

Abstracts of Articles

“The Litany of ‘The World’s Beginning’: A Hindu-Javanese Purification Text” by Nancy J. Smith-Hefner

“Tengger” are the only Javanese to maintain an explicitly non-Islamic, Hindu tradition dating from Majapahit times. The Tengger litany of “The World’s Beginning” shows an astonishing similarity to a Balinese exorcism prayer of the same name. The parallel suggests a substantial link between early Balinese and Tengger traditions. This paper discusses the form and meaning of the litany, its role in Tengger ritual, and its significance for our understanding of Javanese history.

“Who Profits from Custom? Jural Constraints on Land Accumulation and on Social Stratification in Benguet Province, Northern Philippines” by Melanie G. Wiber

This paper diachronically examines how members of one upland Philippine community have utilized conflicts between customary and state laws in individual economic strategies. The property law provisions of both legal codes have been misunderstood, transformed and in the case of communal ownership, invented in their appreciation to property disputes. There is little agreement among laymen or specialists over the provisions and how they should be applied. The consequences of this “jural jungle” have been interesting for social stratification and the distribution of productive resources.

“Sarawak Malay Attitudes Towards Education During the Period of Brooke Rule, 1841–1946” by Ooi Keat Gin

Sarawak Malay attitudes towards education during the Brooke period (1841–1946) were motivated by socio-economic considerations. The Malays perceived a clerical position in the Brooke civil service that provided economic security and social recognition to be the primary objective of formal schooling. Therefore, Government Malay schools which stressed a practical curriculum in the vernacular aimed at improving their traditional subsistence livelihood received little support from the Malay community.

“Prostitution and the Politics of Venereal Disease: Singapore, 1870–98” by James Francis Warren

Single male emigration as well as prostitution were important phenomena in the history of late 19th century Singapore. The system of registration of brothels in Singapore was part of a larger regulatory code for the compulsory medical examination of prostitutes, The Contagious Diseases Ordinance. There was a protracted conflict between the Chinese Protectorate and the Colonial Office

throughout the 1880s over the C.D.O. and brothel prostitution. Moral reformers, feminists and libertarians in Victorian England managed to have the C.D.O. repealed by 1887 with grave consequences for Singapore Chinese society. Their efforts resulted in the spread of syphilis and gonorrhoea on a pandemic basis in the community by 1890.

“The ‘Chinese Confucian’ and the ‘Chinese Buddhist’ in British Burma, 1881–1947”
by M.B. Hooker

Since 1893 the British had put in place a comprehensive legal system for Burma. The guiding principle of the judicial and legislative system was that each racial or religious group had the right to its own law in matters of religion and custom. But one group, the ‘Chinese Confucian’ escaped the legislation and in the period 1881–1947 caused the courts some considerable problems.

“Reform Symbolism of a Thai Middle-Class Sect: The Growth and Appeal of the Thammakai Movement” by Edwin Zehner

The Bangkok-based Thammakai movement has won an unusually large and influential following based primarily on a core of young and highly educated middle-class participants. This article provides an introduction to the movement’s origins, emphases, and salient themes, and it describes how the symbols representing those themes are presented at the annual *Makhabūchā* observance. The author suggests that Thammakai owes its successes to its moves to frame its teaching, its organizational patterns, and its publicity strategies in ways consistent with emerging Thai middle-class values.