

study, the author then explicates the influence of language contact on Sümi during the tribe's frequent migration.

Uta Reinöhl (ch. 9) discusses the classification of three Mishmi languages. In addition to an etymological investigation of tribe and language names of the Mishmi languages, the author contributes to establishing a phylogenetic tree of Proto-Kera'a-Tawrä, with Kera'a and Tawrä being its bifurcating branches. The Kera'a languages consist of Mithu and Midu, where Midu is undergoing an unusual innovation of consonant aphaeresis in polysyllabic words. Tawrä, on the other hand, is the most conservative for preserving phonetic features lost in Kera'a.

Scott DeLancey's paper (ch. 10) identifies an innovation that differentiates South Central and Naga Belt languages from other Central branch languages through a comparison of first-person pronominals. In these two subbranches, the pronominal reflexes of first person singular have been commonly replaced by the corresponding plural forms, either inclusive (Naga Belt) or exclusive (South Central). After an elucidation of possible socio-pragmatic motivations of this shared innovation, DeLancey tentatively proposes that first person in Proto-Kuki-Naga exhibits a register-determined alternation to denote singular by the two plural forms in certain socio-pragmatic contexts.

Linda Konnerth (ch. 11) reviews pre-existing proposals of classification of South Central languages, with which she integrates new materials from the previously neglected Northwestern subgroup. An updated list of sound correspondences in onsets is then given, along with a brief discussion of carrying out subgrouping through morphosyntactic features.

Gwendolyn Hyslop (ch. 12) traces the development of certain verb suffixes in Kurtöp and argues that not all of them are inherited from Proto-East Bodish but from borrowing or morphological innovation, the latter of which has two diachronic origins: grammaticalization from clause-chaining construction, and reanalysis of nominalization.

The book successfully presents current advances in linguistic studies in East Himalaya with reference to anthropology. It is recommended to linguists and anthropologists who are interested in this currently flourishing field.

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## **Andrew B. Liu: *Tea War: A History of Capitalism in China and India***

**(Studies of the Weatherhead East Asia Institute of Columbia University.) xi, 360 pp. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022. \$50. ISBN 978 0 30024373 4.**

Nathan W. Hill

Trinity College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland  
[nathan.hill@tcd.ie](mailto:nathan.hill@tcd.ie)

This book tells the story of the tea industry in China and India during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The overall storyline is a zigzag movement in the prominence of the two regions. At the curtain's open, India does not yet participate in commercial tea cultivation



whereas China globally predominates. Next, the British introduce tea cultivation into Assam, directly copying Chinese production methods, partly with the help of Chinese experts. Around 1904 Indian tea exports surpass those of China. By the 1930s, it was the Chinese – the book particularly tracks the career of Wu Juenong – who were studying Assam in order to introduce new methods back home in China. Alongside the descriptive account of these changes and the technical production techniques and regimes of labour discipline that underpin them, the book attempts a two-part theoretical intervention on capitalism, arguing namely: (1) that capitalism was born global and embraces coercive labour regimes, i.e. free labour is not capitalism's *differentia specifica*; and (2) that in both regions the ideological embrace or rejection of classical political economy by tea industry theorists arose from the vantage point on the world economy of the writer in question. Put differently, the infrastructural facts of the tea trade gave rise to the superstructure of tea's ideologues. This materialist account of the reception of Smithian political economy in Asia is fascinating and original; to my mind it is the core of the work's contribution.

In contrast, the argument that capitalism was always global in scope and compatible with forced labour is a dead horse in no need of a fresh beating. For a work squarely within the Marxist intellectual tradition (citing Robert Brenner, David Harvey, Moishe Postone, Anwar Shaikh, etc.), I was surprised that Liu nowhere acknowledges the fit between his account and the emphasis by Rosa Luxemburg's and Vladimir I. Lenin's on the need for capitalism to use unfree labour outside the metropole. He cites neither author.

Content with the observation that capitalism does not require free labour, Liu makes no attempt to theorize the place of both unfree and free labour within capital's laws of motion. In a contribution too new for Liu to have consulted, Søren Mau provides a useful theoretical framework for why and when capitalism demands slavery (*Mute Compulsion*, 2023). Mau distinguishes between three forms of power: political, ideological, and economic. Political power is the use of violence to compel. Ideological power is the use of persuasion to coax consent. When market mediation interposes itself between a person and the preconditions of her continued life, this is economic power; it requires neither guns nor fine words. Using this framework, the tea growers of the Wuyi mountains used ideological power to convince their workers to labour as intensively as possible, and the tea growers of Assam compelled their workers to labour with the threat of violence. In both cases, the absence of a class of free labourers meant that capital could not avail itself of economic power per se. This framework accounts both for how Chinese and Indian tea cultivation already took part in the capitalist world system and for how they were not yet part of the capitalist world system. This distinction parallels Marx's contrast between formal and real subsumption.

Liu's zigzag story of technological innovation and labour productivity increases between China and India fits perfectly with Charles Post's work on the place of slavery in the development of US capitalism (*The American Road to Capitalism*, 2011). Post points out that by treating labour power as constant capital rather than variable capital, regimes of unfree labour have no incentive to increase productivity through technological innovation. In Post's view such regimes only innovate when they expand to new geographic areas or switch to new crops. Post gives the examples of the expansion of sugar cultivation to Cuba and the switch from tobacco to cotton in the southern states of the USA. With the help of Liu's study, we can now add tea in China and tea in India as two further examples of this pattern. The elegant fit between Post's theory and Liu's case studies further suggests that in Liu's attempt to decentre capitalism from the West and from wage labour he has overplayed his hand.

Despite these ways in which Liu might have better contextualized and theorized his contribution, the book is an unambiguous contribution, both to East Asian economic history and to the history of capitalism. The detailed treatment of the burning of incense sticks to set the pace of work in tea production alone constitutes a valuable contribution to our understanding of the historical emergence in a non-European context of “socially necessary abstract labor time” – the lynchpin of Marx’s entire system.

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## **Paul Sidwell and Mathias Jenny (eds): *The Languages and Linguistics of Mainland Southeast Asia***

**(The World of Linguistics, volume 8.) xv, 968 pp. Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2021. ISBN 978 3 11055606 3.**

James Kirby

Institute of Phonetics and Speech Processing, Munich, Germany  
[jkirby@phonetik.uni-muenchen.de](mailto:jkirby@phonetik.uni-muenchen.de)

Running to nearly 1,000 pages, Paul Sidwell and Mathias Jenny’s *The Languages and Linguistics of Mainland Southeast Asia* (LLMSEA) is the latest entry in de Gruyter’s World of Linguistics series, the stated aim of which is to present not only the major achievements in linguistic research in each geographical area, but also topics that are controversial or under-researched. Given the explosive growth in scholarship on Southeast Asian languages and linguistics in the past 50 years, one may wonder how LLMSEA distinguishes itself from other recent handbooks focused on the region, such as Enfield’s *The Languages of Mainland Southeast Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 2021) or the present editors’ own two-volume *The Handbook of Austroasiatic Languages* (Leiden: Brill, 2014). Unlike most traditional handbooks, which are organized in terms of sketch grammars of specific languages or typological surveys of particular linguistic features, LLMSEA stands out by focusing on broader language groupings and more general themes, such as language contact or classification, alongside historiographies tracing the different research traditions of Mainland Southeast Asian linguistics and contributions on the historical circumstances that led to the creation of Mainland Southeast Asia as a renowned “linguistic area”.

The chapters in LLMSEA can be categorized broadly into six sections. The first three chapters are devoted to Neolithic Southeast Asia, a discussion of linguistic homelands and dispersal histories, and the origins and spread of cereal agriculture. These provide brief but thorough summaries of our current understanding of Mainland Southeast Asian prehistory, much of which may be new to readers with primarily linguistic, rather than historical or area-studies, backgrounds.

The six historiographical chapters on the scholarship traditions of Mainland Southeast Asian languages are both unusual and welcome. The bulk of each of the chapters on Austroasiatic, Tai-Kadai, Hmong-Mien, and Tibeto-Burman linguistics is devoted to citing and reviewing important scholarly contributions to the study of those phyla; however, some chapters also include considerable detail about people, places and events that, while no doubt familiar to some practitioners, may be unknown to a younger generation