

Five pages of acknowledgements, starting with their hosts in Karimabad/Baltit, are testimony to this close connection.

The book is as lavishly endowed with maps and illustrations as the preceding two volumes. Maps include historical maps as well as maps designed by the author. A highlight is the beautiful reproductions of paintings by Aleksandr Yakovlev, who had accompanied the *Croisière Jaune* as the expedition painter: landscape paintings, accompanied by detailed legends explaining their geographical content, as well as portraits of notables or ordinary people. Another highlight is the photographs which include the first ever photographs taken in Hunza from 1886 and 1888, and which provide documentation of nearly every decade since the 1880s. *Hunza Matters* is not simply a summing up of earlier work and previous publications. These have been incorporated, of course, but new material has been added, especially from archival sources that have become accessible only very recently, and new observations are documented by photographs by the author from as recently as 2019.

Now that *Hunza Matters* has been published as the third volume of Hermann Kreutzmann's trilogy, I would like to reiterate my amazement, stated in my review of the first volume *Pamirian Crossroads* in *IQAS* 49, 2018, at the staggering achievement of not only one but three volumes written by the same author and published over a period of five years. *Hunza Matters* and its companion volumes stand out for this reason, but also for their rare combination of encyclopaedic scope with thematic as well as regional focus.

*Dietrich Schmidt-Vogt*

JONATHAN RIGG, *More than Rural: Textures of Thailand's Agrarian Transformation*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2019. 300 pages, 14 figures, 1 map, USD 68.00. ISBN 978-0-8248-7659-3

In his new book, Jonathan Rigg, until recently Director of the Asia Research Institute at the National University of Singapore and now professor in the School of Geographical Sciences at the University of Bristol, UK, presents insights from more than thirty years of research as a human geographer in rural Thailand.

The book sets out to solve the puzzle of why Thailand's stunning economic development and modernisation have not resulted in a thoroughgoing transformation of the countryside. The puzzle is epitomised by what Jonathan Rigg calls the persistence of the smallholder. One may even speak of proliferation, as the number of smallholder households has increased from 4.2 million in 1975 to 5.9 million in 2013. The persistence of the smallholder is paralleled

by other puzzling developments, such as a decrease in farm size and a partial retreat from cash to subsistence farming. These developments fly in the face of established theories on agrarian transition, especially of what is known as the farm-size transition, i.e. a transition towards larger farms for mechanised and commercially-oriented farming as a result of overall economic growth that causes farmers to leave agriculture for employment in cities. Jonathan Rigg explores this paradox in nine chapters, each dealing with one specific aspect of the countryside: Inheritances, Spaces, Flourishing, Society, Land, Labor, Livelihoods, Class, Futures.

In these chapters, the author presents a countryside that is “more than rural” in several respects, but especially in the sense that even though people continue to farm the land and maintain rural residences, only a fraction of their income comes from agriculture. Most income is from employment. Agriculture has disintensified and in some cases has even been scaled back to a complementary subsistence level. Agrarian transformation in Thailand, therefore, does not fit a simple rural-urban migration pattern. While urbanisation and migration to cities are important components of this change process, they do not tell the whole story. Migrant workers in cities hold on to their rural assets and identities, and industrial production migrates to the countryside, creating employment opportunities right at the doorstep of farming communities. These are facets of an intersection of rural and urban spaces and lifestyles that is characteristic of agrarian transformation in Thailand, but which occurs also in other parts of Southeast Asia. Closely related to this intertwining of the urban and the rural, which has been made possible by a tremendous expansion of the road network, are what Jonathan Rigg calls multistranded and multisited livelihoods, with people and the activities they pursue distributed over localities and sectors in a highly complex pattern. There is also a recognisable distribution of generations and genders. Farming activities are now mostly the domain of the elderly, and employment the domain of the young, especially of young women.

While non-urban residents have unquestioningly benefitted from these developments – rural poverty has been all but eradicated and incomes in the countryside are higher than before – the precarity of such livelihoods persists and some aspirations of the rural population, especially those concerning political representation, have remained unfulfilled. These factors contribute to a sense of alienation that has come to the surface in the red shirt – yellow shirt clashes between rural- and urban-based political activists, and that still persists today.

These are just some of the strands of agricultural transformation laid bare and woven together by Jonathan Rigg. Summarising them within the short space available for this review cannot do justice to the complexity and richness of this book. Among many other gems it includes a penetrating assess-

ment of the philosophy of the sufficiency economy, which has prompted much debate but has thus far had relatively little impact on rural development in Thailand.

At the conclusion of his book, Jonathan Rigg asks whether the picture of a spatially, socially and structurally distributed form of rural livelihood is merely a way station on the path towards a less distributed future of land consolidation and rural exodus, or whether it will persist. The last words are given to farmers in a series of quotes from an interview with a sixty-three-year-old woman from the Northeast. Her response to the question of how their grandchildren's generation views farming – “They don't care ... And they will sell out [the land] as soon as their parents die (p. 233)” – points towards the first scenario of modernisation and rural exodus. An important reason given by Jonathan Rigg as to why the second scenario of smallholder persistence could prevail is the fact that national development has not provided the level of livelihood security that could persuade farmers to fully commit to alternative livelihoods.

Particular strengths of this book are the historical perspective that starts with the first efforts of Siam/Thailand to modernise agriculture in the 1890s, and a solid grounding in primary fieldwork. Jonathan Rigg draws strongly on early research on rural development in Thailand, e.g. the seminal work of Charles Keyes in Northeast Thailand, but especially on ten case studies from his own research and that of his students. That some of these are longitudinal studies with re-surveys after several decades adds to the historical depth that is so characteristic of this book. Case studies cover Central Thailand, Northern Thailand and especially the Northeast, where Jonathan Rigg started his career in 1982 with field research for his PhD, and which has remained a focal area of his research.

This focus on the Northeast has informed and may to some extent have skewed Rigg's perspective. The title of the book implies that the findings are representative of Thailand as a whole and the author even states that they can apply also to other parts of Asia, especially to Thailand's neighbouring countries. There is, however, some bias towards wet-rice farmers residing in the lowlands. While this covers the majority of farmers in Thailand, there is more diversity to the farming experience. The ethnic aspect, in particular, is missing. While Thailand stands out from other Southeast-Asian countries for its apparent ethnic and cultural homogeneity, there are parts of the country with sizeable minority populations, i.e. the North and the South. Though the North is covered by two case studies, these are in lowland locations close to Chiang Mai and not representative of the northern uplands. The farming experience of marginalised minority highlanders in the North, who are going through a transition from traditional shifting cultivation to other forms of farming,

guided and sometimes pressurised by the government but also often of their own volition, is certainly different from that of Thai lowland farmers.

An aspect of agrarian transformation that is touched upon relatively lightly in Jonathan Rigg's book are the boom-and-bust cycles of monoculture crops. While Thailand seems to be afflicted by such cycles to a lesser extent than other countries – Rigg gives the example of rubber farming in Northeast Thailand – they play a much bigger role in neighbouring countries such as Laos, and have by now generated a sizeable literature on the subject. A glimpse of Southern Thailand, where monoculture crops are more important – rubber plantations, for instance, have a much longer history in the South than in the Northeast – could have addressed the balance.

Aside from these bickerings of a stickler for regional particularity, this is a fascinating book, which I read with great pleasure and rich gain after my most recent journey through rural Thailand in February 2020. It answered so many questions that arose during the trip, and I found the complexity and dynamics of agricultural transformation in Thailand – as unravelled and re-condensed by Jonathan Rigg – a healthy antidote to the simpler narratives that I had read before. I enjoyed reading it also because of the outstanding quality of Rigg's prose. *More than Rural* is an example not only of geographical research, but also of science writing at its best.

At the very last, a comment is called for on the photograph on the book's cover, not least because, unfortunately, this is the only photograph in the entire book. A young woman in urban attire is seen striding confidently along a straight, empty and apparently new road through a setting that seems rural but not stereotypically so: illustrating the book's message that infrastructure development has led to a connecting, blending and integration of urban and rural that has benefitted women and young people in particular.

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ANNE GRÜNE, KAI HAFEZ, SUBEKTI PRIYADHARMA, SABRINA SCHMIDT (EDS), *Media and Transformation in Germany and Indonesia: Asymmetrical Comparisons and Perspectives*. (Internationale und Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 15). Berlin: Frank and Timme, 2019. 342 pages, €59.80. ISBN 978-3-7329-0579-9

A core methodological question in comparative analysis concerns case selection. Although both are fruits, can apples and oranges be compared? In the social sciences, the structured, outcome-explaining comparison of two or more countries is traditionally informed by the logic of either the most similar sys-