

Gerade bei der beigelegten CD-Rom zeigen sich daher auch am stärksten die Schwächen dieser Publikation. Verlag und Autor haben es hier versäumt, die mittlerweile vielfältigen Möglichkeiten dieses Mediums zu nutzen, um der vorgelegten Bibliographie neue Dimensionen der Anwendung zu öffnen. In den letzten Jahren haben immer mehr Bibliotheken im In- und Ausland ihre Angebote zur Literaturrecherche in den eigenen umfangreichen Beständen ausgebaut. Ausgefeilte Suchmasken bieten heute die Möglichkeit, nicht nur in den Beständen deutscher, sondern auch jenen internationaler Bibliotheken nach einschlägiger Literatur – seien es Überblicksarbeiten oder hoch spezialisierte Forschungsarbeiten – fündig zu werden. Es ist daher unverständlich, warum Autor und Verlag die Möglichkeiten, die ein Medium wie die CD-Rom hier bietet, wie etwa die Verlinkung zu einschlägigen Bibliotheksbeständen, ungenutzt lassen. So verfügt etwa das ISEAS nicht nur über eine sehr gute Auswahl an Literatur zur Region, sondern bietet zugleich auch umfangreiche Recherchemöglichkeiten über die Suchmaske seiner Bibliothek im Internet.

Insgesamt bietet die Bibliographie einen sehr guten Einstieg in einen Themenbereich, der in den letzten Jahren weiter an Bedeutung gewonnen hat. Der hier präsentierte Überblick über relevante Literatur ist ein guter Ausgangspunkt für die eigene weitere Arbeit zu Ländern und Themen der Region. Statt der gegenüber der Druckausgabe nur wenig ‚Mehrwert‘ bietenden CD-Rom sollten Autor und Verlag jedoch überlegen, ob ein erweitertes Informationsangebot, etwa auf den Internetseiten des Verlages, mit Hinweisen und Links zu einschlägigen Bibliotheksangeboten zur Literaturrecherche, nicht eine sinnvolle Weiterentwicklung darstellen würde, die gerade für die anvisierte Zielgruppe von Interesse wäre.

Rolf Jordan

MARK ASKEW, *Bangkok. Place, Practice and Representation*. (Asia's Transformations/Asia's Great Cities). London, New York: Routledge, 2002. 376 pages, £ 22.99. ISBN 0-415-18854-7 (pb)

“And who can so describe a city as to give a significant picture of it? It is a different place to everyone who lives in it. No one can tell what it is” – with this quote from Somerset Maugham begins the first book, about Bangkok, in an exciting new Routledge series. The author speaks Thai and has lived and taught in the country, he offers a long bibliography of English and Thai titles. His aim is ‘to explore people’s own realities’ (Clifford Geertz), having shared their daily life in various districts of Bangkok. Askew nearly apologizes for being influenced more by Thai scholars than by the latest trends in Western theory; yet it is precisely in the large portions of the book where he eschews those passing fads of social science jargon, that the text is most valuable and concrete.

The author is sensitive towards misuse of the term 'culture' as fixed and essentializing, given that anthropology had been the handmaiden of European colonialism. Thus cultural analysis should not construct a post-colonial otherness but ought instead to embrace pluralities of subjectivity and identity. Yet he sees noteworthy particularities of Thai society, such as the subculture of the bureaucracy and the strength of Chinese patterns of family affiliation that permeate business relations. Urban-rural relations are another important aspect, given that in the late 20th century Bangkok as capital had the highest proportion of the national urban population (around 56 percent) of any world capital. Thus the city defines cultural trends for the whole country.

The introductory chapters – a third of the whole book – present a general history of the city, followed by more detailed descriptions of select localities and social milieus. Bangkok, the "water hamlet of the wild plum tree", was the name of the old settlement where the new (and still ruling) Chakkri dynasty founded its capital Krung Thep in 1782, moving it from the city of Thonburi across the Chao Phraya river after the overthrow of King Thaksin. In its Indic-derived tradition of legitimacy from ancient Cambodia, fused with Theravada Buddhism, the royal city is "a symbolic and structural locus of political power, social hierarchy and religious legitimacy". Add to this the status as port city in proximity to the Gulf of Siam, where Chinese traders have long resided, and the special significance of the Thai capital is evident.

Siwalai is the transliteration of the English word 'civilized' and expressed the aspirations of the people to share in the values of Western modernity, a trend that began under King Mongkut (1851-68) and accelerated thereafter. Askew describes the reform process as reflected in the major changes in built infrastructure and sets it in the context of the cosmology of the Thai state. Traditionally social mobility was connected to temple education, but under King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910) it shifted to modernized school education and employment in the bureaucracy. The urban population expanded, mostly due to an influx of Chinese traders rather than rural-urban migration. The customary division of labor restricted Thai men to agriculture and state service, while commercial activity was left to the Chinese. Yet intermarriage created a large group of people of mixed identity, and assimilation also promoted integration. Only during a phase of enforced nationalism in the early 20th century did Thainess assume racialist dimensions, and did Chineseness become equated with otherness.

After a detailed portrayal of the modernization process until the financial crisis of 1997 and beyond, the next 200 pages contain six chapters on particular districts and milieus. This part could have gained by being a bit more concise, since some of the social changes described are general rather than unique to Bangkok. A big plus are the various black-and-white photos that make the dimensions of infrastructural change more comprehensible to the reader.

A chapter on the internationally famous district of Banglamphu gives an impression of the local notion of city as livable space for the community and how,

despite all modernization efforts, Thais still aim to preserve the human dimension in their environment. The uniqueness of places is emphasized also in the genealogy of the slum settlement, when the author points out that Klong Toei is the least typical, being a 'rich' slum from which emerged an assertive politicized movement. The (possibly inevitable) chapter on sex workers in Bangkok stresses that women catering to foreign tourists make up only about 2 percent of that trade. From various personal interviews the author points out that these sex workers are generally older than the majority of colleagues when they enter, often as a result of failed relationships with Thai men.

The last chapter on contesting urbanisms summarizes the author's impressions of Bangkok's development and ends with a portrait of the Bangkok Forum, a lobby group established by activist Chaiwat Thirapantu after the fatal clashes between government and students in May 1992. He could draw on his political experiences from many years spent in Germany to enhance the quality of city life through active citizen involvement in the decision-making process. While social science literature on non-Western societies often reveals how Western-theory inspired this field of study still is, and that most books are still written by Western authors, this example of citizen involvement leads back to the initial question about people's own realities. Are these developments a sign of 'Westernization', or, to quote Clifford Geertz, rather part of "one of the significant mysteries of man's life in culture: how it is that other people's creations can be so utterly their own and so deeply part of us"?

Sabine Grund

YEONG HEUI LEE, *Wege zur nachhaltigen Entwicklung in der Republik Korea*. (FAGUS-Schriften Bd. 13). Berlin: Universitätsverlag der TU Berlin, 2004. XX, 283 Seiten, € 25,90. ISBN 3-7983-1952-9

Das Buch vermittelt interessante aktuelle Informationen über das südkoreanische Umwelt- und Planungsrecht unter dem Aspekt der Transformation des Nachhaltigkeitsprinzips. In diesem Zusammenhang erfolgt eine kritische Auseinandersetzung mit dem New-Governance-Ansatz, der weithin als der Königsweg der Umsetzung des Nachhaltigkeitsprinzips auch in der deutschen Literatur favorisiert wird. Die Autorin zeigt am Beispiel der Republik Korea auf, dass die bisherige Umsetzung vorbildlich erfolgt ist, allerdings nicht mit diffusen partizipativ-kommunikativen New-Governance-Strukturen, sondern auf der Basis der geltenden Rechts- und Verwaltungsordnung durch die dazu legitimierten Institutionen. Ein wesentliches Instrument ist dabei ein der Nachhaltigkeit angepasstes Planungsrecht und die ihr entsprechende Planung der Landesentwicklung, die derzeit mit dem „Vierten umfassenden Plan für die Entwicklung und Bewahrung des Gesamtstaatsgebiets“ angestrebt werden.