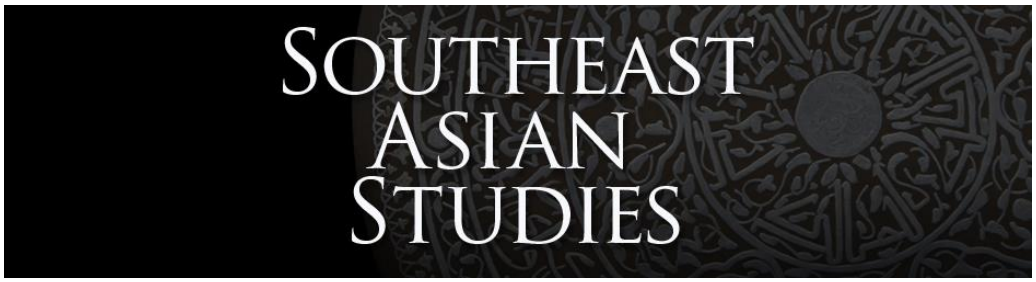

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CONTENTS

Disrupting the Realist Nation: The Forest as Radical Illegibility in the Novels of Jose Rizal

Glenn L. Diaz*

The matter of geography does not seem to register in the predominant readings of the works of the nineteenth-century Filipino writer Jose Rizal, most of which privilege a framework built around nationalism. In this article, I consider how the forest as a narrative space and conceptual trope—or "forest thought"—can mediate the way in which history is imagined in Rizal's novels, *Noli me tangere* (Touch me not) (1887) and *El filibusterismo* (The subversion) (1891), mostly by disclosing, unsettling, and ultimately resisting the legibility that state-making and narrative require and engender. In looking at "forest thought" in the novels and the conceptions of history that it reveals, I seek to bring to the surface a disrupting potential in the works: the forest as "excess" of and radical threat from the center, as incubator of an inchoate utopia, and as a site of generative illegibility, which also locates the trauma of colonial conquest in Rizal as a figure of European enlightenment, offering hopefully new ways of thinking about the constellation of space, narrative, state-making, and empire.

Keywords: Jose Rizal, spatio-poetics, forest, Philippine literature, empire

The novels of the late-nineteenth-century Filipino writer and martyr Jose Rizal—*Noli me tangere* (Touch me not) (1887) and its sequel, *El filibusterismo* (The subversion) (1891)—are literary and political marvels, widely considered "the greatest achievement of modern Filipino literature" (Anderson 2006, 26). *Noli* was the "first major artistic manifestation of Asian resistance to European colonialism," according to the Penguin Classics translation by Harold Augenbraum (Rizal 2006), the first by a Filipino author in the imprint. Benedict Anderson (1998; 2005; 2008), who did vital work on Rizal's writing and nationalism, views the works as pioneering not just in the region but across most of the colonized world by the end of the nineteenth century: "There is nothing in the Americas, nothing in the rest of Southeast Asia, nothing in Africa till three-quarters of a century later" (Anderson 1998, 232). In the history of Spanish-language literature, the

* School of Humanities, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Metro Manila 1108, Philippines
e-mail: gdiaz@ateneo.edu
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8950-9441

two books are among "the most influential works of colonial or postcolonial fiction" (Augenbraum 2011, x).

But the "best evidence" of the books' achievement is their enduring political influence, beginning with "the immediate recognition given to Rizal by both his own countrymen and Spaniards . . . as the leader of the growing nationalist movement," a position that he would deny but for which he would be martyred, executed after a sham trial in 1896 (Guerrero 2009, xv).[1)] More than half a century later, beginning in 1956—soon after America had granted the Philippines independence—a "Rizal Law" mandated that every Filipino high school student read the two novels, enshrined as "a constant and inspiring source of patriotism with which the minds of the youth . . . should be suffused" (Republic Act No. 1425). The landmark legislation, Caroline Hau writes, put *Noli* and *Fili* at the apex of the "nationalist pedagogical project," in recognition of their role in "shaping the 'national character' by articulating a new historical entity, the (modern) Filipino nation" (Hau 2000, 86). Rizal's novels are thus implicated in postcolonial state-making and the figure of Rizal effectively made "the general guarantor of the truth of Philippine nationalism . . . even its alibi" (Anderson 1998, 252).

Critics have pointed out the inadequacies in such formulations of nationalism applied in a postcolonial context yet rooted in Western modernity (Balibar 1990; Chatterjee 1996; Cheah 2003). In the Philippines, historians such as William Henry Scott (1982), Vicente Rafael (1988), Francis Gealogo (1994), Reynaldo Ileto (1998), Resil Mojares (2002), and Rosario Cruz Lucero (2007) have noted, in varying ways, how nation-centric historiography, which Rizal's novels purportedly evince, privileges an elite and liberal conception of history that excludes the "conceptual world" of the masses: the "largely rural and uneducated Filipinos who constituted the revolution's mass base" (Ileto 1979, 4, 27). Anderson (1998, 253) himself warns that "official nationalism" can be both "emanation and armature" for the state. This is evident in how Rizal's fashioning as a reform-minded pacifist who allegedly opposed the revolution was foregrounded in the early years of American colonial rule, his politics defanged to suit the agenda of the new colonizer and collaborating Filipino elite (Quibuyen 1997, 228).[2)] The Philippine state continues to harness Rizal's stature as literary hero toward the "formation of model citizens," a contentious field in which the state has the sole power to define what constitutes such virtuous citizenship (Hau 2000, 31). Radical and subversive in their time, Rizal's novels have been co-opted as self-legitimating ideology for the modern Philippine nation-state, unwitting apparatuses to its machinations.

In this inquiry, I seek to intervene in the field by positing an alternative reading of

1) See Guerrero (1974, 472–479) and De la Costa (1961).
2) See Delmendo (1998).

Rizal's novels, arguing that far from being stable "gospels of nationalism" (Guerrero 2009, xiii), they contain traces of resistance against the modern, nation-centric imaginary central to the dominant ways in which the texts have been read. I locate and explore this alternative paradigm in Rizal's rendering of the forest, both as narrative space and conceptual field, and how it contests and destabilizes the coherence of nationalism and state-making in the novels on the one hand, and realism, narrativity, and nation as artifacts of modernity on the other. Central to my reading is the notion of illegibility, in particular the illegibility of the forest as a narrative space and conceptual trope—what I will refer to collectively as "forest thought"—and how the disruption of legibility within and outside the texts can gesture toward a broader, more grounded conception of history. I use ideas drawn from James Scott's work on Zomia, the massive "great mountain realm" in mainland Southeast Asia and "one of the largest remaining nonstate spaces in the world" (Scott 2009, 13). The discourse around the "enormous ungoverned periphery," I argue, is useful in thinking about the spatio-poetics of the forest in Rizal's two novels and the fraught relationship between space and legibility in parallel with the dynamic operating between narrative and state-making.

Even so, this critique constitutes a very specific, even "rational," way of looking at forest thought and literature. It does not include explicitly ecological arguments from ecocriticism, biopolitics, or even environmental history, although the link between state-making and late capitalism on the one hand, and deforestation and the broader destruction of the nonhuman world on the other, is well established. I propose elsewhere a working theory of the tropical forest "as a material structuring force in the historical imagination that undergirds Philippine literary production," drawing ideas from new materialism, material poetics, and tropicality (Diaz 2022, 128–129). As regards current directions in Philippine ecocriticism, there remains ample ground to be covered in charting a nonhuman history of the forest and how it may clarify, nuance, or even overhaul dominant ways of thinking about the forest, state-making, and narrativity.[3] This frontier of illegibility is outside the scope of this still largely anthropocentric critique.

Looking for Rizal's Nation

More than his political work, it was Rizal's two novels that played a "central role" in helping galvanize the Philippine anticolonial imagination and revolutionary movement by, respectively, "creating in the imagination a whole (and contemporary) Philippine

3) See Ong (2019).

'society'" in *Noli* and "imagining the political collapse of this society and the near-elimination of its ruling powers" in *Fili* (Anderson 2005, 567; 2006, 26). The collective anticipation for the dinner party with which *Noli* begins, Anderson writes, which was "discussed by hundreds of unnamed people, who do not know each other, in quite different parts of Manila, in a particular month of a particular decade, immediately conjures up the imagined community" (Anderson 2006, 27). A Filipino reader, recognizing the realistically rendered scene, is then implicated in this act of imagining, and

> the casual progression . . . from the "interior" time of the novel to the "exterior" time of the reader's everyday life gives a hypnotic confirmation of the solidity of a single community, embracing characters, author and reader, moving onwards through calendrical time. (Anderson 2006, 27)

In this way, the technologies of print capitalism, such as the novel, help create a common discourse through which people who could not possibly know each other establish a kind of kinship. In the context of Philippine nationalism, Rizal's heroism, Miguel de Unamuno writes, is the heroism of a writer (in Arensmeyer 1970, 740). And his power, Anderson notes, "did not come from his sermons and critical articles [but] his novels" (Anderson 2006, 566).

The unmistakable entwining of nationalist historiography and Rizal as a historical figure thus lies in his fiction, and any attempt to disassemble and trouble the link needs to attend to the imagination animating the work, to what Neferti Tadiar describes as "the experimental character of literature itself," when "lived experience" is creatively recast and sheds "the form of incontrovertible social fact" (Tadiar 2009, 18). "Literary works are figurations of possibilities of life that authors exercise in their imaginations of historical experience; in this way, they are also theoretical perspectives on both dominant and residual cultural logics of social life" (Tadiar 2009, 18). Lee Horsley points out that novels about historical experience subjectify "the tensions involved in our imaginative shaping of actuality," which "lay bare the dilemmas involved in giving form and meaning to historical experience" (Horsley 1990, 4). In the context of Rizal's works, Ileto raises the possibility of a discrepancy between the liberal conception of history evinced by his novels and "phenomena that resisted his ordering mind" (Ileto 1998, 31). These phenomena, he adds, "exist on the fringes of his life and work, and can be retrieved if we set our minds to it" (Ileto 1998, 31). Locating the nation in his novels, its manifestations and "alibis" but also its excesses and slippages, requires unpacking the historical imagination at work, both wittingly and unwittingly, behind them.

In her influential *Necessary Fictions: Philippine Literature and the Nation, 1946–1980*, Hau argues that while Rizal's novels indeed "stand as the 'originary' fictions of Filipino nationalism," a particular "outsider-as-insider" narrative stance in the works allows them

to complicate, if not contest, a blanket endorsement or reproduction of modern liberal historiography (Hau 2000, 86, 147). The outsider perspective from the metropole, she writes, operates via a "critical distance born of comparison," while the insider one works "by critique through attestation or testimony" from the viewpoint of someone in the colony (Hau 2000, 144). Taken together, this "bifurcation . . . between official representation and the insider's narrative" (Hau 2000, 147) is where Rizal's narrative "derives its nationalizing impulse," with the tension signaling the instability of the nation in the novels (Hau 2000, 144).

Set in the waning years of Spanish rule in the late-nineteenth-century Philippines, *Noli me tangere* and *El filibusterismo* follow the gradual radicalization of idealistic, reform-minded Crisostomo Ibarra, the son of a wealthy mestizo landowner who returns home from his studies in Europe with plans to build a modern school in his hometown. Instead, he runs afoul of the enormously powerful clergy, portrayed in the works as backward, corrupt, "degenerate descendants" of the first missionaries who turned the Catholic faith into a religion of "commerce in whips and scapularies" (Rizal 2006, 325, ch. 49).[4] The critique of this "frailocracy," for which Rizal and the novels are best known, is narratively enabled, according to Hau, by the outsider stance often filtered through Ibarra, who brings "the cognitive apparatus and standpoint of Europe, of a sense of a 'world history,' and of moral development, and serves up a powerful indictment of the abuses of colonial rule" (Hau 2000, 144). In the opening of *Noli*, for instance, the omniscient narrator sarcastically describes the venue of the dinner party as a house whose doors, "like those of his country, were closed to no one but tradesmen or perhaps a new or daring idea" (Rizal 2006, 5, ch. 1). Meanwhile, the slow-moving steamer where *Fili* begins is described as "quite dirty despite its pretension to whiteness . . . [and which] shared their country's particular character, something akin to triumph over progress" (Rizal 2011, 1, ch. 1). In both instances the colony's backwardness, metaphorized, is situated within a discourse of modernity and progress as seen from Europe. This "outsider" viewpoint is perhaps most evident in the long polemical debates that pepper Rizal's narrative. Ibarra in *Noli* engages in drawn-out discussions on education with the schoolmaster (Rizal 2006, 111–115, ch. 19); on the tactical pursuit of reform with Tasio (Rizal 2006, 164–170, ch. 25); and, most important, with the boatman Elias on the work's—and the period's—most overriding political question: reform or revolution, or "whether political reform is possible in the Philippines or a revolutionary upheaval inevitable" (Anderson 1998, 230).

This theme continues in *Fili* except the docile Ibarra, who returns in the sequel

4) For the passages from the two novels that I use, I referred to the Penguin Classics translations to English by Augenbraum (2011). For an overview of and the politics behind the many translations of *Noli*, see Testa-de Ocampo (2011).

disguised as the brash and vengeful jeweler Simoun, now argues vociferously in favor of violent revolution. He tells Basilio, another holdover from *Noli* and now a medical student: "I've come back to destroy that system, to shatter the corruption, to push it to the abyss to which it rushes without even its knowledge, even if it means tidal waves of tears and blood" (Rizal 2011, 52, ch. 7). Rizal's capacity to novelistically engage in and comment on this political conversation is made possible by his time in Europe, which "put him in a position . . . of being able to ridicule the metropolis from the same high ground from which, for generations, the metropolis had ridiculed the natives" (Anderson 1998, 229). In *Noli*, this "outsider" viewpoint manifests in "liberal, utopian spaces that the patriotic Ibarra tries to create on the basis of his Europe-inspired vision of progress" (Hau 2000, 148). This modern vision does not go unchallenged. It is "constantly disrupted, ultimately ruined by crowds of the disenfranchised," which Hau says articulates the "insider viewpoint" that represents the variegated and "not always laudable and progressive standpoints" of people who live in the colony (Hau 2000, 144). In *Noli*, a riot ensues among the crowd in rural San Diego when civil guards try to stop a zarzuela show during the town fiesta, and when the culprits are caught, "indignation exploded in every breast," "stones rained down on the . . . militiamen," and "some . . . proposed to torch the barracks" (Rizal 2006, 269–270, ch. 40). Later, after a heated encounter between Ibarra and Franciscan Padre Damaso, the former parish priest who out of spite denied Ibarra's liberal father a Christian burial, the gossiping townspeople excitedly conjure up the specter of Ibarra's being labeled a "subversive" (Rizal 2006, 237, ch. 35). In the novel's climax, the same amorphous mass brand Ibarra a "heretic" (Rizal 2006, 364, ch. 56) following a botched attack at the town barracks for which he is framed by the current parish priest Padre Salvi.

In *Fili*, tenacious rumors also accompany the secret plot by Simoun to blow up a wedding reception in which all of Manila's colonial officialdom and elite will be gathered. The explosion is to be the signal for his recruited troops to emerge from the outskirts, "in the mountains, in the caves," and "fall on the city" (Rizal 2011, 283, ch. 33). But even days before the wedding, the capital is already on edge. Students petitioning to open a Spanish academy, including Basilio, have been arrested for subversive posters at the university:

> Rumors circulated that there had been contact between the students and the cavalry of San Mateo. People averred that in one pansiteria they had sworn to surprise the city. There was talk of German boats outside the bay that would support the movement, that a group of young men, under the banner of protest and Spanishism, had gone to Malakañang to place themselves under the orders of the general and had been arrested because they were armed. (Rizal 2011, 247, ch. 28)

In the novels, then, the crowds are not just a passive chorus, acting "not simply as onlookers, but also as movers and doers, and above all as commentators" (Hau 2017, 156). In particular, while the "uprisings" at the center of the novels fail to materialize or achieve fruition, the "insider" perspective of the crowds, the gossip and comments and stirrings and occasional unrest, affirm and telegraph the popular anxiety and restiveness in which the imagined revolts are grounded. In this way, the novels "register the presence of the people . . . [with] this 'people' at once the frame of reference of nationalism, its essence, its truth" (Hau 2000, 160). But this presence, Hau says, is also an "excess that is indexed but not fully contained by the novel" (Hau 2000, 161). Narratively speaking, "we might look at this excess as creating the possibility of a failure of reference, a failure of perspective even, that blurs the conceptual boundaries that determine the oppositions that operate in the novel" (Hau 2000, 161). This excess generated by nationalist thought is a "constitutive feature of nation making, an irreducible component of the nationalist project of making community" (Hau 2000, 7).

This counterpoint to what could have been a unitary discourse on modernity and nationalism in Rizal's fiction is crucial as the novels can be seen as ultimately defeatist. *El filibusterismo*, which "imagine[s] the political collapse" of the society that *Noli me tangere* conjures, ends with what cursorily can be read as a repudiation of revolution, at least for the time being (Anderson 2005, 567). After his cover is blown, Ibarra as Simoun flees to the remote seaside home of the Filipino priest Padre Florentino, where he drinks poison, delivers a long confession, and demands to know why his plot has failed. Rizal gives Padre Florentino the burden of the final word: "I don't want to say that our freedom will be gained at the point of a sword. The sword comes into play, barely, in modern destiny, but yes, we must win when we deserve it" (Rizal 2011, 325, ch. 39). Biographically, Rizal's stand on the matter "is no straight progression . . . but a flexible accommodation to the realities of the situation" (Guerrero 1974, 287). While *Fili* imagines a subversive conspiracy and Rizal professed in some letters the inevitability of a violent reckoning, he also famously disapproved of the Katipunan's plans to rise up in arms—"¡Ah no! ¡mil veces no!" (No, no, no, a thousand times no!) he is said to have told the group's emissary—and, when the revolution did break, denounced how his "name had been used as a battlecry" and offered "not only [his] services but [his] life and even [his] name to be used in any manner thought opportune in order to suppress" it (Guerrero 1974, 382, 422–423, 466). In a manifesto written after his arrest, as the wave of revolts spread across Luzon, he expressed his belief that "for reforms to bear fruit, they must come from *above*, since those that come from *below* will be irregular and uncertain"; as such, he "condemn[s] this absurd, savage insurrection" (in Anderson 2005, 559, emphasis in the original).

The crucial distinction he makes on the source and direction of revolutionary change, not to mention the discrediting of popular revolts as *salvaje* (savage), affirms the liberal *ilustrado* nationalism and historiography that Rizal, as the harbinger of modernity and bearer of the "cognitive apparatus" of Europe, is said to epitomize, although, on trial for subversion, his pronouncements were clearly made under duress. Even so, Hau admits "the relative paucity of attention" that Rizal devotes in his novels to the "day-to-day life of so-called ordinary people" (Hau 2000, 90), symptomatic, Charlie Veric writes, of "Rizal's own failure to signify the 'people'" and modernity's "gesture of silencing" them (Veric 2002, 103).[5] Veric thus disputes the value of the critical "insider" perspective that Hau accords to crowds, which, "grasped solely by way of secret listening," are robbed of agency and prevented from "[producing] their beings for themselves" (Veric 2002, 103). True enough, while the novels are populated by archetypal characters "from every stratum of late colonial society," from the highest-ranking Spaniard in the colony down to "the illiterate indio masses" (Anderson 1998, 229), there is a marked discrepancy in their roles as narrative subjects. Characters who belong to the *principalia*, or noble class, such as Ibarra, while mercilessly mocked and satirized, routinely spar with friars and colonial officials with a measure of agency, generating conflicts that drive the plot. Indio characters such as Basilio's mother, Sisa, in the little space they occupy, passively endure arduous colonial abuse in the background. While radical to a certain degree, there is something to be said about the fundamental ideological moorings of this narrativization of Philippine colonial society, an inquiry in which spatio-poetics may be generative.

Space, State-Making, and Legibility in Rizal's Fiction

The matter of space or geography does not seem to register in the predominant readings of Rizal and his fiction, most of which have been drawn to the stable framework offered by nineteenth-century nationalism (Hau 2000; Bernad 2004; Anderson 2005; 2008).[6] Ileto writes that during the centenary of Rizal's birth in the 1960s, a time of nationalist

5) In a later essay, Hau used the novels' "frequent depictions of crowds" to elaborate on "the role that commentary and speculation play" in "making, unmaking, and remaking community" (Hau 2017, 156).

6) Writing about the "narrative ruses" in the novels, Eugenio Matibag offers the tangle of "Rizal's *baliti* tree" as a site of "narrative crossings and revelations" where "multiple plots with their ideological implications conjoin and cross," suggesting alternate courses for "reinterpretation" of Philippine history (Matibag 1995, 255). Isa Lacuna examines the storm tropes in the literary and political writings of Rizal and suggests that Rizal's "environmental imagination" (Lacuna 2021, 198) via a metonymic deployment of tropical weather prefigures a kind of "transnational solidarity" (Lacuna 2021, 201) so vital in the context of a broad ecocritical project.

ferment, historians "wasted much effort by endlessly debating whether Rizal was a realist or an idealist . . . [and] probing the intentions behind his actions, speeches and writings, and attempting to clarify his contribution to the process of nation-building" (Ileto 1998, 31). The inattention to fissures in his work only serves to affirm the liberal historiography that peddles a monolithic "national" narrative, with Rizal, the so-called First Filipino, at its helm, its untouchable "alibi."

Much is elided in this conception of the country as a monolithic space, such as the long history of dynamic spatial configurations and its consequences for historiography. Prior to the Spanish conquest, there already existed a divide between lowland and highland peoples based on the areas and terrains in and around which they settled or moved, reflecting their respective lifestyles and cultures (Newson 2009, 12). When the Spanish arrived, the process of *reduccion* forcibly resettled "scattered tribes and semi-sedentary agriculturalists" from dispersed hamlets into centralized Spanish-style *pueblos*, where they could be "reached by clergy, tribute collectors, and road foremen" (Scott 1974, 75). This produced another version of the divide, this time between

> Filipinos who settled where they were within easy reach of the power of the Church and State in *pueblos* (*taga-bayan* [from the town]), and those who kept their distance from the colonial administrators and their native agents, staying close to the sources of their livelihood in the mountains or the hinterlands (*taga-bukid, taga-bundok* [from the field, from the mountain]). (Lumbera and Lumbera 2005, 36)[7]

From the perspective of the colonial state, control necessitated visibility, which enabled bodies, resources, and land to be subsumed under and eventually expropriated by the system. The notion of legibility is thus inextricable from state-making, especially colonization, writes Scott (2009). From census-taking to tribute collection, proselytizing, and corvée labor, native populations upon conquest were, by design, "forcibly removed en masse from settings where their production and labor were illegible and inappropriable" (Scott 2009, 10). To a certain extent, spatial configuration determined the depth of one's assimilation into the colonial order.

The cleavage also carries a narrative dimension. Space determines and regulates the degree to which these places are documented and narrativized, an operation in which legibility—of entities as historical subjects—is also key. In towns and cities in the colony lived the Hispanized elite and others under colonial subjection, the locus of nation-centric historiography, the contours of their lives well documented, while those outside such spaces were largely unaccounted for, stigmatized as "without history" or "as lacking the

7) For the deeper implications and other versions of this divide between lowland and highland natives, see Keesing (1976), Gealogo (1990), and Scott (2009).

fundamental characteristic of civilization, namely historicity" (Scott 2009, 237). Rizal's novels initially seem to reproduce this bias toward the *pueblo* as the main site of narrativity and history, privileging its inhabitants as the sole agents of an elite conception of history. Indeed, Anderson notes that for the demographic breadth and lushness of *Noli me tangere*'s dramatis personae, "the geographical space of the novel is strictly confined to the immediate environs of the colonial capital, Manila" (Anderson 1998, 230).[8)]

A consideration of any monolithic or unitary "national" space overlooks the critical geographic divides and hierarchies that are constitutive of colonial society, and the divergent discourses whose negotiations, contacts, tensions, and antagonisms govern and animate the history of the colonial period and beyond. I argue that the destabilizing position proposed by Hau, evident in elements like point of view and character, can also be located in the rendering of the forest in Rizal's two novels, as well as other encounters with the myriad ideas associated with it. By contesting the notion of legibility in different ways, this "forest thought" clarifies and disrupts the entwined apparatuses of state-making and narrativity not only in the fiction but also in Rizal's fashioning as a historical subject under colonialism.

The Forest as Excess, Radical Threat from Within

The first reference to the forest in *Noli* signals its rendering for the rest of Rizal's fictional universe: a space pointedly outside of and a threat to the colonial order, but also uneasily connected to it. When Ibarra's father, Don Rafael—who is the richest man in San Diego and has earned the ire of Padre Damaso for his liberal ways—accidentally kills a Spanish tax collector, "all his enemies emerge from hiding," and he is accused of "heresy and subversion" (Rizal 2006, 28, ch. 4). One proffered proof is how he, a capitalist who owns large tracts of land, allegedly "kept up relations with *tulisanes* [bandits] so that his fields and animals would be protected" (Rizal 2006, 29, ch. 4). This reference to an interface between the "inside" or "of the town" and the "outside" or "of the forest," where bandits roam, suggests a porous border between the two, including routine interaction, albeit tense and illicit. That the charge is hearsay and formless only adds to its numinous power, to the sense of danger that the forest and its associated elements exert upon the town.

Elsewhere, two bandit figures who gain notoriety for navigating the forests and mountains of the vast Tagalog region around San Diego and eluding capture by a mili-

8) For Rizal's use of particular political vocabulary as indicative of his growing sense of geography or territory as marker of nation, see Anderson (2008). See also Woods (2005).

tarily more powerful force concretize the amorphous specter of the *tulisan*. Balat (literally, "skin"), whose "bloodthirsty name . . . [spreads] from province to province," is "the terror of the villages" in *Noli* (Rizal 2006, 329, ch. 50), while Matanglawin (literally, "hawk-eye"), the "terrible and ferocious chief" of a gang of bandits, roams the countryside in *El filibusterismo* (Rizal 2011, 268, ch. 31). Their way of life "outside" is contingent on their decision to escape and abandon the social order built around colonialism and, later, to take advantage of and challenge the gaps in colonial policing by taking refuge in terrain beyond the ambit of colonial authority. Navigating the same spaces in *Noli*, but more pointedly political in motivation, is the band of fugitives led by Pablo, who abandoned a distinguished life in town to seek justice for his aggrieved children. Once rich and respected, Pablo witnesses his two sons get arrested and tortured for crimes they have not committed. Feeling guilty for not doing anything, Pablo goes to the forest and gathers an "army" of "disaffected ones," with plans of "go[ing] down onto the plains to exact his revenge" (Rizal 2006, 299, ch. 45). He also refuses the boatman Elias's invitation to go with him to the north and "live among the free, pagan tribes" (Rizal 2006, 297, ch. 45).

Here, where the colonial order sees "subversion," the forest realm sees "protection," strength even, a viable resistance to the legal, economic, and cultural regimes on which the town relies. The nineteenth century saw a "remarkable" increase in the number of bandits outside town centers (Gealogo 1990, 130).[9] Outsiders, including bandits and fugitives, historically thrived in provincial "frontiers," which became their "centers of action" (Gealogo 1990, 130). In the Tagalog region, in particular, as religious orders grabbed more and more land, "many landless persons turned to crime: while rural poverty drove many to seek restitution of their lands and the improvement of conditions on the estates" (Newson 2009, 143). Gealogo observes that these indio "outsiders" freely traversed state-imposed borders, crisscrossing lagoons, mountains, forests, and expansive fields. They were known to "travel briskly" and "would be seen in all places at once" (Gealogo 1990, 130). The physical configuration of forests, the lush impermeability that hinders easy access and movement inside, and the mystery and incomprehensibility of the terrain create an inhospitable environment for "foreign" (Spanish) elements. The hostility of the environment becomes a form of protection, leveling the playing field between poorly armed indios and gun-toting Spanish civil guards.

In *Noli*, the only time a Spaniard—the salacious friar Salvi—ventures into the forest, he finds a hostile place with an almost sentient belligerence against his malicious intentions to spy on Ibarra's fiancée, Maria Clara, during a picnic. Rizal describes how the friar "wandered among the thick undergrowth, avoiding the thorns that grabbed . . . as if to

9) The quotes from Gealogo were translated by the author from Filipino to English.

hold him back, the tree roots that emerged . . . from earth tripping this man . . . unaccustomed to walking" (Rizal 2006, 151, ch. 24). These are the same trees that appear "sad" at the end of the day when Maria Clara and the rest of the party leave, "the vines swaying, as if to say, 'Good-bye, my young friends, good-bye, dreams of day'" (Rizal 2006, 160, ch. 24). By contrast, the forest seems wary but still welcoming of Elias when he ventures to visit Pablo. His steps through the woods are "slow and gentle," and "in order to reorient himself, he whistles a particular melody, which is more often than not answered by someone far off, who whistles the same air" (Rizal 2006, 296, ch. 45). Elias is an ambivalent figure: by "choosing a life of self-exile from colonial society," he is able to "flit between the two worlds of the *taga-labas* (those from the outside) and *taga-loob* (those from the inside) of colonial society . . . with a facility . . . denied men of privilege like Ibarra" (Hau 2017, 167). In moving about in spaces that are unmapped and thus illegible to colonial authority, the outsider harnesses geography, both distance and terrain, to guarantee survival and mobilize a challenge to the center.

The origins of the characters "inside" the *pueblo* and what drive them "outside" also reveal a critical aspect of how the two spaces are connected. In his "former life," Matanglawin was a gentle woodcutter named Tales, who "cleared some dense woods on the edge of town, which he thought didn't belong to anyone" (Rizal 2011, 26, ch. 4). He joins the bandits following a land dispute with Dominican friars who have suddenly claimed his fertile land, and he loses everything in a Sisyphean court battle,

> the type of struggle never before seen in the Filipino universe: a poor, ignorant, friendless *indio*, convinced of his rights and the justice of his cause, fighting a highly powerful body before which justice bowed its head and judges dropped their scales and took up the sword. (Rizal 2011, 29, ch. 4)

Like Pablo, what drives Tales "outside" is a profoundly, existentially lopsided encounter between a disempowered peasant and an externally imposed legal infrastructure. His plight repudiates the notions of order and justice touted by the center, which derives its authority from the supposedly enlightened metropole. The forest transforms this bankruptcy into a persistent, if vague, threat and redirects it back to the town. It can be said that the lawlessness attributed to the outside is nothing more than the excesses of the legal and civilizational regime on which colonial society, and even colonialism itself, rests. All "projects of rule," Scott says, "style themselves, unselfconsciously, as bearers of order, progress, enlightenment, and civilization . . . [wishing] to extend the advantages of administrative discipline, associated with the state or organized religion, to areas previously ungoverned" (Scott 2009, 1). The lawlessness that supposedly reigns in the forest is the justice that the colonial authority has failed to dispense. In calling outsiders "bandits" and other criminal names, Gealogo (1990, 127) says, the colonial center in fact

admits that they are, ultimately, free.

This dialectic is hinted at early in *Fili*, when a friar makes a passing reference to "the era in which people were forced to cut down large trees for shipbuilding" (Rizal 2011, 8). Simoun suggests harnessing slave labor to construct a new canal to facilitate travel to and from the capital, Manila, one of his many provocations intended to agitate the locals into joining his secret plot. That would lead to riots, another friar cautions, and the first friar brings up the precedent, presumably when indios were mobilized to cull the forests for wood in order to build ships. The backbreaking enterprise would have led to a lot more uprisings, he notes, "if it hadn't been for the priests." The forest-clearing "era" the friar alludes to could have been as early as the late sixteenth century, or three hundred years before the events in the novel, when the colony's timber resources began to be used by the colonial state for such purposes, among others. "Ever mindful of the need for suitable wood, writers of early accounts of the islands were quick to appreciate their potential for naval purposes" (Bankoff 2004, 323). Thus, while the forest is made to recall an early stage in colonization when its value as extracted resource helped sustain the colony, it is also invoked as a site in which popular resistance against the self-same colonial process was nourished and incubated.

This sense of freedom in the forests may be seen in the context of the historic struggle against feudal bondage, especially in the agrarian Tagalog region. The colonial labor system was the foremost reason for natives to flee from the lowlands (Keesing 1976, 224). In the early decades of Spanish rule, after Manila's fortifications, churches, monasteries, and private houses had been built, "the main call for polo [forced] labor came for the extraction of timber and work in the shipyards" (Newson 2009, 29).[10] "Corte de madera," or the extraction of timber, became a dreaded form of forced labor among the natives, "the most arduous and poorly paid" (Newson 2009, 29, 145; Bankoff 2013, 538). The grueling labor resulted in a high mortality rate; it drove the natives to evade draft and commit suicide, and led to "fugitivism on a wide scale" (Newson 2009, 145–146). Some 8 million hectares, or 22 percent of the colony's forest cover, would be lost in the three centuries of Spanish rule, in addition to untold numbers of native lives. In broader terms, colonialism ushered in a shift in juridical notions of land and space as political and thus legal subjects, a process that saw the "nationalization" of once communally owned forest resources and consequently the "erosion" in the authority of indigenous communities and systems, each "with their own systems of tenure, customary law, and technologies for utilization" (Poffenberger *et al.* 2006, 14). As elsewhere in Southeast Asia,

10) Most of the timber came from forests in Laguna, Rizal's birthplace and where the fictional San Diego is located. To build one galleon required some six thousand workers to labor for three months (Newson 2009, 145).

by putting once-mobile peoples in permanent settlements, states "tried to replace open common-property land tenure with closed common property [and] seized timber and mineral resources for the national patrimony" (Scott 2009, 4). Over the centuries, religious orders amassed massive tracts of land with impunity while systematically dispossessing the indigenous populations (Connolly 1992; McAndrew 1994). By the late nineteenth century, on the eve of the Philippine Revolution, the legal regime that kept the colonial system tenable had all but been discredited and had driven Filipinos beyond their limits: "unbearable exactions in taxes, tributes, and forced labor led the peasants to commit atrocities that ordinarily would have been shocking, yet were natural and justified when no means were left to air their grievances and to get justice" (Agoncillo 2002, 2).

The Rizal family, which had built its modest fortune through farming, did not escape the tide of escalating feudal unrest, including an ordeal that unmistakably influenced the Tales-Matanglawin subplot. Like Tales, Rizal's family and many others in Calamba town, on which San Diego is based, became embroiled in a dispute about land claimed by the Dominicans. The tenants decried rising rent and other arbitrary charges levied by the Dominicans, who remained heedless of "hard times" (Guerrero 1974, 183). Rizal, already a marked man after the publication of *Noli*, "became the center of the struggle" (Guerrero 1974, 184), and the Dominicans sued his family in a case that dragged on for four years and which the family eventually lost. By then, Rizal had returned to Spain and could only hear from afar how artillery and military forces were sent to demolish his home, arrest members of his clan, and threaten them with exile (Quibuyen 1998, 166). The Calamba eviction ordeal was the "turning point" in Rizal's politics, writes Floro Quibuyen, toward "a more radical separatist stance" (Quibuyen 1998, 156, 169). Rizal biographer Leon Ma. Guerrero (1974) confirms that this episode inspired the subplot of Tales in *El filibusterismo*. The note Tales the peasant leaves before becoming Matanglawin the bandit alludes to the evictions. Addressed to "the whole town of Kalamba"—including, dangerously, real names of evictees, such as Rizal's brother, Paciano—it narrates the suffering of the people, none of whom "has taken the law in his own hands," and vows to grant them justice (Rizal 2011, 77). The letter reveals "the whole point of the novel" (Guerrero 1974, 279) and "suggest[s] a way out of the impasse" on the debate about reform that Rizal began in *Noli* (Guerrero 1974, 282). In *El filibusterismo*, Rizal's answer is unequivocally no: peaceful reform is no longer possible.

The ramifications of having rejected reform are productively inconclusive, a space where the forest as an idea can offer some direction. After all, Rizal chooses to "resolve" this significant biographical episode in *El filibusterismo* by moving the struggle "outside" of the *pueblo*, even if Matanglawin's cause will later be subsumed under Simoun's grander,

more self-involved, more "national" campaign targeting the colonial center. But the plot's failure leaves key questions unanswered. If independence is the only route and a violent reckoning is inevitable, what "nation" exactly lies on the other side of this novel? *Nihil*, Anderson says, nothing: "Simoun has no plans for the aftermath of his successful vengeance, and nothing in *El filibusterismo* suggests that anyone else has either: only a dream of 'liberty,' formless and utopian" (Anderson 2005, 118).[11] He arrives at this conclusion after plotting Rizal's place within "the zigzag of insurrectionary explosions in the metropole and in the colonies" at the time (Anderson 2005, 81), concluding that Simoun's revolt is suffused with ideas from Europe even if Tagalog peasants "had their own utopian and messianic traditions" (Anderson 2005, 118). Anderson implies that the plot "has to fail" (Anderson 2005, 118) because Simoun's imported nihilism, preoccupied solely with liberty, is unable to facilitate a more coherent imagining of the nation should the plot succeed.

The Forest as Incubator of an Inchoate Utopia

The goal of this so-called formless utopia, I argue, already exists in Rizal's fictional universe, though perhaps not within a discourse that Simoun—and Rizal—may readily apprehend. The forest in the novels generates an imaginative clearing in which an inchoate utopia can be glimpsed. It is utopian insofar as, in offering an alternative to the bankrupt colonial state-making, it draws from both what preceded colonial conquest and what could follow in the wake of its demise. "The main, long-run threat of the ungoverned periphery was that it represented . . . a constant alternative to life within the state," writes Scott (2009, 6). In Rizal's novels, this threat is telegraphed by the consciousness of certain characters as well as elements of setting, in particular the spatial configuration of San Diego in relation to events in the narrative. Because the imagination of these utopias falls outside, or is illegible to, conceptions of nineteenth-century nationalism and nationalist historiography, it presents a decisive danger to the colonial order.

Among Rizal's characters, Sisa and her two young sons, Crispin and Basilio, are destitute indios who live in a hut "an hour away" from town (Rizal 2006, 91, ch. 16). With their forest garden and hens and the occasional journey to town for odd jobs, their life

11) In a letter, Rizal defined *filibustero* as "a dangerous patriot who will soon be hanged or a presumptuous man," a word he first heard during the execution of three Filipino priests to whom he would dedicate *Fili* (in Anderson 2005, 59). It is not clear whether he was aware of another definition—an outlaw who radicalized people in the Spanish West Indies, including Cuba (*filibuster*)—although in the book Simoun's riches were accumulated while he gallivanted around Cuba and Europe.

has the barest, most transactional connection to the center and is perhaps the closest one can come to forest living without actually living in the woods. One stormy night Crispin is accused of stealing from the parish where he and Basilio work—and are maltreated—as sextons, and Basilio, injured and traumatized after a scuffle with the civil guards, returns home alone. The fantasy he feverishly conjures up to his mother as they try to sleep is entwined with, indeed embedded in, the forest. In this dream scenario, he gets a job as Ibarra's cowherd:

> I'll gather fruit in the forest and sell it in town along with vegetables from our plot and then we'll have money. I'll set snares and traps to catch birds and mountain cats, I'll fish in the river, and when I'm older I'll hunt . . . [Basilio] could already see himself and his little brother as herders. They gathered guavas, alpay, and other fruit from the forest. (Rizal 2006, 98–99, ch. 17)

Days later Basilio himself disappears, and Sisa is arrested for her sons' purported crimes. The long, tortuous journey from her remote hut to the barracks in town marks the beginning of Sisa's descent to insanity, the natural world hovering in the recesses of her ebbing consciousness: "vast rice fields, irrigation ditches, scrawny trees, but no cliff to jump from, no boulders to smash against!" (Rizal 2006, 130, ch. 21). Catatonic after hours in captivity, she is ordered released and begins wandering the streets back to her hut and around the edges of San Diego, calling out the names of Crispin and Basilio, in the scene that would make her the archetypal madwoman of Philippine literature. As she is uprooted from sanity, her final lucid thoughts are of her sons, in particular Basilio's vision of freedom. These thoughts "lighted the darkness, and she was able to murmur, resignedly, 'Later . . . later we will go to live deep in the forest'" (Rizal 2006, 130).[12] The following day, she is seen "wandering about, smiling, singing, and talking, with all of nature's beings" (Rizal 2006, 133, ch. 21).

Sisa spends the rest of the novel as this charged, meandering specter, haunting the narrative and adrift in the town and beyond, her violent dehumanization, like the others', a product of the manifold, systemic "excesses" of the colonial system returning to the spaces under its dominion, interrupting the peace like a ghost. She appears at the picnic during the town fiesta and after the attack at the barracks, when it is revealed that she stayed with a doctor who sent her away because of her association with Ibarra, leaving her "crazy as ever," singing, bothering people, and living in the forest (Rizal 2006, 412,

12) In a deleted chapter featuring Elias and a love interest, Salome, the forest is also utopia: If it weren't for a dire family history which he must reckon with, he tells her, "I would have married you months ago in the eyes of God and we would have gone to live in the jungle far from civilization" (Rizal 2006, 427, appendix). Salome's "tiny but picturesque" hut, the site of their brief encounters and thus respite, is itself "built among the lush bamboo, palm tree, and coconut palm forests, on the shores of the lake" (Rizal 2006, 423).

ch. 63). For Epifanio San Juan, in her transformation Sisa "assumes the sentient environment of rural Philippines . . . the humanization of the stigmatized territory customarily identified with the autochthonous ambience of savagery and barbarism, with bandits and tulisanes, with outlaws, pagans, and vagrant lunatics" (San Juan 2011, 17). Her traumatic arrest is framed as a violent act of making her visible to colonial policing, from being a "dweller on the fringes beyond the scope of the church bells' tolling . . . alienated from the urban circuit of money and commodity exchange" to becoming suddenly and unjustly subsumed under its rule (San Juan 2011, 16–17). For Sisa, the idea of the forest as refuge survives this deluge of agony and trauma. Seeing her captor, the ensign, at the picnic, she becomes "terrified and [breaks] into a run, disappearing among the trees" (Rizal 2006, 154, ch. 24). Even in fragments, the forest commands muscle memory. Ordered to sing by the ensign's megalomaniac wife, Sisa hums a desolate *kundiman*, or love song, about a "parched, faded flower" whose final image is the "hollow of an ancient trunk" and the "melancholy of the forest" (Rizal 2006, 260, ch. 39). Trauma may even have resuscitated fantasies about the forest, which register as both dream and lucid ambition, heedless of time.

This idea of the forest as a durable, perennial utopia can also be glimpsed in the fictional town's genesis in and as a forest. The swath of earth that would become San Diego begins as "a spur of forest amid a section of tilled earth . . . an ancient stand of hollow trunks" (Rizal 2006, 62, ch. 10). According to a fictional legend in the novel, an old Spaniard arrived when the area "was a miserable pile of shacks and grass grew wildly in the so-called streets . . . when deer and wild boars wandered about the town at night" (Rizal 2006, 63, ch. 10). He bought land from men "pretending to be the owners" and promptly disappeared, before a "fetid odor began to emerge from the forest" and shepherds followed the trail and came upon the same man "in a state of putrefaction, hanging from the branch of a baliti [banyan] tree" (Rizal 2006, 63, ch. 10). Months later, a "Spanish half-breed" introduced himself as the dead man's son and began to farm the area. By the time the newcomer, Ibarra's father, Don Rafael, had taken over the land, the arrival of "new residents" meant "the hamlet [had] become a village . . . then a town" (Rizal 2006, 64, ch. 10). After the first Spanish friar replaced the native priest, "the tomb and the old boundaries were respected" (Rizal 2006, 64, ch. 10). While geographically part of the town, this "ancient stand" is also distinct from it. It emits a ghostly and sacred aura, suffused with lore and teeming with real dangers, resulting in a combination of danger and awe that protects it from accidental incursion.

In the narrative, at one spot in particular, the area around the tomb, which has remained unchanged over decades, protectively conceals the forest's potential, the charge it can activate and unleash. The Ibarra family's treasure is buried at the foot of the baliti

where their ancestor hanged himself, his death lending the tree a preternatural energy. The treasure transmits danger in the most material sense. In *Noli*, Ibarra's reforms, such as the building of a modern school, rest on the family's wealth. In *El filibusterismo*, all of Simoun's "subversive" activities—the most concrete threat to the colonial order—from the recruitment of men to the purchase of arms, are also financed by these riches. This also means that, despite the comparatively limited "action" that takes place in the woods, all the conflicts in the town and city centers are in fact enabled by something deposited in and emanating from the forest. It is telling that *El filibusterismo* ends with the Filipino priest Florentino—"while the forest whispered in incomprehensible voices"—throwing this treasure into the sea, after which "the abyss closed over" it (Rizal 2011, 327, ch. 39). The act appears conclusive, a natural enactment of the priest's—and the novel's—ambivalent attitude toward a violent revolution. But the priest's closing apostrophe to the treasure affirms the dormant potential of the riches, still mediated by nature, and effectively modifies the "no" into "not yet": "When men need you for a holy, sublime reason," he intones, "God will pull you from the bosom of your waves" (Rizal 2011, 328, ch. 39).

Aside from the narrative significance, the metonymic value of a treasure in the forest is also critical, evoking not just an indigenous conception of the woods as communal resource but a utopian ideal of harmony that colonization has dismantled. The idea is inscribed in local lore, most notably in a well-known folktale about Mariang Makiling, a retelling of which Rizal published in Spain in 1890, a year before the publication of *El filibusterismo*. In his version, the titular mountain spirit is a "half nymph, half sylph, born . . . in the mystery of [the mountain's] august forests and to the lullaby of the murmurs of the neighboring lake" (Rizal 1968, 1). From this forest realm come the gifts the spirit regularly bestows on the rural folk—"gold, money, reliquaries, and jewels" (Rizal 1968, 2). One day the bounty stops, and the spirit vanishes without a trace. Details from the Calamba evictions case spill over into Rizal's retelling. The gifts from Mariang Makiling stop "because the Dominican friars seek to despoil [rural populations] of their property by appropriating half of the mountain" (Rizal 1968, 5). Meanwhile, according to an "old woodcutter" of "secular trees" (Rizal 1968, 5), a young man Mariang Makiling is fond of enters a forced marriage to evade a military draft for an unspecified war, leaving her distraught. In both cases, the idea of an abundant indigenous treasure sourced from the forest realm is withheld in the wake of, and seen as inherently incompatible with, an unwelcome and disruptive colonial order.

Thus, the act of harnessing this treasure in the forest is also an act of harnessing the past, not just in the sense that the treasure is an accumulation of wealth from the soil of San Diego, but that in its place in the anticolonial struggle, aligned with the other

fugitives that haunt the forest, it absorbs a collective disenchantment amassed over time. In *Noli*, Tasio the philosopher tries to convince Ibarra that the struggle of which Ibarra is terrified persists beyond him, like resilient flora: "Put in the first stone, sow the seeds. After the storm is unleashed, perhaps some grain will germinate, survive the catastrophe, save the species from annihilation and serve thereafter as the seed for the children of the late power" (Rizal 2006, 170). The forest's value as a space in the narrative also affirms this persistence: the forest is the site of revolutionary struggle passing through time. At the conclusion of *Noli*, young Basilio reunites with a dying Sisa near the baliti but also sees the older Elias, himself injured after helping Ibarra escape from prison and covering for him when they were accosted at the lake. After telling Basilio to gather firewood for a pyre, Elias reveals to him the location of the treasure before he dies. This story continues in *El filibusterismo*, when Basilio, grown up and part of an assimilationist student group, goes into the forest to visit the grave of his mother and accidentally discovers that Simoun is Ibarra. When the jeweler invites the student to his more radical conspiracy, the cycle—and the discourse around the struggle—continues.

The crucial, illicit negotiations take place under the cover of the forest, always at night or in the small hours, in the reprieve carved out from colonial surveillance. Buoyed as much by the energies of the past as visions of the future, the forest unites the historical present in the novels, its regime of discontents, with the valuable possibilities of the ongoing "precolonial" time and the imagined aftermath of colonization, both suffused with utopian ideas. In Rizal's anticolonial narrative, the perennial forest signals and embodies what the critic Greg Forter, citing Walter Benjamin, calls a work's "utopian project of constellating alternative, post-national futures," inscribed in the "unrealized residues of a past that persists within yet disrupts the 'homogeneous, empty time' of colonial modernity" (Forter 2019, 2). As forest time in the works encompasses colonization and the time around and outside it, the forest is able to act as incubator for various utopian visions by "recover[ing] from the historical past new resources for the radical imagination" (Forter 2019, 5).

The Forest as Illegible, Illegibility as Resistance and Trauma

While space and geography signal a counterpoint to the nationalist thought that Rizal as a novelist is said to have forged, the narrative and discursive fullness of the forest do not seem to register either with Rizal or in the predominant readings of his novels. What constitutes forest thought, it seems, may be among the "phenomena that resisted his ordering mind" (Ileto 1998, 31). I argue that this illegibility demonstrates the resistance

of the forest as both a political and narrative subject, in a process abetted by Rizal's conception of history and reliance on the narrative apparatus of social realism. It also locates the trauma of colonization in the figure of Rizal as colonial subject, and the illegibility can be seen as the loss in imaginative capacity that colonization irrecoverably engenders on the consciousness of the colonized.

Colonization, in the sense of a broad project to "integrate and monetize the people, lands, and resources of the periphery so that they become . . . rentable" (Scott 2009, 4), had uneven results in the Spanish Philippines. It was perennially and widely contested,[13] but as a political system and bureaucracy it was able to "facilitate" the "exaction" of Filipino tribute and labor (Newson 2009, 24). This is perhaps most evident in the way conquest has altered traditional land tenure systems and the nature of people's relationship with land, which proves to be the costliest, most irreparable, and enduring legacy of colonization.[14] Following the Calamba evictions, Rizal seemed to recognize the grievous sense of helpless incarceration that de facto landlessness brought. But if his fictional response was reluctant fugitivism via the Tales-Matanglawin arc in *Noli*—fomenting a threat to the colonial order from outside—in reality what he considered was a reproduction of the same system, albeit humane, elsewhere. Just before returning to the Philippines, he considered founding a "Filipino colony" in North Borneo, south of the Philippines, with the other evicted farmers of his town (Guerrero 1974, 319). The British North Borneo Charter Company was eager to occupy the "very sparsely populated region" and offered him 5,000 acres of "uncultivated land" rent-free for three years, with an option to purchase the estate eventually. While it did not preclude a continuation of his political work on Philippine independence, transplanting his reformist utopia to Borneo allowed Rizal to envision "a community of free men with guaranteed rights and liberties" (Guerrero 1974, 319).

The Borneo plan would fall through—Spanish authorities, unsurprisingly, did not approve—but the discrepancy between what Rizal elected to do in his fiction and what really happened is perhaps telling not only of his class position and its many implications, but also of the faint, indistinct quality in which such an outside realm registers in his historical consciousness, how that world, and "defecting" to it, appears to have been illegible to him. From Rizal's position in the center, the narrative and discursive instability of the forest—demonized but feared, a source of danger but also a potential—is a space that resists incorporation into the colonial fold, hence the seduction of the same tenancy system in Borneo without the same sense of feudal abuse. This "official invisibility of defection is encoded in the narrative itself," Scott writes, especially in the

13) See Rafael (1988) and Mawson (2019).
14) See McAndrew (1994).

context of a "civilizational narrative that assumes its own cultural and social magnetism and that depicts acculturation to its norms as a much desired ascent" (Scott 2009, 125). As a result, "those who move to non-state space, who adapt to its agro-ecology, become ethnicized barbarians who were, presumably, always there" (Scott 2009, 125). How the forest resists fully registering in Rizal's novels attests to its exception to this normative reading.

Inscribed in this same illegibility, I argue, is the trauma of colonization; the illegibility of the forest to the imagination of *Noli me tangere* and *El filibusterismo* may itself be the loss in imaginative capacity that colonization irrecoverably engenders in the consciousness of the colonized. This can be located in Rizal's "full demonstration of the Western [realist] novel form" (Mojares 1983, 192) and not just in the sense that his novels have helped supplant a dynamic, variegated oral tradition but in how they privilege a certain conception of historicity. Orality and literacy as traditions differ in many ways, foremost being their relationship with knowledge and knowledge production. Writing, Walter Ong argues, "separates the knower from the known and thus sets up conditions for 'objectivity,'" while orality achieves a type of "empathetic and participatory" learning, an interactive and communal "identification with the known" (Ong 2002, 45). Orality has an "unalterable presentness" (Scott 2009, 230), in that it implicates aspects of its performance every time it is performed even if it invokes, say, millennia of a group's "history." Orality emerges from a narrative tradition organically embedded in everyday lived experience, suffused with "more or less close reference to the human lifeworld, assimilating the alien, objective world to the more immediate, familiar interaction of human beings" (Ong 2002, 42). By contrast, Rizal was guided by "empirical and mimetic impulses," influenced by European realists such as Charles Dickens, Honoré de Balzac, and Émile Zola (Arensmeyer 1970, 741–742; Mojares 1983, 94). His avowed intention in the novels—to render "the first impartial and bold account of the life of the Tagalogs" in which "the Filipinos will find . . . the history of the last ten years"—"hinges on the question of truth, of accuracy . . . [and] objectivity," which he set out to accomplish by novelistically "creating a discourse that is in an important sense scientific" (Hau 2000, 118). This "ability to depict—if not actually politicize the depiction of—the national character" (Hau 2000, 14) is how the two novels "enter history" as a complex and multipart cultural artifact that "presents and elaborates the knowable community"—that of the modern Filipino nation (Hau 2000, 124). While orality is ephemeral and thus resists codification in this way, Rizal's novels can be seen as a project in making what he imagined to be a Filipino experience duratively legible as a narrative subject.

Although in the service of anticolonial critique, the novelistic narrativizing of legible subjects can nonetheless be seen as epistemologically extractive, the same way that

naming and documentation preceded the commodification of native resources and bodies. The operation is certainly linked to the unitary, rational way in which Rizal imagined the nation in his works, afflicted perhaps with what Mojares describes as the "crippling fetish about so-called 'facts' and the 'unities' of time, place, and action," and which had banished "local histories" to the role of "mere . . . embroidery on 'national' history" (Mojares 2002, 69). What exactly constitutes this field of legible narrative subjects—and what it excludes, wittingly or not—is a product of how Rizal apprehended history. For Ileto (1998, 31–33), Rizal's subject position as part of the liberal-educated elite predisposed him to an "evolutionist" view of Philippine history, one in which colonization interrupted a flourishing precolonial civilization, the recovery of which was necessary before the inevitable progress toward secular (European) enlightenment. Deeply in tune with this conception of history, Rizal labored to "reconstitute the unity of Philippine history, to bring under the sway of the ilustrado mind the discontinuities and differences that characterized colonial society" (Ileto 1998, 35). The forest, perhaps as part of "the thought-world of the history-less" (Ileto 1998, 31) that Rizal subdued, to some extent escapes this attempt, contesting legibility by virtue of its unstable, slippery nature as "knowledge" and narrative subject.

The incomplete, often liminal, register of the forest in the novels can thus be attributed to the manifest failure of the entwined apparatus of narrative and the state, both of which are unable to contain the forest's supposed lack of history. The supposedly scientific and documentary impetus behind the Western realist novel, the mode in which Rizal wrote, delimits its field of legible narrative subjects to knowable ones, while nationalist historiography, anchored in modern state-making, either resists or ignores the forest's multiplicity of excess meanings. This failure to register fully can thus be seen as the assertion of the forest's radical historical illegibility as both narrative and political subject. Inscribed in that failure is also the trauma of colonization, in that Rizal, a brilliant colonial subject, is only able to apprehend and imagine a trace of the forest's agency as a space and discourse, and so his rendering of it is limited, perhaps inevitably, to the forest as "the inescapable 'dark twin' of state-making projects in the valleys" (Scott 2009, 326).

Conclusion

Invested with Enlightenment ideas of rationality, secularism, and an evolutionist conception of history, while also formally attuned to a "realist" accounting of such history, Rizal's two novels are a rich field for disentangling the operations of state-making and narrativity in the context of Spanish colonization. As an ambivalent space in Philippine

history and a productively illegible presence in the novels, the forest as both site and idea offers a glimpse into the limits of and resistance to colonial conquest, as well as the gaps and fissures in the imagination of Rizal as a historical subject. Recovering a sense of this lost agency is critical in confronting the world of misrecognitions, and their political implications, which colonialism has engendered.

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Family Structure in Early Modern Vietnam: A Case Study of Villages around Huế

Ueda Shinya*

In present-day Vietnam, patrilineal kinship groups called *dòng họ* are widely dispersed. However, from a historical viewpoint, there have been various arguments about the formation and transformation of the Kinh people's patrilineal kinship groups. In this article, we will introduce the village documents called *Viên bộ* and examine the family structure and household division around Huế in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. From those examinations, this article concludes that the patriarchal image of the patriarch having strong authority in a large family based on polygamy does not apply to rural areas near Huế in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Rather, it is supposed that members of the next generation were separated from the patriarchal household one after another. This brought about a loosely knit household group comprising two or three generations based on paternal blood relationships, which was formed with the patrilineal family at the top. When paying attention to the inheritance of ancestral rituals and inheritance of property, it can be said that they were clearly a kind of Confucian patrilineal kinship group. On the other hand, we can also find a point in common with multi-household compounds in the rest of Southeast Asia. It may be necessary to reconsider the family structure of the Kinh people in comparison with Southeast Asia and East Asia from a historical viewpoint.

Keywords: early modern Vietnam, patrilineal kinship group, Huế, village documents

Introduction

In present-day Vietnam, patrilineal kinship groups called *dòng họ* are widely dispersed. In recent years there have been some transformations and a decline of the family structure due to urbanization—for example, an increase in nuclear families and a declining

* 上田新也, Thang Long Institution of Cognition and Education Studies, Thang Long University, Nghiem Xuan Yem, Dai Kim, Hoang Mai Hanoi 11718, Viet Nam
e-mail: uedashinya_vnjp@yahoo.co.jp
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3797-1399
Due to space limitations, Table 4 is opened on the following website: https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/article/seas/12/2/12_239/_article/-char/en#supplimentary-materials-wrap

birth rate—as well as some regional differences such as between the north and south. But for the Kinh, who are the main ethnic group in Vietnam, accounting for more than 90 percent of the country's population, *dòng họ* is considered part of their "traditional culture." However, from a historical viewpoint, there have been various arguments about the formation and transformation of the Kinh people's patrilineal kinship groups.

The beginning of this argument was most likely a series of studies in *Lê triều hình luật* 黎朝刑律 (*Lê code*). *Lê code*, which contains numerous regulations unique to Vietnam though it is a law adopted from China, has attracted attention from early on as a symbol of the cultural and social uniqueness of premodern Vietnamese society. It drew the attention of researchers such as Makino Tatsumi (1930) and Yamamoto Tatsuro (1938) during the first half of the twentieth century, and since then researchers such as Katakura Minoru (1987), Yu Insun (1990), and Yao Takao (2020) have conducted further research. According to their studies, the original restrictions contained in *Lê code*, especially those related to the family system—such as marriage and inheritance—represented the Southeast Asian social situation at the time of enactment.

However, a new research trend has emerged in recent years. This consists of studies using local documents from the early modern period. Vietnamese economic reforms from the 1990s onward enabled foreign researchers to conduct field surveys, resulting in the rise of studies utilizing local documents. In particular, the new historical materials made it possible to examine local society and communities in ways that government compilations of historical documents could not. As a result, the study of premodern Vietnamese history since 2000 has made a clear distinction not only in terms of content but also in terms of historical materials,[1] and research fused with anthropology using family genealogy and testaments is rapidly developing in early modern Vietnamese social history.[2] At a minimum, these studies indicate that Vietnam's patrilineal kinship group, known as *dòng họ*, is not just a copy of China's but has its own uniqueness. These new studies have led to a controversy among some researchers about the social status of patrilineal kinship groups and women's social status in premodern Vietnamese society.[3]

Thus, in recent years, debates have resurfaced in cultural anthropology and history

1) This tendency is particularly remarkable in Japan. As representative studies, see the study of the early Lê Dynasty by Yao Takao (2009) and that of the late Lê Dynasty by Ueda Shinya (2019).
2) For example, studies on women's property rights in the premodern period by Miyazawa Chihiro (1996; 2016), the study of premodern Vietnamese family genealogy from the cultural anthropological viewpoint by Suenari Michio (1995), and the study of family property in early modern Vietnam by Tran Nhung Tuyet (2018). At the same time, family research through field surveys has made great strides. See Luong Van Hy (1989) and Suenari (1998).
3) Regarding the social status of women in premodern society, Miyazawa (2016) and Tran (2018) hold conflicting opinions; their arguments have not yet been settled.

over premodern *dòng họ*. However, the fundamental issue of why a patrilineal kinship group with fixed and closed membership like *dòng họ* developed in Southeast Asia, which is generally characterized by a "loosely structured society," has not been extensively examined. Therefore, in previous research, the author (Ueda 2021a) took Thanh Phước village near Huế as an example and demonstrated how the village community gradually became closed due to the limits of agricultural development and population pressure, resulting in the establishment of social groups based on Confucianism. In another article, Ueda Shinya (2021c) examined the testaments and land cadastres for the nineteenth-century Red River Delta and established that "multi-household compounds" may have been transformed into patrilineal kinship groups by the generalization of patrilocal residence due to the popularization of Confucianism. The above studies did not cover the specifics of household composition and household division. Nevertheless, after collecting more village documents around Huế, the author discovered some historical sources recording detailed ownership of residential areas in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century villages. In this article, we will introduce the outline of these village documents and examine the family structure and household division at that time.

I Outline of *Viên Bộ*

I-1 *Basic Bibliographic Information for* Viên Bộ

First, the author would like to explain the *viện bộ* 園簿 (garden cadastre) that was used as the main historical source in this article. Simply described, the garden cadastre is a land register that records the landowners and areas in the residential area of the village for each parcel of land. As is generally well known, the Nguyễn Dynasty conducted nationwide surveys since the dynasty was founded, and the survey results are still in existence as a *địa bạ* 地簿 (land cadastre). However, residential areas comprising house and garden parcels were only recorded with their total area as *thổ trạch viên trì* 土宅園池 or *thổ trạch viên cư* 土宅園居 in the land cadastre. The main purpose behind compiling the land cadastre was to determine the tax amount for each village. Considering the administrative costs, it is understandable that there was no detailed survey of the living spaces that were not taxable under the tax regulations of the Nguyễn Dynasty.[4] However, when we consider the premodern family structure in early modern Vietnam, the lack of information on residences presents a barrier for analysis. In fact, in the previous

4) On the land tax of the Nguyễn Dynasty, see Trương Hữu Quýnh and Đỗ Bang (1997). Since the end of the seventeenth century, the rice field tax has been largely fixed for each village (Ueda 2019, 147–153).

studies using the land cadastre up to the present, only the amount of cultivated area for each individual was examined, and the type of family/household connection was not comprehensively considered.[5] However, because the "garden cadastre" used as the main historical source in this article records the detailed ownership status of each parcel of land in the residential area, we can use this to speculate on the actual living conditions and family ties in the village.

The garden cadastre is a type of historical material that is hardly known even in Vietnam, and the author obtained a total of only four documents photographed in two villages in the northern suburbs of Huế. At this point, it is unclear how many analogous historical materials exist, and we must await the results of future investigations. Prior to these analyses, I will introduce the bibliographic information and outline of the four garden cadastres.

The garden cadastres analyzed in this article were photographed in the village communal halls (*đình*) of Thanh Phước and An Thành villages.[6] Both settlements are located about 7–8 km north of the Imperial City of Huế, and they are only a few kilometers apart from each other. The basic bibliographic information of the garden cadastres photographed by the author is provided in Table 1.

In this article *viên bộ* is used to refer to the four village documents mentioned above, though the actual titles of each document vary slightly. This term applies not only to the title but also to the format and content, which are slightly different for each era and village. There is no unified format such as the Nguyen Dynasty's land cadastre. For example, in *Thanh Phước A* and *An Thành A*, which were compiled in the late eighteenth century, landowners are listed in the form of a personal pronoun and personal name such as "Lão Phúc 老福 (Old Phúc)," "Chú Minh 注明 (Uncle Minh)," and "Mụ Lưu 媒留 (Aunt Lưu)." Modern Vietnamese also uses various personal pronouns with given names depending on the person's age, gender, and social status. The method of writing the personal names in the two garden cadastres is basically a *chữ Nôm* notation of "personal pronoun + given name (or alias)."[7] On the other hand, *An Thành B*, compiled in the mid-nineteenth century, is basically described in the form of "family name + middle name (*tên đệm*) + given name" with Chinese characters, such as "Trần Viết Tô 陳曰蘇" and "Trần Viết Lương 陳曰良."

In addition, the garden cadastres of *Thanh Phước A* and *Thanh Phước B* not only

5) Nguyễn Đình Đầu (1997) has conducted statistical analysis using the land cadastre of Huế Province and clarified the basic facts, such as the large number of public rice fields and official fields compared to other areas. However, there is no mention of residential areas in the village.

6) Their current addresses are as follows: Thôn Thanh Phước, xã Hương Phong, huyện Hương Trà, tỉnh Thừa Thiên Huế, Thôn An Thành, xã Quảng Thành, huyện Quảng Điền, tỉnh Thừa Thiên Huế.

7) In modern Vietnamese the full name consists of the "family name (*họ*) + middle names ↗

Table 1 Garden Cadastre in Thanh Phước Village and An Thành Village

1) *Thanh Phước A*

Title:	園居并園簿 [*Viên cư tinh Viên bộ*]		
Edited year:	Cảnh Hưng 33 (1772)	Reference number:	ĐTP68d
Location:	Village communal hall of Thanh Phước village	Photographed date:	March 10, 2010
Size:	30 cm × 16 cm	Number of leaves:	30
Overview:	The cover leaf is difficult to read because this document is adhered to another document [ĐTP68c]. For the same reason, what seems to be a regulation of this garden cadastre is written on page 1a, but it is unreadable. In addition, each leaf is moth-eaten and missing about 2 to 3 cm at each end, so about one-fifth of the information is missing. The characters in the document are from the Lê Dynasty period. The landowners of garden and house sites are recorded by personal pronouns and personal names using chữ Nôm, not by first and last names in Chinese characters.		

2) *Thanh Phước B*

Title:	壬辰年園簿 [*Nhâm Thìn niên Viên bộ*]		
Edited year:	1780s–1810s	Reference number:	ĐTP70
Location:	Village communal hall of Thanh Phước village	Photographed date:	March 10, 2010
Size:	30 cm × 21 cm	Number of leaves:	27
Overview:	"Nhâm Thìn niên" in the title probably refers to 1772, when *Thanh Phước A* was compiled. Although there are some differences, the content is almost a duplicate of *Thanh Phước A* as it is. The year of transcription is not stated, but the characters in the document are from the Lê Dynasty period. In general, the fonts of the Lê Dynasty changed to the refreshing fonts of the Nguyen Dynasty after the Minh Mạng era (1820–41), so the document was probably copied around the 1780s–1810s. The landowners of garden and house sites are recorded by personal pronouns and personal names using chữ Nôm.		

3) *An Thành A*

Title:	Unknown		
Edited year:	Bính Thìn year (1796)	Reference number:	An Thành-Đình56
Location:	Village communal hall of An Thành village	Photographed date:	November 20, 2016
Size:	24 cm × 17 cm	Number of leaves:	16
Overview:	The cover leaf and all the other leaves are moth-eaten and lacking about 2 to 3 cm at each end, so about one-fifth of the information is missing. After compilation, many annotations were written by the village secretary (*Thủ bộ* 守簿), and the status of transfer of ownership up to 1859 can be seen. The characters in the document are from the Lê Dynasty period. The landowners of garden and house sites are recorded by personal pronouns and personal names using chữ Nôm, not by first and last names in Chinese characters.		

4) *An Thành B*

Title:	安城社土園簿 [*An Thành xã* Thổ *viên bộ*]		
Edited year:	Tự Đức 13 (1859)	Reference number:	An Thành-Đình52
Location:	Village communal hall of An Thành village	Photographed date:	November 20, 2016
Size:	23 cm × 15.4 cm	Number of leaves:	28
Overview:	This garden cadastre was compiled to update the information in *An Thành A*. After that, the information was updated until the beginning of the twentieth century by the village secretary. The landowners are recorded by family name, middle name, and last name in Chinese characters.		

document the owner, location, length, and area of each parcel of land but also record the usage status of each parcel, such as *viện thổ* 園土 and *viện cư* 園居. *Viện thổ* probably refers to a parcel of land meant only for a garden, while *viện cư* most likely refers to a parcel of land where a house is built in the garden. However, in the case of *An Thành A* and *An Thành B*, the owner, the length, and the area of all four sides are listed, which is the same as Thanh Phước. In addition, an amount of money is recorded. This is the tax levied on the parcel of land, as described later. However, it appears that both garden cadastres of An Thành are unconcerned about the usage status of each parcel, because *An Thành A* classifies all the pieces of land as *Thổ trạch* 土宅 (garden and residence). Conversely, *An Thành B* classifies all the land pieces as *Thổ viên* 土園 (garden) for the same residential area. That is, the garden cadastre of An Thành does not strictly distinguish between "garden" and "garden with house" in the document.

Instead, the garden cadastres of An Thành provide us with a more detailed transaction and inheritance history for each parcel of land. For example, the parcel of land owned by Uncle Bỉnh 注秉 listed at the beginning of *An Thành A* and the parcel of land owned by Trần Viết Lương 陳曰良 at the beginning of *An Thành B* clearly refer to the same parcel of land, because the length and area of all four sides are exactly the same. According to *An Thành B*, this parcel was purchased by Trần Viết Tô 陳曰蘇 and subsequently inherited by Trần Viết Lương. In other words, when we combine the information from these two sources, we can see that between 1796 and 1859 Trần Viết Tô purchased the parcel of land from "Uncle Bỉnh" and subsequently bequeathed it to his offspring Trần Viết Lương. Furthermore, when the ownership of the land was transferred through a transaction after creating the garden cadastre, a note to that effect is appended to the left and right.[8] By combining these descriptions, it is possible to trace the sales transactions

↘ (*tên đệm*) + given name (*tên*)," and people are usually called by their "personal pronoun + given name." For example, a man named Nguyễn Văn Thanh would be called "ông Thanh," "chú Thanh," "em Thanh," etc. (personal pronoun for male + given name). However, the reality is not so simple. For example, in the case of a father named Nguyễn Văn Thanh with an elder son named Nguyễn Văn Minh, the father is sometimes called "ông Minh"—the son's given name (personal pronoun for male + son's given name). This is because calling someone by their given name is considered impolite, especially in the case of older people. Furthermore, married women are often referred to as "bà Thanh" or "cô Thanh," using their husband's given name (personal pronoun for female + husband's given name). Currently, such common names are not often used in public places. However, they continue to be used in places and situations with a traditional culture, such as when people return to their hometown or attend a get-together of relatives.

8) As far as the notes of *Thanh Phước A*, *An Thành A*, and *An Thành B* are concerned, if landownership was sold to another lineage or another lineage's member, the purchaser had a reporting obligation. However, it seems that there was no reporting obligation when the property was inherited by children. Therefore, there are some cases where the landowner is deceased, such as "前老善 Tiền lão Thiện" (the late old Thiện). This means that ownership was not renewed because the male offspring inherited it after the death of the previous owner.

and inheritance of a residential area from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the twentieth.

I-2 *Purpose of Compiling the Garden Cadastre*

In this sub-section, we will briefly examine why the documents called "garden cadastre" were compiled in Thanh Phước and An Thành villages, and clarify the social background of the documents. To begin with, we introduce the regulations at the beginning of *An Thành B*.[9] The head of the garden cadastre describes the situation as follows:

> We, the village officials of An Thành commune, An Thành canton, Quảng Điền District, Thừa Thiên Prefecture, gathered together and considered that roads, gardens, and houses always change their boundary over time. Thus, maintained according to the previous scale regulations, the village officials worked together to measure the area of each parcel of land in the residential area. Compared to the previous garden cadastre [*An Thành A*], there was an increase or decrease, but it was not due to an individual's evil act. When editing the landowner, tax amount, and area of land, we rewrote or followed the description of the previous garden cadastre [*An Thành A*], but of course, we have no evil intention at all in those new registrations. Regarding the new and old regulations, we will clarify by adding an annotation to each entry. Keep this new garden cadastre for generations and make this an invariant rule. The details are described below.
>
> 1. Every year, the tax is 130 *tiền* per 1 *sào* as payment of land tax by coin. If another commune purchases the garden, the tax is 230 *tiền* as payment of land tax by coin. The regulation is stipulated here.
>
> 2. Hereafter, none of the landowners of the residential area shall be allowed to lend to other villages. If a person violates this rule, the punishment will be one pig, one tray of betel nuts, and liquor. The regulation is stipulated here.
>
> 3. If a person permits the lease of a garden to other people in the commune, the contract should be submitted to the village official of our commune, and his name should be recorded in the garden cadastre, and the contract will be transcribed and used as evidence. After that, he/she must pay 1 *quan*, betel nuts, and liquor. If a person makes a bad attempt and falsifies it, it will definitely be a felony.[10]

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9) Of the four garden cadastres photographed by the author, *Thanh Phước A* and *An Thành A* also have something resembling regulations at the beginning, but the text is difficult to read because the documents are not well preserved. *Thanh Phước B* is very well preserved but does not have the regulation part, probably because it is a duplicate copy of *Thanh Phước A*.

10) Original text: 承天府廣田縣安城総安城社員職本社等，會同竊念，道路土園人居，日久不能無彊界之差殊．至茲，一依前代尺寸定規保置，員職同心協力，整度土園高尺寸分，或加或減，原非一已之妄．爲刪修舊簿姓名錢土．或革或因，原非一毫之私意．并及新舊例定，脚註明白．俾長留于世世，永爲不易之成規．若干具編于後．

計

一例定．常年税每高代納錢壹陌參拾文，他社造買土園税代納錢二陌參拾文．茲定例．

一例定．自茲向後，何員名有土園，不得雇賣許他鄉．若何人違例者，則禍猪壹口並美榔酒壹盤．茲定例．

一例定．或何員名，有土園雇賣，許内社人，愬文契，呈與本社職役，著名入簿，再抄文契爲憑．懸于後，簿納例，錢壹貫并美榔酒．若何員人陰謀私寫，必干重罪．茲定例．

As stated in the preamble, *An Thành B* was compiled in 1859 to update the contents of *An Thành A*, compiled in 1796. The first article that follows the preamble most clearly indicates the purpose behind compiling the garden cadastre. Because Article 1 stipulates that the owner of each parcel of land in the residential area pays tax according to the owned area, in the case of the residents of An Thành village, the tax rate is 130 coin/1 *sào*.[11] The tax rate for residents of other villages is 230 coin/1 *sào*. This is the main reason why not only the land area but also the amount of money is recorded for each parcel in both garden cadastres of An Thành. In other words, the garden cadastre was compiled to collect taxes from residents according to the area owned in the residential area. It is probable that the garden cadastre was a kind of tax collection ledger compiled by the commune (*xã* 社). Another point to note is the restriction on landownership for outsiders. In Article 1 the tax rate is set high for outsiders, and Article 2 prohibits future sales of land to outsiders. *An Thành A*, which is difficult to read due to missing characters, also has tax regulations for village members at 300 *tiền*/1 *sào* and 500 *tiền*/1 *sào* for outsiders.[12] The second article of *An Thành A* is also difficult to read, but it states: "If a person from another commune buys the parcel of land in our commune and builds a house, . . . [missing some characters] . . . must not record it with the land cadastre of another commune (如有他社人造買在本社地分内土, 而結立家居 . . . 不得著入他社簿)."

It is presumed that the reason for preventing land purchase by an outsider was to avoid disputes caused by the purchased land being registered as the land of the other village.[13]

However, if the main purpose of the garden cadastre was to collect taxes from the

11) To avoid confusion, *An Thành B* surveyed each parcel of land by the same measure scale as *An Thành A* compiled in 1796, without using the Nguyễn Dynasty's measure scale of 1859. Thus, on the last page of *An Thành B*, a straight line of 26 cm is drawn with the annotation "Measure scale for garden. 5 tấc (土園尺．由五寸)." Based on this, units of measure are calculated as follows.
Unit of length: 1 *sào* 高 = 780 cm, 1 *thước* 尺 = 52 cm, 1 *tấc* 寸 = 5.2 cm.
Unit of land area: 1 *mẫu* 畝 = 6,105 m^2, 1 *sào* 高 = 610.5 m^2, 1 *thước* 尺 = 40.7 m^2, 1 *tấc* 寸 = 4.07 m^2.
These units of measure are presumed to be from the Nguyễn Lords period (Ueda 2021b).

12) Compared to 1859, the tax amount in 1796 appears to be very high. This is probably due to differences in coins. According to Taga Yoshihiro's study (2018, 7–11), zinc coins were the common currency for small purchases since the eighteenth century in central Vietnam. The tax amount in 1796 presupposed the use of zinc coins. After that, the Nguyễn Dynasty distributed several types of copper coins from the 1830s, and both zinc and copper coins were used in mid-nineteenth-century central Vietnam. In the edict of 1858, one small copper coin was valued at three zinc coins and one large copper coin was valued at four zinc coins. It is probable that the tax amount in 1859 presupposed the use of copper coins.

13) This description is interesting as an indication of the concept of ownership at the time. It is obvious that in modern times, administrative right and landownership are separate. However, it seems that common people in the premodern period did not make a clear distinction between them. This may be one of the reasons for closed village communities.

owner of the garden, a new question arises. As mentioned above, in the land cadastre of the Nguyễn Dynasty, the description of a residential area is very simple, because the residential area is tax-exempt. Why was such a tax collected in Thanh Phước and An Thành villages? Was it not a legitimate tax but a kind of "village membership fee" that each village collected voluntarily? To clarify these questions, we look at the land cadastres from the Nguyễn Lords period to the Nguyễn Dynasty period and observe that the two villages had a common feature regarding the legal treatment of residential areas in the national land system.

At first glance, in the case of Thanh Phước village—whose land cadastres from 1669 to 1814 still exist (Ueda 2019, 298–305)—we make a strange observation. In the land cadastres from the Nguyễn Lords and Tây Sơn periods, all of Thanh Phước's village territories are recorded as public rice fields (*công điền* 公田) or official land (*Quan thổ* 官土). If this registration is accepted as the truth, it means that there were no residential areas in Thanh Phước village, only agricultural lands, which is obviously unlikely. Probably, the parcel called "Viên Trạch xứ 園宅處" (meaning "parcel of garden and house," 37 *mẫu* 1 *sào*), which was registered as official land, was actually a residential area.[14] That is, in the case of Thanh Phước, from the Nguyễn Lords period to the Tây Sơn period, its residential area was registered as taxable "official land" under the land system, and thus the village had to collect money from the residents in some way to pay the land tax. This was the reason behind compiling the garden cadastre. However, "Viên Trạch xứ" was removed from the land cadastre of the Gia Long era in 1814; instead, a new description appeared as follows: "the former constructed area consisting of garden, house, village communal hall, market, shrine, and pond is taxed as rice field. 34 *mẫu* 4 *sào* 3 *tước* 3 *tấc*." This means that even though residential areas were not taxable under the Nguyễn Dynasty tax system, land tax was still collected because the residential area of Thanh Phước was classified as "rice field" under the tax system. In other words, the tax system of the Nguyễn Lords was virtually inherited by the local administration of the Nguyễn Dynasty, who disregarded the tax system laid down by the Nguyễn Dynasty's central court.

The residential area of An Thành village is also similar to that of Thanh Phước village. There is no residential area in the land cadastre of An Thành compiled in 1731 (An Thành-Đình40), which still exists in the village communal hall. However, two official lands of "Thượng Thôn xứ 上村處" and "Hạ Thôn xứ 下村處" (meaning "parcel of the upper village" and "parcel of the lower village"; total area about 12 *mẫu*) were registered.

14) This residential area is called *phe Đông* in the present Thanh Phước. New residential areas made in the first half of the nineteenth century are called *phe Tây* (Ueda 2021b, 6–10). The registered areas in *Thanh Phước A* and *Thanh Phước B* do not include new residential areas.

Probably, these parcels were residential areas. In the land cadastre of the Gia Long era in 1814 (An Thành-Đình36), instead of those parcels of land disappearing, there is a new description and note: "Public land 14 *mẫu* 8 *sào* 5 *tước* 4 *tấc*. (Note: Taxed from Tân Mùi year [1811?]. This commune has been building gardens and houses for some time)." Thus, even though the two parcels "Thượng Thôn xứ" and "Hạ Thôn xứ" had been residential areas since the Nguyễn Lords period, they were not tax-exempt "residential areas" under the land system, and the taxation for residential areas was transferred to the Nguyễn Dynasty.

Therefore, in the case of Thanh Phước and An Thành villages, the residential area was subject to taxation during the Nguyễn Lords period, and this was passed down even after the Nguyễn Dynasty was established. Thus, in both villages it was necessary to compile a detailed cadastre of residential areas in order to collect taxes from residents. As a result, the creation of garden cadastres and their updates continued long after the nineteenth century. Normally, the taxes of rice fields and plowed fields were paid in the form of products of those fields; however, in the case of these two villages, as they were actually places of residence, tax was paid in the form of money. Therefore, unlike the land cadastre, the garden cadastre is a semi-official document independently created by the commune (*xã*), which was the tail end of the administrative organization, to meet the demands of the state. This is why the format and description are slightly different for each village.

II Analysis by Personal Pronouns

II-1 *Household Size in Thanh Phước Village*

The average household size will be defined as a basis for analyzing family structure using the garden cadastres. The garden cadastres of Thanh Phước village are useful in this analysis. During the period of study, Thanh Phước village had two garden cadastres; however, *Thanh Phước A* is not very well preserved—about one-fifth of the total information is missing as the pages were eaten by moths. *Thanh Phước B* is a transcription of *Thanh Phước A*, but because *Thanh Phước B* is almost identical to the remaining part of *Thanh Phước A*, we can trust its description.[15)]

In *Thanh Phước B* the residential area is subdivided into 289 parcels of land, and each is recorded with its owner and area. What is important and advantageous while

15) *Thanh Phước A* has many notes for each parcel of land due to transactions. However, only the original text is transcribed in *Thanh Phước B*, and the notes are ignored. It seems that *Thanh Phước A* was used for updating information and *Thanh Phước B* for saving the original text.

considering family structure is that these parcels of land are classified into *viên thổ* 園土 (garden) and *viên cư* 園居 (garden with house). When the utilizations of the parcels of land are arranged according to the descriptions in *Thanh Phước B*, "garden with house" accounts for just 100 parcels.[16] That is, as of 1772, there were 100 houses in the residential area of Thanh Phước. Meanwhile, per the census registers in 1786 (ĐTP45), the oldest population registration in Thanh Phước village recorded 162 males aged over 20, and the census registration in 1793 recorded 201 males (including 48 males aged 17 to 19). Judging from these censuses, it is estimated that Thanh Phước village at the end of the eighteenth century had around 160 adult males. Assuming that there was no significant change in the number of houses and population in the village between 1772 and 1786, we can presume that each house had about 1.6 adult males on average. Vietnamese premodern census registrations recorded only males who were subject to taxation and conscription, and no females were recorded at all. Therefore, if the village had roughly the same number of adult females, each house had about 3.2 adults on average. In other words, there were only three to four adults in each house, and it is not possible to assume a large household size. The typical household composition assumed from this figure consists of parents, one or two grandparents (grandfather/grandmother), and minor children. In the case of slightly older families, the household was made up of parents, one adult son/daughter, and minor children. That is, the general household in late-eighteenth-century Thanh Phước was a nuclear or lineal family. When a child came of age, he/she formed an independent household due to marriage and was separated from the parents' household. At the very least, a large family system in which the patriarch had strong power is hard to imagine from these figures.

II-2 *Classification by Personal Pronouns*

As mentioned in the previous section, the owners of each parcel of land in the garden cadastres of the eighteenth century were recorded by the colloquial notation of "personal pronoun + personal name" rather than the official family name and given name. More than one hundred landowners are recorded in the garden cadastre with various personal

16) At the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, there was probably only one dwelling in each parcel. In the case of household division in northern Vietnam researched by Suenari (1998, 241–243), the dwelling for a son's household was built on the site of the parents' house, and the land was eventually divided into two parts. On the other hand, in the garden cadastre of An Thành, there is little evidence of fragmentation of land parcels associated with the division of households from the end of the eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, there was a trend toward the division of lots and parcels, probably due to the division of households. From the second half of the nineteenth century, we can see a trend toward land division and subdivision due to household division.

pronouns. Most of the Vietnamese personal pronouns are derived from the words used to indicate relationships between members of a family. For example, *ông* (meaning "grandfather") is used as the personal pronoun for a man who is considerably older than the speaker, and *chú* (meaning "younger brother of father/mother") is used as the personal pronoun for a man who is considerably older than the speaker but younger than the speaker's father.

However, in Vietnamese the personal pronoun is variable due to the relative age relationship and hierarchical relationship between speakers. For example, if an eighty-year-old man and a 75-year-old man are having a conversation, the older man can call the younger one *em*, which means "younger brother/sister." Therefore, the personal pronoun and the actual age do not always match. According to such rules of grammar, if the editor of the garden cadastre was a very young person, most of the landowners would be recorded by the personal pronoun for elder people; and conversely, if the editor of the garden cadastre was an aged person, most of the landowners would be recorded by the personal pronoun for younger people.

Although the garden cadastre was not an official document of the Nguyễn Dynasty like the land cadastre, it was a public document used by the village to collect land taxes from residents. Probably, the use of personal pronouns, which could change greatly depending on the personal relationship between the editor and the landowner, was not common. Rather, it is assumed that the use of personal pronouns in the garden cadastre was determined according to the relationship between the village and the landowner, or by the social status of the landowner in the village. Even in modern Vietnamese, personal pronouns are often determined by hierarchical relationships and social status, regardless of age—for example, the boss at work is called *anh*/*chị*, which means "elder brother/sister." Unfortunately, there is no description in the garden cadastre of an objective standard for the use of personal pronouns. We have to rely on analogies from the modern Vietnamese language for many of these usages. Table 2 summarizes the usage of each personal pronoun and the landownership of each personal pronoun group in Thanh Phước and An Thành.[17)]

II-3 *Men's Landownership*

We can understand the cycle of land acquisition and dissolution in the village to some extent by examining each generation. According to Table 2, basically, the owned area

17) Regarding the statistics of Thanh Phước, about one-fifth of the information in *Thanh Phước A* is missing; hence, it was created based on the duplicated *Thanh Phước B*. Furthermore, the last few pages of *An Thành A* are also missing; therefore, it is hard to say that the statistics of An Thành are very accurate. The information lost due to the omission is probably about 15 percent of the total.

Table 2 Landownership by Gender and Generation in the Late Eighteenth Century

◆ Thanh Phước Village

Category		Personal Pronoun	Number of Persons	Average Area (m^2) (Viên thổ + Viên cư)	House Ownership	Remarks
Men	Aged	翁 (Ông), 博 (Bác)	5	2,521.1	80%	
		老 (Lão)	12	1,796.8	100%	1 person owns two houses.
	Middle-aged	吒 (Cha)	8	702.4	50%	
		注 (Chú)	41	2,081.8	76%	4 persons own two houses. 10 persons do not own a house.
	Youths	尚 (Thằng)	16	1,027.9	44%	9 persons do not own a house.
	Officials	員 (Viên)	15	1,285.5	87%	2 persons do not own a house.
Women	Aged–middle-aged	媒 (Mụ)	21	1,012.7	81%	1 person owns two houses. 4 persons do not own a house.
	Youths	昆 (Con)	1	2,226.0	100%	
Others	Co-owned	媒 and 尚	1 pair	1,866.5	0%	Common ownership by mother and son?
	Common facility	俚在 (Lái tại), 圖家 (Đồ gia)	–	541.4	–	
Deceased persons	Deceased men	前首 (Tiền thủ), 前老 (Tiền lão), 前教 (Tiền giáo), 前錄 (Tiền lục)	5	1,452.0	60%	
	Deceased women	前媒 (Tiền mụ)	2	1,280.7	100%	

Source: *Thanh Phước B* [ĐTP70].
Notes: Conversion rate: 1 mẫu = 6,105 m^2 1 sào = 610.5 m^2 1 thước = 40.7 m^2 1 tấc = 4.07 m^2

◆ An Thành Village

Category		Personal Pronoun	Number of Persons	Average Area (m²)
Men	Aged	翁 (Ông), 博 (Bác)	0	–
		老 (Lão)	5	981.7
	Middle-aged	吒 (Cha)	2	755.5
		注 (Chú)	16	764.8
	Youths	尚 (Thằng)	3	413.4
	Officials	社政 (Xã chính), 訓導 (Huấn đạo), 護軍 (Hộ quân), 該 (Cai), etc.	11	912.0
Women	Aged–middle-aged	媒 (Mụ)	5	817.1
	Youths	昆 (Con)	0	–
Others	Co-owned	媒 (Mụ) and 尚 (Thằng), 父 (Bố) and 媒 (Mụ)	2 pairs	581.8
Deceased men	Aged	前老 (Tiền lão)	21	530.0
	Middle-aged	前吒 (Tiền cha), 前注 (Tiền chú)	8	530.8
	Officials, literati	前訓導 (Tiền Huấn đạo), 前參 (Tiền tham), 前教 (Tiền giáo), 前該 (Tiền cai), etc.	9	597.0
Deceased women		前媒 (Tiền mụ)	2	426.2

Source: *An Thành A* [An Thành-Đình làng56].
Notes: Conversion rate: 1 mẫu = 6,105 m² 1 sào = 610.5 m² 1 thước = 40.7 m² 1 tấc = 4.07 m²

* Based on the current usage of personal pronouns, the following are generally assumed:

Ông: Man around 70 years old
Bác: Man around 60 years old
Lão: Man around 50 years old
Chú: Man around 40 years old
Thằng: Man over 20 years old–Man around 30 years old
Mụ: Woman over 30 years old
Con: Woman around 20 years old
Tiền: The deceased person

However, in the case of young people, there is a possibility that their identification has been changed due to being married or unmarried.

* See note 8 for why deceased persons are registered as landowners.

per person tends to gradually increase from the young to the elderly in both Thanh Phước and An Thành villages. The average owned area in Thanh Phước and An Thành is nearly twice as large, because the garden cadastre of Thanh Phước was not only a registered residential area called Nội viên thổ 内園土 ("Inner garden"), where "garden" and "garden with house" were mixed, but also was registered as an upland field called Ngoài viên thổ 外園土 ("Outer garden"), which was located along the Hương River, north of the settlement. The per capita owned area in the residential area called "Inner garden" is not very different from that of An Thành village.

Furthermore, in both villages the number of people in the "Cha" group, which supposedly refers to men aged between forty and fifty years, is much smaller than that of the "Lão" and "Chú" groups. This is probably because many of the official groups comprised men between the ages of forty and fifty. In the case of Thanh Phước village, many people who belong to the official group use the personal pronoun *Viên*, and in the case of An Thành, official titles are used instead of personal pronouns, although it is assumed that they actually refer to the same individual.[18] In the administrative documents of Thanh Phước during the Nguyễn Lords and Tây Sơn periods, village officials are often referred to as *Viên chức* 員職. In the Nguyễn Lords period, tax collectors with various names were abundant as government posts were on sale, and they were collectively called *Giám tô viên* 監租員. However, in the first half of the eighteenth century tax collectors were so numerous that their number was regulated according to the population of each administrative unit.[19] Probably, the "Official" groups in Thanh Phước and An Thành villages (Table 2) of the eighteenth century made up a terminal organization for tax collection, and in reality its members were wealthy peasants in charge of tax collection in the village.

We may infer the family cycle at that time to some extent from the garden books of both villages. In both villages, the areas owned by the elderly group were the largest; the area owned by Thanh Phước's Ông/Bác group was particularly large. However, there was a large disparity in the owned area between the five people in the group. Three men—Ông thủ Hiến 翁首憲 (six parcels of land, total 5,688.3 m^2), Ông Lam 翁藍 (four parcels of land, total 3,074.4 m^2), and Ông giáo Uyên 翁教淵 (four parcels of land, total 2,751.2 m^2)—owned a fairly large area. The area owned by the two remaining men—Ông thủ Công Điển 翁首公典 (one parcel of land, 537.3 m^2) and Bác cai Phù 博該扶 (one parcel of land, 509 m^2)—was extremely small. We can assume that Công Điển and Phù

18) Unlike An Thành village, the area owned by the Viên group in Thanh Phước village was smaller than that owned by the Chú and Lão groups. This was mainly because the members of the Viên group owned very little "Outer garden." These people might have been less active in growing vegetables and fruit in the upland field because of their extra income.

19) *Đại Nam thực lục* [Veritable records of the great South], Vol. 1, pp. 126–127 (Tokyo: Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, Keio University, 1961).

kept only what was essential for their existence and passed on the rest to their children during their lifetime.[20] As a result, there was a large disparity depending on whether the person was retired or still in the Ông/Bác group. Nevertheless, the Thằng group clearly owned a small area in both villages. They were a relatively new household that had become independent from an elderly household through property division and had not yet accumulated sufficient property. However, as the number of families increased, they purchased new parcels of land and gradually increased their holdings, forming a middle-aged group called Chú.

As mentioned above, *Thanh Phước B* records each parcel of land by classifying it into "garden" or "garden with house," and we can see that villagers' property normally comprised a parcel of a garden with a house and other parcels of garden. However, according to *Thanh Phước B*, there were a certain number of people who owned only gardens but no houses in the village. For instance, the Chú group included ten people who owned only a garden but no house. On the other hand, four members of Thanh Phước's Chú group owned two houses. This was an unusual pattern of land possession not seen in other groups in Thanh Phước village.

II-4 *Women's Landownership*

As seen in Table 2, there is a clear economic disparity between men and women in both communities. In the case of Thanh Phước, women's ownership is clearly lower than men's, and the average area of the Mụ group is almost identical to that of the Thằng group. Moreover, in the case of Thanh Phước the number of listed people is 97 men and 22 women, whereas in the case of An Thành the number of listed people is 37 men and 5 women (excluding those in the "Other" category). Assuming that the actual male and female populations in the villages were almost equal suggests that most women did not own any real estate in the residential area, and the women listed in Table 2 must have belonged to a relatively affluent hierarchy within the village. Assuming that there were many women who were not registered in the garden cadastre, we can assume that the actual economic gender gap was much larger than the data in Table 2. However, from the viewpoint of family structure, of particular note is the high homeownership rate for women. This suggests that, as compared to men, women's real estate ownership was more likely to be concentrated in the house than in the garden. What makes this fact even more unique is that, as mentioned in the introduction, the kinship group currently called *dòng họ* is a patrilineal kinship group based on patrilocal residence. If it was common for a wife to live in her husband's house, why did a woman need to own her house?

20) In the case of inheritance while living, it was normal to leave part of the property as self-reserved land (Dưỡng lão điền 養老田) for the life of the parents. See Ueda (2019, 268).

In addition, who lived in that house?

The first possibility we should consider is that there may have been a certain number of matrilocal residences in late-eighteenth-century Thanh Phước village. A detailed examination of the land registration in the garden cadastre reveals some traces of matrilocal residence. To understand this, it is necessary to explain the common name in Vietnamese. As mentioned earlier, in daily life people often call each other by the "personal pronoun + personal name." However, in reality, not only the personal pronoun but also the personal name changes. For example, when there is an elderly couple A (male) and B (female), the wife may sometimes be referred to as *bà A* using her husband's given name. If we translate this term into English, it means "Mr. A's old woman."[21] Even in *Thanh Phước B*, which was strongly influenced by colloquial Vietnamese, such common names were adopted mainly by relatively elderly couples. For example, *Thanh Phước B* records two men named Tiền thủ Duyệt 前首悅[22] and Ông giáo Uyên 翁教淵. Correspondingly, there are records of two women named Mụ thủ Duyệt 媒首悅 and Mụ giáo Uyên 媒教淵. Personal pronouns such as *thủ* 首 and *giáo* 教 were used by only a very limited number of people in Thanh Phước, so it is unlikely that the given names matched by chance. It can be considered that the couples Tiền thủ Duyệt and Mụ thủ Duyệt, and Ông giáo Uyên and Mụ giáo Uyên, were almost certainly in a marital relationship. Thus, there are seven pairs who can be inferred to be married couples in *Thanh Phước B*. Table 3 shows details of these couples.

In three of the seven couples in Table 3 (No. 2, No. 5, and No. 7), there was a high likelihood of matrilocal residency because the husbands owned several parcels of "garden" but did not own a "garden with house." Each of their wives owned a parcel of "garden with house." In other words, the couple owned one house, and the owner of that house was the wife. It is natural to think that they had a matrilocal marriage. In the case of Thanh Phước village, only seven pairs are clearly presumed to have a marital relationship. However, if three of the seven couples were in matrilocal residences, then a few of the female-owned houses also should be suspected of having a matrilocal couple living in them.

However, such matrilocal residence cannot adequately explain a woman's ownership of a house. This is because, as depicted in Table 3, there are many cases where one person owns multiple houses—as in the case of Lão Tài. Table 3 also suggests that in many situations, such as the No. 1, No. 4, and No. 6 couples, a couple owned multiple houses. These cases demonstrate that female homeownership cannot be explained completely by matrilocal residence alone. As mentioned earlier, the average household

21) See note 7.

22) As of 1772, Tiền thủ Duyệt had already died and his parcel been inherited by his offspring. "Tiền 前" was used for deceased persons. See note 8.

Table 3 Landownership Status of Each Couple in Thanh Phước Village

Couple No.	Landowner	Details of Parcel	Area			Area (m^2)	Total Area (m^2)
			Sào	Thước	Tấc		
1	□ Tiền thủ **Duyệt** (前首悦)	Garden with house. Near Tiền lục Doãn.	1	12	0	1,090.8	3,090.6
		Illegible	1	0	7	634.3	
		No data	2	3	8	1,365.5	
	○ Mụ thủ **Duyệt** (媒首悦)	Garden with house. Near avenue.	1	5	4	824.2	824.2
2	□ Ông giáo **Uyên** (翁教淵)	Garden. Near mụ Các.	1	4	2	775.7	2,751.2
		Outer garden. Near thằng Phô.	1	2	8	719.1	
		Outer garden. Near thằng Xuyên.	1	0	1	610.0	
		Outer garden. Near chú Lễ.	1	1	0	646.4	
	○ Mụ giáo **Uyên** (媒教淵)	Garden with house. Near avenue.	0	12	4	501.0	501.0
3	□ Lão **Tài** (老才)	Garden with house. Near thằng Tế.	1	6	0	848.4	1,535.2
		Garden with house. Near chú Tuấn.	1	2	0	686.8	
	○ Mụ **Tài** (媒才)	Garden. Near viên Ước.	0	14	1	569.6	569.6
4	□ Chú biện **Trung** (注卞忠)	Garden with house. Near chú Nhiệm.	0	9	5	383.8	3,385.5
		No data	4	14	3	3,001.7	
	○ Tiến mụ **Trung** (前媒忠)	Garden with house. Near mụ Chu.	0	8	7	351.5	351.5
5	□ Chú **Các** (注各)	Outer garden. Near lão Cố.	1	14	4	1,187.8	2,997.7
		Outer garden. Near Hallowed Pond.	1	5	8	840.3	
		Outer garden.	1	9	0	969.6	
	○ Mụ **Các** (媒各)	Garden with house. Near mụ Dư.	0	12	5	505.0	1,191.8
		Outer garden. Near alley of chú Thích.	1	2	0	686.8	
6	□ Chú **Toản** (注纘)	Outer garden. Near thằng Nhiêu.	1	6	9	884.8	1,369.6
		Garden with house. Near mụ Toàn.	0	12	0	484.8	
	○ Mụ **Toản** (媒纘)	Garden with house. Near avenue.	0	8	7	351.5	351.5
7	□ Chú **Doãn** (注允)	No data	0	11	6	468.6	468.6
	○ Mụ **Doãn** (媒允)	Garden with house. Near market.	1	4	3	779.7	1,692.8
		Outer garden.	1	7	6	913.0	

Source: *Thanh Phước B* [ĐTP70].
Notes: □: Male ○: Female Gray: Garden with house
Conversion rate: 1 mẫu = 6,105 m^2 1 sào = 610.5 m^2 1 thước = 40.7 m^2 1 tấc = 4.07 m^2

size in Thanh Phước was not very large; and it is presumed that adult children lived separately from their parents' households, establishing their own households at a relatively early stage. When a newlywed couple did not have sufficient financial resources, they most likely constructed and lived in their new dwelling on the land of the husband's or wife's parents. As the children's households built on the land of their parents were registered in the name of their parents, many aged/middle-aged couples owned multiple houses. Consequently, the house ownership ratio of young couples was reduced in the garden cadastre. Assuming this, it is possible to explain the homeownership rate and household size in the garden cadastre of Thanh Phước without contradiction.

III Property Inheritance in An Thành Village

III-1 *Garden Cadastre of An Thành and Family Genealogy of Trần Viết Lineage*

As previously stated, An Thành village has two garden cadastres: *An Thành A*, written by someone with the personal pronoun chữ Nôm in 1796; and *An Thành B*, written by someone with a full name made up of Chinese characters in 1859. Neither of the garden cadastres distinguishes between "garden with house" and "garden," and we cannot examine homeownership as in the case of Thanh Phước village. However, An Thành's garden cadastres have two major merits for us. First, An Thành village has two editions of the garden cadastre, one compiled in 1796 and the other in 1859, allowing us to trace the transition of landownership over a long period of time. Second, the Trần Viết lineage 陳曰族 living in An Thành village has a detailed family genealogy through which we can compare the landowner recorded in the garden cadastres with the person recorded in the family genealogy. This makes it possible to infer to some extent what kind of property inheritance took place within the lineage.[23)]

Table 4 is a genealogical tree based on the family genealogy of the Trần Viết lineage. As established from this, there is extremely scarce information on the generations before Trần Viết An 陳曰安. The given names from the founder to the fifth generation are unknown, and all of them just add the honorific title *đại lang* 大郎 to the family name Trần 陳. The sixth generation has only the common nickname Nghiễn 硯, and this indi-

23) The Trần Việt lineage at present has three editions of the family genealogy: untitled family genealogy (*An Thành-Trần Việt 4*) (compiled in 1870), 陳族譜系 *Trần tộc Phả hệ* (Family genealogy of Trần lineage) (*An Thành-Trần Việt 3*) (compiled in 1928), and 陳族譜系(正本) *Trần tộc phả hệ (chính bản)* (Family genealogy of Trần lineage [original edition]) (*An Thành-Trần Việt 5*) (compiled in 1928). The first family genealogy compiled in 1870 (*An Thành-Trần Việt 4*) was updated until 1928. In this article, the family genealogy of *An Thành-Trần Việt 4*, in which the compilation age is close to that of the garden cadastre, is used as the basic material.

vidual's official given name is unknown. Subsequently, the full names of 24 individuals are enumerated in the family genealogy without noting their mutual genealogy. It is presumed that the individuals belong to four or five generations, though we cannot ascertain any details. In other words, by the time this genealogy was compiled in 1870, the details of people before Trần Viết An were already unknown.[24)]

As for the generations after Trần Viết An, the years of birth and death are recorded for some people. From these figures, assuming that one generation spans 25 to 30 years, it is estimated that Trần Viết An lived around the last half of the seventeenth century. Trần Viết Nghi 陳曰儀, the grandson of Trần Viết An, had as many as 11 sons, and the Trần Viết lineage is divided roughly into three branches comprising the second son Trần Viết Tô 陳曰蘇, the eighth son Trần Viết Giao 陳曰膠, and the 11th son Trần Viết Hà 陳曰何. In the family genealogy, all the descendants of Trần Viết Hà have the middle name (*tên đệm*) Viết 曰; but in reality they all seem to be the same in the garden cadastre using the middle name Đức 德, as mentioned below. Furthermore, according to *An Thành B*, there were other lineages in An Thành village with the same family name (but different *tên đệm*), such as Trần Được 陳得 and Trần Văn 陳文. However, the blood relationship between the Trần Viết lineage and these same family-name lineages is unknown because the latter do not appear in the family genealogy of the Trần Viết lineage. It is presumed that the Trần Được and Trần Văn lineages were branches of the Trần Viết lineage before the generations of Trần Viết An in the sixteenth century.

Table 4 illustrates that the An Thành village of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had the typical high birth and death rates. For example, Trần Viết Giao 陳曰膠, a fourth-generation man from Trần Viết An, had four sons (and six daughters) from his first and second wives, but only one son got married and left a grandson. The other three sons probably died prematurely, because the family genealogy gives no description of their wives or children. Similarly, Trần Viết Nho 陳曰儒, a fifth-generation descendant of Trần Viết An, had 13 sons (and six daughters) from four women: his first and second wives, and two concubines. However, only five sons got married and left grandsons.[25)] For the sons who died early without leaving any offspring, the age of death is unknown

24) It seems that the names of the ancestors up to the fifth generation, which are necessary for ancestral rites, are listed as "Trần đại lang 陳大郎." On the other hand, there are many descriptions of the generation close to the editor. Suenari (1998, 307–308) refers to this type of family genealogy as "hollow-structured family genealogy."

25) In the family genealogy of the Trần Viết lineage, most men had more sons than daughters. Although there is no clear evidence, it is likely that gender selection of infants took place after birth. An imbalance of the male-female population ratio due to such gender selection generated a large number of males who lacked marriage opportunities. Perhaps the search for new lands in the south by these people encouraged the *Nam Tiến* (southward advance) of Kinh people in early modern Vietnam.

because only the date of death is recorded. However, at the time there was only a 25 percent to 50 percent probability that a son would marry and leave a grandson; that is, if a man wanted to ensure male descendants, he would need to have at least three or four sons. If there were about the same number of daughters as sons, three or four sons and three or four daughters would be the standard number of children at the time. As it was difficult for a single woman to give birth to this many children, polygamy was very common in the village. In fact, the family genealogy has recorded many cases that are presumed to be divorce due to sterility and remarriage due to maternal mortality. Trần Viết's lineage consisted of members who were not particularly wealthy but became influential bureaucrats and literati. Most men in the lineage had wives and a few concubines.

However, because the average number of adults per house in the previous section was three to four people, we cannot presume a large household. It is probable that the ownership of numerous houses by men or couples, and the ownership of houses by women, were due to the fact that each wife/concubine and child owned their own house depending on the polygamy scenario. In the case of landed gentry during the early twentieth century in northern Vietnam, each wife and concubine owned her own home (Luong 1989, 748–755). Probably, Thanh Phước and An Thành had many separate households for women similar to Luong's case study of the landed gentry.

III-2 *Inheritance in An Thành Village*

Polygamy, as stated earlier, is likely to have resulted in several separate establishments for concubines and mistresses in An Thành village. What implications did this have for property inheritance? The best way to understand the situation is by looking at the inheritance of property in the generations from Trần Viết Tô 陳曰蘇 to his grandchildren in Table 4. The time span of these generations ranges from the end of the eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth, when *An Thành A* and *An Thành B* were compiled. Therefore, we can easily trace the family property inheritance by comparing the garden cadastre of An Thành with the family genealogy of the Trần Viết lineage. For example, according to *An Thành A*, the 70th parcel of land was owned by a person called Xã chính Diệu 社政曜 in 1796. This is the same person as Trần Viết Nghi 陳曰儀 in Table 4, because according to the family genealogy of the Trần Viết lineage, Trần Viết Nghi had another name: Diệu 曜. After that, in *An Thành B*, compiled in 1859, the same parcel of land was written as "Trần Viết Hân 陳曰欣 inherited by the late secretary Trần Viết Tô 陳曰蘇."[26] According to the family tree of the Trần Viết lineage, Trần Viết Hân

26) Original text: 前守簿陳曰蘇留来陳曰欣. A "Thủ bộ 守簿" was a kind of secretary who managed the official documents and public funds of the village. When adding a note to update information in the garden cadastre, the village secretary called "Thủ bộ 守簿" always signed in confirmation.

was a grandson of Trần Viết Tô. Thus, from the end of the eighteenth century to the first half of the nineteenth, it can be observed that this parcel of land was passed down through the male bloodline from Trần Viết Nghi to Trần Viết Hân. Table 5 summarizes the land inheritance from Trần Viết Nghi to his great-grandchildren based on the two garden cadastres of An Thành.

According to Table 5, Trần Viết Nghi owned three parcels of land in 1796, two of which were inherited by his second son, Trần Viết Tô (ostensibly the eldest surviving son, because the eldest son had passed away early). It is unknown what happened next, but the remaining parcel was owned by a man named Trần Được Chính 陳得正 in 1859.[27] Among the sons of Trần Viết Nghi, the eighth son, Trần Viết Giao 陳文膠, tenth son, Trần Viết Hạc 陳曰鶴, and 11th son, Trần Viết Hà 陳曰何, also left offspring; however, no trace of them can be found in the garden cadastre.[28] Trần Viết Tô bought six parcels of land in addition to the property inherited from his father. According to the family genealogy, Trần Viết Tô had at least four sons, but three of them died young. As a result, it is presumed that all his parcels of land were inherited by his second son, Trần Viết Nho. Trần Viết Nho had 13 sons and six daughters from his former wife 元配, second wife 再配, concubine 側室, and mistress 小妾. Of his children, the fourth son, Trần Viết Lương 陳曰良, fifth son, Trần Viết Long 陳曰隆, sixth son, Trần Viết Hân, seventh son, Trần Viết Hoan 陳曰歡, eighth son, Trần Viết Gian 陳曰閒, and 13th son, Trần Viết Cẩn 陳曰謹, grew to adulthood and left male descendants. Of these six sons of Trần Viết Nho, the five other than Trần Viết Hoan are listed in *An Thanh B*. In terms of the boys' inheritance, their father, Trần Viết Nho, gave preferential treatment to the eldest son of his former wife, divided the share of inheritance evenly among the sons of his second wife, and gave the son of his mistress about half the inheritance of the sons of the second wife.[29]

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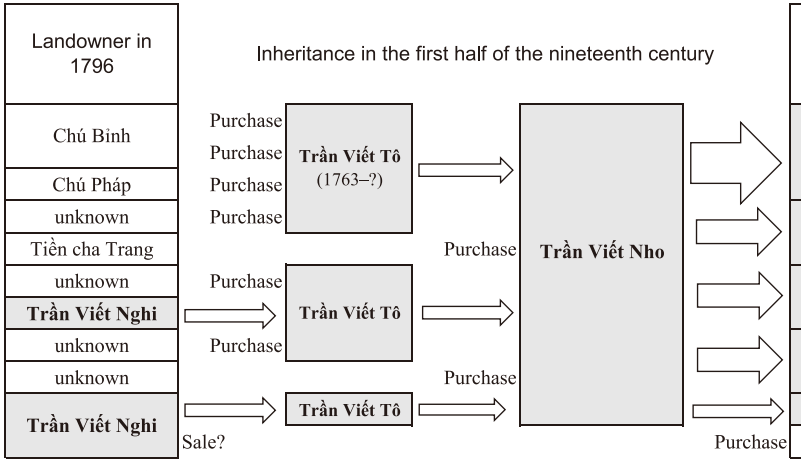
27) In *An Thành B*, Trần Được Chính was given the cognomen "gentry 鄉紳" and owned a vast quantity of land (ten parcels, 6,183 m^2). His father, Trần Được Gia 陳得嘉, who was a low-ranking military officer, also owned a considerable amount of land, and most of the land owned by him was inherited by Trần Được Chính. The Trần Được lineage is presumed to be a branch separated from the Trần Viết lineage before the seventeenth century, but further details are unknown.

28) According to *An Thành A* and *An Thành B*, the Trần lineage had two common pieces of land in the residential area. It is presumed that these parcels of land were purchased by Trần Viết An 陳曰安 and Trần Viết Xoá 陳曰刷 from the latter half of the sixteenth century to the first half of the seventeenth. Sons other than Trần Viết Tô might have lived in these parcels.

29) It is a difficult issue whether to consider such divisions of property because of discrimination based on age or the status of the mother. However, in reality, there was no big difference in the results according to either principle. As far as Table 4 is concerned, after the legal wife gave birth to several children, a concubine was set up, followed by another concubine. As a result, the ages of the children naturally tended to be in the following order: children of the legal wife > children of the concubine > children of the concubine.

Table 5 Land Inheritance of Trần Viết Lineage in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century



Landowner in 1859	Area			Area (m²)	Total area (m²)
	Sào	Thước	Tấc		
Trần Viết Lương (1808–75)	1	3	4	515.2	1,514.8
	1	13	5	798.0	
	0	7	2	201.6	
Trần Viết Long (1812–72)	1	6	4	599.2	1,022.0
	1	0	1	422.8	
Trần Viết Hân	0	7	4	207.2	1,033.2
	1	14	5	826.0	
Trần Viết Gian (1824–?)	1	6	4	599.2	971.6
	0	13	3	372.4	
Trần Viết Cẩn (1839–85)	1	0	3	428.4	428.0
Trần Được Chính	1	11	3	736.4	736.0

Sources: *An Thành A* [An Thành-Đình làng56], *An Thành B* [An Thành-Đình52], [An Thành-Trần Viết 4].
Notes: Gray: Member of Trần Viết lineage ⇨: Inheritance
Conversion rate: 1 mẫu = 6,105 m² 1 sào = 610.5 m² 1 thước = 40.7 m² 1 tấc = 4.07 m²

Polygamy was widely practiced in An Thành village, as mentioned above, to ensure male offspring due to the high birth but high death rates. In many cases, a husband would have as many sons as possible with his legal wife. When it became difficult for the latter to give birth due to her age, the husband would set up concubines to have more sons. As a result, it was not uncommon for a man to have two or three wives and concubines and ten or more children. However, that does not mean everybody lived under one roof. Considering the average household size in Thanh Phước, it may be presumed that each wife/concubine had one house, where she formed a semi-independent household with her own minor children. In fact, *Thanh Phước A* has some cases where a middle-aged man owned two houses, and the parcel of the second house is marked with "Allow Aunt X to live." Probably this meant that his concubine or mistress lived in the secondary house owned by him or his legitimate wife. This assumption may explain to some extent the ownership of multiple houses by middle-aged people and the ownership of a house by a woman.

III-3 *Landownership by Women*

As we saw in the previous sub-section, it was not uncommon for a man to have more than ten children in the Thanh Phước and An Thành of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Naturally, about half the children were female, but there is little evidence that daughters inherited their parents' property in either the family genealogy of Trần Viết or the garden cadastre of An Thành. For example, in the case of *An Thành B*, which describes in detail the history of parcels of land, many parcels were recorded as "Bequeathed from A to B" or "Purchased by A and bequeathed to B" with both the decedent and the heir being men. Most of the lands owned by women were marked only as "Purchased by A." This indicates that, in principle, women were not included as heirs in the inheritance of parents' real estate.[30] However, there are many cases in which women conducted land transactions. In this section, we will introduce some cases of land transactions to clarify landownership by women.

30) In *An Thành A* and *An Thành B*, there are some suspicious cases in which a woman's real estate is inherited by maternal consanguinity or relatives rather than paternal descendants. For example, one parcel in *An Thành B* is explained thus: "The late Nguyễn Thị Thanh purchased and bequeathed to Nguyễn Tất Vãn (前阮氏清造買留来里長阮必挽)." Nguyễn Thị Thanh is obviously a woman's name. As the decedent and the heir have the same family name, it may be inferred that the wife's property was inherited by her relatives rather than her husband's. However, as can be seen in Table 4, the same-surname marriage rule was not strictly adhered to, and even if the surname was the same, marriage was permitted if the branch was different. Therefore, it cannot be determined that the husband and wife had the same family name. Even in Thanh Phước village, the scope of the same-surname marriage rule was narrow (Ueda 2021b, 11–13).

◆ Case 1: No. 6 parcel of land in An Thành village

According to *An Thành B*, No. 6 parcel of land in An Thành village was owned by Trần Đại Điền 陳大田 in 1859. However, in 1877 it was sold by a woman named Đỗ Thị Điền 杜氏田 to a woman named Lê Thị Viện 黎氏院. Subsequently, in 1882, Lê Thị Viện 黎氏院 and her son Lê Văn Khoa 黎文科 resold this land to Phan Văn Thiệp 潘文涉. As mentioned earlier, since it was customary for a woman to be called by her husband's name, Đỗ Thị Điền was probably Trần Đại Điền's wife. It is speculated that Đỗ Thị Điền became a seller because Trần Đại Điền died between 1859 and 1877. Lê Thị Viện bought the land from Đỗ Thị Điền on her own, but the land was resold under the names of Lê Thị Viện and her son five years later.

◆ Case 2: No. 7 parcel of land in An Thành village

According to *An Thành B*, No. 7 parcel of land in An Thành village was purchased by the late Đỗ Thị Nghĩa. However, Đỗ Đăng Sĩ 杜登仕 sold the land to a woman named Nguyễn Thị Mãi 阮氏買 in 1859.[31] The relationship between Đỗ Thị Nghĩa and Đỗ Đăng Sĩ is unknown, but there is a high possibility that they were a parent and child.[32] Nine years later (1868), Nguyễn Thị Mãi alienated the land for a woman named Nguyễn Thị Hám 阮氏憾. In 1872, Nguyễn Thị Hám resold the land to a woman named Thị Vẫn 氏隕 (her family name is unknown) and her son named Trần Văn Bị 陳文備. Nguyễn Thị Mãi is unknown, because there is no historical material, but Nguyễn Thị Hám was the second wife of Trần Việt Hà 陳曰何 (the 11th son of Trần Viết Nghi) in Table 4. His former wife, Nguyễn Thị Tùng 阮氏叢, had given birth to only a son and a daughter; and after that, his second wife, Nguyễn Thị Hám, gave birth to seven sons and five daughters. Since the first wife probably died after giving birth to only two children, Trần Viết Hà remarried Nguyễn Thị Hám. Judging from the phonology, it is presumed that a woman named Thị Vẫn 氏隕 and her son named Trần Văn Bị 陳文備 in *An Thành B* are the very same people: Nguyễn Thị Văn 阮氏橏 (wife of Trần Viết Hà's second son) and Trần Văn Bị 陳曰被 (Trần Viết Hà's legitimate grandson) in Table 4.

The transaction between Nguyễn Thị Hám and Nguyễn Thị Văn involved complex family circumstances. In the family genealogy of the Trần Viết lineage, although Trần Viết Mỹ 陳曰美 (Trần Viết Hà's eldest son) had neither a wife nor a concubine, he had one son named Trần Viết Bị. Instead, Trần Viết Bị is annotated with "Change mother 改母." Presumably, Trần Viết Bị's parents died young for some reason, and he was

31) The original text is "the 3rd year of Tự Đức" (1849). However, this is clearly inconsistent, as *An Thành B* was compiled in 1859. It is probably a clerical error for "the 13th year of Tự Đức" (1859).

32) Since the child's family name is Đỗ, it means that both the father and mother of Đỗ Đăng Sĩ had the same family name, Đỗ. On the same-surname marriage rule in An Thành, see note 30.

brought up by his uncle Trần Viết Kim's wife, Nguyễn Thị Văn. As a result, Trần Viết Bị's position in the Trần Viết Hà branch was subtle because Trần Viết Bị was a direct descendant of Trần Viết Hà in the genealogy. However, he was brought up in the household of his father's stepbrother Trần Viết Kim. Thus, although Trần Viết Bị was a grandson in the direct bloodline of Trần Viết Hà, it was difficult for Trần Viết Kim to give him preferential treatment in the inheritance of property like Trần Viết Nho and his sons in the previous section. Therefore, the grandparents prepared the land for their grandson Trần Viết Bị separately from the land to be inherited by their sons, and the adoptive mother purchased it on the condition that it would be inherited by him after adulthood. This line of thought can easily explain a series of transactions.

◆ Case 3: No. 26 parcel of land in An Thành

As of 1859, No. 26 parcel of land in An Thành was only marked as "purchased by the late Nguyễn Xuân Bế 前阮春閉." Its inhabitants in 1859 are unclear. This parcel was bought in 1866 by a man named Lê Văn Viện 黎文院, and then in 1888 it was sold by three people—"Ngô Thị Hóa 呉氏化 and her sons Lê Khoa 黎科 and Lê Cường 黎強"—to the Trần lineage. It was probably sold by Lê Văn Viện's wife and sons after his death.

◆ Case 4: No. 9 parcel of land in An Thành

As of 1859, No. 9 parcel of land in An Thành was owned by Corporal Trần Đức Bài 伍長陳德排. In 1877, two people—"Thị cai Bài and Trần Đức Phượng 氏該排, 陳德"—sold it to a woman named "Lãnh binh Viện's legal wife 領兵院正室."[33] It may be presumed that Trần Đức Bài and Trần Đức Phượng were the same as Trần Viết Bài 陳曰排 (third son of Trần Viết Hà) and Trần Viết Phượng 陳曰鳳 (eldest son of Trần Viết Bài) in Table 4.[34] "Thị cai Bài" is the same as Hoàng Thị Hợi 黄氏亥 (Trần Viết Bài's second wife).[35] It is supposed that after the death of Trần Đức Bài, his wife and eldest son sold part of his bequest in the name of the mother and child.

◆ Case 5: No. 84 parcel and No. 94 parcel in An Thành village

As of 1859, No. 84 parcel in An Thành village was owned by a man named Đỗ Ngọc Sô

33) Probably, "Lãnh binh Viện's legal wife 領兵院正室" in Case 4 and "Lê Thị Viện 黎氏院" in Case 1 are the same person. Her husband is "Lê Văn Viện 黎文院" in Case 3.

34) In the family genealogy of the Trần Viết lineage, all the men's names are written as "Trần Viết ～～," but in reality it seems that the descendants of Trần Viết Hà formed another branch under the name of "Trần Đức ～～."

35) Her husband, Trần Viết Bài, had the military title of "corporal 伍長." Such low-ranking military positions were often decorated as "*cai quan* 該官." Therefore, "Thị cai Bài" means "wife of a man named Bài."

杜玉芻 and No. 94 parcel by a man named Đỗ Ngọc Tại 杜玉在. However, both of these parcels were sold to Nguyễn Tất Văn 阮必挽 by a woman named Đỗ Thị Lý 杜氏裡 on the same date of the seventh lunar month in 1863. This transaction is a fairly peculiar case because, judging from their family name, it seems that the woman named Đỗ Thị Lý inherited these parcels from two men of the Đỗ Ngọc lineage. With reference to *An Thanh A*, it seems that these parcels were passed down the Đỗ Ngọc lineage for generations as they were purchased by two men named Đỗ Ngọc Thiện 杜玉善 and Đỗ Ngọc Can 杜玉乾 before the eighteenth century. This transaction should be considered not as a sale of Đỗ Thị Lý's personal property, but as a sale of some of the assets of the Đỗ Ngọc lineage on behalf of Đỗ Thị Lý.

There are not many women-only transactions based on the examples of land transactions involving women. In many cases, land purchased in the name of the husband was sold by his wife after his death, or purchased in the name of the mother instead of her minor child. In both cases, the seller's name was often a joint name with a son or grandson rather than a woman's alone. Basically, when a woman became the entity of a land transaction, there were some circumstances in which a man could not become the entity of the transaction. However, such a situation was temporary or transitional, and it disappeared when the male heir became an adult. It is presumed that women's ownership of a house and joint ownership by a woman and a man in the garden cadastre are the results of the registration of such transitional states.

Conclusion

In this article, we examined the family structure based on historical materials called *viện bộ* (garden cadastre) of Thanh Phước and An Thành villages in the northern suburbs of Huế. From those examinations, the general family structure in the rural areas around Huế is inferred to have been a two- or three-generation patrilineal family. In family genealogies, it is not uncommon for one man to have a wife and mistresses along with ten or more children; however, in this case they did not all live under one roof. One of the reasons for this is that sons other than the eldest one were separated from the father's household during their youth due to marriage or other reasons, and they established independent households. Real estate was inherited by sons—with a slight preference given to the eldest son, who inherited ancestral rituals of the lineage; females were not granted the right to inherit their parents' estate.

Although it is impossible to say with certainty since the analysis in this article is based only on residential areas and does not include other forms of real estate such as

rice fields, Thanh Phước and An Thành villagers were patrilineal kinship groups under the influence of Confucianism.[36] However, there remain aspects that cannot be fully explained by Confucianism alone. For example, in Thanh Phước and An Thành villages, concubines and mistresses formed separate households from that of the husband and his wife. It was often the case in the Confucian cultural area that after the death of the husband, his widow became the head of the household because her sons were minors (Washio 2018, 380–382). Especially in the Ming and Qing periods in China, a widow was required to remain chaste and loyal to her husband even after his death, and widow remarriage was severely criticized.[37] It is conceivable that Thanh Phước and An Thành villages also had such widowed households. In addition to such households, concubines and mistresses formed separate households with their own children from the husband's household, and as a result the husband visited his concubine or mistress rather than living with her. In other words, it is assumed that the situation was a "duolocal marriage." If we understand that this situation was a remnant of the matrilineal family structure, as Luong Van Hy (1989) insists, then it makes sense that there were many matrilocal residence marriages in Thanh Phước and An Thành villages.

However, we should be careful not to overemphasize the high social status of women in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Vietnam. An inspection of the garden cadastre shows that women were not granted the right to inherit their parents' property. Furthermore, land transactions by women were conducted mostly when their husbands had died and their sons were still minors. In other words, the status of women as "female heads of household" was basically only transitional, until their sons came of age, and females' property was eventually inherited by the male descendants along the paternal bloodline. If we focus only on the household of the concubine and mistress, it is certainly possible to consider it as a "matrilocal marriage." However, considering the inheritance of property and ancestral rituals, the household clearly belonged to the husband's patrilineal kinship group.

This article only examines the family structure of two villages in the suburbs of Huế.

36) There is no extreme emphasis on the eldest son as seen in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century China and Japan. The influence of the neo-Confucianism of the Song Dynasty, which was based on equal male inheritance, is stronger. If the extreme preferential treatment for the eldest son in inheritance was due to the lack of land to pass on in China and Japan, its lack in Huế may indicate that this region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was not as land starved and labor intensive. For the interaction between land development and the popularization of Confucianism, see Ueda (2021b).

37) In China during the Ming–Qing periods, it was difficult for widows to remarry because they were strictly required to be faithful to their husband even after his death (Gomi 2018, 194–196). However, the neo-Confucianism of the Song period was not necessarily negative toward widow remarriage (Sasaki 2018, 184–187).

Even including the case study of the former Hà Tây Province by the author (Ueda 2021b), it must be said that there are too few cases to reveal the overview of the Kinh family structure and patrilineal kinship groups in the premodern period. More examples will have to be developed in the future. At the very least, what can be said from some case studies is that Vietnamese gender history, for example women's social status and property inheritance (Miyazawa 2016; Tran 2018), is clearly inadequate to elucidate household composition and household division within kinship groups, which are prerequisites for Miyazawa's (2016) and Tran's (2018) analyses. Microanalytical subjects such as household and marriage have not been adequately studied due to archival constraints. However, as seen in this and the author's previous article (Ueda 2021b), it is now possible to examine the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by combining the land registries of the Nguyễn Dynasty period and village documents. Newly discovered village documents will bring about new possibilities and enable the study of new aspects of Vietnamese history.

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How to Frame Hybrid-Syncretic Religious Situations: Based on a Case Study of the Guanyin Cult in Yunnan, China

Nagatani Chiyoko*

This article examines the analytical concepts frequently used to describe the complex situations caused by contact between different cultures and proposes a new framework to describe this reality. Although "syncretism" and "hybridity" have traditionally been the focus of argumentation about cultural mixtures, the majority of arguments choose one or the other term and fail to adequately define these words. Consequently, I will examine several terms and words, including these two, and arrange them into a conceptual framework to analyze the various phenomena that arise during cultural contact.

This case study was conducted in Dehong prefecture in Yunnan province, China, where Theravada Buddhism meets Mahayana Buddhism. Surveying over eighty temples, I describe the four types of religious contact and mixtures that have occurred in Dehong, including "syncretism," "hybridity (in a narrow sense)," "bricolage," and "separative coexistence." The key to this classification involves a greater focus on the insider's subjectivity and an introduction to a continuum between the dichotomy of diversity (hybridity) and unity (syncretism) seen from an observer's perspective. The framework is set by considering the insiders', the outsiders', and the observer's views. Finally, the causes of diversification will be considered with reference to different conditions, including history, topography, and the balance of political power in the place concerned.

Keywords: hybridity, syncretism, bricolage, coexistence, Theravada Buddhism, the Dai (Tai)

I Introduction

This article aims to deepen the understanding of concepts frequently used to describe the complex situations that emerge during contact between different cultures, through

* 長谷千代子, Graduate School of Social and Cultural Studies, Kyushu University, 744 Motooka, Nishi-ku, Fukuoka 819-0395, Japan
e-mail: cnagatani@scs.kyushu-u.ac.jp
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1895-3750

a case study of the religious situation in Dehong Dai[1] and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture (德宏傣族景颇族自治州) in Yunnan Province, China.

Several terms and words, including syncretism, hybridity, and coexistence, have been frequently used to describe the religious situation in Asia. Although it is apparent that in Asian countries there are many religious traditions including Theravada Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism, Taoism, and various kinds of spirit cults, it is difficult to explain how they are related and mixed, how each religious element functions, and how important they are in such relationships. Many scholars have recently recommended that the concept of "hybridity" can be used to answer these questions; however, some scholars prefer the concept of "syncretism" which has a longer history in the analysis of religious mixtures. However, we may not need to choose the better one by disposing of the other but rather clearly define the meaning of each term and properly arrange the compositions between them. In this article, a conceptual framework will be proposed to grasp the Buddhist situation in Dehong, which will hopefully have general validity and be applicable to other cases to some extent.

Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province is one of the places recognized as being relatively successful at cultural coexistence despite its ethnic and religious diversity. A large number of guidebooks and official local government publicity emphasize the ethnic unity between the Han,[2] Dai, Jingpo, Lisu, Achang, and De'ang peoples, and the peaceful coexistence of religions including Theravada Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. However, in most of these books, ethnic groups and religions are separately introduced in an assigned column, with no explanation of the relationships between them. Although it is easy to describe their relationship as a "harmonious coexistence," explaining the actual situation is more difficult.

Therefore, my question here is twofold; what is the reality of so-called "cultural coexistence" situation in Dehong, and what set of concepts or frameworks are most suitable for describing the real situation? To make my argument more demonstrative, I will focus on the spread of the Guanyin (观音) cult in Dehong. The Guanyin cult is only a small part of the overall reality; however, I believe that this case study will provide sufficient data to construct a basic conceptual frame of reference for understanding the complex situations that emerge during cultural contact.

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1) Ethnically, it is usual to notate "Tai" or "Tay." Although they belong to the Thai in the broader definition, they are differentiated as "Tai" living in more mountainous environment. In this article, I use "Dai," adopting the Han Chinese notation because I mainly refer to the people in the political context of China. For the sake of convenience and coherence, I will use Han Chinese notation not only for the Dai, but also for other ethnic groups and place names.

2) In this article, "the Han" is predominantly used in a broader sense, meaning "those who are fully accustomed to the Han Chinese lifestyle and language."

The research methodology is a combination of theoretical study and its verification through a case study. As a theoretical study, I will first review the previous literature dealing with the concepts such as syncretism and hybridity. By making a conceptual map through the review, I propose a framework to analyze situations of cultural contact. The next step is to verify the utility of the framework by applying it to the case study of Dehong, a multicultural and multi-ethnic area. In the fieldwork, the research focused on the Guanyin cult as an example of cultural contact for reasons of conciseness and efficiency. Normally, I conduct fixed-point observations in a city, but in this survey, I visited multiple sites and conducted observations and interviews at each temple. At the end of the discussion, I will point out several findings about the utility and limitation of the framework, and the actual situation of cultural (and ethnic) contact in Dehong.

II Review of Previous Literature

Several terms and words have been frequently used to indicate the complex situations that emerge during cultural contact, such as syncretism, hybridity, and assimilation. I will first review how scholars have previously used these terms.

Of these, perhaps "syncretism" has been the most controversial concept. Although it has been conveniently used to describe religious situations in China, Japan, and Theravada Buddhist countries, many scholars have highlighted its definitional ambiguity (cf. Ringgren 1969; Pye 1971; Kamstra 1989). Some have attempted to find a better way to utilize the term (cf. Sasaki 1986; Stewart and Shaw 1994; Light 2005). However, in recent years, other terms have become more favored. Pattana Kitiarsa (2005) and Justin McDaniel (2014) recently criticized the concept of syncretism in the context of Thai studies.

Pattana suggested that the syncretic model has gradually lost its power to explain the rapidly changing landscape of Thai religion in modern times. He highlighted three reasons for this. First, the syncretists have placed Theravada Buddhism in a tight and rigidly paramount position and have failed to grasp the dynamic changes in Thai religion. Second, the syncretic model is too broad and all-encompassing. Third, the syncretic model does not consider emerging factors such as the influence of mass media and religious commodification (Pattana 2005, 464–466). Pattana used the arguments made by Mikhail Bakhtin and Homi Bhabha to state that "hybridity" is a potential conceptual tool that better represents contemporary Thai religion and a society experiencing intensive hybridity since 1990 (Pattana 2005, 466–467).

McDaniel also dismissed the syncretic model and proposed the concept of

"repertoire." In his view, "syncretism" implies a pure and hierarchical system isolated from economic and cultural morphologies. He rejects such an assumption and asks us to tolerate ambiguity (McDaniel 2014, 15–17). What is more certain is "Thai Buddhists are all at different and evolving levels of knowing and learning Buddhism" (McDaniel 2014, 10) and that they draw upon religious repertoires including words, stock explanations, objects, and images during meaning-making. This is why he focuses only on repertoire and abandons inquiring into the epistemologies and epistemes of Thai society in general (McDaniel 2014, 9).

In contrast, Kanya Wattanagun (2017) reevaluated the concept of syncretism. He suggested that Thai Buddhists' religiosity is not really "beyond syncretism," presenting cases to illustrate that Thai Buddhists resort to syncretization to configure their inclusive and heterogeneous religious repertoires (Kanya 2017, 116–117). In addition, Kanya criticized McDaniel's perspective by indicating that the hierarchical ordering of religious repertoires (with the Buddha always placed on the top) is not a mere assumption but a real notion held by the informants. Therefore, Kanya concluded that we cannot remove the concept of "syncretism" yet (Kanya 2017, 130–134).

I agree with Kanya's criticism of Pattana and McDaniel. When Pattana initially adopted the concept of hybridity, he made special reference to Bakhtin and Bhabha, but the examples presented in his article are not necessarily representative of a "double-voice" or "counter-discourse." What he emphasized as the main traits of hybridity seem to be the fragmentation of religious elements and the commodification of fragmented elements (Pattana 2005, 485–486). Therefore, his way of describing the religious elements appears fragmented, just listing the spirits, gods, and so on. His basic perspective of religion is similar to the "toolkit" in Ann Swidler's argument (1986) and McDaniel's "repertoire."

I partially agree that to view religion as a set of fragmented elements or repertoires is necessary to become aware of the groundless supposition that each religion has a system or a pure essence. However, researchers should not stop there. I believe many scholars have already admitted that there is no religion that has not been experiencing a syncretic process, starting from the fundamental situation of hybridity.[3)] Order emerges from a hybrid situation and grows into a system by undergoing transformation including syncretism, and may dissolve into fragmented parts again. Such a transformative process happens in the real world especially under political pressure, and researchers should explore what is happening, how it happens, and the conditions that make it happen. Both

3) The belief is based on the argument of Robert Baird (1971), André Droogers (1989), and Timothy Light (2005) that I mention in the following section.

the fragmented parts (hybridity) and the system (syncretism) are indispensable poles of a continuum of cultural phenomena. We cannot be content with the recognition of "hybridity" while ignoring the "syncretism."

Although I agree with Kanya, I am not completely satisfied with his argument. Syncretism is not the only word that can be used to describe how people combine (or do not combine) repertoires. The problem is not just whether to discard "syncretism" or not, or to choose between "syncretism" or "hybridity." An analytical framework is required that assigns proper meanings to promising concepts to analyze the meanings of (religious) phenomena. It is important to functionally correlate analytical concepts by adjusting the definition of the words used.

Here, Sugishima Takashi (2014) provides us with a useful hint. Let us see how he distinguishes these words and their usage.

III New Framework for Analysis

In this section, I will propose a new framework by improving Sugishima's definition and classification of "hybridity" to analyze the complex situations that emerge from cultural contact.

Sugishima says that "hybridity" is used by anthropologists as a concept that includes three dimensions: bricolage, syncretism, and hybridity in a narrow sense.

Bricolage

Bricolage is a way to build organic links between various elements (or repertoires) through appropriation, eclecticism, borrowing, or juggling that insiders perform to include foreign elements into their original system. The insiders take it as natural and do not feel odd about these foreign elements. No matter how strange outsiders find the connection of elements of different traditions, insiders feel there is no objective contradiction. Sugishima also called this "normal hybridity."

Syncretism

Syncretism is a method of intentionally synthesizing different elements. Insiders are aware that these elements originally belonged to different traditions and feel odd about the imported elements. Sugishima also calls this "intentional hybridity."

Hybridity in a Narrow Sense

This is like playing different games at the same time. Viewed from an alternative

perspective, the games are contradictory, but the insiders are unaware of it. The insiders might be aware of the contradiction if outsiders highlight it; however, the insiders remain unconcerned by it. Sugishima also calls it a "multi-game situation"[4] (Sugishima 2014, 26–27).

These classificatory definitions typically focus on the subjectivity of insiders. The subjectivity/objectivity and insider/outsider problems have traditionally been focal points of arguments about syncretism. The word "syncretism" has a long history of being used as a pejorative term by Western evangelical outsiders to describe religious traditions, such as Hindu-Buddhism and indigenized folk Catholicism. However, several scholars have criticized the limitations of the outsider's view, instead drawing attention to the so-called insider's view, although it is necessary to consider who is regarded as an insider. As Robert Baird (1971, 143–144), André Droogers (1989, 12), and Timothy Light (2005, 344) mentioned, if we closely analyze any religious tradition from an outsider's objective view, we inevitably notice that every religious tradition is syncretic; therefore, "syncretism" becomes useless as a descriptive concept. If we are to make the word "syncretism" meaningful, we must adopt the insider's perspective as far as possible, because it is the insider's subjectivity that ultimately decides if a tradition is syncretic or not.

McDaniel and other scholars[5] assume that insiders do not recognize their tradition as syncretic. However, I disagree with them based on my experience in the field. When I introduced myself as researching Buddhism to Dai people in Dehong, I was often recommended to visit Myanmar or Thailand because "Theravada Buddhism in Dehong is not pure, mingled with Guanyin cult and spirit cult." Kanya's argument that some believers are aware of the contradictions between religious elements and try to dissolve them is also related to this point. I further argue that an insider's unconcernedness with the contradiction itself is another kind of "recognition." It is not that the insiders do not recognize the syncretism of their religion, but they do recognize that their religion is not

4) To illustrate the situation, Sugishima provides an example like this. Suppose here is a classroom in a university. When the teacher asks students to voice their opinions, a conflict between two rules arises in the minds of the students. One of them is: "you must say some brilliant opinion and show your intelligence." The other is: "you shouldn't stand out. Be modest and keep a low-key attitude." In a way, these two rules are contradictory. However, students generally would not choose one or the other, but manage to find an answer that lies in between, depending on the situation. Students do not fully recognize these two rules separately. Even when they realize the contradiction of these two rules, they would not try to dissolve the contradiction, and just continue the two games (or follow the two rules) opportunistically (Sugishima 2014, 9).

5) Scholars who use the concept of "unconscious syncretism" tend to think that the insiders (sometimes) cannot notice the syncretism or syncretization of their religion. Cf. Droogers (1989, 10–12).

syncretic.

In discussions of syncretism, scholars have traditionally attempted to differentiate between "symbiosis," "parallel phenomena," "amalgamation," and so on from an objective perspective (cf. Colpe 2005). However, scholars should have more respect for an insider's opinion. It is insiders who can really judge if their religious practice is based upon syncretism or pure tradition. In a way, McDaniel and Pattana were too hasty in discarding the concept of "syncretism." No matter how much they wanted to focus on "repertoire" and "hybridity," they should not have neglected "syncretism" just because it presupposes the existence of hierarchy or the purity of religious traditions. Many insiders who believe in hierarchy and the purity of Theravada Buddhism do exist.

Perhaps what is required is to consider both the insider's and the outsider's views. As Charles Stewart and Rosalind Shaw (1994) highlighted, the discourse about syncretism is inseparable from the politics of the situation concerned (Stewart and Shaw 1994, 6–7). Syncretic situations employ symbols or allegories of power politics between insiders and outsiders. In addition, the observer (researcher) is participating in such politics as a different kind of "outsider." Therefore, we require an appropriate framework to analyze the relationship between insider, outsider, and observer.

Although Sugishima's classification is remarkable for focusing on the insider's subjectivity, it is not a sufficiently convenient analytical framework. This is because the classification criteria are not fully articulated. For instance, what exactly is the difference between "bricolage" and "hybridity in a narrow sense"? In both cases, outsiders notice unharmonious elements, but insiders do not care about them. To differentiate between these two, we must clarify another perspective, that is, the observer's judgment of diversity and unity. This dichotomy has also been highlighted throughout the history of theoretical argumentation on "syncretism." Many scholars have highlighted that syncretism can be understood as a continuum between the two poles of diversity and unity.[6] If a syncretism has a vector toward unity, it typically results in "assimilation," "amalgamation," or "fusion." However, if a syncretism has a vector toward diversity, this typically results in conflict or contradiction, and may settle in "parallelism." If the dichotomy is adopted to Sugishima's definitions, "bricolage" will have a direction to "unity," and "hybridity in a narrow sense" will tend toward "diversity."

Therefore, I believe we can extract two criteria: the insider's conscious-unconscious judgment and the observer's unity-diversity judgment. Combining these two axes, we can obtain the coordinates presented in Fig. 1.

6) "Diversity and unity" is my own wording. Other scholars use similar dichotomy such as: "dialogue and syncretism" (Mulder 1989); "two religions and fusion" (Ringgren 1969); and "multiculturalism and syncretism" (van der Veer 1994).

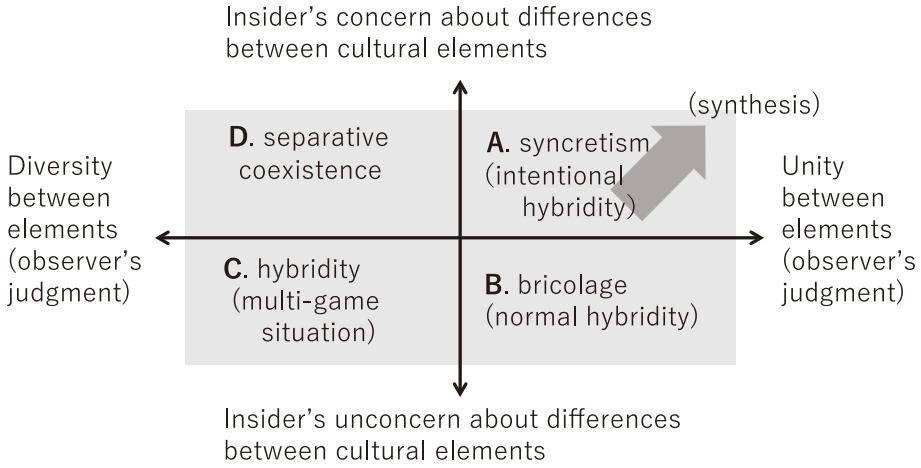

Fig. 1 A Framework for Analyzing Phenomena Emerging from Cultural Contact
Source: Author

The vertical axis represents insider's concernedness and unconcernedness with differences or contradictions between cultural elements. The upper sections (A and D) represent the insider feeling odd about some imported elements. The lower sections (C and B) represent the insider not being fully aware of the contradictory traits of the imported elements. Even when the insider notices this oddness, they are indifferent toward it. The horizontal axis shows the continuum between diversity and unity of elements judged by the observer. The more it veers to the right, the stronger the unity grows; the more it veers to the left, the more salient diversity becomes.

Now, we can allot the proper terms to the four sections. First, the word "syncretism" seems to fit Section A. Insiders wish to believe that religious elements are united in one system; however, they also notice the oddness of some imported elements. If they strive for the unity of the system, they must dissolve the oddness or contradiction in some way. In such a case, syncretism will involve a syncretizing process heading to perfect synthesis. Of course, the concept of "synthesis" is a mere ideal. In reality, synthesis will reflect the political power balance. For example, when insiders come in contact with outsiders who have comparable political strength, one-sided assimilation is not likely to occur. If the interaction between insiders and outsiders is indirect and long-term, the synthesizing process could be peaceful and equal. However, if strong outsiders flow rapidly into the insiders' area, the synthesizing process would be more like assimilation.

Second, Section B represents "bricolage." Although imported elements exist, insiders do not feel odd about them. Perhaps outsiders might feel odd about them, but as a whole, the imported elements are not so disturbing and observers judge the indig-

enous religious system to be unified. In this case, insiders might feel coherent about their religious tradition, no matter how randomly they have borrowed foreign elements. In other words, they are using the foreign tools or brand-new repertoires to improve their indigenous religious system. The coherence of their indigenous religion is maintained from an insider's perspective.

Third, "hybridity" (in a narrow sense) fits Section C. To simplify the chart, I only use "hybridity," although Sugishima implies distinction between the narrow and broad senses of "hybridity." From an observer's perspective, foreign elements are perceived as unharmonious with other indigenous elements or even contradictory; however, insiders are not concerned with this contradiction. Therefore, the diversity of elements (as seen by the observer) is typically maintained (in the practices of insiders).

Finally, a new category has been added to Sugishima's classification. Logically, there must be a Section D, where insiders are concerned about differences and the observer also sees that foreign elements do not fully fit into the indigenous tradition. I cannot think of an appropriate term for it but I have tentatively called it "separative coexistence." More specifically, there could be a situation where anti-syncretistic insiders and outsiders live close by and that the culture of the area has a mosaic pattern. This is the framework I employ to analyze the various phenomena that emerge during cultural contact.

I do not anticipate that this simple framework will be perfect. There may be several phenomena that cannot be described fully by these four terms. The problem of how to identify "insiders" also remains unsolved. However, the most important task is to establish criteria for defining the terms to be used. Without clarifying the defining relationship between the terms, simply replacing "syncretism" with "hybridity" will not solve the problem. I will first try using the framework, and then inspect the validity. In the following section, I demonstrate how this framework can be applied toward understanding the complicated situation in Dehong.

IV The Buddhist History of the Research Site

The research site is Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan, China (Fig. 2). To understand Dehong as a unique Buddhist area, we should review general history of Buddhism and nations in Dehong and related areas.

The first ancient kingdom in Yunnan conspicuously influenced by Buddhism was Nanzhao (from the mid. seventh century to 902). The kingdom showed peculiar affection

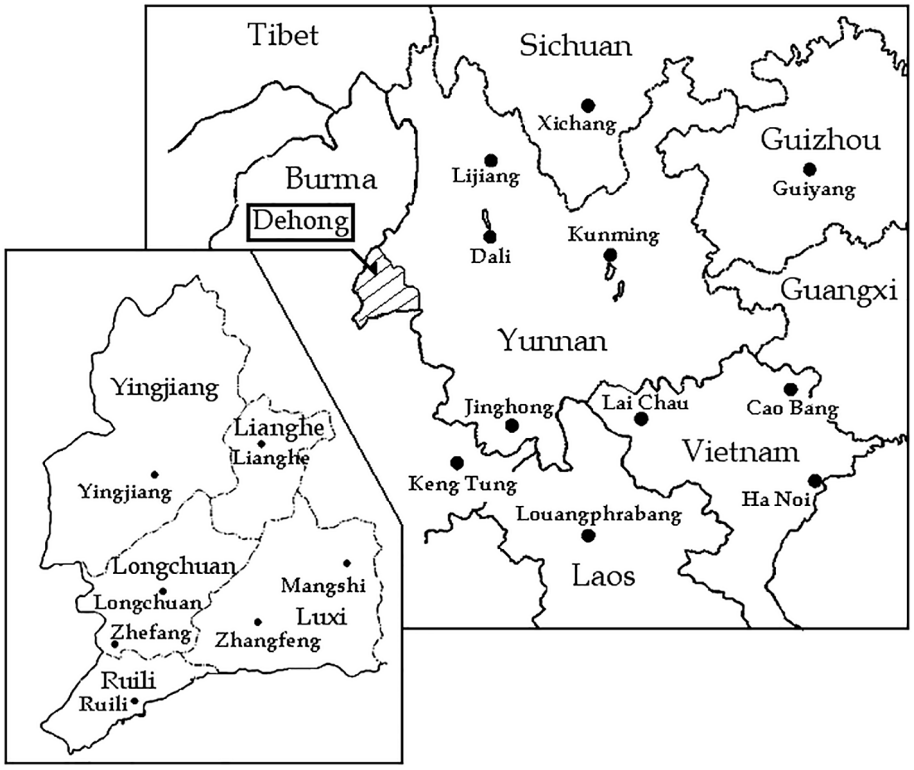

Fig. 2 Map of Yunnan Province and Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture
Source: Author
Notes: Luxi county was renamed as Mangshi in 2011. However, to avoid confusion, I use Luxi in this article.

to Guanyin, and the ancestors of today's Dai were presumed to be a subject people of the kingdom. By the tenth century, the Dai ancestors are said to have established several small kingdoms of their own in today's Dehong and Xishuangbanna (Sipsongpanna). One such kingdom based in today's Ruili grew powerful in the fifteenth century and invited an expedition from the Ming dynasty. Defeated by the army of Ming, the Dai ancestors' kingdoms in Dehong were incorporated relatively firmly into the Ming dynasty's indirect ruling system. The kings became Tusi (土司), or local officers of Chinese dynasties (cf. Yunnansheng Shehui Kexueyuan Zongjiao Yanjiusuo 1999; Wang 2001, 389–392; Hasegawa 2010, 115–122).

Various arguments exist about the period when Theravada Buddhism entered Yunnan, but it was arguably, at latest, by the fifteenth century that the influence of Theravada Buddhism became salient. Although the Tusi-kings in Dehong and Xishuangbanna patronized Theravada Buddhism, there seems to have been differences

in Theravada culture between these two areas. Xishuangbanna mainly accepted the so-called Yon sect from today's Chiangmai, and Dehong, contrastingly, accepted several sects from Shan in Burma and Xishuangbanna. The various traditions in Dehong had been seemingly inherited in the master–disciple relationship in respective sects, keeping relative independence from each other (cf. Yunnansheng Shehui Kexueyuan Zongjiao Yanjiusuo 1999; Hasegawa 2009; Kojima 2012, 399).

However, the situation has changed since the 1930s. Due to the Japanese invasion, the so-called Burma Road from Mangshi to Ruili became the crucial lifeline for China to obtain goods from the Allied Nations. Subsequently, a large number of Han immigrants, including the Kuomintang Army soldiers, the Chinese Liberation Army, and CCP (Chinese Communist Party) officials, flowed into the southern part of Dehong, and by the 1950s, the number reached over half of the total population in this area. Following the establishment of the People's Republic of China, Mangshi became the political center of Dehong. Patterson Giersch depicted the inflow of Han Chinese in this period as a kind of conquest by making local peoples believe that they were backward and requiring the Han Chinese's help economically and politically (Giersch 2020, 200–202).

The inflow of Han Chinese is not a new trend. In earlier periods, Ming expedition could promote the movement and settlement of outer people. In the same period, the trading routes from inland China to current India and Myanmar via Dehong already existed. The main trade route was opened through the northern area of Dehong, so one of the main cities in this area called "Yingjiang" experienced a relatively large inflow of Han merchants. Nandian (currently Lianghe), having the biggest government office in Dehong, could have been strongly affected by Han culture. I will call this premodern "moderate Sinicization" by borrowing the local people's concept of *hanhua* (汉化) or Sinicization. It contrasts with "rapid Sinicization" in the relatively longer span and sporadicity. Although the whole Dehong including the southern part (especially Mangshi) might have experienced the "moderate Sinicization," the traces of "moderate Sinicization" in the northern part (including Yingjiang and Lianghe) may have been comparatively maintained since the influence of "rapid Sinicization" was more severe on the southern part.

In the 1950s, the CCP dissolved the Tusi polity, and started controlling monks by organizing them into the Buddhist Society. Despite the declaration of religious freedom in the constitution, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution broke the promise and seriously damaged Buddhism as well as other religious traditions.

Since the Reform and Open Policy began, the revival of religion occurred in Dehong like so many other districts in China. The Buddhist temples, once destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, were rebuilt, and religious customs such as annual Buddhist events

and life-stage rituals were allowed to be observed. Although religious freedom has become somewhat possible, it has been burdened by controls, regulations, and political expectations. The activities of monks are controlled through the local Buddhist Association, places for religious activities are confined to the officially registered temples, and religious culture including events, architecture, and cuisine, is typically utilized for social contribution especially for the development of tourism (cf. Hasegawa 2010; Nagatani 2010).

Another important trait of the CCP's policy on religion is political and academic discourse combining religions and nationalities. Scholars typically correlate Buddhism and Daoism with Han Chinese culture, and Christianity with Western culture. The Hui might most typically represent the CCP's (and perhaps historically deep-rooted) tendency of superimposing religion on ethnicity. As for Buddhism in Yunnan, many academic Chinese articles describe it as unique in completing three sets of Buddhism: esoteric Buddhism believed by the Tibet; Mahayana Buddhism of the Han; and Theravada Buddhism of Dai, Achang, and De'ang people. However, the discourse does not reflect the actual situation of the Dai. So-called flower-waisted Dai living in inner Yunnan do not follow Buddhist tradition, and the Theravadin culture in Dehong differs from Xishuangbanna. Nonetheless, the Dai are often described as monolithic Theravada Buddhists (cf. Yao *et al.* 2006, 2; Borchert 2014, 610–612; 2017, Chap. 3).

One example of the frequently mentioned traits of Theravada Buddhism in Dehong is the lack of the custom of becoming a temporary monk and the rarity of monks. Kojima Takahiro conducted a thorough field survey in 2007 and reported the number of monks per monastery in Dehong as only 0.1 (Kojima 2014, 58). Nevertheless, the villagers were able to continue observing most of the Buddhist events and festivals by following instructions provided by the senior lay Buddhists in each village. In addition, Zhang Jianzhang (1992) noted that there were only 375 monks for 632 monasteries in Dehong in 1956,[7] although it is possible that the data is not perfectly reliable (Zhang 1992, 125–130). It is likely that Dehong Dai have formed such a laymen-centered Theravada Buddhism at least in the former half of the twentieth century. Although it is unclear since when and how firmly the unique Buddhism has been established, compared to Xishuangbanna, that soon retrieved the custom of becoming monk after the end of the Cultural Revolution, Theravada traditions in Dehong probably have a different cultural background from that of Xishaungbanna and other monk-centered Buddhist areas.

Incidentally, the authority of the Tusi family appears to remain influential especially in the city area. The Tusi system was barely remained until 1954 in Dehong, and the

7) By "monk" here, apprentices are included, and female monks are excluded.

city residents know well who belongs to which Tusi family. I occasionally met the Tusi family's descendants among local government officers, Dai intellectuals, and the senior lay Buddhists who knew how to hold Buddhist rituals. Lay Buddhists of noble birth were generally seen as well-cultured and reliable as Buddhist leaders. That could be one of the reasons why the absence of monks has not necessarily led to the sharp decline of Theravada Buddhism in Dehong.

However, the generation that experienced the end of Tusi system is gradually fading, and the younger generations seem to have somewhat lost interest in Theravada Buddhism. In the city area, the Dai, the Han, and other ethnic groups live together, and the number of people wearing ethnic clothes has drastically decreased since the 2000s. It is hard to deny that the ethnic and religious atmosphere has grown weakened. The people's lifestyle has become uniformly modernized especially in the city area (cf. Chu 2014).

Although Dehong is an autonomous district of the Dai and Jingpo, the Dai population today is outnumbered by Han Chinese. According to 2016 statistics, in the Dehong area of 11,172 square kilometers, there are 1,294,000 people. The Dai consist of 28% (368,100) of the population, the Jingpo 11% (141,200), the others are Han and other minorities (Dehong Daizu Jingpozu Zizhizhou Defangzhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui 2017, 38).

Based on the description above, the uniqueness of Dehong can be summarized into three points. First, the political background is complex compared to other Theravadin areas. Analyzing studies discussing syncretism or hybridity in Theravada Buddhism, most scholars have chosen Burma, Sri Lanka, and Thailand as research sites. These countries share a commonality in populations being dominantly Theravada Buddhists, and their governments basically support Theravada Buddhism. However, in Dehong this is not the case. In communist China, religion is never encouraged, and Theravada Buddhism is only practiced by several ethnic minorities. The Han majority are more familiar with Mahayana Buddhism and have received a communist education prioritizing science over religion. Therefore, Theravada Buddhism in Dehong is just one of the traditions practiced by the minority that has received no support from the political authority. Consequently, it has been subject to more severe cultural and political turbulence compared to the Theravada Buddhism in other countries, particularly in the modern era. The complicity might exceed that of Xishuangbanna due to the sectarian variety. Therefore, in Dehong, we could encounter a larger variety of cultural contacts related to Theravada Buddhism.

Second, Buddhism itself is also complex. As mentioned above, Theravada Buddhism in Dehong is unique in its sectarian variety and layman-oriented tendency. Adding to them, certain scriptures that include Han stories are sometimes used as sutra in Buddhist merit-making rituals. Personally, I wonder if we should simply recognize the Dehong Buddhism as pure "Theravada Buddhism."

Third, nevertheless, in political discourse, Dehong Buddhism is typically represented as monolithic "Theravada Buddhism." More precisely, the CCP seems to attempt to make Dehong Buddhism monolithic. In 1984, the United Front Work Department adopted the Thudanma sect as the only official sect in Dehong. The young monks are educated at official Buddhist schools in Yunnan or abroad like Thailand to learn "normal" Theravada Buddhism. Due to these causes, the traditional sectarian variety may gradually fade. Academic writings do not conceal the historical facts, but they are also formalistic in another way. It is rare to see the description debating the possibility of the mutual influences between Guanyin cult of Nanzhao, Mahayana Buddhism of today's Yunnan, and Theravada sects. Basically, the chapters separately deal with each topic and rarely overlap.[8)]

In political and academic discourse, there appears to be an inclination to think that every tradition should be originally pure and isolated. From this perspective, syncretism or hybridity is undesirable. In contrast, I suppose there is a likelihood that Yunnan Buddhism was originally more hybrid and that the tendency to purify it is introduced in modern times. Although I cannot show concrete evidence of this, the view exists as an undertone in my later argument about the Guanyin cult in Dehong.

There are various kinds of hybrid-syncretic phenomena observable in the languages, clothes, food, and architecture. However, in this article, to reduce complexity in the analysis, I focus exclusively on the Guanyin cult spreading among Theravada Buddhists in Dehong, because I would like to concentrate more on examining the effectiveness of the quadrant model of hybridity. I believe the focus is narrow but also worth examining because the spread of the Guanyin cult reflects several important characteristics of the hybrid reality in this area in terms of both religious (Theravada–Mahayana) and ethnic (Dai–Han) encounters.

As Stevan Harrell (1997) highlighted, there have been several civilizing projects spreading from the civilizing center to peripheries in China. However, his perspective, highlighting Confucian, Christian, and Communist projects, is gained from a bird's-eye view. Seen from the ethnic and cultural minorities' perspective, the projects could be described more specifically as a kind of pressure or imperative. In the following sections, I will mainly describe the situation concerning two sets of contradictive imperatives in the cultural and ethnic spheres. One is not to be merged or mixed, and not to be fragmented. The other is to follow the ways of majority Hans, and to maintain the respective

8) For example, Wang Haitao (2001) and Yunnansheng Shehui Kexueyuan Zongjiao Yanjiusuo (1999) treat Esoteric Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism, and Mahayana Buddhism separately in respective chapters as many other books do. They usually do not discuss the possibility of their intersection. However, it is very rare that the latter book, on page 203, mentions that "some Theravada temples in Dehong enshrine Guanyin tolerantly."

minority ethnicity. Under the surface of "harmonious coexistence," cultural and ethnic conflicts could be hidden, and I expect the case study of the Guanyin cult, by applying aforementioned framework, should reveal the actual situation to a large extent.

V The Survey Results

I have been conducting fieldwork in Dehong since 1996. The longest period of field research was from October 1997 to August 1998, and from January 1999 to May 1999. Since then, I have visited Dehong nearly every year up until 2019. In addition, I have interacted with the local Dai and Han people over long periods of time, learning and speaking their languages. I have visited over eighty temples in Dehong and conducted interviews with monks and laymen. In Table 1, I present the breakdown based on the types and counties.

I selected four sites as representatives of typical phenomena that emerge from cultural contact; the old capital area of Luxi county (hereinafter abbreviated as L town), some villages in Yingjiang county, Y village in Luxi county,[9] and a newly built pagoda in the outskirts of L town.

As with many local districts in China, urbanization is rapidly changing the natural and economic environment in Dehong. Until the late 1990s, the majority of the Dai in this area grew rice. Their religious practices were deeply related to agriculture. They

Table 1 The Number of the Surveyed Temples of Each Type

County/type	Hybrid	Bricolage	Mahayana	Theravada
Luxi	0	1	2	25
Ruili	1	0	1	16
Yingjiang	2	0	4	11
Longchuan	3	0	2	8
Lianghe	0	0	5	1

Source: Author

Notes: I visited a total of 82 temples over the past twenty years. (As I was based in Luxi, the number in Luxi is larger. This does not mean Luxi has more temples than other counties.) Some temples might have changed from Mahayana to Theravada, or vice versa; I counted them according to the current situation. What was judged as "hybrid" or "bricolage" was the Theravada temple that holds the Guanyin festival. In recent years, it is not uncommon for Theravada temples to have several small Guanyin images, so it was not used as a factor in judgment.

9) Although the local government changed the county's name from Luxi to Mangshi in 2011, I refer to the county as Luxi to avoid confusion.

prayed to the guardian spirits of each village and city for good harvest, health, and peace. They also observed Buddhist rituals and events at each temple such as the water-splashing festival in April and the harvest festival in November. However, especially due to the launch of the Western Development policy in 2000, the Dai in the urban area have lost paddy fields and started small businesses for tourists. Following this lifestyle change, they appear to have lost some small agricultural rites.

However, in general, the Dai people in Dehong appear to have kept observing major religious events so far, despite of the big change in their lifestyle. When they gained a large amount of money by selling their rights to the use of paddy fields in the 1990s and 2000s, they spent a significant amount in rebuilding temples and holding merit-making festivals. In the 2010s, many elders who had retired from agriculture spent time in the temples. Middle-aged people maintained their obligation to the local guardian spirits, praying for success in business and education rather than for a good harvest.

The center of Guanyin cult in Dehong is each Mahayana temple. According to Zhang (1992), there are forty Mahayana temples in Dehong except Ruili and Wangding counties in 1989 (Zhang 1992, 251). Among them, there are many Mahayana temples named "Guanyin si" or temple of Guanyin.[10] In such temples, Guanyin is the main figure of the temple and even Shakyamuni (释迦牟尼佛), the founder of Buddhism and the most important Buddha in Theravada tradition, is somewhat marginalized. The image of Guanyin is typically in the feminized style, which is academically recognized as a sign of sinicization of Buddhism. By convention, the adherents pay homage to the temple on the first and fifteenth of every month of Lunar calendar. In the mornings, they come to the temple to pray, burning joss paper and lighting incense sticks. Pious ones listen to sutra recitations and sermon by nuns, and go home after having a Buddhist vegetarian lunch. Most temples have a voluntary group of female adherents, who prepare the lunch, joss paper, incense sticks, etc. The adherents mainly wish for the safety of the family, health, wealth, success, and marriage. The Mahayana temples are open to any ethnic peoples, but the atmosphere is dominantly the Han's because the used language, characters, and the majority of adherents are all Han.

As a Dai religious practice, the Guanyin cult appears to be relatively rare especially in rural areas, not because it has Mahayana origins, but perhaps because there are differences in the acceptance (or rejection) of the cult depending on historical and geopolitical conditions of each temple. For example, in the old capital area of Luxi, Dai monks and laymen typically express an aversion to Guanyin. They say that Guanyin is not a true

10) We might think of the possibility that temples of folk belief with Guanyin as the main deity was automatically classified as a "Mahayana" temple by modern Chinese scholars.

Buddha, only worshiped by superstitious Han, especially, women. In contrast, Guanyin has been broadly accepted in Yingjiang county as one of the Buddhas. The Guanyin cult in Y village seems to have been imported from Yingjiang; however, there is a significant difference. The pagoda in the outskirts of L town was constructed by a Han manager of a theme park who expected it to attract tourists. He intended to display the harmonious coexistence of Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism by placing Guanyin and other Buddhas side by side in the pagoda. Hereinafter, the above four examples will be described in detail.

V-1 *The Old Capital Area of Luxi*

L town, as the local government center in Dehong today, has experienced the greatest change in urbanization of the five counties in Dehong. With over twenty square kilometers of paddy field being developed into a new urban area, the Dai populous area of 5.2 square kilometers has become suburbanized over the past thirty years. The center of the Dai populous area was traditionally the old capital of a Dai kingdom with three old Theravada temples and one Guanyin temple.

Living in L town especially in 1999–2000, I often heard people say that the Han believed in Mahayana Buddhism and the Dai believed in Theravada—a common stereotype in academic books discussing the Dai culture. The point of this discourse is that ethnicity and religion are tightly bound together. The three Theravada temples are strongly connected to the four Dai communities in the area; therefore, the majority of Dai residents attend the Theravada temples because it is almost a communal obligation. Although these temples are open to tourists, they are so crowded with the Dai residents during ceremonies and festivals that other ethnic and foreign people hesitate to enter.

The Guanyin temple is far more open to any ethnic residents and tourists anytime. However, it is natural to feel that the place is for the Han because the majority of the visitors are the Han, and the common language is also Han Chinese. As is usual for Guanyin temples in China, the managers of this temple are nuns, and the majority of the temple-goers are female.

Those who emphasize a strong connection between ethnicities and religions are predominantly Theravadin monks and some male Dai people who frequently spend time in temples. According to them, Mahayana Buddhism is inferior to Theravada because there are too many gods and bodhisattvas like Guanyin in Mahayana temples. For them, Buddhist temples should only contain Shakyamuni, the real Buddha, and Guanyin is no more than an inferior spirit. That is the reason given by them as to why the Dai will not visit the messy[11] Guanyin temple.

11) More precisely, they often say, "there are too many gods and goblins in Guanyin temple."

However, close observation soon revealed that at least some Dai females were visiting the Guanyin temple. Watching the crowd on festival days (usually approximately at least four hundred people), I easily identified over twenty women in Dai clothes. There were also women identifiable as Dai by speech. According to an insider in the pious voluntary group with seventy members, there were approximately thirty regular worshippers, and among them, at least ten members were Dai or have Dai origins.

To the best of my knowledge, the female Dai visiting the Guanyin temple could be classified into four types. The first group is those who had become accustomed to visiting the temple as a family custom. Several elderly Dai women told me that women of the old ruling class became familiar with Han culture in their youth, and often paid homage to the Guanyin temple even up to the present day. The second type were older women from a certain village nearby. They said that their village was assigned by the Tusi to maintain the Guanyin temple up until the fifties. The village women, having an attachment to the Guanyin temple, sometimes visited there. The third type were women from other parts of Dehong.

The Dai women I met, especially those from Yingjiang, Longchuan, and Lianghe counties did not subscribe to the idea that Guanyin is not Dai-Theravada Buddhist but Han-Mahayana Buddhist. They freely visited temples when they wanted to. The last group of women were more Sinicized due marriages to Han husbands or from working with Han people.

Consequently, perhaps the female and male Dai in L town should be separately considered. Some of the male Dai clearly exhibited an anti-syncretistic attitude. They thought that the Mahayana and the Theravada were completely different and should not be confused. However, the female Dai did not care so much about the differences between the two. Actually, on one occasion in the Guanyin temple in L town, I was asked by some female Dai from a nearby village about the difference between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Before I could answer, a woman standing nearby said, "The languages are different, but the contents are the same." This is another common cliché that is used particularly by Dai women.[12] This perspective appears to be shared by Dai women and possibly men, excluding L town in Dehong.

V-2 *Some Temples in Yingjiang*

Here I introduce the situation in the Yingjiang county that contrasts with the case of some

12) In the rural area, I more often came across such conversation: "what is the difference between the two?" and "only languages are different." The same explanation was given by a high-ranking monk in Ruili county in a video introducing "Theravada Buddhism in Dehong, Yunnan" (2002). I will discuss this further in note 27.

of the male Dai in L town. The most peculiar temple is in a small town with a long history as the capital of another ancient Dai local kingdom. In the precinct, a Guanyin temple, a Theravada temple, and a shrine for the Jade Emperor (Yuhuang dadi 玉皇大帝) are built side by side. When I initially visited the temple on December 22 in 1997, an old monk was caring for these three buildings. Although he was Han Chinese, he said he could conduct Buddhist services in both Mahayana and Theravada styles depending on the visitor's request. According to him, the regular visitors came from the nearby village (composed of approximately eighty households). Most of the residents were said to be Dai, but several people admitted that they had both Dai and Han ancestors; therefore, when they entered the compound, they chose a service style depending on their requirements. When I was wondering what he meant, he kindly showed me the two types of clothes that he wore during Buddhist services. The one for Mahayana services was a bright khaki robe with kimono-style neckband. The other one for Theravadin services was a camel-colored traditional jacket that Dai elderly men typically wore. Both clothes seemed not perfectly fit to the monk's dress code, but it was certain that he distinguished two different traditions. Later, one of the daily visitors told me that it was also natural for them to pay homage to both temples simultaneously. The monk stated, "The temple has two traditions: Han-conveyed Buddhism (Han chuan fo jiao 汉传佛教) and Burma-conveyed Buddhism (Mian chuan fo jiao 缅传佛教). So, I call it 'Double Buddhism' (Liang chuan fo jiao 两传佛教)."[13)]

Based on conversations with monks and neighbors of the temple,[14)] I infer that they observe both traditions. They mentioned main Dai-Theravada festivals, such as the water-splashing festival (*pɔi*^{55} *sɔn*^{55} *lam*^{54}), Buddhist Lent Days (*wan*^{55} *sin*^{35}), and the festival to end the Lent (*pɔi*^{55} *kan*^{11} *to*^{55}), and also commented that they paid customary homage to the Guanyin temple on the first and fifteenth day of each Lunar month, similar to the practice of Han Buddhists. They also acknowledged that they observed birth celebrations for Guanyin and the Jade Emperor.

On my fourth visit on the August 31, 2012, I discovered the monk had passed away but another monk showed me some Theravada scripts written in old Dai and Mahayana scripts in Chinese. A Dai neighbor also showed me the Dai version of the "Guanyin sutra"[15)] in her house. Although it was too difficult to read, judging from the character's name, I was sure that the story was about lady Miaoshan (妙善), who became Guanyin

13) In the interview on December 22, 1997.

14) I visited the temple on these dates: December 22, 1997; April 30, 1999; August 12, 2009; and August 31, 2012.

15) In Dai language, "tsau^{31} koan^{55} yin^{55}." This is not the authentic "Guanyin Sutra (the Universal Door of Guan Shi Yin Boddhisattva, 观世音菩萨普门品)" as chapter twenty-five in "Lotus Sutra."

in a Chinese folk tale. The Dai woman said that the script was copied and offered to the temple on special occasions such as grand merit-making festivals. This was the same as the usage of other Theravada scripts. Later I discovered that the Dai version of the "Guanyin sutra" was also used in the same way, in Yingjiang and also by the female Dai of noble birth in L town, although less frequently.

The next case is also from a village near a small town. In an area of the village, a Theravada temple, a shrine of the Jade Emperor, and an ambiguous "temple" that was not clearly Theravada or Mahayana, were built close together. They did not share a compound, unlike the previous example. The "temple" was managed by a couple of Mahayana monks until about 2003. When I visited the "temple" on May 1, 1999, they showed me several Buddhist scripts written in Han characters in the book stack. Later, I heard they had left the temple for some reason, and Dai villagers nearby had maintained the temple for several years. When I visited the "temple" on January 11, 2019, I found that a Theravada monk invited from Burma was running the "temple."

The "temple" is constituted of three compartments: one for enshrining three images of Tathagata, presumably Shakyamuni, Amitabha (阿弥陀佛), and Bhaisajyaguru (药师佛), in the Han style;[16] one for Shakyamuni images in the Dai style; and one for Guanyin sisters[17] in a feminized style. When I asked the monk how he felt about the situation, he said he would learn how to run this temple by respecting the villager's demands. Perhaps it was too early to ask him because he had just started his life there in the previous month.[18]

The Theravada temple that is located on the hill is a five-minute walk from the "temple." The building seems a rather purely Theravada temple, but the supporters are the same villagers. They said that they observed both types of Buddhist events, Mahayana and Theravada, in both temples. When they held the water-splashing festival, they said they cleansed the Buddha images in both temples, going up and down the hill. Although I could not see the book stack in the Theravada temple, one of the villagers showed me the Dai version of the "Guanyin sutra." She also said that they held the birth celebration for Yuhuang on January 9 every year.

I think this case also could be called "double Buddhism." If we include Taoism, it could be called "triple tradition." The villagers were aware that they were observing two

16) I was uncertain because the images seemed slightly deformed, but a Buddhist sculptor whom I met by chance in the temple on August 13, 2006 explained as such.

17) In the Chinese folktale, Miaoshan has two elder sisters.

18) I visited the "temple" five times on the following dates: December 23, 1997; May 1, 1999; August 13, 2006; August 31, 2012; and January 11, 2019. Although the temple seems to have undergone many changes with accepting Mahayana and Theravada monks alternately, I could not clarify the details due to a lack of accurate information.

or three traditions simultaneously, but they did not consider it unusual. I think Sugishima would have termed it a "multi-game situation."

In Yingjiang, I visited 17 temples and determined that it could be said that these two temples existed in a "multi-game situation." As the table above shows, I found three more such temples in Longchuan; however, I introduced the temples in Yingjiang because of the better quality of research.

V-3 *Y Village in Luxi County*

The next case concerns a temple in Y village in Luxi county. The village comprises approximately sixty households and the villagers say all of them are Dai. The village has only one Theravada temple, and a small Guanyin shrine is attached to it. There has been no monk for long time and several elder laymen manage the temple as is typical with villages in Dehong. Villagers usually observe Theravada events every year, but on January 9 of the lunar calendar, they hold a festival for Guanyin.

According to the normal Taoist or folk religion event calendar, January 9 is a celebration day for the Jade Emperor or Daolitian (忉利天), but Y villagers assumed it was the day for the Guanyin festival. The Yingjiang villagers colloquially termed January 9 as the Guanyin festival day. However, when I asked about the origin of the festival, most of them knew that it was originally the Jade Emperor's Day. In contrast, Y villagers assumed it was Guanyin Day and did not know about the Jade Emperor or Daolitian.

The Guanyin images of Y village were unique in form, comprising a set of four small images seemingly made of copper. Among them, the first two were similar to a god and a goddess standing on either side of Shakyamuni image in the Dai style. The next two, each holding a child, were female and male. The latter two seemed like Guanyin, but the villagers (including the temple managers) seemed to treat the four of them as a set.[19] These images were usually hidden in the attic room of the small shrine. They were displayed on the balcony on the festival days. Because the Guanyin images of this village were believed to bring a baby to infertile wives, several couples in the neighboring villages came to pray to the Guanyin images for a baby. The Y villagers said that the origin of these images was obscure but there was a legend that they were brought to Y village by a Han monk from Yingjiang one hundred years ago.

There are some peculiar points about the Guanyin images. First, they had a unique style because most of the images I saw in Dehong were made of clay or ceramic in a feminized figure. The male image made of copper-like matter was very rare. Second, in

19) When I asked, "Which one is Guanyin?", they answered, "All of them." The conversation took place on February 10, 2019, the first day of the Guanyin festival.

other places in Dehong, it appears that people did not emphasize Guanyin's baby-bringing ability. Of course, people can pray to Guanyin for anything because Guanyin is believed to be almighty, but to the best of my knowledge, Y village was the only village in Dehong which had a special ritual to pray to Guanyin for a baby. Third, the depository of the Guanyin images was unique. Dai Buddhists generally did not enshrine Shakyamuni and Guanyin side by side because they believed women should stay away from ascetic monks and the Buddha. When a village temple contains a Guanyin image, it is usually placed in a small shrine-like case in the main hall. Thus, it was not unusual for the Y villagers to enshrine a Guanyin separately from the Buddha. However, the annexational shrine attached to the Theravada temple was not seen in other places. It is also unclear why they hid these images in the attic room.

Fourth, most importantly for my argument, the villagers did not seem to recognize that Guanyin originally belonged to a tradition other than their (Theravada) Buddhism. On September 18, 2011, I asked a Dai intellectual to visit the village with me.[20] He gathered several of the most elderly villagers including temple managers to the temple, and he and I tried to ask them about the difference between Theravada and Mahayana, or between the Burma-conveyed tradition and the Han-conveyed tradition. We tried several expressions, but they did not understand these concepts. When I asked them why they treated Buddha and Guanyin separately, they only highlighted that the male Buddha should not be with the female Guanyin and never mentioned the difference between the two Buddhist traditions. Therefore, I presumed that the villagers had no intention of merging different traditions. Perhaps they thought that they were only following one tradition of their own.

Accordingly, I also infer that a hundred years ago the villagers were perhaps casually introduced to Guanyin to meet their demand for babies at that time. It is generally recognized that Theravada Buddhism has a weak salvation doctrine for women, so I suppose it is possible that the then villagers utilized Guanyin to compensate for this area. In the face of this serious demand, it might have been an ignorable problem whether Guanyin was contradictive with their village tradition. Therefore, they just borrowed an element that was lacking in their tradition to meet their needs. I think this could be termed "bricolage," the technique of assembling useful things by using whatever they can find.

I admit that the description above is full of hypotheses and logical holes. The village

20) The Dai intellectual was a male of the age 62 at that time; he was proficient in Chinese and Dai, and had a wide knowledge of Buddhism. I visited the village four times, on these dates: September 18, 2011; February 1, 2019; February 10, 2019; and February 13, 2019. Similar things were confirmed during the festival in 2019.

is located between Yingjiang and Luxi, but much closer to L town. If the village is strongly influenced by Yingjiang, why did the other villages nearer to Yingjiang not have a similar custom? In addition, it is perplexing that very few people in L town seem to know about the Guanyin festival in Y village. If being blessed with a child is a really serious need to women, the festival should have been much more popular.[21] Consequently, further research is required to make my argument more persuasive.

Despite these unanswered questions, I still consider this example to be one of the four representative patterns of cultural contact. Although this is only one case, I believe it demonstrates a sufficiently unique pattern that is different from the others.

V-4 *A Newly Build Pagoda*

The final example of a Guanyin cult was from a newly constructed pagoda in the outskirts of L town, called the Diamond Pagoda. This was the newest and somewhat artificial Guanyin cult.

The pagoda was built on a hilltop in 2005 by a local Han businessman with indirect financial support from the local government. The CCP does not usually provide support for building religious facilities; however, the local government was keen to attract Buddhist tourists and therefore indirectly supported the plan by funding the construction of a road to the hill. The exterior of the pagoda was made in Southeast Asian (Theravada) style by craftsmen hired from Burma. However, inside the pagoda, the four Buddha images of Shakyamuni, Bhaisajyaguru, Maitreya (弥勒佛), and Guanyin were enshrined.

When I interviewed the businessman[22] on August 11, 2006, he said he was a Buddhist and wanted to build a pagoda which symbolized the entirety of Dehong Buddhist culture. His plan was to construct a new style of pagoda that synthesized the two styles of Buddhism. He said he thought there was no big difference between Theravada and Mahayana, and that there was no significant problem in juxtaposing Shakyamuni and other Buddhas including Guanyin. Consequently, he developed the idea to arrange the four images side by side. It was also his own idea to make the interior of the pagoda like a temple, which is unusual for pagodas in Dehong, to make a space to display the history

21) Since I knew about the Guanyin festival in Y village in 2011, I made it a rule to discuss it with informants especially when I joined the festival feasts at every temple in L town (including the Guanyin temple). I asked at least forty temple-goers in L town and I found that only three people knew about the Guanyin festival in Y village. However, the several villagers from remote villages in Luxi county, who I met by chance, knew about it. I infer that this implies the existence of the two layers of cultural contact, the moderate and rapid Sinicizations.

22) He was a Han Chinese born in Dehong in 1963. He made his fortune from lumber dealing, and started managing a theme park of rare trees and rocks in L town from 2001. The pagoda was built on the park property.

and culture of Buddhism in Dehong. In addition, he wanted to publicize Theravada Buddhism and Buddhism in general by building the grand pagoda, although he made its outward appearance in Theravada style to attract tourists.

However, the pagoda was unpopular at least among Dai Buddhist intellectuals in Luxi who insisted that Shakyamuni should be the sole object of worship. From their perspective, when Shakyamuni is placed alongside Guanyin, it does not signify that they are equal beings, but rather that the hierarchy of Theravada Buddhism has been broken. Therefore, they believed that the arrangement could not symbolize the harmonious coexistence of the two traditions and simply implied that the Theravada tradition has been incorporated into the Mahayana tradition.

Fortunately, or not, the antipathy toward the pagoda has not been salient because it has not been fully admitted as a part of Dai culture by the Dai people. The pagoda becomes crowded when the government holds the official water-splashing event; however, in contrast to the traditional community temple, there is no specific Dai community supporting it. My close informants unanimously said, "The pagoda is not a Dai temple but a facility for tourists." Namely, the pagoda has been almost ignored by local Dai people. It counts as evidence that the donations from the Dai people to construct the pagoda were far fewer than the businessmen expected. When I interviewed the owner,[23] he did not hide his disappointment and assumed that the Dai lacked faith in Buddhism. The Dai in L town are interested in their own Buddhist tradition and temples, not Buddhism in general as businessmen imagine. Perhaps such a misunderstanding prevented him from understanding why the Dai were cold toward the pagoda.

If the pagoda was intended as a tourist facility only, some might think that it is inappropriate to regard it as a serious example of religious syncretism. However, irrespective of the pagoda's status as a tourist attraction, it has been approved as a religious site by the local government. At least until February 27, 2015, Han Buddhist books were available free of charge, and I heard that a Theravada monk stays in front of the Shakyamuni image several days a week to provide consultations to visitors. Although most tourists seemed like ordinary tourists, it was difficult to differentiate between tourists and worshippers. I observed many instances of visitors prostrating themselves before the Buddhas and the monk. Therefore, I regarded the pagoda as a symbolic place of religious "syncretism."

23) At that time, the businessman owned the pagoda. However, I later heard that ownership of the pagoda was transferred to the local government.

VI Analysis

VI-1 *Classification of the Cases*

The results of this research are summarized in Fig. 3. The case of the Diamond Pagoda falls into Section A, syncretism. The manager of the pagoda demonstrated a positive will to syncretize the two traditions, and the Dai people expressed odd feelings about the arrangement of the Buddha images in the pagoda. The case in Y village falls into Section B, bricolage. Although outsiders may have felt odd about the intrusion of Guanyin into the Theravada tradition, insiders were unconcerned about the difference. They had just borrowed a handy tool to complement their own tradition. An observer (me) would judge it as bricolage because the tradition had kept its unity compared to the next case of hybridity in a narrow sense. The temples in Yingjiang fall into Section C, hybridity. In this case, although the two traditions continued to work as two different systems, the insiders just accepted the situation without attempting to merge them completely into one tradition. L town's case was a little complicated. Perhaps, it would be better to separate the male Dai and monks from the female Dai. The case of the female Dai was similar to the situation in Yingjiang, therefore it should be classified into Section C, hybridity. The male Dai and monks' case demonstrates anti-syncretism in my perspective. They emphasized the differences between the Mahayana and Theravada and rejected the Guanyin cult. This situation might be termed "separative coexistence."

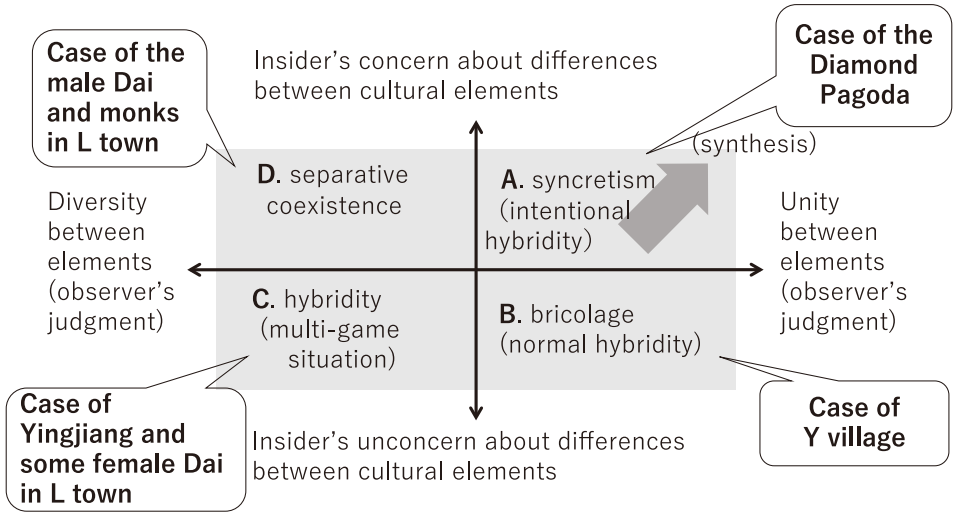

Fig. 3 Analysis of the Buddhist Situation in Dehong

Source: Author

VI-2 *More Comments on the Framework*

I propose distinguishing the three concepts: insider, outsider, and observer for several reasons. At first, I allotted the insider's view to the vertical axis and the outsider's view to the horizontal axis. However, I found that the "outsider" and "observer" were not always the same. A good example was the case of Y village where the villagers thought their tradition kept coherence or "unity," although outsiders could feel odd about the mixing of foreign elements. In fact, when I discussed Y village's situation with some Han scholars and Dai intellectuals including the one who accompanied me to the village, they lamented the situation as contamination of the Theravada tradition by *hanhua* (Sinicization). If they are "outsiders" (because they are obviously outsiders of the Y village), the outsiders' assessment should be inclined to "diversity." If the horizontal axis indicated the "outsider's" view, then the case of the Y village would have been classified under Section C because some outsiders would feel that these two traditions cannot mix.

However, I eventually concluded that the Y village tradition maintained its basic "unity," because the separation of two traditions were, in my view, not relatively apparent as cases in Yingjiang. Accordingly, I classified the case under Section B. To maintain logical consistency, I changed the assessor on the horizontal axis from "outsider" to "observer" by separating myself from insiders and outsiders.

This was an unexpected and exciting outcome. When assuming the Y villagers to be "insiders," the Han (and other non-Theravada believers) are naturally seen as "outsiders." However, different outsiders could have various opinions, and if some outsiders' views significantly differ from others, they will be inevitably differentiated from the rest of the outsiders. Especially when the outsider describes the situation from her view, it is natural to call her an "observer." Similarly, the Dai intellectuals who lamented the situation of Y village as *hanhua* are a kind of "outsiders" of Y village, despite of the common ethnicity, because they do not share the basic perspective with the Y villagers. This perhaps means that the simple dichotomy of insider and outsider was insufficient. There is no separation but relative and gradational differences among insider, outsider, and observer.

When scholars debate the insider/outsider problem, they often make two unconscious assumptions. First, it is often presumed that outsiders (as observers) are naturally detached from the insiders' situation. Second, scholars often assume the insiders and outsiders to be respectively monoliths. However, my analysis indicates that insiders and outsiders are inseparable, nor are they monoliths. In contrast, outsiders (who are near to insiders) and observers (or writers who are relatively detached from both) should be intentionally differentiated because there is continuum between them.

Here, it is necessary to reconsider the meaning of the term "insider." Practically

speaking, those who I met at temples were "insiders" as far as they support their temple, and these included monks, villagers, and worshippers. Although the majority of people I met were Dai, there were many villagers who were partially Han, and some of the monks in the ambiguous temples were Han. Some people could be also Achang and De'ang, although I could not confirm this. Therefore, it should not be assumed that all Theravada Buddhists are Dai or that all Dai are Theravada Buddhists, despite the strong tendency in Chinese official discourse to simply match religion with ethnicity. Perhaps the most accurate description would be to say that they are people who, to varying extent, contribute to maintaining the system of Theravada Buddhism.

In a sense, I have classified such "insiders" into four patterns: those who attempt to maintain the Theravada system **untouched by outsiders** (separative coexistence); those who attempt to **incorporate other elements** into the system (bricolage); those who try to maintain **multiple** systems simultaneously (hybridity); and those who **have a tense relationship with outsiders** capable of breaking the Theravada system (syncretism). The bold-faced parts also imply that the classification turns out to be not only about "insiders" but also about "the relationship between insiders and outsiders (including outer elements)." Consequently, the observer emerges as the person who makes a meta-cognitional analysis of the situation. This also demonstrates how the concept of "insider" is partially and inseparably related to "outsider," and that the observer must distinguish him/herself from various kinds of outsiders for the sake of description.

Second, this reconsideration reveals the limitation of the framework. I did not anticipate that this simple framework would be perfect, although I hoped that the framework could analyze the various phenomena in so-called "cultural coexistence." This is the time to assess what are caught and what are dropped. In other words, the "insider" or the target of analysis does not include people who are unconcerned with Theravada Buddhism. I intentionally excluded certain important elements of Dehong culture, such as Islam, Christianity, and the Jingpo's religion. Because my major purpose is to refine the conceptual framework, it was unavoidable to control variables and concentrate on the relationship between Theravada and Mahayana traditions. However, I was unaware that the framework would fail to account for some situations more or less related to Buddhism, such as the situations of most believers of Mahayana Buddhism, of those who converted from Theravada to other religions, and of those who are uninterested in all religious systems. The framework is only useful for the insiders of a system (in this case, Theravada Buddhism) when assessing the differences between their attitudes toward various outsiders. The focus was considerably Theravada-centric, and it did not focus evenly on both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Even as a study on

Theravada Buddhism, it typically overlooks the practices of the Buddhists who are not firmly integrated into the system or institution. Therefore, when we use this framework for Theravada Buddhism study, supplemental research is required at least to grasp the fragmenting, diffusing, and fading aspects of the Theravada system.

The third and last point was also an unexpected outcome. The results reveal that Sections A and B are related to the incorporation of elements into the system (one is unsuccessful, the other is successful) and that the Sections C and D are about the combination of systems (one is successful, the other is unsuccessful). It is unclear whether this finding is generalizable to other geographic areas. However, this finding implies that more attention should be paid to the characteristics of each element or repertoire, because there appear to be mixable and unmixable elements. For example, although both Guanyin and Shakyamuni appear to be mere elements or repertoires to observers, their weight in each tradition is different. Guanyin can be subordinated to Shakyamuni, but Shakyamuni cannot be subordinated to Guanyin. "Repertoires" is a useful concept, but scholars must be careful when determining the characteristics and values of each repertoire. The random coupling of repertoires is not always to occur even in hybrid culture.

VI-3 *Further Consideration regarding the Situation in Dehong*

This paper emphasizes proposing a new framework for analyzing the various situations that emerge during cultural contact, because the materials are insufficient as a study of culture in Dehong. The model only clarified the four patterns of Theravada Buddhists in Dehong who were reacting to cultural contact with the Guanyin cult. Currently, I am uncertain of the ratio among these four patterns, which pattern is most prominent, how many and what kind of borderline cases might appear, and how many practices fall outside the framework. Classification must not be a goal but a starting point for a deeper analysis of these points. Although current data is limited, it is possible to raise several points that should be considered in future studies on this district.

Firstly, this classification is intended to motivate further historical consideration. Classification itself can provide only a static view of a partial situation. Scholars should also focus on the historical processes that are contributing to the current development of the situation. When scholars focus specifically on the diversity of a situation, questions about what kind of historical conditions diversify the situation will naturally follow. I infer that the rapidity, directness, and power relationship of cultural contact affect the diverse patterns of the situation.

In Dehong's case, as mentioned earlier, Yingjiang experienced a more moderate inflow of the Han since before the Ming period. Previously, the encounter between the Han and the Dai might have been sporadic and indirect due to the small number of Han immigrants.

Such conditions may have created enough time to digest the Han culture in a relatively relaxed way. The translation of the Miaoshan story into the Dai language seems to symbolize a moderate cultural mixing process. Judging from the spread of the Dai version of the Miaoshan story in noble houses and some of the rural areas, I infer that moderate cultural change would have formed the first layer of the cultural contact in Dehong.

In contrast, Luxi, in addition to the early moderate inflow, experienced a rapid inflow of the Han since the 1930s. In 1953, the Dehong local government was established in the old capital area of Luxi, and political measures were more strongly implemented there. The Guanyin temple was constructed[24] opposite to the most influential Theravada temple in Luxi and it was inevitable that some Dai people saw the two temples as rivalrous. I speculate that the sense of competition caused by rapid change enforces the "separative coexistence" or anti-syncretic tendencies.

The spread of the Han version of the Buddhist scriptures could serve as supportive evidence of rapid change caused by direct contact. As usual with Mahayana temples, the Guanyin temple in L town was a big distribution center of free booklets about Mahayana Buddhism. As the younger Dai generation who are better at speaking Han Chinese has increased, the Han books have become more directly accessible to them. Currently, almost all the young and middle-aged Dai can read Han Chinese but cannot read the old Dai characters. Moreover, they even do not know there are Dai scripts of the Miaoshan story. Even if they did, they would demand a Han translation. I believe this is the second layer of the ongoing cultural contact situation in Dehong.

Secondly, it is necessary to interpret the second layer of the ongoing cultural contact in L town from the political perspective. Reading the political context or that of power relationship will provide a deeper understanding of everyday discourse, such as "the Han believe in Mahayana Buddhism and the Dai believe in Theravada," and "*hanhua*."

When Dehong accepted many Han immigrants and the CCP in the first half of the twentieth century, official ethnographers were demanded to identify peoples' nationalities. Their writings reflected the nationalism of the time and the nationalities policy of the CCP. Consequently, each book aimed to describe typical and general ethnic traits of each respective nationality. Therefore, the books contained many general descriptions about imagined nationalities, ignoring the diversity of individual, regional, and temporary characteristics. Dai studies were unexceptional. A typical expression is the statement "The Dai as a whole believe (全民信仰) in Theravada Buddhism." As early as 1950, Jiang Yingliang used a similar phrase in an early ethnography of the Dai people. Another early ethnography by Tian Rukang published in 1946 did not use this expression, but it did

24) It is unknown when the Guanyin temple was built. Guessing from the cases of other temples nearby, it might be built in the late nineteenth century.

contain a vivid description of indigenous rituals that would have impressed on Han readers that the Dai people believed in an unfamiliar kind of Buddhism. I infer that the later usage of "全民信仰" in official books,[25] supported by these early ethnographic descriptions, propagated the idea that "the Han believe in Mahayana Buddhism and the Dai believe in Theravada."

There are further reasons why I suspect that this discourse was popularized politically. First, the report of the official survey undertaken in 1983 states that some of the Dai people in Lianghe and Yingjiang believed in Mahayana Buddhism (Zhang 1987, 148).[26] In addition, Zhang (1992) mentioned that there was a cult called Changzhai-Jiao (常斋教) that was mainly followed by the Han in the mountainous area of Luxi county. According to Zhang, Changzhai-Jiao cult asserted that Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism shared the same origin and worshiped Guanyin, Yuhuang, Shakyamuni, Weituo (韦驮), and Maitreya (Zhang 1992, 254). Although this implies that several religious traditions had formerly mixed in the past, these facts are scarcely mentioned in later books on Dehong.

Moreover, Zhang (1992) wrote that the Political Consultative Conference, United Front, and Buddhist Association in Lianghe County decided to "put the cult in order" (整顿) by making it into a Chan sect (Zhang 1992, 254–255). I witnessed a similar phenomenon in L town. The Guanyin temple once held several annual Taoist festivals; however, since 1999, Taoist festivals have been absent from the annual events calendar posted on the temple wall. The lay Taoist geomancers who once assisted in holding temple festivals were shut out at least from August 2003. This corresponds with the CCP's and academic tendency to prefer the idea of pure and isolated traditions. There are two probable reasons for this. First, the CCP recognizes the product of religious mixing is mere irrational superstition. It is well known that the CCP was so anti-religious that they suppressed religions during Cultural Revolution. It is natural for them to attempt to eradicate superstition that is inferior to ordinary religion. Second, the CCP are alert to so-called syncretic cults as a political threat. It was not too long ago that the CCP wiped out Yiguandao (一贯道), a typical syncretic cult rebellious against the CCP during the Sino-Japanese War.

Therefore, when we listen to people's voices about religion, we should consider how

25) 《Daizu Jianshi》 Bianxiezu (1986) used the expression on page 193. The book was published as official history of the Dai by National Ethnic Affairs Commission. Yu Jianzhong (1997), prefaced by the sub chief of NEAC, also used the similar expression, "the Dai's belief is of the whole people (全民性)" on page 157.

26) It is a report in Dehong Daizu Shehui Lishi Diaocha (Zhang 1987). Most of the survey was undertaken in the 1950s as a basis of the nationality policy but were only published in 1980s due to the interruption of the Cultural Revolution.

deeply they have been affected by the cultural politics, especially in political places like L town. There is an imperative that religious minorities such as the Theravada Buddhists and Daoists should not be merged to the Mahayana Buddhism or mixed together. Simultaneously, there is another imperative that people should not be fragmented. Each religious group is to be cohesive (cf. 全民信仰), and hopefully be friendly and united between different groups. Therefore, arguably, "harmonious coexistence" as the CCP's political ideal is peaceful "separative coexistence."

It is also better to assume that the mixing tendency of the first layer may have been prevalent even in L town under the ongoing process of the second layer change promoting "separative coexistence." In that sense, the tendency for "separative coexistence" of the monks and Dai men in L town might be a figure formed in the rapid Sinicization on the broad ground of the moderate Sinicization inclined toward "hybridity-bricolage."[27)]

The term *hanhua* should also be interpreted in an ethnic power relationship. Listening to the everyday usage of *hanhua* by the Dai in L town, they roughly and broadly use it to represent all the four situations: syncretism, bricolage, hybridity, and separative coexistence. Even the case of Y village and that of Dai men and monks in L town are taken as examples of *hanhua*. According to their usage of the term, even a small Han element mixed into Dai culture represents *hanhua*. The word used by Dai people typically causes pessimistic sentiments like "We have already been Sinicized" or "We are not pure Dai anymore."[28)]

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27) I also remember the surprise I felt when, on September 30, 1997, I was asked by the then monks in a major Dai temple in L town about the difference between Theravada and Mahayana. It was possible that even the monks in L town at that time were inclined to "hybridity-bricolage." There was also likelihood that the saying, "Buddhist temples should only contain Shakyamuni (释迦牟尼佛)," was inconsistent with the actual situation in those days. Looking back at my oldest pictures taken in between 1996 and 1999, some temples in the nearby villages of L town contain the images of Maitreya and Guanyin as worship objects. The saying seems to reflect the CCP discourse that exaggerates the contrast between Theravada and Mahayana. The other saying could be well-interpreted from this viewpoint. I infer that the saying "Mahayana Buddhism is inferior to Theravada" might show the Dai's sense of rivalry caused by the exaggerated contrast. The expression—"The languages are different, but the contents are the same"—although reflecting the honest recognition of most of the female Dai, could be used to lessen the tension caused by Dai–Han or Mahayana–Theravada rivalry, especially when some influential monks used the cliché in publicity of Dehong Buddhism.

28) These are expressions I frequently heard from the Dai intellectuals. I usually felt a tone of "being assimilated" with the word "*hanhua*," and its antonym "*daihua* (becoming Dai)" appeared to be the last word they could think upon. In contrast, when they use Dai words "tsoam^{55} xe^{11} (with the Han)" in more relaxed conversations, approximately meaning "to live by following the Han way/to live with the Han," they could more easily think upon the situation such as a KMT soldier marrying a Dai woman and living like a Dai, and called it "tsoam^{55} Tai^{55}," meaning "living like a Dai." It sounds more neutral. This seems to imply that the word "*hanhua*" is deeply related to the concept of assimilation.

From an observer's point of view, separative coexistence or anti-syncretism is not necessarily called *hanhua*. They are just living side by side. I once asked one of the Dai informants about this. He objected, saying, "Even if we are not mixed together, when we are outnumbered by the Han, the result is the same. We become a minority and will be ignored. That is eventually *hanhua*."[29] Then, what about the case in Y village? Dai people say it is also *hanhua*, but this seems wrong to me. If the Dai have incorporated Han elements to supplement the Dai tradition, should not it be called "Dainization"? When I expressed this opinion to another Dai friend in talking about Dai theater, he produced a puzzled smile and said nothing.[30]

It is possible that the ethnic power balance between the Han and Dai is reflected in these discourses. I believe that local Han and Dai people adhere to a Chinese version of social evolutionism. A passage from Fei Xiaotong's "The Pattern of Diversity in Unity of the Chinese Nation" (中華民族多元一体格局) typically articulates this idea. "If we drive the minority groups into free competition, it is obvious that the less-civilized groups would be eliminated and disappear. It is undesirable for us to become homogenized. Our goal is to achieve a multi-ethnic society. We should adhere to the principle that 'advanced ethnic groups must help backward groups' (先进帮后进). The Han must support the development of the economies and cultures of the backward ethnic minorities" (Fei 1999, 37).

Indeed, Fei highly valued the cultivation of a multi-ethnic society, but he also recognized that such a society was vulnerable to the homogenizing power of the advanced ethnic groups. Although Fei avoided using the word "*hanhua*," it is obvious that the ethnic minorities describe this homogenizing power as *hanhua* in their colloquial language. According to this perspective, it is natural for the Dai culture, including Theravada Buddhism, to disappear during the civilizing process. Moreover, the CCP's dislike of religious mixing makes it inclined toward devaluing hybridity and bricolage in Dehong Buddhism. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the idea of "Dinization" should be repressed. Consequently, the syncretic idea of those like the owner of the pagoda becomes hegemonic, at least in the political discourse.

Here, again, appear the contradictive two imperatives. As Fei's argument represents, the CCP expects that the Dai maintain their ethnicity (as far as its harmless to national unity of China), and the Dai people, especially the Dai intellectuals, share this expectation. However, in the real world, it is almost inevitable to follow the ways of

29) From a talk in August 10, 2006. The informant is a male Dai local official in charge of religious matters; he was in his fifties at that time. I felt that a similar view was shared by some Dai male temple-goers and intellectuals in L town, in daily conversations.

30) From a talk in August 6, 2009. The informant is a just-retired male performer of Dai theater.

majority Han. Whether the Dai like it or not, the Diamond Pagoda becomes one of the powerful symbols of Dehong Buddhism. The Dai intellectuals, monks, and laymen in L town may keep lamenting over *hanhua* in this situation, because they become inclined to feel any Han element entering into Dai culture is a sign of Sinicization.

The majority and politically powerful Han may simply believe that they are realizing "cultural and ethnic coexistence" peacefully, although other peoples like the Dai may feel somewhat homogenized or assimilated. If this assimilating inclination continues to spread, someday in the near future, Dai people (including the Dai in Yingjiang and Y villagers) might begin to feel strange about the bricolage in Y village or the multi-game situation in Yingjiang. In this sense, the political "rapid Sinicization" is possibly not just staying as the second layer but keeps eroding the first layer formed by "moderate Sinicization."

Third, it is necessary to consider other factors that fall outside the scope of the framework. This framework does not capture all religious practices in Dehong. It excludes the practices of Achang, De'ang, Jingpo, Christians, Muslims, and more. It also does not take other groups of Dai people into consideration, such as the Mahayana Buddhist Dai, the Christian Dai, and non-religious Dai. For example, there are several Dai people these days who stopped attending Theravada temples and start practicing Mahayana Buddhism. Their world views have been suddenly expanded by the improvement of their Han Chinese literacy and broad information brought on by the Internet since the 2000s. They voluntarily access and keep learning the Han Buddhist information. It appears that the information is transforming the Dai people's view by teaching that esoteric Buddhism as the essence of Buddhism, Mahayana the intermediate, and Theravada Buddhism as only the basic elements of Buddhism. Other than this, some articles report that the number of the Christian Dai is increasing (cf. Yang 2014; Hou 2015). The presumption that "all the Dai believe Theravada Buddhism" is revealed as only nominal.

In addition, the recent construction of high-rise apartment buildings and the widening of roads has accelerated the process of modernizing old L town. The physical changes will promote the transformation of the Dai culture in unexpected ways.

VII Conclusion

The term "hybridity" has recently become a popular word rather than "syncretism" in Asian studies, especially of Buddhist studies. However, neither term is sufficient for understanding the real and complex situation of cultural situation in Dehong. To grasp

its reality, it is necessary to use a set of appropriately defined concepts. Therefore, I proposed the quadrant framework for analyzing the varied phenomena that emerge during cultural contact. By focusing on the relationship between insider, outsider, and observer, I believe this framework successfully identified four patterns that define multicultural situations: syncretism, bricolage, hybridity, and separative coexistence.

Dehong is an excellent place to assess the usefulness of this framework. In contrast to Theravada-dominant countries, it has a rich history of cultural contact between many ethnic groups and a varied pattern of mixtures between several religious traditions.

However, for the same reason, the reality of Dehong reveals the limitation of the framework. The framework focuses on only four patterns of the attitudes held by Theravada Buddhist insiders. There may be other potential patterns of attitudes held by Theravada Buddhists in Dehong other than these four. However, the most important thing is to make most of the framework suitable to the respective cases. As long as there is no perfect framework, we should try to perceive things from a broad perspective by combining what the framework reveals and what fall outside of it.

I was only able to present a rough analysis on Buddhism in Dehong by relying on many suppositions. Nonetheless, I hope that this essay clarified the hidden conflict, fragility, and complexity of "harmonious coexistence" in Dehong. In addition, I hope that the framework provided a fresh perspective that is applicable to other areas and cases.

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Political Censorship and the Contestation of Nation-Building Discourse: A Survey of Cultural Productions regarding the Malayan Communist Struggle in Malaysia After 2000

Kuan Chee Wah*

This paper examines the development and situation of cultural productions regarding the Malayan Communist struggle in Malaysia from 2000 onward. The dispute and controversy surrounding the Communist struggle in Malaya were related to the Malayan Communist Party's position and role in the country's nation-building in which the regime's official discourse continued to place the Party as a terrorist organization, though ex-Communists claimed the Party had accelerated the nation's independence and thus demanded recognition in the country's nation-building. The UMNO regime implemented selective commemoration of the history and memory of nation-building and hindered publications regarding the Communist struggle. However, the state seemed to be more tolerant of Chinese-language Communist publications as it felt these were less influential among the Malay community. Nevertheless, the state imposed strict censorship on Communist-themed films, and several films providing alternative visions of the Communist struggle were banned outright by the Censorship Board. Thus, film censorship became the repressive state apparatus to cement UMNO's agenda. Despite heavy political censorship, a new generation of Malaysian cultural workers felt a conscientious need to diversify the nation-building discourse through their cultural creations and participation.

Keywords: Chin Peng, Communist-themed films, Film Censorship Board of Malaysia, Malayan Communist Party, nation-building, *The Last Communist*

Introduction

The year 2018 was important for the Malaysian political landscape. The ruling coalition Barisan Nasional (BN; National Front), which had ruled the country since its indepen-

* Academy of Film, School of Creative Arts, Hong Kong Baptist University, Lee Shau Kee Communication and Visual Arts Building, 5 Hereford Road, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon, Hong Kong
e-mail: kuancw@gmail.com
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0650-3402

dence from the British in 1957, was defeated for the first time by the opposition coalition Pakatan Harapan (Alliance of Hope), led by former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad. Even though the tables were turned in 2020 during the so-called "Sheraton Move," which saw the collapse of the Pakatan Harapan government, the 2018 general election marked a major change from the hegemony of the dominant United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), the de facto ruling power within BN. Historically, UMNO maintained its power by manipulating interethnic political conflicts and championing ethnic Malay rights and interests, positioning itself as protector of the rightful indigenous "owners" of the country (Vasil 1971, 2).

In this changing political landscape, civil society groups seized the opportunity to push the political boundaries and appeal for a more egalitarian political system and greater freedom of speech. During the 2018 Cooler Lumpur Festival held in Kuala Lumpur, the organizers decided to screen a banned documentary film about the Malayan Communist Party (MCP, sometimes also referred to as the Communist Party of Malaya) titled *The Last Communist* (*Lelaki Komunis Terakhir*, 2006), directed by the Malaysian independent filmmaker Amir Muhammad. Although this documentary survived the scrutiny of the Film Censorship Board of Malaysia in 2007, it was eventually banned after the Malay-language newspaper *Berita Harian* criticized the Censorship Board for releasing a film that supposedly paid tribute to an MCP leader—in this case, the life and struggle of the late Chin Peng (the alias of Ong Boon Hua), the MCP's long-serving secretary-general. However, the organizers failed to obtain permission for the screening (Azril 2018). While the filmmaker and the organizers had anticipated more relaxed censorship enforcement under the new regime, the topic of the Communist insurgency, the main target of repression during the so-called Malayan Emergency—which began in 1948 and lasted for 12 years—was still deemed sensitive and controversial for Malaysian politics and society.

The banning of *The Last Communist* was part of the political censorship of MCP-related cultural productions in post-independence Malaya/Malaysia. Under this premise, this paper examines the development and situation of cultural productions regarding the Communist struggle in Malaysia after 2000. First, this paper will present a background overview of the intertwining of the Communist struggle, nation-building, and the ethnic politics of Malaysia, which was demonstrated in the regime's selective commemoration of the history and memory of nation-building and the road to independence. Next, it will explore the selective tolerance of MCP-related publications according to language. Third, it will conduct a comprehensive discussion on the censorship of Communist-themed films in Malaysia. Special attention will be given to the roles of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Film Censorship Board as the state apparatuses in fortifying the ruling regime's

official discourse and power status quo. Last, it will highlight the efforts of the new generation of Malaysian cultural workers in the reinvention and diversification of the national imaginaries of the country's Communist past and the nation-building discourse. Overall, this paper tries to show that the histories and memories of the Communist struggle have been in a contested state in which the ruling establishments seek to fortify their power position by marginalizing and silencing the decolonization contributions of the Communists and the Left, while the latter struggle tremendously to reclaim their rightful place in the country's attainment of independence. This contestation is demonstrated in the area of cultural productions such as films, literature, and stage performances.

Communist Struggle and Contestation of the Nation-Building Discourse

Generally, the Communist struggle is a terrain of "memory-contestation" in contemporary Malaysian politics (Show 2020). Memory has become an integral element in the politics of remembering and forgetting (Radstone and Hodgkin 2003, 2), in which the regime relies on forging an exclusionary rightist Malay nationalism. The dispute and controversy surrounding the MCP are related to the Party's position and role in the country's nation-building. From a broader perspective, the MCP's history and Communist activities are an essential element of Malaysia's political, social, and economic development. The MCP formed the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) to assist the British in their fight against the Japanese occupation during the Second World War but British suppression of the Party's postwar activities eventually drove it underground (Stockwell 2006, 284–285). After the war, the MCP allied with a variety of groups, including the leftist political coalition PUTERA-AMCJA (Pusat Tenaga Rakyat [Center of People's Power] and the All-Malaya Council of Joint Action), and through various fronts and alliances negotiated with the returning British on various matters, including independence. However, the British preferred working with less radical elements, such as the eventual first prime minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman (leader of UMNO), and members of his Alliance Coalition (the forerunner of BN, which replaced the Alliance in 1973) (Cheah 2009). The MCP formed its Malayan National Liberation Army (MNLA) and launched its armed struggle in 1948, when a state of Emergency was declared by the British. The armed confrontation between the two belligerents cost tens of thousands of lives, including many civilians. Many of the prisoners taken during this undeclared war by the British were deported to China, as the majority of the Communists were ethnic Chinese. By eliminating the Communist threat and supporting the pro-British

UMNO and its Alliance Coalition, the British successfully retained their economic foothold in post-independence Malaya. The Alliance Coalition negotiated the terms of independence with the British. A constitution consolidating the Malay political supremacy was scripted, and Malaya achieved independence in 1957. Although the Communists demanded recognition and a place in the country's nation-building by claiming they had weakened the dominance of British imperialism (Communist Party of Malaya 1980, 18) and forced the British to the bargaining table (Chin *et al.* 2003, 493–494), the UMNO-led former regime's official discourse continued to place the MCP and its participants as terrorists and saboteurs. Even though the MCP officially terminated its armed struggle in 1989 after signing a peace accord with the Malaysian government, facilitated by the Thai military at Hat Yai in Southern Thailand, the resulting historical scars continued to be a taboo in Malaysian politics.

Generally, the Communist struggle is politically controversial because it is heavily intertwined with the politics of ethnicity in Malaysia. Scholars generally agree that Communism was first brought to Malaya by the radical faction within the Kuomintang, during the period of the first united front between the Kuomintang and the Chinese Communist Party as initiated by Sun Yat-sen in the 1920s (Hanrahan 1954, 7; Lee 1996, 22; Cheah 2012, 14). The earliest Communist activities emphasized fighting for the rights and upgrading the status of laborers—especially Chinese labor. Although fighting for labor rights was the MCP's main objective, the Party tried to speak to general Chinese interests. Thus, scholars have had few problems with defining the MCP as a "Chinese organization" (Yong 1991, 646; Lee 1996, 8; Belogurova 2019, 85). Although there was the existence of the Malay 10th Regiment during the Emergency, it was considered a minor force compared to the ethnic Chinese Communists. Hence, the communal "Chinese versus Malay" narrative came to dominate the Communist struggle's historical discourse, and the events of the Emergency could be conveniently spun as the "outsider immigrant" Chinese attacking and killing the "indigenous" Malays (Short 1970, 1081). This made it easier for the ultranationalist Malays to frame the Communist movement as an invasion by immigrants trying to seize political power from the Malays. Additionally, this "Chinese uprising" was treated as grounds for suspicion of Chinese loyalty to the Malaysian nation-state, adding obstacles to ethnic Chinese seeking their rightful status in the nation-building and hindering their efforts of establishing roots in the land. Concurrently, the Communist past has been frequently exploited by ultranationalist Malays, especially powerful figures from UMNO, to legitimize the its self-appointed role as the guardian of Malay interests from the domination of the Chinese.

Thus, UMNO and right-wing Malay nationalists have tried to skew history and memory to legitimize their primary status in nation-building and Malay ownership of the

land. At the same time, the Malay victimhood during the Emergency and the revival of Communist ideology have been frequently used as fear tactics to lure continued support for the regime from Malaysians, especially Malays. Hari Pahlawan (Warriors or Heroes Day) is celebrated on July 31 every year to commemorate the Malay soldiers who helped to defend Malaya from the Japanese invasion and those who lost their lives during the Emergency fighting the Communist insurgents, while the MCP-led MPAJA resistance and the Chinese hardship under Japanese brutality are marginalized from state commemorations and are not integrated into national memories. The National Monument erected in Kuala Lumpur in 1966 also constituted Communists as enemies of the state and solidifies the Muslim Malay dominancy (Blackburn and Hack 2012, 258). Secondary school textbooks simplify Communists as brutal and dangerous terrorists associated with Chinese interests, while portraying Malays as the only active resistance forces. These textbooks also highlight that Malays were not interested in Communism as Communists did not believe in God and tried to achieve their objectives through violence. The MPAJA's anticolonial role is briefly mentioned in a single paragraph in the textbooks, while the photograph captions also imply that the Chinese-dominant MPAJA was another protentional colonizer (Ting 2009, 46–47).

This "management of the past" by the regime creates a great challenge for the Chinese community in commemorating their ancestors' anti-Japanese efforts. Generally, it is almost impossible for the Chinese-dominated MCP to be considered and included as the country's "liberation war heroes" in the national narrative. In the recent past, some Chinese Malaysians have highlighted the wartime MPAJA's contributions in fighting the Japanese. They have tried to curate their own commemorations by setting up monuments in a Chinese cemetery park and organizing their own event to honor those who sacrificed their lives for the nation's decolonization, even though the state has contested the erection of these monuments (Wong 2007). Kevin Blackburn and Karl Hack (2012) have shown that these commemorations never entered the national sphere, and their memories were hardly nationalized. However, they note that Chinese commemorations are better tolerated if they are curated in a pure "Chinese language setting" in which the messages hardly reach non-Chinese Malaysians and those who cannot read and speak Chinese, and commemoration spaces are limited to "Chinese spaces" such as a Chinese cemetery park where Muslim Malays do not visit; thus, their impact on other ethnicities, especially Malays, is minimal (Blackburn and Hack 2012, 278–285).

Constraining the MCP's Legacy in Publications

Although a certain form of commemoration occurs in Malaysia, all activities related to the MCP or Communism are still tightly monitored and under heavy state surveillance. Since Communism is regarded as something from the past and its influence on the general Malaysian public is minimal, the state still tries to use every means and opportunity to reduce and suppress Communist and MCP discourse; a prime example is the state's treatment of MCP leader Chin Peng. Chin Peng, who was branded public enemy number one during the Emergency, was prohibited from setting foot on Malaysian soil by the Malaysian government although the agreement of the 1989 Peace Accord allowed all former Communists to enter Malaysia at least for a short-term trip (*Malaysiakini* 2013a). After Chin Peng's passing in Bangkok in September 2013, the Malaysian government barred his ashes from being brought back for fear that they would be used to commemorate and inspire a monument in his remembrance (Anand 2013). Although Chin Peng was not permitted to return to Malaysia—alive or dead—his memoir, *My Side of History* (Chin *et al.* 2003), can be accessed in the country despite some resistance from the authorities during the early period of its publication. Chin Peng's 527-page memoir, co-authored by the Singapore-based writers Ian Ward and Norma Miraflor, was the Communist leader's effort to tell "his side of the history" regarding the Communist struggle and the Emergency. The book's publisher stepped over a sensitive line, provoking a negative response from the Malaysian government. When the book's first consignment was transported to Malaysia from Singapore, it was seized by Malaysian customs, who claimed to be following government orders. However, the government later allowed the book's distribution (Wong 2004a). In 2004 the volume was translated into Chinese. Nevertheless, the underlying controversy resurfaced as the publisher filed a lawsuit against the Chinese-language newspaper *Nanyang Siang Pau* for breach of contract as the newspaper was assigned to serialize the book's Chinese version. At that time the newspaper was owned by the Malaysian Chinese Association, UMNO's partner in the BN coalition. The newspaper refused to serialize Chin Peng's memoir after it received "a verbal caution and written advice" from the Ministry of Home Affairs. The publisher and newspaper later reached an out-of-court settlement, and the newspaper agreed to resume its commitment to serialize the memoir (Wong 2005).

Another book, *Faces of Courage: A Revealing Historical Appreciation of Colonial Malaya's Legendary Kathigasu Family* (Kathigasu *et al.* 2006), was also challenged by the Malaysian authorities in 2006. The book's protagonist, Sybil Kathigasu, was a Eurasian nurse during the Second World War who aided the anti-Japanese movement with medical supplies and information and was later captured and tortured by the Japanese. Published

by Singapore's Media Master, the same publisher as Chin Peng's memoir, the book includes Sybil Kathigasu's memoir, an essay by Chin Peng about his contact with Kathigasu, and also a research report by Norma Miraflor and Ian Ward. The customs authorities in Johor Bahru, on the Malaysian side of the Malaysia-Singapore border, seized a consignment containing twenty copies of the book that were intended for press reviewers in Malaysia. According to a news report, the customs officers seized the books mainly because the name "Chin Peng" appeared on the cover. According to Ward, the publisher and co-author of the book, *Faces of Courage* was submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs for approval, but no formal decision was received from the ministry. Thus, the book is not officially banned and can be accessed by readers in Malaysia (Wong 2006).

Chong Ton Sin, the owner of the Strategic Information and Research Development Centre (SIRD), a progressive independent Malaysian publisher of academic books with a critical perspective—including memoirs of ex-Communists and research on the Communist struggle and leftist movements in Malaya—asserts that the topic of Communism and leftist movements gradually became less sensitive after the 1989 Peace Accord. Before that, any publication on the MCP or even Mao Tse-tung was deemed politically sensitive, and the publisher risked a jail sentence. The Ministry of Home Affairs, which is in charge of monitoring the publishing culture, has since relaxed its grip on publications regarding MCP and Communism. Instead, it is more focused on publications about religion, especially Islam, and those that are directly critical of the ruling regime and its policies. Thus, most of the Communists' memoirs and research on the Communist struggle published by the company are left untouched by the authorities; no books have been officially banned except for one, the Malay-language version of *Life as the River Flows: Women in the Malayan Anti-colonial Struggle* (Khoo and Crisp 2004), an oral history of female Communist cadres who participated in the Malayan anticolonial struggle. Although the Malay-language version of the book was sold for years, it was banned in 2017, when Ministry of Home Affairs officers inspected a book fair.[1] As the English and Chinese versions of the book are not officially banned, the question of language became an important factor for the regime in banning a certain publication that involved MCP. In other words, the UMNO-dominated regime is more sensitive toward Malay-language publications on Communists and Communism as the publications directly engage with Malay readers, who allegedly possess a weaker command of English and cannot read Chinese. It is obvious that the regime is trying to keep Malays away from a deeper understanding of the Communist struggle and confining them to the view of Communists

1) Personal communication, Chong Ton Sin, September 24, 2020.

as alien saboteurs and terrorists.

A similar censorship pattern can be observed in the memoirs of Malay Communists. In 2004, *Utusan Malaysia*—a Malay-language newspaper at the time owned by UMNO—published a few letters from readers questioning the appropriation of the National University of Malaysia (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia), which bore the responsibility for upholding Malay nationalism and enhancing the use of the Malay language in academia, to publish the Malay-language memoirs of two Malay Communist leaders, Shamsiah Fakeh and Ibrahim Chik. The letters urged the university management to investigate the publication's motive and eventually led to the forming of a university committee to probe into the issue (Wong 2004c). Malay-language publications from a government-funded university were deemed too controversial in the eyes of certain anti-Communist Malay quarters. The issue halted other publication projects on Malay Communists and radical movements by the university, and some projects were transferred to SIRD.[2)]

On the other hand, Malaysian Chinese-language publications on the MCP and Communism continued to appear. In 2004, Tiong Hiew King, a timber tycoon in East Malaysia who was also the owner of the Malaysian Chinese-language newspaper *Sin Chew Daily*, launched a Chinese-language book on the MCP titled *The Evergreen Mountain: A Journey of the Communist Party of Malaya* (青山不老——馬共的歷程) (Liew 2004). The book features interviews by journalists with Chin Peng and former Inspector-General of Police Rahim Noor, who was involved in the Hat Yai Peace Accord. Written by journalists and edited by the editor-in-chief of the daily, the book also includes profiles and biographies of Chinese and Malay MCP leaders (Wong 2004b). As the Chinese-language newspaper with the biggest readership in Malaysia, *Sin Chew Daily* tried to tap into the hot topic among the Chinese community when Chin Peng was denied entry into Malaysia.

At the same time, Malaysian Chinese publishers continued to publish stories and autobiographical writings by ex-Communist cadres who shared their experiences participating in student and union movements, the armed insurrection, and their life in the jungle. Some of these writers even had columns in Chinese-language newspapers to share their experiences participating in the Communist struggle. A comprehensive survey of the contents of these publications is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it should be emphasized that these publications have been left undisturbed by the authorities because they are read primarily by Chinese readers and circulate within Chinese cultural circles, which confirms Blackburn and Hack's (2012) observation regarding the Chinese commemorations discussed above. Commemorations and publications are tol-

2) Personal communication, Chong Ton Sin, September 24, 2020.

erated if their influence is limited to the Chinese community and avoids direct engagement with Malays.

The situation is the same with 21st Century Publisher, which belongs to the 21st Century Malaysia Friendship Association (21世紀聯誼會), an association of ex-Communist cadres. The association has published many Chinese-language autobiographies, memoirs, historical accounts, political viewpoints, and analyses on the MCP and MNLA since 2002. In addition to hard copies, the publisher puts its publications on its official website to take advantage of the relatively free Malaysian cyberspace. Unlike the case of print media, the BN regime pledges not to censor online content, as a way to attract foreign investors into the Multimedia Super Corridor, a project launched by then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad during the 1990s (Abbott 2001, 104). However, Show Ying Xin, who has studied the contents of 21st Century Malaysia Friendship Association publications, finds that the association's efforts to contest the official nation-building discourse lean toward defending Chinese rights, memories, and identity from the Malay hegemony, which paradoxically tightens the link between Chinese and the Communist struggle (Show 2020, 113–114). While this development may be seen as a limitation in changing the impression of a "Chinese uprising" in the Communist struggle discourse, the publisher's "Chinese-reader-targeted" and "Chinese-identity-oriented" tendencies do spare its publications from serious state harassment. However, the first volume of *Picture Album: History of Communist Party of Malaya*, which was launched to commemorate the fifth anniversary of Chin Peng's passing, was banned in 2018 by the newly elected government. The picture book features archival photographs of British colonial Malaya, the beginning of the MCP, and the union activities and the role of the MPAJA in fighting the Japanese during the Second World War. The photographs are captioned in Chinese, English, and Malay. Despite the first volume's ban, 21st Century Publisher launched the second volume of this picture book in 2019 in conjunction with the Hat Yai Peace Accord's 30th-anniversary commemoration. Nevertheless, the issue of "smuggling" Chin Peng's ashes into the country, which occurred at the same time, was too controversial,[3] and the attention it generated overshadowed the launch of the book. Thus, the authorities left the book undisturbed (Phoon 2019).

Why was the picture book banned but text-based publications spared? Was it

3) In September 2019, a group held a press conference stating that Chin Peng's ashes had been brought back to Malaysia and scattered into the sea and jungle near his birthplace, fulfilling Chin Peng's final wish to return to his homeland. As expected, this announcement provoked a negative response from UMNO, which was on the opposition front. UMNO attacked the newly elected government for changing history by allowing the ashes to be brought back, and demanded that action be taken against those involved. Some retired police associations held a small rally to protest the "revival of Communism" in the country (Faisal 2019).

because photographs and visuals possess a greater ability to breach cultural barriers and are more influential than written words? If so, similar censorship may also be applicable to film as an audiovisual medium. This explains why the Ministry of Home Affairs of Malaysia is very sensitive about films portraying the MCP.

The Banning of Communist-Themed Films

In May 2006, *The Last Communist*, which features a "searching for Chin Peng" theme, was banned from public screening. Prior to the ban, the film was granted a U rating (suitable for all ages) and passed for release without any cuts by the Film Censorship Board of Malaysia. However, the screening was limited to Golden Screen Cinema International Screens, which owned three cinemas with digital projection facilities at the time—two in Kuala Lumpur and one in Penang. Nevertheless, the film was banned by the Ministry of Home Affairs two weeks before its release, after the pro-UMNO conservative newspaper *Berita Harian* published a series of articles accusing the film of glorifying Communism and Chin Peng, even though the newspaper critics and Malay politicians interviewed in the articles had not watched the film. Director Amir Muhammad was then required to conduct a special screening session for the Special Branch unit of the police force, and the Special Branch did not voice any objection to the contents of the film. For a few consecutive days, *Berita Harian* published articles such as interviews with UMNO politicians, pro-UMNO academicians, and filmmakers condemning the director's motives and questioning the decision of the Censorship Board to approve the film. In her interview, the head of Puteri UMNO—the UMNO female youth wing—questioned the Censorship Board as she insisted the film glorified the Communist leader while there were many more credible people to commemorate instead. The entertainment editor of *Berita Harian*, Akmal Abdullah, who was also running a film comment column in the newspaper, questioned the motives behind the film's being screened only in Kuala Lumpur and Penang, which he labeled as "Chinese majority areas." He further commented that Malay filmmakers should make films about the struggle of heroes from their own race (*Malaysiakini* 2006).

In response to the ban, another special screening session was organized for members of the Malaysia Parliament. Many politicians who attended the screening felt that *The Last Communist* was inoffensive and did not endanger public order. However, then Minister of Home Affairs Radzi Sheikh Ahmad, who was from UMNO, defended the ban by asserting that the documentary failed to portray the violent side of Communists, especially the violence of Chin Peng, and could create misconceptions among Malaysians

regarding the Communist struggle. The minister even equated Chin Peng to Osama bin Laden: "it will be like allowing a film portraying Osama bin Laden as a humble and charitable man to be screened in the United States" (Lim 2006). Thus, Malaysia made history by banning a film for not containing enough violence.

Even though Amir Muhammad and the production company appealed the decision, the ban continued. Soon after, Amir resorted to alternative film distribution channels, such as independent bookstores and online streaming services. Amir, a Muslim of Indian descent, in his defense of his film criticized *Berita Harian* for being "ethnocentric and semi-fascist" (*The Sun Daily* May 9, 2006). His subsequent documentary on ethnic Malay ex-Communist members who had settled in Southern Thailand, *Village People Radio Show* (*Apa Khabar Orang Kampung*, 2007)—which can be considered a sequel to *The Last Communist*—was also banned. The sequel was banned by the Film Censorship Board for several reasons, including the following: "it only shows the opinions and stories from the Communist's perspective," "it blatantly criticizes Malaysian Government while insulting the monarchy and the Malays," and "it touches on the sensitivities and bitter memories of security forces and the victims of Communist atrocity" (Amir 2007).

In August 2013, a feature film titled *The New Village* suffered a similar fate to Amir's film as it was prohibited from public screening even though it had been reviewed by the Film Censorship Board the year before and been given the green light for screening with no cuts. The film was directed by the Chinese filmmaker Wong Kew Lit and produced by the Malaysian satellite broadcasting giant Astro in collaboration with the director's production house, Yellow Pictures. As implied by its title, the film's backdrop is the large-scale resettlement of Chinese squatters in concentration camps named New Villages during the Emergency. The film is a love story between a girl who has been resettled in the titular New Village and a boy who has decided to join the Communist forces in the jungle. The Film Censorship Board eventually reversed its decision after Malay right-wing groups alleged, based on its short trailer, that the film glorified Communism. The UMNO mouthpiece newspaper *Utusan Malaysia* published an article by Awang Selamat, the nom de plume of the paper's collective editorial opinion, accusing the filmmaker of presenting a "skewed perspective" of history to rejuvenate the campaign calling on the authorities to allow Chin Peng to return to Malaysia (Chin Peng died in Thailand the same year). The article asserted that the trailer showed Britain's ill treatment of the Chinese while ignoring the predominantly Malay members of security forces killed by the Communists, thus glorifying Communism and the armed struggle. The article also questioned the Censorship Board's supposed double standards for allowing a film that rewrote history to be screened while postponing the screening of what it saw as the historically accurate Malay(sian) Patriotic Film (discussed in the next section)

Tanda Putera (Ng *et al.* 2013; Yiswaree 2013). Thus, the banning of *The New Village* became more dissentious as it coincided with the postponed screening (three times) of the controversial *Tanda Putera* (Dir. Shuhaimi Baba, 2013), which depicted the May 13, 1969 ethnic riots that took hundreds of lives. The human rights NGO leader Kua Kia Soong slammed *Tanda Putera* for adhering to the UMNO agenda and pinning the riot's responsibility on the Chinese, especially those associated with the Communists and leftist political parties (Kua 2013, 33–34). He also contended that *Tanda Putera* was never banned but strategically withheld by UMNO to avoid losing votes in the 2013 general election (Kua 2013, 38).

Wong Kew Lit and the producers never launched a massive and aggressive defensive campaign against the assaults. They released a press statement asserting that the film was mainly "a period feature film in Mandarin that depicts a forbidden love story," a token of remembrance for those living in the New Villages during the Emergency (*Malaysiakini* 2013b). Producer Leonard Tee told the Chinese-language press that the film's true intention was to let people know about the history of the New Villages, and not to judge whether decisions taken during this particular period of history were right or wrong, while hoping that the new generation of Malaysians would appreciate the current peaceful environment (*Sin Chew Daily* August 5, 2013). The producers' appeal to the Censorship Board's decision was not successful.

The New Village was part of the boom of commercial local Chinese-language productions in films and television beginning in the new millennium. The setting up of Chinese-language channels on satellite television and the flourishing of Chinese Malaysian artists and filmmakers were enabled by the willingness of Chinese Malaysian audiences to support local Chinese-language productions. Thus, it would not be wrong to say that *The New Village* catered mainly to Chinese Malaysian audiences, given that the topic of New Villages is deeply embedded in Chinese Malaysian history and identity. Although the film was ingrained in the Chinese cultural sphere and targeted Chinese Malaysian audiences, it was banned due to complaints raised by anti-Communist ultra-nationalist Malays. However, two Chinese-language books relating to the film—a novel extracted from the film and film production notes—were never banned and can still be openly purchased in bookstores. This proves that the ruling establishment is much more sensitive toward cinematic productions than Chinese-language text-based publications.

In February 2017 a documentary titled *Absent Without Leave*, which chronicled the history of the Communist struggle in then-Malaya through interviews with ex-Communists, was prohibited from cinema screenings and DVD distribution in Malaysia. The film was banned by the Film Censorship Board for "having elements which may be negative for national development" after it was submitted for the Malaysia International

Film Festival. As a protest against the ban, the production company held a special screening event on Facebook, and the documentary was made available free of charge for a week on YouTube (*Malaysiakini* 2017). This documentary was directed by Lau Kek Huat, a Malaysian-born filmmaker based in Taiwan. In the documentary, Lau tries to trace his family history, especially that of his grandfather, who has been mysteriously absent from the family narrative. In combing through the family stories, the documentary slowly reveals that Lau's grandfather was involved in the Communist struggle in Malaya. The documentary later tries to give a more complete account of Communist history by interviewing exiled ex-Communists residing outside Malaysia.

Lau was disappointed with the ban as it blocked the film from engaging with the Malaysian public, which was his main intention in bringing the film to Malaysia. He denied that the documentary was trying to worship or glorify the MCP and Communism. Instead, he intended the film to be a bridge for communication between various entities that had suffered equally during the Emergency so that wounds could be healed and interethnic reconciliation could be possible (Kuan 2018). His next project, *Boluomi* (2019), his first feature film, again confronted the political taboo of the Communist struggle in Malaysia. *Boluomi* was meant to pair with *Absent Without Leave*. Lau made the film as a gesture of gratitude to the ex-Communists he interviewed in *Absent Without Leave*, and he tried to make use of the stories and information he had gathered during the fieldwork and documentary shooting for his first feature film (Chang 2020). *Boluomi* utilized a dual narrative pattern juxtaposing a story of the relationship between a male Malaysian student and a Filipino female worker in Taiwan set in the 2000s, with the story of a mother and her son during the Malayan Emergency. The 2000s part is a semi-biographical story of Lau as a Malaysian student in Taiwan, while the other is inspired by the experiences of his grandfather and father during the Emergency. Like its predecessor, *Boluomi* was banned; the Censorship Board contended that 27 of its scenes contained elements that "contradict with national policy and tarnishes the government's sovereignty." Thus, the film was not allowed for screening, in order to preserve social harmony (HummingBird Production 2020). As a result of the ban, Lau's films have never been able to generate intensive public engagement and discussion in Malaysia.

Film Censorship as a Means to Safeguard the Regime's Political Power

According to Robert Rosenstone, visual media such as television and film are important for human understanding of the past in the "postliterate" world, in which people are literate but consume more visual media (Rosenstone 1995, 46). The Ministry of Home

Affairs, which directly controls the Film Censorship Board, is more sensitive toward films depicting visual representations of the Communist struggle. The above-discussed films were accused of glorifying Communism and its leaders and potentially resurrecting Communism in a country where its ideological foothold was already lost. As in the case of the criticisms directed against Amir Muhammad's films, the accusations were made by those who had not even watched the whole film. As a result of these accusations, the Film Censorship Board had to response and banned the films. Government bodies like the Film Censorship Board normally choose not to go against anti-Communist sentiment and are likely to support the status quo set by the regime in power.

Film censorship in Malaysia is basically a legacy of the British colonial government. While emphasizing the need to hinder Communist ideology from influencing the Malayan people, the colonial censorship practice was to make film a medium to assert colonial ideology and promote the British image in the colonies (Stevenson 1974; van der Heide 2002, 119–122). A former head of research in National Film Development Corporation Malaysia mentioned that British film regulations "shaped the present situation that governs and controls the communication industry in general and the film industry in particular" (Balaraman 2005, 25). The public broadcast service of the newly independent Malayan government (Malaysia was formed in 1963) even adopted the British "colonial service model," which was originally meant to safeguard the colonial power (Karthigesu 1987, 76). After Singapore separated from Malaysia in 1965, a new Censorship Board was set up in Kuala Lumpur in 1966 and new censorship legislation was enacted based on the Cinematograph Films Ordinance of 1952 drafted in Singapore (Wan Amizah *et al.* 2009, 44). The Malaysian Censorship Act, which was amended in 2002, requires films (including those that are intended for broadcast on television and satellite channels) to be submitted to the Censorship Board for inspection before they can be exhibited and made available to the public (Saw 2013, 59; Chang *et al.* 2015, 236). The Malaysian film censorship guidelines contain a section on "Ideology and Politics," which prohibits "films praising or spreading the teachings of Communism that will arouse the sympathy of audiences toward Communism." Along with other conditions, such as "films containing ideological propaganda that is inconsistent with the *Rukun Negara* [the national ideology that was created after the 1969 racial riot to promote national unity]," "films that are detrimental to the political climate of the country," "films that are detrimental to the image of the country," and "films that may incite social tension," films can be banned and censored for political reasons (Saw 2013, 59). However, the guidelines are arbitrary and inconclusive. This vagueness potentially contributes to the misuse of censorship for political motives. Moreover, the Minister of Home Affairs has the absolute discretion to override decisions made by the Censorship Board, and his decisions cannot be appealed

or challenged in court (Saw 2013, 41; 61–62). Similarly, *The Last Communist* witnessed the Minister of Home Affairs' decision to ban it after the uproar in the Malay language media. This ministerial post was held by UMNO politicians during the two controversies, and the two ministers did not hesitate to restrain discourse on the Communist insurrection in order to uphold the party's ideology and interests.

Stuart Hall (2016) has contended that although political hegemony is maintained through the manufacture of social consent, coercive devices will always be implemented to ensure consent's stability and dominance. As he asserts, "The moments of coercion and consent are always complementary, interwoven, and interdependent, rather than separated elements. Most systems of exploitation are maintained by the double modalities of coercion and consent; they are both always present" (Hall 2016, 171). Hence, film policies and regulations no doubt function as "repressive state apparatuses" (Althusser 1971) to ensure the dominance of the official nation-building discourse. The Ministry of Home Affairs and the Film Censorship Board play their roles as state apparatuses in fortifying the regime's status quo, hampering film workers' creativity and freedom of expression, and preventing film workers from expressing alternative (read: subversive) ideas.

This rhetoric of glorifying and reviving Communism unequivocally operates within the ethnic politics of Malaysia. Even though there was a regime change in 2018 and a reversion in 2020, any regime in power—no matter how ostensibly reformist it appears—is sensitive to knowledge and cultural production, especially in the Malay language, which potentially alters the general Malay perception of Malaysia's Communist past. Furthermore, the loss of UMNO and BN in the 2018 General Election was related to the government 1MDB (1Malaysia Development Berhad) investment fund scandal and the new pro-Malay party formed by then Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad to compete for the Malay electorate (Funston 2018; Malhi 2018). Thus, it is rather naïve to consider the election's result as a sign of a totally new nation-building pathway and a diminution of the nation's ethnic politics. The new regime that took power was eager to maintain the official nation-building discourse and the ethnic-preferential system in order not to upset the Malay electorate, as any changes carried the risk of offending the anti-Communist Malay faction and consequently losing their political support. This is why all bans remain, including those on newer films about the Communist past such as *Boluomi*.

In contrast, films that adhere to the official nation-building discourse are always spared from the scissors of the Censorship Board. A good example is *The Garden of Evening Mists* (2019), adapted from the novel of the same name by the Chinese Malaysian author Tan Twan Eng. Commissioned by the Malaysian film production company Astro

Shaw but directed by a Taiwanese (Tom Lin Shu-yu), the film has a pan-Asian appeal. It stars Malaysian-born Angelica Lee Sin-je (who launched her entertainment career in Taiwan), Japanese actor Hiroshi Abe, Taiwanese veteran actress Sylvia Chang Ai-chia, and English actors Julian Sands and David Oakes. Although set in pre-independence Malaya, the film is not about the MCP or Communism but centers on the relationship between a Malayan Chinese woman and a mysterious Japanese gardener, who the film later reveals to be connected with the fate of the woman's sister, who suffered brutality at the hands of the Japanese army during the Second World War.

However, there are indeed two scenes portraying the Communist "rebels" during the Emergency, depicting them as terrorizing the protagonists and their British friends while searching for gold left behind by the Japanese army. This representation definitely fits in with the state-sanctioned image of Communists as terrorists and saboteurs. To increase its historical relevance, the film also includes flashbacks showing Japanese tyranny during the war and mentions Chinese resettlements in the New Villages during the Emergency. Nevertheless, like the original novel, the film does not feature a single Malay character or representation of Malay politics, even though it is set in the chaotic period when different Malay political entities fought and negotiated with the British for decolonization. Although creative license is always accepted in film adaptations, this film's production team chose to stay true to the book in order to avoid touching on Malay politics and Sino-Malay tensions, which have continued to haunt the nation since the pre-independence period. With its adherence to the official discourse of the Communist struggle, the film received favorable treatment from the Censorship Board and was allowed to be screened in Malaysian cinemas during the Chinese New Year festive period in 2020.[4)]

Besides censorship and outright banning, the ruling establishment has extended its grip on national film production through sponsoring film projects: Malay(sian) Patriotic Films (Lim 2011) such as *Bukit Kepong* (Dir. Jins Shamsuddin, 1981), *Leftenan Adnan* (Dir. Aziz M. Osman, 2000), *Embun* (Dir. Erma Fatima, 2002), *Paloh* (Dir. Adman Salleh, 2003), *1957: Hati Malaya* (Heart of Malaya; Dir. Shuhaimi Baba, 2007), and *Tanda Putera* mentioned above. These films are usually screened in August and September when the nation celebrates Independence Day on August 31 and Malaysia Day on September 16. Besides *Paloh*, which is considered to be more ideologically challenging for its "problematizing Malay(sian) history" (Lim 2011, 97), all the films mentioned above try to incite rightist Malay nationalist sentiment by upholding the Malays' ownership of

4) I wish to thank Dr. Lim Kien Ket of National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University for his suggestion to include *The Garden of Evening Mists* in the discussion.

the land. In these films, the Malays generally—and UMNO specifically—struggle tremendously to defend their rights and their motherland from the encroachment of foreign colonizers, invaders, and immigrant communities (see Khoo 2006; Lim 2011; Blackburn and Hack 2012, 265–276). Thus, the state is fully aware of the propaganda value of the film medium. These films have been used as a medium for the regime's top-down approach in transmitting and canonizing the official version of the nation-building past via the remediation of the narrative template, in line with the mainstream historical discourse and school curriculum. Utilizing the twin apparatuses of censoring films and sponsoring patriotic films, the regime tries to dominate the representation of the Communist past while curbing rational discussion and debate regarding the Communists' role in the nation-building process.

Reimagining Nation via Cultural Creation

Despite state pressure and suppression, a new generation of Malaysian multiethnic cultural workers and activists feel a conscientious need to renegotiate the national imaginaries by revisiting the nation's past, which ties in with the issues of nation-building and the Communist struggle. They try to diversify and pluralize the nation-building discourse by deconstructing Cold War stereotypes while giving opportunities to Communists and leftists to voice their memories, aspirations, and frustrations. These cosmopolitan, middle-class, and progressive-minded cultural workers and activists are based mostly in the urbanized capital of Malaysia—Kuala Lumpur. They have tried to liberate the nation-building discourse from the jailhouse of the regime's perspective while embracing new interpretations and expressions of national histories and memories. For Khoo Gaik Cheng, the interest and willingness of the younger generation of Malaysian cultural workers to "fill the gaps in Malaysian history" (Khoo 2010, 253) emerged because this generation carried less of a historical burden and emotional baggage about the past compared to the older generations:

> This generation did not experience firsthand the contempt and violence of British colonialism and the Japanese Occupation. For these comparatively young citizens, the idea that one would readily toil in the jungle for over thirty years and fight and die to defend an abstract notion such as "freedom from oppression" is far removed from their urban comforts and daily reality. Distanced experientially and temporally from the emotive propaganda of the times, they are able to revisit a past with some detachment and curiosity. (Khoo 2010, 254)

Besides the films and documentaries mentioned above, another documentary worthy of note is Fahmi Reza's *Ten Years Before Independence* (*10 Tahun Sebelum Merdeka*, 2007),

which engages with the history of the formation of the leftist coalition PUTERA-AMCJA. The documentary features interviews with elderly coalition participants who were still alive at the time. Unlike Amir Muhammad and Lau Kek Huat, Fahmi uploaded his 35-minute documentary online for free streaming and download as a way to dodge the Censorship Board. He even organized "underground screenings" in higher learning institutions, independent bookstores, NGO facilities, and art appreciation clubs. His main intention was to engage with Malaysian audiences and encourage discussion and questioning of the Malaysian nation-building history (Surin 2007).

Some Malaysian art workers have also participated in this consciousness-raising process through their creations. A fine example is the "documentary performance" titled *Baling (Membaling)* (*baling* means "throw" in the Malay language and is also the name of the town near the Malaysia-Thailand border where the peace negotiation between the MCP and Alliance Coalition were held in 1955), which was produced by the Malaysian theater company Five Arts Centre and toured various Malaysian states and international art festivals from 2005. The stage performance, which was choreographed by the theater artist Mark Teh with the visual design by Fahmi Reza, reconstructed the peace negotiations between Chin Peng, Tunku Abdul Rahman, and David Marshall (then chief minister of Singapore) by asking the performers to recite the peace negotiation's declassified transcript. Different sets of readers were invited to read the same transcript, and sometimes performers switched roles. Occasionally there were improvisational acts, such as chairs thrown at the performers, to interrupt the reading process. Using different reading formats and tactics, audiences were invited to think about how the ghosts of the past continued to haunt the present by questioning the meanings of "freedom, loyalty, terrorism, reconciliation, surrender, sacrifice and independence" (Five Arts Centre n.d.). At the same time, the performance "create[d] a space for Chin Peng to appear as a legitimate political subject" (Rajendran 2020, 89) and assigned some weightage for Chin Peng next to his negotiation counterparts.

Five Arts Centre also curated an Emergency Festival in 2008 to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Emergency. The festival featured exhibitions, art installations, and stage performances dealing with the Internal Security Act, the introduction of identity cards by the British, the New Villages resettlement plan, and the repatriation of Chinese Communist sympathizers to China. Although the event was under surveillance by plainclothes police (Iwaki 2016), it did not stop the art workers from constructing "an intriguing re-examination and creative storytelling of the Malayan Emergency" (Choo 2008).

Besides, young Malaysians set up civil groups and organizations such as Malaysia Muda (Young Malaysia), Imagined Malaysia, Amateur, and Projek Dialog to draw atten-

tion to the problem of the lack of contestation in the official historical narrative. They organized talks, dialogues, and exhibitions and published online journals and articles to raise Malaysian awareness regarding the nation's alternative history. One example was an event titled "A People's History of the Malayan Emergency," held in July 2018 in Kuala Lumpur to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the start of the Malayan Emergency. The event was organized by Gerakbudaya, a subsidiary company of SIRD, with assistance from the above-mentioned civil groups. The event tried to tap into the changing political atmosphere in the aftermath of the 2018 General Election. It featured an exhibition; a forum discussion; singing and poetry performances by ex-MCP members; and the screening of another documentary by Fahmi Reza, *Revolusi '48* (Revolution '48), featuring talking heads of ex-MNLA veterans residing in Southern Thailand.[5] The event also had a forum titled "Should We Rewrite Our History Textbooks?" to discuss how the state projected the nation-building past. On the third day of the forum, the two speakers—, Fahmi and Fadiah Nadwa Fikri, a Malay human rights activist lawyer—raised the question of the marginalization of the Communist and left-wing movements in Malaysian history textbooks, especially with respect to nation-building and the country's independence. However, halfway through the session a few angry participants raised their voices and questioned whether the speakers were trying to justify the atrocities committed by the MCP during the Emergency while dishonoring the soldiers and policemen who died fighting the Communists.[6] In the three days following the forum, *Utusan Malaysia* carried news items on the event on its front page with headlines such as "Nilai semula buku sejarah, iktiraf PKM" (Revisit the textbooks, recognize MCP), "Wajarkah perjuangan PKM ditulis semula?" (Should we rewrite the MCP's struggle?), "Komunis bukan pejuang" (Communists are not freedom fighters). The newspaper tried to divert the focus of the event to the "recognition of Communists" while giving the impression that the organizers and speakers were Communist sympathizers. The organizers then held a press conference and issued a statement to refute the newspaper's accusation. They clarified that the event's purpose was not to advocate for the "recognition of Communists" but to encourage dialogue regarding whether the leftists' and Communists'

5) Fahmi Reza considered the documentary "incomplete" because he was not able to include Chin Peng's accounts: Chin Peng was too old to enunciate proper sentences when the shooting team reached him (I was a participant in the screening session when Fahmi explained his "failure").

6) This conflict also related to a digitally doctored poster for the event circulated online a few days prior. The poster contained a provocative sentence: "Semua dijemput hadir ke forum perbincangan mengiktiraf komunis, orang Melayu dan bekas tentera juga dijemput hadir" (All are welcome to the forum that discusses the recognition of Communists; Malays and ex-servicemen are also welcome). The organizer denied having produced such promotional material. This doctored poster was allegedly a manipulative tactic by the anti-Communist faction to discredit the revisionist-oriented forum.

participation in nation-building should be included in the writing of Malaysian history (Cheong 2018; Khaw 2018).

Thus, the ultranationalist Malays and the anti-Communist faction tried hard to contest the revisionist approach of the country's nation-building discourse. Nevertheless, the ultra-rightist Malay nationalist agenda never had a full grip on the political beliefs of all Malays, especially the younger generation. Members of this generation are more critical minded and long for a more integrated Malaysian society. They feel that something should be done to broaden ethnically polarized mindsets. For instance, Fadiah Nadwa Fikri and Fahmi Reza are among the core Malay public intellectuals who feel an urgent need to search for the Malaysian identity by confronting Malaysia's past, especially where Communists and leftists sought to play a role in decolonization. Their interests are mostly motivated by their longing for a Malaysian society that is less ethnically and religiously divisive.

In the aftermath of the forum clash in 2018, Fahmi Reza again teamed up with Five Arts Centre and Mark Teh to choreograph another "documentary performance" titled *A Notional History* in 2022. Besides Fahmi, this performance had two other Malay performers—the stage actor Faiq Syazwan Kuhiri and video journalist Rahmah Pauzi. Using a multimedia approach—including songs, archival visual and audio footage, newspaper clippings, secondary school history textbooks, examination papers, and also the talking heads of ex-MCP members from Fahmi's *Revolusi '48*—it aimed to interrogate the selective erasure of the histories and memories of the Emergency. By utilizing the dark-colored stage floor as a chalkboard resembling a classroom setting, the performers crafted reflective history narratives and memories regarding the Communist struggle that were dialectically related to the archival visuals and school textbooks projected on the screen. By doing this, the performance tried to critically engage the audience and "investigate and speculate on the possible histories for a different Malaysia, intersecting the personal, the national, and the notional" (Five Arts Centre 2022).

Conclusion

For Fiona Lee, the media assault and the ban on *The Last Communist* can be understood not only as a regime's attempt to strengthen its exclusionary Malay nationalist sentiment and maintain its power status quo, but also an attempt to evade a ghostly past that "ironically reproduce the conditions for its haunting" (Lee 2013, 94). The histories and memories of the Communist struggle still haunt the nation with questions such as "Who fought for independence?" and "Who is the legitimate owner of the country?" A nation

can be considered a "mnemonic community" that needs a representation of a "suitable past" for its nationalist movements and to establish a sense of continuity for future generations. However, remembering always occurs "in tandem with forgetting" (Misztal 2003, 17). The ruling establishment has long implemented the "management of memory," in which the nation-building past has been selectively remembered and forgotten. The regime has tried to dictate the memory of independence and buttress its legitimacy via institutional means, such as the National Monument, national commemoration rituals, museum exhibitions, school textbooks, and media representations in, for instance, patriotic films. Generally, even since the disbandment of the MCP, anti-Communist sentiment has been fanned by political opportunists to increase their political capital. The role of the Communists in resisting the Japanese occupation is still a subject of dispute, and the Chinese nature of the MCP is still being manipulated to demonize the Chinese and marginalize them as immigrant Others.[7] UMNO managed to sustain political support from the Malay community by casting itself as their "protector," successfully defending their sovereignty from infringement by immigrants and the Communist insurgency. The BN and subsequent regimes have been willing to maintain the Communist bogey to sustain their political support from the Malay community.

After the 1989 Peace Accord, the topic of Communism and the MCP has become less sensitive. A certain level of commemoration, discussions, and publications is tolerated without much political interference—unless there are complaints, objections, or serious efforts to conform with the Malays' mindset regarding the Communist struggle. Chinese organizations and cultural circuits have tried to battle the official discourse through their own commemorations and publications to tell their side of history. Filmmakers also try to engage with the vigorous push-and-pull of remembering and forgetting the nation's past through their cinematic illuminations and imaginations. While some mainstream filmmakers (like those involved in patriotic films) continue to get government funding and work collaboratively with the state to produce films supporting the official discourse and national myth that secure the power of the regime, some independent filmmakers such as Fahmi Reza, Amir Muhammad and Lau Kek Huat try to retain their editorial independence and utilize film as a medium of political intervention to advocate for oppositional meanings and memories. They create spaces and opportunities for subordinated communities like the Chinese to speak back and fight for their

7) For example, at the 2018 convention of a conservative Muslim group, the Gerakan Pembela Ummah (Ummah Defenders Movement), one of its leaders openly expounded that the MCP army targeted only the Malays who resisted the Japanese and the British. The leader repeatedly asserted that minorities could potentially threaten the status of Islam and would try to seize political power from the Malays (Syed Jaymal 2018).

legitimate place on the road to independence. Although their films are officially banned from open screening in Malaysia, these filmmakers have tried to reach audiences through alternative platforms and mediums such as online video streaming services. Their act of recording is the act of remembering, and remembering becomes an act of resistance, of reframing values and instigating critical thinking.

Thus, the new generation of Malaysian cultural workers have put their efforts into the reappropriation of nation-building memories to construct a meaningful bridge between past and present. Although the ghosts of ethnic segregation still haunt Malaysian society, the forgotten, neglected, and denigrated leftist and Communist past has been recalled, reconnected, and reclaimed. At the same time, fresh and progressive discourses, memories, narratives, art curations, films, literature, and stage performances have been produced to challenge the ruling regime's hegemony. By revisiting and engaging with the past, these cultural workers try to inspire transformative political thinking and action in order to potentially nurture a more integrated Malaysian society that embraces ethnic and cultural pluralism.

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Becoming a Crisis: Shifting Narratives of Seasonal Air Pollution in Northern Thailand (1996–2019)

Olivier Evrard* and Mary Mostafanezhad**

Chiang Mai, Thailand, has long experienced seasonal air pollution episodes at the end of the dry season (February–April). While the severity and length of the episodes vary annually, popular narratives describe how the "haze crisis" is worsening. In this article, we address the role of the media in driving the growing awareness of seasonal air pollution in Chiang Mai. The article contributes to scholarship on the politics of the representation of environmental problems and the understanding of discourses and practices through which natural phenomena are historically produced and become known. It takes into account social relations of power by addressing local environmental politics and how they are framed by political-economic interests. Based on the analysis of three Thai national newspapers over a 25-year period as well as extensive fieldwork and interviews in Chiang Mai Province, we chronicle the development of a collective concern about seasonal air pollution and its political-ecological drivers and consequences. Finally, we demonstrate how this shared perception of a worsening haze crisis is driven by ongoing debates surrounding the use of forests, agro-capitalism, and legitimate forms of political power. This article contributes to emerging scholarship in environmental media studies that addresses how environmental changes become environmental crises.

Keywords: Thailand, air pollution, Chiang Mai, narratives, anthropology, geography, environmental history

Introduction

In this article, we address shifts in popular narratives of seasonal air pollution as an environmental crisis in Northern Thailand. Chiang Mai, the second largest city in

* French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD), Mixed Research Unit PALOC (Patrimoines Locaux et Globalisation), 43 rue Buffon, 75005 Paris, France
Corresponding author's e-mail: olivier.evrard@ird.fr
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0959-2463

** Department of Geography, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, 2424 Maile Way, Saunders Hall 445 Honolulu, HI 96822
e-mail: mostafan@hawaii.edu
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9819-5245

Thailand, has long experienced seasonal air pollution episodes at the end of the dry season (February–April). The seasonality of air pollution is caused by a range of confounding factors, such as the city's geographic setting in a valley, lack of wind during the dry season, agricultural burning, and urban development. While the severity and length of haze episodes often vary from one year to the next, the dominant narrative is that seasonal air pollution is rapidly worsening. What residents once considered a cyclical and unavoidable phenomenon in the early 2000s has become an unbearable threat to the environment, economy, and public health.

Growing awareness of the dangers linked to air pollution has generated academic discussions and political action among civil society groups at the highest levels of the state. These groups struggle over the representation of the causes, effects, and solutions of seasonal air pollution. Among academics, it was Thai health scientists who first addressed seasonal haze as an emerging public health crisis (Phongtape *et al.* 2001; Phongtape 2011; Chaicharn *et al.* 2016; Liwa *et al.* 2018). Following the initial warnings, other scientists began examining the chemical nature of particulate matter (hereafter PM)[1] and its related emission factors (see Moran *et al.* 2019). However, few scholars have so far considered the social and political dimensions behind this growing environmental awareness. Some studies have stressed that the ineffectiveness of air pollution regulations in Thailand is due mainly to two factors. First, the seasonal nature of air pollution is inadequately tackled by year-round policies. Second, the absence of an integrative clean air act means that various Thai agencies work in silos with minimal collaboration (Nikam *et al.* 2021). The studies have also insisted on the transboundary nature of haze, the difficulty in implementing concerted action among regions or countries, mainly due to administrative fragmentation and the protection of vested economic interests by political and economic elites (Marks and Miller 2022). Yet scholars of Southeast Asia know much less about how awareness of air pollution emerges in local contexts and circulates across various segments of society.

The chronopolitics of the growing awareness of air pollution in Chiang Mai is reflected in the development of state-owned and independent sensor networks. These sometimes competing data sets generate debates among residents, scientists, and authorities on how to measure pollution as well as the safety thresholds and discrepancies between international and Thai regulations. Simultaneously, the persistence of shifting cultivation in rural areas, coupled with deepening commercial integration of agricultural practices (especially the development of maize crops), has revived long-standing debates

1) Particulate matter (PM) includes microscopic matter suspended in air or water. PM10 includes particles less than 10 μm in diameter and PM2.5 those less than 2.5 μm. The toxicity of suspended particles is due mainly to particles with a diameter of less than 10 μm.

about the "ecological crisis" in the highlands (Forsyth and Walker 2008) and the danger it poses to the entire population.

In what follows, we track shifts in public awareness of the threat of seasonal air pollution to better understand how environmental problems become known. Focused on three Thai national newspapers—*Bangkok Post*, *Matichon*, and the *Nation*—we chronicle the development of collective concern about air pollution as an environmental crisis, the main narratives it sustains, and its political-ecological consequences. Our research demonstrates how the understanding of environmental issues such as air pollution is framed in the media. We also address the factors that influence such framings (Matthes 2009; 2012), how they evolve over time, and how they shape public dialogue (D'Angelo and Kuypers 2010; Matthes and Schemer 2012). Arturo Escobar explains how "discourses and practices through which nature is historically produced and known" are intimately linked to relations of power between different segments of populations (Escobar 1996, 325). The Southeast Asia scholars Tim Forsyth and Andrew Walker note that "such apparently natural concepts as erosion or pollution should be seen as 'hybrid' mixtures of physical experiences and human values" (Forsyth and Walker 2008, 17). Drawing on these observations, we analyze media narratives of air pollution in Chiang Mai as "simplified explanations of environmental causes and effects, blame and responsibility, that emerge in contexts where environmental knowledge and social order are mutually dependent" (Forsyth and Walker 2008). We also engage with the work of scholars who have demonstrated how the late capitalist era is defined, at least in part, by a feeling of emergency and by the "catastrophization of nature" that goes with it (Agamben 2005; Fassin and Pandolfi 2010; Ophir 2010; Beck *et al.* 2013). This framing contributes to new understandings of how in many Asian countries, air became an "emerging coalescence of scientific and political substance" (Choy 2011, 17). In the case of Chiang Mai, we want to illustrate how the emergence of debates over seasonal air pollution in the mass media is the latest displacement of a well-established discourse on the degradation of nature in the uplands.

Air Pollution in Southeast Asia

Air pollution throughout the Asian continent frequently reaches alarming levels. The world's 148 most polluted cities are in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2020 the region had the highest AQI measurements to date, as indicated by the Swiss air quality technology company IQAir. Soot particles and gas pollutants produced by industries, road traffic, agricultural burning, and waste incineration periodically aggregate during dry periods into huge toxic slicks, covering megacities and the Himalayan foothills. Since the early 2000s, the "Asian Brown Cloud" (UNEP 2008; Verma and Iyanganarsan 2015; Sharma

et al. 2016) has been described as the "world's largest polluted area" (Jarrige and Le Roux 2017, 342). Extending from Pakistan to China, it covers the entire Southeast Asia region. Primary pollutants (PM, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides) regularly reach toxic levels that often exceed those recorded during the great London smog of the early 1950s (Fowler *et al.* 2020, 20). Recent pollution episodes in Beijing have been described as an "airpocalypse" (since 2013) and in Delhi as a "gas chamber" (Koshy 2022). In 2016 the WHO estimated that air pollution annually causes 4.2 million premature deaths. Today, 91 percent of these deaths occur in the regions of Southeast Asia and the Western Pacific (WHO 2016). Risk is linked not only to pollutant threshold but also to the time of exposure (in utero, for example) and to the simultaneous interactions between several pollutants.

During the last decades of the twentieth century, global environmental concerns focused on acid rain, the ozone layer, and deforestation. However, since the beginning of the 2000s, new epidemiological evidence has demonstrated how the health impacts of air pollution have contributed to the rapid growth in global attention to air pollution as a subject of critical environmental concern. As François Jarrige and Thomas Le Roux (2017) have demonstrated, rather than a "discovery," this could perhaps be more accurately described as a "rediscovery." During the last decades of the twentieth century, a "factory of environmental unconsciousness" evolved as a historical amnesia. The mitigation of air pollution episodes in the West and the overall improvement of air quality coincided with the relocation of most of the carbon emissions to Asia.

Growing awareness of seasonal air pollution has mobilized residents and political actors throughout newly industrialized countries. In 1997 in insular Southeast Asia, smoke produced by agricultural fires in Indonesia was exacerbated by unusually long droughts caused by El Niño (Forsyth 2014, 77) and combined with growing air pollution over cities. The air in urban areas of Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore felt particularly thick with smog, and popular media outlets officially recognized air pollution as a problem. The ASEAN Haze Transboundary Agreement was promulgated in 2002 and signed by all ASEAN countries except Indonesia, which eventually ratified the agreement in 2015. Though it committed parties to international collaboration and local action to prevent fires (no such commitments were made with respect to urban sources of pollution), haze episodes occurred again during the following years and became a recurrent disaster. Besides the ASEAN culture of "organizational minimalism," other obstacles to the real implementation of the agreement included the vast array of motivations for fire use in rural areas, the closeness between big landholding companies and the authorities, the complexity of land tenure systems, the absence of pollution sensors able to track the source of emissions, and reluctance to impose clear regulatory constraints over urban

and industrial development (Heilmann 2015).

Seasonal haze in Chiang Mai is a particularly relevant topic in that respect since it is the first time in Thailand that air pollution has drawn attention from the media and public opinion outside of Bangkok. It is only since 2007 that it has become a source of concern in the national news. However, it encapsulates similar debates and generates similar calls for transnational cooperation as observed in insular Southeast Asia more than two decades ago.

Seasonal Air Pollution in Chiang Mai

The Northern Thailand capital of Chiang Mai experiences seasonal air pollution each year between February and April, when winds are low, temperatures are high, and farmers burn their fields for the start of the agricultural season. Due to the area's geographic features, location, monsoon climate, agricultural practices, and more recently urban development, dust, smoke, and other dry particulates obscure the sky (haze) while photochemical reactions involving nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons produce an oxidant-rich pollution mixture (smog). The smog gets trapped in the valley, where 1.8 million people have settled. It was not until 1996 that the Pollution Control Department (PCD) began taking official measurements of particulate matter smaller than 10 microns (hereafter PM10) and 2012 that it began officially measuring particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns (hereafter PM2.5).

While the PCD began publishing its PM2.5 measurements only in 2012, historical documents reveal how haze has been a regular occurrence in Northern Thailand for more than a century. The British geographer James McCarthy surveyed and created Siam land border maps between 1881 and 1893. He described how haze and smoke rendered triangulation work often impossible, due to low visibility in February and March (McCarthy 1900, 130–135, 188, 191). The historical experience of seasonal haze and its predictable nature may help explain why, until recently, public opinion tended to view it as a normal occurrence. Even today, some residents continue to be skeptical about its health hazards.

The main narrative related to the causes of haze focuses directly on swidden agriculture in the highlands. What is left out of this narrative is the role of urban emissions. Highlanders have long been blamed for a range of ecological crises in Northern Thailand. Shifting cultivation practices have been an integral part of traditional forest management throughout Southeast Asia (and elsewhere in the world). With the advent of colonial forestry, many of the highlanders' livelihood strategies were criminalized and highlanders were deemed a threat to lowland Thai society (Pinkaew 2001; Usher 2009). Despite this, they have continued with traditional agricultural practices up to the present day. However, many continue to struggle over access to resources and land use claims.

Additionally, social differences that are often rooted in historical socioeconomic relations perpetuate such narratives (Kull 2004).

Narratives blaming highlanders for the haze crisis are rooted in the period of colonial forestry and internal colonization of the highlands by the Thai state during the Cold War. It was during this time that the "new ideological battleground" took hold (Forsyth and Walker 2008, 9). Over the last seventy years, the crisis narrative transitioned from opium cultivation to deforestation, watershed management, and now seasonal forest fires and air pollution. In each case, shifting cultivation, the primary means of livelihood for more than a million highland residents, is at the center of blame and is often the target of eradication. Since the early 2000s commercial agriculture, especially maize cultivation, has come under growing public criticism because it is identified as a primary driver of increased burning and amplification of toxic smoke due to its heavy use of pesticides (Greenpeace 2020). Behind the "corn boom" in the hills of the northern provinces also lies the (transnational) problem of unbridled agro-capitalism and access to land, with farmers responding to the requirements of big agri-food companies by turning forested areas into plantations in order to increase their incomes or to claim new agricultural land.

Methodology

This article chronicles how the "smoky season" (*ladu mok khwan*) became known as the "haze crisis" (*wikrit molapid*) among residents of Northern Thailand. Interpretation of these findings is informed by several years of fieldwork among urban dwellers, farmers, local administrators, activists, and academics as well as narrative and content analyses of national newspapers. Here, our focus is limited to the coverage of the haze crisis in Chiang Mai by three daily newspapers—the Thai-language *Matichon* (hereafter MA) and English-language *Nation* and *Bangkok Post* (hereafter TN and BP)[2)]—to understand when and how seasonal air pollution emerged as a widespread public concern in Thai society.

The choice of newspapers was based on three criteria:[3)] regular publication over the entire period, a generalist line, and the existence of and access to a computerized database

2) When quoting an article published in these newspapers, we give only the initials and the date: for instance, BP March 9, 2007. All articles quoted in the text, with their complete titles, are listed in the references.

3) Despite the growing importance of social networks since the early 2010s, we have not been able to integrate them into our analysis, mainly for lack of access rights and inability to process the enormous volume of data generated.

allowing keyword searches. Unfortunately, no local newspapers met these criteria, and we therefore focused on national newspapers. Established in 1946, the *Bangkok Post* is the oldest English-language newspaper still in operation in Thailand. Its management claims a daily circulation of around 50,000 (personal communication, *Bangkok Post* office, April 23, 2023). It employs more than 170 journalists, and Thai citizens—most of them Bangkok residents—constitute the majority of the readership. The *Nation* is Thailand's second most widely read English-language newspaper, and since the 1991 coup (and the *Bangkok Post*'s neutral stance toward the coup makers) it has employed numerous former *Bangkok Post* journalists. Founded in 1971 as the *Voice of the Nation* and later shortened to the *Nation*, it claimed a circulation of around 50,000 before going fully online in 2019 (personal communication, *Nation* office, July 2022). In 2008 it transformed into a primarily business newspaper but continued to publish general articles. In 2018 it stopped publishing in print and is now entirely online. *Matichon* is Thailand's most widely read Thai-language daily newspaper. Founded in 1978, it claimed a circulation of 950,000 in 2019 (Infoquest n.d.). In 1991 it founded the online Thai-language newspaper *Khaosod* and later an English version in 2013 (*Khaosod English*), which frequently reports on environmental and social justice issues. These periodicals are primarily read by the educated Thai middle and upper classes, a large proportion of whom live in the Bangkok metropolis and abroad. Their coverage of environmental issues remains relatively modest, although *Matichon*'s coverage is more extensive. All three newspapers are moderate and liberal in political orientation.

Our content analysis extends from 1996 to 2019. The Thai Pollution Control Department in Chiang Mai City began publicizing PM10 in 1996 and PM2.5 in 2012. We compare air pollution narratives with PM measurements to better understand their relationship. Although air pollution in Bangkok was covered episodically by the *Bangkok Post* from the early 1960s (Forsyth 2007, 2115),[4] reliable air pollution measurements in Chiang Mai did not yet exist.

A total of 410 articles about seasonal air pollution in Chiang Mai were published in the three selected newspapers between 1996 and 2019. Our content analysis is based on keyword searches of "air pollution," "haze," "northern haze," and "Chiang Mai." For Thai-language publications, we used the terms ควัน (*khwan* = smoke) and เหนือ ควัน (*nuea khwan* = northern smoke) as well as หมอกควัน เหนือ (*mokhwan nuea* = northern haze). To broaden the search we also added the terms ฝุ่น (*foun* = dust), มลพิษ (*molapid* = pollution), and มลพิษทางอากาศ (*molapid tang akad* = air pollution). The search was done

4) The *Bangkok Post* has published 211 articles specifically on air pollution in Bangkok since 1996. The oldest mentions of air pollution by the newspaper date back to 1969.

for all months between 1997 and 2007 due to the small number of articles published until 2007, and then only February and March from 2007 to 2019 since very few articles were published outside of this time frame. However, 2019 is a notable exception because of the longer haze period, which resulted in an additional 18 articles (not taken into account here) published by the *Bangkok Post* in April.

Through content analysis, we identified three categories: (1) causes/blame of air pollution, (2) consequences/effects of air pollution, and (3) solutions of/to air pollution (Table 1). Some categories were then regrouped under more general labels. For instance, in the causes/blame narrative, "burning rice straws," "burning farm waste," and "preparing swidden land" were classified under "traditional agricultural fires," while "wildfires" was kept as a distinct category. Our analysis revealed nine causes (Table 2). We quantified the representation of these nine causes in the three study newspapers. We proceeded similarly with the impacts of pollution narratives (Table 3), which revealed five categories; and the solutions narrative, which revealed seven primary categories (see Table 4). We also identified the recurrent narrative of seasonal air pollution in Northern Thailand as a "worsening crisis." This analysis was complemented by numerous interviews with academics, local officials, farmers, urban settlers, monks, and activists from 2018 to understand their conceptions of air pollution, its underlying causes, and their perceptions of appropriate responses to this problem.

Reading Air Pollution in Northern Thailand

Between 1996 and 2019, 410 articles about seasonal air pollution in Chiang Mai were published in the three selected newspapers. Coverage by the Thai-language *Matichon* was most consistent, with 46 percent of the articles published against 29 percent and 25 percent for the *Nation* and *Bangkok Post* respectively. These findings indicate that air pollution in Chiang Mai is perceived to be both a Thai and an international concern. Each year except 2007 and 2019, *Matichon* published the most articles on air pollution. In 2007 and 2019 the haze crisis in Chiang Mai was widely reported on in the international media. Among the two English-language newspapers, the *Nation* published more articles on air pollution than the *Bangkok Post*, except in 2019, when the latter published twice the number of articles as the *Nation*. Fig. 1 illustrates how 2007 was a turning point in that for the first time, the haze episode in Chiang Mai attracted the attention of national newspapers, with a significant number of articles: 45 articles were published that year against just 17 during the ten years prior. Since 2007 there has been regular reporting on air pollution, even if the number of articles has varied, sometimes substantially, with

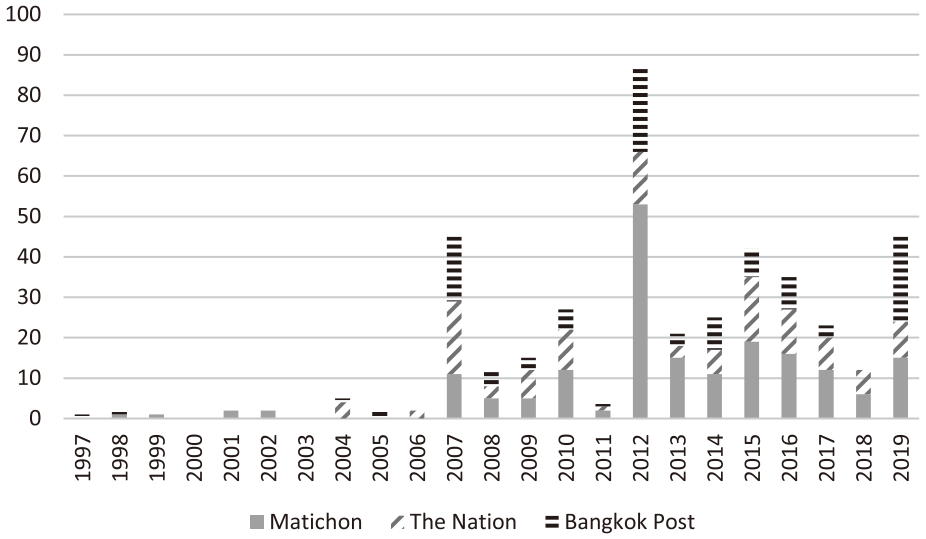

Fig. 1 Number of Articles Devoted to Chiang Mai Haze in Three National Newspapers, 1997–2019
Source: Olivier Evrard and Mary Mostafanezhad.

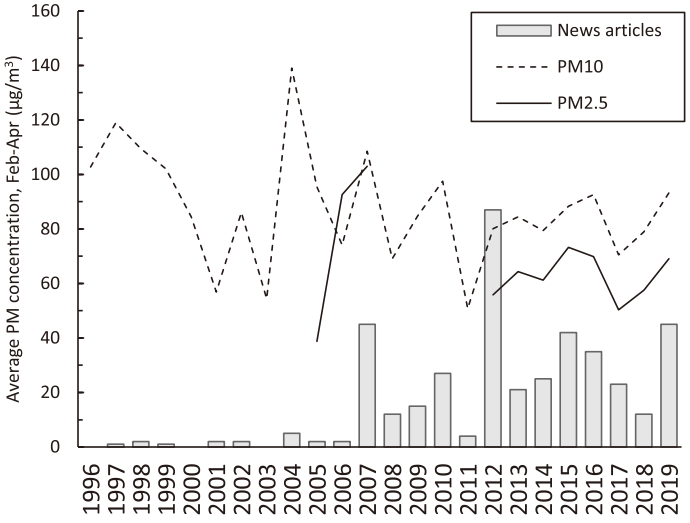

Fig. 2 Average PM10 and PM2.5 Concentrations during Peak Haze Episodes (February–April) in Chiang Mai and Numbers of News Articles, 1996–2019

Source: Olivier Evrard and Mary Mostafanezhad with the collaboration of Naboon Riddhiraksa.

peaks especially in 2012, 2015, 2016, and 2019.

Do these variations reflect the actual severity of seasonal air pollution in Chiang Mai? If we look at Fig. 2, which combines the number of articles published with the average PM concentration from February to April each year (based on PCD data), this is the case after 2013. Before that date, however, the correlation is not obvious. While the haze episode was quite severe in 2007, it did not reach the levels of 2004 or even 1997 according to PCD data. The contrast is even more challenging to explain for 2012, which was only the fourth worst year in the period considered here while having the highest number of articles published (87 articles, more than 20 percent of the whole sample).

The first reference to seasonal haze is in a 1998 report in *Matichon*. This report notes a particularly intense air pollution episode throughout Southeast Asia in 1997, especially in Indonesia and Singapore. In September and October of 2006, severe haze episodes in Indonesia and Singapore were again followed by an increase in attention to the Chiang Mai haze episodes that began in February 2007. While 2012 experienced the highest surge of media reports covering the Chiang Mai episodes, the PCD measurements indicate that air pollution levels were typical for this period. Interestingly, air pollution episodes in other parts of insular Southeast Asia were relatively limited in 2011. However, the surge in media attention on the 2012 smoky season may be attributed to the 2011 dry season, which was virtually non-existent in Northern Thailand, with continuous rain (and, later in the year, major floods in Central Thailand).

A Worsening Crisis?

Popular narratives widely suggest that the "haze crisis" is getting worse. Each of the three newspapers has reiterated this narrative since 2007. In a 2007 article in the *Nation*, the author describes the "haze crisis" which lasted 17 days as "the worst and longest" one in the area's history (TN March 18, 2007).[5] However, PCD indicates that 1999 and 2004 had significantly higher AQI measurements. Other newspapers adopted a more moderate tone and insisted on the complexity and uncertainty of air pollution measurements: "It is not clear if the smoke problem is getting worse (1999 had more PM10 than the present year) but Chiang Mai's mid-March 2007 AQI reading of 180 was the highest since records began" (BP March 31, 2007). In 2012 the *Bangkok Post* quoted local officials saying that "the haze is even worse than the most recent crisis five years ago" because of the increase in the consecutive number of days with levels of dust particles above safe levels and a higher number of northern provinces affected (BP February 26, 2012).

5) The notion that the haze problem in Chiang Mai started in 2007 is still widely popular among academics and the general public.

The year 2012 was a turning point in that the newspapers presented the haze not as an exceptional crisis like in 2007 but as a new regional and repetitive phenomenon. The *Bangkok Post* asserted, "Northern provinces have suddenly become smothered in choking smoke haze every year in February" (BP March 8, 2012). The narrative of a worsening situation was reiterated each year until 2019. By 2019, a more detailed narrative emerged about the general increase in environmental toxicity due to intensive commercial agriculture and also about the interactions between urban and rural sources of pollution. These interactions likely led to an evolution of the chemical composition and biochemical nature of the haze over the last decades due to the presence of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (or PAHs, chemically related organic compounds with various levels of toxicity and carcinogenic potential that bind PM) from vehicular traffic, pesticide use, and coal plants, for which there is a lack of consistent, reliable data. This discourse is supported by interviews with leading local researchers. For instance, a 2011 article in the *Nation* titled "Study Shows Smog Up North Has Worsened" quotes a study by Dr. Tippawan Prapamontol from the Research Institute for Health Sciences at Chiang Mai University revealing that levels of PAHs in urine samples from children more than tripled, especially in rural areas (TN March 9, 2011).

The PCD PM10 and PM2.5 measurements do not indicate a long-term deteriorating trend (see Fig. 2), at least on a purely quantitative level. However, the newspapers tended to focus increasingly on public perceptions (visibility, numbers of consecutive days), the alarming results of new scientific studies, as well as the AQI readings given by independent networks of sensors based on international rather than Thai thresholds. After 2015, new technologies became widely available and used by local researchers to implement additional monitoring stations that publicized results in real time. A consequence of these new technologies is the ability of the general public to compare levels of pollution in various locations around the world (for instance, through websites such as airvisual.com) and for Chiang Mai to be branded, a few days per year, "the most polluted city on earth."

News about the northern haze in the Thai media reflects a sort of progressive "catastrophization of nature" (Ophir 2010). What was once considered a seasonal, unavoidable event has now been declared an emergency and become a metonym for the region's environmental degradation. Several factors have played a role in the framing of the haze crisis. More research would help to better reveal key issues, including the seasonality of the phenomenon and its treatment in the media (most articles are published between February and March); toxicity levels and their health impacts; sociological changes in Chiang Mai's population (second-home migration by Bangkok elites; travelers seeking "pure air" in the North); spectacular images popularized in mass and social media

(e.g., Doi Suthep hidden from view by the haze, Doi Suthep in flames, etc.). Presented simultaneously as a recurring event and as a worsening process, the haze now triggers multiple questions and concerns about its origin, effects, and potential solutions, which leads to the politicization of the seasonal air pollution crisis.

Re-presenting Seasonal Air Pollution: A Content Analysis

Data from our content analysis demonstrate that references to the causes, effects, and solutions of seasonal air pollution follow different trends (Table 1). While references to the causes of seasonal air pollution declined, references to the effects remained relatively stable while references to solutions increased.

Media coverage of the northern haze tends to follow a similar pattern each year. Many articles about its impacts are published at the beginning of the haze season, followed by articles devoted to causes. Finally, in late March, the focus shifts to potential solutions. There are typically fewer than five articles per year published on seasonal air pollution outside of the haze period (roughly February to April).

Attributing Blame: References to Causes

In each article, the selected newspapers refer to the haze as a consequence of multiple

Table 1 References to Causes, Effects, and Solutions during Five Selected Years between 1996 and 2019 in Three National Newspapers

Year	Total References	% of References
2006	36	Causes: 55.5% Effects: 25% Solutions: 19.5%
2007	142	Causes: 44% Effects: 23% Solutions: 32%
2012	435	Causes: 34% Effects: 27% Solutions: 39%
2015	11	Causes: 28% Effects: 34% Solutions: 38%
2019	106	Causes: 30% Effects: 23% Solutions: 46%

Source: Olivier Evrard and Mary Mostafanezhad.

Table 2 Number and Percentage of References to Causes of Haze during Three Selected Years

Causes	2007	2012	2019
Forest fires	26 (30%)	38 (25%)	5 (15%)
Agricultural fires	22 (26%)	29 (19%)	7 (21%)
Urbanism	17 (20%)	5 (3%)	6 (18%)
Hunting and gathering	1 (1%)	15 (10%)	0 (0%)
Cash crops	3 (4%)	16 (11%)	2 (6%)
Natural factors	5 (6%)	9 (6%)	4 (12%)
Waste management	0 (0%)	13 (9%)	0 (0%)
Lack of control and corruption	2 (2%)	10 (7%)	5 (15%)
Transnational	8 (10%)	15 (10%)	5 (15%)
Total	84	150	34

Source: Olivier Evrard and Mary Mostafanezhad.

factors;[6] but in the majority of cases (see Table 2), the emphasis is on forest and agricultural fires. The number of references to the former decreases sharply between 2007 and 2019, while references to the latter decrease only slightly. However, in 2019 forest and agricultural fires represent just a third of the references to causes of haze (compared to 56 percent in 2007). This downward trend reflects the progressive recognition (or rediscovery) among middle-class Thai urbanites that there are very few "natural fires" and that most fires are linked to traditional agricultural practices (TN March 17, 2010) for preparing a field before planting or getting rid of paddy straws or corn cobs after the harvest.

Second, the progressive decrease in exclusive references to "fires" as a cause of haze follows the growing recognition of natural factors (from 6 percent in 2007 to 13 percent in 2019) in PM measurements. These factors include the geographic location of Chiang Mai city in a valley surrounded by hills with little wind during the haze season; unusual weather patterns, especially the global climate phenomenon known as El Niño, which can affect the amount of rainfall, and therefore the humidity in the atmosphere and forest; and the transboundary nature of the haze crisis, with smoke produced in neighboring countries transported by the wind over the Chiang Mai valley. References to El Niño and its impact on the Chiang Mai haze are found as early as 2005 (BP February 21, 2005) and are used as arguments either to relativize the role of local fires in haze episodes—

6) The multifactor causality of haze is acknowledged as early as 2007. An article in the *Bangkok Post* on March 31, 2007 mentions urban pollution and smoke from rural areas as sources of haze and insists that local, regional, national, and transnational dimensions are intermingled.

experts say the haze "has more to do with unusual weather patterns" (BP March 22, 2007)—or to forecast the severity of seasonal pollution episodes in Southeast Asia as a whole. In 2016 (BP February 26, 2016), experts warned that the worst haze since 1998 was imminent. This reporting emerged after record AQI levels in Indonesia just a few months prior. Similarly, the proportion of references to transboundary causes of haze increased over the period from 10 percent to 16 percent. These references focused primarily on agricultural fires in the Shan States of Myanmar and the role of commercial agriculture in the production of haze.

Third, the proportion of references to forest or agricultural fires as the primary cause of haze has diminished in recent years. This is in part because of growing debates around incentives for setting fires and the appropriate use of forests by Northern Thai residents. One of these debates focuses on the use of fire at the end of the dry season to facilitate the hunting and gathering of wild products, especially mushrooms known as *hed thob*, which are sold as delicacies in the restaurants of Chiang Mai. In March 2007, the *Bangkok Post* described how

> 100 bushfires on Doi Pui in the preceding six months, which scorched 400 rai of land, were started by poachers hunting animals who use incense sticks and mosquito repellent to start fires, and this makes it hard to catch them in the act. (BP March 19, 2007)

In 2015, the same newspaper mentioned that according to the Fire Control Division, "forest fires linked to mushroom gathering occurred 754 times in Chiang Mai, 84 in Mae Hong Son, 216 in Lampang" (BP March 29, 2015). The criminalization of fire was a recurrent topic during these years. The authorities of Tak Province promised 5,000 baht to anyone who provided information leading to the arrest of people starting outdoor and forest fires (BP March 4, 2012). They officially asked their Burmese counterparts to help by engaging in firefighting practices (TN March 4, 2012).

No newspapers directly questioned the trigger effect of the tourism industry on customary fire practices (wild mushrooms sold to restaurants are consumed mostly by Thai and Chinese domestic tourists), but they sometimes gave space to the alternative voices of researchers who defended the customary practices of burning as unavoidable and necessary (TN February 7, 2019). Since forests around Chiang Mai are mostly composed of dry deciduous dipterocarps that produce large amounts of dry leaves each year, the researchers claimed that a "pre-season burning" (e.g., before the start of the agricultural year) helped to clean the forest and to avoid the accumulation of fuel on the soil, thereby preventing bigger, uncontrollable fires. This argument gained momentum throughout the study period and has also been used to advocate for prescribed burning rather than a blanket burning ban as a solution to the haze in Chiang Mai (see below).

Some researchers as well as NGO leaders interviewed by journalists also insist that highland ethnic groups are not to blame for starting forest fires. For example, a 2007 article describes how Hmong are heavily engaged in cabbage production, which requires very little use of fire, while Karen practice rotational swidden farming, which allows only strictly controlled fires (BP March 22, 2007).[7)]

However, the bulk of articles related to the use of fire in rural areas are focused not on customary practices but on cash crops, especially maize, and their perceived role in forest encroachment and the increased burning of rural areas. This argument is first mentioned in a 2007 *Bangkok Post* article indicating that the "high prices of maize trigger farmers to encroach on forest and this was the main cause of thick smoke" (BP March 13, 2007). Thereafter, the argument gained momentum and was especially visible in 2015, when a series of articles, primarily in English, pointed to the role of corn plantations—especially in Nan, Tak, and Chiang Rai Provinces—as a major cause in the production of the northern haze. For the first time, the *Bangkok Post* published two editorials blaming agri-business for "unbridled contract farming in the mountains" (BP March 6, 2015; March 20, 2015), creating denuded mountains, air and water pollution, as well as soil erosion. The journal called on residents to "face the real haze culprit" and to "tackle the haze at its roots" not by arresting poor farmers but by boycotting the big agri-food companies (both corn and sugarcane) and putting the pressure on the banks that funded them. An intertwined argument related to the socioeconomic inequalities, corruption, and land issues that favored the replacement of forest areas by corn plantations. This argument was especially pronounced in 2012 as a critique of the Yingluck Shinawatra government for not handling the haze problem appropriately. All three journals pointed out that the causes of fires were related not only to poachers and farmers but also to influential people who hired locals to set fires to turn areas into degraded forest so that they could be issued land title deeds (TN March 6, 2012; BP March 16, 2012). The same argument resurfaced during the 2019 haze episode (BP February 4, 2019; March 15, 2019), which also affected Bangkok, with denunciation of the lack of will of Bangkok-based politicians in front of the influential agri-food companies (corn as well as sugarcane plantations). Interestingly, the three national newspapers focused on this issue during times of political tension in 2012 and again in 2019.

The multiple debates linked to forest and agricultural fires also led to a decline in references to urban sources of pollution. Importantly, prior to 2007, national news coverage on air pollution in Chiang Mai was framed by concerns over urban pollution and

7) Beyond the widespread "Karen consensus" (Walker 2001), some Karen still practice rotational farming with long fallow periods, while others also engage in various forms of commercial agriculture in which fire practices may vary.

urban development rather than forest fires.[8] Though relatively limited (17 articles throughout the ten-year period between 1996 and 2006), the news articles addressed many different issues, including health impacts, the international reputation of the city, the decentralization of power, and regional cooperation for haze monitoring.

In February 1997 the *Bangkok Post* carried its first article on seasonal air pollution. The article featured an interview with then Minister of Interior Saneh Thiengthong, who expressed concern over the degradation of air quality in urban areas. The second article in English was published in March 1998 and focused mostly on the management of waste. It described the 300 tons of garbage produced daily in Chiang Mai and the need for new landfills to avoid the increasing numbers of incinerators. It also described an impressive list of pollutants found in hospital garbage. Thereafter, no articles on seasonal air pollution were published until 2004. According to PCD data, 2004 was the worst year for air pollution; and the *Bangkok Post* published only one story—focused not on the haze per se but on the anger of locals against the proposed expansion of Chiang Mai airport for fear that it would increase air pollution. However, for the first time, the *Nation* covered the air pollution issue. Two articles published the same day (TN February 27, 2004) featured a debate between activists, scientists, and local authorities. The first was an interview with Duangchan Charoenmuang (then a researcher at the Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University, and secretary-general of the Urban Development Institute Foundation), who called for a decentralization of power and for local people to "stand up and start claiming our city and feel as though we own it." The second article, by contrast, was titled "Municipality Plays Down Environmental Concerns" and was based on an interview with the city clerk Sen Santitham, who highlighted the efforts made by the municipality to develop an emission inventory and the 2002 Air Quality Management Plan prepared with Maryland Department of the Environment and Portland city. He pointed to two main difficulties: public transport "in the hands of a very difficult and unreasonable songtaew (local taxi) association" and the lack of financial support from the central government (only around 400,000 Thai baht per year). Two other articles were published by the *Nation* in March 2004, both focusing on urban pollution: traffic congestion, waste burning, and construction dust (TN March 11, 2004; March 14, 2004). The articles commented on the poorly conceived development policy and echoed the criticisms of several urban planners and architects who played a prominent role in Chiang

8) In his 2007 publication on environmental social movements in Thailand, Tim Forsyth mentions that the *Bangkok Post* periodically published air pollution stories between 1968 and 2000 (Forsyth 2007, 2115). It appears that those articles were focused mostly on urban pollution in Bangkok and its suburbs, as well as on the Mae Moh lignite power station in Lampang and industrial estates on the eastern seaboard.

Mai civil society at the time (notably Dr. Sirichai). They also insisted on the idea that there was no decentralization and no cooperation with residents. Increasing urban pollution was also blamed on then Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who launched 21 development projects during his mandate (including airport expansion and the Night Safari) to increase tourism without local consultations and without a plan for a mass transit system. The two articles published by the *Bangkok Post* in 2005 (BP February 21, 2005; March 19, 2005) also kept an urban focus and mentioned the worsening international reputation of Chiang Mai after National Geographic published a report saying that the city was "getting ugly" because of uncontrolled urban development, which also trapped dirty air.

During the following years there were regular references to urban pollution in articles devoted to the Chiang Mai haze, but urban pollution was quoted as just one factor among many, such as forest fires and climatic events. During the 2007 haze episode, several articles mentioned urban sources of PM and criticized the development plans made by the municipality, the increasing numbers of licensed cars, and the deteriorating air quality inside the city. Thereafter, discussions on urban pollution as a cause of haze disappeared until the 2019 episode, during which time six articles described non-agricultural sources of pollution, especially vehicles (315,607 vehicles were registered in Chiang Mai at the end of 2017, the second largest number in the country) and the 18,000 factories scattered around Chiang Mai, Lamphun, and Lampang (TN February 7, 2019).

Identifying Risks: References to the Impacts of Haze

As shown in Table 3, reportage focuses mainly on the public health crisis caused by air pollution, and to a lesser extent on the negative impacts for tourism and the image of the city. In 2002 *Matichon* (MA February 13, 2002; May 29, 2002) described the results of a national study conducted by a Thai doctor, Phongtape Wiwatanadate, who demonstrated

Table 3 Number and Percentage of References to Impacts of Haze during Three Selected Years

Effects	2007	2012	2019
Health	30 (67%)	60 (51%)	10 (38%)
Transport	2 (4%)	22 (19%)	9 (3%)
Tourism	8 (18%)	21 (18%)	5 (19%)
Environment	1 (2%)	3 (3%)	1 (4%)
Visibility	4 (9%)	11 (9%)	1 (4%)
Total	45	117	26

Source: Olivier Evrard and Mary Mostafanezhad.

that Thailand's maximum lung cancer diagnoses were in Chiang Mai (Phongtape *et al.* 2001). This study was again highlighted by the *Nation* in 2004 (and has been repeated many times since) in an article that also featured other Chiang Mai University scientists pointing out that Chiang Mai's urban residents faced the slow but deadly violence of the "boiling frog syndrome" (TN March 11, 2004).[9] The following year, the *Bangkok Post* made its first reference to WHO statistics pointing out that 500,000 people per year were dying from air pollution in Asia.

During the 2007 haze episode, health concerns were given the widest coverage in the three newspapers. Several articles were related to the worrying research by Thai doctors in the preceding years showing that the number of patients with respiratory problems in Chiang Mai was rising and was higher than in other urban areas of Thailand, especially Bangkok (TN March 2, 2007), and that the rate of lung cancer (over 100,000 cases) was six times higher than the global average (BP March 31, 2007). This was the beginning of the popularization of PM10, PM2.5, as well as PAH (polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, a group of chemicals that bind PM and define their carcinogenic potential) among the general public. Most of the articles, however, focused on the rising numbers of patients admitted to hospitals throughout the northern provinces for respiratory diseases and nosebleeds, thereby popularizing the idea of a regional phenomenon and an "emergency disaster area" (MA March 20, 2007).

The *Nation* (TN March 24, 2007), for instance, reported that between March 15 and 23, 2007, a total of 57,765 patients had been admitted to hospital in nine northern provinces (Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Lampang, Lamphun, Mae Hong Son, Kanchanaburi, Nan, Payao, and Phrae)—an average of 7,220 per day—and that 90 percent of them suffered from respiratory problems. In the following years, the three newspapers regularly published statistics on the patients admitted to hospital with haze-related issues at the peak of the pollution season. For instance, in 2010 the *Nation* reported that 81,000 people visited hospitals in the North during the peak haze period, including 66,000 for respiratory problems, 10,000 for heart problems, and 2,000 for skin rashes (TN March 20, 2010). In 2015, the same newspaper devoted a series of articles to the health impacts of haze during the peak of the seasonal episode with descriptions of aggravated risks of heart attack, precautions for pregnant women and elderly people, and anticipated influx of patients in the main hospitals of the North, with preparations being made for extra

9) The boiling frog syndrome is based on an urban legend of a frog being placed in water that is slowly heated; the frog does not notice the slow temperature increase and is boiled to death. While modern biologists have proven this premise to be false, the boiling frog story is often used as a metaphor to warn people about gradual changes in their environment if they do not want to suffer dramatic consequences later on.

beds and mask distribution campaigns. In 2016 the newspaper reported that 64,000 people had been admitted to hospitals in the northern provinces with haze-related problems (TN March 22, 2016), while in 2019 the *Bangkok Post* reported that 22,000 people had been admitted to state health facilities in eight northern provinces between March 3 and 9 (BP March 19, 2019).

The newspapers also regularly reported on the impacts of haze on the local economy and on the international image of Chiang Mai. Journalists described the cancellation of flights due to poor visibility and the economic loss from tourism. In 2007, the *Nation* reported that Chiang Mai was losing 30 million baht per day of tourist income due to seasonal haze (TN March 18, 2007). Mentions were also made of international organizations recalling their employees and their families from the northern area due to health concerns (BP March 21, 2007). In 2012 and the following year, newspapers again reported a decrease of tourism in Chiang Mai during the haze crisis, disrupted aerial transportation due to low visibility, and the closure of schools. Until quite recently, the various consequences of haze on health, the local economy, and Chiang Mai's international image were treated as separate issues, or as a catalog of risks that, depending on the year or on the newspaper, were given more or less attention. Between 2018 and 2019 (and in the years after), however, national newspapers described how these risks were directly linked to increasingly precise air pollution measurements and the popularization of local and independent low-cost sensors.

Measurements of air pollution were rarely mentioned before 2007. In 2010, newspapers began to regularly mention PM10 measurements and "safety levels" as well as the number of hotspots identified by satellites. By 2018, references to measurements became embedded in debates regarding their accuracy and the comparison between Thai and international standards. For instance, in March 2018 the *Nation* (TN March 2, 2018) pointed out that only five stations in Northern Thailand (two in Chiang Mai) monitored PM2.5 and that "air pollution hits hazardous levels in the North and Northeast although AQI gives all clear" because the AQI given by the PCD did not include PM2.5 in its calculation. A few days later (TN March 11, 2018), the newspaper indicated that authorities failed to provide accurate and up-to-date air pollution warnings because PM2.5 could increase even when PM10 was stable. The example of Tambon (subdistrict) Sri Phum in Chiang Mai shows that between March 3 and 9, PM10 was always under the officially "safe" level of 120 while PM2.5 was above the officially "safe" level of 50 for six days out of seven.

The shortage of PM2.5 measurement stations is blamed for the lack of pollution alerts and increasingly considered a fault of the government. A leading Chiang Mai University scientist, Chaicharn Pothirat, explained that every increase of 10 in PM10

increased mortality by 0.3 percent and asked for safety levels similar to Europe and the United States (TN March 22, 2018). While they kept a relatively moderate tone and did not report, for instance, on the local authorities' cancellation of a rally in Chiang Mai city by residents calling for more accurate air pollution measurements (Mostafanezhad and Evrard 2021), the national newspapers nonetheless echoed civil society's perception of increased hidden risks. They also reported on the launch of independent networks of air pollution measurements, presented as "the people's AQI," based on international standards as opposed to the official AQI given by PCD. In 2019, newspapers gave increased visibility to these private air measurement apps as they showed for the first time that Chiang Mai was the most polluted city in the world (BP March 13, 2019). The information was also published in international newspapers as well as social media and turned the 2019 haze season into a national political crisis, with the first visit to Chiang Mai by Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha since the 2014 coup.

The Politics of Fixing the Air

On one hand, there is an inverse correlation between agricultural fires and the proportion of references to demands for greater state control of forests. On the other, the need for decentralization and campaigns with grassroots organizations is also evident (Table 4). Between 2007 and 2012, various actors made regular calls to impose stricter control on agricultural practices as well as a burning ban during the haze season. These emergent calls departed from previous years, when most of the references to seasonal haze in Chiang Mai revolved around urban sources of air pollution and consequently on urban-based solutions to combat it. Local and international organizations also called for a more regional and decentralized approach to development. In 2007, a burning ban became a

Table 4 Number and Percentage of References to Solutions to Haze during Three Selected Years

Solutions	2007	2012	2019
Innovation	2 (3%)	6 (4%)	8(16%)
Control / Burn ban	19 (28%)	55 (33%)	10 (20%)
Protection	23 (34%)	19 (11%)	11 (21%)
Water spraying	7 (10%)	27 (16%)	6 (12%)
Artificial rain	10 (15%)	25 (15%)	0 (0%)
Decentralization / Campaign	5 (7%)	25 (15%)	13 (25%)
Transnational cooperation	2 (3%)	11 (7%)	3 (6%)
Total	68	168	51

Source: Olivier Evrard and Mary Mostafanezhad.

widely touted solution to the haze crisis. Newspapers supported calls to impose fines on poachers or people burning illegally forested areas either to gather non-timber forest products (mushrooms mostly) or to turn the land into a cultivation area. In 2010 and 2012, reports abounded of northern province administrations rewarding anyone who gave information leading to the arrest of people starting fires (BP March 20, 2010; MA March 3, 2012; TN March 4, 2012).

Simultaneously, a debate emerged about the legal framework necessary to ensure the implementation of the burning ban, especially the possibility for provincial governors—based on the 1992 Environmental Protection Act—to declare some areas as "disaster zones" in order to get a larger budget from the central government to fight the haze. In 2007 Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, and Mae Hong Son were declared disaster zones for the first time (TN March 20, 2007), but the Chiang Mai governor removed the label after only a few days due to fears that it would negatively affect the tourism industry (TN March 24, 2007). Fears persisted despite the call by the central government "to give more importance to health than to tourism" (BP March 29, 2007). The Chiang Mai governor did not declare the city a disaster zone. However, there was a shift in focus to protective measures such as the distribution of masks, evacuation plans, and the setting up of "pollution clinics" in the most heavily affected areas.

In 2010 a "war room," later renamed "control operation center," was created. By 2016, its participants had developed a top-down approach to ameliorate the haze crisis (TN March 5, 2016). A collaborative effort by ten government agencies, the initiative was intended to help prevent fires and to implement the sixty-day (initially ninety-day) burning ban. However, newspaper reports had started to give more editorial space to calls for collaborative, decentralized, and bottom-up approaches. Efforts to decentralize governance and create collaboration between various government agencies and local people to prevent the haze are not new. Prior to 2007, Chiang Mai activists had sought out this approach in their struggle against urban pollution and called for more collaboration with residents (echoing the long history of tensions between Chiang Mai and the central power in Bangkok). However, it regained popularity in the media in 2014 after the government adopted a stronger, more authoritarian stance against the seasonal haze crisis. Instead of a "no-burning" approach, activists and Chiang Mai University researchers insisted on the positive role of fire in the management of northern Thai forests and advocated for a prescribed, or controlled, burning (TN March 22, 2015; BP March 29, 2015). Activists who worked with indigenous highland groups such as the Karen were especially vocal in supporting this approach, which gained political support in 2019. By 2019, it became clear that the burning ban policy was not ecologically or economically sustainable and did not prevent serious haze episodes (TN February 7,

2019). The increase in fires observed that year[10] led to a change of paradigm and to the creation of the Chiang Mai Breathe Council, which was conceived as a new, more participatory form of collaboration between provincial authorities and the civil sector (BP March 31, 2019).

Since 2019, there has been a growing interest in identifying technological solutions to the haze crisis. This is due partly to the fact that independent networks of air pollution sensors, based on real-time measurements, are presented in the news as a way to increase awareness of health risks, although they sometimes also contradict the measurements given by the PCD and are based on the Thai AQI. Throughout the northern region, many governmental, nongovernmental, and academic groups have developed an effective haze-sensing and haze-predicting system that is connected to institutional frameworks responding to threshold alerts.[11] In addition to these initiatives, other technological solutions frequently describe the use of agricultural biomass to produce fertilizers (biochar) or energy, the development of electric modes of transportation, the use of indoor air purifiers, and the improvement of filters for car and industrial emissions (TN March 23, 2015; March 11, 2016; February 25, 2019).

Additional proposals have included initiatives to produce artificial rain, or cloud seeding, and are often presented in the media as "royal rainmaking." The expression is derived from the name of the project (*khrongkan fon luang*) launched by King Rama IX in November 1955, run by the Department of Royal Rainmaking and Agricultural Aviation, and operating under the Ministry of Agriculture, in order initially to alleviate the effects of drought for Thai farmers. Each year, newspaper reports describe the efforts of the northern Royal Rainmaking operation center to increase the level of humidity in the atmosphere and induce rain. The frequency of reports on these operations was especially high until 2012 and thereafter tended to decrease. These reports did not address the efficiency of the method (which requires a certain level of humidity already in the air to be effective) or the potential health effects of the chemicals spread in the atmosphere by aircraft of the "rainmaking unit."

10) After several years of continuous decline, the number of hotspots increased dramatically in 2019. Some informants attributed this to the no-burning policy, due to which dry leaves accumulated in the forest and fueled bigger and less controllable fires. Others argued that the farmers were seeking revenge for being blamed for the haze crisis. The farmers pointed out that pollution levels in Chiang Mai did not decrease proportionally to the number of hotspots. They therefore burned more that year to express their political discontent. This shows that, as in other contexts around the world, traditional burning practices can be redirected toward a political ecology of protests (Kuhlken 1999). There is a correlation between number of fires and periods of social unrest, because fire can be a weapon of the poor.

11) Since 2020, the provincial administration has implemented a prescribed burning policy that uses a mobile phone application named Fire D to manage farmers' requests for burning.

Conclusion

Scholarship on the social dimensions of air pollution has mostly addressed relations of power and inequality, especially in cities where a few segments of the population can protect themselves through indoor air purifiers or seasonal escape trips under cleaner skies, while the majority suffer from long-term exposure to deadly particulate matter (Graham 2015). Several studies have also stressed the emotional, affective nature of urban atmospheres (Choy 2011; Adey 2013) as well as the uncertainties and conflict of interpretation raised by the implementation of monitoring systems (Garnett 2015). However, few works have offered a localized and empirical study of the emergence of concern in the public opinion, especially when it is related to an old and seasonal phenomenon. In this paper, we analyze how seasonal air pollution in Chiang Mai has been framed in three national newspapers over more than two decades, in order to understand how environmental issues become an environmental crisis.

Anders Ekström suggests that the media rhythms "resonate with a deep-seated amalgamation of repetition and disruption in the history of disaster discourse" and that "disasters in real-time create a sense of an intensified now" (Ekström 2016). In Chiang Mai, independent networks of sensors that analyze air pollution in real time offer new information to citizens who previously relied on PCD measurements. However, they also amplify mistrust based on micro-local and micro-temporal measurement variations (Buzzelli 2008). These concerns are then relayed by the press as well as digital media and social networks. The obsession with real time creates a kind of "monstrous present" (Hartog 2003, 119) that intensifies the feeling of emergency and its conceptualization as a form of "war," a word often used by authorities in the media in reference to forest and agricultural fires in the northern region.

Simultaneously, there is a growing awareness of the temporal complexity of environmental hazards (Chakrabarty 2009). Natural emergencies call into question forecasting and historical ecology, triggering concerns about cross-temporal relations between hazards. For instance, in Chiang Mai journalists often question the relationship between El Niño episodes, the price of maize, and the severity of seasonal haze. Similarly, the media have popularized the idea that seasonal haze episodes have been getting worse over the last two decades, even though available data does not (yet) corroborate this point. This discrepancy illustrates Ekström's (2016, 5349) expression of "slow disasters and the catastrophic now" in which a long-term and (until recently) low-profile form of violence clashes with new perceptions of and discourses about the degradation of our environment.

Since 2007, seasonal air pollution episodes have received regular coverage in the

Thai national press. However, it was not until 2015 that a correlation became visible between the number of articles published and the intensity of the pollution episodes. Prior to 2015, reporting was relatively infrequent except for 2007 and 2012. Throughout mainland Southeast Asia, as in other cities with more pollution than Chiang Mai (e.g., Hanoi), air pollution does not receive as much coverage. The relative freedom of the press in Thailand, compared to nearby countries, and the existence of a growing contestable civil society amidst the political turmoil over the last decade may help explain this difference. However, other factors such as the development of independent measurement networks relying on international standards as well as sociological transformations (Bangkokians buying second homes in the North) may also have played a role—though in the case of the latter, no study has yet been conducted to corroborate this hypothesis. A direct consequence of this evolution is that the population has largely appropriated the technical vocabulary of air pollution (e.g., PM2.5, PM10, IQA) and frequently expresses a need for better information from the authorities.

The emergence of public discourse and political debate on air pollution in Chiang Mai has been accompanied by two apparent trends in discussions of this issue in the national media. The first is a shift from urban causes of air pollution to broader debates about its rural origins, particularly in relation to the multiple fire practices in the surrounding countryside. The second is a progressively stronger emphasis on solutions rather than causes of pollution, as these become better known and a consensus is reached on the multifactorial nature of the phenomenon.

Beyond these differences, three consistent frames emerge. First, there is a shared perception of a worsening seasonal air pollution period. Although this perspective is not yet corroborated by scientific data, it nevertheless perpetuates a growing intolerance among urban and rural residents alike for a phenomenon that was until recently considered normal. The seasonality of the phenomenon, which is mirrored by its treatment in the press (the vast majority of the articles are published between February and March) may explain why people seem to forget and rediscover haze annually. However, other factors such as possible sociological changes in the Chiang Mai population as well as the impact of spectacular visual elements popularized by popular and social media (Doi Suthep hidden from view by the haze, Doi Suthep in flames, etc.) may also contribute to this tendency. Both of these possibilities require additional research to determine the relationship.

Second, newspapers often frame possible solutions as an opposition between, on the one hand, an authoritarian discourse favoring the criminalization of all fires (“zero burning” policy) and increased control by the central state and, on the other hand, more “regionalist” proposals invoking the need for decentralization, support for certain fires

that are necessary for the environment ("prescribed burning"), and better collaboration between civil society and public bodies. Criticism of agro-capitalism, particularly the expansion of maize cultivation and the land issues associated with it, is to some extent a cross-cutting issue on which the proponents of each of these visions may share the same arguments but with different perspectives on possible solutions. The three national newspapers echoed these debates during times of political tension and demonstrations, especially in 2012 and 2019.

Finally, there is a clear discrepancy between the frequent mention of the transnational nature of the phenomenon and the almost complete absence of articles detailing the concrete measures implemented with neighboring states to improve regional cooperation on this issue. This may be interpreted as a form of self-censorship, given the transnational interests of some Thai agri-businesses, especially in Myanmar, and their close proximity to political circles. Conversely, the framing of air pollution debates as a Thai microcosm undoubtedly reflects broader political issues that cannot be addressed under authoritarian rule.

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Workers and Democracy: The Indonesian Labour Movement, 1949–1957

John Ingleson

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The Indonesian labor movement, which was active between the Dutch recognition of Indonesian sovereignty in December 1949 and the nationalization of Dutch business assets in 1957, was complex. It saw competition between unions and union federations for members; between political parties for influence in both federations and individual unions; and between unions and Dutch managers, many of whom seemingly wanted to continue running their businesses as if the 1940s simply had not happened. The political environment within which these struggles took place was marked by a fragile parliamentary democracy over which the military kept watch, and in which it occasionally intervened.

John Ingleson's success in bringing analytical order to this complex, sometimes chaotic scene is a major achievement and a significant contribution to our understanding of industrial movements in Indonesia at this time, and indeed contemporaneous Indonesian politics more broadly.

After the introduction and a context-setting Chapter 1, the main body of *Workers and Democracy* is divided into two sections, the first concentrating on the primary actors in the industrial arena, the second on case studies of industry sectors. Chapter 2 focuses on the relations between unions, union federations, and politics. Of particular significance is the dominant role played by SOBSI, the union federation linked to the Communist Party of Indonesia (PKI). SOBSI benefited from its PKI connections, and through them its links to the Communist bloc. However, Ingleson makes a convincing case that the reasons for SOBSI's success were primarily local and domestic. Compared with its rivals it attracted better-educated and more committed officials, it made genuine attempts to listen to what grassroots workers wanted, it managed its finances better, and its clear ideological commitment to class struggle against foreign capitalism resonated not only with grassroots workers but also with a broader community sentiment which sought the elimination of Dutch influence from the newly independent Indonesia. Non-Communist unions and federations struggled to compete. Their disparate political and religious orientations were a

major barrier to their forming any effective united front, and their social and political ideologies often thwarted attempts to attract grassroots members.

Chapter 3 focuses on unions and workers at the grassroots level in the immediate post-revolutionary period. Many industrial disputes at this time arose spontaneously, but most were subsequently absorbed by local unions, and occasionally national ones. Amongst the issues workers pursued were the obvious ones such as wage rates, but they also included Lebaran (end of Muslim fasting month) bonuses, canteen facilities, and social wages—payment in rice, textiles, etc. Unions were also keen to show foreign companies that they could no longer treat their employees as they had in the past. Differential wages based on race were a particular target. In the majority of the cases discussed here, workers and their unions were successful in securing greatly improved conditions from their employers—sometimes because of the ad hoc intervention of the government, but more commonly because unions became more adroit in pursuing their causes than employers were in defending theirs.

Chapter 4 focuses on the role of government in industrial relations, and especially in the resolution of labor disputes. Governments of all persuasions faced a difficult dilemma. They understood that limiting industrial activity by workers violated their freedoms, hard won in the struggle against colonialism, but they also feared that industrial disputes had the capacity to damage the fragile national economy. They thus aimed to secure negotiated solutions to industrial disputes, recognizing workers' rights but avoiding industrial conflict.

The remaining four substantive chapters are case studies of workers in four industry sectors: the public sector, plantations, dockyards and shipping, and industrial and urban transport. These are finely detailed chapters. Indeed, in places the detail seems almost overwhelming, particularly when there are several different unions involved in a particular dispute, and a complex mix of wage and other demands being made, such as in the discussion of the 1954 strike in the shipping and stevedoring industry (pp. 286–293).

A key issue in the discussion of the public sector is the distinction between *pegawai negeri* and *buruh*—the former being office-based workers, teachers, stationmasters, and the like, and the latter laborers, factory hands, and so forth. Unions seeking to cover both groups found it difficult not only to reconcile their different industrial objectives but also to overcome the very powerful social distinctions between the two.

The chapter on plantations shows that one union—the SOBSI-affiliated Sarbupri—was predominant in both Java and Sumatra for most of the 1950s. Industry workers, led by Sarbupri, took on some of the most powerful Dutch commercial interests in the country. They were not always successful, and the union still had problems recruiting higher-level workers in the industry, but working conditions in 1957 were unarguably better than they had been in 1950, for which Sarbupri deserved credit.

The dockyards and inter-island shipping companies had been the sites of industrial conflict

since the 1920s; this continued into the 1950s. The dominant shipping company, KPM, Ingleson argues was regarded by Indonesians in the 1950s as "an arrogant company that continued to treat Indonesia as if it were still a colony" (p. 266). The extensive references the author makes to documents in the KPM archives in the Hague, in which company management in Indonesia argued for the continuation of racially discriminatory practices on its ships, reinforce this assessment.

Governments were sympathetic to the efforts of unions to improve conditions in Indonesia, and in particular to eliminate the structural racism endemic in the KPM. But at the same time, the country's archipelagic layout, and its dependence on stevedoring and shipping companies to get crucial exports to market, meant that they were concerned for the potential impact of industrial action on the national economy.

The final case study chapter is more diverse in its industrial coverage than the preceding three, focusing on oil production, textiles, and urban transport. Oil production was still in foreign hands, primarily Dutch but also American and British; the textile industry was dominated by small, Indonesian-owned companies; urban transport was also Indonesian dominated but highly diversified in both its range of work sites—from buses and trucks to horse-drawn carriages and pedicabs—and its geographical dispersion. SOBSI, again, was the dominant union federation operating across these industries; but with the exception of the oil industry, it was not particularly successful in drawing workers into its unions. This chapter is perhaps not as successful as the preceding case studies in developing a single, coherent narrative, except possibly in demonstrating the major difficulties unions faced in seeking to improve working conditions in highly diversified, often cottage, industries.

Ingleson's final chapter brings together the conclusions he draws from his work, discussed below.

This book is meticulously researched. Apart from contemporary newspapers and other print media, it uses archival material from the Netherlands, Australia, the UK, and the US. Importantly, Ingleson also makes extensive use of post-1949 materials lodged in the Indonesian National Archives, which have rarely been used in the past, and never, I suggest, as effectively as Ingleson uses them here. This latter resource does, however, pose something of a dilemma. SOBSI and its affiliates figure prominently in this book; unions associated with other parties or organizations less so. This may well reflect the situation prevailing at the time. However, there is also much less archival material available on these latter organizations than on SOBSI. In the wave of anti-Communist violence which engulfed Indonesia from the mid-1960s onward, SOBSI's records were seized by the military and ultimately preserved in the National Archives. It is ironic that the very processes of destruction of the PKI and its affiliates by the military and its allies helped ensure the survival of their records, thus helping preserve the memory of those organizations, including SOBSI, while the records of other organizations were simply lost.

Ingleson's book makes several important contributions to our understanding of modern

Indonesian history in the period 1950–57. First, Ingleson demonstrates that the achievements of the union movement were real and extensive. Industrial relations in 1957 were very different from what they had been in 1950. Though unions and workers had not won all their battles, and many unions were still structurally and financially weak in 1957, much had been achieved to end colonial-era practices in worker-employer relations. Workers and their unions had learned how best to prosecute their cases when dealing not only with foreign and Indonesian companies but also with the Indonesian state and its agents, including the military, who were by no means uniformly supportive of their objectives. These achievements had, however, been virtually eliminated from the national memory by the anti-Communist, military-led government of Suharto after 1965.

The one caveat which might be entered here is that Ingleson's conclusion that non-unionized workers fared much worse than unionized ones (p. 342) would have been strengthened with more evidence of conditions prevailing in non-unionized industries. There is one citation of a UN report from 1956 saying that the position of unorganized labor, at least in Java, had probably deteriorated since 1950 (p. 151), but little else by way of direct evidence.

Second, Ingleson shows that, contrary to the views of most Dutch employers, most unions and union federations were primarily industrial organizations, not political ones. True, SOBSI and many individual unions were linked to the PKI, and others to other parties including PNI, PSI, and Masyumi. But industrial concerns were informed by political considerations; they were not subservient to them. Workers and their representatives exercised independent agency. Ironically, though, this agency was itself disturbing to many members of the Indonesian political, business, and military elites who were suspicious of mass activism, outside their control.

Parallels might be drawn with other fields where organizations competing for popular support were party affiliated. The women's organization Gerwani, for instance, and the cultural association Lekra, both PKI linked, were subject to the same questioning and suspicions: were these primarily women's or cultural groups, or simply extensions of the PKI?

Third, Ingleson shows the ambivalence of government support for union activities. Government agencies charged with helping resolve industrial disputes, especially the Labour Office and the P4P, played important roles in consolidating workers' gains and changing the industrial landscape. But the influence of these agencies was not entirely benign: they also enabled governments to limit or moderate the impact of union demands on the economy.

However, perhaps the most important contribution Ingleson makes is in illuminating a period of modern Indonesian history often overlooked, a period remembered—when it is remembered at all—more for its failures than for its achievements. This book overturns this myth; it should spark renewed interest in other aspects of this period's history.

Overall, this book is an excellent study of its subject. It deserves a wide readership amongst those with an interest in the Indonesian trade union movement, the evolution of Indonesian politics, and Indonesia's modern history. But it should also appeal to those with broader interests in under-

standing the challenges faced by unions, workers, and governments in newly independent nations in promoting the interests of workers, ensuring that they enjoy the full benefits of hard-won independence, while also maintaining a functioning economy and polity.

Colin Brown
Griffith Asia Institute, Griffith University, Brisbane
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8239-6963

Indes néerlandaises et culture chinoise, deux traductions malaises du Roman des Trois Royaumes (1910–1913)

Ge Song
Paris: Archipel (Hors-Série 1), 2021.

Song Ge's *Indes néerlandaises et culture chinoise, deux traductions malaises du Roman des Trois Royaumes (1910–1913)* is a detailed study of the translations of *Sam Kok* (*Sanguo Yanyi* [Romance of the three kingdoms]) by Lie In Eng (c. 1890–1941, b. Padang) and Tjie Tjin Koeij (1890–?, b. Sukabumi) into Chinese Malay during the colonial era of the Netherlands East Indies. Both translators published their works in Batavia in 1910–13, when the Chinese Peranakan in the Netherlands East Indies were rethinking their cultural and political identity. In her study, Song Ge connects classical Chinese literature and culture with the rising modern world of translators and readers in the Netherlands East Indies (p. 13). She extends her analysis with a multidisciplinary approach using literature, philology, history, and sociology to give a comprehensive context to the translated work.

Song Ge has divided her book into three parts. In the first part (three chapters), she provides the basic literary and historical background for studying the two translations of *Sanguo Yanyi*. In Chapter 1 she traces the translation of Chinese works in the Netherlands East Indies before 1910 with a list of 31 translators and their works (pp. 31–34). In the next chapter the author details the origin of *Sanguo Yanyi* and its evolution. Chapter 3 deals with earlier adaptations of the work into Malay and other local languages. This chapter also contains a brief profile of the two translators (pp. 58–68).

Since the role of translators is central to works such as this, Lie In Eng and Tjie Tjin Koeij deserve greater attention; unfortunately, we have little knowledge of their lives.[1)] Both translators are remarkable since they started work on *Sam Kok* while in their twenties. Their education—Lie In Eng's in a Chinese school and Tjie Tjin Koeij's with a private tutor—allowed them to gain

1) In 1976, Tjie Tjin Koeij worked as a guardian of a Chinese temple in Surabaya (Salmon 1981, 351).

proficiency in Malay and Chinese. Lie In Eng's translation (5,308 pages) was first published in *Sin Po* and was then sold in 65 fascicles, while Tjie Tjin Koeij's work (4,665 pages) was printed by a Batavia publisher (Tjiong Koeng Bie) in 62 fascicles.[2] The close publication dates of their works (1910–13) demonstrated the popularity of *Sam Kok* and resulted in a rivalry between the translators for readership (pp. 73–74).

The book's second part (five chapters) provides a comprehensive literary study of the translated work. The author highlights the aims of Lie In Eng and Tjie Tjin Koeij in translating *Sam Kok*, which included commercial reasons—such as for the daily *Sin Po* to expand its circulation—and, more deeply, a desire to reconnect the Chinese Peranakan with traditional Chinese values. The author then examines the version of *Sam Kok* probably used for the translations and ends by discussing the linguistic, literary, and cultural aspects of the translations.

The third part (three chapters) evaluates the social and political impact of *Sam Kok* on the Chinese Peranakan of the Netherlands East Indies. The author begins by narrating the rise of Chinese national consciousness (*Bangsa Tionghoa*). She analyzes the impact of *Sam Kok* on the Chinese Peranakan community in the Netherlands East Indies by looking at the mentality of readers, examining the role of *Sin Po* in bridging modernity and tradition, and reflecting on the national imagination of Benedict Anderson (pp. 226–232). This conceptual discussion on nation using Anderson's theory leads us to think of the development of nationhood (*Minzu*) within the diverse ethnic groups in the Chinese community in the Netherlands East Indies (*Bangsa Tionghoa*). As mentioned earlier and highlighted in the conclusion, the story of *Sam Kok* published in *Sin Po* allowed Chinese Peranakan from different regions to connect with their ancestral land.

In the final chapter, the author shares her observations and analyses of the translated work as a construction of the past. She provides examples of how *Sam Kok* has been cited by writers online to explain political conflicts in contemporary Indonesia. Interestingly, these writers have chosen to focus on political figures with a Chinese background, such as Basuki Tjahaja Purnama alias Ahok (b. 1966, governor of Jakarta 2014–17), or political leaders idolized by the Chinese in Indonesia, such as Abdurrahman Wahid or Gus Dur (1940–2009; fourth Indonesian president, 1999–2001) (pp. 242–243).[3]

The book includes three appendices citing Tjie Tjin Koeij's translated works: "Preface" (pp. 273–278), "To the Reader of *Sam Kok*" (pp. 279–288), and "Thirty Teachings and Chinese Proverbs Translated into Malay" (pp. 289–294). A glossary at the end of the appendices provides us with a list of loanwords from Minnanhua, a dialect from the south of Fujian, in the Malay language used by Peranakan Chinese in Java at the beginning of the twentieth century (pp. 295–296).

Overall, this book goes beyond a translation study. It provides an extensive analysis of the

2) Salmon (1981, 226–227, 351–352).
3) Once Gus Dur declared himself as a Chinese descendant.

role of *Sam Kok*'s translations in highlighting social and cultural changes among the Chinese Peranakan in the Netherlands East Indies at the beginning of the twentieth century. The author illuminates the multifaceted significance of *Sam Kok*. First, the translations show the cultural connections between Chinese literature in the mainland and overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia. Second, the fact that the translations are read even today indicates the intergenerational readership of these works within the Chinese Peranakan community. Further study is warranted to compare these translations of *Sam Kok* with translations in other Southeast Asian contexts (p. 270).

Yerry Wirawan
Independent researcher
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8290-696X

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Community Movements in Southeast Asia: An Anthropological Perspective of Assemblages

Ryoko Nishii and Shigeharu Tanabe, eds.
Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2022.

In *Community Movements in Southeast Asia*, Nishii Ryoko and Tanabe Shigeharu center the idea of community movements as forms of assemblages in which power arises in collectivity. The contributing authors understand power not as emanating from the state alone but coming into being in assemblages of people—a community. Their edited volume, hence, centers people's everyday experiences with power and participation in community movements, decentering and putting the role of the state into perspective. In effect, the book shows that power is fluid, multidirectional, and changing according to the assemblages that people are embedded in. Nishii summarizes community movement as being "the process by which people create alternative communities and worlds that can persist under inescapable hegemony" (p. 8). She further states that community movements distinguish themselves from social movements by being defined by heterogeneity, coincident formation, and joint action rather than homogeneity of members. As such, they are to be understood as assemblages without an assumed "pre-existing organic wholeness" (p. 9) to them. This theorization of community movements is drawn out by Nishii in dialogue with the individual chapters of the book, giving brief summaries of what readers can expect.

The first three contributing authors look at different community movements across Thailand

as religious, political, and ethnic assemblages in resistance to hegemonic power, growing suppression, and homogenization. Tanabe looks at Buddhist hermits living in Northern Thailand and how their community has served as an assemblage of resistance to hegemonic perceptions and conceptualizations of Buddhism in Thailand. He analyzes how this assemblage of resistance comes into crisis the moment some individuals in the community begin to associate themselves closer with the Thammayut sect. Takagi Ryo, in contrast, focuses on the role of radio—its use of social media and voice—as an essential actant to constitute and form communities. He follows the innovative and resourceful transitions that three community radio stations were forced to undergo in order to maintain and reassemble a sense of collectivity when the Thai government decided to censor public political discourse and dissent in media. In the third chapter, Nishii discusses how Hmong communities' memories of forest life help them to sustain a sense of collectivity and community—even as the forest has been taken away from them. She argues that entering the forest, Hmong could experience a sense of collectivity that was uncoupled from social and ethnic (minority) status as it was defined through being *sahai* (comrades) and sharing common experiences of forest life. This collective memory of forest life continues to sustain the Hmong's land restoration movement and is strengthened through visits to the ruins of their former village, now located in a national park.

The second part of the book turns toward community movements in Myanmar, focusing on religious and linguistic education in a state that is constituted and sustained by conflict with its people. Tosa Keiko focuses on the establishment and expansion of Buddhist religious education in Myanmar through Dhamma schools. While these schools have been associated with the rise of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim extremist movements in Myanmar, Tosa argues that the schools are crucial to providing and promoting education based on a child-centered approach and improving Buddhist education, especially for children from families and orphans in need. Yet Tosa does not deny that the schools and their members reflect anxieties over the erosion of Buddhism and fears over Islamic expansion, with some of the schools having connections with individuals from the extremist anti-Muslim movement. Saito Ayako, on the other hand, turns toward Burmese Muslims and their approach to Islamic education in Myanmar (beyond madrasahs), showing that it does not only provide religious education but also instills a sense of national belonging and community among Burmese Muslims. Saito further demonstrates how Muslims engage in interfaith dialogues and provide community services for all Burmese to counter the discrimination and violence perpetrated against them. Lastly, Kubo Tadayuki analyzes the role of Kyebogyi in the de/politicization and homogenization of Kayah identity in Myanmar, arguing that Kyebogyi is a depoliticized ethnic language. Kubo demonstrates that the Kayah identity and language, as well as the ability to use its script, are anything but uniform and homogenous. As such, he claims that the Kayah are a national *ethnie* in the making rather than already being one.

The third and final part draws on examples from countries around the Mekong Delta—Laos,

Thailand, and Cambodia—looking at rural community movements that fight for economic survival and resist exploitation and dispossession by the state and a global economy. Koya Nobuko looks at the Inpaeng Network as spreading the idea of an "agriculture for living" (p. 213), or integrated farming and sustainable agriculture, in resistance to the profit-driven farming of the globalized market economy. While the network was established in resistance to the global economy, Koya argues that integrated farming does not function in complete rejection of the globalized market economy but that through integrated farming the Inpaeng Network is able to resist dependency on it. Nakata Tomoko similarly focuses on farming practices of rural communities and their challenges from national and global structures of domination. With economic restructuring driven by the state in Laos, Nakata argues, economic disparity has been brought to villages, increasingly defining social relations in terms of money. Taking the example of villagers' irregular practices of land acquisition and bridge building, Nakata demonstrates that villagers' creative reactions to economic deprivation speak to the dynamic character of community movements. Villagers make use of but also resist the effects that national and global power structures produce on their livelihoods. In the final chapter, Abe Toshihiro turns to collective action in Cambodian land rights movements showing that farmers use global pop culture, social media, and international organizations to fight against their dispossession by state policies and projects that on the surface promote development. All the while, farmers learn from failed attempts of resistance and improve their strategies as they face aggressive repression through state violence.

While the volume begins with a chapter that binds together the different chapters to consolidate Nishii and Tanabe's theorization of community movements, it does not offer a concluding chapter, effectively escaping a rigid conceptualization and opening the possibility of further thinking about the essential absence of a "pre-existing organic wholeness" (p. 9) to community movements. Nevertheless, the book offers coherence, as all the contributors draw on the theorization of community movements outlined in the introduction. Through thick ethnographic descriptions and rich empirical materials from their fields, the contributing authors emphasize the everyday workings and forms of resistance to hegemonic powers through subjectivation, which allows for "creating or reproducing other kinds of hegemony" (p. 49) rather than acting solely in a mode of simple opposition, refusal, and rejection. Despite focusing on the daily lives of their participants, none of the contributors loses sight of the fact that community movements in Southeast Asia commonly face a repressive, violent state apparatus or other hegemon. By tracing the role of individuals participating in, transforming, or leaving a community movement, the contributors demonstrate the assemblage character of these movements. They draw out the dynamism and fluidity of individual actants gaining, holding, and losing power in their relations with one another. The book, hence, successfully illustrates the micropolitics and complex relations of power. Individual actors no longer appear entirely helpless against a dominating nation-state but as active participants in a collective reacting to sovereign power.

However, at times the strong focus on thick description and alignment with the editors' theorization of community movement lacks forthright engagement, discussion, and critique of it. It is not always entirely clear how far the chapters work with the concept in more depth, contributing to and expanding on its theorization. In general, the volume could have benefited from a broader discussion of the contributors' understanding of community movements to clarify their distinction from new social movements. As it is, the contributors' claim that community movements are defined by heterogeneity, in contrast to (new) social movements that are based on homogeneity, appears a bit vague. I understand that the contributors focus on the heterogeneous elements and the fluid constitution of community movements. However, this focus also leads to a lack of acknowledgment of the homogenizing dynamics in such movements. Although most contributors write that the community movements they studied are not driven by any pre-existing homogenous sense of community, many of them are based in an ethnic or religious sense of community, of sharing collectivity through common village structures or political (past) alliances that make them become part of the assemblage. From the empirical data offered by most contributors, some of the community movements are clearly based on the creation of homogeneity by glossing over differences (and therewith the heterogeneity of their members) as these are potentially disruptive. Kubo, for example, describes the ambiguous and ambivalent relationship of heterogeneity and homogeneity in community movements. When he writes that the script movement of the Kayah people shows that they are not a homogenous *ethnie* but that they dream of becoming one, unified through a common language and script, he does not show only their heterogeneity but also their desire for homogeneity—for a certain level of commonsensus. As such, it appears to me, community movements are not so much defined by heterogeneity as by the dynamics between members' heterogeneity and the homogenizing processes they are involved in. This dialectic and its ambivalence can be traced by the contributing authors' understanding of community movements and their collectivity as being un/made by individuals who find themselves in an assemblage.

Hence, while the strong focus on community movements as heterogeneous assemblages constitutes a moment of potential criticism, it also constitutes the book's strength as it revives the question of what constitutes a community and its movement. In shining a light on this question through rich empirical data, the edited volume becomes an intriguing read. It puts forward the important suggestion to understand community movements as constituted of assemblages of heterogeneous actors involved in power struggles, whereby their sense of collectivity is not simply oppositional to hegemonic power but also constitutes an opportunity for the actors' subjectivation. This bottom line offers a new avenue into studying community movements in relation to repressive and violent governments and other hegemons.

Miriam Jaehn
Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University

Dynastic Democracy: Political Families in Thailand

YOSHINORI NISHIZAKI

Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2022.

Summary

In *Dynastic Democracy*, Nishizaki Yoshinori shows that political families exist in Thailand and that they are important. The author defines a "political family" as

> (1) a family that has produced at least two MPs since the first parliamentary election was held in 1933, or (2) a family that has produced (only) one MP since 1933 yet is directly related by marriage to another family that has produced one or more MPs during the same period. (p. 4)

This definition, as acknowledged by Nishizaki, is an expansion of the one used by most scholars, who only count a family with at least two MPs as a political family (p. 5).

Nishizaki categorizes political families into two groups: royally related "princely or bureaucratic families"—depending on their political and genealogical roots—and "capitalist-commoner families." Chapters 4 and 5 argue about "the clash between the 2 factions," reflecting the chaos that Thailand has long been facing. It may be concluded that the author's main argument is that the fate of Thai democracy has fallen into the hands of these two factions; democracy is either incomplete or temporarily wiped away.

In a sense, it may be said that Nishizaki straightforwardly insists on the significance of the "agency-based explanation" of Thai politics as well as the network politics that host these agencies. Furthermore, the foundational hypothesis that Nishizaki builds his argument on is simply that networks or dynasties (political families) are bad for democracy. Therefore, if he can prove that they still exist and have a significant presence—which he does—then a proper democratic regime is not yet in place.

Such a claim reminds me of the abundant literature on Thai politics during the late 1990s and early 2000s, particularly during and after Thaksin's first term as prime minister. Both conservative scholars like Anek Laothammatas (1995) and progressive scholars like Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker (2004) and Kasian Tejapira (2006) have a similar perspective on so-called political families, dynasties, and politicians.

Building on the aforementioned claim, Nishizaki arrives at another point in his main argument: it is not Thai politics that has bred political dynasties or families, but the long-rooted political families that have bred the current state of Thai democracy, which is incomplete and decayed. This argument runs counter to the observations of many scholars of Thai politics, who tend to claim that it is the Thai political structure and ecosystem that have produced the conditions for political dynasties to flourish. Nishizaki is almost claiming that it is these political families that behave as

the "structure" itself and have bred the whole ecosystem of the Thai political landscape.

The endurance of political families, as argued by Nishizaki, may be seen from his counterargument against Thai political observers such as James Ockey (2015) and Prajak Kongkirati (2016) that these families emerged at the dawn of Thai democracy in 1932—not in 1973, as most people believe. Of course, there was an awareness of political families from 1932, but most scholars claim that these families are based predominantly in Bangkok or the central plain and not nationwide (see, for example, Prajak 2016). Nishizaki argues otherwise, claiming that these families have long been part of a nationwide network.

The Good

This work's most obvious and probably unarguable contribution is the information it provides. It clearly illustrates Nishizaki's information-gathering and synthetization capabilities at a magical level. The number of sources and amount of information—from the cremation volumes to the Assets and Liabilities Declaration Accounts and so forth—that this work has collected is unimaginable. The author seems to be cognizant of this, since he mentions that the book may be extremely boring due to the data overload. This point may be considered both the weakness and the strength of this work from his point of view. I concur with Nishizaki that this is the pinnacle of his work, but the boredom it creates is far from being the book's worst weakness, as will be discussed later on.

The extensiveness of its data will easily make this book a scholarly reference on the topic for many years to come. The data is not only good in its raw form, but it also provides significant elaborative power for Nishizaki's argument. One of Nishizaki's objectives in this work is to confirm the influence of political families as the core factor in shaping Thailand's political landscape. This is a claim that goes against the recent conventional scholastic opinion on Thai electoral politics, which is founded on a structural change in the way of convincing voters—from charismatic to programmatic, as studied via the clientelistic relationship (Viengrat 2022; 2023). Nishizaki, though he does not deny such a change (p. xv), has made the agency-based claim that political families and network politics still play a much greater role and that, to a certain degree, the widely accepted clientelistic relationship is simply a subset of this dynastic ecosystem (p. xvi).

In order to back such a claim, a tremendous amount of information has to be provided to show the "objective and somewhat undeniable influence" of political families; and the author has achieved this feat. In this sense, the information about the 3,454 MPs throughout Thai parliamentary history that Nishizaki has collected will act as an unsurpassable wall of evidence that political families in Thailand have played a significant role in the development of Thai democracy. Their percentage in the share of parliamentary seats throughout Thai modern political history is not to be scoffed at. Nishizaki has proven that political families (and, by association, agency-based arguments) have been downplayed too much in recent years.

The structural stability of political families in Nishizaki's work would force most observers of Thai politics, particularly the progressive camp, to reconsider their claim on the structural change and dynamic in Thai elections. I believe that this, together with the power of information the author has painstakingly collected, is a huge contribution to academia.

The Bad

Although *Dynastic Democracy* has greatly contributed to our understanding of Thai studies, as mentioned above, it is not flawless. It is actually far from being so. It falls short in four main areas. First, it does not offer much of an original argument. Second, the author is so obsessed with the character of "dynastic families" that he seems to overlook the factors that actually affect and change these dynasties. Third, the work lacks proper criteria to support its claim that political families are significant in Thai politics. And lastly, the work equates "dynastic democracy" with the decay of democracy in a black-and-white manner that is too simplistic.

Nishizaki's arguments make a contribution to some extent, but they are at best unoriginal and borderline irrelevant to the mountain of information that the author himself has meticulously collected and presented. Nishizaki simply tells us, using the data he collected, that political families do exist—but he does not elaborate on their significance. He mentions that dynasties are bad for democracy, and he proposes—albeit not in much detail—reasons for why princely and bureaucratic families carried out coups against the behavior of capitalist-commoners. The volume lacks a discussion of principles and conceptual criteria to explain why political families are bad or why their existence matters. The work simply portrays the role and location of political families as characters in a historical context but barely elaborates on why they matter. What does it mean to have such families? Hence, the arguments made are almost conceptually irrelevant to the impressive data.

Without a proper conceptual framework, this work falls short of demonstrating the importance of political families. Take the Vejjajiva family as an example. It is commonly known that Abhisit Vejjajiva and Suranand Vejjajiva share the same family name and are therefore in the same "political family" as defined in this work—but their political choices and paths have been entirely different. In contrast, the Future Forward Party (FFP), which was dissolved and many of whose members moved over to the Move Forward Party (MFP), was a political cluster of "diehard friends" centered around Thanathorn Juangroongruangkit. Leading members of the FFP and MFP did not share a family name and were not even linked by marriage, but their relationship structure and even political function were like a carbon copy of some political families that Nishizaki refers to. As a result, after reading this book, I do not see the importance of political families in general, as opposed to political clans. From this point alone, argument-wise, I cannot say this work has achieved its goal.

Second, the author is so obsessed with the "vessel" of the dynasty itself that he is almost blinded by all other related factors. To put it bluntly, this is a study of dynastic families that turns a blind eye to changes within the families and their function. Nishizaki is obsessively focused on just the form of the vessel that he has defined. This point is strongly related to the previous shortcoming. It is because the author focuses solely on the form of the vessel that the reader eventually comes to doubt why political families even matter. At this point, we are only told that there are political families formed by blood or marriage, and their number is quite significant. That is all this work conveys.

Indeed, political families still exist. Any sane observer of Thai politics would agree with this claim. But political families that have the unchanged form of a vessel do change their roles. Illan Nam and Viengrat Nethipo (2022) studied the formation and function of the Thai Rak Thai Party (TRT), which is commonly known as the "big political family party" in Thailand. However, the roles that TRT performed were strikingly different from the roles that seem to have been frozen since 1973 as Nishizaki argues. Nam and Viengrat (2022) proved that even though the form of the vessels of political families remains the same, their function does not. Families have to change according to the structural changes brought about by the 1997 constitution and become more programmatic. The Shinawatra family may pass on their power and somewhat own TRT, but this is no longer simply through vote buying and using the charismatic charm of each MP to gain popularity. This is the dynamic of political families that Nishizaki has missed due to his obsession with the static form of political families.

This leads to the third problem. The aim of this work is to portray the "significance of the influence" that stems from political families. The way in which Nishizaki has chosen to do this is by objectively displaying the proportion of seats that these political families share in parliament. This is a sound approach in terms of methodology. But it lacks proper conceptual criteria to distinguish what would be considered influential and what would not be. Take, for example, Nishizaki's attempt (p. 7) to demonstrate the long-term influence of political families since 1932 in comparison to conventional knowledge, which dates from 1973 onward. He first claims that the average proportion of MP seats won by political families is 41 percent. He then argues that political families have been influential in parliament from the infancy of Thai democracy, when 24 percent of the MPs came from political families during the years 1932–71. These numbers are lower than the average proportion (41%), and there are no criteria to identify what makes them influential. The author does not conceptually elaborate on why we would consider something or some set of information influential, something like "from 20% of the seats acquired onwards." This is almost like Nishizaki asking readers to understand for themselves what his criteria are, like saying, "If this number is good enough for me, then it should be good enough for you to see my point." Since 41 percent and 24 percent differ by a significant margin, the measurement of influence is far too weak without proper conceptual criteria.

The last point relates to the previous ones. Not only is Nishizaki too obsessive with the vessel of what he defines as a political family, but he focuses only on the form and continuation of such families without looking at other related issues. This can be seen from early on in the book to the very end, where the author equates "dynastic democracy" with the "decay of democracy." This is a simplified, black-and-white version of reality. Nishizaki goes so far as to argue that political families seek only personal gain, probably at a cost to others. This might have been true at some point in history, but things have changed a lot, particularly from 1997 onward. It is Nishizaki himself (p. 7) who shares the surprising fact that from 1988 to 2020, political families in parliament were more prolific than ever before: they occupied 46.2 percent of the total seats. But was it not during this very period that Thailand experienced wave after wave of the most progressive movements for better democracy? If political families truly make things worse democratically, then during this period Thailand should have gone back to its womb.

In any case, political progressiveness is not waning. This is because political families have evolved alongside the dynamic developments in history. They are not static in the way Nishizaki has portrayed them. Viengrat Nethipo (2023) captures and clearly depicts the dynamics. Of course, political families might seek personal gain at some points—or even most points—in time, but this does not necessarily mean the decay of the majority and democracy. I would stay on the fence and say that this hypothesis is fundamentally flawed. If someone were to argue that the works and legacies of TRT, commonly known as the big family party, did not contribute anything to the advancement of democracy, any sane observer of Thai politics would disagree or even consider the statement insane. Nevertheless, Nishizaki's fundamental logic and hypothesis show that he does not argue otherwise. This is why I claim his argument to be flawed.

The Ugly

Following "The Bad," there is one remaining point of concern. This is Nishizaki's attempt to propose that political families have existed nationwide since 1932, which goes against the conventional understanding. In principle, I agree with the claim and would like to praise the author's attempt. However, the starting point that allows him to reach this conclusion is problematic, especially since he singles out Prajak (2016) in this debate. First, most works on this topic—including Prajak's—acknowledge the existence of political families during the period 1932–73, but they believe that such families were mostly centralized. Nishizaki—with his enormous set of information—has proven this point to be wrong, claiming that these families were not only in the center but across the nation.

However, we see that his definition of a political family is different from that of those who came before, since he has added a marriage relationship into the mix. This means that he has expanded the scope of the entity he would call a political family further than his predecessors. With

this in mind, he has discovered that indeed political families have proliferated since the dawn of Thai democracy, and many of these relationships seem to come from intermarriage between the old elite's political families and the newly emergent ones (Chapter 2). He has even argued this to be the cause for the 1932 democratic revolution not ending well, since the demolition of the elites would cause a conflict of interest for the promoters, who had marriage ties with the elites as well. This is a stunning and great finding on its own. But to deploy it as a counterargument against previous discoveries is rather ugly since previous works, including Prajak's, based their arguments on a totally different definition from Nishizaki's. They did not include an intermarriage relationship in the definition, and Nishizaki knows this well since he has made this point in the book. For me, this counterargument is uncalled for or even unfair.

In any case, I ultimately recommend this book because its positives outweigh its negatives. The hard work of collecting the data alone is worthy of being called the author's lifetime achievement. It will be an encyclopedia on Thai parliamentary politics for many years and decades to come.

Kritdikorn Wongswangpanich กฤดิกร วงศ์สว่างพานิช
Science Technology and Innovation Policy Institute (STIPI),
King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi
https://orcid.org/0009-0005-2321-7944

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In Asian Waters: Oceanic Worlds from Yemen to Yokohama

Eric Tagliacozzo

Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022.

In Asian Waters is Eric Tagliacozzo's third volume of a trilogy that begins with the illicit trade in Southeast Asia, then "expands" to a second volume on Southeast Asians making the pilgrimage to Mecca. In this remarkable sweep of the last five hundred years (and an occasional sortie into the older years), Tagliacozzo asks us to stretch our imagination further and look back at a realm far more extensive and perhaps even richer than Fernand Braudel's Mediterranean zone. With considerable deference, he builds on the writings of historians specializing in specific regions. He also brings in the twenty-year research that took him all over these worlds to produce a far larger narrative of ocean-wide maritime routes that connected places like Hormuz and Aden to Madagascar and Bombay, Hoi-an, Singapore, Zamboanga, Shanghai, Okinawa, and Nagasaki (there is even a mention of northern Australia) as far back as two thousand years ago.

But this breadth is not the book's only appeal. *In Asian Waters* is also a methodological delight. By citing Dutch (instead of French) sources, Tagliacozzo shows how, far from being an insignificant player in global trade, Vietnam was one of the centers of exchange. Ideational flows, especially of religious missions, can best be understood if we see these through the prisms of local communities, as in the case of Islam and the southern Philippine city of Zamboanga (established by the Spaniards, built by the Americans, and a critical hub in the Muslim separatist war against the Marcos dictatorship in the 1970s). Tagliacozzo initially expounded on this theme in his first book, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders: Smuggling and States along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1865–1915* (2005), and *In Asian Waters* he tells us the extensive connections that make possible the sale of "fins, slugs [and] pearls" in small shops in the Chinatowns across Southeast Asia. His field research notes in Appendices C–G are "artifacts" to substantiate his arguments; I suspect he has also reproduced them to get us curious about these linkages.

Scholars point to the different types of mutual compromises Western colonial powers made with Asian chiefs, kings, and emperors to hold on to power despite a shortage of personnel. *In Asian Waters* brings back "structures" to the equation, but this time the most idiosyncratic of them all—the lighthouses dotting maritime Southeast Asia. These supposed guideposts for ships navigating through a region of narrow passageways and scattered islands also functioned as Foucauldian instruments to monitor trade rivals and suppress "piracies." Southeast Asian polities, however, would also use the lighthouses to their advantage and strengthen their bargaining positions vis-à-vis the Dutch and the British.

The book starts with China "ruling the waves" during the time of Admiral Zheng He and ends with China as it appears to "rule the waves" once more. Tagliacozzo hedges as to what would be the outcome, given the current tensions in the West Philippine Sea. But he points us back to his-

tory to provide us with clues. And this, for me, is the last of his methodological gems, where he suggests, "Rather than looking for the big footprint of power on the routes, designed in the form of an aircraft carrier, perhaps it is better to seek out the small" in the

> old inscriptions—there are literally thousands of them—that the Chinese have left across the width and breadth of the Malay world, in temples, caves, and on posts, often in the middle of nowhere. They chronicle the passing of the Chinese historically, all of them traveling the routes. (pp. 387–388)

Tagliacozzo suggests that to appreciate this vast maritime world, we must do away with the blinders that fossilized disciplines have imposed on us. Instead of national geobodies, we should focus on the oceans, where there is that timeless flow of commodities, ideas, and peoples that national borders cannot stop. As he put it in a podcast interview:

> [I]t is more interesting to watch this movement from the sea because it gives us much more an idea of the fluidity and movement of history, rather than the more stationary ideas of having people bounded by the nation-state and the region. (Streckert 2022)

This is an excellent, extraordinarily superb, and fun book to read.

Patricio N. Abinales
Department of Asian Studies, University of Hawai'i -Mānoa

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Marginalisation and Human Rights in Southeast Asia

Al Khanif and Khoo Ying Hooi, eds.
New York: Routledge, 2023.

The topic of human rights for marginalized people in Southeast Asia is gaining more exposure in contemporary discourse. *Marginalisation and Human Rights in Southeast Asia*, edited by Al Khanif and Khoo Ying Hooi, critically examines the status of marginalized groups in Southeast Asia and the persistent violation of their human rights. The importance of the book lies in its ability to illuminate the current situation of marginalized groups and highlight the challenges they face in their pursuit of equal treatment and protection under the law. The book is a collection of case studies categorized primarily into two parts: regional and institutional settings; and country context

and issues-based cases. These case studies provide a comprehensive overview of the complex and diverse challenges marginalized groups face in Southeast Asia from the perspective of both regional and national contexts. The contributors have done an excellent job depicting various human rights issues and delivering policy recommendations essential to ameliorating them. *Marginalisation and Human Rights in Southeast Asia* is a must-read for anyone interested in understanding the current situation of human rights in the region and the practical solutions that can be implemented to improve it.

There are three hinges of argument connecting all the cases. First, marginalization is considered a significant factor leading to social exclusion, which has the potential to harm affected individuals or groups. Second, Southeast Asian governments have failed to address the issue and even systematically contributed to the marginalization process. Third, there are social structures that disregard principles of non-discrimination and fail to value cultural diversity and plurality.

The book's contributors extensively criticize the efforts made by ASEAN and its member states in addressing the human rights issues faced by marginalized groups. Drawing on a wealth of empirical evidence, they identify institutional constraints within ASEAN and highlight the lack of effective implementation by Southeast Asian governments. In response, the contributors collectively call for change and offer a range of policy recommendations.

These recommendations include a strong commitment to implementing plans of action at both the regional and national levels, a more liberal approach to human rights implementation, and greater awareness-raising efforts toward marginalized groups. The contributors argue that these changes are necessary to address the ongoing human rights abuses experienced by marginalized communities in the region.

The volume features chapters that emphasize statelessness as a principal subject. In Chapter 2, Su Yin Htun addresses the ineffectiveness of ASEAN in providing adequate assistance to stateless people, particularly refugees, due to several obstacles such as discriminatory laws and security concerns. She proposes solutions such as naturalization, enhancing ASEAN cooperation, and assisting stateless people to obtain legal citizenship by fostering collaboration among ASEAN countries. In Chapter 8, Lidya Christin Sinaga describes the challenges in obtaining legal citizenship encountered by Chinese people who have resided in Brunei for generations. Brunei's national law fundamentally prevents such people from acquiring citizenship, thereby limiting their access to several welfare benefits, passports, properties, worship buildings, and other basic rights that permanent citizens possess.

The next prevalent theme discussed is the issue of refugees, particularly the Rohingya crisis. In Chapter 5, Satria Rizaldi Alchatib analyzes the partnership between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and regional institutions in Southeast Asia (ASEAN) and South Asia (SAARC) in accommodating the Rohingya. He also emphasizes the constraints faced by these institutions not only in advocating human rights but also in facilitating temporary settlement and

voluntary repatriation. Chapter 10 delves deeper into Thailand's stance on the Rohingya refugee crisis. Bhanubhatra Jittiang describes how the Thai government regards the issue as a national security concern, despite the Rohingya's intention to simply pass through Thailand en route to Muslim-majority countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia. Thailand has refused to protect and accommodate the Rohingya due to past negative experiences hosting Indochinese refugees, security concerns, and public disapproval. These practices have contributed to the displacement and criminalization of Rohingya refugees in Thailand, resulting in their involvement in the growing trafficking network.

Another topic discussed in the book is the challenges faced by minority groups in Southeast Asia. In Chapter 6, Al Khanif focuses on the difficulties encountered by religious minorities in Indonesia and the impact of these challenges on the country's development policies. He highlights the rise of religious fundamentalism, discriminatory regulations, and the unclear segregation of interreligious public spheres as contributing factors to religious conflict in Indonesia. Similarly, in Chapter 7, Mohor Chakraborty discusses the challenges faced by the Moro community in the Philippines in their quest for self-determination. He examines the community's struggle for autonomy and the policy responses they have received over the years. In Chapter 9, Rejinel Valencia describes the negative portrayal of Muslims in the Philippine media, and how this contributes to their marginalization. She argues that the media's racist practices perpetuate this marginalization, and thus it is essential to decolonize the local media in order to address the ongoing conflict in the region.

The remaining chapters discuss other marginalized groups, including migrant workers, disabled persons, children, and academics. In Chapter 3, Ömer Faruk Çingir explores the impact of domestic policies on the position of migrant workers in Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore during the COVID-19 pandemic. He claims that these policies led to violations of the human rights of migrant workers. Therefore, it is necessary to implement more fair and humane policies to protect them. In Chapter 4, Muhamad Nadhir Abdul Nasir discusses the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the promotion of a human rights model for the inclusion of persons with impairments and/or chronic illnesses in Southeast Asia. He identifies challenges such as insufficient political will, socioeconomic gaps, and lack of necessary data. He stresses the importance of addressing these challenges in order to fully realize the rights and inclusion of disabled persons in the region.

In Chapter 11, Archill Niña Faller-Capistrano highlights the issues faced by children in the Philippines, including the contrast between public progress on child rights and the reality of fluid abuse and violence within the private sphere. She emphasizes more fluid mechanisms for upholding children's rights and compares legal-structural compliance with children's rights governance to alternative reports from civil society organizations. Finally, in Chapter 12, Herlambang Perdana Wiratraman discusses the effects of Indonesian politics on academic freedom and the academics

themselves. He explains how the institutionalization of social exclusion based on factors such as sexual orientation, religion, political views, and race is a result of bureaucratization and excessive politicization on campuses. He strongly suggests the promotion of academic freedom and autonomy to create a more inclusive and democratic academic environment in Indonesia.

Marginalisation and Human Rights in Southeast Asia presents an extensive overview of the current state of human rights of marginalized groups in Southeast Asia. Despite its richness of content, the book is not without notable shortcomings. First, its objectives are inconsistent. The primary goal of the volume is not to make a generalized claim on the negative trend of structured human rights violations toward marginalized groups through regional analysis. Rather, "its primary aim is to illustrate some key themes and issues within this nexus but *not* to provide comprehensive regional analysis" (p. 6). However, certain chapters in the first part of the book seem to contradict this intention.

In Chapter 3, Çingir tends to make generalized claims about migrant workers in Southeast Asia despite focusing on only three countries: Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore. For example, he states, "migrant workers in Southeast Asia are also among its most vulnerable and marginalised population" (p. 31) and "in Southeast Asia, human rights are often viewed as a secondary concern, a trend clearly observed in the international agreements to which its states are party" (p. 39). Similarly, in Chapter 4, Nasir discusses the issue of disabled persons through a regional analysis. He critiques the flaws in ASEAN regional frameworks on disabled persons and offers his own recommendations. Some of his analyses include the following: "At the regional level, there must be a proper structure for the ASEAN secretariat to better monitor and hold member states accountable for their respective implementation of the masterplan" (p. 59) and "All member states can and should use ASEAN as a collective bargaining tool to achieve several target programmes of the ASEAN Enabling Masterplan 2025" (p. 60).

Another issue relates to the book's style and structure. Although the volume is the product of a conference and the selection of chapters may have been challenging due to the limited papers presented at the conference, the book's structure is excessively repetitive and overly specific in its depiction of the current human rights situation of marginalized groups in Southeast Asia. Most of the contributors overly repeat their common arguments about the severity of human rights violations of marginalized groups and how ASEAN and its member states are constrained in properly resolving the issue.

While at first glance the book's division of chapters based on regional and institutional approaches with national and issue-based contexts appears logical, some chapters feel disconnected. In other words, while some chapters share a common thread, they do not effectively communicate with each other; as a result, each chapter seems to stand on its own. Additionally, some chapters are easily understood, while others are more complicated, making the book's readability inconsistent.

In terms of balance, the book intends to criticize the efforts made by ASEAN and its member states to resolve the human rights issue of marginalized groups. However, the contributors fail to consider that resolving human rights issues is a long process that requires years, and that ASEAN and its member states are still young compared to the United States and European countries, which have been dealing with such issues for hundreds of years. While ASEAN and its member states lack proper implementation, they have at least put the issue on the table for discussion. Furthermore, most of the contributors clearly express strong support for liberal democratic values while deeply criticizing the more conservative "ASEAN values," which they say form the core constraint. However, they do not consider how the proponents of such values have at least made the discussion a priority despite ASEAN's incapacity to forcefully ask its member states to implement some mechanisms related to marginalized groups.

Overall, *Marginalisation and Human Rights in Southeast Asia* provides a critical examination of the human rights violations faced by marginalized groups in Southeast Asia. The book features case studies that offer a comprehensive overview of the complex and diverse challenges faced by marginalized groups in the region. The contributors offer policy recommendations that include greater awareness-raising efforts, a more liberal approach to human rights implementation, and a strong commitment to implementing plans of action at both the regional and national levels. The book highlights the need for change in addressing the ongoing human rights abuses experienced by marginalized communities in the region. It discusses the issues of statelessness, refugees, minority groups, migrant workers, disabled persons, children, and academics. For those interested in comprehending the present state of human rights in Southeast Asia and seeking feasible remedies to enhance them, the book is an essential read.

Maulana Amrullah
Institute of Political Science, National Sun Yat-sen University
https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6570-6993

Warring Visions: Photography and Vietnam

Thy Phu
Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2022.

At long last, a book-length study of Vietnamese multi-genre photography! Vietnam commanded the world's attention with its spectacle of violence and destruction during its war years. Viewers then, who are now well advanced in years, were bombarded with photographs of bodies writhing in pain. The photos initially helped in generating international support for the cessation of disastrous military intervention (mainly American, which is why the war is called the American War by

the North Vietnamese) and recognize the Vietnamese people's right to self-determination; but over time they accustomed the public to gory images which led to apathy. *Warring Visions* analyzes these staple images and all the contending visualizations of nation, state, politics, person, and family rendered through photography.

Thy Phu's attention to form wonderfully explains the chromatic possibilities of photographic assemblies. Using colored photographs fabricates "as-if" and "what-will-be" scenarios of a socialist future with specific contrived styles for designing agricultural scenes, women, and children. Phu strongly argues against the dismissal of socialist photography as "mere propaganda" as this attitude prevents us from probing essential issues such as the "themes of suffering" that are contrary to images of "physical strength" connoting "political vitality" (p. 55). If aesthetics becomes a problem when it reigns over ideology, it can be resolved by "amplifying the message of socialist uplift" (p. 58). Phu's engagement leads us away from the stultifying methodology of proving ideology as false consciousness. It is no longer essential to assign a cultural production to a set of ideological and political beliefs—in this case, "communist"—and prove that they mislead and fail, but to examine how photographers and viewers make images, respond to them, believe and disbelieve them, and more importantly, appropriate them to suit various purposes. For example, the "colonial," "bourgeois," and "decadent" legacies of French artistic influences were recalibrated in the portrayal of the Vietnamese landscape as an arena of collective struggle.

In an informative assessment of the changing nature of photographic creations during *Doi Moi*, or Vietnamese economic liberalization, Phu addresses photographer Nguyen Minh Loc, whose "idea of beauty centered on the smoke, rubble, and ruin of a factory where there are no bodies to be seen" (p. 76)—an approach that alters photos and therefore falsifies historical occurrences. For Phu, such "aesthetic flourishes" "give visual form" to the task of reconciling market liberalization and socialism in ways that "commodify revolution and aestheticize socialism" in which the messy past becomes "clearer, cleaner, and neater" (p. 76). The past, in this case, is not a foreign country but an acceptable image of a similarly ever-beautified present. Phu also decisively asks about the implications of practices of manipulation on "the historical record and the politics of memory" (p. 79). Simply dismissing socialist ways of seeing as manipulative and propagandistic ignores the more significant fact that "re-viewing the past" and "re-visioning history" are not merely state-led endeavors but also involve photographers and photo enthusiasts worldwide. People offer contradictory views of the revolution, and repurposing photographs reflects the dynamics of revising the revolutionary past and contemporary socialism. This is relevant to all debates surrounding the recall of historical events where the photographer's presence, the aesthetics and technology of documentation, and the politics of witnessing and remembering determine the event's value itself.

Competing representations of women warriors also offer fascinating insights into how the civil war redefined women and was redefined by them. Both North and South Vietnamese female

leaders appropriated the traditional *ao dai* dress in their depictions of a "modest and dignified socialist statement" and "more modern, salacious South Vietnam" (p. 96). Phu expounds that where "militarized motherhood" (p. 96) proved to be a bane for South Vietnamese First Lady Madame Nhu's efforts to project a fighting image (as she only exhibited her alienness from lower-class Vietnamese women conscripted to fight and revealed her half-hearted promotion of women's rights in the Family Code controversy), the "martial vision of revolution" offered by the North contradicted the liberal North American women's movement view of a naturally pacifist woman (p. 105), something that impaired international revolutionary work. Indeed, the Vietnamese militant woman's warring vision became the definitive line separating liberals from the radical left that trumpeted "martial maternalism," using revolutionary violence to oppose state violence in order to realize a future characterized by freedom for women and children (p. 112). After the war ended, it was worrying that the socialist state claimed to have achieved the emancipation of women when, in fact, there has been a continuing struggle to achieve women's rights. We may also infer here that various ideological-political projects claim that their achievement (liberal democratic order, Communist Party-ruled state, etc.) is "the end" (in the sense of a goal or a final destination) of their country's (and possibly the world's) history.

The most revealing parts of the book are the ruminations on war reenactment and family photographs. Phu deftly explicates the manifold contradictions of An-My Lê's reenactment photos: the convolutions of history and memory ("the imagined past" "experienced as 'real'" because of the photograph's indexical capacity [p. 137]), the uncanny collaboration between the bodies of white Americans and diasporic Vietnamese reenacting the war, the American South as a reenactment setting when it itself is troubled by the legacies of the American Civil War, the quiet quality of photos gainsaying the loud spectacles of photojournalistic works of the 1960s and 1970s (a hint of the "humdrum intervals and restful interludes" of the violent war [p. 139]), and the interpretation of fitful sleep as trauma symptom, the most enduring corporeal and psychological legacy of the Vietnam War. Geographies, bodies, histories, and memories are battlefields of war fought repeatedly.

The author explores how family photographs play out the contradictions of the Vietnam War. Against the politicization of the family, family photos may even defy state ideologies. They may be assembled from other institutional contexts, such as refugee ID photos. It is possible to resist statist and statistical objectification and, in the process, humanize the subjects of refugee ID photos by accounting for their personal journeys. In the process, one creates individual stories out of surveillance projects, paradoxically forging subjectivities out of human subjection. A soldier's album evincing the absence of family and a homosocial association with fellows is queering traditional family concepts. "Orphan images" (those "separated from their original owners and stories" because of death, destruction, the avoidance of incrimination, separation, and countless other reasons [p. 148]) may be visually reunited with their owners or mingled with others in myriad ways

to tell profound stories of how the war wrought immeasurable destruction. Other pictures facilitate a "kinship with strangers" when the photographic content shows a shared environment in Vietnam of the past among viewers (p. 179). Those who have not survived mythically appear with loved ones as a complete family, if only through photographs.

It must be emphasized that Phu is writing from the side of the war's "losers," coming from a South Vietnamese family who became refugees and migrants in North America. People cope with depredations through photographs that embody not only history but memory and sublimate the acute impacts of ideology and politics on the individual and the family. This is best exemplified in the photo-weaving trilogy project of Dinh Q. Le where the reparative acts of collecting and archiving ameliorate loss, destruction, separation, and pain. One critiques—and conquers—the limits of state and official archives in collecting family photos and telling and listening to their intimate narratives. Pictures elicit stories and memories, and the process of identifying orphan images surprisingly enables "stranger intimacy" when "multiple claims from unexpected sources" emerge (p. 174). These are some of the profound ways a visual document of inequity makes justice possible, if only through visual recollection and reunion.

Today, Vietnam astounds the world with its gleaming skyscrapers, bountiful agricultural plantations, and fancy spaces of consumption, and it seems that the world has forgotten the war. The Benjaminian saying "There is no document of civilization that is not at the same time a document of barbarism" is relevant here and becomes even more necessary to be applied in the present, as the country relentlessly wages a new war in and through the market, producing new inequalities. A combat of affections suffuses this condition of "silent" violence, and Phu's work provides an illuminating instance of how it can be studied.

JPaul S. Manzanilla
Department of International Studies, De La Salle University Manila

Living Kinship, Fearing Spirits: Sociality among the Khmu of Northern Laos

Rosalie Stolz
Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2021.

At one point in Rosalie Stolz's fieldwork in Laos, the people of Pliya village told her "*Paa hooc niŋ eem, niŋ khəəy*" (You now know the wife-givers and the wife-takers) (p. 25). The notion of knowing kinship is an entry point into a fascinating ethnographic study among the Khmu of Luang Namtha Province. "Knowing kinship" also reflects the field approach, narrative positionality, and analytical rigor that make *Living Kinship, Fearing Spirits: Sociality among the Khmu of Northern*

Laos such a lively and engaging encounter for scholars of upland society in Southeast Asia. The anthropology of a Khmu village is presented in rich detail, interweaving the many facets of village research—personal relationships that go beyond the researcher-informant dynamic, contested voices of local people speaking in different registers, glimpses of the extraneous aspects of fieldwork that inevitably influence a research experience, navigation of cross-cultural life, and the ongoing interplay between empirical and theoretical interpretations of the experience. Stolz has given us a wonderful account that stimulates our thinking of upland society and provides a framework for reflection on our own fieldwork.

Living Kinship, Fearing Spirits is an ambitious but sophisticated engagement with some of the fundamentals of anthropology. An investigation of kinship in a contemporary upland community could easily fall into the established channels that have supported the field for generations. Such a study in Laos could also get mired in the local ideological articulations of national community in a development state. This book is instead a deliberate and thoughtful response to the recent tendency toward "taking for granted" (p. 3) the dynamic complexity of kinship. Stolz undertakes to examine the role of agency amongst all the structures of kinship, searching for empirically derived elaborations of how these structures are not just "miraculously" reproduced by themselves (p. 5). To do this, she observes the many meanings and workings of kinship as practiced in the village she calls Pliya. The result is a refreshing, enlightening, and enjoyable story that is told from the inside out and delivered with elegance and honesty.

Stolz brings together the multiple threads of ethnography with the idea of the "efficacy of kinship" (p. 47). Her experience points to the fact that the people of Pliya make constant investments to ensure that their kinship is efficacious, seen not only in the formalized complex rituals conducted for ancestor and other spirits but also through the daily articulations of kinship that may be overlooked or assumed. In her analysis, "living kinship" is evident in practices surrounding gifts, food and work support, life cycle, and the daily entanglements of prosperity and production. Importantly, the work of kinship includes creating and managing relations with non-humans and takes us into Khmu relationships with their dead. "Doing" or feeding spirits is thus an ongoing effort to reduce spiritual risk through the practice of kinship. In relating these narratives, the text makes a special effort to provide detail in a reader-friendly way. Footnotes offer useful expansion points. Setting out the flow of a marriage ritual in a table enhances the reader's access to the ethnography without losing the flow of analysis. Together with well-selected photos and diagrams, Stolz's book opens an engaging window on her field experience.

What does knowing kinship tell us about Khmu society? Through her analysis, Stolz arrives at the notion of sociality, which she employs to discuss the dynamicity of Khmu social relations. For her, this term also captures the emotional and sensual aspects of daily life. Importantly, sociality also allows for discussion of how non-humans, including spirits, animals, and others, can share the same "relational matrix" (p. 223). The qualities of the relations included here allow us to see,

hear, and feel how a village is located within a broader fabric of intimacies. At the same time, *Living Kinship, Fearing Spirits* is a valuable contribution to the growing body of scholarship on this area of northwestern Laos focusing on the Tha River basin. The area is characterized by high ethnolinguistic diversity, a complex (and yet incompletely resolved) history of conflict and reconciliation, dynamic landscapes where rubber and ecotourism tussle with each other, and rapidly transforming spatial patterns of social organization. The Khmu are demographically and socially an important part of the local social fabric, and this book is a welcome addition that complements previous works of scholars such as Kam Raw (Damrong Tayanin), Olivier Évrard, and Angela Cincotta-Segi. There is potential for continued engagement with work on the Lamet/Rmeet started by Karl Izikowitz and expanded by Guido Sprenger. Other smaller groups in the area have close relationships with the Khmu as well: for example, Eva Sevenig describes the Samtao social mobility, while I have focused on the linguistic culture of the Bit. Aside from these Austroasiatic groups, the works of Jacob Cawthorne and Joseba Estévez on the Kim Mun (Lanten) offer another angle on a *muang* (unit of Tai political organization) created by mountain people. Thus Stolz's story of Khmu sociality is an integral part of an organic and long-term area studies project. The author offers novel ways of looking at kinship across the living-dead divide and understanding the role of multilayered agency in dealing with the insecurities of daily life in these mountains that are shared by diverse peoples.

Throughout the book, Stolz is in conversation with Kam Raw, a Khmu villager-scholar who left a wealth of ethnographic knowledge about Khmu life in his village. Access to much of Kam Raw's work was facilitated by the Swedish scholar Kristina Lindell, and the work provides an insight on Khmu society that is informed by the aesthetic of storytelling. Kam Raw's voice is a fantastic resource in our knowledge of upland Laos. Stolz shares with the reader a story about squirrel stew that exemplifies the "moral ideology of sharing" (p. 225), comparing the similarities between the text she heard in the village and that recorded by Kam Raw. In this way, she does not simply check her theoretical position or assess social change but tries to moderate a discussion between Kam Raw and the villagers of Pliya over the telling and interpretation of a folk story that has central importance to Khmu cultural life. It is in such exchanges that cultural meaning is created. Stolz suggests through her writing that we should engage more openly with oral tradition in our ethnography, but perhaps too much of her conversation with Kam Raw takes place in many of the useful and interesting footnotes rather than in the main text where the contemporary Pliya village narratives are heard. Stolz's telling of kinship in Pliya demonstrates how the writing of theory can, and should, be an area where field mentors—more than informants—make direct contributions to our big-picture understanding and the way we communicate it (Briggs 2021).

It is appropriate that in a text so rich in local voices, Stolz takes the language of her fieldwork seriously. She uses Khmu terminology for many social phenomena she discusses, which is very useful for future work in this area. She includes a glossary, covering primarily words directly

related to kinship, even though the text has many more important references to the cultural lexicon of the Khmu. The notation she uses for Khmu terms is for the most part consistent and based on the work of linguists. Longer narratives introduced in the text are not usually accompanied by the original Khmu, perhaps a reasonable decision given the amount of material this would add to the book, maybe a reflection of the diminishing space for serious treatment of local language in much of the anthropology mainstream. The original Khmu text would be a valuable complement to the ethnographic detail and readable free translations given, in recognition of the explanatory power of ethnopoetics in conversation with anthropology.

My first interaction with Stolz's work in Luang Namtha came through a WhatsApp call with my best friend in another village in the area. He told me that he had met my "Khmu-speaking younger sister [Bit *ʔuuy*] from Germany." He and others in the village were very pleased that they could speak with another foreign researcher in Khmu, a language that they have used as a lingua franca for generations. Stolz was visiting the Bit village as part of a wedding party, and the villagers were fascinated with how she "knew kinship"—the details of wife-giving, wife-taking, and the many practices that allow Khmu people to produce efficacious kinship. With intermarriage becoming increasingly common in contemporary Laos, this anecdote suggests the possibility and necessity of looking at how kinship is made efficacious across ethnic groups. My friend who reported Stolz's visit to his village has since welcomed a Khmu daughter-in-law into his family, asking us to think about how this book's insights on Khmu sociality can be brought into conversation with others working in the area.

Nathan Badenoch
Department of Global Interdisciplinary Studies, Villanova University
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2707-4961

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The Patchwork City: Class, Space, and Politics in Metro Manila

Marco Z. Garrido

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019.

The work of Marco Z. Garrido has served as a foundation for understanding Metro Manila and has inspired many young scholars, myself included. Focusing on the spatialized symbolic boundaries of class identity, Garrido clearly explains through the lens of sociology why Metro Manila is so

exclusionary (Garrido 2008). *The Patchwork City* might be one of the goals of his research trajectory. The first half of this review summarizes class identity, stigma, interspersion, dissensus, and the politics of difference, focusing on the sociological concept of "boundary" that characterizes this book.[1] In the second half, the reviewer argues from an anthropological perspective that the book's focus on Eurocentric sociological frameworks ignores the various spatial dynamics that produce Metro Manila and introduces complementary perspectives.

If you sit in the window seat as your plane flies over Metro Manila, you will experience the visual reality of the fragmentation of the city as described in this book. High-rise condominiums and green gated communities are surrounded by reddish-brown tin-roofed slums. Both cover large areas of the city in patches of different colors, as indicated by the book's title. The close-knit patchwork-like interspersion has the effect of "altering class relations for the worse" (p. 54). The physical walls represent the vigilance of the middle class in a residential area where they are outnumbered by the surrounding slum population. The walls are a means for the middle class to protect themselves from theft, murder, and the influences of the poor and their evils. The boundaries represent the dynamic by which the middle class and the poor are spatially segregated, and they construct a collective identity for both. They form a protective barrier for the middle class (the presence and opening of the gates create and reinforce a sense of crisis in their collective identity), and the sense of exclusion acts to stigmatize the poor. The construction of boundaries in Manila began with the building of Intramuros by the Spaniards and continues to the present day, especially under the impact of urban redevelopment through globalization. These spatial boundaries have created a divide between class identities, between moralities, and between meanings of democracy. The author elaborates on boundaries using four neighborhoods in Metro Manila where gated communities and slums are in proximity. The data from the four cases show that the middle class and the urban poor have similar experiences and perceptions in each of the four neighborhoods.

The politics of class identity in the context of these spatial inequalities led to two large demonstrations in 2001 in Metro Manila: EDSA2 (People Power 2) in January, which called for the impeachment of President Joseph Estrada for corruption; and EDSA3 (People Power 3) in April–May, which defended Estrada and called for his return. Why did the middle class forgive the equally corrupt Gloria Macapagal Arroyo but not Estrada? Why do poor people consider other populists fake but support Estrada? The second part of this book explains the political dissensus regarding class division. The middle class see Estrada as the epitome of political corruption, a symbol of incivility and national shame. For them, Estrada is uncivilized, uneducated, and incompetent. As

1) As far as I know, five reviews have already been written of this book (Levenson 2020; Weinstein 2020; David 2021; Shoemaker 2021; Angeles 2022). Therefore, in addition to introducing the book's contents, this review takes the "politics of difference" more seriously, which the author also attempts to do.

a result, the middle class accept Arroyo as the lesser evil who is corrupt but still has a modicum of civility. On the other hand, the poor support Estrada because they feel he treats them with dignity, unlike other politicians who are only after their votes. More precisely, the poor see Estrada as epitomizing a form of democracy in which the poor are not discriminated against but are treated as equals. Therefore, when Estrada was ousted from the presidency and criminalized, the hopes of the poor were dashed. The author places the different views of one person, Estrada, as a dissensus. Drawing on the political philosopher Jacques Rancière, Garrido argues that dissensus "is not a discussion between speaking people who would confront their interests and values. It is a conflict about who speaks and who does not speak" (p. 21). In other words, while the poor were given a space by Estrada where they were recognized as humans, their voices were heard, and they could speak, the middle class were discredited and their voices were suppressed. The author argues that the political dissensus surrounding EDSA2 and EDSA3 does not show the drawback of democracy but rather the possibility of establishing a democracy in the Philippines based on politics of difference.

This book will be discussed from a more critical and anthropological perspective in the second part of this review. The book incorporates Eurocentric sociological concepts such as Pierre Bourdieu's social class, Charles Tilly's categorically unequal groups, Loïc Wacquant's spatial stigma, Georg Simmel's social interaction, and Erving Goffman's performance. Furthermore, the Filipino language is rarely used; rather, many words have been translated. This translation presents a serious problem considering the book's aims. For example, *hiya* implies the stigma felt by the poor. However, *hiya* does not carry the same connotation as "stigma." It is an adjective, such as *mahiya*, that expresses a positive characterization of shyness with the civility of a child toward a stranger or adult; and *walang hiya* is one of the most commonly used abuses in the Philippines. As such, *hiya* is a concept deeply connected to social recognition in the Philippines and is not the equivalent of "stigma." The politics of difference means taking differences seriously. It means taking people's language seriously. Michael Pinches' (1984) argument, an essential inspiration for Garrido's concept of class, is theoretically founded on the accumulation of anthropological knowledge about rural areas. If this book were to be placed in the category of Philippine studies, a discussion of the concept of class would require cultural-anthropological perspectives since explanations based solely on sociological concepts are not sufficient.

The differences and class collectivity discussed in this book are produced by the middle class solely via the spatial dynamic of boundaries. Do the poor have no way to create their collectivity? To begin with, the middle class imposed their boundaries and the poor were imposed upon. Therefore, boundaries were essentially a spatial dynamic exercised by the middle class. Throughout its history, Manila has been dominated by several colonial powers: Spain, the United States, and Japan; and the spatial dynamic of boundaries was implemented through all these regimes. This dynamic was inherited by the Philippine government after independence, and the latest actors are the

villagers of gated communities and the middle class. However, the concept of boundary alone does not fully explain the realities of spatialized inequality in Metro Manila. If we focus solely on the dynamic of boundaries in this way, we cannot explain the activities and practices of contemporary squatters who are struggling to protect their land and their collectivity against gentrification. Based on the dynamic of boundaries, we would dismiss the agency of the squatters. The most overlooked aspect in the book is the process of "relational intensity,"[2] which in the reviewer's view has always been a crucial driver of spatial production in the city. The way the poor occupied space was not simply a mechanical activity but the construction of a relationship with the land. This relationship was developed by cultivating vegetables, creating housing and infrastructure, negotiating and engaging closely with the barangays, and establishing a level of connection beyond the legal-property perspective. Relational intensity is a generative social force that creates collectivity and community among the poor through their daily practices. Proximity, a key word in this book, implies not just spatial closeness but also the ability to extract through negotiation or to change fixed categorical relationships. The social anthropologist Fenella Cannell (1999) calls proximity the power of intimacy. The spatial dynamics of intensity are ubiquitous in Manila's urban spaces, making it difficult to draw a clear boundary between public and private spaces. Space is fluid and changeable depending on who is present. Without picking up on these dynamics and sensibilities, it is impossible to seriously advance the politics of difference. If we emphasize only boundaries, we cannot engage with the struggles of the poor, who are excluded from the formal legal framework. This is because, like in San Roque—discussed in this book—squatters need to acquire their own legitimacy and rights in areas that are excluded through the dynamic of boundaries. The political movement in San Roque seeks to protect the community's land and livelihood foundation under the pressures of gentrification and urban development. Otherwise, we lose the opportunity to go outside the colonial language characterized by boundaries and categories. The politics of difference, which the author discusses, is important for academia as well as Philippine society; but we also need to pay attention to wider spatial dynamics that produce difference.

Nishio Zenta 西尾善太
Postdoctoral Fellow (JSPS), Ritsumeikan University
https://orcid.org/0009-0003-9715-2712

2) The concept of intensity sometimes has an exclusive effect. For example, see Jensen and Hapal (2022) for exclusivity within slums during the drug war. In that instance, slum residents also attempted to manage intensity by constructing boundaries. Relational intensity is not a dynamic essentialized to a specific class, as the middle class also exercise it.

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Taiwan Maritime Landscapes from Neolithic to Early Modern Times

PAOLA CALANCA, LIU YI-CHANG, and FRANK MUYARD, eds.
Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2022.

Located some 130 km from the Asian mainland, the island of Taiwan is sufficiently large to have been home to inland populations whose lives did not revolve around regular access to coastlines. Yet, and as evident from this edited volume's title—*Taiwan Maritime Landscapes from Neolithic to Early Modern Times*—maritime connections have played a central role in its development. More crucially, the reference to Taiwan as an "island tossed by Asian currents" (Introduction by Paola Calanca and Frank Muyard, p. 13) highlights a trait shared by islands, namely, their liminal condition as a space encountered by steady flows of visitors, traders, conquerors, and wanderers emanating from multiple directions. But a case can perhaps be made that this is particularly so in the case of Taiwan, which stands at the geographical center of an assortment of nearby seas, straits, islands, and extended coastlines.

Beyond geographical considerations, such "Asian currents" have also brought about impactful—and on occasion rapid—changes in Taiwan's political and academic climate. In his chapter, "Taiwan's Place in East Asian Archaeological Studies," Frank Muyard offers a perceptive review

of the impact of such developments on archaeology. There is, to begin, the limitation of a textual record whose usefulness extends only to the end of the sixteenth century, along with the enduring disjunction between archaeological and historical studies. Importantly, the arrival of mainland scholars in 1949 was associated with the pursuit of archaeological and historical studies that for some time focused on China at the expense of research on the island's native Austronesian populations (which earlier Japanese ethnographers had written about). More recently, research on Taiwan has increasingly incorporated contributions from ethnography, archaeology, and history to shed light on past native populations and more recent arrivals from the mainland. Yet, the field of Taiwanese studies remains underfunded by the government—Muyard records only 55 professional archaeologists working in Taiwan—with the current population showing still limited awareness of their island's archaeology and history.

While Taiwan's variegated past may account for some of the public's muted interest in its prehistory and history, the island's position at the center of constantly shifting flows of interaction offers scholars welcome opportunities to consider not only the impact of interaction networks on Taiwan itself, but also its own contributions to regional developments. Thus, each of this volume's chapters includes a discussion of interaction with one or more of the following regions: the mainland, Japan's southern islands, the Philippines, and regions farther south in the South China Sea. Crucially, and reflecting the editors' stated acknowledgment of the benefits of a multidisciplinary approach, several chapters incorporate and interpret the results of recent oceanographic and paleoclimatic studies, along with research on seafaring. While environmental studies are only now beginning to impact research on Taiwan, readers should be encouraged by the potential which such methodological breadth holds for the study of its past.

The chapter "Climate Changes and Neolithic Human Migration 'Out of Taiwan,'" by Lionel Siame and Guillaume Leduc, takes an environmental approach to address the topic of seafaring. After first discussing present-day seasonal (monsoonal) changes in winds and currents in the South China Sea, the authors consider the effect of the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) on areas near Taiwan. Previous research suggests that the period 4500–2500 BP was marked by an increase in ENSO amplitude and frequency, itself correlated with a weakening—during ENSO's El Niño phase—of the Kuroshio ("Black current"), the strong year-round northward current which flows in the Luzon Strait and along Taiwan's east coast. Such conditions, the authors propose, would have facilitated the Austronesians' initial southern dispersal from Taiwan and the associated movement of nephrite artifacts.

In "Taiwan Prehistoric Maritime Trade Networks and Their Impacts," Liu Yi-chang reviews the island's development within the context of broader migratory and diffusion currents. These changes, which chart the inland expansion of increasingly diverse cultures, reveal shifts in Taiwan's primary contacts with surrounding regions. Early connections with the mainland include foraging groups who crossed the land bridge 30,000 years ago and ceramic-using cultivators arriving

about 6000 BP. By 4000 BP, a maritime reorientation toward the south was associated with the Austronesian expansion, followed by later finds of Taiwan nephrite and shared ceramic styles at several South China Sea locations, along with the arrival—from the south—of metal technology and Indo-Pacific glass beads. By the tenth century, increasing trade contacts with China's mainland had curtailed these southern exchange networks. In "Cross-Strait Migration during the Early Neolithic Period of Taiwan," Tsang Cheng-hwa considers the origin of those proto-Austronesian populations which came to be associated with Taiwan's early Neolithic Tapenkeng culture, dated to 6000–5000 BP and now better known following recent excavations at the sites of Nankuanli and Nankuanli East. Based on similarities in pottery, stone tools, settlement patterning, and subsistence (fishing, hunting, and limited farming), Tsang argues that these early Neolithic settlers originated in the area encompassing the Pearl River Delta, Hainan, and the Gulf of Tonkin (rather than along the coast of present-day Fujian) and that familiarity with maritime environments and the pursuit of new habitats (rather than population pressure) were the propelling factors behind their settlement in Taiwan.

Looking toward the northeast, Chiang Chih-hua's chapter "Possible Relationships between Taiwan and the Southern Ryukyu Islands during the Early Neolithic Period" reviews the evidence of contact between Taiwan and Japan's southern island chain. Evidence of a possible 2800 BCE date for the beginning of the Southern Ryukyus' pottery-using Shimotabaru culture helps explains its more pronounced similarities to Taiwan's Tapenkeng culture (4000–2500 BCE) than to its Middle Neolithic (2500–1450 BCE) populations (associated with the Austronesian expansion toward the Philippines). Shared traits include subsistence activities (exploitation of maritime resources and horticulture), settlement patterns, and artifact assemblages. However, differences in pottery traditions warn against a simple diffusion or migratory model to account for early links between Taiwan and the Southern Ryukyus. In "The Austronesian Dispersal: A Lanyu Perspective," Chen Yu-mei assesses the "Out of Taiwan" model of Austronesian expansion from both a localized and a multidisciplinary perspective. With a focus on the island of Lanyu, she reviews the available archaeological, ethnographic, linguistic, and genetic evidence and points to complex and shifting patterns of interaction linking Taiwan and the Philippines. Thus, archaeological evidence indicates early contacts between Lanyu and Taiwan, with the former's reorientation toward the south in later periods, while ethnographic, textual, and linguistic data all point to closer links between Lanyu and the Batanes Islands to its south over the past centuries. Most interestingly, genetic data indicates that "the Batanes and Lanyu are both genetically closer to their respective nearby islands" (p. 131), challenging the idea of "Lanyu being a stepping-stone on the southward migration route from Taiwan" (p. 131).

In his chapter "Interactions and Migrations between Taiwan and the Philippines from the Neolithic to the Early Metal Age," Liu Yi-chang considers cultural developments—with a focus on material culture—in Taiwan and on Luzon Island to shed light on the nature and direction of inter-

action between the two islands during the period 6000–1600 BP. At present, evidence of such interaction remains doubtful until 4200 BP, at which time the presence of pottery and nephrite objects on Luzon indicates the beginning of sustained interaction originating in Taiwan. Starting around 2400 BP, interaction becomes bidirectional, with Taiwan nephrite objects now reaching not only Luzon but also southern regions of the South China Sea; in the other direction, a range of stylistic elements, behaviors, and objects (e.g., dotted triangle patterns, burial practices, agate, glass, metal) begin reaching Taiwan. This expansion of interaction networks in the South China Sea is well supported by Aude Favereau and Bérénice Bellina in "Reviewing the Connections between the Upper Thai-Malay Peninsula and the Philippines during the Late Prehistoric Period (500 BC–AD 500)." Relying on the stylistic and technical elements of Kalanay-type ceramic vessels, the authors point to back-and-forth interaction between the two regions—which are separated by about 2,500 km—involving the movement of styles, people, and in some cases the pots themselves. In their view, small mobile groups of traders would have facilitated such contacts as well as the movement of other glass and stone ornaments throughout the South China Sea. The authors also question why Taiwan appears to have played a relatively limited role in such expanded spheres of interaction, with no Kalanay-type ceramics yet found on the island.

In "Textual Sources on Cross-Strait Contact through the 1st Millennium AD," Hugh Clark reviews the textual evidence pertaining to China's offshore islands from the first millennium BCE to the twelfth century CE. The sparse and vague references mention the "Isle of Yi," the island(s) of the "Liuqiu" kingdom, and the land of "Pisheye," with debate revolving around whether any of these can be equated with present-day Taiwan, the Penghu (Pescadores) Islands, the Liuqiu/Ryukyu island chain, or even some of the Philippine islands. Clark attributes China's meager written record about offshore islands to its Sinitic culture's disinterest in the maritime world. In contrast, occasional references also point to the operation of routine "informal, below-the-radar" (p. 183) trade between islands and coastal settlements, along with raids by so-called Pisheye pirates. While familiarity with (and the occupation of) the Penghu Islands and Taiwan deepened in later centuries—culminating in the Qing invasion of 1683—knowledge of maritime conditions and navigation remained surprisingly limited until the nineteenth century, as Chen Kuo-tung illustrates in "Chinese Knowledge of the Waters around Taiwan from the 16th to the 18th Century." Not only did Chinese sailors misunderstand and fear crossing the Kuroshio when traveling to the Ryukyu Islands, even the sparse references to the Taiwan Strait remained determinedly impressionistic in their mention of differently colored swift currents and calmer waters.

The dearth of detailed information about Taiwan for much of its prehistory and history stands in sharp contrast with the richer picture painted by later Spanish (and other) texts. In "A Century of Contacts between Manila and Taiwan in Spanish Sources (1582–1683)," Manel Ollé situates the island at the center of an expanding and quarrelsome geopolitical world focused on trade. Ollé's review covers not only Spanish Philippines' short-lived presence in northern Taiwan but also the

alliance between Spain and Portugal (based in Macau); the participation of Japanese, Chinese, and native traders; and the expulsion of the Dutch from Taiwan in 1662 by Koxinga, itself followed by the Qing takeover of the island in 1683. Of particular interest are the Spanish references to the customs (including languages) and distribution of Taiwan's indigenous groups. Paola Calanca's "The Maritime Environment around Taiwan: Perception and Reality" complements and enriches the previous three contributions as it gathers information from a large number of Chinese sources. From the mid-first millennium CE, archaeology and texts together indicate the possession of maritime knowledge among China's coastal populations, along with their presence in Taiwan. Beginning from about the sixteenth century, the texts—some admittedly written by members of the elite with limited knowledge of navigation—point to the frequent crossing of the Taiwan Strait, with some providing useful information about sailing conditions, including winds, currents, shoals, and the dangers of sailing near or through the Penghu Islands. Based on current knowledge of oceanographic conditions in the strait, Calanca also attempts to locate currents named in the texts, the most dangerous of which may have referred to unstable (and thus dangerous) surface conditions rather than currents per se.

In the volume's final chapter, "Restructuring Our Understanding of the South China Sea Interaction Sphere: Evidence from Multiple Disciplines," Roger Blench points to the contributions made by multidisciplinary studies to our understanding of the nature and impact of evolving interaction networks in maritime Southeast Asia. Crucially, the emerging composite picture painted by varied disciplines—archaeology, paleoclimatology, linguistics, material sciences, and genetics—remains uneven and on occasion inconsistent, a reflection in part of inadequate temporal and geographical coverage. Disagreements about the interpretation of available data also play a role, as in the case of Blench's challenge of the demographic model of Austronesian expansion. His discussion of *bulul* (seated figures with arms crossed) and metal gongs in island Southeast Asia also supports his proposal that the inclusion of additional data on shared social practices and iconographic elements is likely to continue impacting and enriching our understanding of early basin-wide interaction, including those networks in which Taiwan played a role.

Francis Allard
Department of Anthropology, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4035-4842