

# REVIEWS

Soedjatmoko, **Development and Culture** (The Simul Press, Tokyo, 1983).

There exists, to date, an ocean of literature on "development". Even the qualification that Dr. Soedjatmoko writes about development from the standpoint of the Third World is hardly significant because the central problems of development are posed by the Third World. The thrust of his argument also appears familiar. The book comprises three parts :

- I. Development and Human Rights
- II. Development and Human Needs
- III. Development and Human Growth

which were delivered, separately, in the form of the Ishizaka Lectures during March 1979. Dr. Soedjatmoko reminds us that it is an error to equate modernization with westernization because it is dangerous to adhere to dogma based on the rationales and values of the advanced industrial nations : another lash at the favourite whipping boy of Third World intellectuals – western development theory. And the mortal sin committed by that kind of theory, for which the latter's opponents never cease to reiterate, consists in the tendency to conceive of development as merely the fulfilment of economic and material needs. The reaction to this stifling materialism of western development theory is to push the discussion beyond the material needs of the Third World.

What is really new and stimulating are the profundity of Soedjatmoko's observations, the incisiveness of his formulations, the authenticity of his voice, the power and coherence of his arguments as well as his awareness of the universal dimensions of the problem, and the absence of ready solutions if there are any at all. He called upon the best minds in Japanese institutions of higher learning to join him in what must often be a very lonely search for a more adequate theory of development that can do justice to the relevant totality of the Third World. In particular, he wants to share reflections on the most vexing and important unresolved problems of our time – the relationship between development and freedom.

The theme of development and freedom is a poignant one for Indonesian intellectuals. Military dominance has cast a long shadow over the history of Indonesia since the birth of the Republic. Unlike Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, who used to maintain that the question of freedom and equity are luxuries which may only be entertained after a certain level of prosperity has been achieved, Soedjatmoko appears to be groping

for a concept of development that incorporates freedom. Perhaps, the most important challenge to development consists in how to achieve material and social change with order and justice. The elements of change, order and justice are inseparable from development. Indeed, development and rapid social transformation should never lose sight of the need to maintain a triangular equilibrium between change, order and justice in a manner which would enhance human freedom in society.

But Dr. Soedjatmoko is well aware that development, today, occurs within the framework of the nation state. The nation state often provides poor soil for human freedom to flourish. Indeed, a strong bureaucratic state is too rigid an instrument for managing complex social transformation and, at the prevailing level of bureaucratic efficiency, a strong state can be self-defeating. He suggests that the present framework is too restrictive for true development to occur and implies that there can be no effective solution of Third World under-development unless there is a radical change in attitudes embodied in a new civilization or world order.

Not only does the future of the Third World depend upon an enlightened world order with responsible participation of the industrialized countries but "whether or not the Third World will be able to develop into relatively free and open societies in which poverty is eradicated, will determine, to a great extent, the possibilities for a future of freedom and justice for the whole of mankind (p. 9)" Therefore, it is short-sighted, of some industrialized countries, to use the basic needs argument as an excuse to reduce their aid levels in order "to keep the Third World non competitive largely pastoral societies, although maybe a little better fed, housed and educated (p. 43)".

Equally if not more important than participation by the industrialized countries is participation by Third World peoples themselves in shaping and improving their own future. Development should not become a system of alien imposed opportunities. He sees the inescapable necessity of broadening the social base for development and releasing the untapped energies of Third World peoples. In order for development to succeed it will be necessary to restore the self-confidence of people degraded by poverty and tap the deepest impulses of a culture. For Soedjatmoko, development must be development in the local idiom and the use of available technologies must be sufficiently selective so as not to violate the sense of morality and justice inherent in a people's value system.

*Jeffrey Sng*

Bangkok



C.I. Itty, ed., **Searching for Asian Paradigms: Contribution of Youth to the Promotion of Social Goals and Cultural Values in the Development Process** (Bangkok, Asian Cultural Forum on Development, 1984).

Mankind faces extinction through nuclear holocaust or environmental catastrophe. A nuclear war can destroy the earth within minutes. An exploding population and its unprecedented assault on the earth's life-support systems will result in collapse within years. Whether it be 20, 50, 100 or 150 years is rather academic. Future competition for basic resources and needs such as food, clothing and shelter will become unimaginably intense. With the present-day quality of life rapidly deteriorating, especially in Third World developing countries, the urban apocalypse is now. The poor are being increasingly marginalized and oppressed. There can be little doubt that certain development efforts have actually impoverished the poor and worsened their situation. Pollution of the air and water to levels of contamination resulting in irreparable damage to the physical and mental health of *everyone* is not only commonplace, but actually thrives in the name of "development" and economic growth.

What kind of a future life on earth is being offered to the youth of Asia? Social and political conflict continues throughout the world. Confrontation becomes increasingly violent. Traditional co-operative spirit in local Asian communities is being replaced by competition and self-interest. What can be the future role of youth in attempting to avert imminent collapse?

In November 1981 an Expert Group Meeting was held at Chiangmai, Thailand, sponsored by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the World Council of Churches and the Asian Cultural Forum on Development. The 32 participants from 12 countries of Asia (as well as the Federal Republic of Germany and New Zealand) included government officers in charge of development planning or youth affairs, religious scholars, representatives of youth groups and staff of the sponsoring organizations. *Searching for Asian Paradigms*, published as a result of this Meeting, is a positive contribution toward understanding the development process and clarifying the potential role of youth in contributing toward social transformation in Third World developing countries. The volume consists of 11 articles divided into three sections. The first part deals with general issues regarding development, culture and values. The second part presents different religious and ideological perspectives on development in Asia. The third part is focused on the role of youth in the development process. Authors include C.I. Itty, Sulak Sivaraksa, Koson Srisang, Prawase Wasi, Kanarudin Jaffar, Kim Yong Bock, K. Mathew Kurian and Nancy Chng.



This book is intended to promote the belief that development in Asia requires new paradigms based on the cultural traditions, social realities and aspirations of the Asian people. "The most important reason why our planning and more importantly our implementation process failed," writes C.I. Itty, "was that planners gave inadequate attention to the social goals and cultural values in the development process." According to the editor, the contributors to this volume do not pretend to have discovered or developed a well-designed paradigm. They have only indicated certain directions for consideration by the reader. Within this context, the publication is eminently successful.

Unfortunately, however, this reviewer feels the book lacks a certain degree of depth and insight that is so desperately needed for comprehensive analysis of current development concepts and strategies, especially with regard to youth in Asia. C.I. Itty states in his introductory essay that the goals of the development process must include the fulfilment of basic needs, social justice, self-reliance, people's participation and a better quality of life. *Searching for Asian Paradigms* could have been a more useful and cohesive work if it had centred more on these concepts, especially in relation to developing a more constructive and comprehensive future role for youth. Significant contributions and efforts to enhance the involvement of youth by both governmental and non-governmental agencies are examined in Part III. It is the only section of the book, however, that directly attempts to describe and evaluate participation of Asian youth in development. In his essay entitled "Participation of Youth in National Development," C.I. Itty comments:

In many ways, youth is . . . a unique sector of the population. By and large, they are more idealistic, willing to give selfless service, sensitive to the needs of society, and open to new ideas and impulses than their elders. These characteristics of youth have great relevance to the development process. They are more open to national appeals for service, hard work and honest efforts. Their creativity and openness to new ideas and ways of life enable them to be effective agents of social change. Young people are also more mobile. They are more ready than others to move out of their own surroundings to live and work in other situations. They are also open to undertake new experiments . . . . Young people with these and other traits, abilities and energies can be a great asset to a nation in its striving towards development goals. (p. 115)

Within this context, the accompanying Report of the Expert Group Meeting entitled "Youth and Social Transformation" is regrettably disappointing.



This Report presents the following observation :

The people of Asia have traditionally been simple, peace-loving and honest, with a strong sense of community. Asians used to possess a rich spiritual, artistic and musical heritage. This was before the foreign colonizers came.

The foreign colonizers brought with them political and economic institutions and practices from the West which are alien to and not at pace with how the Asians think and act. They have introduced a system of education which is both irrelevant and elitist. Their concepts of property and their highly individualistic and competitive culture have destroyed and eroded our cultural traditions.

Asia is no longer ruled by colonial powers but by neo-colonialism. Our countries produce the agricultural and industrial requirements of foreign nations but we are forced to buy and consume more expensive finished products from them. Machinery, technology and raw materials have tied Asians to imperialist control in the name of import-saving industrialization. (p. 134)

There can be no justification for past and present-day exploitation of the Third World developing countries as a result of Western imperialism. What this reviewer finds fault with is the lack of a comprehensive analysis for clarifying the potential role of Asian youth in contributing toward the fulfilment of the stated goals of the development process, namely, the fulfilment of basic needs, social justice, self-reliance, people's participation and a better quality of life. The degradation of Asian cultural values and the quality of life is not exclusively the result of foreign colonizers. Self-reliance entails responsibility for one's own actions. Greed and self-interest is indigent and, indeed, prevalent throughout *both* the East and West. If the goal of development is to be reached, especially with regard to youth in Asia, the old social and political clichés of "colonizer" and "colonized" must be let go. As the Buddhist scholar D.T. Suzuki explains :

... the darkness of the cave itself turns into enlightenment when a torch of spiritual insight burns. It is not that a thing called darkness is first taken out and another thing known by the name of enlightenment is carried in later, but that enlightenment and darkness are substantially one and the same thing from the very beginning ... (*Essays in Zen Buddhism*, p. 25)

An imminent collapse of the entire social structure in *both* East and West is rapidly approaching. The belief that social transformation must be viewed as a political process is quickly losing its credibility, especially when confronted with an exploding population and impending environmental collapse. *Searching for Asian*

*Paradigms* fails to emphasize the significance of ecological implications. A discussion of youth in Asia must confront overpopulation and the gross environmental mismanagement and destruction due to basic greed and self-interest. The potential role of Asian youth in contributing toward a new type of social transformation must be one that is based on *moral* transformation. It is only when this issue is faced with true honesty and spiritual insight that any real development progress can be made. Regardless of its various limitations, *Searching for Asian Paradigms* provides a successful foundation for stimulating further discussion and analysis of alternative development goals and strategies for youth in Asia. "The search must go on" *but hopefully not forever.*

*Terry A. Silver*

Bangkok



S. Sivaraksa, *Chūang hāeng chīwit* (Bangkok, Samnakphim Thianwan, 2527 (1984) 652 pp.

When S. Sivaraksa writes in the epilogue to his autobiography that "Writing an autobiography like this is rather *farang* than Thai," he forgets some important considerations. The first piece of literature ever written in Thai is an autobiography. What I am referring to is, of course, the *Silāchāruk of Phōkhun Ramkhamhāeng*. Famous passages such as "My father is called Sī 'Intharāthit, my mother Nāng Sūang" and the story of the war of Sukhōthai with Mūang Chōt should remind us that Thai alphabets and the Thai tradition of autobiographical writing were simultaneously conceived. Moreover, a large part of the *sutta* in the Buddhist *Tripitaka* is unmistakably the Buddha's autobiography, albeit through the narration of Ānanda Bhikkhu. And consider those popular *Jātaka* (s) which become great pieces in Thai literature such as the *Vesantara-jātaka* and the other nine stories of the *Dasajātijātaka* series. The word "autobiography" does not quite do justice to the essence of these Buddhist texts. No matter how one wants to approach them, they are believed to be the Buddha's own account of his past lives.

In this sense, S. Sivaraksa's voluminous autobiography entitled "*Chūang hāeng chīwit*" (Phases of Life) should be regarded as an heir of both Thai and Buddhist literary heritages. The book comprises six phases in S. Sivaraksa's life beginning with a description of his maternal and paternal lineages. The other five phases account respectively for his birth, childhood and early school years, experience during the war, adolescence and youth, as well as his education abroad.

Whether one knows him personally or not, the pseudonym "S. Sivaraksa" always reminds one of a personality which is straightforward, incomplicant, and audacious. It also reminds one of a world-renowned intellectual figure who relates conservatism to radicalism and translates them into inexhaustible sources for social critique. It signifies the quest for the root of tradition, the need to comprehend one's own past whether individually or socially. Very few names, indeed, evoke such a rich and encompassing meaning. Thus when the owner of such a name reveals his own past and its relevant stories, enduring importance may be guaranteed for the result.

As a child, S. Sivaraksa was over-indulged. Being the only child born of his father and mother before their *de facto* divorce, he was the only bridge between many sensitive relationships. The boy knew it and manipulated his role very well. This tells us much about his audacity and incomplicant. Among the most distinct incidents was when he beat one of his aunts with a broomstick. Like many other incidents, he could get away with it; for no one dared to intervene. Even when another aunt



suggested that she bring the case to his father, she replied with grief, "That's no use, (his father) alway sides with his son; to him, I am a dog, while his son is an angel" (p. 248).

Nevertheless, the world of this little "angel" was not totally characterized by disorder and indulgence. It was rather a world in which authority and seniority had to incorporate justice and righteousness. The incident mentioned above happened thus because this aunt, being angry with him, said something insulting against his mother. This was an act against his sense of justice. And it is very consistent with the S. Sivaraksa we know of nowadays that, of all his intimate relatives, he feared one of his older cousins most. This older cousin, who was only a couple of years younger than his father, took the role of moral authority in his world. Being learned, honest, strict and disciplined as well as benevolent herself, she was the only other person besides his father in whom the little devil saw the integrity of authority and justice.

The young S. Sivaraksa spent a great deal of time with his father. It is not surprising then that he inherited much of his father's personality. This includes, among other things, a strong sense of nobility. The quest for nobility is indeed the moral basis for the aristocratic world. In a market society where every aspect of human life becomes a commodity, one needs to be more or less uncompromising in order to retain one's nobility. Kukrit Pramoj hits the point exactly when he comments on S. Sivaraksa as "a *čhek* wanting to be a *čhao*," perhaps because he understands so well how the modern world makes a *čhao* want to be more and more like a *čhek*. This is not as much a matter of wearing *phā mūang* as a matter of how one sets the priority of one's moral values. S. Sivaraksa's father witnessed the decline of the aristocratic world and the rise of the modern world, but he chose to remain in the former and adhered to its virtues. For him, honesty and "face" came before commercial shrewdness and gain. On many occasions he decided to resign from his jobs or refuse promotion rather than witness corruption.

It is not hard to see how S. Sivaraksa could have turned this inheritance into a sharp weapon for social criticism, particularly in a society where people sacrifice all sense of nobility for gain. But as ironic as fate may be, in order for him to be capable of doing so, he needed more self-restraint and self-control. And as he points out himself (pp. 307-8), this was all the more possible only after his father's death. Left on his own feet, the juvenile embarked on a new stage of life—a stage of self-independence in which knowledge became the best comfort and morality the most effectual source of pride.

Although S. Sivaraksa derives a large part of his personality from his father, it is not so in the case of his rigorous and persistent interest in Thai and Buddhist traditions. Of course, his father was the one who insisted that he be ordained as a



novice for at least a lent season for fearing that he might become too Westernized. But beyond that, his father remained an admirer of Western culture (p. 94). S. Sivaraksa's interest in tradition came rather from the atmosphere of an extended family in which he grew up during his early childhood. Being surrounded by elders of various ages and backgrounds, their knowledge and practice became a rich resource from which he would develop a long-lasting curiosity in tradition.

The educational institutions that S. Sivaraksa attended, namely, Wat Thōngnophakhun, Assumption College, and St. David's College at Lampeter, all share one characteristic. They are steeped in rich traditions, and their faculties are more or less inspired by religious ideals. Considering his roles in various religious institutions and organizations up to the present, very few would possess experiences as broad and as deep as he. At Wat Thōngnophakhun, S. Sivaraksa was trained in Buddhism and customs by some of the most learned monks of our time. There he also began to read Prince Damrong's work. At Assumption College, the Catholic tradition of the St. Gabriel brothers initiated his interest in Christianity. His interaction with pupils of various religious persuasions, including Moslems and Sikhs, equipped him with an experience of religious tolerance as well as providing him an ability to learn from other religious perspectives. St. David's College, the oldest university in Wales, was affiliated with the Church of England. Its religious orientation, consequently, brought him in contact with the religious tradition of the kingdom. There the traditional training in Greek and Latin, designed in the manner of the Oxonian Greats, led his curious mind to the heart of Western civilization.

Some readers may doubt why I do not include the Middle Temple in my discussion above. The reason is because the method of education there is different from the ones mentioned above. Lacking an atmosphere of a college community, the relationships between faculty and students there do not result in any substantial effect on a student's personality. Moreover, by the time S. Sivaraksa entered the school, his formative years were behind him.

Not surprisingly, the same people who provided S. Sivaraksa the resources for his love of tradition were the ones who contributed to his political conservatism. Some of them were even extremists in this case. This is probably a distinct weak point of people who identify themselves with tradition. Without awareness, the complicated refinement of tradition may arouse snobbery. Snobbery, in turn, may bring about an extreme conservative stand in politics. "The people" becomes synonymous with "the vulgar". And as S. Sivaraksa himself has already described elsewhere (see *Nai Pridi Banomyong in My Opinion*), this somewhat extreme political conservatism had influenced his attitude even until the time he became editor of the *Social Science Review*. However, being conservative does not bar one from being critical or radical,



if we define radical in the sense of an ability to grasp things as their roots. In an ideal sense, one may hardly be the one without being the other. Without conservation, there is no change; without change, there is no conservation. To be sure, S. Sivaraksa admires tradition and its kingship while distrusting modernity and its so-called "democracy". But in doing so, it does not mean that he will never be critical of the former or supportive of the latter when the question of justice arises. To him, the majesty of tradition lies in justice; to injure the latter is to lessen the former.

While reading S. Sivaraksa's autobiography, the readers will also find themselves reading Thai history, particularly, concerning Bangkok during the early years of democracy, the living conditions of both Thai and Chinese middle-class Bangkokians as well as Siam during the War period and its aftermath. The book will certainly become an important source for the study of Thai history and culture in the years to come.

As one may always expect from his work, the writing style of this book is lucid, revealing and straightforward. Undoubtedly, there is a limit to his straightforwardness as one who writes an autobiography must be cautious about references to others. But within the extent to which the limit allows, S. Sivaraksa always takes his full liberty. Partiality may, of course, be found throughout the book. But it is better to be frankly partial than to be pretentiously objective where one cannot be.

Incredible is how he finishes the whole volume within a month. This may, however, be the season for some of its ambiguities. For example, the story about the death of his sister, Mū (p. 189), contradicts with the one about the birth of his other sister, 'Īd (both born of his step-mother). The passage concerning the Sirirāt Hospital on p. 92 suggests that 'Īd was born after Mū's death. But at the bottom of the same page there is another passage saying otherwise. The last paragraph of chapter 3 of the fourth phase contains two items of information which contradict one another. On p. 443 the sentence in the second full paragraph which says "but she agrees with her in many things" does not make any sense there. As I hope that these small ambiguities will be resolved should the book be revised, I also hope that S. Sivaraksa will continue to tell us about his later "phases of life" in the near future.

This book is highly readable and contains hilarious anecdotes. It is a work of superb memory, vivid description, revealing narration and wise interpretation written by one of the most prominent Siamese intellectuals.

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สมเด็จพระปาดำรงราชานุภาพ, หน้าที่ข้าพเจ้ารู้จัก (Biographies by Prince Damrong Rajanubhab) ชมรมตำรวทยาจัดพิมพ์, พ.ศ. ๒๕๒๗/1984, 3 volumes.

Almost all of Prince Damrong's writings must have been published by now – except some private letters and official documents. Yet, it is a pity that no one has taken the task of publishing his collected works in a complete and unified form, despite the fact that he, more or less, created the Ministry of Education, and the National Library – not to mention the Fine Arts Department which benefited a great deal from royalties from his copyrights. Besides there are at least 2 or 3 philanthropic Foundations named after him or directly in connection with him.

It is gratifying, therefore, to learn that now there is a Chomrom Damrongvidya Club under the patronage of Princess Poon Diskul, his eldest surviving daughter, with the intention to reprint Prince Damrong's works in unified form, although it has not intended to publish his complete work in a scholarly manner, with proper introduction and index.

So far the Club has produced five volumes of Prince Damrong's writings – all dealing with biographies : the first being พระชนมเอก which is not an appropriate title as the book deals with lives of former Queens as well as with previous monarchs' minor wives. The next in the series was เจ้านายพระชนมชาน dealing with members of the royal family who lived beyond 70 years of age. The third in the series comprising three volumes is now under review. Most of the titles of these books were concocted by the Club itself.

Prince Damrong was in the habit of writing short biographies, mainly for memorial volumes of the deceased or birthday anniversaries of the living, in order to encourage the sponsors to pay for the publication of those valuable manuscripts carefully edited by the National Library under his Presidency. This saved the Government's expense in preserving and making known the Siamese national heritage and those whom he wrote for would be flattered that a distinguished man of letters mentioned something positively about them. Hence these biographies tend to lack the negative elements. Besides, Prince Damrong was not in the habit of writing criticism on anyone, except perhaps Mr. K.S.R. Kulab whom he thought was dangerous in distorting facts concerning Thai history and literature.

Although these 'biographies' are only one-sided, they provided a lot of factual materials for later generations, and all those facts were not fabricated, despite the fact that the Prince did avoid to mention some of the unpleasant facts.

The three volumes so far, as the title indicates, dealt with admirable persons only. Yet they covered all walks of life – members of the royal family, of the nobility, high and low officials, commoners, monks and laity, and foreigners – both male and female.

Although these lives have been reprinted before, this is the first time that they have been put together in a series, which would help the younger generation to read Prince Damrong easily. Since his style is pleasant, the contemporary Thai will find it not too difficult to dip into the past lives of our ancestors. Unfortunately, the Life of Sunthorn Pu, the most famous poet in the early Bangkok period, was not included in the series, which might be limited to those whom Prince Damrong knew personally. Yet why should the biography of General Chao Phya Badindrdeja (Singhaseni), a contemporary of Sunthorn Pu, be included? But then this piece was not written by Prince Damrong at all.

These volumes have no editorial comments, except in the third volume, in which Mr. Aram Swadivichai, the editor, wrote an appendix on a short biography of Mrs. Lom Hemajanyati, quoting Professor Luang Boribanburibhand who was supposed to have heard some more facts from the Prince about the famous rich lady. Unfortunately most of the so-called facts were fabricated. Since I am a member of her family and have family record to testify that, although the appendix was well intended, yet it is not true.

On the whole, however, Chomrom Damrongvidya ought to be encouraged in bringing out Prince Damrong's works to the public of contemporary Siam, who need to know the past through the eyes of His Royal Highness as well as from some other sources. Yet we should not expect any scholarly attainment from such publications. The Club did what it could, which was not in any way worse than the so-called learned institutions of the realm which have used tax-money to publish so much rubbish during the past decade.

*S. Sivaraksa*

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Ernest Young, *The Kingdom of the Yellow Robe. Being Sketches of the Domestic and Religious Rites and Ceremonies of the Siamese* (Oxford University Press [reprint], Kuala Lumpur, 1982) , 399 pages, illustrated, no index.

When the Thai millennium arrives, "the tide will flow up one side of the river and down the other, so that everyone may go withersoever he pleases without the trouble of rowing."

Whether in agreement or not, one can't help but find engaging this and a dozen other sensitive turn-of-the-century observations. Ernest Young, a Britisher who lived in and loved Siam, wrote *The Kingdom of the Yellow Robe* upon returning to England in 1898. It is an unusually perceptive collage of sociological observations such that historians, to their discredit, commonly overlook.

Mr. Young chose to focus on the mechanics of Thai society because he was an education specialist, not a historian. What most interested him were those "Domestic and Religious Rites and Ceremonies" his subtitle refers to, not the politics of the Franco-Siam dispute, the dominant international issue of the day. As a result, he has left us one of the most complete collections of this type available in the English language. It is best characterized as a sociological snapshot.

The snapshot comparison is particularly apt because the author tried to record various aspects of Thai society without judgment, but not without humor and sympathy. He summed up his feelings this way: "The climatic, racial, and social differences between the nations of the East and of the West are too great to render it easily possible for a member of either to sum up for or against the general moral condition of the other." [p. 399]

Supporting Mr. Young's bid for impartiality is his topic selection. He writes on living conditions he observed along the country's khlongs as well as those he experienced in Bangkok. He covers children's place in Thai society, the top-knot ceremony, marriage, household management, leisure activities, rice cultivation, laws and religion. It is about as eclectic a subject grouping as will as be found between the covers of a single volume.

Not only his subject breadth but also his anecdotes are discerning. One he tells about a teacher and his student is illustrative. The teacher carefully explained that the world was round, in contrast to the folk belief that it was pancake-shaped and towered over by Mount Meru. The student listened attentively, and when asked at the close of the discussion what shape the world was, answered: "The teacher says it is round." Modern educators have been known to lament the same tendency.

There are many other pointed observations that could as easily come from today's newspaper as from this century-old volume. "The forests," he wrote in 1898, "will ultimately be destroyed unless some regulations are made . . ." [p. 192] On a lighter note, he comments that "whenever the voice of hunger makes itself heard, its appeal is promptly responded to . . ." [p. 109]

On the cultivation of rice: "... despite the terrible nature of the disaster which would attend any sensible diminution in the supply of this all-necessary and all-sufficient article of food, the methods of cultivation are primitive to the last degree, and are carried on with agricultural implements of the rudest possible character." [p. 196]

Or how about the feeling that "the faults of Siam's legislative system do not lie in the laws themselves, but in the administration of them." [p. 223] Laws generally, he added, "are sometimes enforced when it suits the authorities . . ." [p. 231]

In rare reproach, Mr. Young did castigate one "barbarous and revolting" custom, that of feeding the bodies of criminals to the vultures. [p. 247] One can pardon lapses no more serious than this. Unfortunately he again broached the line during his overlong assessment of Buddhism, which to his mind was "seen to the greatest advantage when distance has lent its proverbial enchantment." [p. 288]

An aspect of Thai Buddhism (on which topic he spends over one-third of his time) that distracted Mr. Young was the dichotomy between the theoretical and the practical. He dwelt on the popular interpretation, as if that somehow undermined the value of the scriptural underpinnings. [274] Such comments as "the catalogue of sins which the priests may not commit is a lengthy one and is religiously neglected" [p. 262] imply judgment on the part of the author.

It is when discussing religious beliefs that Mr. Young demonstrated his best and worst. His best because he made every effort to uncover the motivations of practicing Buddhists; his worst because in so doing, he made unconscious comparisons to his own beliefs. If the book has a weakness here, it is a small one.

Religion aside, the attraction of Mr. Young's study is that it is literary yet informative; full of detail without being dry; and knowledgeable without being scientific. He wrote an extended primer on what made the common man — his actions and his beliefs — in late 19th-century Siam.

*The Kingdom of the Yellow Robe* belongs on the shelf with Sir John Bowring's *Kingdom and People of Siam* (on which Mr. Young relied heavily), somewhere between Phya Anuman Rajadon's in-depth descriptions and John F. Embree's intuitive analyses. A more contemporary comparison might be to Denis Segaller, who waxes poetic in his *Bangkok World* column, "Thai Ways."

Like Mr. Segaller, what Mr. Young offers is color. Readers may blush at the religious naivete; they may rail at the superficiality. But they will continue to read, fascinated, much as a young man will pore over an old family portrait, vainly looking for The Answer.

Because this book is like an old photograph. Excellently done, given the resources of the times; here a bit tattered around the edges, there a bit faded; it yet captures much of value.

Dimly, a shadow lurking in the background — can you see it? is a peek into the present.

Alex P. Mavro, Jr.



Malcolm Smith, *A Physician at the Court of Siam* (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1982), pp. 164.

This curious book was previously published in 1957 by Country Life Publication, and is another from the stable of Oxford in Asia paperback reprints. The book was apparently finished just after the war, since the preface is dated "London 1946". Malcolm Smith was a doctor at the Bangkok court and for five years was physician to Queen Saowapa, a daughter of King Mongkut, first queen of King Chulalongkorn and mother of Kings Vajiravudh and Prajadhipok. As she died in 1919, Dr. Smith would have appeared to have become a consultant to the Phya Thai palace in 1913; he tells us in the text that he ran a private practice in Bangkok and was medical officer at the British Legation.

Unfortunately, as is increasingly the case with local Oxford reprints, no additional information is given, no new introduction is provided, no justification for the reprint (other than a blurb of eleven unrevealing lines on the back cover) is provided. So little information is available that even the publisher acknowledges that he 'has made every effort to trace the original copyright of this book, but with no success'. The ease of photographic reprinting and the profits obtained thereby should not diminish the responsibility of a university press for updating the publications it offers to the market.

The most recent publication cited by Dr. Smith is Landon's *Siam in Transition* of 1939 and in the epilogue one reads that Queen Rampai Barni, a granddaughter of King Mongkut and the widow of King Prajadhipok, is 'still in this country' (England). This remarkable lady, of whom there is a delightful photo dressed for the top-knot cutting ceremony when she was a girl, continued to live, not in London, but in Bangkok, nearly forty years after this book was written and passed away on 22 May 1984. Since there are many well-connected Thais around who know her well, it is a pity one familiar with court circles could not have been invited to give a new introduction to this book.

The volume starts with a chapter on King Mongkut. There is very little that is new here; however, Dr. Smith's account does not rely exclusively on the memory of Queen Saowapa and has interesting quotes from contemporary journals. His death after the expedition to watch the eclipse at Sam Roi Yot is now well-known.

The next three chapters deal with the stages of the royal lady's life, first as princess, then as queen and next as queen mother (after the death of King Chulalongkorn). The chapter on Princess Saowapa describes the royal female quarters and life for those on 'The Inside', as it was known, a forbidden world to most and with the real

world largely forbidden to those who had to live within its walls. There is a detailed description of the Royal Palace at the time and of the prevailing laws and customs.

Life was different after Queen Saowapa assumed this title, not just by the addition of a title, but above all because King Chulalongkorn liked to travel outside the palace, to mix with his subjects and to move up and down the country with an enormous retinue, including a considerable number of wives from The Inside together with their attendants. The king's numerous reforms are mentioned in some detail and an account of the ceremonies held at his death in 1910 is given.

As Queen Mother, Saowapa kept the same nocturnal hours as the late king, turning night into day (the details of the diversion of traffic and garden staff employed to chase away even the birds which might disturb the sleep of the royal head of household are interesting) and pulling rank when it suited her. But almost by choice she was more or less bedridden until her death. Personalities of twentieth century Siam now appear in the account, with comments on the friction between King Vajiravudh and his mother, on the engaging character of Prince Chakrabongse of Pitsanulok, whose marriage to a Russian precluded him from ascending the throne, and on many others, like the choleric but brilliant Prince Svasti, private pupil of Jowett at Balliol.

The three remaining chapters in the book are something of a miscellany. "The House of Chakri" is a brief excursion into a study of consanguinity in royal houses, "Polygamy in Siam" seeks to prove that King Chulalongkorn, with only 76 children by 36 wives and a sexual life that apparently ended at the age of 42 (p. 142), was really a family man devoted to his children (all accounts agree in this), and the last, "The Court Physicians", describes traditional Siamese doctors and their cures, largely derived from traditional Chinese medical practice.

The epilogue brings the book up to date at the time of its inception and there is an appendix on the position of second king (with nothing new on the subject) and a short bibliography of the thirty-four sources quoted.

*A Physician at the Court of Siam* is a curiosity, adding little new knowledge to court life or the country. It is however agreeably written, has some amusing details and the original photographs are, for once, unusually clear. It would have been made much more valuable a reprint if it had been graced with a contemporary introduction from a knowledgeable Thai, placing the book and the court life it describes in its historical background.

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Anuvit Charernsupkul, *The Elements of Thai Architecture*, translated by Victor Kennedy (Bangkok, Karn Pim Satri Sarn, 1978), 142 pages, 61 plates.

I must admit at the start that much of my disappointment with *The Elements of Thai Architecture* results from a subtitle which, interestingly enough, appears in English, but not in the Thai text from which the English section of the book is translated. "An analytical approach to Thai Buddhist architecture and its component parts from the Sukhothai period down to the nineteenth century" conjures up visions of a weighty volume containing many hundreds (thousands?) of carefully researched pages, stacks of detailed ground and elevation plans, and a wealth of bibliographic references. The selection of the article *The* (as opposed to *Some*) to introduce the book's primary English title also suggests a definitiveness that the mere twenty pages of English text and fifteen of Thai obviously cannot deliver.

There are other faults with the English translation that do not apply to the Thai text. Footnotes, which appear in the Thai version, have been suppressed; works in English cited in the Thai section are not included in the brief English bibliography; and the last two chapters of the translation have been rearranged so that plate references, which no longer fit the text, have been omitted. The English translation, awkward at best, becomes at times almost incomprehensible.

But *The Elements of Thai Architecture* is not an easy book to translate. Prof. Anuvit, who holds a degree in architecture from Rice University in the United States and who is obviously well versed in the ways of Western architectural theory, has attempted in this small volume to analyze various aspects of traditional Thai religious architecture, partially, at least, from a Western viewpoint. The confrontation of Western norms with well-established Thai artistic and religious traditions is another subject well beyond the book's limits; and the author does not seem to have recognized the complexities and dangers of discussing and evaluating works of art from both Eastern and Western points of view indiscriminately. I personally find it disturbing to read that the *sēmā* stones that delineate sacred space around a *bōi* (Buddhist ordination hall), are "another architectural ornament" and "the quickest and easiest means of marking the sacred boundaries." Or that the *sēmā* are "out of scale," i.e., not tall enough, for the buildings they were designed to surround. It is also difficult to understand just how the medallion motifs that have traditionally been placed on Thai temple ceilings give material expression to what the author perceives as the Western concept of architectural space.



Unlike most Western architects, the author views Thai architecture (which for him includes, *bōt*, *wihān* [congregation halls,] and *prāṅ* [stupas displaying Khmer influence], but apparently not *chēdī* [bell-shaped stupas]) "less of an architectural form, or even a structural form than it is a sculptural form created out of its architectural components." These components are all ornamental – a "dressing" – and each is discussed individually, chapter by chapter. In addition to chapters on *sēmā* stones (physically disconnected from the structures they surround) and the ceiling medallions mentioned above, there are chapters devoted to eaves brackets (which, the author informs us, are non-structural); gables (the components "for which fine ornament is given its clearest display"); door ornament; and mural design. One longs for at least some mention of the basic post and lintel construction and east-west longitudinal ground plan that link the earliest Thai *wihān* and *bōt* with those of the present day.

But putting false expectations aside, I can note that *The Elements of Thai Architecture* does include a number of interesting photographs and a remarkable accumulation of information about Thai architecture not normally available to English readers. Some caution must be taken with Prof. Anuvit's dates. For example, several architectural works usually, and correctly, I think, attributed to the Ayutthaya period, are here given Sukhothai period dates. Reasons for the new attributions are not well substantiated.

But Prof. Anuvit is much more concerned here with architecture that falls outside the spectrum usually considered in the classic works on Thai art history. And herein lies the value of the book. Regional works from all over Thailand – from Lanna to Nakhon Phanom to Nakhon Si Thammarat – are included, and Prof. Anuvit's respect for popular taste as a determinant of architectural styles is worth considering. The author's special interest in the foreign is also evident throughout the book. For instance, we are told about, and shown a photograph of, a Buddhist deity in the guise of a male European; a *sēmā* stone displays "Mediterranean" influence; and the use of Chinese ceramics as architectural embellishment is frequently mentioned. While one cannot claim that these things constitute the mainstream of Thailand's architectural history, they are interesting, and it is a pleasant surprise to find them included here.

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David A. Kohl, *Chinese Architecture in the Straits Settlements and Western Malaya: Temples, Kongsis and Houses* (Heinemann Educational, Kuala Lumpur, 1984), pp. 232.

This interesting volume is the outcome of an MA thesis in Comparative Asian Studies at the University of Hong Kong. It seeks to describe and analyse the different architectural influences on Chinese buildings found in Malaya and Singapore, some of which are remarkably handsome and distinctive, though this does not prevent their wholesale destruction in the name of progress. The author is apparently an art teacher at the International School in Hong Kong and prior to the writing of this thesis admits to little knowledge about architecture.

If this is so, then he has more than mastered his subject, for technical terms like *newel posts*, *bargeboards*, *corbel blocks* and *stylobates* dot the text of the book and constitute 25 closely printed pages of the glossary in three languages, English, Malay, and Pinyin Chinese. The book is fortunately profusely illustrated to exemplify these terms. Most often the illustrations are sketches by the author himself of buildings, plans or crosssections, but sometimes they are curiously fuzzy copies of original prints or early photographs which could have been far more clearly reproduced.

Kohl in an introductory chapter discusses the origins and culture of the Chinese in Malaya and then, in Chapter 2, the architectural influences on them. He divides these into four, the most obvious being southern Chinese architecture, and rightly points out that this is different from standard (northern) Chinese forms.

The second influence he detects is 'Compradoric Architecture', a term apparently taken from Gin-Djih Su in Hong Kong; by this is meant European influences on southern Chinese architecture, particularly in the Treaty Ports and Hong Kong. This fascinating subject is summarised in only one page of text. Malay building traditions are adequately covered and the last influence noted is that of Anglo-Indian architecture (including Portuguese and Dutch influences), which includes a long excursion into Georgian Palladian architecture and the design of columns in the classical orders.

The third chapter, *Men and Materials*, is fairly brief and describes in historical succession the presence of the Chinese, and Indians in Malaya, the materials available, the trades of carpenters and contractors and the construction of different temples.

The meat of the book starts with the fourth chapter, dealing exclusively with Chinese temples and *kongsis*, with a brief mention of theatrical stages, pagodas and tombs. The detail here is substantial and the plans and sketches very helpful. The

enormous variety in type of temple is remarkable, and Kohl traces this to the different geographic origins of the immigrants.

No less interesting are the thirty-eight pages given over to the study of Chinese domiciles in the peninsula. Most attention is given to the characteristic dwelling of the Chinese in Malaya, the terrace house, with its later variants of so-called Chinese Baroque, Chinese Corinthian or Towkay Italianate. Examples are also given of 'Sino-Malay-Palladian' style of houses, which are free standing, like the courtyard mansions or European models.

The last chapter deals more briefly with shophouses, another typical Chinese construction in Malaya. The characteristic covered 'five-foot ways' gave protection from rain and sun and are the most sensible adaptation to climate. It is a pity that modern architects replacing the traditional shophouse did not take into consideration pedestrians and shoppers by continuing this tradition instead of destroying it.

Clearly the early buildings were temporary and the second stage of construction harped back to known forms. But as the Chinese community became more settled and also wealthier, its architecture became more eclectic and elaborate, producing quite fascinating and often very beautiful buildings which have considerably more aesthetic, as well as practical, appeal than their concrete and glass replacements.

Although Kohl's work, in its presentation, with usually more than a hundred footnotes per chapter and occasionally excessive coverage of well-known architectural features, is sometimes too closely reminiscent of its source as a thesis, the book is nevertheless a valuable contribution to a little-studied subject and is visually very attractive.

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J. Westermeyer, **Poppies, Pipes and People : Opium and Its Use in Laos** (University of California Press, 1982), 366 pp. incl. index, gloss. and bibliog. 12 black-and-white ill.

Professor Westermeyer's book represents research in Laos over a ten-year period between 1965 and 1975, in addition to which he has had the opportunity of following up individual cases among Laotian refugees within the United States. He worked in Laos under WHO and USAID as a physician and public health worker, and holds joint professorships in anthropology, psychology and psychiatry at the University of Minnesota and its associated hospital. What is remarkable about his intensive cross-cultural study of opiate addiction (which also includes an examination of the related uses of tobacco, betel, alcohol and cannabis), is its enlightened marriage of a practical concern with medicine and medical issues, with a knowledge of the social background and cultural context in which these issues occur.

Ten major hypotheses are examined, ranging from whether ethnicity is a prime determinant of opium use (with more Sinitic peoples tending to undergo greater addiction than others) and whether opium can be used regularly on a non-addictive basis, to whether current treatments of opiate addiction are at all effective, and what the most effective means of eliminating opium addiction may be. Another primary hypothesis tested is whether the view of opium addiction as a medical illness rather than a social habit is not due to an imported, Western conceptual framework. While Prof. Westermeyer's conclusion on this point may not be final, it is useful to have the question raised in a scientific context.

One of the most interesting passages of the book is that dealing with the increase in police corruption and dramatic rise in the consumption of *heroin* caused by the passing of the anti-opium law in Laos in 1971 (after considerable international pressure). Detailed comparisons are made between heroin and opium addiction syndromes, while the author's fundamental concern with questions of cultural background and ethnicity has led him to include members of Caucasian as well as Laotian, Hmong and other groups in his sampling of cases. The results are sufficiently varied to be considerably informative,

Prof. Westermeyer approaches his task professionally and competently. The data is well arranged and statistically presented. The results of numerous field trips to the more remote areas in Laos, as well as his own work at the National Narcotic Detoxification Centre in Vientiane, are analysed. Perhaps the most attractive feature of the book is that analysis of a sometimes dry and tedious kind is leavened by extensive

biographical case-studies of individual addicts, ranging from the youngest son of a wealthy German industrialist to a 53-year old Hmong refugee village chief and a patriarchal Catholic Vietnamese merchant. This makes the book eminently readable.

The comparison of different treatment modalities in one of the final chapters, particularly between those offered by a Buddhist monastery in Thailand and those offered at the National Narcotic Detoxification Centre in Vientiane, is also most instructive.

Prof. Westermeyer perhaps does not deal with the *medicinal* uses of opium as fully as he might have done and (as he is the first to admit) his research on the course of addiction was inevitably hampered by the practical difficulties of following up individuals' life-histories on a long-term basis. Nonetheless the book is informative, illuminating and valuable, and will play a crucial role in provoking and directing further studies on this most important problem.

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Yoshito Yamane, *Raosu ni sasageta waga seishun* (My Youth Devoted to Laos) (Chuokoron, Tokyo, 1984).

Having faithfully served the Japanese Imperial Army, the Lao Issara (the Lao nationalist army), the incipient Lao People's Liberation Army (the Pathet Lao) and the Royal Lao Army at the rank of Colonel, it is for good reason that the Japanese *Shukan Asahi* (27 August 1982) hailed the author of this memoir as a "modern-day Nagamasa Yamada", a reference to the Japanese hero/adventurer to the Siamese court of Ayutthaya.

Returning to his homeland in 1982 after 39 years in Laos it might have been expected that Yamane would have received at least a quotient of the "imperial" treatment meted out to more celebrated late Imperial Army returnees. Rather, his first home in Japan shared with his Lao wife was to be a humble Lao refugee *mura* (village). Japanese press reports confirmed our observation at a meeting with the author in Laos over New Year in 1980-81 that he had worn the years remarkably well and if on that occasion was equally at home in a Lao setting had lost nothing of his samurai spirit and bearing.

Manifestly a soldier's soldier, Yamane's tale merits attention as both personal narrative and history. Drafted into the Japanese Imperial Army in 1943, he was sent at the age of 22 to the Indochinese battlefield. At war's end in August 1945, having eluded internment, he was sheltered by anti-French Lao Issara sympathisers (in turn, the manager of the general store and a Vietnamese family in the northeastern Thai village of Muongku). Sharing the Issara goal of liberating Laos from French colonialism and forging an authentically independent Laos, the author proceeded to Bangkok for an audience with Prince Phetsarath, the titular head of the Lao Issara and the then most prestigious Lao nationalist figure. In acknowledgement of his commitment and his military prowess Yamane was assigned along with four other Japanese soldiers to the Savannakhet quarter, the scene of quite active clashes between the Issara and the French. Overall local Issara command, he relates, was in the hands of the whisky-drinking future "strongman" of Laos, Phoumi Nosavan. In the face of superior French fire-power Yamane and his band then accomplished the hazardous transit of the Annamite Cordillera to Don Dien, a village base in north Vietnam. It was at this juncture, the author contends, that the Issara was disbanded and supplanted by the Viet Minh-linked organisation best known to the world as the Pathet Lao. After two years' residence in the Laos-Vietnam border region he was selected to study at a Viet Minh-sponsored military academy – a probable reference to the "Kommadan School" through which most of the Pathet Lao elite graduated. With his first Pathet Lao command – and



following what have elsewhere been described as distinguished actions against the French forces – Yamane was elevated to the Pathet Lao general staff and then to the guard company of the Red Prince Souphanouvong. Uniquely for a foreigner – although by now practically indigenised as a speaker of Vietnamese and Lao – Yamane further assumed, in his own admission, an amazingly senior if powerless position in the Pathet Lao military academy, prosumably from which he had already graduated. Yet it was at some point in 1950 on the occasion of his relegation to the position of commander of a frontline border garrison that the seasoned fighter broke his bridges with the Pathet Lao and, in the manner of many other former Issara, passed over to the “Vientiane-side”. He reasoned, *inter alia*, that Laos was already independent. In particular he was critical of those Lao, especially senior Pathet Lao, who married Vietnamese women and who – in the process – “spiritually lost their autonomy”.

Further sections of his memoir describe his entry into the Royal Lao Army, the 1962 Geneva Conference on neutrality for Laos, the ensuing years of civil war, his concern at the inherent corruption of the Royal Lao Army and, on the personal level, his marriage. Likewise he broadbrushes the defeat of the pro-American forces, the “quiet” revolution” ushered in by the victorious Pathet Lao and even ventures some opinions on the slaying of a Japanese Embassy official in Vientiane in 1977. Although having endured some forty days political re-education at the hands of the revolutionaries, Yamane ascribes his decision to return to Japan as the education of his children.

Whatever the agonising decisions and individual life-choices made by Yamane over these decades, it is clear from his autobiography that not only did he admirably fulfill the title of his book but that he was also a great survivor. While a highly anecdotal tale, circumspect to degrees and lacking in historical precision, this work nevertheless enters the select corpus of personal narrative memoirs of this era (some by Japanese and some by Lao) and altogether serves as a valuable antidote to the kind of French military history which has hitherto acquired the status of a general truth on a little understood and little studied Southeast Asian revolution.

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Victor B. Lieberman, *Burmese Administrative Cycles. Anarchy and Conquest, c. 1580–1760* (Princeton, New Jersey : Princeton University Press, 1984), xvii, 338 pages.

This book examines nearly two centuries of Burmese history, from the decline of the First Toungoo Dynasty at Pegu (ca. 1580–1599), through the Restored Toungoo Dynasty (1597–1752) at Ava, to the reign of the founder of the Kon-baung Dynasty, ending with King Alaung-hpaya's death in May 1760 near Martaban, marching towards Rangoon after his unsuccessful expedition against Ayutthaya. Although the Toungoo period has been virtually ignored by historians in Western languages, the author demonstrates that there are ample Burmese sources for considering political forces and administrative changes in great depth. The period 1580–1760 provides two examples of imperial decline and two of integration, from which an admirable analysis of recurring patterns and reforms is drawn.

The author poses a key methodological question : 'does the traditional emphasis on polical chronology mask equally, or perhaps more, legitimate institutional or socio-economic criteria for periodization ?' The answer emerges from his careful analysis of the control of resources (court and provincial elites, labour, taxation, new technology such as firearms and to a lesser extent trade) as the driving force of cyclical change. Emphasis on the manipulation of resources lends support to his analysis that the rapid collapse of the 1580s and 1590s (the first of his two cycles) was hastened by a determined ambition to maintain a grasp on too many semi-independent states (including Burman viceroyalties), without creating adequate practical means of control. Most precisely stated : 'Between powerful vassal and High King there was an inadequate conceptual and practical demarcation : each might metamorphose into the other, and ambitious regional leaders were constantly tempted to accumulate sufficient strength to effect the transformation.' By 1600 lower Burma was divided into four mutually hostile regions – Toungoo, Prome, Syriam, plus the south-east coast dominated by Ayutthaya – and thus resumed the general appearance of the early sixteenth century before Tabin-shwei-hti (1531–1550) initiated the First Toungoo Dynasty unification process.

Elaborating on his purpose, the author cites studies of political and administrative cycles in South-East Asia (usually centred upon major dynasties and regional regimes) as well as institutional studies (dealing chiefly with social and political structures and adopting a synchronic perspective). His objective is to integrate the two approaches into a detailed examination of administrative decline and regeneration, thus exploring a new historical approach through a detailed analysis of the recurring process. He examines personal, ideological and institutional controls in turn, each as a potential strength or weakness of central authority, and also the ways in which trade patterns and economic growth served to strengthen or undermine ruling houses.



Considerable discussion is devoted to the contrasts between the coastal region (the Mon stronghold into which there was much Burman migration) and the drier Burman interior. This lends weight to two important interpretations that disprove earlier, sparsely documented conclusions on the period. First, the old argument that Burma was isolationist and static after the sixteenth century, unaffected by and disinterested in external trade, is shown to be fallacious. He concludes that 'Without the sustained contribution of maritime trade and imported silver to commercial integration, and without Ava's continued control over the firearms, revenues, and luxury imports of the coast, it is most unlikely that the Restored Empire could have been maintained. Herein lay the chief significance of the early seventeenth-century provincial reforms: they allowed Toungoo kings to reside in the main agricultural districts without endangering reliable access to the coast.' Second, the author stresses that one must beware of interpretations based on ethnic divisions. Mons from the interior, for example, fought alongside the Burmans during the struggle of 1754-1757 against the Mon kingdom at Pegu. Alaung-hpaya readily accepted their submission and did not, as some have argued, try to extinguish their leadership and culture. Far from trying to Burmanise the Mons, Shans, Chins, Europeans or others, Alaung-hpaya enjoyed the glittering cultural diversity that these people represented when paying homage at his court, regarding them as proof of his pretensions as a universal sovereign.

Besides enriching our knowledge of a neglected period of Burmese history, this type of study is essential to analogies with other parts of South-East Asia and with cyclical tendencies in China and India. The author suggests several parallels, such as the collapse of Ayutthaya and the Lê dynasty. In the absence of published background research, his methodology and analogies cannot yet be extended to the truly obscure interior, where the rises and falls of tiny princely states were subject in rapid succession to the forces that he discusses. In this connexion, it is unfortunate that Burmese, Chinese, Thai and Vietnamese sources provide only dim glimpses of them.

The author has made admirable use of contemporary Burmese documents, showing them to be far richer for these centuries than those in Khmer, Malay or Thai. To complement the thorough bibliography, an appendix assesses the contemporary Burmese sources, especially edicts and chronicles - a valuable addendum for historiographers and future researchers.

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Khin Myo Chit, **A Wonderland of Burmese Legends** (Bangkok, The Tamarind Press, 1984), 126 p.

For many years Daw Khin Myo Chit has sought to explain Burmese culture not just for foreigners but to keep the ancient traditions alive for the people of Burma as well. She is not only familiar with the Buddhist texts and the chronicles of her country but also is herself a living repository of much oral history. Her forebears came from the Monywa-Mandalay area, which was the heart of pre-British Burma, and continues to be the center of Buddhist learning. As a child she heard all the stories of the court and the great legends about the coming of Buddhism, the building of pagodas, and the exploits of the kings and warrior heroes, as well as tales about the omnipresent nats. Her wealth of knowledge gained through the years plus her thoroughness in research is all evident in her latest book, *A Wonderland of Burmese Legends*.

The book is deceptive. On the surface it reads and looks like a fairy tale. But within it there is a wealth of information, some of which is not available elsewhere in the English language. Part of the material was presented in previous works by the author but these are either out of print or not easily secured outside of Burma.

The legends concern for the most part the building of pagodas, and it goes without saying that the book will be of interest and assistance to any serious traveler in Burma. Included are legends about sites in the Rangoon, Pegu, Prome-Srikshestra, Sagaing and Mandalay areas, and about the famous Kyaiktiyo Pagoda, which rests so precariously atop a ledge on the way to Thaton.

One of the aspects of the book which this reader found most helpful is Daw Khin Myo Chit's definition of the position of the nats with respect to Buddhism. She considers nats to be yet another class of beings and as such are subject to the same cycle of rebirth as humans. Nats have supernatural powers but it does not follow that they are all good. Some are good and some bad as is the case with other beings in the world. While their life-span is longer than that of humans, they are not immortal and are subject to death, decay and sorrow. She accepts them as a normal part of her life, feels that they are everywhere in different guises, and is often affected by them. A visit to a pagoda, she believes, gives one a chance to see and appreciate how the local populace respects the nats and accepts them within Buddhism. The author dwells at some length on the important and greatly venerated nats connected with Mt. Popa. In addition she gives information about other nats not included within the pantheon of 37 nats and not accessible otherwise in the English language. Notable is her account of the Pegu Mother Royal, the patron nat-lady of the Pegu area, who is depicted with the headdress of a buffalo.



Daw Khin Myo Chit's text is amplified with bright watercolors by Paw Oo Thet, one of the most well-known artists in contemporary Burma. At their best they can be quite charming but many will find them too cute.

The book is the initial publication of a new publishing company, the Tamarind Press, which proposes to publish several other works about Burma. If they are of such caliber as this, they will help to fill a void.

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Mochtar Lubis, **Twilight in Djakarta** (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 254.

This is a welcome reprint of the late Claire Holt's translation of what is considered by many the most important novel by Mochtar Lubis. It was first published in English in 1963, before the work had appeared in Indonesian. It was completed in March 1957 when the author was detained; he was under house arrest and in gaol from 1956 to 1965 but was allowed to go to a conference in Tel Aviv in 1961 when he took the manuscript with him. Nothing seems to have been changed from the original edition and the opportunity to get the author to comment on his work nearly thirty years on has been passed up by the publishers.

Set in the chaotic situation of Jakarta of the mid-1950s, Lubis runs the gamut from corrupt politicians, through idle civil servants, Marxist intellectuals, middle class whores, to indigent garbage collectors and *becak* drivers, all of whose lives interweave and touch at different points.

The Dutch scholar, Teeuw, in his *Modern Indonesian Literature* of 1967 remarked, "In all respects it is a mature novel, giving a penetrating picture of the corrupt, chaotic and inhuman Djakarta of 1956". However, as Teeuw pointed out, the approach remains journalistic, as befits Lubis' training and background. There is even a "City Report" at the end of each chapter, presenting a slice of life to the reader and only marginally connected to the movement of the work as a whole.

One could argue that there is no whole to life in Jakarta itself and the book is only a kaleidoscope of characters forming the teeming millions of the bedraggled capital of the 50's. Lubis does not try to disguise the more unpleasant facts of Jakarta's life. In all its noxious squalor of the period it is there (it is a little unfortunate that the city has retained this image, for it is infinitely better now than its reputation deriving from the past).

The novel takes the form of a monthly chronicle, from May to January, and starts with the lowest orders, the garbage collectors Saimun and Itam, hungry, unable to afford food, working in the drizzle, calculating their debts and sharing their one luxury, a kretek cigarette. The scene shifts to Suryono, a lazy young civil servant recently returned from abroad and having an affair with his step-mother. There is a cinematographic technique of shots, as further shifts of scene are introduced. Slowly, the novel builds up these scenes, events move to a climax as the cabinet falls, politicians and corrupt civil servants are exposed for making illicit millions, and the "little people", the *wong kecil*, fighting to obtain rice, salt and kerosene. It ends with Itam and the



intellectual talker Murhalim dead, killed in an incident at a rice and kerosene line, and Saimun collects his girlfriend Neneng in jail after a roundup of prostitutes; their only hope is to try to escape the city.

"We'll get married, we'll go back to the village. What's the good living like this in the city with no sense in it?"

But the city and its underworld continue, defying logic, law and order and having the last word: the final shot, to use film terminology, is of a torrential storm covering the city, with the only human movement being dark shapes slipping into houses, the "thieves of the night doing their work".

It cannot be said that the novel is particularly well-constructed and a number of scenes seem gratuitous. Abu slaughters the entire family of the prison officer who sheltered him on his first night out of jail for no apparent reason, other than an unconscious desire to return to the only world he felt he could face, prison. But this forms no integral part of the plot. The discussions of the group of intellectuals do the very reverse of advancing the progress of the novel, though they do show the educated young men and women trying, and failing, to face up to the problems confronting society at the time. The details of the illicit deals over import licences are of a complexity worthy of Balzac, and have a tendency for those unversed in such machinations to confuse the reader.

The novel certainly does not present a very flattering picture of Jakarta society of the 1950s and can hardly have endeared Lubis to the authorities of the time. It is compelling reading, for all its faults; Southeast Asian literature is not strong in presenting the steamier side of contemporary life and too few authors have first-hand knowledge of the underworld and the dregs of humanity to write about them with conviction. Mochtar Lubis is able to bridge with ease the very different societies he describes.

Teeuw rightly declared:

"It is difficult to imagine a more shattering judgement on the toughness and immorality and human degradation found in the Djakarta of those days than the one given in this book which is ostensibly so matter-of-fact and objective."

Mochtar Lubis, journalist and polemicist, is shown in this work to be without doubt a novelist of undoubted power and telling verisimilitude.

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Sri Mulyono, **Human Character in the Wayang : Javanese Shadow Play** (Singapore, Gunung Agung, 1981), pp. 272.

This volume is a translation of a collection of articles which originally appeared in two Indonesian newspapers, *Yudha Minggu* and *Buana Minggu*, between 1969 and 1976, with a foreword acknowledging this and the fact that there is still some repetition in subject matter. Collections of newspaper articles rarely make for a satisfying volume and it must be admitted that this one suffers from disjointedness.

Mr Mulyono apparently comes from Yogyakarta, having studied civil engineering at Gadjah Mada University, and as well as being a consultant for the construction of Halim Airport in Jakarta was also giving performances of the shadow play as a *dalang* or puppeteer. He is therefore a man of many parts.

The author has placed the most substantial articles early on, and describes the importance of the *wayang* in Javanese *weltschaung*. But many of his comments are bald and without substantiation: to say that the *wayang* is 'realistic' is all very well, but just saying so does not make it so, and the fact has to be proven. Many would argue that it is just the opposite. Mr Mulyono tries on several occasions to make his accounts of the *wayang* stories modern, but this does not always have the desired effect. Magic chariots fly out of palace squares "with the force and speed of a Boeing 747", Rahwana asks Sinta if she wants a Mercedes 500, Arjuna is disguised as a "popsicle vendor" with a magic weapon that destroys "like battery acid", Mustakaweni smells of raw meat from her fangs "for she had forgotten to brush her teeth before changing form, and she had also forgotten to dab the Dior for Men which the Pandjawa always wore" and Rahwana's blood pressure goes up to 420/150 with the comment "Luckily he had ten heads, so the pressure was evenly distributed, preventing a brain hemorrhage."

In a world of ogresses and magic weapons, it is incongruous for an educated reader to learn that Mustakaweni graduated from the Manimantaka State Military Academy, majoring in military intelligence and when in a fight to find she disappears in her helicopter. It does not help when on one line we are told that Srikandhi is screaming "at the palace archivist" and the next that her son, Priyambada, a recent graduate of the Air Academy, gives chase with his Sabre fighter. This does not demonstrate the reality of the *wayang*, nor is its implied modernity demonstrated by anachronisms.

There are also somewhat disconcerting variations in register or tone. Rama says to Sarpakenaka when she tries to seduce him, "Village maiden, how can I do what you ask? I have a wife. Try my younger brother, Laksmana". He however calls her a "bold trollop" and a "she-devil" and declares "It makes me want to throw up just to look at you." Such shifts in language are no less worrying to a reader than the shifts in historical exactitude.

Mr Mulyono is much given to a philosophical turn of phrase. He is clearly the kind of Javanese who likes to go off into abstractions of a metaphysical nature.



Sartre, Kierkegaard, Plato, Machiavelli and of course the state philosophy of Pancasila all find their place. The term 'characterology' is freely used, though without explanation. Statements like "Man was created by God to be monopluralistic" are all very well, but do not contribute to a helpful understanding of Javanese wayang.

Perhaps indirectly, Mr Mulyono reveals more about Javanese attitudes which the wayang can be said to exemplify the humanity of the characters is demonstrated by abstract attitudinising: "There is no life free of dilemmas and hesitation. Only with inner strength of purpose and courageous endurance can man ultimately encounter the genuine reality of things." Later we are informed that "even to refrain from choosing is to choose." Arrogance, we are told, "as defined in Javanese philosophy is the unwillingness to accept things as they"; but how does that reconcile with the statement that the Pandawa's victory comes from "building up their strength in struggle under difficulties", in short, "The Lord helps those who help themselves"? Perhaps the philosophy of wayang defies logic, just as do its characters, with ogresses jumping into their helicopters. Since "the stories within it are meant to be understood symbolically" and symbols can be interpreted in a multitude of ways, the wayang becomes a convenient hold-all into which any interpretation can be stuffed.

Most of the very short entries, two or three pages each, relate parts of the tales of the wayang and specify the characters in the section and their noble or other qualities. This clearly jarred on some of his Indonesian readers (8 readers' letters are included for good measure in various parts of the text, often raising points which go unanswered) for a letter from one complains that all the attention is given to the noble virtues of the kastia caste, whereas there were ordinary people deserving attention too.

The earlier part of the volume deals with stories from the Ramayana and is relatively easy to follow, but the disconnected scenes from the Mahabarata in the second half, with its wealth of characters, leaves the reader confused and dazed by both magic and modernity. Semar, we are told at one stage, "will be written of later in this series". If he was, it does not appear in this volume, and yet Semar and his sons are extraordinarily important in any overview of the Javanese wayang. However, we are assured without a scrap of evidence that Semar is definitely pre-Hindu. But Mulyono is not very strong on history. The wayang has been going for 3,500 years, he boldly states, and Indonesian scholars in the early nineteenth century first started exploring the cultural implications of the wayang.

It cannot be said that this volume makes either easy or satisfying reading, but it does have interesting comments on some of the standard characters appearing in the shadow play. It lacks an index with which to locate these, however. The volume as a whole is without too many typographical errors.

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David J. and Indrani Kalupahana Shambhala, **The Way of Siddhartha** (a life story of the Buddha) (Boulder (USA) and London, 1982) 234 pp. Paperback.

This is one of the most fascinating books ever written on the life of the Buddha by a husband and wife team. Both born into the same Buddhist culture, plus their intimate knowledge of early sources of Bodhisattva Siddhartha's life from Pali and Chinese sources enabled them to write this charming book. Written in simple language, yet without leaving out abstract and deep philosophical aspects of the Buddha's teachings.

The life of the Bodhisattva begins as an infant with Prajapati as aunt and foster mother, and of course, dominated by Suddhadana, his father. Asita's astrological predictions has cause for a father's fears. We read about his early childhood associates, Devadatta, Ananda, Kapila and others, and all these recapitulations give the feeling that the Kalupahanas had actually witnessed these events of Bodhisattva's early life.

Then they narrate his marriage to Yasodhara, his own cousin. But, I never realized, until I read this book, that she was more mature and serene than I ever gathered of what I learnt in Sri Lanka, that Yasodhara was against his great renunciation. Then, as we read on in the book, we learn more and more of the life of the Buddha, as authentically as possible. We learn of the gracious King Bimbisara, noble Ambapali, Waisakha, and the patricide Ajasatu, and the jealous Devadatta, the murderer Angulimala who was made a saint by the Buddha. All this and much more on the Buddha, to us the greatest man who ever lived on earth. It is an authentic biography of the Buddha – the man who attained the Samma-Sam-Buddhahood, who found us a way to overcome the riddle of existence and end Dukkha and enjoy immortality in the Nirvanic bliss.

Dr. and Mrs. Kalupahana have a natural way to express the Dharma (Dhamma) in very simple terms, whereby all can read and understand. Perhaps more complex Buddhist books could be read later after this exposure.

Sri Lanka is proud of the performance of this son and daughter. Dr. Kalupahana is a product of the Ceylon University Peradeniya, who studied under the well-known professor, Dr. Malalasekera, and later obtained a Ph.D. (London). Dr. David Kalupahana is one of the most outstanding Buddhist scholars and is a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Hawaii.

This book should find a place in every public and private library, and should be widely read.

*Buddhadasa P. Kirthisinghe*

Representative Maha Bodhi  
Society of India,  
New York



Buddhadasa P. Kirthisinghe, Editor, **Buddhist Concepts Old and New** (Sri Satguru Publications, Indian Book Center, Delhi, 1983), 221pp.

This book is a compilation of important, interesting and informative essays and lectures by four men from different parts of the world – Japan, Sri Lanka and the United States. All are well-known in their field for their work and strong support of Buddhist studies.

Given are the old and new concepts of Buddhism, beginning with the Buddha through his disciples, and down through the ages with thinkers and reformers elaborating and shedding their own light upon His views, in Sanskrit, Pali and other languages.

Buddhism, from its start, has captured the attention and affection of man throughout the world wherever it was accepted, and over the span of more than 2500 years has changed the life and thought of men who put the Master's ideals into practice. In some lands, such as Mongolia and Tibet, it both calmed and civilized; while in others, it raised their higher civilizations to even greater heights, as for example, in China and Japan. In India, Ceylon and other South East Asian lands Theravada Buddhism produced the golden periods of their history. It was this collective area that was called "the Wonder that was India" by the well-known British Indologist, Professor A.L. Basham. Thus, Buddhism had a magical effect, civilizing and ennobling man, raising their lives to sublime heights.

The effectual spread of Buddhism to other lands by missionaries was accomplished by the efforts and Zeal of one of the noblest men to have ever lived—the great Emperor Asoka, who, during his reign in the 3rd Century B.C. came under the influence of Buddhism. Grief-stricken over the horrors of the devastating war he had waged and won, he renounced war and dedicated his life and services to the peace and goodwill of mankind.

There are seven lectures dealing with and adding light to various aspects of the Buddha's teaching by the late Dr. Gunapala Malalasekera which he gave over Radio Ceylon broadcasts in 1943. He is well-known as Buddhist scholar of Pali literature, and was the organizer of the World Fellowship of Buddhists.

Eight of the many popular lectures given by Dr. Kurt Leidecker, a world-recognized Indologist and authority of both Hinduism and Buddhism, are included, and are certain to become a permanent part of the vast insightful literature on Buddhistic life and ethics.



Four profound and clearly written essays are offered by the noted Indologist and authority on Zen, Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, Dr. Shohei Ichimura of Japan.

Dr. Buddhadasa P. Kirthisinghe, the Editor, has himself contributed seven important essays relevant to present concerns which should be pondered over carefully. His dedicated, devoted work and contributions for more than 30 years in the fields of Buddhism, sociological and philosophical studies, have been welcomed by scholars.

*Louise J. Paparazzi*

Northfield,  
Mass.