

K.S. SANDHU, SHARON SIDDIQUE ET AL. (eds.), *The ASEAN Reader*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1992. 582 pages, US \$ 39.90 (soft cover), US \$ 59.90 (hard cover).

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in 1967 by Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines to foster cooperation in many fields among the member states. ASEAN survived a few serious internal crises and became a viable regional institution. In January 1984 Brunei Darussalam became the sixth member when it gained independence. Unlike the EC, however, initially ASEAN neither intended to become a supranational organization nor to force integration among the member states. It was simply meant to create a forum for dialogue in order to promote stability and peace in the region. The annual Foreign Ministers Meeting (FMM) is the most important institution of ASEAN. Each year after this conference the foreign ministers of the USA, Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the EC and South Korea now join the foreign ministers of the ASEAN countries to talk about political as well as economic issues; this has become institutionalized as the Post-Ministerial Conference (PCM). Without doubt, ASEAN is now the most important regional organization in Asia and has contributed much to the stability and security of its members as well as of the region.

There are already numerous books and articles about ASEAN, but the real purpose and goal of this organization is still misunderstood because it is often compared to the EC. One of the original goals of ASEAN was also the promotion of interest in Southeast Asian studies. To this end the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS) was established in Singapore in 1968. Since then the ISEAS has become the center for Southeast Asian studies and has brought out many good studies on the region and ASEAN. To commemorate the 25th anniversary of ASEAN six prominent scholars in the region compiled this ASEAN reference book, under the aegis of the ISEAS and with the financial support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. *The Asean Reader* is a comprehensive collection of scholarly works on ASEAN from the thousands which have been published over the past 25 years.

The late director of the ISEAS, Prof. K.S. Sandhu, outlines the purpose of this book, namely to make ASEAN more understandable and to act as a useful reference book. This is followed by two contributions by the founding fathers of ASEAN. The former Foreign Minister of Thailand, Thanat Khoman, recalls the political background of ASEAN and

his personal contribution to the founding of this regional grouping. His counterpart from Singapore, S. Rajaratnam, emphasizes the importance of this organization for stability in the future.

The book is divided into ten main sections preceded by a brief introduction written by the compiler of each section. It has a total of 94 contributions from leading ASEAN scholars from within and outside of the region. The first and second sections provide an overview of the history of regionalism in Southeast Asia as well as of the origin, formation and organization of ASEAN. The third and eighth sections deal with politics of ASEAN including such sensitive topics as security, political and military cooperation. Section four covers social and cultural issues including education, press, religion and urbanization. Sections five, six and seven deal with economic aspects of this regional grouping, covering wide areas such as intra-ASEAN economic cooperation as well as external economic relations. Section nine concentrates on external political relations, especially with the USA, China, Japan, Australia and Vietnam. In the last section eight prominent Asian and Western scholars speculate on the future of regionalism in Asia Pacific and the future development of ASEAN.

*The ASEAN Reader* contains a comprehensive and carefully selected bibliography on ASEAN. This will be extremely useful for students of ASEAN. In short, this book is more than a reader but a reference book on ASEAN as well as on the region. It provides a balanced account of ASEAN's performance and progress in political, social, economic, cultural and security fields in the past 25 years. This book is most highly recommended to anyone interested in ASEAN.

Mark B.M. Suh

RUDOLF G. WAGNER, *The Contemporary Chinese Historical Drama. Four Studies*. Berkeley, New York, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1990. XIV + 362 pages, \$ 45.00. ISBN 0-520-05954-9

The publication comprises four studies, the first three of which each deal with a historical drama written and performed between 1958 and 1963. The dramas analysed are Tian Han's "Guan Hanqing" (pp. 1-79), Tian Han's Peking opera "Xie Yaohuan" (pp. 80-138), and "Monkey King Subdues the White Bone Demon" (pp. 139-235). In his analysis of the