

REVIEWS

Jean Duffar, *Les Forces Politiques en Thaïlande* (Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1972), pp. 176.

En France on peut trouver des dizaines de livres sur L'Indochine qui portent aussi bien sur l'éthnologie, l'archéologie que la science politique. Mais la Thaïlande est extrêmement peu étudiée et mal connue. Jusqu'à présent il existait un seul livre étudiant vraiment ce pays: celui de M. Pierre Fistié intitulé "L'Evolution de la Thaïlande Contemporaine", livre épais et très complet mais accessible seulement aux spécialistes. Maintenant vient de paraître un nouveau livre: *Les Forces Politiques en Thaïlande* écrit par M. Jean Duffar, Assistant à L'Université de Paris 1.

Ce livre est le mémoire du Diplôme d'Etudes Supérieures de Sciences Politiques. Ce mémoire fut soutenu en 1968 mais a été publié seulement en 1972.

Comme tout mémoire, cette recherche est d'une écriture simple et facilement compréhensible. Mais comme l'écrit Nietzsche: "Les faux penseurs écrivent des choses incompréhensibles pour faire croire à leur profondeur"; tel n'est pas le cas de M. Duffar qui expose clairement le problème de forces politiques en Thaïlande.

Le livre est composé suivant un plan très rigoureux et équilibré. Dans une première partie (84 pages), l'auteur examine ce qu'est le pouvoir en Thaïlande. Dans une deuxième partie (76 pages), il examine ensuite quelles sont les forces s'opposant à ce pouvoir.

L'étude du "pouvoir" se divise elle-même en deux chapitres; le premier porte sur "les données favorables au pouvoir établi". Pour l'auteur, le Bouddhisme favorise grandement le pouvoir grâce à la croyance générale au fait que celui qui a une haute position, le doit aux mérites de ses vies antérieures et doit donc être respecté. Ensuite l'éducation elle-même favorise le pouvoir car seuls les classes favorisées ont accès à l'université et donc ont intérêt à conserver et protéger les structures établies. De plus pour le moment, il n'y a pas l'apparition de classe qui pourrait favoriser la naissance d'un mouvement révolution-

naire. En effet les paysans (sauf dans le Nord-Est) ne sont pas pauvres et il existe peu d'ouvriers. Enfin au-dessus de tout cela, le peuple thaï est assez indifférent à la politique et ne songe pas à se révolter même si le gouvernement ne lui plaît pas.

Le deuxième chapitre étudie "les composantes du pouvoir établi." Le pouvoir est représenté tout d'abord par le roi dont M. Duffar a su bien voir qu'il était unanimement respecté par tout le peuple thaï. Ensuite il explique pourquoi les militaires sont actuellement au pouvoir en examinant dans quelles conditions les civils furent éliminés. Mais ce qui est original, et surtout pour un Français car en général ceux-ci sont très critiques envers la politique américaine en Asie du Sud-Est, c'est que bien qu'affirmant que les américains participent au pouvoir en Thaïlande, ceux-ci sont dans ce pays extrêmement désintéressés et ont réussi à développer le pays dans tous les domaines — éducation, économie, routes, armée etc. C'est un hommage mérité car la Thaïlande est certainement un des rares pays dans lequel les américains se soient conduits avec autant de désintéressement, au moins si l'on juge par rapport à d'autres pays.

La deuxième partie sur "Les Forces de Contestation" est certainement la plus intéressante car en fait ce problème a été assez peu étudié. La première force de contestation trouve son expression dans les minorités ethniques. L'auteur étudie très bien le mécanisme de la subversion communiste pour arriver à utiliser le mécontentement de celles-ci. (En particulier la page 92 consacrée à la propagande chez les Lao-Thaïs du Nord-Est est très intéressante.) Mais l'auteur pense que les mesures prises par le gouvernement correspondent à une juste appréciation de la réalité et seront un succès si elles sont appliquées honnêtement.

En ce qui concerne la minorité chinoise, contrairement à beaucoup d'auteurs de langue anglaise, M. Duffar affirme qu'elle représente un danger car elle n'est pas réellement assimilée.

Mais à part les minorités existe aussi une "menace économique". La Thaïlande est un pays agricole et les cours mondiaux des céréales subissent souvent des variations imprévisibles. De plus le pays manque de capitaux pour investir dans le secteur industriel et ne peut donc

absorber la main-d'œuvre venue des campagnes. Surtout trop de propriétaires terriens citadins s'enrichissent alors que les paysans s'appauvrissent et trop d'étudiants restent sans travail. Cela pourrait créer dans le pays une masse de mécontents difficiles à satisfaire.

Enfin la corruption (malgré l'effort personnel du Maréchal Thanom Kittikachorn) empêche tout développement sérieux. Pour conclure l'auteur remarque que la Thaïlande parmi les autres pays qu'on appelle sous-développés est malgré tout un pays riche. Mais que si elle veut se développer et résister au communisme elle devra se grouper autour de "la seule force politique qui fasse l'unanimité : Le Roi." (page 163) On peut reprocher à l'auteur quelques erreurs, pardonnables car non fondamentales. Sauf le Bouddhisme, la distinction qu'il fait entre l'Hinayanisme, le Mahayanisme et le Tantrisme prête à confusion. Il utilise aussi les statistiques sans nuance et affirme qu'une famille moyenne à Bangkok gagne 90 dollars par mois. Si cela est statistiquement vrai, cela ne correspond à la réalité de la vie quotidienne. Et parce que la recherche date de 1968 il y a quelques incorrections comme celle qui consiste à affirmer que : "seul, la Friendship Highway qui joint Saraburi à Khorat depuis 1957 est tout a fait carrossable." (page 97)

Enfin nous finissons cette étude en avertissant le lecteur qu'il ne doit pas chercher dans ce livre une analyse ou étude approfondie. L'auteur n'a passé en fait que peu de temps en Thaïlande et cette recherche est surtout fondée sur une documentation déjà existante. Mais M. Duffar a su exposer une présentation claire et complète des problèmes politiques de la Thaïlande. Comme l'écrit dans sa préface M. François Luchaire, Président de l'Université de Paris I, (Panthéon-Sorbonne) : "Le mérite de M. Duffar est d'avoir su donner à chacune des composantes de la vie politique thaïlandaise sa véritable place; d'avoir su utiliser l'histoire, non pour s'enfermer dans le passé, mais au contraire pour saisir une évolution qui dépasse le présent.

C'est là, par conséquent, une recherche utile et bien conduite qu'il est agréable de présenter au lecteur."

Paturaya Dassé

*Faculté des Sciences Politiques
Université de Thammasat*

Thawatt Mekarapong, *History of the Thai Revolution : A Study in Political Behavior* (Chalermnit, Bangkok, 1972), pp. 251.

This is an important book on an important subject. The author, who is a ranking Ministry of the Interior official and has lectured at universities in Bangkok, rather modestly suggests in the preface (p. viii) that he may be criticized by those who feel that there is nothing new to be said on the matter and that the story could be summarized in a few pages: most however would readily agree with him that "this topic has not been adequately and thoroughly explored," and this reviewer would maintain that there has in fact been surprisingly little serious study of the political events of the early 1930's, particularly in the English language.

The book is an adapted version of the author's political science doctoral dissertation (originally titled "The June Revolution of 1932 in Thailand") submitted to Indiana University in 1962, and is divided essentially into two sections. The first is a summary of Thai political practice stretching the whole way back to Sukhothai, of the changes set in motion by intensive contact with the West from Mongkut's reign onward, and of the growing pressures for further change in the last years of the absolute monarchy. The second section is a detailed narrative of political events from June of 1932 through October 1933, comprising a little more than half of this relatively short work; nearly 40 pages are devoted just to the 'second *coup*' of June 1933 and its causes. A brief 'conclusion' is primarily a summary of political developments from the fall of 1933 to King Prajadhipok's abdication in March of 1935.

The book concludes with a bibliography and three appendices but, regrettably, no index. The first appendix is a carefully worked out list of (hopefully) all of the "promoters" of the 1932 *coup*, who by Dr. Thawatt's tally number 114. Somewhat surprisingly, the classification used differs from that of the text. The author makes a convincing case (p. 174) that the "revolutionary circle" can usefully be seen as composed of four subgroups (plus a few 'unclassifiabes') — a senior army clique, and a junior clique divided into army, navy, and civilian factions. However the appendix list ignores the senior-junior distinction and

classifies the promoters only as army, navy, or civilian. The final two appendices give the texts of the firey June 24, 1932, People's Party manifesto and the March 1935 abdication statement of King Prajadhipok.

* * *

For the most part the author's account is thorough, readable, and convincing. Among topics well treated at length are the backgrounds of the leading figures of the period, comparisons between the successful 1932 *coup* and the abortive *coup* plot of 1912, and analysis of the temporary constitution of June 1932 and the permanent constitution promulgated in December. Another point, which has been made before by Walter Vella and others but is well made again here (pp. 56-57), is that the monarchy from King Chulalongkorn's time on, in gradually abandoning a claim to legitimacy by 'divine right' in favor of a claim based on the benefits it conferred on the nation, may have disarmed its critics in the short run, but in the long run it made itself vulnerable to the counter claims of a group (here called the "counter-elite" (pp. 86-87) which believed itself better qualified to govern. As for the 1932 *coup* itself, it is emphasized how little military force the plotters actually had at their disposal, and consequently how much their plans relied on bluff and deception. A corollary is that their success depended on careful planning and precise execution; this was undoubtedly for the most part achieved, but the other side of the coin is shown in Khuang Aphaiwong's account (cited below) in which Khuang and his group, who fortunately for the plotters played a relatively minor role, appear almost comic in their ineptness. The account of the 'second *coup*' of June 1933, while open to question on some points, is exhaustive.

The book jacket describes the author as "a native who really knows his own country, its history and the mentality of its people" and "has no political axe to grind," and the book is on the whole a relatively dispassionate work of scholarship in this very contentious field. However, like the nineteenth century American historian Bancroft, of whom it was said "he voted for Jackson on every page," the author's sympathy

clearly lies with democracy and constitutional government, and consequently he is critical of both the old regime and most of the political trends since June 1932 as well. Furthermore, the nature of the sources makes it doubly difficult to maintain objectivity. Most of the writing on the early 1930's has been highly partisan, typified by such titles (using Dr. Thawatt's translations) as *Shaken Democracy, Must Thailand Become Communist?*, *The Age of Tyranny*, and *The First Drop of Blood of Democracy*. This makes it particularly desirable to use as great a range of sources as possible, but the sources used are in fact rather limited. Of the thirty books in Thai dealing directly with the period, just over two thirds were published in the decade following the Second World War, and twelve of them in the three years 1947-49, when there was an outpouring of literature in the field. Relatively few sources contemporary to the period are used, being mainly some references to Thai and English language newspapers and, to a lesser degree, the minutes of the National Assembly and the government gazette. The extensive National Archives records on the Seventh Reign are not mentioned, nor are there interviews with surviving figures of the period. One source that is used repeatedly is the *Decision of the Special Court on the Insurrection of B.E. 2482 (1939)*. This is the record of the determined but not very successful efforts of the government to prove that Phya Song Suradej and a group of his followers were plotting a rebellion; Dr. Thawatt himself writes (note, p. 176) that, "Although some parts of the conclusion drawn from this testimony against Phya Song's group are somewhat doubtful and less convincing, the story itself does give many interesting facts." One wonders whether some of the "facts" are not also doubtful.

Furthermore, although this "adapted version" of a 1962 thesis was published just last year, only one post-1961 work is mentioned. This reviewer would not hazard a guess as to how much relevant material has been published in the past decade, but among things that readily come to mind are first-hand accounts of the *coup* by Phya Song (*Bantuek Phya Song Suradej*—not apparently the same as the 1947 work of the same title), by Phya Ritthi Akaney (*Chiwit Thang Kan Muang Khong Phan-ek Ritthi Akaney*), and by Khuang Aphaiwong (included in *Ruang*

Nai Khuang, and also in one of Khuang's cremation volumes); Kiatchai Phongphanit's *Pathiwat* 2475; several substantial articles in Chai-anan Samuthwanich, ed., *Sat Kan Muang*; T. Kluamai's article on the abdication of King Prajadhipok (in *Sangkomsat Parithat*, June 1968); and Pierre Fistié's *L'Évolution de la Thaïlande Contemporaine* (largely on the 1930's) and *Sous Développement et Utopie au Siam* (on Pridi's economic plan; this work has recently been published in Thai.) And although it was undoubtedly too late to be taken into consideration, practically the whole June 1972 issue of *Sangkomsat Parithat* was devoted to the 1932 coup. (For the opposite view see the review (in Thai) in the March 1973 issue of *Sangkomsat Parithat* by Likhit Thirawekhin, who criticizes Dr. Thawatt's lack of analysis and conceptualization but praises the detailed narrative and particularly the extensive use of Thai sources).

One consequence of the sources being virtually all from one or another of the "revolutionary" factions, and mostly after the event, is that the picture of the last years of the absolute monarchy is a conventional and in part misleading one. King Prajadhipok is shown as well-meaning but weak, controlled by reactionary relatives. Prince Boripat as usual is the villain of the piece. The very considerable accomplishments of the regime are glossed over, and modernizing princes like Prince Purachatra and Prince Sithiporn are not even mentioned. (Correspondingly, in the constitutional period there is scant discussion of members of the royal family, such as Prince Wan, Prince Aditya, and Prince Sakol, who actively supported and participated in the new government.)

There is a lengthy discussion of Pridi's famous feud with Prince Charoonsakdi, the Thai Minister in Paris, which concludes (p. 80), "Apparently the government considered this incident a trivial matter and never dreamed that Pridi would become a serious threat to the absolute monarchy." Actually in almost identical terms the Thai Minister reported to Bangkok that he believed Pridi would be a "serious danger to the government" (p. 79 gives a slightly different version); in a letter (in Thai) dated April 4, 1927, King Prajadhipok, speaking through the Royal Secretary, made the following interesting comment: "This Nai Pridi is intelligent but inclined to be a little brash, as is common among the young. Once he enters the government in a responsible

position he will probably work well, and I don't much believe that he will become a "serious danger to the government" as Prince Charoonsakdi has reported. If the government doesn't use him in a manner commensurate with his knowledge, then things might develop in an undesirable way."¹

As for Prince Charoonsakdi, it is said that "he was subsequently summoned back home." In fact he died in Europe in October of 1928, still serving as Thai Minister to France as well as chief Thai Delegate to the League of Nations.

On the whole figures in both the old and new governments are depicted as motivated mainly by a desire for power and wealth. (The major exceptions are King Prajadhipok, who is at least credited with good intentions; Pridi and some of his followers, who while possibly misguided are idealistic and principled (pp. 7, 179); and Phya Phahol, who is shown as patriotic and sincere, but rather simple and subject to manipulation by others (pp. 174-75, 180-81). The result is a kind of conspiratorial history, in which considerable effort is devoted to untangling the Machiavellian motives of the various participants. Not infrequently conclusions are based on single passages—including private conversations, quoted *verbatim*—taken from sources written fifteen or twenty years after the event. (Cf. pp. 16-17, 131, 190-91, 194.) Such conclusions are necessarily open to question.

Another consequence of the somewhat secondary nature of the sources is the number of inaccuracies in the book. Many of these are minor, but the cumulative effect sometimes distorts the true picture. For example, the 'Bowaradej case' is described thus (p. 97):

Toward the end of 1931, the first protest against the retrenchment scheme occurred when Prince Bowaradej, the Minister of Defense (*sic*), who attempted to seek popularity in the Army, resigned in protest because his proposal to increase the salaries of the military officers at this time was turned down by the King on the advice of the Supreme Council. While conveying more or less the gist of the matter, this account is wrong in virtually every specific. The facts of the case (as

1) National Archives, Seventh Reign, Royal Secretariat, 10.1/7, *Chao Phya Mahithon* to *Chao Phya Phichaiyat*.

taken from the National Archives files) are (1) this was far from being the first protest against the retrenchment scheme—and one of the earlier cases had involved Prince Bowaradej himself, who in December 1930 had without proper authorization gone ahead and committed funds for military construction, for which he had received a sharp rebuke from the King; (2) in the spring of 1931 Prince Bowaradej ordered (and actually began to pay) raises for 322 officers. Of these 231 had been raised in rank, and for these raises there was no objection. However, another 91 received raises at their old ranks, and to these raises the Minister of Finance (incidentally a *Phya*, not a member of the royal family) made strenuous objection, citing government policy established some months before; (3) a majority in the Cabinet upheld the position of the Minister of Finance (it was not, as Prince Bowaradej later claimed, an arbitrary decision of Prince Boripat), and the Cabinet decision was unanimously endorsed by the Supreme Council of State, which also expressed suspicion that Prince Bowaradej was the source of leaked accounts of the controversy appearing in the Bangkok press; (4) on June 3, having 'lost face' and failed to protect his constituency, Prince Bowaradej (whose title was Minister of War—the English designation was not changed to "Defence" until December 1931) submitted his resignation; (5) these developments were communicated to King Prajadhipok, who at the time was in the United States. The King replied, "Minister of War's action is absolutely contrary to decision on this matter. I cannot understand why he has done this and cannot understand his arguments in the least." Nonetheless he offered Prince Bowaradej a chance to send his explanations, and subsequently a chance to withdraw his resignation. When the explanations proved unsatisfactory and Prince Bowaradej refused to withdraw his resignation, the King reluctantly followed the recommendation of the Supreme Council and accepted it.²

The account of King Prajadhipok's eleventh-hour efforts at political reform is also somewhat misleading. According to Dr. Thawatt (pp. 41, 93, 131), early in 1932 the King asked Raymond B. Stevens, the American Foreign Adviser, and Phya Sri Wisarn Waja, a high official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of which he became the first Minister under the

2) National Archives, Seventh Reign, Ministry of Defence, 1/35, 36 and 3/6.

constitutional regime, to draw up a constitution, but both advised the King that the Thai people were not ready for constitutional monarchy. In fact Stevens and Phya Sri Wisarn Waja did draw up an outline plan for change in the political system which was submitted to the Supreme Council of State in great secrecy in March 1932. The plan was strikingly similar to that actually implemented by the constitutional regime. It called for the appointment of a prime minister and the removal of the King from the everyday affairs of state (since Chulalongkorn's days the absolute monarchs had in effect served as their own prime ministers.) The prime minister was to preside over a cabinet responsible to a legislative assembly, and it was recommended that the assembly be composed of equal numbers of appointed and elected members, the elected members to be chosen by an indirect process. The main differences between the proposal and the system actually put into practice after June 1932 were that the Supreme Council of State would be retained, although with a modified membership and functions, and that extensive powers, at least of a 'veto' nature, would be reserved for the monarchy. In separate comments on the proposal, both Stevens and Phya Sri Wisarn Waja maintained that the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in Siam was both inevitable and desirable; both however expressed doubts that the proper time had come, pointing to the level of education among the general public as well as the danger of major changes which might disrupt a government already beset by economic crisis. The long, slow process by which a degree of constitutional government had been achieved in Burma and other countries was cited. Both therefore opted for a policy of gradualism, and (as noted on p. 93) suggested that local municipal governing assemblies be introduced at once, but that the question of a national assembly be deferred. Stevens went further and also recommended the immediate appointment of a prime minister, a change which he deemed important but not fundamental.³

Similarly, the brief reference to the formation of the Privy Council Committee in 1927 (pp. 91-92) omits important points and is wrong about some of those it does give. There is a detailed account, based on

3) The outline proposal, as well as the comments of Stevens and Phya Sri Wisarn Waja (all in English) can be found in, National Archives, Papers of Prince Damrong, 47/242.

National Archives records, of this tentative but significant step toward representative government in an article by Dr. Chai-anan Samutthwanich in *Sat Kan Muang* (pp. 1-40).

A number of other inaccuracies could be cited: the account on pp. 66-67 appears to confuse Somdet Chao Phya Sri Suriyawong and his son Chao Phya Surawong Waiyawat; the membership of the Supreme Council of State, while limited to royalty, was not totally limited to uncles and half-brothers of the King, as stated on p. 90; Prince Alongkot was not Minister of Defence in 1932, as stated on p. 40; the famous circular letter from Phibul and Luang Suphachalasai, warning alleged plotters, was sent not in September 1933 (p. 197) but in July; and in Appendix C the sentence in King Prajadhipok's abdication statement which usually, and correctly, reads to the effect that in giving up the crown he wishes to retain all the princely prerogatives he enjoyed before coming to the throne, has somehow become, "I hereby renounce all the rights which I enjoyed before my accession." (p. 251).

Nor are the inaccuracies limited to details concerning the ruling elite. On p. 100 it is stated that "the world depression had little impact upon the masses of the people" and "only two classes of people—the merchants, mainly Chinese, and the officials—actually suffered from the economic crisis." By implication "the masses" are "the country people," i.e. the approximately 80% of Siam's population who engaged directly in agriculture. In the spring of 1932, alarmed by the deteriorating economic situation, the government ordered a series of surveys of rural economic conditions in the *monthons* of the Central Plains.⁴ It was in this large and heavily populated region that the commercialization of agriculture resulting from Siam's nineteenth century treaties with the Western powers, and consequent entry into the international rice trade on a large scale, had had its major impact. The findings in various *monthons* were surprisingly similar: the price of rice was only about a third of the price of several years earlier, and land values had fallen to as little as one sixth of their former level. The farmers were heavily in debt, but with land virtually unsaleable and unprofitable to put into

4) National Archives, Seventh Reign, Ministry of Commerce and Communications, 13/5.

production, creditors were reluctant to foreclose on mortgages. Instead debts mounted and gold, in the form of ornaments, flowed from the countryside to towns and hence to Bangkok and out of the country. The price of goods the farmers purchased had declined proportionally less than their income, and trade was at a standstill. Perhaps most felt was the severe reduction in expenses on merit making and temples, marriages and cremations, and the various festivals and ceremonies which mark the agricultural cycle—expenditures which may be ‘unnecessary’ to the economist but are the very essence of Thai rural life. The basic cause of all these conditions was the falling price of rice and the consequent reduction in the cash income of farmers in the Central Plains, for whom the development of a specialized commercial agriculture had long since ended the possibility of a comfortable, “self-sufficient” livelihood, and it is an exaggeration to say, as the author does (p. 100), that the government’s efforts to alleviate the burden of the relatively small land and capitation taxes had given the farmers “a fair measure of relief.” This is not to argue that there were any direct and immediate political consequences of the economic distress in the countryside, but it is not true that the economic crisis affected only urban classes.

It should be added that in spite of the author’s background (a master’s degree in economics as well as political science), economic issues in general receive scant attention. The government’s ill-considered salary tax, which set off a storm of protest in the press when it was introduced in the spring of 1932, is mentioned only in passing when it is repealed by the constitutional government (p. 137). (The tax affected mainly middleclass government officials and employees of Western-style firms; in particular it left practically untouched royalty and the higher nobility, a major part of whose income was derived from sources other than salaries, and the Chinese merchant class, who generally received no salaries as such at all. The government itself conceded that the tax was unfair, but defended it on the pragmatic grounds that the government lacked the bureaucratic capacity to administer a more equitable but more complex general income tax.)

The hypothesis that the depression and the government’s consequent retrenchment policy were major factors leading to the 1932 *coup* is dis-

missed (p. 101) with the seemingly simplistic arguments that (1) "the idea of carrying out the revolution had been conceived by the revolutionary leaders long before the economic crisis," and (2) the plotters themselves enjoyed "secure positions" (in fact retrenchment came in a series of steps, which made it difficult for anyone to be sure that today's position would be secure tomorrow, and this also ignores the question of blocked promotions and salary cuts for officials not dismissed). The rather ambiguous conclusion is that the depression "merely had a bearing on the timing" of the *coup*. These arguments leave unanswered the questions of whether without the economic conditions existing in 1931-32 the senior military members would have agreed to throw in their lot with the *coup* group (certainly their most frequently expressed reason for doing so was the "inefficiency" of the existing government, and the most visible proof of inefficiency was the economic situation, for which in traditional Thai manner the government was held accountable—however often and however justly it might put the blame on international economic conditions beyond its control); whether the *coup* would have been attempted at all; and if so whether the attempt would have succeeded. It is of course impossible to say what might have happened if Siam had not been plunged into an economic crisis in the early 1930's, but there is certainly enough circumstantial and chronological evidence to suggest that economic factors deserve more consideration than they get here.

Another aspect that receives relatively little attention is the relationship between developments in Siam and in the surrounding countries of Southeast Asia. The period of political change in Siam was contemporaneous with the growth of various Marxist and non-Marxist independence movements throughout Southeast Asia—several using Siam as a base beyond the reach of colonial police—and factions in Siam, depending on their point of view, looked on these movements with either sympathy or apprehension and cited them as precedents to be followed or avoided. And while a number of comparisons are made between the post-1932 political system of Siam and those of China and the Soviet Union, Japan is mentioned only briefly as a distant example; the question of direct Japanese involvement in the 1932 *coup* and its aftermath, which has been studied in detail by Thadeus Flood using Japanese archives, is not raised.

Finally, as the *Sangkomsat Parithat* reviewer points out, the words 'coup' and 'revolution' are used interchangeably. It may be that the word 'revolution' has become so intimately associated with the events of June 1932 that it is too late to hope for a change now, but it does seem that there is a useful semantic distinction to be made between a handful of plotters overthrowing the existing political power and a considerable segment of the population becoming involved in violent political action. Also, one might well question the consistent use of the word 'Thailand', since throughout the whole period under study the name of the country was Siam. On the whole the book is readable, but the evident enthusiasm for the subject sometimes results in an exaggerated style that distracts from the narrative; thus revolutionaries are constantly "burning with desire," or (p. 135), after a speech by Phya Mano which the author obviously considers utopian, "the simple-minded soldiers and the innocent Boy Scouts shouted "Chaiyo" at the top of their voices. They were glad to hear that the revolution meant something good for the nation. It was a wild cheer for the revolution indeed."

* * *

This rather lengthy catalogue of criticisms (some, although not all, fairly trivial) should not be taken to imply that the book's weaknesses outweigh its merits. The *coup* of June 1932 and its immediate consequences remain the most important political events in the past century of Thai history, and Dr. Thawatt's book is the most complete and accurate account in the English language. Furthermore, it is practically unique in making a substantial effort to place these political changes in a proper historical perspective. It is to be hoped that this example will lead other Thai and foreign scholars to look beyond the myths and partisan rhetoric that have enshrouded these events, and to give the period the serious, objective study it deserves.

Benjamin A. Batson

Cornell University

Yoneo Ishii, Toshiharu Yoshikawa, and Osamu Akagi, *A Selected Thai Bibliography on the Reign of King Chulalongkorn* (Thai Section, Osaka University of Foreign Studies, 1972), 44 pages.

This bibliography of published works in Thai concerning the history of Thailand under King Rama V (1868-1910) has been prepared by three members of the Thai Section at the Osaka University of Foreign Studies. It is intended as a guide to assist students specializing in the Thai language to prepare a B.A. thesis in history, and is therefore limited to materials available in Osaka. It contains more than 250 Thai titles, each provided with an English translation for reference. These consist of literary and scholarly works, travelogues and speeches written by King Rama V, as well as biographies and general reference works for the period.

In addition to the students for whom it is modestly intended, this guide will be of great value to all who are interested in the modern history of Thailand. And one will certainly look forward to the expansion of the work into a more comprehensive bibliography on the reign of King Rama V which the compilers plan for the future.

Kennon Breazeale

*St. Antony's College,
Oxford*

Paitoon Mikusol, "*The Administrative Reform of Monthon Isan during the High Commissionership of H.R.H. Prince Sanphasittiprasong (1893-1910)*" (Unpublished M. Ed. thesis, College of Education (Prasanmit), 1972), 189 pages. ไพฑูรย์ มิกุล "การปฏิรูปการปกครองมณฑลอิสาน สมัยที่พระเจ้าบรมวงศ์เธอ กรมหลวงสรรพสิทธิประสงค์ทรงเป็นข้าหลวงใหญ่ (พ.ศ. 2436-2453)."

Of all the royal commissioners sent by King Rama V to administer the provinces and tributary states on the frontiers of the old kingdom of Siam, Prince Sanphasittiprasong as High Commissioner to Monthon Isan held office longer than any other and under the most complicated circumstances. Arriving in Ubon Ratchathani at the very end of 1893 after the Siamese withdrawal from the left bank of the Mekong River,

Prince Sanphasit was assigned to the formidable task of reorganizing the dismembered eastern Lao provinces and the Champasak principality and of beginning the process of centralization through replacing the late nineteenth-century Lao administrative structures by a new nation-wide model controlled directly by Bangkok. This mission was made an especially delicate one because of the exclusion under the 1893 treaty with France of Siamese troops (a mainstay of Siamese power) from all towns along the Mekong; by the presence of hostile French vice-consular representatives in Ubon; by unsettled conditions, frequent border incidents, and constant pressure from the French colonial party for further territorial expansion in Indochina; and by the openly protective posture towards the Lao people taken by French officials against Siamese attempts to reduce the powers of Lao ruling families and integrate the right-bank Lao provinces into the Siamese kingdom.

Bangkok strove for more than a decade to reduce the tensions and avoid open conflict along the borders between French and Siamese Laos, while negotiating new treaties and attempting to restore cordial diplomatic relations with France which could better guarantee the uncertain position of Bangkok in her Lao provinces. While cautiously observing for many years the call by some Indochina officials for the annexation of parts of the right bank with a view towards achieving a reconstitution of the pre-nineteenth-century Lao kingdoms, Sanphasit had to proceed carefully in dealing with the Lao people themselves, who resisted the imposition of Siamese-conceived institutions and laws upon their provinces. While open conflict with France was avoided, the Siamese were less fortunate in dealing with their Lao subjects and were faced with a wide-spread rebellion for several months in 1902 in the Ubon region. No existing work deals adequately with Siamese foreign policy as it related to this frontier area; and the author of "The Administrative Reform of Monthon Isan" hardly mentions this important aspect of the problem. Several recent works have, however, dealt with the 1902 rebellion; and it is around this aspect of Sanphasit's tenure that the author centres his thesis, adding much detail from six volumes of documents in the Thai National Archives to what has already been written.

In providing background to the princely reforms of the 1890's and some of the causes of the rebellion, Mr. Mikusol first outlines the late-

nineteenth-century administrative structure of a typical Lao state. He then outlines the reforms begun by Prince Phichit Prichakôn (High Commissioner in Ubon, 1891-1893) and Prince Sanphasit prior to 1902. An account of the events of the 1902 rebellion and an analysis of its causes are followed by an outline of the administrative changes by Sanphasit during the years following the rebellion. Mention of the transfer of portions of the Monthon to France by the Treaty of 1904 and a few notes on Sanphasit's later life complete the work. In spite of the title, less than half of the thesis deals with the work of Sanphasit himself.

One important element has been missed. That is the period of the first High Commissioner to the area, *Phraya* Maha Amat (Run Siphon), 1882 to 1891. He was described by his successor as a "truly evil man" (คนชั่วชาติแท้) in reference to the cruel oppression of his regime.* While misleading Bangkok with false reports on progress in organizing the Lao provinces, *Phraya* Maha Amat, it would appear, was in fact presiding over nothing better than a self-enriching, rapacious military occupation so typical of traditional armies. This occupation of nearly a decade stimulated very early local resentment against Bangkok rule, which Frenchmen played upon in dealing with Siamese officials in the region as well as with Bangkok. This is an embarrassingly disagreeable episode which tends to reflect badly upon its subjects; and it is unfortunate that Mr. Mikusol ignores this period entirely, because an account of it would provide a better understanding of the Lao attitudes prior to the rebellion.

Prince Sanphasit's tenure in Ubon has been treated in only a few books and had never been examined from archival sources. Although Mr. Mikusol limits his account largely to the decrees issued by Sanphasit and does not always link them to the process of centralization taking place throughout the country or provide an analysis of the practical results (if any) of the changes made, he has nonetheless summarized accurately the general trends of the Monthon administration. His description of the old Lao political order leads one to expect some analysis of the way in which centralization affected them; but there is no clear

* National Archives, Fifth Reign, Mahatthai 62.1/32. Letter, Prince Phichit Prichakôn to Prince Damrong, 9 June 1892.

statement of what the new order under Prince Sanphasit was like. And in places where the analysis tends to be weak, one can partly blame the lack of complementary historical works. His suggestion on page 122, for example, that modern weapons and military organization were significant assets in the Government's suppression of the Rebellion is a logical one. But, there is no critical study of the army in this period to support this; and in fact the Siamese army in Ubon was neither well equipped nor trained. If this had been known to the author, he might have been led to ask himself not merely how the rebellion was suppressed but rather why it was so successful for so many months. An examination of limitations based on foreign policy towards Indochina would also have clarified the matter. Some other points have obviously not been considered thoroughly, as for example the allegation on page 92 that the mere fact of listing villagers on Government forms as "Thai" people made them feel more "Thai" and less "Lao".

In his work Mr. Mikusol has made extensive use of the administrative records of the Ministry of Interior as a beginning to the study of this particular area of Thailand. Documents from the ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense, Education, etc. remain for future research concerning Monthon Isan. The thesis also provides further detail towards a proper biography of Prince Sanphasit and a future study of his personal role in shaping provincial affairs. And it illustrates clearly the complexities of provincial histories and the worth of detailed research on topics of limited scope which, when multiplied in future years, will provide an accurate understanding of the history of Thailand as a whole, as distinguished from the common tendency towards mere "history of Bangkok".

Kennon Breazeale

*St. Antony's College,
Oxford*

A.B. Woodside, *Viet-Nam and the Chinese Model: a Comparative Study of Vietnam and Chinese Government in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Harvard, 1971), pp. 358.

There can be no doubt that Professor Woodside's book is a major contribution to the English language historiography of South East Asia. It deals for the first time, in any detail, with the society, government and culture of Viet-Nam during the period immediately before the French intrusion which by 1884 had reduced the country to the position of a colony. This was the 'traditional' Viet-Nam to which Vietnamese of the twentieth century look back, whether to glorify it for its achievements or to revile it for the failure of the Nguyen dynasty to keep the French out. And it was, for all that, a period of achievement: under the emperor Minh Mang (1820-41) the unification that had been brought about by his father in 1802 was transformed into an administrative reality; and the defeat of a revolt at Saigon, which was supported by a Thai invasion, was followed in 1836 by a brief Vietnamese annexation of much of Cambodia. The administrative changes of the period were of the greatest importance, and they were carried out under the aegis of an emperor and a court which was almost obsessed with Chinese Confucianism. Of all the periods in Vietnamese history this was the one when the Chinese model loomed largest in Vietnamese political thought and practice: larger even, perhaps, than in the later fifteenth century when Le Thanh-tong first introduced a thorough-going Confucian system of examinations and government. That earlier 'Confucianisation', which was limited to the northern half of what was then Viet-Nam, had not been entirely permanent and—after a decline in the seventeenth century and revival in the eighteenth—Vietnamese Confucianism had virtually collapsed during the conflicts of the Tay-Son period (1774-1802). It is perfectly reasonable therefore that Professor Woodside should have taken as the theme of his study the similarities and contrasts between Viet-Nam and China. He does so from the point of view of one well qualified in the field of East Asian studies, and the exercise has gained a great deal from his erudition on the Chinese side of the comparison.

The book has three special strengths: its analysis of the institutional framework, its treatment of Vietnamese relations with the West, and its frequent appeals to specific literary examples. Indeed the work is a contribution to the study of Vietnamese culture as well as of institutional history. The survey of institutions is less detailed than one might have

hoped, and the picture might have been clarified by a few diagrams; but it is excellent as far as it goes. In particular, the comparison with China is made with a full awareness of the problems faced by a Vietnamese emperor whose knowledge of China was based partly on reports by his own envoys, but more substantially upon the reading of Chinese texts. Professor Woodside is at his best in showing how Minh-Mang created the *Co-Mat-Vien* (Secret Council) in order to deal more effectively with the crisis of 1834, basing it on his reading of Sung history and on reports about the Ch'ing 'Grand Council'; the dual inspiration is reflected in the name itself, which takes one character from the Ch'ing model and two from Sung texts. As for the internal working of Vietnamese institutions, it probably diverged from Chinese practice even more than differences of terminology imply. Often the Vietnamese may well have appealed to Chinese models to justify changes whose logic arose from their own problems or wishes. Certainly this book offers an explanation for the sense of strangeness felt by Chinese visitors to Hue in the nineteenth century.

The chapter which deals with the external relations of Viet-Nam will be of great interest to those whose concern about South East Asia begins with the Western expansion. Minh-Mang was a contemporary—both in age and in the time of his reign—of Rama III of Siam; he was only about twelve years older than Rama IV, although the latter's reign began ten years after Minh-Mang's death. A comparison between Minh-Mang and King Mongkut is both possible and worth making. European pressures were felt earlier in Viet-Nam than in Siam, owing to the presence of Christian missionaries and also to the greater proximity of Viet-Nam to the arena of the Opium War. By the 1830s, the Vietnamese were facing problems which only became serious for the Thai in the 1850s. The point which Professor Woodside brings out very clearly is that Minh-Mang was considerably more sensitive to the arrival of the Europeans than were his Ch'ing contemporaries, and his response was a real one. As a firm Confucian it was natural that he should look to traditional ways of thinking for his inspiration, just as Mongkut looked towards Buddhism. It was moreover in the nature of Confucianism that this would make him strongly opposed to Christianity, where Mongkut was more tolerant. In 1825 a decree was passed against Missionary activities, and by the 1830's a policy of persecution was being fairly thoroughly enforced. The campaign became intensified after the participation of Father Marchand in the southern rebellion of 1833-35, and he was the

first of about half a dozen European missionaries to be executed in the years 1836-39. But this attitude to Christianity should not be taken as the only measure of Vietnamese response to the West. In 1835 we find Minh-Mang expanding the small corps of interpreters at Hue into a Translation Office, whose work was directed to European as well as to other Asian languages. Even earlier, he had encouraged the translation activities of Father Jaccard. In 1836 there are references to the Vietnamese buying English gunpowder, and the Board of Works completing an imitation of an English longboat. The Board was very active in the later 1830s, and in 1838 was responsible for a new handbook on coastal defence. Professor Woodside also shows that Viet-Nam was far from being 'isolationist' at this period; the Vietnamese travelled widely in South East Asia and even to India, as well as making the time-honoured tribute missions to Peking. Finally, in 1840 Minh-Mang decided to send a mission to Europe and it was not his fault that angry Catholic missionaries prevented it from making any progress at the French court.

However, the emperor died early in 1841 and the developments which had begun during the last few years of his reign were not followed up by his successor. In comparing his career with that of Rama IV, one might well remember that Minh-Mang died at the age of fifty, whilst King Mongkut came to the throne only at forty-seven. Conceivably had Minh-Mang lived longer, the whole development of Viet-Nam in the next two or three decades would have been different. Nor should one forget that in the end the French found the conquest of Viet-Nam less easy than they bargained for. In 1860-61 they had to wait for reinforcements and were saved from defeat only by having longer-range guns; in 1881-4 they needed a vastly larger army and expenditure than Jules Ferry originally anticipated. French rule in Viet-Nam was not necessarily in the logic of history. Much followed from the fact that in the period when King Mongkut and his ministers were responding to English advances in the 1850s, Viet-Nam was dominated by court faction conflicts made inevitable by the nature of Tu Duc's accession to the throne in 1847.

Minh-Mang's attitude to the West did not however include the slightest element of cultural admiration, and he made it clear that his desire for experts in Western languages was purely practical. His reforms were undertaken within a framework of values which made China the first centre of the world and Viet-Nam itself the second, and which had no need of cultural enlightenment from without. One of the most fascinating features of the book is the way in which the author continually

reminds us of the cultural background: of the education and examination of the scholar-officials, and of their ability to treat literature and government as part of a single world. At the same time he brings out an underlying conflict in the Vietnamese tradition: not so much between what was Chinese and what was Vietnamese as between the formal and the creative aspects of life. Professor Woodside quotes several of the poems of the conservative Confucian scholar Nguyen Cong Tru, whose desire was to see society live up to the ideals enshrined in the classics and whose satires and criticisms belong to the spirit of the Minh-Mang's reforms. But he also quotes the work of two other poets: Ho Xuan Huong, the poetess who defied the *mores* of a society which treated women as objects of sex; and Cao Ba Quat, whose genius was widely recognised but who could not fit into the requirements of formal scholarship and who ended his life being beheaded for his part in a revolt. The contrast between Tru and Quat was to find a parallel in the twentieth century, in the contrast between those who accepted French formalities and those who rebelled against them: for in the end Confucianism was left behind whilst the creative spirit of the Vietnamese went on to meet a new challenge.

It was inevitable however, in the present state of Vietnamese historical studies, that a book of this kind would open up new problems and in some ways Professor Woodside has raised more questions than he has answered. One of the principal defects of his work is that it centres almost entirely upon themes and ideas, or else upon texts, and pays much less attention to people. One might—if one wished to be unreasonably critical—challenge the whole focus of the book in its concentration upon the Chinese model. By choosing this as his theme, Professor Woodside has been led away from an analysis of his period in terms of individuals and politics. Moreover the institutional developments of the reign of Minh-Mang represent more than merely a cultural borrowing from China: they arose from the use of power, and they can only be understood in relation to the politics of his court. Unfortunately such light as is thrown on that subject in the book is hidden under the bushel of its thematic treatment of a period for which no one has yet produced a proper chronological study.

R. B. Smith

*Centre of South East Asian Studies,
School of Oriental and African Studies,
London University*

H.L. Shorto, *A Dictionary of the Mon Inscriptions From the Sixth to the Sixteenth Centuries, incorporating materials collected by the late C.O. Blagden* (School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, London Oriental Series, Vol. 24, Oxford University Press, 1971), xlii, 406 pp.

H.L. Shorto's dictionary of the Mon inscriptions is a welcome addition to the collection of basic research tools available to the student of early Southeast Asian history and linguistics. Unfortunately such tools have been all too few, and their importance seems not to have been recognized by many of the scholars active in the field.

The early stages of investigation into the various types of source material—archeological finds, works of art, architectural remains, inscriptions, chronicles, law texts, ancient literature—which have been used to reconstruct early Southeast Asian history were characterized by a large amount of wide-ranging speculation, hazy syntheses and sometimes premature conclusions drawn from the uncritical use of isolated bits of evidence. As beginnings such were inevitable and proper, and were generally in accord with contemporary historiographical and ethnological theory. Indeed, in those areas in which inscriptions abound, a solid chronological framework has been thrown up around which later students may build.

There comes a time, however, when the increasing application of speculative, particularistic methods to these materials and their over-zealous synthesis into seemingly coherent narrative gives diminishing returns and may even, when new evidence continues to be forced into old frameworks, lead into an ever descending spiral of scholastic involution.

It is at this point that the old syntheses need to be reexamined and the individual pieces of evidence restudied, a process which may often be aided by advances made in the relevant auxiliary sciences—linguistics, ethnology, etc. This type of reexamination requires certain tools which were not available to the pioneering scholars and which were not absolutely essential to the type of investigation they were pursuing. Among the tools required are detailed catalogues of all the individual bits of evidence arranged in a systematic manner. For inscriptions or texts

this means dictionaries of all the words in their various contexts, or more specialized lists of all the personal names, toponyms or titles found in a given body of material. Only in this way can the meaning of obsolete words, expressions, titles, etc. be determined.

The scholar who was most aware of the need for such systematic research in Southeast Asian historical material was the late Louis Damais whose articles in *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême Orient*, as well as his massive *Répertoire Onomastique de l'Epigraphie Javanaise*, are either in themselves tools for further research, or models of the type of new investigation of old material needed throughout Southeast Asia, but especially in the fields of mainland epigraphy and chronicles.

Shorto's dictionary is thus the first example of the type of tool that is needed right now in Thai, Burmese and Khmer, as well as Mon, studies, and by its appearance the embryonic field of Mon epigraphy finds itself in one respect pushed ahead of its Thai and Khmer cousins in which epigraphic and paleographic work has been pursued for some 70-odd years. In spite of the vast amount of work done on Khmer inscriptions it seems that not even Coedès saw fit to compile a card index of the vocabulary, and that imposing task still awaits a future generation of students. Thai studies, in spite of the smaller volume of material which would facilitate the task, are even further behind, not having even the type of indexes and lists provided by Coedès in volume 8 of his *Inscriptions du Cambodge*. Shorto's work is so far ahead, in fact, that contrary to the Thai and Khmer situation, a number of the inscriptions used have not been published and are not yet available for further study.

The dictionary is compiled on sound linguistic principles, the meanings of doubtful words being determined by the contexts in which they are found. The transcription is clearly explained and easy to follow, and the material is thoroughly cross-indexed. The only thing I missed was a bibliography of the sources used for the various Mon-Khmer vocabularies cited for comparison.

Interestingly, this dictionary should prove of value not only to those working with Mon, but also deserves to become part of the equipment of students of Thai history, for, used together with Shorto's *Dictionary*

of *Spoken Mon* it may help to provide answers to a certain number of perplexing questions arising from statements in some of the early historical and descriptive literature concerning Thailand.

For example, Fernão Mendes Pinto has been criticized for the "outlandish" terms he proffered in the guise of local place names. All of the temples he mentioned in his account of Ayutthaya were called *Quiai*, as were monks, and in one case a secular official. The unlikely character of the term disappears when we find that the Mon equivalent of Thai *phra* is *kyāk*, pronounced *kyaik* (Shorto, p. 59) and in modern spoken Mon *caik* (Shorto, *Spoken Mon*, p. 93). Strong Mon influence in early Ayutthaya is now recognized by historians, but study of its specific manifestations has been neglected and attention has not been given to the evidence that as late as mid-16th century such important community centers as the wats were called by a Mon term.

About a century and a half after Pinto, Kaempfer was given the information that wat *cau panaeñ jo'n* in Ayutthaya was "a Peguan Temple . . . call'd in the Peguan language tsianpnun tsiun".¹ The expression *panaeñ jo'n* is of course not Thai, and I had always been inclined to consider it Khmer, since *jo'n* is the common Khmer word for "foot" and the expression in that language for sitting in the cross-legged position, like the Buddha image in question, is *pin panen*. The exact expression *panen jo'n* is not used, although it can be understood by Cambodians, who consider it very awkward. After noticing Kaempfer's remark I began to look for relevant entries in Shorto's dictionaries. Mon for "foot" indeed turns out to be *juñ*, spoken Mon *cañ*, cognate with Khmer *jo'n*, but the search for *panaeñ* in the desired sense did not prove fruitful. It seems that the common Mon expression for the cross-legged position is *thaway/həwai*, ancient and modern respectively (*Inscriptions*, p. 49; *Spoken*, p. 93), while *panañ*, *pnañ* means "pedestal, throne"; and there is an expression *panañ kyāk* meaning "seated Buddha on pedestal so used". (*Spoken*, p. 145. For the sake of ease in typesetting I have used the graphic rather than phonemic transcription). So until more

1) Engelbert Kaempfer, M.D., *The History of Japan Together with a Description of the Kingdom of Siam 1690-92*. Translated by J.G. Scheuchzer, F.R.S. (Glasgow, James Maclehose and Sons, MCMVI), 3 vols.

evidence is found, the complete etymology of *panaen jo'n*, and Kaempfer's information about the temple must remain something of a puzzle. Perhaps the name is a conflation of terms from both Mon and Khmer which were probably major languages in early Ayutthaya.

Perhaps further Mon study will permit identification of more of Pinto's strange terminology and provide additional insight into early Ayutthayan history and society.

Of course study of Mon is of crucial importance for the investigation of Burma's early history, and it is encouraging to see Shorto take note, at one point, of the fact that "Kyanzittha's resort to Mon as the language of his inscriptions sets a historical problem that has not yet been fully explained". We may hope that the dictionary will aid students of early Burma in their efforts to investigate this question.

Finally, I should like to devote a few words to some entries for which Shorto has not followed his dictum of defining terms by their contexts, but has rather adopted the glosses proposed many years ago on the basis of uncritical comparative evidence. The terms in question are *lwa' krom ja'ha* and *kamboja*, which in Shorto's dictionary are glossed as Lawas, Cambodians and Laotians for the first three, while *kamboja* appears on p. 62 in the phrase *kambojāpaṇamahāthera*, given as the Pali equivalent of the Mon *mahāthe pṣā krom*, "the monk of the C[ambodian] market". However, on p. 34 the author notes that *kamboja* "in Burma usy. = Shan states".

Now in the case of *lwa' krom ja'ha* a certain amount of guesswork may finally prove to be inevitable, for the phrase is found in only one inscription and apparently no context remains legible, as Prof. Luce, who first proposed an explanation, was careful to state (*Old Burma Early Pagan*, I, p. 24). For him *lwa'* "is the tribal term Lawa or Wa, present in the name of the city, *Lavapura* (Lavo, Lophburi)", a matter which surely deserves more rigorous treatment. With respect to *krom* Luce's opinion varied over the years. At one time he felt that *krom* meant the "Cambodianised" or Mon Khmer people "from the neighborhood of Lophburi" or "Lower Siam" rather than from Cambodia proper (*Journal of the Burma Research Society* XII(1), p. 45 and XLII(1), pp. 67-8), but

in his latest work says "*krom* is the Mon word, the western word for Cambodian (old Burm. *krwam*; Thai *khom*)" (O.B.E.P. I, 24). The term *ja'ba*, in Luce's opinion, "might be the *Moan Javā* of Rāma Gāmhēn's inscription . . . i.e. Luang Phra Bang" (O.B.E.P. I, 24), thus Shorto's "Laotians".

With respect to *krom*, the Kalyani inscriptions, as Shorto makes clear, seem to indicate it as equivalent to *kamboja* which, as Shorto notes, in Burmese usage usually means Shan States.

In fact, there is strong evidence that in Burmese, and also in early Thai usage, *kamboja*—not to be confused with *kambuja*, the Khmers' own term for themselves since classical times—*always* meant either the Shan States or other vaguely defined areas in the eastern Burma-western Thai region. To cite all the evidence would take up too much space here, but the *sāsanavamsa*, *phongsāwadān nu'a*, the pre-Ayutthayan part of the British Museum Chronicle, and *Jinakālamālī* are the best known contexts. Thus Luce's earlier views in the meaning are probably closer to the truth, and in any case many more contexts need to be examined before the definition of the term is settled.

As for *ja'ba*, one might legitimately wonder, in a situation in which only guesswork is possible, whether an inscription from Thaton, close to the Southeast Asian maritime trade network, was more likely referring to Luang Prabang or to that other well-known locality of similar name, the island of Java.

I hope the foregoing has illustrated the interest this dictionary has for historians as well as linguists and its value as a tool which everyone interested in the study of early Thailand and Burma should have on his shelf.

Michael Vickery

School of Humanities,
Universiti Sains Malaysia,
Penang.

Stanley J. O'Connor, Jr.: *Hindu Gods of Peninsular Siam* (Artibus Asiae, Ascona, Switzerland, Supplementum XXVIII), 1972, pp. 76, 16 pp. pls.

Much of the fascination of pre-modern peninsular Thailand lies in the fact that our knowledge of the area exists in layers, layers which consist of the tantalizing Chinese descriptions of flourishing kingdoms, of some potsherds, of legend, of a small number of works of art, and of conclusions drawn about these and other matters. When superimposed, these layers create a picture that is blurred and presents no easily recognized pattern. The Chinese records, for instance, as Professor O'Connor notes with the sort of phraseology that gives *Hindu Gods of Peninsular Siam* a peculiar elegant bounce, "are not securely anchored in the topographic reality of the isthmian earth." Given such dilemmas, what is perhaps needed are detailed studies of each of the layers, for only through piecemeal clarification of individual problems will there arise those certainties upon which an understanding of the whole can be based. Professor O'Connor, who teaches history of art at Cornell University, realizes the need for such narrowly focused research, and the bulk of his study concentrates on the historical positions of just two works of art in the Bangkok National Museum. Both works are images of Viṣṇu. One is from Chaiyā and the other from Takuapā.

These two images are very different in character. The Chaiyā Viṣṇu is stiff, severely frontal, and encumbered by chunky pieces of cloth, earrings, and reserves of stone. A left hand holds the conch against the left hip. The body of the Takuapā Viṣṇu, in comparison, is liberated from the stone of which it is made and from superfluous encumbrances, and the arms are all held away from the body. If the two works have any meaningful historical relationship at all, the Chaiyā Viṣṇu must either be older and archaic or newer and regressive. When Professor O'Connor started his researches, the most recent scholarly opinion was that the Chaiyā sculpture was a regressive work of about the eighth century. In this book, however, it is the first alternative which is chosen. For Professor O'Connor, the Chaiyā image is not just older but "probably the most ancient Hindu image discovered in Southeast Asia." He believes it "should be dated no later than 400 A.D." Professor O'Connor's

case rests on the stylistic analogies of the Chaiyā Viṣṇu with images from Mathurā, a site in Gujarat known as Bhinmāl, and Andhra Pradesh. His argument is carefully presented and is for the most part convincing. The early dating of the Chaiyā Viṣṇu has important implications for the study of the early development of sculpture everywhere in Southeast Asia. If one has reservations, they are not in regard to the question of whether the Viṣṇu is the most ancient discovered in Southeast Asia—that may be tentatively accepted—but whether a date of before 400 A.D. has been necessarily established. In this regard it is hard to resist making some professorial comments. Professor O'Connor's precluding of a somewhat later date depends not so much on style as on an iconographical detail, a right hand in *abhaya mudrā*. A comparison, however, of the foliated decor on the diadem of the Chaiyā Viṣṇu with that on the diadem of a figure at the Śiva temple at Bhumara (Archaeological Survey of India, *Memoirs*, XVI [1924], pl. XIIc), to which a fifth or sixth century date can be given but hardly a fourth, suggests that a 400 date may be too early. An uncharacteristic slip on Professor O'Connor's part, in addition, might give readers the impression that the evidence of Buddhist art from the peninsula supports his very early date; he says (p. 17) that A.B. Griswold "has demonstrated . . . that images were made in the area before the 6th century." What Mr. Griswold said in the quoted article, however (leaving aside the problem of the merit of Mr. Griswold's arguments), was that "a school of image makers . . . was flourishing before the *end* [my italics] of the 6th century."

The Takuapā Viṣṇu is, as Professor O'Connor realizes, an extraordinary but little-known work which deserves its prominent place of display in the Bangkok National Museum. In discussing this image, Professor O'Connor exhibits the qualities of sensitivity and orderliness apparent in his treatment of the Chaiyā Viṣṇu. His conclusions, however, are neither so important nor exciting. He shows how the Takuapā Viṣṇu cannot be a Pallava-type work of the sixth century, as once thought, but ought to be considered "a fully developed product of an isthmian workshop between 650 and 800." If the conclusions are not equal to our expectations, it may be because Professor O'Connor has not asked the really important questions, which are always the most difficult

to answer. How can we know for sure that the Takuapā Viṣṇu was in fact made in an isthmian workshop? How does it relate to the sculpture of Cambodia and to that from the district of Dong Si Mahā Phôt, east of Bangkok? It may be that the narrow limits Professor O'Connor has placed on his study have here become a straightjacket that prevents him from dealing with the most serious issues. One way to approach the problem of place of manufacture is through identification of the stone from which a statue is carved. The Takuapā Viṣṇu is made of a sort of gray sandstone which is very much like the sandstone characteristic of images from Dong Si Mahā Phôt and may be indistinguishable from it. (For information about the kinds of stone from which images in the Bangkok National Museum were carved, I wish to express my gratitude to Mr. S.L. Rieb.) The powerful swelling of the hips and thighs of the Takuapā Viṣṇu, moreover, relates this image stylistically to the Viṣṇus of Dong Si Mahā Phôt. Professor O'Connor restricts himself to a discussion of the Brahmanical images of the peninsula, and it is they which constitute his family. Perhaps the true families and lineages, however, will turn out to be constituted in other ways, ways which may cut across religious boundaries and the borders suggested by findspots. How little sense we now have of these true families and lineages is indicated by the fact that one of the images illustrated in *Hindu Gods of Peninsular Siam* (fig. 15; also of gray sandstone) and said to have been found at Wiang Sa in the South was according to the *Album of Art Exhibits*, I, National Museum, Bangkok, 1954, p. 133, brought to the National Museum in 1929 from Wat Nā Phra Men in Ayudhyā, to which it had been taken from Ayudhyā's Brahmanical shrine during the reign of King Rāma III. Of course it is not impossible that this Viṣṇu was carved on the peninsula and taken to the Brahmanical shrine during the Ayudhyā period, but nothing in Professor O'Connor's book tells us why it necessarily is a southern work rather than the product of some other region.

Professor O'Connor's final twelve pages are devoted to two later groups of images. The sculptures in the first group, Pallava in style and dated here to the eighth or ninth centuries, are to be associated with a southern Indian merchant guild which left an inscription at the site in Takuapā province where the statues were found. These images were

once a peculiar delight to visit, for they were embedded in the trunk of a tree, across the river from the hill on which the Takuapā Viṣṇu was discovered. About seven years ago, however, they were smashed, and subsequently one of the heads was put on sale and advertised in a scholarly journal by a prominent London dealer. The fact that after protest through diplomatic channels this dealer graciously consented to return the head to Thailand, where it is being put on display at the Bangkok National Museum, does not make the destruction that much easier to bear. The second group of images is Cōḷa in style and ascribed to the tenth or eleventh century by Professor O'Connor.

Hardly any of the scholarly literature has escaped Professor O'Connor's notice; a review in *Rupam* 37 (Jan., 1929), pp. 59-60, in which the Viṣṇu of the last Cōḷa group (O'Connor's fig. 32) is said to be a southern Indian image of the 14th or 15th century, is an example which suggests the level of obscurity of what Professor O'Connor has missed, as well as the level of much of what he has looked at (though the less obscure discussion of peninsular sculpture in Paul Wheatley's *Impressions of the Malay Peninsula in Ancient Times* has also been overlooked). The photographs, although not in every instance as good as they ought to be, are in the case of many of the published pieces the best that have ever been printed. Professor O'Connor offers sensitive descriptions of works of art; he has a sense of historical context; and his opinions are judicious. Some of his conclusions are of great importance. If *Hindu Gods of Peninsular Siam* is in any respect disappointing, it may be merely because Professor O'Connor is a modest man who knows that our understanding of the past can only develop slowly and painstakingly.

Hiram W. Woodward Jr.

University of Michigan

Shigeru Iijima, *Karen-zoku no shakai bunka hen'yô* [Socio-Cultural Changes among the Karens in Thailand] 飯島 茂「カレン族の社会文化変容」東京・創文社・昭46 (Tokyo, Sôbunsha, 1971), pp. 315 + 30.

This is a monograph on socio-cultural changes among the Karens in northern Thailand written by a Japanese social anthropologist who engaged in a twenty-one month long intensive field research in Mae Sarieng District, Mae Hongson Province between 1963 through 1965. Professor Shigeru Iijima of the Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa in Tokyo, presents here an interesting picture of a process of socio-cultural integration of the hill Karens into lowland Thai peasant communities, which he called a process of "plains emulation." Two Sgaw Karen communities of different stages of development were chosen for the comparative study, one being a hill village of Hti Topa (pseudonym), twenty kilometers east of the township of Mae Sarieng and the other the plain-located Hti Kani (pseudonym) which is separated from the district capital by only two kilometers.

Like their counterparts in Burma, the Karen societies of northern Thailand are believed to have been originally organized upon consanguineal basis, once with long houses which gave a strong cohesiveness to the semi-nomadic agriculturists. With the introduction of wet-rice cultivation, however, the traditional pattern of the Karen life began to show noticeable changes in various aspects. For example, a land ownership system emerged under which wet-rice field have come under private ownership. A concomitant shift in tenure has also begun in the swidden fields as well. Kinship ties have been weakening and individualism is now developing. Basis for village organization is seen inclining from consanguineal toward territorial one, as semi-nomadism is supplanted by sedentary life. The ever-increasing influence of money economy from the adjacent "urban" center also accelerates the tendency.

One of the most conspicuous change may be observed in the sphere of religious life. Traditionally the Karens perform the *Oxe* ritual for their ancestral deity called *Bgha* which necessitates the compulsory

participation of all matrilineal kin group of *Dopuweh*. The complicated procedures have been simplified as a result of secularization and even abolished under the strong pressure of lowland Buddhist culture. The tendency is also accelerated when the quasi-Buddhist ritual of *Chakasi* was adopted. This has contributed, the author believes, to "a greater freedom of action and choice to the individual" for the tradition-bound Karens. In this cultural crisis, a new tendency is also observed in the emergence of *Talutaphadu* ritual which helps to reorganize the dissolving consanguineous communities upon territorial principles, although the rite itself is nothing but a plains emulation of *Liang Phi Chaoti Chaodin Chaomuang* from the lowland Thai.

As is indicated in the sub-title of this book, the author's basic concern is to clarify the dynamism of nation building at its basis. The Karens are, therefore, treated as an emerging peasant society which is expected to be integrated into the national whole. The "plains emulation" of the Karens, in this context, is considered to be a good indication showing that the hill-people has already started their shift toward Thai nationhood. An interesting observation made by the experienced field-worker is the importance of northern Thai sub-culture in incorporating hill tribes into Thai socio-cultural frame-work. The correlation among the proficiency of various dialects spoken in the two Karen villages suggests that the more "Yuan-ized" the people, the easier the Thai-ization. "Yuan-ization" does not conflict with Thai-ization; the former rather paves the way for the latter.

The monograph contains a detailed bibliography on the Karens mainly written in English. Should this work be translated into English, it must certainly attract a wider audience.

Yoneo Ishii

*Center for Southeast Asian Studies,
Kyoto University*

Charles Archaimbault, *La Course de Pirogues au Laos : un Complexe Culturel* (Artibus Asiae Supplementum XXIX, Artibus Asiae Publishers, Ascona, Switzerland, 1972), pp. 126, 4 maps, 48 plates.

As if it were another episode in a serial on Laotian rituals, students of Southeast Asian ethnology will be eager to see the latest opus prepared by this painstaking recorder and perceptive author. "La Course de Pirogues" may be translated as "The Regatta of the Dugout Canoes", great boats, ten or more meters in length, hewn from the trunk of a single tree. Vessels of this kind are always driven through the water by fifteen to twenty-five paddlers plus steersmen, and, if intended for princely use, they are crowned with the head of a gilded dragon or "hansa" bird. *Course*, both in French and English, refers to the distance and direction a boat takes across the water, but in French the word also implies a race. Thus Archaimbault is informing us about the boat races along the Mekong river in Laos, which take place in Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and at P'apin near Basak, actually in Thailand. The major report centers on the November rites of the Basak area.

To account for these events, it would be insufficient to say that the competitions offer gala entertainment to the participants and hundreds of spectators along the shores on the days of the regatta, particularly with temples open to merit-makers, evenings spent in festivals with singers, entertainers, and dancing, all liberally lubricated with alcohol. Behind this celebration lies a major and somber intent attested by offerings to supernatural beings and pleas for their protection over the people. What is its significance?

Archaimbault finds a common element in the rites along this river in their primary but not exclusive concern with facilitating the migration, during the ebbing floods of the year's end, of the nagas, demon spirits with inclination to live in a watery environment. During the wet season they occupy ponds and irrigations ditches but then as the dry season approaches must move to the sustaining depths of the Mekong river. His evidence for this thesis comes from the ritual offerings and invitations specifically set at the mouths of tributaries, invocations addressed to naga dignitaries, and moments during the ceremonies when these monsters are asked to protect the town together with its neighboring villages. Naga response to the invitation to attend the boat races might so disturb the waters with whirlpools and eddies that special offerings

are made to steady the river's flow. Temporary shrines, from which to observe the races, are erected not only for high-ranking nagas but for a host of supernatural visitors from elsewhere. There they receive offerings of meat from a recently sacrificed buffalo, delight in the singers and pipers as well as the fire works that continue for several days. Finally, after a boat ride on the river, the supernaturals are invited to return to their homes, the nagas ushered to their caverns in the river depths. Should the nagas be delayed along the migration route to deep water, dangers to the maturing rice are illustrated in folktales of ruined crops and villagers eaten by stranded monsters.

Archaimbault is first to insist that many other events occur simultaneously with the foregoing sequence. There is the sacrifice of a buffalo by aboriginal Sui villagers, the reaffirmation of royal control over a fraction of the lost domains of Champasak, the end of the Buddhist retreat, the demonstration of respect to many guardian spirits, etc. We observe themes of fecundity, of restoring order in nature, of turning the flood, of insuring the harvest, as well as others. Add to this the changes in the ritual not only that occur in time, but the variations in their emphasis between the three Laotian cities, and the political events that have moved the rites to new locations, stopped them altogether, or just lopped out a section. All this and more unfolds in this rich account, so that the subtitle, a Cultural Complex, is well deserved. The rewards are rich as well, providing one expends some effort, for which the author occasionally feels some compassion and tosses in an uproarious song of lusty men, as if to mitigate the intensity.

There is more. Archaimbault with his watch and notebook recording the event as it unfolded before his eyes during the 1950's, interviewing the principal actors, and comparing his version with those of other observers, seeks to give a scientifically objective description, but then . . . He asserts that facilitating the migration of nagas is the primary and probably initial function of the regatta. To be sure, this affirmation is offered as hypothesis, respectably enough, but the hypothetical stand does not prevent attack on the "school of Pryzluski" for its single thesis about the contest of wet and dry in the change of seasons. But how can anyone feel certain enough in dealing with these materials to consider this knowledge positive? None of us can rely on the short memories of witnesses. Can the *Chronicles of Khun Bulom* be said to

be more accurate historically than other ancient texts? One may as well make the case that the sacrifice of the buffalo tapped a deeper root, because the attendant ceremonies must have occurred when Fa Ngoum first came to Laos in the 14th century. Or one could say that veneration of ancestral spirits is widespread in the area, so that this aspect stands prior.

I would prefer to think that we are dealing with a wondrous collective work of art, more complex than a city where major and minor functions can be specified, more complex than such a monument as a cathedral because of its greater plasticity, more complex than the accumulating doctrines of world religions which one or the other proponent seeks to simplify for us in a reaffirmation. Commentators may awaken a profounder appreciation by emphasizing one facet above another or several facets, yet none can assert a burnished final validity in his conclusions. After all Mona Lisa may not be smiling at all; who is to say that she is not perturbed or inquisitive? We are not dealing with science but art as soon as we pass beyond the act of description, and perhaps not even then.

An index of names helps refer back to one or the other of the many passing characters; a glossary of Laotian terms guides us past other shoals; admirable photographs limit soaring imaginations, and several maps orient movements up and down the river. Yet many a place name never comes to rest (e.g. l'embarcadère de la Sangkalok (p 13), T'a Lot (p 77)). One also yearns at least for more complete statement of references, preferably a full bibliographic list of both these references and other of the author's writing beyond those mentioned on the perishable book jacket. Two maps lack orientation and scale, a third could not possibly be 1:500,000 and the fourth, though adequately scaled, cuts off important topographic features on the river. We need every prop in place to guide us through a contribution to scholarship with this degree of complexity.

L.M. Hanks

*North Bennington,
Vermont*

Bej Sal, Sdoeng Chūr *et al.* (comps.), *Prajum rioen brañ khmaer phāg 8 (ombi pravatti nak ta khlah)* [Collected Khmer Folk-Tales, Part 8: The traditions of certain "ancestor-people"] (Buddhist Institute, Phnom Penh, BE 2515), 218 pp.

The cult of the *nak ta* (literally, "ancestor people") in Cambodia, despite its great importance there, has received little systematic attention. Mme. Eveline Porée-Maspero's descriptions of the cult, scattered through her monumental study of rural religion in Cambodia* showed some of the directions that scholarly inquiry might take. But little field work has been done, and until the appearance of the volume under review people interested in the *nak ta* and the myths associated with them had no readily accessible documents to work with. There are thousands of *nak ta* in Cambodia (at least one to a village), and this collection examines the traditions, rituals and myths associated with twenty-seven of them, distributed throughout the country.

Very briefly, the cult of the *nak ta* involves the periodic appeasement of highly localized spirits. These are associated with features of the landscape and with the dead. For ceremonial purposes they can be summoned into a boulder, a bit of statuary, or almost anything. Summoning occurs in times of crisis ("when there is sickness among men or animals, or when the people are frightened"—p. 36) and at various points in the agricultural year, most frequently just before planting and the beginning of the rains.

The roles played by particular families or clans in these ceremonies are not clear from the documents at hand, but the fact that *nak ta* represent many sorts of people, including mythical ones, suggests that most of them are not ancestors, in a genealogical sense, but predecessors.

Inside this framework, there is considerable variety in the cult from place to place. Some *nak ta* speak through mediums, known as *rub nak ta*; others are silent. Most *rub nak ta* seem to be old women, one to a village, and inherit their posts from relations; but some are

* Eveline Porée-Maspero, *Les Rites Agraires des Cambodgiens* (Mouton, Paris and the Hague, 1961-1969), 3 vols.

young, some are men, and some villages have several. Some villages honor a single *nak ta*; others honor many. As for the spirits themselves, many are spoken of as women, which is not surprising considering the close relationship of many *nak ta* with fertility and the soil. But others are the spirits of dead kings or high officials, and still others are the humble, half-remembered founders of a village (pp. 197 ff.). Some people take *nak ta* with them when they move; others find new ones. Two of the myths in this collection date from the mid-1960s, when a previously unnoticed *nak ta* came to the aid of a detachment of Cambodian militia (pp. 187-195). Other *nak ta* are very old, even prehistoric, like the one associated with a battle between a local king and a crocodile at a time when the Mekong Delta was "under the sea" (pp. 65-70). The ceremonies of summoning the *nak ta* and of sacrificing to them are also different from place to place. East of the Mekong (very generally) some of these rituals involved, until recently, the sacrifice of buffaloes and occasionally condemned prisoners to the *nak ta*; in other parts of the country, sacrifices to the *nak ta* are made with candles, fruit and alcohol.

For an historian, the most interesting myths in this collection are probably the ones that throw light on the process of Indianization in Cambodia and those that show regional variations that may reflect historical experience.

In the neighborhood of Angkor, Indianization and "de-Indianization" occur side by side. There are at least two *nak ta* near Siem Reap that reside in statues of the Hindu elephant-god, Ganeṣa, who retains his name and his traditional connections with fertility (pp. 41-44 and 57-60). At the same time, the Hindu names for the monuments nearby have been forgotten (if they were ever widely known), and many of the monuments are now called after *nak ta* (e.g. Takeo, Bakong, Ta Phnom). In southern and southeastern Cambodia, the region of most prolonged Indianization in the early years of the Christian era, the interplay between Indian cults and local ones is still going on. Several of the rituals in this area honor goddesses of the soil as *nak ta*. At Ba Phnom, she is known as *Me sar* (literally, "white mother"; but probably a corruption

of the name Uma Māhiṣāmaṛdīnī, a Hindu goddess whose pre-Angorean statue, gilded by local inhabitants, now forms part of the cult). At other times, the goddess is known as *nāng khmau* ("black maiden"). Both goddesses are probably manifestations of Siva's consort, who is known in India as Uma, Durga, Kali, and many other names. In classical India, and until recently among Munda-speaking tribes there, this goddess received human and buffalo-sacrifices. The cult of *Me sar* involved human sacrifices as recently as the 1870s, when the goddess appears to have been a patroness of Cambodia. The most interesting document in the collection, I think, is one that describes the cult of *Me Sar* in 1944 (when the document was written) and also in the era of human sacrifices, recalled by an old villager who had attended such ceremonies as a boy (pp. 81-88). In several other *nak ta* cults from this region, the goddess is asked to descend in all her "blackness" and with her "tongue of flame"—undoubtedly a reference to Kali, who is often depicted as black, with a flaming tongue (pp. 40, 56, and 138).

This volume, then, is of considerable importance to students of Southeast Asian mythology and religion. It has been ably edited by Mme. Bej Sal and some of her colleagues at the Commission des Moeurs et Coutumes Cambodgiennes (CMCC) of which Mme. Bej Sal is a director. The editors have written many helpful explanatory and comparative notes. The documents in the collection, however, represent only about a third of the ones about *nak ta* in the archives of the CMCC. Many of the unpublished documents are fragmentary and uninformative, but there are certainly enough good ones to collect into another volume, or even two.

David P. Chandler

Elizabeth Wray, Clare Rosenfeld, and Dorothy Bailey, with photographs by Joe D. Wray, *Ten Lives of the Buddha: Siamese Temple Paintings and Jataka Tales* (John Weatherhill Inc., New York and Tokyo, 1972), pp. 155, colour plates 32.

The ability of Buddhism to flourish as one of the great world religions has depended not only on the qualities of the Dharma and the Sangha, and on the good relations it has established with temporal rulers throughout the ages, but also on the way it has been in close touch with the needs of ordinary folk. The latter relationship manifests itself in many ways. A close look at one of these manifestations is taken in the book under review.

The authors are American ladies resident in Bangkok who have devoted much of their spare time to the study of Thai history and art. Besides studying the relevant literature of their subject and the mural paintings photographed by the husband of one of them, the authors consulted many scholars during the preparation of the book. We may be confident, therefore, that the factual content of the work is reliable.

After a foreword by the well known writer on Thai history A.B. Griswold and a brief introduction on the character and cultural origins of the Jataka stories we come to the main section of the book which contains the last ten of the tales together with colour photographs of Siamese temple paintings illustrating them. The tales are retold in an abridged form that concentrates on the episodes depicted in the murals. To my mind the authors have not been totally successful in their rewriting of these stories. The style is rather a plain one which just misses the simple dignity of a Pali narrative. It tends to bump along connecting together a multitude of events in rapid succession, a result no doubt of the difficulty of compressing a long story into a few pages.

The photographs, thirty-two in number, show murals from temples in several different provinces of the country. The tropical climate of Siam causes mural paintings to deteriorate rapidly and such deterioration is evident in most of the pictures here. However, only in one or two of the examples selected for this volume can it be said that the pictures have been badly spoiled. The colours are bright and the forms are clear. Some of the photographs give overall views of complete paintings while

others are closeups that enable us to study the details of the line drawing and the texture of the brush-work. Nevertheless, these pictures do suggest that there must be many other paintings in a worse condition. "If this book should have the happy effect of encouraging the preservation the paintings cry for, the authors and photographer will feel well compensated for the many months of effort they have put into this endeavor", says a note on page 22.

The book continues with a well written section giving background information of interest in connection with the Jataka tales and Siamese temple paintings. The life of the Buddha, the evolution of the canonical texts, and the spread of Buddhism are covered briefly, there is a detailed discussion of the Jatakas in Asian art, and an account of historical developments in Siam is given. The architectural setting of the mural paintings is beautifully evoked by a description of the *bot* in Wat Suwan-naram, Thonburi, illustrated by black and white photographs and a plan. Then Siamese painting itself is reviewed. We are told how the Thai artist makes his colours and prepares the wall for painting, how he includes several different scenes from a story in a single composition, and how he depicts the various orders of beings in different characteristic styles. A knowledge of these things helps us to see more in Siamese mural paintings and to enjoy them better. Yet when all this has been said, there are still, I believe, further paths to be taken in the study of these works. What we have in this book is essentially an appreciation of the art: what we now need is a criticism of it that distinguishes the good from the bad (assuming that such concepts are admitted in the present context!), that discerns variations of style, that identifies dead ends and points of growth in the development of the art, and so on. The authors have, perhaps wisely, not entered into these fields.

The book concludes with a reference section containing, among other things, a very full bibliography that will be of great use to anyone inspired by this delightful volume to study the subject further.

Robert Exell

*Asian Institute of Technology,
Rangsit*

Hans-Dieter Evers, *Monks, Priests and Peasants. A Study of Buddhism and Social Structure in Central Ceylon* (E J. Brill, Leiden, 1972), pp. 136.

In his book *Manks, Priests and Peasants*, Professor Evers attempts to do far too much in too small a space; what he gives us is the sketchiest skeleton of one or several fatter books. In a mere 107 pages (with a further 20 pages of appendices and glossary) he describes and analyses the functioning and inter-relationship of the *vihara*, *devale* and palace systems, as this is manifest in the social, religious and economic organisation of the "Radiant Great Royal Temple of Lankatilaka", situated about mid-way between the old royal cities of Kandy and Gampola in Central Ceylon.

The title of this monograph is, strictly speaking, rather misleading, suggesting as it does a one-to-one correspondence between monks, priests and peasants, and the three sub-systems with which he is concerned. However, as Dr. Evers makes clear in Chapter Three, both the *vihara* and *devale* systems are internally stratified into three different levels, namely, and in declining rank order, secular officials (most of whom in the *vihara* system seem however to be monks pp. 36-37, which may reflect a terminological difficulty), religious specialists (given as *bhikkhu*=priest for the *vihara* system) and their attendants, and lastly the 'peasants', namely the temple tenants.

The palace system, as Dr. Evers relates, represented a third and parallel "religious" system" (p. 13) until 1815, when the Sinhalese kingdom was abolished. Many high-ranking families, however, continue to maintain their old life-style, and virtually monopolize many senior religious offices by virtue of the rule of succession whereby chief monks have the right to determine their successor and heir; thus, "all chief monks in Central Ceylon belong to the Goyigama caste and many of them to the Radala subcaste, the Kandyan aristocracy. Together with the temple lords (*basnayake nilame*) of the devales, almost all of whom are Radala, and other landlords they perpetuate the Kandyan feudal system."

Dr. Evers' presentation serves to compound rather than to elucidate the complexities inherent in his data. In quick succession the reader is presented, without apparent order or differential emphasis, with details on the ideal functioning of the system; with statistical information, specific to a temple, a group of temples, or an area of the country, which has been copied from government records; with biographical details

from a sole informant in a particular village; with topical anecdotes on the kinship, political and temple relations of well-known politicians, and with historical data, conjectural or otherwise, relating to the founding of a particular temple, or the ebb and flow of political and religious forces in Southeast Asia.

There can be no doubt that all these sources are of value in any sociological analysis, and more especially when one is dealing with a society which has a long literate tradition, and is in the process of relatively rapid change and development. Nevertheless, and to reiterate an earlier point, perhaps one should not attempt to take in all this landscape—with its minutiae of stones and ferns, and the great grand vistas—at quite such a gallop.

This urgency is manifest in the breathless nature of Dr. Evers' exposition; for example, in discussing the relationship of binary opposition existing between the Buddhist *bhikkhu* and the *kapurala* he writes... "the *bhikkhu* has to shave his head, the *kapurala* is expected to have long hair (note the sexual or fertility connotation of long hair!)" (p. 40). Thus the author calls the attention of his fellow-specialists to a valuable piece of stock-in-trade as it flashes past. His choice of words is not a happy one; the *bhikkhu* "has to", the *kapurala* "is expected to"; if one is going to go into this sort of detail, then one should also mention the authority for these tonsorial styles.

Faced with this idiosyncratic and confidential treatment one is often at a loss as to how to evaluate the information given. Thus (on p. 56) we learn that: "The concern about pollution is used as a justification for keeping onerous temple services at a minimum." How are we meant to interpret this statement? Has Dr. Evers been told this by one or by several informants, of similar or different social status and beliefs? Can he deduce this from observed behaviour patterns, or is it merely a comradely aside, reaffirming that, as we anthropologists have known for a long time now, the natives can be pretty slack when it comes to ritual?

Again one must come back to the old complaint, Dr. Evers should be less ambitious in terms of material to be included and much more thorough in evaluating his sources.

In his concluding chapter Dr. Evers poses the question: "How is it possible to have separate socio-religious structures, identifying and dra-

matizing separate values, without splitting and differentiating the members in their allegiance to either system". But the principles of "opposition" and "parallelism" are called on stage to effect the customary happy ending :

"To sum up Max Weber has defined 'competition' as regulated conflict. In our case, the regulation took place through the principles of parallelism and opposition which have successfully maintained and balanced the social system of Sinhalese religion. 'Parallelism' and 'opposition' are defined as principles of social organisation, according to which differing though closely related, value systems find expression in similarly structured social organisations ("parallel organisations") with certain specific features in which the differences in the values concerned are contrasted ("supplementary oppositions"). "Competition" and "hierarchization" refer to the dynamics of the systems."

Whether or not the specialist reader can go along with this analysis, and the terms in which it is expressed, it surely has a familiar sound. Sinhalese society is presented as a stationary arrangement of opposed yet balancing forces; a kind of societal *ikebana*, if cross-cultural metaphor is permissible. Despite the plethora of anecdotal material, one is given very little insight as to what these principles mean for the people who must enact them, and where are the tensions within and between individuals which are inherent in any living society. There are tantalizing glimpses, as in the chapter on Economic Organisation where we read that "discontent with the existing temple tenure system is widespread and the temple lords, both the chief Buddhist monk as well as the Basnayaka Nilame of the devale are openly criticised. In systematic interviews with all temple tenants in one of the temple villages, only few gave religious reasons, like earning religious merit, for complying with their duties as temple servants. Most peasants objected to performance of *rajakariya*, but stated that they had to obey for fear of eviction from their land or other economic deprivations". (p. 94)

One could wish that Dr. Evers had given close attention to this or some similar smaller issue, analysis of which would possibly have been more revealing of the broader principles at work than is his rather sketchy attempt to picture the whole.

Jane Bunnag

*D.S.C.S.
Bangkok*