

growth; for example, by developing human capital, rebuilding infrastructure, courting direct foreign investment, etc.

Readers already familiar with Vietnam's history and socioeconomic transition are likely to find chapter 7 the most interesting contribution of the book. In this chapter the authors discuss Vietnam's prospects to the year 2010. Though the authors acknowledge that such a chapter "necessarily must be speculative in nature" (p. 137) and only can be based on assumptions, here the text moves from description to prognostication. Extensions of projections by the World Bank and Economist Intelligence Unit are provided, with the general conclusion that projections for macroeconomic performance are "encouraging" (pp. 149, 163). It is important to note that several significant problems must be overcome to maintain current rates of growth. Ongoing problems, as well as new problems that have emerged since the date of the book's publication, are causing many prognosticators to be less optimistic than Harvie and Tran. Additionally, this chapter is somewhat Australia-centric. For example, the authors specifically discuss Australia's prospects in Vietnam (p. 157). Given the authors' professional affiliations, this focus is understandable, but some non-Australians—this reviewer, for example—wondered why they *only* addressed Australia's prospects. Singapore, China, Japan, Germany, the Netherlands, Korea, the United States, and other countries have interests and thus prospects as well. Though there is cause for guarded optimism in Vietnam, the country remains a difficult environment, for both Vietnamese and foreign investors, in which to do business or simply to invoke institutional change that will affect economic development. Even though some macroeconomic indicators are promising, Vietnam does indeed face numerous challenges, many of which could be remedied by policy changes that the government still is not willing to make. The book concludes with a summary and conclusions in chapter 9.

Though now somewhat dated, the book provides a generally sound economic overview of Vietnam. For readers looking for more depth and breadth beyond economic analyses, the book may be too technocratic, as it does not really reveal the dynamism of the people, now nearly 80 million strong. This dynamism, the special nature of the Vietnamese, if only unencumbered, will drive economic growth. Nevertheless, Harvie and Tran have written a book that will be helpful to readers who know very little about Vietnam and regional influences. It articulates well many of the issues and forces that contributed to Vietnam's transition and will continue to drive Vietnam's economy into the next millennium.

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*Merchants and Migrants: Ethnicity and Trade Among Yunnanese Chinese in Southeast Asia.* By ANN MAXWELL HILL. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1998. 178 pp. \$32.00 (cloth); \$20.00 (paper).

Recent studies of Chinese diaspora communities have made various contributions to a growing literature on translocal and transnational contexts of identity. While some may indicate that the disjuncture of place and identity is a characteristically modern (or postmodern) predicament, Ann Maxwell Hill's account of the Yunnanese Chinese in mainland Southeast Asia charts some of the region's systemically

multiethnic social landscape to show that this is equally a premodern condition. Unlike the “overseas Chinese” communities in Southeast Asia, the so-called *haw* (among Tai-speakers, *panthay* in Burma) that are the book’s focus are overland sojourners whose background relates to, at different times, caravan trade and political upheavals. Hill documents historical dimensions of Yunnanese Chinese presence in Southeast Asia. This is valuable because they have so far not been the focus of any study, while often mentioned in passing.

The introductory chapter contains a critical assessment of Skinner’s assimilationist model of the Chinese in Thailand, that they become “Sino-Thai” and then gradually “Thai.” Drawing on Leach’s pioneering analysis and subsequent work on local/regional systems of ethnic identification and complexity in Burma and Thailand, Hill situates her work outside functionalist and instrumentalist models. She then describes some of the Yunnanese populations in northern Thailand, noting that the stereotypes of *haw* as Muslim Chinese and/or as remnants of Kuomintang armies contain no more than partial truths. The account of Tengchong, the native place of most of the Yunnanese Chinese in this study, is telling for its ethnic complexity on the fringes of the Chinese state and for the long history of Chinese trade into non-Chinese areas.

The second chapter concerns the caravan trade that traversed the politically, socially, and physically complex terrain from Tibet to the Southeast Asian peninsula. Tea, cotton, and opium were the main goods traded. There is no telling difference between Han and Muslim Yunnanese Chinese who engaged in this trade, and the case contains various ethnopolitical twists. The historical analysis suggests that the central place of Yunnanese in this transregional trade was strongly connected to their position toward a much larger Chinese market.

The third chapter examines the caravan trade in terms of its relations to the Tai (Yuan, Lao, Lue) courts of Chiangmai, Luang Prabang, and Sipsongpanna. As with the upland groups discussed in chapter 2, the lowland peasants in these domains were all engaged in trade to some extent. This reinforces Hill’s point about the structural features of this long-distance trade, as opposed to assuming that different ethnic groups have uneven inclinations to commerce. Though Hill discusses various features that Tai polities had in common, the difference between the three cases is instructive about different combinations of trade and rice farming. This third chapter, which focuses on the tea trade, indicates that *haw* as both a social category and position has historical roots in the thirteenth century. That was a period of significant ethnopolitical restructuring in southwestern China, and the points Hill makes about *haw* in the context of other groups rather than a people in and of themselves make good historical and analytical sense.

The fourth and fifth chapters discuss Yunnanese Chinese in contemporary Thailand, dealing with rhetorics of ethnic identity and issues of assimilation. Many overland Chinese have a precarious legal position in Thailand, and Thai nationalist anxieties over subversive aliens have accentuated that marginality. Hill relates the difficulties she had during the 1970s in getting people to talk about the recent past, when Yunnanese Chinese sense of identity was still linked to the Chinese Nationalist (KMT) cause. While many people still have no more than a tenuous position in Thailand, and are subject to police harassment, the political landscape that involved China, Taiwan, and cross-border opium trade and insurgency has changed, with subsequent changes in the ramifications of Yunnanese and other Chinese identities in Thailand. Hill explores dimensions of interethnic relations, and the more inward-looking aspects of kinship and funeral practices, pointing out how the recent

flourishing of public assertions of Chinese identity contradict the expectations of assimilationist models.

The spatial and temporal reaches of the study and the combination of materials from fieldwork and archival research (drawing on works in Chinese, Thai, French, and English) are impressive. The account of the caravan trade is interesting in and of itself, and the book makes a strong case for long-term, historically oriented research on issues of ethnic identity. In the process, it bridges the often separate academic domains of China and Southeast Asia specialists. For all these reasons the book should both find a broad readership and stimulate further analytical sojourns.

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*The Politics of Environment in Southeast Asia: Resources and Resistance.* Edited by PHILIP HIRSCH and CAROL WARREN. New York: Routledge, 1998. 325 pp. \$85.00 (cloth); \$27.99 (paper).

The contributors to this edited volume treat the environment and environmentalism as a window through which researchers can explore broader processes of social, political, and economic change. The authors eloquently demonstrate that environmentalist discourses are multifaced—they can be used as a legitimizing tool for local opposition to state control over resources as well as a legitimizing tool for the more powerful elite with vested interests in economic growth and centralized control over resources. Thus, these authors make the critical point that while environmentalism underlies many of the conflicts over resource use, the word is ambiguous and can be employed by different social groups to meet radically different ends.

The book is organized thematically around six resource-related issues: large dam construction, forestry, industrialization and mining development, pollution and environmental health, tourism development, and the politics of response. Case studies are drawn from several locations throughout Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Burma, and the Philippines. The case studies collectively demonstrate two interrelated issues. While the appropriation of resources by the powerful and wealthy at the expense of the marginalized and the poor is a common occurrence throughout Southeast Asia, local people are not passive victims of these changes. Instead, the case studies illustrate the multitude of ways in which local people respond to these large scale changes, at times even altering the direction of national and international resource development projects.

What is striking about these case studies is the commonality of experiences despite historical and national differences. Across the region we see case after case illustrate how the environmentalist rhetoric has been used to exclude subaltern groups from traditional sources of livelihoods. For instance, Bryant concludes chapter 6 by stating that in the context of colonial and postcolonial forestry in Burma, “the guiding political ideology may have changed, but the central link between politics and forestry remains the same” (p. 119). In other words, despite the differences between the colonial state, which was ideologically committed to a capitalist development path, and the postcolonial Burmese state, which is committed to a socialist development path, the central preoccupation of the state remains exploiting the country’s forests for revenue and foreign exchange.