

purely antithetical, resulting in her total exploitation. Not a single Indian woman will get her *human rights* by such a 'method', much less a nation. – It is a very sad book, despite so much laughter in it.

Both books demonstrate anew the great competence of the editors Lothar Lutze and Rainer Kimmig in choosing the works and translators of the NIB.

*Irmtraud Höhn*

HARALD UHLIG, *Südostasien*. (Fischer Länderkunde 3). Frankfurt/M.: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1988. 719 pp., maps, tabs., DM 29,80

Compared with the original (first published in 1975), this new edition is greater in volume. And considering that it now deals exclusively with South-east Asia and not, as previously, with Australia and the Pacific Region as well, the text is almost double what it was. It is also more homogeneous; instead of several authors, as previously, Uhlig is now sole author of all the contributions on this complex subject.

This has its advantages: the treatment of the various topics is in the hands of one person, and in this case one can be sure that the author's vast and life-long field experience is a guarantee of solid judgment. Nonetheless, things are very much in flux and are becoming more complex every day as the author rightly says at the beginning. Small wonder that the number of scholarly publications has increased enormously since 1975, and hence the size of the bibliography too. This of course gives the reader a good chance to familiarize himself with different views about the nature and development "of the regions and landscapes, the structures and functions of Southeast Asia" (p. 11) – whether he does so or not is of course up to him. (The fact that some of the titles given in the bibliography are more relevant as "Club Members Cards" than as important sources of information is no doubt an inevitable by-product of the rapid increase of publications.) The maps – unfortunately there is no reference to them in the index – are very informative, and their lay-out shows quite some experience in handling pocket-book format. Though they are printed only in black and white, they (all in octavo) are eminently legible because they refrain from any overloading with detail. – Equally pleasing is the statistical appendix, for the same reason that it is concise, clearly constructed and limited to essentials, though nonetheless ideal for verifying the one or other trend. Its content is what one expects from a pocket-book, which does not claim to be a statistical compendium, but first and foremost a descriptive *Länderkunde* not crammed with statistics, and thus less liable to

soon become obsolete. Besides, anyone familiar with everyday life in Southeast Asia knows that here (and not only here) statistics do not prove very much, i.e. they require interpretation, an interpretation that is sufficiently realistic and familiar with the special situation under concern. – Welcome too, last not least, is a comprehensive general index which makes it easy to cross-reference specific topics and problems dealt with throughout the text.

What does this booklet deal with?

It presents a panorama of this *Kulturerdteil* (cf. the heading of the first of the two main sections). Thus, the spectrum is exceptionally broad. It comprises a general survey (pp. 13-231), dealing with physical and biogeographical, historical, demographic, ethnological and agronomical aspects, with forest environment and forest economy, rural and urban planning, development of material and energy resources (to mention only a fraction of the topics discussed in this general survey), then treating (in the other main section) "The States of Southeast Asia" by region (pp. 232-410: "continental"; pp. 419-620; "insular"). These larger regional entities are then discussed according to their particular state territories, landscapes, ways of life, specific problems, also according to potentials, prospects and perspectives – all in all, *Länderkunde* par excellence.

Now, this series aims explicitly at engaging authorities with a profound knowledge of what they are writing about, and who are thus able, if need be, to fall back on their own experience of the country concerned (p. 2: "The authors have first hand knowledge and field experience of the topics discussed by them"). Uhlig well fulfills these prerequisites. Not only that, he accomplishes his enormous task with such balance, such elan and sensitivity that fairness requires one to refrain from petty criticism – this extraordinarily erudite work is too bold in conception and too consummate in execution for that. Not that this, on the whole, brilliant presentation has no flaws – it is simply that the few points one might criticise bear no relationship to the benefit derived from reading it. And above all, one should refrain from censure of the one or other "contradiction" (cf. p. 571, e.g., where explicit mention is made of the increase in material wealth at the expense of the ecosystem) – the reality which is here pragmatically described is indeed contradictory, and no one knows this better than the author. A more intricate analysis of the connections between cause and effect in particular cases is doubtless part of the "smaller fry" to which those who are unwilling to compromise with the inconsistencies of practical reality may indulge in. The author, however, who takes upon himself the task of capturing this cultural "quasi-continent" of Southeast Asia on c. 700 (albeit very closely printed) pages, is forced to dispense with a certain accuracy (however desirable) and



do what every cartographer does as a matter of principle – he must generalize.

The fact that Uhlig has succeeded in providing the reader with such a comprehensive mine of information – and such is this little volume on South-east Asia – places it on a par with the 2 classical accounts of E.H.G. Dobby and Ch.A. Fisher (both entitled "South-East Asia"), which do admittedly have a larger format and therefore make easier reading, though they do not necessarily have the same broad spectrum and certainly not the topicality of Uhlig's pocket-book.

Dietrich Kühne

BERNHARD DAHM, *José Rizal. Der Nationalheld der Filipinos.* (Persönlichkeit und Geschichte, 134). Göttingen, Zürich: Muster-Schmidt Verlag, 1988. 88 pages, DM 14,80

The author and publishers are to be congratulated on this first presentation of the Philippine doctor, writer and national hero, José Rizal, to a German public. His biography appears in a series called *Persönlichkeit und Geschichte* along with the great names of European politics and humanities.

Rizal studied for a while in Heidelberg and was friendly with German scientists and intellectuals. He published what is probably his most important novel *Noli me tangere* in Berlin in 1887. Nevertheless, Rizal is practically unknown in Germany. Bernhard Dahm's important and most welcome book extends the extremely limited contribution in the German language to Rizal and his times. Up to now, the only literature available were mainly Bernhard Dahm's own works and a biography by Harry Sichrovsky about Rizal's friend Ferdinand Blumentritt, himself a specialist on the Philippines.

Dahm tells the story of Rizal's life in the context of Spanish colonial government during which the Filipinos were subject to discrimination and prejudice. It was the suppression in his home country as well as the ideas of the enlightenment and liberalism which he got to know as a student of medicine and the arts in Madrid, Paris and Heidelberg, that made Rizal criticize the Spanish rule and become a protagonist of Philippine nationalism. He used political clubs, newspapers and magazines, speeches and mainly his novels as platforms for propagating his reform ideas. Yet he did not aim at secession from Spain, but at assimilation. Although he was a deeply religious man, he particularly criticized the unlimited power of the Catholic Church and its orders.