

des „*Buch des edlen Ritters Marco Polo*“ (so der Titel der deutschen Erstausgabe von 1477) ist die Vehemenz, mit der nicht nur Schütte, sondern auch viele andere in westlichen Ländern wie in China gegen jeglichen Zweifel an der Augenzeugenschaft Polos anstürmen. Dem Direktor des Überseeereisen-Museums in Quanzhou, das als „Zayton“ Marco Polo als Ausschiffungshafen für seine Rückreise gedient haben soll, stieg bei der bloßen Erwähnung des Wood-Buches durch den Rezensenten vor einigen Jahren die Zornesröte ins Gesicht; noch heute versucht die chinesische Geschichtsforschung, Spuren des Aufenthaltes in alten Dokumenten zu entdecken. Aber auch in Online Communities wie z.B. www.Geschichtsforum.de ringen zahlreiche historisch interessierte Laien nach wie vor mit den Fakten. Der amerikanisch-japanische Fotograf Michael Yamashita startete 1997 eine jahrelange entbehrungsreiche Reise mit dem erklärten Ziel, entgegen der Thesen von Frances Wood zu beweisen, das Marco Polo wirklich nach China kam.

Wie kann Il Milione heute noch solche emotionalen Reaktionen hervorrufen, während zweifelsfrei auf Tatsachen beruhende Reiseberichte von Zeitgenossen Marco Polos wie der des flämischen Minoriten-Mönchs Wilhelm von Rubruk vergessen sind?

Aus chinesischer Sicht ist Marco Polo sicherlich als früher Beleg für die Anerkennung der zivilisatorischen Leistungen Chinas durch das Abendland von Nutzen, bei manchen westlichen Verteidigern mag mit dem Buch des Venezianers der persönlich-biografische Einstieg in die Faszination des Orients verbunden gewesen sein. Auf jeden Fall bietet der Text von Hans-Wilm Schütte einen guten Anlass, wieder einmal das Buch des „vorzüglichen Mannes“ (Goethe über Marco Polo) aus dem Bücherregal zu holen, egal ob man darin nun die geschickte Fälschung eines Hochstaplers, eine kompetente Kompilation zeitgenössischer arabischer und persischer Quellen oder den wahrheitsge-

treuen Bericht des größten europäischen Asienreisenden zu sehen glaubt.

Wolfgang Georg Arlt

41

Christian Schafferer (Ed.): Election Campaigning in East and Southeast Asia

Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006, 166 S., GBP 45,00

Election campaigning has become a major industry not only in America, but also in many other countries, for instance in East and Southeast Asia. As campaigning combines various aspects of textual and visual messages, of media, of political strategies and their legal and economic contexts, contemporary Asian Studies have therefore a fascinating new field of interdisciplinary inquiry.

In this context, the volume edited by Christian Schafferer constitutes one of the first comparative contributions. The case studies cover electoral campaigning in Japan (Christian Schafferer with Kawakami Kazuhisa), Taiwan (Christian Schafferer), Malaysia (Lim Hong Hai and Ong Kian Ming), and the Philippines (Julio Teehankee), with an introductory and a concluding chapter by Christian Schafferer. As the main contributor, Christian Schafferer in fact specialized so far mostly on election campaigning in Taiwan, being an Associate Professor of International Trade at the Overseas Chinese Institute of Technology in Taiwan.

Theoretically, the volume departs from an account of the state of the art of political marketing, including the phenomenon of its globalization. Since the 1960s, the spheres of business marketing have increasingly expanded to the realms of political communication. Consequently, economic goods and services are viewed as comparable to political promises and favors, sellers and buyers to candidates and voters, and money to votes. As marketing-inspired election cam-

paigining and its academic coverage had their first major impact in America, the initial global dissemination of the concept of political marketing has been dubbed the "Americanization" of political communication. In some countries, such as in France or Belgium, this kind of "Americanization" evoked fears of further cultural dependency. However, American political consultants (and a few European counterparts) are currently even active on a global scale, including in East and Southeast Asia, continuously disseminating their ideas of election campaigning.

In the present volume, Christian Schafferer's chapter on Taiwan is a well-documented case study of the new approach to election campaigning in East Asia. Apparently, it was particularly during the 1970s that campaign innovations began to be employed in Taiwan, before a new era of campaigning began in the 1980s. According to a new law from 1980, it was now considered legal to establish campaign headquarters and employ campaign assistants, to hold political views presentations, to print and disseminate name cards and handouts, to operate campaign vehicles and loudspeakers, and to canvass and visit the electors. Consequently, campaigning in Taiwan developed new modes of communication, involving, among others, dramatized events, direct action, and political advertising. Underground radio, cable TV, call-in programs, political fashion shows, and campaign merchandise were other keywords of the new style of innovative electoral campaigning in Taiwan.

Also the other chapter (co)-authored by Christian Schafferer, on electoral campaigning in Japan, is comparably detailed in the diverse means and methods of political marketing, although here a greater emphasis is placed on the broad development of the political system. In contrast, the chapter on electoral campaigning in Malaysia (Lim Hong Hai and Ong Kian Ming) concentrates more on the legal aspects of the election system in Malaysia, including its various

"bonus" effects for the leading coalition, the National Front (*Barisan Nasional*). Since also most of the Malaysian mainstream media support the ruling coalition, the emphasis in this chapter is not so much on a detailed account of campaign gadgets and the like, but rather on the broad campaign strategies of major political parties, including their central programmatic messages.

Similarly, also the chapter on the Philippines, by Julio Teehankee, does not emphasize on the theoretical impulse presented in the introductory chapter. Rather, it gives a well-rounded overview of the election system, the 1973 and 1987 constitutional contexts, major election results, the election laws and regulations, and the campaign strategies of major political parties. As the structure of this chapter resembles that on Malaysia, it seems that the authors responded in their contributions to a request by the editor. Since other edited volumes are frequently criticized for their lack of coherence, this homogenizing effort should be viewed positively. On the other hand, one would perhaps wish to obtain a more detailed analysis of the concepts and the practice of political marketing in these countries.

It is obvious that the study of political communication in East and Southeast Asia is an emerging field of inquiry where the present volume constitutes one of the first pioneering and hence rather meritorious attempts of mapping the field geographically as well as theoretically. In future endeavors, more countries should be analyzed in case studies, in particular Indonesia and India as the most populous democracies in Asia. It might also be useful to delve deeper into the individual national approaches to election campaigning, which would allow for taking the diverse cultural backgrounds more into account. The mentioned "Americanization" hypothesis could thus be tested empirically.

Arndt Graf