

Im Schlussteil des Buches greift Ninette Preis nach einem Fazit ihrer Ergebnisse die Themen auf, die in der Arbeit nur gestreift oder nicht besprochen werden konnten. Auf diesen letzten Seiten wird klar, dass ihre Arbeit nicht nur ethnologisch, sondern auch sozialgeschichtlich relevant ist. Dass die lange Zugfahrt einen speziellen Charakter als räumlichzeitliche Übergangssituation besitzt, wird im Buch bereits früh angesprochen. Im Schlussteil wird deutlich, dass sie zusätzlich auch einen Übergang in einem Prozess von Kulturwandel markiert. Die neue Lebenssituation von Frauen seit der wirtschaftlichen Öffnung Indiens 1991 schafft nämlich nicht nur das Bedürfnis der Frauen nach größerer Freiheit von „traditionellen“ Rollenzwängen; Sie schafft gleichzeitig auch den Raum, in dem diese Freiheit gelebt werden kann. Dieser Raum eröffnet sich in einem Umfeld, welches auch für konservativ denkende Angehörige der Frauen akzeptabel erscheinen muss: Die äußere Form des zweckgebundenen Pendelns vom Heim zum Arbeitsplatz entspricht der gesellschaftlich verankerten Vorstellung, dass Frauen den öffentlichen Raum nur zweckgebunden nutzen (und nicht etwa zur Entspannung).

Das Bedauern darüber, dass dieser Teil der Arbeit der kürzeste ist, mündet in die Hoffnung, dass einige der von Preis angesprochenen Forschungsdesiderate in Zukunft aufgegriffen werden. Zusätzlich interessant wäre sicher auch eine quantifizierende Publikation der Fragebogenauswertung.

Susanne Knödel

**Anthony Reid: Imperial Alchemy: Nationalism and Political Identity in Southeast Asia.**

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, 262 S., USD 31

In recent decades a growing body of literature has emerged exploring the origins of

nations and the development of nationalism. With few exceptions, such as Benedict Anderson's much-quoted (and often misunderstood) *Imagined Communities*, most research has focussed on concepts emanating from European experiences. Studies of nationalism in Asia had so far limited impact on the theoretical discourse on nation and nationalism. Anthony Reid's recent book is therefore a most welcome contribution to fill this gap. According to the blurb, the author, who is a famous and prolific historian of Southeast Asia, views nationalism in its particular Southeast Asian form as "the great alchemist, turning the base metal of empire into the gold of nations". The book is divided into seven chapters, followed by a comprehensive conclusion.

In the first chapter Reid develops a typology for Asian nationalism. It is a typology which avoids the term "nation" as an analytical category. Reid chooses instead the term "ethnie" to denominate the largest group of people defining themselves as kin. Consequently he calls the aspiration for political self-determination of this particular group of people "ethnie nationalism". This is contrasted with the inclusive notion of "state nationalism" with its participatory civic character. Apart from these two main categories of nationalism, which have developed also in nineteenth-century Europe, Reid introduces two further categories typical for Asia (and Africa), namely "anti-imperial nationalism" and nationalism motivated by an "outrage at state humiliation" (OSH). Whether the highly emotive type of OSH nationalism – as manifested, for example, in the Chinese May Fourth movement (1917–21) – is typical for Asia is debatable since nationalist movements in a number of European countries (Germany, Poland, Serbia, etc.) have operated on popular resentment against collective humiliation by foreign powers as well. Reid elaborates on his basic assumption that there is a fundamental difference between the enduring states of East Asia (including Vietnam), favouring a "state nationalism", and the

predominantly “state-averse” polities of Southeast Asia, where various types of nationalism overlapped in a rather complex manner.

Reid’s analytical tools enable him to provide thoughtful reflections on how different pre-colonial and colonial legacies shaped the emergence of specific forms of nationalism and concepts of nationhood in the various modern Southeast Asian nation-states. Whereas, for example, in Burma and Vietnam the nation-state was formed around an “ethnic core” which gradually incorporated peripheral communities, the Philippine and Indonesian nations are essentially the results of revolutionary anti-colonial struggles. In Malaya/Malaysia, Cambodia and Laos nationalism took a completely different direction. As the colonial powers protected the fragile monarchies in these countries, both the indigenous elite and their subjects did not feel particularly inclined to develop any kind of anti-imperial nationalism. Cambodian and Malay ethnic nationalism was “directed against Vietnamese domination of the administration and Chinese of commerce, not against colonialism or the French [and British] *per se*” (p. 43).

Chapters 3–7 are excellent case studies ranging from Overseas Chinese ethnic nationalism, Achehnese ethnic nationalism, which has deep roots in the memories of an ancient monarchy and a long history of resistance against Dutch colonialism, to the nationalism of two largely Christianised ethnies – the Batak in Sumatra and the Kadazan or Dusun in Sabah – in relation to their respective nation-states. Most stimulating and convincing is Reid’s comparative study of Malayness in Malaysia and Indonesia. While in Malaysia Malayness and Islam are considered essential and indistinguishable components of Malay national identity, the Malay language was transformed from a *lingua franca* in the Netherlands Indies to the powerful symbol of national identity in the multi-ethnic nation-state of Indonesia. The author arrives at the

conclusion that notwithstanding the “top-down ruthlessness and brutalisation” with which Indonesian regimes enforced the territorial integrity of the state, “Jakarta has succeeded in turning its subjects into Indonesians, as Kuala Lumpur has not managed to turn its subjects into Malaysians” (p. 214). Reids closes his book with the prediction (or better hope?) that in the post-Cold War period of growing regional cooperation, “unfulfilled” ethnic nationalisms will be reconciled with state nationalism in the broader framework of ASEAN.

This reviewer is not entirely convinced that the “imperial alchemy” is really working. Reid’s case studies are all from Insular Southeast Asia, the area of the author’s expertise. A study of Karen and Shan nationalism in Burma might have led to different conclusions. Moreover, unlike the successful transformation of the artificial colonial construct of the Netherlands Indies into the Indonesian nation-state without any change of borders, the imperial alchemy did obviously not work in French Indochina. A comparison of early nationalism in Indochina and Indonesia (see David Henley’s article in *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37, 1995) would have been illustrative. The book is nicely edited and contains only very few spelling mistakes (f.e., “Hapsburg” instead of “Habsburg”). In spite of its restricted empirical basis, *Imperial Alchemy* is definitely an original and provocative study of nationalism and ethnic identity in Southeast Asia.

Volker Grabowsky