

THE REAL AND IMAGINED ROLE OF CULTURE IN DEVELOPMENT: Case Studies From Indonesia. Edited by Michael P. Dove. Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press. xiii, 289 pp. US\$ cloth. ISBN 0-8248-1080-5.

Peasant cultivators and isolated groups (suku terasing) have important ecological and economic niches to fill, Dove argues, and they do not suffer from a poor way of thinking (pola berpikir) or backward (terbelakang) culture. Members of traditional social groups will accept fundamental innovations when those are in their best interests and will reject changes that are not viewed by them as being in their best interests. However, there is an over-reliance on the part of government officials and some experts (ahli) on simple numerical measures (e.g. number of people moved) instead of more sophisticated social science approaches. All of the contributors to this volume attack the prevalent myth that there is a lack of dynamism among tribal people. Nine case studies examine different aspects of the myth that what is traditional is necessarily undeveloped. Anthropological examples of tribal people not affiliated with any of the world religions come from the islands of Siberut (the Mentawai), Bima (Bimanese), and Flores (Ngadha), the jungles of Kalimantan (Punan, Kantu', Maloh), the paddy fields of Java, and the uplands of Central Sulawesi (Wana). All the studies are informed by a critique of the current development approach of the Government of Indonesia. For example, in both long-distance (i.e. transmigrasi) and short-distance (i.e. resetelmen penduduk) resettlement efforts officials expect people to change "too much, too fast, in exchange for too little" (p. 19). The book is a worthwhile addition to our ethnographic knowledge of the peoples of the archipelago. It is also a hard-hitting and necessary corrective of ignorance and corruption among some Indonesian planners and officials who are supposed to help such people and safe-guard the quality of the environment but instead act on the basis of latent motives of private profit (e.g. granting of commercial logging concessions and contracts for construction of resettlement housing). Thus, for example, Indonesian planners are very critical of traditional cultivation practices, which are perceived as wasteful; but, while slash and burn cultivation may sometimes be an environmentally-destructive pattern, such age-old practices tend to be harmonious with the environment when practiced by traditional isolated tribes (suku terasing). Of course there is also environmentally-harmful swidden carried out by urban-based "truck swidden" middlemen. This daring book should be discussed and hopefully will lead to practical steps toward a more effective approach to development and extension activities in isolated areas. Today the officials talk and the cultivators pretend to listen; perhaps someday the people from remote areas will be heard. Their vast store of ethno-scientific knowledge can do a great deal to improve the development picture in the archipelago if it is heard. Because the book is so important it is unfortunate that the editor has indulged in unsubstantiated pot-shots against straw-man villains such as an undifferentiated "colonialism" and "missionary activity". Similarly, while ritual

often helps to promote a sustainable ecological system, Dove does not look at examples of genuinely problematic aspects of isolated "tribal" village life such as internal village stratification and incorrect diagnoses using ethnomedicine. Unfortunately, few Indonesian decision-makers are likely to read this book, published in English. Perhaps some scholars who will read the book will be in a position to influence the thinking of progressive Indonesian officials.

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