

The remaining essay, by Billington, deals with the lord of misrule, mock-kingship and anti-kings, a topic touched upon in other parts of the book. Its purpose is to show that mock-kings of the medieval and Renaissance periods were not just festival figures but included leaders of outlaw bands and rebellions who represented a "permanent antithesis to rule."

Specific rebuttals or corrections of individual essays can only be made by specialists in relevant fields. *Kingship* is a thin but not a slim collection of essays of uneven length but not erudition. Its various essays are more like the rays of the rayed nimbus than the nimbus itself. Hillenbrand's concern about the inappropriateness of the symbolism associated with the rayed nimbus might be mitigated by the fact that Christ was no more than a human prophet in Islam. Billington's analysis of the lord of misrule would have benefited by incorporating some of Victor Turner's ideas on anti-structure. Drakakis seems a bit too close to reifying ideological discourse. As for Balinese kingship what needs to be looked at is not simply god-kings or god-priests but god-priest-kings. Finally, the articles by Lyle and Wyatt are unnecessarily elliptical and assume a readership with a prior knowledge of their work. To anyone interested in the subject of kingship, these nine essays are delightfully instructive.

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MACDONALD, CHARLES, comp. *De la hutte au palais. Sociétés "à maison" en Asie du Sud-Est insulaire* [From hut to palace. Societies of "houses" in insular south-east Asia]. Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1987. xi+218 pages. Maps. Paper 80 F; ISBN 2-222-04111-2. (In French)

This collection of papers represents an initial step toward a systematic testing and refinement of Claude Lévi-Strauss's seminal concept of "house societies." In certain societies, Lévi-Strauss has argued, the house is the focal point of kinship and social groupings, forming an institution which appears to "reunite" or to "transcend" opposing principles, such as descent and alliance, patrilineal and matrilineal succession, hypergamy and hypogamy, or close and distant marriages. Examples, he has suggested, include tribes of the Northwest Coast of North America, feudal Europe and Japan, and many of the peoples of island Southeast Asia and the Pacific. Island Southeast Asia is a particularly fertile field in which to apply and test his idea. Not only do its impressive vernacular architectures provide an obvious clue to the importance of houses in this region, but it abounds in examples of kinship systems whose ambiguities have puzzled anthropologists, but which perhaps might be resolved by the application of this concept.

This volume, which has something of the immediacy of "work in progress," is thus very welcome. The societies discussed range from those as fluid as the Moken (sea nomads of Thailand, whose boat-communities, argues Ivanoff, show some of the features of "house societies" in their attachment to islands of origin where they reside in the company of their ancestors during the monsoon season) to those as hierarchical as the sultanates of the southern Philippines (papers by Macdonald and Loyré). Of particular interest are two papers on Borneo, by Sellato and Guerreiro, which highlight some of the ambiguities evident in Lévi-Strauss's formulation when it comes to

deciding exactly which societies may truly be said to constitute "house societies." Also included are transcripts (somewhat fragmentary) of discussions held by the contributors, who are members of a CNRS research team in the comparative ethnology of Southeast Asia.

What then are the essential features of a "house society"? The salience of the concept of "house" within indigenous categories must be one, as Carsten ably demonstrates in her paper on the Malays of Langkawi. An ideal of permanence is another, which raises questions in the Borneo context about whether it is the longhouse itself, or the apartments of which it is constituted, which in any particular case act as an enduring corporate body and should properly be regarded as "houses." Furthermore, does the passing on of names, goods and titles through houses necessarily mean that "house societies" must be hierarchical? This is implied in Lévi-Strauss's writings, but is nowhere specifically addressed by him. While Guerreiro sees rank as an essential feature of a "house society," Sellato notes that in some egalitarian societies such as the Iban and Selako, longhouse apartments also form units which pass on heirloom wealth and are not supposed to die out. He concludes that, although the majority of Borneo groups cannot really be seen as "house societies," it is not exclusively to the stratified ones that the concept may be applied. Given the ambiguities of the Iban case, one must address the possibility that the features attributed by Lévi-Strauss to the "house" could be distributed over more than one unit of the society: there are some contexts in which the household acts as a unity and others in which the entire longhouse, or even a group of longhouses, does so. In such a case, it is problematic to decide which one of these is the "house." Again, the relation between a "house," in the sense of a group of people, and the house as an architectural structure, is in practice variable and requires to be carefully examined. Fox points out that in different domains of the island of Roti, the concept of "house" (*uma*) is applied at different levels of social organization. A provocative note is introduced by Rousseau, who denies that the concept of "house" has any heuristic value at all. The clearest and consistent analysis in this volume comes from Bernard Sellato, particularly in his concluding paper, which provides a thought-provoking examination of the relations between house organization and political hierarchies in different parts of the archipelago. This is a stimulating book, which perhaps raises more questions than it answers; it is a pity that its production should be marred by such an extraordinary number of misprints.

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MOSER, DIETZ-RÜDIGER. *Fastnacht-Fasching-Karneval. Das Fest der verkehrten Welt* [Fastnacht-Fasching-Carnival. The celebration of the reversed world.] Graz/Wien (Austria): Verlag Styria, 1986. 382 pages. 406 plates, 85 of them in color, bibliography, indices of names, places and subjects. Cloth DM 98.—or öS 695.—; ISBN 3-222-11595-8. (In German)

Where Asians appear in this book we are clearly faced with instances of that illfamed "orientalism" which *imagines* Asians rather than really looks at them. But this is not the author's attitude, he does nothing but show how Asians (Japanese, "Moriscos")