

Joy for the World: A Buddhist Play by Candragomin, translated with an Introduction and Notes by MICHAEL HAHN, Dharma Publishing, Berkeley, 1987; xxiv + 155 pages.

The Indian Buddhists contributed to, and were often at the forefront of, most branches of the traditional arts. The earliest surviving Indian drama is by Aśvaghoṣa (1st century A. C.), author of a famous verse life of the Buddha, the *Buddhacarita*. The present work is a drama composed by Candragomin (whom Hahn dates to the fifth century), who is also well known as a grammarian and a poet. The English translation is based on Hahn's own edition and German translation of the Tibetan version (the Sanskrit, but for a few verses, not having survived), which was published as *Candragomins Lokānandanātaka: Nach dem tibetischen Tanjur herausgegeben und übersetzt: Ein Beitrag zur klassischen indischen Schauspieldichtung in Asiatische Forschungen*, Band 39, Wiesbaden, 1974.

The *Lokānandanātaka* resembles the *Jātakamālā* in that, though religious and didactic in theme and purpose, it is a non-sectarian and literary work, addressed to the educated public in general, and composed by a master poet. The play is based on the story of the bodhisattva's past life as Prince Mañicūḍa, and is thus an adaptation of a *jātaka* or *avadāna* for the stage. In his introduction Hahn, an authority on *avadāna* literature, discusses the use and development of the medium of poetry in Buddhist literature, and gives a summary of some of the source materials and of the conventions of Indian drama. The translation succeeds in the difficult task of bringing out the poetry and maintaining dramatic interest; intended for the general reader, it is rounded out by useful "Notes and Comments" and a brief glossary. The volume is beautifully produced.

The Fortunate Aeon: How the Thousand Buddhas Become Enlightened (Tibetan Buddhist Canon, Text 94), translated into English by Dharma Publishing Staff

under the auspices of the Yeshe De Project, 4 vols., Dharma Publishing, Berkeley, 1986.

The Fortunate Aeon gives the Tibetan text and English translation of a popular Mahāyāna text, the *Bhadrakalpika-sūtra*. The *sūtra* is lost in Sanskrit, but preserved in Tibetan (translated by Vidyākaraśimha and dPal gyi dbyangs and revised by dPal-brtsegs, ca. 800 A. C.) and Chinese. The preface states that the Tibetan text is based on the "gSer-ljong edition" in comparison with the sDe-dge; the readings of the two editions are graphically distinguished within the text itself. From the colophon (vol. IV, p. 1748-1749) we learn that the gSer-ljong edition was published in 1932, and that the Ku-se gSer-ljong dgon is near sDe dge, that is, in Eastern Tibet. The Tibetan text appears on the left-hand page, the English *en face*.

Like most other long Mahāyāna sūtras, the *Bhadrakalpika* is a composite text which may have taken several centuries to arrive at its present form. In the first part, after the usual description of the setting and audience, Bodhisattva Pramuditārāja—who figures as interlocutor throughout—asks the Buddha a long question on the nature of the bodhisattva path (pp. 6-13). In reply, the Buddha gives a long description of the wondrous qualities of a *samādhi* (concentration) called "Showing the Way of All Dharmas" (pp. 14-59). He then relates how a number of past Buddhas also taught the *samādhi*, how the Buddha Amitāyus studied it as a bodhisattva, and how he himself learned it from Dipaṃkara (pp. 58-73). Such "Mahāyānist *jātakas*" (sometimes termed *pūrvayoga*) are a common device to legitimize the teachings of a Mahāyāna *sūtra* by giving it the sanction of past, present, and future Buddhas. Pramuditārāja then announces that he will devote himself to the practice and preservation of the *samādhi* and *sūtra*, even in the face of great adversity. This opening section, in prose interspersed with verse, resembles other Mahāyāna *samādhi* texts, such as the *Pratyutpanna-buddhasaṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*, which seems to be earlier in terms of style and

contents.⁹ Since the section ends with a description of the effects of the teaching on the assembly, and is given a separate chapter-heading, "The teachings of taking up the Bodhisattva's activities, the completely purifying actions" (p. 79), it is possible that it was originally an independent text. The Buddha then relates a further *jātaka*, linking the *samādhi* to the Buddhas Amitāyus and Akṣobhya, and to 1000 sons of the latter when he was a "chakravartin king" (pp. 80-83). This sets the stage for the remainder of the text, for it is these 1000 bodhisattvas who are to become the 1000 Buddhas of the Fortunate Aeon. The Buddha praises the "thought of great enlightenment" and the *samādhi* in verse, and enters *samādhi*.

Pramuditārāja then asks the Buddha about the perfections (*pāramitā*); in reply the Buddha lists 2100 (pp. 92-115). The rest of volume I (pp. 116-477) is taken up by a description of these perfections. At the end of the section it is stated that the 2100 become 8400, and that finally there are 84,000 perfections. The intimate connection between the *pāramitā* theory and the *jātaka* tradition is shown by the number of *jātakas* referred to by name as specific illustrations of individual perfections.¹⁰

Near the beginning of volume II the Buddha Śākyamuni lists the names of the 1000 Buddhas of the Fortunate Aeon (pp. 488-515), and then relates in detail their "biographies", in both cases in response to requests put by Pramuditārāja. Roughly the first hundred accounts are in prose, the next hundred in verse, followed by a hundred in prose, and so on.¹¹ Twelve particulars are given for each Buddha:

- 1) his land or country;
- 2) his descent or lineage (*jāti, gotra*);
- 3) his light, that is, the extent of the his halo or radiance (*prabhā*);
- 4) the name of his father;
- 5) the name of his mother;
- 6) the name of his son;
- 7) the name of his chief attendant (*upasthāyaka*);
- 8) the names of the "supreme pair, the excellent pair"

(*agrayuga*, *bhadrayuga*) of disciples;

- 9) the size and number of his monastic assemblies (*san-nipāta*);
- 10) his life-span (*āyuhpramāṇa*);
- 11) the duration of his dispensation (*saddharma*);
- 12) the extent of his relics (*dhātu*).

Classification of this sort goes back to the early canonical texts of the Śrāvakayāna, such as the Pali *Mahāpadāna-sutta* (*Dīgha-nikāya* 14), which gives ten particulars for the seven past Buddhas including Gotama, including the names of their *bodhi*-trees, an important early concept not given in the *Bhadrakalpika*, and omitting numbers 3, 6, 11, and 12 of the latter text. The *Jātakanidāna* gives similar particulars for each past Buddha, omitting the same items, and including the *bodhi*-tree and two further details: the names of the chief pair of female disciples and the Buddha's height. The commentary to the *Buddhavaṃsa* adds further details, to total 22. The Theravādin classifications have been discussed in detail by I. B. Horner in the introductions to her translations of the *Buddhavaṃsa* (especially pp. xx-iii) and its commentary, while a general survey is given in the *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*.¹² The *Mahāvastu* of the Lokottaravādin school follows a similar pattern, as do "prophetic" texts of various schools for the future Buddha Maitreya, and the Theravādins for ten future Buddhas in the *Dasabodhisattupattikathā* and the *Dasabodhisattavuddesa*.¹³ Thus the *Bhadrakalpika-sūtra*, by doing the same for 1000 Buddhas, takes a time-honoured tradition to the extreme limit. It is interesting that it prefers the cult of relics, and hence the *caitya* or *stūpa*, over that of the *bodhi*-tree of the Theravādin tradition. Both cults are equally ancient.

The account starts with Śākya-muni's three predecessors—Kakuc-chanda, Kanakamuni, and Kāśyapa—plus Śākyamuni himself, and then Maitreya, first of the future Buddhas, all of whom also belong to the Auspicious Aeon (pp. 518-523), and who are of course common to the traditions of all Buddhist schools. Then comes the account of the remaining Buddhas,

which seems to be unique to the present *sūtra*. This takes up the remainder of volume II (pp. 523-967), all of volume III (pp. 968-1447), and the beginning of volume IV (pp. 1448-1479).

Pramuditarāja then asks about the first production of the "mind of enlightenment" (*bodhicitta*) by the Buddhas of the Auspicious Aeon; in reply Śākya-muni describes in verse the circumstances of this act for each of the Buddhas (pp. 1480-1733: this section relates to the past, since all of the 1000 are already bodhisattvas). (Four examples from this section are cited in Sanskrit in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya*¹⁴ and six in Tibetan in the *Sūtrasamuccaya* attributed to Nāgārjuna,¹⁵ in both cases in prose: the use of prose and the number of variants show that these citations are from a different recension than that translated into Tibetan.) Since in each case the production of the mind of enlightenment involves an offering or other act of devotion towards a past Buddha, 1000 Buddhas of the past are named. The section is remarkable for the frequently humble status of the bodhisattvas and the simplicity of the acts of devotion. The *sūtra* concludes with a prediction about the number of Buddhas to appear in the aeons succeeding the Auspicious Aeon, and further praises of the *saṃādhi* (pp. 1733-1749).

The Theravādins limited the number of Buddhas of the Fortunate Aeon to five, a figure supported by the early scriptures. According to Daśa-balaśrimitra, the Sāmmatiyas allotted 500 Buddhas to the Auspicious Aeon.¹⁶ The *Mahāvastu* of the Lokottaravādin branch of the Mahāsāṃghikas is the only Śrāvaka text that I know of that gives the figure 1000.¹⁷ The concept of the 1000 Buddhas of the Fortunate Aeon became widely disseminated, and was accepted by such important Mahāyāna *sūtras* as the *Śūraṅgamasamādhi*,¹⁸ the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*,¹⁹ the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika*,²⁰ the *Tathāgatācintyaguhyā-nirdeśa*,²¹ the *Karuṇāpuṇḍarika*,²² and the *Mahākāruṇāpuṇḍarika*.²³ Some of these sources are discussed by the great Tibetan scholar Bu ston in his *History of Buddhism*,²⁴ and valuable summaries of sources are given by Lamotte in his notes, by Isshi Yamada in his

introduction,²⁵ and by Jean Dantinne.²⁶ The evidence of the *Mahāvastu* suggests that the concept might predate the Mahāyāna, and in fact the whole of the two sections dealing with the "biographies" of the 1000 Buddhas and their initial generation of *bodhicitta* contains nothing that is uniquely Mahāyānist. The "assemblies" of the various Buddhas are of arhats rather than bodhisattvas.²⁷ It is therefore possible that the *Bhadrakalpika-sūtra* originally belonged to the Śrāvakayāna, and was "converted" to the Mahāyāna by the addition of the opening sections on *saṃādhi* and the *pāramitās*. Perhaps further research into related Chinese sources will clarify this point.

The text as a whole takes up 1749 pages; that is, the English translation runs to well over 800 pages. Volume IV ends with an appendix giving the names, Tibetan and Sanskrit, of the 1000 Buddhas of the Auspicious Aeon in order of appearance, followed by separate indexes of the Tibetan and Sanskrit names, a brief bibliography, a glossary, and an index.

The Fortunate Aeon does not pretend to be a scholarly work in the technical sense: the Tibetan text is not a true critical edition, and the translation is not accompanied by philological or text-comparative notes. In his preface Tarthang Tulku acknowledges the difficulties posed by the translation, the limitations of the translation team, and the preliminary nature of the result, stating that the work is offered "as a gesture of blessing for those who wish to read the sacred texts". Given these limitations, the translators may be commended for making a long and difficult text available to the English (and Tibetan) speaking reader. The translation, in a "religious" rather than "scholastic" style, is based directly on the Tibetan translation without taking into account the underlying Sanskrit.²⁸ It is generally natural and quite readable; it succeeds in recreating the grand and inspirational sweep of the text. There are, of course, inaccuracies and errors, and occasional problems with the form of the Sanskrit names. On p. 517, *mchog gi zung dang/ bzang po'i zung dang* is translated as "the foremost follower of greatness and foremost of

goodness": it should rather be "the foremost pair, the excellent pair" (Sanskrit *agrayuga*, *bhadrayuga*), which refers to the traditional idea that each Buddha declares his foremost pair of disciples, one foremost in wisdom (*prajñā*), the other in magic power (*ṛddhi*). This is shown in the prose on the following pages, where the translation is correct. In the verse sections, "one foremost in wisdom" is paraphrased, *metri causa*, by *mḥas pa*, translated as "the one of skill", or *blo can / blo gros can*, rendered as "the one with fine intelligence". Here it would be clearer if the term "wisdom" were retained, or if the concept were clarified in a note.

The bibliography is rather general, and does not give some important sources such as Bu ston's discussion or the introductions to the translations of related Pali works, mentioned above. I may also add here the pioneering description of the *sūtra* by Alexander Csoma de Körös in his "Analysis of the Mdo", first published in *Asiatick Researches*, Calcutta, 1836-1839 (repr. in *Analysis of Kanjur*, Delhi, 1982, pp. 109-112); the fragmentary lists of names of Bhadrakalpa Buddhas published with detailed bibliographical notes in *Sanskriithandschriften aus den Turfanfunden*, part 3 (Wiesbaden, 1971), catalogue nos. 840, 840a, and the various references in Alexander Coburn Soper's *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China* (Ascona, 1959, pp. 201-202, etc.). Citations should also be taken into account: one in the *Śikṣāsamuccaya* (see above), two in the *Sūtrasamuccaya*,²⁹ and one in *Daśabala-śrimitra*.³⁰

The glossary too is rather general: it seems to have been tacked on from another source, since it includes many items not relevant to the *sūtra*, such as the "forty special meditation subjects," a uniquely Theravādin classification. On the other hand, it does not give definitions of Sanskrit words such as *pāramitā* or *saṃādhi*, which occur repeatedly and are left untranslated. The definition of *kalpa* ("aeon") as "a very long period of time" is insufficient for a term of such significance to the text.

The edition is sumptuously produced—a result of the meeting of traditional Tibetan aesthetics with modern Western printing and book-binding arts. Each volume has as frontispiece a colour reproduction of a Tibetan cloth-painting (*thangka*), as endpieces a red line-drawing of one of the Four Great Kings and two auspicious benedictions in gilt Lantsa calligraphy: *sarva maṅgalaṃ* and *jayantu*. The page-edges are gilt, the endpieces carry the multiple reproduction of the *ye dharmā* verse in Sanskrit in Lantsa script, and each volume has a red ribbon page-marker. At the top of about every third pair of pages are gilt line drawings, reproduced from the gSer-ljong edition, of a pair of Buddhas flanking a *stūpa*; their names are given below in Tibetan and Sanskrit. At vol. 4, p. 1595, the illustrations of Buddhas end, and a new series of other figures commences: the interlocutor Pramuditārāja, assorted deities, disciples or elders (*sthavira*), Indian and Tibetan masters, Tibetan kings, and the eight *stūpas*. Here only the Tibetan captions are given, in Tibetan and roman script; it would, of course, be helpful for the general reader to have the Sanskrit names.

The Udāna: Inspired Utterances of the Buddha, translated from the Pali by JOHN D. IRELAND, Buddhist Publication Society, Kandy, 1990; 160 pages.

The Pali text of the *Udāna* edited by Paul Steinthal was published by the Pali Text Society in 1885; an English translation of the *Udāna* by F. L. Woodward was published in 1935 (repr. 1948) in *The Minor Anthologies of the Pali Canon, Part II, Udāna: Verses of Uplift and Itivuttaka: As it was Said*. The *Udāna* consists of prose stories attached to older verses; in some cases the connection between the story and the verses is tenuous indeed. Nonetheless, the *Udāna* is one of the more accessible texts of the Pali canon: the sections are brief, and the material is varied, dealing with all aspects of the Dhamma from ethics to Nibbāna. Ireland's style

is simple, lucid, and accurate, and will no doubt be preferred by the contemporary reader to Woodward's, which contains many archaisms. In particular, Ireland's treatment of the technical terminology of spiritual practice and meditation is clear and natural, making his version of the *Udāna* a suitable introduction to Buddhism for those who want to read directly a canonical text. The translation is accompanied by a brief introduction (pp. 1-8), notes (pp. 125-151), a list of "parallel passages and references" (pp. 152-153), a bibliography, and a "list of [English] Sutta titles".

NOTES

1. For the ten perfections, see (in Thai) H. R. H. Princess Mahā Chakri Sirindhorn, *Dasapārami in Theravāda Buddhism*, Bangkok, 2525 [1982]. For the *Tiṃsapārami*, a text devoted to the "thirty perfections", see George Coedès, *Catalogue des manuscrits en pâli, laotien et siamois provenant de la Thaïlande*, Bibliothèque Royale, Copenhagen, 1966, pp. 89-91; for a list of titles of *pārami* texts, see Louis Finot, "Recherches sur la littérature Laotienne", in *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême Orient*, XVII, Hanoi, 1917, p. 72 and p. 196 nos. 524-528, 536-544. For the Theravādin Buddhology in general, see Richard Gombrich, "The Significance of Former Buddhas in the Theravādin Tradition" and I. B. Horner, "Some Notes on the *Buddhavaṃsa* Commentary (*Madhuratthavilāsini*)", in Somaratna Balasooriya et al., *Buddhist Studies in Honour of Walpola Rahula*, London, 1980, pp. 62-72 and 73-83. Also relevant is André Bareau's "The Place of the Buddha Gautama in the Buddhist Religion during the Reign of Aśoka", in the same volume, pp. 1-9.
2. Regarding the latter, I may add to Khoroché's references a *Jātakamālā* mentioned in the *Sphuṭārthā Śrighanācāra-saṃgraha-ṭīkā*: see Sanghasen Singh, *A Study of The Sphuṭārthā Śrighanācārasaṃgraha-*

- ṭikā*, Patna, 1983, p. 48.5; tr. J. Duncan M. Derrett, *A Textbook for Novices: Jayaraksita's "Perspicuous Commentary on the Compendium of Conduct by Śrīghana"*, Turin, 1983, pp. 9, 17.
3. I cannot find any evidence for this title in the text under review or elsewhere in Mulasarvāstivādin literature, the only title being the concluding *de bzhin gshegs pa'i le'u'o* (p. 54), "Chapter on the Tathāgata", that is, the Buddha. Thus "*Buddhāvadāna*" seems to be an invention of the author.
 4. For this work, cf. P. Skilling, "The *Samskṛtāsamskṛta-viniścaya* of Daśabalaśrimitra", in *Buddhist Studies Review*, vol. 4, no. 1, 1987, pp. 3-23.
 5. Peking edition of the Tibetan *Tripiṭaka*, no. 5562, vol. 113, *sems tsam*, si, 131a5 foll.
 6. Translated from the Chinese in Garma C. C. Chang, ed., *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sūtras: Selections from the Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra*, Penn State, 1983, pp. 442 foll., especially pp. 449-452, 457-464. The *sūtra* (also available in Tibetan translation) also gives many details of the traditional life of the Buddha, again from a Mahāyāna standpoint, and may be profitably compared with the account of the *jātakanidāna*.
 7. In addition, the brief citation by Daśabalaśrimitra shows that a similar version of the event was transmitted by the Sāmmatiya school.
 8. I regret that I am unable to offer alternate translations in French. The Tibetan is transcribed differently from the "Francophonic system" of the text, in order to avoid the use of diacritics.
 9. See the review of Paul Harrison's translation in JSS, Vol. 79.2, 1991, pp. 152-156.
 10. The *pāramitā* theory, which is accepted in some form or other by the known Śrāvaka schools, may be seen as a development within the early *jātaka* tradition, as elaborated by the "*jātaka*-reciters" (*bhāṇaka*). It predates the rise of the Mahāyāna, which took the *jātaka-pāramitā* tradition, originally confined to Śākyamuni (or the other early "historical" Buddhas) as the basis for its prescriptive and universalist description of the bodhisattva path. To suggest that references to the *pāramitās* betray a Mahāyāna influence is therefore to put the cart before the ox. For a discussion of this and related points, see Anthony K. Warder, "*Original*" *Buddhism and Mahāyāna*, *Pubblicazioni di "Indologica Taurinensia"* XVI, Turin, 1983.
 11. The breakdown, by sequential numbers of the Buddhas, is as follows: prose 1-99, 202-301, 402-502, 604-703, 804-903; verse 100-201, 302-401, 503-603, 704-803, 904-1004. The use of verse probably explains some of the variation in the names of the Buddhas between the three lists (see remarks at vol. 4, p. 1752).
 12. Vol. III, fasc. 3, 1973, "Buddha", esp. pp. 358-361. Cf. also *Hōbōgirin*, *dictionnaire encyclopédique du bouddhisme d'après les sources chinoises et japonaises*, 3rd fascicule, Paris, 1974, pp. 195-196 ("Butsu").
 13. The first-named translated and edited by H. Saddhatissa, *The Birth-stories of the Ten Bodhisattas and the Dasabodhisattupattikathā*, and published by the Pali Text Society, London, 1975, the second by François Martini, "Dasa-bodhisattauddesa, texte pali publié avec une traduction et un index grammatical", *Bulletin d'École française d'Extrême Orient*, tome 36, 1936, pp. 287-413. Note that only Metteyya belongs to the Fortunate Aeon, in accordance with Theravādin doctrine: the remaining nine future Buddhas are spread over five future aeons.
 14. Ed. Cecil Bendall, St. Petersburg, 1902, p. 8 ult.-9.6 = nos. 15, 17, 23, and 38 of the translation.
 15. Bhikkhu Pāsādika, *Nāgārjuna's Sūtrasamuccaya: A Critical Edition of the mDo kun las btus pa*, Copenhagen, 1989, p. 26 = nos. 15, 17, 23, 38, 39, 52.
 16. *Op. cit.*, ño, 42b5. Daśabala also gives the figures "five" for the Sthaviras and "1000" for the Mahāyāna.
 17. Ed. Radhagovinda Basak, *Mahāvastu Avadāna*, vol. III, Calcutta, 1968, p. 437.10.
 18. Tr. Étienne Lamotte, *La Concentration de la Marche Héroïque (Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra)*, Brussels, 1975, pp. 190, 215, and notes.
 19. Tr. Étienne Lamotte, *L'Enseignement de Vimalakīrti (Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa)*, Louvain, 1962, p. 385 and note.
 20. Ed. P. L. Vaidya, *Saddharmapuṇḍarikasūtra*, Darbhanga, 1960, p. 129.1.
 21. Cited in Bu ston: see note 26.
 22. Ed. Isshi Yamada, *Karuṇāpuṇḍarika*, 2 vols., London, 1968.
 23. Yamada, pp. 137-138.
 24. E. Obermiller, *History of Buddhism (Chos-hbyung)* by Bu-ston, part 1, Heidelberg, 1931, pp. 90-100.
 25. Vol. 1, pp. 121-139; see also pp. 93-95.
 26. *La Splendeur de l'Inébranlable (Akṣobhyavyūha)*, vol. 1, Louvain-la-Neuve, 1983, pp. 144-146.
 27. There is at least one exception: Buddha number 703, whose assemblies will be of "irreversible Bodhisattvas" (*phyir mi ldog pa'i byang chub sems dpa'*).
 28. Cf. translations such as "Dharma robes" (p. 3) from Tibetan *chos gos* = Sanskrit *civara*.
 29. In addition to that cited above, there is one at p. 4 = *Fortunate Aeon* 1742-1745.
 30. *Op. cit.*, ño, 42b6-43a2.

Louis XIV et le Siam
 DIRK VAN DER CRUYSSSE
 Paris: Fayard, 1991
 586 pp., ill., FF 150
 ISBN 2-213-02719-6

This voluminous study by the Belgian Professor Dirk Van der Cruysse on Louis XIV and Siam came out in Paris in September 1991. By its appearance and contents it promises to attract considerable interest and to remain for years to come a basic synthetic contribution on this fascinating as well as turbulent chapter of Franco-Siamese relations. The author being a historian specializing in the French 17th century, with broad exposure, as it appears, to the Asian world as well, his endeavour rested from the start on solid foundations and so the final outcome achieves a natural success.

The story has been told time and again and from so many angles or so variously fragmented that an all-embracing synthetical attempt at recapitulation seems most welcome and appropriate. The author has done it very satisfactorily, exhausting almost every available source, whether in archives and libraries of Paris, The Hague or Rome. All those familiar with the subject are aware of the extreme difficulty of evaluating and combining the available historical evidence, which is, unfortunately, mainly European due to the almost complete silence of the Siamese sources. (The Revolution of 1688 and especially the destruction of the Siamese archives in the Burmese fires which engulfed Ayudhya in 1767, condemn forever any historian or researcher to only a partial access at reconstituting the sequence of events at the time of the reign of Phra Narai.)

The point to underline is that the Belgian author not only manages to present to his readers a well organized and deeply researched historical narrative, but also to do this in a vivid style where irony is often made a tool for very down-to-earth conclusions, after unavoidable long and "dry" juxtapositions of materials and testimonies. The text thus becomes always interesting and pleasant and the reader is helped to forget the distance in time and to

acquire a feeling of live participation in the unfolding of the drama. The work is definitely scholarly but this vivid, personal style makes its reading flow as a fascinating mosaic of historical biographies.

The organization of the study is, generally, what it should be: After an overview of the Portuguese, Dutch and British presence in Siam (which, incidentally, covers by necessity almost one-fifth of the entire work), the author deals extensively with missionaries, apostolic vicars, merchants, diplomats, examining closely the Siamese embassies to France and the French embassies to Siam, sparing no detail of their splendor as well as their shortcomings. Naturally, the three main protagonists, Louis XIV, Narai and the Greek Favorite, Constantine Phaulkon, are given due preeminence. Then comes tragic catharsis and final disillusionment at the time of the dramatic Revolution of 1688. Extensive notes, chronological tables, indexes and bibliography complement the narrative most usefully.

This is the general framework in a brief summarization. But what is the author's position with regard to this most complex historical chapter?

Obviously, his intention is to be guided by testimonies and texts and present the picture, particularly of Constance, as objectively as possible. The general dichotomy of relevant sources is well known to the students of the period: British and Dutch in most cases incriminating, French again in most cases "eulogizing," and further subdivisions within the French camp between Jesuits and members of the Seminary. The Belgian historian mentions everybody, often presenting us with both shades of the contrast, and leaving us with the final aftertaste of his own irony.

It would be delicate to try to summarize his basic opinions but this is necessary for the purposes of this review:

- Narai: An enlightened despot much ahead of his times.

- The French: Unduly emphasizing — in those times of reversal of the Edict of Nantes—the paramount need

for religious conversion of Narai and later embarking on the disastrous idea of Siam's colonization.

- Phaulkon: Extraordinarily gifted but cunning and an adventurer, from the beginning to end.

- Father Tachard: The most dangerous grey eminence, the Jesuit turned diplomat, often exceeding his instructions.

- General Desfarges: A weak character, instrumental in Phaulkon's downfall.

- Phetracha: Usurper but incarnating the nationalistic and Buddhist feelings of the Siamese.

The table could go on and on but it would be better to let the reader enjoy the presentation of the text himself and draw his own conclusions. One last point is nevertheless fundamental: Prof. Van der Cruysse's commendable analysis of the diametrically opposed concepts of religious tolerance and intolerance of the Siamese and the French respectively.

It would not be easy to find fault with the above framework and basic approaches and conclusions. Having expressed our concurrence, in general, we would like nevertheless to offer some differing nuances on some specific points, as a contribution to the overall discussion.

First, a minor chronological correction: The Dutch Factory at Ayudhya was not established in 1607 (p. 62), but in 1608 (pp. 64 and 490).

The reference (just one paragraph on p. 75) to the Japanese presence in Ayudhya could perhaps be slightly expanded, to be in line with the overall pre-French alien presence there. And this even more as a measure of comparison between the notorious leader of the Japanese community, Yamada Nagamasa, and Phaulkon, and the former's involvement in the Siamese exercise of power, some decades before the advent of the latter.

Although the term "interlude," used by the author, is appropriate especially with the famous Persian Embassy sent to Siam in 1685, I would rather hesitate to use it in connection with Siam itself (p. 93) since developments there constituted a "constant"

dimension of the overall Franco-Siamese encounter and cannot be viewed as an "interval." On the other hand, we do not see any corresponding "French interlude," and rightly so. (This remark pertains of course only to form, and finally the author himself—and again rightly so—justifies the modest scope of his Persian interlude, v. p. 307).

Regarding Narai's preference for Lopburi, the author seems to dismiss the old explanation of Prince Damrong (i.e. because of the threat of the Dutch) and subscribes to other interpretations which emerged at the historical seminar at Lopburi in 1979. Indeed, such opinions were voiced there, but it is not certain that there is yet unanimity on the subject: Manich Jumsai,¹ and Prof. Rong Syamananda² writing in 1981, seem still to point to the Dutch factor.

Some slight corrections regarding references to events in Japan seem to be in order: François Caron, writes Van der Cruysse (p. 126), became director at Hirado in 1639, one year before the xenophobic *Sakoku*, culminating in the expulsion of the Portuguese and the transfer of the Dutch factory to Deshima. In reality, *Sakoku* found expression in the three famous edicts of 1633, 1635 and 1639; the Portuguese were expelled in 1639; and the Dutch went to Deshima in 1641.³

Also, the reference to the "Christian insurrection of Nagasaki in 1637" is an oversimplification of a largely debatable episode of Japanese history: it was indeed the "Shimabara insurrection," which, despite some Christian connotations, was essentially a peasants' revolt.^{4, 5, 6}

While I fully endorse the author's treatment of the subject of Buddhist tolerance, I would go even further regarding King Asoka: Not only he did not "impose" the Dharma on anyone by force, but he himself turned to the solace of Buddhism after reflecting on the bloody battlefield of Kalinga.

There is a slight reservation concerning Jacques de Bourges's ignorance of the "*devaraja*" character of Siamese kings (p. 172). While this was true in the time of Narai, it was not the case during the previous Sukhothai period when the monarch, according to the traditional interpretation of the Ram

Khamhaeng inscription, was more paternalistic.

A more serious objection would have to be formulated in reference to the point that "Narai's indifference with regard to Buddhism" caused a conspiracy by "Talapoins" (p. 191). Whereas there was indeed some uneasiness among the Buddhist clergy, I am afraid that the wording of the sentence goes too far: Narai did manifest great interest and tolerance towards Christianity but this never made him reject his basic Buddhist beliefs. (Cf. his own eloquent defense of 2229 Buddhist years on p. 359 and the remarks of Prof. Rong Syamananda about Narai's Buddhist adherence.)

The evaluation of Phaulkon (in "Interlude Grec" as well as in many relevant references) claims objective analytical research and it is true that both sides of the portrait are shown. But in the end, the author hardly disguises his disapproval of the royal Favorite. One may agree or disagree, but this is a legitimate option of the author. After all, for more than 300 years, the personality of "the Greek in Siam" has challenged complete impartiality of judgement, making some incline favourably towards him and most against him... My only objection here would be regarding the partial use of a reference to Phaulkon in a neutral way (p. 224), whereas the same source can definitely be interpreted as clear praise for Constance: This is the summary of the *History of Siam* by King Mongkut⁸ where Phaulkon's portrait emerges in the most positive way from the pen of this enlightened Siamese Monarch of the middle of the 19th century.

The Persian Embassy of Shah Suleiman was not heading towards Shahr Nav, "Siam" in the sense of the country (p. 296), but towards Shar Nav, "Siam" in the sense of Ayudhya, as is correctly mentioned on page 300. This is just to avoid the well-known confusion regarding the use of the term "Siam" in those times.

The question of which is the authentic text of Kosa Pan's diary, the text of the Rue du Bac (p. 378 sq.) or the one published in 1990 by Prof. M. Smithies,⁹ presents us with another

interesting scholarly dilemma. It is indeed sad that we have not been able to locate, so far, the complete and authoritative version of such a valuable Siamese testimony. Perhaps one day some lucky scholar will finally come across some copy in one of the neighbouring countries of Siam, if Narai had indeed forwarded it there, to one of his then allies, as per the wishes of Kosa Pan (v. p. 402).

With reference to the one hundred "slaves" allocated by Phaulkon to the Jesuits, and to the author's ironical remark on "slavery" versus "eternity" (p. 428), it should of course be accepted but also qualified: the connotation of "slavery" in the western world does not correspond exactly to the much milder Siamese version.

The author's endorsement of Phetracha (p. 450) as "champion of traditional Siamese values, of threatened Buddhism and of national independence," is, in my opinion, leaning too much on the other side of the whole argument. An extreme idealization of a nationalist, certainly, but also a usurper whose thirst for power was even greater than his antforeign feelings. This is, incidentally, a permanent danger when one tries to draw more or less absolute lines regarding the protagonists of this strange story, where so much lies in the grey area, far from both entirely black or white...

Where I would be completely unable to agree with the author is his attempt (p. 462) at proving the famous "English Catholic's" dismissal of Phaulkon's harmonious married life through the well-known quotation from the strange and isolated testimony of Engelbert Kaempfer: when Phaulkon had fallen from grace, the 17th century writer mentions that his wife "spit in his face." I think that a "*mise au point*" becomes necessary here: First, the private life of the hero is rather irrelevant to the story. Second, Kaempfer's testimony, based on Dutch sources, is in certain points even factually wrong (e.g. the events of the Revolution happened "in 1689"—instead of 1688).¹⁰ Finally, regarding the "spitting in his face," suffice it to mention the refutation by not a Jesuit but a British historian,

Anderson:¹¹ "In view of her [Mrs Phaulkon's] Christian character and kindly womanly nature..., a story told by Kaempfer to her discredit had better be left untold."

After these short remarks on the main part of the book, we come now to examine the notes and the bibliography.

The notes occupy some 36 pages and are definitely to be read as they provide a most useful background to the central narrative. They are accurate and they prove the enormous and conscientious effort of the author to locate and analyze his numerous sources. I would only wish to add a footnote on the basic testimony of Père Le Blanc (note 22 on p. 534). The other available manuscript at the Municipal Library of Dijon, mentioned here *passim*, had already been extensively analyzed by Hutchinson¹² in 1968. Moreover, there is an Italian translation of Le Blanc's work, edited in 1695 in Milan.¹³

Turning to the bibliography, I think that it will usefully serve many future researchers on the subject. It is very ample and well presented, almost exhaustive. Of course, most of it is already known to the specialist but there are numerous noteworthy references to manuscript sources in the Paris National Archives, the Paris National Library, the Quai d'Orsay, the archives of "Missions Étrangères" as well as manuscripts in The Hague and in Rome. Moreover this bibliography is not only addressed to the specialist but also to the enlightened general reader and as such it can certainly and greatly facilitate his further research.

It is a well accepted rule that the choice of the bibliographical material belongs to the writer. The critic has very small margins of legitimacy to question the author's choices. As far as this reviewer is concerned, the bibliography is most satisfactory with only some minor suggestions:

Some of the books mentioned do not have a direct connection with the central topic of the work (Louis XIV and Siam). Therefore they should rather be presented in an independent subdivision (for instance R. Knox: *An Historical Relation of Ceylon*; Matteo Ricci:

Histoire de l'expédition chrétienne au royaume de Chine; L. Frédéric: *Sudest asiatique*...etc). In this way, the main references to the central topic could be more easily located.

One fundamental work which is missing is Hutchinson's 1688: *Revolution in Siam*, the Memoir of P. de Bèze. Prof. Van der Cruysse rightly draws from the relevant publication of the Salesian Press of Tokyo, 1947, but Hutchinson's work provides many additional interesting remarks on de Bèze and many interesting appendices worth discussing.

In a reverse case, Van der Cruysse mentions a work but refrains from making any use of it in his text. This is Luang Sitsayamkan's historic biography of Phaulkon which, although based on French sources, is interesting for its Thai writer's remarks and conclusions, favourable to Narai and to Phaulkon in general.

This reviewer is conscious that over-dissection of such a monumental work as that of Prof. Van der Cruysse's may perhaps be blamed as stressing the limits of criticism. By his doing so it does not mean that he detracts from his praise at the beginning of these notes. The work is basically solid and very good. If there are occasional slight disagreements, the reason is the controversial character of some of the main protagonists of the story and the contradictions of the sources themselves. Everybody wishes to examine the drama of 1688 dispassionately, but at the end, perhaps subconsciously, he tends to lean, slightly or more, to one or the other side. The Belgian professor revives the overall unending discussion, attempting to capture the Truth, already elusive for 300 years.

GEORGE A. SIORIS

Former
Ambassador of Greece in Thailand

NOTES

1. Manich Jumsai. *Phra Narai, Roi de Siam*, Bangkok: 1986, p. 44.
2. Rong Syamananda. *A History of Thailand*, Bangkok: 1981, p. 76.
3. George Sansom. *A History of Japan*, Stanford: 1963, III, p. 36.
4. Ibid. III, p. 38.
5. C.R. Boxer. *The Christian Century in Japan*, Univ. of Calif. Press, 1967, p. 377.
6. François Toussaint. *Histoire du Japon*, Paris: 1969, p. 258.
7. Rong Syamananda. *op. cit.* p. 77.
8. Sir John Bowring. *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, London: 1857, p. 341 sq.
9. Michael Smithies. *The Siamese Embassy to the Sun King*, Bangkok: 1990.
10. Engelbert Kaempfer. "A Description of the Kingdom of Siam," in *Itineraria Asiatica*, pp. 31-32. Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 1987 (reprint).
11. John Anderson. *English Intercourse with Siam in the 17th Century*, p. 372. London: 1890.
12. E.W. Hutchinson. *1688: Revolution in Siam*. Hong Kong: 1968, p. xiii.
13. Jeremias Van Vliet. *Historiael Verhael der Sieckte Ende...* Toyo Bunco: 1958.

Louis XIV et le Siam
DIRK VAN DER CRUYSSSE
Paris: Fayard, 1991
586 pp., ill., FF 150
ISBN 2-213-02719-6

The title of this major work of scholarship is somewhat misleading. It is essentially a survey of Siamese-far-ang relations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, though concentrating on the period of the Siamese and French embassies between 1680 and 1688. It covers the early Portuguese, Dutch and English contacts, the establishment of the Catholic missions, the rise of Phaulkon, and the final debacle with the seizure of power of Petracha and the retreat of the French from their forts in Bangkok and Mergui.

Most of this (including the embassy of Hussein Beg from Persia) is familiar territory. But the importance of Dr. Van der Cruysse's work lies not only in bringing it all together in one volume, but in the access he has had to hitherto unpublished archival sources. Some of these, notably the Céberet

journal and Tachard's "Relation", not to be confused with his published first and second voyages, were used by Michel Jacq-Hergoualc'h in his magisterial edition of the original French text of La Loubère which appeared in 1987 (reviewed in *JSS* in Vol. 77, Pt.1, 1989). But Van der Cruysse has also used the "Lettre d'un anglais catholique" in the Rue du Bac, has used and translated extracts of the hitherto little known (and so far unpublished in toto in French or English) "Journal de Brest" of Kosa Pan, the Mémoires of Le Blanc in the Jesuit archives in Rome, Dhiravat na Pombejra's London Ph.D. thesis of 1984, has carefully analysed the Mémoires of Vachet and Challes, and above all has had access to all the Dutch records, both archival and published.

The early story of the western contacts may not be so well known. They admirably set the scene, and Van der Cruysse makes full use of the text of a fellow-countryman, Jacques de Coutre from Bruges, who visited Siam in 1595-6, and whose account was published, in Flemish, by Verberckmoes and Stols in 1988. The establishment of the VOC "factory" in Ayudhya and the comings and goings of the less successful British one are also carefully recorded.

Van der Cruysse makes clear that the northern Europeans were interested in trade (put more crudely, profit) and not much else. The Portuguese who preceded them also had the same motive, but as their material importance declined, they placed increasing emphasis on faith rather than the factory. The treaty of 1516 gave the Portuguese in Siam the right to practice their religion; they supplied arms to the Siamese kings and established a merchant community in Ayudhya, cared for by Dominican priests. A pope had earlier thoughtfully divided the world into Spanish and Portuguese spheres of influence and the *Ius Patronatus* gave the Portuguese crown authority in religious affairs from the Cape to Japan. The establishment of the Jesuits in 1534 and their appearance in Siam in the early seventeenth century (the first, Sequeria, died in Petchaburi in 1609) was to challenge the Portuguese *Padroado*. The establishment in Paris of the Mis-

sions Etrangères and their subsequent appearance in Siam in 1662, enhanced with the titles of bishops (*in partibus*, it is true), was to lead to serious religious disputes. The Vicars Apostolic were astonished at the tolerance which prevailed in Siam; for the most part, the Catholic missionaries and Jesuits showed little tolerance towards each other. This was hardly calculated to inspire the confidence of outsiders in the new religion which was clearly rent with all manner of internal schisms.

The movement towards the climax of the period with the exchange of embassies is very clearly presented. The first Siamese embassy to Louis XIV was lost in the Indian Ocean; without any news of it, Narai, presumably at Phaulkon's urging, sent what Van der Cruysse calls a mini-embassy, not to the king, but to his ministers, particularly the Marquis de Seignelay, the minister of state for what were effectively overseas relations. The record of the missionary Vachet, sent as interpreter, is used to recount the difficulties of this mission: the two Siamese refused to go anywhere, refused to socialize, and were constantly scandalized at farang habits and customs. Louis XIV expressly requested their presence at the opera. "I had to tell them twice that they had to stand when His Majesty entered; he had the grace to turn towards them and greet them. The Dauphin and all the court did likewise, and it was only with much difficulty that I could get them to return the compliment. It is hard to believe that throughout the performance they neither looked at the King nor the actors, but kept their eyes cast down, except to glance from time to time at the exit." Since they were treated more like creatures from outer space than envoys, their attitude can in some ways hardly be blamed. Details of this mission have not hitherto been generally available and Van der Cruysse gives an excellent summary of it.

The next three embassies, two French, one Siamese, are much better known, and records abound; Van der Cruysse points out that few journeys were so well recorded as the Chaumont-Choisy mission of 1685-6; apart from the accounts of the two

ambassadors, there were also those of Bouvet, Vachet, Forbin and that genius of intrigue, Tachard. Apart from the accounts of Bouvet and Vachet, which appeared much later, the rest were published almost immediately on the return of the embassy (Forbin's with some delay) and, with the exception of Choisy—an exception which Oxford University Press is remedying next year—translated contemporaneously into English.

But how little all three embassies accomplished. The first obtained some rights in relation to the practice of religion, but these rights were never publicized by Phaulkon, and the commercial advantages were of no consequence. Chaumont himself was hardly the model of diplomatic flexibility. The two subsequent embassies were rendered ineffective from the start by the machinations of the Jesuit Tachard, whose hot line to the king's confessor and orders which overrode those given to La Loubère and Céberet made a mockery of the missions themselves. His secret dealings with Phaulkon made the position of both Siamese and French ambassadors untenable, and his increasing paranoia and self-importance were intolerable.

The final debacle is well known, but the different threads are carefully pulled together and the motives of the actors in the ultimate tragedy convincingly analysed. The arch-schemer Phaulkon, who all along appears to have sought the French alliance to back up his own position (the fragility of which he well recognized) rather than to counterbalance Dutch power, falsified the situation from the beginning by holding out the bait of Narai's conversion. Versailles was equally to blame in accepting the likelihood of this conversion (though how much this was clouded by possible commercial and colonial advantages, particularly after the signal lack of success in the settlement of Madagascar, is unclear). Yet when the climax came, Phaulkon gave up the chance of an easy escape; apparently feeling his place was beside the dying king, he went to the palace in Lopburi and knowingly his death, after dreadful tortures.

The different Frenchmen in the denouement come out worse, with the possible exception of Mgr. Laneau, the Bishop of Metellopolis, who also was tortured and imprisoned, and eventually resumed his post in Ayudhya, where he died in 1696. Tachard is clearly the arch-villain of the piece, encouraging false hopes and vainglorious of his position first as secret envoy of France, then as declared Siamese envoy to Louis XIV and the pope, inciting discord among the missionaries, and conveniently out of harm's way when the crunch came. Desfarges, the French general, was throughout despicable, and his treatment of Phaulkon's widow Marie Guimard (who was to spend years as a slave in Phetracha's stables) scandalized even his own officers; still, he had his deserts, after the withdrawal via Mergui, the pointless attack on Phuket, and his recall, by dying on the return journey, with his sons and his not inconsiderable personal fortune (possibly augmented by some of Phaulkon's wealth) sinking without trace off the coast of Brittany. Even the Abbé de Lionne, often represented as a saintly figure, is shown to be otherwise in these pages. His own superior wrote to him saying he was accused "of the death of Mr. Constance, of the misfortune which befell the French, and of the reversal which had occurred in matters of religion in Siam." Seeing the going was getting rough, Lionne made his escape from Siam while he could, "abandoning Mgr. Laneau and his colleagues to their sad fate." Véret, the representative of the French Indies Company, was only interested in his pocket and his skin.

Many of the Siamese in the drama fared no better. Narai's favourite and possibly chosen successor, Phra Pi, was executed and his stinking head hung around Phaulkon under torture; the king, now a prisoner in his own palace, died the day after he heard his two half-brothers had been killed by Phetracha's son Sorasak. Kosa Pan became for a time Phra Klang, had his nose cut off in a fit of anger by the usurper Phetracha, and died (or committed suicide) in disgrace.

None of this is new, but the material is assembled in a consummately

readable and analytic fashion. Van der Cruysse tries to see all sides of the picture; his sifting through all the contradictory "facts" relating to Phaulkon's background is eminently balanced. One is forced to reflect on the absurdity of the whole proposal (pointed out quite early on by La Bruyère, apparently emphasized throughout by Forbin), and on the danger of mixing the traffic in goods with that in souls. The number of fortunes which disappeared beneath the waters—the lavish presents to Louis XIV in the *Soleil d'Orient*, the assets and person of Caron outside Lisbon in 1673, the wealth of Desfarges and quite likely Phaulkon in the *Oriflamme* among others — also underlines the fact that travel on these journeys was not only long and uncomfortable, but also dangerous and occasionally fatal.

A careful reading of the textual sources cited here should give both the librarian and the publications officers of the Siam Society a rich supply of additional material deserving of being either acquired or published, reissued, and/or translated. And it is still surprising that no Hollywood mogul has yet hit upon this most fascinating and improbable of historical dramas. It is to be hoped that Dirk Van der Cruysse has secured the film rights.

MICHAEL SMITHIES
c/o United Nations-ESCAP
Bangkok

*Etude historique et critique
du "Journal du Voyage de
Siam de Claude Céberet,"
Envoyé extraordinaire du Roi
en 1687 et 1688*

MICHEL JACQ-HERGOUALC'H
Paris: Editions l'Harmattan, 1992
360 pp., no price given

After a mere 304 years, Céberet's text of his and La Loubère's embassy has at last been published, and who better than Michel Jacq-Hergoualc'h to present it, after his editing of the new French version of La Loubère which

appeared in 1987. This was reviewed in *JSS* vol. 77 pt. 1 (1989), when a plea was made for the publication of Céberet; now we have it.

It has been known about for a long time, and was used by Lanier in the last century, by Van der Cruysse in his recent *Louis XIV et le Siam*, and of course by Jacq-Hergoualc'h himself in his edition of La Loubère, where extracts from it showed more clearly than La Loubère's discreet text the incredible difficulties the joint embassy laboured under, and the inexcusable behaviour of Tachard throughout.

It does not, by itself, come to a massive text, running to 111 printed pages, with 30 pages of biographical and historical notes preceding the main text, and no less than 424 footnotes (filling 189 pages), as well as a chronology, bibliography and very complete index.

La Loubère's text needs no introduction, and provides the best summary of information about Siam available at the time. But though he was in charge of the diplomatic and religious aspects of the mission, he rarely mentions anything in relation to it. Céberet, as one of the twelve directors of the Compagnie Française des Indes Orientales, was in charge of the mission's commercial aspects. Nearly everyone of consequence in Versailles was dissatisfied with the commercial treaty brought back by Chaumont and Choisy's mission of 1685-6; neither of the ambassadors was acquainted with business, and Véret, in charge of the French "comptoir" or godown in Ayudhya, was both incompetent and venal. Céberet's mastery of commercial niceties is very clear in the complex arrangements relating to Phaulkon's entry into the Compagnie, adding 300,000 livres (or 100,000 écus) to its capital.

The mission of the envoys extraordinary (who were not given the title of ambassadors, a subject of much protocolar dispute during the reception of the mission) was a disaster, thanks to the presence of the Jesuit Father Tachard. While the hierarchy between La Loubère and Céberet was established, that between them and Tachard was not. Neither was the position of

General Desfarges clear: did he obey the King of Siam, his minister, Phaulkon, as of course his minister wished, or the King of France's envoys? (In the end he obeyed none of them, and bears much of the blame for the fiasco which was to occur).

Desfarges' idiocy comes out very clearly in this text. He was asked by La Loubère and Céberet early on

"if, according to the plans and reports made to him about Bangkok, he considered it possible to undertake its attack, to which he only replied that if he were put before Bangkok with his troops, he would die at his post, to which I replied that it was not a question of dying but of knowing if the enterprise was feasible..."

Before Céberet returned to France, via Mergui and Pondichéry, leaving La Loubère to complete the unhappy embassy alone, he spoke to Desfarges, pointing out that the Marquis de Seignelay, the Minister of the Marine charged with this affair, might ask him about the condition of the Bangkok fort and if the French troops there were "in safety and out of insult." Desfarges unhelpfully replied "He would defend himself well in that place, even though it was poor." Céberet pressed his point: was it in a position to be defended?

"He replied he would defend himself behind a gauze curtain. I then told him I was not asking if he would defend himself, being well persuaded of his valour and experience, but I was requesting him to tell me if the fort of Bangkok was in a position to withstand an attack. He did not wish to add anything, except that he would do his duty."

One cannot wonder that at this point Céberet gave up; reasoning with a buffalo would have been equally productive.

But the position of Tachard was more equivocal. The Instructions to the envoys stated:

"His Majesty desires that they send back the envoys of the King of Siam on local boats to be found on the spot, with whom they would send Father Tachard, to whom His Majesty had graciously given a

letter of credence in reply to that of sire Constance, to which the instructions he will receive from the sires La Loubère and Céberet should be relative. They should therefore give him an instructive memoir of all that he should propose to the said sire Constance..."

Given such ambiguity, it is not surprising that Tachard took full advantage of it. Father d'Espagnac, Céberet notes, publicly stated that Phaulkon

"considered us as persons to whom the king had given an apparent position of rank which the reverend father could not publicly undertake because of his religious character, but that for the negotiation of the embassy he would only deal with Father Tachard with whom he would obtain better results than with us..."

Tachard took as much as he dared into his own hands, negotiating directing with Phaulkon (Monsieur Constance throughout in the text, though Tachard objected that he should be referred to as "Monseigneur"). He openly announced to the envoys that he was conveying Phaulkon's wishes to them. They replied that they

"were surprised he waited on the orders of Mr. Constance to communicate matters in which the king [Louis XIV] had interest. He replied brusquely that the commission of the king was complete, that His Majesty had only ordered him to disembark first and to effect the entry of His Majesty's troops into Bangkok. Our astonishment at hearing the father speak in such a manner prevented us from replying, apart from the fact that the conversation would have become heated if we had continued with it."

Their astonishment was to be still greater when they discovered that Tachard had signed commissions from Phaulkon to the French commanders as Phaulkon's secretary. Tachard moved completely into Phaulkon's camp, and acted only as his mouthpiece to the envoys, who never came into contact with the minister until a few days before their formal presentation at court. The protracted negotiations continued

through this far from impartial third force. He then announced that he had charge of explaining to Louis XIV what he had undertaken and to bring him all documents concerning his intermediation.

"Do you not," he said to us, "have orders to follow my advice?"

We replied simply, no, to which he relied he too had no orders to obey us, and wanted to see the article in our instructions which said we would send him to disembark first and would give him our instructions. He argued over the distinction between instruction and order and we replied that we had only this article concerning this matter and did not pretend to more.

"This article," he went on, "implies that you will not act without me."

"So," we replied, "do you pretend, in that case, that orders come from you or from us?"

"I pretend to nothing."

All this is quite extraordinary; Tachard's self-importance must have gone to his head. Matters were not helped by Tachard being named, early on in these negotiations, as the ambassador of King Narai to Louis XIV and the Pope, and thus to return with La Loubère on an equal footing. His effrontery knew no bounds, nor did his servility. When, after the presentation in Ayudhya and the now routine trip to Lopburi, the envoys stayed rather late at Phaulkon's residence discussing details, Phaulkon sent Tachard into his kitchens to order supper for those present. Not only did he act as Phaulkon's secretary, but even his butler.

The text gives fascinating insights into Phaulkon's complex and arrogant character. He appears as choleric as La Loubère and far more demanding. This Greek upstart, who started his career as a cabin boy, was behaving like the nabob he had become. Clever he undoubtedly was, a gifted linguist (though Céberet snidely notes that when he translated La Loubère's discourse to King Narai, he did so "in very few words"), an acute businessman (seen here in his dealings relating to his entry into the *Compagnie des Indes*), but apparently so blind to his exposed

position that he could not see the house of cards about him as ready to collapse at one puff of wind. Power and self-importance seem to have gone to his head as well.

There are two other fascinating facts to emerge from this text. One is that French intentions were not as peaceful as they appeared. The envoys' instructions stated:

"If a change of government which might have occurred since the departure of the ambassadors [Chaumont and Choisy], or a change in the wishes of the King of Siam, took away all hope of succeeding through negotiation, His Majesty has resolved in this case to attack Bangkok and to make himself master of it by open force, and he will give his orders to sire Desfarges on this subject, through which he will explain that he should not proceed to this extremity but that after the sires La Loubère and Céberet will have communicated to him that there was no other way of succeeding."

This a capital text, not in fact in Céberet's record at all, but in Jacq-Hergoualc'h's footnotes; nevertheless, it does not really justify no less than three separate appearances (namely, in footnotes 50, 95 and 110). It proves the contentions of percipient Siamese that French intentions were not ultimately disinterested.

The other is that both Céberet and La Loubère were under no illusions that everything might go very wrong. In the arguments against having Siamese troops (which Phaulkon was demanding) alongside the French in Bangkok, they exposed all the weaknesses of the French and Phaulkon's position. This single sentence will be quoted (in translation) in full, in part because it is a good example of the very complex style used by Céberet:

"We indicated to him [Tachard] that although the king had the right to approve the establishment of French troops in the Kingdom of Siam, such as had been done, we had not the right to approve it, and it was also in our minds to do our duty, that the intention of the king in sending his troops to Siam

had been to assure the Christian religion and the commerce of his subjects, as Monsieur Constance had even requested His Majesty, but we saw the king frustrated in his intentions since his troops were not in complete safety in Bangkok for, apart from the peril of a dangerous division which could arise in a garrison composed of two different nationalities, especially when a foreigner was in overall command, there was also the danger of secret betrayals which the example of what had arrived recently to the Macassars and the English at Mergui was an example [sic], that the King of Siam could die and his successor not be among our friends, that the sire Constance himself should consider this matter still more than us, in that he was furthermore interested, having no other means to protect himself from the violence to which it was natural he could be exposed, if the King of Siam were to die, but to withdraw to Bangkok where he would find his safety if the French were entirely the masters, that in his letter, by which he accorded the custody of Bangkok, he had given as the motive the necessity of fortifying a place as a retreat for Christians who could not be in safety among pagans."

That was foresight indeed. For the results of this embassy were dissipated by events. Céberet left Siamese territory overland on 4 January 1688, La Loubère the day before by ship (the paranoia of Tachard on board has been described by Jacq-Hergoualc'h elsewhere). King Narai fell seriously ill in February, Desfarges was summoned by Phaulkon to Lopburi on 31 March to discuss Phetracha's plot, did not go, and left Phetracha a free hand to act on 18 May. The rest is well known: the murder of Narai's half-brothers, of Phra Pi, of Phaulkon, the death of Narai, the siege of Bangkok, the handing over of Phaulkon's wife, the retreat of the French on 2 November.

Valuable as this text is, it is not an easy read, as the translation above might indicate. It is not made easier by the desire of Jacq-Hergoualc'h in

effect to compare this text with the unpublished *Relation* of Tachard in the Archives Nationales describing the same events as Céberet (the differences between the two are sometimes remarkable), as well as Tachard's published *Second Voyage...* of 1689, Céberet's own summary of his account, and, where relevant, extracts from La Loubère, the envoys' instructions, and other documents. It might have been better to have printed a face-to-face text so that an immediate comparison between the unpublished Céberet and the unpublished Tachard could be made, with footnotes coming at the bottom of both pages. At it stands, one spends all one's time turning between the text and the occasionally overwhelming and repetitive footnotes. Still, it is better to have it published at last than not published at all.

Now that we have this text, there still remains one more from that rich period in Siamese history which has never been published in full and which is capital to a clear understanding of events leading up to the final fiasco, and that is Father Benigne Vachet's account. This is the only text to describe in detail the second mission, consisting of Khun Pichai Walit and Khun Pichit Maitri, sent by King Narai to his "brother" Louis XIV, as well as subsequent events, and it only saw a partial publication in 1865. Would it be too much to ask Michel Jacq-Hergoualc'h, or Dirk Van der Cruysse, or even the Siam Society, to undertake this and so end our ignorance?

MICHAEL SMITHIES
c/o United Nations-ESCAP
Bangkok

Seeds of Peace, A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society

SULAK SIVARAKSA

Foreword by H.H. The Dalai Lama, preface by Thich Nhat Hanh. Berkeley, CA: Parallax Press, 1992. ISBN 0-938077-78-3; pp. xiv, 129. US\$12.00.

The title of this book points already to the fact that it should not be read for its literary or scholarly value alone. Of primary importance apparently is neither the style of the author nor the scholarly approach (i.e., the amount of footnotes and references), but the goal expressed in the title. Seldom are readers asked so directly to contemplate on their own views and look at their own attitudes in the light of the material presented. Seldom are readers reminded so directly to consider the effects of their own thoughts, words, and actions.

That H.H. The Dalai Lama decided to write the Foreword to the book and that the Ven. Thich Nhat Hanh wrote the Preface should also alert readers that they are invited to approach the content of the *Seeds of Peace* from a higher level of understanding. *Seeds of Peace* has truly been written in the spirit of the basic teachings of the Buddha.

The author himself, in the words of the editor, "is a prominent and outspoken Thai social critic and activist." The idea that Buddhists can become actively involved in the improvement of the quality of life in their own communities may be new to those who follow the last words of the Buddha, that we should be a lamp to ourselves and work on our salvation with diligence. With the population growing in numbers, however, and the increasing modernization with all its concomitant results—industrialization, pollution of the environment, de-personalization, greater availability of consumer goods—our preoccupation with material issues has reached proportions where spiritual concerns have become overshadowed and are pushed aside during the hectic pace of modern life. We are in dire need of being reminded to balance materialism with increased spiritual practice and the application of these spiritual insights to daily life.

In the editor's words, Sulak Sivaraksa "is the natural product of the contradictions of contemporary Thai life—educated abroad, he often dresses in traditional clothing, and his politics are at once culturally conservative and socially progressive." A lawyer, a teacher, a scholar, a publisher, the founder of many organizations, and the author of

more than sixty books and monographs in both Thai and English, he has, during the last three decades prepared himself for the task of proposing some blueprints for "renewing society."

The idea to publish this book emerged from a collection of previous talks. Discussed in Part one, "The Politics of Greed," are "The Religion of Consumerism," "A Thai Monologue with Japan," "The 'Think-Big' Strategy of Development," "Quantifying Development," and "Development as if People Mattered." In Part Two, "Personal and Societal Transformation," the reader is confronted with topics like "Religion and Social Change," "Buddhism with a Small 'b'," "The Five Moral Precepts," "Buddhism and Non-Violence," "Buddhist Women—Past and Present," and "A Buddhist Model of Society." The latter chapter offers some concrete suggestions how consumerism could be curbed, how democracy could be implemented, how global disarmament could be administered and guaranteed by a permanent international peace-keeping force, and how international justice could be strengthened by a Universal Bill of Rights. One of the appendices presents a critical view of democracy in Siam and the other some clarifying statements of the author about his motivations to speak out in public talks and his publications.

The book is certainly thought-provoking and attests to the courage and fortitude of the author. Readers should not be affected by the terse and often direct language which the author apparently chose to shift the attention of the readers out of their habitual mode of thinking, because progress will only be possible when we see and go beyond prejudices and stereotypes.

RUTH-INGE HEINZE

*Center of Southeast Asia Studies
University of California, Berkeley*

***Siam in Crisis
A Collection of Articles***
SULAK SIVARAKSA

Bangkok: Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute and the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development, 1990, 371 pp.

When a second or subsequent edition of a book appears in print, there is a tendency to ignore it, for inevitably

it contains a good deal of material which has already been read and reviewed.

In the case of Sulak Sivaraksa's *Siam in Crisis: A Collection of Articles* this would be a mistake. While retaining the best articles from the original 1980 edition, the revised version also includes a considerable amount of new material written during the 1980s that addresses some of the most important issues affecting Thailand over the past decade. "On Southeast Asian Modernization" takes a hard look at the high costs of modernization to the Thai body politic—costs that include environmental degradation and pollution, the expansion of slums, child prostitution and absentee landlordism, to name but a few. "The Religion of Consumerism" deplores the recent upsurge of rampant consumerism and loss of traditional cultural values in Thailand. In "The Problem of Ethnic Minorities and State: Burma and Siam" the author reflects on what he sees as his country's lack of respect for its neighbors and for minority peoples within its borders, while in "Buddhism and Social Values" he attacks the increasing cooption of the Sangha by the state.

Presented in his distinctively trenchant and provocative style, the second edition of *Siam in Crisis* to a large extent reflects Sulak Sivaraksa's own personal odyssey. Retained here from an earlier phase of his work are the articles in which he pays tribute to his heroes (Prince Narit, Prince Damrong and Prince Dhani) and mentor (Phya Anuman), and excoriates his fallen idol (Kukrit Pramot). Here too are articles from the 1960s and 1970s which reflect his growing concern for the common man, willingness to speak out against social injustice, and increasing growth in stature as a social critic. At the same time we see him increasingly turning to Buddhism for ways to deal with his country's ills. Much of the new material presented in the 1990 edition of *Siam in Crisis* reflects an extension of this trajectory. It shows the author's current active concern with issues of social justice not only within his own country, but also as they affect Thailand's relations with

its neighbors, and particularly with Burma.

So what forces in Thai society does Sulak believe can overcome the problems of rapid modernization facing the country? Basically he looks to an alliance between three groups that he believes truly have the needs of the people at heart. They include those members of the Sangha who have become aware of the dangers of being coopted by the state and are now alert to local and village needs, especially in the environmental sphere; non-governmental organization (NGO) workers whom he claims now see themselves as being on the side of the people rather than, as in the past, superior to them, and the mass of the people themselves.

The forum in which Sulak sees a socially engaged Buddhism as being most effective still remains, however, a predominantly rural one. Yet he is the first to admit that one of the most intractable problems is how to make Buddhism meaningful in an urban environment. Buddhism still mostly works well at the village level; it is in major cities such as Bangkok that it has become, in his own words, largely ceremonial. Simplicity of life-style, self-awareness and mindfulness do not mix easily with the lures of modern high-rise, fast-paced urban conglomerates.

Further thought might have been given to the headings under which some of the articles are placed in the new edition. A few give the impression of belonging to residual categories and of having been listed under particular headings for want of a better place to put them. The appendices, for example, include several miscellaneous pieces that relate to the author. Book reviews of earlier works by Sulak are mixed with articles about and interviews with him. The book reviews have already appeared elsewhere, and probably do not merit being reprinted here, while some of the remaining material needs either to be polished into true article form or omitted. By the same token the recent brief obituaries dedicated to various friends do not blend comfortably with the longer pieces on leading Thai cultural figures

and could have benefitted from being placed in a separate category.

The vision of Thailand presented in this book is at once conservative and radical. The tension between these two sides of Sulak's vision is not resolved in the new edition of *Siam in Crisis*, but its presence is what makes many of the essays stimulating reading.

JANE KEYES
Seattle, Washington

Historical Dictionary of Laos

MARTIN STUART-FOX and

MARY KOOYMAN

Asian Historical Dictionaries No. 6.
Metuchen, N.J. and London: The
Scarecrow Press, Inc. 1992 (xlix +
258 pp)

For those seeking guidance in their study of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (LPDR), this work offers an aggregate of names, treaties, and parties that one may encounter in post World War II, especially post-1975, political literature. Although not advertised as such, the volume is presumably directed towards non-specialists, perhaps journalists or the casual researcher attempting to see Laos in the context of other Asian countries. If indeed this is the true purpose of such a publication then it might be considered a satisfactory reference of conventional beliefs held by Western political scientists.

In the event that this book aspires to contribute to the study of Lao history as its title portends, then it is acutely deficient and the title deceptive and misleading. The reader is in fact apprised of a narrower focus in the foreword which declares that in order to understand events linked to the Vietnam war in Laos (already a dubious motivation for producing a historical dictionary), "it is necessary to reach further back." But "reaching back" must be taken here as a *relative* term since the authors say apologetically in their preface that "both the classical kingdom of Lane Xang and its successor kingdoms, and the French colonial

interlude have been *relatively* neglected" [reviewer's emphasis], and furthermore, "political figures and events have been given prominence over economic, social and cultural developments." Thus, to be honest and academically aboveboard the title should read, *A Political Scientist's Pocket Dictionary of Laos*, since entries, even when they do relate to earlier periods, are of the quick-fix variety that gloss over complicated ethnographic and historical detail. But while this predilection is unfortunate it does accurately reflect most recent political work on Laos.

Owing to the dichotomy in stated purpose between title and preface, both of which are contradicted by the series editor in the foreword, the question naturally arises as to the distinction between history and politics. The authors are sensitized to this (171), even stating explicitly that in their own historiographic conception, political developments *constitute* "contemporary history," and furthermore that politics provides "an essential framework within which to study social or cultural change." In the case of the former, while we can accept that politics is included in contemporary history, we must reject the implication that they are interchangeable, and, since in most academic circles politics would be classed as a subset of social phenomena and not the reverse, the latter is a disappointing and unconvincing contention, not to mention an example of fallacious logical typing. It is moreover not borne out in practice since proportionately few examples of social or cultural analysis appear in the dictionary. Nor is such a hypothesis warranted on the basis of currently available political literature on Laos such as in the works of Brown and Zasloff (1986), Stuart-Fox (1986), Deuve (1984) or Gunn (1988), studies which are confined primarily to political events with slight mention of culture and society. One senses an indecision on the part of the authors and we are left with an aftertaste of confusion of intent: that the result is neither fish nor fowl, and that left to their own devices, unconstrained by the dictionary-of-current-affairs genre, richer and more

diverse flavors might have emerged, Luang Prabang Stew [ຜົງປາກຸງ] as opposed to rice and salt.

Politics, in this reviewer's opinion, fails as history precisely because its discourse evades those cultural issues which tend to put unwanted flesh on anorexic chains of causality, thereby disrupting neat and simplistic interpretations. It is no accident that this work and those of others in the field emphasize French and English sources as opposed to indigenous ones thereby avoiding, to the extent possible, any confrontation with culture. This approach has led to a myriad of popular misconceptions, many of which are reproduced in this work as well as in the works of authors which this dictionary ostensibly seeks to explicate, such as those already mentioned.

The primal transgression of political scientists writing on Laos, one with grave historiographic repercussions, is their disregard for the Lao language. This is tantamount to a proscription of primary sources: interviews in Lao, oral history, the reading of original texts, and hermeneutic endeavor generally. Doubt is cast on conclusions since analyses, it may be assumed, have not penetrated the Lao mode of thought. (Must we return to the primitive Eurocentric stages of Southeast Asian studies where the colonial language is the means of knowledge?) Furthermore, the problem of the lack of inclusion of language in political history is peculiar to Laos and not to homologous undertakings in Cambodia, Thailand, and Vietnam where utilization of in-depth knowledge of the respective language has been *de rigueur* for at least the past twenty years. Historiographically speaking, it is this fact that sets Laos apart from the others in Southeast Asia. If we accept that history [<Greek *histor* 'wise, learned,' < IE *weid-* 'to see'] goes beyond description, beyond the naming of people and the dating of events, to examine and explain the thinking which leads to actions and the genesis of that thinking, then it must be accepted that the purported historical study of Laos represented in this volume lags far behind.

The authors are faced from the

outset with the problem of language, initially with the very minor (but for them very bewildering) linguistic problem of how Lao words should be Romanized. Consistency, we are informed, is not possible. Pathetically failing to grasp the logic of the French system, the authors state that 's' and 'x' are interchangeable and use the surname 'Insixiengmay' as an example saying the 'x' could be spelled as 's' just as well. In fact, in the French system, 's' corresponds to the high series consonant [ɕ] in the Lao orthography and 'x' corresponds to the low series [ʁ]. Hence only one spelling of this surname is possible in the French system. Words like 'Xaignaboury' [ຊາຍນະບູຣີ] must then be searched for under 'Sayaboury' in the dictionary. Although it is obviously not perfect, there are numerous other significant and helpful regularities in the French Romanization not apprehended by the authors, rendering the spelling and, as a consequence the search for entries, thoroughly impressionistic and unpredictable (it is of course a Romanization, not a "phonetic transcription" as they mistakenly refer to it). With no guide to pronunciation, and no provision of the original Lao for either phonological or lexical purposes, this dictionary can only expand the already considerable gap between Western and indigenous thought. Nescience in these very rudimentary language matters which occur in the opening pages is disturbing and reinforces a presentiment that this level of superficiality pervades the volume as a whole.

Ignorance of the language has led to another level of fundamental error, this time in the classification of Tai, the ethnolinguistic family of which Lao is a member. Many of the Tai speaking peoples in Laos and Vietnam refer to themselves as Phou Tai [ພູໄທ or / phuu C1 tay ~ thay A4/ meaning 'Tai person']. Based on the impressionistic Romanization, not on the original language, the expression has become incorrectly glossed as 'mountain Tai' (as it is in this volume p. 152 and in Stuart-Fox 1986:46ff—a work replete with examples of ethnolinguistic illiteracy too numerous to mention here) and then

later rendered as 'hill Tai,' throughout the political literature. This is not just a phonological blunder that results from ignoring tones ('mountain' [ພູ] has a separate tone from 'person' [ພູ້] and a distinct initial consonant in many of the languages referred to) but it is also an elementary syntactic error because the modifier follows the head in Lao and the other Tai languages of this area, so there is no excuse even based on an inability to discern the tones. Since Tai speakers everywhere, from Hainan to Assam, inhabit valleys and not mountains this kind of misnomer is difficult to countenance, and the attitude behind it betrays an arrogance: that one should not be held responsible for the accuracy of information outside one's own discipline (even though ensuing analyses may be based upon it).

Language is the primary basis for determining ethnic identity and in keeping with the general insouciance towards cultural issues in the dictionary, of the more than one hundred ethnic groups which have been identified in Laos fewer than fifteen are mentioned and these with little precision. The Loven, for example, call themselves 'Jru,' a fact not provided at all; Bru, the group (albeit loosely defined) to which General Kong Le belonged, is not mentioned; the Kha Toum, who were considered to be valiant fighters for the Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces, are not included; and the Hmong-Yao languages are incorrectly classed as Tibeto-Burman (72). (To be typologically accurate this family should be named either Miao-Yao—the outsider terms, or Hmong-Mien—the insider terms.) The term Mien or Iu Mien, which the Yao use to refer to themselves, is not provided. The so-called "lowland Yao" known as Lantèn but who call themselves Kim Mun are not included, nor are the Phou Noi (Seng Saly Ba) lowland Tibeto-Burman speakers, the dominant group of Phong Saly city and environs. In terms of political history, if a researcher desired to investigate the relationships between the Lue, Lao, Kha Bit, Phou Noi, Ho, [ພູງຸ້] Wuti Akha, Lantèn and Hmong of Phong Saly and events that led to

the political ascendance of Asang Laoly (Akha) and Kham-Ouan Bouppha (Lao), he would not get very far using this dictionary as a starting point since half of these ethnic groups and both personages are missing from the listings.

An interesting point which pertains to entries concerning both the ethnic Lue and the origins of the Lao, and one which this reviewer has been preaching since 1975, is that the Lue royal lineage of Muang Ou in Phong Saly claim to predate the establishment of the capital in Chiang Hung because the Lue migrated originally from northwestern Vietnam, passing through Muang Ou before arriving in Sip Song Panna. The linguistic evidence supports this east to west movement and there is still a Lue population in Lai Châu (Vietnam) today. Moreover, the Lao of the upper Nam Ou, at Nam Bak and Muang Ngoy, preserve a tradition that the Lao originated in Muang Boum (on the upper Black River near Muang Tè), not in Muang Theng as commonly held (cf. Chamberlain 1975, 1991).

The oversimplification of ethnic classification inherent in the terms Lao Loum ('Lao below'), Lao Theung ('Lao above'), and Lao Soung ('high Lao'), which were the creation of P.S. Nginn in the early 1960s, is ideal for political purposes but hardly befits an academic study, and from a humanitarian point of view it does not grant people the dignity of correct identity. Here again, political scientists, supported by government politicians, have opted for the easy way out, as this typology allows for a down-playing of very complex inter-ethnic relationships which underlie thinking and complicate political matters in Laos, something that cannot be understood without at least a knowledge of Lao and preferably some of the minority languages as well. It is more than likely that ethnic diversity accounts for why political scientists specializing in Laos shy away from language and culture and prefer to withdraw into the more secure passageways of French colonial archives and international treaties. And even colonial studies of language and culture, some of which are contained in

the bibliography, are customarily ignored by those interested in Lao politics.

One statement in particular, made in the authors' introduction (xlv), encapsulates basic misunderstandings of an ethnolinguistic nature and also demonstrates its importance since Western political scholarship on Laos asserts this in various guises as a founding premise: "The present borders of Laos owe more to historical accident than to the logic of either geography or ethnography." Setting aside the problems inherent in the expression "historical accident," there is in fact a logic to the boundaries. The distribution of the true Lao language (not including other Tai languages like Lue, Red Tai, Phuan, etc.) begins at the northern point of the Nam Ou River in Phong Saly and follows the Nam Ou to Luang Prabang. The eastern Phongsaly border separates the valley of the Ou (Lao) from the valley of the Tè or Black River (White Tai). There are also branchings which are found along the Nam Tha and the Nam Beng which appear to stem from the northern point and extend to the southwest. From Pak Beng it extends west for some distance along the Mekhong, mostly to the south of the river. The mountain ridges which skirt this area beginning in Chiang Rai and continuing into Nan form the land border between Thailand and what is now Oudomxay Province. This is logical from both a cultural and geographic perspective. The Lue and Kalom populations, whose languages differ somewhat from the Lue of Muang Sing, are relatively dense on the Lao side, but thin out considerably where they spill over into Thailand. In the northwest, the boundaries follow the territories of the Lue principalities of Muang Sing and Ou Neua respectively. From Luang Prabang, the Lao language follows the Mekhong south all the way to Champasak and Ratanakiri in Cambodia. In Xaignaboury it is found spoken in the valleys from the river to the beginning of the mountain crest with Nan, again forming a natural linguistic and geographical area. South from Thakhek, the lowland areas are inhabited primarily by Lao speakers between

the river and the crest of the Annamite range, again forming a natural border. The main exception are the lowland Phou Thay of Savannakhet and Khammouan, more recent arrivals from Nghê An and Thanh Hoá. In the northwest along the northern Houa Phan border, the main distinction is between the Black Tai speaking area to the north and the Thay Neua speaking area to the south. The boundary is slightly distorted here since the Tai of Muang Vat (Yên Châu) in the Sip Song Chou Tai speak a form of Thay Neua closer to that of Xieng Kho than to Black Tai proper. The only part of the border which seems really to be arbitrary is from eastern Houa Phan south to Borikhamxay. The Red Tai and Tai Meuy [/m ɛy C1/] occur on both sides of the border as do many of the other Tai languages from this location. Of course the political entities of Houa Phan and Xieng Khwang, where Neua-Phuan dialects are dominant as opposed to Lao, have had problematic eastern borders since the Vietnamese began their nationhood. Thus, the borders of Laos do form, even omitting the obvious situation of Northeast Thailand, a coherent non-accidental ethnographic and geographic area, and its complexity should not be allowed to obfuscate that fact. From Phongsaly to Champasak, Lao speakers possess a common language and literature. Refusal to look at basic ethnolinguistic information (in this case consulting the 1949 EFEO ethnolinguistic map of Indochina would have helped) has led to the emplacement of a false assumption that is adhered to in one form or another in political discourse on Laos, one which has engendered an ontology of divisions in which unifying factors have customarily been overlooked. Of even greater concern are deficiencies in the educational process which have allowed this kind of thinking to arise.

In the works this dictionary directly addresses, language and cultural diversity are paid lip-service (to portray divisiveness *à la* the above example) but are rarely taken into consideration in analyses. Studies of minority uprisings carried out by Gunn come closest in terms of recognition of the

intricacies of the problem, but here data are taken primarily from secondary and tertiary sources. In Gunn's (1986) study of the Hmong Pa Chay [Paj Cai] rebellion, for example (incorrectly spelled Ba Chay in the dictionary and Batchai by Gunn), the indigenous Hmong language source in Mottin (1980) which differs radically from the French positions is not consulted. Thus, while we are demanding of those who would specialize in Laos, our position is justified. But the intellectual economics are clear: Laos is a small country of 3.5 million people (many of whom are excellent polyglots speaking several Asian and European languages) with over one hundred ethnic groups from five ethnolinguistic families; therefore a major investment in language is mandatory for understanding. Few investors are willing to pay the real price and many are agreeably seduced by the considerable foreign language skills of the Lao themselves. But as the saying goes, it comes with the territory.

Other popular misconceptions due primarily to language deficiency which are given unquestioned credence in the volume include: the meaning of *Kha* [ຂ້າ] as 'slave,' which is perhaps understandable since the meaning does come close in contemporary usage. However, this word appears to derive from an ancient ethnonym for 'Austroasiatic,' vestiges of which are found in the terms *Khmu*, *Khmer*, *Khom*, *Krom*, etc. As a Tai word its distribution is limited to the geographical range of Mon-Khmer, that is, where the two families overlap. Another form frequently mistranslated and never questioned is *Muang Theng* [ມືອງເຫງ], the Tai name for Dien Bien Phu. Here the authors have provided a most imaginative gloss, 'place of the gourd,' which defies explanation. The word for 'gourd' found in the original Lao and Black Tai mythological texts is /maak taw pun/ [ບຕມາກເຕົ້າປຸ່ງ] so this cannot be the source. In the original Lao texts of Khun Burom the gourds were said to have appeared at a location not far from Muang Theng and this may be the reason for the error. One would hope it is not a mistake for /tɛŋ/ 'cucumber, melon,' but given

the level of language awareness found in the dictionary this cannot be ruled out. The other gloss offered is '[place of the] heavenly beings (Then)' because many linguistically naive folk-etymologists have sought to relate *then* [ທຸນ] to *theng* [ເຫງ]. But these two words are always kept separate in Black Tai, and such a correspondence just does not work historically in Tai linguistics, where final consonants are stable. It must be accepted that *theng* is a place name with no translation, most likely pre-Tai in origin. A more minor point is the mystery of why the Chinese Pin-Yin spelling *Zhenla* is utilized in place of the more widely accepted *Chenla* in the name of the ancient kingdom. The Lao form is *Chin* [ຈີນ] (with a short vowel) and the Khmer word is *Chân*, both of which are good Southeast Asian names.

In another cultural area, one that could shed much light on political affairs and history, the subject of Lao literature is barely alluded to. The entry under 'Literature' begins with a bizarre declaration that Lao literature dates only from the 16th century in spite of the fact that the epic poem of *Thao Hung Thao Cheuang* [ທ້າວຮຸ່ງທ້າວເຈືອງ] is shown by its archaic language to be much older, at least 14th century in composition, with origins dating from a much earlier period. It is particularly ironic and inexcusable that this work is not mentioned anywhere in the dictionary since its content is to a large degree historical and is related to figures found regularly in the chronicle tradition, and is found preserved by the Khmu as well (the Khmu "Chuang" is mentioned in the bibliography in an article of Ferlus 1979). Its publication several years ago in Laos was the crowning achievement of Maha Sila Viravong before his death (Sila 1988). The poem of *Sang Sin Xay* [ສັງສິນໄຊ] (not an epic by standard definition although it is defined as such in the dictionary) is the only work given a separate entry. Besides this only four other works are cited (one is spelled incorrectly: *Kalabet* should be *Kalaket* [ກາລະເກດ]), which is a very poor showing indeed for a country so rich in literary tradition. The dissertation

of Anatole Peltier (1986) describes 37 of the major works (most of which were published and have been available since the early 1960s). Lafont (1959) lists 1,634 titles of manuscripts, and a recent publication of the Committee for Social Science (Khampheng 1988) lists many more.

Even in the domain of political history, the purported focus of the dictionary, many principle minority leaders are disregarded or have gone unnoticed due to the language barrier. Pho Kadeuat, the much-feared Kha military commander, has been excluded. Chao La, leader and successor to a long line of Mien (Yao) ethnarchs, is never mentioned. Ba Va, the Akha leader from Phongsaly, is not to be found. Phragna Thao Nhi, leader of the "Soek Cheuang" (Cheuang Wars) in Houa Phan and Thanh Hoá from 1875 until 1886, is mentioned only in passing (and even then his title is misspelled as Thao Nhé). He defeated the Lue army from Muang Say and was finally killed 10 years after he began (not in 1877 as we read in the dictionary) (Boutin 1937) but the hostilities continued until 1901 (Robequain 1929) and caused massive migrations by Tai speakers into Khammouan Province to the south. Finally, the 13th century Black Tai prince Lo Let (Chau Ngou Hao = "the cobra prince"), who made contact with Luang Prabang and King Phagna Khamphong, grandfather of Fa Ngoum, marking the first recorded interaction with the Sip Song Chou Tai, has not been included in the dictionary (cf. Doré 1991).

Thus it would appear that the further one goes in a quest for detail in this work, the more its deficiencies become apparent and the more its focus is revealed as shallow and restricted. In part this situation is a result of ignoring the basics of language and culture, which, however democratically one wishes to view academia, must precede other disciplines if mistakes are to be avoided. It also results from a failure to question the works of other writers mirrored therein with the consequence that old errors are repeated and given additional credence. The authors are trapped in the mas-

querade of having to pay homage to a disingenuous title while trying to remain faithful to their own interests. The core of the work is an alphabetical list of some major (mostly post-1975) persons and topics surrounded by a few aleatory entries from earlier periods, especially names of kings. These are located between lackluster and in some cases highly disputable maps in the front of the book, and an adequate but uninspiring bibliography in the back, together with appendices providing names of Lane Xang kings beginning with Fa Ngoum in the 14th century (earlier ones are not listed), names of kings from Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Champassak (the Xieng Khwang Phuan royal line has not been included), and names of political figures in various eras all of which are readily available in other sources. In this manner the *status quo ante* of Lao political studies is maintained but our own intellectual curiosity, like that of the authors', *ignoti nulla cupido*, has not been aroused.

The reviewer is truly sorry for this very critical assessment, not only of the dictionary but of the many works it represents as well. It is written not with animosity but with a sincere desire to awaken scholars to some of the problems and elevate the condition of Lao studies generally, to imbue relevant disciplines with broader epistemological as well as factual foundations that include indigenous and hence more diverse views of this fascinating country and its unique inherent qualities. These essential substructures have been missing for too long. We are promised (172) that a new general history of Laos by Martin Stuart-Fox will appear this year (1992) and so we look forward to this with the hope that, having dispensed with the constraints of the political dictionary genre, a more well-balanced and erudite treatise will emerge.

JAMES R. CHAMBERLAIN
Chulalongkorn University

REFERENCES

- Boutin, André. 1937. Monographie de la province des Houa-Phan. BAL 1.69-119.
- Brown, MacAlister and Joseph J. Zasloff. 1986. *Apprentice Revolutionaries: the Communist Movement in Laos, 1939-1985*. Stanford: Stanford University Press (Hoover Institution).
- Chamberlain, James R. 1975. A new look at the history and classification of the Tai languages, in *Studies in Tai Linguistics in Honor of William J. Gedney*, eds. J. Harris and J. Chamberlain. Bangkok: CIEL.
- . 1991. The efficacy of the P/PH distinction for Tai languages. in *The Ram Khamhaeng Controversy: Collected Papers*, ed. J. Chamberlain. Bangkok: The Siam Society.
- Deuve, Jean. 1984. *Le Royaume du Laos 1949-1965*. Paris: EFEO.
- Doré, Amphay. 1991. The Sukhothai inscription seen from the middle Mekhong valley, in *The Ram Khamhaeng Controversy: Collected Papers*, ed. James R. Chamberlain. Bangkok: The Siam Society.
- Ferlus, Michel. 1979. Le récit Khamou de Chuang et ses implications historiques pour le Nord-Laos, Asia du Sud-est et Monde Insulindien 10.327-365.
- Gunn, Geoffrey. 1986. Shamans and rebels: the Batchai (Meo) rebellion of northern Laos and north-west Vietnam (1918-21). *JSS* 74.107-121.
- . 1988. *Political Struggles in Laos (1930-1954): Vietnamese Communist Power and the Lao Struggle for National Independence*. Bangkok: Editions Duang Kamol.
- Khampheng Ketavong. 1988. [*ສຳມະນາໂບລາມທົ່ວປະເທດ ຄັ້ງທີ ໑*.] (The First Country-Wide Seminar on Palm-Leaf Manuscripts) Vientiane: The National Research Institute of Arts and Literature, Lao Committee for Social Sciences.
- Lafont, Pierre-Bernard. 1959. Inventaire des manuscrits des pagodes du Laos. *BEFEO* LII. 2.429-545.
- Mottin, Jean. 1980. *Contes et Légendes Hmong Blanc*. Bangkok: Don Bosco Press.
- Peltier, Anatole-Roger. 1986. *Le Roman Classique Lao*. Thèse pour le doctorat d'état. Université de la Sorbonne Nouvelle (Paris III).
- Robequain, Charles. 1929. *Le Thanh Hoá*. Paris et Bruxelles: EFEO.
- Sila Viravong (Maha). 1988. [*ມຫາກາມ ທ້າວຮຸ່ງທ້າວເຈືອງ*.] (The Epic Poem of

- Thao Hung Thao Cheuang) Vientiane: The Research Institute for Arts and Literature, National Research Committee for Social Sciences.
- Stuart-Fox, Martin. 1986. *Laos: Politics, Economics, and Society*. Marxist Regimes Series. London: Frances Printer; Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

The Archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia From 10,000 B.C. to the Fall of Angkor
CHARLES HIGHAM
University of Otago.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989
xii+387 pp. About US\$70.

Charles Higham has hitherto made a very substantial contribution to the study of and progress in prehistoric archaeology in Southeast Asia, having published countless articles and reports on sites he has excavated in Thailand. This book only further confirms his recognized stature as a discerning analyst and interpreter of archaeological data. Although his expertise lies within the prehistoric period, as he himself points out in the introduction, the later stages of the book have been researched with typical conscientiousness and thoroughness. Personally the reviewer has always warmed to his style of English; it matters a great deal for a book to be not only academically sound but also eminently readable.

Vietnamese archaeology is a field deserving special attention and thus Professor Higham's presentation in some detail of data from many sites in that country is very welcome. It is commendable that emphasis has been given to a country where archaeological research has apparently made strides forward and been very active in the past fifteen years. Admittedly few outside Vietnam can claim to have been able to follow closely the new discoveries made in the field of archaeology in that country, and these would be those with contacts with the Vietnamese archaeologists or who have access to and can read the vernacular.

It is interesting to note that while Professor Higham of course sees as significant the novel objects which appear at about 6000 B.C. at Spirit Cave, such as pottery and polished stone tools, he feels their presence there is not necessarily diagnostic of the beginnings of agriculture, as many scholars in the past and even now have believed. Absolute proof of rice agriculture can be determined by analyses of rice husks, which at Spirit Cave have been proven to be of the wild variety up until the upper layers of the site. Admittedly methods for determining the type of rice being consumed still needs perfecting or at least improving, but the upper layers of the Hoabinhian site of Xom Trai in Vietnam have yielded sufficient evidence of a successful transition to plant cultivation. It must also be said that the artefacts unearthed from layers 2-4 at Spirit Cave and the tools excavated from the Bac Bo region of similar date show close similarities, much of this period reflecting the widespread presence of a form of Hoabinhian culture in mainland Southeast Asia.

Professor Higham emphasizes the point that in antiquity in the uplands of Northern Thailand the communities like those at Spirit Cave, so well endowed as far as food resources were concerned, continued for thousands of years to lead a hunting-gathering way of life because food production was not considered necessary. It is only when the environment was overexploited or exhausted that such a transition was often made.

A resounding success for Professor Higham was his excavations at Khok Phanom Di, which are dealt with in some detail in this book. He observes that at this site one can witness a successful transition towards what he calls the domestication of people, which is the adaptation of humans to a sedentary way of life. He feels that although man was now raising animals and perhaps cultivating rice, these adopted practices, although admittedly important, should be regarded at Khok Phanom Di as less significant than the fact that people were settling down to live in a village-type community where

they had permanent homes. One of the highlights of Professor Higham's excavations at this site is the amount of paleoenvironmental evidence gained and the picture this consequently gives about life at that time and the resources available locally. Professor Higham is in no doubt as to the richness of the environment, which includes marine food, and indeed the skeletal remains indicate healthy, well nourished populations. At the time the book was written it had not been determined whether the rice consumed at Khok Phanom Di was cultivated or wild.

We see also at this site that the people had been interred in clusters some distance away from one another, which Professor Higham believes to be indicative of different family groups. It seems that for one generation after another the dead were buried above the points where their ancestors had been laid to rest. The excavator also observes that wealth must have oscillated in particular family groups, an analysis based on grave goods which seems to show that status was probably achieved and not ascribed. Professor Higham's analysis of the burials at Khok Phanom Di is very discerning and interesting. Although the site dates from about 2000 B.C. to 1400 B.C., the absence of bronze objects as prestige goods which were traded has perplexed the excavator, especially when one considers that the location of the site is within reach of arteries of communication leading up northwards to Lopburi, a copper-bearing region and an area where bronze was being produced in some quantity at that particular period. Bronze ornaments found at Nong No in the Phanat Nikom area, not far from Khok Phanom Di, argue for trading links with the Lopburi area and pose the question of why the high status site of Khok Phanom Di did not itself yield any bronze items.

Emphasis has been given in this book also to Northeast Thailand, beginning with the early settlements characterised by the probable practice of rice agriculture and the raising of livestock. Ban Chiang's lowest archaeological layers, dated to about 3600-2000 B.C., represent this period,

and hopefully further field work in the region will give us more data on this phase. Professor Higham calls this period the General A phase, using the term of Donn Bayard.

Professor Higham draws attention to the fact that early settlements of General Periods A and B, the latter characterised by the presence of bronze in the archaeological layers, whether in Northeast Thailand or in the Bac Bo region of Vietnam, share one interesting feature, which is the almost invariable occurrence of sites on slightly elevated terrain above the confluence of streams. Such a choice of sites had presumably been determined by the need to be near a water source and at the same time to be safe from the hazards of floods.

Professor Higham believes that bronze appears in Northeast Thailand for the first time around 2000 B.C., a view he has maintained for some years now and which agrees with Joyce White's revision of the Ban Chiang chronology. He favours the theory of North Vietnamese origin for bronze metallurgy in Northeast Thailand and it must be said from available archaeological evidence that the bronze-bearing Phong Nguyen sites in Vietnam have so far yielded earlier dates than the Northeast and also more in the form of objects associated with metallurgy around 2000 B.C. Indeed, the finished bronze tools and the moulds in the two areas show a resemblance, and this suggests probable contact and trade between North Vietnam and Northeast Thailand at that time, and there is reason to believe that the initial stages of the metallurgical tradition were one and the same.

General Period C sees iron appearing and one can witness the growth of settlements in terms of physical size, evident at sites like Nonchai and Ban Chiang Hian. Such sites are believed to be representative of chiefdom-like centres usually surrounded in the nearby areas by smaller sites, undoubtedly subordinate to the centres. Although Professor Higham believes the use of iron to be an indigenous development rather than an introduction from the subcontinent he does not rule out the

possibility of diffusion in this issue.

It is a popularly held view amongst experts in Southeast Asian prehistory that acquaintance with iron came with the smelting of certain copper ores which contained iron elements and that this led to the adoption of the practise of iron smelting, so local innovation is thought probable for this region. This General Period C, which is estimated to have lasted from about 400 B.C.-300 A.D., was also characterized by the appearance of glass, agate and carnelian beads, which are likely to have been trade items. Although it is still a matter of debate, certain beads made from semiprecious stones were most likely imported from India, whose agate and carnelian have been fashioned into such ornaments for a long time. The quality of the stones is such in India that the much inferior Southeast Asian specimens could not have been as prestigious when exchanged although it could be that many of the local stones were used for bead-making. The site of Ban Don Ta Phet in west Central Thailand is representative of this period, having yielded semiprecious and glass beads in some quantity.

In conclusion, I should like to draw attention to the continuing field work done in the Lopburi region of Central Thailand. Professor Higham has not gone into much detail on the results obtained from this project, probably due to the fact that the data acquired had not been published at the time of the writing of his book. The fact that the bronze objects in the two areas are quite distinct would support separate development of bronze metallurgy, in spite of contacts having definitely been made possible by the water-ways.

PAJRAPONGS NA POMBEJRA
c/o The Siam Society

***Austroasiatic Languages:
Essays in Honor of H.L.
Shorto.***

Edited by

J.H.C.S. DAVIDSON.

School of Oriental and African
Studies, University of London.
1991. 249 pp.

This fine collection of sixteen papers marks the retirement of H.L. Shorto, the eminent scholar of Southeast Asian linguistics. Shorto is best known for his work on Austroasiatic and the Mon language, especially for his two major lexical contributions: *A Dictionary of Modern Spoken Mon* (1962), and *A Dictionary of the Mon Inscriptions from the Sixth to the Sixteenth Centuries* (1971). The articles in this *Festschrift* cover a broad range of the diverse linguistic sub-disciplines, including synchronic and diachronic aspects of Mon-Khmer and Austroasiatic phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, lexicon and philology, and represent major academic advancements.

The **Austroasiatic** superstock, which includes the **Mon-Khmer** ethnolinguistic family, is without question the oldest and most widespread group of languages on the Southeast Asian mainland. (At one time, around the turn of the century, Wilhelm Schmidt attempted to relate the Mon-Khmer languages to Austronesian and used the all-inclusive term **Austrie** to refer to this larger unit. In his introductory paper to the volume Paul Benedict attacks this concept in *Austrie: an 'extinct' proto-language*. Although the classification of sub-groups within Mon-Khmer is perhaps still not complete, the tentative groupings of Gérard Diffloth (1991) seem reasonable:

(1) **Northern Mon-Khmer**, comprised of **Khasian** (the subject of a contribution to this volume by the late Eugénie J.A. Henderson, *Problems and pitfalls in the phonetic interpretation of Khasi orthography*); and **Palaungic** (the subject of Diffloth's paper for this volume, *Palaungic vowels in Mon-Khmer Perspective*). The Northern sub-group has been further divided into **East**

Palaungic (including Waic, Angkuic, and Lamet), represented here by Jan-Olof Svantesson's article on an Angkuic language, *Hu—a language with unorthodox tonogenesis*, and **West Palaungic** (Danaw, Rieng, and Rumi); the **Khmuic** is represented by Dr. Suwilai Premasri's excellent study, *Aspects of inter-clausal relations in Khmu*.

(2) **Eastern Mon-Khmer** includes **Vietic** (represented by two papers in this volume: *Seventeenth-century Vietnamese lexicon: preliminary gleanings from Alexandre de Rhodes' writings* by Professor Nguyễn Đình-Hoà, and Kenneth Gregerson's *On Austronesian lexicon in Vietnamese*); **Katuic**; **Bahnaric** (the subject of David Thomas' paper *Communicatives, existives, and statives in Proto-South-Bahnaric*); **Khmeric** (well-represented by several papers: *Les dérivés désidératifs en Khmer* by Saveros Pou, *A diachronic survey of some Khmer particles (7th to 17th centuries)* by Judith M. Jacob, and *The form syag in Angkorean Khmer* by Philip N. Jenner; and **Pearic** (including the Chong language spoken in Thailand, the subject of Dr. Theraphan L. Thongkum's article *An instrumental study of Chong registers*).

(3) **Southern Mon-Khmer** includes the branches of **Monic** (represented by Christian Bauer's *Old Mon s-*); **Aslian**, and the Mon-Khmer substratum found in **Achanese** and **Nicobarese**.

Included in the broader stock of Austroasiatic are the **Munda** languages spoken in India. This group is represented by *A linguistic analysis of some South Munda kinship terms*, by Norman H. and Arlene R.K. Zide.

As may be seen from the fascinating array of titles, the articles in this volume embody the full breadth and depth of the field of Austroasiatic linguistics. It is in addition a most valuable offering to Southeast Asian language studies generally, with considerable implications for reconstruction of the prehistory of Southeast Asia. We are much indebted to the School of Oriental and African Studies for making this volume available to the scholarly community.

REFERENCES

- Diffloth, Gérard. 1991. "Linguistic prehistory from a Mon-Khmer perspective," paper presented at the conference, *The High Bronze Age of Southeast Asia and South China*, Hua Hin, Thailand, 14-19 January.

JAMES R. CHAMBERLAIN
Chulalongkorn University

***Modern Art in Thailand:
Nineteenth and Twentieth
Centuries***

APINAN POSHYANANDA
Singapore: Oxford University
Press 1992, 259 pp., ill.
S\$110.

Art is not produced in a vacuum; it may possess its own internal logic but, at the same time, it is subject to a complex and constantly shifting set of external factors. Painting and sculpture are as much reactions to the past as responses to the present. A critical tradition thus seems essential if art is not to lose impetus, nor fail to establish a dynamic relationship with its audience. The art historian and the critic have definite roles to play.

Thailand has lacked such a critical tradition, partly due to the nature of art production in the past, though it is also the result of a more general cultural phenomenon. The absence of documentation and dialogue is especially regrettable in the present era, when modern art has evolved hesitantly and with a confusing eclecticism.

Now, the publication of *Modern Art in Thailand* goes a long way to filling the void, and offers the kind of scholarly study contemporary Thai art not only deserves but needs if it is to thrive. In what is the first comprehensive account of the development of Thai painting and sculpture in the 19th and 20th centuries, Assist. Prof. Apinan admirably lays the foundations on which a critical tradition may be built.

Not only welcome, *Modern Art in Thailand* is also an extremely timely

publication as the local art scene is currently experiencing one of its periodic booms; a boom which, unlike other moments of heightened activity, might just not fizzle out. Making sense of the boom and giving it some perspective is not the least of Apinan's achievements.

Part of the difficulty in assessing and understanding modern Thai art lies in the fickleness of the subject. The number of times Apinan has recourse to the word 'novelty' is indicative. In the 19th century there is a "search for novelty that constantly changed the meaning and form of Thai art;" later the "novelty [here a fascination with oil painting, bronze and marble] had worn off;" by the 1950s Prof. Silpa Bhirasri is described as feeling "the search for novelty had become a chronic disease."

In a sense, Bhirasri was right, though not quite in the way he intended, his attitude being arguably reactionary and certainly anti ultra-modern. He seems to have been confused about, among other things, the difference between change, or new directions, and novelty. Since he is popularly known, with some justification, as the "Father of modern art in Thailand," it is perhaps not surprising that many Thai artists tend to do the same.

A case can be made that a fascination with novelty for its own sake has long been deeply ingrained in Thai culture, and the problem existed well before Bhirasri's time. The important point is that the eclecticism it produces was never properly appreciated, true change and development not distinguished from a facile pursuit of that which is merely new or different.

Given that by the late 19th and early 20th centuries Thai art was at a turning point, with the decline of didactic religious art, an appreciation of the various influences at work is crucial to an understanding of the development of modern art in Thailand. Without a critical historical appraisal it is impossible to distinguish accurately valid new directions, to separate the good from the bad or simply the indifferent. It is precisely such an appraisal that Apinan successfully attempts in *Modern Art in Thailand*.

The core of the study traces the

various influences which have produced the essential eclecticism that characterizes modern Thai art. The theme of modernism provides a context, though as Apinan points out, it is a term whose precise meaning lacks international consensus, and which here must be understood with specific reference to Thailand's own "revolutionary process of modernization."

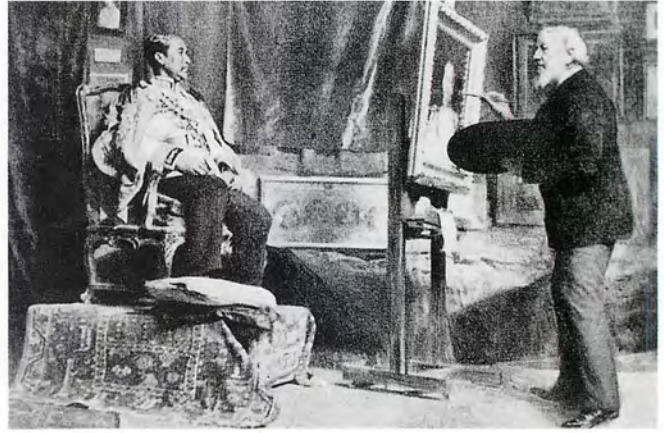
The central problem of modernism in regard to Thai art is "the dilemma of choosing between a need to be modern and a desire to preserve national identity and traditional values. As a result, there is no dominant style or uniformity in modern Thai art." In tracing the several stages in the evolution of art in the modern era, Apinan attempts to define modernism as the term relates to a specific stage of development. Thus the actors—art teachers and patrons as well as artists—are portrayed against a detailed and well-researched sociopolitical background.

The book opens with an intriguing survey of the latter half of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th—the "threshold" of modern art in Thailand. Particular attention is paid to King Chulalongkorn, whose patronage played a major role in disseminating Western art in Bangkok, but, more interestingly, Apinan also takes the reader into less familiar territory—the work of foreign, especially Italian, painters in Thailand and the quest for reality in art, prompted in part by an interest in the alien fields of portraiture and photography, and expressed in the work of Thai artists such as Prince Narisaranuwattiwong.

No simple transitional period, this "threshold" of modern Thai art also contained the seeds of the dilemma which has plagued and slowed artistic development. In the early 20th century, King Vajiravudh felt that Siamese arts and crafts were suffering from an overexposure to Western influences, and aired his views in newspaper articles written under the pseudonym "Asvabahu." And colourful writing it was, too; for example, Apinan quotes a lament that Thai decorative painting had to make way for "a piece of lithographic horror, whose colours knock you down at a distance of 10 yards."



Cesare Ferro and Luang Soralakikhit (Mui) painting portraits of King Chulalongkorn at the Abhisek Dusit Throne Hall, Bangkok, in 1906. (Photograph courtesy of the National Archives, Bangkok).



Francesco Margotti. Charles Emile Auguste Carolus-Duran painting King Chulalongkorn in the studio of Francesco Margotti in May 1907, San Remo, Italy.



Corrado Feroci (Bhirasi), *To Their Heroes who Died for the Country*, 1922, Bronze, Portoferraio, Italy, (Photograph Carlo Carletti).

Emile-François Chatrousse, *King Mongkut*, gilded metal, 1863, Ratcha Karanyasapha Throne Hall, Grand Palace, Bangkok, height 59 cm. (Photograph courtesy of Bureau of the Royal Household).



Fua Haribhitak, *Nude Study*, pastel, 1955, collection of Dhep Chuladul, Los Angeles, 48 x 65.5 cm. (Photograph Narong Thongwitokomarn).



Chalood Nimsamer, *Lokuttara*, 1991, Fibreglass, height 700 cm. Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre, Bangkok (Photograph courtesy of Presko Ltd.).



Damrong Wong-Uparaj, *Fisherman Village*, tempera, 1960, Silpa Bhirasri Memorial Museum, Bangkok, 88 x 109 cm. (Photograph Kittti Amornpatanakul).



Montien Boonma, *Venus of Bangkok*, bucket, wood, paint, 1991, the Visual Dhamma Gallery, Bangkok, 180 x 94 x 180 cm. (Photograph Kittti Amornpatanakul).



Nitti Wattuya, *Oriental Soul*, acrylic on paper, 1989, CL Sahaviriya Finance and Securities Co., Ltd., Bangkok, 60 x 80 cm. (Photograph courtesy of the artist).

This resulted in a revival of traditional arts—the Department of Fine Arts and the Arts and Crafts school were founded in 1912 and 1913, respectively. The effect was a slowing down in the pace of the local art scene, compared to that in Europe or Japan; moreover, there was little financial or moral support for artists who wished to study Western art.

This early background is important, but the real pivotal period in the development of modern art in Thailand came in the 1930s and '40s. It was a time when the connotation of the word "modern" ceased to be confined to the monarchy and the elite; when art was institutionalized "as a government tool to state building;" when the School of Fine Arts (later Silpakorn University) was founded, and when scholars and teachers, most particularly Prof. Bhirasri (Corrado Feroci), had a pervasive influence.

Here Apinan brilliantly describes the social and political context, most notably using Bhirasri and the creation of the Democracy Monument as a telling example of the influences at work. Despite enormous change, there was neither a full revolution at this time, nor was the conflict between traditionalism and modernism resolved.

The complexities are enormous and are here well tackled. While the present volume is perhaps not the place for a full critical analysis of Bhirasri's influence, Apinan provides ample food for thought. The informed text raises in the reader's mind questions as not only to Bhirasri's talent, but also to his questionable politics and his seemingly contradictory aesthetics. Bhirasri is probably rightly revered as a great teacher—former students attest to his enthusiasms and his ability to inspire—yet along with Bhirasri's undoubted achievements, attention should be given to confusions he either failed to resolve or to which he actually contributed.

From the first institutional development of modern art in the 1930s and '40s Apinan traces the path of modernism up to the present day. Always keeping a firm grasp on the impact of political and social events, he offers

detailed descriptions of the works of major painters and sculptors. Based on extensive research, personal observation and interviews with the artists, the accounts of individual achievements are clear and precise. In the main, Apinan avoids art critics' jargon while remaining pertinent; for example, on a series of Pratuang's works: "...landscape is filtered and abstracted to a point beyond recognition. One's vision is captured by a rhythmic effect where a staccato compositional thrust is created by a fusion of delicate lines and prismatic colours."

As a trained art historian (with a PhD from Cornell University), as well as an art critic and a practising artist, Apinan is ideally equipped for his task. His knowledge serves him especially well in drawing interesting parallels with well-known Western artists. He further complements a sharp eye with an academic thoroughness—the book's bibliography covers 15 tightly-packed pages.

Never does *Modern Art in Thailand* become a mere catalogue of art and artists, and individual achievements are always viewed against the background of the overall art environment, the booms, the exhibitions, the institutions, the galleries, the critics and the controversies. Moreover, Apinan interestingly combines the descriptive with thematic analysis, and there are chapters on abstract art, thematic art and post-modern art, as well as a well-argued and provocative section titled "Taste, Value and Commodity."

One slight disappointment is that Apinan chooses to offer criticism only implicitly, and that rarely. At one point he comments: "It is difficult to pinpoint when—and if—the concept of Surrealism was fully understood by Thai artists," yet the question prompted by such a loaded statement is not answered. Moreover, he does not always take his analysis quite far enough. For instance, Fua Haribhitak's paintings are discussed but not his eventual abandoning of his own art in favour of mural restoration. Likewise, the highly-talented Tawee Nandakwang is discussed without mention of how or why his work became increasingly commercial.

Such criticisms are, however, minor in the context of the book's broad scope (yet they raise hope for future separate studies of particular artists or art styles). Overall, *Modern Art in Thailand* is scarcely to be faulted as both an historical study and as an analysis of major contemporary artists. Apinan writes well, managing to be interesting as well as informative, and his research is impeccable—even to such fascinating minutiae as quoting the *London Times* on a Thai art exhibition. Supporting the substantial text are more than 200 illustrations, 64 in colour, and, like the writing, these have been well researched to give a good sampling of artworks and some intriguing historical insights—for example, there is what must be a rare 1907 magazine sketch of King Chulalongkorn sitting for his portrait in the San Remo studio of Francesco Margotti.

Fresh revelations are to be found in *Modern Art in Thailand*, but the book's principal value lies in its broad canvas, its comprehensive scope which brings together so much material in a clear and coordinated fashion. In providing the first full-length study of modern Thai painting and sculpture, Apinan has made an invaluable contribution towards establishing a critical tradition from which art in Thailand can only profit.

JOHN HOSKIN
c/o The Siam Society

Journal of the Pali Text Society,
Volume XIV, edited by
K. R. NORMAN,
Oxford, 1990; 228 pp.

Volume XIV of the *Journal of the Pali Text Society* contains a valuable contribution to Siamese Pali and Northern Thai studies in the form of a lengthy article (one might say monograph) by H. Hundius of Chiangmai University, entitled "The colophons of 30 Pāli manuscripts from Northern Thailand" (pp. 1-173).

The study opens with a detailed introduction (Part A, pp. 10-41) which provides an overview of various historical and social aspects of the study. The colophons are presented in Part B (pp. 42-156), which opens with notes on technical aspects: transliteration, pronunciation, the pagination of palm-leaf manuscripts, dates and calendrical systems, etc. Then begins the study proper ("The Manuscripts and their Colophons"). For each text Hundius first gives a physical description of the manuscript, with information on its date and location. He then gives the opening and closing sentences (in Pali) and the text of the colophon (in Northern Thai), with English translation, and, as appropriate, concluding remarks. The manuscripts listed include canonical texts (08, 11), commentaries (01, 02, 09), numerous *Jātakas* (03, 05, etc.), and Southeast Asian texts such as the *Cakkavāḍadīpanī* (15, 16), *Cāmadevivāṇsa* (17, 18), *Lokadīpa[kasāra]* (20, 21), *Lokasaṇṭhāna* (22), and so on. Hundius's historical and bibliographi-

cal remarks about the latter are particularly valuable, since little has been written about Southeast Asian Pali literature. The colophons themselves give the motives of the scribe and other details, and are a contribution to Lanna social, literary, and religious history. Some have a disarming simplicity: "Accomplished shortly after noon-time—Bindaa Bhikkhu did the writing all by himself, my dear!" (no. 16, p. 97).

The catalogue is followed by a number of indexes: [A] Pāli Manuscripts in Chronological Order (Christian Era); [B] Repositories of the Manuscripts; [C] Texts and Authors; [D] Donors, Scribes, and Other Persons Mentioned in the Colophons; [E] Names of Places; and [F] Names of Monasteries. The study concludes with a detailed bibliography.

The volume contains two other articles, both installments in ongoing series, and both of great interest to Pali scholars. "Studies in the Pāli Grammarians II.1" by O. H. Pind of Copenhagen (pp. 175-218) deals with [A]

Buddhanghosa's interpretations of eight terms, [B] Grammatical References in Paramatthajotikā I-II, and [C] Mahānāma and Buddhadatta on Grammar. The study extracts grammatical comments from the Pali works, translates them into English, and discusses them in the light of both traditional Pali and Sanskrit grammar and modern philology. "Pāli Lexicographical Studies VII: Five Pāli Etymologies" by K. R. Norman of Cambridge (pp. 219-225) is "another random collection of words which are either omitted from [the Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary], or given an incorrect meaning or etymology there". The volume concludes with an index by author to volumes IX to XIV of the *Journal of the Pali Text Society* (pp. 227-228), compiled by K. R. Norman.

PETER SKILLING
c/o The Siam Society

