rather difficult conditions in an exile situation. Thus, this volume is highly recommended as it provides a very valuable supplement to the range of established studies on Tibet, and encourages further research.

REFERENCES CITED
(Unless stated otherwise, all references appear in the volume under review)

CALKOWSKI, Marcia S.
The Tibetan diaspora and the politics of performance, 51–57.

GOLDSTEIN, Melville

HUBER, Toni
Green Tibetans: A brief social history, 103–19.

KLEGER, P. Christiaan

KOROM, Frank
Introduction: Place, space and identity: The cultural, economic and aesthetic politics of Tibetan diaspora, 1–12.

MCLAGAN, Meg
Mystical visions in Manhattan: Deploying culture in the Year of Tibet, 69–89.

METFESSEL, Thomas
Socioeconomic adaptation of Tibetan refugees in South Asia over 35 years of exile, 13–24.

Frank KRESSING
University of Ulm
Ulm, Germany

SOUTHEAST ASIA

MASING, JAMES JEMUT. The Coming of the Gods: An Iban Invocatory Chant (Timang Gawai Amat) of the Baleh River Region, Sarawak. Two volumes. Canberra: Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1997. 598 pages. Maps, figures, tables, glossaries, references. Paper $A45.00 (overseas price for both volumes).

The production of this text is a saga in itself, one that has taken half a century to unfold. It begins in 1949, not long after the last Rajah ceded Sarawak to the British Crown. In a remote Iban community, Derek Freeman attended a longhouse festival focussed on a cosmic journey recounted by the lemembang, or bard, Igoh anak Impin. Impressed by Igoh’s poetic genius, but lacking a tape recorder, Freeman arranged for the bard to repeat the entire cycle of songs, dictating line by line to a literate Iban, Patrick Ringkai. Over several years, Freeman made annotations to this manuscript, even after Igoh himself had converted to Christianity. In 1976 Freeman recruited James Jemut Masing, recently returned from a university in New Zealand, to undertake a translation of the text. Masing’s work earned him a doctorate from the Australian National University. Now finally published in a handsomely produced two-volume set from the same institution, it represents a priceless contribution to world literature.

The text itself makes up the whole of the second volume, 219 pages of Iban transcription,
each matched by English translation on the facing page. It falls into eight parts, episodes in
the travels and headhunting adventures of the divine hero Lang Singalong Burong, plus a
ninth episode collected by Masing at a later date. There is little exegetical material, nothing
more than a couple of footnotes per page. A synopsis at the beginning of each episode would
have been helpful in finding one’s way through a tangled plot line, but the story is on the
whole surprisingly accessible, where one might have expected mystical or esoteric language.
Clearly, Igoh intended its dramatic impact to be appreciated by his entire Iban public, and not
restricted to some elite of ritual specialists. There is only a brief glossary, but this need not
impede further study of the text because Iban is well provided with easily available dictionar­
ies, such as Ricards (1988).

The first volume of 130 pages describes the cultural context of the performance. Much
of this information can be found elsewhere, but it provides a useful and concise introduction
that will be especially appreciated by scholars discovering Iban ritual language for the first
time. Chapter one outlines Iban migration, longhouse architecture, and cosmology. Chapter
two summarizes Iban rituals, from the least elaborate to the great festivals that accommodate
the imposing bardic recitations described in chapter three. Chapter three contains the only
discussion of the ethnopoetics of the chants, and it is brief. Nevertheless, there is enough to
see a dense use of parallelism, particularly rhyme and alliteration. There is no specific crite­
rion for segmentation into lines, but stanzas are clearly marked by the bard himself, who sig­
nals to his chorus, either by a gesture or by a repeated and inverted phrase or both, where to
come in with their refrain. Chapter four is the most interesting and novel. It describes
the training of a bard, including his formal apprenticeship to an established practitioner, and
makes clear the prestige incentives that make (or made, unfortunately) the role of bard worth
the considerable effort of practice and memorization needed to attain it. Chapter five and the
conclusion sum up the place of the bardic chants in Iban religion.

In recent years, there has been an increased urgency in the recording of Iban oral liter­
ature, reflected in a steady flow of publications. Clifford Sather has completed the collected
works of Sarawak’s best-known indigenous ethnographer, Benedict Sandin (1994), and the
Sarawak Literary Society has further projects in preparation. The result is a truly remarkable
corpus of texts, among the finest from anywhere in Asia, in which Masing’s volume takes a
prominent place.

REFERENCES CITED

Ricards, Anthony

Sandin, Benedict
1994 Sources of Iban oral history, edited, and with an introduction by Clifford Sather.

Museum

Peter Metcalf
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA