

Near the beginning of his first chapter on Vichy, Jennings notes that the Vichy regime's role in Indochina has almost completely been overlooked. He is correct. He also advances a new view (which I happen to share) that there is a link between Vichy rule and nationalism. But then "in attempting to rectify . . . [a] historiographical imbalance" (p. 133) in which the Vichy contribution is ignored, he consciously excludes much discussion of Japan's wartime role in the region. This is baffling. The Vichy regime in Indochina ruled at the discretion of the Japanese military until March 9, 1945. The Japanese perpetuated this arrangement to free up their resources for elsewhere. Furthermore, beneath a public veneer of cooperation, the Japanese military contested French influence over the indigenous population. It reached out to indigenous leaders as well as to a variety of Buddhist groups, the Hoa Hao, and the Cao Dai. Finally, the Vichy regime had to give in to Japanese exactions that were not in its self-interest. Japanese demands for foodstuffs and other products severely distorted the local economy and exacerbated the famines of 1945. Discussion of such issues is missing from Jennings's book.

Although Japan's influence on Indochina cannot be ignored, I agree with Jennings that Vichy ideology enabled Vietnamese nationalism. This provocative view is not found in the previous literature, as it conflicts with the revolutionary and nationalist accounts of modern Vietnam. Jennings argues persuasively that Vichy's "National Revolution" did not always operate as intended in Indochina. Vichy attacks on French republican ideals and the exaltation of indigenous customs, practices, and beliefs "served to sharpen a new nationalist rhetoric in many Indochinese circles" (p. 155). Jennings also observes that Vichy ideology could easily be subverted to serve the cause of those actually opposed to the regime. (An examination of some of the Vietnamese-language material published in this period bears Jennings out.) Vichy influence did not simply remain at the level of ideology. Jennings also shows how Vietnamese enthusiastically participated in Vichy efforts to mobilize the populace. But, all these comments should come with a caveat. I have examined many of the Vichy files on Indochina, and it struck me that they had a heavy Hanoi bias and did not give a broad, nuanced picture of how Vietnamese (or other inhabitants of French Indochina) appropriated the Vichy message.

In the end, a nagging question remains: How much should we credit Vichy for the great transformation of Vietnam that followed? Did it provide the "seed" for the changes that followed? No. Was it a catalyst of these changes? Yes, but only one of many. For the vast majority of inhabitants of French Indochina, the Vichy period had an extremely limited ideological impact. One is led to wonder if the Vichy impact on Madagascar and Guadeloupe was as significant as Jennings asserts. These criticisms aside, we should still applaud Jennings for boldly attempting a comparative study of Vichy actions in the tropics while recognizing that the story that he tells is only part of the complex, transnational refashioning of colonial societies and cultures.

SHAWN MCHALE  
*George Washington University*

*Ethnicity in Asia*. Edited by COLIN MACKERRAS. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003. xvi, 232 pp. \$100.00 (cloth); \$29.95 (paper).

Colin Mackerras's edited volume *Ethnicity in Asia* provides a broad state-by-state survey of the constitution and configuration of ethnicity throughout most of East and

Southeast Asia. In each chapter, contributors provide a general sketch of the constitution of ethnicity in one contemporary nation-state along with some of the central social or policy issues in which ethnicity is seen as a problem in the context of that nation-state, ranging from interethnic conflict and genocide to illiteracy rates. Mackerras notes in his preface to the volume that "it is not designed as a path-breaking study, . . . [but] the authors hope that it will prove useful and interesting to the general reader, including journalists, workers in government, and undergraduate students" (p. xv). As such, there are a number of points to recommend this volume. For a work drawing on a dozen different authors, it is remarkably well balanced in its coverage of ethnicity in a wide variety of nation-states, from Japan, with its supposed ethnic homogeneity, to Malaysia's explicit and overtly politicized ethnic diversity. At the same time, this is not a mere cookie-cutter exercise. Each contribution provides unique insights into the volume's main theme based on the diverse experiences and histories of the eleven nation-states covered by the authors.

Although I would recommend this text to both specialists and the sort of general reader that Mackerras and his contributors are targeting, I would do so with several important caveats. All these caveats are related to the limited scope of the book. Rather than being generally about ethnicity *per se*, the volume is really about the administration of ethnicity by nation-states in the late twentieth century. This is a quite reasonable scope for a volume of this sort; however, it could have been made more explicit in the introduction. In this context, the volume does not provide much insight into ethnicity at the level of theory, it does not say much about the crucial question of how ethnicity is subjectively experienced, the relationship of ethnicity to power is mentioned but not dealt with in detail, and ethnic identities are for the most part treated ahistorically.

As Mackerras notes in his introduction (pp. 9–13), the meaning of the term "ethnicity" is far from being analytically or descriptively clear. The introduction succinctly covers many of the different ways in which scholars and others have attempted to define ethnicity (such as the "primordialist" vs. "instrumentalist" debate) and discusses the preference for "ethnicity" over competing terms (such as "nation," "race," "minority," and "tribe"). However, Mackerras leaves the questions open as to what ethnicity means, apart from signifying a group of people who are believed (either by themselves or by others) to share some vague set of characteristics. Rather than trying to explain what ethnicity is or might be and given that there is something that we might call ethnicity or ethnic difference, the volume asks how different nation-states deal with it.

As a work on the administration of ethnicity (by nation-states) in Asia, the volume has relatively little to say about the subjective experience of identity by those who claim certain identities or to whom they are ascribed. Closely related to this omission is the largely implicit argument in the volume about the relationship of ethnicity to power. Several authors, such as Kirsten Refsing (chap. 3), do explicitly state that "when we talk about minorities, we are talking about power relations more than about anything else. Who has the power and who has usurped the right to define what is 'ethnic' and what is 'mainstream'?" (p. 60). Writing of Indonesia, Gerry van Klinken also raises the political dimensions of ethnicity (p. 73). For the most part, however, these are asides to the volume as a whole. Moreover, these discussions do not address the crucial distinction between power, as Mao Zedong would have it, "coming from the barrel of a gun" and power in Michel Foucault's sense, the generation of attitudes and ways of being in the world through particular discourses and institutions. Clearly

both of these types or aspects of power are at work in the eleven case studies of this volume.

The volume also contains very little history of ethnic identities per se. All the contributions provide useful historical context; however, they focus primarily on the historical context within which ethnic groups act rather than the historical construction and transformation of various ethnic identities. Most authors indicate that the identities about which they are writing are historically constituted—for example, in China the “Han” suddenly appear at some point during the Qing dynasty (p. 15) and in Singapore the quartet of “Chinese, Malay, Indian and Other” homogenizes a much greater diversity of identities (p. 101). But apart from such nods to the conditions under which these identities are historically constituted, there is little attention to their historical reinvention and transformation. It is as if ethnic identities can be born and can die (through assimilation or genocide), but they do not transform, change, or evolve. To cite but one example, in the chapter by Bertil Lintner, the Burmans who made their way down from the Tibetan plateau into the Irrawaddy Plain from the ninth to eleventh centuries (p. 175) appear to constitute the self-same group with self-same identity as the Burmans who dominate the contemporary nation-state of Myanmar. Given most recent work on the history of ethnic identities, one would doubt that the story is that simple. By contrast, the most insightful work on ethnicity over the past decade or more focuses precisely on the historical transformation and political mobilization of ethnic-identity signifiers (such as Anthony Reid’s “Understanding *Melayu* [Malay] as a Source of Diverse Modern Identities,” *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 32[3][2001]:295–313).

Nevertheless, read with these caveats in mind, *Ethnicity in Asia* is an extremely useful contribution. For scholars whose specialized knowledge is often confined within the boundaries of one or a handful of particular nation-states, this volume offers a very useful, broad survey of ethnicity in Asia, with contributions of consistent scope and quality. The writing style is also consistently accessible to general readers. Each chapter concludes with a good, and in most cases annotated, set of suggestions for further reading, which in many cases will address the various caveats that I have listed above. If read in conjunction with other texts that address some of these more complex and complicated aspects of the idea of “ethnicity,” this book would provide an excellent comparative text for undergraduate courses on ethnicity, nationalism, politics, and related themes.

ERIC C. THOMPSON  
*National University of Singapore*

*Hybrid Modernities: Architecture and Representation at the 1931 Colonial Exposition, Paris.* By PATRICIA A. MORTON. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000. ix, 380 pp. \$45.00 (cloth); \$24.95 (paper).

The International Colonial Exhibition, which attracted almost thirty million visitors to Vincennes in the months between May and November 1931, has already been the subject of numerous publications. Patricia A. Morton, an architectural historian and professor in the Department of Art History at the University of California, Riverside, invites us in this book to rediscover this staging of “greater France.” She does so through an abundantly illustrated analysis consisting of 170 photographs, maps, and blueprints, all of which are pleasantly presented and shrewdly brought together.