

religions of asia today by john l esposito

Religions of Asia Today by John L. Esposito: Exploring Faith in a Diverse Continent

religions of asia today by john l esposito offers a profound window into the complex tapestry of faiths that shape the vast and diverse continent of Asia. In his work, Esposito delves deep into the historical roots, contemporary practices, and evolving dynamics of major religions across Asia, helping readers understand not just the spiritual landscape, but its cultural, social, and political implications as well. Whether you're a student of religion, a curious traveler, or someone eager to grasp the nuances of Asian spirituality, Esposito's insights provide a crucial framework for appreciating the region's rich religious heritage and its modern-day realities.

Understanding the Religious Diversity of Asia

Asia, often described as the birthplace of many of the world's major religions, is home to an unparalleled variety of faith traditions. In "**religions of asia today by john l esposito**," the author emphasizes that Asia's religious scene is anything but monolithic. Here, ancient belief systems coexist with modern interpretations and practices, creating a vibrant mosaic that impacts billions of lives.

Major Religions Highlighted in Esposito's Work

Esposito carefully examines the major world religions that originated or flourished in Asia, including:

- **Hinduism:** Rooted primarily in India, Hinduism is one of the oldest living religions, rich with diverse philosophies, rituals, and deities.

- **Buddhism:** Emerging from the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, or the Buddha, this religion spread widely across East and Southeast Asia, influencing countless cultures.
- **Islam:** With origins in the Arabian Peninsula, Islam became a dominant faith in large parts of South and Central Asia, as well as in regions of Southeast Asia.
- **Christianity:** While often associated with the West, Christianity has ancient roots in Asia, with communities in places like the Middle East, India, and the Philippines.
- **Judaism:** Though smaller in number, Jewish communities have had a continuous presence in parts of Asia for millennia.
- **Other Traditions:** Esposito also sheds light on indigenous religions, Shinto in Japan, Taoism and Confucianism in China, Sikhism in Punjab, and other local faiths.

His approach helps readers appreciate not just theological differences but also how these religions interact with culture, politics, and modernity.

The Contemporary Landscape: Religions of Asia Today by John L. Esposito

What makes Esposito's examination particularly valuable is his focus on the present-day realities of religion in Asia. Far from static, these faiths are living traditions that adapt and respond to social change, globalization, technological advancement, and political pressures.

Religious Revival and Modern Challenges

In many Asian countries, the late 20th and early 21st centuries have witnessed a resurgence of religious identity. Esposito highlights how this revival is not merely about spiritual renewal but also often tied to nationalism, identity politics, and social movements. For example:

- In India, Hindu nationalism has become a major social and political force.
- Islamic movements in countries like Indonesia, Pakistan, and Malaysia influence both governance and community life.
- Buddhist revivalism in countries such as Sri Lanka and Myanmar sometimes intersects with ethnic conflicts.

At the same time, Asian religions face challenges such as secularization in urban centers, government restrictions in certain countries, and the impact of migration and diaspora communities spreading Asian faiths globally.

Interfaith Dialogue and Religious Pluralism

Esposito's work also explores how Asia's religious diversity fosters opportunities for interfaith dialogue. In many parts of Asia, people navigate daily life amid multiple religious traditions, leading to exchanges that promote tolerance and shared values. Yet, this coexistence is not without tensions. Understanding these dynamics is crucial, especially as Asia plays an increasingly important role on the global stage.

The Role of Religion in Asian Societies Today

Religion in Asia often transcends personal belief, intertwining with culture, law, and social norms. Esposito's analysis sheds light on this intersection, explaining how religious traditions influence education, family life, festivals, and even economic practices.

Religion and Politics

In Asia, religion frequently intersects with politics in profound ways. Esposito points out that in several countries, religious identity can be a source of unity or division. For example:

- Religious parties and leaders often play significant roles in national elections and policy-making.
- In some states, religious law is incorporated into the legal system, affecting issues like marriage, inheritance, and criminal justice.
- Religious minorities sometimes face discrimination or persecution, leading to conflicts or calls for reform.

Navigating these realities requires an understanding of how religion shapes power structures and social cohesion.

Religion and Social Change

Esposito also examines how Asian religions contribute to social change, whether through charitable work, education, or advocacy for human rights. Many religious organizations have been at the forefront

of movements addressing poverty, environmental conservation, and peacebuilding. This highlights the dynamic role religion plays beyond ritual and doctrine.

Why “Religions of Asia Today by John L. Esposito” Matters

For those seeking to understand the complexities of Asia’s spiritual landscape, Esposito’s work serves as an invaluable resource. His balanced, well-researched approach avoids simplistic stereotypes and instead paints a nuanced picture of how religion continues to shape one of the most populous and culturally diverse regions in the world.

Whether you’re interested in the historical development of Asian religions or their current manifestations, “religions of asia today by john l esposito” offers insights that are both accessible and deeply informative. It reminds us that religion in Asia is not static or isolated but part of a vibrant, ongoing human story.

Exploring this work can enrich your perspective, whether you’re engaging in academic study, interfaith dialogue, or simply trying to better understand the world’s rich spiritual heritage.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is John L. Esposito, the author of 'Religions of Asia Today'?

John L. Esposito is a prominent scholar of Islamic studies and professor of religion and international affairs known for his extensive work on Islam and Muslim societies.

What is the main focus of 'Religions of Asia Today' by John L.

Esposito?

'Religions of Asia Today' provides an overview and analysis of the major religious traditions in Asia, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and others, and their role in contemporary Asian societies.

How does John L. Esposito address the diversity of religions in Asia in his book?

Esposito explores the historical development, core beliefs, practices, and modern challenges of various Asian religions, emphasizing their diversity and the dynamic interactions between tradition and modernity.

Does 'Religions of Asia Today' cover the impact of globalization on Asian religions?

Yes, the book discusses how globalization influences religious practices, interfaith relations, and the spread of religious ideas across Asia.

What religions are primarily covered in 'Religions of Asia Today'?

The book primarily covers Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, and various indigenous Asian religions.

Is 'Religions of Asia Today' suitable for academic study?

Yes, the book is widely used in academic settings for courses on religion, Asian studies, and international affairs due to its comprehensive and well-researched content.

How does Esposito approach the topic of religion and politics in Asia?

Esposito examines the intersection of religion and politics, highlighting how religious identities shape political movements, conflicts, and social change in various Asian countries.

What updates or editions of 'Religions of Asia Today' are available?

Multiple editions have been published, with updated content reflecting recent developments in Asian religions and their global contexts.

How does 'Religions of Asia Today' contribute to interfaith understanding?

By providing detailed insights into the beliefs and practices of diverse Asian religions, the book promotes greater interfaith awareness and dialogue.

Additional Resources

Religions of Asia Today by John L Esposito: An In-Depth Review and Analysis

religions of asia today by john l esposito presents a compelling and insightful exploration of the diverse religious landscape that shapes the Asian continent in the contemporary era. John L. Esposito, a distinguished scholar of Islamic studies and interfaith relations, offers an analytical framework that delves beyond the surface of religious demographics to examine the cultural, political, and social dynamics underpinning Asia's multifaceted spiritual traditions. This review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of Esposito's work by unpacking its key themes, methodological approach, and the relevance of its findings in the context of today's global religious discourse.

Contextualizing Asia's Religious Diversity

Asia holds the distinction of being the birthplace of many of the world's major religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, and various indigenous faiths. In "religions of asia today by john l esposito," the author contextualizes this religious pluralism within the continent's vast geographic, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Esposito's narrative avoids reductionist interpretations,

instead emphasizing the dynamic interaction between religion and other societal factors such as nationalism, modernization, and globalization.

One of the standout features of Esposito's analysis is his focus on how traditional religious identities are being reshaped in response to contemporary challenges. For instance, he addresses how the rise of political Islam in certain regions contrasts with the secularization trends observed in other parts of Asia, particularly in East Asia. This comparative dimension enriches the reader's understanding of how religion functions not only as a system of belief but also as a potent social and political force.

Major Religious Traditions Explored

Islam in Asia

Esposito's expertise in Islamic studies is evident throughout the book, where he meticulously charts the growth and diversity of Muslim communities across Asia. From the Middle East and Central Asia to Southeast Asia, the book outlines both the historical roots and modern manifestations of Islam. Esposito highlights key issues such as the role of Islamic law (Sharia) in different countries, the impact of reformist movements, and the tensions between conservative and progressive interpretations.

The author also probes into the geopolitical implications of Islam, particularly in countries like Indonesia, Pakistan, and Malaysia, where religious identity influences governance and foreign policy. Esposito's balanced treatment avoids stereotypes and acknowledges the internal heterogeneity of Muslim populations, which is often overlooked in popular discourse.

Hinduism and Buddhism: Tradition and Transformation

In his examination of Hinduism, Esposito emphasizes the religion's enduring cultural significance in

South Asia, especially India and Nepal. He discusses how Hinduism's intrinsic connection to social structures such as caste continues to provoke debate within and outside the faith community. The book also assesses the resurgence of Hindu nationalism and its implications for interreligious relations.

Buddhism, with its deep roots in countries like Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Japan, is portrayed as both a spiritual path and a cultural identity marker. Esposito investigates how Buddhist teachings adapt to modernity, including the engagement with issues like secularism and environmentalism. He notes the rise of engaged Buddhism and its contributions to peacebuilding and social justice.

Christianity and Other Faiths

Although Christianity remains a minority religion in much of Asia, Esposito's analysis points to its growing presence and influence in regions such as the Philippines, parts of India, and the Middle East. The book explores how Christian communities navigate their minority status, often balancing cultural integration with the preservation of religious identity.

Esposito also brings attention to indigenous religions and new religious movements that continue to thrive in Asia. These traditions, though less globally recognized, contribute significantly to the continent's religious mosaic and merit closer scholarly attention.

The Interplay of Religion and Politics

A critical theme in "religions of asia today by john I esposito" is the intersection of faith and politics. Esposito offers nuanced insights into how religious ideologies shape political landscapes and vice versa. For example, the book discusses the use of religious rhetoric in legitimizing state power, as well as the mobilization of religious groups in resistance movements.

Esposito's analysis includes:

- The rise of religious nationalism and its impact on minority communities
- State policies towards religious freedom and their enforcement
- Interreligious dialogue initiatives aimed at conflict resolution

Such discussions are essential for comprehending ongoing conflicts and peace efforts in Asia, providing readers with a grounded perspective on complex issues.

Methodological Strengths and Analytical Depth

John L. Esposito's methodological approach combines historical narrative, sociological insight, and theological understanding. His use of case studies across various countries allows for both breadth and depth, highlighting common patterns while respecting local specificities. The book's interdisciplinary framework makes it a valuable resource for scholars, policymakers, and anyone interested in Asian religious studies.

One notable strength is Esposito's commitment to balanced representation. He acknowledges the diversity within religious traditions and resists the temptation to generalize or stereotype. This is particularly important in a field where misinterpretations can fuel misunderstanding and prejudice.

Pros and Cons of Esposito's Approach

- **Pros:** Comprehensive scope; nuanced portrayal of religious dynamics; integration of political and social contexts; clear, accessible language.

- **Cons:** Some readers might find the treatment of certain indigenous religions less detailed; the focus on major religions can overshadow smaller faith communities.

Despite minor limitations, the book stands out as a seminal contribution to contemporary religious scholarship.

Relevance in Today's Global Religious Climate

In an era marked by globalization, migration, and increasing religious tensions, “religions of asia today by john l esposito” provides timely insights. Understanding Asia’s religious landscape is crucial not only for regional stability but also for global interfaith relations and international policy.

Esposito’s work encourages readers to appreciate the complexities behind headline news about religious conflicts or cooperation. His emphasis on dialogue and mutual respect resonates with ongoing efforts to foster peaceful coexistence in multi-religious societies.

The book also serves as a reminder of the adaptability of religious traditions amid rapid social change. Whether through reformist movements, interfaith initiatives, or grassroots activism, the religions of Asia continue to evolve, reflecting the continent’s dynamic nature.

Through meticulous research and thoughtful analysis, John L. Esposito has crafted a work that enriches our understanding of Asia’s religious realities today. His balanced approach and scholarly rigor make “religions of asia today by john l esposito” an indispensable resource for anyone seeking to grasp the profound influence of religion on Asia’s past, present, and future.

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religions of asia today by john l esposito: The World's Religions in Figures Todd M. Johnson, Brian J. Grim, 2013-03-25 Created by two of the field's leading experts, this unique introduction to international religious demography outlines the challenges in interpreting data on religious adherence, and presents a contemporary portrait of global religious belief. Offers the first comprehensive overview of the field of international religious demography - detailing what we know about religious adherents around the world, and how we know it Examines religious freedom and diversity, including agnostics and atheists, on a global scale, highlighting trends over the past 100 years and projecting estimates for the year 2050 Outlines the issues and challenges related to definitions, taxonomies, sources, analyses, and other techniques in interpreting data on religious adherence Considers data from religious communities, censuses, surveys, and scholarly research, along with several in-depth case studies on the global Muslim population, religion in China, and the religious demography of recently created Sudan and South Sudan Argues against the belief that the twentieth-century was a 'secular' period by putting forward new evidence to the contrary Provides resources for measuring both qualitatively and quantitatively important data on the world's religious situation in the twenty-first century

religions of asia today by john l esposito: Yearbook of International Religious Demography 2015 , 2015-06-29 The *Yearbook of International Religious Demography* presents an annual snapshot of the state of religious statistics around the world. Every year large amounts of data are collected through censuses, surveys, polls, religious communities, scholars, and a host of other sources. These data are collated and analyzed by research centers and scholars around the world. Large amounts of data appear in analyzed form in the *World Religion Database* (Brill), aiming at a researcher's audience. The *Yearbook* presents data in sets of tables and scholarly articles spanning social science, demography, history, and geography. Each issue offers findings, sources, methods, and implications surrounding international religious demography. Each year an assessment is made of new data made available since the previous issue of the yearbook. The 2015 issue highlights both global and local realities in religious adherence, from the demographics of the world's atheists to the

emigration of Christians from the Middle East. Other case studies include inter-religious marriage patterns in Austria, Muslim immigration to Australia, and methodological challenges in counting Hasidic Jews.

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religions of asia today by john l esposito: *Religions of South Asia* Sushil Mittal, Gene Thursby, 2006-04-18 South Asia is home to many of the world's most vibrant religious faiths. It is also one of the most dynamic and historically rich regions on earth, where changing political and social structures have caused religions to interact and hybridise in unique ways. This textbook introduces the contemporary religions of South Asia, from the indigenous religions such as the Hindu, Jain, Buddhist and Sikh traditions, to incoming influences such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam. In ten chapters, it surveys the nine leading belief systems of South Asia and explains their history, practices, values and worldviews. A final chapter helps students relate what they have learnt to religious theory, paving the way for future study. Written by leading experts, Religions of South Asia combines solid scholarship with clear and lively writing to provide students with an accessible and comprehensive introduction. All chapters are specially designed to aid cross-religious comparison, following a standard format covering set topics and issues; the book reveals to students the core principles of each faith, compares it to neighbouring traditions, and its particular place in South Asian history and society. It is a perfect resource for all students of South Asia's diverse and fascinating faiths.

religions of asia today by john l esposito: *Culture, Identity and Religion in Southeast Asia* Alistair D. B. Cook, 2009-05-27 I have read the draft of this book sent to me by the editor. After reading this draft, I do think this book is valuable and timely. It discusses the contemporary issues that have worried many people in the present world: terrorism, human rights, Islamic radicalism and the problem of identity in the Singaporean capitalism. These issues are not discussed in the theoretical/abstract way (it also doesn't mean that theories are not discussed at all), but in the

context of various concrete societies. The book deals with one of the above issues in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia (Aceh and Sumenep in Madura). Each issue is written by a different author that has studied the issue thoroughly. So, the book is a collection of research done by specialists of these issues. Two essays on Southeast Asia (one on health and the other on human security) give the general picture of this region, acting as a broad introduction of the chapters that follow. Each chapter has been written professionally and the readers will learn many things from each of them. One has to read the chapter in order to really appreciate them. Therefore I really recommend that this manuscript to be published as a book in order to get a large audience. One shortcoming though, this book deals with three countries only (Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia), albeit these three are the important countries in the region. Other important Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, the Philippines and Burma are not discussed individually. With the omission of these countries, it thus can be argued whether this book can represent the Southeast Asian region? Also in dealing with Indonesia, the chapters talk on sub-national level, namely on Aceh province and a peripheral city Sumenep in the island of Madura, East Java, while Malaysia and Singapore are dealt on the level of nation state. To conclude, even with these shortcomings, this book is still valuable. Therefore I would like to recommend it be published. —Arief Budiman, Foundation Professor of Indonesian, Asia Institute, The University of Melbourne, Australia

religions of asia today by john l esposito: Confucianism as a World Religion Anna Xiao Dong Sun, 2013 Is Confucianism a religion? If so, why do most Chinese think it isn't? From ancient Confucian temples, to nineteenth-century archives, to the testimony of people interviewed by the author throughout China over a period of more than a decade, this book traces the birth and growth of the idea of Confucianism as a world religion. The book begins at Oxford, in the late nineteenth century, when Friedrich Max Müller and James Legge classified Confucianism as a world religion in the new discourse of world religions and the emerging discipline of comparative religion. Anna Sun shows how that decisive moment continues to influence the understanding of Confucianism in the contemporary world, not only in the West but also in China, where the politics of Confucianism has become important to the present regime in a time of transition. Contested histories of Confucianism are vital signs of social and political change. Sun also examines the revival of Confucianism in contemporary China and the social significance of the ritual practice of Confucian temples. While the Chinese government turns to Confucianism to justify its political agenda, Confucian activists have started a movement to turn Confucianism into a religion. Confucianism as a world religion might have begun as a scholarly construction, but are we witnessing its transformation into a social and political reality? With historical analysis, extensive research, and thoughtful reflection, Confucianism as a World Religion will engage all those interested in religion and global politics at the beginning of the Chinese century.

religions of asia today by john l esposito: A Muslim Archipelago Max L. Gross, 2007 This book is with a contemporary focus. Author, Dr. Max Gross's purpose is to use history to explain today's Islamic insurgencies in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines and to offer perspectives for the future. Muslim Archipelago's unique contribution is that it brings together in one reference a mass of information on the insurgencies in Southeast Asia. The country accounts are detailed and thorough as to events, organizations, dates, and participants. The chronological context provides Dr. Gross the opportunity to give insights about historical casualty. His accounting highlights the interaction of the insurgencies within Southeast Asia and their international connection outside the region. The detailed presentations in the chapters on Indonesia and Philippines are especially fruitful. Included in this nearly 280 page book are detailed four-color regional maps, charts, and historical photos spread throughout the text. An extensive bibliography and index are included.

religions of asia today by john l esposito: Modern Perspectives on Islamic Law E. Ann Black, Hossein Esmaeili, Nadirsyah Hosen, 2013-01-01 'This book presents an invaluable contribution to the debate on the compatibility of Islam and modernity. It is full of arguments and examples showing how Islam can be understood in line with modern life, human rights, democracy,

the rule of law, civil society and pluralism. The three authors come from different countries, represent different gender perspectives and have a Shia, a Sunni and a non-Muslim background respectively which makes the book a unique source of information and inspiration.' Irmgard Marboe, University of Vienna, Austria This well-informed book explains, reflects on and analyses Islamic law, not only in the classical legal tradition of Sharia, but also its modern, contemporary context. The book explores the role of Islamic law in secular Western nations and reflects on the legal system of Islam in its classical context as applied in its traditional homeland of the Middle East and also in South East Asia. Written by three leading scholars from three different backgrounds: a Muslim in the Sunni tradition, a Muslim in the Shia tradition, and a non-Muslim woman the book is not only unique, but also enriched by differing insights into Islamic law. Sir William Blair provides the foreword to a book which acknowledges that Islam continues to play a vital role not just in the Middle East but across the wider world, the discussion on which the authors embark is a crucial one. The book starts with an analysis of the nature of Islamic law, its concepts, meaning and sources, as well as its development in different stages of Islamic history. This is followed by accounts of how Islamic law is being practised today. Key modern institutions are discussed, such as the parliament, judiciary, dar al-ifta, political parties, and other important organizations. It continues by analysing some key concepts in our modern times: nation-state, citizenship, ummah, dhimmah (recognition of the status of certain non-Muslims in Islamic states), and the rule of law. The book investigates how in recent times, more and more fatwas are issued collectively rather than emanating from an individual scholar. The authors then evaluate how Islamic law deals with family matters, economics, crime, property and alternative dispute resolution. Lastly, the book revisits certain contemporary issues of debate in Islamic law such as the burqa, halal food, riba (interest) and apostasy. Modern Perspectives on Islamic Law will become a standard scholarly text on Islamic law. Its wide-ranging coverage will appeal to researchers and students of Islamic law, or Islamic studies in general. Legal practitioners will also be interested in the comparative aspects of Islamic law presented in this book.

religions of asia today by john l esposito: Islam and Democracy in South Asia Md Nazrul Islam, Md Saidul Islam, 2020-03-20 Grounded in the Weberian tradition, Islam and Democracy in South Asia: The Case of Bangladesh presents a critical analysis of the complex relationship between Islam and democracy in South Asia and Bangladesh. The book posits that Islam and democracy are not necessarily incompatible, but that the former has a contributory role in the development of the latter. Islam came to Bengal largely by Sufis and missionaries through peaceful means and hence a moderate form of this religion got rooted in the society. Both militant Islam and militant secularism are equal threats to democracy and pluralism. Like democracy, political Islam has many faces. Political Islam adhering to democratic norms and practices, what the authors call "democratic Islamism," unlike "militant Islamism," is not anti-democratic. The book shows that the suppression of democracy and human rights creates avenues for the consolidation of militant Islamism, orthodox Islam, and "Islamic" terrorism, while the "fair play" of democracy results in the decline of anti-democratic form of political Islam.

religions of asia today by john l esposito: Radical Islam's Rules Paul Marshall, 2005-02-25 A major feature of the rise of Islamism in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and parts of the West is the rapid growth of a starkly repressive version of Islamic shari'a law, often fueled by funds and support from Saudi Arabia. The central purpose of Islamists, including terrorists, is to impose such law in all Muslim lands, and then throughout the world in a new Caliphate. Despite its importance, this worldwide growth of extreme shari'a is under-documented and little understood. By a comparative study over the last twenty-five years of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, Nigeria, Malaysia, and Indonesia, this book shows its terrible effects on human rights, especially the status of women and religious freedom, of Muslims as well as religious minorities, and on democracy itself. It also shows that such laws are a direct threat to the American interest of advancing democracy and human rights, that the United States lacks a policy for dealing with the spread of extreme shari'a, and concludes with policy recommendations for the United States regarding specific countries confronting extreme shari'a.

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religions of asia today by john l esposito: Islam in Asia John L. Esposito, 1987 The actions and political rhetoric of the day seem to affirm the commitment of many Muslims to a more Islamic political, social, and economic order. But despite the pervasiveness of this phenomenon and its geopolitical significance, our understanding of the contemporary Islamic world has remained astonishingly limited. More than half of the world's 800 million Muslims live in Asia, and yet most people continue to think of Islam as an essentially Arab phenomenon. This wide-ranging volume brings together previously unpublished writings by leading authorities on Islamic affairs to provide the fullest picture of the diverse roles played by Islam in Asian public life today. Central topics include how Islam is presented in the public life--government, national ideology, law, and political parties--of Asian Muslims, and the ways in which Islam influences both the domestic politics and foreign policies of Muslim countries today.

religions of asia today by john l esposito: A Muslim Archipelago Max L. Gross, 2007 Southeast Asia continues to beckon policymakers and scholars alike to revisit its history in spite of the tomes of appraisals already written, deconstructive or otherwise. Because of a significant presence of Muslims in the region, and particularly in the wake of 9/11, it invariably attracts the attention of foreign powers drawn by the specter of terrorism and focused on rooting out radical Islamist groups said to be working with al-Qaeda. Dr. Max Gross has written an impressive account of the role of Islam in the politics of Southeast Asia, anchored by a strong historical perspective and a comprehensive treatment of current affairs. The result is very much a post-9/11 book. The origins of Jemaah Islamiyah and its connections with al-Qaeda are carefully detailed. Yet, unlike much of the post-9/11 analysis of the Muslim world, Dr. Gross's research has been successful in placing the phenomenon of terrorism within a larger perspective. While recognizing that al-Qaeda's influence on regional terror networks remains unclear, it behooves us to be reminded that, regardless of the nature and extent of the linkages, to dismiss terrorism as a serious threat to security would be na ve to the point of recklessness. The Muslim Archipelago is a profoundly Islamic region, and Jemaah Islamiyah is only a small portion of this reality. The attention Dr. Gross pays to ABIM in Malaysia, of which I was a part, and the civil Islam movement in Indonesia, of which the late Nurcholish Madjid was a principal spokesman, is greatly appreciated. Those unfamiliar with the background and role of the traditional Islamic PAS party in Malaysia, as well as the Darul Islam movement in Indonesia, will find the author's account highly beneficial. The MNLF, the MILF, and Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, as well as the various Islamic movements in southern Thailand, are also carefully explained.

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