

Notices of Books.

COMMT. ERIK SEIDENFADEN.—COMPLEMENT A L'INVENTAIRE
 DESCRIPTIF DES MONUMENTS DU CAMBODGE POUR LES QUATRE
 PROVINCES DU SIAM ORIENTAL. (Hanoi, 1922).

Sous ce titre, le Commt. E. Seidenfaden vient de publier dans le Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient (vol. XXII) une importante contribution à l'archéologie du Siam. C'est à dessein que je dis : archéologie du Siam, et non archéologie siamoise, car le mémoire du Commt. Seidenfaden traite exclusivement des monuments khmèrs des provinces d'Ubon, de Roi Et, d'Udon et de Nakhon Rajasima. L'inventaire des ruines khmères de cette région avait déjà été établi par le Commt. Lunet de Lajonquière et publié par les soins de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient en 1907. Cet inventaire avait lui-même été précédé par les travaux archéologiques de M. Aymonier (*Le Cambodge*, vol. II, Paris, 1901), mais il restait encore beaucoup à glaner après ces deux explorateurs.

Pendant le séjour de onze ans qu'il fit dans le Siam Oriental au service de la Gendarmerie siamoise, le Commt. Seidenfaden sut mettre à profit ses longues tournées d'inspection, et son intérêt pour les études historiques et archéologiques lui a permis de reconnaître un certain nombre de monuments qui avaient échappé à ses devanciers. "On verra, dit-il au début de son article, que j'ai reconnu 26 nouveaux sanctuaires, dont un temple taillé dans le roc, un grand chaitya, 4 vieilles cités, 7 inscriptions, et enfin 18 localités où se trouvent des statues, autels et autres objets présentant un intérêt archéologique."

Ce mémoire de 45 pages, illustré de plans et de photographies et accompagné d'une excellente carte, fait honneur à la science de son auteur, et sera d'une grande utilité le jour où le Gouvernement Siamois décidera d'assurer la mise en valeur et la conservation des trésors archéologiques du pays.

Parmi les découvertes du Commt. Seidenfaden, il faut mentionner d'une façon particulière les inscriptions de Pak Mun émanant de Citrasena-Mahendravarman, le frère de Bhavavarman I avec qui

il fonda, au milieu du VI^eme siècle, la première dynastie du Cambodge indépendant du Fou-nan ;—l'inscription de Tham Pet Thong, émanant du même roi ;—la stèle de Ban Bung Kē, de 886 A.D., Indravarman régnant, prouvant que, à cette époque, la puissance du Cambodge s'étendait plus loin vers le nord qu'on ne le croyait généralement ;—le pilier de Phu Khiao Kao, portant une inscription au nom d'un roi Jayasimhavarman qui se rencontre ici pour la première fois.

Il faut savoir gré au Commt. Seidenfaden de nous donner une aussi importante contribution à l'histoire et à l'archéologie du Siam Oriental à l'époque de la domination cambodgienne, et souhaiter qu'il trouve des imitateurs pour les autres provinces du Siam, dont les monuments purement thais sont encore si peu étudiés.

G. Coedès.

FROM GOLDEN GATE TO GOLDEN SUN—A RECORD OF TRAVEL,
SPORT AND OBSERVATION IN SIAM AND MALAYA.

BY HERMANN NORDEN, Fellow of the Royal Geographical and American Geographical Societies. (London H. F. & G. Witherby, 1923).

Despite the prominence of Siam on the title-page, only 85 out of the 290 pages of the book are devoted to this country. It is not a work of importance, but it is quite readable, and the writer saw Bangkok from a somewhat unusual standpoint, one that was neither Siamese nor European. His descriptions of a visit to a house in Rajadamnern Avenue, of a dinner in a big Chinese restaurant, and of an evening at a club in Bush Lane are certainly curious. The same applies to the picnic party with whom he went down river to Prachadee-Klang-Nam, a party among whom the Siamese and the European were again conspicuously absent. On his way up the Peninsula, Mr. Norden halted at Tung Song, and went by elephant for a day into the country. He was the guest of the manager of the wood department of a great company with international connections, a man with 500 men and more than 200 elephants under his management. Life in these lumber camps is described in some detail, but we fail to see the sense of such an evident romance in a record of travel and observation.

W. H. Mundie,

MATAHARI: IMPRESSIONS OF THE SIAMESE-MALAYAN JUNGLE.

By H. O. MORGENTHALER.

(London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd.)

Dr. Morgenthale is a geologist, who came out from Switzerland in 1917 to join the firm of Berli & Co. Ltd., his special task being to explore the peninsula for tin. He says that practically the only tangible souvenir he took home with him from Siam was his sketch-book, and certainly the *motifs* he secured in the temples form admirable and fitting illustrations for so sympathetic a study of a somewhat primitive section of the people of this country, in the Malayan part of the Kingdom. Dr. Morgenthale is about equally interested in all three of the civilisations he studied—the Siamese Buddhist, the Malay Mahommedan, and the Chinese; and he is convinced it is a good thing for Siam that the Chinese have been admitted into the country. The book is a series of studies of the servants and peasants he lived with and his few years in this country rather upset his European philosophy of life. “I have never met so many like-minded with myself as in Siam, where life is unconventional and simple, gay and like a natural song of joy..... Europe asks too much of a man and gives him too little; even denying the right to, or the possibility of, the very cheapest of life’s pleasures. Away in Asia things are different. To begin with, life gives everyone all that is most essential for living: a loin-cloth, a stomach full of rice, a wife and his betel quid. Everybody tacitly accepts these as Fate’s first advance on account. In the East there are no housing, heating or clothing problems, and very seldom hunger. And for these happy people there is no eager race with time.....They are not tortured by any consuming and unattainable desires. This is the explanation of their inexhaustible source of stoic calm and strength.....Asia is a harmonious world.....In the West, it seems to me, all achievement is the result of a grim and sullen despair arising from the impossibility of escaping from frenzied work.... I still have hopes of clearing up a little the terribly humiliating question,—‘Is Europe really right?’”

But, as Dr. Morgenthale recognises, it is not possible to go back to the happy state of primitive man with his un-selfconscious

life, and indeed Bangkok is about as far from that primitive jungle as is Europe itself.

This is emphatically not a book of travel; it looks as if the author intended that no one should follow in his footsteps in these constant journeyings in the jungle. Few places are mentioned by name and these in nearly every case by a bare initial. But the work is an honest attempt, very largely successful, to get at the heart of a primitive people. It is a very human book, and from that fact it is a piece of literature. One may suspect that the work loses a little in translation. It was originally published in German, and has been translated into Dutch as well as English. It is dedicated to Nu Kiang who "waited thirty days for me in vain and on the thirty-first . . . took a Chinaman."

W. H. Mundie.