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Ethnic Groups of Insular Southeast Asia

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Book Reviews

ETHNIC GROUPS OF INSULAR SOUTHEAST ASIA. Volume 2: Philippines and Formosa. Edited and compiled by Frank M. LeBar. New Haven, Conn: Human Relations Area Files Press, 1975. vi, 174 pages, \$15.00.

This is the second of a two-volume survey of the peoples and cultures of insular Southeast Asia. The first, which included the peoples of Indonesia, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, as well as the Malagasy speakers of Madagascar, was reviewed in an earlier issue of *Philippine Studies* (24[1976]: 242-43).

As in the first volume, a preface and table of contents (pp. iii-vi) precede the text (pp. 1-148), while a bibliography (pp. 149-63), an index of ethnic-group names (pp. 164-67), and seven black-and-white outline maps follow it. Both the text and the bibliography are rich in detail, presented in orderly fashion. The categories of information are, in general, the major headings of the HRAF's *Outline of Cultural Materials*.

The authors who contributed special entries are qualified anthropologists (as is LeBar himself): Casiño, Geoghegan, Hart, Jocano, Kiefer, Maceda (Marcelino, not Jose), Manuel, Mednick, Wood-Moore, Sather, Warren, Yengoyan, and the Rosaldos. Readers familiar with these names will rightly suspect that most entries concern Muslim and other non-Christian groups, who together constitute less than 10 percent of the Philippine population. As a matter of fact, the description of the numerically dominant Christian Filipinos (by Donn Hart) occupies only six-plus pages of the 106 pages devoted to the Philippines. The volume is really about minority peoples.

I am not aware of there being any completely satisfactory framework for classifying the culture-language groups of the Philippines, but I find LeBar's arrangement especially difficult. Not only are the peoples of Sulu (part 1) and the Batanes (part 3) considered apart from the Philippines (part 2), but there are headings of the same level for the Tausug, the Samal, Muslims, and Mindanao (including the Muslims of Lanao and Cotabato). The classification of Filipino peoples is an unsolved problem to which anthropologists should address themselves.

Another shortcoming of the volume is its being somewhat out of date. Though it was published in 1975, the latest bibliographic entries are as of 1972. This is especially noticeable when use is made of the 1960 Census of the Philippines — already 15 years old by the time this volume appeared, and superseded long since by the 1970 census. Hart's description of the sociopolitical organization of the Christian Filipinos, with its references to elections, a bicameral Congress, and a two-party system (pp. 21–22) make for especially nostalgic reading.

Because of my personal interests and experience, I was bound to find fault with a number of generalizations in the entry on Christian Filipinos. One such statement, made obliquely, is that "massive indirection" characterizes Christian Filipino behavior (p. 21). I am not sure just what Hart intended, but my reading (or misreading) of the sentence is that Christian Filipino behavior is frequently, or characteristically, evasive. Not so. This kind of behavior occurs, to be sure, but it appears in predictable situations and in a small minority of interpersonal episodes. What *is* characteristic is the *value* placed on pleasant interpersonal dealings, which may *on occasion* call for the use of conventional euphemisms. Before leaving Hart's contribution, let me register one tentative, friendly suggestion. I wonder if Donn Hart, old Philippine hand that he is, would consider giving up on such anglicisms as Cebuan, Ilokan, and Samaran (for Cebuano, Ilocano, and Samareño) and following instead the local usage.

One more point, and a much more important one at that. Contrary to what we read in the volume, the Tasaday are *not* "hunters and gatherers" (p. 40). They are *food gatherers* (period). It is in this that their world-wide near-uniqueness consists, in fact, rather than in their using stone tools or living in caves.

Especially as handy reference work on the so-called minor culture-language groups of the Philippines and Taiwan, this volume will serve the reader well. It belongs (with its companion volume) in every Philippine college and university library, and in the reference set of any agency dealing with these smaller groups.

Frank Lynch

UNEQUAL PARTNERS. By W. Scott Thompson. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1975. 183 pages.

The book seeks to disaggregate the external and internal sources of Thai and Philippine foreign policy vis-a-vis the United States. The external sources relate to the complex network of dependent relationships of the two Asian countries with their traditional ally, as well as their dealings with other powers. The internal sources of foreign policy — the existing political and social structures —