Readers should take note of the preposition “for” in the title of this work by fourteen contributors long associated with each other on the same side of the debate on Confucian efficacy in the face of modernism. The first international appreciation of the Confucian ethic for modern use appeared in the early 1970s (the editors for some reason assign it a 1980s beginning on page two of the Introduction), as seen in Herman Kahn’s economic prophecies and Singapore’s invitations to New Confucian philosophic consultants for its state-building. Since then, for more than a quarter century, Confucian correlative thinking and communitarian ethic on one side and Western liberal democracy and individual underpinning of human rights on the other have provided spirited discourse.

Arranged over three sections are six articles devoted to Confucianism and democracy, four to Confucianism and capitalism, and four to Confucianism and law. The opinions contained in this work have moved beyond, as the editors note, the mere “descriptive and explanatory” (p. 4) aspects of Confucianism with the normative vision that goes with it. The contributors now have “specific proposals for social and political change” through examining practical and institutional aspects of Confucianism. While the Introduction is useful and helpful, especially in view of the numerous views of an anthology, Professor De Bary’s Epilogue should be read carefully for its insightfulness into the many nuanced claims and counterclaims of Confucian efficacy vis-à-vis such modern values as democracy, capitalism, and rights and laws.

The book is the result of conferences (no dates mentioned) held in Korea, the historic seat of Confucian state and society outside of China, with Yonsei University prominently represented in all phases from convocation to appearance in book form. The language, as seen in the Introduction, is that among friends, almost chummy and in-house. This constitutes the spirit of the tome as the reader probes the expertly wrought articles. Some common themes and aspects are shared by the contributors. All agree on valuing the communitarian (some use the word “affective”) emphasis in Confucian relations and by extension the correlative logic in the human situation. Conversely, they all decry the latter-phase (current) deterioration of Western liberal individualism with its dysfunctional excesses. Further, there is general agreement, though only pointedly so in De Bary’s Epilogue, in seeing the significance of Confucianism in its varied historical usefulness (Han and Song China and Chosŏn Korea), although none is immune from lapses into normative appreciation of this or that Confucian value. Moreover, in spite of this agreement, most have left open the question of intended results; that is, while the intent of every age is to summon Confucian moral correctives (normative values), the resultant appropriation by strong state interests has often produced other than the intended results. A corollary of this disposition, one that will confuse the reader outside the scholarly camaraderie of the contributors, is a shared derision of Singapore’s modern use of Confucianism (The Introduction labels Lee Kuan Yew’s efforts “notorious” on page three and, inter alia, elsewhere) as being authoritarian. All agree on the moral suasion of this venerable creed; none, including this reviewer, under-appreciates the appeal of the Confucian notion of the morally sovereign self for any society in any historical epoch.
As with any review of anthologies, not every contribution can be reviewed adequately and responsibly. The few mentioned here are cited either for uniqueness and/or for reasons of illustrating the common themes mentioned.

Hahm Chaihark leads off with arguing that Confucian ritual propriety can serve as constitutional norm, appreciating constitutionalism as a cornerstone of democracy. He states clearly that rites (li) will have the same function as rights, and li can restrain inordinate government and safeguard a regime’s legitimacy (though he does mention legitimacy is to be determined). While aware that li had historically been limited to only the select of society, as they shared common values and trust, and were difficult to reach down to everyone, Hahm invokes Benjamin Barber’s phrase of seeing democratic education as consisting of “an aristocracy of everyone” (p. 53). Jongryn Mo’s following piece on the censorate (cum Chosón Korea) values its ability to ensure accountability in those who rule, for a democracy depends on “the sharing of certain values and attitudes such as trust, tolerance, and accommodation at all levels of society” (p. 55). He thinks the censorate should be reintroduced into modern Asian and other governments for the censors are “also voices of dissent and opposition, playing the roles of mass media and opposition parties in modern democracies” (p. 59). Yet his scholarly reserve makes him caution that the traditional censorate lacks vertical accountability, without which the ordinary people do not have a chance against high-handed government (p. 62).

Wang Juntao, the post-Tiananmen political activist and only invited contributor from outside the circle, adopts a generally defined Confucianism and guides the reader through all of the “Chinese democrats” in history, saying hopefully that in “an overall democratic political context, Confucianism can help to promote a moral sense and good values that help to elevate members of the community and to combat tendencies to narrow self-interest” (p. 89). ChangYun-Shik uses the Confucian theory and practice of mutual (though in the Chinese case not exclusively Confucian) help in modern Korea to show that while it engendered nepotistic “administrative despotism,” it was also the organizing principle and habit of the pro-democracy elements of the Korean opposition. The answer appears to lie in knowing what to recommend.

Another illustration of using parts of either the Confucian or the Western tradition in advancing the general themes of the tome is the contribution by Roger Ames and David Hall, who summon Dewey’s pragmatism in their criticism of latter-day stages of Western liberalism, “as if he [Dewey] were not himself a liberal!” (De Bary, p. 367).

Geir Helgesen’s “Case for Moral Education” (pp. 161–77) is well researched and informative for persons who are concerned with the processes of globalization, labeled by Helgesen as the “runawayworld,” against which “communalistic, solidarity-oriented” democracy as informed by Confucian moral education could be the resource against existential insecurity and thus ensure cultural rootedness. Again, as in other pieces, Helgesen’s Korean example shows that when state attention is enjoined with the efforts to cure the ills of the “runawayworld,” the results may not be democratic as intended.

In the section on Confucian perspectives on capitalism, elements of Confucian economic philosophy are resorted to (for example, Gilbert Rozman’s Confucian propensities for decentralization and regionalism and Daniel Bell’s Confucian restraints on property rights), with great earnestness one may add, as palliatives or correctives to modern practices. Here it may also be raised, as with the hyang-yak (Chinese xiangyue) emphasized by ChangYun-Shik, whether the well-known Korean chaebol (oligarchic combine) might be dealt with in the contemplation for communitarian democracy. Still, all contributions face the old adage of “the proof of the pudding is in the eating” in the sense that the “food and commodity” economy of the agrarian age (shihuo) still has to prove itself against modern economic theories and realities evolving since the eighteenth century.

In the section on Confucianism and the law, both Albert Chen and Lusina Ho maintain that Confucian values are present in modern legal practices, with Chen pointing to Confucian mediation in the settling of disputes, and Ho stating that Confucian values have influenced the minds of judges in
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ruling on succession rules and rulings, although she is cautious in eschewing the worth of Confucian patriarchal rules of succession. Chan Sin Yee’s philosophical recourse to yin-yang thought in the matter of Confucian approaches to gender recommends the complementariness of this Chinese dualism to temper the dialectical polarity of Western liberal gender thinking. She is aware how yin-yang may be used to buttress Confucian patriarchy, and she recommends going to pre-Han notions of yin-yang. In this section, Hahm Chaibong, through his case study of Korean family practices and court rulings, presses for searching for relevant ways of preserving family and family values.

This book is “for” the modern world, more precisely in the words of the editors, for those who are “disenchanted with Western-style liberal modernity,” because “most important of all is its [Western-style liberal modernity] inability to articulate and institutionalize the kind of mutual life that can ensure human flourishing” (p. 24). Few humanists, who have had at least a century of dealing with the positivism and scientism inherent in modernism, would argue with this sentiment. While sharing the same awareness of the malaise, not all can accept in part or in whole the solutions proffered in this book, or even with the way in which the solutions are to be sought. One can note two reservations. While the Confucian communitarian ethic is appealed to for its antidote role for the West’s inability to “ensure human flourishing,” a fuller humanism would expect a larger human scope beyond the Confucian family/clan “complementariness” and “affectiveness.” Also, while it is easy to recognize Confucianism’s relevance for different historical stages in various East Asian venues, it is another to contemplate a-historical judgments, as in the case of pre-Han yin-yang for modern-day use and calling the very modern user of Confucianism in Singapore “notorious.”

Reservations aside, few can fail to note and applaud the earnestness, some would say moral concerns, of the contributors to this volume. All are troubled by our times, as Confucius was by his. Like the sage, recommendations are made to bring morality back into politics, when the modern trend has been to divorce the two, as seen in political history since the seventeenth century. Yet the history of Confucianism’s “historical relevance” has more often than not produced the pattern of “the morality of politics” turning into “the politics of morality,” with “communitarian ethic” producing a tradition of formidable patriarchy. The contributors eschew “original” Confucius, because they, quite correctly, want to argue that Confucianism has struck respondent chords in every new age (Han and Song China, Korea and so forth) and therefore it is needed now for the modern age. None of the contributors, however, probes the reasons for these unintended results, the reasons for horizontal, correlative logic turning into vertical and hierarchical logic. Such irony, the “original” Confucian vision of the moral person in a moral society, so full of regenerative idealism, could in most historical ages lead to unintended results. Surely, here lies a history lesson.

Reviewed by Shu Takahama, Kanazawa University
E-mail tkhmsh@kenroku.kanazawa-u.ac.jp
DOI: 10.1017/S1479591405220077

This book looks at a broad sweep of nomadic history, beginning with the rise of pastoral nomadism in the Eurasian Steppes, and continuing through the formation of the Xiongnu Empire until the middle Western Han period when the Emperor Wudi took an aggressive policy against the Xiongnu. It consists of four parts, each of two chapters.

The first chapter describes the rise of pastoral nomadism as a Eurasian phenomenon, and discusses its appearance there through recent archaeological finds. The author first describes the geographic features, and then discusses the rise of pastoral cultures in the western Eurasian Steppes in the
middle of the third millennium BCE. He points out that the domestication of horses and horse-riding, the prerequisites for pastoral nomadism, were already known to have existed at Dereivka in the Ukraine by about 4000 BCE. During the Bronze Age, mainly in the Andronovo period, wheeled vehicles and bronze metallurgy spread throughout the Eurasian steppes. Many scholars consider that chariots, which first appeared in China in Shang dynasty burials, were introduced from these areas to China. In the latter part of the second millennium BCE the Karasuk culture rose in the Minusinsk region of South Siberia, and early in the first millennium BCE the Scythian type of early nomadic culture made its appearance. As the author points out, it had been surmised from the wear on horse teeth from Dereivka that horse riding was already practiced there about 4000 BCE, but a recent study of the horse skull in question dated it to the Scythian period (Anthony and Brown 2000). However the author’s argument in general still holds true, for horse domestication and riding in other areas, such as at Botai in Kazakhstan for example, is not questioned at present.

Chapter 2 looks at nomadic cultures on the northern frontiers of China, again employing archaeological materials. Here, in the transitional areas between the Chinese Central Plain culture and the Eurasian Bronze Age cultures, were formed several distinct cultures, including the Qijia, Huoshaogou, Zhukaigou and Lower Xiajiadian. The author then describes the Bronze Age culture of the Northern Zone during the Shang period, and the period of the early nomads in three phases, covering the period between the ninth and third centuries BCE. He discusses the Upper Xiajiadian culture in the northeastern region as well as the Kayue and Shajing cultures in the northwestern region as examples of the first phase. Second-phase sites include Jundushan, Taohongbala and Maoqingsou, and Di Cosmo also examines cemeteries in Guyuan County, in the northwestern region, with their two types of graves: catacomb and pit. To the third phase are attributed several cemeteries in the Ordos area, such as Xigoupan, Aluchaideng and Nalingaotu. Their striking feature is their richness, and the funerary inventory sometimes includes a large number of gold and silver ornaments, which suggests to the author that the chiefs here were involved in trade. The author observes that the people of Guoxianyaozi did not have a highly developed horse-riding culture, being different from “Scythian-type” early nomads. I feel that they differ only in a minor way from the Taohongbala and Maoqingsou, not enough to regard them as pre-nomadic.

Chapter 3, concerning the historical context of early Chinese perceptions of the northern peoples, examines the relationship between the Zhou states and Rong-Di, mainly from the literary sources. The moral and cultural superiority of the Zhou states over the Rong-Di as described in Chinese literature can be explained as a kind of pretext used according to circumstance by the Zhou states in their foreign policy. The author states that as a result of the expansionist policies of the Zhou states, Rong and Di soldiers were incorporated into the armies of those states. This reminds us that Cimmerians and Scythians were also employed in the armies of western Asiatic countries. I wonder though where we should locate the archaeological culture of Xianyun, which played a large part in the downfall of the Western Zhou dynasty, for it seems very difficult to find a distinct culture that fits the appropriate period and region.

The Hu, or Xiongnu, are the main subject of Chapter 4, which deals with the first historical contacts between horse-riding nomads and the Chinese states. The Hu are considered to be anthropologically different from the Rong and Di of the seventh and sixth centuries BCE and not homogeneous from either an ethnic or a linguistic standpoint. The author describes the trade between China and northern peoples and the introduction of cavalry into China, and then gives a detailed explanation of the role of the Great Wall of Qin Shihuang, by unifying the walls that had already been built by the Yan, Zhao and Qin states during the Warring States period. The purpose of each wall was not just defense against nomads; it had a more aggressive function, enclosing the territory of the nomads after driving them out. The author believes that the walls were constructed to administer the surrounding non-agricultural territory, and he explains Mengtian’s expedition as a further part of this expansionist policy, which is considered to be the stimulus for the rise of the Xiongnu Empire.
Chapter 5 describes this rise and the political unification of the nomads. The author first introduces theories concerning the ethnic origin of the Xiongnu, questioning the theory that the nomads formed a state to obtain by force the agricultural products they did not produce themselves. He then mentions Modu’s rise to power, the battle against the Han at Pincheng, and the *heqin* (appeasement) policy taken by the Han. This policy was abandoned by the Han during the time of Wudi, when they took an aggressive military course. In Chapter 6, the author explains why this occurred and how Wudi and his generals decided upon military action on a scale unprecedented in Chinese history. After describing the discussions in the Han court about the change of policy, the author questions why the *heqin* policy did not work. Despite the treaty between the Han Emperor and the Xiongnu Chanyu, Xiongnu aristocrats did not cease their incursions. The authority of Chanyu, resting on individual relationships and the personal loyalty of aristocrats, was not absolute, as compared with the authority that the Chinese Emperor enjoyed lawfully and institutionally. That is why Chanyu was not capable of guaranteeing his treaty obligations and why the Han court changed from the *heqin* policy to a more aggressive one. This is very interesting point of view.

Chapter 7 discusses Simaqian’s (Ssu-ma Ch’ien’s) standpoint as an “historian” when he wrote about the Xiongnu. The author considers the sources of information, and then examines the ethnographic description of the Xiongnu: pastoral nomadism, burial customs, society and laws, military training and warfare, state sacrifices and rituals and so on. He understands that the Xiongnu practiced seasonal migration based on Simaqian’s allusion that they had a portion of land. Chinese geographic expansion and trade, as well as the economic impact of the Xiongnu wars on Han are also described.

Chapter 8 considers how the nomads were rationalized in historical thought, in particular, how Simaqian as an “historian” placed the Xiongnu within traditional Chinese thought and history. Simaquan positioned the Xiongnu as a legitimate component of Chinese history, having established kinship, as seen in the *heqin* policy. They were recognized as related to the “yin” principle, occupying a position anthropologically and historically opposite to, and at the same time complementary with, China’s “civilization”. They were also given a place in Chinese cosmology and at times their moves were associated with astronomical phenomena.

*Ancient China and Its Enemies* is a showcase for the author’s broad standpoint, full of new ideas and stimulating interpretations, such as the role of the great wall, and the considerations about the *heqin* policy. The long historical span is described, not only through literary sources, but also through the most recent archaeological materials in China and the territory of the former USSR. Archaeology has played an important role in this work, especially for the period before Han, but it plays a far smaller part in the later period, although there is an ever-increasing amount of material related to the Xiongnu available in China, Mongolia and Transbaikal’e. Noin-Ula cemetery in Mongolia, Derestuiskii kultuk and Ivolga complex in Zabaikal’e, for example, are important Xiongnu sites almost contemporary to the Western Han dynasty, but they are not discussed as fully as the sites of the Warring States period. There are many unsolved problems about Xiongnu archaeology; for example, which culture in Mongolia and Zabaikal’e belongs to the Xiongnu before the Han period, and the discrepancy in the funerary system between the cemeteries in the territory of today’s China on one hand and Mongolia and Zabaikal’e on the other. I would like to hear the author’s view on these problems. However, even without allusion to these problems, this book shows a new synthesis of the early stages of nomadic history using fresh approaches, which make it a valuable contribution to the field.

The author employed the Wade-Giles System for the transcription of Chinese words.

**Reference**

Much has been written about the Japanese invasion of Malaya and Singapore and the subsequent occupation. Many of these writings are in the English language, including those by people who participated in the greatest British military debacle in living memory. A considerable number of them have dwelt at length on the military side of the war, as well as on the suffering by POWs interned in various camps (with Changi, according to some scholars, actually not that bad compared to similar establishments within the region) and taken against their will to the notorious Thai-Burma border. Those who did not perish in the malarious jungle emerged after August 1945 as walking skeletons. Their sorry sight stirred up the popular imagination of unrestrained Japanese brutality afflicted on white POWs. The plight and sufferings of local forced laborers were not a feature in these accounts.

The Japanese have also published their experiences and views on the same subject, with a few providing damning accounts of the war and the conduct of the Imperial Japanese Army either in Southeast Asia or elsewhere, including the home front. Unfortunately these interesting materials are only accessible to those who are able to read Japanese or when they have appeared in studies making reference to them. Henry Frei has liberally consulted such works, notably the memoirs of Tsuchikane Tominosuke of the Imperial Guards Division, Arai Mitsuo of the 18th Division, Ohnishi Satoru of the 2nd Military Police (Kempeitai) Field Unit, and Ochi Harumi of the 5th Division. Thus it is an important work, in that it greatly helps to redress the imbalance in our understanding of the Japanese invasion, providing views from the other side, of soldiers on the battlefield and their understanding of various issues, including the treatment of civilians caught in the fighting. Many Japanese who appear in the text were remorseful for what had happened more than sixty years ago and they sought to make amends by providing a no-holds-barred account that is good for the discipline of history.

Guns of February was published about a year after Frei’s untimely death in 2002. The camaraderie of those who had known Frei and who contributed to the final product suggests the camaraderie of the soldiers featured in the book (for instance, in their carrying the ashes of fallen comrades in the triumphant entry into Singapore). Professor Akashi Yoji provides useful biographical notes concerning the more important personalities involved, Dr Paul Kratoska a touching preface and Dr Brian Farrell an equally thoughtful foreword. There are many poignant photographs appended including one showing soldiers of the Christian faith and prisoners honoring the dead in the Christian fashion, and another showing a soldier assisting a fellow soldier in an oil palm estate during a lull in fighting.

Guns of February is thoughtfully divided into eleven chapters written in novel form but meticulously documented with Japanese sources. Kratoska inserted an earlier essay by Frei, with amendments, to serve as the introduction which was not completed at the time of Frei’s death. One cannot help but notice it is a little out of sync with the rest of the text. Nevertheless, Kratoska must be commended for such a delicate job and for overseeing the publication of the book. As for the other chapters, they represent, to quote Farrell in the foreword, “the stories of the men who did the fighting or were caught up in it, and how they remember their experiences,” and give both the inhumane and human sides of the characters (p. xviii). One also gets glimpses of the lighter side of General Yamashita Tomoyuki, who was often portrayed as aggressive and intimidating, during the surrender talks at the Ford Factory in Bukit Timah.

In its own way the book provides an inside account of the working of the invincible Japanese fighting machine which succeeded due to a host of factors including brilliant planning, experienced and battle-tested soldiers, a bit of a gamble, the atrociously inept colonial defences and, not to be
forgotten, the assistance of the local “fifth columnists.” The Imperial Army might have planned well for the invasion but they still overlooked important details like the nature of the tides at the Skudai estuary on the night the soldiers attempted to cross the Johore Straits into Singapore (p. 85). In the end General Percival’s decision to surrender, as recommended by some of his senior officers, saved the day for the over-stretched Japanese Imperial Army who were, as shown in Guns of February, to have been affected by the strong resistance they met after landing in Singapore, especially in the Bukit Timah area. The Japanese perspective of the invasion is vividly chronicled in many places in the book, and this is its major contribution to our understanding of the war in Malaya.

Feelings of remorse and regret among war veterans were openly expressed from the late 1940s, and into the 1950s and 1960s. Yet many other men, such as Colonel Katakur Tadashi of Manchukuo and Burma Area Army fame (personal interview in Tokyo in mid-1982) were simply unrepentant. One also wonders why it took much longer for the Malaya veterans to express their remorse and guilt compared to the Burma or Philippine veterans. Perhaps the Malaya veterans took a longer time to come to terms with the past and their guilt. In the end, their accounts tend to downplay the war’s impact on the local population in Malaya and the kind of life locals had to endure. With the end of the massacres, often termed the Sook Ching, in the first half of 1942, it certainly could not be said that Kempeitai atrocities came to an end. Rather this notorious outfit, with people like Onishi at the helm, sought to find new victims and new means of torture to cow a helpless populace.

It might be correct to say that the victory of February 1942 was dissipated by the wanton massacres of March–April. It is also an understatement, since Japanese brutalities continued right until the surrender, though with perhaps less intensity. The populace continued to remain terrified and the Japanese unrepentant and unaccommodating, except when it was desperately necessary to be so. After all most, if not all of the Japanese were convinced of the invincibility of their own fighting machine despite the setbacks in the Southern Pacific in mid-1942. For the members of the Kempeitai, who continued to devise more effective torture methods, repentance and guilt came late in their life, although in retrospect this is much better than those who continued to deny Japan’s past guilt. At least the former did attempt to put the record straight.

The book does provide glimpses of brutalities committed by soldiers hard pressed on the battlefields, like the rape of a woman by soldiers in Senggarang (p. 71), the killing of civilians in Batu Pahat (pp. 64–66) and the killing of three Chinese girls in Singapore (pp. 106–108). If soldiers like Arai Mitsuo found these acts repulsive, others were less repentant. These actions confirmed what many in Malaya had heard regarding Japanese atrocities in China since 1937, as has been expressed in recent accounts by local participants. The book also provides brutal descriptions of hand-to-hand combat and depicts overwhelmed defenders being shot or bayoneted without mercy (pp. 96–97).

The book essentially ends with the Sook Ching massacres in Singapore (and elsewhere in Malaya), with an epilogue thrown in to show remorse and regret on the part of those who had been part of these brutalities. In a way Guns of February has gone a step further than the official history of the war or the school textbooks. But for Malayans (and Singaporeans too), their story and agony began after this date. This is a story of physical abuse by Japanese soldiers and opportunistic locals, depredations, and the kind of life and mental anguish they had to endure until the surrender. This affected many more people than the victims of the massacres mentioned in Guns of February. It is true that the Chinese suffered more than others but it does not mean that these others were not affected by Japanese brutality or were unconcerned about it. As has been shown in a recent study, Malays who had been victims of Kempeitai atrocities or women who had lost their husbands through the Death railway project had great difficulty in coming to terms with what had happened. And they, unlike the victims of Sook Ching, have remained forgotten in the annals of the occupation. There is no remembrance of them in accounts like Guns of February.

One must not also overlook disillusionment with the Japanese. Those who were expecting cheaper Japanese goods were disappointed, while those who collaborated for political gains were disillusioned.
Many of the latter had turned their backs on the Japanese even before the capture of Singapore in February 1942. By their own shortsightedness and gullibility, the Japanese made themselves unwelcome to the locals, who saw the imperialistic war as of no concern to them. As imperial functionaries, Japanese soldiers and civilians were imbued with the idea of rebuilding a new Asia under the East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere; this failed to resonate with local aspirations as expressed by the more vocal local nationalists. In the end even the most pliable locals lost hope in Japan and the Co-prosperity Sphere. For them Japan had lost the war not in 1945 but much earlier: the Japanese victory of February 1942 would only have had meaning if Malaya had been allowed some measure of self-rule, such as that championed by the members of the Malay Youth Association (KMM).

Despite the above arguments *Guns of February* is still an important book for understanding the Japanese viewpoint and psyche, especially of those in the middle and lower echelons, during the invasion and the early part of the occupation. The book demonstrates to us that these soldiers, and even their commanders such as General Yamashita, were after all human beings with their strengths and weaknesses. This aspect makes the book useful and illuminating.

*Merit and the Millennium: Routine and Crisis in the Ritual Lives of the Lahu People.*
**Reviewed by David Bradley, La Trobe University, Australia**
E-mail d.bradley@latrobe.edu.au
DOI: 10.1017/S147959140524007X

This magnificent volume provides a thorough analysis of the beliefs and ritual life of the Lahu, a group of nearly 800,000 people in China, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and the USA. Starting with detailed ethnographic data from the author’s long-term experience in a Red Lahu village in Thailand, it traces the profound effects of Buddhism, both older Mahayana and more recent Theravada influences and a long series of indigenous messianic movements. It also places the conversion of a substantial part of the Lahu to Christianity in this context, as another indigenized renewal movement based on external influences.

Laudably, Walker uses the Lahu orthography to represent Lahu words throughout; this represents the sounds of Lahu accurately, including its seven tones. Walker has previously published an amazing array of Red Lahu ritual texts, in Lahu and in translation; would that other scholars did likewise! The references (pp. 771–842) are superb and comprehensive; despite working on the Lahu language for nearly thirty years, I found very many new sources that were unknown to me, all marshalled into a convincing narrative.

After clear and useful prefatory material including an introduction to the nature of the sources and the Lahu orthography, the volume starts with a brief description of the Red Lahu village where the author spent four full years in the early 1970s. Chapter 2 is an attempt at reconstructing the history of the Lahu and tracing their geographical origins. It would have been useful to tie in the information on the death journey as chanted during the funeral ritual (pp. 479–99) here; however the Red Lahu traditional version appears to be the least specific about earlier migrations of any Lahu group.

Walker cites Chinese sources on the Lamu, a small group in northeastern Binchuan County (p. 62). These Lamu are now classified as members of the Lahu nationality in China, but their language is closer to Lisu than to Lahu, and they are over 200 kilometres from the northernmost Lahu in southern Yun and Fengqing counties, and from the northwesternmost Kucong in southeastern Jingdong County. The Lamu are one of a number of very small Central Yi groups in north central Yunnan, the likely point of origin of the Lahu, Lisu and other related groups less than a millennium ago. Curiously, though Walker wants to trace the Lahu back through the Lamu area in northeastern Binchuan, and he
convincingly shows that Chinese monks from Jizushan in northwestern Binchuan brought Mahayana Buddhist practices to the Lahu from the late seventeenth century on, however he does not link these two facts.

Another group amalgamated into the Lahu nationality in China is the 45,000 (not 36,000) Kucong, who call themselves Lahu or Lahlu and live scattered across central Yunnan to the east of the main Lahu concentrations and into Vietnam (all 6,874 Lahu in Vietnam in 1999). Again Walker cites Chinese sources (p. 66–68 and elsewhere) which report the official decision to classify them as Lahu from 1987, though their language and culture are quite different. For obvious reasons, recent Chinese sources tend to exaggerate the similarity of the Lahu and the Kucong.

The discussion on the name “Lahu” and its subgroups (pp. 91–100) fails to note that many Lahu actually say [la ho]; while [u] is the only pronunciation for some, [o] is also very frequent, especially among the Yellow Lahu. Population figures given are somewhat out of date; for example, the 2000 census population of Lahu in China (including Lamu, Kucong and Laomian groups speaking distinct languages) is 453,705. Map 5 (p. 105) completely omits Jiangcheng County, where there were 1620 “Lahu” (in this area all Kucong) in 1990, or 0.5% of the national population total. Walker is quite right to say that Black Lahu and Yellow Lahu are the two main subgroups of the Lahu proper, excluding the Kucong; but his linking of the Kucong with the Yellow Lahu is dubious. One may also criticize the treatment of Lahu Hpu or White Lahu: the 1950s messiah who made some Lahu Kulao in northwestern Laos and nearby in Burma and Thailand change their name to Lahu Hpu is not mentioned at all, though Walker is correct to say that these White Lahu have nothing to do with the Kucong Lahu Hpu (p. 99).

The main body of the volume (pp. 111–309) is concerned with Lahu spiritual life: chapter 3 on traditional religion, chapter 4 on calling souls and dealing with spirits, and chapter 5 on blessing and cursing. This focuses on the Red Lahu version of events, in which many things are not typical for the Lahu; for example, the traditional Lahu tree shrine at the top of the village has been moved into the Red Lahu village temple (p. 167). Chapter 6 traces the history of Mahayana Buddhist influences on Lahu religion, discussing various Chinese monks who became Lahu religious leaders from the mid-seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries, and the Lahu leader A· Sha Fu· Cu (1806–circa 1890) who followed in their tradition. Chapter 7 describes the Red Lahu rituals and ritual objects, and relates many of them to Buddhist models. One thing Walker fails to note is the regular association of iron tools with the house altar. Among northern Lahu, these are a ploughshare and some tools, in some other Lahu groups iron bars or ingots, and among the Red Lahu a trident, showing Indic influences transmitted through Buddhism. This chapter also describes the four ritual officials of the Red Lahu village, atypical in their number and nomenclature: first, To bo pa· “village priest” (elsewhere Paw hku or Maw· pa_); second, Sa la pa_ “healer” (Tai/Burmese word, elsewhere Pu· caun); third, La shaw_ pa_ “exorcist” (elsewhere Ne· hpa’); fourth A ca pa_ “blessing seeker” (Tai word, no counterpart elsewhere). By comparison, the treatment of the rituals, artifacts and religious officials of other Lahu groups is incomplete and secondary.

Chapter 8 on year and life-cycle rituals again shows how distinct the Red Lahu are: they have borrowed three Tai Buddhist festivals (pp. 438–46) in addition to the two main traditional Lahu festivals, New Year and Harvest. While Walker mentions the Torch Festival as found among some traditional northern Lahu, he does not mention the new Lahu Gourd Festival established in China some twenty years ago and roughly corresponding to the traditional Harvest Festival.

In chapter 9, Walker documents a series of twentieth-century Lahu messiahs, some with wider influence than others. Another, Eh· Yeh, is described (pp. 582–87) in conjunction with the acceptance of Christianity by many Lahu in Burma from 1904 onwards. This constant religious ferment and revival among the Lahu greatly facilitated the acceptance of Christianity. Unusually for a western anthropologist, Walker spends a great deal of time on the process of Christianization (chs. 10–11, pp. 552–733), both by foreign Protestant and Catholic missionaries and now by the Lahu themselves.
He shows how indigenous beliefs and earlier messianic movements opened the way for this conversion; in fact his estimate for the proportion of Lahu Christians in China is way too low; Paul Hattaway (Operation China, Piquant, Pasadena, CA, 2000 p. 265) suggests that 11 per cent of the Lahu there, or close to 50,000, are Christian, which seems about right to me. This would give a total Christian Lahu population well over 100,000, including about a third of nearly 90,000 in Thailand as Walker says, and substantial numbers in Burma as well.

Walker spends a great deal of space (pp. 551–773) on the doings of the foreign missionaries and their converts. While his non-hagiographic missiology is novel and entertaining (concerning, for example, the controversy in the 1950s about revising the Protestant Lahu orthography (pp. 667–72) or the other battles between the Young family and just about everyone else – Presbyterian, Catholic, fellow Baptist and other Christian missionaries, local Tai and Chinese rulers and so on), this is perhaps not as relevant as it would have been to give more ethnographic detail about the ritual life of other Lahu groups. Also, Walker has not used the extensive unpublished material in various archives and seminaries in Burma, nor discussed matters with the Lahu participants in these processes.

There are a very small number of misprints in the Lahu tones; for example in its first appearance, the first syllable of the Red Lahu term *tcuh*– *tcuh* “spirit released by a witch” mistakenly has the high falling instead of the high rising tone (p. 121); but this is correct everywhere else, including the very useful glossary of all Lahu words (pp. 739–52). The pronoun *yaw* “he/she/they” is occasionally given with the low falling instead of the correct high falling tone; the late Lahu Christian leader Ai_ Pun finally gets both his tones the last time he is mentioned (p. 675), and so on. In a few cases there is minor confusion in Chinese place names, such as Yun County in Lincang Prefecture; this is mostly cited as Yunxian County (“Yun county county”) on pp. 63, 64, 105fn, 553, 613, 688, and 906 (incidentally two of these missing from the index) but also once as Yuxian County (p. 81, misidentified as modern Fengqing County in the index, p. 907). Some of the most recent publications on or in Lahu are not referred to; for example, the complete Scriptures published in Thailand in 1997. In the copy reviewed, pp. 273–88 are missing, and pp. 305–19 are printed twice. The appendix of Chinese names, including those of the foreign missionaries, is quite useful, and the indices (authors, pp. 845–49, general, 850–907) will also make the volume more accessible.

I have made some negative comments about the volume, but only to correct some minor problems. However, most of the book is excellent and provides an invaluable compilation on Lahu beliefs and rituals. It can be recommended without reservation to anyone who wants to know more about syncretism, messianic movements and the religious life of this fascinating group. Walker indicates that he plans additional volumes on other aspects of Lahu society, and these are to be awaited eagerly.


Reviewed by Haruka Yanagisawa, Chiba University, Japan
E-mail yanagisawa@le.chiba-u.ac.jp
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The environmental decline in India has increasingly been attracting scholarly attention over the past twenty years, leading to the rapid enrichment of environmental history. The recent scholarship challenges the standard environmental narrative, which characterizes the pre-colonial past as a time when environmental resources were managed sustainably by village and other local communities and which judges the appropriation by the state, in particular by the colonial state, of the villages’ rights to control common property resources as the main factor that led to a decline in local ecological conditions.
While the degradation of forests has been the main issue in ecological history, the decline of the tank irrigation system has also been attracting attention. The mainstream of environmental concern, including that of NGOs, considers the re-establishment of community-based control of the system as the main scenario that might possibly rehabilitate the dying tank irrigation system.

Mosse’s monumental study, *The Rule of Water*, radically challenges the standard narrative, presenting a new framework for understanding the historical changes in the tank irrigation system of south India. Focusing on the villages of Ramnad and Sivaganga, Tamilnadu, the work successfully reconstructs the history and the present state of tank irrigation, based on historical documents as well as data collected in the course of field work.

The author first challenges the conventional view that considers colonialism as the critical disruptive moment in the environmental history of India, by demonstrating a long-term involvement of the state in the irrigation system. The construction and control of the tank irrigation system between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries was an essential part of the political and military structure of the southern plains region. Along with land, water rights and titles to draw water from a shared channel were granted by Maravar kings to chieftains, kinsmen, warriors, temples, Brahman communities, and village headmen. In this system of pyramidal political patronage, power at every level resided in the capacity to direct material and ritual system distribution, rather than in outright domination and control of resources. Through their local control of this system of redistribution, Maravar headmen and their kin acquired control over resource flows and reproduced caste dominance locally.

In the Permanent Settlement under the British colonial rule irrigation was given in perpetuity to Zamindars. While, despite the British forms of property and landholding through the Permanent Settlement, royal endowment and the gifting of villages continued, the Zamindars failed to provide political rewards for irrigation maintenance. “It was the loss of political authority under Zamindarari rule, not the loss of community authority, that proved to be disruptive to the tank system”. As irrigation maintenance obligations were weakened in the decentralized segments of the former warrior state, the burden of tank repair shifted to the centre.

Presenting the historical view as a background, Mosse provides us with a fascinating account of changes in the irrigation system in two villages with different ecological as well as socio-economic conditions. In the first village, Vayalur, located in a red-soil area, almost all households are involved in agriculture, and cultivation is crucially dependent upon irrigation tanks. The village firmly maintains its tank irrigation systems; tank water is rationed by Dalit water-turners, nirppaccis, according to established rules. As Mosse reveals, these systems, however, are not sustained by a community moral ethic, but by hierarchical village social relations in which elite Maravars dominate. Nirppaccis, central to water distribution, are strongly dependent upon leading Maravars.

In contrast to Vayalur, in a black-soil village, Alapuram, Maravars failed in reproducing village-level caste dominance. Though water retentive black cotton soil permits extensive cultivation of the unirrigated dry land which comprises 80 per cent of the cultivated land of the village, crop failure is common and tanks provide an important source of stability. The scarcity and risk in agriculture does not, however, automatically produce the response to tank water management as found in Vayalur. Alapuram has no formal rules of water allocation and distribution, no means of rationing in times of shortage and no established nirppaccis, even though it is almost certain that some version of the pre-colonial village order in which a complement of caste-based village officer and service roles existed in the village. But the nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw a transformation in the relations of power and resource control in Alapuram. Economic expansion in the nineteenth century ensured the growing economic power of Utaiyars based on expanding cultivation, and newly secure property rights. Between the 1960s and 1990s the most significant economic change in the village was the increase in landownership among Dalits. Thus the Pallar (Dalit) strengthened their independence from the dominant Maravar elite class leading to a decline of the caste-based social order that supported the irrigation system.
The gradual and partial transfer of village lands to Dalits and other previously landless classes has been already documented for Tamilnadu, and S. Janakarajan’s pioneering study on tank irrigation has already suggested the possible connection between such land transfer and the decline of tank irrigation (“In Search of Tanks: Some Hidden Facts”, Economic and Political Weekly, 28:26, 26 June 1993). Mosse’s excellent depiction of these two villages successfully reveals how the changes in the village social order expressed in the transfer of landholdings led to the decline of the irrigation system.

Though the landownership by Dalits empowers the lower classes of people, the difference between these two villages cannot be fully explained by the difference in landholding. Though not so much as their co-caste fellows in Alapuram, Vayalur Dalits also own 18 per cent of village lands but still remain dependent upon the Maravars. The stronger dependence of the Vayalur Dalits may be partly attributed to their lower chance of obtaining a non-farm income than their counterparts in Vayalur. But the relevant chapters lack detailed information about such aspects as non-agricultural employment in the villages, which could have contributed to a fuller understanding of the difference.

By examining the cases of 89 tanks (in 79 villages) located both in the upper and lower catchment of the Sarugani minor basin, the author locates these findings in the context of theoretical frameworks to examine the validity of applying institutional analysis theory as done by Robert Wade. In almost all tanks in the upper part, water is controlled through a sophisticated water rationing system, whereas in the management of every tank located in the lower part of the catchment such institutions are absent, although two villages had nirppacis in the past. While Mosse admits that the analysis of tank institutions in terms of ecological variables and individual incentives is useful, he stresses the historical influences of external interests in the organization of agricultural production and the tank irrigation system. From the point of view of social agents, he argues, “it would be quite wrong, as Wade does, to attempt to separate out the ecological-economic from the social and symbolic aspects of common property systems and to apply an institutional analysis only to the former”.

A shocking argument presented in this book is that tank repair work by village communities called “kudimaramat” was not a traditional institution in pre-colonial India but an invention constructed by the British colonial bureaucracy. The colonial government did not, as standard environmental narratives insist, take over and undermine an institution belonging to the people. Rather the government invented a village tradition in the image of the needs of the state’s irrigation administration to mobilize unpaid village labour to repair and maintain tanks and the irrigation system. While it is difficult to prove the non-existence of an institution in general, and while Mosse's argument that considers the tradition of village tank repair work as an invention by the colonial government also needs further evidence, it is a stimulating and plausible hypothesis in reconstructing the history of tank irrigation in Tamilnadu.

Another point that needs further elaboration concerns the argument that the introduction of tube-wells by richer classes of farmers not only weakened their concern to maintain the tank irrigation system but also contributed to the lowering of the water level of tanks by extracting underground water, and Mosse's comparison of the villages in the upper and lower catchment area also suggests a difference in the extent of tube-well irrigation, the influence of which should have been further discussed.

Even if the control of irrigation by villages was not a traditional institution that was destroyed by the colonial and post-colonial states, as understood by NGOs, a local community of inhabitants like a village can be a possible agent for maintaining and improving the local irrigation system once it is fully democratized with an egalitarian type of social structure. Nevertheless, the empowerment of lower classes of people that has so far contributed to the decline of the tank irrigation system, as evidenced by this book, could be interpreted as a necessary step towards a new formation in which communities create a new rule of water of an egalitarian type. This is another point that requires further elaboration.
One dollar in currency must be worth one dollar, whether it is in the form of a one-dollar coin, or one hundred one-cent coins. When we discuss money, it is the total amount that concerns us, not the denomination, since there is a broad acceptance that a one-dollar coin can be completely converted into one hundred cents. This belief, however, was not common until comparatively recently, even in Western Europe. Before the nineteenth century, Western Europe suffered serious instability in the exchange rate between coins of large and small denominations. Thus, as the title of the book under review denotes, small change was not a minor matter, but rather a “big problem.”

In order to present their interpretations to fit the historical facts, the authors divide the quantity theory of money into two parts: small denomination currency and large denomination currency, since “small coins can be used for large purchases, but large coins cannot be used for large purchases” (p. 146). Contrary to the prevailing concept, therefore, we are being warned that a large denomination currency should not be considered to substitute perfectly for a small one. Starting from this proposition, the authors have attempted to solve certain “mysteries” relating to small coins in Western European history.

Obviously it has not been only Western Europe that has experienced severe fluctuations in exchange rates among currencies. Countries in Asia have depended significantly on small denomination currencies in the past: the history of currency in China and surrounding countries cannot be described without reference to the copper cash, and Southeast Asia too has a history of the use of small currency, both cowries (shell money) and copper coins. Herein lies the reason that this book merits review in a journal dealing with Asian Studies.

In content, the book ranges from the minting system of medieval Europe to the establishment of the gold-standard system in the nineteenth century, and it includes discussion of the technologies of minting, monetary theories in Western European history, and the models the authors have devised to fit the facts. In the following paragraphs, I hope that readers will allow me to focus on the comparative aspects, leaving inherent examinations to other specialists.

Among the “mysterious” facts that this book deals with, the most important is that in Western Europe after the thirteenth century, the shortage of small-denomination coins coincided with the period such coins depreciated. Why should shortage have accompanied depreciation rather than appreciation? The authors suggest that the market managed shortages by temporarily giving a low return on small-denomination coins. Large-denomination coins with a greater return appreciated in terms of coins of smaller denomination. In other words, the exchange rate of large coins in terms of small-coins continued to depreciate. The only remedy to stop the process was to adopt token currencies convertible with unit monies into small denominations. This is the “standard formula” that was gradually adopted in the course of Western European history. According to the authors, realizing this standard formula needed innovations in minting to prevent counterfeiting.

Indeed, “small coins make purchases large coins cannot” (p. 335). However, historical facts, particularly in East Asia, suggest that small coins are not suitable either for transporting over long distances or for accumulating as assets. When the fineness of the small coins was the same as large ones, we need not stress either of these points. However, even in medieval Europe, which depended mainly on silver, small coins contained more non-precious metal than did large ones. In other words, small denominations cannot easily do what large ones can, even if, as the authors stress, the authorities do not impose limitations on the amount of small coins that could be used. What we need is to have a precise understanding of the complementary relationships among currencies.
C. Cipolla, who first paid attention to “the big problem of petty coins,” attributed the complementary aspects between small and large coins to social class differences. Indeed, among certain classes, such as artisans and merchants, there were differences in the frequency that small or large coins were used (Cipolla 1956, pp. 26, 34). However this observation suffices only to describe the situation in city states.

Unlike the cases that the book under review covers, there are known to be a number of instances where small denomination currency appreciated. In China, whenever peasants bought products after the harvest, copper cash appreciated in terms of silver, as did the cowry in Bengal. Small currencies tended to appreciate over the long term in India and China throughout the eighteenth century, as the rural market grew in both societies. Thus, though the shortage of small currencies was not particular to Western Europe, but universal in Asia as well, this shortage often coincided with their appreciation, both seasonally and over the long term. Why should the shortage of small coins cause appreciation in some cases and depreciation in others?

In spite of the contrasting situation described above, Western Europe and Asia had much in common regarding the shortage of small coins. For example, in 1333 the French king ordered that a third of all privately-owned silverware be minted to provide small coins (p. 135), while many similar orders can be found in Chinese records restricting the possession of copperware or the production of copper statues, and encouraging that they be minted for their copper content. Again, in 1347 the French king permitted the city officials in Narbonne to cut coins in half, because the poorer classes were suffering severely from the lack of small change to make small purchases. Such a relationship between urban demand and the creation of a cheaper coinage can also be found in Chinese history. Similarities in many aspects sharpen the contrast between the point of divergence, whether the money then appreciated or depreciated.

In fact, large as well as small denomination currencies appreciated during the harvest season. The silver dollar appreciated in terms of the silver tael in the purchase of raw silk in the Lower Yangzi, as did the Arcot rupee in terms of the Sicca rupee after harvest in Bengal. Both the silver tael and the Sicca rupee were available for the payment of taxes across the empires, while the silver dollar and the Arcot rupee were provided for use in local markets. The crucial point is their relationship with fluctuating demand in rural markets as well as differences in denominations.

In societies where small currencies reach rural markets, like China, shortages of small coins and their appreciation can occur easily, since strong seasonal fluctuations in demand for coins in rural markets and the difficulty in collecting dispersed fractional currencies discourage those currencies from being re-floated at upper-level markets. This gap between upper- and lower-level markets creates complementary relationships among currencies. By contrast, after the fall of the Roman Empire, Western Europe did no have sufficiently small coins in circulation, so that they rarely reached rural markets, where commodity currencies, like linen on one Baltic island (p. 111), mediated daily transactions.

The study of monetary thought in this book impressed upon me that the authorities in Western Europe seriously considered the relationship between debtors and creditors. This possibly reflects that societies here depended more on lump payments, whereas China was dependent on spot transactions using fractional cash. In simple terms, in one society the use of credit worked in complement with large coins, while in the other fractional cash was complementary with large denominations. It seems to me that the depreciation of small coins during times when they are in short supply suggests the dominance of non-cash transactions in rural markets, regardless of credit or commodity currencies such as grain or cloth.

Besides the depreciation of small coins, another distinctive point is that in England the exchange rate between large and small coins had already been stabilized in the eighteenth century, before the government made private coinage illegal in 1817 (p. 303). Why was this?
This book, in general, lays stress on the technology of minting. However, the stabilization mentioned above had already occurred before the steam press was invented in 1787 (p. 326). As this book also shows, the introduction of new cylinder press technology to Castile in the seventeenth century did not succeed in stabilizing the exchange rates among currencies. Although China adopted a method to cast copper cash more than two thousand years ago, which was more expensive than the hammering technique used in the Euro-Mediterranean world, the monetary history of China is dominated by the competence between official and counterfeit coins.

In Japan, by contrast, by the end of the eighteenth century silver had almost become a subsidiary coin, fixed against a gold coin, although this change was accompanied by few technological innovations in minting. This was a time when the number of rural markets began to decrease, while castle towns were increasing their influence throughout each domain (see Kuroda 2002). In England, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, lower-level markets were filled with various small token coins. In extreme cases, “the circulation of each token was limited geographically to a few streets” (p. 267). Despite their heterogeneous appearance, local tokens in circulation were convertible to legal tender available over a broad area. Facts suggest, therefore, “the triumph of the standard formula” was achieved rather by vertical unification between upper and lower level markets than by new minting technology.

This important work makes clear what a big issue small currency was in history. It contributes in particular to opening a way to free us from the concept that “silent about the physical object” (p. 263), money must be aggregated. Attention to asymmetric aspects among currencies paid by such a leading scholar of the rational expectation theory as T.J. Sargent will surely encourage further studies on monetary history. I venture to suggest that small currencies in world history imply further and larger issues than this book covers.

References