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<Book Review>

Ibrahima Amadou Dia

Sari K. Ishii, ed. *Marriage Migration in Asia: Emerging Minorities at the Frontiers of Nation-States*. Singapore: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press, 2016.

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Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University

There are a few issues that I found problematic. In some places the author discredits the importance of *adat*, while in others he overemphasizes it vis-à-vis Islam when it is criticized by someone sitting in the market (for example, compare the discussions on p.33 and p.55). On another occasion, he provides an image of a wall painting in which Osama bin Laden appears close to Bob Marley. In its visuality there seems to be a change in the focus/gaze/orientation (the very text written at the top of the painting is “what are you looking at” [p.170]). Even so, he chooses to discuss only Bin Laden at length while glossing over Marley. Why does Marley appear with/ before Bin Laden, and why does he disappear in the discussion? Does Bin Laden ring relevant only because the community in focus is Muslims, who not only produced an image of Bin Laden through ambiguous and changing connotations but also kept it undamaged along with a painting of Marley? Does this imply that the moral subjectivity of a Muslim community is thus rooted only in particular sets of images and Islamic practices (such as prayer) but not in other forms of piety and subjectivities such as music and songs?

Notwithstanding these issues, the book impressively explores the Minangkabau community’s social life beyond its matrilineal identity and tells us about people’s everyday concerns and lives while grappling with existential questions on their place and time in society, religion, and nation. The questions and the predicaments they find themselves in are not exceptional and unique to the community; rather, they are often universal even though the solutions might be peculiar to the individuals or micro-communities. Conflated with the notions of Islam, the book argues how people problematize their ideas of selfhood in their everyday interactions, practices, and religious existence through different realms. The book will be an interesting read for all those who are interested in the notions of morality and religion in Islamic and/or Asian communities in general and Indonesia in particular.

Mahmood Kooria
Leiden University

Marriage Migration in Asia: Emerging Minorities at the Frontiers of Nation-States

SARI K. ISHII, ed.

Singapore: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press, 2016.

Marriage Migration in Asia: Emerging Minorities at the Frontiers of Nation-States, edited by Sari K. Ishii, strives to deepen understanding of the complex trajectories of marriage migration in Asia. Going beyond the narrow vision of marriage migration as solely a South-to-North axis, this book underlines the complexity of the patterns of international marriage migration and its various axes.

Drawing on sociological, cultural anthropology, sociolinguistics, social anthropology, area and cultural studies, and legal perspectives, this book considers marriage migrants as an integral part of the global diaspora or “transnational diaspora” (p. 2).

The book is organized into three parts. Part 1, titled “Migration Flows beyond the Marriage-Scapes,” delves into the complexity of the migratory trajectories of marriage migrants. In Chapter 1 Masako Kudo shows the complexity of the migratory trajectories of Pakistani husbands and Japanese wives involved in transnational households. Their migratory trajectories relate to different motives, including the search for a favorable space for the socialization of their children according to Islamic principles. Some of the Japanese women who face difficulties adjusting to living conditions in Pakistan opt to return to Japan or re-emigrate to other countries such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and the United Arab Emirates. Kudo analyzes the duplicated or circular migrations of these Japanese women and the formation of transnational households to meet the needs of their families and adjust to “shifting socio-economic conditions” (p. 39). Another significant aspect analyzed in this chapter is how the “concept of what it meant to be Muslim was negotiated between husbands and wives” (p. 40).

Chapter 2 by Chie Sakai investigates the case of marriage migrants from Japan to Shanghai. Most of the Japanese women interviewed moved to Shanghai for study or work reasons or “complied with their Chinese husbands’ decisions.” Some of them are willing to settle permanently in China, while others are considering returning to Japan. Their move to China has several implications on their lives, employment status, and career prospects as well as the status of their children. Constraints related to obtaining a work permit along with difficulties in adjusting to the host country’s language and culture have impeded the career of these women. While some interviewees opt to prioritize family life over professional career, others are frustrated over their situation. The chapter highlights the many sacrifices made by Japanese women to ease tensions that may arise in the context of transnational marriage migration or to circumvent challenges such as downward professional mobility.

In Chapter 3 Linda A. Lumayag examines the situation of highly qualified Filipino women facing difficulty in pursuing their professional career in Malaysia due to their precarious status as marriage migrants. Constraints related to illegal stays accentuate their social and economic marginalization, especially in the case of those who move to Malaysia as domestic workers and later turn into undocumented domestic workers. However, some of these Filipino women hold a social pass that confers them social prestige among their friends and social networks, as it signals the possibility of obtaining Malaysian citizenship. Lumayag shows how restrictive migration policies constrain the access of highly educated Filipinas to “employment, the division of property, and the rights to children in cases of separation or divorce” (p. 98), visas, and permanent residence status, resulting in continuing precarity and downward professional mobility.

Part 2, “Reversed Geographies of Power,” shows that despite possessing citizenship of a

developed country, marriage migrants may feel a sense of marginalization and vulnerability if their status in the host country does not allow them to improve their living conditions and achieve their aspirations. Ikuya Tokoro in Chapter 4 analyzes cross-border marriages between Filipino women and Japanese men in the context of the global anti-trafficking campaign and the rise of *konkyu houjin* (impoverished Japanese marriage-migration men; pp. 106, 112–115). This chapter explores the transnational marriage of Filipino women with Japanese men as a strategy to access employment to support the livelihoods of families left behind. Tokoro argues that due to the constraints in obtaining an entertainer's visa, many Filipinas resort to illegal coping mechanisms such as fake marriages to move to Japan, which often makes them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation by illegal brokers. The rise of fake marriages makes it challenging to obtain marriage visas and Certificates of Eligibility to legally remain in Japan even for "Filipinas who marry Japanese men whom they truly love" (p. 116).

Another critical issue analyzed by Tokoro is the case of *konkyu houjin*, or reverse marriage migration from Japan to the Philippines: "rich" Japanese men moving to the Philippines to follow their Filipino wives or girlfriends. According to Tokoro, these "reverse migrant flows" underline a paradigm shift regarding the "economic geographies of power." Because these Japanese migrants have severed ties with their families and friends back in Japan, they lack the social support to escape poor living conditions and social isolation if they are rejected by their wives or girlfriends in the Philippines. Most face difficulties returning to Japan.

In Chapter 5 Sari K. Ishii investigates the situation of Japanese-Thai children who migrate to the rural communities where their Thai mothers settle after divorcing their Japanese partners. Any improvement in the financial situation of these children, as well as their mothers, depends mainly on the remittances sent by their foreign fathers. However, in "numerous cases, the expectation of receiving remittances became an illusion when the intimacy ended, which tended to occur even before marriage migrants' return home to Thailand." Most of these children face stigmas in their rural communities in Thailand as they ". . . could not enjoy economic advantages as 'rich Japanese children'" (p. 131). These children often face administrative bottlenecks from the Thai immigration office owing to their Japanese citizenship. Ishii's chapter illustrates the reversal in geographies of power underlying marriage migration.

Caesar Dealwis in Chapter 6 analyzes the assimilation of Eurasian Muslims into the larger Malay group identity in order to gain from the political, economic, and social benefits of Malaysian citizenship. According to Dealwis, Eurasian Muslims increasingly refer to their Malaysian rather than Eurasian identity because being a Malaysian citizen carries more benefits for them politically, economically, and socially. Thus, there is an assimilation of the descendants of Caucasian Muslims into the mainstream Malaysian culture, similar to other minority communities in Sarawak. Dealwis examines how Eurasian Muslims in Sarawak are departing from their Eurasian identity, which is regarded as "unstable, multiple, fluctuating and fragmented, whereas being Malay is much more

stable as national discourses heavily influence their daily experiences” (p. 147).

Part 3, “Marriage Migrants as Multi-Marginalized Diaspora,” dwells on the multiple forms of marginalization confronting marriage migrants and migrant children. In Chapter 7 Caroline Grillot analyzes the situation of Vietnamese women involved in transnational marriage migration and the ensuing vulnerability, marginalization, and precarity due to their illegal stay in China. Due to the inability to register their marriages, they become “partners, mistresses, mothers or domestic workers” (p. 170). They are often subject to violation of their human rights and have limited or no access to legal and social protection. According to Grillot, while cross-border marriages represent a coping mechanism to reduce vulnerability, they can also lead to “uneven and exposed pathways that cause individuals to sink further into non-existent positions on the fringes of society” (p. 171).

Hien Anh Le in Chapter 8 explores the precarious present and uncertain future of returning migrant children in the borderlands of Vietnam and Korea. The fact that their mothers are reluctant to abandon their children’s Korean nationality means that they are barred from access to the civil rights granted to Vietnamese nationals. These returning migrant children “. . . suffer from de facto statelessness, caught between the advanced country that they reach only in their imagination and the real country where they reside” (p. 185).

In Chapter 9 Lara Chen Tien-shi examines the way stateless individuals in transnational marriages and their children are legally barred from access to the social security and welfare given to individuals possessing the required citizenship. Using cases, Chen shows the difficulties that stateless adults face “to gain citizenship in their spouse’s country based on the spouse’s citizenship” (p. 199).

Chapter 10 by Chatchai Chetsumon analyzes the legal obstacles arising from marriages between irregular workers from Myanmar and Thai nationals in Thailand. Thai state laws determine whether irregular workers can “normalize their situations through legal means” (p. 209). These irregular migrant workers do not have their births officially registered in Myanmar, owing to their minority situation, which results in rejection or cancellation of most official marriage registrations. Most irregular migrant workers from Myanmar do not officially register their marriage for fear of being expelled from Thailand because of their illegal stay or the fear of having their application rejected. Chetsumon stresses the need to protect the dignity and rights of these irregular migrant workers, including their rights to marry and set up a family “under natural laws” (p. 209).

This book provides a solid understanding of marriage migration in Asia drawing on a transnational diasporic standpoint and rich empirical evidence based mainly on qualitative research. The focus of the book is on the causes and consequences of transnational Asian marriage migration; the challenges confronting Asian marriage migrants and their dependents, and their coping mechanisms, identity negotiations, and shifts; criticism of the dominant vision of marriage migration as

South-to-North migration; and case studies of reversed geographies of power in the Asian context. Further studies are needed to explore the similarities and differences between transnational marriage migration in Asia and other regions. There is also a need to enhance understanding of the societal implications of remittances in the context of transnational marriage migration. In all, *Marriage Migration in Asia* is an excellent contribution to understanding the complex patterns and dynamics of transnational marriage migration in Asia in the twenty-first century.

Ibrahima Amadou Dia
International Development Consultant

Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora

MARTIN F. MANALANSAN IV and AUGUSTO F. ESPIRITU, eds.

New York: New York University Press, 2016.

In *Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora*, Martin F. Manalansan IV and Augusto F. Espiritu shepherd new forays by Filipino and Filipino-American scholars into the tempestuous seas of Philippine studies. Influenced by works from preeminent scholars such as Vicente Rafael (1995); Antonio T. Tiongson, Jr., Edgardo V. Gutierrez, and Ricardo V. Gutierrez (2006); Rolando Tolentino (2011); Priscelina Patajo-Legasto (2008); Coloma *et al.* (2012); and Reynaldo Ileteo (2014) that reflect the preoccupations of contemporary Philippine studies with representations of Filipino identity and experiences as imbricated in diasporic and globalized contexts, *Filipino Studies* issues upon itself both a warning and a challenge against radicalizing views of Philippine postcoloniality as either purely victimized by or purely antagonistic toward its colonizers. Taking the image of “palimpsest” as its semantic inspiration, the essays in the volume problematize the “layerings’ or shifting stratigraphy of power that obscure or erase and at the same time resurrect specific historical, cultural, and political experiences” (p. 2). At the core of this volume is its focus on the continual reinscriptions of previously held ideas, assumptions, and frameworks about “Filipinoness”: a process that did not end with the formal liberation of the Philippines from its colonizers, but which is instead resemanticized alongside paradigmatic power shifts brought on by waves of diaspora, transnationalism, and globalization. This Filipinoness, insofar as it implies not just *what* a Filipino is but also *where* to locate such an identity, has been a spectral question in Philippine studies scholarship. Manalansan and Espiritu’s volume recuperates Filipinoness from the aporias between contestatory modes of power and gives Filipino subjectivity a voice by ascribing it with a palimpsestic quality, that is, as deriving its valence simultaneously from existing narratives that seek to define it and from the ongoing emendations of those narratives. What makes Manalansan and Espiritu’s volume excitingly productive is that it opens up Philippine studies to the anxiogenic possibilities that arise