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## <Book Review>

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**Gerard Sasges. *Imperial Intoxication: Alcohol and the Making of Colonial Indochina*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017.**

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focus heavily on China. Out of the 12 essays, there are only 2 essays covering South Asia, 2 on Southeast Asia, and none on West Asia and Central Asia. Even while engaging with East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, it focuses on the “centers” of the respective regions and leaves out other equally relevant nations, like Korea, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, and others which could contribute to a more inclusive and comparative knowledge about gender and sexuality in Asia. This could have been achieved if there had been a more democratic selection of essays on Asian societies. To an informed reader, this will seem problematic, and arguably the first question that may come to mind is how the editor perceives Asia: does Zheng see China as the focal point of Asia? It is understandable that it is challenging to devote equal attention to all regions in such an edited volume. However, the volume could have instead chosen to focus on East Asia or China, and be titled *Cultural Politics of Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary East Asia/China*. A book like that would have also given the “space” for some valuable essays on China, and engaged the reader in various exciting contexts and ideas which were raised in this present volume but not adequately fleshed out.

Further, as is the case with any edited volume, certain chapters contain better arguments than others. While all essays do well to engage with issues of gender and sexuality ethnographically, I found the discussions concerning “neoliberalism,” “sexual field,” “modernity,” “whiteness,” and “morality” rather puzzling. The contributors of these chapters should instead have engaged more critically and analytically with these concepts within the contexts of their respective studies. Nonetheless, this book also includes more nuanced chapters which successfully tease out various textures hidden in concepts of “agency,” homosocial relations, spatial identities, and masculinity-femininity stereotypes.

These issues aside, *Cultural Politics of Gender and Sexuality in Contemporary Asia* as a whole is informative and can be useful for teaching gender and sexuality classes, particularly those focused on contemporary China. Particular chapters on South and Southeast Asia can also be extracted to supplement texts in undergraduate-level courses.

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### ***Imperial Intoxication: Alcohol and the Making of Colonial Indochina***

GERARD SAGES

Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2017.

*Imperial Intoxication: Alcohol and the Making of Colonial Indochina* traces political, economic, and scientific forces involved in the emergence of the alcohol regime in Indochina, its long lasting until

the end of the colonial period, and its indelible mark on Indochinese economy, society, politics, and culture.

Each chapter examines dynamic projects run by individuals, organizations, and communities—in colonial Indochina, French metropole, and across the globe—that engaged in the formation of the alcohol regime as the central institution of Indochina’s colonial period. Specifically, Chapter 1 “Inheritances” examines how the state’s alcohol policies originated from the codependent relationship between the French administration and enterprises, particularly tax farms in Indochina that were dominated by powerful Chinese syndicates. Chapter 2 “A Scientific Monopoly” tells stories indicative of role of Albert Calmette—a scientist in microbiology in charge of establishing Indochina’s first vaccine production facility and promoting the growth of French-owned industry—in the creation of Indochina’s alcohol regime. Chapter 3 “Fiscal Logics” recounts events that reveal how Frenchmen (including Paul Doumer, A. R. Fontaine, and Antonin Frézouls in the position of Governor-General) attempted to create, consolidate, and normalize monopolies of alcohol production and sales across Indochina as the basis of a fiscal system that enabled the realization of new, interventionist state policies. Chapter 4 “The Limits of Sovereignty” explores distinctive geographical, historical, and ethnic characters of Indochina as factors that constrained the French administrators’ vision of excising alcohol production across the entire territory of Indochina, and the associated idea of Indochina as being controlled by a rationalized centralized bureaucratic state. Chapter 5 “The Great Service” discusses how the Department of Customs and Monopolies attempted to administrate and enforce the monopoly of factories of the Distilleries of Indochina Corporation run by the colonial state over the “native alcohol”; the chapter also looks at cooperation of ordinary Indochinese, such as Vietnamese, Khmer, and Lao, in the operation of the Department. Chapter 6 “Oppression, Resistance, Rebellion” examines negotiation and suppression of the state over its subjects in response to the reality that the alcohol regime was hindered by the Indochina’s people “everyday resistance” and “overt resistance.” Chapter 7 “The Political Economy of Alcohol” discusses August Raphael Fontaine, the founder and managing founder of the factories of the Distilleries of Indochina Corporation, who possessed great capital, global linkages, new technologies, and state access, and established alcohol monopoly in Indochina. Chapter 8 “Evolutions” investigates the ways in which the alcohol regime was shaped by the two interrelated elements of contemporary Indochina’s evolving public sphere: consultative institutions and print media.

Emphasizing multiple contexts, *Imperial Intoxication* departs from the common belief that the formation of the alcohol regime in Indochina must have been shaped by the colonial rule as the result of colonial modernization. In this volume, the alcohol regime in Indochina here is, instead, treated as part of economic, scientific, political, economic processes, and cultural forces spreading—unevenly while inevitable—throughout diverse, incoherent Indochina and across the globe. By placing the alcohol empire in “as many context as possible,” the author argues persuasively that

the formation of Indochina's alcohol regime was a historically avoidable event in the context of ineluctable dynamic connections of French-ruled Indochina with global-crossed changing forces. Accordingly, the alcohol regime in Indochina was formed and maintained by the convergence of several local and global elements, including: fiscal demands of state-building (Chapter 3) and the need for a civilian police system as part of colonial rule (Chapter 3); advancements in microbiology and the French armaments industry (Chapters 2 and 7); commercial interests and cooperation of local Chinese, Khmer, Vietnamese, and Lao populations; and the geographical cultural, and historically diversity of Indochina. The author particularly stresses the ways in which Indochina's alcohol regime was derived from engagements between people and governments, and the introduction of new industrial, governmental, financial, and scientific technologies at the turn of the twentieth century. Accordingly, the Indochinese alcohol regime is presented as fitting within a global history of state monopolies on alcohol production: the book places the history of the Indochina's monopolistic state alcohol regime in connection with that of other alcohol monopolies across countries in Europe and Asia, such as Russia, Switzerland, Japan, and Taiwan. In doing so, *Imperial Intoxication* offers a perfect answer to the "inexplicable" historical context from which the alcohol regime was maintained for decades regardless of its enormous political loss and financially unproductive contribution. That is, the appearance and long continuation of the alcohol regime was determined not only by the colonial rule; it was also an integral part and avoidable process of the larger global alcohol regime in particular, and the economic, scientific, political bodies and processes across the global in general.

In summary, *Imperial Intoxication* explicitly encourages readers to look beyond national and imperial boundaries and away from normalized distinctions between metropole and colony in regard to the alcohol regime in Indochina. Nevertheless, this volume offers excellent examination of politically, culturally, and economically dynamic and complex conditions of Indochina under French colonial administration. In other words, the alcohol regime can be understood a case study through which the author discusses traditional subjects and dominant arguments in studies of colonial Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. As explicitly stated in the book, the alcohol regime provides "a unique window on the modalities and experiences of French rule in Indochina" (p. 9). For example, analyses of the alcohol as a moment in the growth of Vietnamese media and the development of Indochina's intellectual debates, invite readers to reconsider dichotomies of revolution and reform in favor of the tradition of "colonial republicanism" that Peter Zinoman scrutinized in his book *Vietnamese Colonial Republican: The Political Vision of Vu Trong Phung* (2013). Explorations of complex relations to the state alcohol agents with local ethnic minorities and villagers regarding alcohol production and sales indicate what Pierre Brocheux and Daniel Hémerly in their *Indochina: An Ambiguous Colonization, 1858–1954* (2009) called "ambiguous colonization," in which the French administration is both hegemonic and fragile, and colonial institutes reflected and performed aspirations and interests of the French and of local ordinary and powerful people. The struggles

to maintain the monopolistic status of the state alcohol are examined in relation to: local people's shared experiences of colonialism (Chapters 7 and 8); complex and overlapping ways identities were articulated and shaped in colonial Indochina (Chapters 2, 4, and 5); and individuals and institutions involved in the emergence of anti-colonial nationalist movements in Indochina (Chapters 6 and 7). Impressively, treating alcohol production and consumption in Indochina as an institution in the colonial rule and as a moment in political processes in that region suggests a historical explanation for sentiments about alcohol pervading national Vietnamese literature, where alcohol is a symbol of both the exploitative and the brutal reality of French rule and cultural identity—a means in national struggles to end the colonial rule.

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***Moral Politics in the Philippines: Inequality, Democracy and the Urban Poor***

WATARU KUSAKA

Singapore: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press, 2017.

In *Moral Politics in the Philippines: Inequality, Democracy and the Urban Poor*, author and Japanese scholar Wataru Kusaka eruditely examines Philippine politics and contemporary democracy. Divided into seven chapters apart from the Introduction and an Addendum (on Duterte's initial year as President), this book focuses on social movements and struggles of an assortment of civil society (CS) with and against the state on the one hand, and hegemonic contestation between and among varying types of CSs associated with moral politics, on the other. He defines moral politics as "politics that creates groups that are seen either 'good' or 'evil' and draw a demarcation line between the two" (p. 1).

Aimed at exploring the dynamics of social movements against the backdrop of the "hegemony of the elite" as "contested by various counter-hegemonies of CSs," the volume offers an alternative explanation on the weakness of Philippine democracy and prevalent social inequalities, contrary to the dominant view of "interest politics" which is simply centered on the uneven distribution and control of resources (pp. 5–6). Likewise, Kusaka challenges a number of conventional theories that analyze Filipino politics—notably "patron-clientelism" of Carl Lande and Remigio Agpalo; "neo-colonial dependency" of Renato Constantino and Gary Hawes; "elite democracy" or "patrimonialism" of Nathan Quimpo; "rent-capitalism" of Paul Hutchcroft; "bossism" of John Sidel; and "machine politics" of Tekeshi Kawanaka, among others—as inadequate and inappropriate to explain and capture the dynamics of Philippine politics and democracy.

The author argues—through ethnographic research (participant-observation) at an urban poor