The book gives a detailed and compelling account of a community where reclaiming land worked, without ignoring internal conflict. Yet some questions remain. In similar instances in Indonesia, companies have grabbed such "vacant" land, regardless of protests and lack of support from the local population. Other cases of successful reclaiming are often in remote areas, where there are limited resources to exploit, making them less attractive to corporate interests. In Casiavera, apparently only one company contested control over the land, raising the issue of its actual value for industry. Further, an engagement with the wider existing literature on land conflict in Indonesia could help to pinpoint more elements of success or failure in contesting land control. A future publication discussing the Casiavera case in a comparative national context would allow for further testing of the explanatory power of the case. And when discussing land conflict in West Sumatra, it would be relevant to learn more about the legal processes involved (or lack thereof), given that the province has recognized customary communal rights in provincial legislation and the community claimed to have them. The book is a detailed case study that discusses the history and development of land usage and land conflict on the slopes of the Aren volcano in Sumatra. Specifically, this temporal perspective makes it a strong and insightful contribution as it connects the study to work on politics, law, anthropology and history of land issues in Indonesia.

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Enchanted Modernities: Ancestral Vitalizations in the Upper Mekong. By Micah F. Morton. University of Wisconsin Press, 2025. xv+259 pp.

Enchanted Modernities is about indigenous identities today, and how Indigenous peoples redefine themselves today by reaching back into their own traditions, where possible. The focus of the book is on

Akha communities of northern Thailand and neighbouring areas.

The book's key strength is the detailed ethnographic exploration of how indigenous religion and traditional law (the Akha *ghanr*) are re-mobilized to reassert the historical cohesion of Akha communities. This process takes place in myriad ways, including the reviving and adapting of religious practices, genealogies and other links with the past, such as cooking and feeding offerings to the ancestors, which is described in lavish detail, and re-erecting village gates.

This is an important, ethnography-based account describing how all this is happening today; an important contribution in the field of indigenous and religious studies. The book was clearly made possible by the author's interpersonal skills, which enabled extensive work with neo-traditionalist Akha religious practitioners, whom he befriended and whose trust he gained. Without this painstaking research, we would not have this intriguing account of all the efforts these people now make to continue living and existing in more than name. It is marvellous work; a truly ethnography-based social-anthropological history of religion, including both traditionalist and missionary-Christian aspects and the antagonisms and multifaceted interaction between them.

The current resurgence of traditionalist Akha culture, including the new "transregional scaling-up of Akhaness beyond the village gates" (p. 20) also raises the question of why all this is happening, and, not least, why now?

The book does not say. It might be productive to bring in world systems theory, especially its anthropological formulations, to explore how the production of identities plays out within the dynamic of relations between state centres and their peripheries. In particular, I think of Jonathan Friedman's concept of "identity spaces" used in seeking to explain how ethnic self-definition can become possible in certain historical situations (Friedman 2012). The "transregional scaling-up" becomes especially interesting in this regard, and also recalls the late Nicholas Tapp's investigations of the new transglobal self-redefinition of the Hmong people, who originate from the same area (Tapp 2010).

Enchanted Modernities is based on work in Thailand, where it has become possible for Akha neo-traditionalists to reassert past continuities in numerous ways—and this is the core of the book. Probably because of the focus on Thailand, the book does not say much about China, even though there are many Akha there (as well as the closely related Hani people). It does end with a vignette from a village in an unspecified part of southwest China, describing how they initiated gate-building and other neo-traditionalist and revivalist activities in about 2010. One wonders whether such activities are still possible today. After the shift in neo-nationalist Chinese ethno-policy in about 2012, with China's government now aggressively demanding and enforcing the Sinicization of "minorities" (and the term "indigenous" is forbidden), the situation there could be very different now.

There is an intriguing epigraph at the very beginning of the book from an Akha person declaring how much he felt at home and at ease while visiting China, the putative or imaginary home of his Akha ancestors. Reading it, I waited for more clues on how the locals square these contradictory and contrasting factors, and on how they, perhaps, relish the relative freedom they have in Thailand. But this tantalizing reference to the idea of an ancestral origin within what is today China is not revisited in the book.

The focus of the book is naturally and necessarily the communities in Thailand, but the reader is left wondering what these ideas about origins mean for today's Akha. In some other ethnic communities in the region, the buried history of China's military expansions and ethnic cleansing of much of Yunnan is still remembered. At the same time, there is evidence of the Chinese state seeking to play on putative ancestral connections in order to weaken or destabilize neighbouring nation-states.

Thus, there are many reasons to ask more about China. To be sure, Morton has discussed China in other writings, including the rubber plantations of China, and Akha-Hani relations. Perhaps there is more to come on these issues, or on other related aspects, like the heavy regulation of the Mekong River or the destructive effects of migrant labour regimes on traditional cultures in China.

All in all, this is a highly valuable and rich ethnographic account of the resurgence and expansive redefinition of Akhaness, especially in Thailand. It will be of great interest to scholars of Southeast Asia's cultures and of how Indigenous people can flourish when permitted to take charge of themselves.

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A Sense of Place and Belonging: The Chiang Tung Borderland of Northern Southeast Asia. By Klemens Karlsson. Northern Illinois University Press, an imprint of Cornell University Press, 2025. xviii+228 pp.

Scholarship on the borderlands of northern Southeast Asia has always been somewhat marginal, like the region itself, compared to mainland states like Myanmar and Thailand. Klemens Karlsson's new book places the margin at the centre by exploring the Khuen people and the city and region of Chiang Tung, with both impressive breadth and detail. At its core, this book explores what makes a particular place unique to those who occupy it, and what connects a people to that place. Drawing on notions of space-making, identity formation and ritual performance from scholars such as Pierre Nora, Edward Relph and Clifford Geertz, Karlsson paints a vivid, multilayered picture of Chiang Tung, a unique point in the inland constellation of city-states that stretched across northern Southeast Asia.

Karlsson's exploration of Khuen identity and place-making reaches from deep myth through dynastic and colonial history, and from