

ANNA L. DALLAPICCOLA / ANILA VERGHESE (EDS), *India and Southeast Asia: Cultural Discourses*. Mumbai: K. R. Kama Oriental Institute, 2017. 503 pages, \$110.00. ISBN 978-93-81324-12-7

The volume under review emerged from a conference convened at Mumbai in 2015, the original title of which, “Cultural Dialogues between India and Southeast Asia”, probably represents the contents of the volume better than its chosen title “Cultural Discourses”. A small number of scholars from Southeast Asia attended the meeting, redressing the frequently observed predominance of European and, as in this case, Indian scholars. At the heart of the conference was the question of the “Indianisation” of Southeast Asia, which has kept scholars busy for decades but still offers new finds and aspects that require a re-assessment of received wisdom.

The first section of the volume contains three articles that address more general and theoretical points. Pierre-Yves Manguin demands what he calls a “necessary re-assessment” of the Indianisation within a revised time-scale (until 1500 CE), using recent theoretical approaches, which operate with concepts such as “decadence” and “convergence” or engage with Pollock’s model of the Sanskrit cosmopolis. The latter is criticised by Robert Brown for both its lack of synchronicity of historical developments in South and Southeast Asia and its focus on India as the sole point of reference for these developments. This aspect is also emphasised by John Whitmore, who compares the “Indianisation” of Vietnam to the Chinese influence upon the country. He concludes that the actual Indianisation between ca. 300 and 1200 CE was sandwiched between two periods of much more dominant Chinese influence.

The second section consists of six contributions revolving around topics of syncretism and religious influence. Ang Choulean chooses megaliths and lingams to show how Indian culture was adopted in Cambodia, and Siyonn Sopenarith refers to cows and buffaloes to describe two cults unknown in Cambodia before its contacts with India. Another paper on Cambodia questions the juxtaposition of Indisation vs. Indigenisation in a more fundamental manner. Ashley Thompson argues that candleholders used in a ritual of ancestor veneration (*babil*) no longer allow a distinction between external or internal origins.

Hiram Woodward explores the sources from which the artists of Pagan (Burma, 11th–13th centuries) drew their artistic inspiration by comparing various monuments and artefacts with Indian textual sources. Including Sri Lanka and Lower Myanmar, he highlights Northeast India and the “composite culture” of Lower Myanmar as the two most important sources of inspiration. Philip Friedrich also looks at Sri Lanka in a careful re-assessment of the sources that inspired the monk Sri Sattha, who introduced a Sinhalese-Buddhist ordination lineage at Sukhothai (Thailand) in the mid-14th century.

The third section continues with the themes of urban planning and architecture. Im Sokrithy asks whether Indian concepts of urban planning can be discovered in Cambodian settlements, and Swapna Kothari offers a comparative analysis of differing notions of heritage management and conservation in India and Southeast Asia. Swati Chemburkar singles out the concept of the *mandala* for the ground plan of stupas (and especially the Borobudur), which she illustrates with examples from India and Tibet. Finally, Olivier Cunin provides further evidence that some of the sculptures on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art originally came from the Banteay Srei temple in the vicinity of Angkor. Though only loosely connected to the overriding theme of Indianisation (or other cultural discourses), his article is nevertheless one of the more substantial contributions to the volume for the straightforward and persuasive argument it presents.

The subsequent group of essays is focused on aspects of iconography and sculpture. With the help of Indian texts, Vasudha Narayanan interprets a statue of Vishnu from the Musée Guimet as a *vishaka* pillar, which represents the four hidden incarnations of Vishnu (Samkarshana, Vasudeva, Pradyumna and Aniruddha). Nicolas Revire concentrates on the iconography of Buddha images sitting cross-legged (*bhadrāsana*), comparing examples from a broad geographic spectrum ranging from Gandhara to Java. The paper by R. Mahalakshmi investigates the artistic exchanges, notably of Brahmanic statues, between South India and Sri Lanka. Despite the proximity of the two regions, regional varieties can easily be discerned. Again closer to the theme of the volume is the essay of Natasha Reichle, who studies Durga statues from Indonesia, where these are known as Rangda. Suchandra Ghosh refers to recent finds from Mogalmari (Bengal) to explore the spread and utilisation of Buddhist clay (or votive) tablets, to claim that depictions of Buddhas with the gesture of preaching (*dharmacakra-mudra*) are rather exceptional.

The final section covers the areas of literature and performing arts. It contains three papers on Indonesia, which deal with the *gamelan* orchestra (Jaclyn Wappel), shadow play (Ilicia Sprey) and symbols of political power (Helen Jessup). In addition, there is an article on the (early) coinage in Southeast Asia (S. B. Majumdar), for which again an Indian origin is suggested. It is clear that Indian production of coins preceded that in Southeast Asia by several centuries; but the perhaps more important question – why Southeast coinage is by and large limited to the realm of Pyu-period Myanmar (which also deflates the perception that the minting of coins was a pan-Southeast Asian phenomenon) – is unfortunately left out. This section starts with an article by Kenneth Hall, who investigates Javanese *kakawin* – poetical literature with a spiritual undercurrent – and its relation to Pollock's model of the Sanskrit cosmopolis, as well as the role it played in the formation of a Javanese-Islamic nation. Carefully assessing the usefulness of Pollock's concept, Hall ac-

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