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Reviews

PATRICK GUILLAUMONT, *Caught in a Trap. Identifying the Least Developed Countries*. Paris: Economica, 2010. XIV, 386 pages, $ 54.95. ISBN 978-2-7178-5799-3

Patrick Guillaumont starts his book with the basic question – "what are the least developed countries" – and gives the answer right away. Today, 49 countries constitute the category of least developed countries (LDCs), according to specific criteria and procedures, and as confirmed by a resolution of the UN General Assembly. Countries in that category are low-income countries that suffer from severe structural handicaps to growth, particularly low human resources and high economic vulnerability. In the years since the LDC category was established, the number of countries on the list has doubled, now representing about 40 percent of the developing countries, with more than 750 million people or 11.8 percent of the world population. By contrast, their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is just 0.7 percent of world GDP and 3.2 percent of the GDP of all developing countries on an exchange rate basis (UNDP 2007). Compared on the basis of purchasing power parity, the differences are a little smaller, with the LDC's share at about 1.8 percent of world GDP and 4.0 percent of developing country GDP. Most LDCs are small or medium-sized in population, are landlocked, insular or arid; 20 of them are Asian countries.

In the literature and in international relations, other (unofficial) structural categories of developing countries are used. While the LDCs are an official category of the United Nations, "low-income countries" is a classification established empirically each year by the World Bank, making a group of 60 or more. Another category used, this one geographical, is that of the "small island developing countries", which has about 50 members, 36 of them independent states. A final structural category is that of the "land-locked developing countries", 28 in number.

Furthermore, there are three political categories of developing countries that partly overlap with the LDC category: the "African, Caribbean and Pacific countries"; the "heavily indebted poor countries"; and the "low-income countries under stress", now included in the broader 'fragile states' group. For 2005, 46 countries were classified as fragile states according to an OECD approach and 35 according to the World Bank. The link between the categories of LDCs and fragile states can seem questionable, insofar as the LDC category basically refers to structural features while the fragile states category refers to policy and governance indicators, more likely to change over time. In sum, the LDC category is a structural category, not designed to reflect present policy and its assessment. As such it is fairly stable, though not permanent. Countries are likely

to join or exit from the list according to trends in their structural features; these features are only progressively influenced by policy, yet they influence policy.

The official recognition of the LDCs as a special category of developing countries by the United Nations took place as early as 1971. In two chapters Guillaumont explores, in great detail, the evolution of the way in which LDCs are identified and how that procedure was changed over time. In a way, this is the history of the CDP – the Committee for Development Planning (later: for Development Policy) of the United Nations – of which the author was member over a long period. The book thus reflects the decades of work and discussions in the CDP about the LDC category for which there can be no better author. The refinements of the initial identification criteria are described, as are the rules for triennial reviews of the list, and the more recent focus on the specific vulnerability of LDCs.

Currently, four types of quantitative criteria are being used to identify least developed countries: Population; Per Capita Gross National Income (GNI); Human Assets Index (including the subcategories education; nutrition; health); Economic Vulnerability Index (including export concentration; instability of exports of goods and services; instability of agricultural production; homelessness; share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in GDP; remoteness from main world markets). Accordingly, developing countries must meet four criteria to be eligible for inclusion in the list of LDCs: (1) population of 75 million or less; (2) per capita GNI and (3) the human assets index value are below a certain threshold; (4) the economic vulnerability index value is above a certain threshold.

Similarly, there are four but different criteria for LDCs to be eligible for graduation (exclusion) from the list: (1) the threshold for per capita GNI increased to 20 percent over the inclusion criterion; (2) the thresholds for human assets and (3) economic vulnerability index decreased to 10 percent over the inclusion criteria; (4) a special vulnerability profile is undertaken for countries meeting the graduation criteria. A high per capita GNI – at least twice the graduation threshold – would be considered a sufficient single graduation criterion.

This difference between (or even insconsistency of) the inclusion and the graduation criteria reflects two problems in evaluating the development status: there could be more quantities at stake in defining poverty and underdevelopment, and qualitative judgment could be needed in addition to pure quantitative judgment. With the suggestion by the CDP to graduate Maldives and Vanuatu from the list, these potential conflicts came explicitly to the fore: the governments concerned declined the suggestion, arguing that climate change would threaten the stability of their countries. As there is no generally accepted environmental (or climate) indicator available so far, none is used in the LDC procedure. To develop a structural environment indicator in the future would be one option, to provide a more qualitative country profile would be another.

Guillaumont knows about this deficiency, but is more concerned with the rationale of the LDC category as such – which he defends with all his intellec-

tual capability. In three chapters he examines the justification of the theoretical and empirical foundations of the criteria used by the CDP, compares the human assets of least developed countries with those of other developing countries, and assesses the economic vulnerability of the LDCs in great detail.

A declining number of LDCs is the essential goal of the category. A substantial decline in this number would suggest that policies towards the LDCs have been successful, just as the previous increases implied that such policies were failing. However, factors such as scarcity of natural resources, climate change, domestic policies and civil conflict are likely to affect the eligibility of developing countries for inclusion (or graduation). That makes the prospects for the LDC category somewhat unclear. Therefore, Guillaumont addresses possible future options: (1) expanding the list; (2) shrinking the list; (3) maintaining the size of the current list. This chapter makes exciting reading – the reason why this reviewer will not reveal the personal preference of the author. What should be revealed however, are the great efforts made by him to further refine the identification criteria and possibly combine them, also addressing the question of whether, in future, a synthetic "least likely to develop index" should be designed.

In the final chapter of the book, Guillaumont makes a strong plea for enhancing the consistency of the LDC category. No doubt, the category has a clear rationale. It aims to identify poor countries facing particularly severe structural handicaps to economic growth – obstacles that make these countries likely to remain poor even in the long term. The logical and empirical foundations of the LDC category also seem well established, but a problem remains: that of consistency in the list over time. An inconsistency (or even discordance) results from the present asymmetrical rules for applying the inclusion and graduation criteria.

Patrick Guillaumont has written a seminal, well-documented book on the least developed countries. No one is better qualified to convince the United Nations to rectify this inconsistency. So, it's good to hear that a companion book is already in the making: to use low human assets and high vulnerability as major criteria for more specifically allocating international aid to developing countries to enable them to escape from the poverty trap. If the respective future vulnerability index were to include environmental assets, this approach (and that of the book) could make a major contribution to the other main challenge of our times, the international efforts to mitigate and enable adaptation to climate change – and so help escape from the climate trap.

Udo E. Simonis

ADIVASI-KOORDINATION IN DEUTSCHLAND E. V. (Hg.), *Rourkela und die Folgen. 50 Jahre industrieller Aufbau und soziale Verantwortung in der deutsch-indischen Zusammenarbeit*. Heidelberg: Draupadi Verlag 2007. 200 Seiten, € 17,–. ISBN 978-3-937603-22-3

Rourkela steht seit Langem für erfolgreiche deutsch-indische Zusammenarbeit. Für die Führung der Indischen Union stand fest, dass die 1947 erreichte Unabhängigkeit mehr als die Übernahme der politischen Macht von den Kolonialherren zu sein hatte. Bereits vor dem Zweiten Weltkrieg hatten indische Unternehmer und Politiker Vorstellungen entwickelt, wie der Wiederaufbau im Sinne einer auf die eigenen Bedürfnisse ausgerichteten Entwicklung der Wirtschaft vonstattengehen sollte. Das Land ließe sich nur wirkungsvoll aus dem beginnenden Kalten Krieg heraushalten, wenn es militärisch unabhängig sei, und dies bedeutete in den frühen fünfziger Jahren des letzten Jahrhunderts, eine eigene Grundstoff-, Schwer- und Rüstungsindustrie aufzubauen. Der Stahlerzeugung kam dabei eine zentrale Stellung zu. Immerhin gab es bereits ein privates indisches Stahlwerk; der Bau weiterer Stahlwerke ermöglichte es, Unabhängigkeit zu demonstrieren, indem sie nicht aus dem einstigen Mutterland bezogen wurden, sondern aus Staaten, die ihren eigenen Weg gegangen waren, neben der Sowjetunion auch die junge Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Für Deutschland bot der Großauftrag aus Indien die Möglichkeit, an alte Exporterfolge anzuknüpfen; Indien war auch eines der Länder, in denen das deutsche Ansehen nicht unter der Nazi-Diktatur und den Kriegen gelitten hatte. Das anfänglich reine Exportprojekt beschäftigte wahrscheinlich die größte Zahl deutscher Arbeiter auf einer ausländischen Baustelle; mit dem Beginn der deutschen Entwicklungshilfe stieg später der deutsche Staat ein und später noch einmal, als die Renovierung der inzwischen veralteten Anlage anstand.

Der Standort des Stahlwerks ergab sich aus den nahen Erz- und Kohlevorkommen; er war auch Ausdruck des Bemühens um Dezentralisierung und um Teilhabe strukturschwacher Regionen an der industriellen Entwicklung. Was entstand, war eine Enklavenwirtschaft mit geringen lokalen Ausbreitungseffekten: Die Produktionsanlagen und die Infrastruktur mussten neu geschaffen, qualifizierte Arbeitskräfte anderswo rekrutiert werden; für die einheimischen Bewohner, die Adivasi, blieben nur die niedrigsten Arbeiten. Darüber hinaus hatten sie vor allem den Schaden: Den Verlust ihres angestammten Siedlungsgebietes, vielfältige Eingriffe in ihre Rechte und schließlich eine Domination durch Fremde. Ihre Rechte wurden weniger auf dem Altar des Fortschritts geopfert als schlicht übersehen. Es ist das Verdienst der Herausgeber, sich mit diesen Problemen schon früh beschäftigt zu haben. Auch heute werden Adivasi oft übergangen, soweit sie nicht in gewalttätiger Form versuchen, auf ihre Forderungen aufmerksam zu machen. „Maoisten“ liefern sich inzwischen bewaffnete Auseinandersetzungen in jedem dritten indischen Distrikt; der „Naxaliten-Korridor“ erstreckt sich durch das Stammesgebiet von Nepal bis tief in den Dekhan.

In seiner Einführung wirft Johannes Laping die wichtige Frage nach einer deutschen Mitverantwortung auf. Er stellt diese Frage allerdings im Anschluss an den Bericht über die Tötung von Adivasi bei Auseinandersetzungen um ein anderes Projekt (S. 13). Im Weiteren werden deutsche Ansichten indischen gegenübergestellt. Es folgen ausgewählte Dokumente, „Rückblick und Ausblick", eine Liste ausgewählter Literatur und Bilder aus Rourkela und Umgebung.

Unter den deutschen Ansichten ist vielleicht die von Bodo Sperling, dem Leiter des German Social Centre in Rourkela von 1958 bis 1962, symptomatisch. Wie er in seinem Beitrag mit der Überschrift „Das Problem der Adivasi" (wobei offen bleibt, ob es sich um ein Problem der Adivasi handelt, oder ob sie selbst das Problem darstellen) schreibt, „gehörte das Adivasi-Problem nicht zu meinem Aufgaben- und Arbeitsbereich". Erst später, im Rahmen einer deutschen Kommission, hat er sich eingehender mit der Problematik befasst und stellt rückblickend die Frage, „warum die deutsche Regierung die Vorschläge der Experten, Sozialarbeitsspezialisten nach Rourkela zu entsenden, nicht umsetzte." (S. 41). Allerdings weist er selbst darauf hin, dass die indische Regierung dem Problem keine große Beachtung schenkte. Fälle aus der jüngsten Vergangenheit in Orissa und Westbengalen zeigen, dass die indische Regierung nach wie vor großzügig von den juristischen Möglichkeiten Gebrauch macht, Land zum Zweck der Industrieansiedlung privater Unternehmen zu enteignen. Unterschiedliche Rechtsauffassungen, gepaart mit einer hohen Empfindlichkeit in puncto nationaler Souveränität, hätten ein stärkeres deutsches soziales Engagement selbst bei einer höheren Sensibilität auf deutscher Seite erschwert, zumal indische Nationalisten bei einem ausländischen Engagement bei der oft christlichen Stammesbevölkerung eine unzulässige Missionierung vermuten und die indische Regierung versucht, solchen Auseinandersetzungen schon im Ansatz den Boden zu entziehen. Darüber hinaus geht die Sicherstellung des Rechts auf Heimat über die Möglichkeiten der Sozialarbeit weit hinaus.

Celestine Xasa listet die vielen, auch nach 50 Jahren immer noch ungelösten rechtlichen Fragen auf. Trotz aller Schutzbestimmungen ist es den Adivasi kaum möglich, ihre Rechte durchzusetzen. Wie sie schreibt, nimmt die Regierung durch die „rücksichtslose, großflächige, wirtschaftlich schädliche und im sozialen Bereich nachteilige Übernahme von fruchtbarem Ackerland für eine nicht-landwirtschaftliche Nutzung [...] den Bauern die tägliche Schüssel Reis weg." (S. 68).

Die anfangs gestellte Frage nach einer deutschen Mitverantwortung bleibt letztlich unbeantwortet. Eine zunehmende Sensibilisierung gegenüber den Rechten aller Bürger ist in Indien wie in Deutschland zu beobachten. In einigen grundsätzlichen Punkten, wie z. B. der Verbandsklage (public interest litigation) oder dem Recht auf Information (right to information) ist Indien weit vorangeschritten. Neben der Wahrnehmung der Interessen durch Dritte (advocacy) sind auch in Indien die Betroffenen in zunehmendem, aber immer noch zu geringem Maße in der Lage, ihre Forderungen vorzutragen und durchzusetzen. Das ist auch deshalb notwendig, weil die Möglichkeiten ausländischer Einflussnahme

in Indien gerne überschätzt werden. Seitdem Indien über Devisenreserven in bis vor kurzem unvorstellbarer Höhe verfügt, sind die Möglichkeiten wirtschaftlichen und politischen Drucks von außen noch geringer geworden. Was Rourkela aus deutscher Sicht interessant macht, ist, dass hier so viele berufliche und private Kontakte bestehen und Berichte vorliegen, die eine differenzierte Betrachtung der Wirkung des modernen indischen Staates auf die Wirtschaftsweise und die sozialen und kulturellen Systeme der Stammesbevölkerung geradezu erzwingen.

Wolfgang-Peter Zingel

KENNETH M. BAUER, *High Frontiers. Dolpo and the Changing World of Himalayan Pastoralists*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004. 336 pages, 81 illus., $ 45.00. ISBN 978-0-231-12391-4

Dolpo, the setting of the Academy Award-winning film *Himalaya* (or *Caravan*), encompasses the four valleys of Panzang, Nangkhong, Tsharka, and Tarap in the northern reaches of Dolpa district along the border of western Nepal and the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. It is one of the least populated regions of Nepal and contains some of its most high-lying villages. On account of high altitude and location in the rain shadow of the main Himalayan range, much of Dolpo is covered by extensive grass- and shrublands. The livelihood of Dolpo's inhabitants was traditionally based on pastoralism, supplemented by agriculture and trade. Dolpo is culturally part of the Tibetan region and was historically part of or affiliated with the Tibetan kingdoms of Zhangzhung, Purang and finally Lo, better known as the Kingdom of Mustang. Dolpo was absorbed into what today is Nepal along with the Kingdom of Lo in the course of the Gorkha conquests in 1789. Dolpo is one of the remotest regions of Nepal, was closed to foreigners until 1989, and has retained its distinctive Tibetan culture until today.

Dolpo is part of a geographical entity which Kenneth Bauer refers to as *trans-Himalaya* or *Indo-Tibetan frontier*: a broad transit area between the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau, which in the past was a scene of exchange, economic opportunity, and mutual dependence. People in Dolpo traded salt and grain between Tibet and Nepal, and relied on winter pastures in Tibet. These and other exchanges, which depended on generation-long connections with partners across the region, were disrupted when China established its authority over Tibet in 1951 and closed the border in 1959, but also as a result of the Nepal nation state's increasing assertiveness over its peripheral regions. The book explores how the Indo-Tibetan frontier turned into a border and how Dolpo was affected by this change. On a broader and more general scale, Dolpo serves as a case study of how pastoralists, who rely on mobility and far-flung

social networks to overcome resource constraints, cope with boundary-making and other interventions of central state agencies in the late 20th century.

The book is divided into 9 chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 describe Dolpo's mixed economy of agriculture, animal husbandry and trade, with the focus in chapter 2 on pastoralism. Chapter 3 provides the historical backdrop to the post-1950 nation-state building programs by China in Tibet and by Nepal in its northern regions which transformed life in Dolpo, and which are described in more detail for each of the two countries in chapters 4 and 5. Chapter 6 discusses how the people of Dolpo adjusted to these changes, and chapter 7 looks more specifically at the impact of conservation, especially the creation of Shey Phoksundo National Park in the 1980s. Chapter 7 summarizes the conservation and development interventions in Dolpo since the 1960s, and chapter 8, "A Tsampa Western", looks at the impact of the making of the film *Himalaya* on Dolpo. Chapter 9 rounds the book off by summarizing the present and looking into the future.

The author lived in Nepal for a continuous period between 1994 and 1997, and first came to Dolpo in 1995. Like some other young researchers from the West, he was drawn to Nepal and to development work out of concern for environmental and cultural degradation. While assisting in the preparation of a grant proposal to develop Shey Phoksundo National Park for WWF Nepal, he soon became skeptical of the practice and rhetoric of development, and especially of the value of information gathered by development workers through procedures such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). He desired to become a more thorough and more independent observer of Dolpo, so he applied for a Fulbright fellowship and went there in the fall of 1996, shortly before the passes were closed due to snow, to take up residence and become fully immersed in life in Panzang valley. The book draws on the master's thesis that was the outcome of his stay at Dolpo as a Fulbright fellow but also on subsequent research, altogether spanning the years from 1995 to 2002. While in the field, Kenneth Bauer followed the daily routines of his host family, and accompanied Dolpo people as often as possible on their migrations and journeys. The style of writing, excellent throughout the book, not least because he carefully avoids the "rhetoric of development", assumes almost literary quality when he describes these personal experiences and impressions of life in Dolpo.

It is not surprising that a writer as gifted as Kenneth Bauer should project the image of himself as scientist and storyteller in statements like "… the story I tell of Dolpo amidst change..." which recur throughout the text. This image is in line with his preference for qualitative research which relies on narratives of local informants, but does not do sufficient justice to the academic quality of Kenneth Bauer's writing seen e.g. in his discussion of theoretical approaches, especially in the chapter on pastoralism. These discussions reveal the extent of his erudition and discerning use of terminology, e.g. when he rightly points out

that the German *Almwirtschaft* is a more appropriate term to describe the agro-pastoral system of Dolpo than the commonly used term transhumance. There are, however, some weaknesses and omissions. To write, for instance, that "…the tragedy of the commons is still a dominant framework used by social scientists to portray environmental resource issues…" (p. 52) is a misrepresentation. This was still true in the 1970s, but no longer in the 1990s, by which time the work of Elinor Ostrom (not cited by the author) had eclipsed Hardin's hypothesis. A weakness of a more editorial nature is that the critical assessment of the carrying capacity approach to livestock management, which Kenneth Power perceives as one of the main threats to pastoralism as a way of life, is concealed in a chapter (mis)named : "A double-edged sword: the Royal Nepal Army in Shey Phoksundo National Park."

While in the field, Kenneth Bauer's predilection changed. Having viewed his research initially as an exercise in "salvage anthropology" (p. 192), recording the gradual disappearance of traditional life in Dolpo, he found it more important to witness and document the adaptations of Dolpo people to the changes caused by border restrictions, the reorganization of pastoral economies on both sides of the border, and to improved access to services and markets and other opportunities in Nepal. These changes caused people in Dolpo to reduce their herds, to reorient livestock movements, to forge new economic partnerships, and to search for economic alternatives to pastoralism and to trade with Tibet. The value of Kenneth Bauer's work lies mainly in his ability to combine scale levels, i.e. to portray with remarkable insight the political and socioeconomic changes in China and Nepal, and to link them to developments in Dolpo. He does so with careful attention to detail, resp. specificity of place, e.g. when he describes how each of the five valleys in Dolpo responded differently to the challenge of border restrictions and other changes depending on their geographical location, resource endowment, and local history. Kenneth Bauer, however, does not just lament these changes and the passing of old ways, but also examines opportunities that have more recently arisen and to which people in Dolpo respond with alacrity, often employing their traditional skills of mobility and trading acumen. Cases in point are the development of multi-local livelihoods, based in Dolpo, Kathmandu and other places, and the growing trade in medicinal products such as *yartsa-gumbu*, a tonic obtained from the ecological interaction between a caterpillar and a mushroom on high-altitude rangelands, which since the year 2000 draws thousands of collectors to Dolpo. A resource just as unexpected as *yartsa-gumbu* is what Kenneth Bauer refers to as the "Tibetan phenomenon": the fascination of Westerners with things Tibetan which partly explains the success of the film *Himalaya* and the subsequent media and development focus on Dolpo.

The book by Kenneth Bauer is an excellent contribution to scholarship on the dynamics of change and adaptation on the Indo-Tibetan frontier, and on the future of pastoralism as a way of life. It shows the particular vulnerability of

mobile communities in border locations to historical changes, but also their ability "…to reinvent themselves through mobility" (p. 201). Kenneth Bauer's book is also that rarity in academia: a thorough and painstaking analysis which, at the same time, is an exceptionally good read.

Dietrich Schmidt-Vogt

MARK P. WHITTAKER, *Learning Politics from Sivaram. The Life and Death of a Revolutionary Tamil Journalist in Sri Lanka*. London: Pluto Press, 2007. XIV, 250 pages, £ 14.99 (pb.). ISBN 0-7453-2353-7

On 17th May 2009, the Sri Lankan President declared that the civil war that had raged since 1983, was over. The LTTE was defeated, and all its leaders, civil and military, killed. By that time, the Tamil journalist Sivaram Dharmaratnam, called Taraki in his publications, had been dead for four years. On 29th April 2005 his body had been found bound, gagged and shot in a fashionable part of Colombo. Sivaram had been no stranger to death threats; as the editor of the website Tamilnet.com and an irrepressible columnist for several Sri Lankan papers, he had raised the hackles of many a politician and party grandee. He was neither the first nor the last Sri Lankan journalist to be killed for his fearless reporting – the name of Lasantha Wickrematunga, murdered on 8th January 2009, comes readily to mind. But Sivaram, more than others, had an uncanny knack of predicting strategic military campaigns and events – and he had outlined a government plan of action against the LTTE that came to pass almost exactly as predicted, a plan that in short amounted to destroying the morale of the Tamil population in toto.

The American anthropologist Mark Whittaker had been a friend and sparring partner of Sivaram for more than twenty years, and he published Sivaram's biography in 2007, beginning with their first meeting in a dusty library in Batticaloa in 1982. Whittaker emphasises that he does not intend to write an anthropological biography, a 'top-down' one, where the author explains and interprets the almost mute object of the exercise. But neither does he give us a life description (or deconstruction) of a public person where the author fades completely into the background. On the contrary: the lives of Mark Whittaker and of Sivaram continuously cross each other's, though it is Sivaram who influences Whittaker in his thinking and research. Hence the title: *Learning Politics from Sivaram*.

Sivaram came from a respectable, learned and land-owning Karaiyar family in Batticaloa (for long periods a comparative backwater of Sri Lankan Tamil settlement) and was related to many well-known and well-read Tamil intellectuals of his time. In that area, he was decidedly a member of the elite. Though his family converted to Christianity early on, their connections to the local tem-

ple and their powerful position in temple administration remained. Whittaker delves into the family history, bringing out the shenanigans and personal weaknesses especially of the male members of the extended family, which did not remain without influence on the young Sivaram.

Whittaker seeks to explain how Sivaram, the brilliant and unruly youth with a penchant for classical Tamil literature and Marxism slowly turned not only to different intellectual and philosophical schools; the subalterns, post-modernism and post-structuralism, but eventually turned into a radical militant who joined the PLOTE and took a leading position in the organisation, fighting for an independent Tamil state. His development is exemplary for many young men in north and northeast Sri Lanka during that time and it arose, in Sivaram's own words, from the foreclosure of the future. Until the 70s, the future was not only predictable, it was also secure and it was not shaped by the individual, but was planned for him or her by the family. After the 70s, any planning was futile because the old certainties were gone though an older generation acted as if they still existed. As the reviewer has put it in her own work: the future broke down. Young Tamils turned radical not only in words, but in deeds.

Whittaker situates this development in the context of Sri Lankan and especially Sri Lankan Tamil history. Unfortunately, in shortening this history, he also distorts it in some ways, especially when he traces the discrimination of the Tamils back primarily to the desire of an elite to retain power after independence. On the one hand, Tamils were long a part of this elite, on the other, power struggles on an ethnic and linguistic basis had begun much earlier, at the beginning of the 20th century at the latest. Democratic structures that were introduced in 1931, had no culture of democracy to fall back on, and neither had the country a sizeable middle class nor did political leaders try to involve the masses in their freedom struggle as happened in India. Whittaker's account is here too close to a deterministic view that makes Sinhalese behaviour an ontological necessity instead of a policy chosen quite consciously.

What is important for understanding Sivaram's radicalisation and his militant activities is, so the author, Sivaram's ambition to become a *paticcal*, a learned man in traditional Tamil understanding, not an intellectual. A *paticcal* has a responsibility to society, a responsibility to name injustice when he sees it and to act to deliver justice, an idea already found in classical Tamil literature, whereas an intellectual remains in Sivaram's view detached from real life, does not get involved, he remains on his magic carpet of 'objectivity'. The intellectual who does not commit himself only fools himself, creating discourses from earlier insights completely devoid of any connection to reality. It was a reproach directly addressed to his friend Whittaker, the American anthropologist with the 'magic carpet' of an exit option and who can afford detachment. Sivaram claimed that he could not afford detachment, he got involved on many sides simultaneously or successively, demonstrating in the process the unique Tamil ability of not only living with unresolved contradictions, but working with and around them: adding to 'the fecundity of Being'. Even in his political radicalism

and militancy, Sivaram did not stand still: he went from an activist of PLOTE that endeavoured to cooperate with leftist groupings and the JVP on the Sinhala side until very late in the day to the socialist, but also very Tamil nationalist LTTE once it became clear that the comrades from earlier times had turned into rabid Sinhala chauvinists: Dayan Jayatillake furnishes only one sad example.

Nor were Sivaram's experiences theoretical: not only did he see friends and colleagues abducted and killed, first and most crucially Richard de Soysa in 1988. The list of friends and colleagues threatened and killed on both sides of the divide make sad and sadly familiar reading for the reviewer, who also personally knew a large number of the people mentioned herself. But Sivaram himself was also arrested, tortured, continuously persecuted by the government, threatened with death and finally killed. It was these experiences that finally brought him to the conclusion that it was only the LTTE, violent as it might be, that stood between the Tamils and annihilation, a prophecy that has come true now in a most terrible way.

Whittaker thus presents himself as the foil against which we can observe and follow the development of Sivaram. He remains the woolly liberal US academic on his magic carpet who abhors violence on principle. But even he is forced to concede the rationality, if not the legitimacy of Sivaram's attitude the more the war progresses. He is compelled to admit that even if one cannot condone the violent actions of the Tamil militants, one can understand and even empathise with them. Whittaker himself admits that he is unable to point to an alternative to the violence which he still thinks not only wrong but counterproductive. It is touching but also somewhat pathetic when he tries to assure the reader that Sivaram the militant had to do what he had to do, but never took part in massacres or killed civilians….

The verbatim quotations of the extended intellectual discussions between Sivaram and Whittaker belong to the best passages of the book. They show in detail the process mentioned earlier: how a well-to-do youth from Batticaloa morphed from an avid reader and intellectual and theoretical adherent of philosophy ranging from Hegel to Foucault first into a militant and finally into a political activist and committed journalist. Maybe surprisingly, the fact that Whittaker often jumps back and forth in time with flashbacks and fast forwards, does not detract from the narrative nor is it confusing: on the contrary, it enlivens the tale.

From an active militant Sivaram finally turned to his real vocation: journalism. His writing was wide-ranging, lucid, and spared neither friend nor foe. He worked for a number of Sri Lankan papers under his own name as well as under the pen-name Taraki for *The Island*. He analysed the civil war, its causes and consequences, but especially drew out the military and political moves and strategies of all players in the conflict. Invariably, he put his finger on the mistakes and weak spots of the Sri Lankan military theory and planning and often predicted accurately not only LTTE strategies, but also its victories. In 1996 he took over as editor of the website Tamilnet.com with the intention of giving a

factual, but different view of the conflict from the other side. Tamilnet became the most influential and respected Tamil website on which major news agencies like BBC, CNN, AP, DPA relied for exact information from the Tamil areas and the frontline. But he could not prevent Tamilnet being called an LTTE front, hard as he fought LTTE attempts to bring the website under its control. For his pains, he was suspected by the government of being both a CIA and a RAW agent. In his articles and especially in talks and discussions he pointed out the strategic importance of Sri Lanka for sea lanes and transport and how the war therefore affected not only Sri Lanka, but other countries as well, foremost the US.

The most chilling discussions in the book turn on the intentions and strategies of the Sri Lankan government towards the Tamils which Sivaram places in the contexts of state, nation and nationalism and the illusion (he calls it Empedoclean folly) of the freedom to rule hell. But even more significant is his outline and analysis of the constant presence of terror and violence. Nation-building, so he says, always consists of the domination of one group by another and serves the elite maintenance of power. The elite either appeases the masses by creating organic intellectuals or by relocating hatred to smaller and weaker groups. Though Sivaram does not believe in primordial ethnicity, he does believe in the force of history and common experience in creating collective bonds. For him this explanation also applies to and legitimises Tamil nationalism: the experience of common suffering. The civil war in Sri Lanka he considers an experimental ground for new forms of counter-insurgency: eliminate any form of resistance by whatever means. These include the four-cut strategy as employed in Burma as well as brute force. Even more horrifying is his description of counter-insurgency as collective torture: a form of violence that is always to be expected, but never predictable. Just as the temporary suspension of torture serves to demoralize the individual prisoner when torment is renewed, so is the destruction of the morale of a whole group or nation achieved by attacking them, herding them into camps and occasionally granting small concessions. Both means intend to secure compliance and acquiescence: avoid torture by good behaviour, be grateful for small improvements e.g. by being allowed out of the camps because this prevents people from demanding their rights and what is rightfully theirs. It was against this type of 'hearts-and-minds' strategy, he says, that the LTTE constantly rebelled in a form of counter-counter-insurgency strategy. Particularly horrifying is the accuracy with which these predictions came to pass during the last, brutal phase of the war, four years after their author had been killed. One wonders whether Sivaram would also have foreseen the routing of the LTTE and to which factors he would ultimately have traced it back: a break-down of the will to fight because of an earlier break-down in communication, or a lack of support from the population because they had exclusively relied on the military option, but had lost faith in it? What kind of future Sivaram would have foreseen for the Tamils in Sri Lanka must remain speculation. Most probably he would have agreed with what notable – and

completely non-violent – Tamil intellectuals in Sri Lanka already anticipated in the late 70s and early 80s: they did not see a future for themselves or their children, they were convinced they would perish, but if so, they would go down in flames of glory, because this was their destiny. And that is what Sivaram did. His biography stands as a dire warning that conflicts are inescapable and in many cases irresolvable.

Mark Whittaker tells how an earlier version of this biography was rejected by several publishers accusing him of being a fraud and having invented the figure of Sivaram. Moreover, it was claimed, it was not in tune with the pretensions of the US academic community. He is to be thanked for persisting and finally managing to bring out an account of a journalist who embodied the conflict, the tensions, the contradictions, the sacrifices and most of all, the young Tamils of Sri Lanka as did few others.

Dagmar Hellmann-Rajanayagam

ROBERT H. TAYLOR, *The State in Myanmar*. 2nd edition. London: Hurst and Company, 2009. XXV, 445 pages, 4 maps, £ 50.00 (hb.), £ 19.99 (pb.). ISBN 978-1-85065-893-1 (hb.), ISBN 978-1-85065-909-9 (pb.)

CHRISTINA FINK, *Living Silence in Burma. Surviving under Military Rule*. 2nd edition. London: Zed Books, 2009. XIV, 300 pages, 2 maps, illus., £ 50.00 (hb.), £ 16.99 (pb.). ISBN 978-1-84813-271-9 (hb.), ISBN 978-1-84813-272-6 (pb.)

Any discourse on matters related to Burma's/Myanmar's post-independence history is overshadowed by the crunch question "How to deal with the military rule?" The books under review here both of which were re-published in 2009 represent two rather divergent answers to this basic question as the authors stand for different generations of Burma scholars and have taken a very different approach on how to assess the country's troubled past and present. Both the writers and their books may be regarded as complementary representations of how contemporary Western academics treat the study of modern Burma.

The two books are not just reprints of the first editions which came out in 1987 (Taylor) and 2001 (Fink) respectively, but updates covering events until 2009. The different approaches of the authors are indicated by the titles of the two books. Taylor has changed the book title replacing the name "Burma" by "Myanmar" in accordance with the name change in the English language prescribed by the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in June 1989. Fink deliberately uses the word "Burma", noting that the name change was implemented "unilaterally" by the military regime without consulting the citizens (Fink: p. 5).

A short look at the biographies of the authors and the comments on the covers of the two books explain the difference. Taylor, born in 1943, studied political science in the United States with a focus on Southeast Asia and par-

ticularly Burma. He is the author of many books and articles on a variety of topics related to Burma/Myanmar and Southeast Asia and can be regarded as the most outstanding Western scholar investigating the country's modern political history. Taylor was accused of being an apologist of the Burmese military as pointed out in an anecdote told in the foreword of the book. On the cover his work is recommended by a number of academics for both the vast amount of material integrated and the analytical handling of the information.

In contrast, Fink's book is praised by Aung San Suu Kyi who was interviewed by the author in 1995, by Prof. Joseph Silverstein, an outspoken academic critic of the military regime and also by journalist John Pilger who highlights the book's exposition of the "surreal horror imposed on the people of Burma". The author presently lives in Chiang Mai and works for various institutions, one of which was established by the National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUGB), the Burmese exile government. Fink's research was sponsored by the Open Society Institute founded by George Soros. The author received her Ph.D. in social-cultural anthropology from the University of California for her dissertation on the Karen which brought her to Southeast Asia for the first time.

Fink's book is written by a Burma activist with an academic background. Taylor's work is an academic study written by an active participant in the current political controversies over Myanmar. The authors thus represent the two foci of the recent scholarly treatment of Myanmar's development since the last coup d'état in 1988 and its historical backdrop. The political scientist analyses the relationship between state and society during the various stages of the country's history since the colonial period, the anthropologist looks at the impact of politics on the people.

The State in Burma is the ambitious attempt to analyse Burmese history using a theoretical framework and thus emphasising the continuity of the consecutive periods instead of stressing the ruptures. The book's guiding argument is the necessity of the state as an institution to come to terms with the internal and external forces supporting or challenging its sovereignty. Each chapter investigates a variety of factors which have to be taken into account.

On the whole the study builds on J.S. Furnivall's famous analysis of colonial society written in 1939 referred to in the quotation on the book's frontispiece: "Leviathan [the State] … must fail unless he can adapt himself to human nature."

This aim was not achieved in Burma after the end of the pre-colonial state (chapter 1), nor in the colonial period characterised by a "Rationalisation of the State" (chapter 2) nor during the first period of Burma's history after the defeat of the British in 1942 (chapter 4 "The Displacement of the State") preceded by the emergence of Burmese nationalism (chapter 3) nor during the era of the Burmese Way to Socialism (chapter 5, "Reasserting the State") as shown by the events of 1988.

As for the dominant role of the military in Myanmar, Taylor argues that the state's legitimacy was not accepted by major sections of society in 1962 nor in 1988 and that the military was the only state institution that had developed "a viable independent existence" (Taylor: p. 13) since the end of World War II.

The five chapters of the first edition are reproduced unaltered in the second edition and supplemented by a sixth one ("The State Redux") of 100 pages and an "addendum" on the country's third constitution which was adopted in a – much disputed – referendum in 2008. Besides analysing the course of events the fourteen sub-sections of this chapter draw parallels to previous periods, consider new phenomena and examine the role of the state.

All sections as well as the final paragraph on the new constitution provide a lot of material both from primary and secondary sources but present no decisive conclusions. Key questions about Myanmar's future are "yet to be answered" (Taylor: p. 485) or "beyond the scope of this volume" (Taylor: p. 605). This openness can be seen as a wise restraint or a limitation of the study's strength in that it treats recent Myanmar history from too short a distance.

While Taylor concludes his analysis with some questions marks, Fink in the final paragraph of her *Living Silence in Burma* presents an albeit cautious sketch of a "different Burma", thus emphasising change instead of continuity. This summary is a consequence of the design of her book which is based on interviews with Burmese people, most of them living outside their homeland since the re-installation of direct military rule in 1988. The interviews are evaluated in seven chapters of the book depicting a broad spectrum of daily life in the last decades (family, communities, military, prisons, education, the arts, religion). Some black and white photos illustrate various aspects of daily life. The chapters on the modes of "survival" are preceded by a historical overview concentrating on the time after the military coup in 1962 and highlighting the resistance against the regimes since then. All four chapters inform about "Historical Legacies" followed by comments from interviews. The final chapter is devoted to the "internationalization" of the country's politics and concluding deliberations on an alternative to the present political system.

Besides some changes in the layout, the first three chapters (Historical legacies; The Ne Win years, 1962–88; Breaking the silence, 1988–1990) dealing with the historical backdrop are reprinted unchanged in the second edition. Chapter 4 (Military rule continues, 1990–2000) has been updated and a new chapter 5 (The Than Shwe years, 2000 and beyond) has been added. The chapters on the various domains of people's life and the concluding chapters have been updated by integrating more recent interviews and treating new developments.

The value of Fink's book lies in the detailed account of how a specific section of Myanmar society perceives the recent history of the country and the living conditions in the last decades. The views of members of the educated middle class are important for understanding the political climate of Burma/Myanmar both past and present. Not surprisingly, the state's failure to provide

living conditions that satisfy the majority of the population is attributed to the generals in power. The many personal stories told in the book convey the impression that beneath this shared assessment a non-conformist tendency exists and that in some respects related to religion and magic, the attitudes of the rulers and the ruled are not so far apart.

Seen as a commented documentation of the articulation of discontent with the present living conditions in Burma by a mainly urban elite, the reader might be prompted to ask certain questions. In the description of the coup of 1962, it is recounted that many people were disappointed with politics under the parliamentary system, that any government in Burma was traditionally regarded as one of five evils and that people gave the new government the benefit of the doubt (p. 24). It would be interesting to compare the anthropological studies undertaken in Burma in the late 50s and early 60s by Spiro, Pye and Nash on the attitude of the people towards the government with Fink's findings. Some structural analogies might be found in the highly ambivalent attitude towards authority related to the concept of *kamma*, an argument only briefly referred to by Fink in her chapter on religion (Taylor: p. 228) and in Taylor's analysis of the pre-colonial state (Taylor: pp. 59–60).

The two books reviewed here as well as their authors represent two characteristic views of Myanmar's political history. Taylor's starting point is the centre of Burmese politics, the state, dominated by the political culture of the country's largest ethnic group. From here, he looks at how the respective state managers deal with a number of issues and challenges including alternative authorities and ethnic groups on the fringe of the state. Fink on the other hand begins her inquiry on the periphery of the Burmese state, evaluating both the perspective of the various ethnic groups and the opponents of the current state managers. Politically they represent divergent opinions. Theoretically, they may complement each other and can be integrated in an analysis of Burma's/Myanmar's political history as part of regional or global studies. Both books take note of this particular aspect but not as a principle guiding the design of the respective study. Besides casting light on Burma/Myanmar, the two books – as do all such studies – invite the reader to try and form his own picture of Southeast Asia's largest country.

Hans-Bernd Zöllner

AZHARI-KARIM, *One Idea, Two Tuns and Three Hundred German Companies Later. Smart Partnership and Malaysia-Germany Relations*. Shah Alam: University Publication Centre, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 2009. 102 pages, bibliography, index. ISBN 978-967-305-145-8

This book by Azhari-Karim, a professor at the Malaysian Science University and former diplomat, deals with the concept of "smart partnership" that was put forward by former Malaysian prime minister Tun Dr. Mahathir. In order to

achieve parity in relations between Malaysia, an industrialising middle-income country, and foreign investors, the new concept aims at creating a win-win situation between co-operating companies and states. Earlier studies by the Starnberg Max-Planck-Institute on the new international division of labour come to mind. Malaysia is certainly one of the countries that have moved from a raw material producing economy to low value added industrial production (like textiles) to high-tech export oriented production. In this process German companies played a major role, as demonstrated by Azhari-Karim who provides not only a wealth of statistics and interview material but also details on the diplomatic process accompanying German foreign investments. The triangle of trading activities, German investments and political cooperation between the two countries constituted the new "smart partnership".

The empirical analysis starts with the great Asian financial crisis 1997/98 and ends in 2006. Inclusion of the US-induced financial crisis of 2009 would have been an advantage, as the behaviour of German multinational corporations in a declining world economy may have put the "smart partnership" to a severe test.

Though German trading companies have been active in what was then British Malaya since 1824 the really big impact started only around 1970 when German investment in the electronics industry and related branches in the Penang free trade zone started. By the end of the millennium "Germany had already emerged as the biggest investor from Europe" (p. 75), overtaking the former regional colonial powers Great Britain and the Netherlands.

In the final chapter Azhari-Karim summarizes his findings by applying a "reality check" going beyond the use of statistical data. His constructivist approach, common in social science theory, reveals that the concept of "smart partnership" has had a decisive impact on Malaysian-German relations. On the whole Azhari-Karim's well written book is a useful addition to the literature on international relations and Malaysian economic history. It provides a benchmark for future studies on EU-Malaysian relations.

Hans-Dieter Evers

ANN DANAIYA USHER, *Thai Forestry: A Critical History*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2009. 231 pages, THB 625.00. ISBN 978-974-9511-73-2

Thai Forestry is a book not for the forester or regional expert on Thailand only. The history of forestry in Thailand revolves around core issues of natural resource management in developing or transition countries such as the transfer of management concepts from developed countries in the temperate zone to developing countries in the tropics, the struggle of state monopoly versus community rights, and the shift of focus from resource extraction towards management for conservation.

The history of Thai forestry, as recorded by Ann Danaiya Usher, is – in a nutshell – the history of the rise and decline of its leading institution, the Royal Forest Department (RFD), and of the persistence of concepts that the RFD helped to introduce to Thailand. The RFD was established in 1896 in order to gain control over the profitable teak logging in northern Thailand, and was for more than a hundred years the single state agency responsible for forests, controlling almost half the surface area of the kingdom. Accused of mismanagement and blamed for an enormous deforestation rate, the RFD lost a large part of its mandate following the proclamation of a nation-wide logging ban in 1989, and was finally dissolved on 20 September 2002.

The logging ban is one of the watersheds in the history of Thai forestry that are the subject of Part One of the book. The term watershed is used here to denote events that have marked or initiated major shifts in the development of Thai forestry. 1989 stands out as a particularly significant year. It is the year when the logging ban was imposed and the first community forest was officially recognized at Huai Kaeo near Chiang Mai. 1989 thus marked not only the beginning of the end of the RFD's leading role in administering the forests of Thailand, but also ushered in the era of greater civil society involvement with forests, and the beginning of the long and ongoing struggle for legalizing community management of forests through a community forestry bill. These and some of the other watersheds explored by Ann Danaiya Usher are evidence of the increasing ability of local people in Thailand to influence decision makers at very high levels, which is quite unique in the region of Mainland Southeast Asia. To trace the emergence of civil society through the history of Thai forestry is one of the core themes of the book. As one of Thailand's leading environmental journalists, Ann Danaiya Usher is particularly qualified to do this. Working for *The Nation* – the more investigative of Thailand's two English-language dailies – in the 1990s, she covered as a journalist a large number of the events that she relates in her book, which lends an eye-witness quality to much of her writing.

Another core theme provides the *Leitmotif* for the remaining chapters of *Thai Forestry* and is probably the most important message that Ann Danaiya Usher seeks to convey: Throughout its history Thai forestry has been and to some extent still is grounded on external concepts designed for temperate forests and based on the traditions of developed countries. This is as true for the resource-extraction oriented phase of Thai forestry prior to 1989 as for the conservation-oriented approach that followed upon the logging ban. Each of the three following parts traces the influence of a particular country: Part Two the influence of the German tradition of "scientific forestry" which the RFD had adopted from British India, Part Three the influence of Danish advisors on the development of plantation forestry, and Part Four the influence of American concepts of wilderness conservation on the management of protected areas in Thailand. The influence of scientific forestry in the German tradition is seen to be the most pervasive of all. Its goal, according to the author, is to impose bio-

logical simplicity and state control by creating "even-aged, single species stands to secure the state a long-term supply of timber" (p. 38), and by excluding local people from forests and from forest management. Key figures in the transfer of these concepts from Germany via British India to Thailand are Dietrich Brandis, India's first Inspector-General of Forests from 1864 to1883, and Herbert Slade, Siam's first conservator of forests from 1896 to 1901, who was seconded to Siam from the Burma Forest Department. In this and the following chapters, the author's tendency to drive home her points with sometimes excessive *gusto* is compensated for by her remarkable erudition and ability to project a balanced perspective. While she sometimes overstates and repeats like a mantra that the focus of German forestry is on "replacing diversity with simplicity" (there is more diversity to German forestry than conceded by the author, e.g. the structural diversity in the so-called planter or selection forests of southern Germany), she treats the protagonists of the transfer of foreign concepts that she is so critical of, Dietrich Brandis and Herbert Slade, with understanding and even sympathy based on a thorough knowledge of the literature. She acknowledges, for instance, Dietrich Brandis' failed and little known attempt to provide a measure of community control over forests in British India by establishing a parallel system of state-controlled forests and village forests, and Herbert Slade's critical views of fire suppression in teak forests or plantations, which predated insights from the science of fire ecology by half a century. Herbert Slade's main legacy, however, was to have laid the legal and administrative foundations for Thai forestry for the coming century. He was not successful, however, in reducing the domination of the teak industry by European logging companies, and in keeping logging at sustainable levels. Over-cutting of forests continued beyond his term and eventually led to the downfall of the RFD.

After the logging ban, the focus of Thai forestry shifted from logging to plantation forestry and to managing forests for conservation. Plantation forestry was based on the genetic improvement of a very few selected species, mainly teak, pine and eucalyptus, and was initiated under the Danish forest geneticist Carl Syrach-Larsen in the 1950s. While forestry has been influenced by European models from the establishment of the RFD until the present, conservation came to be influenced by the American model of protecting wilderness by excluding local people from protected areas. Ann Danaiya Usher ends her book with a plea for reinventing Thai forestry by taking into account the biological diversity of its forests and the connections between human communities and forest ecosystems.

This is an excellent book that provides an exciting case study of the shifting priorities and changing actors of natural resource management in developing and transition countries. It is highly readable because of its unique mixture of on-the-ground reporting and scholarly reflection The book is a must for all interested in Thailand, enabling them to learn about the crucial role forestry has played in the country's history, e.g. by providing the economic rationale – to gain control over the teak forests of the north – for the annexation of Northern

Thailand, and in the making of Thai society. There are a few mistakes, made mainly when the author ventures into the ecology of temperate forests – despite their names and contrary to a statement made on p. 43 Norway spruce and Scotch pine are species native to Germany –, but they weigh lightly against the overall excellent quality of reporting, documenting and reasoning that have gone into the making of this book.

Dietrich Schmidt-Vogt

ALEXANDRA KENT / DAVID CHANDLER (eds), *People of Virtue: Reconfiguring Religion, Power and Moral Order in Cambodia Today*. (NIAS Studies in Asian Topics 43). Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2009. XVII, 323 pages, £ 45.00 (hb.), £ 18.99 (pb.). ISBN 978-87-7694-036-2 (hb.), ISBN 978-87-7694-037-9 (pb.)

Scholarship on Cambodia has long focused on two fields of research: the ancient Khmer civilization of Angkor and the Khmer Rouge revolution and its aftermath. This lopsidedness can partially be explained by the availability of and access to sources as well as by political circumstances. However, the years following the Paris Peace Accord of 1991 witnessed an upsurge in research on Cambodian culture and religion. This book, which arose from a conference held in the Swedish town of Varberg in October 2005, is a significant and most welcome contribution to the field. Exploring the relationship between politics and religion both from a historical and a contemporary perspective, the volume addresses a wide range of topics such as how the moral order was influenced by historical change and how religious practices may contribute to the restoration of a society shattered by political violence. As more than 90 per cent of the Cambodian population are Buddhists it is comprehensible that minority religions, notably Islam and Christianity, are not discussed in a book which deals almost exclusively with Buddhist practices.

The sixteen chapters in this volume are divided into four sections of which only the first deals with historical changes in particular whereas the other three sections are based mainly on ethnographic or sociological data. The first section contains a comprehensive overview of the historical development of Cambodian Buddhism by Alain Forest; it is followed by Anne Hansen's astute analysis of Buddhist modernism in the French colonial period, drawing on the last two chapters of her recent book *How to Behave: Buddhism and Modernity in Colonial Cambodia, 1860–1930* (2007). The section's last chapter by Alex Hinton explores the politics of memorializing the genocidal Pol Pot regime. Though conflicting Buddhist interpretations of the Cambodian tragedy are mentioned, their relevance for the current debate on the international tribunal convened to try the surviving Khmer Rouge leaders could have been elaborated in more detail.

The second section, headed "Desired Ideals", contains three contributions which examine ethnographic data that demonstrate how Cambodians use legends and myths to imagine a reconfigured social order free of injustice. One author (John Marston) discusses the legend of a monk from the Sihanouk period famous for his magical powers, another (Alexandra Kent) uses the exemplary biographies of two Buddhist laywomen, while the third contribution (by Erik Davis) introduces us to a woman whose dream-like memories of her previous existences – including that of a tree spirit – enable her to lead two lives simultaneously, one with her present-day family and one with surviving members of her family from a previous life. Davis' fascinating account shows how Grandmother Yaan's tales and memories testify "to the power of death to manage desire" (p. 141).

All four chapters of the third section ("Remaking Moral Worlds") reflect widespread concerns over moral decline given the fact that at least one generation of young Cambodians grew up without experience of Buddhist practice. Despite the secularizing influence of Communist rule over a period of some twenty years, merit-making remains a central element of village Buddhism as Judy Ledgerwood emphasizes. Numerous temples have been built since the early 1990s and villagers are anxious to sponsor religious ceremonies. The most convincing explanation for these activities is the need to transfer merit to relatives who perished during the Khmer Rouge regime. However, Eva Zucker's field research shows that the lack of elders, due to the human losses of the 1970s and 1980s, had its impact on the religious attitude of communities as well as individuals. As many of the surviving elders are tainted by their association with the Khmer Rouge, the transmission of the moral order to the young generation is problematic. This helps explain some of the success of Methodist missionaries in recent years.

The fourth and final section deals with questions pertaining to the restructuring of the moral order in contemporary Cambodia. One chapter (Heng Sreang) discusses the involvement of monks in politics, another (Christine Nissen) the role of Buddhism in the discourse on political corruption. Venerable Khy Sovanratana's discussion of the progress and challenges of Buddhist education today is certainly one of the best researched chapters in this section, providing valuable data on the re-establishment of monastic education at different levels since 1989.

People of Virtue is an important book for all interested in the history and practice of Cambodian Buddhism. Moreover, it may even inspire studies of other societies which have undergone similar traumatic experiences.

Volker Grabowsky

JOSHUA A. FOGEL, *Articulating the Sinosphere. Sino-Japanese Relations in Space and Time*. (The Edwin O. Reischauer Lectures). London: Harvard University Press, 2009. 206 pages, £ 25.95. ISBN 978-0-674-03259-0

Looking at China through the lens of the 20th century tensions distorts the picture – that is the author's fundamental motive for a reassessment of Chinese-Japanese relations from the beginnings until the first modern war between the two countries in 1894/5. Of course, the reader will concur with such a statement but after finishing the slim volume he or she might add that looking at the so called "Sinosphere" from the bird's eye view may well blur the picture.

The volume consists of three essays, first given as Reischauer memorial lectures at Harvard, each of them presented as a model study: The first on Sino-Japanese relations as a macro-historical one, the second on the voyage of the first modern Japanese vessel carrying an official delegation to Shanghai in 1862 as a micro-historical investigation, and the third on the first generation of Japa-

nese immigrants to Shanghai, written from both the macro- and micro-historical perspectives.

Edwin O. Reischauer and John K. Fairbank (with whom I had the privilege of staying as a researcher in 1976) might have been amused by the lectures and, especially, by the author's self-confident remarks that for more than 30 years he has been working on a new classification of the two countries' relations. Fogel substitutes the traditional chronological perspective with three different points of reference, the political, the cultural and the economic, omitting, however, the military and power politics. Despite the many negative examples Fogel yet insinuates that, on the whole, China and Japan had been on an equal footing.

Given the core of the Chinese *Weltanschauung*, the Sinosphere with the Middle Kingdom as centre of the world, all other states from neighbouring Japan to faraway England inevitably had a tributary status. The "son of the setting sun" would never accept the "son of the rising sun" (the latter being patterned after the heavenly Chinese emperor) as an equal. The Japanese reformers of the Mito-school, re-inventing the direct rule of a god-like Tenno, propagated the idea of simply reversing the old Asian order by installing Japan instead of the weakening Chinese Empire as the centre of a new "Japano-sphere" – which in 1940 took shape in the disguised form of the "Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere".

In the second essay – the voyage of the *Senzaimaru* to Shanghai in 1862 – Fogel traces with meticulous precision the life of the Dutch facilitator and the history of the vessel prior to the prominent voyage, thereby losing sight of the Chinese-Japanese negotiations and the immediate results. The archives on this trip have been supplemented by newly discovered Chinese material in Taiwan. (But there may be even more in the First National Archives in Beijing, where in 1988 I found some key documents relating to the Prussian Far Eastern expedition which took place at the same time). The author wrongly describes the *Thetis* as a merchantman. In fact the *Thetis*, as a part of the Prussian expedition, called at Shanghai for research purposes on mainland China – Richthofen's geological investigations.

The third memorial lecture – the early Japanese colony in Shanghai – would certainly have met with unlimited approval by the two founding fathers of Asian studies at Harvard. Based on the traditional method it is a fine scholarly study, depicting the growing Japanese community in Shanghai, then China's window to the West. The first wave consisted of Japanese prostitutes. Whether they were sent on purpose to find out about the men of the foreign world (as in 1945 with the American occupation force), or whether this immigration reflects the miserable conditions in the countryside in late Tokugawa Japan is difficult to decide. Presumably both motives were interlinked. Anyway, in 1890 Tokyo ended this strange kind of reconnaissance. Now commercial interests were to be supported, first those of small Japanese shopkeepers, later on of big business. Cultural or religious links through the Zen sect "True Pure Land" soon lost in

importance. Shanghai, nevertheless, was a dream for the early Japanese settlers, about 600 persons in the 1880s, as for the first time after 250 years of Japanese seclusion they were staying in a foreign country, and yet in a cultural atmosphere which was not totally alien to them. But the microcosm of a peaceful Sino-Japanese sphere came to an abrupt end when the Japanese military started to meddle in Chinese affairs after China had lost the first military encounter with her "younger brother".

Bernd Martin

ANDREAS FULDA, *Förderung partizipativer Entwicklung in der VR China. Möglichkeiten und Grenzen politischer Einflussnahme durch Akteure der deutsch-chinesischen Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (2003–2006)*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009. 277 Seiten, € 34,90. ISBN 978-3-531-16357-4

Die Veröffentlichung dieser Dissertation kommt zu einem Zeitpunkt, an dem die deutsch-chinesische Entwicklungszusammenarbeit (EZ) gleich vor mehreren Herausforderungen steht: Zum einen hat sich China durch das kräftige Wirtschaftswachstum und die starke Verringerung der armen Bevölkerung von einem Entwicklungsland zu einem Schwellenland gewandelt, das nun selbst als globaler Investor und internationaler Geber auftritt; zum anderen hat die Bundesregierung in ihrem Koalitionsvertrag Strukturreformen der deutschen Entwicklungspolitik angekündigt, die insbesondere die Zusammenlegung wichtiger Durchführungsorganisationen der Technischen Zusammenarbeit (GTZ, DED und InWent) betreffen. Eine Adjustierung der deutsch-chinesischen EZ ist also schon im Gange – aber wird dies ausreichen, um den neuen Herausforderungen des Umgangs und der Zusammenarbeit mit China zu entsprechen? Oder sollte die EZ mit China gar ganz eingestellt werden, wie manche dies fordern? In dieser Situation wird auch besonders deutlich, dass es vergleichsweise nur wenige wissenschaftliche Analysen zur deutschen und internationalen EZ mit China gibt. Umso gespannter können daher die Leser auf die Studie von Andreas Fulda sein.

Um es gleich vorwegzunehmen: Diejenigen Leser, die vorrangig an partizipativen Entwicklungen der chinesischen Gesellschaft und ihrer Teilbereiche interessiert sind, werden bei diesem Buch eher weniger auf ihre Kosten kommen; für diejenigen Leser dagegen, die sich für Theorie und Praxis der deutschen EZ in China interessieren, bietet das Buch neben politikwissenschaftlichen Ansätzen, einem Einblick in die Tätigkeit des Autors in China und dessen Reflexionen hierzu eine Fülle von Beispielen und provokanten Einschätzungen der Struktur und Akteure der deutschen EZ mit China. Der Autor plädiert dafür, die bislang eher technisch verstandene EZ durch eine vorrangig politisch ver-

standene zu ersetzen, und lotet hierzu die Möglichkeiten und Grenzen politischer Einflussnahme durch Akteure der deutsch-chinesischen EZ aus.

Die Studie ist in fünf Kapitel unterteilt, ohne Einleitung und Fazit, allerdings können Kapitel 1 und 5 entsprechend gelesen werden. Im ersten Kapitel entwickelt der Verfasser die Hypothese, dass sich mit der Entstehung zivilgesellschaftlicher Organisationen in China „neue strategische Handlungsmöglichkeiten" (S. 34) eröffnen, die herkömmliche Förderansätze in Frage stellen, die exklusiv auf staatliche Kooperationspartner ausgerichtet sind. Im Sinne einer politisch verstandenen EZ fordert Fulda ein verstärktes ausländisches Engagement zur Förderung gesellschaftspolitischer Pluralität in China. Im Rahmen einer Politikfeldanalyse stellt der Verfasser im 2. Kapitel fest, dass trotz Ressortstreitigkeiten zwischen dem Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) und dem Auswärtigen Amt (AA) die Förderung partizipativer Entwicklung in China im Untersuchungszeitraum (2003–2006) durch die jeweiligen Bundesregierungen immer legitimiert war. Kapitel 3 und 4 sind der entwicklungspolitischen Praxis in China gewidmet. Anhand von Fallbeispielen (zur Förderung von NGOs und partizipativer Verfahren) zeigt Fulda, dass Durchführungsorganisationen der EZ in China Verselbständigungstendenzen aufweisen, da sie durch BMZ und AA nicht hinreichend gesteuert würden und daher das chinesische Handelsministerium die Oberhand gewonnen habe. Gleichzeitig sieht er aber auch Potentiale der Förderung partizipativer Ansätze durch Projekte wie z. B. CANGO (China Association for NGO Cooperation) Vision Training Center und Participatory Urban Governance Program for Migrant Integration. In Kapitel 5 unterbreitet der Verfasser Reformvorschläge und diskutiert das Für und Wider einer Beendigung der deutschen EZ mit China. Einiges hiervon ist inzwischen schon wieder obsolet, z. B. die Frage einer Fusionierung von GTZ und KfW (S. 255–58). Eine politisch verstandene EZ mit China, so legt der Autor nahe, ist ohne eine Integration der Funktionen des BMZ ins Auswärtige Amt nicht zu realisieren (S. 262).

Fulda zeichnet also in etwa folgendes Bild: Die politischen Institutionen der deutschen EZ sind untereinander zerstritten und nicht in der Lage, ihre Steuerungsfunktion gegenüber den Durchführungsorganisationen in China, die sich im Zuge einer Dezentralisierung quasi verselbständigt haben, wahrzunehmen. Hier nimmt der Verfasser insbesondere die GTZ aufs Korn, während er die CIM (Centrum für Internationale Migration und Entwicklung) mit ihrem Programm integrierter Fachkräfte explizit ausnimmt. Eine zusätzliche „Entmachtung" sieht er in der dominanten Rolle des chinesischen Handelsministeriums (MOFCOM) (S. 234) und beschreibt damit einen Umstand, der anderswo gern als *ownership* nationaler Entwicklungsstrategien gerühmt wird. Die Durchführungsorganisationen kooperieren nach Darstellung des Verfassers vorrangig mit einflussreichen Institutionen des Einparteienstaates und nicht mit Organisationen der chinesischen Zivilgesellschaft, wie z. B. den als staatsnah oder als staatsfern geltenden GONGOs (government organised nongovernmental organisations) bzw. NGOs. Hier sieht der Autor die wesentlichen Grenzen für eine

Förderung partizipativer Entwicklungen in China, einschließlich einer entsprechend begrenzten Mittelallokation, wenngleich er zugesteht, dass es auf der Ebene einzelner Projekte durchaus Spielraum zur Stärkung partizipativer Ansätze gebe, und dies nicht zuletzt durch eigene Anstrengungen zu belegen sucht.

Kritisch anzumerken ist, dass Fulda – schon fast obsessiv – seine Auseinandersetzung sehr stark auf deutsche Akteure der EZ in China fokussiert und andere gewichtige Perspektiven und Spannungsfelder nur wenig berücksichtigt. Dies gilt für international vergleichende Betrachtungsweisen (die nur marginal herangezogen werden), aber besonders für die chinesische Seite der deutsch-chinesischen EZ. Obgleich des Chinesischen offenbar mächtig, kommen fast keine chinesischen Autoren zu Wort, und es werden chinesische Positionen kaum dargestellt oder analysiert. Insgesamt stellt das Buch aber doch eine lesenswerte Studie dar, die – wenn man den nötigen langen Atem mitbringt, sich durch einige redundante Wortungetüme durchzuarbeiten – nicht nur provokativ, sondern auch anregend ist.

Bettina Gransow

JAMES W. HEISIG / TIMOTHY W. RICHARDSON / ROBERT RAUTHER, *Vereinfachte Hanzi lernen und behalten 1. Bedeutung und Schreibweise der häufigsten chinesischen Schriftzeichen*. (Klostermann RoteReihe 29). Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2009. 471 Seiten, € 23,90. ISBN 978-3-465-04068-2

Das Buch, das trotz des beträchtlichen Umfangs von knapp 500 Seiten gut in der Hand liegt, setzt sich aus 50 Lektionen zusammen, denen eine 26 Seiten umfassende Einleitung vorausgeht und fünf Zeichenindices folgen. Schon im Vorwort des deutschen Mitherausgebers ist zu erfahren, dass es die „chinesische" Variante einer früheren Publikation der beiden amerikanischen und in Japan lebenden Ko-Autoren darstellt: „Die [japanischen] Kanji lernen und behalten".

„Ziel dieses Kurses ist es, Ihnen dabei zu helfen, sich so schnell und wirksam wie möglich die Bedeutung und Schreibweise der 3000 meistgebräuchlichen chinesischen Schriftzeichen selbständig beizubringen." (S. 9) Dieser einleitende Satz klingt verlockend, und es ist sehr wohl möglich, dass die Autoren nicht zu viel versprechen. Voraussetzung dafür ist der „Bruch mit den herkömmlichen Methoden des Zeichenlernens" (S. 9), allen voran die allgemein übliche Praxis, Bedeutung, Aussprache und Schreibweise eines Zeichens gleichzeitig zu erlernen. Von diesem Vorgehen gibt es im deutschsprachigen Raum meines Wissens allerdings schon lange Abweichungen in Gestalt von Lehrbüchern für Gymnasien oder intensiven Sprachlaborübungen an Universitäten, die eine temporäre Abkoppelung von Aussprache und Schreibweise nahelegen. In beiden Fällen wird die Einführung der Zeichen zugunsten der Aussprachеübungen verschoben. Im vorliegenden Buch aber wird der umgekehrte

Weg beschritten: Die Zeichen kommen an erster Stelle, und zwar unter anderem mit dem stichhaltigen Argument, dass diese angesichts einer ausgeprägten Homophonie (Gleichlautung) der modernen chinesischen Sprache immerhin eindeutig sind.

Die Autoren setzen bewusst einschlägige kognitive Lernstrategien ein, inklusive verschiedener Mnemotechniken. So werden die Zeichen, die für den ersten Teil des Buches (Lektionen 1–12) vorgesehen sind, mit kurzen Erzählungen eingeführt, wenn sich die Etymologie nicht verwenden lässt. Im zweiten Teil (Lektionen 13–19) wiederum wird das den Lernenden unterstellte „erfinderische Gedächtnis" (S. 22) selbst aktiv, indem es angehalten ist, die nunmehr bloß skelettartigen Vorgaben für Erzählungen fortzuspinnen, sogenannte Entwürfe, die den neuen Zeichen beigesellt sind. Erst recht ist im letzten und größten Teil des bisher vorliegenden Kursus (Lektionen 14–50) die Phantasie gefragt, um den auf sogenannte Elemente verkürzten Paratext zu den Zeichen spielerisch auszugestalten.

Die vollständigste Information zu einem Zeichen, die für den ersten Teil charakteristisch ist, umfasst demnach in einem Rahmen übersichtlich angeordnet: die laufende Nummer; das Schriftzeichen in der Kurzzeichen- und gedruckten Variante; das deutsche Schlüsselwort, d. h. seine Hauptbedeutung; die Erzählung, wobei die signifikanten graphischen Bestandteile des Zeichens herausgegriffen und mit der deutschen Schlüsselbedeutung verknüpft werden. Nicht zuletzt werden die Strichfolge, um eindringlich zum wiederholten aktiven Mitvollzug aufzufordern, sowie zusätzliche Primitiv- bzw. Grundbedeutungen aufgeführt.

Handelt es sich hierbei um reine Gedächtnisstützen, so folgt das Gesamtarrangement des Kursus im vorliegenden Band 1, dem sich ein zweiter Band mit weiteren 1500 Schriftzeichen anschließen soll, einem lernstrategischen Prinzip, das Organisation, Elaboration und Wiederholung vorsieht. Mit anderen Worten, das Buch zeichnet sich durch eine klare Struktur aus, die sich mit jeder Lektion weiter entfaltet, dabei aber immer auf die Grundelemente Bezug nimmt: Der Kursus beginnt zunächst mit einfachen Schriftzeichen (Primitivelementen), um diese dann als Bauteile beim Zusammenfügen neuer Zeichen zu verwenden. Ab einer bestimmten Anzahl differenziert sich die Struktur und nimmt pro Lektion entweder zusammenhängende Zeichen in den Blick, die sich z. B. auf den Menschen, auf Mengenangaben, auf die Elemente der Natur oder auf Schule und andere Einrichtungen beziehen, oder ordnet die neuen Zeichen ihren Bildelementen zu, die zugleich Radikale sind, wie „Bäume und Blumen/Gras" oder „Dach und Einfriedungen". Auch kann eine Lektion Zeichen gewidmet sein, die bisher „durch die Ritzen der Lektionen gefallen sind" (S. 290).

Das Spektrum an Mnemotechniken reicht in den Worten der Autoren „vom Kindischen bis zum Ausgeklügelten" (S. 14). Im Allgemeinen findet sich in den Geschichten immer eine Pointe oder „der Kasus macht [oft herzhaft] lachen". Der bewusste Einsatz von Emotionen oder Gefühlsatmosphären ist mei-

ner Erfahrung nach selbst dann noch wirkungsvoll, wenn die eine oder andere Erzählung, ein Entwurf oder die Interpretation eines Primitivelementes dem etwas strenger gestrickten Leser – erst recht dem sinologisch bereits Geschulten – ein Stirnrunzeln oder ein indigniertes „Na ja!“ abzwingen sollten. Als ein kluger Schachzug nicht nur in mnemotechnischer Hinsicht erscheint es also, an die Phantasie des Lesers selbst zu appellieren!

Es bleibt zu hoffen, dass man vor lauter amüsanten Geschichten, die man im Gedächtnis behält, nicht die Zeichen selbst vergisst.

Abschließend noch ein Wort zu den sehr hilfreichen Indices: Index I enthält alle Schriftzeichen des vorliegenden Bandes, diesmal in der handgeschriebenen Variante, in der Reihenfolge ihres Erscheinens (laufende Nummer) und mit der jeweiligen Aussprache, die somit durch kurzes Nachschlagen jederzeit aufgeholt oder auch mitgelernt werden könnte kann. Index II listet alle Primitivelemente bzw. Radikale auf, ordnet sie wie in einem Wörterbuch nach der Strichzahl und gibt die Seite an, auf der das Zeichen(element) erstmals erscheint. Index III umfasst alle ganzen Schriftzeichen, nach Strichzahl und Strichfolge geordnet, unter Hinzufügung der laufenden Nummer. Index IV ist wiederum der Aussprache in alphabetischer Reihenfolge gewidmet, wobei die vier Töne berücksichtigt werden und neben dem Zeichen wiederum die laufende Nummer genannt wird. Der letzte Index V führt alle Schlüsselwörter und Primitivbedeutungen auf, stellt also eine alphabetisch geordnete Liste der deutschen Äquivalente dar, denen das jeweilige chinesische Zeichen sowie die laufende Nummer (und nicht die Seitenzahl, wie S. 456 den Index einleitend behauptet wird) beigeordnet ist.

Wie immer könnte man alles ganz anders aufziehen. Gleichwohl macht das Buch Lust darauf, es auszuprobieren, auch im akademischen Kontext, um die „vereinfachten Hanzi zu lernen und zu behalten“ bzw. auf vergnügliche Weise zu rekapitulieren.

Gudula Linck

ALICE GRÜNFELDER (Hg.), *Flügelschlag des Schmetterlings. Tibeter erzählen*. Zürich: Unions-Verlag, 2009. 253 Seiten, € 16,90. ISBN 978-3-293-00406-1

Vielleicht ist es ein guter Rat, zunächst das Nachwort der Herausgeberin (S. 237–245) zu konsultieren und vor jeder Geschichte die jeweilige Kurzbiographie (S. 249–253) der insgesamt elf Autoren zu lesen. Die Lektüre wäre so stärker in den Kontext einbezogen – es sei denn, man möchte den Fokus ohne Ablenkung auf die spezifische Textstruktur sowie die literarische Qualität der einzelnen Beiträge richten. Zu beidem werde ich mich eines Urteils enthalten, fehlt mir dazu doch die Kompetenz im Hinblick auf die moderne tibetische Literatur.

In jedem Fall scheinen die beiden Übersetzer, d. h. die Herausgeberin selber sowie Franz Xaver Erhard, hervorragende Arbeit geleistet zu haben.

Wie angedeutet, ist das Nachwort für die mit der zeitgenössischen tibetischen Literatur kaum vertrauten Leser äußerst hilfreich, ist die Herausgeberin doch bemüht, in der gebotenen Kürze einen differenzierten Überblick über die zeitgenössische Literatur der Tibeter seit den 1950er Jahren zu skizzieren. Dabei spricht sie nicht nur den Unterschied zum traditionellen, überwiegend religiösen tibetischen Schrifttum an, sondern markiert Höhepunkte und Einbrüche literarischer Tätigkeit von Tibetern in Büchern und Magazinen, insbesondere in der sogenannten Autonomen Region (TAR), seit dem Einmarsch der Chinesen im Jahre 1950. Als unterschiedliche gesellschaftspolitische Phasen sind folgende auszumachen: die 1950er Jahre, die Zeit vor, während und nach der Kulturrevolution (1966–76), die 1980er Jahre bis zu den Unruhen im März 1989, die 1990er Jahre bis hin zur Gegenwart.

Die Unterscheidung in AutorInnen, die in Tibet aufgewachsen sind, und solche, die es nach China oder ins Exil nach Indien, Taiwan, in die Schweiz oder die USA verschlagen hat, die auf Tibetisch, Chinesisch, Englisch oder Deutsch schreiben, führt unmittelbar zur Frage einer modernen tibetischen Identität oder anders gesagt zur Frage: Wer bin ich? Und wenn ja, wie viele? (So der Titel einer Philosophiegeschichte von Richard David Precht, München: Goldmann 2007) Und die Antwort lautet mit Tsering Öser, der Autorin des Beitrags an dritter Stelle, lapidar: „Sinisiert, verwestlicht, modernisiert oder was auch immer." (S. 244)

Die Autoren, zehn männliche und drei weibliche, deren Geburtsjahr zwischen 1949 und 1975 liegt, die also nunmehr zwischen 34 und 50 Jahre zählen, sind sich dieser multiplen Identität bewusst, empfinden sie aber in ihrer Unschärfe bzw. Hybridität als Überforderung, wenn nicht Zerrissenheit, und bringen dies in ihren Geschichten verschlüsselt und verfremdet, kritisch und selbstkritisch, humorvoll und satirisch, sensibel und poetisch, aber auch traurig und „müde" (S. 234) zum Ausdruck. Zuweilen klingen nostalgische Empfindungen an, im Allgemeinen aber wird die Absurdität des gesellschaftspolitischen Umfelds sowie der schlichten Alltagsgeschehnisse thematisiert und karikiert – ohne Schuldzuweisungen.

Die Komplexität tibetischer Lebenswelten in Tibet, China oder im Exil macht es unmöglich – so die übergreifende Botschaft dieser Zusammenstellung – die Konflikte binär zu erfahren bzw. zu gestalten: als Konflikt zwischen Chinesen und Tibetern oder zwischen Alt und Jung, Mann und Frau, zwischen Tradition und Moderne, Asien und dem Westen, Buddhismus und Säkularisierung oder zwischen radikalen Positionen der tibetischen Jugend im indischen Exil und dem sogenannten mittleren Weg des Dalai Lama und anderer Exilführer.

Es ist die Mischung aus all diesen Fäden, die sich vernetzen, verschlingen und verwirren, die erklärt, warum die hier ausgewählten elf Geschichten und zwei Gedichte informativ und anrührend zugleich, mitunter frech oder melancholisch, aber immer ehrlich daherkommen. Da ist aber noch etwas, das das

Buch lesenswert macht: Die Gestalten und Charaktere, die hier vorgeführt werden, sind geeignet, ein Stück weit den Exotismus zu dekonstruieren, zu dem – wie auch die Herausgeberin auf S. 242 bemerkt – nicht bloß Westler, sondern Exiltibeter und bestimmte Chinesen gleichermaßen neigen.

Abschließend ein Wort zum vielsagenden Titel der Sammlung, zugleich Titel des zweiten Beitrags! Dessen Autor Jamyang Norbu, der, bevor er in die USA auswanderte, zunächst in Dharamsala, dem Ort der tibetischen Exilregierung in Indien, lebte und hier literarisch tätig war, wurde auf dem Umweg über das Tibetan Security Office von den chinesischen Behörden in Lhasa darauf hingewiesen, seine Schriften hätten ebenso viel Wirkung wie der „Flügelschlag einer Mücke gegen einen Felsen"; er möge sich eines Besseren besinnen und am sozialistischen Wiederaufbau Tibets mitwirken. Geschmeichelt fällt Jamyang Norbu dabei der Flügelschlag des Schmetterlings ein – in der Chaostheorie Symbol für die sogenannte sensitive Ausgangsbedingung –, was ihn hoffnungsfroh stimmt: „Könnte also der Luftwirbel, den ein Schmetterling heute in New York (oder Dharamsala) verursacht, sich schon im darauffolgenden Monat zu einem Sturm in Beijing auswachsen?" (S. 14)

Gudula Linck