

prerogatives given by government agencies. To get such advantages, a person must certify that he belongs to a disadvantaged caste. The political pressure groups to consolidate and enlarge such opportunities are formed on the basis of caste. Hence, caste allegiance and identity are in some ways being strengthened rather than weakened.

A main problem felt by educated ex-untouchables is that they want to blot out their former caste identities, and as yet have fashioned no satisfactory new identity. Some have recently become converts to Buddhism, others have devised a way of passing in public but not in private, a few mention the possibility of a larger common identity for all to share, that of being a citizen of the new India.

The author has done studies of American Negroes, but notes that he does not discuss the obvious parallels in this book. Both cases are relevant to the important problem of group identity and political change. The political changes in India have opened up new possibilities for the lowest and poorest, opportunities that require changes in self-identity as well as in identification by others. Harold Isaacs has given us a fine, very well-written examination of the personal and social problems entailed in developing these possibilities.

*Ceylon: Gesellschaft und Lebensraum in den orientalischen Tropen: Eine sozialgeographische Landeskunde.* ANGELIKA SIEVERS. (Bibliothek Geographischer Handbücher.) Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1964. xxxii, 398 pp., bibliography, English preface and table of contents, 4 figures, glossary, 28 maps, 77 photographs (and 3 aerial photographs). DM 76.

Reviewed by NUR YALMAN, *University of Chicago*

Sir James Emerson Tennent was probably one of the last persons to condense a detailed description of all the important geographical, historical, economic, and social aspects of Ceylon into one book. Miss Angelika Sievers has attempted the immense task once again, and we must be grateful to her for this remarkable volume, filled with carefully selected, detailed, precise information on all subjects pertaining to the demography, ecology, and economy of all regions and of most social groups on the island. We have had excellent works on the geography of Ceylon from Farmer, Thambyahpillay, Wikkramatileke, Cook, and others, but none covers as wide a field in depth as Sievers. The labor of seven years of research and preparation has gone into this work. It will be indispensable to anthropologists concerned with South India and Ceylon.

We are first provided with a careful study of the general ecology of the island. Sievers then goes into a sophisticated, useful, and yet succinct account of the history of Ceylon from 250 B.C. to the present day. Not only are we again well served with information, but the outlines remain clear. From here, the author moves on to the presentation of precise data on population sizes, ethnic groups, and all religious affiliations and such information as is available on caste. The next chapter deals with settlement patterns, towns, villages, fishing villages, plantations, market centers, etc. House types and even building materials are not overlooked. Chapter V presents an immense amount of information (again carefully selected and well presented) on land use, paddy, garden, and shifting cultivation. The major features of Ceylon's economy—the tea, rubber, and other plantations; the fisheries; and trade and transport—are also drawn in clear and firm outline.

The facts condensed into each subsection are noteworthy. Sievers detects for instance that in the breakdown of those "gainfully employed" in transport, trade, and

banking, who apparently made up 27 percent of the work force in the 1953 Census of Ceylon, some suspiciously large populations (270,000 out of 550,000!) have fallen into the category of "miscellaneous," which makes a striking difference in the global figures (p. 96). Similarly, in writing about tea estates, she is not content to speak of tea alone, but discusses the relative economic and gastronomic merits of high-, medium-, and low-grown tea.

The second part of the book consists of vignettes of eight different geographic regions of Ceylon. These are detailed enough in terms of regional demography, history, and economy to provide very useful insights even for those who know Ceylon quite well, but they are not full field studies. In fact, nothing less than monographic treatment would do justice to some of the subjects that Sievers selects for attention. Thus, the mere 13 pages devoted to the city of Colombo are obviously minimal. The same has to be said about the 21 pages devoted to the Southwest Coast or the short studies of Galle and Kandy. The author's intention here is a detailed survey and this limited aim is achieved. Apart from those mentioned above, there are sections devoted to the rubber estates and gem industries in the Ratnapura region; the tea estates in the Highlands, Jaffna, and the tank-villages; and the irrigation schemes of the Northern and Eastern Dry Zone.

The vignettes, though brief, provide data that are otherwise not even found in handbooks. For instance, in the Ratnapura region, there is a brief account of the gem industry, but also the facts on the division of the profits between the owner of the license, the owner of the water pump, the owner of the land in which the gems are found, the laborers, etc., are provided.

The weakest part of this section is that on the East Coast, but since there is very little published on this area of Ceylon, the fault does not lie with the author. Again, not much is added to our knowledge of the Dry Zone, but that is less serious because Leach, Farmer, Sarkar, and Tambiah have already provided us with excellent studies.

A more important and more general weakness may be noted. With all this excellent information, there is, in fact, little said systematically about social organization or social problems. The facts of religious denominations, caste (to a lesser extent), and family are noted, but they are externally observed. The issues that arise are not penetrated. In this case the weakness lies in the discipline that the author represents. Human geography seems to live in the shadowy land between geography, sociology, anthropology, and economics. It is hardly surprising that having been given so much, as anthropologists we should demand much more in the field of our interests.

It is economics that provides the thread to tie the book together in the Conclusion: what is the prospect for economic development in Ceylon? Miss Sievers' argument is again thoughtful and accurate. She observes the essential paradoxes of the landscape: there is first the lack of trust and communication between communities that are culturally similar; second, there is the dual economy of modern plantations and traditional villages; third, there are the differences of attitude toward labor between industry and caste.

These cleavages exist in an island with a population that is now 10.6 million and rising. The immediate issue is food, specifically rice. Ceylon imports rice. Yet rice is grown on the island with very low yields. The prospects for altering the traditional economy of villages seem dim. The new plans call for great resettlement schemes in the Dry Zone; but clear-headed observers like Sarkar note that only 400,000 are to be resettled by 1985, while the population itself rises by 300,000 in one year. Can such visions be regarded as anything but palliatives?

The answer, according to the author, lies in the resolution of the paradoxes that beset the social and economic life of the island. She sees hope in the "modernization" of the economy and society of Ceylon. This, too, appears utopian at this time.

The author's preparation for this work has been admirable. Apart from the 28 maps, 3 air photographs, 3 cross-sections, 77 photographs (film and cameras specified!), a full glossary of Sinhalese words, and a very considerable array of statistical and other tables, there is also an excellent bibliography that is particularly valuable for its entries in German. A translation of this work is obviously needed.

*Maternity and its Rituals in Bang Chan.* JANE RICHARDSON HANKS. (Cornell Thailand Project, Interim Reports Series, Number Six/Southeast Asia Program, Data Paper: Number 51.) Ithaca, N. Y.: Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University, 1963. viii, 128 pp., appendix, glossary, references cited. \$2.50 (paper).

*The Lua? (Lawa) of Northern Thailand: Aspects of Social Structure, Agriculture, and Religion.* PETER KUNSTADTER. (Research Monograph No. 21.) [Princeton, N. J.]: Center of International Studies, Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, Princeton University, 1965. 56 pp., bibliography, map, references cited. \$1.00 (paper).

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Dr. Hanks' study, based on field work done in 1953-1954, is more generally useful than its modest title and format indicate, for she relates maternity rituals to the cosmological, physiological, and psychological beliefs of the Bang Chan villagers. She also relates variations in practice and expressed belief to relevant social categories and aspirations. There are also brief, but useful, suggestions for introducing innovations in the care of parturients and neonates. Moreover, her study is written clearly, sometimes charmingly, and with a minimum of jargon and repetition.

The first chapter, a short introduction to Bang Chan (that much studied but little reported Central Thai village), sometimes confuses social community with physical area. This introduction emphasizes those aspects of Bang Chan that are expectably related to maternal care.

The next two chapters provide a rich, detailed, and rather systematic account of Bang Chan beliefs about the nature of man, his conception, gestation, and birth. As is common in sympathetic anthropological accounts, it is difficult to discover whether any single native knows the beliefs as a coherent system. This coherence-without-a-locus, in addition to its descriptive weakness, may distort the very system it portrays. I would suggest that the function of the Thais' simultaneous beliefs in merit, luck, and astrology is their complementarity, not their redundancy. While merit may sometimes cause auspicious birth (p. 28), I think it more pertinent that the supposition of auspicious birth can explain the good fortune of a wicked man.

The fourth chapter is a lovely synthetic account of the birth of a child, some thematic elements of which are analyzed in Chapter 5. Together, these two chapters are of interest far beyond Thai studies, for they provide an elegant example of the interpretive strengths and the methodological weaknesses of cultural anthropology at its best.

The sixth chapter is an ingenious analysis of the features and practical implications of the village categories: natural, supernatural, doctor, midwife, and amateur helper. Like the preceding chapter, and unlike the fashionable "new ethnography," it is written "right-side-out" and so does not show its seams.