

and plates are mixed. These are, however, minor errors and can hardly detract from the overall positive impression.

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MANFRED KIESERLING (ed.), *Singapur. Metropole im Wandel*. (Edition Suhrkamp, 2113). Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2000. 257 pages, DM 22,80. ISBN 3-518-12113-8

This is a collection of essays by four German and seven Singaporean authors under the title "Singapore, changing metropolis". One of the contributors, Manfred Kieserling of Kassel University, is also the editor.

The essay by Manfred Kieserling is a good introduction to the topic of the book, describing the development of the city state in its regional environment and as a continuous process of change. Although the book purports to sideline the economic issues, Kieserling does review Singapore's position in world markets and cursorily describes some elements of Singapore's economic policy. He races through Singapore's colonial history from Raffles' landing in Temasek in 1819 up to independence and the ascension of the People's Action Party to power, before turning to the purposeful transformation of the city state. Up to independence Singapore just grew. Thereafter it was completely transformed. A section devoted to the political system and the methods adopted by the ruling party to enable it to stay in power provides Kieserling with the opportunity to refer to some of the other papers in the book, but, unfortunately for the reader, there is no attempt to place them in some kind of coherent analytical structure.

Heike Stengel deals with expatriates in Singapore. After introducing the reasons for expatriate involvement in Singapore's economic development and describing the psychological and other adjustment problems, we return to Raffles' landing in 1819 and the development of the population up to the present. Singapore's policy towards the immigration of foreigners of different skills is described, before attention reverts to the conditions awaiting the prospective expats and their dependents in the Singapore environment. No doubt, this paper will be of interest to those seeking information on the basic living conditions in Singapore before arrival, whereas the other papers in the book will be of less interest to them, just as Stengel's paper is of less interest to those for whom the other authors seem to be writing.

Rolf Jordan also deals with immigrants but focuses on domestic servants and construction workers. Domestic servants enable educated spouses to enter well-paid employment. And construction workers with fixed term employment passes are useful regulators of construction prices, since the number of workers permitted to enter the Republic can be fine-tuned from day to day. Jordan, too, cannot resist taking us back to Raffles' landing in Singapore, but this is really more the editor's problem than that of the author. Neither Stengel nor Jordan deal with the important problem of emigration from Singapore.

Lee Sing-Kong and Ooi Giok-Ling contribute a paper on eco-tourism in Singapore. After the usual generalities regarding the importance and develop-

ment of tourism and the need to preserve parks and open spaces in order to maintain the attractiveness of the city, the paper deals with three specific examples: Sungei Buloh, a river estuary previously used extensively for prawn farming; Bukit-Timah nature reserve, an important forest area in the heart of Singapore island; and the Pasir Ris nature park in the northeast of the island, where mangroves lining the estuary of the Tampines River are to be preserved. While the preservation of these areas is no doubt important in its own right and also for the Singaporean population, it seems doubtful whether these projects will attract additional tourists to Singapore, most of whom probably do not come as eco-tourists anyway.

Yap Mui Teng's paper is on identity construction in Singapore. Because of the cultural, religious and linguistic diversity of the population, Singaporeans carry multiple identities depending on the given context – outside or inside Southeast Asia; in Singapore vis-à-vis a foreigner, or vis-à-vis a Singaporean of another ethnic group; in one's own group; in the same clan, dialect, or sub-dialect group; in one's own community.

In their contribution on identity and history of landscapes Lily Kong and Brenda Yeoh show convincingly that attempts by governments to create attractions for tourists are generally doomed to failure, unless the neighbourhoods selected by them are primarily allowed to develop as attractions for the local population. This loss of identity certainly applies to Chinatown, one of the two examples the two authors deal with, the other being Katong, where the causes for the exodus of original inhabitants and the loss of a local identity are different. The construction of identity is pursued further by Ooi Giok-Ling with regard to the planning and erection of New Towns in Singapore.

Christina Delius gives a good account of traffic planning in Singapore and the use of market mechanisms to regulate congestion and thus reduce congestion costs. To be sure, measures taken by the government tend to be "top-down", but the issue is whether the measures lead to individual decision-makers internalising external costs and then deciding appropriately, or whether the measures intervene directly. In this sense the criticism directed by the author at the top level appears less justified.

In his piece on imagined space and *kampung* nostalgia Chua Beng Huat describes the process of development and change from the *kampung* lifestyle to life in housing blocks where open common space as an extension of private living space is missing. He shows that while the memory of *kampung* life is still very much present, the desire to return to the *kampung* itself is not a desired option.

Finally, Yao Souchou has contributed a very perceptive paper on corporal punishment as exemplified by the well-known Michael Fay case. He shows that at the base of the efficient judicial dispensation of pain as a punishment for vandalism there is an ideology of continuous crisis and the need to maintain the discipline for national survival. The argument runs as follows: The world Singapore lives in is one of cut-throat competition. Singapore's economy and society are continually in danger of collapse. Survival has top priority over all non-economic considerations. And with this goal in view, all social and political

processes can be judged with regard to their contribution to survival. This pragmatic materialism provides the reasoning for the low values attached to human happiness, democracy, human rights, liberal freedoms, the arts etc. However, some doubts remain in this reviewer's mind as to whether the interpretation of readers' letters to the Straits Times justifying the caning of Michael Fay as an expression of this ideology is totally correct, since in some of them the point made refers not to the sentence as such but rather that it should not be mitigated merely because the recipient is an American.

It is well known that Singapore is a city state. However, this knowledge tends to obscure the duality of Singapore as the city of that name and the state as a whole, i.e. the Republic of Singapore. This duality would have provided a useful organising principle for the book. As it is, while several contributions deal with very specific issues, down to individual street corner coffee shops, others cover the economic and political development of the country as a whole, as well as a time span of 180 years from Raffles' landing to the present. The separation of contributions focussing on the physical aspects of urban development and planning, including their effects on the societies and communities in specific neighbourhoods, from those dealing with broader economic, political and social aspects of Singapore as a whole would have made good sense and would have provided the reader with a guiding principle. As it is, it is unclear from the preface and the list of contents, what readership the authors had in mind. The lack of co-ordination and editing of the essays confirms the impression that the papers are addressed to very different readers who must pick and choose according to their interests and state of knowledge.

Unfortunately, the reader is left in the dark both with regard to the background and affiliation of the individual authors and the original titles and place of publication (if any) of the contributions that have apparently been translated into German, probably by someone mentioned in passing in the preface. The exception is the paper by Chua Beng Huat, which provides the information that it was originally published (probably in English) in a work edited by Lily Kong and Brenda Yeoh (quoted elsewhere in the book as edited by B.S.A. Yeoh and L. Kong), both of whom also appear as co-authors in the present work.

A German book introducing Singapore to the general reader still remains to be written.

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EVA MARIA KERSHAW, *A Study of Brunei Dusun Religion: Ethnic Priesthood on a Frontier of Islam*. (Borneo Research Council Monograph Series, 4). Phillips ME: Borneo Research Council, 2000. X, 287 pages, US\$ 38.50 (hb.). ISBN 1-929900-01-5

The Dusuns (or Bisayas) of Negara Brunei Darussalam are on the verge of cultural extinction. A non-Islamic people in a predominantly Muslim-Malay sultanate on the north-west coast of Borneo, they are confronted by several almost insuperable problems. First and foremost, they comprise a negligible proportion