

among individual contributions, but also of their very diversity. For example, some readers will struggle to understand chapters written by specialists in disciplines not their own; in at least one case, the terminology was so specialized that I found the argument almost impossible to follow.

This diversity is especially problematic because of the absence of a unifying “voice”. Some 240 million Muslims — about forty per cent of the population of the region as a whole — live in Southeast Asia. This population is almost as great as those of North Africa and the Middle East, which together have a Muslim population of about 317 million. For centuries, busy two-way traffic in people, ideas, commodities and finance has linked Muslim Southeast Asia and other parts of the Muslim world, and this traffic has increased in volume in the modern period. The history, and the present, of the “world” of Southeast Asian Islam therefore raises thorny questions about the very notion of globalization with which most of the contributors to the volume operate. One would have liked to see in such a volume some attempt to deal not just with the way in which some Southeast Asian Muslims are “responding to” globalization but also to the ways in which they are shaping it.

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Red Stamps and Gold Stars: Fieldwork Dilemmas in Upland Southeast Asia. Edited by Sarah Turner. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2013. x+295 pp.

My fieldwork notebooks always have two sides: field notes and personal diary. While I will eventually formally record the field notes for analysis and write them up, I seldom share the diary because I usually find its content too personal, sometimes not directly relevant

to the topic. Inevitably, then, I make those materials that directly support the findings and conclusions of the research the focus of my attention. Accountability to the sponsors of research often reinforces that prioritization. However, the fieldwork journey — with all its difficulties, drawbacks and dilemmas — is often very enriching, and discoveries go beyond merely the subject of the research.

Sarah Turner's edited volume brings the dilemmas of doing fieldwork to the centre of attention. *Red Stamps and Gold Stars* presents a collection of candid stories of the challenges that researchers encounter during fieldwork in mainland Southeast Asia. Issues of sensitivity surrounding research topics often accentuate these dilemmas, which include the problem of limited access — administrative, physical and sometimes linguistic and cultural — to ethnic minorities. Among the factors limiting access are the political context of socialist countries (Chapter Two by Jean Michaud), dealing with political gatekeepers (Chapter Six by Jennifer Sowerwine) and facing censorship and self-censorship (Chapter Eight by Pierre Petit, Chapter Thirteen by Oscar Salemin). They also include stretching the research methods from participant observation to “participant intoxication” (p. 109, Chapter Eight by Pierre Petit); learning how becoming friends with the locals can affect one's research (Chapter Seven by Christine Bonnin); and making ethical decisions relating to studying and advocating (Chapter Eleven by Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy).

By sharing personal experiences and ethical doubts, the authors — mostly established social scientists working on Southeast Asia — raise the issues of reflexivity and subjectivity in the field. While reflexivity allows the researchers to be more open to the challenges to their theoretical positions that fieldwork would inevitably raise, it can also change researchers and their positions relative to the others in the field. In Chapter Three, Stephane Gros starts this discussion with his feeling of what he calls “fieldwork-verite” (p. 58) — finding himself in the middle of what he had been observing. “Positioning” is a fascinating theme that this volume discusses in different ways. For example, positioning the anthropologist vis-à-vis the studied

groups as he or she slowly becomes an accepted member of the community is a fluid process, one subject to various forms of social negotiations. Age, gender, nationality, the ability to speak a (or the) local language and the need to navigate cultural norms are potential challenges that anthropologists and other social scientists face upon entering the field. In Chapter Six, Jennifer Sowerwine fears being rejected as a “Yankee” (p. 103) in Vietnam, but while in Lào Cai province she discovered that “foreignness” can also have advantages and open up opportunities. In Chapter Nine, Karen McAllister experiences the frustrations of the difficulties involved in interviewing ethnic minority women and the challenges of being a female researcher in Laos. She eventually learns to use her “foreign expert” (p. 175) card to become accepted as an “honorary man” (p. 168) in the community. In Chapter Twelve, Sarah Turner gives local research assistants recognition. Playing the role of “cultural consultant” (p. 221), they are often essential to foreign researchers’ understanding of and connection with the local community. Cultural positioning of a researcher is not, hence, limited to her relationship to the studied community; it also includes her relationship to her research assistant or assistants.

Power relations — from reciprocal and potentially exploitive to inherently hierarchical — between the researcher and the studied ethnic groups, as well as their gatekeepers, is another theme discussed in the volume. Making friends, while seemingly natural, can also be a source of ethical concern, as Christine Bonnin argues in Chapter Seven. While bonding in the field may suggest that the relationship between the researcher and informants is one of equals, it also brings potential pitfalls. Each party may draw on such bonds to achieve its own objectives, raising the risk of conflicts of interest and even betrayal.

Dealing with expectations from marginalized or victimized groups is also a challenge for many scholars. In Chapter Eleven, Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy discovers that the expectation of the Tibetan community that she is studying that she will do something about what she knows brings her identities as researcher and activist

into conflict. Navigating between the expectations of others and the positioning of the researcher is a constant challenge for all the contributors to this volume, and trust becomes important in political settings. In Chapter Five, Candice Cornet describes the benefits of bringing her child with her into the field. While having a child or baby in the field might usually be associated with enhanced difficulties, she finds that her daughter's presence makes it easier for her to gain the trust of the community. For it makes known to local people that she has the qualities associated with motherhood. Being trusted is clearly crucial to success in obtaining information, but it also comes with responsibility. In Chapter Thirteen, Oscar Salemink describes his moral dilemma, deciding between publishing and protecting the identity of those whose trust he has gained. In Chapter Eight, Pierre Petit examines the issue of trust from the perspective of censorship both before and after fieldwork. He reports his experience in disclosing different forms of knowledge in the process of obtaining his research permit for Laos as well as in the publication stage. He openly shares examples of his original text and the revised versions in his chapter.

Red Stamps is a heart-warming manual for social scientists, as well as a warning to those with the naive belief that they can succeed despite the difficulties. The contributors to the volume have done a great service to the research community by describing the technicalities, doubts and dilemmas encountered during and after fieldwork. They prepare the newcomers for potential difficulties. This volume gives a sneak peek into the world of foreign researchers in socialist Asia and shares the months and even years of "backstage" stories before scholarship is published. My own experience from my fieldwork is that, as much as findings are exciting, it is the process of research that shapes us as researchers. It is often those unexpected experiences and reflections that sharpen our techniques of conducting research outside the library or computer room. In publishing material from research diaries that would otherwise lie in bottom drawers, the volume makes an important contribution to understandings of the process and craft of research. These diary

notes should become a must-read for students of ethnography, anthropology and methodology.

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