

THOMAS SCHWEIZER, *Reisanbau in einem javanischen Dorf*. (Kölner Ethnologische Mitteilungen, Vol. 9). Köln, Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 1989. XVI + 718 pages, DM 158.-

An evaluation of the results and social effects of the "green revolution", i.e. the intensification of agriculture through hybrids and fertilizers has been the subject of a good many studies during the past 20 years. Whereas social scientists have tended to stress the negative impact on rural social organization, especially the increased social differentiation between poor and rich peasants, the loss of work for women and pressure towards outmigration, more recent studies have come to a more positive judgement. Especially the Indonesian BIMAS-Programme is now seen as a success responsible for the rise in general living standards in most areas of rural Java. Schweizer's voluminous study on "rice agriculture in a Javanese village" is the most recent addition to this debate.

Between August 1978 and October 1979 the author did extensive field research in the village of "Sawahan" (pseudonym) in the district of Klaten near the main road between Yogyakarta and Solo in one of the most fertile and productive rice growing areas of Indonesia. The village of about 1.600 inhabitants is relatively rich by Javanese standards. Three quarters of its agricultural land is used for wet rice production and the rest for kitchen gardens. About 40% of the households do not own any land. As the average size of landholdings is only about a quarter hectare, practically all families have to seek additional income through trade or wage labour. Schweizer's aim is to study the changes of the village economy during the late phase of the green revolution. To aid his analysis he develops a "system's theory" of the village economy and subjects his data derived from a number of sample surveys to rigorous statistical analysis. Though his theoretical reflections are not without interest, their main function is to structure the immense amount of data collected during field research. The book is extremely systematic and the data provided on Javanese agriculture assume encyclopedic dimensions. It is a mine of information on Javanese and Indonesian terminology of rice agriculture, of institutional arrangements, land tenure, and work organization. Schweizer's work is likely to increase in value over time. I could very well imagine that in another 50 or 100 years, researchers will regard this book as a major historical document on the state of central Javanese agriculture and social life.

The central and most important chapter is chapter 6 on rice agriculture, but it takes five chapters and 270 pages to lay the groundwork for the final discussion. After a meticulous description of the region and the village

(chapter 4) Schweizer discusses four factors (*Wirtschaftsregulative*) that determine the socio-economic system of the rice village. These are land, productive activities, material possessions, and knowledge and values. Several of his surveys are based on a rather small number of cases, as for instance his time budget study, for which he interviewed 59 persons in 29 households, which were divided into four major categories (male/female, old/young), thus producing rather small sub-groups. Fortunately, his findings are always backed up by ethnographic details and observations. It is, for instance, an interesting result of this study that on average only two working hours are spent on agriculture, and 3½ hours on non-agrarian activities (of this, one hour's wage labour). Thanks to a meticulous description of work in the rice fields, trade, and division of labour, a very accurate picture of the Javanese rural economy emerges, which contradicts many of the earlier assertions about backwardness and immobility in Javanese peasant society. Schweizer's discussion of Javanese norms and values confirms the importance of the idea of *rukun* or harmony in Javanese thinking, but it also shows that in terms of statistical analysis there is a very weak correlation between landownership, occupation, and age on the one hand, and selected values and norms on the other. The question of how far Javanese values influence or determine social action, is therefore not taken up again in an interesting discussion of decision-making processes during harvest time. The choice of the type of harvesting, namely use of wage labourers, the farmer's own labour, or selling rice before harvest to a contractor (*tebasan*) is, according to Schweizer, not determined by Javanese values but by a rational calculation based on current rice prices, need for cash, and size of landholding (p. 335ff.).

The central chapter is, according to the author, the discussion of *Reisbau* (rice agriculture). This discussion is divided into four parts. The first discusses the rice production cycle over several years, the second, rice cultivation, its institutions, decision-making of paddy operators, and strategies of production; the third part is an analysis of the causes of different rates of return on paddy agriculture, including a cost-benefit analysis, and the fourth part provides case studies.

In addition to many ethnographic details there are some parts that throw light on often discussed aspects of Javanese agriculture. Schweizer provides us with a detailed description and explanation of the famous *tebasan*-system. In this particular village there are three major rice contractors (*penebas*), two of them women. Relations between them and the women harvesters are amicable and supported by a multitude of other social relations at festivals etc. Schweizer describes in great detail how a rice contractor calculates the price she is likely to offer to a farmer, the organization of harvesting, and the

institutional arrangements of wage payments (in this village 1/18 to 1/25 of the harvested rice). Wages for agricultural workers are paid according to moral standards. The daily wage should be approximately equivalent to one kilo of white rice. This is indeed an interesting observation as it backs up the now well-known calculation of poverty lines based on rice equivalence proposed by the Indonesian sociologist Sajogyo.

The final seventh chapter draws together the various findings scattered throughout the book. Schweizer lists five major results:

1. Rice agriculture is highly monetarized. Most wages and the major part of the harvest are paid in money.
2. Rice agriculture is highly commercialized. Wages are based on current rice prices and agricultural inputs are bought on the market.
3. Javanese traditional values of cooperation and harmony do not hinder the commercialization of rice agriculture but soften the social impact of a market economy.
4. Income from rice agriculture varies considerably. Most households are engaged in rice agriculture only as a subsidiary activity or at least engaged in off-farm employment.
5. Monetarization, commercialization, and off-farm employment are not a matter of recent developments due to the green revolution as alleged in many previous studies, but are the result of a process of social and economic change that goes back to colonial times. The green revolution has only strengthened this development.

Schweizer's book is an interesting combination of meticulous ethnography and social survey research. This book is perhaps the most comprehensive contribution to the study of rice agriculture and Javanese rural society to date.

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BURKHARD VIEWEG, *Big Fellow Man. Muschelgeld und Südseegeister. Authentische Berichte aus Deutsch-Neuguinea 1906-1909*. Weikersheim: Verlag Josef Margraf, 1990. 370 pages, 85 ill., 7 maps, DM 45.-

Sharing the Pacific Ocean with Asia but on the fringe of the Asian and Indonesian world lies the relatively new state of Papua-Newguinea. Burkhard Vieweg's book reminds of two facts about this country. First, that in long gone times of colonialism and imperialism it was a colony of a defunct German