

REVIEWS

Covarrubias, Miguel: *Island of Bali*.

A recent addition to the Society's library is a copy of 'Island of Bali' by Miguel Covarrubias, a gift from a former honorary librarian, Miss Dorothy Ward.

It is fortunate for posterity that someone of Covarrubias' ability visited Bali in the peaceful '30's before war and invasion came to the little Indies paradise. An artist of note the author is especially suited to record with pen and brush the delightful culture of what was really a living museum of a by-gone era fostered by the paternalism of the Dutch administration. With the apparent extinction of Dutch rule it seems that the Balinese will be forced into a struggle for survival against outside forces that will seriously affect the tempo of island life and its cultural pursuits. Few who know Bali believe the gentler days of the pre-war period will recur. Therefore Covarrubias' book takes on added significance as a history of the past rather than a description of the contemporary scene.

'Island of Bali' with more than four hundred pages of narrative is enhanced by the author's choice selection of photographs and sketches. There is also at the beginning of the book a useful map to refresh the recollection of readers whose geography has become a bit rusty.

The description of the physical characteristics of the island opens the book after which the author logically fills it with people who in turn become communities with work, play and arts filling succeeding chapters.

In describing the people the author passes rather lightly over the influences of the Singasari invasion in 1284 and the comment on the rule of Madjapahit is not commensurate with the lasting effect of his great kingdom on the Balinese. Generally the author is

inclined to deprecate the contribution of Javanese invaders to the cultural aspect of Bali. Had he spent an equal period of study among the Javanese he perhaps would have been a little more generous toward Java.

For some reason, probably because the record was easily available, Covarrubias feels it necessary to describe at length the tragic fighting between the Dutch and the Balinese whereas he leaves untold the equally grim story of the subjugation of the people of Lombok by the Balinese not long before.

To the reader seeking to know the Balinese probably the best chapter in the book is that on The Community. This is an excellent and accurate account of life on the island as it was found prior to the Japanese invasion — a truly communal existence that is bound to disappear in the present social and political strife.

Describing the Balinese family life the author writes of a gentleness and deep affection for children comparable with that of the Siamese. Plural marriages are sanctioned in Bali but again as in Siam the economic burden of more than one family is rapidly making monogamy the rule. Lengthy residence in a Bali home has given Covarrubias a sense of the warmth of family ties not found in most European countries.

The description offered of Balinese art and drama is comprehensive and greatly enhanced by the splendid drawings provided by the author. As in all Indo-Malay areas the Ramayana is a source of the drama and painting. Hanuman is as well known in Bali as in Siam. The author is inclined to deprecate the commercialization of Balinese skills with brush and carving knife for as a master craftsman himself he sees only perfection as a goal to be reached. Commercial production understandably makes for volume rather than quality but were it not for the cash return it is doubtful if many artists could survive today. One amusing aspect of Bali carving mentioned is the numerous pieces depicting scenes from movies, newspapers or comic strips. Subjects include modern highwaymen robbing an automobile, alien soldiery in decidedly un-military poses

as well as a famous Dutch anthropologist at his favorite pastime — consuming huge quantities of beer. The only stone available to Balinese sculptors is so soft that it suffers badly from erosion. Consequently there is always room for new work on almost any wall. The Balinese excel in carving and painting over the other islands of Indonesia but as silver workers they are not the equals of the craftsman of Jogja-karta on Java or perhaps the men of Makassar.

In the author's description of rites and festivals the longtime resident of Siam will recognize many bits and pieces familiar to the rural festivals of this Kingdom. The charts and definitions included in the book should go a long way toward helping the novice to comprehend the fantastic interpretation of religious ideas that have come to the island from all of southern Asia. However, it is obvious that the author is not always certain where Hinduism leaves off and Animism begins. A little better knowledge of Hindu religion would have strengthened the discussion of this phase of the islanders' lives.

When the author comes to his final section, Modern Bali and the Future, he is inclined to make careless statements such as mention of 'galvanized tin', when he obviously means galvanized iron. His somewhat silly explanation that thatched roofs were ordered abolished because the Dutch feared fires from automobiles obscures the fact the thatched roof gave way to tiles and metal in a very fine campaign to eliminate plague.

Perhaps it is just as well Covarrubias wrote his last chapter before the bombing and invasion took place in 1942. When Covarrubias contemplated the future of his delightful island friends he foresaw only the problem of tourism and missionary strife. He did not see revolution and destruction as it faces these gentlefolk today.

E. T.

Chen Duriyang, Phra : *Siamese Music in theory and practice*, 32 pages, 1948.

This is the substance of the lecture given in the home of the Siam Society on August 22nd, 1947, which was graphically illustrated by a full *pipat* orchestra. The national music had been, up to that time, sadly lacking in a scientific exposition for want of a qualified exponent. In interpreting this national art to an international audience Phra Chen was accorded widespread acclamation. In setting down the substance of his lecture in writing now he has enhanced the value of his exposition. The little brochure deserves the title of a pioneer work.

Korwong, K. & Rangtong, J. : *A New Guide to Bangkok*, Hathatip Co., Bangkok, 226 pages, 1948.

The last and perhaps only guide to Bangkok was the one written some years ago by Major Seidenfaden. In shape and arrangement the present volume resembles it. Both are of the same size and bound in green; both have additional notes on Siam in general and they resemble one another in many other respects. The former is now rare and unavailable. On account, as the authors put it in their preface, of more people coming into our city from all parts of the world this new Guide has assumed shape in order to fill the only gap missing in rendering them welcome.

Contrary to Major Seidenfaden's Guide, this new publication contains less descriptive material, such as descriptions of individual monuments. It makes that up, however, with beautiful illustrations. Out of its 226 pages, 125 are taken up entirely with illustrations. The contents are divided into the following main headings: a description of Bangkok city, the Siamese Theatre, Structures of note in Bangkok (containing 102 pages, 61 of which are full-page illustrations), Siamese Architecture, Metal Work and Jewellery, the Diplomatic History of Siam and an Index.

Griswold, A.B.: *Ma Tuan-lin's Nan Chao*, 27 pages, octo., 1949.

Students of the history of the Thai race in southeast Asia are often baffled by its earlier history beyond the last 800 years. The Thai people of course had their habitat in the hinterland of China, whence they gradually migrated south. Ma Tuan-lin, living in the XIII century, supplied considerable authentic information about them and their home, which was known as the Kingdom of the South, 'Nan-Chao'. This information was translated into French by the Marquis d'Hervey de Saint Denys, entitled *Ethnographie des peuples étrangers à la Chine* (Th. Müller. Genève, 1877-82). It is from this translation that Mr. Griswold has produced his English version which is now published for private circulation. It is of course the first English version and as such is highly useful for those who cannot read French.

We learn from the Chinese annalist that the head of the state of Nan-Chao in those days was known by the term of *chao*, exactly identical with our word for a prince. A closer study of this material reveals many more interesting philological and ethnographical identifications. The translation of Mr. Griswold is admitted to be a free one.

D.

Bangkok, 14th December 1949.

The Siam Philatelic Society, Bangkok: *Postage Stamps, Stationary and Postmarks of Siam, 1939-1948*.

This booklet is the result of many months of hard work by the Compiling Committee. It contains a complete record of all issues of stamps etc., between 1939 and 1948, excellently printed and illustrated by many plates. For all collectors of stamps the book will be indispensable. The compilers, especially Mr. G. Kinsky, are to be congratulated on the result of their work.

U.G.

Sten Konow & Paul Tuxen : "*The Religions of India*" 216 pages
G.E.C. Gad, publisher, Copenhagen, 1949.

Many books have been written about the religions of India. The above book by the two well-known and eminent scholars of Indology is addressed to laymen as well as students and gives a lucid account of the intricate characteristics of India's religions which had baffled many a general reader. Though it is not meant to be an exhaustive account of all the religions of India in all their aspects and developments, the book gives in an easy and fascinating style most of their prominent features which one wishes to know.

The book is divided into three chapters only. Chapter I, "Introduction and Prehistory", by Sten Konow gives a short survey of the pre-Aryan period in India where flourished a highly developed civilization as revealed in the ruins of Mohenjo Daru in the Indus Valley. The account as given in this introductory chapter is precise and clear for one who desires to know something, in outline, of this prehistoric Indus Civilization which has raised new problems for the student of Indian culture and Indian religion.

Chapter II, "Brahminism, Jainism and Buddhism", forms the major part of the book and is divided equally among the above three religions. The author, in his opening words, remarks that "Three grandiose cultural monuments mark as many great periods in the religious life of India: the ruins of the Indus Civilization, the hymns collected in the Rigveda, and the huge heroic epic Mahabharata". The author discusses in a scholarly manner and analyzes at some length the most important ideas as revealed in the Vedas, the sacred books of Brahminism. The survey is as complete and illuminating as one can wish to show the evolution of Brahminism together with its off-shoots Jainism and Buddhism. There is one part (p. 38) which will interest students particularly as to the meaning of the now defunct state ceremony of Drinking Water of Allegiance in Thailand. The author says "On the other hand it is of interest to find a certain connection between Varuna (the chief

Vedic God) and water. It has already been mentioned that his dreaded punishment is dropsy, and even at the present day the Indians touch water when swearing and undertaking obligations, e.g. when an official yearly swears fidelity to his ruler".

Chapter III, "Hinduism" by Sten Konow, deals with the later developments of Brahminism into Hinduism of the present day. Hinduism with its many sects and cults, a conglomeration of religious beliefs, customs and ceremonies, is very difficult for a layman to understand. The author has succeeded here in outlining the main movements of Indian thoughts and conceptions embodied for the general reader.

There is also at the end of the volume an ample and up-to-date bibliography for the use of all students of Indian religions and culture. There are a few misprints and there is no index but the book is clearly printed and handy. To sum up, "The Religions of India" is a very good introduction for ordinary readers who have little or no acquaintance with the subject, but are interested in and desire sympathetically to know India in her cultural aspects. The book is scholarly but is clearly written in non-technical language.

P.A.R.

RECENT SIAMESE PUBLICATIONS

36. Bodhiprasad, N.: *Architecture in Siam*. (สถาปัตยกรรมในประเทศไทย) 136 pages octo. with 5 maps & 181 illustrations, Bangkok, B.E. 2487 (1944).

As pointed out in its preface, this book has been compiled along the line of an history of Siamese Architecture. It goes without saying that such a work must be profusely illustrated. The ground it covers is large. In the first chapter the author establishes the dictum that Siamese architecture has its origin in religion or devotion. He therefore sketches the progress of Buddhism in India and in neighbouring countries, culminating in its arrival and establishment in our own land. In the second he analyses the various periods of architecture in this country, basing his analysis on the extant remains. The periods are (a) *pre-Thai*, namely: Dvaravati, Srivijaya and Lopburi; and (b) *Siamese*, namely; Chiengsaen, Sukhothai, Ayudhya, Bangkok and the contemporary period. The illustrations and maps are well produced.

37. *The Gazetteer of Siam* (เรื่องจังหวัดต่างๆ ในประเทศไทย) 269 pages, 1948.

This is a pioneer publication and to be valued as such. It is admittedly incomplete, for, as the preface of the Fine Arts Department says, it deals "with provinces as such and does not go into their subdivisions of districts, communes or villages." By this is meant that the work is made up of an alphabetical catalogue of the names of provinces, under headings of which are given the names also of their individual districts. Some provinces are dealt with fairly exhaustively in all aspects—statistical, historical, anthropological, etc., as for instance the province of Nakon Sri Dharmaraj (pp. 68-77). Others receive remarkably scarce attention inspite of

their size and importance, such for instance as the province of Ubol, one of the most populated provinces of the Kingdom to which is allotted only 2 pages (pp. 268-9).

The publication of this Gazetteer has been sponsored by the family of the late Phra Sobhon Aksorakich, whose biography and photograph are as usual included. The deceased was a self-made man who became in time one of the most popular social figures in the early decades of this century on account of his geniality and philanthropy. His heir is Mr P. Smitasiri, recently Lord Mayor of Bangkok.

38. *Popular Music* (ดนตรีสำหรับประชาชน) 2491-2 (1948-9).

The volume is in fact a complete set of the programmes of music given at the musical kiosk in front of the Theatre of the Fine Arts Department between November 1948 and May 1949. These concerts became very popular especially 'those at which western music was given'. The preference is understandable, for while western music is designed for independent performance Siamese music consists originally of tunes for the accompaniment to the dance, without which the music alone cannot appeal to an audience in the same way as western music. The original *pipal* set consisted of percussion and wind instruments only; but was later adapted for orchestral work with a view to concert performances by the addition of string instruments, maintaining nevertheless the old tradition of tunes.

Had the volume been just a collection of programmes it would have been unnecessary to make this review. The programmes however contain a number of individual histories of national tunes, never before collected and rendered accessible to the public. These will form the nucleus with which some future history of Siamese music might be compiled.

As for other, less important details, one is tempted to add that, considering the admitted aim of the authorities to educate

their public musically, the notes on western musical pieces might be made fuller by additions of analytic descriptions of the work from which the concert pieces have been taken. The presence everywhere in the volume of advertisements—however justified in the daily programmes—is detracting to the value of a volume like this.

39. Komarakul Montri, Phya: *Ballads of the Phra Ruang of Swankalok*, (เสนาเรื่องพระร่วงสวรรคโลก) 54 pages, 1949.

I am taking the liberty of calling the *sepa* a ballad because no other English word fits in better and closer to the original Thai meaning. The ballad is founded on a legend, one of those collected in the early Bangkok era in a work known as the *Pongsawadarnia*, or *Annals of the North*. Modern research has of course gone further and has been able to sift history from this mass of legends. The work under review does not attempt to give any consideration to scientific research but merely relates the old story as it used to be told. This fact detracts nothing from the value of the romantic ballad of Phya Komarakul Montri, who is out to write poetry and not history.

As a *sepa*, this ballad belongs to the modern class in that it provides songs freely interspersed among the recitations, for the old *sepa* consisted entirely of recitations. It includes also an address in *vai*, rhyming prose, dedicated to the triple gems of Buddhism and to the author's parents and preceptors. The absence of the customary invocation to the monarch is conspicuous.

40. Prince Damrong's Miscellanies, part 3, (ประชุมพระนิพนธ์เบ็ดเตล็ดภาค ๓) published in commemoration of the cremation of Lady Burus, 1949.

The contents of this are (a) Lectures on Thai domestic customs, treating of various stages of a man's life, birth, schooling, livelihood, marriage and death; (b) The history of the Thai lantern dance, which owes its origin to the Vietnmites who immigrated to

this country with Gialong and took refuge under Rama I. These dances are believed to have been modelled in their turn upon Chinese gymnastic exercises; and (c) a broadcast made prior to the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the founding of the new capital of Bangkok on the subject of the heritage handed down by Rama I. Here Prince Damrong was in his element as a national historian. His analytical mind has summed up the heritage of the founder of the Chakri Dynasty in five headings, namely: the Capital of Bangkok, the Effigy of the Emerald Buddha, the Freedom of the Siamese Nation, the Purity of the National Buddhist Church and the Code of Laws revised at his instigation.

D.

Bangkok, 14th December 1949

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST IN OTHER JOURNALS

Journal of the Burma Research Society.

Vol. XXXII, part 1. (December 1948).

Editor (U Pe Maung Tin): The Junk in Pali. pp. 77-8.

cf. note in the present number of J.S.S.

Luce, G.H.: A century of progress in Burmese history & archeology pp. 79-94.

Bulletin de la Société des études indochinoises.

Tome XXIV, nos. 3 & 4 1948.

Marchal, H.: Notes sur quelque pagodes de Bangkok pp. 119-124.

The notes cover the monasteries of Janasonggram, Rajabopidh, Phra Jetubon, Sudasna, Arun (called wat Chan) and Benčamabopitra. They are mainly archeological in treatment.

Tome XXIV, no. 3 1949.

Dupont, P.: Recherches archéologiques au Siam. pp. 79-92.

The article deals with archeological work carried on during 1939 and 1940 at the monuments now known as Wat Phru Men and Phra Pat'on, respectively south and east of the town of Nakon Pathom, and is illustrated by plans.

Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Malayan branch.

Vol. XXI, part 2. September 1948.

Taylor, E.N.: Mohamedan Divorce by Khula. pp. 3-40,
Inheritance in Negri Sembilan. pp. 41-130.

Vol. XXII, part 3. June 1949.

Sheppard, M.C.f.: A short history of Trengganu. pp. 1-76.

Hill, A.H.: Wayang Kulit stories from Trengganu. pp. 85-105.

This part is entirely devoted to matters relating to the east-coast state of Trengganu, one of the last to be transferred

from Siamese to British suzerainty. The wayang kulit is of course a shadow-play, a counterpart of our 'nang'. The story generally portrayed is taken from the cycle of the popular Panji romance of the type known in this country as that of DALANG or the INAO YAI, starting with the usual four contemporary (unhistorical however) kingdoms of Kurepan, Daha, Gegelang and Singhasari. The heroine here is the daughter of the King of Daha, by the name of Galoh.

Vol. XXII, part 4. Sept. 1949.

This part consists of papers relating to the find of gold images at Sambas in west Borneo, running to some 110 pages.

Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon branch.

Vol. XXXVIII, parts 3-4.

The number is mainly philological and runs to some 142 pages.

Bulletin de l'Ecole française de l'Extrême-Orient.

Tome XLIII,

Coedès, G.: Etudes cambodgiennes:

xxxvi. Quelques précisions sur la fin du Funan pp. 1-7.

An important article for chronology.

xxxvii. Le site de Janapada d'après une inscription de Pràsàt Khnà. pp. 8-11.

xxxviii. Nouvelles précisions sur les dates d'avènement de quelques rois des dynasties angkoriennes. pp. 12-16.

Dupont, P.: Etudes sur l'Indochine ancienne:

I. La dislocation du Tchen-la et la formation du Cambodge angkorien (viie-ixe siècle). pp. 17-55.

Coedès et Dupont: Les stèles du Sdok Kok Thom, Phnom Sandak et Phra Vihàr. pp. 56-154.

The three inscriptions in the last article, already made known to students in the Bulletin of former days, are of course highly important documents for the study of South-East Asian history.

Dan Vietnam

No. 2, December 1948.

Gaspardone, E.: L'histoire et la philologie indochinoise. pp. 7-16.

A survey of the history and philology of South-Eastern Asia, more especially of the Indochinese Union.

Levy, P.: Origine de la forme des tambours de bronze. pp. 17-26.

The mahoratik is included of course.

Journal Asiatique.

Tome CCXXXVII, fasc. 1, 1949.

Filliozat, J.: L'enigme des 256 nuits d'Asoka. pp. 143-154.

A further continuation of the seventy odd years of discussion of a chronological point on the interpretation of the final part of the Rupnath Edict of Asoka, worded "Vyuthena 256". The epigraphist, Cunningham, started the discussion in 1876 by taking this to mean a date in the Buddhist Era, in which opinion he was supported by scholars like Bühler. The interpretation was then challenged by F.W. Thomas and Sylvain Levi, who took the number to refer to days of study or pilgrimage. Hulsch later joined in the discussion. The present article discusses the opinions of the last three and comes to its own conclusion.

The Far Eastern Quarterly.

Vol. IX, part 1. Nov. 1949.

The Journal is devoted to matters concerning principally Tibet, Japan and China.

Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African
Studies of the University of London.

Vol. XIII, part 1. 1949.

Vogel, J. Ph.: Notes on Ptolemy's Geography. Contd. pp. 146-153.
