

ernance and trade and that most Southeast Asian nations today face many challenges: For example, despite an exceptional long-term economic growth stimulated by interventionist governments, most observers agree that Southeast Asian nations must adopt important reforms if they want to return to the long-term growth phases of the 1970s, 80s, and early 1990s. And despite the integration of Southeast Asian nations into a regional institution, ASEAN, and the success of this regional organisation in security cooperation, efforts toward economic integration have been stalled for years due to the different economic priorities.

The external relations of Southeast Asia and perceptions of Southeast Asia by other countries are described in part IV of the book. Southeast Asia's relations with India, the Near East, the role of the Chinese in this region and the European perception of Southeast Asia give a rich impression of the various influences which have shaped Southeast Asian culture. They provide an ideal link with the following part on Southeast Asian religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity and part VI, which deals with literature, art and material culture (architecture). While Southeast Asia is well known for its metal, wood and leather handicrafts, as well as its traditional wooden houses, much less is known about the conceptual dimensions of Asian villages and cities.

It is, perhaps, the greatest merit of the book to bring all these different topics together, to provide a broad overview without ever becoming superficial. The reader is not only introduced to Southeast Asian history and culture, but also learns something about the difficulties of doing research on this area and of the variety of approaches to Southeast Asia as a region. Moreover, Dahm and Ptak have to be congratulated on their excellent editing, which has made the handbook a unified whole, despite the variety of the issues discussed. This makes the Southeast Asia Handbook an enjoyable book. Moreover, it lacks the scientific language and lengthy footnotes which are so typical of German scientific studies and usually make reading rather exhausting. The handbook thus not only speaks to a scientific community, but also to a more general public interested in the history, society, politics, economy and culture of Southeast Asia.

Anja Jetschke

JOHN KLEINEN, *Facing the Future, Reviving the Past: A Study of Social Change in a Northern Vietnamese Village*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1999. 256 pages, US \$ 29.90. ISBN 981-230-039-2

John Kleinen has written an anthropological longitudinal study based on several field trips since 1988, which he himself calls a "narrative" (p. 196),

of an agricultural village in Northern Vietnam's Red River Delta that lies in a province adjacent to Hanoi and was formerly even part of Greater Hanoi. Conceived as an anthropological narrative, the major part of the book presents a chronological socio-economic village history. Information about what happened in the village at various periods is embedded in short factual accounts of the corresponding greater events peppered with hints concerning the involvement of the village of Lang To (a pseudonym) as well as the effects of greater historic events on the rural population in general.

Apart from this narrative, the first (introductory) and the three concluding chapters take a more analytical stance.

The first chapter, which is very readable in itself, provides sketches of village life in Lang To after an overview of previous studies on Vietnamese villages and a review of social anthropological concepts of "the (corporate) village" in Southeast Asia in general and in Vietnam in particular.

Reliable data on the pre-colonial village are obviously scarce, but extensive investigations in historical archives in Vietnam as well as in Europe enabled Kleinen to come up with a vivid account of fields like village administration, court-village relationship, landownership, and social stratification with special regard to the role of lineages and frictions between Catholics and Buddhists.

Court-village, or state-village relationships are a recurrent topic throughout the book (as is the importance of lineages - within the party and state apparatus as well as in spiritual and symbolic matters). Major renegotiations in this realm were a regular concomitant of watersheds in Vietnam's history of colonisation, revolution, and recent economic liberalisation. At the end of the book Kleinen points out that "the colonialist and the socialist agendas *vis-à-vis* the supposedly closed character of the village community often went in a parallel path" (p. 192).

After outlining the French defeat in Vietnam, chapter three on the colonial period describes how heavily the colonial administration depended on Vietnamese rulers and their staff in running what was then Hanoi province. This section is supplemented by a thorough examination of village administration in Lang To, dwelling on the importance of lineages and elders and on the effects of conditions set by the colonial state. Still in its first, more general, part the chapter gives valuable insights into the receptiveness towards nationalist ideas at the rural grassroots level and in Lang To village itself. The sections on colonial transformation and social differentiation in chapter three provide data on constituent fields of rural socio-economic life like land distribution, tenancy relationships, population growth, and the tax burden levied on villagers.



During times of revolution and the war for independence (chapter four), the village of Lang To seems to have been only weakly politicised. There was no party cell in the village, and active collective involvement of villagers in the revolutionary struggle, taken up rather reluctantly in the first place, was curbed when natural disaster cast them back into the struggle for survival. Due to its location in Hanoi's vicinity, sovereignty over Lang To village oscillated a couple of times between the Viet Minh and the French colonial administration, which meant that the Council of Notables alternated with a Viet Minh-installed Administrative Committee.

Chapter five on "Land Reform" presents salient facts on the land reform of the early fifties from the different levels of state- and party administration. Beyond factual accounts Kleinen's interviews show that villagers harbour uneasy memories concerning times of land reform, almost regardless of whether they suffered or profited from it.

At first, agricultural collectivisation (chapter six), which gained momentum in the early 1960s and in the north lasted officially until the early 1990s, brought considerable improvement in public infrastructure, in roads and irrigation. Nevertheless, it encountered widespread resistance among the rural population, and in the long run it "had a devastating effect on the living conditions." (p.123)

One reason why Lang To villagers felt alienated by agricultural collectivisation was that leading persons in the co-operatives originated almost exclusively from other villages. The two Lang To families who had a say within the co-operatives were poor families that were promoted during land reform.

In direct terms, the Second Indochina War, or, for the Vietnamese, the "American" war, had little impact on Lang To village. Comparatively few people from the village died or remained missed in action. In one incident there were eight casualties from an American bombing attack on the village in 1972. Today that war is recalled as a time of great and true solidarity deliberately contrasted with officially prescribed solidarity (p. 151).

Sometimes the headings in the book are a bit misleading: For example, the section "Lang To village" of chapter three p. 49ff. is mainly concerned with the administrative and political situation at province, canton and district level. Also, most of chapter seven ("Power and Prestige in the Élite Formation of the Village") continues the chronological narrative when detailing circumstances and events from the period of economic reform in Lang To.

These policies of economic reform put an end to the egalitarianism of co-operatives and gave rise to a substantial increase in social differentiation within the village community. Almost as in former times, power was mo-

nopolised by a small exclusive circle. However, the dominance of private economic activities since then contribute to a reshuffling of the social order in which affluence plays an increasingly important role, though villagers still frown upon a too conspicuous display of wealth.

One of the most interesting issues in the context of élite formation – i.e. businesspeople-turned cadres – shows up only briefly (p. 153f). Yet against the background of discussions of market transition in general and of similar developments in China, it would have been interesting to learn more details about cadre economic activities and how they either switch from politics to market activities or reconcile activities in both spheres.

Vietnam's renovation process "gave unintentionally room for a revival of local religious and cultural practices" (chapter eight, p. 192), which the socialist state in turn tries to utilise to enhance its own legitimacy. Here party regulations have lost their coercive power, and "feasting and holding of banquets (...) offer a new arena within the village in which the emerging [economic] élite is competing" (p. 184). Yet the comeback of rituals must not be seen as a simple revitalisation of pre-1945 practices and relationships, but as a restructuring that de-emphasises ideology in favour of practices derived from tradition. In this process "the 'old' (pre-1945) village élite again plays an instrumental role (...) as safe-keepers of local customs" (p. 195).

All in all *Facing the Future, Reviving the Past* is a book combining solid fieldwork with intriguing analytical insights that substantially enriches the social anthropological literature on Vietnam.

Erland Meyer-Tran

Chinesischer Kapitalismus. PROKLA – Zeitschrift für kritische Sozialwissenschaft, Heft 119, 30. Jg., Nr. 2, 2000. Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2000. 159 Seiten, DM 20,-. ISBN 3-89691-319-0

Seit Ende der siebziger Jahre setzt Chinas kommunistische Führung wirtschaftspolitisch auf eine stärkere Freisetzung von 'Marktkräften' und einen allmählichen Rückzug des Staates aus der Wirtschaft. Der eingeleitete Reformprozess zielt dabei auf die Entwicklung einer – in regierungsamtlicher Lesart – 'sozialistischen Marktwirtschaft', mit deren Hilfe eine deutliche Erhöhung des Lebensstandards der breiten Massen erreicht werden sollte und – wie makroökonomische Daten zeigen – auch erreicht wurde. Das vorliegende Themenheft der Zeitschrift PROKLA versammelt eine Reihe von Beiträgen zu den polit-ökonomischen Perspektiven dieser Entwicklung.

Hansjörg Herr sieht Chinas Transformationsprozess in deutlichem Unterschied zu jenen der ehemaligen Ostblockstaaten. So weist dieser Prozess