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Dhammic Socialism

BHIKKHU BUDDHADASA

Second edition; translated and edited by Donald K. Swearer.

Bangkok: Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development, 1992. 142 pp.

While the exuberance of some of his disciples did not always serve Buddhadasa well, the second printing of *Dhammic Socialism* was a most worthy and timely tribute to one of the most provocative Buddhist philosophers of modern times. Those of his followers responsible for this second edition of *Dhammic Socialism*, in the translation, editing and publication phases, deserve the appreciation and thanks of all concerned with the role of Buddhism in the contemporary world.

In the several chapters, actually sermons, of this book, Buddhadasa issues a clarion call to return to that state of original perfection when man and nature lived in harmony and unity.

Buddhadasa implores his readers to avoid the temptations of craving and attachment and the accumulation of goods beyond one's needs. One should share any surplus with the needy and disadvantaged. Acting in the interests of society, one would forego selfishness and not take advantage of others. Buddhadasa opines that, in the full realization of a harmonious balance and the interdependence and interrelatedness of man and nature, personal benefit and profit will be forsaken. One will then act in the best interests of the community according to Nature's laws and, thus, live according to the true essence of socialism.

If one did a word content analysis of Buddhadasa's sermons, a constant refrain would be heard: balance, unity, interdependence, restraint, self-discipline, morality, generosity, simplicity, moderation.

While Buddhadasa and his disciples would deny that his vision of Dhammic Socialism is either utopian or messianic, such demurrers are difficult to accept fully. Buddhadasa envisions an interdependent, harmonious community with-

out greed and aggrandizement; a society impelled by mercy, compassion and tolerance. It is a community where one does not accumulate beyond one's needs, and the rich are obligated to provide for the needy. While Buddhadasa's critiques of excessive individualism in liberal democracy and capitalism and the authoritarian and divisive nature of materialistic Marxism ring true, his alternative vision of Dhammic Socialism presumes a dramatic social and spiritual revolution, within society and within each individual, the realization of which is difficult to contemplate. However, the problem we have in conceiving of such a change is our own failure, not that of Buddhadasa. As Buddhadasa notes, his prescription is not a paradise of anyone's creation but one grounded in the laws of Nature. We remain in Buddhadasa's meritorious debt for providing us with a paradigm for social and political behavior which will hopefully energize each and everyone of us to reach for the stars—or rather a dhammic socialist heaven on earth.

In translating his spiritual desirata into the realm of politics, Buddhadasa offers us a political system of morality in accordance with the principles of nature. For Buddhadasa, this is not liberal democracy but rather a spiritually imbued socialism. To achieve such a system, freedom ruled by craving and attachment must be controlled. True freedom means freedom from defilements. Buddhadasa's concept of freedom recalls to mind the writings of the Scottish theologian George MacDonald, who, more than a century ago, wrote of "liberty in obedience" and "a slavery which is liberty." For Buddhadasa, individual interests must be sacrificed to the well-being of the community. Buddhadasa has no qualms in favoring dictatorial methods being applied to control and eliminate defilements, attachments, and greed. Only then will one be truly free. Buddhadasa refers to such action as being dictatorial in a dhammic way—consistent with Dhamma.

Buddhadasa has no reticence in extolling the virtues of a benevolent, or rather an enlightened, dictatorial form of government, a dictatorial Dhammic Socialism. Buddhism itself may be so described.

Under such a political system, the ruler follows the Ten Royal Virtues; punishments are undertaken in the spirit of being useful to society and not for personal or selfish reasons; wealth is used for the well-being of the community. Within such a sociopolitical structure, class is based on function and duty. Class differences are accepted and each person undertakes his or her duties and responsibilities willingly and based on morality and the Dhamma.

For Buddhadasa, moral responsibility must take precedence over unrestrained freedom. Individual political rights may well have to be sacrificed so as to guarantee social order and stability. Dictatorial means, albeit inspired by moral rectitude and spiritual values, become a tool to promote the Dhamma and assure peace and social order and the realization of Dhammic Socialism.

Buddhadasa has no qualms in talking of a dictatorial socialist democracy. He presents his argument with much intellectual courage for, in his teachings, he is largely reaching out to the educated urban middle class and intellectuals, the very communities so caught up in the euphoria of full-fledged liberal democracy and largely unrestricted political freedoms.

Buddhadasa leaves us with the thought that, unfortunately, in the world today there is more study about religion than the practice of it. This book under review, with its prescriptions for action, will hopefully redress the balance. However, each reader must be prepared to act. If one small snowflake can cause a branch to break and fall, so perhaps, one reader's attempt to recreate a balance with Nature, to relive the original state of perfection, can jump start the spiritual engine to propel us to a realization of Dhammic Socialism.

WILLIAM J. KLAUSNER

Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok

Thailand and the United States: Development, Security, and Foreign Aid

ROBERT J. MUSCAT

New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. xviii + 367 pp.

The United States program of foreign aid to Thailand, which began in 1950, continued uninterrupted throughout the period of four decades until this book was published in 1990. Over this time the United States provided Thailand with approximately \$1 billion in development aid. Thailand was thus not a major foreign aid recipient, but it also was not a minor one. In terms of aid per capita, the Thai program was in the middle range of United States aid programs for the region. During the same period Thailand achieved one of the strongest sustained economic growth records of any Third World country. In *Thailand and the United States: Development, Security, and Foreign Aid*, Robert Muscat provides an in-depth analysis of the impact the United States foreign aid program had on the economic development of modern Thailand.

The author, in terms of background, was well equipped to address this important albeit complicated issue. Robert Muscat first came to Thailand in 1957 as an economist with the U.S. foreign aid program, where he remained until 1962. After earning a doctorate from Columbia University and working with various development organizations, including the World Bank and the United Nations Development Program, he returned to Thailand in 1985 to work as an economic advisor to the National Economic and Social Development Board of Thailand. The book under review was actually written under funding from the United States Agency for International Development while Muscat was still working for the National Economic and Social Development Board.

Foreign aid from the United States, as for other donor countries, is an instrument of foreign policy. In the Thai case,

its primary objectives must be understood in terms of overall U.S. interests in Southeast Asia in general and in Thailand in particular. After World War II, these primary objectives concerned no less than the integrity of the Thai state in the face of regional threats to its security, together with the internal stability and economic development judged necessary to maintain Thailand's external security. There were significant changes in terms of the sources and nature of the threats to Thai security over the period covered by the book, but the primary objectives of U.S. aid and its other efforts in Thailand remained the same.

In dissecting the various phases of the U.S. aid program to Thailand, Muscat builds on the work of J. Alexander Caldwell, author of the book published in 1970 entitled *American Economic Aid to Thailand*. Adopting Caldwell's division of the initial decades of the U.S. aid program into periods of nearly equal length, Muscat begins with a review of the early years when U.S. aid focused first on agriculture, health, and communications and later on infrastructure development. One of the most notable characteristics of U.S. aid in this early period was the feeling on the U.S. side that the United States government was up to any challenge. Muscat subsequently extends the fourth phase of Caldwell's paradigm, the counterinsurgency period, to 1974. United States aid to Thailand in this time frame, in addition to counterinsurgency, also supported a remarkably successful family planning and population control program.

Muscat then adds a new phase, extending to 1984 the Caldwell typology, in which the focus of United States aid programs shifted from security threats to economic and social development with an emphasis on rural poverty. A variety of different techniques and approaches were applied to this difficult problem; but in the end, infrastructure development probably remained the single most positive contributor. United States aid made a noticeable contribution to the total effort, most especially in the northeast of Thailand. The proportion of the Thai population at poverty income levels declined substantially over the pe-

riod although the absolute number of people living at those income levels remained relatively constant due to the overall increase in the population. After 1984, as Muscat points out, the focus of the U.S. aid program shifted from basic needs and poverty eradication to areas like the promotion of the private sector and the application of science and technology to modernize production processes.

Muscat concludes that U.S. aid to Thailand in the second half of the twentieth century actively and positively supported two major achievements. The first was in the area of human resource development and associated institutional development, a component also identified by many Thais as a major accomplishment. United States programs, often present at the birth of organizations and institutions, provided important assistance in the growth of Thailand's institutionalized capabilities and capacities for modern economic development. This significant and well-documented conclusion had been challenged by scholars in the past. Second, U.S. aid to Thailand made an important contribution to the development of necessary bureaucratic capabilities which evolved positively in support of the institutional development outlined above.

One of the real strengths of this book is the charts and tables scattered throughout the various chapters as well as in an annex. Collectively, they exemplify and clarify many of the observations made and conclusions drawn. The author has also provided a short but select bibliography which includes the most relevant literature on economic growth and development in Southeast Asia in general and Thailand in particular.

In *Thailand and the United States: Development, Security, and Foreign Aid*, Robert Muscat has made an important contribution to our knowledge of a subject which is much discussed but not well understood. In particular, he has greatly increased our understanding of Thai economic development in the post World War II era together with the role United States aid played in that development. At the same time, he has improved our comprehension of the broader develop-

ment process which continues in Thailand and neighboring states. Students of contemporary economic reform in countries like Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, for example, will find much insight and information here that is relevant to what is happening today elsewhere in the region. Simply put, this is the best book available on the subject, and it sets a very high standard for future students of foreign aid and its impact on the development process.

RONALD BRUCE ST. JOHN

Dunlap, Illinois

Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation

THONGCHAI
WINICHAKUL

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994. xvii + 229 pp.

Thongchai Winichakul, in a most innovative and stimulating work, uses an element of nationhood which he terms the geo-body to explore the creation and composition of national identity in Thailand. Expanding on traditional concepts of geography and geopolitics, explored earlier in a University of Sydney Ph.D. dissertation, he argues persuasively that the geo-body is more than simply an element of modern geographical discourse. The author uses the term to signify, not simply space or territory, but the component life of a nation. From this perspective, the geo-body also becomes a source of pride, loyalty and passion which generates other conceptions and practices related to nationhood.

A central thesis of the book is that the nationhood of the area once known as Siam and now known as Thailand was

arbitrarily and artificially created by the science of geography together with its prime technology, mapping. In support of this thesis, the author examines premodern and modern geographical discourse and details the conflict, confrontation, and misunderstanding which have often occurred when these different approaches to geography collided at crucial moments in Thai history.

Premodern concepts of boundary in Southeast Asia centered on the earthly realm, local geography, and sovereignty often within the context of divine kingship or a personification of sacred power. Instead of being determined or sanctioned by a central authority, the limits of a realm, a kingdom, or a country were most often defined vaguely in terms of the allegiance of outlying towns and villages to the center of the kingdom. Since a realm was not a bounded, territorial state in the modern sense, the political sphere could be mapped only by existing power relationships as opposed to territorial integrity. In part for this reason, premodern maps of localities and routes in Siam were extremely rare, reflecting the low level of interest in and need for such activity.

In contrast, when the Western colonial powers talked about boundaries, they had different, more concrete concerns in mind. Imposing European concepts on Asian space, representatives of Britain and France viewed boundaries as fixed lines delimiting national territories. In consequence, European attempts in the second half of the last century to demarcate the boundaries of Southeast Asia frequently generated controversy and strife due to the differing concepts of political space prevailing in Europe and Asia.

Thongchai's discussion of marginal space, which offers a good example of the insight and perspective his study brings to late nineteenth and early twentieth century Thai history, is especially interesting. As he points out, most studies of the France-Siamese conflict at the end of the last century have concentrated on the issue of French imperialism with very little attention being paid to an equally critical factor, the nature of space itself. The reason for this, he suggests, is

that most scholars have assumed that there was no real difference between Siam and France in terms of their knowledge and technology of political space. In fact, the converse was true.

Multiple sovereignty was the common situation in this period for the smaller kingdoms and tiny chiefdoms on the eastern frontier of Siam, including the Lao region along the Mekong River. These tiny tributaries often served as the frontier of several kingdoms simultaneously because the realms of the supreme overlords of Laos, Siam and Vietnam overlapped. The rulers of these various chiefdoms—examples are the Shan, Karen, and Phuthai—considered themselves sovereign and autonomous in their own right even though they were located on the margins of many spheres of power and influence.

With this perspective, the question of whether or not the contest between Siam and France for the upper Mekong and the entire Lao region involved a loss or gain of Siam's territory takes on a whole new context. The Franco-Siamese crisis of 1893 signalled the emergence of the geo-body of Siam, but the ultimate loser was not in fact Siam. The real losers were the tiny chiefdoms scattered throughout the region. Not only were they conquered, but they were also transformed into integral parts of the new political space defined by the modern notion of sovereignty and boundary. The European concept of a modern boundary with absolute and exclusive territorial sovereignty eliminated the possibility of such tiny chiefdoms continuing to exist. Indigenous concepts and knowledge of political space were also losers since modern geography displaced them as the regime of mapping became hegemonic.

The author suggests in his conclusion that he has probably exaggerated the power of the map in an effort to draw attention to its impact and importance. While this is true, some overstatement was likely necessary in order to draw proper attention to the effects of mapping on the birth of the geo-body of Thailand as well as on the geo-body of neighboring states. In this regard, it must be emphasized that the significance of this study goes well beyond the Thai

example. The approach taken is equally applicable to Burma, Cambodia and Laos, as well as to many of the other nations which have appeared on the globe in the last two centuries.

In *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, Thongchai Winichakul makes a significant contribution to the historiography of Thailand. In the Thai case the map did not single-handedly create a nation, but it played a much more important role than historians in or out of Thailand have previously recognized. In the process new geographical discourse displaced the indigenous, pre-modern one. And the new geo-body helped shape the way in which the past of Siam is viewed and known today.

RONALD BRUCE ST. JOHN

Dunlap, Illinois

The Life of the Buddha

PATRICIA M. HERBERT

London: The British Library, 1993;
Petaluma CA: Pomegranate
Art Books, 1993.

This publication marks the first color reproduction of an illustrated Burmese manuscript virtually in its entirety and accompanied by an English translation. The book features two linked manuscripts centered on the life of the Buddha, affording a glimpse into the ways that both Burmese painters and Buddhists interpreted the life of Sakyamuni at the opening of the nineteenth century. In addition, the work itself is not only among the earliest surviving examples of book illustration in Burma but it also was likely produced in a court atelier, two added features enhancing its importance.

The manuscripts originally belonged to Henry Burney, British resident at the Court of Ava during the last seven years of King Bagyidaw's reign (1819–1837). The text is without a colophon but Patricia Herbert has speculated that it was perhaps commissioned by a minister, U Saw. At the time of Bagyidaw's overthrow by King Tharrawaddy, it may have been entrusted to U Saw's friend Burney for safekeeping. On a number of illustrations are small letters ("a", "b", "c", etc.) in ink that correspond to a partial commentary on the text preserved in a handwritten document by Burney himself now in the Royal Commonwealth Society. The association of the manuscripts with Burney is further reinforced by the fact that the manuscripts were acquired for the British Library from one of Burney's descendants. Herbert suggests that the production of the manuscripts should probably belong to the early 1800s, although space did not permit comparisons with other early manuscripts or to fresco painting associated with dated temples.

The illustrated story of the Buddha is divided between two traditional *parabaiks*, or folding books. This format consists of sheets of paper glued together along their long edges and folded concertina fashion. A photograph in the Introduction depicting one of the two *parabaiks*, unfolded to reveal six "pages," demonstrates the way in which the *parabaik* is opened out according to connected scenes. Beneath the illustrations run the accompanying Burmese narrative text, inked in black within a wide horizontal band against a solid yellow background. The two *parabaiks* have a total of seventy-seven illustrated folds from which sixty have been selected for publication. The sizes of the illustrations are only somewhat smaller than the originals, thereby enabling the reader to experience the sense of perusing real *parabaiks*. The Burmese text beneath the illustrations is replaced by Herbert's translation.

Parabaik artists first prepared the paper with a light colored wash after which lines were drawn to distinguish shapes that were then filled with solid colors. Forms, then, were created principally by

line; chiaroscuro was used sparingly but with scant attention to a consistent light source. Also, there was little concern for correct proportions, and depth was largely created by overlapping elements. Six color illustrations from later Burmese manuscripts appearing in the Introduction allow the reader to note the various painting styles developed in the nineteenth century. By the middle of the century, Burmese manuscript painting reflected European pictorial conventions that increased as the century unfolded.

The Introduction opens with a brief, solid discussion of the major Pāli and Sanskrit versions of the founder's life, a review of the key tenets of Buddhism and the faith's major symbols. These sections cover familiar ground and are intended for a general audience. But the remainder of the Introduction contains valuable information designed for the specialist, such as the provenance of the manuscripts, and the religious and artistic traditions from which the manuscripts emerged.

The Burmese text of the manuscripts appears to be based on an influential biography of the Buddha known as *Mala lingara wuthtu*, portions of which were made available to English audiences in Bishop Bigandet's first (1858) edition of the *Life of Godama*. This text was composed by Dutiya Medi Hsayadaw, an important cleric who was patronized by U Sa.

The story opens with the forecasting of Sakyamuni's future at the time of Sumedha and Dīpaṅkara, and in the same sequence is depicted his last rebirth as Vessantara. The text concludes with the Buddha's death, cremation and the contentious division of the relics. The last portion refers to King Asoka's missionary role in spreading *dhamma* from the Buddha's "homeland to many other lands" (p. 79). An especially engaging sequence is the depiction of the special Seven Week period that the Buddha experienced at Bodhgaya, beginning with the Enlightenment and ending with the presentation of hair relics to two traveling merchant-brothers, Tapussa and Bhallika. This last episode is especially important for Burma, since early Mon legends, later adopted by the Burmese, claim that the brothers belonged origi-

nally to Lower Burma. The two merchants kneel before the enthroned Buddha, their ox carts and animals framing the scene on the bottom and to the right.

The illustrations are followed by an Appendix with notes that explore the diverse textual sources for the illustrations and various artistic features. This information is the first step to unraveling the complex sources (Pāli, post-canonical, Sinhalese and indigenous) that contributed to the biographies of the Buddha current in Burma at the turn of the nineteenth century. Indeed, Herbert's commentary, if expanded, would be a tremendously important book in its own right for the specialist.

The manuscripts' likely production in a court atelier and their association with such an important figure as Burney establishes these two *parabaiks* as unique and significant survivals from Burma's history. This handsome edition with scholarly commentary marks therefore a signal moment in the study and appreciation of Burmese manuscripts. The publication's success should encourage other repositories of Burmese manuscripts to produce similar editions.

DONALD M. STADTNER

London

Nietzsche and Asian Thought

GRAHAM PARKES, Ed.

Chicago and London:
The University of Chicago Press,
1991. 253 pp.

On taking up *Nietzsche and Asian Thought* initially I was surprised that there would be interest in comparing Eastern philosophy/religions/thinking

with Friedrich W. Nietzsche who, for many intellectuals, represents an embodiment of Western thinking and the "end" of Western metaphysics and religion—the thinker who announced "God is Dead." There is also the matter of Nietzsche's well-known contempt for all religions and their philosophical concomitants. However, my surprise at this attempt at comparative philosophy abated when I read that Graham Parkes is Associate Professor of Philosophy at the University of Hawaii. Being an old graduate of the University of Hawaii's Department of Philosophy, I am familiar with their interest and expertise in doing comparative philosophy.

It is a pleasure to report that *Nietzsche and Asian Thought* is one of the finest books in the field of comparative philosophy that I have ever read. Before I explain why *Nietzsche and Asian Thought* is an outstanding work there are words of caution for the potential reader. First, this book is not an easy read. If the reader is a stranger to the essential philosophical presuppositions of Eastern and Western thought and their leading thinkers, then the contents of this book will remain a mystery. However, one of the book's glories is that its language is sincere, clear and meant to be understood by people interested enough to have soaked themselves in Eastern and Western thinking so they, to a more or less degree, have been permeated by the ideas presented. There is no element present of what is so common in modern literary criticism and philosophy of incomprehensible academic gibberish trying to masquerade as profundity. The ideas presented in these essays can be clearly understood by the well-read, amateur lover of philosophy.

Mr. Parkes in the book's opening chapter notes that although the recent past "... has seen a powerful resurgence of interest in the thought of Friedrich Nietzsche on a global scale" there is still real ignorance in the West of Nietzsche's impact on Eastern intellectual life. Parkes calls this ignorance a "peculiar parochialism." Thus, the first goal of *Nietzsche and Asian Thought* is to overcome parochialism by increasing the number of voices talking about Nietzsche's thought. Parkes states

... there is a far greater chance that justice will be done to the polyphony of Nietzsche's thought and the diversity of his styles in an anthology, where an actual multiplicity of voices is invited to discourse on his texts. The present collection improves the odds still further by bringing a number of voices from East Asia as well as from Europe into the dialogue. The expectation is that such an anthology may lend new bloom and fresh perspectives to our picture of the thinker Nietzsche.

The second aim of *Nietzsche and Asian Thought* is to examine historical questions concerning Nietzsche's level of understanding of Asian thinking, Asian ideas that may have influenced Nietzsche, and Nietzsche's influence on Asia (China and Japan).

The third purpose of *Nietzsche and Asian Thought* is to explore possibilities of Nietzsche as a global thinker. Here we read in this book fascinating, exciting, and enlightening discussions about possible and credible converging lines of thinking between Nietzsche as the "end" of the Western metaphysical tradition and, e.g., Zen Buddhism and Daoism, also radically unmetaphysical ways of thinking. Parkes believes "... one may therefore be justified in imputing to Nietzsche an aim—that [of] effecting a synthesis between Eastern and Western thinking—which he had no illusions about being able to achieve within his lifetime. He saw himself as sowing the seeds of such a synthesis, in the full realization that the tending and harvesting would come only later and from hands other than his own ..."

I like very much the organization of this book as there is a superb symmetry between its historical and philosophical aspects. In the fourteen essays presented I judge seven to be primarily relating to historical issues and seven to philosophy. The historical essays are interesting, well-written, and informative. After reading this book the reader will have an appreciation of the influence Nietzsche had on Asian thought and vice versa. These excellent historical essays have

intellectual pliancy as they are decisive, based on the information presented, yet allow interesting speculation, and are not unpleasantly dogmatic.

The seven philosophical essays are among the finest examples of comparative philosophy I have ever read. The first reason for their excellence in comparative philosophy is the incredibly skilful way in which the essay writers use the philosophical presuppositions and thinking of Nietzsche, Nagarjuna, Chuang Tzu, Lao Tzu, and Zen Buddhism to hone each other's thinking. After the philosophical "honing" the writer leaves us the intellectual essence of each individual, yet points out the identity and difference between the thinkers discussed. Another glory of this book is there is no hidden academic political purpose or agenda trying to claim that, e.g., Nietzsche was really a Zen monk. The differences between Nietzsche and Eastern culture, history, temperament, and background are honestly examined and respected.

For me, however, the realm of possible "identity" beckons and leads to the second excellence of this book's comparative philosophy—the odyssey into new thinking. A personal example of this kind of odyssey is that, although with my German and Japanese tutors I am translating *Also Sprach Zarathustra* and several "poems" by Dogen, many of the ideas expressed by Joan Stambaugh in her essay "The Other Nietzsche" had never occurred to me. Now, because of her thinking, I am off on an odyssey into regions of thought new to me. Herein lies the great value of this book. This book is a pointer—a non-dogmatic pointer—that says to the lover of philosophy "Look! This might be interesting. This might lead to new thinking." I am grateful for this.

In conclusion, I enthusiastically recommend this book to intellectual voyagers desiring the services and expertise of experienced guides to help point the way to new destinations in the pleasure of thinking.

WILLIAM S. WHORTON

Bangkok

*A Buddhist Vision for
Renewing Society: Collected
Articles by a Concerned
Thai Intellectual*

3rd printing with addenda

SULAK SIVARAKSA

Bangkok: Thai Inter-Religious
Commission for Development, 1994.

Sulak Sivaraksa has become one of the world's leading exemplars of "Engaged Buddhism," a term first coined by the Vietnamese Zen monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, Acharn Sulak's friend and cohort in this worldwide movement. Other well-known Buddhist leaders associated with Engaged Buddhism include the Dalai Lama and the Cambodian peace activist, the Venerable Somdej Phra Maha Ghosananda. It is interesting to note that all three have been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, Acharn Sulak being the only layperson among the three.

Although Thich Nhat Hanh's writings and meditation retreats in Europe and the United States have given his articulation of Engaged Buddhism prominent visibility, Acharn Sulak has been the creating and sustaining force behind the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), the organization which has given Engaged Buddhism an institutional voice. Like so many of the organizations (NGOs) Sulak has founded, sponsored, or led—e.g., the Santi Pracha Dhamma Institute, the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Development (TICD), the Asian Cultural Forum on Development, the Coordinating Group for Religion and Society, the Thai Development Support Group, the Sathirakoses-Nagarapradipa Foundation, the Ashram Wongsanit—INEB seeks to articulate an activist philosophy of Buddhist engagement with the realities of contemporary social, economic, political, cultural, and environmental issues, and at the same time to create *sanghas* in which individual spiritual development contributes to the peace,

harmony and justice of the world. The first of these goals is exemplified, for example, by the thrice-annual publication of INEB and the TICD, *Seeds of Peace*; the second by INEB's annual conference. The 1994 annual week long conference was held at Wat Samaki in Surin whose abbot, Luang Po Nan, is known internationally for his work among the rural poor in his province, e.g., organically grown crops, rice banks, co-op stores, etc.

While Sulak has played a major leadership role in various NGOs and foundations, he is even better known in Thailand as a writer and social critic. Most of his publications are in Thai. His autobiography (*Chuang Haeng Chitwit*), published in 1984, lists over eighty Thai titles by Acharn Sulak and that number must be well over one hundred at the time of the present review. Sulak's English language writings are also substantial, however, and include various collections of articles and speeches, e.g. *When Loyalty Demands Dissent* (1993); *Seeds of Peace* (Parallax Press, 1992); *Siam in Crisis* (2nd ed., 1990); *A Socially Engaged Buddhism* (1988); *Siamese Resurgence* (1985); *Religion and Development* (3rd ed., 1986), and the occasion for this review, *A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society* (1981, 1984, 1994 with addenda).

The reprinting, with new addenda, of *A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society* is welcomed for at least five major reasons: (a) Sulak's critical and constructive agendas articulated in the book are even more timely today than when they first appeared thirteen years ago; (b) the sum total of Sulak's English language publications help to articulate a challenging but as yet incomplete and unsystematic philosophy of Buddhist social engagement; (c) arguably, this volume provides the reader more insight into Sulak's personal vision than any other single collection of his English language writings; (d) the addenda provides new material which amplifies in significant ways Sulak's vision as it appears in his English language writings; and finally (e) *A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society* serves as a valuable companion book to *When Loyalty Demands Dissent: Sulak Sivaraksa and the Charge of Lese Majeste in Siam, 1991-1993*, and should be required reading for

those who know about Sulak primarily through media reportage of his trial. They will see that S. Sivaraksa is much more than a social critic with a knack for being outlandish in both dress and speech who takes potshots at public pretence; rather, he is a deeply committed Thai Buddhist fashioning a vision of a humane, just, sustainable nation and world.

The structure of *A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society* gives us insight into Sulak's self-understanding and several of his deepest concerns. The opening section, "The Role of a Critic in Thai Society," can be read as describing Sulak. In "The Role of Siamese Intellectuals" he says:

Siamese intellectuals have been referred to as a tiny group of people who provide for Siam the most articulate, persuasive, precise and perhaps accurate definition of Siamese society and the Siamese experience. They also have a serious commitment to improve that society ... (p. 3)

... If the intellectual is an outsider—say the editor of a magazine—he cannot hope to achieve anything at all by mere writing ... but, he must also know his counterparts in the different government departments well ... In such cases working from within the system... small achievements may result ... In general, the intellectual does not play a leading role in contemporary Thai society. But if one is not too ambitious and not too impatient, each intellectual can contribute something constructive to his society. (p. 7–8)

In this reviewer's opinion Acharn Sulak has defined himself: an intellectual, writer and Buddhist social activist who has patiently sought to contribute something positive to Thai society from the perspective of his understanding of Siamese society and experience. In other writings Sulak has expressed a deep admiration for Socrates. In the first section of *A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society* I suggest that Sulak is defining himself as a kind of contemporary Thai Buddhist Socrates.

In the essays in the second section of this volume Acharn Sulak discusses "development," one of the most persistent themes in all of his writings. Here and in other writings Sulak is very critical of Western models of economic development. Consistent with contemporary Buddhist social critics and in agreement with the late Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, Sulak espouses a form of Buddhist socialism. As he puts it: "From the Buddhist point of view, development must aim at the reduction of craving, the avoidance of violence, and the development of the spirit rather than of material things. As each individual progresses, he increasingly helps others without waiting for the millennium, or for the ideal socialist society" (p. 71).

Essays in the third and fourth sections of *A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society* move from a focus on social justice—in particular, nonviolent means to achieve social justice—to two talks given by Sulak in 1976 and 1978 on Buddhism, development and society. Although somewhat dated now, they are especially interesting when read with the post-1976 Thai political events in mind and Sulak's subsequent self-imposed exile in England, Canada, and the United States. It is poignant to read Sulak's remarks delivered at an ecumenical gathering in March, 1976, in the knowledge of the brutal military assault on the Thammasat University campus the following October. Sulak opened his remarks by saying that the aim of those attending the meeting was to think, speak, and work together in order to apply religious Dhamma to develop society to make it genuinely and justly peaceful (p. 130). Sulak is still working toward that end.

The addenda include a number of addresses and interviews Sulak has given in Europe and America in the past several years, including his speech at the Parliament of World Religions in 1993, and his keynote address at the seminar on "Reconciliation and the Role of Religion in Situations of Armed Conflict" at the Life and Peace Institute in Upsala, Sweden, in 1989.

In the light of the several essays that Sulak has written about exemplary figures in contemporary Thailand and in

Thai history, e.g. Phya Anuman Rajadon, Pridi Banomyong, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, Phra Debvedi (Dhammapitaka), this reviewer found his remarks about Biography and Buddhism of particular interest. In this essay he articulates two principles which make biography empowering: (a) it makes concrete and accessible truths about the nature of things, in the Buddhist case the truths of impermanence and suffering; and (b) biography (in life and print) provides examples of imitable lifestyles. Acharn Sulak has acknowledged his debt to various mentors of the past and in the present. Sulak himself has been a mentor to many in Thailand and in other countries. *A Buddhist Vision for Renewing Society* contributes to our understanding and appreciation of S. Sivaraksa's role as a mentor of Engaged Buddhism.

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***The Quest for a Just Society:
The Legacy and Challenge of
Buddhadasa Bhikkhu***

SULAK SIVARAKSA, Ed.

Bangkok: Thai Inter-Religious
Commission for Development,
1994. 119 pp.

Bhikkhu Buddhadasa passed away on 8 July 1993, but he remains very much a part of Thai Buddhist intellectual and religious life. His lifelong quest for a just society, the title of the book under review, continues unabated through the interpretative writings and works of his disciples. Striking evidence of his legacy may be found in this present collection of commentaries by both Thai and foreign scholars. We must be grateful to the Thai Inter-Religious Commission for Devel-

opment for both orchestrating symposia commemorating the first anniversary of Bhikkhu Buddhadasa's death and for arranging for the publication, in the book under review, of lectures given at one such seminar at the Buddhist University, Mahachulalongkorn. Acharn Sulak Sivaraksa has carried out his editorial responsibilities in commendable fashion.

In the first essay, Donald K. Swearer, the foremost Western interpreter and translator of Buddhadasa, examines, in his usual trenchant style, the master's legacy in three aspects: individual, communal and ecological. Swearer stresses that, for Buddhadasa, liberation from attachments (the freed mind) is accessible to the dhamma-driven lay person as well as the ascetic monk. Swearer then moves on to discuss Buddhadasa's concept of dhamma-grounded cooperative community that has become well known under the appellation, dhammic socialism. In such a community, restraint should be conceived of as a positive virtue rather than a limitation of human freedom. The problem for Swearer and many other followers of Buddhadasa's teaching is the pragmatic one of translating such a dhammically-infused cooperative society into some semblance of political and social reality in the turbulent context of modern-day society. Swearer ends his article with a very perceptive analysis of Buddhadasa's teaching as it applies to environmental issues focusing on the deeper meanings of "caring" and "nature" as expounded by Buddhadasa.

In the second essay, Louis Gabaude, another Western scholar who has studied and translated Buddhadasa's writings, expounds on Buddhadasa's contributions as a human being, as a Thai and as a Buddhist. Gabaude remarks on the atypical nature of Buddhadasa's clerical persona as he disdained honorific titles, kept at arm's length from the state, and denied any miraculous capabilities. Gabaude then discusses Buddhadasa's doctrinal formulation of a comprehensive global humanism grounded in the "nature of things." Lastly, Gabaude points out that Buddhadasa did not deny his Thai-Chinese heritage but rather created from it a psychological and spiritual syn-

thesis, combining the Chinese talent for efficiency with the Thai-Buddhist quest for peace. Buddhadasa also dedicated much of his intellectual life to creating productive synergies between Buddhism and Christianity, Theravada and Zen, and Eastern and Western intellectual traditions.

A short and pithy essay by Professor Suwanna Satha-Anand is next. The author comments on some of Buddhadasa's philosophical legacies, drawing attention to Buddhadasa's well known intellectual penchant for reinterpreting traditional Buddhist terminology. Thus, in his writings, Buddhadasa delves into the deeper dhammic meanings of such doctrinal concepts as dhamma, karma, merit, nirvana, etc.

The fourth essay is by a western monk, Santikaro Bhikkhu. His focus is on Buddhadasa's dhamma teachings which appear, to the author, to be the most relevant in the rapidly changing world of today, e.g., sila dhamma (morality) which is defined in terms of ultimate reality and ultimate truth and not limited to the abstract dichotomy and duality of good and evil. Santikaro Bhikkhu discusses at some length Buddhadasa's explication of the profound but often misunderstood doctrines of conditionality/interdependence and dependent co-origination.

The last chapter in this intellectually challenging compendium is an English summary of a lecture in Thai by Dr. Prawase Wasi. Dr. Prawase analyzes the nature and causes of the social, economic, cultural, political and environmental crises facing the Thai nation today from the perspective of the philosophical reflections of Buddhadasa. Dr. Prawase then offers solutions, in consonance with Buddhadasa's teaching, which will result in a just dhammic society, a society operating on the rule of dhamma or rightness.

One cannot but praise the authors of the various essays in the book under review for their efforts to call attention to the relevance of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu's teaching to a true understanding of and the means to cope with and overcome the destabilizing conditions, tensions, and conflicts facing not only the Thai

body politic but all humanity. Buddhadasa's teachings, as so articulately expounded in this book, presume a radical social and spiritual revolution within society as well as within each individual. Such social and personal change may be difficult to realize or even conceive. However, such difficulty must be seen as our own failure as disciples—not that of the teacher, Buddhadasa. Buddhadasa's vision is grounded in the reality of the Laws of Nature. Our response must be to realize that vision in our everyday thoughts and actions. The volume under review will be a valuable guide in such a quest.

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*National Identity and
Its Defenders: Thailand,
1939–1989*

CRAIG J. REYNOLDS, Ed.

Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1993.
iv + 397 pp.

This collection of essays, product of a conference entitled "Thailand: Aspects of Identity, 1939–1989," hosted in 1989 by the Centre of Southeast Asian Studies at Monash University, should be of great interest to scholars and others with affection for the region. However, despite the fact that it contains some very good work from contributors and editor alike, its faults are unfortunately more instructive than its genuine contributions to collective knowledge.

Given the title, one would expect some treatment of the Thai military, but the reader is disappointed on this score. Furthermore, it should by now be common knowledge that since the fascist era it has

been difficult for intelligent people to discuss Thailand intelligently, because our vocabulary has been subverted. When, in ordinary conversation, one says "Thai," one is on safe ground, but when a scholar writes "Thai" he treads upon a quicksand of ambiguity. Is the writer using the term conventionally as a sort of shorthand for "the people of Thailand"? Or is he talking about Luang Wichit's pure Thai master-race? In Canberra or Cornell this question may seem irrelevant, but here in Thailand it is of vital importance; Luang Wichit Wathakan has not yet met his pine-stake or silver bullet. Several of the contributions to the book under review blithely use racial terms as though they were disciples of Luang Wichit, though I do not suppose that they are.

Prior to 1939-40, when the name of Siam was changed to Thailand, one could safely do Siamese Studies (i.e., investigate the Indianized culture of Siam) and Thai Studies (i.e., investigate the pre-Indianized or un-Indianized culture of Thai-speaking peoples). The name change brought with it confusion; Siamese Studies were renamed Thai Studies, though their content remained essentially the same. Simultaneously *real* Thai studies (of the non-Indianized Thai-speaking peoples) went begging for a name, or became discredited by unscholarly efforts at racial aggrandizement. This vital issue is not addressed by any of the contributors to this volume.

Craig Reynolds, on page 19 of his otherwise impeccable introduction, falls into serious but forgivable error when he states:

In some circumstances this notion of "the same blood" has been stretched even further, and by no means are the proponents of the notion always from the armed forces. Sujit Wongthes, a prominent Thai writer and intellectual who helped to champion the return of the purloined Cambodian lintel in his publications, argues that Siamese (a term which he prefers to Thai) ancestry includes the Mon-Khmer peoples who preceded the Thai in the lower main-

land, an argument that anchors Thai claims to Khmer monuments in Thai territory and proves that "the Thais were always here" (Sujit 1986).

Sujit, in addition to being a formidable scholar, is an irrepressible humorist, and his statement "The Thais were always here" is one of those irritatingly multi-tiered Siamese jokes. It must be understood in line with his other frequent claim "I am half-Lao, half-Chink" (his father was a descendent of Lao prisoners-of-wars brought down from Chiang Khuang by Rama III, and his mother arrived here on a junk).

For Sujit, "Thai" has no ethnological meaning at all; it is a cultural term, and "The Thais were always here" means that the inhabitants of Thailand are a mixture of races and always have been. At one level it is a humorous poke at "Thai" racialis; at another it is a serious statement about the racial/cultural situation in modern Thailand.

Much of the blame belongs to Sujit. I have remonstrated with him repeatedly "Scholars don't tell jokes! Say what you mean!" but to no effect. Sujit insists upon having his joke because it tickles him so when right-wing extremists shower him with praise as "Our greatest patriot; better than Luang Wichit."

But one should not suppose that Sujit's humor is simply a personal indulgence. Despite the exemplary freedom of the press in Thailand, scholarship here remains under a sinister cloud, against which humor is the only effective weapon.

My sympathy goes to Craig Reynolds. It took me fifteen years (and a good percentage of my liver function) to understand Sujit and how difficult it is for a Thai scholar to be honest. But did Reynolds really read Sujit?

Thai scholars complain bitterly that many western scholars, having completed their fieldwork here, go home and sit in their libraries, writing like fury about "Thai" culture without following up on advances in indigenous scholarship. Admittedly, much Thai "scholarship" is tiresome, but this is part of the fascist legacy that demands that a scholar may praise but not pry. Those Thai schol-

ars who, by diplomacy or wit, manage to defeat the subtle censorship of "national identity and its defenders," deserve a better hearing in the West.

There are even cases of western scholars leaping into print without, apparently, having talked to a "native" in years. A striking case in point is Charles F. Keyes's "The Case of the Purloined Lintel: The Politics of a Khmer Shrine as a Thai National Treasure."

He starts with a carefree use of racial terms, "Khmer" and "Thai," as though the racial identity of a lintel or shrine could be established with a blood test. He then suggests that the "Thais" demanding the return of the lintel from the United States were implicitly laying a "Thai" claim to the "Khmer" heritage and might, perhaps, by laying grounds for Thai claims to Cambodian soil in times to come.

Had Professor Keyes bothered to talk to any of those involved, he would have learned that nothing could have been further from their thoughts.

1. All were well-aware that the temple and the lintel were products of Cambodian civilization. (The nationalist term "Lopburi Art" withered about a decade ago. Has anyone in the West noticed?)
2. No one supposed that the temple was "Thai" art, but legitimate claim was made to it because it stands in what the international community calls "Thailand."
3. When the reconstruction of the temple was completed, it was universally pronounced "handsome," but the absence of the lintel left a horrid gap in the front elevation.
4. Everyone knew where the lintel was, and when, and under what shady circumstances, it had been spirited away to the United States.
5. A concerted effort was therefore launched to retrieve the artifact. Thanks to the energy with which the campaign was carried out, and the wisdom of our American friends, the lintel now graces the entrance to the temple for which it was created a thousand years ago.

6. The battle of the lintel was fought between a broad group of honestly committed intellectuals in Thailand against sleazy elements in both the United States and Thailand. "Cambodia" or "Khmers" had nothing to do with it, legally, artistically, racially or otherwise.

Thus I can only conclude that "The Case of the Purloined Lintel" sprang fully armed from its author's brow, without reference to what was happening on the ground.

In one of the most challenging and intellectually stimulating papers in this book, "Rumours, Foul Calumnies and the Safety of the State," Annette Hamilton, who obviously has her ear to the ground, trips up only in her footnote 11 (pp. 373–4):

I have had it explained to me by a number of people, including a monk, that our present age, midway in the 5000 year cycle between the life of the last Buddha and of Maitreya, the Buddha to come, is especially marked by its corruption and distance from the moral foundations of a virtuous existence. Some accounts suggest this is the midpoint of the cycle and things will get better from now on; others say that things will continue to deteriorate for another 2500 years until a monk will be signified only by the wearing of one square inch of yellow robe. Under these cosmic circumstances there is really nothing anyone can do other than look after his or her own interests and attempt to ensure the most beneficent rebirth possible, which becomes increasingly important as things on a planetary scale become worse and worse. As Craig Reynolds points out (personal communication) there is nothing in the Pāli Canon or the commentaries about 2500 years; this is an invention of modern Buddhist consciousness.

"... [A]n invention of the modern Buddhist consciousness"? Our evidence

for the 5000 year prophecy begins in the Mahavamsa (A.D. fifth century, and then probably nothing new). It must even then have given rise to millennial prophecies (common to all religions), examples of which appear in the literature of Sukhodaya.

This is an example of the price to be paid for trying to do Thai Studies (i.e., Siamese Studies) without a familiarity with Indic sources.

However, in this collection, Annette Hamilton, along with Sulak Sivaraksa, Chai-anan Samudavanija, and B. J. Terwiel, comes closest to prying apart those tacky pages in which the national identity is concealed by its self-proclaimed defenders.

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Acta Asiatica: Foreign Relations of Tokugawa Japan, Sakoku Reconsidered.

Tokyo: Toho Gakkai, August 1994.

For every student of Japanese history, the term "Sakoku," or "closed country," is immediately associated with the period from 1633 to 1853, from the first anti-Christian, national seclusion edicts up to the anticlimax of the opening of the country by Commodore Perry. The relative connotations have been, in general, negative so far, automatically conveying an image of anti-Christian, ultraconservative Bakufu mentality, combining xenophobia with severity to any enterprising, outgoing inclination of Tokugawa citizens themselves.

I admit that it was in such a frame of mind that I started my own association with this fascinating chapter of Japanese history, way back in the late sixties, as I was trying to penetrate the immense wealth of material on the subject at the

Historiographical Institute of Tokyo University.

Upon my recent return to Japan I came across a study on Sakoku in Toho Gakkai's *Acta Asiatica*, dated 1972. That volume consisted of a series of related articles by a group of Japanese historians along the generally accepted lines, but with a welcome emphasis on new European sources—especially Dutch—and with an interesting concluding survey of Japanese Sakoku studies by Professor Kato Eiichi, suggesting a reorientation of research for the future.

In August 1994, *Acta Asiatica No. 67* came up with a new compilation on the matter where the key meaning is in the subtitle: "Sakoku Reconsidered." In this issue a gifted group of young Japanese historians, inspired by the respected editors Professors Kunai Madoka and Kato Eiichi, successfully attempt a refocusing of the whole issue in light of new evidence from research carried out between 1970 and the early 1990s.

Reading their analyses and conclusions is a pleasure in itself. The volume is addressed of course to the world of scholars or at least to the enlightened readership of the academically prestigious Toho Gakkai, not to the ordinary reader who would navigate with some difficulty through the detailed and scholarly argumentation.

In essence, the structure of *Acta Asiatica No. 67* is as follows. Two elaborate articles, one at the beginning and one at the end, constitute the research background through which the corpus of the other papers has to be approached. At the outset, Professor Kato Eiichi picks up the thread almost where he had left it in 1972 and convincingly calls for a reexamination of the National Seclusion policy in light of the conclusions of recent research. In a concluding contribution, Professor Arano Yasunori argues against the stereotype of the term "Sakoku" with all its latter-day negative accretions, since the coinage of the word "Sakokuron" by Nagasaki interpreter Shizuki Tadao in his translation of an essay from the appendix to Engelbert Kaempfer's *History of Japan*.

In between these two articles we have three papers dealing with three of the

famous "Four Gates" or ports of entry maintained under the strict control of the Tokugawa shogunate: The Tsushima Gate in relation to Korea, by Professor Tsuruta Kei; the Matsumae Gate in relation to the Ainus and Northern Koryo—encompassing the region to the north of Korea, i.e., Tartary—by Professor Kamiya Nobuyuki; and the Ryukyuan kingdom and its response to Commodore Perry's efforts to convert it into a transit base on his way to Japan, by Professor Maehira Fusaaki.

The fourth "Gate," Nagasaki, related to the Dutch and Chinese, is not examined here "in view of the greater amount of available information on Nagasaki," as the editors explain in their foreword. This omission is very legitimate for the purposes of the volume under review, but otherwise sad from the perspective of the less-scholarly reader who would have certainly preferred to see even a brief reference to this fourth Gate and to examine all of them as an entity.

The main themes emerging from all these papers converge on the following ideas:

The term "Sakoku"—National Seclusion—should be rephrased as "maritime prohibitions" in conformity with the *Tokugawa Jikki* (*True Chronicle of the Tokugawa*).

This policy should not be viewed, as it has until now, in the unilateral context of Japanese history only or of relations between Japan and Europe, but rather in the context of Asia and especially East Asia. (It is significant that even Sir George Sansom, writing long ago in his *History of Japan* (vol. 3, p. 44), had established a parallel between Sakoku and the type of isolation of Confucian China.)

Christianity in Japan should not be studied exclusively as "missionary history" but also in connection with the political and economic activities of the Japanese church.

The world order in the period of Sakoku was not the negative perception of a xenophobic Bakufu as portrayed for many years, not a picture of "narrow-

mindedness, fogyism, autocracy, exclusiveness and backwardness," but rather a system within the sphere of East Asian traditions. The western monolithic categorizations of "opening" and "closing" the country do not reflect the more subtle perceptions of East Asia at the time, still aware of the excesses of Wako pirates and desirous of a more orderly flow of movement; or of Japanese perceptions establishing a distinction between "diplomatic" intercourse (Korea, the Ryukyus) and simple "trade" relations as with the others.

The challenge of this volume will be significant in the future, not only for eventually dissenting foreign researchers in the field, but perhaps even for other Japanese historians still not prepared to view things in this new light. But the contributors have to be credited for starting the debate anyway, with courage, with analytical skills, and with obvious academic integrity. Perhaps this debate is already going on in Japanese academia on a bigger scale that we outsiders can imagine. Here again, the editors deserve praise for presenting such a good translation of their original texts, thus allowing an international readership to examine new approaches and angles. In a nutshell, this collective contribution reflects a healthy and vigorous research spirit in the world of modern Japanese historians, continuously looking for new sources and new interpretations when the accumulation of data provides a solid basis for them.

Having thus extended every word of praise, the present reviewer would have some peripheral personal remarks or wishes. I think it is now time for Toho Gakkai—or any other similar institution—to attempt a synthetic presentation of "Sakoku," stressing the general lines and avoiding the minute details. The subject should leave its academic pedestal and come closer to the general reader who is interested in Japanese history. The new trends and the recent interpretations should be incorporated, along with well-founded objections, if

any. Otherwise I am afraid that chapters related to "Sakoku" in other existing histories of Japan will continue to convey mostly negative connotations, leading to unavoidable misinterpretations.

The present volume, although based on a very rich and useful bibliography, has rather scant references to foreign sources. A better balance would be more desirable in a future re-edition.

The concept of "maritime prohibitions" as the "monopolistic control of foreign relations by state authorities" (p. 20) is perhaps contradicted by similar practices in the seventeenth century Siam of King Narai, where the monarch exercised a monopoly on trade and foreign relations through his "Phra Klang"—the famous Greek adventurer Constantine Phaulkon at the time—without linking it necessarily with travel restrictions on his subjects.

Finally, without contesting at all the treatment of the Ryukyus in connection with Commodore Perry's attempt to establish a base there, I would rather have liked to see how these "lonely islands in a distant sea," serving two masters, Japan and China, helped Shimazu to circumvent the seclusion laws of Edo. As George Kerr states in his classic *Okinawa, the History of an Island People* (p. 166), "using Okinawa for its purposes, the Satsuma clan boldly flouted the ban on foreign intercourse through any other port and the Tokugawa were unable to check them." It is precisely these breaches of policy which minimized the monolithic totality of the hermetic edicts of the Bakufu, as they were generally perceived at least until now.

In the final analysis the words of Sir George Sansom are still valid: "[The Japanese policy of almost complete isolation is] an historical phenomenon which, while simple in appearance, is by no means easily explained."

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