

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The South-East Asian Round Table, A Symposium on Traditional Cultures and Technological Progress in South-East Asia.* Published by the South-East Asia Treaty Organization Headquarters, Bangkok. 152 pages.

SEATO has had the excellent idea of publishing a competently edited summary of the proceedings of the Round Table Conference on Asian culture and technology held in Bangkok at the beginning of 1958. The meeting was attended by fifteen representative scholars of standing from Asia and the West.

The main issue questions raised were: "Is Asia undergoing a social and cultural revolution? What are the effects of external influences on the family, religion, the arts, etc? Are Asian traditions being damaged by technological changes? Can Western forms of "progress" be reconciled with Asian religious and spiritual values?" The subject, it will be obvious, is wide. So wide, indeed, that the participants had no difficulty in making it cover practically every important facet of life in Asia today. The Round Table can therefore hardly be expected to give a firm formulation of these controversial questions but must be regarded as a pioneering undertaking in which East and West met in a spirit of friendly exploration and thought aloud around certain vital subjects.

The result is enlightening and stimulating. The conference did in fact reach certain general conclusions. But, even where no common formula was evolved, the nature of the problem and the difficulties in the way of its solution were clearly outlined--no mean achievement. In particular, the Round Table brought out a consensus of Asian feeling which often lays down a fairly firm limit beyond which the trend or solution adopted by the West will be rejected or unwillingly tolerated.

Perhaps the most heartening conclusion was that change is, broadly speaking, inevitable and that it need not be in itself a bad thing. Many speakers stressed the decrease in hunger and pain, the virtual banishment of slavery and the improvement in the status of women. More specifically, it was pointed out, culture can never be static in changing conditions unless it wishes to become a museum piece. Professor Longchambon

put the point well, if somewhat optimistically: "The genius of a people is preserved less in the traits which they have assumed in the past than in the creations which they will bring forth in the future." However, change is a complex and varied process. The externals of a civilization are easily adopted mechanically but techniques (or technology, as the modern parlance has it) cannot be imported like a pound of butter. They must be digested slowly, assimilated from the bottom up, and adapted in the process to the needs of the society acquiring it. As Professor Northrop expounded learnedly and at length, the technical conquests of the West rest on a century-old basis of concepts (mathematical, moral and political) which can hardly be adopted by the East unchanged, though the fruits of these values may be unreservedly desired.

The dilemma of the East—to take the new wine and the bottles or just the wine—is reflected faithfully, to take one example, in the question whether to adopt a European tongue for higher education, especially in technical subjects. No very clear guidance emerged from the discussion of this point by the Round Table, and Professor Longchambon's hope that translating machines will solve the problem is perhaps a trifle far-fetched. Most Asians stressed the difficulties of their nationals in mastering a Western tongue, and the time consumed by these efforts. While sympathizing with them on this score, one cannot, as a Western (and therefore biased) observer, help feeling that their reaction is based to some extent on national pride (though none the less valid for that). The "national" solution presupposes the translation of text books and other material on a formidable scale which can as little be afforded by a growing and none too rich Asian country as the trouble taken by students to learn, say, English; and the latter studies have at least the advantage that they open up to the Asian nation concerned the whole world of information, techniques and contacts which are in any case needed for their advancement. The solution whereby the local language is used for the majority of studies, and English adopted as a universal second language, has worked well for such nations as the Netherlands and Sweden. Surely, it can be modified to provide a lasting solution for the linguistic difficulties in the field of education of the Asian countries as well. And, whether we

like it or not, one has only to attend an important conference in this region to be convinced that English is already in practice adopted as the cultural *lingua franca* of the delegates.

However, the question of reconciling Eastern culture and Western technology goes deeper than the mere question of language.

In fact, serious discussion of almost any problem in Asia must take as its starting point the fact that the gap between the standards of living in the developed and the under-developed countries is widening rapidly in spite of the present attempt of most countries of the region to break the century-old economic stagnation and misery by development programmes which provide for industrialization and the improvement of their agriculture. For, unless some measure of success in this direction is achieved, there can be little point in talking of expanding education and creating a new type of art when the society as a whole is stagnating. The difficulties in the way of this economic advance are formidable. There is a shortage of capital, of skills, and an overabundant supply of births to swallow up any increase in per capita income achieved. Yet this vital struggle for economic progress was hardly mentioned by the conference. There was, on the contrary, a speech on the need to return to the land which was as unrealistic as it was apparently oblivious of the innumerable down-to-earth measures taken to improve agriculture in the region over the past ten (and more) years, and the careful studies being made of urbanization. It is surely necessary to discuss cultural advances against the background of the economic development of the region.

Secondly, and perhaps even more important, even if the economic breakthrough is achieved it will entail a radical transformation not only of thinking (as pointed out by Professor Northrop) but of the whole social and cultural pattern, and even in many cases of religion. It is not at all exaggerate to talk in this context of a revolution. Yet it must be admitted that planners in most countries are only now beginning to take account of the social, and even less, the cultural changes which are an integral part of this revolution. Professor Crocker stressed the key question of how to control the process of development. But, in the cultural field, it is by no means

certain that the 'immense movement of economic change, with its attendant phenomena, can be more than partially guided, even with totalitarian methods. For it is relatively easy to destroy an existing culture pattern. It is immensely difficult to build up a new one. It may be that, as several speakers asserted, there is no inherent clash between Eastern art or religion and modern technology. But the real conflict is between the culture (often popular) of a pre-industrial society and that of an industrial one. And what is happening all too frequently is that the former is lost and only the externals of the latter are acquired. The classical example of the extinction of an ancient art is that of the Yemenite Jews whose thousand-year old music was lost almost overnight when it was brought face-to-face with modern music in Israel.

Professor Yamamoto was therefore more than justified in calling for a greater attempt to collect and study factual information about Asian culture, much of which is in European museums, and for a comparative study of the process of modernization in Southeast Asia.

These critical considerations suggest, not that the Round Table was unsuccessful, but that, as Tom Harrisson recommended, a further series of conferences should be held to carry on this vital debate by discussions of more specific issues. And, if the reviewer may offer two tentative suggestions for these conferences, far greater use might be made of the storehouse of economic and sociological knowledge accumulated by modern researchers on under-developed countries (including a good deal by ECAFE in Bangkok), and a less complacent view should be taken of the danger that ten years from now a process of cultural erosion may have dried up (possibly for ever) vast tracts of Asia which (whatever their present economic poverty) represent cultural values which have surely something to contribute to a world which is beginning to realize that affluence is not enough.

*J. Cairncross*

Bernard—Philippe Groslier, *Angkor et le Cambodge au XVI Siècle d'après les sources portugaises et espagnoles*, with the collaboration of C.R. Boxer, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1959. 194 pages, with numerous maps and seven plates.

The starting point of this valuable study is a document recently discovered by Professor Boxer—an account of Angkor by Diogo do Couto, the official chronicler of the Portuguese Indies. Groslier inserts this statement in the chain of early seventeenth century Spanish and Portuguese documents on the same subject and, by a thorough and ingenious process of correlation and cross-checking, separates the original from the derivative, the reliable from the fanciful. On the picture thus derived of sixteenth century Angkor (and Cambodia) he brings to bear relevant evidence from the Khmer chronicles and epigraphy and from archaeology (meaningfully interpreted as “the methodical examination of the subsoil”). The net result is to reduce the margin of error in chronology (rightly recognized as the indispensable framework of history) to a minimum and to extract the maximum of information from the source material, which data are then made to tell their story within the cultural, economic and religious pattern of the country. Short of remarkable new discoveries, which appear unlikely in the near future, this book should prove definitive for the period covered, for some time to come.

The methodical discussion of the finer points of dating may not appeal to the general reader, but even the non-specialist can hardly fail to be gripped by the tale of the rediscovery of Angkor—the Rome of the East in its heyday—some hundred and twenty years after its abandonment in 1431, the reinstallation of the Khmer court in the ruins for a decade or two in the second half of the sixteenth century, and the final reversion of

the city to the jungle and to legendary obscurity, from which it was to be wrested only in the present century by the monumental efforts of the French.

Scholars of Thai history, too, and not only the Cambodian experts for whom the book is primarily intended, will find Groslier's work of great value. Contacts between the two countries at the time may have been mainly military—it will be remembered that the Thai played a considerable part in the downfall of Angkor in the fourteenth century—but there is a clear intermeshing of source material from both sides when a date in either country has to be determined.

One is struck, too, by the innumerable points of similarity between life in Cambodia and the pattern in Thailand at that time. There is the same absolute, but precarious political regime, and the unwillingness of the peasants to grow more than necessary for subsistence because of the royal power to dispose of the land. There is the same emphasis on the capture of wild elephants, on the phenomenon of floating rice and the merry-making accompanying the harvesting. In both countries, the Catholic missionaries showed an equally intemperate zeal in intervening in local matters, and the kings too great a readiness to try to use religion as a means of gaining the patronage of one or other of the European powers. Lastly, European adventurers, though of different calibres, form a common element in the political landscape of the two lands. These and other similarities may help to throw light on some of the points in Thai history which need clarification, and vice versa.

Groslier observes (p. 164) with restrained regret the complete lack of interest on the part of the Portuguese and Spanish missionaries in the local flora, fauna, and mores. In the seventeenth century, Thailand was, to that extent at least, more fortunate in its visitors. They were for the most part French, and their curiosity was insatiable. Unfortunately, their descriptions are far from having been methodically examined, and much of the relevant material has not even been published. It is greatly

to be hoped that this country will benefit in the near future from such thorough and enlightening studies as the work now contributed by the French scholar on Cambodia. In this connection we must enter a slight caveat against Groslier's reference (p. 27) to "the wealth of research on the missionaries in Thailand." The material as such is richer than that for Cambodia, but most of it is confined to the period from 1665 to about 1700. The few documents published are almost all in de Launay's great work on the French Foreign Missions in Thailand (which excludes the Jesuits) and in the *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses* (which is confined to the latter order). But, be it said without disrespect to de Launay, his selection and use of these documents is not as critical as it might be, and in any case he does not set out to extract the rich historical material contained in them, since his book is a history of missions and not of a country. Incidentally, it is surely a little exaggerated of Groslier to talk (p. 125) of the "success" of the Catholic missions in Thailand; the missionaries themselves frequently dwell on the lack of response to their efforts.

Three more points. Groslier has some doubts as to the accuracy of the statement by the French missionary Chevreul that pilgrims came to Angkor from as far afield as Tenasserim. But that town (and the province of the same name) came immediately in importance after Ayudhya at the time—Bangkok being a mere hamlet, albeit with a key fort. There seems no reason *a priori* why the Buddhists of this rich area should not have sent delegates to the great shrine, just like the other centres of the whole region.

On page 144, Groslier asks whether pepper was unknown in Cambodia in the sixteenth century. It probably was not (just as it was not common in Thailand, apart from the southern provinces until late in the seventeenth century), but a firm answer to his query can certainly be obtained from the French manuscript material which contains frequent accounts of the trading position in Cambodia, as well as a good deal of other information.

Lastly, the French writer wonders (p. 156) whether Mambaray, the King's Chief Minister at the court of Cambodia, is not derived from "montrei." Another explanation may be sought in the fact that, according to Choisy, the corresponding post at Ayudhya was called Ommarat (*i.e.*, Maha Uparat.)<sup>1</sup>

It only remains to note that, in a work where the author moves with ease in a dozen languages, the only one where he occasionally appears to hesitate is German. It is rare to see such a carefully prepared text.

*J. Cairncross*

*Modern Indian Poetry*, A.V. Rajeswara Rao, editor. Kavita Press, New Delhi, 1958. 144 Pages.

It is maintained by some people that a nation in order to qualify as such requires homogeneity of culture. This is a plausible viewpoint if the definition of culture is wide enough to include not only language, customs and religion, but common history, past achievements, future ambitions, level of intellectual refinement, stresses of environment, a sense of purpose, the sharing of a basic modicum of values and the possession of a oneness which is both voluntary and fulfilling. The book under review seeks to bring out this definition of culture.

India is a country with a variety of languages, religions and customs. Yet if one were to study the strains of society which move the soul of India, as expressed in all her various languages, one encounters an emotional experience which is common and universal, and, when all is said and done, a very

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1. Since this review was written, I have had the good fortune to read Professor Coedes' review of the same book in *Journal Asiatique* (CLXLV, 1957, number 4.) in which, p. 414, the eminent scholar makes the same point, but with his usual erudition and preciseness. According to Professor Coedes, the title indicates "the heir to the throne" and not the Chief Minister.



prized heritage of India as a whole. Colonisers have played upon differences of culture in order to perpetuate their rule. But ever since the day of India's independence there has been a new upsurge in the nation, bringing together and pooling the talents and capabilities, the long-felt stresses and strains of various language groups, all of which has emphasized the theme of common heritage. Today we find a growing number of translations being made from one language to another, and these efforts are commanding larger audiences and greater patronage than ever before. The spirit that moves this effort may well be termed a "Renaissance of Reacquaintance." *Modern Indian Poetry* is a notable contribution to this effort and it is a refreshingly delightful anthology. It includes seventy-five works of seventy poets from fourteen different languages, including English, but excluding Sanskrit.

As one would expect, the collection includes works touching on almost all conceivable topics. There are some choice pieces of pure romanticism in the classical style, a liberal sprinkling of verses in a philosophical vein, a few attempts in rhyme arising out of the hopes and frustrations of the present generation, one or two poems "seeing the light of morning in the eyes of New India," some of which satirize social inhibitions and some of which pay due reverence to religion; also included are a few political poems which are forcefully rendered. But the most popular subject is romance. This is revealed in the poetry of a tortured mind seeking solace in fantasy, or of an ultra-sensitive but mature mind reacting to the burdens of life in mellow, soft and tender tones. The popularity of the romantic theme in almost all languages is staggering, but it does not reveal anything new. If exercise in imagination is taken to be synonymous with complaisance, one need only look at Amrita Pritam's poem on the tragedy of the Punjab which uses classical symbolism to describe a political upheaval.

This book is one of the most intelligent and comprehensive attempts to present a total picture of Indian poetry at the present time. The value of such an attempt in terms of cultural

heritage, social cohesion and mutual understanding can never be over-emphasised. It is to the credit of the editor that the compass of the selection and the representation is wide and deep. The work of translation has been accomplished with care and sensitivity, although of course translation can never be a substitute for the original.

There remain certain minor omissions in the book which should be pointed out in order to balance a general evaluation. First of all, this reviewer in his limited knowledge ventures to suggest that the selection, as a treatment of poets in every language, is not perhaps the most representative. In the Urdu section, for example, all of the three poets included belong, more or less, to the same school of thought, namely, "classicism," and a vital and growing body of "progressive" poetry has been left out altogether. In the Hindi section poets like Niraj, Maithili Sharan Gupta, Dr. Bachan, are not found. In the Malayalam, the giant of a poet, Vokkalathol, has been passed over. There are reasons for these omissions. The editor imposed upon himself a condition that only the works of living poets should be included, and this has deprived the anthology of some extremely living poetry. Yet even among the living poets there are some notable omissions. Finally, had the editor only taken the care to put down the dateline under every poem, a practice which is not normally followed in India but which could have been used to advantage here, the task of placing a particular poem in its true time-perspective would have been much easier. This would have helped in "solving the sonnets," as it were.

Nevertheless, it should be said without hesitation that the collection is a job well-conceived and splendidly executed. The editor, A.B. Rajeswara Rao, should be congratulated on such a competent handling of an elusive subject.

*Saad M. Alhashmi*

F.B. Sayre, *Glad Adventure*. The Macmillan Co.; New York, 1957. 356 pages.

The book covers a long career of public service, which in spite of its author's label as a failure, has been varied and successful. Born of what he himself terms 'a railroading family' in Pennsylvania, his marriage with President Woodrow Wilson's daughter brought him into a family circle where he could see with clarity the public life of an idealist head of state who made his idealism felt all over the world at the time of the conclusion of the first world war. His calling was law, which he taught at Harvard. He was then offered the advisership in foreign affairs to the Siamese government, which was then directly presided over by King Rama VI. The main problem then was the liberation of the Siamese nation from treaty-shackles which encroached upon the nation's sovereignty, such as the limitation of her jurisdiction and her fiscal rights. Woodrow Wilson's idealism and magnanimity led to the United States' initiative in surrendering the oppressive treaty-rights mentioned above. Sayre, acting upon his initiative, tackled leading statesmen of Europe one by one and won for Siam the jurisdiction and fiscal rights, thus entitling her to full sovereign status in the world family of nations.

Dr. Sayre's narrative carries us further to later events in his career—his resumption of teaching at Harvard University which had merely loaned him for a time to His Majesty King Rama VI, his being called upon by his own government to rule over the Philippines in the name of the United States government, his graphic experience in World War II whilst in the Philippines, his work on the various post-war organisations such as that on the trusteeship Council of the United Nations, his missions to different parts of the world in support of national

independence of subject peoples, ending up with a thought-provoking chapter named "The Path Ahead."

The more legitimate duty of this review is of course the two chapters on his work in Siam. Though somewhat marred by slips of detail the book reveals clearly the figure of a most likeable personality, a clean-living and devout Christian and a liberal humanist.

D.

*Bangkok, 18 July 1959.*

*Journal of the Burma Research Society*, Vol XLI, pts I & II, December 1955, pp. 1-117.

For obvious reasons the *Journal* is of special interest for this part of the world. The number under review commences with *Standards for Ngapi*, dealing with an important article of food which is widely used in Burma and Siam in the form of a paste. The standard proposed here is that there should not be more than 40% water and 20% sodium chloride. It should moreover contain at least 60% protein and 5% fat and sodium chloride.

Next is *The Cultivator's Contribution to Literature*. It is not limited to scientific treatment of paddy, sesamum and groundnuts, but its references to proverbs, etc., are interesting. Thus it says "The army is always on the look-out (for insurgents since 1948) and wherever fighting ensues poor cultivators suffer loss of life and property. So the victims of insurrections grumble in low voices, 'when two buffaloes fight the myeza grass beneath them is unable to withstand them'." The saying has a parallel in our language which compares hoi polloi to prék grass being trodden under when men fight.

U Lu Pe Win's *Aspects of Burmese Culture* (pp. 19-36) is a scholarly resumé of the latest data in Burmese historical research prior to the XIth century, commencing with the Pyu culture of Srikshetra, V-VIIIth centuries, going on to the Mon from whom their conquerors, the Burmese, adopted much of their culture.

Dr. Than Tun's *Social Life in Burma, A.D. 1044-1287*, takes the narrative up from where the last article left off.

Then follow two articles of technical interest in mineralogy and botany by Maung Ba Shein and Daw Thanda Pe, respectively. Then *Mon Literature and Culture's Influence over Thailand and Burma* by Nai Pan Hla which should appeal to local readers here, though its presentation might have been clearer. We learn, however, among other data of interest how the Mon came over the seas to this side of the Indian Ocean and set up at least two centres, one at Thaton and the other in the land of Dvaravati, and how the Burmese under Anawratha and Kyansitha subjugated them at Thaton. The article ends up with a survey of the status of the present-day Mon.

Maung Nu's short account of Burma is of interest. It is of course modern Burma which he describes, more especially with regard to her economic and social aspects.

The Journal is brought up at the end by a report of Drs. Tha Hla and Nyi Nyi, dealing with field work in archeology at Hmaza (Srikshetra) and Prome, which is followed by Professor Hall's biographical sketch of Henry Burney, the "Diplomat and Orientalist."

D.

*Huahin, 31 May 1959.*

A. Ghosh, *Indian Archeology, 1957-8, a review*. 114 pages, 125 illustrations.

This report for the public of the Archeological Department of the Indian Government is a useful summary of the considerable activities in the period under review. It of course covers the whole of India. It has brought to fresh light many historical monuments which had been buried and unknown, among which may be mentioned the ancient Harappa culture which has been discovered far down the west side of India beyond the Narmadda estuary. Of particular interest to readers in Buddhist Siam would be the excavations of the Gangā plains, among which have been unearthed the high brick walls of Kausambī, the pre-Mauryan *stūpa* of Vaiśālī—perhaps one of the eight monuments built after the Buddha's death to enshrine portions of his relics from the crematory pyre. Important discoveries have also been made on the site of Nāgarjunakonda which reveal its history dating from the early stone age.

The main sections of the report are those concerning the explorations and excavations, epigraphy, numismatics, and treasure troves, museums, archeological surveys of temples, with a list of new publications of the Department. The plates are well-reproduced and valuable maps help to clarify the subject-matter.

D.

*Bangkok, 19 September 1959.*

W.F. Vella, *The Impact of the West on Government in Thailand*, University of California Publications in Political Science, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1955. pp. i-iv, 317-410.

This *Journal* reviewed a short while ago Walter Vella's *Rama III*, which was really a later publication than this volume. The latter had not been brought to the notice of the Editorial Committee,

It is evident here that the author has read much, though it is to be regretted that his authorities include dubious material long known as mere propaganda. Commencing with a carefully summed-up chapter on the "Traditional Pattern of Government in Thailand" as a background of his presentation, the work goes on to a chapter on the "Adoption of Western Technique," from 1851-1910, covering the fourth and fifth reigns of the Bangkok period. Then a chapter on "Democratic Trends" of the sixth and seventh reigns; then another on the "Establishment of Constitutional Government," followed by one on the "Decline of Constitutionalism," and finally "Prospects for Democratic Government." Though carried away by a—perhaps natural—sympathy in the intervening chapters, his conclusions in the final one are sound and logical. It would serve no purpose to try to correct the angles from which the subject has been viewed. Suffice it to say that one cannot help thinking that even an academically qualified writer is liable to lose sight of the *raison d'être* of institutions which has served the nation for centuries and brought it, not without a great deal of anxiety and sacrifice, to the status of membership in the family of nations at the end of World War I, which steered it through its scylla and charybdis till it was suddenly caught in a storm from within which made it founder, while it was trying to realise the *summon bonum* of the West. In reading the work under review we seem to be losing sight of whatever were the accomplishment of former days, of the steady adaptation of western culture and technique, of the generous initiative of America in helping us to negotiate and realise sovereignty within our own lands, not only one of the former *de jure* type but also one of the *de facto* type, too. Most of the picture left on one's mind after reading this book contains but little more than revolution, strife, jealousies and corruption.

D.

Bangkok, 16 September 1959.

*Governments and Politics of Southeast Asia*, G.M. Kahin, editor; various authors. Cornell University Press, New York, 1959. 531 pages.

The work has been published under the auspices of the Southeast Asia Program of Cornell University, dealing with the six larger of the nations of Southeast Asia: Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, Malaya with Singapore, Vietnam, with a section at the end on Communist Vietnam and the Philippines. The authors are, in respective order of their writing, David A. Wilson, former teacher and lecturer at Chulalongkorn University and latterly fellow of the Ford Foundation Foreign Area Training Program; Josef Silverstein of the Ford Foundation Foreign Area Training Program and Fulbright Program; Herbert Feith, who after service with the Republic of Indonesia became a research associate in political science of the Cornell Modern Indonesia Project; J. Norman Parmer, who has carried out research in Malaya under the auspices of the New York State School of the Industrial and Labour Relations at Cornell University; Wells C. Klein, anthropologist, fellow of the Ford Foundation Foreign Area Training Program with Marjorie Weiner, a political scientist who has served in Vietnam with the Education Division of the United States Operation Mission, and David Wurfel who has carried out research in the Philippines as a fellow of the Ford Foundation Foreign Area Training Program.

The work has been systematically planned, each part devoted to one of the nations, consisting of chapters on the historical background, the contemporary setting, the political process and a final one on major problems, with an extra chapter in the case of Vietnam on the northern state. A clear, serviceable map is also attached to each part. The editor points out that Southeast Asia is not an area of great political homogeneity, going on to say that "... differences in their traditional cultures and in their colonial and postcolonial histories have produced substantially dissimilar results, and any close scrutiny of their contemporary governments and politics will disclose at least as many important differences as similarities." Only six nations are here treated, but it is hoped that others like Cambodia will follow.



Obviously our main interest lies in the first part, dealing with Thailand. The historical background forming the first section concerns modern history with a very brief sketch of what had preceded since the entry of the Thai into what is Siam. The conception of kingship prior to the middle of the XIXth century is somewhat exaggerated in its stress on ceremony and self-preservation. In fact, historical data are carefully marshalled, though they are not altogether understood in correct proportions. The second and third sub-sections dealing with the period of the modern Absolute Monarchy (1851-1932) are well-written and contain very few inaccuracies. The minutely detailed sub-section on the revolution of 1932 and its aftermaths and "post-war Thailand" may be called authoritative and hardly to be equalled by any other works yet available. The author wrote naturally from local sources but seems to be, as far as is possible, impartial.

Under contemporary setting much material has been gathered which are not met with elsewhere, dealing with economy, social setting, political forces and political ideas. Here again, unlike many similar treatises of recent years, even academic publications, this may be said to be on the whole accurate.

The third section, dealing with the political process, apparently the main topic of each of these parts, is the author's pronouncement. Like several of the six nations here treated, the "written document (of the Constitution) receives none of the veneration which is accorded the American Constitution." He goes on to say that "the introduction of the document was itself revolutionary, and, contrary to the concept of orderly constitutional procedures. In such a setting it is to be expected, perhaps, that the document's force is not dominant." The reviewer, not being a politician but a mere historian, is inclined to wonder whether the veneration for the American Constitution which was also introduced through revolutionary means received at that time similar veneration as it does today when it has been in usage for quite a considerable period and entitled to the respect due to its coming second century of age. The fourth

and last section deals with major problems, among which the treatment of those of the Chinese minority deserves mention for its handling of the subject based on the writing of Dr. Skinner.

The remaining five parts have been systematically written on similar lines and division of treatment. It is proposed here to review them not in the succession of their presentation but to take each of the sections of each part together.

Under "Historical Background," we have a comparatively short notice of that of Burma. There are quite a few topics regarding Indonesia to be taken notice of. Of the nature of Indonesia's geography the author says: "Because it straddles the world's largest and most scattered archipelago, Indonesia as a unit must do battle with geography to maintain itself." Like the four other states which have recently attained independence, it is said of Indonesia that colonial administration is naturally followed by the desire for independence. The Philippines on the other hand went through a peaceful transition to self-government and independence and this has dulled the cutting edge of contemporary nationalism. The historical background of Vietnam is well presented, too.

Under "Contemporary Setting" and the "Political Process" the main topic of each part is the respective development of democracy and constitutionalism.

"Major Problems" as a rule is a more interesting and broader subject than the last two. In the part dealing with Siam it is the problem of the Chinese minority. In Burma the main difficulty would seem to be national unity, for the Union of Burma has been formed out of conflicting racial elements, some quite antagonistic to the Burmese. In Malaya it is the problem of the large Chinese minority, part of which however has identified itself with the land of its residence. In Vietnam it is the problem of economy and the proximity of their northern communist confrères whose separate state is dealt with in a sub-section of its own.

*D.*

## RECENT SIAMESE PUBLICATIONS

245. Narābhipāl, Nai: *Verses and the sebhā of Prayā Koṇ and Prayā Pān*, เทศน์แพทยคำฉันท์ของนายนวนวิภาต และเสภาเรื่องพระยาทรงพระยาพาน Prākārchāṇ Press, Bangkok, 2501, pp. 95.

These writings from the pen of the late Nai Narābhipāl were published for presentation at the cremation of the remains of the author. By profession secretary to the late Prince of Nakon Swarn he made his name in the literary world by his poetry, some of which (pp. 17-51) are included in the volume. His style was elegant and his rhetoric was of the classical type.

The publication also includes a feature of historical interest—the metrical narration, or *sebhā*, of the story of Kings Koṇ and Pān. The late Nai Narābhipāl published this in some magazine in 1924, with a preface which says that the original mss. in his possession were written on old black folios, and, judging from its calligraphy, might have been written down from dictation in the fourth reign of the Bangkok era. It was then (1924) published with the intention of preserving old poetry. The gist of the story is as follows:

Once upon a time there was a king known as Sikā, reigning in B.E. 400 over Kampēpsén. He had a son named Koṇ to whom he entrusted the administration of his realm. He asked for the hand of the daughter of the King of Pējraburi for his son. When the old monarch died at the age of 90, his successor, Koṇ, renamed the state Srivijaya. In due course of time the queen gave birth to a son. The royal baby's head knocked against the receptacle known as a *pān* at the time of its birth, leaving an indelible mark on the forehead. Hence he came to be known as Pān. Unfortunately the court astrologer pronounced him a prospective patricide and the baby was left to die in a bamboo thicket outside the town.

At that time there happened to have been an old woman, Yai Hom, living near, who noticed birds of prey flocking round

the bamboo thicket. Coming up to the place she found the baby, and snatched it from the birds. The baby grew up under her loving care to the age of 15, when he persuaded the old woman to let him wander away in search of knowledge and experience in life. With five companions he wandered from town to town till they got to Sukhodaya in the north. Taking refuge at Wat Yai under the tutelage of its abbot, Pān served his aged namesake who taught him lessons as was then usual. He was eventually ordained as a monk when of age, but after a time preferred a layman's life which he obtained the abbot's permission to resume. There happened to have been an elephant in musth, which no one was able to keep in order. In a spirit of adventure Pān tried his hand at the difficult task; and subdued the beast by pushing his tusks into the ground, thereby earning a reputation in the northern capital, and an employment in the King's service. At the instigation later of the King of Sukhodaya, Pān volunteered to lead an expedition to the south to conquer Prayā Koṇ, whom he naturally did not know was his father; and, engaging that monarch in single combat on elephant, he killed him. Entering the palace with the intention of taking his late enemy's queen to wife, he heard and understood a cat telling her kitten not to heed his bad manners in stepping over its head because, she said, the newcomer was uncultured enough to take his own mother to wife and hence could not be expected to be good in manners. Wondering over what he was hearing, he prayed for some indication of the real truth; and, lo! at his approach milk flowed out of the breasts of the queen, thus enabling him to identify her as his mother. Angered at having committed a patricidal act, and blaming Yai Hom for not telling him of the identity of his father he sent for her and had her killed. Then, feeling the remorse of the double act of ingratitude, he erected the *stupa* of Pā Pathom in atonement. So far the story here complies with other versions of the tale of Prayā Koṇ and Prayā Pān.

The narration proceeds now to recount that King Pān changed the name of his state from Srivijaya to Nakon Jaisri,

When he died, the overlord at Sukhodaya was told by one of his senior courtiers that Pān was descended from an old lineage of the south. The ancestor named Mên ruled from Kampēnsēn, now a small village north of Nakon Pathom; his successor Kāla added embellishments to the capital; the third in line was Sīkā whose son Koṇ comes into our story. Koṇ renamed his state Srivijaya. Pān, who changed the name of his state again to Nakon Jaisri, is thus the fifth of the dynasty, and its last, for he had no issue. The southern state was left to ruin till the overlord of Sukhodaya came down south to inspect it. He founded a new capital called Sōṇpān, *i.e.*, *The City of the Two Thousand*, because he left his younger brother to rule over the south with a force of 2,000 men. Eventually a King of Sukhodaya, named Pālī, married his son to a daughter of the King of Sōṇpān.

Then follows a story which is almost identical with the romance of Khun Chāṇ and Khun Pôn, with its locale in Sōṇpān and Kānburi, but with slightly different names for the principals. We have here Čan for the Pôn of the romance; Bua, the 'Bone-head', for Khun Chāṇ; Tōṇprasi, name in the romance of the hero's mother, for the heroine Pim. The gist is identical, without details of the romance, and it ends up with a campaign by Čan in which he conquered the Mon at Pā Pathom.

The narration of events after the death of King Pān is not to be found in any history. When coupled with the story of those leading citizens of Sōṇpān which follows it, it becomes really interesting for historical researches. These are of course mere traditions but traditions are often useful in the solution of problems of history. The problem of the lineage of the founder of Ayudhyā is an historical one which has up to now never been solved to everybody's satisfaction. What we have here does not yet solve it but may go some way towards elucidation. Let us now go into the facts as they are given in the story :

(a) As to *place-names*, we are told here that Kampēnsēn was the capital of a state on the lower reaches of what is now known as the Nakon Jaisri river—the site being known by that

name, though nothing in the way of ruins of age is left. Old records usually speak of a state by the name of its capital and in this case we ought to be safe in regarding the name as that of the state as well as that of its capital. The name was then changed to Srivijaya three reigns later. As far as we can make out the change might have been possible but we would be as likely as not incorrect if we hold fast to the period specified—three reigns or say three generations. The name was then changed to Nakon Jaisri, and then to Sôṇpān. Obviously Sôṇpān became Suṇān later but this does not appear in our story. This of course contradicts to a certain extent the theory hitherto prevalent of place-names in the Land of Gold, for Suṇān would be a mere corruption of Sôṇpān. If we discard, however, the story of the 2,000 men, and assume that the original name was Suṇān, merely corrupted into Sôṇpān, then the old theory might hold. It is almost just as probable.

(b) It introduces us to the connection with Sukhodaya which did not appear in other tales of Koṇ and Pān. The King of Sukhodaya's name is given as Pālīraj—King Pālī. Now Pālī could not have been a man's name, much less so if he were a king, since the name is well-known as one of the monkey King of Khītkhin in the story of Rāma of Ayudhyā. There were, however, two kings of Sukhodaya in history named Bān or Bāl Mūaṇ, which could be corrupted into Pān or Pāl. One was the second of the line of the P̄ra Ruṇ, son of Sri Indrāditya and elder brother of the famous Rām Khamhēṇ of the inscriptions. The other was a son of the reigning monarch who died in 1419 (History version of Luṇ P̄rasroeth) and fought his way to the throne of Sukhodaya but had to submit to King Indarājā of Ayudhyā. Sukhodaya inscription No. XII (in Coedès' *Recueil des Inscriptions*, Vol. I, 1924) also mentions a Pāla as sponsoring the erection of a footprint in that capital in 1427. These were probably one and the same Pāla. This latter date may be conformable with the date of the incident of the romance mentioned above.

(c) It also introduces us to the romance mentioned above of Khun Chāy and Khun Phên with different names for the principals.

It is curious that this romance should be added to what purports to be a history. The addition might have been due to the fact that the narrator wishes to claim connection with the state or township of Sôṅpān. In that case one would be inclined to suspect that the whole poem was composed by an inhabitant of Supān or Sôṅpān who thus traces the history of his locality.

246. Chitrapōṅs, Princess Duanċit: *Monastic Fans*  
 ศาสดาพร พร้าณด Press, Bangkok, 2502, copiously ill., pp. 129.

The work is a dedication to her late mother, the Princess Naris, at the cremation of whose remains it was distributed to guests. The author having been the constant companion of her father, no one else could have been more familiar with the late royal artist's works and artistic creations. She also contributed a biography of her late mother as is usual in such dedications, from which contribution one learns that the late Princess was her husband's trusted and sympathetic partner with much taste in arts and crafts.

The monk's fan is an old institution, though perhaps it has been more developed in this country than in other Buddhist nations, for it has assumed here an official character in being utilised to signalise the bearer's office and rank in the Siamese Buddhist Church. It is here bestowed upon individual monks by the Sovereign, just as titles and decorations are upon officials of the laity. The author gives all details as to the various ranks of the official honorific fans with short descriptions of their shapes and design. In supplement to the honorific fans—'pād yos'—there is another category of fans—'pād roṅ'—meaning supplementary fans which are invariably oval in shape. Being designed as memorials of personalities or occasions, such as birthdays, ceremonies not necessarily ones of state, they are more elastic in conception. The late Prince Naris was an expert

in designing and drawing patterns for these, specimens of which are copiously reproduced in the work under review.

Monastic fans are among the most artistic products of the national inspiration and are thus to be studied from that point of view.

247. Rüangsuwarn, C.: *Feats of Heroism of Čaoṇprayā Bodindradejā* ( *Singh Sinhaseni* ), วรรณกรรมทางตอนของท้าวเจ้าพระยาบดินทรเดชา (สิงห์ สิงหเสนี) Pānija-čaroen Press, Dhonburi, 2502, pp. 83.

One of the heroes of the early Bangkok regime, who was now and again sent to pacify the north-east and east borders, is the principal figure in this sketch. The soldier-statesman was born in 1777 and died at the age of 72. His had a varied disposition. He was extremely humane in peace; a strict disciplinarian in war, not even sparing his own son from capital punishment; and an able organiser who often handled international tangles successfully. The author of the sketch seems to have made far-reaching studies for his book though it would be an exaggeration to attribute literary qualification to the work at all.

248. Svasti, M.O. Subhasvasti: *Ariyavithi*, อริยวิถี "a dialogue with dances," Pāčand Press, Bangkok, 2502, 264 pp.

The work, described as a "dialogue with dances," was written on the theme of the life of Prince Siddhartha of Kapilavastu, prior to his enlightenment as the Buddha. Among its points of interest is the pioneer interpretation of the Buddha's philosophy, evolved—not revolutionised—from the traditional version of the Theravāda School of Buddhism.

The author makes a special request from the outset that his preface should be read before the play. Starting with the axiom that, contrary to prevailing opinion among us, the key to civilisation is not to be found in Europe and America alone; it lies quite near us; it is in fact Buddhism which we all profess to have faith in. Many will contradict this. Some would say



that Buddhism discourages economic progress for it preaches contentment; not a few might say that they have followed all their lives the theory that one's action, good or bad, brings corresponding results and yet they have never reaped due reward, whilst those whose behaviour is nowhere near exemplary reap every prize. This category of people would claim that Buddhism is at fault. Then there is a great number who seem to think that the way to national progress lies in an equality in property and class—an ideology which is unnatural and un-Buddhist. Right and freedom may be equalised but there can be no control of individual spending and saving. Effect depends on cause and that was why the Buddha never attempted to preach equalisation of man's individual status.

It seems therefore that such convictions, so far from the Master's ideal, can only result in the deterioration of the rational philosophy enunciated by the Buddha. His teaching was in fact the very opposite of a static life. Take for instance his theory of mundane welfare which would answer these grumblings. Besides, progress should not be confined to the material side of life; it should be measured by the amount of resultant public spirit and civic responsibility among the nations. Buddhism in fact can be shown to be dynamic in nature for it inculcates movement.

It is in this spirit, the author says, that the play has been written in the hope of suggesting a way to progress along Buddhistic thinking that is calculated to do away with selfishness as well as to promote public spirit and civic responsibility. The Buddha's way of teaching, rather than using threat and punishment, relied on mercy and self-training.

The author has many apologies to make in the preface. First of all, his method of presentation in the form of a play to make his telling more attractive. It can be staged if preferred, in which case dances have been provided for in order to add to its visual attraction. It can be treated as literature, just for reading. Above all, care has been taken by the author not to provide for

anything which may possibly lead to sacrilege in that neither Prince Siddhartha nor the Buddha appears on the stage, merely their voices being heard, or their hands or feet being visible.

This preface is in many ways the most interesting section of the whole volume, enunciating, as it does, the author's philosophy of life and progress. One has the impression that the "Dialogue with Dances" has been written to preach it. The handling of his subject, despite a few inaccuracies due to ignorance of Pali such as calling Prince Siddhartha's consort by a masculine form of the name, is carried out with delicacy and charm. His philosophy, though shared by or identical with that of many modern Buddhists, is not yet generally accepted by the majority. It is nevertheless logical.

The main feature of interest from a reader's point of view is undoubtedly Act II scene 5, where the author portrays the nascent sage's inward struggle for the Truth by personifying abstract phenomena. Thus the element of knowledge appears on the stage as Cittavimutti, clothed in white, which carries on a long dialogue with the Buddha (pp. 70-136). This is obviously meant for reading and not staging. There are some other personified abstractions also, such as Dukkham, Aniccam, Anattā and Karma. Evil, of course, has already been personified in traditional versions and he appears here as Māra with his tempting, sensuous daughters. This lengthy reading matter is followed by the First Sermon of the Deer Park at Vārānasi in Act III, Sc. 2 (pp. 160-194). Every act is prefaced with a scene in which an old man introduces the subject of the coming Act through a dialogue with his grandson in the manner of the Shakespearean chorus in some of the poet's plays.

The musical items show a deep appreciation of Siamese classical music. There is real skill and charm in their application to the developments of action and narrative.

249. Nai Kaew: *Record of the tour of the south by H.R.H. the Crown Prince in R.S. 128 (1910)* จดหมายเหตุเสด็จประพาส

หัวเมืองฝ่ายใต้ ร.ศ. ๑๒๘ ๗ King Mongkut 'Academy Press, Bangkok, 2502, pp. 228.

King Rama VI, when Crown Prince, made a tour of the south as far as Trang and Nakon Sri Dharmarāj for 54 days. Gifted with the use of his pen though hardly fluent as yet in it from his long sojourn from childhood in Europe, he seemed to have been unable to resist writing a series of letters of travelogue during a trip which was strenuous for its social commitments. His letters were addressed to 'Prān Buñ' primarily to be published in a club magazine called "Chuan Hua," *i.e.*, the *Humorist*; but, in his own words, "the material multiplied in volume as the series progressed till it was now felt that readers of the magazine would be kept too long waiting for each serial." It was then decided to publish the letters in book form.

As was his habit in some instances the Prince wrote as a member of his own suite, adopting "Nai Kaew" as a *nom de plume*. Obviously the expediency gave him broader scope. He certainly had difficulties in the language but he kept clear of foreign words which at that time were fashionable for would-be progressives who thereby attempted to display their "up-to-date" command of the widely known language of the West even to the detriment of their own.

The journey was made by sea from Bangkok to Jumpōrn; then by elephant across the isthmus of Kra to Ranong; by sea thence to Takuapā, Bhūket, Pāṇṇā, Krabi, and Traṅ; by motor-cars and horses across the peninsula again via Tujsoṅ to Nakon Sri Dharmarāj, whence the return to Bangkok was resumed by sea.

As a travelogue it is adequate, touching on scenery, and the life of the people of the districts passed through. It also gives an idea of the pleasures and hardships of the party, permitting the reader to get a glimpse of the intimacy which the Prince shared with his entourage, incidentally revealing, without the writer saying it, the lovable nature of the Prince. However out-of-date its account of the topography has become

by this time, its record of customs and of personalities are still interesting. We learn for instance of the Chinese tin-prospecting and mercantile family of na Ranong, one of the members of which became *Āyā Rasada*, Lord Lieutenant of Bhuket circle, consisting of all the provinces on the Indian Ocean, a benevolent despot and a real acquisition for Siam.

250. Devawongs, H.R.H. Somdeč Kroma<sup>1</sup>prayā: *The Family of Sučaritakul* สุชาติประยูร สุจริตกุล King Mongkut Academy Press, Bangkok, 2502, pp. 65.

Together with the foregoing book, no. 349, this publication has been dedicated to the memory of *Āyā Udom Rājabhakdi*, a member of that family once Major Domo of the Court of King Rama VI. It was, according to the introduction, written by the late Prince whose name is mentioned above. Both the Prince's mother and wife belonged to this family. Prince Devawongs, however, did not bring the book to completion and the work was continued by some of his sons and daughters and published in March 1938 on the occasion of the cremation of the remains of Her late Royal Highness the Princess of Čandaburi, daughter by Mom Yai (née Sučaritakul) of Somdeč Kroma<sup>1</sup>prayā Devawongs. The publication under review has been continued from that earlier work by the children of the late *Āyā Udom Rājabhakdi* and includes families related by marriage with the Sučaritakuls.

It is made up of family trees and lists of members of the families mentioned. It is noticeable that the family counts among its membership, both direct and related, several queens and distinguished ladies of the Kingdom.

251. Birasri, Prof. S.: *Appreciation of our Murals* คุณศรีทองจิตรกรรมฝาผนัง Siva<sup>1</sup>porn Press, Bangkok, 2502, 40 pp. with map and illustrations.

This is the current year's publication by the Royal Fine Arts Department to celebrate every year the Buddhist observance of Monastic Retreat. Some 10,000 copies have been issued for

distribution to monks and novices visiting the National Museum on that day, others being presented to individuals, museums, libraries and learned institutions.

The department has this year organised an exhibition of Thai murals collected or copied from various places in the kingdom. A chronological list of the murals is given, dating from the Srivijaya paintings in the cave at Yalā, B.E. 1830 (late XIIIth century, Chr. era).

The professor begins by explaining the three systems of mural painting, tempera, fresco and encaustic, going on to what may be gained by studying murals, their aims, the western influence in art and material, the artist's objectives, the method of learning to appreciate murals of different kinds such as those depicting religious scenes or fantastic moods or dynamic action as in the Rāmākien, those depicting natural life and scenes of hell, carrying messages of warning to people so that they would avoid sin and do good. The end is brought up by recommendations for the preservation of murals which decay so soon in a humid climate.

252. Journal Thailand-Centre, P.E.N. International, "Bhāsā tē Nāysue" ภาษาและหนังสือ Vol. I, part 1, Karpimp-strisār, Bangkok, 2502, pp. 114.

It is with pleasure that we welcome this new journal, which is a promising sign of greater interest being taken in scholarly research in our Siamese circles. As its name implies, it will be the organ of P.E.N. International, about which an article appears in this number (pp. 87-89). Among the very readable material we note especially two articles dealing with Thai linguistics. One is *In quest of the Thai Language* (pp. 9-16) by Dr. Ban-čob Pāndhamedhā, the locale of whose subject is placed in the Shan states. The other is S. Čāndralekhā's *Discussion of Languages of the North-east* (pp. 102-107) which is equally worth reading.

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The literary analysis of a few stanzas of the old *Nirāś Haripuñ-jaya* (pp. 32-34) by Dr. P. na Nakon is a scholarly piece. So also is the bi-lingual rendition of *Nirāś Narindr* (pp. 26-31) of J. Kasem Sribunruang. This latter too does not cover the whole poem. Folklore is represented by Sathien Koses' *Fairy Fruit* (pp. 17-20) which is written in that author's customary style. Problems of translation occupy considerable sections of the magazine (pp. 48-50; 108-114). Administrative matter such as reports of meetings and regulations make up the remainder of the volume.



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Murthy, H.V.S.: Was Asoka a Buddhist?

(His answer was that he was neither a Buddhist nor a Jaina, but a follower of Sanātana Dhamma or Porāna Pakiti, as he himself had said (in Brahmagiri edict). One might also say with equal truth that he subscribed to all three schools of thought).

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