

flourishing of public assertions of Chinese identity contradict the expectations of assimilationist models.

The spatial and temporal reaches of the study and the combination of materials from fieldwork and archival research (drawing on works in Chinese, Thai, French, and English) are impressive. The account of the caravan trade is interesting in and of itself, and the book makes a strong case for long-term, historically oriented research on issues of ethnic identity. In the process, it bridges the often separate academic domains of China and Southeast Asia specialists. For all these reasons the book should both find a broad readership and stimulate further analytical sojourns.

HJORLEIFUR JONSSON

Arizona State University

The Politics of Environment in Southeast Asia: Resources and Resistance. Edited by PHILIP HIRSCH and CAROL WARREN. New York: Routledge, 1998. 325 pp. \$85.00 (cloth); \$27.99 (paper).

The contributors to this edited volume treat the environment and environmentalism as a window through which researchers can explore broader processes of social, political, and economic change. The authors eloquently demonstrate that environmentalist discourses are multifaced—they can be used as a legitimizing tool for local opposition to state control over resources as well as a legitimizing tool for the more powerful elite with vested interests in economic growth and centralized control over resources. Thus, these authors make the critical point that while environmentalism underlies many of the conflicts over resource use, the word is ambiguous and can be employed by different social groups to meet radically different ends.

The book is organized thematically around six resource-related issues: large dam construction, forestry, industrialization and mining development, pollution and environmental health, tourism development, and the politics of response. Case studies are drawn from several locations throughout Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Burma, and the Philippines. The case studies collectively demonstrate two interrelated issues. While the appropriation of resources by the powerful and wealthy at the expense of the marginalized and the poor is a common occurrence throughout Southeast Asia, local people are not passive victims of these changes. Instead, the case studies illustrate the multitude of ways in which local people respond to these large scale changes, at times even altering the direction of national and international resource development projects.

What is striking about these case studies is the commonality of experiences despite historical and national differences. Across the region we see case after case illustrate how the environmentalist rhetoric has been used to exclude subaltern groups from traditional sources of livelihoods. For instance, Bryant concludes chapter 6 by stating that in the context of colonial and postcolonial forestry in Burma, “the guiding political ideology may have changed, but the central link between politics and forestry remains the same” (p. 119). In other words, despite the differences between the colonial state, which was ideologically committed to a capitalist development path, and the postcolonial Burmese state, which is committed to a socialist development path, the central preoccupation of the state remains exploiting the country’s forests for revenue and foreign exchange.

Yet, despite the commonality of experiences, the studies also demonstrate the wide range of responses from different localities with varying political-economic and ecological circumstances. The authors of this volume dispel the myth that environmentalism is a luxury of the middle class. They effectively demonstrate that the poor and marginalized also can mobilize environmentalist discourses to defend and reclaim land, forest, water, minerals, and healthy living and working conditions. This view of environmentalism is critical in that it sheds light on the notion that environmentalist discourses are not only a tool of the powerful elite. They can also be mobilized in defense of subaltern groups against larger, dominant interests.

In general, the authors favor large scale political-economic analysis of environmental issues over more local and detailed cultural analyses of the issues surrounding resource use. It cannot be denied that a political-economic framework for analysis is critical because it highlights the broader issues of unequal power relations that frame debates over resource use. Yet the result of this analytical focus is that at times the local-level actors appear to be a homogenous group, lacking social differentiation. Differences between the gender, generations, ethnicity, and class are sometimes too quickly glossed over. Two chapters in the book are notable exceptions, chapter 12 by Warren and chapter 14 by Yap. Warren's chapter provides a fresh look at issues of resort development in Bali, emphasizing that "in Indonesia, environmental issues have become highly politicized, not only because the environment became . . . a surrogate for the expression of dissent on broader issues, but also because they are ultimately connected with questions of cultural identity and social security" (p. 229). Her close analysis of the cultural symbols associated with social action against resort development provides an alternative way to look at resource conflicts that is underexplored elsewhere in the book. Additionally, Yap's chapter on local initiative in the Philippines draws critical attention to the ways in which local people foster connections to multiple (and at times competing) social and political institutions in order to better position themselves as the political, economic, and social terrain shifts under their feet. This detailed attention to the unexpected ways in which coalitions form, break up, and realign across social groupings provides a highly differentiated and locally specific view of the ways in which local social groups form in response to the loss of control over land and natural resources.

For anyone interested in obtaining a deeper understanding of natural resource conflicts in Southeast Asia, *The Politics of Environment in Southeast Asia: Resources and Resistance* is essential reading. However, I would encourage readers to read this largely political-economic study together with others studies on environmental politics in Southeast Asia which focus more on the cultural logic of resource conflicts. Read together, such alternative and complementary frameworks for analysis of environmental issues highlight the tensions that are emerging region wide in the struggles to control natural resources.

AMITY A. DOOLITTLE
Yale University

A Moment of Anguish: Singapore in Malaysia and the Politics of Disengagement.
By ALBERT LAU. Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1998. viii, 312 pp.
\$25.00 (paper).

Albert Lau's study is an important contribution to studies of Malaysian and Singaporean politics. Singapore's separation from Malaysia in 1965, after only two