

EDEN IN THE EAST



The Drowned Continent of
Southeast Asia

STEPHEN
OPPENHEIMER

CONTENTS

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xv

Prologue 1

Southeast Asia: a lost prehistory – Lost continents and civilisations – Footprints on the beach: did East come West? – The flood in Southeast Asia and the Asian dispersal – history in myth

PART I: STONES, BONES, GENES AND TONES

Introduction to Part I 17

GEOLOGY

Chapter 1: An Ice Age and Three Floods 23

The genius of Milankovitch: out of place, out of time – Milankovitch and the floods – The flood trigger: an inside job? – A wobble on the conveyor belt – Not one, but three floods – The Older Dryas event and the first flood – The Younger Dryas event and the second flood – Another cold dry snap and the third flood – The Black Sea flood – Land-raisers after the flood – It was everything they said it was – A soft, springy, plastic and liquid Earth – A cool, springy, broken crust – The outer mantle: hot, weak and plastic – The loading of the ocean floors – Other causes of sea-level variation – Evidence for the third flood

ARCHAEOLOGY

Chapter 2: The Silt Curtain 49

Noah's flood re-examined – Missing strata – A sea flood? – Was Noah's flood the same as Utnapishtim's? – The drowning of Southeast Asia and the Austronesian dispersal – A maritime trading network in Southeast Asia and the Pacific – The diet of the first Austronesians – Incised, cord-marked and ring-footed pottery –

Blowpipes, bark-cloth and megaliths – Out of Taiwan? – Cultural links between East Asia and Ur

Chapter 3: Wet Feet 78

The drowning of Sundaland – Flooding of the Strait of Malacca – Safe caves of island Southeast Asia – D'ou les Chams – Long-distance trade between Southeast Asia and Melanesia after the flood – The Lapita controversy – Were the pre-Lapita long-distance traders Austronesian? – Old Austronesian settlements in New Guinea hidden by the flood – The age of the mangroves – The dingo and other arrivals – Flooded out and nowhere to go – Getting your feet wet – Did the flood stimulate a Neolithic Revolution?

LINGUISTICS

Chapter 4: Babel 113

The comparative method in linguistics – Know your ancestors – Indo-European and other Eurasian languages – Language and prehistory – Superphyla – Populations and distributions, not languages and trees – Southeast Asia: the centre of the world in prehistory – Austro-confusion in East and Southeast Asia – Sino-Tibetan – Austro-Asiatic – Tai-Kadai and Miao-Yao – Three coastal homelands

Chapter 5: Homeland of the Argonauts 141

Western Austronesian languages and their links with mainland Asia – Offshore or mainland? – How far west was the homeland? – Drowning Sundaland – Palaeo-Hesperonesian: the oldest tongues in island Southeast Asia? – The Sama Bajau of Wallacia: amphibious foragers and traders – The first western Austronesians? – Two Austronesian dispersals to the Pacific, not one – Three views of Lapita – The eastern branch of Austronesian languages – The express train to Polynesia – Enough time for change? – Two routes out to the Pacific – Branch train to south Melanesia from north Melanesia – Pre-Lapita colonisation of north Melanesia

GENETICS

Chapter 6: Eve's Genes 171

The genetic mark of Cain – Eve's genes – The Asian deletion – The Polynesian motif – Three generations of Asian mothers – Southeast Asians went to Australia

Chapter 7: Orang Asli: Originals 205

Orang Asli: the original Asians – Mothers and fathers move west? – The thalassaemia belt from Asia-Pacific to Europe – Beta thalassaemia connections from Southeast Asia to Europe – Alpha thalassaemia connections from the Pacific to Europe – The genetic evidence

PART II: CHINESE WHISPERS

Introduction to Part II 221

FLOOD MYTHS

Chapter 8: Five Hundred Cataclysms? 227

Sea-based floods – Land-based floods – No flood myths in Africa? – Flood-myth anthologies – Watery creation myths and land-raisers – Birds as earth-raisers and land-seekers – Earth-moulding and topographical changes – World conflagration as the primary or associated disaster

Chapter 9: Floods in the West 242

Noah's Flood – Flood stories of Mesopotamia and Syria – The Sumerian flood – The Old Babylonian flood – The Assyrian flood – Three flood stories from the Ancient Near East – Greek flood myths – Iranian flood traditions – Western European floods – The five flood traditions in the West

Chapter 10: Floods in the East 265

Manu's flood – A fiery catastrophe – An Austro-Asiatic fish motif from the East? – Three archetypes in the Far East – The flooding of Adam's Bridge – Fish floods and island-cutting in Maluku – Austronesian flood stories – Mountain-topping myths in east Polynesia as well – Austronesian flood myths in island Southeast Asia – Birds, incest and mountains – Western Malayo-Polynesian mountain floods – The bird, the snake and the tree – Arks: sealed chests, tubs and ships – Five hundred cataclysms?

CREATION

Chapter 11: Watery Chaos with Dragons 297

Two creations – The oldest layer in creation myths – Myths of cosmogony: explanatory or irrational – Cosmogony: the explicable and inexplicable – Ancient uses of astronomy – Chinese whispers – Watery chaos and dragon-slayers – A dry start to creation – The land-raiser myths – Summary

Chapter 12: Heaven and Earth 319

Separation of the Sky Father and Earth Mother – The Word, separation and light before luminaries – First light before the luminaries – First light before both separation of Heaven and Earth and luminaries – Light called forth before separation of the Heavens – Light engendered by the gods before separation of the Heavens – Separation of the Heavens and Earth lets in light – Cracking the cosmic egg lets in the light – Separation reveals the Sun as the source of first light

– Separation, parricide and the use of the body to build the cosmos – Separation of the waters above from the waters below – Which is the original separation story? – The Sun – The Moon – The origin of the week – The seven sisters – The seven sages from the East – Sevens from the South Pacific to the Sami – Creation story-types as prehistoric intercontinental cultural markers – Conclusion

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

Chapter 13: The Creation of Man 355

Totemic origins – Totemism in island Southeast Asia – The divine potter – Bloody temper in the clay – Red clay or bloody temper? – Ribs, breaths and sneezes – Clay models, devils, horses and dogs – Conclusions

Chapter 14: The Quest for Immortality 382

The Fall – The Fall as a confidence trick – The Moon's gift of immortality – The tree of life and edible immortality – Immortality through the cast-skin – Links between the cast-skin and the perverted message – Layers of immortality – Paradise – Dilmun: abode of the founder gods of Sumer

Chapter 15: The Dying and Rising Tree God 410

The death of the tree of plenty – People from trees – Mother Tree – The two-brothers theme – Mother Holle – Adonis, Attis and Osiris – Gardens of Adonis – Attis and Cybele – Common motifs in fertility myths and cults – Birds, serpents and the tree of life – The bird/tree/snake triad in the West

Chapter 16: Cain and Abel 441

Shepherds or farmers? – Who was the hero, Cain or Abel? – Are Cain and Abel motifs related to the Adonis/Attis/Osiris type? – Sumerian parallels – An eastern origin of the two-brothers conflict – The two warring brothers in Maluku and Melanesia – Kulabob and Manup – Kulabob and Manup: the core story – Pale-skinned brothers from the West? – The start of the odyssey – Episode 1: Kilibob leaves Madang – Episode 2: leatherskins, trevally and kingfish – Episode 3: Mala's travels on Umboi – Episode 4: Ambogim – Episode 5: The tree of wealth and plenty – Episode 6: Namor's Ark – History or myth? – Two brothers in the Sepik Basin? – Two brothers spread east to the Pacific

Epilogue: 475

Filling in the gaps – The trail West – Problems with dates of migration – Some stories can be dated – Just what did the East teach the West? – Conclusion

Notes 486

Index 533