

the empirical evidence, the writer does not demonstrate the theoretical potential the Brunei case holds for understanding the different dimensions of the ideological process. This omission is understandable, given the unusually short length of the text. None the less, the subject under study would have been more interesting if the theoretical issues raised were treated in greater detail.

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***Historical Dictionary of Laos.* By Martin Stuart-Fox and Mary Kooyman. Asian Historical Dictionaries, No. 6. Metuchen, New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1992. 258 pp.**

This book in the Asian Historical Dictionaries series fills a wide gap in the rather scarce contemporary literature of general accessibility on Laos. Stuart-Fox, a historian of Laos at the University of Queensland, Australia, and his co-author have compressed a great deal of information into a slim volume, which has been so structured as to serve both as a work of ready reference (useful, for example, in spelling Lao personal and place names) and as a brief historical overview, through the use of ample cross-referencing, of any period of interest to the reader. It should stand the test of time for students and specialists alike.

Following a list of acronyms and a set of outline maps, the first twenty pages are devoted to a chronology of events in Lao history from prehistoric times to 1991, when research on the book came to a close. In this part, there is considerable space devoted to the early migrations that populated the country and to the dynastic history of its rulers since the founding of the imperial mandala of Lan Xang in 1353 by Fa Ngum. Modern history, beginning with Laos' experiences during World War II, take up the last thirteen pages.

The chronology can be used as an entry point into the dictionary proper, which takes up the next 170 pages, and which itself is cross-referenced in such a manner that the reader is afforded a wider view of persons and organizations and the parts they played in history.

The career of Prince Phetsarath, for example, who in September 1945 took the initiative as prime minister of reaffirming the independence of Laos, proclaimed by the king under Japanese duress, and in decreeing the unity of the kingdom, can be linked to the Lao Issara, the wider movement opposing the return of Laos to French jurisdiction, and its fate as a consequence of the return of the French in force in 1946. Similarly, the expression "Three Revolutions in Laos" is cross-referenced so that the reader goes from a shorthand term borrowed from the Vietnamese after the victory of 1975 to a discussion of the larger issues of nationalization of industry and collectivization of agriculture and their feasibility under the conditions existing in the Lao People's Democratic Republic. In this section, the biographies of Prince Souvanna Phouma, Prince Souphanouvong, and Kaysone Phomvihane are particularly good.

Most of the remaining nearly one hundred pages are devoted to a bibliography. The historiographical introduction to this is first rate. It contains, however, one mistake in that the title of Amphay Doré's 1980 book is *Le Partage du Mékong* (as correctly printed on page 186), and not *Le Portage du Mékong*, a title that would also be possible in view of the strenuous French efforts, eventually brought to nought, to find a navigable river to southern China.

The bibliography itself, however, is less satisfactory, perhaps inevitably so. To locate a title or the work of a specific author requires some effort in the absence of any index of author names. Compensating for this, at least somewhat, is the comprehensive scope of the bibliography, covering as it does the fields of history, politics and government, economy, society, and culture. Laos is a country that has been much written about; the problem facing the present-day reader is that much of this writing appears in specialized journals and other publications that are often of difficult access, as the senior author well know from the variety of sources of his own numerous contemporaneous articles about the country. The bibliography presented here serves as a useful introduction, particularly for English-language publications. The specialist researcher interested in the voluminous French-language materials will also want to have Lafont's two-volume bibliography at hand on the shelf.

The last few pages of the book are devoted to twenty-two appendices containing lists of names (rulers of the various kingdoms at different stages of Lao history, French administrators, Lao prime ministers, members of Pathet Lao committees and of successive coalition governments, and so forth) and tables of population data.

All in all, this book is a most useful contribution to the literature on Laos.

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***The Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh: The Untold Story.* Edited by Mizanur Rahman Shelley. Dhaka, Bangladesh: Centre for Development Research, 1992. 200 pp.**

The Chittagong Hill Tracts, as the British colonial rulers named the hilly terrain in the southeastern corner of Bangladesh, home for twelve tribes, ethnically different from the majority Bengalis, is another "trouble-spot" in turbulent South Asia. The majority of the tribesmen, mainly the Chakmas and Marmas (slightly less than a million), have been fighting a guerrilla war against the Bangladeshi authorities since early 1973. Their main politico-military front, the Shanti Bahini, has been fighting for self-rule and against the Bangladesh government policy of settling the Bengali Muslims in the Hill Tracts. Unfortunately for the tribals, mostly Buddhist and racially akin to the Mongoloid and the neighbouring people of Myanmar, they have been fighting a losing battle against the majority community which is adamant to bring the Hill Tracts (almost 10 per cent of the nation's land of mostly hills and forest) under its control. Since the tribals constitute less than one per cent of the total population of Bangladesh, for the Bengalis, the real issue in the region is not one of ethnic identity and autonomy of the tribals but of living space and arable land in this land-scarce, predominantly agrarian country.

Consequently, with the growing assertion by the majority Bengalis of "Bengaliness" as the sole identity of all the inhabitants of Bangladesh in 1972, the movement for a separate homeland for the tribals began. Initially, the tribes asked politely for autonomy to protect themselves from the influx of Bengali settlers and to preserve their culture and identity, as they had been enjoying this special status during the British period and to some extent, during the Pakistani period