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Southeast Asian Anthropologies: National Tradition and Transnational Practices. Edited by Eric C. Thompson and Vineeta Sinha. Singapore: NUS Press, 2019. xi+335 pp.

This survey covers the scope and institutionalization of formal anthropology in several Southeast Asian countries. There has been varied success in these matters in different countries. Thailand has a long history of anthropological research, including work beyond Thailand, whereas other nations have had less extensive developments, or have had their traditions interrupted, especially Cambodia and Vietnam because of the imposition of Soviet interference. Though the authors set out the facts, they do not state that Soviet colonialism was the worst form of colonialism to which anthropology in these countries was subjected. Despite the claim in the introduction that American anthropology has recently become parochial while Southeast Asian anthropology has become open to global trends, most of the research discussed in this book has been carried out on the writers' own countries. Nevertheless, their educations represent an impressive array of universities, mostly foreign. Although there are references to Western hegemony in anthropological traditions, for the most part these authors are evidently well-prepared in terms of international developments.

The introduction provides a summary of the topics covered by each of the authors, plus a count of the number of papers devoted to each country covered. Even so, it cannot be said that any of the papers is comprehensive in this respect or tries to be. Each contribution may be read as an introduction to the depth and form of the establishment of formal anthropology—so a reader needing an introduction to a particular country's anthropology may select that—but the book also has comparative ambitions.

There is much reference to theory in this book. But the question to be asked, as the introduction points out, is theory of what? 'Theory' should be read as analytic notions. In fact, there is no theory in anthropology comparable to that of the hard sciences.

An important early figure in Filipino anthropology was José Rizal, a politician and polymath, and by profession an ophthalmologist, who was executed by the Spanish colonial government in 1896. Another such figure is Isabelo de los Reyes, who collected folklore and published ethnology. Both men have come in for criticism. General anthropology in the Philippines, as in the other countries represented in this book, has been shaped to an extent in reaction to political circumstances.

Despite being a nation of islands, published ethnographic research on fishing communities in the Philippines is sparse. Such research that exists is mostly in academic theses rather than in publications. The authors describe their own research and that of other ethnographers.

Cambodian anthropology lacks a distinctive tradition and was badly affected by the communist period. It 'remains a long way from coming of age'. Vietnamese anthropology was influenced by French colonialism and, to its detriment, by Soviet ethnology. Soviet influence declined after the collapse of world communism, but individual anthropologists are confused and have lost their sense of direction. Many students write their theses without doing any field research.

The essay on West Malaysia begins with a useful discussion of the history of anthropology in Malaysia generally. When Mahathir Mohamad was education minister, policy became very restrictive. Involvement of students and staff in societies, trade unions and political groups outside the universities was criminalized. Lectures and the conduct of staff were closely watched. Sensitive topics were not permitted. These restrictions caused weak scholarship. Later, as prime minister, he introduced extensive social engineering policies that also affected anthropological research. There is also a strong bias towards Muslim topics. Furthermore, because of limited linguistic skills, scholarship has been weak.

The separate contribution on Singapore by Vineeta Sinha gives a balanced discussion of the relation between academic anthropology and colonialism. Anthropology has acquired an institutional position in Singapore over the last fifty years. The relationship between

sociology and anthropology is good. She states that the situation for anthropology in Singapore is highly promising.

The paper on Borneo deals with a group distributed across three separate nations: the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia and Indonesia. The Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah took a leading role in setting research agendas and sponsoring field research. There is a rather extensive listing of a range of categories. These include, among other topics, indigenization, minorities, religious conversion, identities and interethnic relations.

The single article on Indonesia states that it is concerned with the self. In fact, there are many ethnographic studies on Indonesian topics but not of this kind. Fundamentalism has become a problem. For good reason there are frequent mentions of Koentjaraningrat, but no mention of the political shifts that resulted in the 'bring culture back' movement.

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Aristocracy of Armed Talent: The Military Elite in Singapore. By Samuel Ling Wei Chan. Singapore: NUS Press, 2019. xxvii+495 pp.

Chan claims that his book "represents the most detailed current account of the military elite in Singapore" (p. 349). Far from being an instance of scholarly hubris, the claim is justified in most respects. The author has undertaken the mission to (partially) unravel the camouflage surrounding the top brass of Singapore's military elite, elucidating the personal motivations, circumstances and structures that have defined their careers.

In the first chapter, Chan clarifies what he understands by the term 'military elite'. His primary concern is the career trajectories of 'flag officers', the highest echelon of the three services in the