

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS.

RAYMOND PLION—*Fêtes et Cérémonies Siamoise* 125 pages with 50 illustrations,—Firmin-Didot et Cie—Paris, (1934).

Monsieur Plion, the French Consul in Bangkok, has already spent a number of years in Siam and travelled extensively in the country, whereby he has had the opportunity to witness many of the most important of those colourful and spectacular ceremonies which alas! no longer form an integral part of the spiritual life of the Siamese nation. M. Plion has studied the Siamese feasts and ceremonies with intelligent interest, and, though the outcome of his efforts does not represent what science strictly could expect, it satisfies the demand for a more popular presentation of these interesting and ancient rites and ceremonies, handed down from generation to generation from a hoary past, than the elaborate descriptions given in Dr. Quaritch Wales' more learned work on Siamese State Ceremonies.

M. Plion's book has had a good reception in his home land, so good in fact that the Académie Française has awarded him a share of the celebrated "Prix Montyon" as an acknowledgement of his work.

In his preface the author voices his fear that the new régime will result in the disappearance of the national dress and the old traditional ceremonies. His fears have now been amply justified. The *phanung*, that beautiful and practical piece of dress, has already almost disappeared from our streets and public gatherings. A pity, indeed, as it represented something really original and very befitting. As a nether garment, especially for men, its equal in convenience and charm cannot be found, but we fear it has "gone west" for ever. Several of the old popular and spectacular ceremonies such as those of *Raek Nā* or the Ploughing Festival, and *Tri Jampharway* or the Swinging Festival, are no longer celebrated, and more are no doubt to disappear.

The cutting of the top knot called *Kon Chuk* is now but rarely seen, as also the pretty water festival of *Loi Krathong*. Both of these rites were, however, already dying out under the *ancien régime*.

It has been argued that such mediaeval customs had better disappear in our time which is dominated by science, the motor car and the cheap tripper.<sup>(1)</sup>

We are not sure that such an argument holds good for any country or people, European or Oriental. Anything which can assist in staying the ever oncoming spirit of materialism should be welcomed. In this country, with its still somewhat primitive (and healthy) peasant population, the disappearance of these links with a glorious past is only to be deplored.

The celebration of such rites may still have a certain functionalistic value as Dr. Wales says in the above mentioned work, and, to quote the author of the present book, can certainly very well go together with the most modern forms of progress.

M. Plion writes well, entertainingly and vividly, and we have only a few comments to make.

It is noteworthy that whereas almost every other book dealing with Siam attributes more or less god-like qualities to the White Elephant in describing the attitude of the Siamese towards it, the author of this little book has been singularly accurate in his understanding of the regard paid to the White Elephant in this country. It might in fact be likened to a kind of a rare article in the regalia of the Siamese king; and therefore it would be a matter of esteem and appreciation rather than worship.

With regard to the origin of the Swinging Festival, it is now generally recognized that this is to be sought in ancient Egypt, and that, in its primitive form, it was a solar ceremony and that the one as performed in Siam really consists of several ceremonies superimposed one on the other.<sup>(2)</sup>

On page 20, the *Boys-scouts siamois* should not be explained as *Tigres sauvages* for they are called *Luk Suq*, or *Tiger cubs*.

On page 51, *plumes blanches* should of course have been *plumes noires*

(1) See R. A. S. M. in his review of Mrs. M. Macleod's *British Calendar Customs: Scotland* Vol. I, in *Man* for July 1937 pp. 116-117.

(2) See Dr. Quaritch Wales—*Siamese State Ceremonies*, pp. 243-45.

On page 83, fourth line from the bottom, the author talks of Mong Don, a misprint from Nong Don, of course.

On page 92, it is open to question as to which Siamese word the author refers to. If it is the word *yen*, in *Mongyen*, then to translate it by *fraiche* would be wrong. *Yen* here does not primarily refer to temperature, but to the post meridian part of the day, just as one says 6 *p. m.* in contrast with 6 *a. m.*

On page 109, in the last line of the foot note, M. Plion speaks of the Garuda as the mount of Shiva. It should of course be Vishnu. The god Shiva's *vāhana* or mount is the bull Nandin.

The fifty illustrations enlivening the pages of the volume are all quite well reproduced and this little but excellent book is herewith recommended to all future readers.

I am indebted to His Highness Prince Dhani Nivat for the passage on the White Elephant as well as for the correctional notes referring to certain statements of the author on pp. 20, 51 and 92 of the book under review. For this kind co-operation on the part of His Highness I hereby beg to render my sincere thanks.

ERIK SEIDENFADEN.

Bangkok, 15th August, 1937.

WALES, H. G. Q. : *Towards Angkor*, 8 vo. 249 pp. Harrap, London, 1937.

Although much has been written about India's cultural influence over Indochina, little in the way of a complete treatment of the subject as a whole is available. This is notably so with regard to works written in the English language, especially now that a great part of Dr. Chatterji's *Indian Influence in Cambodia* has been rendered out of date by recent researches. It is on this account therefore that one welcomes Dr. Wales' latest contribution to the study of what he calls "Greater India"—a terminology by the way that will not find general acceptance in view of the fact that this south-eastern corner of Asia has been no less influenced by the culture of the Chinese.

Dr. Wales' book takes us in a graphic manner along with successive waves of Indian colonists, taking what he has termed the "Trans-peninsular Route" by landing at Takuapa, proceeding to Chaiya and thence to Java, Champa and Cambodia, besides two other routes leading to Burma and to somewhere near the modern state of Kedah.

We are able to visualize in a realistic manner the establishment of an Indian state now known by its Chinese name of Funan, which included, according to Dr. Wales, Sri Thep, or Sri Deva, an ancient ruined town which the author believes to have been primarily Indian. We are conducted along the path of Thai migrations, leading up to their contact with more civilised peoples in what is now western and central Siam. His description of the city of the Prince of Uthong off the district of Songpinong in Supan is perhaps the only one available in a foreign language. We are then led up to the romance of the Sailendra or the "King of the Mountain"—the greatest of the Indian Argonauts—which is really (in the reviewer's opinion) the climax of this work. The description of the migrations culminated of course in the crowning triumph of Angkor.

In a critical consideration of *Towards Angkor*, it seems that two distinct points of view should be clearly kept in mind: that of the specialist and that of the amateur. The present reviewer, not being a specialist, will not attempt to tread on sacred ground when so much has been said and argued on the main point on which Dr. Wales differs from formerly accepted theories—the identification of Chaiya as capital of the Sailendra Empire. The question of the age of Sri Thep is dimmed by comparison. It still remains nevertheless for the mover to disprove the contention of the opposition.

From the point of view, however, of the amateur, a few additional remarks about this book may not be out of place. The book, as has been said above, is graphically presented. One cannot but admire the lucid statement of a subject hitherto treated almost exclusively from the scholar's angle. No real attempt seems to have been made formerly to present it for popular consumption in English. It is true that René Grousset's classic work (*Histoire de l'Extrême Orient*) is an authoritative monument, but it is not accessible to those who cannot read French. In this book under review, one detects the master-hand of an experienced teacher whose business it is—or rather was—to enable his audience to grasp the subject. One is therefore led to recollect the author's position as a master of the Royal Pages College, which in fact enabled him to obtain first hand knowledge of most of the Court functions in the reign of the late King Rama VI.

By way of detail, the attention of the author might be called to a few passages which seem to require modification. On page 62 *et seq.* the name of Phra Sudara should be Phra Sudhana

(or phonetically Sū-tōn). On the map on page 111, Bāsak looks much too far to the south. On page 122, one would like to bear in mind that Dvāravatī as the name of a state was *only provisionally adopted* by M. Cœdès (*Recueil des Inscr. du Siam*, 1ère partie, p. 1, note), in the absence of a substantially proved name. On page 125, in connection with the Buddhist *credo* one wonders whether the author is referring to the stanza *Ye dhammā hetupabbhavā. . .*, which is not a profession of faith but rather a statement of the essence of Buddhism. What really corresponds to the *credo* is the *Namo tassa*, one of the best known formulæ in the Buddhist Scriptures. On page 133, the twin name of Dvāravatī Sri Ayudhyā is a problem about which a note has been written for the *JSS*, and will probably be published shortly. On page 139, one wonders why clouds should bank up in the south west, rather than in the north east, if they mark the approaching end of the rainy season.

To sum up then, it is a clear and extremely well written résumé of all the latest archeological data on the subject, not to mention the author's own theories which, however, are not within the scope of such criticism as has been the aim of this short review.

D.

Bangkok, 16 December, 1937.

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## PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST IN OTHER JOURNALS.

*Journal asiatique.*

Tom CCXXIX, Oct.—Dec. 1936.

Lalou, M.: *L'histoire de Rāma en tibétain*, pp. 560–562.

A description of two Tibetan manuscripts in the Bibliothèque nationale of Paris, both originating from *Tsien fo tong*, on the subject of the adventures of Rāma. Comparison is drawn to the four manuscripts from Touen-houang in Chinese Turkestan, which have been studied and analysed by Professor F. W. Thomas in *Indian Studies in honour of Charles R. Lanman*, 1929, and especially to manuscripts marked A and B in the above collection. As with the MSS from Chinese Turkestan, the two Tibetan manuscripts are also incomplete, and each is of different redaction from the other, as well as from the MSS A and B. The title of one is incomplete; while that of the other is not mentioned. The story is told along accepted lines of the classical Ramayana, with of course Tibetanised forms of naming the principal characters, Rāma becoming Ra-ma-na, Sitā Zi-ta and so on.

*Bulletin of the London School of Oriental Studies.*

Vol. IX, Part I.

Stewart, J. A.: *The Song the Three Mons*, pp. 33–39.

"This poem," says the author, "embodies two traditions found among the Mon or Talaing people of Burma, (1) that they came from the east coast of India in very early times, and (2) that they consist of three tribes, occupying three several provinces of the Mon country of Burma-Bassein, Pegu and Martaban." The three tribes are Mon Tang peopling Pegu, Mon Te peopling Moulmein or Martaban, and Mon Nya peopling "the old town" which is thought to be Bassein. Mr. Halliday, the authority of the Mon language, relying upon the Mon work on the life of the Buddha.

*The Pathamabodhi*, written in 1798, was inclined to assign the Mon Nya to Pegu, with which the author agrees and incidentally explained the derivation of Rāmañña as being from the phrase *Mon rah Mon Nya*, meaning "The country of the Mon Nya." The author produces the text and translation and gives variants of reading for each of the three stanzas. The locality in India whence the Mons came over the sea to this side of the Bay of Bengal is clearly indicated as Telingana and the Coromandel (Koromante) coast, and, as they were known to be the authority from whom old Siamese civil administration was derived, these three stanzas of "Song" are of considerable interest in this country. The poem is dated by the author as not later than the beginning of the nineteenth century.

*Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.*

Vol. 13, 1937.

Law, B. C.: *Studies in the Apudāna*, pp. 23-35.

A scholarly analysis of a section of the Tipitaka which is comparatively unknown, dealing at length with names of animals, plants, occupations and geographical data.

*Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.*

Vol. XV, Part 2.

Loch, Ch. W.: *The Rhinoceros Sondaicus*, pp. 130-149.

This animal is still found in Siam among many other countries tabulated, the exact localities being Eastern Siam and on the Siam-Burma frontier.

van Stein Callenfels, P. V.: *The Founder of Malacca.*

Contains data concerning Parameshwara the first Malaccan king in supplement to Sir Richard Winstedt's *History of Malaya* in Vol. XIII, part 1 of that journal.

*Journal of the Greater India Society.*

Vol. IV, no. 2 1937.

Coedès, G.: *A new Inscription from Fu-nan*, pp. 117-121.

The inscription records the foundation of a hermitage, a tank, and a dwelling-house by a king of Funan. Although it is undated, the palaeography permits us to place it at the end of the 5th century A. D.

*Indian Art and Letters.*

Vol. IX, No. 2. 1937.

Mus, P.: *Angkor in the Time of Jayavarman VII*, pp. 65-75.

That the Khmer monarch was identified with the deity, at least in certain respects, is generally accepted. The author of this article has gone a little further to interpret Khmer architecture in the light of this cult. According to his interpretation, the causeway over the city moat into the city with its Naga balustrade was a representation of the pathway of the rainbow leading up to the heavens where was situated Meru the abode of the Great God (Siva), the interpretation being supported by the fact that two serpents in ancient mythology were connected with the rainbow. From the fact that the Bayon was a pantheon of Sivaite, Vishnuite and Mahayanist deities he developed the idea of identifying the faces on its towers as portraits of Jayavarman VII. its builder.

Whether or not one agrees with the above theories, the serpents on either side of the causeways have been understood to be representations of the serpent Vasuki taking its part in the churning of the ocean of milk. Mount Meru which was the pivot of the churning process is doubtless represented by the Bayon in the centre of the city. The same cult—that of the Devaraj—is obviously at the back of either interpretation.

Stutterheim, W. F.: *Note on a newly found fragment of a four-armed figure from Kota Kapur*, pp. 105-109.

The site of this find on the island of Banka had already yielded in 1892 a stone bearing an inscription in old Malay and Pallava characters dating from 686 A. D. with a mention of a military expedition of Srivijaya against Java. The present find is that of a figure of a male deity wearing a conical headdress of Further Indian images. (The headdress reminds us of figures at Sri Deva which Dr. Wales attributed to Indian art). The figure is further described as having non-Indian features such as a broad nose and thick lips etc. Dr Stutterheim concludes that it was a product of Srivijaya art.

*Bulletin of the Colonial Institute of Amsterdam.*

Vol. I, No. 1. 1937.

Those who take an interest in the comparative study of problems of South-Eastern Asia, especially in its cultural aspect, cannot do so

effectively unless armed with at least three linguistic media of information, namely: French, English and Dutch. One note therefore with considerable satisfaction from the foreword of this new Journal that it has been published with the object of creating an organ by means of which a double aim may be realised: "to lay before the world outside our own country and its dependencies, in the English language, subjects of current importance in the Netherlands Indies, and furthermore to inform the Dutch reading public of events and conditions in Pacific countries which deserve their attention. This first number deals with administrative matters such as the colonial Budget, Malaria, statistics, air transport, and a note on the Japanese mandate islands of the Northern Pacific. The last item is of international interest, quite brief (pp. 69-74), and has been written by J. S. van Vollenhoven, who concludes that: (1) there could be no legal objection to Japan's remaining mandatory for the islands after her withdrawal from the League of Nations; and that (2) with regard to her administration of them she must continue to submit to its supervision, failing which the mandate should be withdrawn.

*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.*  
1937, Part 2.

Rhys Davids, C. A. E.: *The Self: an overlooked Buddhist simile*, pp. 259-264.

In Hinayāna Buddhism, points out Mrs. Rhys Davids, the conclusion has been drawn that since neither body nor mind is Self (attā), therefore there is no Self. This conclusion, she finds, to be deplorably wrong, and if only it had not been so, "what a history of error might have been averted". This view is based upon her interpretation of the simile in the *Lesser Saccaka Sutta* of the Majjhima Nikāya. Such a point of view, of course, brings up an entirely new aspect of one of the most important doctrines as accepted by Hinayāna Buddhism.

Law, B. C.: *Formulation of Pratityasamutpāda*, pp. 287-292.

A critical examination of the formulation of the idea known among Hinayāna Buddhists as *Patīccasamuppāda*.

*Bulletin des "Amis du Laos"*.

1er Année, No. 1. 1937.

The debut of this new periodical is to be welcomed as an admirable step in the right direction. Every article of this number would merit

mention in this notice, many being from the pens of several *chefs du service* responsible for those lines of activity therein dealt with. The volume is prefaced by the Resident Superior of Laos, and the aims and project of the Society of the *Friends of Laos*, or *Mittasamākom Prades Lao* as it is called in the vernacular, are set forth by the Director of Public Instruction who is also president of the Society. Other articles which deserve special mention are those of MM. Marchal and Parmentier on Lao Art, one by M. - D. Faure entitled *trois fêtes laotiennes à Vientiane*, and a monograph by A. Boutin, the Resident, on the province of Houa-Phan. Very interesting maps accompany an article by the Director of Public Works on the means of penetration of the Laos, in which a main road is scheduled to connect that part of the French Colonial Empire with the two main outlets of Hanoi and Saigon. The field of Music and archeology are dealt with by Tiao Souvanna-Phouma. The number is copiously illustrated, and may be said to be distinctive in its details of Lao decorative work.

*Silpakorn.*

1st year, Nos. 1 & 2.

Another magazine making its debut during the current year is the *Silpakorn* published by the Fine Arts Department of the Siamese Government. It is also a step in the right direction. Its object is stated to be the "propagation and support of the national literature, archeology, arts and culture". The publication is of course in Siamese. Its tone is not limited to the academic consideration of those subjects, but largely educational also (e. g. an article on the elements of Music in the first number), and possibly something else too. It contains, besides, a considerable number of administrative records and regulations in connection with the activities of the Department of Fine Arts. A feature that should prove of great utility is the catalogue of works in the National Library. The catalogue is divided into two sections, Siamese and foreign. The first section starts with the class of literature known as the *Phra Rājani-phondh*, i. e. the King's writings. The two instalments so far published have covered those of the first four kings of the present dynasty. Had the editor been able to see his way to include a descriptive catalogue of manuscripts of Siamese Literature on the subject at the same time, the value of these catalogues would be doubled. The section dealing with foreign books in the Library is very short in both number

and needs more careful proof-reading. As to individual articles, that of Luang Boribal Buribhand in the first number, which might perhaps be translated as *The Characteristics of Buddhist Iconography as classified by periods*, is a useful resumé along lines already accepted by artists and archeologists. The second number is mostly occupied by material in connection with the new drama of *The King of Dhonburi* by the Director-General of the Department, together with a critical note on the biography of a general of the same period. It seems doubtful however whether such a treatment of the subject could be taken seriously if subjected to the usual standards of historical criticism.

*Dharmacakshu.*

For some time past the King Mongkut Pali Academy of Wat Bovoranives has been reviving the publication of its periodical, well-known to those of a generation ago. The new periodical, while keeping up the former scheme of translations and commentaries of the Sacred texts of Buddhism, is distinguished for its initiative in popularising the Dharma. A translation of Yuan Chwang's Records of the Western World is an interesting feature from the pen of Phya Surindralujai, former Governor of Dhaññaburi.