

Book Reviews

PAOLA CALANCA / LIU YI-CHANG / FRANK MUYARD (EDS), *Taiwan Maritime Landscapes from Neolithic to Early Modern Times*. Paris: EFEO École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2022. 392 pages, €40.00. ISBN 978-2-85539-272-1 (pb)

Taiwan Maritime Landscapes contains a wealth of interesting information on the history, archaeology, and geographic and natural maritime environment of Taiwan. The majority of the thirteen contributions (excluding the general introduction) focus on the millennia and centuries BCE, while four – by Hugh R. Clark, Chen Kuo-Tung, Manel Ollé and Paola Calanca – concentrate on the centuries CE, until the eighteenth century. The edited volume is the product of an international conference convened in Paris on 17 and 18 November 2015, as part of a research project carried out in a cooperation of the École française d'Extrême-Orient (Paris), the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica (Taipei), and the Centre de recherche sur les civilisations d'Asie orientale (Paris). The reader is provided with numerous maps and illustrations, as well as various tables. A general bibliography is added at the end.

The book's major goal, according to the editors, is the recovery of Taiwan's own history and archaeology, focusing on its geographic position and role as an island and covering not only its more recent history since early modern times – as is the rule in most publications on Taiwan thus far – but also its history back to the Neolithic period. The editors and authors are thus seeking to fill a gap in the research on Taiwan, which has focused almost entirely on the post-sixteenth-century period, primarily because of the lack of written documentation prior to this period. Archaeology, consequently, plays a major role in this book, as do questions of maritime relations, including early migrations and the natural environment – Taiwan's maritime landscapes. The authors repeatedly stress their interdisciplinary approach, combining archaeology with linguistics, socio-cultural anthropology and genetics, when examining the early periods of Taiwan's history.

The first contribution, by Frank Muyard, provides a detailed analysis of the history of archaeology in Taiwan as well as recent advances in archaeological knowledge of the island's past, for example the rise of archaeological research on ancient settlements of indigenous people. Muyard also discusses the links between archaeology, nationalism and history, introducing some specific features of “Taiwanese archaeology”, especially in contrast to general Chinese archaeology or an archaeology of mainland China, lamenting, for example, the long lack of state support for the archaeology sector in Taiwan. Given its specific history,

Muyard sees good chances for Taiwanese archaeology to develop in a pluralistic fashion, employing both a regional and an island-centred perspective.

The second chapter, by Lionel L. Siame and Guillaume Leduc, is dedicated to Taiwan's early climatic environment, concentrating on the Holocene, the era since the end of the last major glacial epoch, or "ice age", 11,700 years ago. The chapter analyses the ways in which Taiwan's natural maritime environment, from winds and currents to sea surface temperatures and the El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) climate phenomenon, may have favoured long-distance seafaring and migrations. One of the authors' "main objectives is to describe the wind patterns and oceanic currents" in the South China Sea, focusing on the Taiwan and Luzon Straits (p. 48). The strong Kuroshio current during the time under investigation would actually have constituted an obstacle or barrier for navigation and human migration. The authors suggest that ENSO variations may have played a significant role in reducing this current's strength, thereby facilitating sailing conditions for Austronesian people sailing from Taiwan either north (to the Yaeyama Islands) or southwards (to Luzon and the Batanes). The chapter is bolstered with coloured illustrations showing monsoon winds, ocean currents, main phases of the ENSO, relative sea levels, as well as the distribution of Taiwanese nephrite artefacts in Southeast Asia.

The three subsequent chapters focus on the Neolithic period: Liu Yi-chang examines the question of migrations between Taiwan and the Philippines from the Neolithic to the Early Metal Age, Tsang Cheng-hwa discusses cross-strait migration during the Early Neolithic Period of Taiwan, and Chang Chih-hua taps into possible relationships between Taiwan and the Southern Ryūkyū Islands during the Early Neolithic Period. Chen Yu-mei then introduces the example of Lanyu, two small islands located southeast of Taiwan in the Luzon Strait, to trace back possible scenarios and patterns of interaction. The chapter analyses migrations, oral legends and regional relationships using archaeological data – especially pottery, but also metal, jade and glass objects, as well as other aspects of local material culture, such as glass beads and gold, agricultural and animal products – and also touches upon demographic aspects revealed by genetic analysis.

These contributions all provide excellent insight into the very early history of Taiwan and its neighbourhood in the larger East-Southeast China Sea area. The chapter by Aude Favereau and Bérénice Bellina moves the geographical focus a bit further westward. They review the connections between the Upper Thai-Malay Peninsula and the Philippines during the late prehistoric period (500 BCE–500 CE). The authors introduce pottery styles that strongly suggest a connection and cross-cultural influences between sites in the Philippines and the Isthmus of Kra. Taiwan, however, "seems not to have shared the cultural codes found elsewhere among coastal communities of the South China Sea", possibly, according to the authors, because trade between Taiwan and the Thai-Malay

Peninsula and other locations in Southeast Asia may “have been carried out through small mobile groups from the Philippines” (p. 161) – a hypothesis that still awaits further research.

The chapters that follow focus on the centuries in the common era. Hugh R. Clark introduces perceptions and knowledge of Taiwan as reflected in textual sources. What can we learn from written records of pre-modern Sinitic states, given that Taiwan, despite its closeness to the Chinese mainland, has received little attention in pre-modern times? Clark discusses the possibility of an historical identification of Taiwan with the regions of Yizhou and Liuqiu – did Ouyang Xiu mix up “Liugui guo” 流鬼國 (a country he located far in the north beyond Korea) for “Liuqiu guo” in his *New Tang History*? – and considerations about the possible origins of raiders from Pisheye 毗舍耶. Why do Song sources like Zhao Rugua’s 趙汝适 (1170–1228) *Zhufan zhi* (諸番志) tell us that “merchants don’t go there” (*shanggu bu tong*, 商賈不通) or why does the ‘Official History of the Song Dynasty’ (*Songshi*, 宋史) consider local inhabitants as “barely human” (*daifei renlei*, 殆非人類)? Clark’s conclusion is plausible (p. 182): While officially almost no trade existed between Fujian and Taiwan, unofficially “both trade and communication flourished because of people-to-people contacts”, an undocumented trade, in other words, that operated “below the radar” and outside the purview of customs officials like Zhao Rugua, a supervisor of maritime trade at the local customs office in Quanzhou. The reader clearly sees how important it is to consider the entire historical context and read beyond official textual documentation.

In the next chapter, Ch’en Kuo-tung analyses Chinese knowledge of the waters around Taiwan in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, concentrating on the concept and understanding of the so-called *luoji* (落澌) falling trench – a topic that is later resumed by Paola Calanca – as well as the Kuroshio current and the Taiwan Straits. Analysing historical sources and regional geography, Ch’en discusses the possible location of this “deep ditch”, which must be “somewhere close to the islands off China and possibly” (p. 190) in the Pacific Ocean, the *wanshui chaodong* (lit. the “ten thousand waters leading to the east”). Many traditional writers indeed locate the *luoji* in the Pacific Ocean, so that Ch’en considers at least the possibility that it may be identical with the Kuroshio current.

Manel Ollé summarises Spanish relations with, and their activities and presence on, Taiwan in the period between 1582 and 1683. The history of Spanish-Taiwanese contacts started with a shipwreck of some Spaniards off the coast of Taiwan and ended with a physical presence of the Spanish on the island for only sixteen years, between 1626 and 1642. Ollé starts with the first description of Taiwan in Spanish sources and introduces the Spanish plans to conquer Taiwan and to establish a permanent settlement there, as well as all the problems the Spanish were confronted with. We read about Spanish interactions with the Taparri

and the Quimaurri natives and about relations between Taiwan and the Spanish Philippines after the Dutch were expelled from Taiwan and Taiwan came to be ruled by Zheng Chenggong 鄭成功 (1624–1662) and his family. Manel Ollé also stresses the necessity to consult historical sources of different provenance and written in different languages, as with his use of Spanish documents “in conjunction with the Dutch records in Taiwan and the Chinese maritime and regional historical dynamics” (p. 210) to gain much better insight into the history of “northern Taiwan’s Austronesian peoples at the beginning of the 17th century and their relations with the Europeans and Chinese, about their ways of life, their social and territorial organization, the conflicts, and methods of domination” (p. 210).

The purpose of Paola Calanca’s chapter “is to better understand the nautical environment of Taiwan and its connection with Chinese and regional maritime activities” (p. 213). She provides the reader with a very rich variety of literature on topics related to practical navigation in these treacherous waters as well as legends that circulated among sailors and common people. The reader obtains here an excellent overview of contemporary navigation handbooks and navigational terminology used by local sailors, as well as of hazardous places, winds, typhoons and currents in the Taiwan Straits and around the island – nicely illustrated with maps and images. We also read about anecdotes and descriptions in contemporary literature. But Calanca focuses particularly on the perils and dangers in the waters around Taiwan. She analyses in detail the expressions *wanshui chaodong* (萬水朝東, “where ten thousand waters [i.e. all the waters] converge to the East”), *luoji* (落澌, “dive into the abyss/deep ditch”), *ruoshui* (弱水, “weak waters”) and *gou* (溝, “trench”), which designates three currents in the Taiwan Strait – the *Hongshui gou* (紅水溝, the Red stream) and the two *Heishui gou* (黑水溝, the Black stream and a branch of the Kuroshio). Terms like *wanshui chaodong*, *ruoshui* or *luoji*, she suggests, may simply have been used by sailors to “replace proscribed words” that indicated dangerous areas for ships (p. 248), trying to explain specific phenomena they were confronted with when sailing these waters. And of course, early modern sailors did not yet possess scientific knowledge about the various phenomena they experienced at sea and tried to explain them in their own words, relating them to questions of peril, destiny and fate. The maritime environment, Calanca concludes, has influenced the imagination of sailors over centuries. As they did not understand the phenomena they were confronted with, they coined a vocabulary full of perils and dangers, although many of these passages and places were located along the main sea routes frequented by Chinese ships. At the same time, all the descriptions, as well as archaeological sites with artefacts, attest to the sailors’ knowledge of their maritime environment.

The volume concludes with a contribution by Roger Blench, entitled “Restructuring our Understanding of the South China Sea Interaction Sphere: Evidence

from Multiple Disciplines”. This last chapter once again stresses what most authors emphasised in their chapters, namely the importance of a multi- and interdisciplinary approach to arrive at a better understanding of interactions between local cultures. The reader is also informed about paleoclimate and sea-level data, learning that many parts of what is now island Southeast Asia once belonged to a more or less coherent land mass. A table provides an overview of the linguistic terminology in different regions for the words “boat”, “iron” and “knife”, and is taken by the author into aspects of comparative iconography, archaeology and genetics in the region.

To summarise, the volume is densely filled with a great deal of information on Taiwan’s maritime environment, covering many aspects of Taiwan’s early history (pre-1600). The volume is basically designed as a publication for specialists, but it will also attract readers interested, for example, in the history of maritime environments, in ocean currents, winds and monsoons, or in early archaeology and migration history. The book is an essential volume for any library with a section on Asian maritime history. Although focusing primarily on the early history of Taiwan, it goes far beyond and informs readers about manifold aspects of early East and Southeast Asian maritime history. The numerous maps and illustrations, the extensive bibliography and the comprehensive index are an added bonus. It is therefore a must for any specialist.

Angela Schottenhammer

KEN M. P. SETIAWAN / DIRK TOMSA, *Politics in Contemporary Indonesia: Institutional Change, Policy Challenges, and Democratic Decline*. London: Routledge (Taylor & Francis Group), 2022. 240 pages, 1 map, £120. ISBN: 978-1-138-62606-5 (hb)

Once renowned for its promising progress towards the consolidation of its democracy, Indonesia has recently entered a declining trend. Less than a decade after dismantling the autocratic New Order, which had stayed in power for more than three decades, Indonesia achieved a remarkably successful transition with the so-called *Reformasi* (reform) movement. From recalibrating the proportional strengths of check-and-balance mechanisms to attempting extensive corruption prevention and eradication measures, Indonesia became the most promising democracy in Southeast Asia. Nonetheless, the success has recently shown signs of decay, particular in the country’s democratic institutions.

The stagnation of democracy during the second term of the Yudhoyono Administration (2009–2014) revealed the vulnerability of the reforms, which became an avenue for the subsequent regression of the quality of the democracy.