

of ethnic boundaries and the redistribution of wealth and privilege on the basis of such exclusions.

Although all the articles in the series offer thought-provoking insights, some are much more lighthearted than others. Liana Chua describes her experiences of “eating one’s way through fieldwork,” while Janet Carsten offers nostalgic reflections on fieldwork in a coastal fishing village. Finally, the article that would likely be of greatest interest to anthropologists beyond Malaysia—particularly those in teaching positions—is Patricia Sloane-White’s marvelous account of a video-conference-based course linking her students at the University of Delaware to those at two campuses of Malaysia’s Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman. Sloane-White provides not only an engaging account of cross-cultural interaction but also an intriguing model for transnational pedagogy.

Although the “Ini Budaya Kita” series offers readers insights into contemporary Malaysia as well as a contemporary view of anthropology as a discipline, both the contents of the series and its omissions are telling—with respect to both Malaysia and anthropology. Most remarkable is the fact that as varied as the backgrounds of the contributors are, none of them come from Malaysia’s numerically and politically dominant Malay community. Much is said about Malays and Muslims, but Malay Muslim authors are not among the writers. The articles also deal overwhelmingly with topics and subjects that are mainly the concerns of urban, highly educated Malaysians. Reflecting anthropological trends elsewhere (e.g., the United States), the “Ini Budaya Kita” articles tend toward the academically fashionable and politically progressive, addressing issues such as theme parks, contemporary architecture, cinema, slang, environmentalism, and consumption (particularly, consumption of food). Nonurban and nonindustrial domains are relatively under-represented, notwithstanding two fine articles by Robert

Dentan and Alberto Gomes, both of whom write on discourses about and experiences among *orang asli* (non-Malay, indigenous peoples).

The “public” with which this particular exercise in public anthropology engaged in Malaysia is a somewhat rarified one. In the case of “Ini Budaya Kita,” written for and by a circle of Malaysian cosmopolitans (by which I mean citizens as well as noncitizens who are nevertheless intimately engaged with the country, myself included), this also reflects the rather severe limits on critical discourse in the country. In the name of “responsible” journalism and public order—the familiar argument that any public discussion of “sensitive issues” will result in social and political chaos—the topics and tenor of most of the articles from *Ini Budaya Kita* are only (and only marginally) permissible in a forum such as the English-language publication *Off the Edge*. It is hard to imagine them in a mainstream Malay-language publication consumed by a wider reading public. But then again—as Lee and his contributors argue—cultures, as well as politics and publics, are complex, unpredictable, ever-changing things.

#### NOTE

*Postscript.* Julian Lee has recently collected the articles from the series along with a number of responses to them to be published as an edited volume entitled *The Malaysian Way of Life* (2010) by Marshall Cavendish.

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2010 *The Malaysian Way of Life: Twenty-one Insightful and Sometimes Humorous Essays That Reveal the Deeper Aspects of Malaysian Culture and Politics*. Tarrytown, NY: Marshall Cavendish.

## Tokyo Green Space [<http://tokyogreenspace.wordpress.com/>]

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Unlike European and North American cities, Tokyo never benefitted from planning that incorporated green space into the urban form. Yet, the city is home to innovative gardeners who enjoy significant local governmental and corporate support. That is the finding of the Tokyo Green Space Project, a web log (blog) that examines the transformation of Tokyo into “an urban forest that supports bio-diversity, the environment, and human community” (<http://tokyogreenspace.com/about/>). Japan’s Council for Foreign Relations Hitachi Fellowship supports the project. Focusing on the connection between

the actions of corporations and governments and the planted spaces created by household gardeners, the blog documents distinctive gardening forms, such as pot gardening and vertical gardening.

This design-anthropology project, which began on March 31, 2009, is the work of Jared Braiterman. Design anthropology uses anthropological methodologies and theories in the data collection and analysis of a design process. The products of the design process improve on an existing program or material product or create new ones (Cardew Kersey 2007:1). Although the roots of design anthropology can be traced to the 1960s, the current research strategies were outlined only recently (Blomberg et al. 1993; Wasson 2000). Braiterman undertook the project to show

that small, planted spaces could support biodiversity in the world's largest city. The intended audience for the blog is urban planners, environmental activists, and gardeners. On it, he effectively combines descriptive and analytical content with the mixed-media capabilities of the blog format.

One of the concepts driving Tokyo's microgardening is the urban *satoyama* movement, an initiative of Japan's Ministry of the Environment (UN University 2009). Derived from land-use practices in Japan's rice-growing communities, the term *satoyama* refers to a zone of heightened plant and animal diversity between the artificially limited community of the arable rice fields (*sato*) and the naturally limited species mix of the mountain slopes (*yama*) that surround them (Takeuchi et al. 2003). In the countryside, *satoyama* is accomplished by coppicing practices, cutting trees and shrubs to ground level. This practice allows a sustainable supply of timber, vigorous regrowth of existing plants, and an increase in new plants and animals. Transferring this practice to the city is no easy task. Here the "sato" is represented by the streets that make circulation possible while the "yama" is the vertical walls of the buildings. Finding the middle zone where diversity can flourish requires insight and imagination. Braiterman documents the most successful examples of urban *satoyama*: a shop that specialized in using nontraditional plants for bonsai art, growing wet rice (with ducks!) on a rooftop near the Ginza, a firefly-conducive garden in a middle school, gardens created by local residents in public spaces, and, most spectacularly, the 29-meter-high "green curtain" garden of the Suginami-ku assembly hall.

Reading through the blog's posts in chronological order, we see a research project that emerges from Braiterman's wanderings: we encounter anything from a flâneur drawn to catalogue the Debordian spectacle of color and variety among the homogeneous flow of street to detailed interviews with landscape architects and urban agronomists. The entries are not field notes, a common weakness of ethnographic blogs, but public presentations of exemplary plantings and designs in the manner of blog narratives (Vancouver's Olympic vegetable garden project; Ho Chi Minh City's dramatic loss of green space). Each month, there are 17–45 different entries with luscious color photography that captures the design el-

ements and urban environments. Sidebar links provide the reader with direct access to the reports, presentations, and publications that the project generated. Each post offers the reader an opportunity for comment, and several readers have done so. The responses range from simple expressions of support for the project to contributions of examples or problems that supplement Braiterman's entries.

Design anthropology has influenced marketing since the early 1980s. It is currently making an impact in management as well. It can be understood in two ways: as the object from which we tease out cultural issues surrounding the products and practices of designers both professional and amateur, or the anthropology of design; and as the medium of anthropological communication to which we add visual, aural, or tactile representations, or the anthropology in design. This project incorporates both. To the best of my knowledge, this website is the first instance of this approach directed toward urban environmental issues.

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#### Review Essay

## The 2009 UN Climate Talks: Alternate Media and Participation from Anthropologists

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**ABSTRACT** The United Nations climate talks in Copenhagen during December of 2009 were surrounded by numerous side

events. Some anthropologists and other social scientists at these events used the Web as a technology for reporting on activities as they occurred. The success of alternate publishing fora is difficult to gauge, but these weblogs reflect some of the difficulties faced by lone researchers in observing and reporting on