

land rights movements in that its claim is not based on notions of origin or indigeneity” (4). The specifics of this ethic of staying are not collected together at any point for the reader to reflect upon. What precisely does the ethic of staying entail? What role does staying play in this ethic? Why is it an ethic of staying and not of subsistence? The rich detail that Rizvi brings to the fore in this book could have been complemented with a more ambitious concluding chapter to tie some of these loose ends. That said, the detailed and nuanced engagement with an immensely important movement is the real strength here, and readers are left with a convincing picture of claims that exceed legal property rights.

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THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE CONTACT IN THE HIMALAYA.

Edited by Selma K. Sonntag and Mark Turin. Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2019. xiii, 181 pp. (Tables, figures, map.) US\$27.46, paper. ISBN 978-1-78374-704-7.

As Mark Turin concludes in the final essay of this original and useful edited volume, “It’s complicated.” The five main chapters and the editors’ introductory and closing essays of *The Politics of Language Contact in the Himalaya* demonstrate that the history, present, and future of language contact and politics in the Himalayan region are complicated, nuanced, and changing. Each chapter provides a detailed empirical case study, while engaging with and building on theoretical concepts.

Selma K. Sonntag’s introductory essay positions the interdisciplinary contribution of this volume, which is novel for its focus on the politics of language *contact*, rather than language politics in general. Sonntag helpfully introduces themes that unify the book’s wide-ranging chapters, such as enduring power hierarchies, standardization and writing, and relationships between language, ethnicity, and nations. Turin’s concluding chapter focuses on language shift, a phenomenon that underlies each chapter. The final essay also addresses potential gaps in the volume, such as the absence of studies focusing on stateless and refugee populations.

The first chapter, by Tunzhi (Sonam Lhundrop), Hiroyuki Suzuki, and Gerald Roche, examines “Language Contact and the Politics of Recognition amongst Tibetans in the People’s Republic of China.” Far from a simplistic narrative of Chinese overwhelming the Tibetan language, the authors demonstrate how speakers of the rTa’u language are harmed by several layers of misrecognition. Through examination of historical, scholarly, and present-day accounts of the rTa’u language and its speakers, the authors show that despite rTa’u speakers’ hopes of being recognized as Tibetan people who

speak a non-Tibetan language, they are excluded through academic and everyday discourses that position rTa'u speakers as others.

Recognition has been critiqued by other scholars as a concept with the potential to maintain existing power hierarchies; the politics of refusal, or the rejection of existing authorities' legitimacy to provide recognition, rights, or social services, has been proposed as a more transformative concept. The authors argue that rTa'u speakers are a group which "is facing misrecognition from a dominant, mainstream group which with it identifies and which *it does not wish to refuse*" (41, emphasis original). Tunzhi, Suzuki, and Roche argue that refusal has been proposed by scholars working in "Western, settler-colonial, liberal-democratic, multicultural societies" (41). For rTa'u speakers, recognition is still a desired political goal. This discussion demonstrates the importance of including a diverse set of contexts when developing theoretical concepts, especially those dealing with subaltern groups. The authors additionally take on recent sociolinguistic skepticism toward bounded, named languages, arguing that approaches "that view language as a fundamentally dynamic, fluid, fuzzy set of resources" (41) may not account for the views of speakers themselves, who seek recognition of their language as a bounded whole.

In the second chapter, Sonntag asks, "What happened to the Ahom language?" Drawing largely from secondary and historiographical sources, she traces changes in Assamese language regimes, "the institutionalized practices of language governance" (50), across three polities: the Ahom kingdom, British India, and independent India. The account clearly illustrates her conclusion that "colonial and postcolonial language regimes are palimpsests, imposed not on blank slates but in complex political and cultural environments marked by historically dynamic language contact" (74), a statement that could frame the entire volume. Sonntag's chapter also provides helpful historical examples of language regimes beyond the idealized monolingualism of nation-states.

Uma Pradhan's chapter, "Transforming language to script: Constructing linguistic authority through language contact in schools in Nepal" is an ethnographic study of the reconfiguration of languages, both linguistically as they are sanitized for official purposes, and socially, as languages recently introduced in schooling take new positions in the linguistic hierarchy. The examples of linguistic sanitization provided in the chapter take the form of writing Tharu and Awadhi languages in ways that more closely resemble Nepali, leaving the reader wondering whether there were other forms of sanitization, and also, given the volume's emphasis on language contact, whether similar processes might be occurring in spoken language as a result of prolonged contact and unequal power relations between these languages. Given that the seal of a missionary organization is visible on the multilingual textbook discussed in the chapter, alongside seals of the government of Nepal and of the school, the central role of Protestant missionary organizations'

participation in the production of language regimes and linguistic forms seems worthy of greater attention.

In the following chapter, “The significance of place in ethnolinguistic vitality,” Maya Daurio depicts a complicated set of overlapping places, languages, and ethnic affiliations. In her account, several layers of migration and contact shape linguistic affiliations and language use. Daurio’s contribution offers many empirical details, but she provides limited theoretical engagement compared to other chapters in the volume.

Returning to the complexity of language contact in Tibet, Bendi Tso and Mark Turin’s chapter “Speaking Chone, speaking ‘shallow’: Dual linguistic hegemonies in China’s Tibetan frontier” employs the concept of hegemony to understand the interaction of Chinese language policy and Chone Tibetans’ language ideologies. The discussion, organized around the twin concepts of coercion and consent that make up hegemony, illustrates the practices and discourses that establish a hierarchy that positions Chinese, Amdo Tibetan, and Chone Tibetan in a descending hierarchy.

This volume is well worth reading, both for the individual chapters and for the ways they comment on each other. The editors’ choice to publish it as an open access volume, available to read for free on the publisher’s website, ensures that it will be accessible to readers. This would be an obvious choice for area studies courses’ syllabi, but would also be appropriate for courses in sociolinguistics, language policy, and language contact and change. Turin concludes by wondering whether the “historic multilingualism” of the region “will endure and outlive the narrow ruptures of nationalism” (174). The deep-seated, complex multilingual history, present, and hopefully future (as Turin points out) of the Himalayan region makes it a region not only important for empirical study but also for contributions to theory building and imagining plurilingual linguistic futures.

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ARC OF CONTAINMENT: Britain, the United States, and Anticommunism in Southeast Asia. *The United States in the World; Studies of the Weatherhead East Asian Institute, Columbia University.* By Wen-Qing Ngoei. Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2019. x, 254 pp. (Map, B&W photos.) US\$45.00, cloth. ISBN 978-0-5017-1640-9.

Scholars of Southeast Asia are familiar with the “common-sense” stories that the United States and Britain tell about their own involvement in the region. Southeast Asia looms large in British history books as a site of colonial competition and conquest—a backdrop for their wartime struggles against Japanese imperialism and the post-war incubator for foundational models of anti-communist counterinsurgency. For Americans, Southeast Asia was