

Southeast Asians. The chapter in this volume that most effectively reconciles the political and the transnational is Huang Yu-ling's poignant study of how unfair trade agreements with the United States have made life-saving drugs less, not more, accessible to HIV patients in contemporary Thailand. This is an essay that connects Western and Thai actors in a compelling narrative, and also one that moves beyond the colonial period to investigate the balance of power between the global and local in the postcolonial era.

Transnational histories should also incorporate perspectives from social history. This is another area in which *Global Movements, Local Concerns* is rather lacking; the focus is above all on states, philanthropists and physicians. In fact, the chain of international interaction and mediation must ultimately end at the ground level. One hopes, then, that the book will encourage more transnational work on the history of medicine that will include the experiences and responses of Southeast Asians.

**Loh Kah Seng**

Institute for East Asian Studies, Sogang University, 1-1, Sinsu-dong, Mapo-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea; email: LKSHIS@GMAIL.COM.

DOI: 10.1355/sj28-2k

*Images of a Forest People: Punan Malinau — Identity, Sociality, and Encapsulation in Borneo*. Uppsala Studies in Cultural Anthropology 52. By Lars Kaskija. Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2012. 270 pp.

Over the past five decades, anthropologists have keenly studied indigenous communities undergoing change and “development” in the forested uplands and lowlands of Southeast Asia. The book under review here examines the complexity of the issues relating to forest people living in the Indonesian province of East Kalimantan. Lars Kaskija draws on his fieldwork from 1990 to 1992 and from 1997 to 2000 to describe the lives of the Punan Malinau. The book is significant because little research has been undertaken by

anthropologists either on hunters and gatherers in Indonesian Borneo in general or on the Punan Malinau living in small settlements in the upper reaches of the Malinau River in northeast Borneo in particular. The Malinau area holds some 15 to 20 per cent of the total population of Borneo's hunters and gatherers.

In framing the lives of the Punan Malinau, Chapter Two begins with a detailed survey of the anthropological literature on past and present perceptions of hunters and gatherers. Concepts like hunter-gatherer, forager, sociality and opportunism are briefly explained. Chapter Three focuses on Central Borneo's hunter-gatherers, highlighting the ethnological complexities involved in examining such groups. Information on the various ethnic groups living in the Malinau area — including the Merap, Punan, Kenyah, Putuk, Bulusu' and Abai — is presented in Chapter Four to help readers understand the lives of the Punan Malinau in relation to those of members of other, similar groups. Chapter Five then narrows the focus to an ethno-historical account of the upper Malinau, followed by a discussion of the role of forests in supporting subsistence-level livelihoods in Chapter Six. The chapter includes discussion of the importance of non-timber forest products like *gaharu* (incense wood). Chapter Seven then addresses the distinctive features of Punan sociality. It makes clear that a reliance on hunting and gathering is not the most striking characteristic of the Punan Malinau. Instead, as Kaskija shows, characteristics such as individualism, opportunism and sharing feature more prominently and importantly in Punan sociality. In wrapping up the book, Chapter Eight then moves to the turn of the millennium, to note numerous changes affecting the Punan Malinau — changes that have brought both a number of negative consequences and various new opportunities.

As a development economist focusing on forest-use conflicts and native customary rights in Sarawak, I read this book with an interest in whether the same issues plagued communities across the border in Indonesia. Did indigenous communities living in these areas experience the same development challenges and hardships

as their counterparts, not least involving encroachment on their native customary rights? Did the Punan Malinau learn to maneuver through this “jungle” of changes and challenges? Was compensation for encroachment on to indigenous rights fair and equitable?

The author must be credited for having answered the above questions throughout the book. The evidence he provides effectively demonstrates the ways in which indigenous rights have been encroached upon by mining and timber companies, with compensation being unfair, inconsistent and often unpredictable. While the last chapter of the book treats such issues in general terms, it would have had a greater impact if a case study focusing on a particular subset of members in this Punan Malinau community had been employed.

Moreover, while the book’s last chapter also attempts to update the analysis to the year 2000, the author could have undertaken a stronger quantitative analysis of the impact of “outside intrusion” on the availability of, for example, non-timber forest products like *gaharu* and wild boar. Such a quantitative analysis would help the reader to grasp the actual outcome of the extent to which collectors from outside the area (or those working in the mining and logging companies) have affected the livelihood of the Punan Malinau people who have lived in this area for centuries.

The book is a compelling read, especially for those who savour anthropological detail on an ethnic minority community whose members’ lives differ vastly from those of people living in urban areas. That the author is able to provide such a rich ethnographic account is due to many years spent collecting extensive data. It is also important to note that this valuable study lends support to many of the findings of the anthropological literature on Sarawakian native communities, especially accounts of the nomadic Penan in Sarawak, another community of hunter-gatherers. Interestingly enough, this book highlights one surprising detail: unlike indigenous communities in Sarawak which lamented the coming of the timber companies, the Punan Malinau were not averse to the presence of such entities, and instead saw them as an opportunity to secure

cash incomes in exchange for their labour. Also surprising is the finding that, although the Punan Malinau have utilized plant and animal resources for centuries without degrading the environment, it was not out of any conservationist ideology that they did so. Rather, their population numbers were too insignificant to have a positive or, for that matter, negative impact on such resources. To this end, Kaskija found the Punan Malinau to be fundamentally pragmatic and economically rational. Their use of resources was not governed by a morality or ideology of conservation such as those pointed out by some anthropologists studying indigenous communities elsewhere.

### **Lee Poh Onn**

Regional Economic Studies Programme, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace, Pasir Panjang, Singapore 119614; email: polee@iseas.edu.sg.

DOI: 10.1355/sj28-21

*Global Filipinos: Migrants' Lives in the Virtual Village*. By Deirdre McKay. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2012. 247 pp.

The title of this book suggests an anthology of accounts of Filipinos who have migrated overseas and of the ways in which their relationships with home are shaped by technology. But *Global Filipinos* is much more nuanced than that. It offers a descriptive and intimate account focused on two individuals, called Luis and Angelina, who hail from Haliap village in Ifugao Province, northern Luzon. As Deirdre McKay follows their lives closely through their sojourns overseas, she documents in ethnographic detail their journey from a rural village to work sites abroad, in Hong Kong and Canada, and, finally, their homecoming.

Throughout the book, McKay addresses central themes of globalization and migration, presenting findings from her long-term participant observation. She seeks to understand the world of migrants