

REVIEWS

G. Coedès, *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, Volume VI. V.E. de Boccard, Paris, 1955. 337 Pages.

This is the sixth and final volume of the inscriptions of ancient Cambodia, edited and translated from the Sanskrit and Khmer lapidary texts into French by Professor Coedès. He is the master of Khmer and Sanskrit epigraphy, and the six volumes of these inscriptions represent an imposing monument of diligent research, profound learning, and ingenious insight into the spiritual and cultural life of the ancient Khmer people. This last volume runs to 337 pages of text, including, like its predecessors, useful geographical, historical as well as lexicographical lists. The reviewer would like to take the opportunity here to express his deep satisfaction that he has had the privilege of reviewing all the six volumes of this magnificent work.

The inscriptions treated in the present volume are arranged in chronological order. They come from monuments situated both inside and outside the borders of the present Kingdom of Cambodia, including the following located in Siam: two in the easternmost part of *Changwat* Prachinburi, four in Nakhon Rajasima, one in Surin, two in Sisaket, one in Roi Et, one in Sakon Nakhon, and one within the precincts of Wat Phra Kaeo in Bangkok. All the inscriptions come from localities outside the various old capitals of Cambodia, and most of them have been treated by the late Major Etienne Aymonier in his *Cambodge*, I-II, some 70 years ago. Professor Coedès, however, has improved the deciphering of the inscriptions, and has also corrected a number of errors made by Aymonier. He has again been assisted by the helpful suggestions of the Cambodian philologist, M. Au Chhieng. Nevertheless, many words met with in the inscriptions present great difficulties to the translator as they represent ancient forms of the Khmer language now no longer used.

The contents of the inscriptions for the most part record the erection of sanctuaries in honour of the Brahmanic gods, and of gifts to them of land, cattle, slaves, of both sexes, golden parasols and

precious metals. We shall in the following, as usual, only mention those inscriptions which present a special interest to the readers of the *Journal*

The oldest of the inscriptions goes back to the reign of King Isanavarman I (beginning of the VIIth century A.D.), while an inscription at Vat Prei Wal from the reign of Jayavarman I (second half of the VIIth century), which has now disappeared, mentions two *phra phiksu*, and is thus one of the oldest witnesses to the pre-Angkor existence of Buddhism in Cambodia. It is interesting to find in this inscription the name of the town of Naravaranagara, in Chinese Na-fu-na, where the last of the great kings of Fu-nan sought refuge after the conquest of their kingdom by their former northern vassals, the Khmer. The Buddhism of VIIth century Cambodia seems to have been of the Theravadin sect which later gave way to the Mahayāna.

Most of the inscriptions are dedicated to the redoubtable god Siva, or his phallic symbol, the linga, which is still the object of worship by barren women in Cambodia and Siam. Most of the Khmer kings were worshippers of Siva, and only a few were devoted to Vishnu or the Buddha. The great mass of the common people seems, as opined by His late Royal Highness Prince Damrong, to have been Buddhists and/or animists. Caves were also used in ancient Cambodia, and also to the north of the forbidding barrier of the Dangrek hills in Siamese territory, as places of worship of the Brahmanic gods. While most of the Brahmanic images installed in the various sanctuaries have disappeared, probably destroyed by treasure hunters or fanatical Buddhists, some ancient images of the Buddha have survived till our day.

It is rare to find invocations to the Trimurti (Brahma, Vishnu and Siva) in the inscriptions. We have already mentioned gifts offered to the gods, among which were occasionally elephants, horses, bullocks, carts and palanquins with golden handles in the form of Nagas. In one inscription in the sanctuary of Ampil Relöm the Buddhist Triad of Buddha, Maitreya and Avalekitesvara is invoked to whom a number of slaves were offered. This inscription is one of the oldest attesting to the Mahayānist cult in Cambodia

in pre-Angkorian times, that is, prior to 900. A.D. On another, believed to have been made at the same time, the reigns of Yaso-varman, Harsavarman I and Jayavarman IV are mentioned. It was during the reign of these kings that Buddhism was substituted for the Brahmanic cult. The inscription on the door pillar in the northern tower of Ampil Rolôm is interesting as it mentions the names of three kings: Devaditya, Indraditya and Dharmaditya, the last of whom is connected with the town of Bhavapura. The location of King Bhavavarman's (ca. 550 A.D.) capital has hitherto baffled all research. Profersor Coedès therefore asks: Was Bhavapura situated near to the temple of Ampil Rolôm? We have been unable to find Prasat Ampil Rolôm on Major Lunet de Lajonquière's archaeological map in his great work *Monument du Cambodge*, I. On page 358 under No. 268 there is a description of a Prasat Rolôm which lies on the road connecting several sanctuaries of the Koh Ker group. Lajonquière's description of this sanctuary does not, however, tally with that of Professor Coedès. There seems to have existed a certain amount of antagonism between the two Cambodias, lying north and south of the Dangrek range, which lead twice to the division of the kingdom, the first time for a period of several hundreds of years. From an inscription at Prasat Anlong Charat it now appears that Vyadhapura the capital of the once mighty Funan must be identified with the present Ba Phnom in Lower Cambodia.

The religious syncretism met with, especially in Java, is also encountered in ancient Cambodia. Thus in the temple towers of Don Tri, according to the inscriptions, gifts were donated both to Siva Paramesvara and the Boddhisatva Ariya Mettraya. Much has been written about the great King Jayavarman VII's terrible affliction, that of leprosy (though he probably attained the great age of a hundred years), and of his compassion for fellow-men suffering from the same dreaded disease. This prompted the king to build his 101 hospitals along the main roads of his realm of which the sites of many still remain in Cambodian and Siamese territory. That the great king really suffered from leprosy is confirmed by an inscription in Prasat Praptus where "the enceinte of the leprous king" is mentioned. The Buddhist dedications seem

always to be Mahāyanistic. Thus in Prasat Chikreng an inscription tells about gifts offered to the Triad of Ekadasamukha, Lokesvara and Bhagavati. King Jayavarman VII was a Buddhist. In an inscription from the province of Sisophon the Buddha, Trailokanath and Vajrapani are invoked, and a fourth personage whose name has disappeared. The majestic and eery temple of Phra Vihar or Sikaresvara, crowning a spur of the Dangrek range like an eagle's nest, has given us a wealth of inscriptions. The oldest, in Khmer, is from 624 A.D., and states that the temple was dedicated to Siva. An inscription in Sanskrit from this great temple was transported to the town of Sisaket but has since disappeared. The inscriptions of Sikaresvara belong to several periods, both of Brahmanic and Buddhist kings. The Sivaitic cult was, however, the predominating one. The latest inscription goes back to the reign of Jayavarman II (1112-1152 A.D.), the founder of Angkor Wat. The bulk of this wonderful temple with its monumental staircases, naga terrace, long chaussées lined with pillars, rock cut basins and its main temple with its galleries and pyramidal tower was no doubt constructed principally during the reign of Suryavarman I, a Buddhist from Tambralinga (Nakhon Sritammarat), who reigned from 1002 to 1049 A.D. In an inscription from A.D. 1037 is mentioned the god Vṛddhesvara to whom there was a temple in the fortified village of the present Ban Srī Kampheng Yai, lying to the northwest of Phra Vihar in the *Changvat* of Srisaket. In an inscription found at Lovek is mentioned a Kamrateng Jagat Vnam Rung, the old name of the temple crowning the basaltic outcrop of Phnom Rung (*Amphō* Nangrong, *Changvat* Buriram).

The oldest inscription in Thai territory is engraved on a stone pillar. *Hin Khôn*, standing near the road leading from *Amphō* Pakthungchai to the sub-*amphō* of Sakerat. This pillar (now disappeared) marked the site of one or several Buddhist monasteries. The inscription is old, perhaps from before 700 A.D. Its letters resemble those in the inscriptions of Bô Ika. The names of Indravarman and Suryavarman cannot therefore be the later Cambodia kings bearing these names. It is also interesting to note a certain Môn influence in this inscription both as regards the form of the

letters as well as certain words in the text. The influence in north-eastern Siam of the Môn Kingdom of Dvaravati in the Menam valley is, of course, well known. The inscription is in Sanskrit and Khmer, and the site of the former Buddhist sanctuaries was called Srau Bra or Sro Vrach. On one side of the pillar is mentioned a certain Raja phiksu, Nrpendrathipativarman, who was a prince or king, son of another person with about the same name, and both belonging to a local dynasty. It is interesting to note that about 700 A.D. there was a Khmer population in Southwestern Korat. Did it originally come from west or east? Furthermore, in view of the late Major William Hunt's epoch-making aerial photographs of a large number of ancient fortified and deserted town sites lying in the great forest Kôk Luang in Korat province, a thorough exploration of all these ancient places would be most desirable. Such investigation might reveal important phases of the history of this part of the Kingdom of Thailand. Bô Ika is the name of an ancient stone terrace lying inside the enceinte of the now deserted Mûang Nakhon Rajasima Kao (situated north and slightly west, of Sung Nôn). On this terrace is seen a stela of red sandstone with an inscription in pre-Angkor letters. The inscription on one side is Buddhist inspired, and mentions gifts of cattle and slaves of both sexes to the Sangkha or Buddhist community of monks. The donor is a King Sri Chanaca. Professor Coedès believes that this king is no doubt the same as the King Chanaca of Chanacapura mentioned in the inscription in Sanskrit and Khmer of 937 A.D. found in Ayuthia, and which gives a list of kings who are not kings of Cambodia. This stela was brought to Ayuthia from a place outside the Menam plain, probably the Korat plateau. We think that to this dynasty belonged perhaps the King Sri Jayasimhavarmanaraja whose name appears on the inscribed pillar from Mûang Phu Khio Kao. On the other face of the stela is invoked Siva and the inscription says that a certain Angsadeva was the recipient of a piece of land situated "outside Kambudesa" which was unoccupied, perhaps originally donated by a king of Chanasa, as stated on the front side of this stela. On this piece of land Angsadeva erected a golden linga in the year 668 A.D.. Professor Coedès thinks that in the VIIth century A.D. the Korat region was not yet a part of Cambodia.

At Ban Phutsa, ten kilometres north of Korat town, are the ruins of three small Khmer sanctuaries. On a stela in Wat Tawan Tok one reads the name of Rudraloka which was the posthumous name of Harsavarman (912-922). The town of Surin has, besides the inscription of Mahendravarman (circa 600 A.D.), also delivered us fragments of one or two other inscriptions where the name of King Rajakula Mahāmontri shows that the inscription comes from the time of King Jayavarman V (968-1001). In the ruined sanctuary, lying on the top of a small hill, Phnom Krebas, some thirty kilometres north-west of Phra Vihār, is seen a ruined inscription in Sanskrit whose letters seem to be those used in the XIth or XIIth century A.D.

In the tower of Phnom Sankhē Kong, standing on a hillock near the village of Sbök Ampil, west of the gigantic temple of Bantai Chhmar, and south of Chong Tako, thus in Siamese territory, is an inscription in which the god Siva is invoked and King Suryavarman I is eulogised. The date is 1016 A.D.. The images of the Linga, Sambhu (Brahma) and Devi were worshiped here, and they probably represented the three persons of the founder and his father and mother. Thus a kind of ancestor worship is revealed, which reached its highest point at the end of the XIIth century A.D. when the huge temple of Phra Khan at Angkor Thom was peopled by a multitude of statues raised in homage to deceased parents of queens, princes or other great personages.

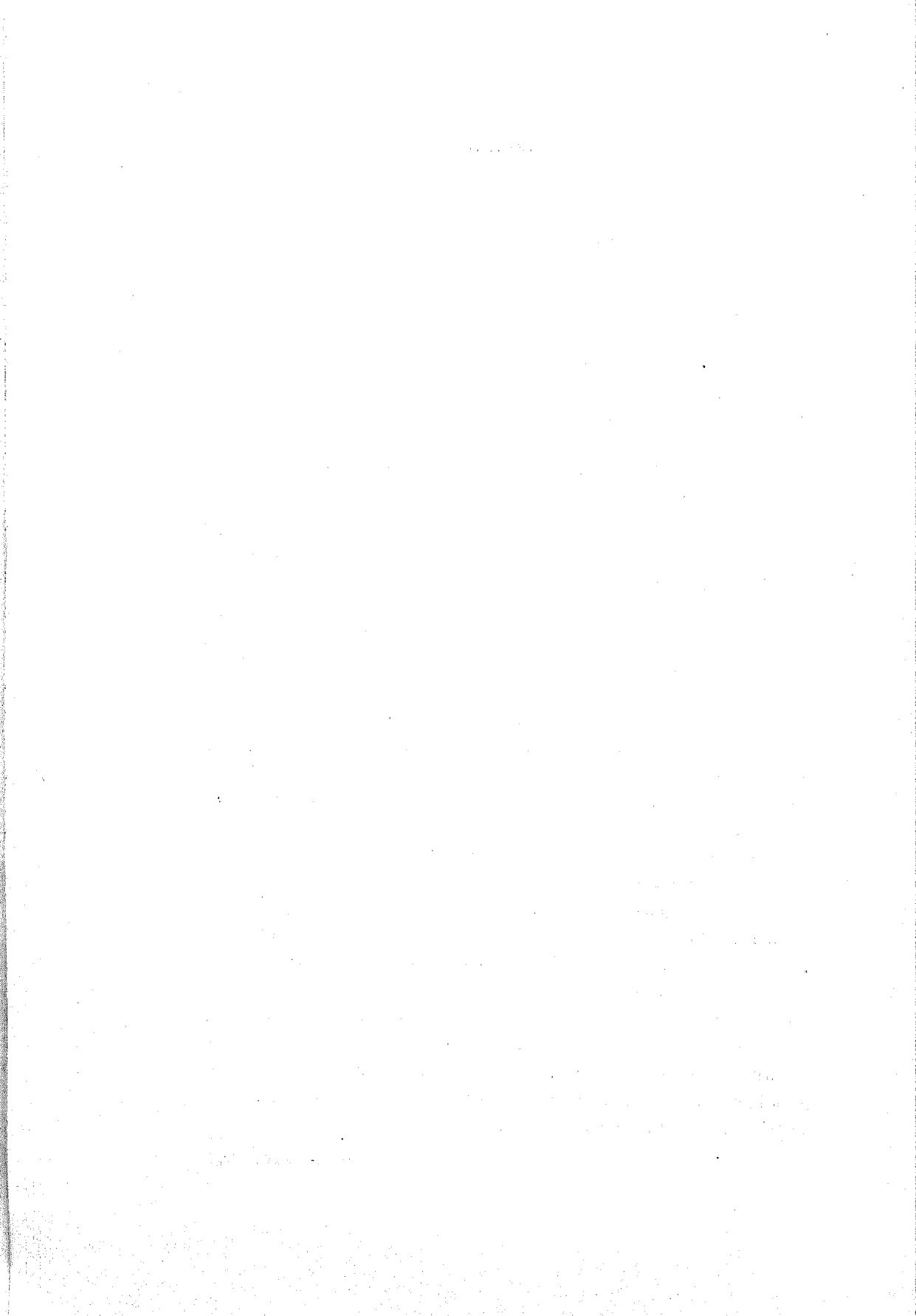
Prasat Tap Sim is a sanctuary of three towers standing south of the famous Sdok Kak Thom sanctuary near the Cambodian frontier but still in Siamese territory. The Sanskrit inscription is identical with that found in Phnom Sankhē Kong. Bān Sra Kampheng Yai, already mentioned, must have played a certain rôle in the history of ancient Cambodia. The sanctuary there boasts of an unfinished brick temple with a gopura and an enceinte. The gopura juts out from the eastern gallery, and inside is seen an inscription in Sanskrit, dated 1042 A.D. (reign of Suryavarman I). It says that Vrah Ramrateng Añ Sivaddase and three other dignitaries had bought the land for the upkeep of the temple of the god Vrdhhesvara (Siva). This ancient place, whose original name was Vrdhhesvarapura, seems to have been in intimate relations with the great

sanctuary of Sikaresvara (Phra Vihar). About 10 kilometres north east of *Amphö* Suvannaphum (*Changvat* Roi Et) is seen an old red sandstone stela with an almost illegible inscription in Khmer from the XIth century A.D. Its contents concern a dispute over some pieces of land with a list of dignitaries cited as witnesses.

The present Wat Thāt in Sakon Nakhon is really a Khmer tower which the Thai Yō or Phu Thai settlers some 125 years ago converted into a Lao *thāt*. An inscription in Khmer mentions the division of certain pieces of land in the district of Jraleng between the authors of the inscription and two local chiefs of the people of Jraleng and Vnur Vinau. The language seems to be a dialect of Khmer. This inscription may go back to the year 1000 A.D.

In the great and important temple of Nom Van (about 10 kilometres northeast of the town of Korat) are four groups of inscriptions. The first dates back to the reign of King Udayadityavarman II of Cambodia, and is in Sanskrit and Khmer but the estampage is almost illegible. Professor Coedès has, therefore, deferred a translation until a better impression can be obtained. The second, of 41 lines in Khmer and dated 1084 A.D., mentions King Jayavarman VI giving orders to a group of dignitaries concerning the upkeep of a Devasrama. The names of these dignitaries are known from other inscriptions of his reign. The third inscription pays homage to the god Siva, and contains the titles and names of several high dignitaries, among them Vrah Kamrateng Añ Rajindrarvarman, who was a general commanding the central army. A passage in the inscription mentions the god's voyage to Ratnabhumi. The name of Ratnapuri is also mentioned. There is an *Amphö* Ratnaburi in *Changvat* Surin. The fourth inscription is mutilated, but mentions three horses. One of Jayavarman's hospital decrees was also found here but it has since disappeared. Finally, there is the inscription on a stone pillar standing within the confines of Wat Phra Kaeo in the Grand Royal Palace in Bangkok. It is not known just where this octagonal pillar was found. On its upper part is an inscription in Sanskrit giving the date of 1316 A.D. and mentioning two measures of water.

Erik Seidenfaden



Lawrence Palmer Briggs, *The Ancient Khmer Empire*. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 41, Part 1, Philadelphia, 1951. pp. 295, 58 ill., 22 plans, 17 maps.

The approach to the study of the ancient Khmer Empire in Cambodia, Champa and Thailand, one of the most brilliant and colourful civilisations in Asia, has always been difficult on account of the historic sources. By the publication of this standard work in English the author—to quote Professor Coedès—has made a date in the history of South-East Asia, because here, for the first time, the enormous and widely scattered materials have been absorbed, impartially interpreted, co-ordinated and made available to students and scholars. The volume is dedicated “to that wonderful group of French savants, particularly those of the Ecole Française d’Extrême Orient, whose scholarship and faithful labors have brought to light and preserved the wonders and the story of the ancient Khmer Empire and have thus made them known to the world.”

The author has been United States consul in Indo-China and has visited the historic sites about which he writes, as is mentioned in the foreword by Robert Heine-Geldern. Brigg’s book gives a complete history of the Khmer Empire from the Funan period to the abandonment of Angkor after the sack of Angkor Thom by the Thai in 1431 A.D., and in addition it provides a complete history of the development of Khmer art and architecture. The bibliography contains 750 references and is exhaustive as well as up to date; the Grandmaster George Coedès is mentioned with more than 160 cited works. Complete justice is done to the other great French savants, to mention here only Aymonier, Maspéro Finot, Goloubew, Groslier, Marchal, Mus, Parmentier, Pelliot and Stern. The number of articles by Briggs himself cited shows to what extent the author has already been able to penetrate the complexity of the Khmer civilisation.

A complete review of *The Ancient Khmer Empire* has been given in the meantime by Professor Coedès in *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 73, No. 1, January/March 1953, pp. 56-62.

Briggs has divided his work into three periods:

1. Funan period (First cent. A.D. to ca 550)
2. The Chenla period (Ca 550-802 A.D.)
3. The Kambuja, or Angkor Period (802-1432 A.D.)

It is not known what the people of the earliest kingdom of the Mekong delta called themselves, but in the Chinese Annals this country is called Funan. A vassal kingdom of Funan, just above it on the Mekong, was called Chenla by the Chinese. Chenla seems to have been the Chinese equivalent of Kambuja or Kambujadesa. After the founding of the Khmer kingdom by Jayavarman II on Mount Mahendra in 802, the inscriptions use the terms Kambuja and Kambujadesa; hence, the Kambuja, or Angkor period. This classical Khmer period comes to an end by the definite removal of the capital to the southeastern part of the kingdom in 1432 after the capture of Angkor by the Thai in 1431. The author is aware that the above division of the subject is open to criticism, but he believes the objections are outweighed by the advantages. Coedès in his review would have much preferred that the author had followed the usual division, pre-Angkor period and Angkor period (802-1432 A.D.). The reason for this preference is that very little is known of Funan whilst the name Chenla is still not explained and is certainly not a Chinese transcription of the word Kambuja as the author supposes. The name Tchen-la was used by the Chinese to designate Cambodia, until quite recently. In the inscriptions, the inhabitants of Cambodia are called Kambuja, "descendants of Kambu", the legendary founder of the race. The term Khmer, practically synonymous with Kambuja, is the adjective generally used with Empire, and this history aims to cover more than Kambujadesa (desa=land, country).

The origin of the Khmer people is unknown. The author suggests that if they were not natives of this region the Khmer originally must have come down the Mun valley or through what is now Siamese Laos. In Thailand the expression Siamese Laos, however, is not used and we understand that Mr. Briggs means the

North-East Region (Pākisāna) on the Korat plateau. This theory may be true but there is as yet no evidence in support of it. The author suggests furthermore that if the Khmer ever had common ancestry with the Môn, as their joint name Môn-Khmer seems to imply, their contact appears to have been via the valley of the Mun. Coedès points out that the name Môn-Khmer is the expression of a recent linguistic theory only; therefore, an assumption of common ancestry does not seem permissible. Coedès is of opinion that this section on the founding of Chenla (Kamujadesa) should be rewritten in a second edition. Nevertheless, Briggs' treatment of the early history of South-East Asia, the kingdoms of Funan, Dvāravati, Chenla, Kambujadesa, is indispensable for the student of the history of Thailand. Much of the earlier material is derived from Chinese sources. It also relates the early influence of the Pallava culture from South-East India, bringing the beautiful Pallava script characters. In the early stone sculpture of the Hindu Gods, Viṣṇu and Harihara (combination of Viṣṇu and Śiva) to be seen in the stone gallery in the National Museum in Bangkok, the Pallava prototypes as early as the 6th century A.D. are clearly present. This style of sculpture is usually classified as belonging to the Funan and Chenla periods, but one would be quite safe in stating that this sculpture is pre-Angkorian.

The third part of the book deals with the Kambuja, or Angkor period (802-1432), which occupies two thirds of the volume. The available material is abundant and the author has been able to give a complete and excellent picture of this "classical" period of the Khmer civilization. The Khmer inscriptions and the great number of monuments, of which Angkor Wat and the Bayon of Angkor Thom are the most impressive, form the basis of this history. These temples, replica of the universe, are today the highlights in the increasingly popular weekend tourists flights from Bangkok to Angkor (Siemreap). Even the most blasé traveller is deeply impressed by the dimensions and the atmosphere of these huge deserted temples, which, in their perfect setting in the jungle, are to be seen at their best at the end of the rainy season in November. These monuments were all built with the object of creating a maximum effect.

The most important date in Khmer history is the year 802 A.D. From later inscriptions it is known that in this year King Jayavarman II established his capital on Mount Mahendra parvata situated on Phnom Kulen and declared his independence of Java. In accordance with Hindu ritual a brahman anointed Jayavarman II as a universal monarch or cakravartin and, at the same time, this brahman prepared the ritual for the royal līṅga, symbolising the cakravartin power. This ceremony took place in 802. The author calls it the Khmer Declaration of Independence. By this consecration of the sacred līṅga (symbol of Śiva) Jayavarman at the same time established the cult of the devarāja (god-king), as the official religion of the kingdom for many centuries to come. The communication between the king and the god by the intermediary of a priest is made on top of a holy mountain in a temple which is a symbol of the Meru, the Olympus of the gods, and which at the same time is a replica of the universe. Thus is Angkor Vat with its five towers to be interpreted as a microcosm which is at the same time a funerary temple or mausoleum. The Meru is the central tower and the four lower towers, erected at the four cardinal points of the universe, according to ancient Hindu mythology, symbolise the four continents. In the same way, for example, the Wat Arun in Dhonburi is also a replica of the universe. In Bangkok the "Pramane" ground (prah Meru) is the place where traditionally the King of Thailand is cremated on a Meru, the centre of the universe. These are some of the basic ideas required for the understanding of Khmer religion and architecture. The cult of the devarāja resulted in megalomania in their kings and ultimately brought about their downfall and the abandonment of the astounding number and size of their monuments dedicated to their personal glory. This story is superbly told in Briggs' book in convenient paragraphs. It should be understood, however, that this work is not easy reading; but it gives all the facts and existing theories in a way which is in accordance with the highest scientific standards.

At the end of the book we find a list, four pages long, of Khmer monuments and their relevant inscriptions which facilitates research considerably. Apart from the exhaustive bibliography

(750 references), the book ends with a detailed index of 17 pages each containing 3 columns of references to pages inside the book. There are quite a number of small typographical errors in Sanskrit words (diacritical marks missing or placed incorrectly) and in names of Dutch works cited; these should be corrected in the next edition.

Of special interest are the references made to the history of Thailand and the descriptions of real Khmer monuments now in this country. We mention here the most important ones: Pimai, Nom Van (Panom Van, N.E. of Pimai) and Panom Rung, probably all built during the reign of King Suryavarman I. In the references we miss Seidenfaden's descriptions of Pimai and Panom Rung. (J.S.S. Vol. XVII pt. I and Vol. XXV, pt. 1) We must object to the identification of Pimai with Bhimapura; the correct identification is Vimāyapura and is mentioned as such in the inscription of 1082 A.D. (p. 178). But these are only very minor criticisms and should not distract attention from the fact that we have before us a magnificent, scientific and complete description of the Ancient Khmer Empire.

J. J. Boeles

H.G. Quaritch Wales, *The Mountain of God, a Study in Early Religion and Kingship*. 174 pages, illustrated. Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., London, 1953.

This challenging book must be read as a sequel to the author's earlier *The Making of Greater India, a Study in South-East Asian Culture Change* (London, 1951). In this previous work the author set out to demonstrate and interpret the importance of pre-Indian influences in the culture of Southeast Asia, principally the Younger and Older Megalithic, the Dongsonian and the Han. These pre-historic factors established what Dr. Wales calls the local genius which modified the subsequent Indian influences in historical times and eventually produced the unique cultural patterns which characterized the ancient states of Southeast Asia. Dr. Wales believes that in each case it was a resurgence of the local genius which gave to the Southeast Asian cultures their distinctive features. In developing this thesis the author has made fullest use of the wealth of archaeological and anthropological materials which have become available during the past two or three decades, and leans heavily upon the works of Coedès, Krom, Stutterheim, Heine-Geldern and other specialists in these fields. This ambitious attempt to re-interpret and re-evaluate the cultural foundations of Southeast Asia has naturally been viewed with skepticism by some scholars, but the book nevertheless remains a real contribution if only by virtue of the stimulating challenges it poses.

The Mountain of God seeks to explore this intriguing subject in more detail, especially with respect to the possibility of Mesopotamian and early Chinese influences in the Southeast Asian local genius. The book has an advantage over its predecessor because of the author's utilization of a number of newly-available and highly-significant materials upon which he has been able not only to correct or modify some of his earlier views but also to present his interpretation of the local genius in an even more convincing manner.

In brief, Dr. Wales offers the hypothesis that some of the more important aspects of Megalithic culture which later had a

bearing on the development of religion and kingship in Southeast Asia can be traced back to Mesopotamian sources. The essential element was apparently the clear association of the deity with the chthonic forces of the Earth as distinct from the more rudimental animistic concept of spirits of earth, sky, trees, water, etc. The mountain, therefore, came to be regarded as the place where the mysterious force of the Earth with its life-giving fertility was concentrated. Hence, this force, or the deity, became clearly associated with the mountain, that is, the Mountain of God. In ancient Sumer the ziggurat was built in the Mesopotamian lowlands to represent the Mountain of God. Later it developed a more cosmological aspect as a model of the universe, and in time came to represent the bond between Heaven and Earth, a concept which was further elaborated with the development of the Babylonian planetary cosmology. The essential point which Dr. Wales stresses, however, is the underlying principle that the mountain, or its model, the ziggurat, represented the concentration of chthonic forces upon which was determined the welfare of the world and man.

Dr. Wales then endeavors to trace the movement to Southeast Asia of this originally revolutionary concept of teluric forces concentrated in the mountain. The course was likely by way of the steppe route from Mesopotamia to China, where the very early change from a simple animism to a cult of Earth (and later of Heaven) suggests Sumerian influences as fully as does the early introduction into China of the art of bronze making from the West in the Shang period. Consequently, Dr. Wales does not believe we should be surprised to find in ancient China the god of the soil associated with a mound or pillar, and such kindred associations throughout Southeast Asia underlying the use of such devices as the *kilnuchie* pyramids of the Angami Nagas of Assam, the menhirs among the Konyak Nagas, the Megalithic mountain sanctuary on the Yang plateau and the pyramids of Sukuh and Lebak Sibedug in Java, the Megalithic structures at Quang-tri in Vietnam, the *laut* steles of the Chams, the mountain temple at Si T'ep (Sri Deva) in Siam, and perhaps the most significant of all, the great Khmer mountain sanctuary at Wat Phu in southern Laos. These various uses of mound, pillar, menhir, pyramid and mountain temple and the

unmistakable chthonic nature of the cults associated with them when set against the wealth of anthropological evidence now at hand, leave no doubt in Dr. Wales' mind that these older Megalithic features of Southeast Asian culture can be traced in part at least to ancient Sumer where the artificial mountain, the ziggurat, represented the concentration of all the vital forces of the Earth and served as the place where the king, as the delegate of the god, had the duty of maintaining harmony between man and deity.

Through subsequent Indian influences in Southeast Asia the Mountain of God lost much of its teluric significance and came to be treated in terms of the Hindu Meru. Likewise, under Indian Sivaitic influence the menhir was converted into the *linga*. Thus, as Dr. Wales concludes, when the Khmers established the *devara ja* cult with its stepped pyramid and its *linga*, "they were merely calling back into service a meaningful structure with which they had been familiar for millennia."

It is difficult in a brief review to evaluate properly this challenging and stimulating book. Dr. Wales has pushed deeply into territory which has as yet been inadequately explored, and it is significant that most of his views are based upon the results of very recent research in this new field. Some of the opinions he has advanced will undoubtedly require modification in the same way that Dr. Wales has so frankly modified some of his earlier views. Many of the points treated in this book are certain, too, to be the subject of considerable controversy among other scholars in this still controversial field of study. Nevertheless, Dr. Wales has approached this difficult subject with scholarly caution and has eschewed those more sensational generalizations to which a matter of this kind so easily lends itself. He has made fullest use of all available research in the field, and has brought to his task a wide knowledge of Southeast Asia gained from his own archaeological work in the area as well as years of scholarly research. *The Mountain of God* may be a controversial book, but it is also a persuasive one which may well open a new vista in Southeast Asian studies. This unusual area with its wide range of fruitful subjects needs more basic research of this kind.

Charles Nelson Spinks

Prem Chaya: *The Story of Khun Chay Khun Phan*, Book I, 97 pages with illustrations by Hem Vejakorn, Chatra Press, Bangkok 1955.

The original story of *Khunchāy and Khunphaen* was a metrical romance of the type known as the *sebhā*, sung to the accompaniment of a pair of wooden instruments called the *krab*, somewhat resembling western castanets. Latterly music and even dancing have been added in accompaniment. Up to quite recently when the late King Rāma VI wrote an adapted—and naturalised—Shakespeare's tragedy of Othello as a *sebhā* under the name of *Sebhā Phya Rū jawaysan* no other story seemed to have been sung as such.

The scene of the story depicts several phases of Siamese life in every circle. It first portrays life in Sup'an, bringing in now and then Court scenes which tradition attributes to the days of King Rāmadhibodi II of Ayudhyā (1491-1529). It is however hard to maintain that the scenes, whether rustic or urbane, represent those of the XV-XVI century—Ayudhyā; they more likely belong to the time when the romance or most of it was written—early XIX century—when the pivot of the nation had already been transferred to Bangkok.

In any case, none of these problems concerns Prem Chaya's delightful "retelling" of the story, which is on the whole true to its original. The theme is as follows:

There were three well-to-do families among the gentry of Sup'an, each of which produced the principal characters of the story. P'im was the lovely daughter of Pan Sora Yotha, probably a village elder with the minor rank of a *p'an*; Kaew, son of a provincial military commander who was however disgraced in the course of the story and had his possessions confiscated while our hero was still young, was the brave but inconstant hero of the tale; and "Khunchāy", son of the custodian of the King's elephants in that locality, was his rival in love. The three had been playmates in childhood. When they grew up the first two fell in love with one another. Khunchāy's family was a rich one and through riches, now and then supplemented with intrigue, the ugly young heir of the family was able

to maintain the balance of his struggle for P'im's favour against his dashing but inconstant and poverty-stricken rival whose heirloom had been confiscated since childhood.

The "retelling" does not cover the whole story. A review has to be critical and safe, for the following few points the book may be pronounced excellent and should prove to be another *Lamb's Tale*. Note 7 says that Phra Bisnukarma was the Siamese name for Vishnu when it should have said that the name was a confusion of Vishnu with another Hindu god named Viśvakarma, the celestial artificer, brought in to imply his fashioning of the beautiful form of our heroine at the time of her birth. Note 24 seems to imply that prostration as a form of salutation was given to the monarch because he was looked upon as a god. But it is still practiced towards monks and elders even today. It is in fact just an indication of the highest respect with no sense of sycophancy or abject worship. King Chulalongkorn decreed its cessation as far as he was concerned for the sake of uniformity in public. He was liberal enough never to interfere with the practice in individual homes where freedom of thought and action were permitted. Note 47, the *Mahā-jūti* is not the story of Buddha's life but that of what was believed to be his last preceding life.

D.

France-Asie, numéro spécial, 114-5, nov.-déc., 1955.

This volume of some 243 pages has been dedicated to Cambodia and is consequently prefaced by photographs of His Majesty King Suramarit and his son Sihanouk who is now his Prime Minister. It contains numerous articles of interest for readers in a country like ours, possessing as it does so many features in common with Cambodia.

The concise sketch on *History* by Pierre Grison (pp. 329-338) is readable; *Arts* is dealt with by no less an authority than Henri Marchal, who writes on *The Symbolism of Hindu and Khmer*

Temples (pp. 339-344) and on *Reflexions on modern Cambodian Art* (345-350); art is also represented by two other no less interesting articles, *Imagerie populaire* (351-354) by Mlle Bernard Thierry and *Angkor, ou l'Univers manifesté* (355-362), the latter being characteristically French in its eloquence; several articles are of ethnographical interest among which are Mme Porée-Maspéro's *Travaux d'Ethnographi au Cambodge* (363-367) and François Martini's *Monastic Organisation* (416-426). Language and Literature are well represented by the writings of distinguished authors, among whom are F. Martini and Mlle. Bernard Thierry. G. Coedès takes, of course, a prominent part in the publication with his *Epigraphie cambodgicane* (483-488) specimens of which are translated (489-504). F. Martini's extracts from the *Ramakirti* (505-509) are of interest for the comparative study of the world-famed classic. *Proverbs, popular poems and legends*, together with an article by E. Robbe on *French Economic and Technical Aid to Cambodia* and a bibliography bring up the rear of a most interesting dedicatory publication.

D.

RECENT SIAMESE PUBLICATIONS

176-182 Mementos of the Royal Tour of the North East. The Tour was the occasion for the publication of a number of handbooks and local guides, among which are the following:

176. *The memento issued by the 2nd Army Corps*, Publishing Service Co, Nakorn Rājāsīmā, 1955. อนุสรณ์เสด็จภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ ของกองทัพที่ ๒

The memento consists of a metrical dedication, photographs of Their Majesties, a blue-print map of the North East indicating the route of the Royal Tour and a programme of the tour, short descriptions with illustrations of objects of interest, namely the city gate of Nakorn Rājāsīmā with its statue of the heroine of Korāt, the Lady Mo who organised the defeat of the Wieučand army of Prince Anu which had occupied the North East a century ago, a chapter on the life of that Lady with a photograph of a painting of her leading her women into battle, the Khmer sanctuary of P'imai and the grand staircase of P'ra Vibār. The booklet is brought up with information concerning the organisation and a list of the personnel of the 2nd Army Corps with its nucleus at Nakorn Rājāsīmā, duly illustrated, and a list of the distribution of houses among the members of the Royal suite.

177. *The memento issued by the Third Administrative Section*, Thaiksem Press 1955. 205 pages. อนุสรณ์เสด็จเยี่ยมราษฎร ภาค ๓ พ.ศ. ๒๔๙๘.

The Third Section of Civil Administration comprises the provinces of Nakorn Rājāsīmā, Jayabhūmi, Buriram, Surind, Ubol and Srisakes. Its headquarters is situated in Nakorn Rājāsīmā and is under a Governor-General, Major-General Sae Noysroth. The handbook commences with the text of an address by way of a preface signed by the Governor-General extending greetings to Their Majesties, followed by a metrical greeting from the populace of the third section and a preface giving references for the information herewith presented, some of which had been personally gathered by the Governor-General himself. The book goes on to deal with the section as a whole with a map and items of general information.

The most valuable parts are the description of individual provinces, giving its geographical situation, the composition of its administration, notes on the people's livelihood, local objects of interest, its history and its economic activities. Then comes a description on a similar scheme of each of its districts (amphoeship), illustrated now and then. The publication is one of the best of this collection of mementos.

178. *The memento issued by the Fourth Administrative Section, Čitsrit'oj Press, Udorndhani, 1955, 106 Pages* สมุดที่ระลึกเสด็จเยี่ยมราษฎรภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ พ.ศ. ๒๔๙๘.

The fourth section of civil administration comprises no less than nine provinces, namely Udorndhani, the centre of the administration, Khonkaen, Loey, Sakolnakon, Nakonpnom, Kālasindhu, Mahāsāragām and Roied. Their feature is a dry climate unfavourable for agriculture. Hence their comparative poverty. The author is Sut'in Vivadhana, Deputy Governor-General, who pleads shortness of time for preparation. The handbook is nevertheless full of interest and if its general get-up cannot aspire to the level of that of its neighbour, the third section, its contents is of value for this section consists of many localities of interest, including the ancient cradle of north-eastern culture, the localities of the two lakes of Nonghār and the township of Nakonpnom on the Maekhoj river. Each of the descriptions of individual provinces contains besides general descriptions the texts of the governors' addresses to His Majesty in some of which we may read of information of historical, social and economic interest.

179. *A memento of the Province of Loey, P'račand Press, Bangkok. 88 pages.* ที่ระลึกเสด็จเยี่ยมราษฎรจังหวัดเลย พุทธศักราช ๒๔๙๘.

Loey is one of the far-flung provinces which is rarely visited by the ordinary tourist. It is therefore fitting that it should receive special attention by thus having a separate volume to itself. The handbook is in fact very well got-up by a special committee of three civil servants and two teachers of the local government school, headed by B. Cintanā, the District Officer of Chiepkān on the

Maekhōṅ. It is, of course, prefaced by the usual address and a metrical greeting. It then goes on to give a historical account of the province which dates back to 1560 of the Christian Era and has been an outpost of the Kingdom of Siam in that direction. At Dansai there still exists a monument which is much venerated, the Thāt Srisongrak, deriving its name from the incident taking place there in that year of the confirmation of an act of alliance between the then harassed Siamese state under King Chakrapat and the powerful King Jayajettha of Lānchāṅ who undertook to come to his ally's rescue in the fight against Burma. (The Lānchāṅ army, however, was unsuccessful later and Burma actually subjugated our country and held it for a little over a decade till Siam was liberated by its hero Naresvara). Local customs and ceremonies are given in some detail which makes good reading and supplies plentiful material to the ethnologist. The famous resort of Phu Kadiṅ comes in for its share of interesting folklore concerning its mysteries and ghosts as believed in by the peasants of the neighbourhood and the myths are delightfully told..

180. *A Summary of the Activities of the Ministry of Agriculture* 1955. 49 pages. กิจกรรมกระทรวงเกษตรในภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือโดยสังเขป

This memento has been issued for the Royal Tour by the Ministry of Agriculture. It does not purport to be anything more than a set of statistics and yet it is an interesting collection of them, classified by provinces. For each province are given the latest figures of population, of farmers, of land, further subdivided into forests, protected forests, marshes and arable land. The products of agriculture are given for the year 1954; and, of course, rice comes first with coconuts as the next in point of importance. Figures are also available for domestic animals. For the North East matters pertaining to irrigation should occupy the travellers' interest. They are duly given under each province. Other statistics concern fishery, forestry, industry, and a great deal of attention is given to experimental stations.

181. Phra Sri Visuddhivojjs, the Rev.: *Five Thousand Years of the Buddhist Era*. King Mongkut Pali Academy Press, 1955, 26 pages. พระพุทธศาสนาห้าพันปี

As the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha's death draws near, interest is being centred in the computation and the limit of the duration of the Master's teachings. The learned author of this little pamphlet points out that an examination of the Canon of the Tipitaka with its commentaries has yielded the following result:

1. The *Vinaya*, the first and supposedly nearest of all the texts of the Canon to the Master's words, quotes the latter as having said that the admission of women into the Holy Order would have the result of reducing the duration of the pure Norm from 1000 to 500 years (Cullavagga, vol. 7, p. 320);

2. The *Suttanta*, the next authoritative section of the Canon, corroborates the statement, quoting the identical incident which gave rise to the Master's calculation (Anguttara, 8th section, vol. 23, p. 281);

3. The *Samantapāsādikā*, Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the *Vinaya*, extends the above maximum limit of 1000 to 5000 years, which could be realised through the erudition of venerable monks who may be carrying on the precepts of the Master (third part, p. 449);

4. The *Manorathapūraṇi*, Buddhaghosa's Commentary on the Anguttara section of the *Suttanta*, maintains the statement of no 3 (part 3, p. 300);

5. The *Milindapañhā* has the statement that although the Master had predicted only 500 years as the minimum limit of the duration of his teaching, the monk Nāgasena, whose sayings form the subject of this work, would, by his erudition, prolong that limit to 5000 years.

It is thus obvious, our author points out, that the maximum-limit of 5000 years was never set by the Buddha. The idea came into being through the agency of the Commentaries of Buddhaghosa some centuries after the death of the Buddha and thus spread from

Ceylon to countries which, like our own, took their inspiration from Sinhalese Buddhism.

182. Khamvilai, Ch.: *The Centenary of Sundorn Bhū*, Rujrūaṅ-dharm Press Bangkok, 1955. pp. 1-603 1-69 ๓๐๐ ปีของสุนทรภู่

It is a matter of credit not only to the author of this book but also to the nation that the initiative of celebrating the centenary of Sundorn Bhū has taken the concrete form of a book such as the one under review.

The author says in his preface that his original intention was merely to write a *nirās*—a farewell poem—based on one of the episodes of Bhū's *Phra Abhaimani*. The poem is actually to be found at the end (pp. 1-69 extra) of the book. From writing this the idea occurred to him to write a biography of the great poet. This has been worked out primarily from his writings which is then followed by a separate biography which does not quote his poetry.

The sketch—the one based primarily on his writings—traces Bhū's parentage to the days of Ayudhyā, going on to those of the poet's birth, boyhood and adolescence. At this juncture Bhū came into contact with royalty, having lived with his mother who was wet nurse to some of the royal children of the Prince of the Palace to the Rear, that is to say, the family of one of the sisters of King Rāma I. The author now makes a diversion to describe the grounds and extents of the various palaces of Bangkok at a time which was contemporaneous with the poet's life. The diversion goes on to enumerate the successive occupants of those royal residences with short accounts of them. All this involves a considerable amount of research into old-time topography and genealogies. The sketch of the poet's life is then resumed through all its vicissitudes, his creation as a *khun* with the title of Sundorn Vohār and the office of a royal scribe, his increasing eloquence as manifested in the "Royal Writings" of King Rāma II who was then his patron, the quarrel with his wife resulting in his imprisonment, the release and restoration of his official status which was however short-lived, his degradation and eventual taking of monastic vows, his wanderings in the

country evidenced by his various *nirās* poems, his renunciation of the monastery followed by another assumption of the monkhood and his eventual renunciation, the patronage of His Majesty Phra Pinklao of the Palace to the Front and his installation as that monarch's Chief Scribe with the rank of Phra and title of Sundorn Vohār, and his death in 1855.

Pages 520-543 sum up the works of Sundorn Bhū under the following headings. Of the *nirās* type of poems there were 8, ranging in date from 1807 to 1842; there were 5 romances in *klon* between 1806 and the end of the third reign (1851), the last being his famous *Phra Abhaimani* which was commenced in 1820; 3 *subhāsit* in *klon* (moralist poetry) between 1803 and 1805; 2 *sebhā*, one forming part of the romance of *Khun Chāy Khun Phaen* written between 1821 and 1824, and the other about the History of Ayudhyā written between 1851 and 1855; one dramatic romance under the name of *Abhainurāj* more or less written for the diversion of the infantile daughter of his patron Phra Pinklao before his elevation to the Palace to the Front some time between 1842 and 1850; 4 undated lullabies and miscellaneous passages from undefined sources.

Besides the biography based primarily upon his writings there is also a separate biography which does not make quotations from his works. It seems to be an abbreviated biography. The poet was born on Monday the first of the waxing moon of the eighth month in the Year of the Horse, 1148 of the Minor Era, which is worked out to correspond with the 26th of June 2329 of the Buddhist Era (1786 of the Christian Era). His father left his mother either before or just after Bhū's birth, the mother taking service in the household of the Prince of the Rear. All the above-mentioned incidents of his life are now reiterated ending up with his death in 1855 in the fourth reign.

According to the author Bhū's poetical merit was very high and has not been given its share of public appreciation (pp. 539-541). The consensus of opinion however is that Bhū owed his fame to his depiction of plebeian life and the rhythmic sonance of his verses.

It seems that the poet was well aware of his ability and never minced his words to that effect to such an extent that he made his first patron King Rāma II set about writing his *Saṅkhit'ay* to prove that he too could write plebeian stories with a plebeian atmosphere.

The author seems interested in astrology since he gives prognostications by astrologers of the poet's fate from the birth chart made from the recorded day of the poet's birth.

The book ends with the author's own *nirāś* based on the *Phra Abhaimani*. It is dedicated to the occasion of the centenary. It commences with Phra Abhaimani's sojourn in the cave of the ogress, his regret of the unnatural situation of being husband of an ogress, his escape by way of the oceans and the pursuit and death of the ogress. The *nirāś* is followed by a metrical appreciation of the poet based on the successive events of his long and varied life.

From reading the book one gets the feeling of Bhū's irregular life, somewhat of the type of an Omar Khayyam, which was tempered by his wealth of feeling and sympathy. This is frankly the work of a poet who thinks nothing of repeating facts and data. It is, however, balanced by the author's obvious enthusiasm and admiration for the great poet whose centenary he celebrates.

