

the king revised another tale, the *Mahajanaka Jataka*, which does not seem to have been significant in earlier periods.

Perhaps a fuller picture of the rehabilitation of pre-modern discourses of kingship in Thailand needs to look beyond Buddhism. Jory presents only the Buddhist dimension of discourses of royal rule. He does not consider the significant Brahmanical elements in Thai theories of kingship, and he overlooks notions of the monarch as a “virtual deity” (*sammuti devaraja*) and related ideas of royal power as *saksit*, or magically powerful. However, these gaps do not detract from the central contribution of Jory’s innovative study in providing invaluable historical context to the intensified absolutist royalism that has now become the official discourse of the country’s national bureaucracy and authoritarian military regime.

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DOI: 10.1355/sj33-1j

Learning, Migration and Intergenerational Relations: The Karen and the Gift of Education. By Pia Joliffe. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. xvii+179 pp.

This book is a solid attempt at providing insights into the experiences of young Karen migrating both internally in Thailand for schooling purposes and from Myanmar to other countries. The author has considered the experiences of three distinct populations of the Karen: Karen who were born in Thailand, Karen from Myanmar living in a predominantly Karenni refugee camp on the Thai–Burmese border, and Karen from Myanmar who lived in refugee camps on the Thai–Burmese border and currently live in the North of England.

The book begins with an introduction of the main theory and concepts used. The author employs Malinowski’s and Mauss’s work on the gift economy to frame the way in which the Karen perceive

education, “as a gift that cannot be immediately reciprocated” (p. 2). An examination of how social change affects childhood, education and social dissonance and the relationship between learning and intergenerational relations follows. Chapter Two presents the way in which learning occurs in the family and in everyday life and the linkage between children’s aspirations and their family economies. The author provides a historical account of the establishment and development of formal schooling in Myanmar and Thailand for the Karen, and provides a case study of a Thai Catholic school attended by many Thai Karen children and the development of new education pathways for these Thai Karen children in chapter 3. Chapter 4 also focusses on a particular school in Thailand and on the experiences of young Karen who migrate to attend this school. This chapter provides insights into the clash of values between urban, middle-class Thai teachers and their rural, working-class Karen students to highlight the nature of social reproduction in the school.

In my view, chapter 5 provides the best descriptions of the many forms of inclusion and marginalization that Thai Karen youth experience in the Thai lowlands, and of the way in which they negotiate their identities among peers and between communities. The next two chapters focus on two different Karen communities and locations. Chapter 6 examines the post-secondary schooling of young Karen from Myanmar in a predominantly Karenni refugee camp on the Thai–Burmese border, providing valuable information regarding their life course aspirations. Chapter Seven describes the different values and norms encountered by resettled Karen refugees from Myanmar in schools in the North of England. The concluding chapter summarizes the book using the theory and concepts discussed in the introduction. As a whole, this book contributes to the literature on the Karen, in particular their education, schooling and migration. It provides rich descriptions of young people’s schooling experiences, their aspirations and their trajectories.

Notwithstanding its many strengths, the book would have benefitted from a more critical reading of Mauss as his theory relates to the

assertion that education is an intergenerational gift. The author does not critique Mauss's theory or engage other theories on reciprocity — those of Marshall Sahlins or David Graeber for example. The main critique of Mauss's theory of the gift focuses on the lack of a universal obligation to reciprocate; there are, after all, gift-giving practices from which this obligation is absent. In addition, the term "obligation" has many different meanings, covering distinct social realities. Attention to these points would have helped to provide more nuance to the analysis in this book.

Moreover, although the author has very clearly taken into account the wider structural constraints that permeate the lives of young Karen students, she has not adequately incorporated them into her analysis of education as a gift that "engages people in permanent commitments, therefore creating and sustaining relationships between educators and pupils of different ages" (p. 3). In other words, young people's motivations to help their parents, their families and their communities by using the learning that they acquire are more complex than the book suggests. There is a desire for parental approval, to justify leaving the family and withdrawing from its household economy in order to pursue education and to rationalize the expenses incurred for schooling. My point is that it is not unusual in societies in which the government does not provide welfare and in which for reason of cost markets are inaccessible for families and communities to create norms that encourage young people to support their families and communities. In fact, the study of family economies tends to be undertaken from a perspective of care economies, rather than gift economies, because the former takes into account wider economic and political structures that have an impact on household interdependencies.

In summary, this book fills a gap in studies on the Karen and provides us with a better understanding of the learning and migration experiences and aspirations of Thai Karen and of Myanmar Karen who live or have lived in refugee camps. The book is thus a welcome addition to a field which has tended to focus on ethnology, on the armed conflict between the Karen National Union and the

government of Myanmar, and on the Karen in refugee camps along the Thai–Burmese border.

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DOI: 10.1355/sj33-1k

War and Peace in the Borderlands of Myanmar: The Kachin Ceasefire, 1994–2011. Edited by Mandy Sadan. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2016, 517 pp.

In 2011, as a new, semi-civilian government came to power after decades of military dictatorship in the country, a ceasefire between the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and Myanmar Armed Forces, or Tatmadaw, collapsed after seventeen years. Instead of considering this collapse as a single, sudden event, this book — the product of a seminar held at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in 2013 — proposes to contextualize it as part of a long historical continuum.

Fascinating, multifaceted and authoritative, this book will be warmly welcomed by readers seeking a deep understanding of the political, social and economic dimensions underlying the conflict between the KIA and the Myanmar state. No writer has probed the unhealed wounds of the Kachin people's long history with more subtlety and rigour than the volume's editor, Mandy Sadan, an established authority on social and cultural aspects of the Kachin history. Through various perspectives, the contributing authors demonstrate that the collapse of the ceasefire resulted from a multifaceted deterioration of the situation in Kachin State and that it had become inevitable, at least from the Kachin perspective, by the time that it occurred.

The first part of the book focuses on historical perspectives. It includes a chapter co-authored by the editor and Robert Anderson examining the conflict in long-term perspective. Martin Smith then