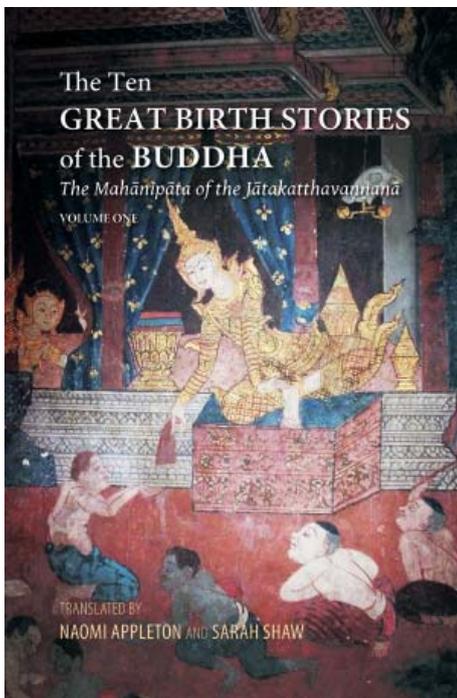


Reviews

The Ten Great Birth Stories of the Buddha: The Mahānipāta of the Jātakatthavaṇṇanā translated by Naomi Appleton and Sarah Shaw. Two volumes. (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books in cooperation with Chulalongkorn University Press, 2015.) ISBN: 9786162151125. 3,000 Baht.



Flying horses, magic gem-wielding ascetics, magical snakes, seductive dancers, lecherous Brahmins, green gods, crippled children who can suddenly pick up chariots over their heads, and talking frogs that hide in princesses' hair – these are just some of the characters and creatures that are commonplace in the last Ten Birth Stories (*dasajātaka*) of the Buddha. The new English translation—the first serious one in over a century—of the ten most important stories in Southeast Asian Buddhism (and well-known in many other Buddhist lineages in South Asia, the Himalayas, and East Asia) by Naomi Appleton and Sarah Shaw is a momentous literary accomplishment. It is the most important English translation of a set of Pali texts to come out in years, not because of its rarity or linguistic complexity, but because of its literary, artistic, historical, and religious importance to tens of millions of Buddhists.

The last ten *Jātakas* are undoubtedly the most important Pali Buddhist stories in Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. They are subject to thousands of mural depictions or bas reliefs in South and Southeast Asia, and have tellings in numerous vernacular languages. They, more than any other Buddhist texts, are the basis for ethical narratives throughout the region. Having an accessible, accurate, and dynamic translation of them in a beautifully-produced two volume box set is cause for celebration. They should be required reading for all courses in South and Southeast Asian Buddhism, Pali literature, Buddhist art history, Buddhist literature, and Southeast Asian cultural history.

Published in honor of the Sixtieth Birthday of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand (herself a scholar of the *Jātakas*) by Silkworm Books in cooperation with Chulalongkorn University Press, this collection of ten stories including the Temiya, Janaka, Sāma, Nemi, Mahosadha, Bhūridatta, Canda, Nārada, Vidhura, and

Vessantara *Jātakas* in over 500 pages can be read by students of religious and epic literature as a way of rethinking the way Buddhism has been traditionally taught in the West. Until recently, the *Jātakas*, have largely been studied as quirky folk stories that are fantastic tales designed to entertain children and the “unlettered masses.” They were often criticized by foreign scholars of Buddhism as not teaching the timeless values of Buddhism through didactic ethical treatises, but being salacious and distracting stories. The history of their reception has been well-documented over the past decade and I hope that the work of Naomi Appleton, Arthid Sheravanichkul, Peter Skilling, Steven Collins, Toshiya Unebe, Sandra Cate, Yohei Shimizu, Kazuko Tanabe, Leedom Lefferts, Bonnie Brereton, Richard Gombrich, Sarah Shaw, Lilian Handlin, myself, and others has helped elevate them to their rightful place in the pantheon of great world-epic stories. They might not reflect the cold rationality of Buddhism as imagined in the Victorian era, that never actually existed, but they are ethical tales of great insight, complexity, and vigor. Appleton and Shaw’s edition retains that vigor while providing a reliable translation that can be used in Pali language courses to help guide students. The footnotes are informative and show the restraint of seasoned translators who aim for clarity for the reader instead of overbearing philologists’ chest-beating.

Not only is the translation excellent, but the translators have also given scholars and students valuable tools for understanding the history and reception of these stories. First, they made the important decision to ask Peter Skilling, one of the most respected scholars of Pali and Thai literature (as well as Tibetan and Sanskrit), to write the foreword. He offers a short history of the importance of the last ten *Jātakas* in artistic depictions in early Indian Buddhism (especially at Ajanta, Bharhut, and Sanchi), as well as their literary value, citing the work of the Indian poet Haribhaṭṭa, who wrote: “A preacher of the dharma, having first recited one of the sermons of the Buddha, afterwards illuminates it in detail by telling a *jātaka* of the Bodhisattva—in the same manner as one illuminates a picture-gallery by the light of a torch—and (thereby) creates utmost happiness in the mind of his audience...” (xx). Skilling also points out the importance of the *Jātakas* in the inspiration of other vernacular texts.

Appleton and Shaw also provide a clear and instructive introduction. Indeed, for students and scholars, this should be the first thing one reads when approaching the *Jātakas*. They make several important points that I only have space to mention briefly. They correctly point out that the Thai tradition (started largely in the early 20th century with the writing of the Sangharat, Prince Jinavarasiriwadhana) of associating each of the last ten *Jātakas* with a specific “perfection” (Thai: *barami*) does not necessarily match up with the purported contents of the *Jātakas* themselves nor with the Burmese or Sri Lankan traditions. These differences are clearly identified with helpful charts (6, 8). The Thai tradition seems to be inspired more by the *Cariyāpiṭaka* than the *Jātakanidāna*, although it is not merely derivative of these earlier Pali text lineages from South Asia. Second, even though the *Jātakas* always have the bodhisattva (future Buddha) as the main character, other characters often steal the show. For example, Khaṇḍahāla, Rucā, Indra/Sakka, Vimalā, Jujuka, Maṇimekhalā, and others are often the movers of the plot, while the bodhisattva seems removed at many times. These ancillary and supporting characters are often the ones that provide the intense emotional content of the *Jātakas*.

I would have liked Appleton and Shaw to discuss the role of the god *Indra/Sakka* a bit more, although admittedly they discuss him more than most scholars of the *Jātakas* have before (9, 22-24). The large number of images, shrines, and artistic depictions of Indra (including a modern comic book series in Thailand) are a direct result of his role in the *Jātakas*, and his impact on Southeast Asian culture cannot be underestimated. Appleton and Shaw also have two informative sections on kingship (while strategically avoiding any extensive commentary on the present king of Thailand's interest in the *Jātakas*, especially the Janaka, even though they allude to it on pages 37 and 46) and the literary qualities of the stories (24-25). However, I found it strange that they did not cite the extensive work by Holt (1991), Tambiah (1976), and many others on the counterpointing of renunciants and kings in popular Buddhist stories.

One of the most interesting parts of their introduction is where they astutely point out the importance of women in the last ten *Jātakas*. Although they acknowledge that women are often depicted as flighty and weak at best, and often dangerous temptresses at worst in many *Jātakas*, there are some women who are complex figures, like the nun Uppalavaṇṇa, who appears in five stories (9). Appleton and Shaw also emphasize that mothers, like the mother of the Bodhisattva Temiya and Sīvalī, the wife of Janaka, are not to be discounted as simply passive observers of their powerful sons (19). To support their argument, this complexity is also seen in artistic depictions of the *Jātakas*. For example, in a recent paper at the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeology and Art History (Paris, 2015) Jessica Patterson demonstrated that female characters like the goddess Maṇimekhalā (mentioned on page 38) are depicted in art and text as tender and motherly, intelligent and insightful, as well as aggressive seductresses all within the same story. I would also add that women in the *Jātakas* often provide some comic relief. For example, Forrest McGill of the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco showed me several 19th century Thai paintings where Jujuka's wife appears as a powerful woman criticizing her lecherous husband and where her female friends mock their marriage by encouraging her to use dildos to replace him. The *Jātakas* certainly inspire a wide range of interpretations and adaptations!

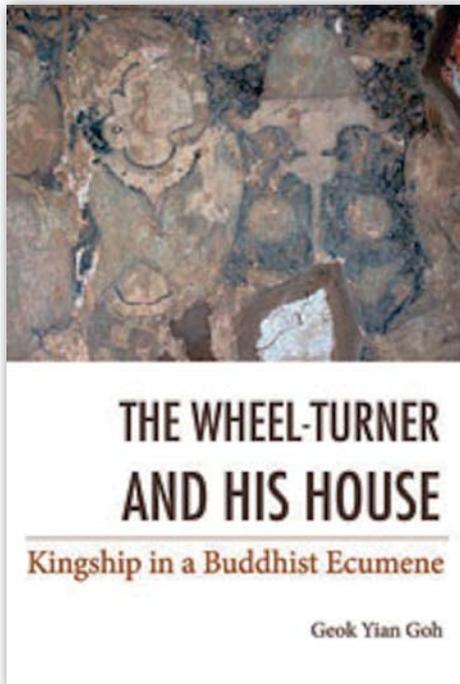
This two-volume work is also a model of the value of collaborative work, something Buddhist Studies lacks. Shaw and Appleton both bring their strengths to this study and translation. Appleton is no stranger to the study of the *Jātakas*. Her 2010 book, *Jātaka Stories in Theravāda Buddhism* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), was an excellent overview and literary analysis of the genre. She followed that up with her expansive *Narrating Karma and Rebirth: Buddhist and Jain Multi-life Stories* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), and she even runs a very useful blog about Pali and Sanskrit narrative studies: <https://naomiappleton.wordpress.com/>. I have benefited from following her work for many years and reviewed her first book on the *Jātakas* in 2011. In that review I had one major criticism: "I would have liked to have seen a more extensive discussion of murals, dramatic and performative devices and styles, musical scores, comic books, films, sermons, and other cultural expressions of the *jātakas*." Shaw is also no stranger to the study of the way texts are used in dynamic modern contexts in places like Thailand. Among her many publications is her contribution to the excellent book, *Illuminating the Life of the Buddha: An Illustrated Chanting Book from Eighteenth-century Siam*

(Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2013), written jointly with Naomi Appleton and Toshiya Unebe, where she traces the detailed history of a single manuscript. Working together, Shaw and Appleton have rendered my earlier criticism moot. They offer a lengthy (well, as lengthy as one can be permitted in an introduction to a translation) description of the various ways that the last ten *Jātakas* have been depicted in art, especially in Burma, Sri Lanka, and Thailand (35-47). Here we see their past work with Thai mural specialist, Toshiya Unebe, as well as their consultation with Burmese art historian Lilian Handlin and Thai specialists like Arthid Sheravanichkul and Peter Skilling, as being really helpful. They also cite recent work done on Lao and Northeast Thai depictions of the *Jātakas*. Not only is this section a welcome addition to the study of the *Jātakas*, but they also include almost 200 color plates of these murals that bring the stories alive for readers. My only major criticism here is that they failed to consult the many important studies of *Jātaka* texts, murals and reliefs written in Thai and Japanese. They also did not consult closely studies in the Burmese, Khmer, Lao, or Sinhala languages. However, this introduction is not necessarily designed for Buddhist Studies specialists (although I think specialists will learn a lot from this work) and is meant to expose these extremely important stories to English-speaking students and those interested in comparative literature.

In the end, students and scholars will delight in reading Appleton and Shaw's beautiful translation and thorough and insightful introduction. In my opinion, these translations are, alongside Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit's translation and study of the *Khun Chang Khun Phaen* epic (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2010), evidence of the vibrancy of literary studies in Buddhist South and Southeast Asia today. It should be the primary introduction to the genre for many years to come.

Justin Thomas McDaniel

The Wheel-Turner and his House: Kingship in a Buddhist Ecumene by Geok Yian Goh, (DeKalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois University Press. 2015.) ISBN: 978-0-87580-716-4. US\$35.00



G.H. Luce’s celebrated *Old Burma-Early Pagan* opens with a lengthy chapter devoted solely to Pagan’s first important king, Aniruddha (c. 1044 – c. 1077). Sifting through inscriptions and chronicles, this doyen of Burmese civilization concluded with characteristic self-reflection, “... when all is said, Aniruddha remains a dim figure” (Luce 1969-1970: 1.14). Indeed, our meager evidence surviving from his reign and the classic Pagan (Bagan) period (c. 11th – c. 13th centuries) ensures that the ‘real’ Aniruddha, that is, the historical Aniruddha, will remain a ‘dim figure’ about whom myth and conjecture overshadow fact. Geok Yian Goh bravely takes up where Luce left off in this groundbreaking study which brilliantly explores the genesis and transmission of the Aniruddha legends that mushroomed following the Pagan period.

Aniruddha’s legacy remains very much alive today in Burma (Myanmar) where he is known as Anawrahta, his name used in most later chronicles. He is remembered today for two pivotal roles: as the country’s first unifier and as the ruler who single-handedly introduced Theravada Buddhism to the nation. He is therefore often lumped together with Bayinnaung (1551-1581) and Alaungpaya (1752-1760), monarchs who also expanded the country’s borders through arms. A favorite of Burma’s military, this august trio is now immortalized by enormous bronze effigies in Naypyidaw. But Anawrahta stands apart, since his career is so entwined with Burma’s religious history.

Anawrahta slips comfortably into a long list of historical figures enveloped in myth. A well-known parallel is Emperor Ashoka whose posthumous biographies diverge radically from the little gleaned in his famous stone edicts. Myths, as the author underscores, are like open-ended books, with added chapters reflecting ever-changing political and social milieux. This explains why bits and pieces of legends are sometimes entirely dropped or reinterpreted and why Anawrahta’s legacy was never restricted to a single definitive version. Indeed, chroniclers openly wrestled with contradictory accounts of Anawrahta as they formulated their own conclusions, as Goh notes. Anawrahta’s legacy was therefore fluid, fashioned from many different pieces, with each version differing slightly, all coexisting in time and space.

The version that carries most weight today flows directly from the famous *Hmannam Yazawindawgyi*, authored by court savants in Inwa, or Ava, around 1829; a portion was translated into English, titled *The Glass Palace Chronicle*. (Luce & Pe Maung Tin 1923)

Anawrahta weaves in and out of nearly forty dense pages, the chief episodes being his conversion to Buddhism by the monk Shin Arahan, the capture of the Canon, or *Tipiṭika*, from Thaton in Lower Burma, his suppression of the heretical Ari and the imposition of Buddhism at Pagan. Over a dozen separate fanciful incidents fill these pages, such as quarrels with his half-brother and son, and even his failed union with a Shan princess. Whence did this legendary material come and why and when did it filter into the various chronicles are the questions at the heart of the ambitious task set by the author.

The book opens by reviewing what is known about Anawrahta from Pagan-period sources. The only tangible evidence from his reign are scores of small terracotta ‘votive tablets’ bearing the king’s name, suggesting to scholars long ago that Anawrahta is the first important Pagan ruler whose historicity is certain. These tablets have been discovered widely, from Katha in Upper Burma right down to Tenasserim. Goh attributed one Pagan inscription to Anawrahta’s reign, with a possible date of 1058, but others have more plausibly attributed it to the time of Kyanzittha (c. 1084 - c. 1112) (Aung-Thwin 2005:84-85; personal communication, Tun Aung Chain).

Goh advances the notion that Anawrahta’s later fame was predicated in large part on his presumed epithet, *cakravartin* (Sanskrit), or *cakkavatti* (Pali). One literal translation is ‘wheel-turner’, broadly interpreted as ‘universal monarch.’ (p. 17) No stone inscriptions from his reign survive, but a single Pagan epigraph, dated 1207, refers posthumously to the king as “*cakkravattiy Anuruddha*.” The strongest evidence for Anawrahta’s assumption of this title, though not brought forth, is that one of Anawrahta’s successors, Kyanzittha, adopted the title as part of his extended epithet in two inscriptions (“*paramiswarabalacakkāwar*”) (Duroiselle 1917: 142, 144). However, following Kyanzittha, the term is very rarely found in Pagan inscriptions, for unexplained reasons (Frasch 1996: 86). Also, the term *cakravartin*, or *cakkavatti*, enjoyed very little currency in inscriptions and even in chronicles in subsequent centuries, as the author acknowledges. (p. 24) For example, in Bayinnaung’s Bell Inscription or in Alaungpaya’s records, the terms are noted by their absence. In post-Pagan contexts, the term is therefore used sparingly and is usually written as *chakravatē* (personal communication, Tun Aung Chain). Moreover, in the copious inscriptions from the Buddhist kingdom of Sukhothai, the term occurs rarely and not as an epithet (Griswold & Prasert 1972: 119). Taken together, perhaps we can conclude that far too much weight has been attached to this concept in modern historical writing on mainland Southeast Asia, especially in view of the term’s restricted use (Leider 2015: 403-404; personal communication, Jacques Leider; Gombrich 1988: 82). Moreover, diverse evidence has too often been improperly interpreted “to reconstruct a supposedly commonly shared notion of Southeast Asian Buddhist kingship.” (Leider 2015: 403)

If the designation ‘*cakravartin*’ does not likely explain Anawrahta’s later importance, then how did this king come to enjoy such an influential legacy in Burma and even in Northern Thailand where he made cameo appearances in certain chronicles. His enduring legacy likely springs from his actual conquest of Lower Burma, an event of momentous consequence that altered the direction of Burmese history. This distinction between the role played by his presumed epithet of *cakravartin* in the formulation of his legacy and his actual military accomplishments may seem like splitting hairs, but

it sheds a different perspective on Anawrahta and the very process by which facts and fiction are spun around historical figures and incorporated into chronicles.

If Anawrahta achieved his lasting status through a conquest of Lower Burma, then what is the evidence? His small portable terracotta ‘votive tablets’ in Lower Burma



(above) Anawrahta’s tiles were placed around the top terraces of the Maung Di stupa, near Yangon.

(below) The largest tiles in Southeast Asia, nearly 3 feet in height. All are in fragments.



are often taken as proof for Anawrahta’s southern campaign, but Goh rightly questions this. (p. 52) The author cites *en passant* the Maung Di stupa located between Yangon and nearby Twante and attributed by Luce to Anawrahta. (Luce: 1969-1970; I. 23) The full significance of the Maung Di monument has not been tapped, since it provides a convincing argument for Anawrahta’s presence in Lower Burma. Dozens of large terracotta plaques connected to Anawrahta encircled the stupa’s two lower terraces which supported the solid brick dome; the tiles were never part of the stupa’s original design, strongly suggesting that they were placed on the monument after its completion. These tiles closely resemble the common small ‘votive tablets’ in design, measuring no more than seven inches in height, but the Maung Di plaques are huge. By far the largest ‘votive tiles’ in Southeast Asia, each stands nearly three feet and weighs no less than thirty pounds (h. 2 ft. 7 in. x w. 1ft. 6. in. x d. 5 ½ in.). Many retain incised Pali inscriptions with the same brief text used on certain common small tiles: “This Blessed One [the Buddha] was made by the great king, Śrī Aniruddha the divine, with his own hands, for the sake of deliverance”. (Luce 1968-1969: III. 2) By setting these large

tiles on a pre-existing Mon stupa, Anawrahta was intentionally proclaiming Pagan’s new hegemony in Lower Burma. The large plaques, by their size and location *in situ*, differ qualitatively from the many small ‘votive tablets’ of Anawrahta found in Lower Burma. The moulds for the tiles were probably taken down from Pagan expressly for producing tiles used in this fashion; a few unpublished fragmentary tiles from the same moulds were recently found at Pagan (personal communication, Thein Lwin). We can never know if Anawrahta personally supervised his troops in the South, but his forces were certainly there. Ironically, while this stupa near Yangon can be associated with

Anawrahta with remarkable certainty, no monuments at Pagan can be attached to the king's patronage with the same degree of confidence. It may be true, as Goh and others have presumed, that the Shwesandaw stupa and Hpetleik monuments date to Anawrahta's reign, but no firm proof exists.

Additional evidence are Anawrahta's small 'votive tiles' discovered within the relic chamber of the Pyu-period Bawbawgyi stupa at Śrī Kṣetra; other confirmations are stone inscriptions in Lower Burma from Anawrahta's immediate successors, starting with Sawlu's near Mergui and Kyanzittha's Mon records in and around Thaton, two of which are dated to 1098 (Luce 1968-1969: I. 19, 46, 56). This art historical evidence may seem unrelated to the book's thesis, but the king's lasting legacy was a product of this very conquest and had little to do with his presumed epithet of *cakravartin* or *cakkavatti*.

A key source in the trajectory of Anawrahta's legacy is the Kalyani Inscription in Pegu (Bago), dated to c. 1479. This comes only some 200 years after the Pagan era and the shift of the capital to Inwa, and therefore furnishes the earliest reliably dated recording of a key part of the Anawrahta legend, that is, the capture of Thaton, the Pali canon and the city's monks. The inscription also contains the first mention of the Mon king in Thaton, "Manohari" whose "weak kingdom" presumably accounted for his defeat. (Taw Sein Ko 1893:17) The name that appears in the inscription itself is Manohara (personal communication, Jason Carbine). In later chronicles, this same king was taken prisoner to Pagan where he expired; in the *Glass Palace Chronicle*, he is Manuha. Known by many variants, this ruler can likely be identified with a king named Makuṭa noted in two Thaton inscriptions assigned to the 11th century. (Luce 1969-1970: I. 24) No evidence suggests that Anawrahta's actual conquest was spurred by a desire to seize the Pali Canon in Thaton, as Goh rightly points out.

By linking Anawrahta to the captured Canon from Thaton, the Mon in Pegu laid claim to establishing Buddhism at Pagan; and it was indeed this very version of history expressed in the Kalyani Inscription that shaped the entire history of Buddhism in Burma in all major subsequent royal and religious chronicles (Pranke 2004: 23, 201, note 73; personal communication, Patrick Pranke). The only major components added later to the legacy were the king's conversion by the monk Shin Arahan and the suppression of the Ari, elements first recorded only in the early 18th century. This evidence suggests that Mon chronicles available in 1479 preserved the memory of the invasion of Rāmaññadesa by Anawrahta but painted the Mon defeat in a positive light by claiming that the Mon furnished Upper Burma with the *Tipiṭika*. The next important step for tracking Anawrahta's narrative is the influential *Mahayazawingyi*, or *Great Chronicle*, c. 1720, by U Kala in which virtually the full-blown legend is found. Once Burmese chroniclers embraced the idea that the Canon came to Upper Burma from Thaton, expressed in the Kalyani Inscription, this triggered a lasting need to elevate Thaton in the ongoing religious history of the nation. This probably explains why the famous 5th century Buddhaghosa is said in certain later chronicles to have been associated with Thaton (Luce & Pe Maung Tin 1923: 46). A separate chapter, "Makers of Burmese History after U Kala", is a rigorous in-depth discussion of the numerous chronicles subsequent to U Kala and their role in shaping the legends.

Anawrahta's fame extended beyond Burma where his name figures, albeit rarely, in chronicles from Sri Lanka and Northern Thailand. Goh summarizes the Sri Lankan evidence, based mostly on the famous *Culavamsa*, in which "Anuraddha" is named once. He is said to assist King Vijayabahu I (c. 1070 - c. 1110) by sending gifts for motivating Sri Lankan troops into fighting the Cholas. These passages indicate that "Anuraddha" was a well-known player in the geo-politics of the Bay of Bengal. The 'facts' are reported in 'historical' time, unlike the Thai chronicle tradition framed in 'legendary' time.

The treatment of Anawrahta in Northern Thailand is most fully expressed in the well-known Pali chronicle, *Jinakamali* (JNM) by Ratanapañña, 1516/1517, in which "Anuruddha" appears in two different sections. Goh interprets passages in the JNM to suggest that the kingdom of Haripunjaya "derived its Buddhist traditions from both Myanmar and Sri Lanka" (p. 99), but the references in the JNM are far more narrow in focus since the sections in which "Anuruddha" appears are devoted merely to enhancing two lineages of Buddha images in Thailand. (p. 99) One case involves a set of five black stone Buddhas fashioned by the ancestors of "Manohāra" in "Ramaṇṇa Country"; Manohāra refused to hand over the images to Anawrahta, prompting an invasion in which Manohāra is sent captive to Pagan. (Jayawickrama 1968: 156). The JNM, as Goh observes, has conflated the story about seizing the Pali canon with this set of Buddha images.

Anuruddha weaves again into the JNM in the peregrinations of the Emerald Buddha, an image prophesied to "shine among the races of Kamboja, Arimaddana, and Syām" that was eventually taken to Sri Lanka (Jayawickrama 1968: 142) 'Anuruddha' retrieved it from Sri Lanka, with four sets of *Tipiṭikas*. The Emerald Buddha, with two sets of scriptures, returned to Burma on a separate ship, which sailed astray and landed in Mahānagara, or Angkor. 'Anuruddha' then mounted a flying horse, and, after demonstrating his prowess by cleaving a stone with his urine at Mahānagara, is conducted to the king from whom he demands the Canon. The Angkor ruler ceded the sets but 'Anuruddha' left for home "without remembering the Jewel-Image [Emerald Buddha]." (Jayawickrama 1968:144) In each case, Anawrahta serves only as a foil to elevate the importance of the Buddhist images found in Northern Thailand. Anawrahta is nowhere described as a *cakravartin* in this Northern Thai chronicle but this dated text indicates that the conquest of Lower Burma and Anawrahta's mythical or factual link to Manohara enjoyed a secure place in regional chronicles centuries after the supposed events.

To explain these occurrences in three disparate regions, Pagan, Northern Thailand and Sri Lanka, Goh proffers the concept of the *ecumene*, or a common Buddhist civilization that shared fundamental values. It came into being in the 11th century and flourished in the 12th and 13th centuries when "intense exchanges occurred between the three centers"; the *ecumene* began declining in the 14th century with "the end of Pagan, the rise of Ayutthaya and the demise of Polonnaruva" (p. 38). The term *ecumene* comes from Greek, one definition for which is 'house' and by extension a region "which shared common cultural beliefs and practices". (p. 42). The *ecumene* "functioned as a religious political sub-system within a larger Buddhist world system and had a specific time span,

from the 11th through the 14th century.” (p. 42). One wonders if such a distinct beginning and termination of the *ecumene* is somewhat arbitrary, in light of the strong continuous contacts among Southeast Asian Buddhist kingdoms and Sri Lanka throughout the second millennium. Indeed, the 15th century could be proposed as a watershed of shared influence, in light of the Mon missions to the Kalyani monastery near Colombo and the numerous references in Sukhothai inscriptions linking Sri Lanka, Lower Burma and Thailand. Indeed, precisely these interconnections in the 15th century prompted one scholar to use the word *ecumene* in relation to this very period (Frasch 2011).

Another pivotal moment in Anawrahta’s legendary biography is his conversion by the monk Shin Arahan who hailed from Thaton. This well-known story is modeled directly upon the later legends of Ashoka’s conversion, a major observation first made by Patrick Pranke (Pranke 2004: 201, notes 72, 73). As Luce observed, the Shin Arahan of the later chronicles is likely the very same chief priest, or “*mahathera*”, also named Arahan, who is featured in a lengthy inscription by Kyanzitha, attributed to c. 1102. (Luce 1969-1970: I. 72; Duroiselle 1923: 1-68). This Arahan of the Pagan period, according to the Pagan inscription, presided over extensive ceremonies involving 1,408 monks; whether Arahan hailed from Thaton or served under Anawrahta cannot be fixed, but he was certainly a key cleric at Pagan whose memory persisted for centuries. That this Arahan of the later legends and the historical Arahan are probably one and the same, though unstated in the book, is another illustration of how historical figures were interpreted freely by later chroniclers. But a basic question is what exactly was known about Pagan’s history, real or legendary, to the chroniclers immediately following the classic Pagan period?

An instructive parallel with Anawrahta is the Mon ruler based in Pegu, Rajadhiraj (c. 1384 – c. 1420). This king weaves in and out of Mon/Burmese and Thai chronicles in a fashion reminiscent of Anawrahta. His personal sobriquet was Sutasoma, taken from a heroic figure in a *jataka*, no. 537; the name is attested to in the 15th century Shwedagon Inscription. The king’s White Elephant, according to a Mon chronicle, was a gift to his descendants from a ruler in Sukhothai, thereby forging a tie, albeit probably mythical, with a powerful neighboring kingdom ruled by an unnamed king who was, based on the chronology, none other than Ram Khamhaeng. (San Lwin 2007: 9) Yet in a second chronicle, Sutasoma is said to have presented his daughter to the famous King Mangrai of Chiang Mai. (Tun Aung Chain 2003: 6) Sutasoma turns up for a third time, in *The Chiang Mai Chronicle*, in which he is conflated with a powerful king ruling in Mottama, or Martaban, identified indirectly with the famous Wareru (Wyatt & Aroonrut 1998: 36). Sutasoma, like Anawrahta, was yet another strong ruler whose legacy was preserved in chronicles and probably folklore, local theatre and ballads.

Both Anawrahta and Sutasoma demonstrate how the memories of strong monarchs coursed through diverse chronicle traditions spread over a wide area and many centuries, ready to be tapped in narratives. A blatant example was the claim by King Bodawpaya (1782-1819) in the Mingun Bell Inscription that Anawrahta failed to wrest the Mahamuni Buddha from Rakhine; the Buddha image itself then prophesied to Anawrahta that it would be taken from Rakhine only by the Buddha of the Future, Metteyya, that is, Bodawpaya himself (Tun Aung Chain 2014: 195). European history

affords similar examples, such as the Plantagenet's ties to the legendary King Arthur or the Capetian claims on Charlemagne.

The last chapter is a fitting conclusion, since Anawrahta's story is taken right up to the present. A thoughtful review of recent books and films suggests the various nuanced versions of today's Anawrahta legends, blending his religious and soldierly roles. A line quoted from a speech delivered by the former Senior-General Than Shwe leaves no doubt about the revival of this ancient revered king. (p. 3) Another reminder of how the present piggybacks on the past is Pagan's recently built 'Anawrahta Palace', adding yet another gargantuan eyesore to the site's scarred landscape.

The author's dogged pursuit of this shadowy king's legacy takes us squarely into a neglected dimension of historical writing in Southeast Asia, that is, how historical figures and events are endlessly re-interpreted. This pioneering book, it is hoped, will spur others to follow in Goh's footsteps and unravel the history and myths of other key Southeast Asian protagonists. The *Wheel-Turner* is a must-read for those interested not only in pre-modern Southeast Asia but also in understanding how the past is reinvented in our time.

Donald M. Stadtner

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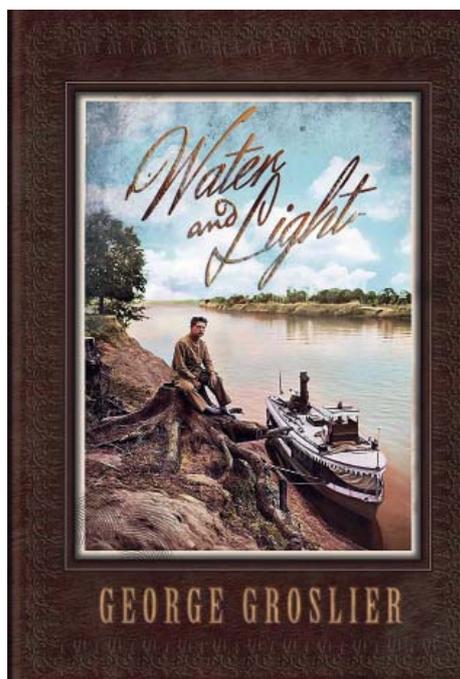
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Water and Light, by George Groslier, translated by Pedro Rodríguez, edited by Kent Davis (Florida, USA: DatAsia Press, 2016). ISBN 1934431877 and ISBN 978-1934431870. US\$34.95.



Water and Light recounts two river journeys on the Cambodian Mekong made by George Groslier in September-October 1929 and February-March 1930. Born in Phnom Penh in 1887 to Antoine Groslier, a French administrator, and his wife Angelina, George's first stay in Cambodia only lasted two years. When Angelina miscarried her second child, she quickly took George back to the safety of France, later giving him the opportunity to benefit from a Western education, studying at the School of Fine Arts in Paris. In 1910, aged 23, Groslier returned to Cambodia to take charge of a mission at the service of Albert Sarraut (1872-1962). Then Minister of Public Education, Sarraut would in his long political career serve as Governor-General of Indochina, as Minister for Colonies and briefly as Prime Minister of France. Sarraut's trust in Groslier's abilities would have a profound effect on his

professional life. Groslier was tasked with the documentation of the kingdom's most remote Khmer temples and founding a new school for the preservation and restoration of Cambodia's traditional arts. His real mission, and enduring legacy, was to preserve Khmer art and culture by establishing the Albert Sarraut Museum (now the National Museum of Cambodia) and the School of Fine Arts.

The background of *Water and Light* was Cambodia at a time when the country was as yet untouched by the great crises that would befall Indochina in the 1930s and beyond. The two journeys took Groslier to numerous places, including Kampong Cham, Stung Treng, Kratie, the Bassac River, Angkor Borei, the Tonlé Sap and Kampong

Chhnang. The travel accounts are populated with villages stretched along the Mekong, screaming children playing in the water and exotic plants. It was a journey for the senses, where hearing plays its role in assembling and making sense of life in the immediate surroundings: “At dawn I checked the nocturnal picture sketched by my ears” (p. 13).

The objective of Groslier’s account, as he states in his Preface, is to inform anyone who had “never seen Cambodia”, or indeed anyone who would probably never see the country. At times, his enthusiasm in trying to share *his* Cambodia with readers in faraway lands can result in added emphasis, as when he defines as “drought” the period of dry weather that follows the seasonal rains, no doubt to convey better the arid state of the land. In September and October, at the height of the rainy season, torrential rains transform the lives of subsistence communities dwelling on the banks of the Mekong. The river has scaled five metres to reach the once dry lowlands. Banana trees have lost their trunks, animals sleep on rafts fashioned from banana trunks and only boats ply the waters between houses. The dry season ensues from December to May, and communities anxiously await the onset of the rainy season to saturate their parched land. The trees that were inundated by torrential rains a few months earlier, and to whose trunks Groslier tied his boat, now tower over him by some five metres, with their exposed roots dishevelled but still somehow managing to remain upright.

By reworking descriptions of repetitive routines for the daily tasks of riverine life, Groslier has transformed a potentially “dry” documentary account into a work of art, like “a painter producing a new sketch daily” (p. XVII). The book’s unique strength lies in its ability to provide a detailed account of life in rural communities and the slow-paced daily routine punctuated by hardships, acts of kindness, rituals and devotion, but chiefly, by the challenges inherent in communities where acceptance of one’s fate has its own rewards.

Groslier took steps to revive and insulate Cambodia’s traditional arts from Western influence, in all its manifestations. For instance, he laments the decline in travel by boat due to the automobile becoming the chief mode of transport: “the old Cambodia has been so thoroughly upset by Western influence that soon any voyage, even at a rower’s pace, will be thoroughly disappointing” (pp. 3-4).

This context is useful in dealing with Groslier’s indignation at the influence exercised on the traditional arts by foreign concepts, as when he discovers that images of French soldiers guard the entrance to a concrete pagoda, replacing the traditional *dvarapala* guardian deities. Groslier is unable to contain his disdain for the soldier’s representation: “a melon atop his head, a rifle, and a toothy expression. Over the past eight days I have seen more French soldiers at pagoda doors than are stationed at the Phnom Penh garrison” (p. 49).

Groslier has been called an anti-colonial French colonialist. His account largely refrains from using the disparaging terms employed by some of his contemporaries: scholars and administrators steeped in the colonial mould, borne out of France’s *mission civilisatrice*. Unlike most colonial administrators, who were born and bred in Metropolitan France, Groslier charts his journeys as someone who is proud of his birthplace, for its beauty, achievements and inherent flaws. He depicts life along the Mekong not as a foreign observer, but as a patient host, leading the reader by the hand

and generously sharing his knowledge of the country. However, it is not a wholly objective account because, by his own admission, his pen was swayed by “fifteen years of Cambodian life” (p. 4).

In his native Cambodia, he feels sufficiently at ease to use self-deprecating terms. Though far from corpulent, he blames his “seventy kilos of flaccid flesh” (p. 31) as the source of discomfort during his trips. At other times, his “Western rump” (p. 14) overhangs a 50 cm-wide pirogue, barely adequate for local lithe bodies. On another occasion, a makeshift bridge fashioned from bamboo poles can only advance at the rate of 500 metres (0.5 km) per hour, despite his manservant pushing the contraption, because Groslier is “no acrobat” (p. 39).

Scattered in this delightful book are hints that Groslier struggled to accept some aspects of Cambodia’s customs, as when he expresses disapproval for the discarded religious icons “left to the termites”, or other religious artefacts “disassembled and rotting in a calamitous heap” (p. 51) inside a pagoda. His indignation, laudable for its concern with Cambodia’s cultural heritage, should be juxtaposed against the context of impermanence, the same concept that surrounds the creation and immediate destruction of a lovingly constructed sand mandala in Tibetan Buddhism. What Western eyes construe as ‘neglect’ may just embody acceptance of the inescapable process of perishability in a Theravada Buddhist country. Other seemingly incongruous aspects of Cambodian life lead Groslier to retort, not without a hint of irony, that Buddhist monks are beholden to a life of begging but are nevertheless served like princes, sworn to humility but addressed by people who kneel in their presence, and whose vows of self-denial appear not to interfere with the consumption of large quantities of food and sweets (p. 66).

At the end of the 19th century and early in the 20th century, numerous publications relayed journeys across Indochina or along the Mekong, for the most part commissioned by the French government and lasting two years or more. The longest, and arguably the most renowned, of the 19th century missions to Indochina was led by Auguste Pavie (1847-1925) and his trusted officers. Though some of these early river journeys are on a very different scale, some comparisons are useful, particularly with the expedition led by Ernest Doudart de Lagrée (1823-1868), whom Groslier briefly mentions (p. 139).

In July 1866, Doudart de Lagrée sailed from Stung Treng (in present-day Cambodia but formerly a Lao territory) to explore the Mekong as a trade route between southwestern China and the mouth of the river near Saigon. His voyage of exploration became a template of sorts for subsequent Mekong voyages, including the 1882 expedition led by Paul Neis (1852-1907), a French naval surgeon who documented his explorations in *Travels in Upper Laos and Siam*. Neis, who ascended the Mekong from Bassac, expressed his admiration for “the rigorous exactness of the itineraries of the mission of Commander de Lagrée” (p. 11). Although the journeys narrated in *Water and Light* span weeks, rather than months, what they lack in chronological scope is generously compensated for by richness of detail.

Whereas Groslier’s account illustrates the *minutiae* of daily life along this majestic river, Doudart de Lagrée’s descriptions are concerned with the constraints and challenges of quantifying the navigability of the Mekong, as documented in his *Exploration*

et missions de Doudart de Lagrée, published in 1883.¹ His account is not wholly preoccupied with quantitative details, however. Included are instances of compassion and understanding of human frailties, as when he writes, without a hint of rancour, that the expedition members had to share their rice with the boatmen, who misjudged the duration of the Mekong journey and had insufficient rice stocks of their own. It is these poignant details that bridge the gap with Groslier's *Water and Light*, an intimate account narrated by an "insider" at ease in the country of his birth.

Distilled to around 200 pages from an original manuscript of 600 pages, Groslier's recollections flow without discernible gaps. As an account of life along the Cambodian stretch of the Mekong early in the 20th century, *Water and Light* fills a gap in the literature, to balance the precisely quantified accounts from the period, which often lack the qualitative details for a window into a country's soul.

Water and Light is greatly expanded from the original and includes annotations, hand-restored colourised images, additional images and supplemental materials, with appendix articles by Paul Boudet, Paul Cravath, Kent Davis and Solang Uk. This new version also includes the French text of *Eaux et Lumières* published in 1931 by the Société d'Éditions Géographiques, Maritimes et Coloniales in Paris, a useful feature since extant copies are now mostly consigned to the 'rare' books section at libraries around the world. Select chapters of *Water and Light* were also published in French in the review *Terre et mer – la géographie*, from September to November 1931. This special colour edition was inspired by, and prepared under the guidance of, Nicole Groslier Rea, Groslier's eldest child, who passed away on 15 February 2015, aged 97. She is pictured with her doting father on p. VI of the book, at the front gate of their Phnom Penh home in 1923.

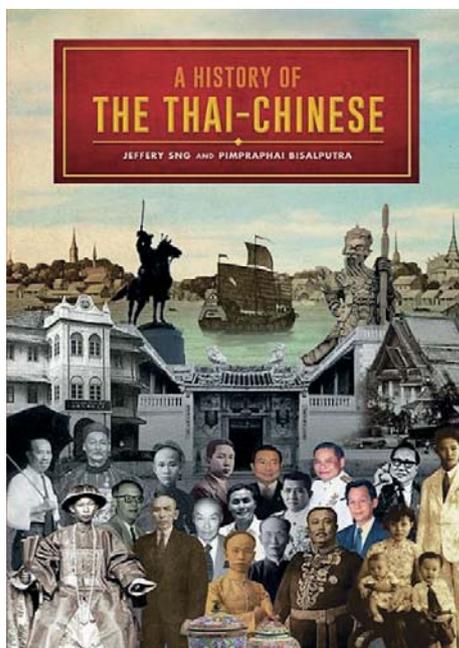
Lia Genovese

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¹ Doudart de Lagrée died in Yunnan in March 1868. Captain A.B. de Villemereuil, expedition member, edited and published his detailed travel diary.

A History of the Thai-Chinese by Jeffery Sng and Pimpraphai Bisalputra (Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2015.) ISBN: 978-981-4385-77-0. Bt1,295 / US\$39.00.



Despite numerous research data, supported by various governments and academic institutions, that at least up to the conclusion of the Second World War, Thailand was home to the largest ethnic Chinese population outside of the Chinese mainland, academic publications concerning the Chinese community in Thailand appear to be among the rarest in comparison with her ASEAN neighbors. It is indeed quite depressing to admit that, until very recently, nothing has been done that could even be considered at a comparable level to G. William Skinner's classic masterpiece, *Chinese Society in Thailand: An Analytical History*, published nearly six decades ago, in 1957. Some even suggested that such a work could not be done for a whole host of reasons: because the Chinese have become so assimilated; because the Chinese in Thailand were, and remain, very

closely intertwined with the kingdom's ruling powers—including royalty, military, as well as the major political parties; or, because the situation in Thailand is just so unique that it is impossible to relate the history of the Chinese in Thailand with that of any of her neighbors.

A History of the Thai-Chinese by Jeffery Sng and Pimpraphai Bisalputra is awe-inspiring. This is a work that, at long last, has surpassed Skinner's *Chinese Society in Thailand* and has done so in a way that has opened a new horizon for the entire field of Chinese diaspora studies in Thailand. There are a few important innovative perspectives that the authors have employed in accomplishing this academic feat that are worth mentioning within the very limited space permissible.

First, and perhaps most daring, is the huge historical time span covered in this single-volume publication—from 14th century Ayutthaya to the present day. At first glance, one may think that the authors are simply following in the grand Skinnerian tradition, considering the fact that *Chinese Society in Thailand* goes back even further, to the Sukhothai period sometime in the 13th century. A big difference—that gives *A History of the Thai-Chinese* a significant advantage—is the fact that Bisalputra is one of the leading names in the history of the Ayutthaya period. Combined with Jeffery Sng's profound knowledge of and adept insight into Thai modern political history, the duo are able to create a masterpiece which transcends the traditional modern/pre-modern divide in historical periodization. Thus, readers can observe an almost flawless logic and teleological continuation from the history of the Thai-Chinese in the Ayutthaya era all the way up to the present day. The 14th century was included not simply as 'background

information,' but as an essential starting point of the complex rhyme and reason of the 600-odd years of Thai-Chinese history presented in the book.

The authors' attempt to shy away from the traditional 'impact-response' narrative, which tends to view the East as static and to recognize all forces of change as being driven by modernizing agents from the West, is not only noble, but enormously necessary for developing a more progressive and realistic perspective for the field of history in this area of the world. Of all histories, the history of the Thai-Chinese should not fall back into the imperialist fallacy that divides all forms of temporality in Asia into times before and after colonial modernization. For that matter, even from the perspective of local Thai historians, the history of the Chinese in Thailand should not even be narrated according to the dynastic divide of the late 18th century. This is because there is, and remains, a crucial continuation through family businesses and the extensive network of dialect and hometown associations of the Chinese across the South China Sea from the earliest days of Ayutthaya to the modern era.

Another novel aspect of *A History of the Thai-Chinese* lies in the fact that the authors have managed to amass a great deal of data and documents related to the history of Chinese families, clan associations, secret societies and all sorts of interesting socio-cultural networks of the Chinese in Thailand throughout the period under investigation. The history provided is therefore not only from the perspective of the state—which has long monopolized the production of historical records and documents in the field of Thai history—but also provides a complex and comprehensive view from the more personal side of family businesses and community legends.

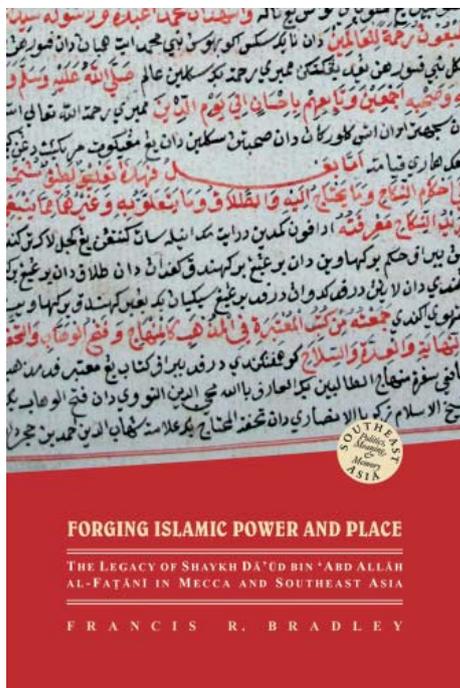
While *A History of the Thai-Chinese* is solidly grounded in rich and rare historical documentation, thanks to Bisalputra's years of research and extensive family network, Sng greatly contributes to the volume through his enlightened transnational perspective on the history of the Chinese diaspora. This book is a rare exception to the tradition of writing the history of the Chinese overseas simply as an extension of either Chinese national history or the national history of the host nation—in this case, Thailand. The authors are well aware of the innate transnational nature of the Chinese in Thailand, and therefore, never attempt to limit the scope of the narrative to the national boundaries in the way that so many other pieces have previously. Perhaps most impressive is the fact that the book does not shy away from numerous controversies, and difficult political matters concerning the Chinese in Thai politics, especially in the modern period. Despite the tumultuous political atmosphere that has engulfed Thailand for the past decade, Sng and Bisalputra have managed to demonstrate that it is not impossible to discuss and analyze such sensitive matters in the pursuit of knowledge and enlightenment.

A History of the Thai-Chinese has managed to cross many thresholds and broken many boundaries. It is a study that bridges major divides in historical periodization—both dynastic divides from the Thai tradition and the modern/pre-modern divide in the grander scheme of Orientalist historical narrative. It investigates and recounts the history of the Chinese in Thailand from a truly transnational perspective—not minimizing diaspora history as simply an extension of national history. Perhaps most importantly, this tome has managed to break the monopoly of the state's perspective on the history of a transnational minority community by diversifying historical sources to include

important aspects from family and business histories as well. In short, the authors have succeeded in revolutionizing the history of the Chinese in Thailand. At long last, a new classic to match Skinner’s *Chinese Society in Thailand* has arrived!

Wasana Wongsurawat

Forging Islamic Power and Place: The Legacy of Shaykh Da’ud bin ‘Abd Allah al-Fatani in Mecca and Southeast Asia by Francis R. Bradley (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2015). ISBN: 978-0-8248-5161-3. US\$54.00



Patani Malay nationalism, like most nationalisms, holds certain things sacred: the Patani Malay language (including its written form, *Jawi*, or Malay written in a modified Arabic script), the memory of a glorious sultanate, its Islamic tradition with its *pondok* system of religious education, its many historical defeats at the hands of the Thai kingdom, its famous Kresik mosque, and its great historical personages. Of these, few are more renowned among Patani Malays than the prolific Islamic scholar, Shaykh Da’ud al Fatani (1769-1847). Indeed, Shaykh Da’ud’s reputation extends beyond Patani, which contributes to his popularity; his works are well known to Southeast Asian Muslim scholars. While scholars of Patani’s history and its Islamic tradition duly mention the significance of Shaykh Da’ud and the “Patani school” of Islamic scholarship he helped found, very few

have actually closely examined this corpus of written work. Part of this oversight can be put down to the comparatively undeveloped state of studies of Patani, but part of the reason is that most of these writings have yet to be published and can only be accessed in manuscript form in the original *Jawi* script. It has taken an American scholar, Francis Bradley, to delve into this rich tradition of Patani Islamic scholarship and present the fullest account of Shaykh Da’ud’s life, work and legacy that has yet been written.

Bradley has made the astonishing discovery of the existence of 1300 *Jawi* manuscripts produced by scholars of the former Patani sultanate, on such diverse topics as law, prayer, mysticism, poetry, Arabic grammar, Malay translations of Arabic literature and Patani Malay oral tradition (pp. 2-3). The manuscripts were found in libraries in Malaysia, the Netherlands, London, the United States and South Africa. According to Bradley, this represents “one of the largest collections ever assembled in the region”,

rivalled only by the manuscript tradition of Java. What is even more astonishing is that this corpus of Islamic scholarship has received “virtually no attention” in the existing academic literature (p. 3). As a result, Patani’s contribution to Southeast Asian Islam has been “largely ignored” (p. 4).

Forging Islamic Power and Place: the Legacy of Shaykh Da’ud bin ‘Abd Allah al-Fatani in Mecca and Southeast Asia seeks to rectify this situation. It places Shaykh Da’ud and the Patani school of Islamic scholarship into a regional historical context. It demonstrates the importance of Patani’s intellectual contribution to Southeast Asian Islam in the 18th and 19th centuries. More importantly – and here is another aspect of the novelty of this book – Bradley argues that the emergence of this rich Islamic scholarly tradition was a direct result of the “Patani-Siam” wars of this period, which ended Patani’s existence as an independent sultanate and created a scholarly diaspora that sought to keep alive the essence of the Patani community through the production of religious scholarship.

The book is organized chronologically, beginning with the “golden age” of the Patani sultanate as a prosperous trading state during the 16th and 17th centuries, and the respective roles of the merchant class (*orang kaya*), the palace and Islamic scholars. It goes on to show how Patani’s declining status as a trading centre resulted in a downturn in its economic fortunes that eventually led to political in-fighting within the palace. This political disunity was partly responsible for the sultanate’s devastating defeat by a Thai army in 1786, followed by a series of subsequent defeats, which by the 1830s had led not only to a loss of independence, but also to the “withering away” of the social hierarchy centred around the royal court. Bradley gives a particularly vivid account of the violence and brutality of the Siamese invasion and destruction of Patani, the cruel treatment of Patani’s inhabitants and the enslavement of a substantial part of the population.

Patani’s destruction as an independent sultanate is crucial to Bradley’s argument. The wars with Siam led to the displacement of a large part of Patani’s population. Among those displaced were a small number of Islamic scholars, who proceeded to travel to Mecca, then the centre of global Islamic scholarship, where they joined Malay-speaking Muslims from other parts of Southeast Asia, the so-called *Jawah*. One of these figures was Shaykh Da’ud, whose career and work forms the core of the book. In the late 1780s, soon after the Siamese invasion and sacking of Patani, Shaykh Da’ud fled to Mecca where he spent most of the rest of his life. By the early 19th century, Shaykh Da’ud had become the “leading figure in the Malay-speaking community” in Mecca (p. 100). Bradley argues that the subsequent flourishing of Patani Islamic scholarship in Mecca should be understood as an attempt to construct a “revitalized moral order” based on Islamic teachings in the wake of the sultanate’s destruction by Thai forces. Over the course of his long career, Shaykh Da’ud wrote prolifically on such subjects as Islamic jurisprudence, eschatology, the “tenets of the faith”, pedagogy, and Sufism (pp. 74-99). He is also known as one of the foremost translators of Arabic works into Malay, enriching the corpus of Malay-language Islamic scholarship and thus enabling the dissemination of textual Islam beyond the small community of scholars literate in Arabic, to the broader Malay community.

Shaykh Da'ud was also a gifted teacher, and students from all over the Malay peninsula, Sumatra, and even as far away as Borneo, studied with him in Mecca (pp. 100-103). Bradley describes how his legacy continued through his students and, importantly, through Patani's famous *pondok* Islamic schools, which sought to reproduce the Mecca model of Islamic learning. This contributed to the formation of what Bradley calls an Islamic "knowledge network" (pp. 100-18), centred on the Patani scholarly community in Mecca, and which included Patani, Sumatra, Cambodia, Bangkok, and even the Malay community in South Africa. Bradley continues the now quite common tradition in recent scholarship on Southeast Asian Islam, pioneered by scholars such as Azra, Laffan and Ricci, in highlighting the lineages of Islamic scholars, the books they wrote, the schools they founded, the students they taught, and the schools their students founded. While mapping out these networks does not always make the most scintillating reading, such work does give empirical substance to the often casually used concept of "network". Here, Bradley could have gone further and proposed, using the late Benedict Anderson's famous argument, that this "knowledge network" of scholars who moved in the same circles, used the same written language, and read the same texts, was the genesis of Patani's "imagined community". This might additionally help explain the heavy religious element present in Patani nationalism by comparison with the more common secular nationalisms that emerged in the European colonial states of Southeast Asia. Bradley has a point in the Introduction to the book where he criticizes the preoccupation of much scholarly work on Patani with nationalist themes, while the trove of Islamic scholarship he has discovered has hardly been touched. But this book, in fact, contributes to a better understanding of the nature of Patani nationalism.

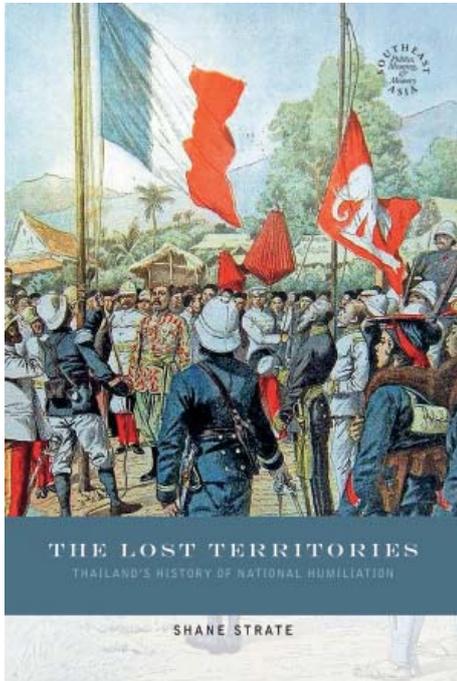
The book is written in a sympathetic vein. Bradley demonstrates an admiration for the enormous scholarly legacy of Shaykh Da'ud and the Patani school, at least partly due to the difficult circumstances in which it was produced: this was the product of a defeated, diasporic community.

Although it is not explicitly argued in this book, Bradley's work helps explain a phenomenon that can be seen elsewhere in the Muslim world: the rise of "Islamist politics", which since the 1980s, has also reshaped Patani resistance movements against the Thai state. The elimination of the pre-existing Patani elite (earlier the "*orang kaya*" and the political elite centred on the royal palace, and in the modern era subsequent political leaders) as a result of Thai colonial depredations and, more recently, military repression, has left a political, economic and moral leadership vacuum within Patani society which the Thai regime has not succeeded in replacing. Instead, this leadership vacuum has been filled by Islamic leaders, institutions and Islamic discourse. This is a direct legacy of Shaykh Da'ud and the Patani school.

This is an important book. It will stake a claim for the significance of Patani Islamic scholarship in the context of the Southeast Asian Islamic tradition. Although it is not necessarily the intention of the author, as the discovery of this rich tradition of Islamic scholarship becomes better known, it cannot but help strengthen the claims of the people of Patani for recognition by the Thai state as a people with a distinct and separate national tradition.

Patrick Jory

The Lost Territories: Thailand's History of National Humiliation by Shane Strate (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2015). ISBN: 978-0-8248-3891-1 (hard). US\$52.



As every Thai knows, and any foreign visitor to the kingdom quickly learns if they did not already, Thailand, or Siam as it was called until 1939, was never colonized by a Western imperial power. In the conventional historical narrative, the preservation of the country's independence is usually attributed to the skilful diplomacy and modernizing reforms of King Mongkut (r.1851-1868) and King Chulalongkorn (r.1868-1910). But there is a darker side to this triumphant story of continual independence: Siam's survival comes at a high price as it is forced, first, to sign unequal treaties with the Western powers that limit its fiscal and judicial sovereignty, and, second, to cede parts of what are now Cambodia and Laos to the French, and Malaysia and Myanmar to the British. Although never formally colonized, Thailand was thus still a victim of Western imperialism. It is this narrative of loss and suffering that forms the

focus of Shane Strate's *The Lost Territories*.

In this insightful and highly readable study, which is based upon his PhD dissertation from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Strate explores the origins of what he terms 'National Humiliation discourse' and its relationship with the predominant Royalist-Nationalist strand in conventional historiography. Both of these narratives were born from the same event: namely, the 1893 Franco-Siamese Crisis in which the French used gunboat diplomacy to force the Siamese government to surrender its claims over the Lao tributary states on the left bank of the Mekong River. From the Royalist-Nationalist viewpoint, this concession was a classic example of the kingdom's 'bamboo diplomacy', with Chulalongkorn wisely bending to the wishes of the French in order to stop them colonizing all of Siam. Drawing on the work of Thongchai Winichakul, Strate shows how the still passionately held belief that Siam was robbed of its former territories is based upon anachronistically projecting the modern concept of nation-states exercising exclusive sovereignty over specific territories demarcated by borders into a Southeast Asian past of hierarchical overlord-tributary interstate relations and frontiers of overlapping sovereignty. This ahistorical sleight-of-hand is necessary to turn what was actually a humiliating defeat in 1893—that might have tarnished Chulalongkorn's reputation—into a diplomatic victory that ensured Siam's survival and saw the monarchy enshrined as the nation's guardians. As Strate illustrates, however, the sense of humiliation and victimization by the West has never been entirely erased. Indeed,

the Thai state and other political actors have frequently used these feelings to foster national unity, mobilize support for authoritarian rule and suppress dissent. Rather than celebrate the country's continuous independence à la the Royalist-Nationalist narrative, National Humiliation discourse maintains that Thailand is under constant threat from both external and internal enemies: if Thai people do not unify under strong leadership, then further suffering and loss will result. As a recent example, Strate highlights how politicians used this discourse in the aftermath of the 1997 Asian financial crisis to portray the demands of the IMF as illegitimate. Today, traces of it can be seen in the belief of the military government and its supporters that Western-style democracy and its proponents represent an existential threat to the Thai nation.

The core of *The Lost Territories* focuses on the 1930s and 1940s, particularly Thailand's role in the Second World War under the military regime of Luang Phibun Songkhram (1938-1944). Strate uses the development of National Humiliation discourse and its relationship with Royalist-Nationalism as a compelling analytical framework to shed new light on the policies and foreign relations of both the Phibun government and those of its post-war successor. In the late 1930s, Phibun sought to legitimize his increasingly authoritarian control and discredit the monarchy he had helped depose from power in 1932 by stirring up memories of the 1893 crisis. Government propaganda cast this confrontation with France as a defeat and a blow to national prestige: only the military could protect the Thai nation from further such humiliations and right the historic wrongs suffered at the hands of the Western imperial powers. This rhetoric was remarkably successful in generating popular support for the Thai military's invasion of French Indochina in January 1941, which ended with Thailand gaining possession of parts of Laos and Cambodia.

Strate goes on to show how the Phibun regime also used National Humiliation discourse both to explain the country's subsequent occupation by the Japanese and to justify its declaration of war against Great Britain and the United States in January 1942. By highlighting how all of Asia, including Japan, had suffered from Western imperialism to some extent, the government managed to link the discourse of National Humiliation with the Japanese ideology of Pan-Asianism. Rather than being occupied by Japan, Thailand was its junior partner in helping liberate its less fortunate colonized neighbours. Strate argues that National Humiliation discourse thereby enabled the Phibun regime to disguise its aims of (re)creating a great Thai empire across mainland Southeast Asia, evidenced by the Thai military's occupation of the Shan States in British Burma in 1942, as an anti-colonial liberation struggle.

Come the end of the Second World War, Thailand found itself on the wrong side, with both Britain and France wanting to punish the kingdom for its aggressive actions. Moreover, France insisted that if Thailand did not return the Lao and Cambodian provinces it had seized in 1941, it would block the country's application for membership of the UN. This placed the government of Pridi Banomyong, which had replaced that of the tainted Phibun, in a difficult position: the intense emotional attachment to the lost territories meant returning them to France would seriously affect its legitimacy. Therefore, the Pridi government revived the Royalist-Nationalist narrative of sacrifice and survival to justify its decision to give in to the French demands: returning the Lao

and Cambodian territories was necessary to make amends for Phibun's mistakes and illustrate its commitment to the UN and international peace. Nevertheless, the wound of the lost territories was left open as France's heavy-handed approach allowed the Thais to recast themselves as a peaceful nation that had been the victim of Western bullying once more.

For this reviewer, the most interesting part of the book is the examination of a little known aspect of the wartime period: specifically, the Phibun regime's persecution of Thai Catholics as fifth columnists because of their suspected sympathy with France. Strate traces the roots of this anti-Catholicism to the late 19th century, when French priests used extraterritoriality to protect their congregations and converts from the taxation and *corvée* labour demands of the Siamese authorities. The Phibun government's propaganda was thus able to link Catholicism with French imperialism, portraying the religion as a foreign ideology that threatened Thai values. To be Catholic was to be un-Thai. The government's anti-Catholic policies involved pressurizing Thai Catholics into converting to Buddhism and seizing Church property. Tragically, this resulted in state-supported vigilante violence in which several Thai Catholics were murdered and churches were burnt down. This episode serves as a powerful warning about what happens when governments incite religious intolerance for political ends. It also has some uncomfortable parallels with the growth of anti-Muslim sentiment within the Thai Buddhist monkhood in the present day.

In the final part of the book, Strate examines the historical origins of the long-running dispute between Thailand and Cambodia over the Preah Vihear temple ruins on the two countries' mutual border. During the 1930s, the temple became a key symbol of the lost territories and was part of those areas temporarily seized by the military in the war. In the 1950s, the Thai government under a rehabilitated Phibun tried to bully newly independent Cambodia into surrendering Preah Vihear, with the military illegally occupying the ruins. These aggressive tactics backfired, however, when the Cambodian government decided to bring the international community in to resolve the dispute by appealing to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in 1958. Thai newspapers then revived the rhetoric of National Humiliation in order to build up public support and donations for the Thai legal case; linking the issue to French imperialism by depicting the leader and former king of Cambodia, Norodom Sihanouk, as a stooge of the French and by even claiming that Cambodia was just a French colonial construct that had once been part of Siam. Similarly, when the ICJ ruled that Preah Vihear belonged to Cambodia in 1962, the military regime of Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat explained this setback by accusing the ICJ of being a neo-imperialist institution of the Communist powers, the latest mortal threat to the Thai nation. Nearly fifty years later, the lack of emotional closure over the temple enabled the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD) to mobilize support for its protests against the Thaksin-backed People Power Party after that government agreed to endorse Cambodia's application to have Preah Vihear listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

As is to be expected for a work based on a PhD dissertation, *The Lost Territories* relies on extensive archival records such as government reports, speeches and newspaper articles. In his examination of the anti-Catholic episode during the Second World War,

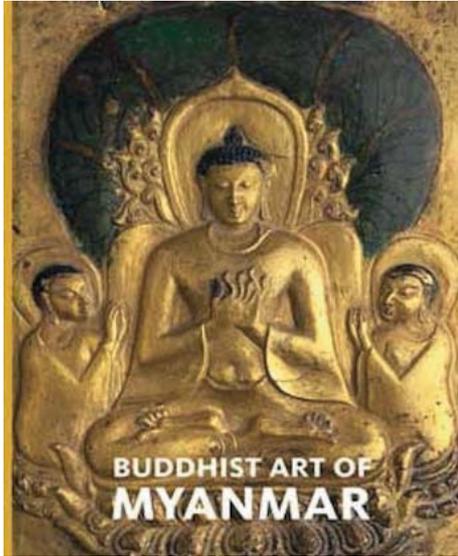
Strate also uses the unpublished and previously unutilized eyewitness accounts of Thai Catholics from the Assumption Cathedral archives. The book also contains several political cartoons that provide graphic evidence of the National Humiliation discourse at work.

Taken as a whole, *The Lost Territories* raises some important questions, particularly about the relationship between the Thai media and public opinion. Rather than merely reflecting the public mood, Strate highlights how the Thai media has often been responsible for manufacturing public outrage and generating popular support for government policies. Just as significantly, the book builds on recent scholarship on Thailand that challenges the 'colonized' versus 'non-colonized' or 'colonizing' binary classifications used to describe Western and non-Western states. In this respect, Strate demonstrates how National Humiliation discourse has allowed Thai governments and other political actors to use 'un-colonized' Siam/Thailand's victimization by the West to disguise their own neo-colonial ambitions over neighbouring states. What is also clear is that the rhetoric of the lost territories is not going to disappear from Thai political discourse anytime soon. Commenting on how the various maps showing the lost territories issued by the Phibun regime often differed over what those territories actually were, Strate explains that: 'The *lost territories* were not a location. They functioned as a symbol, a monument commemorating the idea of a National Humiliation. Since the meaning of the symbol proved remarkably flexible, it could also be continually reinterpreted and used by later generations to meet contemporary needs' (p. 45).

In sum, *The Lost Territories* is an important addition to the historiography on modern Thailand and essential reading for those wishing to understand the origins of the Preah Vihear dispute. More broadly, it will be of interest to anyone interested in how governments and other political actors manipulate historical memory to mobilize popular support.

James A. Warren

Buddhist Art of Myanmar edited by Sylvia Fraser-Lu and Donald M. Stadtner (New York: Asia Society and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015). ISBN 978 0 300 20945 7. US\$65.00



This book was published to accompany an exhibition at the Asia Society Museum in 2015. Nine scholarly essays occupy eighty-eight pages, with a catalogue of 139 pages. Of seventy-one artifacts in the catalogue, thirty-one were loaned by the National Museums of Myanmar (13), the Sri Ksetra Archaeological Museum (7), the Bagan Archaeological Museum (9), and the Kaba Aye Buddhist Art Museum (2). Ten American institutions and individuals loaned the remainder. Most of the items from Myanmar date from the Classical period; most of the American items date from the 17th to the 20th century.

The essays average seven pages in length, of which an appreciable proportion is occupied by photographs. Within these restrictions, the authors did an admirable job of distilling Myanmar history. The editors Sylvia Fraser-Lu and Donald Stadtner summarize the history of the Archaeological Survey of Burma, founded in 1902, the Burma Research Society, important foreign collections of Myanmar art, and the progress of archaeology since independence in 1948. The next chapter, on foundation myths of Myanmar by Patrick Pranke and Donald Stadtner, describes the links between legends of Bagan, Inwa, Bago, Raikhine, Shan, and important sites in the country. The next chapter by U Tun Aung Chain complements those beliefs with a summary of Myanmar primary sources, including ancient inscriptions and more recent chronicles. Patrick Pranke provides a summary of Burmese Buddhism, which provides the necessary context for most of the works of art which constitute the main subject of this book. Jacques Leider's essay counteracts the view that Myanmar's main contacts with its neighbors consisted of Indian immigration and warfare with Thailand. Although Myanmar shares borders with India, China, and Thailand, Myanmar's main contact with them occurred in the context of trade. The wars with Ayutthaya in the 18th century may have been incited in part by trading disputes.

Art historians Robert Brown and Donald Stadtner contribute a chapter on the earliest Buddhist art of Myanmar, mainly that associated with the Sri Ksetra site, identified with a culture known as Pyu. The catalogue section begins with ten art works found at Sri Ksetra, a site associated with Pyu culture. The oldest item, a double-sided stele found at Sri Ksetra, is dated in the catalogue to the 4th to the 6th century. Pamela Gutman and Bob Hudson in the *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* (2014) argued for a date as early as the 1st century. Several items in this section were discovered within the last decade, including a *Mettaya* and a *vajraghanta* which add significantly to our

knowledge of the mixture of Theravada and esoteric Buddhist beliefs in early Myanmar. This chapter also summarizes what is known about the early art of lower Myanmar and Rakhine (Arakan) where an early 8th century inscription records that a king patronized both Buddhist and Hindu monasteries.

The important site of Bagan is represented by thirteen items from Myanmar museums. Three items in the catalogue from American collections may also have come from Bagan. The origin and date of another item, a mold for votive tablets, are uncertain, but it is believed to have been made during the Bagan period or earlier. Donald M. Stadtner, in 'Ancient Bagan: a plain of merit', summarizes the development of the art of Bagan during its florescent period during the 11th through 13th centuries, and the various theories which have been proposed to account for the evolution of its architecture, sculpture, and mural painting.

The number of Bagan's residents has not been ascertained. Little research has been devoted to the study of remains of daily life at the site. One important clue is the record of the period of time needed to build some of the major monuments. The largest stupa in Bagan, Dhammayazika, for instance, was recorded in inscriptions as having been built in only two years (p. 62), suggesting that a large workforce was available.

Bagan's role as a political capital came to an end in the 14th century, but the site continued to be relevant to Myanmar society and politics. Later chronicles purport to record events and situations during the Bagan period, and the patronage of later kings. Out of the seventy-one items featured in the catalogue, the majority (44) date from the post-Bagan era. Three chapters of the book deal with this phase.

Sylvia Fraser-Lu covers the period from 1287 to 1900. She denotes the 465 years from 1287 to 1752 in Upper Myanmar the 'Ava-Taunggu Period', since the center of political power and artistic patronage was located at Ava (Inwa in modern orthography) near Mandalay during most of this time. The later part of this era is represented by seven Buddha images, two in a distinctive style with enormous crowns or head-dresses, possibly related to a tradition about a vainglorious ruler named Jambupati whom Buddha converted by appearing in the form of a world ruler.

At the head of the Ayeyarwadi nmar between 1369 and 1537, including glazed plaques, three of which are shown in the catalogue. Mrauk-U in Rakhine produced major works of architecture and sculpture, represented in the catalogue by a single small bronze Buddha.

The early Konbaung period which began in 1752 is represented by a glazed tile from Mingun, across the river from Mandalay, where the famous Mingun Bell still rests. Myanmar was progressively annexed by the British between 1826 and 1885, when the Konbaung Dynasty came to an end, and court artists had to turn their skills to other ends. Some sculpture of this period in the catalogue is almost heart-rendingly beautiful. The last item in the catalogue is a covered box decorated all over with a depiction of the *Vessantara jātaka*. The photographs in the catalogue are excellent; the box is so interesting that one wishes that photographs of all sides of the box including close-ups had been included.

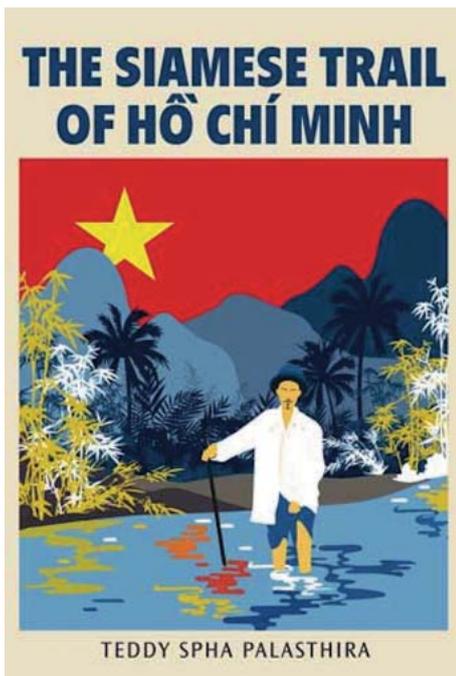
The last two chapters deal with general topics. Adriana Proser ingeniously uses the biological concept of the 'meme' to explain why the production of certain Buddhist

images has waxed and waned in Myanmar. Heidi Tan discusses the various semi-didactic situations where Buddha images are found in Myanmar, such as the collections of assorted objects exhibited at pagoda complexes which combine images of Buddha with a wide range of other artifacts, the Archaeology Museum and other ancient sites in Bagan, and the National Museum in Yangon.

This book contains essays and a catalogue condensing a large proportion of the gamut of Myanmar art history. It is a necessary reference for any general reader interested in acquiring familiarity with the broad scope of Myanmar art, and can be read with enjoyment by the advanced student of the field.

John N. Miksic

The Siamese Trail of Ho Chi Minh by Teddy Spha Palasthira (Bangkok: Post Books, 2015). ISBN 978-974-228-285-1. 400 Baht.



Subject and style set *The Siamese Trail of Ho Chi Minh* apart. The subject is the Vietnamese leader, Ho Chi Minh, who under various aliases spent much of 1928 and 1929 living in the northeast of Siam recruiting allies among the “Viet-Kieu”, the Vietnamese minority who settled there as the French moved into Vietnam in the late 19th century. As such, the book is a straightforward biography about a mysterious period of Ho’s life. To find out “the facts” during this period, Palasthira does the ordinary detective work of the historian: consulting primary and secondary sources, as well as revisiting the known sites of Ho’s time in Bangkok and, most particularly, in the northeast.

But such historical method has limitations for writing a biography of Ho in Siam, which is why none of his many biographers devoted more than about four pages to his Siamese sojourn. This is largely because before, during, and after his time in Siam, Ho was on the run from the French secret police (*Sûreté*) who sought Vietnamese rebels like Ho, who took refuge just across the border from their French Indochinese colony. In this context, Ho became a chameleon, changing identities, names, costumes, and donning disguises that make it difficult for historians to trace by conventional means. Nevertheless, from what Ho later told his official biographers, it was in Siam that he first became a master of the jungle lore which he later used as the basis for the guerilla wars in Vietnam against the Japanese, French, and Americans.

Thus, what remains for the historian about the time Ho was in Thailand are just bits and pieces. He appeared in different guises (local medicine man, Chinese businessman, and even as a Buddhist monk), changed names, and purposefully obscured his movements. Ho was known to appear and disappear rapidly, like a mole. But what happened in-between? To address this mystery, Palasthira artfully shifts mid-point in his book from historian (just the facts!) to novelist. The second half of the book is a fictionalized account about one of Ho's Thai recruits, Wong, who is the son of a Vietnamese émigré and Thai mother living in Phichit.

In Vietnam, Wong's father had a failed first marriage in which his wife betrayed him with a French military officer. Despite his father's protests, Wong's Thai mother made sure that Wong learned to speak Vietnamese. With a bilingual background, Wong in 1928 surreptitiously joined the expedition of "Thau Chin" in Thailand at the age of seventeen. As a guide and interpreter for the Viet Minh rebels he accompanied the man who will become Ho Chi Minh, falling for Ho's charisma and revolutionary fervor. Wong led Ho on an arduous 500-kilometer trip through the mountains of the northeast between Phichit and Udon Thani, rugged areas which, ironically enough, would later be held by the Communist Party of Thailand during the late 1970s. Ho made the trip in two weeks—a strategy that "defeated geography" by making improbable journeys on foot. This strategy later benefited the Viet Minh when conducting raids on the French in the 1940s, at the battle of Dien Bieh Phu in 1954, and in the 1960s-1970s during the war against the Americans. "Thau Chin", the man who became Ho Chi Minh, developed this strategy in Siam: suddenly appearing at organizing meetings under one name, disappearing into another disguise before reappearing at the next.

His time in Thailand finished, Ho commanded his new disciple Wong to educate himself—a task Wong undertook as Thailand modernized quickly in the 1930s. A brief period of democratic rule in Thailand was quickly followed by the dictatorship of Luang Pibulsongram, the Japanese Occupation, and the emergence of the underground "Free Thai" movement which challenged the Japanese. Palasthira in this context uses his Viet Kieu character Wong to describe the rise of Thai nationalism in the 1930s and 1940s in which the Vietnamese minority came to be seen as a threat to Thai identity, particularly in the context of the uneasy role that Thailand had with neighboring French Indochina. This in turn sets the stage for the last part of the novel, which is about Wong's trip to Vietnam to fight as a volunteer with the Viet Minh under Ho Chi Minh between roughly 1944 and 1947.

Palasthira describes well the cruelty of French and Japanese colonialism with their racial segregation and the violent nature of colonial rule. In this context Wong is sent by Ho to survey the Tai-speaking villagers of Vietnam, whom Ho sought to incorporate into his revolt against the Japanese occupation. Wong then observes the surrender of the Japanese forces to the Viet Minh, after which Ho briefly establishing an independent Vietnam in 1945, followed by re-occupation by the French military. Wong becomes an intelligence officer for Ho during the subsequent revolt against the French immediately following the end of the Second World War.

In the end, Wong grows weary of all war and the cruelties he both witnesses and commits. Worn out by his time in Vietnam, he returns to his mother in Phichit, and quietly

enters academia as a lecturer in anthropology and Thai linguistics at Chulalongkorn University. From the perspective of Wong, Palasthira then presents the rest of Ho's story, including the Viet Minh victory at Dien Bien Phu in 1954, the outbreak of the American War in the 1960s, and finally the emergence of an independent Vietnam which Wong visits as an old man in 1987.

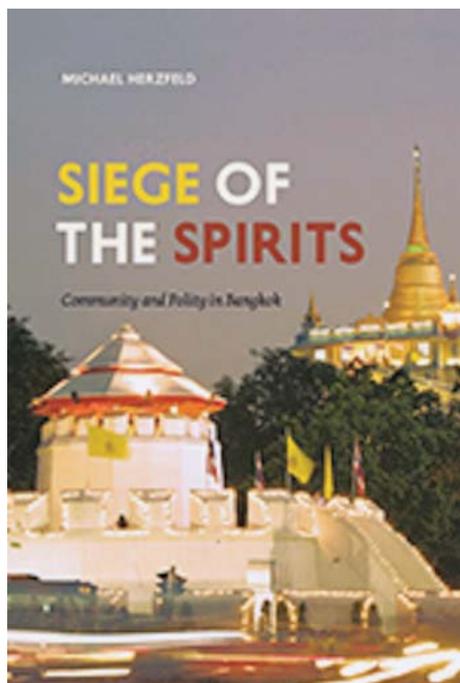
In "Wong", Palasthira creates an engaging character that describes the role of the Viet Kieu in Thailand. Much of what Palasthira writes about the Viet Kieu is interesting for its own sake, both in the more "historical" part of the book, as well as the novelized second part. Wong himself is an interesting case study for his engagement with Ho Chi Minh. But the backstory about Thailand's ongoing relationship with Vietnam before, during, and after the Cold War is also interesting. By the end of the book, Wong is more than a heuristic device to develop Ho's story, though he is that. Wong also becomes a literary device to describe Thailand's ongoing relationship with Vietnam, and its Vietnamese minority. In this sense, the book is also an exploration of "Thai-ness".

My criticism of *The Siamese Trail of Ho Chi Minh* is that the novelized story of Wong at 136 pages is not long enough. Because the character is indeed sympathetic, I wondered about Wong's broader story. For example, I would like to read more about his experiences among the Tai people of northern Vietnam in 1945. But perhaps most lacking is Wong's account of the Thai history through which he lived, particularly after he returned from Vietnam in 1947. What did he think about Thailand's role in the Vietnam War during the 1970s, and the student uprisings at Thammasat University in the 1970s? What did he think about the withdrawal of the Americans from Thailand in 1976? What did he think when the mountains through which he led Ho in 1928 became a redoubt for the Thai Communist Party in the 1970s?

What makes *The Siamese Trail of Ho Chi Minh* effective is its grounding in historical research, much of which is found in the first 178 pages which is the "biography" of Ho's time in Siam. But what makes the book enjoyable is the historical novel focused by Wong. In this sense the book also follows in an important Thai literary tradition that includes Botan's *Letters from Thailand* (Tan Suang U) and Kukrit's *Four Kingdoms* (Mae Ploy). So perhaps in future we can hope for more elaboration from the fertile imagination of Teddy Spha Palasthira.

Tony Waters

Siege of the Spirits: Community and Polity in Bangkok, by Michael Herzfeld (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2016). ISBN 978-0-226-33158-4 (cloth); ISBN 978-0-226-33161-4 (paper); ISBN 978-0-226-33175-1 (e-book). Cloth US\$90.00; Paper US\$30.00; E-book US\$10.00 to US\$30.00.



At a Thai Studies conference in 2002, Michael Herzfeld, professor of anthropology at Harvard University, announced a new interest in Thailand. Herzfeld had been a key figure in developing approaches to anthropology, which moved beyond structural functionalism without plunging into postmodernism. His research in Greece, and elsewhere in southern Europe, had focused on tensions between communities and bureaucracies, especially in relation to heritage in the context of tourism, most famously in the elegantly titled book, *A Place in History*.

A year later, while trawling for research sites among the communities threatened with eviction under plans to develop the historical centre of Bangkok, Herzfeld did not really *choose* his research site; rather the site chose him—the embattled residents of the Mahakan Fort community astutely recognised the potential value of a Harvard professor. Over a dozen years later, this book is the result. It traces the extraordinary story of the community’s protest, and offers many subtle insights on the relations between the state and people in contemporary Thailand.

The Mahakan Fort community, along with many others, was threatened by a development plan with two main aims: to clarify the old centre on Rattanakosin Island as an essentially royal space; and to improve its attraction to tourists by developing its “beauty.” The Mahakan Fort Community, clustered against the city’s original wall, was to be replaced by a park that would improve the vista of the old fort and its environs. Opposing this project was tricky on many grounds: the redevelopment project could claim to be serving modernity, monarchy, and the tourist income so important for national prosperity. Moreover, the Mahakan Fort community is tiny. The site is only five *rai*, and the population hovers around 300 people. Most are genuinely poor, hence the resources available for mounting resistance are scant.

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) gained an early advantage by taking ownership of the land under the law of eminent domain, and paying many of the community’s members a first instalment on compensation for eviction. On legal grounds, the community does not have a foot to stand on, and the courts have consistently ruled against its petitions to stay. Yet, a quarter of a century after the first attempts to remove the community, it is still there. The community has been fighting in the public space of the media, and in the knuckle-to-knuckle space of confrontation and negotiation with

the bureaucracy. Herzfeld concentrates on the latter.

He describes these scenes of negotiation in great detail, analysing the body language, the vocabularies deployed, the use of aggression, deference, contempt and humour. He discusses the politics and poetics of sound amplification.

The BMA argued that the Mahakan Fort residents had no legitimacy as a historic community. The area had been occupied as residences since the Third Reign, but had no association with a valuable craft or a prominent family. There are records of performances of the traditional musical drama, *like*, there in the late 19th century, but that is hardly unique. Few of the residents can claim a long historical association with the site, and many have arrived recently, from Isan among other places. However, the BMA's plans for redeveloping the site were vulnerable. They intended to replace the community with a park, to remove the people in order to create an empty space. In one fractious confrontation, they sent in soldiers who tore down a row of houses. In another, they dumped truckloads of garbage over an area that the community members were developing as a garden. The BMA commandeered part of the area and planted a lawn, which quickly became an eyesore.

In face of the BMA's aggression, the community gradually redefined itself as "a community of ancient wooden houses," highlighting their rare physical asset. They argued that the diversity of their members' origins made the community a microcosm of the nation. They claimed a role for themselves as curators of this unique location, as guardians of the legacy of the ancestors who occupied the many spirit houses on the site (thus giving Herzfeld his delightful book title). By this deft manipulation of discourse, they repositioned the BMA bureaucrats as threats to Thai heritage, lacking in compassion and cultural sensitivity, and hence unworthy of being Thai. Moreover, while the residents had varied backgrounds and many internal disagreements, under the pressure exerted by the BMA they developed into a community with a robust organisation, strong leadership and extraordinary tenacity.

In many respects, the Mahakan Fort community has followed a pattern seen in other protests over the last three decades. Faced by authorities claiming to act on behalf of nation, modernity, monarchy and progress, the protesters imitate the authorities' vocabulary, techniques, claims and practices. The Mahakan Fort site now has its own museum, signage which closely copies the official signage at tourist sites, and a hierarchical internal organization which can be every bit as authoritarian as the bureaucrats.

How has the Mahakan Fort community survived repeated threat of eviction for almost a quarter of a century, where many other communities have failed, either disintegrating in the face of pressure or surrendering from exhaustion? Part of the reason, Herzfeld argues, is because of its central location. The community is built up against a wall and fort built at the origin of the city. It lies next to the point where Rachadamnoen Avenue, the "royal walk" built by King Chulalongkorn, "smashed through" (Herzfeld's term) this wall as part of the modernisation of the city. A few steps away are the museum of King Rama VII and the Crown Property Bureau's museum of Rattanakosin Island. Above looms the Golden Mount, and across the way lies the "metal temple" with King Rama III's statue. In such a location, the community cannot be quietly destroyed by

the bureaucrats without anyone noticing. The community has exploited this centrality to make its protests known by banners hung over the walls, and amplified messages that float out into the streets. The community has attracted many useful or influential sympathisers, including architects, city planners, academics, people within the Crown Property Bureau, and the short-lived head of the BMA, Apirak Kosayodhin.

But there is more to it than centrality. Herzfeld has studied several wrangles over heritage between communities and state in southern Europe, but cannot imagine a case similar to the Mahakan Fort community occurring there. For explanation, he invokes the conceptualisation of Asian states that was popularised in slightly different forms as mandala (Wolters), segmentary state (Stein) or galactic polity (Tambiah, who was Herzfeld's teacher). He suggests that: "Thailand oscillates between its historical antecedent as a 'pulsating galactic polity' and its modern incarnation as a clearly demarcated territorial nation-state." In the pyramidal structure of the bureaucratic nation-state, a small, scruffy community with no legal rights, like that at Mahakan Fort, is at the bottom of the heap. But the mandala/segmentary state/galactic polity works on different principles. The units, whether a neighbourhood, village, city or kingdom, are conceived as moral communities or imagined families. The units are nested inside one another, like concentric circles, rather than arranged in a vertical formation. The same principles operate at different levels of scale, from neighbourhood to kingdom: the kingdom can claim to be a family, and a minute community can claim to be guardians of the principle of 'Thainess'. In Herzfeld's telling, the Fort Mahakan community has learnt how to slip free from the hierarchy of the nation-state and play the politics of the mandala. In every formal battle in the courts of law, they lose. But in face-to-face negotiation, witnessed at some distance by the nation, they win every time. This is a result of "the residents' self-conscious efforts to portray themselves as a microcosm of the country as a whole." They claim to be guarding a little sliver of the national heritage on behalf of the nation.

As this review is written, the community is again back in the news as the threat of eviction has recently resurfaced. On Herzfeld's analysis, they should survive yet again. However, there is one factor that emerges from Herzfeld's telling, although he does not comment on it. This community (and others) has always been most vulnerable when the military is in power, perhaps because the military as an institution, as a result of its characteristic internal culture, is less susceptible to the politics of the mandala.

This book is a delight to read, full of subtle insights and blissfully free of jargon. It contributes to the growing subgenre on the anthropology of protest, while at the same time offering new ways to think about issue of state and people, history and heritage.

Chris Baker

From Mulberry Leaves to Silk Scrolls: New Approaches to the Study of Asian Manuscript Traditions edited by Justin Thomas McDaniel and Lynn Ransom (Philadelphia: Schoenberg Institute of Manuscript Studies, University of Pennsylvania, 2015). ISBN 978-0-8122-4736-7. US\$ \$49.95. £32.50



This is an exciting time for the study of Asian manuscripts. Many new collections have been found, particularly in China. The dramatic fall in the cost of imaging techniques and computer storage has resulted in thousands of manuscript pages becoming available online. This book is the first in a series of “Studies in Manuscript Culture” from the University of Pennsylvania dedicated to the memory of Lawrence J. Schoenberg, a pioneering software magnate and great collector of manuscripts. As Justin McDaniel notes in his introduction, the book offers “a glimpse of innovations into the study of Asian manuscript traditions.”

The book is divided into three parts. The first, titled “The Art of the Book”, has three show-and-tell essays on outstandingly beautiful manuscripts from Southeast Asia. Hiram Woodward examines the genre of *Tamrā chāng*, Thai manuals on the characteristics of elephants, concentrating on a particular example from the Walters Collection of which Woodward was the curator. Alexandra Green, curator of the Southeast Asian Collection at the British Museum, offers a detailed description of a late 19th century cosmology manuscript from Burma. Sinéad Ward describes a *Kammavācā* manuscript from Burma which, contrary to the usual format, is illustrated with scenes from Jātaka tales and the life of the Buddha, beautifully done in red and gold. All three essays are lavishly illustrated, showcasing the highly developed art of illustration of the 18th and 19th centuries in Southeast Asia.

The second part of the book, entitled “Inscribing Religious Belief and Practice”, has three essays on the contribution of manuscripts to religious history. Angela S. Chiu discusses how legends of the Buddha’s visit to the northern Thai territories, along with relics, were techniques for fixing these places as part of the Buddhist world. The essays by Ori Tavor and Daniel Sou show how newly found caches of manuscripts from the Warring States Period (453–211 BCE) are changing the debate on the evolution of early Chinese religious beliefs and practices. Tavor examines manuscripts which debated the use of ritual while Sou examines texts on ghosts, suggesting that exorcism was taken up as a duty by local administrations.

The third section, entitled “Technologies of Writing”, reflects Schoenberg’s pioneering interest in the digitalization of manuscripts. Kim Plofker notes that the

current transition from paper to digital recording is as momentous as the transition from oral memory to written media in the Vedic age. She shows how authors of early Sanskrit texts considered written recording to be inferior to memory because copyists introduced mistakes. She details how scribes adapted techniques from oral recording to new written forms in Sanskrit manuscripts on scientific topics. Sergei Tourkin provides a guide to the intricate abbreviations used in astronomical and astrological manuscripts written in Arabic script from the 10th to 14th centuries CE.

Over 150,000 manuscripts were found along the Silk Road, especially in the Dunhuang Library Cave, but were scattered among several collections and libraries. Susan Whitfield describes how the International Dunhuang Project is bringing these manuscripts back together again in online form (<http://idp.bl.uk>). In addition, Whitfield provides a fascinating discussion of the evolution of the media or support for writing in Asia, beginning with wood, and then progressing to leaves, paper, strung books, and then concertinas. Peter M. Scharf describes the software developed for digital recording and cataloguing of Sanskrit manuscripts at the virtual Sanskrit Library (www.sanskritlibrary.com).



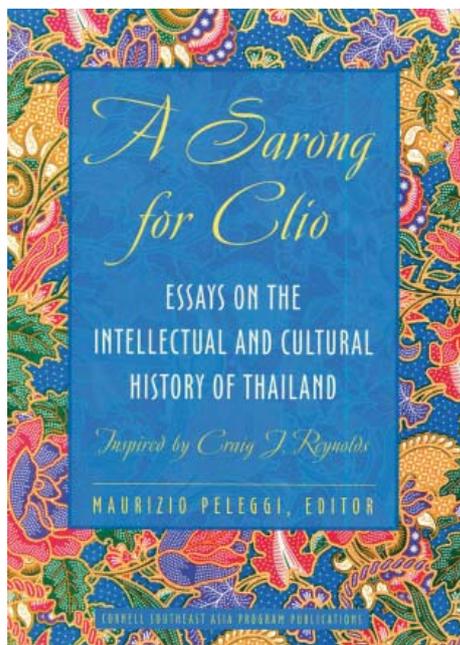
The article possibly of most interest to readers of this journal will be Hiram's Woodward's essay on "The Characteristics of Elephants." The focus is on a manuscript held by the Walters Art Museum, which seems to be a relatively late production, and thus in rather good condition, but has affinities to other known manuscripts stretching back to the early eighteenth century. Unlike some of these, this manuscript is not simply *Tamrā chāng*, Manual of elephants, but *Tamrā laksana chāng kham khlong*, Manual of the characteristics of elephants in a poetic meter. It dwells on the classification of elephants into different types with different abilities and characters, and has little of the practical material on hunting and training found in other examples of the genre. Woodward points out that such manuals were an "emblem of office" or "badge of authority," something owned by an senior official in charge of elephants as proof of his capacity. This was

something to show off, hence the fine verse and superb illustrations. However, there is some practical material, particularly a mantra to be used in connection with the leather noose employed in hunting and training elephants. By following the trail from this mantra into other documents, Woodward detects a lineage of Brahmans, probably from southern India, who were probably engaged in the production and systematization of elephant lore from the Ayutthaya era through to the early twentieth century. This essay is a fascinating example of “reading” a manuscript.

Although each essay is focused in some way on manuscripts, the range of topics in this collection is very wide, beyond any individual scholar’s core interest. The delight of such books is that they induce the reader to wander into unknown territory, often with surprising results. The essays are all of extremely high quality. The book is also beautifully designed by Judith Stagnitto Abbate, and superbly produced—a work of art in itself.

Chris Baker

A Sarong for Clio: Essays on the Intellectual and Cultural History of Thailand – Inspired by Craig J. Reynolds, edited by Maurizio Peleggi (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asian Program Publications, 2015). ISBN: 0877277966 (hard) ISBN: 9780877277668 (soft) . Hardcover US\$69.95. Paperback 925 Baht/US\$23.95.



By all accounts and purposes, *A Sarong for Clio* is a deliciously seditious collection of essays on the intellectual and cultural history of Thailand. At first glance through the table of contents, one might seriously wonder if, without such a mighty muse as Craig Reynolds, such a collection of works by such prominent figures in the field of Thai history—the likes of Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, Thongchai Winichakul, Tamara Loos, etc.—could ever be brought together and published side by side in such a harmonious and awe-inspiring collection. The area, topic, and period of the articles in *A Sarong for Clio* are quite diverse, covering a rather expansive range, from the literary history of early modern Siam to contemporary political issues of “Governance in Thailand.” Yet, there is a general theme that runs through all the pieces, creating a sort of harmonious unity and intellectual authority for the collection. That is what obviously appears to be inspired by Craig Reynold’s lifelong passion and enthusiasm for investigating history through the perspective and experience of those outside the comfortable and authoritative position of the ruling elite—be it the common people, the subaltern, or even the defeated oppositional elite. While history is often criticized as being written by the victors, and therefore, too frequently employed by the ruling powers to suppress voices of dissent and oppress the suffering masses, *A Sarong for Clio* suggests that Craig Reynolds’ kind of history strives to give voice to the voiceless and provide the subaltern with a fighting chance through alternative narratives that do not necessarily glorify the elite.

The collection is divided into two equally exciting parts: *Part I – Historiography, Knowledge, and Power* and *Part II – Political and Business Culture*. The first part consists of four essays investing four alternative narratives that either contest the mainstream or illuminate the not so widely explored subaltern alternative. It is always a pleasure to read the historical pieces by Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit and this collection starts out with their essay on “The Revolt of Khun Phaen: Contesting Power in Early Modern Siam.” The article investigates how the folk epic *Khun Chang Khun Phaen* could have once—prior to being revised, reinterpreted, and coopted by the ruling elite—served as a sort of common man’s manual for navigating and negotiating power with the ruling class. The second article is Thongchai Winichakul’s “Fabrication, Stealth, and Copying of Historical Writings: The Historiographical Misconducts of Mr.

Kulap of Siam.” In this essay, Thongchai argues that scandal, discredit, and punishment of Kulap between the late 19th to the early 20th century had more to do with the crime of narrating history from the perspective of the commoner instead of following the safe and approved royalist tradition. While Chris and Pasuk focus on the narrative of village folk and Thongchai on the cultivated commoner, the third essay in the collection, “Renegade Royalist: Autobiography and Siam’s Disavowed Prince Prisdang” by Tamara Loos, explores the intriguing narrative of a banned and disgraced member of the royal family. The defeated and denounced elite could also be the source of a bitterly oppressed subaltern narrative. Part I concludes with the editor, Maurizio Peleggi’s own essay, “The Plot of Thai Art History: Buddhist Sculpture and the Myth of National Origins,” which questions the very core narrative of the mainstream nationalist narrative of the nation’s origins through the mainstream investigation in the field of art history and interpretations of ancient artifacts.

Part II explores how the alternative narrative of the subaltern and the marginalized are reflected in various aspects of Thailand’s political and business culture from the era of modernization in the mid to late 19th century all the way up to the complex political conflicts of the present day. The essays in this part are also quite diverse in area and scope—from grand themes of republicanism in Patrick Jory’s “Republicanism in Thai History” and Kasian Tejapira’s “Governance in Thailand” to the more specific cases of populism in local politics in Yoshinori Nishizaki’s “Big is Good: The Banharn-Jaemsai Observatory Tower in Suphanburi,” and James Ockey’s analytic study of madness in “Madness, Authoritarianism, and Political Participation: The Curious Case of Cham Jamratnet.” These four essays argue that there are valid and inspiring new ways of perceiving and understanding political culture in Thailand outside of the mainstream royalist nationalistic framework that appears to have dominated the field from Prince Damrong to Luang Wichit Watakarn, and even up to the present military government. A more creative and comprehensive view of Thai political culture needs to be discovered from the vantage point of local agents, lower ranking political players, and regional politics.

Villa Vilaithong’s “Marketing Business Knowledge and Consumer Culture before the Boom: The Case of *Khoo Khaeng* Magazine,” which is probably the most brilliant piece in this entire collection, also stands out among the work of other contributors in Part II in that she focuses on an alternative culture that is not necessarily marginalized nor subaltern, and yet might be the most potent antidote to the dominant royalist nationalist mainstream narrative. Villa’s investigation of the consumer culture through the fantastic success of *Khoo Khaeng* magazine provides a stunning description of the rise of a wider and more diverse business sector that was becoming a force to reckon with. Parliamentary democracy in Thailand might have been hampered by coup after coup throughout the Cold War era, but the rise of the business sector and the increasing influence of foreign investment and the global economy has made the monopoly of political power in Thailand’s domestic scene less viable.

In summary, *A Sarong for Clio* has brought about quite an impressive collection of essays on Thai intellectual and cultural history. It is definitely not to be missed by all who claim Thai studies—Thai history, in particular—as their field. There is, however,

one major irony that needs to be addressed concerning the form and presentation of this volume, if one is to truly honor the legacy of Craig Reynolds in this review. There is a problem with naming the collection *A Sarong for Clio* and then having a picture of a young Craig Reynolds (circa 1964) sitting topless in what looks very much like a sarong on the first page of the introduction. This leads one to conclude that Craig Reynolds is being elevated to the supernatural plain of existence of *Clio*, the muse of history. This is not a framework that encourages any sort of critical discussion about anything involving Craig Reynolds' works and, as the editor, Maurizio Peleggi himself asserts, also in the first page of his introduction, such a framework is "not befitting academic writing."

It is ironic that Craig Reynolds spent much of his career studying and promoting alternative historical narratives of the subaltern and marginalized, and yet the volume that he supposedly inspired purports to deify him—make him into a muse that is not to be questioned or criticized. While many of the pieces featured in *A Sarong for Clio* mention the stifling socio-political and academic environment that has arisen in the context of the hegemonic dominance of "royalist nationalism" that operate through draconian *lèse majesté* laws, none of the pieces debate, criticize or even question Reynolds' legacy, ideas, research, methodology or political standpoint. From the perspective of this collection, Craig Reynolds is the mainstream, and so much so that, from a reviewer's perspective, it appears doubtful whether or not there really exists any room to review this collection in any way that is less than positive.

Another major drawback of this collection that needs to be addressed is that, not unlike the mainstream royalist nationalist history works of the conservative elite so criticized throughout this volume, many of the pieces that make up *A Sarong for Clio* appear to be very inward looking. Debates and discussions in the more current pieces, such as Jory's "Republicanism in Thai History," and Kasian's "Governance in Thailand," appear to be limited to the author and the Thai right wing conservatives. The collection as a whole appears to have failed to connect and relate to the broader context of the postcolonial/post-Cold War globalized world. Historians who work on any other area outside of Thailand, even fellow Orientals, would have to struggle pretty hard to discover the relevance of all these very unique cases of very unique Thailand to their respective fields of studies. This, plus the hyper-exoticized title and cover of the book could result in the grave danger of misunderstanding the purpose of the project and altogether misunderstanding Craig Reynolds' legacy.

At this point I would beg readers, most of whom are probably very familiar with Craig Reynolds' works and have enormous respect for him as an academic and historian, to please take a step back and pretend to be an outsider to the field of Thai Studies—especially Thai history—and look again at the title and the cover of this book currently under discussion. Which part of *A Sarong for Clio: Essays on the Intellectual and Cultural History of Thailand – Inspired by Craig J. Reynolds*, with the Southeast Asian floral sarong pattern in the background, does not suggest that this is yet another institutional publication mythologizing a great white male historian of an exotic Oriental land?

I personally have the utmost respect for Craig Reynolds as an academic, a teacher, an intellectual and definitely one of the most brilliant historians of our time and I write

this review with the most profound regards to what is about to become his legacy. The work of the great historian should not only provide inspiration, it should be discussed, debated, criticized, challenged and pushed to the limit so as to continue to be relevant and meaningful through the unforgiving test of time. Craig Reynolds deserves better than to be made into a muse. We all need to honor him by engaging his work more rigorously.

Wasana Wongsurawat

