

## REVIEWS

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สาขาสันนิยาศ

**Art Styles in Thailand: A Selection from National Provincial Museums, and an Essay  
in Conceptualization**

*Piriya Krairiksh, with an appendix by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn  
Bangkok, Department of fine Arts, 1977  
in Thai and English, illus., 236 + x pp., 180 baht*

### TWO VIEWS OF A NEW CLASSIFICATION OF ART STYLES

#### I

This superbly illustrated catalogue, with its careful description of each of the sculptures presented at a Bangkok exhibition in 1977, is preceded by an introduction advocating a novel system of classification which is sure to provoke considerable discussion. And it is in this catalogue that the system receives its first implementation. The present review will be mainly concerned with the introduction, in which the new proposals are set out. The author is already known for his competent analysis of the Chula Paton bas-reliefs<sup>1</sup>, and the details of his catalogue leave no doubt as to his thorough familiarity with the Indian art history which forms the basis of any serious study of the religious sculptures of Thailand. It is with the greater regret, therefore, that I do not feel able to extend the welcome to his new proposals that I should have wished. However, Dr. Piriya also includes some quite acceptable propositions, but these are by no means so new or unacknowledged as he apparently thinks them to be. Nevertheless their reiteration may serve a useful purpose.

The author's thinking emerges clearly enough in the first four pages, which are concerned mainly with his wish to have the term "Môn art" substituted for "Dvāravatī period or school". While he admits that it may be desirable to relate art styles to historical periods that are strongly documented, that is not the case with Dvāravatī. To this we may reply that we know enough of

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<sup>1</sup> *Buddhist Folk Tales Depicted at Chula Pathon Cedi* (Bangkok 1974).

the approximate position of Dvāravatī, and of its duration from late sixth to eleventh centuries A.D., to attach a definite style of art to this political entity without having to be in possession of a chronicle of events such as we possess for the Khmer empire or the kingdom of Ayudhya. Of course he is writing in the rather narrow context of an exhibition of sculpture and for art historians. But there are also historians of wider interests, and archeologists. They may want to study such entities as Dvāravatī or Śrīvijaya, **in all their aspects**, despite, or more likely because, they are at present less well documented than it is to be hoped they will become.

What is really fatal to Dr. Piriya's primary conception is that we cannot be certain that all that appears to be similar to Môn art is in fact the work of Môn. In particular there can be no justification for labelling the sculptures and other Buddhist art objects found at Yarang, Patani, as Môn art. There is no reason to suppose that the inhabitants of Patani were ever Môn. Yarang is almost certainly the site of the capital of the ancient state of Lankasuka, and the objects found there are best described as Lankasuka art. The same difficulty occurs with the art of Fu-nan, whose people cannot certainly be described as Môn or as Khmers, though they were probably a Môn-Khmer speaking people. So to describe the ivory comb from Chan Sen, illustrated at the beginning of the catalogue, as "Môn art" is questionable, whereas to label it "art of Fu-nan" provides a clear distinction from its successor the art of Dvāravatī. Similarly to use the aspirated form "Thai" to include Chiengsen art is inaccurate, for the people of Chiengsen were a different branch of the Tai race from the Thai (Siamese) of Sukhothai and Ayudhya.

The author divides his Môn art into a number of styles according to provenance. This seems to me to be acceptable only in such well-determined cases as Fa Daet style or Lamphun style, which may be held to correspond to similar well-marked divisions of Khmer art. But we are all too often concerned with images lacking documented context whose true place of origin is unknown. Thus we have in Cat. No. 6 a standing Buddha from Buriram, classified as "Môn art, style of Buriram", which in fact is almost identical with one in the Bangkok Museum from Śī Mahā Phot<sup>2</sup>. The author himself recognizes that the latter belongs to the same "iconographical series", but according to his system it would have to be labelled "Môn art, style of Śī Mahā Phot". Indeed on the very next page the author recognizes the existence of such a style in its Hindu facies, and I shall return to it below.

On the other hand the term "Môn art, central Thailand style", under which Dr. Piriya classifies several of the exhibits, is simply too wide to be meaningful. In the present state of knowledge (which controlled excavation should improve) Dupont's typological classification is surely preferable. While Dupont realized that each of his Buddhist sculptural groups was probably derived from a particular Indian prototype, and made at a specific centre, such as Nakhon Pathom or Lop Buri, identification of the atelier concerned is not at present possible. But he was able to indicate the direction of change within each group<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> P. Dupont, *L'archéologie môn de Dvāravatī* (Paris, 1959), fig. 373; H.G. Quaritch Wales, *Dvāravatī* (London, 1969), pl. 70 B.

<sup>3</sup> The recent excavations at In Buri, where unfinished images have been found, suggest that here is one site where a specific atelier can be identified.



I return now to the Viṣṇu, Cat. No. 7, "style of Śī Mahā Phot", which is Dr. Piriya's only example of the long-robed mitred Viṣṇus which account for the greater part of the Hindu facies of what he calls Môn art. He actually notes that this statue "is related" to the images found at Wieng Sra, which however he would have to describe as "Môn art, style of Wieng Sra". Apart from the doubt as to whether the people of Wieng Sra were ever Môn, both the Viṣṇu illustrated as Cat. No. 7 and the Wieng Sra Viṣṇus belong to what Dupont classified as Group A of his three groups of long-robed Viṣṇus<sup>4</sup>. These have been found not only at Śī Mahā Phot, central Thailand and several places in the Peninsula, but also in Khmer Chen-la! More recently Professor O'Connor has shown that the characteristics which Group A images have in common are due not to provenance but to their close post-Gupta affinities. Again it was on the basis of Dupont's **typological** classification that O'Connor was able to elucidate the nature of the changes from Group A to Group B<sup>5</sup>.

With the pre-Angkorian statues found in recent years on the Khorat Plateau we have the making of a similarly confused situation if Dr. Piriya is to classify them by their find-spots, as of Pra Khon Chai and Lam Plai Mat styles (p. 39). In fact the images found at both these places (the former collected in the crypt of a later temple) have been identified by Boisselier as belonging to the well-known pre-Angkorian style of Kompong Prah<sup>6</sup>.

One must also take note of the sort of misunderstanding that can be caused by the author's exaggerated attachment to provenance, even where the place of origin is actually known. This occurs in the case of the head and torso, Cat. No. 52, which was found *in situ* at Wat Pra Pai Luang, Sukhothai (first state). It is described as "Thai art, style of Sukhothai". How misleading this is will be appreciated immediately one recalls that its pronounced Chiengsen characteristics are a prime piece of evidence for the anteriority of the early style of Chiengsen to that of Sukhothai. Indeed the author himself refers to its resemblance to an image in the Pagán Museum, Pagán being a likely source of the Chiengsen style. It is necessary to realize that early Chiengsen-style images did not have to be made exclusively at Chiengsen, any more than Ayudhyan style images were made only at Ayudhya. Indeed the latter were so widely made that they have been called "the national style"<sup>7</sup>.

In referring to the sculptures from the Peninsula, other than those above mentioned, as "Peninsular art", Dr. Piriya seems obsessed with the desire to ignore the influence of the great empire of Śrīvijaya. So we have the remarkable statement that "as an historical entity the existence of Śrīvijaya is attested by one inscription found at Nakhon Śī Thammarat bearing a date equivalent to 775 A.D." (p. 45). Even if recent excavations in the Palembang district have failed to find a site earlier than 1000 A.D. (and such negative evidence can never be finally convincing), the existence of a Śrīvijayan empire can hardly be reduced to the evidence of the

<sup>4</sup> P. Dupont, "Viṣṇu mitrés de l' Indochine Occidentale", *BEFEO*, XLI no. 2, 1941.

<sup>5</sup> S.J. O'Connor, *Hindu Gods of Peninsular Siam* (1972), chapter IV.

<sup>6</sup> J. Boisselier, "Notes sur l'art du bronze dans l'ancien Cambodge", *Artibus Asiae*, vol. XXIX pt. 4 (1967).

<sup>7</sup> Luang Boribal and A.B. Griswold, "Sculpture of peninsular Siam in the Ayudhya period", *JSS*, vol. XXXVIII pt. 2 (1951).



inscription of 775 A.D. However, it is on this premise that the author is able to give exaggerated importance to works showing Cham characteristics, and the relatively late Pallava and Cola sculptures, all most probably attributable to the requirements of foreign merchants which, like the Khmer occupation of the Chaiya region in the eleventh century, had no bearing on the main efflorescence of Peninsular art from the eighth to the twelfth centuries. An objective study of all the evidence can only ascribe this to the influence of Śrīvijaya, both Mahāyānist and Hindu.

Of course, within this compass I have no objection to the author's desire to distinguish a number of styles proper to the Peninsula, as for example of Chaiya<sup>8</sup>. This is precisely what I have myself envisaged as work for the future art historian<sup>9</sup>. But so long as there is uncertainty as to true places of origin this will have to be undertaken on the typological lines worked out by Dupont in the case of the art of Dvāravatī.

I have remarked above that the author also makes a few proposals which I find quite acceptable but which lack the flavour of novelty. That the religious sculpture of Dvāravatī, like that of Sukhothai, had a Hindu facies, represented more particularly by the long-robed mitred Viṣṇus of the Prachin valley, was certainly stressed by me in my book *Dvāravatī*<sup>10</sup>. Then again others have already made us aware of the need to recognize a Chiangmai style, besides that of Chiengsen. As to the U Thong style, which the author states is a misnomer for the early Ayudhyan, that is a fact that has surely been long appreciated. I have myself always thought that a clear distinction ought to be made between purely Khmer works of art found in Thailand, ranging from the pre-Angkorian to the style of the Bayon, and the Lop Buri school which is a product of the interaction of Khmer and the preceding Môn. However, this does not seem to be accepted in some quarters, and the author's insistence on it may be useful if it leads to further consideration of this particular question.

I must once more adopt the role of adverse critic in regard to what Dr. Piriya has to say of the later phase of Thai culture. Certainly the object of the early Bangkok intelligentsia was to revive and perpetuate every aspect of the vanished glories of Ayudhya. But to say that stylistic changes in a traditional art "are generally the results of such external factors as political upheaval and social disruption" (p. 44) is contrary to one of the best-established principles of culture change. Where a foreign culture has something attractive to offer, this can be easily and peacefully introduced by a very few teachers, as happened in the early Indianization of South-east Asia. It happened similarly in the mid-nineteenth century with the introduction of perspective in Thai painting. Later in the very same paragraph the author states that in the latter part of the nineteenth century "there was wholesale acceptance of Western culture", rather an exaggeration one might comment, but certainly accomplished quite without political upheaval and social disruption.

<sup>8</sup> This should not be confused with the post-Śrīvijayan school of Chaiya identified by Dupont ("Le Buddha de Grāhi et l'école de Caiya", *BEFEO*, vol. XLII [1942], pp. 105f.) and further studied by Griswold (*loc. cit.*). An example is shown in Cat. No. 55.

<sup>9</sup> H.G. Quaritch Wales, *The Malay Peninsula in Hindu Times* (London, 1976), p. 119.

<sup>10</sup> P. 124. The continued accretions of Indian influence seem to have kept the facial features relatively unchanged.

In sum, I must conclude that the author's main contentions appear to be overambitious. To me there seems to be no justification for the sudden imposition of a new and highly questionable system of classification on the arts of Thailand. Modifications in detail of the present system will certainly be called for, but they should be introduced gradually as and when the progress of knowledge, largely through controlled excavation, tends to clarify the picture.

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## II

For the Seventh Conference of the International Association of Historians of Asia, held at Bangkok, Thailand in August 1977, the Fine Arts Department arranged a special exhibition of a selection of ancient objects from National Provincial Museums, cataloguing them after a new classification scheme proposed by Dr. Piriya Krairiksh. The book under review is the outcome of that exhibition.

Dr. Piriya's proposals for the classification of Thai art, published for the first time in this book, should be evaluated according to whether they are reasonable, provided with concrete evidence, made to facilitate the study for students or on the contrary to render it more complicated. One should bear in mind that the classification of art styles is usually made long after the art objects were produced in order to facilitate the study of art history. Artists normally produced their own works after the taste of their own period without thinking of the art style.

Dr. Piriya says that the terms "period (of history)" and "school (of art)" should not be interchangeable. I agree totally with him on this point. When I came back from study abroad in 1953 I tried to introduce the word "style" instead of "period" in the Thai language but the Thai public had already been used to the word "period". The word "style" would puzzle them and would make them think that the art object was made in imitation of another object in an earlier period. I therefore was not successful in introducing the change and would normally use the word "Dvāravatī art" instead of "Dvāravatī period" or "Dvāravatī style" in the Thai language. Dr. Piriya suggests that the use of the term "Dvāravatī" might make the reader misunderstand that the political power of the Dvāravatī kingdom spread to many parts of Thailand such as the northeast. But I think if one will use the phrase "the influence of the Dvāravatī art spread to northeastern Thailand", nobody will misunderstand it so far as political influence is concerned. On page 37 of the book where it is stated that Dvāravatī art spread to Yala in southern Thailand, it is in reality to Yarang District in the Province of Pattani.

Dr. Piriya proposes that the word "Dvāravatī art" should be substituted by "Mon art". I totally disagree with him as the use of the ethnic name might make the reader misunderstand that that type of art was produced especially by the people of that race. Though one can admit that there was quite a number of Mon people in central Thailand in the old days, as a few dedication stone inscriptions in ancient Mon language have been discovered, one has never found such documents in northeastern Thailand. Those that have been so far found are only Mon words mixed with the Khmer language or the name of some *jātaka* which might have appeared there through Mon culture and Theravāda Buddhism from central Thailand. One example can be cited from the Ananda Chedi in Burma which was constructed by command of King Kyanzittha, the second son of King Aniruddha. There exist terracotta plaques decorating the base of the monument bearing Mon inscriptions. This is because during that period



the Burmese had just received Mon culture, and King Kyanzittha especially admired it. Dr. Piriya, I think, probably would not say that the Ananda Chedi belongs to Mon art. The Dvāravatī art at Yarang, Pattani, does not prove either that there were the Mon people at that time in southern Thailand. It might just again be the spread of Mon culture down south from central Thailand. Dr. Quaritch Wales, in discussing a Buddha image found at Yarang, Pattani, has given the opinion that the image does not exactly look like those found in central Thailand.

Dr. Piriya also suggests that the Dvāravatī art wherever it is found, should be called the Mon art of that local school. I disagree with him again on this point because before one can set up a style or a school, one should have found first enough examples of common characteristics. One cannot just classify one piece as a school. Otherwise in Thailand we might have 72 schools of art (from 72 provinces) or more if one will go down to individual districts. Dr. Piriya might, however, just wish to register them first and then try to study their common characteristics in order to form styles or schools afterwards. If this is the case then one can say that he works from Z to A instead of from A to Z.

The reviewer has coined the phrase "ancient Hindu images in Thailand" for a group of early Hindu images in order to differentiate them from Dvāravatī statues which are mostly Buddhist. Though these two groups have been found in the same place and might have been produced at the same time, one has never found one early Hindu image that has the same facial characteristics as those Dvāravatī sculptures of the middle (native) phase: a flat face, curved and connected eyebrows, protruding eyes, a flat nose and thick lips. If they belong to the same school of art, at least these facial features should have existed commonly among both groups. These early ancient Hindu images (Vishṇu wearing a cylindrical hat) have never been found in southern Burma which is believed to have been the habitat of the Mons. They also resemble Khmer sculpture (Vishṇu from Kompong Cham Kau) more than the Mon art. For Cat. No. 7, of which Dr. Piriya says that the earrings resemble strongly the Mon earrings, one can notice that they are much smaller and might reflect only the Dvāravatī influence. Regarding Buddha and Hindu images of the Sukhothai period, the reviewer has not separated them into two different art groups because their facial features and expression are the same, the difference lying only in the dress and ornaments. Therefore the reviewer has not thought of separating sculptures according to religious differences.

It would be rather interesting to know how Dr. Piriya would classify those early Hindu images found at Si Tep in the Province of Phetchabun, northern central Thailand. At the town of Si Tep no Mon inscriptions have been found, but a Sanskrit inscription mentioning King Bhavavarman of Cambodia about the middle of the seventh century A.D. has been discovered. Those who agree with Dr. Piriya's theory propose that the art at Si Tep should be labelled as Mon-Khmer. This is rather subjective and should not be used as principles in art history nor archeology. Otherwise soon we will have as well Indian-Mon and Mon-Thai arts which will be totally subjective and create nothing but confusion.

As for the word "Lop Buri art", the reviewer admits that it is now not a very convenient term to use as we have expanded it to cover the art resembling the Khmer artistic expression



from the seventh to the fourteenth centuries A.D. instead of between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries as before. The term has also been used to cover the Khmer works of art found in Thailand. The reviewer therefore welcomes any suggestions from scholars to coin a new, appropriate name, but at the same time he disagrees with the use of the word "Khmer art", suggested by Dr. Piriya, as it might make people misunderstand that this type of art was produced only by the Khmer people. In Thailand it might have been fabricated by the Mon or the Thai after the Khmer prototype. The French expert on Khmer art, Professor Boisselier, also differs on this issue. He explains that the works of art in Thailand resembling the Khmer art have their own special characteristics up to the point that they should not be labelled as "Khmer art". He cites as an example the octagonal stone window-balustrades found at Prasat Panom Wan, Nakhon Ratchasima which have never been found in Cambodia. The epithet "provincial Khmer art" is also opposed by the eminent scholar because the word "provincial" usually contains a pejorative meaning. Professor Boisselier explains that during some periods Khmer-derived art in Thailand was even more remarkable than that in the Khmer capital. He cites again as another example a stone lintel from Prasat Ban Noi, Wathananakhon District in the Province of Prachin Buri, which according to him is even more beautiful than the Khmer lintels of the contemporary Prei Kmeng style (the second half of the seventh century). As for the word "Lop Buri art" which also covers the Khmer works of art in Thailand, the reviewer thinks that it is very difficult to separate these art objects into two distinct groups. Sometimes they are hardly distinguishable; for instance, there is one stone Buddha head in the Bangkok National Museum, which if sculpted in Cambodia, would have been the head of Prajñāpāramitā, because of the feminine facial expressions of the Bayon style. But here it is known as a Buddha head. Should we classify it as an example of Khmer art, or a Lop Buri object? This classification must be worked out piece by piece. However, if anybody has the ability to do so, the reviewer would be glad to listen to his opinion.

For Thai art, Dr. Piriya suggests that it should be classified according to locality, such as Thai art of Chiang Mai style, Sukhothai style, Kamphaeng Phet style or Ayutthaya style, etc. This type of classification will again create so many styles that it would be tremendously confusing for students. The reviewer is of the opinion that the former classification into broad styles such as those of Chiang Saen or Lan Na, Sukhothai, U Thong, Ayutthaya and Bangkok are already convenient, and if we have enough antiquities of the same characteristics we can subdivide them again into smaller schools without any difficulty. In his classification Dr. Piriya combines the U Thong and Ayutthaya styles into the same group. Now the reviewer would like to ask the reader to examine Cat. Nos. 56 and 57 in the book. One will see that they do not possess the same characteristics. The first one has received influence from Khmer art, and used to be classified as U Thong B. The second figure belongs to the Ayutthaya style imitating the Sukhothai characters. But according to Dr. Piriya, they both belong to the same style and the same period, the difference being only the provenance. How much perplexity will this new classification create among students? The reviewer again agrees that the term "U Thong" is not much justified either and welcomes new suggestions, but to incorporate it into the Ayutthaya style is not feasible as the reader might think that it dates only from the construction of the city of Ayutthaya from 1350 onward.



It is even more surprising that Dr. Piriya says that the Bangkok style originated from the middle of the nineteenth century onward, and proposes that the art preceding that period should be labelled "Ayutthaya style". The reviewer would like to ask the reader to consider here that for the phrase "Ayutthaya style of the First Reign of Bangkok", and "Bangkok art of the First Reign in imitation of Ayutthaya style", which one will be easier to understand? More than that, in the Third Reign in the early nineteenth century, Chinese art was so influential that the *ubosoth* and *viharn* of that period have no roof decorations, and the round or octagonal column became a square pillar without any capital. Did this change occur during the 'Ayutthaya period', and does Dr. Piriya call it 'Ayutthaya style'?

For the art of southern Thailand, the reviewer agrees with Dr. Piriya that there are many styles and they should be studied according to their prototypes. However, if one believes in the late Professor George Coedès's theory about the Śrīvijaya kingdom, one must admit that Śrīvijaya spread its power up to southern Thailand from 775 A.D. (from an inscription) and that in the middle of the twelfth century Khmer power extended only to Grahi or Chaiya (after the Chinese Sung chronicle). In 1183 a bronze Buddha image in the attitude of subduing Māra under the *nāga* was cast at Wat Wieng, Chaiya, in the Province of Surat Thani. Though this image displays some Khmer influences, the local characteristics exist such as the pleated end of the robe over the left shoulder and the plain cranial protuberance with a halo in the form of a *bodhi* leaf attached in front. If we would not label this type of art as Śrīvijaya, what should we call it? One must also remember that the name of the king who had this image cast resembles that of the king of Malāyu on the island of Sumatra, which is believed to be the centre of the Śrīvijaya kingdom during that period. In 1225 Śrīvijaya still controlled Chia-lo-hsi or Grahi (Chaiya; from Chu-fan-chih of Chao Ju-kua). It is therefore rather difficult to deny the existence of Śrīvijaya in southern Thailand and not to call the art of that period Śrīvijayan art. The reviewer would also like to express his opinion that the original classification of Śrīvijaya art was not based mainly on Mahāyana Buddhist antiquities. If one will enter the Śrīvijaya room of the Bangkok National Museum, one will notice the image of Śiva which has also been labelled as belonging to Śrīvijaya art. In any case, the reviewer still agrees with Dr. Piriya that the study of Śrīvijaya art or the art of southern Thailand should be based on its prototypes, and the right-hand image on the cover of Dr. Piriya's book should be classified as Chaiya school as it is already contemporary with the Ayutthaya period.

In conclusion the reviewer thinks that regarding the study of art history, although the main research is focused upon the history of art and its evolution, it must in the end be synchronized with historical periods. One cannot separate them totally. The use of ethnic name for the art style might be easily misleading, and the most important thought to consider is whether it is worthwhile to change the name that has been used for a long time. Will it create better understanding or confusion? The example might be given here of Gothic art in Europe, which is now known not to have been created by the Goths. Yet, the name has not been changed because of the popularity and the general use of the term.



The objects on display in the book will be reviewed below according to the catalogue numbers of the photographs. Only differing opinions from Dr. Piriya's ideas will be mentioned, excluding the photographs already discussed. When the reviewer went to Paris in early November 1977, he discussed Dr. Piriya's book with Professor Boisselier. So the following contents will also contain some of Professor Boisselier's ideas.

*Cat. No. 1:* The reviewer agrees that the influence of the Indian Gupta art exists, and the work might be dated around the fifth century. But since only one piece has been discovered, it is not sure whether it should be classified as belonging to Mon art or as an Indian object imported into Thailand.

*Cat. Nos. 2-4:* The date of the sixth century might be too early; a better dating would be around the seventh, for the following reasons. *Cat. No. 2:* The image of Skanda is carved from sandstone which was popular in Khmer workmanship and during the Lop Buri period. During the Dvāravatī period, limestone was much preferred. The reviewer would therefore like to classify this image among the ancient Hindu image group. For workmanship, if one compares it to the image of Skanda at Angkor Borei in Cambodia which dates from about the sixth century, one will see that the Skanda in Thailand is much superior. Therefore the seventh century might be a preferable date. *Cat. No. 3:* The necklace resembles strongly that of the image of Sūrya at Si Tep, and the belt of Umā or Lakshmī at Koh Krieng in the Khmer Sambor Prei Kuk style (first half of the seventh century). Therefore their dates should be more or less contemporary. *Cat. No. 4:* The reviewer thinks that it should also be attributed to the seventh century because of the Indian Pallava style influence.

*Cat. No. 7:* If the image is at the end of the series of Vishṇu wearing a cylindrical hat (according to the Thai text), its age should have been about the eighth or ninth century.

*Cat. No. 9:* The lintel in the Khmer Sambor Prei Kuk style should have the figure of *makara* at each end, but here it is replaced by the figure of a griffin; therefore it should have been classified into the early Khmer Prei Kmeng style (middle of the seventh century). It should also be noted that the middle parts of the three medallions on the centre of the lintel were originally plain and not carved.

*Cat. No. 10:* Professor Boisselier's idea is that it is quite difficult to date. He would attribute it to about the eighth century.

*Cat. No. 11:* Professor Boisselier thinks that it should be dated in the Khmer late Kulen or early Prah Ko styles, about the middle of the ninth century, as the floral designs form the *kāla* face as well as the garland or the body of the *nāga*, pointing to the strong influence of the Khmer Kompong Prah style (eighth century) even though the *nāga* announces already the Prah Ko style. The lintel therefore does not correspond to the new inscription which was found at Prasat Panom Wan and deciphered by H.R.H. Princess Sirindhorn as published in the appendix of the book. Professor Boisselier says that that inscription concerns another stone lintel which



has been preserved at the Fourth Fine Arts Department Branch, at Phimai, Nakhon Ratchasima Province. That red sandstone lintel was also found at Prasat Panom Wan. It is a rather low piece of lintel at the centre of which represents Vishnu riding on Garuḍa who is holding the tails of two *nāga*. The three heads of each *nāga* appear at each end of the lintel. Above the bodies of the *nāga* are dancing angels and *narasiṃha*. Professor Boisselier suggests that this last lintel really belongs to the Khmer Bakhaeng style (late ninth century) and corresponds to the inscription deciphered by the Princess, which is dated 891.

*Cat. No. 12*: The wavy lines of the monastic dress falling from the left wrist of this Buddha image denote the influence of the Indian Gupta style (*circa* fourth-sixth centuries). Therefore this image should have been carved in the seventh rather than the eighth century. The *tribhaṅga* posture also denotes its early date. Professor Boisselier classifies this standing image in the Śrīvijaya style.

*Cat. No. 13*: The reviewer does not understand why Dr. Piriya classifies this image as "Mon art, central Thailand style". Since it was found in the crypt of the main *prang* of Wat Ratchaburana, Ayutthaya, it could have been brought from any part of Thailand, for instance from the northeast.

*Cat. No. 14*: The left hand is placed upon the right one which probably originated from the wrong carving of the mould. Though it cannot be seen quite clearly in this photograph, it can be easily distinguished from other Buddha images made from the same mould.

*Cat. No. 25*: The reviewer still holds to the idea that the face of this image is much softer than that of the Pāla Buddha image No. 381 in *The Art of Indian Asia*, vol. II, by H. Zimmer. He would like to think that the influence on this image came more from the Indian Gupta and post-Gupta styles, and the date should have been seventh-eighth centuries rather than Dr. Piriya's tenth century.

*Cat. No. 26*: The date should have been about the eleventh century.

*Cat. No. 27*: Professor Boisselier suggests that the image belongs to the Khmer Baphuon style (eleventh century).

*Cat. No. 30*: Professor Boisselier says that though this image imitates the Khmer Angkor Vat style (early twelfth century), it was probably cast in the thirteenth or fourteenth century.

*Cat. No. 33*: According to Professor Boisselier, such a beautiful image should not have been attributed to "provincial art".

*Cat. No. 34*: It should have also been explained that the image receives the Indian Pāla influence *via* the town of Pagan in Burma.

*Cat. Nos. 38-39*: Professor Boisselier maintains that they belong to the Khmer Angkor Vat style, as can be proved from an esthetic point of view and the details of the ornaments. One should also notice the sharp ridge and the slenderness of the legs in contrast to the short and stout ones of the Khmer Bayon style (*Cat. No. 43*). Five of these images, both male and female, were found in a monument called San Ta Pha Daeng at Sukhothai. They are therefore probably not figures of door guardians.



*Cat. No. 40:* This head was probably carved locally at Prasat Muang Singh, Kanchanaburi, as it was carved from red sandstone and not from gray sandstone as the other sculptures of the Khmer Bayon style found at the same site. It is rather difficult to know whether it was carved by a Khmer artist or a local artisan.

*Cat. No. 45:* Professor Boisselier says that this sculpture cannot be classified as Khmer because the posture, ornaments and symbols have never existed in Khmer art.

*Cat. No. 47:* This image was found in the crypt of the main *prang* of Wat Mahathat, Ayutthaya. If one will follow Dr. Piriya's principles, it should have been labelled as "Thai art, Ayutthaya style" rather than "Thai art, Lop Buri style".

*Cat. No. 49:* Dr. Piriya classifies this image in the twelfth century by comparing it to Buddha images at Nāgapattinam in southern India. This supposition is totally opposed by the reviewer as the estheticism is totally different. The Buddha image at Nāgapattinam wears the same kind of monastic dress, but the end of the robe always exists on the left shoulder and a flame-like halo appears on the cranial protuberance. This image the reviewer thinks bears Indian Amarāvātī influence (second-fourth centuries) in the monastic dress, and derives its slenderness of the body from the Indian Gupta style (fourth-sixth centuries). The reviewer therefore thinks that the image should be attributed to the fifth-sixth centuries and should be classified as an early Buddha image in southern Thailand.

*Cat. No. 52:* This image is probably seated in a folded-leg posture (*virāsana*) like other stucco Buddha images at Wat Pra Pai Luang, Sukhothai, rather than a crossed-leg one (*vajrāsana*), and was probably moulded later than 1220.

*Cat. No. 59:* This image is much more beautiful than those inscribed Buddha images in Mr. A.B. Griswold's book. It probably was cast before the late fifteenth century.

*Cat. No. 66:* The Sukhothai influence in this image should have been mentioned.

*Cat. No. 67:* The end of the robe over the left shoulder may not necessarily be the end of a *saṃghāṭi* (shawl), or the end of the uppergarment (*civara* or *uttarāsaṅga*), as is stated in the catalogue. The back part of the image should have been examined for verification.

*Cat. No. 69:* The term "Peninsular art, south Indian influence" should not have been used. These images were probably imported into Thailand from southern India.

*Cat. No. 73:* Should it not be worded in Thai language as "the attitude of calming the ocean" ?

*Cat. No. 76:* Should it indeed be classified as "Thai art, Nakhon Ratchasima style", as the image could have been brought quite easily from Ayutthaya or carved at Nakhon Ratchasima in the Ayutthayan style?

*Cat. No. 77:* The reviewer disagrees in classifying this image as "Thai art, Ayutthaya style" because from the Ayutthaya period no Buddha images nor Buddhist disciple figures wearing monastic dress decorated with floral designs have ever been found. This type of *civara* exists



only in the Bangkok period. Therefore it should have been classified as belonging to the Bangkok period.

*Cat. No. 78:* This, as *Cat. No. 76*, should be classified as belonging to the late Ayutthaya or early Bangkok styles.

*Cat. No. 79:* The floral design which exists on the lower part of the frame and the base of this sculpture was very popular during the Third and Fourth Reigns of Bangkok, so this image should have been classified as Bangkok style although the general characteristics still follow those of Ayutthaya.

*Cat. No. 80:* At the end of the Ayutthaya period, the base line of the architecture was always curved. This characteristic disappeared at the beginning of the Bangkok period, probably from the Second Reign onward. This throne with a straight base line was probably erected at the command of the Prince of the Palace to the Front, in the Third Reign. It should therefore be classified as Bangkok style.

This review is written by the reviewer in order to "provoke discussion and encourage young art historians to put more effort into study and research into Thailand's art history", as stated in the foreword of the Director General of the Fine Arts Department at the beginning of this book. Let us hope that his wish will be fulfilled.

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## Thaïlande

par Pisit Charoenwongsa et M.C. Subhadradis Diskul

Coll. *Archaeologia Mundi*, éd. Nagel, Genève, éd. fçse. 1976

93 ill. en couleurs, 168 en noir et blanc; 268 pp.

La récente parution de l'ouvrage consacré par le Pr. M.C. Subhadradis Diskul à l'archéologie de la Thaïlande marquera une date dans l'histoire de la recherche archéologique du Sud-Est asiatique. S'étant assuré la collaboration du Pr. Pisit Charoenwongsa, spécialiste de la préhistoire, pour la rédaction des quatre chapitres formant la première partie, "Les temps préhistoriques", le Pr. M.C. Subhadradis Diskul traite de l'archéologie des "Temps historiques" dans la seconde partie, en douze chapitres qui conduisent le lecteur de la protohistoire à la fin de la première période de l'art d'Ayudhya (ca. 1450 A.D.). Dans ces cadres sont évoqués les divers arts, successifs ou contemporains, développés au cours des siècles, chacun d'eux étant brièvement présenté dans le contexte historique et accompagné d'éléments de bibliographie.

Après la publication de nombreuses études consacrées à des thèmes particuliers, études d'accès parfois difficile du fait de leur grande dispersion, *Thaïlande* est le premier ouvrage de synthèse consacré à l'ensemble des recherches poursuivies depuis, environ, le début du siècle. Ayant débuté et progressé à l'instigation de S.A.R. le Pce. Damrong Rajanubhab, père de l'auteur en qui nous devons reconnaître le véritable fondateur de l'archéologie thaïlandaise, entrée dans une phase active vers 1925, la recherche archéologique allait prendre son plein essor vers 1960, conduisant à un ensemble de découvertes dont l'importance est encore trop souvent ignorée non seulement du grand public mais même du monde savant. L'utilité, et même l'urgence, d'un ouvrage de synthèse, s'adressant à un large public sans sacrifier pour autant aux tentations de la vulgarisation, apparaissait de plus en plus. C'est cet ouvrage qu'a réalisé le Pr. M.C. Subhadradis Diskul en offrant au lecteur, spécialiste ou amateur, une étude qui embrasse pour la première fois, encore que sous une forme nécessairement succincte, l'ensemble de l'archéologie thaïlandaise—architecture, sculpture, céramique, éventuellement arts mineurs—pour toute la période s'étendant de la préhistoire au XVe siècle approximativement.

Mais *Thaïlande* ne constitue pas seulement un bilan des activités archéologiques passées ou récentes. S'attachant aux divers problèmes posés en matière de chronologie et de filiation, utilisant judicieusement, grâce à sa grande expérience de chercheur et d'enseignant, les données fournies par l'analyse scientifique et les méthodes de recherche comparative dites "d'évolution des motifs" préconisées par son Maître Ph. Stern, l'auteur livre ici le fruit de ses observations personnelles et ses propres conclusions.

Avec une très abondante illustration qui révèle au public nombre de pièces inédites, l'ouvrage peut être regardé comme le premier manuel d'archéologie de la Thaïlande, oeuvre dont la réalisation s'avérait exceptionnellement difficile du fait de la complexité d'un sujet que G. Coedès définissait, avec raison, comme caractérisé par une stratification chronologique



compliquée par la configuration géographique. *Thaïlande* est, certainement, l'un des meilleurs ouvrages publiés dans la Coll. *Archaeologia Mundi* et nous le considérons indispensable à tous chercheurs et amateurs d'art. Si quelques faiblesses de la traduction française nous paraissent de peu d'importance, nous ne pouvons nous interdire de regretter que l'éditeur n'ait pas utilisé plus judicieusement l'excellent choix d'illustration qui lui avait été proposé. C'est trop souvent que les documents (statuaire surtout) ont été regroupés sans plus de souci de présentation que de chronologie ou de correspondance avec les chapitres (spéct. fig. 53-147, rassemblant à la fin de la première partie, "Les temps préhistoriques", des exemples empruntés à toutes les écoles et répartis sur une période s'étendant des IV<sup>e</sup>-V<sup>e</sup> siècles au XIX<sup>e</sup>...). Un ouvrage de la qualité et du sérieux de *Thaïlande* et la richesse de son illustration méritaient une meilleure présentation qui eut, d'ailleurs, facilité l'utilisation par le lecteur.

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## เรือนไทยเดิม ["Traditional Thai Houses"]

ฤทัย ใจจงรัก และ อนุวิทย์ เจริญศุภกุล

[by Ruethai Jaijongrak and Anuwit Jaroensuphakul]

in Thai; Bangkok, The Siam Society, 1976; 53 pp.; hardcover 30 baht, softcover 15 baht

This recent publication of the Siam Society concerns Thai domestic architecture, a subject on which little has been written heretofore. The work is divided into two sections each with a different author, research method, and style. Ruethai Jaijongrak in the first half of the book covers "Traditional Thai houses: Central plains area", while in the latter half Anuwit Jaroensuphakul concentrates on "Traditional Thai houses: Northern area".

The reader learns that in the 28 provinces of the Chao Phraya Lowlands there were four types of villages: "river-lineal"; "road-lineal", located at natural overnight stopping places for oxcart traffic; "cluster", on raised ground in rice fields; and "scatter", with distant dwellings and weak social interaction. Seven types of houses were commonly found in such villages. The most basic was the nuclear family dwelling which consisted of a sleeping house, a kitchen house, a deck, and a general area. Also common were the stem, or extended, family type which included a small house for each married daughter and her spouse. The well-to-do people had a cluster house which was large and elaborate; it was composed of separate houses for sleeping, eating, birds, kitchens, and other familial needs and all functions were tied together by walkways. A fourth type of dwelling was that of monks. In towns these usually were of a cluster design with a central eating area and made of wood or brick and plaster. In the forests such dwellings usually were quite separate to encourage meditation, and were wooden double buildings with the front used for eating and communal activities and the rear for sleeping. Another type of dwelling was the commercial house next to water; the front or business section generally was linked to the back or living section by a bridge. There also were raft houses which provided mobile commercial sites; these consisted of either a bamboo raft or wooden raft-boxes, usually numbering three to five floats per house. The last type of dwelling described is the commercial house next to roadways; these were single or double dwellings where commerce was conducted either on a porch one meter above the ground or in a separate, unwallled area.

Three important features characterized the traditional house of the Chao Phraya Lowlands. First, it was raised off the ground, usually as high as one's head, and built on stilts. The deck was somewhat lower than the bedroom and the variation in levels provided air movement, a means of seeing to the ground, and seating (since there was no furniture). Raising the dwelling provided protection from nocturnal animals, flood protection, and space for farm activities and equipment storage, for homecrafts, and for entertaining. A second characteristic was the high-pitched roof; this usually was made of wood, thatch, or baked clay tiles. The extreme pitch let rains run off fast, thus discouraging leaks, and it was cooler; a broad overhang was



also necessary as further protection against rain and sun. The third feature was the deck area between the individual components of the house; this was some 40 per cent of the total space. Very wide at one point, it provided space for general living, entertaining, weddings, and so on; moreover, the decking served to unify the whole. Structural characteristics mentioned are wooden construction (usually teak except in cases where harder woods were required) using the post and lintel system. The posts generally leaned inward, providing greater stability against the wind and necessitating few nails to hold the walls in place. Decking commonly was structurally independent of the roofed areas. The shapes of the houses were similar in most of the Lowlands provinces.

Traditional Thai houses did not have designs based on anything scientific, such as wind or sun direction, since to the Thai being happy, free from sickness, and other things based on superstition and social tradition were much more important than science. Wind and sun direction were never the basis for orientation, which instead was based on certain geographic considerations. For instance, if a dwelling were on the water, it fronted thereon. The exception occurred with Mon houses which traditionally were placed perpendicular to the river and, since rivers generally run north-south, were thus properly oriented according to science. A dwelling located in the rice fields usually faced the oxcart road or footpath. In villages later houses faced in the same direction as the first house in order to avoid the arguments believed inevitable when houses faced each other. In planning bedrooms, consideration had to be given the Thai tradition of calling south "direction of head when sleeping", and north "direction of feet when sleeping"; moreover, one could not put his head down toward the west since the sunset symbolized death. Generally speaking, the plan of traditional Thai houses was simple and uncomplicated due to the lifestyle of the people. The over-all impression conveyed by these dwellings is one of peacefulness, coolness, and quietude. The section on the central plains houses has very few illustrations, but the author cites examples of everything he discusses, and provides a list of 41 examples giving owners' names and locations so that the enterprising reader can further his understanding by personal observation. This list of dwellings is perhaps the single most helpful item in the volume.

The section on the northern area deals with eight provinces where the traditional Lan Na culture is still very much in evidence; the author concentrates on houses reflecting that culture. Three types of villages are discussed: jungle villages, usually very isolated so the buildings utilized local materials; market towns, usually open to more outside influences thus dwellings had a higher technical level of construction and used new materials, including industrial by-products such as asphalt paper between bamboo panels for walls; and villages inside cities which are provincial centers. Topography determined whether the form of the village was "linear-scatter" or "cluster-scatter"; the latter type is generally never found in a flat area and is characteristic of Chiang Mai Province. The temple was the center of village life, and that area not specifically used for gardens or trees was usually left untamed. From Tak Province northward, Lan Na villages had gardens planted around each house, either fruit-bearing and ornamental trees surrounding the house itself, or ornamental plants around a well. There were three types of Lan Na houses. The first were simple and basic dwellings using bamboo, and thatch, they ranged from huts used to watch fields during the planting season, to more per-



manent abodes. Because they are cheap to build, such dwellings were also used in towns by the poor and by recent arrivals. The second type were wooden houses which belonged to those with more income; they used wood throughout, had tile roofs, were raised above the ground, and had considerable differentiation of interior space. Finally there were the *kalae* houses belonging to the rich and influential; these used expensive materials and usually were similar in plan—twin houses together having one bedroom or more.

All three types of Lan Na houses, no matter what their size, had six common characteristics. First, there was a staircase and a free-standing column; called a "horse-hitching post" in Thai, it was a roof support. Second, there was a space beyond the landing which was a semi-open living quarter called a *durn*; it was never smaller than a bedroom and was raised, thereby permitting distinction of social levels at gatherings. In one-bedroom houses, the *durn* served as the sleeping area for the sons, especially when they were older and came in late at night. (Daughters slept with parents in the bedroom.) Water jars usually were kept in one corner. The third characteristic of the Lan Na house was the bedroom, which in country huts was the biggest space. The wall without a window faced on *durn* area and the door opened onto a general walkway or hall. In wooden and *kalae* houses, the total bedroom space might be equal to or slightly smaller than the *durn*. In *kalae* houses the bedroom was very large and the walls leaned out. The room was divided in two for sleeping and storage by a walk space which was separate from the rest of the flooring so an early riser could get out without disturbing others. A fourth characteristic was the decking and walkway which connected all functions and was a unifying feature. Fifth, the kitchen generally was at the end of the walkway or off to one side; in wooden houses it usually was separate, while in twin *kalae* houses the kitchen was a smaller back building or an entirely separate building where the charcoal brazier was on a raised, earth-filled area. Finally, all Lan Na houses had spatial articulation.

The author went into considerable detail describing special characteristics of Lan Na dwellings in the eight northern provinces. But the examples are of relatively minor variations, both within and among provinces, which are attributable to environmental conditions, materials, workmanship, and contact with the outside world. Generalizing, however, one can say Chiang Mai is characterized by beautiful curves, Lampang by heaviness and solidity, and Phrae by extremely straight lines. A number of pictures accompany this section of the book and there is a short bibliography. Unfortunately there is not a list of Lan Na dwellings with their locations so that the reader cannot follow them up on his own.

This volume is brief, much more a monograph than a definitive work; nonetheless, it is a valuable introduction to a subject as yet not fully documented. Regretably it has been published only in Thai; an English edition would seem warranted. The reviewer also strongly suggests that such an edition include more illustrations. Of particular help would be plans and drawings; they not only would save many words but also elucidate clearly certain points

on design that remain quite abstruse. Generally, however, the authors are to be commended for their informative presentation. Hopefully others will now be encouraged to publish further studies on the subject.

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**Old Bridges of Bangkok / สะพานเก่ากรุงเทพฯ**

by Sirichai Narumit

in English and Thai; Bangkok, The Siam Society, 1977

illus., 176 pp.; 150 baht

The Siam Society has published a remarkable book which is of considerable interest to conservationists, historians, and anyone concerned with the capital of Bangkok in terms of its expansion and change. Indeed, change is one of the main themes apparent in the author's excellent compilation of photographs acquired from the archives of the Association of Siamese Architects and his own personal collection, among other sources. Although the text gives a few hints about the preference for different European artistic styles, the pictures speak for themselves. This reviewer has spent many an enjoyable hour poring over them, especially the comparative illustrations showing Bangkok areas at present and as they were 100 years ago.

The tendency for eclecticism which is prevalent in Ratanakosin art is certainly observable in its bridges built for one purpose or another. The variety of kind includes the following: quaint Netherlandish drawbridges, Venetian-Florentine echoes of the Renaissance and Baroque periods, sturdy Norman-Romanesque types à la H.H. Richardson (USA), elegant French Neo-Classic and Art Nouveau predilections, adaptations of Siamese motifs to European engineering know-how, and small non-professional Siamese bridges donated by Buddhist and Islamic patrons. Actually, this work is as comprehensive as it is informative about the variety of artistic style in the city. Especially valuable are the book's photographic details, particularly those showing decorative and sculptural motifs. Few people stop to take a thorough look at such items on the bridges themselves. These details prove that the architects had to work hand-in-hand with a team of sculptors. The two disciplines are in remarkable harmony throughout nearly 200 years of bridge-building. It is often via these illustrations that clues of the artistic heritage are most noticeable, although there was never a true evolution of artistic styles, since the motifs were not adopted chronologically.

If the emphasis upon large bridges is stressed during the reigns of Kings Rama V and VI, this is partially explained by the tenor of the times; i.e. utilitarian bridges crossing canals and waterways in Bangkok were expected to be esthetically pleasing. Thus there were suitable commemorative bridges in honor of the respective birthday anniversaries of the two monarchs: the famous series of Charlerm and Charoen Bridges established for the respective kings. This practice was not observed in either European or American cities.

Strong Western influence soon gave way to a suggestion of Thai motifs in later constructions, particularly in terms of their refined ornamentation and decoration. Of course, most Siamese in character as well as in construction are the *sala* bridges for commoners which might serve as resting places and commercial stalls. Yet, in fact, there is little to suggest the Thai



culture in most of the bridges built during the Fifth Reign, the so-called "golden age" of bridge-building in the capital. It is noteworthy to realize that the engineering calculations were usually figured out by European visitors under the king's patronage, while designers from Italy, France, and Germany created the monuments on paper. Prince Naris during the Fifth Reign period apparently became the first Siamese architect to employ Thai designs in the standardized prototypes, although even he was strongly under the influence of the former models constructed throughout the capital, as well as the popular Art Nouveau style. One cannot help but be impressed by the engineering achievements that allow for the continued service of a few large bridges which still sustain the weight of the vast volume of modern traffic, including heavy lorries, i.e. the Panfarleelars and Makawan Rungsun Bridges.

Professor Sirichai has included a map of part of the capital and its complex waterways system indicating the important old bridges existing at the present time. The number is pitifully small—only 16 in all. The map is valuable, but this reviewer feels that the author should also have given the page numbers of the bilingual annotated remarks accompanying these splendid monuments. For those readers who glance through his book the first time, such a guideline for the surviving works would be useful.

The author makes a passionate plea for the continued maintenance of these and other historic bridges so that they will not become victims of so-called "progress", a fate that has befallen scores of others described in the text. Unfortunately the brief comments giving information about the now non-existent bridges often do not provide the reader with the exact date when they were demolished, nor does the author divulge what precisely replaced them.

The author, however, cites one instance of a bridge having been restored to its former glory, the Charng Rongsee Bridge (p. 137), an example which should be followed. He also includes data about the lovely Charlern Sawan 58 Bridge (pp. 67-69) in need of a suitable place to be re-erected. One immediately thinks of parks such as Lumpini, Thon Buri, or Chaturachak (now under construction), or some large, privately-owned public garden as a likely spot to rebuild the elegant structure for both the enjoyment and the educational benefit of Siamese posterity. At least this bridge was preserved to the extent that its components are in storage. Most of the other examples were merely left to the ravages of time until they were dismantled to make way for more utilitarian constructions tending to lack any semblance of estheticism.

At the conclusion of the book, the author mentions a few small Thon Buri-Bangkok bridges which, owing to one reason or another, do still exist, albeit in a somewhat forlorn state. Many of these simple structures were sponsored by private donors rather than members of the royal family. Non-professional people, including monks, designed and built them. Their preservation may partially be due to the fact that Thon Buri is able to withstand the pressures of change and urban development better than modern Bangkok where almost every square inch seems to be utilized for some purpose, usually mercantile. These unpretentious bridges are mute testimonies of a bygone era, and we suspect that even such quaint constructions which are tucked away in odd corners of the metropolis will go the way of the larger monuments within the next 20 years. One wonders whether the prophecy of the author's final dark photo-



graph suggesting the bleak future of the capital's bridges will come true. The somewhat pessimistic scenario indicates in a characteristically Buddhist way that all things in this phenomenal world are subject to change and deterioration.

The scholarship and format are of a high order. Only one minor error is apparent to the eye of this reader: the Ubolratana Bridge (described on p. 135) is actually on Pahurat Road, according to city maps, and not as stated on Ban Moh Road, although the two roads do intersect in the same neighborhood at some distance to the east of the bridge. It is also rather unfortunate that greater editorial care was not taken in the mechanical production of this volume, for inconsistencies in spelling, capitalization, and other typographical errors frequently occur, particularly in the English translation. In regard to the Thai text itself, this exactly parallels the English version. Yet I prefer not to commit myself on either technical or stylistic considerations in regard to this, since Thai is not my native language. However, the Thai text is straightforward and factual, and lacks the usual verbosity often associated with many historical and architectural treatises.

All things considered, there is a wealth of authoritative information to welcome the reader, be he conservationist, historian, or just an architecture buff interested in bridges of Western and Eastern modes.

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### **The Ancient Thai Art of Vegetable Carving**

*Sumitra Narain; photographed by Alberto Cassio and Luca Invernizzi  
Bangkok, Media Transasia Thailand Ltd., 1977  
59 pp., illus.; 150 baht (US \$ 7.50)*

Mrs. Sumitra Narain has produced a beautifully illustrated and clearly written book on the art of carving vegetables. It will be found useful by advanced students as well as by beginners. There are eight chapters, each dealing with one of the main vegetables or fruits which can be carved: cucumbers, radishes, tomatoes, chillies, onions, watermelons, pineapples, papayas and carrots. Each chapter consists of a double page of numbered instructions together with excellent and simple line illustrations, followed by a double page of gorgeous colour photographs suggesting ways in which the designs can be used. The last chapter of the book is for advanced students, and shows how to carve roses, chrysanthemums and dahlias out of such mundane vegetables as pumpkins, carrots and turnips. The book ends with several pages of colour photographs which are vivid testimony to the author's dexterity, ingenuity and artistic good taste.

Indeed this is such an attractive production that it should appeal to a wide variety of purchasers, even as a "coffee-table" volume alone. I must point out that the book does not cover the entire subject indicated by the title, however. Vegetable garnishing is well known in many countries, and the book shows many styles. But there are three unique aspects of vegetable carving in Thailand which Mrs. Narain has not mentioned.

On page 9 Mrs. Narain shows us the instruments needed for carving vegetables today; but in the old days a Thai lady would have relied almost entirely on a small, very sharp penknife which she would always have with her, hanging unobtrusively with her keys from her silver-filigree belt on a keyring formed rather like a large safety-pin. A good example of the quality of work Thai ladies could produce with this single implement is the series of beautiful broaches carved by H.R.H. Princess Nabhaporn, Krom Luang Tiparat, the aunt of Prince Boripat. When travelling by train in South Africa before the last World War, she began to experiment at carving African "ivory nuts" to pass away the time. Soon she found she could carve them into beautiful flowers, following the style of Thai vegetable carving and using only her penknife. These are now treasured by members of her family, set with semiprecious stones and used as pins or brooches.

Secondly, there is no mention of carving of Thai plum or apricot (*Bonea burmanica* Griff. Anacardiaceae ; มะขาม) which in fact was considered the highest accomplishment of the ancient art. Indeed a competition was held every year at Sanam Luang during the Seventh Reign for the carving of this fruit alone. One needed a set of special knives, delicately made and each with its own function. They were made of bronze, and the best ones came from China.



Thirdly, the author has stressed the use of fruit and vegetable carving to decorate the dining table or even as part of a Japanese *ikebana* flower arrangement, whereas the ancient Thai concoction was intended to be eaten! Assorted edible roots such as turmeric, ginger and okra would be carved and placed upon the table at every meal, accompanied by their appropriate sauce or dip (usually a kind of *nam prik* or a '*lon*'). The greatest occasion for the display of this art was a Songkran celebration when *khao chae* ("iced rice") was served. It consisted of a bowl of boiled and perfumed rice, chilled in ice and surrounded with many dishes of carved fruit and vegetables, such as raw mangoes, turmeric roots, cucumbers and spring onions. This was considered the apogee of the art, and would take two days to prepare.

It is unfortunate that omissions such as these make the title of Mrs. Narain's book somewhat misleading. But as a book of instruction on fruit and vegetable carving, and as a book of photographs of that art as practised by an expert, it deserves to be in every household.

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**The Lampang Field Station: A Scandinavian Research Center in Thailand, 1969-1974: Reports**

*ed. by Søren Egerod and Per Sørensen*

*Copenhagen, The Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies, 1976; 302 pp.*

The Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies operated a field station in Lampang from 1969 to 1974, under the direction of Per Sørensen. The volume under review is a collection of interim reports on their work by a majority of the researchers associated with the field station. The projects outlined cover a broad range of interests and disciplines, including religion, folklore, linguistics, history, ethnomusicology, agronomy, archeology, literature, and material culture. The style of presentation in most of the reports is chatty rather than scholarly, and reads more like a tourist brochure than the results of serious research. The quality of scholarship exhibited by the great majority of the contributors is, quite frankly, appalling.

Most of the reports are impressionistic and imprecise in their treatment of raw data. Hans Haagensen's sketch of the human geography and domestic architecture of a Lampang village (pp. 54-71) is accompanied by well-executed maps and drawings and comes to some interesting conclusions concerning the effects of socio-economic change on family organization and the plan of residential compounds, but the economic data offered is anything but precise. We are told, for example, that "rice amounts to approximately 70 per cent of the agricultural production" (p. 62), without being told the means by which this percentage was calculated (relative weight of yield, labour input, cash value, or land under cultivation). Haagensen notes further that because of the primitive state of agricultural technology in the village, "production is still down to a minimum" (p.64), whatever that means. Several research projects appear to have eschewed any degree of originality or of meticulousness in the collection of data. Viggo Brun's list of northern Thai spirits and ritual specialists (pp. 103-109) does not offer any data that has not already been published by other researchers. Vagn Plenge's latest field trip to Thailand was devoted to "collecting stories and tales in general and, more particularly, stories related to the Ramayana" (p.111), yet the author reveals rather ingenuously that "the written 'Raamaahian', or 'Phrá Lág Phrá Raam' of Khonmyang [i.e. of the northern Thai] probably could have been found in some *wat* (temple) . . . but there was no time for it" (p. 112). Such work is to be taken seriously?

A great many—perhaps a majority—of the reports are given to clichés in their characterizations of Thai society and culture. Anchern and Bengt Andersson's report on the social and cultural determinants of the Thai education system (pp. 165-174) inevitably lists religion as an important influence. Characteristically Buddhist values specified as relevant are "respect for the older, moderation in living, and gratitude for what you have" (p. 170), characterizations which any thoughtful observer would have difficulty in defending as peculiarly Thai or peculiarly Buddhist. Ron Ohayv prefaces some interesting comments on Buddhist meditation as a psychotherapeutic technique (pp. 189-198) with the rather trite and certainly inaccurate ob-



servation that "... we Westerners may learn to meditate as a hobby, to relax or to calm down, or to improve concentration. But Buddhists do so in a temporary but total effort, to understand the laws of the mind, or to lose desires and attachments in order to gain lasting satisfaction" (p. 189).

Matti Sarmela's study of Westernization in Lampang (pp. 155-163) involved work in the town of Lampang, a large village near the town, another village farther away, and a small collection of hamlets in the mountains. This is similar to the scheme used by Redfield in *The Folk Culture of Yucatan*. Since Redfield's study dates from the late 1930s, we can expect some advance over him in theoretical sophistication. Instead, we find an assumption similar to Redfield's but without his elegance and apparently without any familiarity with more recent urban studies: "cultural anthropologists recognize an increasing danger in the metropolitan or urban standards, which threaten not only ethnic cultures as a way of life but also man's need for cultural identification and ethnicity" (p. 155). In fact, in urban studies conducted within the past two decades, cultural anthropologists have been discovering the very opposite process in many cases: a growth rather than a decline in tribal or ethnic identity as a concomitant of urbanization (e.g. Batak migrants to Medan, Yoruba traders in Ibadan); and the presence of very rich but at the same time truly urban cultures (e.g. urban black communities in the USA). This same naive assumption that urbanization and modernization inevitably involve some sort of cultural breakdown appears in Thomsen's report on the town of Lampang (pp. 2-26), along with bad English: "most of the wooden buildings are not very old compared with our [i.e. Scandinavian] stone buildings, rarely more than 100 years... But it is the sad truth that due to many co-existent factors the wood plays a less important role as building material being replaced by concrete and asbestos-cement causing a complete condemnation of the traditional architecture in favour of bad imitations from other cultures" (p. 6). In a similar vein, Sarmela frowns upon the advent of miniskirts and laments that "happiness [in modern-day Lampang Province] is an illusion provided by the technological culture of fashionable metropolitan man" (p. 159).

Other trite generalizations lead the reader to suspect that many of the projects were not carried out as serious research: "every society has its own characteristics" (Andersson and Andersson, p. 167); "traditionally the kings of Southeast Asia were considered as gods" (Sonne, p. 84); "the traditional Thai and Yao practitioners treat their patients with rituals or with substances not generally accepted by the current international medical tradition" (Århem, p. 135). These statements clearly do not anticipate any degree of sophistication from readers of the reports.

There are, however, a few reports which would be of interest to a sophisticated specialist audience, which suggests a lack of consistent editorial policy concerning the level of audience at which the collection is aimed. Birgitte Bukh on the legal code of Rama I (pp. 199-206), Søren Egerod and Inga-Lill Hansson on Akha sentence particles (pp. 231-241), and Anders Jørgensen on Pwo Karen swidden cultivation (pp. 275-287) have all conducted meticulous and original research. Kirsten Andersen's study of Karen religion (pp. 269-274), which explores the dichotomization of sacred activity centering around the Buddhist monk and the *bóungkhó*

or village priest, reveals some fascinating complementarities and oppositions between the two roles; it also encourages a critical perspective on the stereotyped dichotomy of Thai minorities as either "Buddhist" or "animist". Andersen's study, unlike that of most of his colleagues, fulfils the promise of serious research which one would expect the Lampang Field Station to have facilitated.

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The best chapters in this section, "The system of urban places" and the three succeeding ones, combine to render a vivid picture of the Thai capitals from the Sukhothai period to modern Bangkok Metropolis, covering a span of more than 700 years. The descriptions evoke a past unfamiliar even to many Thais, indicating an admirable grasp of the historical material. One omission, however, is the lack of coverage of the political evolution of the country during the past 50 years. Also, the traditional influence of Buddhism on Thai culture and habit must be more extensively explored if the social environment of Thailand is to be properly understood.

The final section, on the economic environment, is a comprehensive report on various economic sectors of significance to the country. Of course, the figures quoted only take the reader up to the time that the book was written. Such reporting, based on trends perceived in data of a specific period, always has to risk becoming outdated whenever the economic situation changes.

This book represents an understanding of the Thai environment through the eyes of an Australian who spent more than a decade in this country. In this respect, the author has succeeded in more than a few ways. This product of experience and an extensive literature search certainly is recommended reading, particularly for visitors or would-be visitors to this country. It is no small accomplishment to be able to portray in such broad scope and fine detail the many facets of the Thai landscape, physical and human. In closing, I cannot help feeling regretful that in this decade of the 1970s it still requires a foreigner to portray Thailand to the world.

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## Thailand

*photo. by Hans Johannes Hoefer, ed. by Charles Levine*

*Apa Photo Guides No. 5; Singapore, APA Productions, 1977*

*310 + x pp., 230 colorplates, 13 maps, index; US\$ 7.95 softcover, \$11.95 casebound*

The concept for the Apa Photo Guides was created by Mr. Hans Johannes Hoefer, who is also the photographer and has illustrated the text produced by eight writers. The book is dedicated to the people of Thailand, and produced according to the foreword "with painstaking care to make it a worthy companion and aid for the traveller, photographer, student, and stay-at-home reader". Conveniently combining the textual and photographic coverage with maps, index and glossary, the volume also contains a 15-page "Guide in brief" which includes information on travel formalities, weather, clothing, hygiene, electricity, currency, business hours, communications, the media, courtesy and custom, festivals and fairs by month of occurrence, shopping tips, recommended reading, Thai foods, a Thai menu, and an overview of the Thai language, including useful expressions.

Visually the Apa Guide to Thailand is without peer at this writing. From its vibrant orange cover with its photograph of a young Buddhist novice holding a red umbrella, through the other photographs of mostly the same high quality which illustrate the text, many of the beauties of Thailand are presented for the permanent pleasure of those who have access to this guide. Photographer Hoefer has a keen eye for using human subjects to highlight or complement the inanimate objects in his photographs. Stone carvings at Phimai are brought to life by four young Thais (p. 12). An enormous and lurid movie poster hovers above, indeed dwarfs, soberly clad passersby below (p.38). A versatile, quick-footed fellow helps to propel a garland-like train of bamboo floats down the River Khwae (p. 112), reminding this reviewer of 'log runs' in western Oregon, western USA. And in ancient Kamphaeng Phet Hoefer contributes a Piranesi-like touch, in the form of a diminutive visitor admiring the image at Wat Phra Keo (p. 126), to the classical setting of ruined grandeur and nostalgia.

Dramatic jewels on paper set in a variety sizes and colours, these creations of Hoefer mesmerize and educate the viewer. We traverse Thailand seeing it through his eyes, and with the help of his camera realize anew how beautiful and colourful the country is. Photographs, of course, are worth many words, and we come to realize this as we look at Bangkok disappearing in the evening haze (pp. 42-43), mentally walk into the hills of northern Thailand (pp. 136-137), stare at the northern woman who smokes her cheroot unaware that we are watching (pp. 142-143), confront again the young novice from the cover as he walks with friends (p. 164), look at the giant stone lions not far from Mae Hong Son which must stand 20 feet tall (p. 169), witness the enthralling spectacle of the sunset over the ricefields of Issan (pp. 184-185), or see, perhaps for the first time, the gigantic alabaster Buddha image on the hillside not far from the Friendship Highway en route to Nakhon Ratchasima (p. 193). From the arid splendor



of northeastern Thailand, Hoefer takes us to the eastern Gulf area, and even introduces us to a "polished blue sapphire" which adorns the index finger of the gem vendor (p. 232). Alas, it is one of the few poor illustrations, so we cannot appreciate the legendary beauty of the blue sapphires of Thailand.

No travel book, of course, is perfect. And even Hoefer has to have better luck with some shots than with others. His views of the south are disappointing. The photographs are not as evocative, nor are they as well displayed. What should have been beautiful shots of Phuket and Phang Nga are dim, poorly reproduced, lacking the sense of specific detail that enlivens the scenes of other regions of Thailand. The distinctive charm of such deep-south parts as Songkhla, Yala and Haadyai was not palpably recorded. For the south in general, too much is crammed into too small a space. With another 12 to 24 pages and a better layout, this section could have done justice to the genuine native beauty of this region. One hopes the revised edition of *Thailand* by Apa will correct this deficiency.

The maps, provided in each regional section of the book and clearly identifying the general areas referred to in the text, prove to be rather a disappointment in a book otherwise so lavishly illustrated. They are simply a gross reference and adjunct to the text, but not sufficient in themselves (with the exception of a few of specific local areas) to take us along the routes described and photographed.

Accompanying the illustrations is the text written by eight men and women: William Warren, Star Black, Robert Burrows, Jerry Dillon, Nancy Grace, Frank Green, John Stirling and Tony Wheeler. They provide interesting anecdotes with which to enliven conversations. For example, in the "Portraits of contemporaries" section, on page 25, the reader learns that tattoos are regarded as effective in warding off evil, and that this protection was demonstrated when a French firing squad, upon request of the first Thai ambassador to the Court of Louis XIV, fired on him and his tattoo, but could not harm him because the bullets fell to the ground without reaching their target. In a subsequent section (p. 28) the role of Thai women is examined favourably, the conclusion being that women in Thailand are the principal domestic decision-makers so far as financial matters are concerned. On page 30 there is a revealing and even-minded sketch of the contemporary role of the army in Thailand (skillfully reflected in an accompanying photograph). On page 39 Thai movies are discussed — it is in such attempts at timely writing that the reader becomes aware of the text's pitfalls. Situations change, movie fans find new favourites. A guidebook, perhaps, should not attempt to contain too much of current "news".

The authors have attempted to be *au courant*, however, to bring to their readers a sense of Thailand today, and to do this they must present Thai people and the times in which they write, not only inanimate objects or the past. They have attempted, for example, to divide what is present-day Bangkok into geographic categories: "Early royal Bangkok", "Later royal Bangkok", "Military Bangkok", "Chinese Bangkok", "Old tourist Bangkok", "New tourist Bangkok", "New residential Bangkok", "Even newer residential Bangkok", and "Principal Thai markets". Turn to page 49 and see if you agree. And there is a map entitled "Key to touring Bangkok" (pp. 50-51), which warns the reader firmly "Map not drawn to scale".



In their descriptions of the temples of Bangkok and the splendours of the "inner city", the reader of Apa's *Thailand* will probably be happy with content and presentation. However, dates and details in other guidebooks are not always consistent with the Apa version. In *Thailand* the authors write that "Wat Benchamabopitr, the 'Marble Temple', was started by King Chulalongkorn in 1901 and finished ten years later..." (p. 71). In the second edition of *Discovering Thailand* by Clarac and Smithies, published in 1971, the authors state that Wat Benchamabopitr "was built by King Chulalongkorn in 1899" (p. 103). In Nagel's *Encyclopedia Guide to Thailand* (first edition 1971), the author writes that Wat Benchamabopitr was built in 1899, and provides several paragraphs of the earlier history of the area and what originally stood on the site. According to Nagel, there were 53 bronze statues on display in the gallery. Apa gives a current count of 51 Buddha images. Clarac and Smithies simply advise that there were assembled by King Chulalongkorn "the country's finest examples of bronze Buddha statues in the cloister so as to present a complete iconography" (p. 105). A booklet entitled "Wat Benchamabopitr: The Marble Temple" sold on the temple grounds (no author or date given; publ. by Siripat Co.) describes how the Temple is actually an amalgam of two older temples, begun in 1899 and completed the next year, which displays in its galleries "more than 50 different images of the Lord Buddha". Ms. Helen Bruce in *Nine Temples of Bangkok* published in 1960 by Chalermnit Book Shop, writes that King Chulalongkorn decided to restore the temple completely in 1899. Her description is more comprehensive than those of the other authors, and readers may wish to refer to it at their leisure. The text is embellished with nine black-and-white illustrations. The sixth revised edition of *Guide to Bangkok* by Thong-in Soonsawad, published December 1973, states that Wat Benchamabopitr "is one of the most beautiful temples made of marble... built over 70 years ago by the order of the King of Thailand". Even so eminent a scholar as Professor Rong Syamananda of Chulalongkorn University in his well-documented *A History of Siam* does not specify the date of the construction of the Marble Temple: in describing the accomplishments of King Chulalongkorn, the author writes "he practically rebuilt Wat Benchamabopitr which is to-day recognized as a gem of modern Thai Buddhist architecture known as the Marble Temple" (p. 127, 2nd ed., 1973). Thus, in comparatively easily available guide or reference books on one subject, Wat Benchamabopitr, and more specifically on its age and the size of its continuing exhibition of Buddha statues, the reader is confronted with a lack of consensus and any reason for the disparity between reports on the facts.

Returning, in conclusion, more generally to the text of Apa's *Thailand*, it is only fair to warn the reader that this particular guidebook should not be used by itself while travelling in Thailand. Easy and pleasant to read, it tends to be imprecise in giving directions, although this varies and one detects inconsistencies, almost as though the different authors did not always include the same definitive order of details; this in turn must have created problems for the Editor Charles Levine who was not able to be at every site itself as he put together the various portions from his contributors.

Travelling, of course, is done in as many different ways as there are travellers. Apa's *Thailand*, then, is perhaps a perfect reading selection for the armchair traveller, or an introduction to the variety of the land, but it cannot serve alone as the precise tool many will require



on the scene. In discussing the south, for example, the text advises that "travelers in no particular hurry should break their journey in several provinces to see attractions otherwise passed after dark. You can set off from railway towns on bus, taxi, or boat for a varied and thorough appreciation of the south" (p. 245). In later specific textual references to various southern cities the specificity improves, but we might wish there had been a little more precision and appreciation for cultural and language differences. Younger travellers may, indeed, be anxious to "set off", but would their parents or older friends?

This guidebook, then, offers readers a new vision of Thailand in colour, and a light and entertaining text. Acquire it, by all means, for it is pleasing visually and very likely will make you want to know more about the country, if you reside outside Thailand or are a new resident. Individuals who have lived here for several years will find flaws in the text, most likely, but they too will delight in the wonderland created by Hans Johannes Hoefer.

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**Communist Party Power in Kampuchea (Cambodia): Documents and Discussion**

*comp. and ed. by Timothy Michael Carney*

*Southeast Asia Program Data Paper No. 106*

*Ithaca, New York; Cornell University, 1977; 68 pp., maps; US \$4.50*

Mr Carney is a US Foreign Service Officer with three years' experience (1972-1975) in Phnom Penh. His perceptive and useful study begins with an introduction, "Continuity in Cambodian Communism", tracing the history of the Cambodian Communist Party (under various names, it has survived since 1951), and the policies of Democratic Kampuchea through the middle of 1976. Carney has mastered the secondary literature, some of it in Khmer and much of it hard to find, about the party and its policies. The second part of his book (pp. 27-62) consists of translations of five Cambodian texts. Three of these are pieces of Party ephemera dating from 1973 and 1975. The other two, written by a former schoolteacher, Ith Sarin, in 1973 (published and republished in Phnom Penh, 1973-1974), report on his travel and indoctrination, in 1972, in Communist-controlled zones. A comparison of the Cambodian text with Carney's translation reveals that he has an excellent grasp of colloquial and Party language<sup>1</sup>. Ith Sarin's account is unique. Wherever it can be verified from other sources, it stands up very well; in any case, it is the most extended and objective document of its kind. Cambodia-watchers will find it useful in pinpointing people inside the Communist leadership before 1973; others will find it helpful as a study of rural life in the process of transformation from one characterized by ramshackle and not especially systematic injustice (although this increased in the late 1960s) to the regime currently in power, which sees no point in coining money or sponsoring a postal system.

Carney's analysis of the doctoral dissertations of two present-day Cambodian leaders, Hu Nim and Khieu Samphan, is useful and judicious. After looking at their Marxian views of the Cambodian economy (Khieu Samphan's written in Paris in the 1950s, Hu Nim's in Phnom Penh a decade later), Carney asserts that "the case for a rural tinderbox remains to be proved". He is referring here, of course, to two analyses of **pre-war** Cambodian society—that is, before the massacres, the bombing, and "liberation". To say that Hu Nim and Khieu Samphan are on shaky ground, historically, is one thing; to assert (and Carney is careful not to do so) that a recognizable Cambodian society was being built between 1970-1975, or could be reconstructed by anyone thereafter, is something else. Moreover, the changes in the late 1960s, also, especially demographic ones, were enormous, and this meant that there was far more pressure on Cambodian land in this period than there had been in the (comparatively) idyllic years of the French Protectorate. The disaffection of the young, the increasing corruption (ironically fostered in large part by trading with the New Liberation Front) of the elite and the armed forces, combined with local conditions about which we know little, to produce enough of a

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<sup>1</sup> He has also provided (pp. 65-68) a useful "Khmer Communist glossary".



tinderbox, at least in the northwest and parts of Kampong Cham, to support a Communist-led revolution as early as 1968<sup>2</sup>.

Carney's account of the growth of the Cambodian Communist doctrine in the 1970s, distancing itself from its Indochinese past, is intelligent and helpful. Unfortunately, I think, he plays down the havoc wrought on Cambodian society by the behemoth of US aid after 1970 and the bombing program of 1973 — surely one of the most squalid episodes in a drawn-out, squalid intervention. It was in this period, of course, that the Communist Party gained the support it needed in the countryside to win the war. This is not to fall into the trap, however, of asserting that all the refugees — or even most of them — in Republican zones were fleeing American bombing *per se*: they were fleeing for their lives, and felt they could live longer in Republican zones, even after the bombing stopped, in the middle of 1973.

Carney's book adds nothing to the polemic that has raged from right and left about the rights and wrongs of the Cambodian revolution. In fact, it is a curiously restrained book for such an unhappy subject. But the documents he translates, and the clear-headed interpretation he gives of Party policies and actions, will be more useful to scholars a few years from now, I think, than much that is said these days without access to meaningful data.

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<sup>2</sup> See Ben Kiernan, *The Samlaut Rebellion and its Aftermath, 1967-1970*, Working Papers 4-5, Monash University Center for South-East Asian Studies, 1975.

**At Our Wit's Beginning: An Invitation to Anthropology**

*by Peter I. Wilson, ill. by Murray Webb*

*Otago University Studies in Prehistoric Anthropology No. 10*

*Dunedin, New Zealand; University of Otago, 1976*

A witty and learned commentary on the development of man, this book is intended for the wider public as well as for the initiate. It is not only concerned with the evolution of man, man as the object of the essay, but also man as the subject of anthropology in general. Accordingly it moves across a very broad front at such a speed that one is quite out of breath trying to keep pace with it. It provides neat summations of Marxist social theories and Durkheimian sociology down to Lévi-Strauss, with a disarming disclaimer in the bibliography section of not claiming to be authoritative. It contains oblique or direct references, elaborated in some cases in a bibliographical note from the works of Darwin to Jane Goodall, from Frazer to Mary Douglas, from Freud to Keith Campbell's *Body and Mind* and Sir John Eccles's *Understanding the Brain*, from Immanuel Kant to Wittgenstein, to Sartre, to Ayer, Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn and finally to Castaneda, with a host of other authorities in between. The reason for choosing this course is best explained in the author's own words.

By and large I followed Frazer, tempering eclecticism with some detailed consideration of a case study. I have done so because I wanted to introduce the reader to as much of the variety of Anthropology as I could within the confines of a short essay. (p. 96)

This the author endeavours to do in the form of an "overture" in precisely 94 pages. Thus as the author says the subject ranges from "Australian Aborigines to Roman architects to bearded nineteenth-century scientists and philosophers". In the face of such a display of erudition one must tread with some trepidation indeed. One false step and one could end up on the wrong branch of the evolutionary tree, with no means of communication with the main trunk. One is certainly impressed by the proficiency and wit, and a little dazzled, but the nagging doubt remains among the neophytes such as I am, to whom this essay is presumably largely addressed, whether one has come away any better informed.

The interesting thread that runs through the essay is the question of whether the basis for human development is individual, and therefore biological, or whether it is social and therefore peculiarly human, or whether in fact the social is resolvable into the biological. It is not completely clear which side of the divide the author favours, "between the attempt to understand human nature by the individualistic approach and the attempt to convey understanding by a collective approach" (p. 93). These two approaches are contrasted in the concluding section by taking as examples the approach to the anthropological discipline by Castaneda, and and by Lévi-Strauss. While the author claims to take a neutral stand because "the subjective that



the objective are characteristically human attributes, [and] to make such a choice can only result in a partial understanding of human nature and the nature of the species itself" (p. 94), he nevertheless indicates a few paragraphs earlier that "my tone may betray my own leanings". These leanings however are not consistent, for although as a professional anthropologist he casts his lot with Lévi-Strauss ("I cannot help feeling, myself, that Lévi-Strauss has opened a door that was once locked whereas Castaneda has told us that the door is always locked"), yet the development of some of the arguments might conceivably mislead one to conclude otherwise. Thus on page two he states "I have tried to convey the anthropological view that although our mode of experiencing the world depends on our theories of the world, that is on what our minds hold it to be, our test of these theories, our criteria for selection, acceptance and rejection are in the long run the hard facts of the world" (i.e. independent of culture and society ??)— "the body or its extension proves the mind right or wrong". Moreover, the triggering mechanism for human development, the author argues, is primarily biological and only secondarily social. It lies in fact in our upright posture and bipedal locomotion, producing a narrowed birth canal and consequently a greater need for postnatal development in the infant, which led to a mother-child bond; and secondly in the "continued sexual receptivity in human females [which] lays the basis for a continued attachment between a male and a female" (p.9). Out of these two overlapping relationships arises a whole set of metarelations which are independent of the biological and which lay the foundation for the development of the species. Again in the concluding chapter the author states "I have argued as a rationalist, and I have stressed that among the crucial factors responsible for human evolution and human nature is **rational strategic thought which has produced the vast apparatus of culture**" (p. 91; emphasis mine). This kind of argument is difficult to appreciate for students of anthropology unless enlarged considerably more, though probably it is perfectly legitimate within the Western tradition of epistemological enquiry. In social anthropology it seems to bypass altogether Marx and Durkheim, without providing sufficient reason for doing so unless the author's argument is reduced to a tautology.

Nevertheless the essay is often provocatively inspiring. The comments on kinship, incest and marriage provide a new interest on much discussed subjects (it is a pity in this respect the writings of Rodney Needham were not discussed\*). The argument that the Iks of Colin Turnbull's *The Mountain People* in their destitution while manifesting callousness were in fact affirming their humanity, and not denying it as Turnbull accuses (p.54 *et seq.*), that they were carrying out reciprocity "literally" by giving and taking of their own selves in the absence of anything else to give, is an argument that is perhaps open to the charge of being ingenious. To suggest as Wilson does that for Engels the survival of the fittest implies that "because a certain 'class' of people contributes labour and thereby enables human societies to survive, that they, **rather than any other class**, are the fittest to survive" (p. 86; emphasis mine) is I think simply mischievous. It deliberately ignores the fact that all of Engel's arguments are based on dialectical and historical materialism and cannot be simplified the way it has been done. But

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\* *Rethinking Kinship and Marriage*, Rodney Needham, ed., A.S.A. (11), 1971.

these are minor quibbles perhaps and probably intentionally presented to have the effect they do, i.e. to be provocative. The point presumably is to have fun since the author's avowed intention is to provide "light yet enlightening reading" (p. 1).

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