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read as a consecutive narrative, mined for information like an encyclopaedia, or simply enjoyed as a magnificent picture book. One can read it from cover to cover or explore its content according to one's own specific interests. Such exploratory reading could have been aided by a list of maps and illustrations.

The work stands out for the fact that it has been written by a single author. The rule of the day is that syntheses as comprehensive and complex as this one generally appear as edited volumes containing the contributions of many authors. That Hermann Kreutzmann has taken upon himself the staggering work of writing and compiling this volume on his own commands respect, to say the very least, and is a testament to his unique and dedicated career. Finally, as a vast repository of knowledge on the Pamirs and Wakhan, *Pamirian Crossroads* offers particular value as a reference point from which to gauge the influence of the current and impending geopolitical shifts in this region, such as China's Belt and Road initiative, on the lives of Kyrgyz, Wakhi and other residents of this highly dynamic region.

Dietrich Schmidt-Vogt

KARL JETTMAR, *The Religions of the Hindukush: The Pre-Islamic Heritage of Eastern Afghanistan and Northern Pakistan*. Bangkok: Orchid Press, 2018. 591 pages, 3 maps, 24 figures, 14 plates, \$65.00. ISBN 978-974-524-218-0

In 1975 Professor Dr Karl Jettmar (1918–2002), the eminent Austrian-German scholar and doyen of anthropological and historical research on the high mountain peoples of Eastern Afghanistan and Northern Pakistan, published his seminal work on their pre-Islamic cultural heritage. This German-language book became a classic within the international scientific community. The present volume is its first complete English edition; it contains contributions by Georg Buddruss, Schuyler Jones, Max Klimburg and Peter S.C. Parkes as well as an obituary written by Harald Hauptmann. The book was translated by the late Adam Nayyar (d. 2008) as well as other (unfortunately unnamed) colleagues and edited by Hugh van Skyhawk. Thanks to the persistent efforts of Wolfgang-Peter Zingel this English edition has finally seen the light of day.

The voluminous study is divided into six parts: in addition to an introduction and an epilogue the main parts investigate the religions of the pre-Islamic Kafirs in Eastern Afghanistan, the speakers of the Shina language (i.e. the main group of the so-called Dards), the Burusho, the Kalasha and the Kho. The latter ethnic groups inhabit the valleys of the eastern Hindukush, Karakoram and Western Himalaya. In detailing the ancient religious systems of these

mountain peoples, the author describes and analyses their main concepts, their belief in gods (for instance the pantheon of male and female deities among the Kafirs), demons and spirits, their myths, sanctuaries and shrines, rites and feasts, and the role of ritual functionaries as well as other religious aspects, placing his results in a comparative and historical context. In the epilogue, he also discusses the extent to which petroglyphs can be taken as evidence of religious configurations, a topic based on Jettmar's own sensational discoveries of rock engravings in the upper Indus valley, which drew worldwide attention as they highlighted trade relations, the spread of Buddhism and other historical dimensions. In addition to the cultural traits of early Aryan peasants and pastoralists, they even exhibit recognisable traces of pre-Aryan settlers in the Hindukush. Later, Iranian tribes migrated to the mountain valleys, converted to Buddhism and enriched the local archaic religious traditions. In what is now Northern Pakistan, Buddhism was followed by neo-Hinduistic influences.

From at least the 16th century CE onwards Islam gradually became established in its orthodox Sunni as well as Shi'a forms (Twelver-Shi'a and Ismailiyya). Particularly in Sunni-dominated areas, any traces of paganism were radically eradicated over the last decades. Only the Kafirs of the Afghan Hindukush were able to defend their pagan religions until at least the late 19th century. The ethnic groups of the Kati, Parun, Waigali and Ashkun living in these remote valleys were called Kafirs – “heathens” – by their Muslim neighbours; after their subsequent enforced conversion to Islam the region became known as Nuristan, the “Land of the Light”.

About thirty years ago, after having carefully studied this comprehensive work of my teacher Karl Jettmar as well as his other writings and after having completed extensive ethnographic field research in Nager and Hunza (Northwest-Karakoram) and in Harban (Indus Kohistan) myself, I was sceptical as to whether our knowledge about the pre-Islamic religions in the Hindukush, Karakoram and Western Himalaya could grow substantially in the future, especially considering the firm grip of Deobandi Islam on the Sunni Muslims living in the side valleys of the river Indus. But a substantial amount of fresh research has since been done between Nuristan in the west and Baltistan in the east. Thus, Jettmar's final sentence in his opus magnum, in which he expresses the hope that “a final chapter for the *Religions of the Hindukush* could be written by future scholars”, has been fulfilled. It therefore remains a question why the bibliography of the volume under review has not been updated accordingly. Here it suffices to mention just three very important works on indigenous religious traditions, namely Max Klimburg's *The Kafirs of the Hindu Kush. Art and Society of the Waigal and Ashkun Kafirs* (Stuttgart 1999; 2 volumes), Alberto M. Cacopardo's and Augusto S. Cacopardo's *Gates of Peristan. History, Religion and Society in the Hindu Kush* (Rome 2001) as well as

Augusto S. Cacopardo's recent *Pagan Christmas. Winter Feasts of the Kalasha of the Hindu Kush* (London 2016).

The late Karl Jettmar was an outstanding, eminently respected scholar, who “successfully combined ethnographic studies with historical and anthropological views, resulting in a holistic perception of cultural history in a way only few of his contemporaries could parallel” (obituary, p. XIII). His *The Religions of the Hindukush* was indeed a masterpiece of scholarship devoted to this part of Central Asia, but other works published subsequently should have been mentioned, at least within an appendix to the bibliography.

Jürgen Wasim Frembgen

FRAUKE KRAAS / REGINE SPOHNER / AYE AYE MYINT, *Socio-Economic Atlas of Myanmar*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2017. 188 pages, 52 photos, 13 tables, 54 illustrations, EUR 39.00. ISBN 978-3-515-11623-7

The *Socio-Economic Atlas of Myanmar* is the first such publication and combines copious amounts of valuable data on the country with skilful and accessible visualisations. The authors have identified six key themes – administration and spatial organisation; environment and natural resources; population, settlements and urbanisation; infrastructure; economic development; social development: household infrastructure, education and health – and provide insights on specific themes such as hydropower and thermal power plant projects or the garment industry in Yangon.

In many cases it is easy to see how the data and its visualisation will aid improved policy making or research on the relevant sector. Researchers and policy makers in the past often struggled to find the right data or any data at all. Thus, the *Socio-Economic Atlas of Myanmar* contributes to filling an important gap. This is especially true for topics that were not covered by the 2014 Myanmar Census Atlas, such as the sections on the environment, natural resources and infrastructure.

Despite these important contributions, it is unfortunately also easy to see how the atlas might fail its readers, at least in part. An atlas is never a mere presentation of data but inevitably also presents a specific point of view, consequently shaping the way that readers perceive the information at hand. The authors, however, reflect little on the perspective they are generating. The atlas includes no data or visualisations regarding questions of ethnicity and belonging. The authors write that “despite the enormous relevance of questions of ethnicity, especially in the process of national reconciliation, it was not possible to include a map of the regional distribution of ethnic or ethno-