

REVIEWS

A. Ghosh (editor), *Ancient India, Archaeological Survey of India*.
1902-1952, Kanpur, 1953. 249 pp. with 122 plates.

This volume is edited by the Director General of Archaeology of India and is produced by a group of Indian scholars as a report of the fifty years of work of the Archaeology Survey of India. This organization with its many activities was continued after the transfer of India's membership from the British Empire to the Commonwealth but wholly under Indian leadership although following the general policies worked out by their British predecessors. The record of these fifty years is an uneven one of marked and almost feverish activity and long periods when little more could be claimed than that the earlier archaeological finds had not been dissipated or lost. The net results of these fifty years of planning and effort are impressive not only in terms of the "spade work" done but in the new vistas of Indian history opened up by the back-breaking, laborious accumulation of isolated finds of archaeologists.

One fifth of the book is devoted to the story of these fifty years of investigation, research and publication, with a summary of just what all of this has meant in pushing out the known limits of Indian history. The Western World is much more familiar with the work done on the plains of Sumeria or the banks of the Nile than with the discovery of even richer finds on the Indus. This book should help to redress the balance; at least it will make available the materials for a more balanced judgment. A knowledge of Indian history and of archaeology in terms of its objectives and techniques will add to the enjoyment and profit to be gained from the reading of this record but the veriest layman in both of these fields will find the reading of this book a rich and even thrilling experience.

The balance of the book describes in greater detail the techniques used, as well as the precise location of the areas explored. A special chapter is given to the museums which have

been founded as a necessary part of the work of the Survey, and a generous number of pictures of various sites in the course of exploration as well as some of the more significant and dramatic individual finds have been included.

This half-century of scholarly drudgery and failures, alternating with rare finds and great discoveries, coincides roughly with the life span of the Siam Society. From the moment of the appearance of the first issue of its *Journal* to the issue in which this review appears, Thai and foreign scholars have tried to alert the Government and its people to the urgency of doing for Thailand what this Survey has done for India. Again and again the plea has gone forth to undertake, before it is too late, a modest program of exploration and conservation of the rich cultural heritage awaiting even a modest paralleling of the effort in India. It is neither by accident nor yet by design that the three articles of this present issue, each in its own fashion, reports some progress but stresses the larger areas and responsibilities awaiting the careful work of the student of Thai history.

It is not so much the scholar who needs the stimulus of this record of achievement. The pages of the *Journal* during the past half-century provide adequate evidences of dedicated scholarship. But Ghosh and his co-authors make very clear that brilliant scholarship is not enough. Unless and until the Thai Government is willing to undertake the encouragement of such efforts and, equally important, the preservation and making available the life work of such men for the study of other scholars, that work will have been in vain.

No one expects that the present Thai Government or any of its successors will be able to duplicate the scope of the Survey in India, but a Government which has undertaken with such a lavish and even prodigal hand to re-build a part of Ayuthia and other comparable projects in celebration of B.E. 2500, could find the means for an assured support of a museum adequate to house more of the treasures already uncovered and a modest program of research and publication. It would seem that the responsibility

of this government to its own people was clear and unequivocal, but as Ghosh points out in his introduction, Indian scholars must needs "look for enlightenment to our fellow explorers in the neighboring lands". The admitted origins of Thai culture impose upon the Thai people at least some degree of acknowledgement that this country has a debt to pay to its neighbors in terms of at least making available the results of local scholarship in matters of common origins. A few scholars such as the distinguished president of this society have heard and met that call. But again, the challenge is not so much to the willingness or even competence of available scholarship but to the readiness of the Government to give it the necessary support. The new Government being installed as this issue goes to press might well read the terse comment of King Mongkut quoted by Griswold concerning the unsatisfactory state of Thai historical scholarship. His warning has been too little heeded during the past century. How much longer can this country continue to ignore it without risking irreparable damage to the records of its cultural inheritance?

Frank G. Williston

Karl Ludvig Reichelt, *Meditation and Piety in the Far East*
Harper and Brothers, N.Y., 1954. 171 pages.

The author's purpose is "to deepen the reader's understanding of the vast world of the East... Asiatic peoples in their most essential nature, revealed through their religions."

His discussion is confined largely to the religions of China. He spent nearly fifty years in that country, and gained the reputation of being one who "knew the mind of East Asia and had the respect of its religious leaders." During the latter part of his life, 1922-1952, he was head of a Christian (Lutheran) Mission to Buddhists at Tao Feng Shan, near Kowloon.

In Part One, the smaller section of this book, Dr. Reichelt discusses Hinduism, Mohammedanism, Sikhism, and Christianity, and makes the point that the Biblical doctrines of the transcendence

and immanence of God are not inimical to the tenets of some other faiths. He attributes similarities in religious concepts to "general revelation," common to all mankind. A point in common is the concept of cosmic Law, ultimate Truth, the supreme Wisdom by which all things operate. The Buddhist Law or *Dharma* has a counterpart in the *Tao* (cosmic principle, the Way, the law of heaven) of Taoism and Confucianism, and in the *Logos* of Christianity.

However, the author discusses the doctrines of these faiths only to the extent that they bear upon his subject—*meditation*—which he calls "the heartbeat of the East-Asiatic religions." This he takes up in Part Two.

Noting that Buddhists, Taoists, and Confucianists use almost identical expressions to describe religious experience in which "the law of life" is apprehended, or they "break through" to cosmic consciousness, the author goes into the historical development of meditation. The Indian term for meditation, *dhyana*, became *ch'an* in China, and *zen* in Japan. In Thai, we note, it is *chan* อาน. The author has no difficulty in describing meditation as practised in Buddhism, nor in establishing its importance in Mahayana Buddhism. But to make a case for meditation in Taoism and Confucianism requires much more effort because the devout spirit of these faiths, characteristic at the time of their origin, has more recently given way to formalism, magic, and to animistic practices. The description therefore, is more historical than current. Dr. Reichelt has, however, some interesting comments upon the effects of meditation as he has observed them in a few men who finally apprehended "the law of life." We may speculate as to whether the religious eclecticism of the Chinese predisposed the author to see congruity rather than disparity in the faiths with which he was most familiar. He does not advocate religious syncretism, however, but merely points out concepts and terminology that evoke response in devout hearts of various faiths, for example:

"Through the knowledge of this law man's outlook is widened, and his heart enlarged. . . . He enters into the great fellowship and partakes of the kingly and heavenly mind. He begins

to become a kinsman of heaven . . . he who possesses *T'ao* will abide. Even though his body perishes, he himself will not suffer loss." (P. 85, quoting Lao-Tzu, Tao-Teh-Ching XVI. 2)

Dr. Reichelt seems moved by what could be termed the lost potentialities of Taoism. He says of Lao-Tzu, "His *T'ao*, which in many respects represents the most sublime in Chinese thought, is after all suspended in the air as it were, half-way between the personal conception of God and the abstract-metaphysical divinity conception." (P. 56) He was, perhaps, thinking of the verse,

"Ah, how deep it (*T'ao*) is! It may be likened to the Father of all things!" (V. 1)

While Dr. Reichelt has described the religions of China with sympathy and insight, reluctantly we must reflect that the picture he presents has of late been obscured by the bamboo curtain. But we can endorse the wish of the author, expressed in the Foreword, that this volume will serve to deepen understanding of, and respect for, Asians, and "prepare the way for that higher power, love—the only power that can extinguish the flames of fear, hatred and racial prejudice, and bring the two, East and West, into one family of nations."

This book was first written in Norwegian, including a Taoist poem which the author translated from Chinese. It is termed "masterly" by Sverre Holth, who translated this volume into English that is entirely pleasing in style and clarity.

K. E. Wells

C. William Skinner (general editor). *The Social Sciences and Thailand: A compilation of articles on various Social Science fields and their application to Thailand*. Cornell Research Center, Bangkok. Published under the Education Society of Thailand. 1956.

This book is accurately described in its title. Its purpose, to evaluate the social sciences as they apply to Thailand, is clearly fulfilled in the plan and execution of the work. The chapters devoted

to defining each social science, from cultural anthropology to social statistics, are written by Western scholars in terms clear and simple enough for even the uninitiated to comprehend; each of these papers is immediately followed by another chapter, written by a Thai expert, treating the application and value of that particular science to Thailand. All the papers are presented in Thai in the first half of the volume and in English in the second, with Thai-English and English-Thai glossaries included.

Since the social sciences are a relatively new field to the Thai, this work is valuable for its explanations of what these disciplines are and why they are useful to this country. It offers also a number of interesting insights and potential research problems. For instance, Thai families differ from Western families so radically that Western work on family and child development is often not relevant here. What is the effect of polygamy on the child? Or of the change (resulting from Western influence) of the mother's role in the family? What are the precise needs for social work in Thailand? What crops besides rice can be profitably raised, what farm methods of management are best and how can Thai farmers be persuaded to adopt them? Western norms sometimes have no application here, statistics and data need to be compiled. So much remains to be discovered in all the social science fields in Thailand that many of the frontiers have not yet been even surveyed.

A happy example of the international character of scholarship, this book is recommended for all readers who are interested in the social problems of Asia in general and Thailand in particular.

Mary Sanford

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