

chapter examines collective and individual memories of the “Red Barrel” incident in Southern Thailand involving the mass killing of alleged communist supporters by the Thai military in 1972. Damrongviteetham finds competing narratives that are being reconfigured and reframed as the community attempts to find a way to make sense of the past. Leong Kar Yen draws on the compelling testimony of survivors of the Batang Kali massacre in 1948, a “fragment” of the Malayan Emergency, to examine the place of the traumatic past in Malaysia’s history. Unlike other narratives in this volume, these are memories made public for the purpose of pursuing restitution from the British government. Damrongviteetham and Leong’s chapters are excellent case studies of how experiences of violence are remembered. Rommel A. Curaming and Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied examine the memories of the lone survivor of the Jabidah massacre in the Philippines. The authors did not interview the late Jibin Arula who is at the centre of their chapter, but rely on media reports. Unfortunately, the authors fail to discuss the nature of their source material and how their subject’s memories have been mediated. As a result, their analysis is unconvincing.

The three chapters that form the third part of this volume explore oral histories recorded in the context of modernising landscapes. Rapid or sudden modernisation can instigate oral history projects and motivate those who remember times past to tell their stories. Recording the past may contest the onslaught of change. Chou Wen Loong and Ho Sok Fong explore memories of residents of the Sungai Buloh leprosy settlement in Malaysia during the struggle to preserve it as a heritage site. This work is an excellent example of how oral history can be used as a tool for advocacy. Stephen Dobbs likewise investigates a community in the midst of change. Dobbs shows how Singapore’s lightermen interpret their role in modern Singapore as the lighterage industry, once a feature of the Singapore River, is transformed. Finally, Emilie Wellfelt investigates how the Alor community in Indonesia remembers Cora Du Bois, a Swiss American anthropologist who studied the Alor people in the early twentieth century. Her chapter examines an oral tradition that the Alor community now seeks to preserve through a tangible monument.

The theme underlying all the contributions to this volume is how authoritarian rule has shaped, and continues to shape, individual and collective memory, and the practice of oral history in Southeast Asia. The book illuminates the role of states in creating and reinforcing particular historical narratives and shows how personal narratives may conform to, or counter, these official histories. As a collection, these contributions highlight the diversity of oral history work being undertaken in the region and provide much-needed insights into the peculiarities of oral history in Southeast Asia.

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**Institutions and social mobilization: the Chinese education movement in Malaysia, 1951-2011**, by Ang Ming Chee, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2014, 278 pp., US\$29.90 (paperback)

Vernacular education has been a site of conflict and cooperation in Malaysia since colonial times. Ang does a fine job of highlighting the sometimes competing priorities of *Dongzong* (United Chinese School Committees’ Association of Malaysia), *Jiaozong* (United Chinese Schoolteachers’

Association of Malaysia) and *Dongjiaozong* (the alliance of these two organisations) working under the banner of the Malaysian Chinese Association. The author signals the importance of the Malaysian non-liberal democratic state in the educational context and identifies the lack of existing scholarship covering the post-1998 period. Ang also illustrates the importance of schoolteachers and organisations comprised of schoolteachers as leaders of social movements, a role that runs throughout much of Malaysia's history.

One of the strengths of this work is the discussion of the importance of informal relationships between major players. The relationships between patronage and politics are crucial to understanding the history of education in Malaysia, both within this study and in the broader context. In this work, Ang focuses on the relationships between different leaders of the movement as well as looking at links with social and political elites throughout the period under study. Support for schooling was used to achieve political compromise in order to channel votes to political allies. The work also highlights some of the issues with movements where interpersonal relationships play such a strong part. The Malaysian state also added to tensions, punishing movement leaders who opposed official policies.

Ang dates the start of the movement to opposition in 1951 to the Barnes Report, which proposed a national English-medium education system for the multi-ethnic state and which, according to its Chinese and Indian critics, was premised on Malay supremacy. Considering Chinese education during the earlier colonial period may have strengthened the work. Chinese schools in the colonial context were unusual for being run by associations. English-language schools were largely run by missionaries, Malay-language schools by the colonial government, and Indian-language schools by owners of large commercial estates. While the postwar context did expand the number of people attracted to educational movements and the new political situation also provided additional opportunities, the break from prewar developments is not as pronounced as often presented in such studies. As Chinese educational associations are a large part of Ang's research, the book may have benefited from a longer-term view of how they came into being.

The work also highlights one of the factors common to vernacular education in Malaya and Malaysia: the right to operate schools in vernacular languages as a means of preserving culture and ethnic identity, often in opposition to state policies and nation-building. Malays campaigned for vernacular schooling in colonial times to preserve their identity and position themselves against perceived economic dominance by the Chinese, whereas, in the time period covered by Ang's study, the Chinese community was facing Malay political and cultural dominance.

Ang sees the Chinese education associations as an exclusive movement. Their narrative of injustice and discrimination suffered by the Chinese proved to be a strength, fostering mobilisation of the community. Members of the movement were exclusively ethnic Chinese, educated in Chinese-language schools. However, language barriers meant a lack of inter-ethnic allies in their struggle to maintain a Chinese education system. At the same time, Ang notes that children from non-Chinese backgrounds sometimes attended these schools because they were more competitive academically. At a grassroots level, therefore, such schools may not have been as exclusive as they first seem.

Ang refers to women's movements in Malaysia (such as Sisters in Islam) as important exclusive institutions, but doesn't really follow through on any gender considerations for the Chinese schools. This absence may be due to the fact that these schools cater mostly to boys, or because education of girls was not an issue for leaders of the movement. However, given how important education for girls and women was for other movements at similar times, and that at least some Malaysian women from Chinese backgrounds prided themselves on schooling for girls dating from the early twentieth century, it is a curious absence.

The qualitative nature of the sources used for this research defines the study's scope and conclusions. It is limited to West Malaysia, but does not really touch on any of the differences

between states and regions within this area. Given the importance of individual interpersonal relations, it may have strengthened the study to look more at such variations. Through use of non-English sources, previously untapped in the scholarly literature, as well as the provision of appendices, glossary and impressive bibliography, Ang provides important information about the organisation and internal workings of the Chinese education movement in Malaysia.

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