

aim or at least claim to appeal to an audience beyond specialists. *Everyday Life in Southeast Asia* is one of the rare collections compiled and written by academics that should indeed speak to a broad audience as an introduction to the societies and peoples of one of the world's most richly diverse regions. Specialists, too, will take pleasure and find insights in this book.

Eric C. Thompson

Department of Sociology, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, National University of Singapore, AS1 #03-06, 11 Arts Link, Singapore 117570; email: socet@nus.edu.sg.

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Beyond the Sacred Forest: Complicating Conservation in Southeast Asia. Edited by Michael R. Dove, Percy E. Sajise, and Amity A. Doolittle. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011. 372 pp.

This fascinating book is the result of an extended collaborative research project that has sought, as the subtitle states, to complicate thinking about a wide range of aspects of what we usually think of as “conservation” in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. Most of its chapters report on research in ethnic minority areas of Indonesia and Malaysia during the 1990s; one chapter concerns the Philippines. Three are revised versions of papers previously published elsewhere. The authors represent an impressive range of disciplines, including anthropology, biology, history, rural sociology and social ecology, and their institutional affiliations are roughly evenly divided among Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, the United Kingdom and the United States. The overall quality of the scholarship and the writing in *Beyond the Sacred Forest* is very high, and the book will be of interest to scholars and practitioners working on conservation, natural resource management, and agrarian political economy in Southeast Asia and beyond.

The introductory chapter by editors Michael Dove, Percy Sajise and Amity Doolittle begins with a succinct and stimulating overview of some of the main changes that have taken place in scholarly

approaches to conservation and development since the early 1990s. Prominent among these, they argue, is the emergence of a “postlocal, postequilibrium, poststructural, and post-Western” intellectual stance (p. 1). They then proceed to put the book’s chapters into conversation with one another by examining the ways they engage with five core themes: “the complexity of the local communities and natural resource management”, “historical perspectives on natural resource use”, “ideals of planning and relations of power”, “knowledge and discourse”, and “nature, culture and science” (pp. 10–11). In setting up the volume, the editors do not give their contributors a set of marching orders; rather, they lay out the broad contours of a field of research and allow the chapters to take their places within it. This approach to framing the chapters complements the book’s commitment to interdisciplinarity and its argument that deviations from master plans, scepticism about equilibrium states, and conflict are all potentially positive and productive.

While there is not space here to survey the contributions to the volume individually, the chapters, when read together, give a clear sense of the complexities, the conundrums, and the sheer range of issues with which research on conservation must grapple. A few empirical themes stand out particularly clearly. The first is the ways in which state policies relating to natural-resource management can conflict with one another. Conflicts are often due to the contradictions among conservationist, modernizing, and other goals, or to what happens in the interstices between state agendas. A second theme is the importance of intra- and inter-community differentiation for natural-resource management. A third is the historical dynamism of “community” approaches to, and knowledge about, conservation, and an accompanying critique of assumptions — scholarly, policy, activist — about communities and conservation. Fourth, the volume highlights the (at times quite self-conscious) mobilization of ideas about environmental stewardship and territorial belonging by people trying to hold on to land, and the unanticipated consequences of such strategic essentialisms. Prominent amongst the latter are the ways in which “affirmation by the central state of local values and institutions seems inevitably to undermine them” (p. 27).

These themes are developed through sophisticated analyses of agrarian political economy and natural resource regimes which move deftly across historical time periods and between analytical scales. Endah Sulistyawati's chapter deserves special mention for developing and drawing conclusions about issues such as landlessness and deforestation from a computer simulation of swidden rice cultivation and rubber tapping by Kantu' households in West Kalimantan, Indonesia. Few volumes comprised mostly of work by anthropologists and social ecologists would include a chapter by a biologist. This chapter, with its very clear description of the rationale behind its model, substantially broadens this volume's interdisciplinary scope.

While *Beyond the Sacred Forest* is highly impressive, some imbalances in the book's coverage deserve mention. First, although the volume's subtitle states that it is about "conservation in Southeast Asia", its empirical scope is in fact narrower than that. In addition to the focus on Indonesia and Malaysia rather than on Southeast Asia as a whole, the book deals mainly with natural resource issues in upland, ethnic minority areas where people engage at least to some degree in swidden cultivation and/or agroforestry. An exception is the excellent chapter by Yunita T. Winarto, which deals with Integrated Pest Management programmes in rice-farming villages in Java and Sumatra. One unfortunate consequence of this imbalance in focus is that "conservation" implicitly comes to appear a matter of relevance primarily to forested, ethnic-minority areas, rather than to ethnic-majority lowlands.

Second, while all of the chapters highlight state policies, those policies that explicitly seek to promote conservation receive little attention. The exceptions are the chapter by Winarto and Lye Tuck-Po's chapter on protected-areas management and discourse in Malaysia. A very substantial proportion of Southeast Asia's land area has been demarcated by states as some form of conservation area. The volume, however, devotes little attention to that reality or its consequences.

Finally, it is not always clear where the book draws the line between the analysis of conservation and natural-resource management

(terms that it uses largely interchangeably) on the one hand and the broader study of what the introduction calls “resource-use regimes” (p. 12) on the other. Several chapters deal with natural resources mainly through a focus on property, access, land use and territory rather than engaging more directly with the question of the management of potentially degradable resources. At times, then, the book loses its analytical focus on conservation. In some ways, the volume is perhaps understood better as being about resource use and agrarian political economy in upland Indonesia and Malaysia than specifically about conservation. These caveats, however, take nothing away from the many accomplishments of *Beyond the Sacred Forest*.

Derek Hall

Department of Political Science and Balsillie School of International Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University, 75 University Avenue West, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3C5, Canada; email: dehall@wlu.ca.

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Monks and Magic: Revisiting a Classic Study of Religious Ceremonies in Thailand (NIAS Classics series, no. 2). By Barend Jan Terwiel. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2012. 312 pp.

Monks and Magic, the classic account of Buddhism in rural Central Thailand that was first published in 1975, has been reprinted with a new preface and postscript and with additions to the text. The book is organized around the ways in which engagement with Buddhism develops through the life-course of villagers. The author’s own engagement with the monastic and lay communities gives the work a notable depth in the ethnography of ritual and meaning. This remains an important but controversial book: important for the beautiful, detailed ethnographic account of ritual and belief in a village community that it provides, and controversial for the unbridgeable separation that, the author maintains, exists between “village” and “elite” Buddhism.