Southeast Asian Cultural Characteristics
A. Family Values

1. Need for everyone to be married & have a family
   a. exception for homosexuals – basis for their social exclusion (but not persecution)
b. exception (sort of) for Buddhist monks & Filipino priests

c. modern educated women (especially in rural areas) often single for lack of suitable prospects
2. Bi-lateral kinship
a. ancestral descent gives equal weight to maternal & paternal sides of families
b. greater equality for women
   1.) equal inheritance (or at least not male only)
2.) no requirement for male heir
3.) pre-European naming practices not always based on the individual’s family
4.) no dowry (man works for bride’s family)
5.) post-marriage residence often with woman’s kin
3. Traditional match-makers
   a. marriages are family affairs – not just the bride & groom
   b. freedom in “dating” is not possible
3. Divorce
   a. traditionally (pre-European & pre-Islamic) women had great freedom to divorce
   b. divorce still allowed today but often more controlled
   c. the Philippine Catholic divorce problem
4. The “Fictive” Family
   a. “extra-familial” friendships
      1.) similar to ours = fraternities, clubs, neighborhood associations, work groups BUT . . .
2.) often lifetime & a major force in the individual’s life – Philippine examples

b. ritual kinship

1.) sponsors/witnesses at weddings, baptisms, or Qu’ran recitations

2.) ritual kinship as family and allies
B. Relationship with the State

1. “The Emperor’s Law stops at the village gate” – Vietnamese folk saying

2. Needs of the state & local level a balancing act – warfare, irrigation projects, etc.
3. hill tribes out of range of control – rice farmers & river/coastal dwellers in range

(importance of geography + agricultural practices – paddy rice cultivation vs. upland slash & burn)
4. mainland polities = coercive control of rice paddy “wet rice” agriculture → leads to stronger states

5. island polities = geographic autonomy → leads to sharing of resources with numerous semi-independent local leaders weak central government