

of recent ideas on the decolonization of Southeast Asia during the Cold War would have been welcome in chapter 19 or 20. But given the extensive scope of the book, this is a mere quibble.

With *A History of Southeast Asia*, Reid has set the standard for academic textbooks on the region's history. He includes an impressive list of references and further readings, another reason that this will appeal to readers new to the study of the region. And while his book is clearly focused on Southeast Asia, Reid effectively illustrates the region's extra-regional linkages. His book will thus be of interest to scholars and students of world and global history.

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Nalanda, Srivijaya and Beyond: Re-exploring Buddhist Art in Asia. Edited by Gauri Parimoo Krishnan. Singapore: Asian Civilisations Museum and National Heritage Board, 2016. 296 pp.

Gauri Krishnan's volume takes its place among a series of recently published books rethinking early Southeast Asian history through the lens of international networks and cultural exchanges. Still, being among the few works to focus on art instead of texts, Krishnan's book was awaited with great expectations.

The volume is a collection of ten papers delivered in 2008 at the Asian Civilisations Museum in Singapore, on the occasion of the exhibition “On the Nalanda Trail” (see Krishnan 2008). The idea behind the book is to explore Nalanda’s role within a pan-Asian Buddhist network. However, rather than strictly follow a single guiding thread, the authors have opted to present the reader with a kaleidoscope of Buddhism and Buddhist art, from the early historical period (Peter Skilling’s “Writing and Representation: Inscribed Objects in the *Nalanda Trail* Exhibition”) to the modern period (Teoh Eng Soon’s “Chinese Assimilation of Avalokiteśvara”), and from the Indian subcontinent (Suchandra Ghosh’s “Mainamati: An Enigmatic Centre of Buddhism in Southeastern Bangladesh”) to China (Ho Puay-Peng’s “Housing the Colossal Images of Avalokiteśvara”), and passing through Central Asia (Rajeshwari Ghose’s “Kizil, The Hospitable Halt on The Silk Road”) and Southeast Asia (John Miksic’s “Buddhism in the Straits of Melaka and the Archaeology of Srivijaya”). Yet the main focus is on Northeast India and Southeast Asia; seven out of ten papers deal with those regions.

The book is nicely illustrated and a pleasure to read, but the editing seems slightly rushed: some references are missing, others are misspelled, and the use of diacritics is often inconsistent — if not incorrect. In the same vein, it is surprising to note that, on the first map, Borobudur is located in West Java and Kizil in the Urals. Closer attention to the details might have been hoped for.

The book opens up interesting areas for future debate, notably about the status of sacred objects and their role in the transmission of Buddhist doctrine and about the link among the importance of texts, ontological speculation and the maintenance of international religious networks. Miksic’s suggestion that many bronze artefacts found in Nalanda and on Java might come from Sumatra will inevitably invite further reflection, as will Krishnan’s idea of an artistic cross-fertilization among those same three regions.

In “Buddhism in the Bujang Valley, Kedah (5th to 10th Century)”, Nik Hassan Shuhaimi introduces the reader to the inscriptions, sculpture and architecture of this site. The passage on inscriptions requires some clarification though. The author refers to, among others, two epigraphic records, the Buddhagupta-Cherok Tokun (Bukit

Mertajam) inscription and the Bukit Meriam inscription. However, it appears that Hassan Shuhaimi confuses different texts. Contrary to what he suggests, the Cherok Tokun and Buddhagupta inscriptions are not one and the same; the Cherok Tokun inscription was discovered in the 1840s on Mertajam Hill, whereas the Buddhagupta inscription was unearthed at an unidentified spot in 1834. The Cherok Tokun inscription is a religious text, and it is the Buddhagupta inscription that evokes a sea captain. The description found under the heading “Bukit Meriam” is actually that of the Buddhagupta stele and, contrary to the suggestion that only a few words are legible, most of the text was read by Bahadur Chand Chhabra (1935). The author has omitted the tablet usually referred to as the Bukit Meriam inscription, possibly because it went missing during its shipment to Calcutta. Interested readers will find a discussion of the Bujang Valley inscriptions in Michel Jacq-Hergoualc’h’s landmark 1992 book, strangely missing from Hassan Shuhaimi’s references.

In short, *Nalanda, Srivijaya and Beyond* is to be recommended to informed Buddhist art lovers. Those without previous knowledge of Buddhist history will find the scientific jargon and the absence of a glossary serious impediments to their reading. Specialists in the field may be disappointed to find that many of the book’s chapters are works of synthesis and do not present real new interpretations or data. Yet the book will be useful for those scholars who want to look beyond the boundaries of their own specific domains of research.

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