to the Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) in 1979, not 1980 (p.18), Puey Ungphakorn was a one-time governor, not director, of the Bank of Thailand (p. 73), a location for a new national capital proposed by Phibun was Phetchabun, not Phetchaburi (p. 124), the stronghold of the Communist Party of Thailand in Isan covered not only Sakhon Nakhon, but many neighboring provinces in the northeastern part of the region – indeed, the first armed fight between a CPT unit and the government force took place in Nakae district, Nakhon Phanom (p. 132) – or making Thao Suranari the wife of Nakhon Ratchasima's governor rather than deputy governor (p.187). There are also many misspellings and inaccuracies in the bibliography.

Peleggi's book may look too general for serious students of Thai and Southeast Asian history, but his global history approach should spark some interesting debates in the field. Some of his insightful views and brave treatments of the global formation of modern Thai nation-state and identity should offset the factual errors and shortcomings appearing in the book. *Thailand: the Worldly Kingdom* is the most up-to-date reader on the introductory history of modern Thailand.

Pattana Kitiarsa

Don McCaskill, Prasit Leepreecha, and He Shaoying, eds., *Living in a Globalized World: Ethnic Minorities in the Greater Mekong Subregion*. Chiang Mai, Mekong Press, 2008, pb, xi+374 pp., Bt 895.

Living in a Globalized World is an indication of new times in the research and publication about the region, both in its focus on China and mainland Southeast Asia, and in the collaboration among scholars from Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, and China. This is a new and positive development, and hopefully indicates a trend of thinking past national boundaries. The nicely designed cover of the book shows (someone dressed as) an ethnic minority woman talking on a cellphone and simultaneously working on a laptop computer. She has an ipod, but it is unplugged because she is already on the phone and the internet. The picture draws on a stereotypical contrast between tradition and modernity, the local worlds of ethnic minorities and the global realities that they are being pulled into

The introductory chapter, written by the three editors, relates some of the features of globalization, such as an increasing interconnectedness that may undermine the ties of culture and place, and gives an overview of national integration policies in the four countries. The bulk of this chapter is concerned with the results of surveys in Dai, Hmong, and Mien study villages. The findings persistently make statements in relation to ethnicity, such as that "77

percent [of Hmong in Vietnam stated] that they had a strong knowledge of the culture compared to 18 percent in Thailand and only 6 percent in China" (36). The samples are small, between 17 and 52 people in each setting, the largest from a town of 10,000 people. In the study villages, "individuals were asked to be interviewed by local representatives, often the village headman" (27). In at least two of the study areas, Doi Pui village in Chiangmai and the Dai Culture Park in Yunnan, the inhabitants make a living from looking ethnic to tourists. To rely on answers to survey questions administered by a government official and without any follow-up, from people whose livelihood depends on enacting certain ethnic stereotypes, is fundamentally naïve.

The chapter "Religious conversion and ethnic identity: The Karen and Akha in northern Thailand", by Khwanchewan Buadeng and Panadda Boonyasaranai, is based on more convincing research methods, and builds on considerable familiarity with the research settings. The authors suggest that previously, people engaged with identity in relation to kin-groups and village membership, and argue that "ethnic identity, based on common descent and shared culture, has been constructed as part of the greater process of modernization and globalization" (62). This is an important argument, and one that challenges the ethnicist framework of the introductory chapter. Traditional religious practices among Akha and Karen united and divided people by village and kinship, by patriline among the Akha and matriline among the Karen. Khwanchewan and Panadda's account of conversions stresses individual and family decisions in relation to village factionalism and a range of options for affiliation. For some, there are on-going shifts among Buddhist, Catholic, and Protestant networks. At least for Karen, Ywa refers equally to their creator spirit, the Buddha, and the Christian God, and "many see them as the same being" (82).

Prasit Leepreecha writes on "The role of media technology in reproducing Hmong ethnic identity." His chapter contains a valuable account of the pervasive Thai-ization that he experienced growing up in Thailand, and how he later reconnected to Hmong identity and culture as a budding academic. Prasit shows the complex interconnections that facilitate contemporary Hmong senses of identity. In the 1980s, Hmong in Thailand became aware of fellow Hmong in China and the West through a Hmong magazine published in the USA. The cultural knowledge that had been the preserve of elders and experts is now accessible to anyone literate in Hmong. Video CDs serve to create transnational links among Hmong peoples, and, along with embroidered story cloths, enable the remaking and reproduction of Hmong history. This includes a film that combines fiction and history and ends with the defeat of Pathet Lao forces by the Hmong. Alongside such fantasy outcomes, internet communication helps build a more positive self-esteem that counters the pervasive vilification of Hmong people in Thailand.

Nguyen Van Thang and Nguyen Thi Minh Nguyet describe "Changes in healing practices among the Hmong in Vietnam," and Tran Van Ha and Le Minh Anh write on "The transformation of rituals in two Mien villages in Northeast Vietnam." The former chapter deals with the Sapa area of Lao Cai province, and the latter Quang Ninh province. Both are well informed and insightful, and show the complex interplay of government policies, economic changes, tourism, and international aid. The latter chapter shows and explores a resurgence in ritual activity by the 1990s. It mentions that many of the younger people intermarry with ethnic Vietnamese and are more keen on karaoke and Vietnamese pop music than local ritual practices. But the ethnic label Mien is misdirected in this case, and seems to draw on an editorial decision to replace official labels (such as Yao and Kariang) with local group-references that are more varied. The authors mention that they worked among Than Phan people (141), who are one kind of Yao (variously spelled Dao, Zao, and Dzao in Vietnam). The material on language, lineage names, and ritual practice is significantly different from what is known about Mien peoples. The choice of the Mien label creates an artificial similarity with other cases in the book, and detracts from this valuable study.

Three chapters on China show varied aspects of contemporary changes in the southwestern region. Xiong Zhang, Jinrong Liu and Ma Li write on "Hydropower development on the Lancang: A recommendation for affected minorities," He Shaoying, Lou Hailin, and Luo Ping write on "The inheritance of Dai culture and the preservation of Dai park in Xishungpanna," and Liu Jiang writes on "Khmu identity and survival in globalizing China." The chapter on hydroelectric dams shows how national policy threatens local livelihood, in this case Lahu, Yi, Hani, and Dai peoples. The government has policies aimed at mitigating any negative cultural impact, but so far these efforts all seem aimed at attracting tourists to culture shows and ethnic parks. The case of the Dai Culture Park shows what appears to be a genuine boost to the preservation of culture, and turns out to be a corporate profit-venture run by outsiders who relegate local Dai to low-paid jobs. The park fits a larger effort to expand tourism to help with economic development, but there are various disjunctures between national, corporate, and local interests.

"Somehow, I still think that my ID card is not quite right" (234). This quote is from a Khmu woman in Yunnan. Khmu are not recognized as a nationality in China, and the authorities insist that they register as Bulang, Hani, or Dai. Liu Jian's informative chapter describes some of the Khmu people's history along the Lao border, and the shift from swidden farming to rubber cultivation. Promoted as a move to prosperity, rubber farms have had devastating ecological consequences and have created significant economic vulnerability related to international market prices, something the Khmu had already experienced with sugar-cane farming in the 1980s.

Given this knowledge, it is somewhat disturbing to learn in the following chapter that Chinese entrepreneurs are establishing rubber and sugarcane cultivation across the border in Laos. Houmphan Rattanavong's chapter on "The changing livelihoods of the Akha in Muang Sing and Muang Long in Laos" describes various challenges to Akha livelihood. Many adverse effects relate to the eradication of opium cultivation and a move to the lowlands. The chapter concludes with a range of suggestions for a reasoned approach to the range of social, ecological, and economic problems in the area.

Don McCaskill's chapter on the "Transformation of Hmong Culture and Identity" combines a theoretical discussion of globalization, objective and subjective realities, with the results of surveys and interviews in Doi Pui village on Doi Suthep, above Chiangmai City. In contrast to the fieldwork-based chapters that make up most of the book, the material comes across as superficial. In spite of the theoretical ambitions of the chapter, the material never goes beyond verbal statements about such things as "the most important things in Hmong culture" (303) and a list of the "most important factors that caused the changes to Hmong culture" (310). In the book's Epilogue, Pinkaew Laungaramsri ably draws together some of the book's collective findings in a discussion anchored to the dynamics of state control, globalization, and the negotiation over tradition.

The book is an example of new kinds of collaborations, but at the same time it appears to reinforce national boundaries and ethnic divides. Chinese scholars study matters in China, Thai scholars Thailand, and so on. For the most part, the scholars are ethnic majority people (along with a Westerner) looking at their minorities. There are important exceptions in the book, and it would be a nice experiment to have a similar group of researchers trade places and make sense of ethnicity, development, economic disparities and the like in each other's countries. Among the things to explore, aside from trends in development and change in minority areas, is the importance of national research traditions and to what extent they lend particular shape to how we understand the basic matters of identity, culture, national histories, and global dynamics. This book raises a range of excellent questions, and provides valuable cases with which to think about the changes taking place in the region. One of the unanswered questions is how the Greater Mekong Subregion becomes a framework for engaging with the world, and what difference it makes that this notion is actively backed by the Asian Development Bank. If a major financial institution can define how scholars demarcate their fields, it is certainly worthy of some exploration. Studies of ethnic minorities are still important, but it is to be hoped that other dimensions of globalization and the making of regions also come into view as cultural and social phenomena worthy of serious study.

Hjorleifur Jonsson