

and modern history, specialists on world music and ethnomusicology, and informed fans of one or more of the performers profiled.

**Craig A. Lockard**

Center for History and Social Change, University of Wisconsin–Green Bay, Green Bay, Wisconsin 54301, USA; email: lockardc@uwgb.edu.

DOI: 10.1355/sj33-2i

*Caring for Strangers: Filipino Medical Workers in Asia.* By Megha Amrith. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2017. xiii+226 pp.

As healthcare becomes increasingly commodified and globalized, an opportunity structure has emerged for nurses from the Global South to engage in long-term mobility projects through labour migration to high-income countries/cities around the world. Yet migrant nurses are uncomfortably positioned at the interstices of low-status care work and high-skilled professional migrations. Megha Amrith explores the aspirations and experiences of Filipino migrant nurses working in the global city of Singapore as a way to understand the intimate relations that develop between migrant nurses and their patients, alongside the commercial and labour practices that bring these nurses to Singapore but keep them marginalized from mainstream society there. At the same time, Amrith situates Filipino migrant nurses within a broader history of labour migration from the Philippines, while situating Singapore as a stepping stone to more attractive destinations in North America and Western Europe. Amrith deftly draws from her extensive fieldwork in Singapore and the Philippines to maintain this productive tension and duality within each of the chapters of *Caring for Strangers*.

After the introductory chapter, which lays out the key themes of the book and provides a useful overview of the literature on care work and intimacy, and some brief histories of labour migration from the Philippines and to Singapore, the rest of the book is organized to track the trajectories that Amrith's migrant nurse interlocutors

follow. It starts in the Philippines, moves on to Singapore, and then focuses finally on what the future holds for these nurses. The second chapter highlights the political economy of migration in both the Philippines and Singapore, and its intersections with the political economy of care. Amrith details the transnational nature of care work in the twenty-first century, describing the new global movements of health workers, including doctors and nurses and other medical professionals, and also of patients. While this chapter focuses on the structural factors that define and constrain the migration flows of migrant nurses from the Philippines, the subsequent chapter digs into the subjective aspirations that fuel their voluntary migrations. In this chapter, Amrith introduces the idea of a “cartography of care” (p. 49), an evocative phrase she coins to describe the imagined worlds that Filipino nurses are carrying in their heads as they dream of overseas employment. Amrith points to the position of nursing within the Philippines’ broader culture of migration, and how the higher status and greater wages that come with being an overseas nurse continue to draw large numbers of Filipinos even as there is an ongoing public health concern about the shortage of high-quality nurses, especially in rural areas of the Philippines.

In chapter 4, Amrith shifts her focus to Filipino migrant nurses after their arrival in Singapore. Having imagined that they would enjoy an elevated status as professionals overseas, these nurses are shocked to experience marginalization and proletarianization instead. Amrith reports on her participant-observations in two care spaces in Singapore — a large, modern government hospital and a religiously affiliated, charitable nursing home — and notes that, in both places, there are ongoing contestations over the meaning and value of their profession of nursing and care labour more broadly. These tensions partly stem from the overarching association of Filipinos in Singapore with low-status domestic work. In the subsequent chapter, Amrith outlines how these differences in meaning and status are negotiated by Filipino migrant nurses in their interactions with foreign and local nurses, doctors, and patients in Singapore, all of whom tend to be Asian of one nationality or another. This is perhaps Amrith’s

most unique contribution: her exploration of how Filipino migrant nurses are situated within a diverse Asia comprising “First World” and “Third World” countries, and stereotypes about “modern” versus “backward”, and “caring” versus “uncaring” peoples. Filipino migrant nurses in Singapore are forced to constantly engage in identity work, often on moral grounds, to reassert to themselves and to others their innate worth as nurses, as professionals, as Filipinos, and even as “Asians”.

This boundary work extends to the ways in which Filipino migrant nurses in Singapore disassociate themselves from the large Filipino migrant domestic worker population in Singapore. In chapter 6, Amrith highlights how nurses, both in their comportment and in socio-spatial configurations, mark themselves as not only different but also more respectable than their co-ethnic domestic workers in Singapore.

Towards the end of her book, Amrith switches her focus to the future plans of Filipino migrant nurses in Singapore. She distinguishes between three possible next steps: moving on to another, “better” destination; staying put in Singapore; or returning to the Philippines. Throughout all of these possibilities, there are questions of what counts as home and whether or not Singapore, which is often seen as a point of transit for many of these migrant nurses, could ever be considered “a place with a sense of future” (p. 184) for them and their families. The book ends here. More information on the subsequent trajectories that these migrant nurses follow would have been welcome. Without this, there is a sense of an incomplete mapping of their migratory lives.

Overall, however, there is a deceptive simplicity in *Caring for Strangers* that belies the sophisticated theoretical arguments about transnationalism, the nature of being “Asian”, and the politics within the profession of care work that Amrith offers her readers. By situating herself in the middle space of Singapore, a transient destination for many and one that in fact tends to treat most of its migrant workers as transitory, Amrith is able to look backwards and forwards at these migrant nurses’ past and imagined journeys, even

as she examines their day-to-day lives in Singapore. This book is thus a worthy addition to the growing scholarship that sits at the intersection of migrant imaginaries, globalizing labour markets, and individual state and society responses to changing demographics within their borders.

**Anju Mary Paul**

Division of Social Sciences, Yale-NUS College, National University of Singapore, 10 College Avenue West, #01-101, Singapore 138527; email: anju.paul@yale-nus.edu.sg.

DOI: 10.1355/sj33-2j

*Nanyang huazong: Malaixiya pili yibao yandong miaoyu shilu yu chuanshuo* 南洋華蹤：馬來西亞霹靂怡保岩洞廟宇史錄與傳說 [Trails of the Nanyang Chinese: History and legends of the cave temples in Ipoh of Malaysia]. Edited by Tan Ai Boay 陳愛梅 and Toh Teong Chuan 杜忠全. Beijing: *Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe* [China Social Sciences Press], 2017. 276 pp.

This volume of essays, funded by the Perak Non-Islamic Affairs Department (Unit Hal Ehwal Bukan Islam Negeri Perak, 霹靂州非伊斯蘭事務局), is an attempt to uncover the history and legends of cave temples (*yandong miaoyu* 岩洞廟宇) in Ipoh, the capital city of the Malaysian state of Perak. Scholars of Malaysian history have long been interested in Chinese migration to British Malaya and their involvement in Perak's tin mining industry during the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. The intention of this volume is not to focus on Chinese tin mines in Perak, but rather to present the lesser-known histories of the numerous cave temples in the Ipoh region. It examines the historical sources and epigraphic records of seven cave temples that were established before the Japanese occupation of Malaya in 1941.

Following the forewords by Tan Chee-Beng 陳志明 (Sun Yat-sen University), Wong Sin Kiong 黃賢強 (National University of Singapore), and Mah Hang Soon 馬漢順 (Perak Non-Islamic Affairs Committee), Tan Ai Boay's short introductory essay explains the