 170).

Finally in Chapter 9, Collins places Indonesia's development experience in a global context. In the globalized environment, local NGO activists confront the power of international financial institutions and multinational corporations as well as national and local political and business elites. This chapter provides good summaries of topics such as the debt trap, structural adjustment programs, the Asian economic crisis, and free market utopianism.

While the argument of this book is not new, Collins' detailed description of South Sumatra and its development dynamics is very stimulating and can be particularly recommended to readers interested in civil society movements in developing countries.

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Grant Evans, *The last century of Lao royalty; A documentary history*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2009, xiv + 430 pp. ISBN 9789749511664. Price: THB 1850.00 (hardback).

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When Grant Evans, one of the few Westerners to have conducted continuous research in socialist Laos since the 1980s, published his first volume on the country, it dealt with agricultural collectives. Fifteen years later in 1998, the same author's *Ritual and the politics of remembrance* showed how memories of the Lao monarchy, abolished in 1975, were increasingly informing post-revolutionary Laos despite continuing official silence about the circumstances of the royal family's death in a 're-education camp'.

Evans' latest book, more ironically still, is entirely dedicated to these memories of Lao royalty. It is a lush and beautiful volume containing hundreds of well-reproduced historical photos, mostly in black and white, together with transcriptions and translations of documents, memoirs, interviews, newspaper articles, letters and other original materials, some of them easily available elsewhere, but many published or translated from Lao and French for the first time. There are contributions from anthropologists like Joel Halpern, Charles Archambault and Catherine Choron-Baix, alongside selections from the memoirs of Prince Phetsarath and reports by various foreign ambassadors. Evans himself provides a lengthy introduction and some shorter texts in between, all of them thoroughly intelligent, well informed and insightful. He is less interested in the grand turning points of history than in social life and ritual. Nor does he focus exclusively on the rulers of Luang Phrabang, who became kings of Laos with the country's independence in 1953, although the portrayal of their family takes up the major part of the book. The politically marginalized but economically influential rulers of the southern polity of Champassak are also represented, as, more briefly, are the descendants of the Phuan principality on the Laos-Vietnam border. Servants and court officials are also portrayed.

Very much in this book depends on how one reads it, as Evans lets the material speak for itself. Academic readers will find a plethora of interesting data here, although inevitably the information provided remains incomplete. Interviews with surviving members of the court give insightful impressions of court life, although they lack the length and detail on which in-depth analyses could be based. For general interest readers, and especially for many Lao, this is a loving memorial of an era gone by.

The image these documents convey of the Lao royals is a curious mixture of accessibility and strict hierarchy, of pragmatism and socio-cosmic integra-

tion of the country. Princes went to schools together with commoner kids, and King Savang Vatthana enjoyed farming. Nevertheless, royals had to be addressed in 'royal language', and family relations were often exclusive, as most princes married cousins, nieces, even half-siblings, at least as first wives (the last king being the first one to take a single spouse). As the offspring of these relations was distributed across the entire political spectrum – including the figurehead of the socialists, 'Red' Prince Souphanouvong – Lao history in this politically highly charged period appears almost as a family affair. The book suggests that royalty, while conservative and sometimes corrupt, was mostly benevolent and accepted by a majority of Lao and many other ethnicities in Laos. As the Pathet Lao maintained the appearance that they did not plan to abolish the monarchy until a few days before they actually did so, it seems that the Laotians were cheated out of this representation of national integration by international forces and a small party elite. Even now, Evans does not hesitate to write, '(t)he monarchy could be invited to return, and there is no doubt that most Lao would welcome it' (p. 41). However, he deems it unlikely to happen.

While *The last century of Lao royalty* does not aspire to be the single authoritative source on this period of Lao history, it is a highly important contribution to its study. It also provides excellent material for the study of royalty in the context of the twentieth-century transformations of nation-states.

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Tineke Hellwig and Eric Tagliacozzo (eds), *The Indonesia reader; History, culture, politics*. Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2009, x + 477 pp. ISBN 9780822344247. Price: USD 25.95 (paperback).

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This primer on Indonesian history, culture and politics is part of a book series named 'The World Readers' by Duke University Press, and is intended 'for the traveler, student, and expert alike' (jacket blurb). The publisher's website informs us that 'each volume will feature many perspectives, including those of scholars, journalists, activists, novelists, poets, and politicians: historical and contemporary figures, men and women, racial and ethnic minorities, residents providing first-hand accounts and outsiders looking in'. As a special feature, '[m]uch of the material will be translated into English for the first time' (<http://www.dukeupress.edu/features/>; last accessed on 16 November 2009).

Following the series' format, the book under review is organized in chronological order, and is divided into ten thematic sections of more or less equal size with the following titles: (I) Early histories; (II) Early modern histories; (III) Cultures in collision; (IV) Through travelers' eyes; (V) High colonial Indies; (VI) The last decades of the Indies; (VII) From nationalism to independence; (VIII) The Old Order, the New Order – political climate; (IX) Social issues and cultural debates; and finally, (X) Into the twenty-first century. Thus the very first topic concerns the Kutai inscriptions in Kalimantan, which are dated around 400 CE and are the earliest known writings in the Indonesian archipelago, while the last issue is about the controversial 'anti-pornography' law passed by Indonesia's parliament in 2008. In some 150 selections we find passages from Indonesian text editions, foreign travelogues, scholarly articles, literary works and other textual sources, but also some cartoons and photos. This potpourri of all sorts of extracts and quotations from diverse provenances is the book's real forte. All pieces are most helpfully preceded by succinct, informative introductions by the editors, and are sometimes also footnoted with fuller explanations. The section 'Suggestions for further reading' (pp. 451-5) is rather short, but can be used as a first aid guide.

As the editors themselves state, making choices was the most arduous part of their job (p. ix). While other scholars would perhaps have decided to draw attention to yet other fascinating texts and topics, this resulting anthology has an impressive variety of interesting documents on offer. What we have here is a wonderful display of the rich diversity in cultural and historical legacies of the Indonesian archipelago. The coverage is most up to date: the final section on the new millennium points to the multifarious problems and challenges which will continue to face the Indonesian nation for many years to come.

I have only a few minor criticisms. The photo of the Kutai inscription is too dark, making it hardly possible to discern any letters at all (p. 18). In the reference to verses 18-26 of the so-called *Babad Dipanegara* (translated by Peter Carey) it should have been mentioned that the episode belongs to canto VII in Carey's text edition; it would also be a help to know that this particular history of Dipanegara does not represent the latter's own views, but was written about him at the rival Surakarta court (p. 121). The explanatory note that 'Sunnah means Islamic laws other than The [sic] Qur'an which are not binding' (p. 432) is inaccurate. *Sunna* denotes the general approved way of life in Islam, based upon the example set by the Prophet Muhammad. The sunna (literally, 'trodden path') of the Prophet has the position of the second root of Islamic law, after the Qur'an. Such few quibbles aside, this is a highly recommendable tool for students and general readers alike.

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Raymond Corbey, *Snellen om namen; De Marind-Anim van Nieuw-Guinea door de ogen van de Missionarissen van het Heilig Hart, 1905-1925*. Leiden: KITLV Uitgeverij, 2007, 137 pp. ISBN 9789067183024. Prijs: 18,90 (paperback).

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'A photograph is a secret about a secret. The more it tells you, the less you know.' This quotation by Diane Arbus, with which Corbey opens his book, captures the ambivalence and ambiguity inherent in the pictures displayed in *Snellen om namen; De Marind-Anim van Nieuw-Guinea door de ogen van de Missionarissen van het Heilig Hart, 1905-1925* (Killing for names; The Marind Anim of New Guinea through the eyes of missionaries of the Sacred Hart, 1905-1925). They are, as Corbey describes in his preface (p. 8), familiar, alienating, confronting, voyeuristic and aggressive at the same time.

The photographs Corbey presents to us were predominantly made by missionaries of the Sacred Hart (MSC, *Missionarii Sacratissimi Cordis*) from Tilburg, who stood witness to the vanishing culture of the Marind Anim living on the southwest coast of what was then Dutch New Guinea. The Tilburg missionaries had established their first mission post in Merauke in 1905, shortly after the Dutch government had established a government post in the area due to complaints by the British government about killings by Marind Anim of people living on the British side of the border (p. 7). The photographs displayed here concern the period up until 1925, after which much of the traditional Marind Anim culture radically changed.

In addition to the circa 50 photographs made by the missionaries, Corbey has added about 15 photographs by the Swiss ethnographer Paul Wirz, who did fieldwork among the Marind Anim between 1916 and 1919, and in 1922. Four other photographs come from the collection of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) in Amsterdam. As Corbey explains in his preface (p. 8), his choice for the selected photographs derives mainly from their ethnographic-documentary value with regard to the traditional way of life and culture of the Marind Anim (p. 8). This selection, as well as the interest of the missionaries who took the photographs, results in a collection of images representing the Marind Anims' spirit world, headhunting rituals, initiations, and other rituals, such as those surrounding birth and death (p. 8).

In addition to a fascinating collection of photographs, Corbey presents us with a short but informative introduction (pp. 10-29) to the culture of the Marind Anim, as well as a bibliography (pp. 31-4). Basing himself mainly on missionary writings and the ethnographic studies of Paul Wirz and Jan

van Baal, he describes the cosmological world of the Marind Anim, in which clans, spirits, fertility, strength, life, death and rituals (such as headhunting and the consumption of human sperm) are intrinsically intertwined.

Among the Marind Anim, headhunting was part of a long initiation ritual in which the goal of obtaining the 'head-name' (*pa igiz*), translated by the missionaries as *snelnaam* (headhunting name), was crucial (p. 19). Upon killing and beheading the victim, the Marind tried to find out the victim's names, which they would then give to their children. Each adolescent had to get such a *snelnaam*, which explains the large number of heads that had to be hunted (p. 19). Corbey mentions that around 1925, there were Marind who had their traditional clan name, and a *snelnaam*, as well as a Roman Catholic name, which they obtained at their baptism (p. 19). The next generation, however, would no longer have *snelnamen* as both colonial government and missionaries worked hard to eliminate headhunting, which they saw as a horrific and 'barbaric' custom (pp. 19-20).

The missionaries who encountered this passionate and violent culture, as Van Baal characterized it (p. 11), were both appalled and fascinated by the practices they encountered. The Marind are described as animals, as immoral people who indulge in barbaric practices of headhunting and ritual promiscuity (pp. 22-3). The photographs displayed reflect some of this abhorrence, as well as the missionaries' fascination and love for the Marind Anim. Several missionaries praise the kind, merry and friendly character of the Marind, who were as ambivalent toward the missionaries as the missionaries were toward them (pp. 23-6).

*Snellen om namen* is now also available in English under the title *Headhunters from the swamps; The Marind Anim of New Guinea as seen by the missionaries of the Sacred Heart, 1905-1925* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2010). Its strength lies above all in its photographs, which enmesh the viewer in an enthralling gaze of alienation and familiarization, of horror and compassion, unsettling the reader and urging him or her to learn more about the Marind Anim and their culture.

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Patrick Guinness, *Kampung, Islam and state in urban Java*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009, xiv + 275 pp. ISBN 9789067183482. Price: EUR 22.50 (paperback).

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Community studies of peasants, the urban poor, and other marginalized populations were a staple of post-war social anthropological research and writing. Since the early 1990s, however, anthropologists' interest in the middle classes, transcultural networks, and deterritorialized social imaginaries has brought about an overall decline in community studies. Patrick Guinness's book on a settlement of urban poor located on environmentally precarious riverflats in Yogyakarta, south-central Java is a welcome reminder of just how important this research genre remains.

Guinness' involvement with his pseudonymously identified field site of Ledok began with pre-dissertation research in 1975 followed by PhD research in 1979. His first book, *Harmony and hierarchy in a Javanese kampung* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986) offered an overview of local politics and socioeconomic organization in Ledok during the early-middle portion of Indonesia's New Order era. Guinness' new study revisits some of the issues raised in the earlier book, not least of all as regards the tensions in Javanese social life between the aspiration for social harmony (*rukun*) and the pervasive if contested reality of social hierarchy. But the new book has the notable advantage of a thirty-year research perspective on social, economic, and religious change in this poor community.

The book's first chapter lays out the theoretical terms for the volume as a whole, defending the concept of community against those who would dismiss it as theoretically obsolescent. Contrary to what some critics claim, Guinness explains, community is typically studied, not apart from the state, but in dialectical interaction with it. In Indonesian studies, Guinness takes exception to those who have argued that the New Order state so effectively hegemonized local society that any sense of grassroots solidarity withered. Guinness' *longue durée* perspective provides abundant examples of state domination, but also shows 'strong local impulses to community, quite independent of state action' (p. 24). The book's penultimate chapter returns to this theme, emphasizing that recognition of such impulses is vital if development programs are to become more effectively participatory.

The middle chapters of the book apply this same community-based perspective to enterprises undertaken by Ledok poor (Chapter 2), formalization and informalization in state-community relations (Chapter 3), and the mobilization of informal social resources for locally development (Chapter 4). The latter half of the book, Chapters 5 to 9, invokes a similar analytic frame, but applies it to a delightfully broad array of concerns. Highlighting the ways in which youth culture articulates, often contradictorily, local adults' norms with a hegemonic mainstream society, Chapter 5 offers one of the finest community-based studies of consumption and youth identity currently available in Indonesian studies. Chapter 6 reports on the near-total disappearance of *kenduren* ritual meals, which Java anthropologists have long identified as the

core of nominal Javanese Muslims' ritual life. An insight applicable to large portions of Muslim Indonesia, Guinness explains the ritual's decline in terms of the spread of more formalized and reform-minded styles of religiosity. Chapter 7 examines the 2004 elections in Indonesia, using local facts to highlight broader changes in electoral politics. Chapter 8 examines the incidence of community and state violence in Ledok during and after the New Order period. Guinness agrees with those who have observed that vigilante violence has diminished since 2000-2001. He also recognizes that violence is a pervasive part of village life. But he takes exception to those who have argued that 'violence and its suppression is the foundation of kampung community' (p. 200).

As is inevitable in as far-ranging a study as this one, there are a few points in Guinness' analysis where more comparison might have deepened the analysis. Guinness' observations on the causes of the Islamic resurgence (p. 164) and on state and societal violence in metropolitan Yogyakarta overlook several important reference materials. But these moments of ethnographic haste are few by comparison to the many insights this fine book offers into marginality, survival, and identity among the urban poor in Indonesia over the past thirty years. Well suited for adoption in undergraduate and graduate courses, this study is a welcome reminder of the continuing importance of community-based research even as disciplines like social anthropology 'go global'.

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R.E. Jordaan and B.E. Colless, *The Māharājas of the isles; The Śailendras and the problem of Śrīvijaya*. Leiden: Department of Languages and Cultures of Southeast Asia and Oceania, 2009, xviii + 279 pp. [Semaian 25.] ISBN 9789073084254, price EUR 30.00 (paperback).

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As every student of early Southeast Asia will know, the historical position of Śrīvijaya is a true academic minefield. Ever since the well-known article of Georges Coedès established the existence of a kingdom of that name in 1918, the location(s) and political and economic importance of Śrīvijaya have been a hot topic. Unlike the other great ancient Indonesian realm Majapahit, it fell into complete oblivion after its demise. Still, the late rediscovery of the comprehensive Hindu-Buddhist polity by European scholars quickly caught the imagination of modern nationalism, to the extent that Śrīvijaya was hailed as a predecessor of the modern Indonesian state. The common wisdom found

in textbooks of Indonesian history, is that Śrīvijaya was an early empire centred in Palembang from the seventh century, an empire that drew much of its wealth from its control over the Melaka Strait. Following the painstaking epigraphic studies of Johannes de Casparis, it has been assumed that the rulers of Śrīvijaya entered into matrimonial relations with the Śailendra Dynasty which was based in Java. After a conflict afflicting Java in 855, the Śailendra prince Balaputra would have fled to Sumatra, becoming ruler of Śrīvijaya by circa 860. The realm would later, according to the conclusions of Oliver Wolters, have changed its centre from Palembang to Jambi in circa 1080, and survived as an economic power in the Straits until the early Majapahit era.

However, hardly a single statement on the nature and location of Śrīvijaya has remained unopposed. The fragmentary nature of the Chinese, Arab, Indian and indigenous sources is simply not sufficient for a confident reconstruction. Not least the capitals of the realm are in doubt, since the archaeological record of Palembang does not suggest it as the centre of a realm that supposedly included much of the western and central parts of the Southeast Asian archipelago. The archaeologist Bennet Bronson argued in 1979 that Śrīvijaya, although not quite fictitious a construct, was something quite different from the extensive and glorious realm envisioned by some scholars and Indonesian nationalists. Against this background of controversy, two scholars of Dutch and Australian origins, Roy Jordaan and Brian Colless, have reconsidered the available evidence for a new tentative reconstruction. While the two of them have published profusely on ancient Southeast Asia, none is a classical epigraphist or philologist. They remark somewhat excusing that philology is an auxiliary science, and that even giants in the field such as Georges Coedès did not master all the languages in which the textual sources were written. Since the groundbreaking studies of Coedès, De Casparis and Wolters, few new textual records have surfaced, and those extant have been translated and scrutinised since long. There are however a couple of recently discovered inscriptions which cast new light on the issue, and which are taken full advantage of by Jordaan and Colless. Especially the Wanua Tengah III inscription, with its exact dating of non-Śailendra Javanese rulers, appears to alter the conclusions of De Casparis in important respects. There is also a substantial and growing body of archaeological data that allows for new perspectives on central places and emporia.

The main argument of the book circles around the relationship between Śrīvijaya and the Śailendras of Java. In developing Bronson's critical stance towards Coedès' classical reconstruction, the authors argue that much previous scholarship has been the victim of an 'optical illusion', and propose a paradigm shift in the way we look at the texts. In their opinion we must look for elements of symbiosis rather than applying a strict hierarchic model when regarding the position of Śrīvijaya. The Sailendras, who dominated Java in

about 775 to 855, were in their opinion the great kings or the Mahārājas of the Malay-Indonesian archipelago. As such they possessed a strong agricultural base in Central Java. The rulers of Śrīvijaya, on the other hand, had lorded over an extensive realm in the west during part of the seventh and eight centuries, but in Śailendra times they were subordinate allies and did not rule an “empire” as in the classical model. There was therefore a ‘bi-nodal’ structure of the Śailendra empire, consisting of Suvarnadvīpa (Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula) and Yavabhūmi (Java). The supplementary roles of the trade-oriented Śrīvijaya and the agriculture-based Sailendras were disrupted when the latter were expelled from Central Java in 855. This event brought about far-reaching changes for the region. The Śailendra successor realm in Suvarnadvīpa was moreover not a replica of the old Śrīvijaya. Jordaan and Colless do not find evidence for a capital at Palembang after the dynastic move. Rather, a new bi-nodal structure can be discerned, where Kedah and Jambi (alias Malāyu) appear to have been simultaneous centres of power. The maritime realm ruled by the Śailendras in the eleventh century was known to the Chinese as Sanfoqi (San-fo-ch’i) and by the Arab geographers as Zābag. Jordaan and Colless doubt that these terms should be equated with Shilifoshi/Śrīvijaya of the older sources, as is conventionally done.

One link in the argument of a Śailendra empire is the contention that the prince Balaputra was no newcomer to Sumatra after the fighting of 855, as is usually concluded. New epigraphic discoveries and work by Indian historians suggest that Balaputra was present in Suvarnadvīpa some time before 850. He would therefore have been a subordinate Śailendra ruler under the main Māharāja in Java, years before the breakup of the Śailendra realm. This, of course, implies that Śrīvijaya had joined a political alliance with the Śailendras since long, presumably (on the base of an interpretation of the epigraphic record) since circa 775. It would by implication be misleading to regard the history of Hindu-Buddhist insular Southeast Asia in terms of a dichotomy between maritime trading polities and agricultural inland realms. Rather, forms of alliance and cooperation surface in the dim records. This is certainly a point worth consideration, but on the other hand the chronology of the Pala kings of Bengal, on which the authors lean, is still too vague to allow truly secure conclusions.

The book is not easy reading, and one would have wished for a concluding chapter that summarized the authors’ reconstructions in somewhat clearer terms than is done here. But it is certainly a most useful work. The coverage of the large and complicated historiography on Śrīvijaya makes it mandatory reading for anyone wishing to orient him- or herself in the state of the field. The usefulness is enhanced by the appendixes. Appendix A provides a critical historiographical assessment of the identifications between geographical names commonly done, summarized in Coedès’ formula Śrīvijaya = (Shili-)

foshi = Śrīvisaya/Śrīvijayam = (San-)foqi = kingdom of Śailendra = Zābag = island of the Mahārāja = kingdom of Palembang. Several of these identifications are found debatable. Appendix D is a historical geography of maritime ancient Southeast Asia that helpfully lists the various names and variants for each important location. The vagueness of the sources, and the disturbing paucity of texts that actually mention the Śailendras, may leave the reader less than convinced of the precedence of Jordaan's and Colless's reconstruction over those of others. Nevertheless, the strength of the book lies in its broad and multidisciplinary approach to the subject.

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Henk Schulte Nordholt, *Bali: an open fortress, 1995-2005; Regional autonomy, electoral democracy and entrenched identities*. Singapore: NUS Press, 2007, x + 105 pp. ISBN 9789971693756. Price: SGD 22.00 (paperback).

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Having lived in Bali over the past fourteen years, I am grateful to Henk Schulte Nordholt for his insightful analysis of so many bewildering developments and events that have befallen the Balinese and their reactions to them, in particular in post-Soeharto Indonesia. Well-known is the horror of the Bali Bomb in 2002, shattering Bali's image of a peaceful island in the midst of a country ridden by eruptions of ethnic and religious violence elsewhere after 1998, which made the Balinese themselves painfully aware that Bali is not immune to international terrorism. However, the author convincingly shows that Bali's instability and violence are also due to internal divisions within Balinese society: between village and nobility, commoners and higher castes, and polarizing political affiliations. It is one of the strengths of the book that it shows that these divisions are not new, but are rooted in Bali's turbulent past.

Another important message the author brings across is that Hindu Bali, generally perceived as a unique culture, is not so unique after all. The heightened intensity of many of its older problems, conflicts, and discourses is the direct result of recent policies emanating from Jakarta. The devolution of power from Jakarta to the district level, regulated by the 2002 law on regional autonomy, has deprived the provincial assembly, bureaucracy, and governor of Bali of the clout to manage the increasing number of local conflicts on borders and other adat issues, as well as the polarization within the leading organization of the Hindu community, the Parisada Hindu Dharma. The

administrative fragmentation has also undermined the previously effective supra-district control of capital investment in the tourist industry, and forms a formidable obstacle to the coordination needed to overcome the island's recent shortages in water supply and electricity, and to provide other basic public services.

The political change of climate after 1998 and the electoral democracy introduced since 2004 throughout the country have not fostered regional development and prosperity either. However, they formed a political watershed. The electorate enthusiastically supported the PDI-P at the expense of Golkar, the party that dominated the island's politics for so long. However, the dominant position and popularity of the PDI-P suffered setbacks during the 2003 gubernatorial elections, the 2004 general elections, and the first direct elections of district heads in 2005. This was due to conflicts of interest between the party's headquarters, led by Megawati Soekarnoputri, and regional branches of the party, and to the fact that electoral democracy stimulated the buying and selling of votes, thus fostering corruption on the part of PDI-P politicians once in office. Politically motivated violence occurred at grassroots level, fuelled by semi-criminal gangs allied with various political factions. The author points out that these effects of regional autonomy and electoral democracy are not specific to Bali, but characterize the political arena in other regions as well.

The second purpose of the book is to show how the Balinese have responded to the events and trends that in their perception put their society and culture in jeopardy. The search for stability has come in the form of a movement working for a strong and resilient Bali, promoted by the media conglomerate of the *Bali Post* and supported by the Balinese intelligentsia and urban middle class. This *Ajeg Bali* movement calls for a revival of Balinese Hindu culture and institutions and is opposed to globalization, which is blamed for many social evils such as drug use and growing materialism. The movement is also opposed to the continuous influx of (mainly) Muslim migrants from neighbouring poorer regions, notably East Java and Lombok. Conservative and inward looking in nature, *Ajeg Bali* stands for a return to Bali as it used to be. It wants to make Bali into a culturally resilient fortress, but a Bali still open to tourists and investors and other influences from outside if considered beneficial.

The concrete outcomes of the *Ajeg Bali* ideas, however, have not been so beneficial. Village militias dressed in traditional attire called *pecalang* have been formed, but these are unable to prevent and manage local conflict. The strengthened traditional village administration, the *desa pakraman*, as well as regional governments discriminate against migrants from other islands by means of new legal and illegal regulations, creating a social time bomb. All political parties have participated in the *Ajeg Bali* hype, obscuring differ-

ences of concrete interest and hampering fruitful debate and policymaking on public service issues. Anti-Muslim feelings are on the rise, erupting in 2006 in a widely supported protest against the draft of a new 'pornography law', regarded as an assault on Balinese culture and values.<sup>1</sup>

Although the Ajeg Bali movement promotes regional authenticity, the author points out that as a phenomenon it is very Indonesian: similar movements reinforcing regional ethnic and religious identities have come into being throughout the archipelago. The book's final chapter ends on a wary note. Hegemonic movements such as Ajeg Bali appear to be unable to incorporate notions of change and agency. It is the author's opinion that Balinese intellectuals and administrators need to develop a more dynamic idea of their culture, providing room for the increasing hybridism and plural character of their society as well as national and transnational forces.

This book deserves a wide readership, ranging from those interested in the fate of the region in post-Soeharto Indonesia to anyone interested in Bali's past and present. The small size (only 83 pages of text), the fluent style, and well-chosen illustrations are inviting. The book also makes the reader curious about the ongoing story: is Bali evolving in the direction the author advocates, or will sterile complacency continue to set the tone? Other questions barely covered in the book but calling for answers are: how do ordinary Balinese men and women view their past and present? Why do they seem so attached to traditional ways and primordial ties? To what extent do they also desire, and will they also perhaps demand, change?

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Sukardi Rinakit, *The Indonesian military after the New Order*. Copenhagen and Singapore: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), 2005, x + 278 pp. [Studies in Contemporary Asian History, 2.] ISBN 9788791114052, price GBP 40.00 (hardback); 9788791114069, GBP 14.99 (paperback).

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The Indonesian armed forces – renamed TNI (Tentara Nasional Indonesia) in 1999 – have been the subject of scholarly research for many years. In the late 1970s the classic study by Harold Crouch (1978) concerning the Indonesian army and politics set the standard for future studies on the Indonesian mili-

<sup>1</sup> The pornography law was temporarily shelved because of the protests, but ultimately endorsed by the central parliament in 2008.

tary. More than thirty years later it is no exaggeration to speak of a well-established academic genre in its own right. Why does this topic warrant so much attention? Admittedly, in absolute numbers the Indonesian army ( $\pm 230,000$ ) is the largest in Southeast Asia. Together with the navy ( $\pm 45,000$ ) and air force ( $\pm 24,000$ ) the Indonesian military numbers approximately 300,000. However, in view of the enormous size and complex geographical features of the Indonesian archipelago this is not particularly large. Furthermore, in 2007 Indonesia spent only US\$ 18 per capita for defence purposes, which compares favourably with neighbouring countries Malaysia (US\$ 162) and Singapore (US\$ 1539). In 2009 the Indonesian defence budget amounted to only 0.7% of GDP, significantly less than the defence budgets of Malaysia (3%) and Singapore (5%).

These numbers testify to the fact that the Indonesian armed forces' doctrine is in essence defensive and primarily aimed at securing the country's internal political stability and maintaining its territorial integrity. In order to understand why the Indonesian military has been under scrutiny for so many years, we must turn our attention to its political role. Ever since Indonesia's struggle for independence in the 1940s, the TNI has been at the centre of Indonesian politics. The crucial and highly controversial role of the armed forces within Indonesian society has inspired many authors to analyse and assess the military's conduct, especially after the downfall of Soeharto and the concomitant collapse of the Orde Baru in 1998. For the first time in Indonesia's history the socio-political role of the TNI was seriously questioned, obliging the military to readjust to new political circumstances. Rinakit's book focuses on this readjustment and is part of a large body of recent work on the changing political involvement of the Indonesian military.

In his study Rinakit argues that the Indonesian armed forces were indeed forced to retreat from civil life after Soeharto stepped down. However, much of this 'retreat' was cosmetic, as the military never intended to return to their barracks completely. The 'territorial principle', for instance, was maintained, meaning that the Indonesian army remained present throughout the country as a de facto shadow administration alongside each level of the civil administration (p. 22). Rinakit believes that the military are still far from accepting civil supremacy. In his opinion they undertook only a tactical withdrawal after the fall of Soeharto, returning to an old doctrine developed by General Nasution in the 1950s: that of the so-called Middle Way, now renamed the 'New Paradigm' (pp. 7-8). This doctrine gives the armed forces a socio-political as well as a security and defence role, as in the *dwifungsi* or 'dual function' of the New Order period, although the political function now involves influence rather than control (pp. 102-3). As early as 1998, Lieutenant General Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono – currently serving his second term as president of the Republic of Indonesia – stated that the armed forces needed to reposition themselves away from deep involvement in politics, but carefully added

that in his view they should retain an 'influence role' (p. 6). Rinakit argues that the New Paradigm accommodates this goal, and he concludes his arguments by predicting that 'the future role of the military will be to share power with civilians in governing the Republic' (p. 247).

It is obvious that much painstaking work has gone into this original study. Rinakit clearly spent a lot of time researching the available sources, as judged by his extensive and, above all, varied use of academic publications, magazine articles, and newspapers. In addition, he managed to interview key participants in the events he describes. What makes his study all the more useful is his presentation of a large amount of data in the form of tables and figures. These deal with such matters as civil-military relations, nepotism, military business interests, promotion patterns, and tenure of command. Finally, it should be mentioned that Rinakit succeeds in keeping his study concise while simultaneously presenting much detail. This is quite an accomplishment when compared with the more recent voluminous studies by Sebastian (2006) and Mietzner (2009).

Still, this publication would have benefited significantly from more extensive editorial assistance. It is not very well written and its rigid prose not only forms a real challenge to the reader, but makes it difficult to comprehend the arguments presented. The bibliography, especially the section on newspaper and magazine articles (pp. 261-8), also makes it clear that the author conducted most of his research before 2002. This shows in his last two chapters, in which he only briefly covers the Megawati presidency and the election of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as president of Indonesia. The value of Rinakit's publication lies first and foremost in its extended treatment of military politics from independence in 1945 until Soeharto was forced to abdicate in 1998, and in its account of the military's readjustment to a less dominant position within Indonesian society in the immediate aftermath of 1998.

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Roxana Waterson, *Paths and rivers; Sa'dan Toraja society in transformation*. Leiden: KITLV Press, 2009, xxxii + 510 pp. [Verhandelingen 253.] ISBN 9789067183079. Price: EUR 34.90 (paperback).

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The Sa'dan Toraja, wet-rice cultivators living in the highlands of South Sulawesi, are among the best-known ethnic groups of Indonesia. Their elaborate rituals, grandiose ancestral houses and intriguing artistic expressions attract the interest of foreign and domestic tourists, and anthropologists and historians have attested to the richness and the dynamics of Toraja culture in its many local variations.

Roxana Waterson's previous writings include some 'must-read' anthropological literature on Sa'dan Toraja. Now, this delightful, all-encompassing book has been published, and the temptation is great to label it her 'definitive' work on that people.

The word 'definitive', however, would be pretty foreign to the vocabulary of the author. She modestly presents the book as an open-ended 'story', existing in parallel with alternative stories which would have been told if different 'paths and rivers' had been chosen in the course of the research. Between the lines, we find a personal story, that of Waterson's longstanding relationship with the Toraja. This story records the conditions and outcomes of the various periods of her fieldwork and shorter visits, from 1978 to 2007, as well as enumerating the progress of her explorations. Throughout the text accounts are given of the problems and enigmatic situations encountered during research, and the ways in which the author tried to resolve and interpret these. Hence the reader can participate in her process of reflection and exploration. But, without becoming sentimental at any point, Waterson also conveys her emotions, such as when she depicts her personal relationships, especially with her adoptive family in the western Saluputti district, and her enjoyment in participating in some of the rituals.

The first part of the book deals with Toraja history – or rather, histories – and their interpretation, while the second part is about houses, kinship, and social organization. The subsequent section addresses daily life, paying attention to gender, family life, and agriculture, and the fourth and final part is devoted to rituals and religion.

Waterson scrutinizes the ways in which present-day Toraja use the past for defining their place in society and in distinction to other ethnic groups, especially their powerful neighbours, the Bugis. The invasion of their land by Arung Palakka, ruler of Bone, in 1683, brought about a unity among the

Toraja, and in their collective memory their eventual defeat has been transformed into a triumph. Another defining episode was the so-called Coffee War at the end of the nineteenth century, when Bugis traders, in collaboration with some high-ranking Toraja, made violent attempts to monopolize trade in the coffee produced in the Toraja region, carrying off many of its inhabitants as slaves and importing firearms and other resources for the most powerful Toraja on a massive scale. Dutch colonial rule, which began in 1906 and ended in the 1940s, and the Dutch Reformed Church missions which arrived in 1913, profoundly upset the organization of this hierarchical society, and at the same time contributed strongly to the construction of a Toraja identity. After the Japanese occupation and the independence struggle, in the 1950s the Toraja homeland was terrorized by the troops of the Buginese-Toraja warlord Andi Sose. Toraja resistance in the face of this terror was inspired partly by the oral tradition which told of their ancestors' firm stand against outsiders.

Despite the considerable distance in time between them, these three spells of bloody conflict (the Bone War, the Coffee War and the turbulence of the 1950s) are sometimes merged in Toraja social memory, and the same motifs emerge in the accounts of each episode. In her account of history, Waterson has chosen to discuss these three episodes of antagonism between Toraja and their neighbours first, and only then to put in a chapter about the intervening colonial period. The price to be paid for this strategy, intended to show the weight of oral memory and the participants' handling of the past, has been some loss of momentum. Developments in more recent periods are addressed in the subsequent thematic parts of the book.

The orientation points of social organization of the Toraja are the ancestral houses, with their soaring roofs and wonderfully embellished gables. It is through these houses that people in this cognatic society understand and trace their ties of kinship or affiliation, and the term for them, *tongkonan*, refers both to the house itself and to the people who claim membership of it. Consequently the Toraja constitute, as the author argues, a typical example of a House Society as characterized by Lévi-Strauss. Each *tongkonan* has its own communal grave, hewn out of cliffs or boulders, and often marked by effigies representing the dead. The ritual function of the origin houses is underlined by the display of decorations which refer to buffaloes and – less frequently – to hornbills. These indicate that members of the house have organized major ceremonies pertaining to the two large categories into which the Toraja rituals are grouped: those of the West, associated with death, and those of the East, connected with fertility and prosperity.

Toraja religion, *aluk to dolo* or *alukta*, involves a vast number of rituals, as well as myths, deities, and rules about moral conduct. Several traditional rituals have persisted or even been expanded in recent times, despite the fact that the great majority of Toraja are now Christians. One clear benefit

of the longitudinal character of Waterson's research is that it has enabled her to record important changes in the rituals, and their adaptation to new conditions. During her first spells of fieldwork, half of the population of the village where she stayed still adhered to *alukta*. When she returned eleven years later, in the 1990s, conversion to Christianity was complete, and many rituals had already disappeared. In a subtle way, regret about this disappearance is noticeable in several places in the text. In the late 1970s, Waterson was already aware of a rapid decline in the 'rituals of the East' as a result of the incompatibility between Christianity and the invocation of divine spirits. In subsequent years the numerous minor rituals associated with each stage of the agricultural cycle would also disappear, affected both by religious change and by alterations in farming methods and technology.

Rituals of the West, associated with the dead, are still performed today by Christians as well as non-Christians. Depending on their rank, some of the deceased receive a second burial, celebrated by a great ritual, at the heart of which is a complex process of sharing of the meat of buffaloes and pigs. These events, which the author recounts minutely and vividly, are occasions for (re) confirmation of social relationships, especially those between affines. The presenting of meat is essential to acquiring or maintaining prestige. There are obvious parallels here with the potlatch, with feasts given by 'big men', and with the kula exchange – all classic phenomena in anthropology. The major Toraja rituals can be considered 'feasts of merit' of a type which is common in many Southeast Asian societies, and which is sometimes also labelled 'megalithic' because in many cases, including that of the Toraja, stones commemorating prominent people and events play an important role in the ceremony. A salient feature of the Toraja mortuary feast is that the organizer of the event is not the one who expects a future return gift from the guests; that honour falls to the guests themselves who, with their presents of buffaloes and pigs, place the host in their debt.

The gift-exchange mechanisms which structure ongoing interdependencies among people are of special interest because of the expansion and escalation of the expenses involved in mortuary rituals. Waterson's accounts of chains of transactions, her observations on the ways in which the ceremonial economy is articulated with the market and domestic economies, and her exercises in calculating costs are all among the most fascinating parts of this book. So too is a deceptively simple table in Appendix E which brings together a great variety of sources to show how the exchange values of various types of sacrificial animal have changed since the beginning of the twentieth century.

Numerous themes and stories, easily readable and always cogent to Waterson's argument, are addressed in this book. As to the ethnography, her use of data from various periods (her own fieldwork stints over the years, and

older accounts) is not without problems, and she is well aware of this. Despite the author's manifest efforts to provide as much precision as possible, in some passages it is impossible to ascertain the temporal context of the facts or events discussed.

The conclusion of the book is mainly about the post-Soeharto period. The violent confrontations which have taken place between Christians and Muslims in several parts of Indonesia since 1998, and the ongoing process of *pemekaran* (fission or regrouping of administrative regions), both provide strong reasons to focus once again on questions of Toraja identity and on Toraja interpretations of culture and history – recurring themes in the preceding chapters, in which many fascinating stories were told by people, by houses, by natural phenomena, by rituals. Waterson has transmitted and articulated these stories in a personal, individual, and captivating way.

This volume has been edited with a precision that does justice to the quality of the text. There are also many illustrations to help guide the reader through the book, and the stunning colour photographs deserve particular mention.

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