

seen with suspicious eyes, regardless of their contents. This is due to the unstable status of Japan in the region, deriving from several factors, such as historical memories and the country's "Western" identity in the area of human rights and democracy.

Regional academic collaboration is indispensable in improving on existing provisions to meet the challenges in building East Asian community. In particular, it is essential in devising ways of addressing the difference in the costs to state sovereignty borne by the Southeast and Northeast Asian countries. Effective regional cooperation involves sovereignty costs. In this regard, implicit in the draft charter is the erroneous assumption that such costs will be distributed equally among the EAC members. In reality, the Southeast Asian countries will have to bear the greater cost in a framework in which they will have to negotiate with the greater powers in Northeast Asia. To address this difference, inputs from Southeast Asian academics will be crucial.

In addition, academic cooperation is needed to devise additional measures to incorporate the voices of the people into East Asian regionalism. The above provision for engaging NGOs can be considered a means to incorporate these voices so as to make the EAC more democratic. Yet, in East Asia, the links between NGOs and the people's voices are not always automatic, as the former do not always represent the latter. In many cases, NGOs avoid attacking official policies, in order to maintain their close ties with the governments. Furthermore, some NGOs are mere subsidiaries of authoritarian regimes. Therefore, additional measures need to be conceptualized, and this inevitably requires expertise in Asian local societies. Ultimately, the construction of an East Asian community involves not only inter-governmental cooperation but also academic collaboration across the region.

*University of Bristol, Bristol, United Kingdom*

HIRO KATSUMATA

**ASIA ON TOUR: Exploring the Rise of Asian Tourism.** *Edited by Tim Winter, Peggy Teo, and T.C. Chang.* London and New York: Routledge, 2008. xiv, 360 pp. (Tables, figures.) US\$44.95, paper. ISBN 978-0-415-46086-6.

This book comprises 23 chapters and, given this, many readers will find material that will interest them. Certainly the book opens with a stimulating observation about reactions to a poster which featured a young Japanese male sunbathing on a beach. The metaphors perceived as inherent in this portrayal set a tone for many of the contributions, for often they speak of an author's direct experience. Some are derived from ethnographic studies or long periods of residence in the destinations described. However, the description of the young Japanese sunbather also indicates a number

of issues to which Tim Winter alludes in his final summary, namely the analytical frame often employed is derived from Western schools of thought, notably those associated with postmodernism analyzed through Western frames of “otherness.” This is not true of all contributions, but those that do not utilize such frames tend to the descriptive and, while we hear the voices of local people and, at times, the tourists, in some ways the voices are decontextualized from the wider cultural milieu.

One problem, as Michael Hall notes in his contribution, is that while we think we can identify “where” Asia is, on closer examination Asia becomes increasingly nebulous. For example, as Hall notes, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia includes Saudi Arabia, and I suspect many would not immediately locate this country as being “Asian.” Consequently, because the different chapters concentrate on various member states, one becomes aware that any consideration of tourism in Asia as a whole is indeed an ambitious project. Hence, in spite of the editors’ efforts, a somewhat piecemeal series of chapters emerges that represent the interests and projects of the individual authors rather than a coherent sense of what constitutes Asia. Perhaps this is the truth of Asia, namely, that it is a heterogeneous concept.

The editors have identified five themes. The first is entitled “Challenging Conventions.” The others are “Emerging Markets, (Re)scripting Places,” “National Imaginings and Tourism Development,” “Revis(it)ing Heritage: Dissonance or Harmony,” and “Tourism and New Social Networks.” As a reviewer, I am not familiar with all the locations mentioned and hence my comments reflect my own research interests. I did feel that Jenny Chio spoke clearly in, “The Internal Expansion of China: Tourism and the Production of Distance.” Similarly Thirumaran’s chapter, “Renewing Bonds in an Age of Asian Travel: Indian Tourists in Bali,” is interesting for the reported ambivalences that Indian tourists had about attending Balinese dance performances based on (for Indian tourists) familiar Hindi themes, and how this context, familiar but different, from the perspectives of Balinese performers and Indian audience permitted an exchange of views not possible with other groups of tourists.

This latter chapter was an example of where an author made explicit reference to a non-Western mode of cultural thinking and referenced it as being an important. One observation that might be made of the book is that while it addresses issues of emerging modernity located in older cultures, those older heritages are not often analyzed in their own right. The great religious belief systems of Asia—namely Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism—are relatively silent, as is the hybridism that results from a fusion of such cultures with emergent political states not based in Western liberal democratic traditions. The silence is not complete, as evidenced by Robert Shepherd’s chapter on Han tourism in Tibet, but many of the studies focus on a description of arts, events and experiences that are

largely separated from their wider socio-political contexts. The papers tend to a research tradition based on constructionist, interpretive paradigms that implicitly refute metanarratives. This is a perfectly legitimate mode of research, but a conceptual tension exists between the globalization to which many writers refer but do not analyze and the absence of a consideration of the political and economic regimes that exist in Asia. Another absence within the book is an analysis of tourism in the major Asian cities of Beijing, Shanghai, or Mumbai; rather the analysis tends to concentrate on the rural and small scale.

Overall, I was able to relate to the findings derived from research about places and countries that I knew. At one level the chapters can be likened to informed travelogues based on personal involvement and, for the most part, the authors tell their stories well. The book is to be welcomed as a contribution to the growing works about Asian tourism and is generally free from the dry statistics on the growing numbers of visitors or exhortations about the importance of Asian tourism. This is a book that I can gladly recommend to those interested in tourism in Asia.

*University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand*

CHRIS RYAN

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