

Book review: Rainer Werning, Jörg Schwieger (eds): Handbuch Philippinen - Gesellschaft, Politik, Wirtschaft, Kultur. Berlin: regiospectra Verlag 2019. ISBN 978-3-9477-2906-7

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knowledges that Sanskrit helped stimulate a local literary tradition, but was readily replaced with writings in the vernacular when the king and court elites could draw cultural and political power from the latter.

Two contributions on a less prominent element of the cultural exchange between South and Southeast Asia, viz. textiles and their printing patterns, conclude the volume. Alexandra Green demonstrates that textiles found in the wall paintings of Burmese temples can be referred back to Indian templates. Gujarat appears to have been a place of origin in addition to Bengal and South India. Radhika Seshan complements this finding with a concise survey of the textile trade from Bengal during the 16th and 17th centuries.

Edited volumes such as the one under review here are often hard to assess, as the individual contributions may vary considerably in terms of length, focus or substance and do not necessarily add up to a coherent whole. Moreover, conferences can provide the temptation for scholars to draw from and summarise their own past research without offering many new insights. This tendency occasionally becomes apparent in the current volume, too, even though it must be admitted that a good number of its contributions do enrich the debate about the Indianisation of Southeast Asia with helpful, theory-based considerations. It should also be noted that practically all contributions provide some connection to this general theme, though without always specifically highlighting where their argument fits in with it. If there is a major point to criticise, it would perhaps be that several illustrations have been scanned with insufficient resolution, making them appear pixelated in print. This is all the more regrettable since glossy paper has been used for the printing, which could have allowed for high-quality reproduction of all illustrations. This minor issue apart, the volume offers thoughtful contributions and adds more facets to the cultural connections between South and Southeast Asia in the pre-modern period.

Tilman Frasch

RAINER WERNING / JÖRG SCHWIEGER (EDS), *Handbuch Philippinen. Gesellschaft, Politik, Wirtschaft, Kultur*. Berlin: regiospectra Verlag, 2019. 496 pages, €24.90. ISBN 978-3-9477-2906-7

The 12th most populated country in the world – with currently 106.5 million inhabitants – still appears only marginally in the news and if it does, mostly in the context of kidnapping, catastrophes, violent conflicts, etc. Thus most politicians and journalists have little understanding of the Philippines, or even

South East Asia as a whole, and are unable to acknowledge the country in its complexity and its relevance. To overcome this deficit *Handbook Philippines: Society, Politics, Economy, Culture*, originally published in 2006, has now been issued in a sixth, substantially revised and updated edition. It is unique not only in German, but would also be very useful in an English translation, i.e. for a much larger readership. In English only these two, rather out-dated books are available at the moment: *Philippines: A Global Studies Handbook* by Damon L. Woods (2006, ABC-CLIO) and *The Philippines Reader: A History of Colonialism, Neocolonialism, Dictatorship, and Resistance*, edited by Daniel B. Schirmer and Stephen Roskamm Shalom (1987, South End Press).

For the readers of the IQAS it is interesting to note that an altogether very positive book review of the fourth edition of the *Handbook Philippines* appeared in the IQAS's predecessor *Internationales Asienforum* (2013, Vol. 44/1–2, pp. 177–179). The author, Ralf Leonhard, remarked that this handbook had been very quickly promoted to become a “standard” within the field. He is himself also a contributor to the new revised volume of the handbook. His reasonable recommendation – for any edited volume – to include an index was unfortunately not yet followed by the editors.

Concerning the editorship, Jörg Schwieger has replaced Niklas Reese, and as publisher regiospectra has followed Horlemann. Both editors are well known in the field, and have regularly spent time in the country. Rainer Werning has been a German social scientist and specialist on South and North East Asia for many decades. He has published widely on Cambodia, both Koreas, and the Philippines, and is now teaching on the subject at the universities of Bonn and Osnabrück, as well as at the Academy for International Cooperation/AIZ in Bonn-Röttgen. He is also a regular commentator on the region for the magazines *Freitag*, *Junge Welt* and *Wochenzeitung*. Jörg Schwieger, educated as a Protestant theologian in German literature, was general secretary of the Action Group Philippines from 1982 to 1986, and of the Philippines Office in Cologne from 1987 to 1991. Afterwards he worked for the Protestant Development Service in Bonn in different management functions.

In addition to the new editorship and publisher, many changes have occurred since the former editions, which make it worth presenting this book anew to a wide readership. For example, the dramatic political changes, especially with the election of Rodrigo Duterte as president in 2016, had to be considered. Rainer Werning calls this phenomenon “Dutertismo”, and forecasts a long life for it – as well as for the Marcos clan (pp. 315–326). Johannes Icking's chapter “Desolat: Die Menschenrechtslage unter Duterte” (Desperate: The Human Rights Situation under Duterte) picks up a very critical aspect of the new regime (pp. 281–292). (Unfortunately, similar changes can be seen globally, which I call “social nationalism; see my article “Sozialnationalis-

mus? Anmerkungen zu Wolfgang Streecks ‘Gekaufte Zeit. Die vertagte Krise des demokratischen Kapitalismus’”, *Sozialwissenschaftliche Literatur Rundschau*, 2013 / 67, pp. 39–46). The book would have gained from the inclusion of an international comparison for the better understanding of the embeddedness of the developments in the Philippines. Currently, the Philippines ranks 101 among 179 nations in regard to democracy – considered an “electoral autocracy” – and is estimated to be at high risk of further autocratisation (*Democracy Facing Global Challenges. V-Dem Annual Democracy Report 2019*. Gothenburg: V-Dem Institute, University of Gothenburg, 2019, p. 28, 55).

The new handbook is – as before – reasonably divided into eight chapters: general data and history, life, people, countryside and ecology, politics and the economy, culture, religion, and “Östliches–Westliches” (East–West) as well as an appendix. The chapters each have six to fourteen entries, with altogether 80 entries by 35 authors. Their selection demonstrates again a good mix of German and Philippine contributors, with an admirable interdisciplinarity. The well-written, compact articles are complemented by information boxes and pictures. That the latter are only in black and white is surely a concession to the low price of the book.

Quite a number of articles have been replaced, and it is more than welcome that the trade unions and the workers’ movements have been given more space (pp. 95–100). Of the new articles the following are especially recommendable: “Du bist der Stau” (You Are the Traffic Jam) by Niklas Reese; “Nachhaltige Abhängigkeit” (Sustainable Dependence) by Hannah Wolf; and “Katastrophenkapitalismus” (Catastrophe Capitalism), “Fanal des Widerstands” (Signal of Resistance) and “Tod im Reisfeld” (Death in the Rice Paddy) by Rainer Werning. Other worthwhile new contributions can be found within the chapters on culture and religion. All remaining articles have been revised and updated.

Very positive is the new inclusion of the authors within the table of contents – a former deficit that has now been remedied. Finally, a helpful table of the history of the Philippines has also been added. A very pleasant feature is the relatively low price, for a book with so many narrowly printed pages. It is therefore also accessible for students. In sum the new version of *Handbuch Philippinen* can be recommended without any reservations to anyone with an interest in this country, as it offers an excellent overview on a huge range of topics.

György Széll