

Deriving from an ethnographic research in a mundane *barangay* (village) of the Philippines, this book revisits patron-client relations and the politics adhered that is rampant in the rural area of the country. It decodes the cultural meanings of patron-client ties and the nuances of the social practices of *tulong* (help) by paying attention to the cultural specificity of the *barangay* livelihood, religious practices and interpretation, emotions, and social and moral values inscribed in the villagers' everyday experiences. The contribution of this study is to collage different disciplines and to problematize the way in which rural politics is viewed through patron-client approach, to locate the socio-religious practices of *tulong* and to (re)articulate the desires and visions of the rural folks. Through the lens of the peasantry and the way they exercise patron-client ties in the rural area, we can observe political ideas and ideals that are religiously oriented in construing politics from the bottom up.

Soon Chuan Yeon belongs to the new, exciting generation of Southeast Asian scholars who bring their life and research experiences and intellectual grounding to bear on helping fellow Southeast Asians understand their own and each other's countries.

Soon's groundbreaking study extends Reynaldo Ileto's insights into how ordinary people make sense of, and embark upon, action through their language and culture. His work evinces a nuanced understanding of the ways in which the most vulnerable among Filipinos negotiate the unequal power relations through idioms of reciprocity, empathy, and transformation. His emphasis on what he calls "local concepts" arising from ground-level cultural practices, from the everyday making and remaking of social symbols and ideas, from often ill-articulated emotions, and from forms of religiosity has done much to enrich the current scholarship on Philippine politics and move the discussion beyond functionalist, patrimonialist, and patron-clientelist paradigms.

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SOON CHUAN YEAN



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