

## REVIEWS

Waldon Bello, Shea Cunningham, and Li Kheng Poh

*A Siamese Tragedy: Development and Disintegration in Modern Thailand*

London, New York and Oakland CA: Zed and Food First Books, 1998, pp. 267

Written, with the assistance of two research associates, by Waldon Bello, Professor of sociology and public administration in the University of the Philippines and co-director of Focus on the Global South, a policy research institutes based in Bangkok, this book deals with the numerous perceived policy errors that resulted in the Great Crash of 2 July 1997, and outlines, much more briefly, alternatives approaches to development for the future.

With a series of eye-catching subtitles like "A second Ayutthaya?", "Back to the Third World", and "Financiers and realtors: Bonie and Clyde in Bangkok", the scene is set generally, before we come to "Thailand under the IMF". On the way, we are made aware of "the structural defects of the Thai economy", which led to "increasing deterioration in income distribution", coupled with a "truly monumental environmental debacle", and above all the "erosion of the position of agriculture", as the government tries to keep down food prices to placate a relatively small "urban population that is experiencing mass unemployment," while paradoxically hoping that agriculture, so dispised in the recent past, will absorb the unemployed.

Having set the gloomy scene, the authors then look more closely at different aspects of the causes contributing, as they see it, to the collapse. In the chapter on "The Failure of Industrial Deepening", they point the basically unplanned nature of previous growth, the educational bottleneck, a failure to invest in

research and development (R&D) instead of real estate (the phraseology of the text gets this accidentally wrong), and points to the over-expanded car industry which involved little technology transfer.

The chapter on labour considers the squeezing-of-the-lemon-till-the-pips- squeeks policy, the containment of union organization, using underpaid female labour in often poor conditions, ditto child labour, and importing even cheaper unskilled workers from near-by countries. Short-termism to the fore, the rural Thai unemployed were in turn exported to labour-short countries, and no attempt was made to address the problem of undereducation and skill-deficiency.

The "Los Angelizing" of the City of Angels comes in for due criticism, and concentrates on "the mass transit chaos": "Some parts of the train structure would be only one metre away from adjacent buildings. The Central Station would be 30 metres or 10 floors above ground. . ." Amidst all the expanding slums and infrastructural problems, only the self-reorganization of Klong Toey stands out as a sign of hope. The chapter 'Pollution Haven' covers all the well-known woes on the score, pointing to a lack of effective regulation.

'The Erosion of Agriculture' is perhaps the most substantial capter in the book. "The central policy factor has been the subordination of agriculture to the interest of the urban-industrial sector." Instead of permanently squeezing the peasantry, "a substantial part of government revenues should have been recycled back to the agricultural sector" to upgrade famers' technology and support land reforms: after all, agriculture still provides employment for more than 60 percent of the population which remains essentially rural. Instead of that, the rice export premium and industrial policy led to the

pauperization (“the immiserizing”) of the countryside.

The number of landless peasants has increased, and the few policy initiatives have been top-down, with consequently little effect. Land reform ran into opposition from vested interests, with the result that “in over 17 years, only 43 families have received full land-ownership rights as a result of [the Land Reform Act of 1975], and the area covered amounts only to 795 rai.” Instead of redistribution to the poor, one had “Land reform for the rich under Chuan” with the Sor Por Kor 4-01 programme.

And the problems get worse, as water shortages become perennial, especially in the northeast, containing one third of the country’s population. A shift to contract farming is no answer; big firms will reap the profits. The recent (May 1999) rejection of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) programme, with its sensible proposal to tax water supplied by irrigation schemes, in favour of big business contract farming will do little to improve the lot of an impoverished peasantry. Don’t count on continued rural passivity, say the authors, looking to the development of movements like the Forum of the Poor.

The related rural problems are accorded separate chapters. ‘The Dynamics of Deforestation’ runs through the various disaster in this area, with all the country’s regions suffering. The government is seen to be part of the problem as it allows watershed areas to be logged and condones supposed ‘reforestation’ by eucalyptus and other commercial ventures. Out with the mangroves, in with shrimp farms, and abandon them when the going gets tough, leaving behind a terrible mess. The conclusion is depressing: there seems little chance of reversing “the country’s slide into terminal deforestation, with the loss of biodiversity and other ecological disequilibria that this will bring.”

The other related rural problem deals with large-scale dams and their negative effects. This is seen as the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) v. the people. The destruction of watersheds has reduced the flow of water into the dams, which have been loaded with millions of tons of sediment. The colossal mistakes over the Pak Mun dam are well covered, with the loss of occupation and

residence of thousands of families—and the provision of only enough electricity “to fuel one big Bangkok shopping mall for one day.” One good result of the economic crisis is seen to be that instead of regionalizing its dam-mania, EGAT will lack the financial resources to continue large scale damming.

The penultimate chapter deals with the AIDS crisis. Here there is some hope, as, thanks to effective NGO advocacy, increasing condom use limits the negative effects of the vast sex industry. The authors consider the scale of the industry as a reflection of rural poverty and powerlessness. They avoid considerations of the long-term effects of HIV/AIDS on health and productivity among the economically active segment of population.

The conclusion points to alternative modes of development, the reversal of turing 60 percent of the population into “second-class citizens”. It advocates seven measures: controls on capital flows, an Asian Emergency Regional Fund to replace the United States’ controlled International Monetary Fund (IMF); limitation of foreign debt (the IMF solution is to bail out with public money big private creditors and big private debtors), using the domestic market for development stimulus, and having a progressive tax system, democratic decision-making by communities, and ecological sustainability. Something has to give, including the rich, who will of course resist redistribution of wealth. But too many have been negatively affected by “fast track capitalism” for it continue in the bad old ways.

Many of these “solutions” are pie-in-the-sky and some, notably the first two, either unnecessary or impractical. Most are but pious hopes. And there is no examination of the negative economic effects of large non-productive sectors in society: the bloated and inefficient civil service, the military, etc.

The book has clearly been assembled rather hastily, with several obvious slips: ethnic minorities are said to produce opium in the northeast (p.229), the north is between 600 and 1,500 miles above sea level (p. 180), we have a eucalyptus crop supporting 45 people per square metre (p. 165), international reserves in 1995 were said to be only \$7.0 billion (p. 34), Thonburi is on the east side of the Chao Phraya (p. 96) and there is a river called the Ta (p. 138).

There are several slips in sentence structure and the inevitable typos.

These errors are marginal compared with the overall value of the book, a very critical appraisal of the policies which have got the country into its current economic and financial mess. It should be required reading for politicians; they may not agree with many or even any of the conclusions, but they must realize that carrying on as before, supporting Big Business INC and damning the peasants, will not do. People count, and their votes cannot always be bought.

Michael Smithies



Charles Highman and Rachanie Thosarat  
*Prehistoric Thailand—From Early Settlement To Sukhothai*

Bangkok: River Books, 1988, pp. 234, 330 figs.

This book is an impressive achievement, both for the two authors and also for English language publishing in Thailand, for which it sets new standards in design and printing. As the title suggests the focus is narrower than the earlier well-known volumes by the senior author, "The Archaeology of Mainland Southeast Asia" (C.U.P. 1989) and "The Bronze Age of Southeast Asia" (C.U.P. 1996) and it makes only passing reference to the archaeology of neighboring countries other than a long section in Chapter 6 (pp.191–202) on the rise of Khmer civilization and its influence in Thailand. The book is also addressed to a more general public than the volumes just mentioned and the two authors' many technical site reports and journal articles. It is written for an educated public wishing to understand just how much the research of archaeologists over the past decades can illuminate, what to most people, is rather remote past.

After a preface and introductory 'overview', the basic information is set out in five chronological chapters: 'Hunters and Gatherers,' 'The First Farmer,' 'The Bronze Age,' 'The Iron Age' and 'Early Civilizations of Thailand' before some brief 'Conclusions' and it makes some sense to discuss these chapters in order.

But first some comments on the layout and presentation of the book are on order. This is thoroughly modern, incorporating the large number of excellent colour photographs with or alongside the text and eight 'boxes' of supplementary information on, respectively, radiocarbon dating; the ancient environment; Spirit Cave and the 'Neolithic Revolution' (in Thailand); the study of human remains; dating Ban Chiang; metallurgy; rock art; and inscriptions.

The preface makes proper acknowledgement of the role of the royal founders and supporters of Thai archaeology, from H.R.H. Prince Damrong, and H.S.H. Prince Subhadradis Diskul up to, and including, H.R.H. Princess Maha Chakri Srindorn who maintains an active interest and participation in the discipline. They also list the many other archaeologists who have contributed to research in the kingdom over the past fifty years.

In Chapter 1, 'Thailand: an Overview' the authors emphasise the dramatic changes that have taken place in the environment of Thailand since the first settlement in the Pleistocene; what is purely 'natural' and what is man-induced. The characteristics of the five main geographical regions of present day Thailand; the northern, central, northeastern, southeastern and peninsular zones are described, all of which have rather distinct cultural as well as environmental trajectories through the past.

Chapter 2 takes readers from the earliest human settlement in the country, perhaps 700,000 to 1 million years ago for which the evidence is little, inconclusive and disputed in detail, through to the establishment of permanent village settlements in the late 3rd millennium BC with the transition from the hunting and collecting wild foods to food production. The authors claim that this major cultural change took place much later in Thailand than was previously believed on the evidence from Spirit Cave and results from excavations at some open settlements such as Non Nok Tha and Ban Chiang. Here clear and concise summaries are given from evidence from key sites excavated by the authors such as Nong Nor and Khok Phanom Di near the eastern seaboard as well as brief discussion of Hoabinhian cave sites such as Sai Yok, Lang Rongrien, Tham Phi, Ongbah,

Banyan and Steep Cliff and the Ban Kao sites. There is plenty of room for disagreement with some of the emphases placed here on sedentism versus cultivation but contrary data is given and fairly presented.

Chapter 3 to 5 represent the heart of the book taking us from the establishment of the first farming communities in the 3rd millennium BC, through the development of bronze metallurgy, placed here in the mid 2nd millennium BC, to the Iron Age and rise of more complex societies of the later 1st millennium BC which formed the social foundation onto which a superstructure of Indic civilization was grafted some one thousand years later.

There have been few topics in Thai archaeology more contentious over the past twenty years than dating and identifying the sources of bronze technology. Long ago archeologists and historians dated it to about 500 BC with an origin in the Shang and Zhou cultures of China. Then came Non Nok Tha and Ban Chiang with claims for a precocious and independent development of the technology in the 4th millennium BC—a position which the authors once subscribed to. But their excavations at Ban Na Di in the 1980s changed their understanding and subsequent work at Khok Phanom Di, Nong Nor and most recently at Ban Lum Khao and Noen U-Loke on the Khorat Plateau, has persuaded them and, one must admit, most archaeologists working in Southeast Asia, that bronze metallurgy appeared in Thailand no earlier than the mid 2nd millennium BC with iron appearing about 1,000 years later. But whether the origins should be sought in the north, among the yet poorly understood bronze using societies of southern China as the present authors argue (p.217) or was it largely an independent growth by people exploiting local rich resources is still an open question.

A substantial section of Chapter 3 discusses the, still largely unpublished, results of the 'Thai Archaeometallurgy Project' (TAP) at copper mining and processing sites at Phu Lon near Mekong River in Nong Khai Province and in the Khao Wong Prachan Valley, Lopburi Province. At a number of locations, this joint Thai—University of Pennsylvania team identified ancient copper mines, ore processing and smelting sites which provides the most

important and definitive data on early metallurgy in Southeast Asia. The dating evidence from these sites confirms the conclusions of the two authors of this volume that such activity started no earlier than the mid 2nd millennium BC.

There is now almost universal agreement among archaeologists that iron was adopted—some say locally invented—in Thailand sometimes around 500 BC; several hundred years after it came into use in both India and China and from this time one finds a huge increase in the number, size and wealth of settlements and cemeteries. Sites such as Noen U-Loke, Ban Lum Khao, Ban Don Ta Phet, Tham Ongbah, Ban Wang Hi and later Ban Chiang testify to the increase in ascribed social status and the scope of trading contacts which range from Viet Nam to India. The data for this phase in Thailand is especially well set out in Chapter 5 since it incorporates much information and many photographs and drawings from the very recent—and still unfinished—research of the authors on the Khorat Plateau, some 25 km west of Phimai. Here, they were ostensibly seeking 'The Origins of the Angkor Civilization' and while there is still a gap in the archaeological record of several hundred years between the abandonment of the sites investigated and the expansion of Khmer culture from Tonle Sap region of Cambodia, they have brought to light new and spectacular find from later prehistory; especially the rich burials at Noen U-Loke (figs 236–59). Now it seems that the authors are moving their research into Cambodia where 'The Origins of Angkor' surely lie, but the abandonment of their research in Thailand, partly on account of bureaucratic obstruction, must be a serious loss for the future of archaeological research into the country's past.

In Chapter 6, 'Early Civilizations of Thailand' the story is continued through the Dvaravati, Khmer periods to the 'Coming of the Thai' (p.206) and the rise of Sukhothai in the 13th century. Here much of the research has been undertaken by Thai scholars and is originally published in Thai. For Foreign scholars the insights into the historic cultures of the past one thousand years given here from, often quite new, historical, art historical and archaeological field research is a welcome bonus.

A final chapter of 'Conclusions' tries to summarise the rich data set out in the book and stresses many continuities from the prehistoric past into recent Thai culture. Ancient languages such as Mon and Khmer and, no doubt others we have no record of, have largely vanished or cling on like Nyah-Kur of the Chao Bon people of the Petchabun hills as reminders of this heritage. But despite the 'Coming of the Thai', a new traditions and an intrusive language gene flow from the past has dominated and the ancient Thai were not so different from the people of the kingdom today.

The authors modestly claim a short 'shelf-life' for their synthesis of Thai prehistory but there is little doubt that this book will be reprinted, and perhaps revised, for many years to come. I very much wish that I had it available when I was actively teaching Asian archaeology and have no doubt that it will be on library shelves, and being read with profit, for many years.

Ian Glover



Craig A. Lockard

***Dance of Life: Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia***

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998, pp. 390.

Craig A. Lockard, a professor in the Department of Social Change and Development at the University of Wisconsin—Green Bay, has written, not a history or musically descriptive study of popular music in Southeast Asia, but one that focuses on the role of popular song lyrics within the cultural/political debates and negotiations of four Southeast Asian nations, Thailand, Malaysia (with Singapore), Indonesia, and the Philippines. Before we can appreciate the work, it is important to understand what it is not. Musicians and ethnomusicologists will find nothing about music. Proponents of cultural studies may also feel disappointment, for the author describes his work as "comparative history." From the Introduction it appears that the author sites himself more or less within tradition of modernist description, with acknowledgement of the help of many of the

younger ethnomusicologists who focus on popular musical traditions.

Each of the five chapters is about equal in length, but Prof. Lockard actually specializes in Malaysia, for his 1991 book-length article, "Reflections of Change: Sociopolitical Commentary and Criticism in Malaysian Popular Music Since 1950," published as an issue of *Crossroads: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* (vol. 6–1) along with other works listed in the bibliography demonstrates a more specialized knowledge of Malaysia than is seen in the case of Thailand. I surmise that Prof. Lockard, not being a Thai specialist, does not know the Thai language to a great extent, and indeed, his study of Thailand seems to depend heavily on published sources. In a sense, he has brought together earlier works by both Thai and non-Thai scholars into one coherent package and culled from them the information needed to reach his goal, which is to explore "a preliminary examination of the relationship between various popular musics and political change and protest in several nations." (xvii) Because he has not attempted to work in the post-modernist cultural studies mode, both his language and concepts are perfectly understandable to readers from any background, being free of the jargon and neologisms characteristic of cultural studies.

Chapter one, "Popular Culture and Music in the Modern World," is a stand-alone study that explores "the meaning of popular culture and its relationship to modern society," as well as "the relationship between popular music and various aspects of society, history, culture, and politics." (1) With minimal references to Southeast Asia, he approaches this topic generally, including a review of both factual and theoretical literature pertaining to the topic. Throughout this chapter and the book as a whole are highlighted text boxes focusing on some particular (but not necessarily Southeast Asian) matter, such as the Vietnamese *vong co*, Nigerian popular music, Hawaiian music, etc. While many song texts are quoted, there are rather few (and rather small) photographs.

Because my own expertise lies in Thai music more than the others and because the majority of readers is likely interested in Thailand, I intend to focus on Chapter 4, "Thailand: Songs

for Life, Songs for Struggle.” Readers hoping for a more complete history of Thai popular music will be disappointed to learn that only those song types and performing groups which embrace challenging political lyrics are considered. Although the chapter follows the fortunes of certain groups, particularly Caravan and Carabao, into the context of 1990s politics, its focus is on the “politicized popular musics in Thailand . . . closely tied to the political turbulence of the early and mid-1970s.” (162) Granted, this is what the author set out to do, but this requires him to more or less omit any history that does not speak to political expression, and consequently the reader can legitimately ask, “how did we get here” as the author suddenly begins in the 1960s. That Thai popular music was born, at least in part, of the Western-oriented cultural politics of the period of Prime Minister Phibun Songkram in the 1940s along with an evident craze for Western ballroom dance music and jazz does not figure into this study, since those songs’ lyrics were apolitical.

Lockard narrows his study primarily to two types, *phleng luk thung* (spelled here as *luk-toong* and meaning literally “children of the fields”) and the *phleng phuachiwit* (“songs for life”) of Caravan and Carabao, the latter born out of the political turbulence of the 1960s and 1970s. Because these songs speak for the common people, express their anger and frustration, and challenge an establishment which is seen as corrupt and exploitative, they are clearly political, having characteristics of both American country music and 1960s “folk” music. The author’s emphasis is on history, individual artists, and the meanings of texts, all based on translations. Readers hoping for some understanding of the musical characteristics of these songs will be disappointed, for the author is only interested in political expression which, by the way, happens to come embedded in song.

On the one hand I appreciate the author’s straight-forward prose and avoidance of theoretically-informed obfuscation. On the other I have a nagging feeling that much of this information and analysis is dated. In the case of Thailand, it is also mostly secondary. Perhaps because of their political implications, the *phleng luk thung* and *phleng phuachiwit* have garnered virtually all of the attention paid by scholars to

Thai popular musics thus far. Lockard’s chapter on Thailand breaks no new ground here but rather summarizes previous work. It is more difficult for me to say whether this statement applies to the other countries covered, but I am reasonably assured that he speaks with greater authority in the case of Malaysia, where he is no doubt a pioneer.

Lockard has little to say about Thai classical music, but what he does write suggests a lack of experience in this area. On p. 178 he quotes David Morton, formerly of the Univ. of California, Los Angeles, as if his commentary were current. When Morton did his research in the 1960s Thai music was experiencing great hardship and was little noticed, but the music has undergone a remarkable renaissance since then and Dr. Morton has done no further work since at least 1970. Lockard asserts that in the 1990s “classical music . . . [is] confined largely to little-watch television specials and tourist hotels, . . .” While it is not popular in the sense of “popular music,” Thai classical music is stronger today than at anytime probably since the 1930s, being taught and performed actively in most schools, colleges, and universities.

For scholars having a post-modernist bent, this book will be a letdown. While it explores the intersection of music and politics, it does so in a tame, descriptive fashion. The prose is not compelling, largely because it is both very detailed and describes (at least in the case of Thailand) material that is no longer very contemporary—a kind of “old news.” Lockard does not attempt to interpret or deconstruct his material in Marxist, feminist, or globalized terms. On the other hand, such interpretations can quickly go out of fashion and appear idiosyncratic a few years later. In addition (and perhaps thankfully), there is no hand-wringing about overcoming an ethnocentric “outsider” viewpoint in order to “empower” Southeast Asians to speak for themselves as “insiders.” Lockard simply does the job he set out to do, and that is to study the political implications of Southeast Asian popular song texts. With this in mind I would rate the book as at least valuable for its scope and also as an excellent summary of our knowledge of these matters to this point in time.

Terry E. Miller



Michael Vickery

***Society, Economics, and Politics in pre-Angkor Cambodia: the 7th-8th Centuries.***

Tokyo, The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1998, pp. 486 (map).

This masterful work is the fruit of over twenty years of sustained research. Its rigorous analyses and its closely-argued, often iconoclastic findings will dramatically alter the landscape of Cambodian studies.

With the exception of Helen Jacob, whose work Vickery generously acknowledges, scholars of Cambodia have seen little value in examining the 134 Khmer-language inscriptions, 43 of them dated, that have come down to us so far from seventh and eighth century Cambodia. Instead, earlier scholars tended to privilege inscriptions written in Sanskrit, viewing the Khmer language corpus as subordinate to the elitist orientation that the scholars, led by George Coëdès, favored. As philologists working in the high colonial era, or soon afterwards, most of these scholars had little interest in studying Cambodia's social history *per se*. They were unconcerned with economics and social issues, or with conflict-oriented explanations. Instead, most of them immersed themselves in linguistic and chronological minutiae and in mapping the evolution of artistic styles.

Vickery is a skilled philologist, trained as an historian. Throughout his long career, he has been drawn toward Marxian explanatory frameworks, towards history of *la longue duree*, and toward the notion of an Asiatic Mode of Production, or AMP, first formulated by Marx himself, writing about India, in the 1850s. Twentieth century anthropologists have refined Marx's ideas; Soviet ones have applied them to Angkor, and Vickery has found the AMP fruitful in explaining the interactions between Cambodian state and society, between economics and politics, and among the people of pre-Angkorean Cambodia.

In his "Introduction" (pp. 1–32) Vickery defends his approach, outlines his views about the AMP, and provides a useful "narrative summary of the history of pre-Angkor Cambodia" (17–30) that should form the temporal framework of later studies.

Chapter 2, "Pre-Angkor Cambodia: the Historiographical Situation" (33–60) makes a case for differentiating the pre-Angkorean period from the Angkorean period that followed. Vickery cites the paucity of inscriptions from the late eighth and most of the ninth centuries; linguistic differences between inscriptions from the two periods; and the shift in political power from south central to northwestern Cambodia that occurred in the ninth century.

In Chapter 3, "Pre- and Proto-Historic Background" (pp. 61–82) Vickery extends his earlier arguments, laying the ground work for a longer chapter, "The pre-Angkor Inscriptions" (pp. 88–138) which examines the principal sources for the book, linguistically (pp. 83–99) by structure (pp. 95–99) and by what Vickery perceives as eighteen distinct regional groups (pp. 99–138). He points out wide gaps among the dated inscriptions, with only one (dated AD 803) falling between AD 175 and AD 877.

The remainder of the book is an in-depth study of pre-Angkorean Cambodia. Although Vickery might not relish the compliment, his book is the most rewarding synoptic treatment of early Cambodian history since L.P. Briggs' magisterial *The Ancient Khmer Empire*, published almost fifty years ago. Vickery, to be sure, commands a wider range of sources and has a different theoretical agenda, but he shares with Briggs the virtues of independent-mindedness, patience, and a devotion to detail. These virtues pay off page after page of this engrossing book.

In Chapter 5, "The Cult Component" Vickery argues that an evolution (not the same as an "advance") took place in Cambodian religious beliefs in the pre-Angkorean era, but that strong element of continuity mitigated against the phenomenon of "Indianization. In Chapter 6, "Divisions of the Population" (pp. 155–255) Vickery provides helpful information about the connective layers of society that fell between the kings and princes on the one hand and full time dependents (wrongly translated, Vickery suggests, as "slaves") on the other (see especially p. 273, 439–440). The discussion of *pon* and *mraten*, cult officiants identified by Vickery in an earlier work, and other rank titles, largely ignored by earlier scholars, shows the value of

the Khmer language inscriptions when they are excavated with empathy and care and when recent ethnographic data is used to clarify apparent but still obscure patterns of kinship, patronages and descent.

Vickery opens Chapter 7 "Social Structure and Economy" (pp. 257–320) with the assertion that Cambodia between the seventh and thirteenth centuries "appears as the prototypical inland agrarian state, an example of the Asiatic Mode of Production in a very nearly pure form". In the book's closing chapter, "Political Structure, Kingship and the State" (pp. 321–415) he notes that scholars of Cambodia (and of Southeast Asia generally) have shied away from discussing about early state formation, even though such questions are crucial in understanding Cambodia's progression from a coastal trading polity ("Funan") through inland agricultural chiefdoms ("Chenla"). The chapter attempts to straighten out the confused (and confusing) chronology of pre-Angkorean "kings" before concentrating on the career of the man later known as Jayavarman II, the so-called "founder" of Angkor. These closely argued pages are filled with exciting *aperçus* and evidence of Vickery's impression command of his sources.

The book closes (pp. 405–408) less dramatically than I would have liked, without summarizing the territory it has traversed, but indicating clearly that Jayavarman II's links to the *devaraja*, or "supreme deity of the realm" "were in the same pattern" as claims by earlier cult officiants to be linked to local deities. Jayavarman II was also assiduous in linking himself to a glorious, inaccessible past, a practice that continued throughout Cambodian history, at least until the 1990s.

No review of this length can do justice to Vickery's book, and in closing I wish him good health and a long life, not only as a friend of over thirty years' standing but also because I can imagine no one better equipped than he is to extend his insights and analyses into the Angkorean era, where they are sorely needed.

It is a shame that academic culture at the end of the twentieth century, at least as far as Southeast Asia is concerned, is inhospitable to the kind of grand scholarship on display in this handsomely produced, absorbing volume.

Vickery's book fills an important lacuna, and sets a daunting agenda for scholars in the future. Before long, its effects will "trickle down" into guide-books and popularization that are available to tourists. It is hoped that its findings will also reach Cambodian students at the secondary and tertiary level, not only so that the descendants of "Funan" and "Chenla" can learn that these half-mythical polities were full of real people but also that Cambodians themselves can continue to explore their country's past.

David Chandler



Penny Van Esterik, editor  
*Women of Southeast Asia*

DeKalb: Northern Illinois University, Center of Southeast Asian Studies, Monograph Series on Southeast Asia. Occasional paper No. 17, 1996. pp. *xiv*, 229. Tables, figures, bibliography, addendum to bibliography, index.

This is a reprint of *Women of Southeast Asia* that first appeared in 1982. Changes for this edition include a new preface by Penny Van Esterik and an addendum to the bibliography. The original papers are reprinted without revisions. The volume begins with Van Esterik's introduction followed by three papers on Thailand (Kirsch, J. Van Esterik, P. Van Esterik), one each on Malaysia and Java (Laderman, Hull), and two papers on the Philippines (Szanton, Neher), and one general comparative essay (Winzeler). The volume ends with P. Van Esterik's appendix on future research questions.

In the new preface, Van Esterik briefly discusses current literature on gender in Southeast Asia and identifies four new themes: indigenous scholarship and activism; health, nutrition, fertility, and sexuality; women in development; and Southeast Asian women outside Southeast Asia (xi–xiii). She goes on to suggest two future directions for research: the joining of research with activism and advocacy work and more emphasis on indigenous feminisms (xiii–xiv). These serve to update the original themes and issues and their associated research questions.

Reviewing a reprinted volume is an awkward task. Do you take the author(s) to task for not raising issues that are of current interest or using outdated analytical frameworks? This seems patently unfair. On the other hand, it does not make sense to re-review the book since that was done when it was first published (see Marjorie Muecke, *Journal of Asian Studies* 44(1):252–254 [November 1984] and Leslie O'Brien, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 16(1): 159–160 [March 1985]). Rather than re-reviewing the volume, I attempt to place volume in its larger theoretical and historical context.

*Women of Southeast Asia* is clearly a product of its time. Its focus is on women rather than on gender or gender relations (something Van Esterik recognizes in her new preface, *ix*). The issue is to determine the validity of the cliché that women in Southeast Asia have relatively high status, at least compared to that of women in South and East Asia. Evidence for women's status comes from their access to political power, economic positions, and their perceived autonomy as individuals making decisions about their lives. These concerns all come from a modern, rational, and western perspective on what it is to be human and to be equal. While eurocentric, since it defines the issues in terms of western concerns, there is something both reforming and optimistic about this endeavor. This has a long history in American anthropology—one of Margaret Mead's goals was to see the range of possibilities in other cultures interpreted from her understandings of the issues and use them to reform American culture (see Mead's *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* [New York: Morrow Quill Paperbacks, 1963]). As with Mead's work, we learn how the authors interpret and analyze what they are seeing, rather than attempting to discover how people within the culture or society understand and make sense of their world.

The concern for rectifying past inequalities, reform, and activism reappears in the new preface. The bibliographic addendum also highlights works relevant to these issues—prostitution, women's participation in the work place, both industrial and agricultural, and development. Most surprisingly, given Van Esterik's applied perspective, there is no discussion of the research about women and AIDS, although this may be

subsumed under the women's health topic. What gets left out is any discussion of other approaches to understanding gender in Southeast Asia. The reformist stance has strong roots in women's studies but there is more to women's studies than this. While Atkinson's and Errington's edited volume *Power and Difference: Gender in Island Southeast Asia* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990] is mentioned in passing in the new preface (*x*) and a number of the articles show up in the bibliography, Van Esterik does not address their argument, that "Before analogies to the conditions of women in the West are sought, local constructions of gender relations demand understanding on their own terms" (Atkinson and Errington, Preface, *viii*). Their approach stand in stark contrast to Van Esterik's and needs to be addressed. A longer, more analytic preface, placing the volume in its historical context and situating its arguments in the current theoretical context would have strengthened the volume.

With a reprint, one is concerned with whether or not the volume of enough value to warrant reprinting. While I am ultimately unsympathetic to the volume's perspective, I found rereading and rethinking these issues worthwhile. As a Thai specialist the papers by Kirsch, J. Van Esterik, and P. Van Esterik are important arguments about gender in Thailand. The volume as a whole represents one type of women's studies and, as such, is of general historical and theoretical interest to scholars of Southeast Asia and women's studies.

Nicola Tannenbaum



Hiromu Honda and Noriki Shimazu, Introduction by Dawn F. Rooney

*The Beauty Of Fired Clay: Ceramics from Burma, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand.*

Oxford, England: Oxford University Press 1997. Previous Japanese edition, 1995, pp. xiv, 267.

This impressive book is essentially a collection of very fine photographs depicting every one of the 358 items in a collection of ceramics put together by the two Japanese authors, but mainly by Noriki Shimazu. Despite the title, the emphasis is very much on ceramics found in

Thailand. The photographs have been arranged and briefly described by Dawn Rooney, though her major contribution to the book is the writing of an introduction which covers 51 pages. "Introduction" is surely too miserly a word to describe this very well written summary of our knowledge of the ceramics of Thailand. It is a scholarly, fact filled account of the present state of knowledge, and should be studied carefully by anybody seeking a concise but admirably comprehensive and up to date coverage of the subject.

The two Japanese authors stress the fact that their collection is the result of much travelling and study of ceramics and kiln sites over a period of over twenty years. However, it is difficult not to see this book as the latest of a handful of books on private collections, typically with superb illustrations of wares in fine condition, which owe their origin and much of their success to the appearance of a spate of Thai ceramics from grave diggings. The wares dug up surprised and delighted enthusiasts in a period of about six years following the discovery in the mid 1980s of hitherto unknown and undreamed of quantities of Thai ceramics buried in the hilly western border areas of Thailand.

Poor local farmers were locating and digging up graves of little known hill tribesmen which had remained undisturbed for perhaps 4 – 600 years, but which yielded a rich booty of ceramics buried with the dead. This digging began with the accidental discovery by a farmer near Tak of a remarkable ceramic piece which was sold to a dealer from Chiang Mai who was subsequently active in acquiring many other dug up pieces for the Osotspa collection. From Tak and Doi Musoe, on the way to Mae Sot on the Myanmar border, the digging spread along the western hills south to Umphang and north towards Om Koi and beyond. Thousands of pieces were unearthed in uncontrolled, clandestine diggings, to the chagrin of the Thai Fine Arts Department but to the delight of collectors, diggers and a chain of middlemen (and women).

The pieces dug up were very mixed, and included Chinese celadon and blue and white imports, but interest focussed mainly on an astonishing variety and range of Thai ceramics from kilns at Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai, San

Kamphaeng, Wang Nua, Kalong and elsewhere, and exciting new material from Myanmar. These finds included items of an outstanding quality rarely if ever seen before, including plates and other items in pristine condition from kilns such as Kalong where not much more than fragments and kiln wasters had been known before.

The enormous quantity of new high quality Thai ceramics was unearthed in stages as digging spread to new areas. Five to six years of abundant supply were followed, after 1990, by a decline to the present very low trickle, with the emphasis then returning to the traditional scavenging round kiln sites and to pieces retrieved from sunken ships. The first outstanding items fetched high prices. Subsequently, in 1987–1990, prices sagged a little but for the better items remained firm because the gold-rush atmosphere and general excitement generated by the discoveries brought many new enthusiastic buyers into the market, and thus increased the demand. Excitement was fuelled by the high quality of many of the items, by the discovery of hitherto virtually unknown Burmese green and white wares, and by the range of new designs from Kalong in particular. The finds attracted attention outside Thailand, particularly among a growing body of discerning Japanese collectors able to afford the prices commanded by the best pieces.

Every collection, big or small, normally reflects the personal tastes of the person or persons who put it together. Every piece offered to the collector, and then either acquired or rejected, reinforces that inevitably personal viewpoint expressed by the collection itself. That said, it would seem churlish, and even irrelevant, to complain that a particular type of ceramic, or kiln, was either under or over-represented. Over-represented in what sense? The collector acquired what attracted him and gave him pleasure, and now he publishes his collection in order, one assumes, to share that pleasure and his acquired knowledge with the reader. Let us give thanks for that.

In *The Beauty Of Fired Clay* the viewpoint of the collectors is inevitably Japanese: Thai ceramics are seen through Japanese eyes, and coloured by the traditional love of many Japanese of simplicity and elegance, including rustic simplicity and elegance. The book is also influenced by Japanese interest in the tea

ceremony which accounts for the inclusion of a section entitled "Si Satchanalai wares: bowls and the tea ceremony in Japan." This ceremony is described in detail in the Introduction, which explains why some Thai wares were aesthetically suited to it, with the prize going to a Si Satchanalai celadon bowl of lotus pod shape and 14.5 cm in diameter, but it is not clear from the text if Thai wares were exported to Japan for this purpose (the tea ceremony was at its height in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries) or if the authors of the book are merely showing us how some Thai wares are aesthetically and practically appropriate.

If the viewpoint of the two collectors responsible for this collection is Japanese, it is balanced and supplemented by the lengthy and informative introduction to the book written by Dawn Rooney. The authors and publishers were fortunate in obtaining the services of this well known art historian who has already contributed much to our knowledge of, and attitudes to, south-east Asian ceramics. Dawn Rooney's writing reflects her careful, painstaking, thorough scholarship, often enlivened by a refreshingly innovative viewpoint which sheds new light on what she is examining. For evidence of all this one has only to examine the substantial introduction to this book. Where else can we find, in a single publication, such detailed information on kiln areas, on kiln types, on stacking methods and other technical aspects? Numerous maps are included, including detailed maps of kiln sites, and these are clearly drawn, though they break the first rule of map making, namely that every map should have a scale!

Particularly welcome are the small reproductions in the introduction of a selection of motifs found incised or painted on the wares, such as floral designs, geometric motifs, borders, fish and aquatic plants, chakra (solar whorls), fish scale patterns and conch motifs, phoenixes, dragons, birds and even the occasional human. It requires numerous examples, which can be taken from shards, to illustrate the extraordinary richness and variety of these wares and the playful inventiveness of the Thai potter. One would have liked the illustrations grouped here to have been larger and in colour rather than in black and white, and possibly even more

numerous, but one suspects that the author of the introduction was constrained by her publishers and by considerations of cost to include less than she would have wished.

One of the great attractions of most Thai ceramics is not only the variety of designs used but the fact that almost every individual plate or bowl is slightly different, reflecting the whims of the potter. This is in strong contrast to the painstaking similarity of much of Chinese blue and white where a design would be very exactly reproduced on item after item, sometimes by a team of decorators each adding a few touches, to give an early example of mass production methods. The seemingly endless variety of design of Thai ceramics is shown conspicuously in the Sukhothai and Si Satchanalai fish plates, often giving the impression that the work was executed rapidly, with a fine careless flourish, so that we feel we can recapture, hundreds of years later, the creative joy of the potter. Doubtless we all appreciate Thai ceramics in a slightly different, personal way. In trying to summarise her own feelings as to why she finds Thai ceramics attractive, Dawn Rooney says that the South East Asian pots functioned as utilitarian and domestic vessels, and it is the earthy qualities of the clay and glaze used that are appreciated today. Their sturdiness, she says, has an innate appeal because it takes the wares away from the pursuit of technical refinement and links them with the basic materials of clay and water: the colours are connected with the earth and the natural colour of iron, with no attempt being made to disguise these earthy features.

In contrast to the introduction, the short captions to the excellent photographs give relatively little information. What sort of information should be included in a caption to a photograph, and how long should the caption be? Dawn Rooney, who wrote the captions as well as the long introduction, seems to take the view that since a colour photograph is given the reader it is not always necessary to describe what he can see for himself. The celadon glazes are almost all described simply as "green", on the stated grounds that the type of green can be seen from the photograph, but the photographs show many different, sometimes strikingly different, green glazes. One wonders if we cannot expect these variations to be reflected in

the description. Thai celadons vary from brownish green to olive green, through a range of mid-greens to a distinctive blue green and even to a superb green-blue colour—the most delightful of all to many enthusiasts—known in Thai as “si fa” (sometimes translated as sky blue). In Thailand a bluish celadon will often fetch many times the price of an otherwise comparable green one. It seems incomprehensible that those who made this collection, and whoever wrote the captions, did not respond to these different colours. Is this another case of a possibly Japanese viewpoint? In Japanese the word “aio” is used to describe both blue and green objects, sometimes apparently indiscriminately. Colour perceptions vary between persons, and influence individual tastes and preferences . . . and collections!

A more general observation on the captions might be to point out that a large number of items photographed bear the simple dating “14 to 16 century”. This traditional, cautious view of dating prompts the question in the reader: “after all the recent research carried out can we not do better and be more precise than that?” At Si Satchanalai there is a fairly agreed succession now of different styles of product and of different clays used, with the coarse dark gray clays used early on for a range of products from jarlets to plates to roof ornaments being replaced later by better clays, including the characteristic gray-white clay with small dark specks mined from the other side of the River Yom. It would be helpful if the photographic captions could try to differentiate more between earlier and later pieces. Dawn Rooney in the introduction summarises recent thinking when she points out that the traditional Thai view that the production at Si Satchanalai was greatest in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and then stopped suddenly with the Burmese invasion has now been challenged. Some recent researchers feel that the period of production was much longer than has been thought, starting earlier, probably at the beginning of the thirteenth century (if not earlier), and continuing later, even after the arrival of the Burmese was supposed to have stopped production in the sixteenth century.

By arranging the over 350 items in the collection into sections, Dawn Rooney has in

effect set up and used a classification system. Systems of classification have always been a challenge to the scientist and research worker. To be useful a classification should be both practical and easy to understand: it must separate into groups items having some important characteristic in common, but to do this one has to define the relative importance of the different criteria taken into account. What takes precedence? Is it the shape and use of the vessel, or the type of clay, or the type and colour of the glaze, or the kiln where the item was made? A logical classification system should not be ambiguous by allowing a particular item to fall into more than one subdivision, and it is necessary to define the criteria used to subdivide at different levels of classification, starting from the highest.

In this book the subdivisions used to classify the collection might be criticised by the purist because they are not mutually exclusive. For example, the extensive group “Si Satchanalai wares: covered boxes”, covering 16 pages and 43 items, in fact overlaps with several other groups defined not by their shape and purpose, as are “covered boxes,” but by their area of origin and their glaze. Individual covered boxes included here could equally logically have been grouped under “Si Satchanalai wares: underglaze iron-decorated” (28 boxes) or “Si Satchanalai wares: white-glazed” (3 boxes), or “Si Satchanalai wares: brown-glazed” (2 boxes) or “Si Satchanalai wares: brown and white” (10 boxes). The classifier’s difficulties are shown by the fact that some boxes have more than one glaze, e.g. the lid or the knob has a different glaze from the body. Classifying ceramics thus usually entails some compromises in order to make the result not too hard to understand and not too complicated, and the classification adopted here is acceptable in these respects.

Covered boxes, which occupy a large part of the collection, have long appealed to collectors because of their neatness and variety, but they are not particularly Thai in the sense that they were typically exported, to Indonesia and elsewhere, where they are now recovered from graves. They are not much found in Thailand except round the kilns where they were produced. Thus they seem to have had limited appeal at the time of their production to Thai

people themselves. Unlike so much else from the Si Satchanalai kilns, covered boxes have hardly ever been found in the extensive Thai grave diggings. In fact, most covered boxes in collections were obtained from the countries outside Thailand to which they were exported, including Indonesia, and before the gold rush of ceramics from the grave diggings in Western Thailand began.

The grouping of the collection into 34 sections is based mainly on the area of production subdivided according to glaze and shape. "Early Si Satchanalai wares" form a small group (8 items) distinguished by their coarse, dark gray clay, though this fact is not referred to in the very short captions. The remaining Si Satchanalai pieces are divided into no less than 17 sections, and form the bulk of the collection (150 items, or over 40% of the total). First is a section of underglaze iron decorated wares with green glaze, these being the relatively uncommon and very desirable celadons with underglaze iron painting (5 items). Next are six sections of the more typical green glazed celadon wares, where the decorations are incised and not painted, subdivided into plates, bowls, stem bowls, jars, bottles, and kendis and ewers. The next Si Satchanalai section includes underglaze iron decorated items, but the short captions to all the ten items in this section omit any description whatsoever of the glaze: it is not a celadon (if it were the items would have gone into an earlier section) and is described in the introduction as "a transparent clear glaze", the rest of the description in the introduction being concerned with the often elaborate underglaze decorations, featuring fish in great variety, floral and geometric designs.

The remaining ten Si Satchanalai sections are subdivided according to glaze (marbled, white glazed, brown glazed, and brown and white, the latter traditionally highly prized by Thai collectors), and according to shape (human figures, animal figures, covered boxes, and underglaze iron-decorated jarlets), with a final section called "Bowls and the tea ceremony in Japan" which lumps together bowls of many types presumably because they are of a suitable size for the tea ceremony.

The Si Satchanalai wares are followed by four sections on the distinctive products of the

kilns at old Sukhothai. The first section shows three fine, boldly shaped jars, unglazed but with traces of fly ash glaze (characteristically mainly present on the side of the jar nearest the firebox). The second section shows 16 plates, 13 of them depicting fish, the best known type of Sukhothai plate. Most are relatively restrained examples with a fish in the centre but little or no decoration in the cavetto. Much blacker, more exuberant examples exist, and this is one section this reviewer would have liked to see expanded, possibly at the expense of some of the numerous covered bowls, but *chacun son gout*. The next section deals with Sukhothai bowls, often similar to the plates in their decoration but in this selection including more floral designs and seven bowls with attractive dark decoration featuring solar whorls in the centre, a striking and typically Sukhothai motif.

The distinctive characteristics of Sukhothai pieces, attractive for their lack of sophistication, include the spur marks in the centre of most plates and bowls, the white inclusions in the brown clay and the way the slip and glaze are carelessly applied to the piece, leaving irregular traces on the foot and base, suggesting hasty work. The way the underglaze design is painted on reinforces the impression of haste. The seeming lack of precision and the spontaneity and infinite variety of the design give these rustic pieces an immense appeal. These characteristics and appeal would have come over even more strongly if the book had included more photographs of the underside of the plates and bowls.

Four sections cover northern Thai wares, divided into Kalong, Wang Nua, San Kamphaeng and Phan. The distinctive, mostly very thinly and elegantly potted Kalong wares cover an astonishing range and are well known as being very popular with collectors outside Thailand as well as within the kingdom, including Japanese collectors. It is hardly surprising to find them fairly well represented here, though the variety and range of Kalong wares is such that it would need a much fuller treatment to do them justice. The first plate depicts the best known design, a bold pattern depicting black shapes here described as "abstract birds or bats", though commonly described elsewhere as either crows or flowers,

depending on the imagination of the viewer. Item 288 is a tubular support, short and squat. Tubular supports, especially those from Kalong and Si Satchanalai, are often (as here) covered with layers of glaze from repeated firings, and form beautiful and fascinating objects in their own right, but neglected so far by many traditional collectors.

In contrast to the Japanese viewpoint expressed in "The beauty of fired clay" is the dominantly traditional Thai viewpoint expressed in a book covering another important collection, the Osotspa collection. This book, which has the Thai text accompanied by an English text, also shows a very large number of important pieces, many of them, like those in the Honda collection, unearthed by the recent grave diggings referred to above which did so much to arouse a new fever of interest in Thai ceramics. Like the Honda book, the photographs are of very high quality, and again like the Honda book, the publication benefitted from an outside, expatriate input, in this case the editorial contributions of Mrs. Ginny di Crocco, well known to members of the Siam Society. It is instructive to compare these two excellent books, both recent and both striving to give information to the collector in need of it.

The Osotspa book, *Ceramic art in Thailand*, published in December 1996, is the second edition. The introduction to the first edition said that "a partial purpose of this book is to provide a means of self study". An additional aim, emphasised in the preface to the second edition, was to "stimulate pride in the Thai national identity, patriotism and the protection of the priceless Thai heritage".

The Osotspa illustrations are of a high standard. Some of them (such as Fig 4 of an early incised Ban Chiang blackware, and Fig 41 of dark-glazed tall Si Satchanalai bottles) are outstanding. They are presented in a varied manner, with different backgrounds and in different sizes to give variety. Numerous kiln photos are included.

In general, the Osotspa book succeeds in its aim of being a handbook for self study, particularly for Thai readers. Despite the emphasis in the introduction on the stated aim of stimulating interest in the Thai national identity and Thai heritage, much space and many

illustrations are devoted to non-Thai wares which were imported at some stage, mostly from China but also from Vietnam, Burma and even Europe (Holland, Belgium, Scotland and England). At the end of the book are two supplements. A short supplement (four pages) gives very valuable illustrations of the bases of 18 dishes, an important diagnostic feature. A much longer supplement (60 pages) is entitled "illustrated catalogue of ancient ceramics found in Thailand" and gives pictures of 100 items of which 49 are from Thailand, four from Europe and almost all the rest from China, thus reflecting—as every collection does—the tastes and interests of those who put it together.

The question of nomenclature has long concerned scholars. In a chapter in the Osotspa book listing production centres, "Sukhothai wares" are said to come from two kiln sites, Sukhothai and Si Satchanalai, the latter being correctly described as "the largest industrial site for the production of Sukhothai wares". The term "Sukhothai" is thus used, in this publication and elsewhere, in an ambiguous way since it refers some times to both areas (Sukhothai and Si Satchanalai) and some times to only the smaller area of kilns just outside the walls of Sukhothai old town. In some publications and catalogues further confusion is caused by the use of the term "Sukhothai period" covering a range of sites thought broadly contemporary with Sukhothai and Si Satchanalai. A careful distinction is desirable between the terms Sukhothai, for wares from Sukhothai old town only, and Si Satchanalai, for those from Ban Kot Noi and Pa Yang.

A considerable section of the Osotspa book, including 9 illustrations devoted to Bencharong wares and 18 devoted to Lai Nam Thong and other imports, is devoted to Chinese ceramics of a later period imported into Thailand, mainly in the nineteenth century. These imports are said to have been very popular with the Thai nobility of the period, though these very ornate, colourful porcelain wares are of less interest today. Imports from China are not included in the Honda book. It is difficult to see how the nineteenth century Bencharong imports in particular can be considered to add much to the "priceless Thai heritage" mentioned in the introduction, but again, every collection must

reflect the interests of the compiler, and who are we to grumble?

The two page “selected bibliography” in the Osotspa book is selective to the point of being so short it leaves out much of importance: there is conspicuously no mention of books by Dawn Rooney (on Khmer ceramics), by John Shaw (on Thai ceramics, available in both Thai and English versions, and on northern Thai ceramics), or the work of Joyce White (on Ban Chiang) or Don Hein (on Si Satchanalai)—all of them non-Thais—though space is found for minor articles by Thai researchers and by the Thai Fine Arts Department. The very much fuller bibliography included in *The Beauty of Fired Clay* is, in contrast, an excellent example of thorough scholarship of very great value to anybody seriously interested in the relevant literature.

A word about fakes. Fakes can be defined as copies made with the intention to deceive. Like the poor, they are always with us. The flood of genuine ceramics in recent years has stimulated its own crop of increasingly ingenious fakes, especially of Burmese green and white, genuine examples of which are in very strong demand and fetch high prices. Most collectors and experts, even the most experienced, have been deceived by the faker at one time or another: it is almost a part of learning about ceramics, and a battle of wits as fakers become ever more ingenious. One suspects that some fakers get great satisfaction from deceiving the so-called expert, sometimes using samples of the correct clay from the original clay production sites, sometimes taking genuine old plates or bowls without decoration, and adding a design, glazing and refiring, as was done with initial success to undecorated San Kamphaeng plates which found themselves with an added fish decoration and a new glaze. Some fakes have been deliberately broken and then repaired to add authenticity. The fact that an item is dug up means little: it might have been buried last week. Some fakes are superficially more attractive than the originals which inspired them. *Caveat emptor*, buyer beware!

Fortunately collectors and experts usually develop a sixth sense and a feel for the genuine article, shown in the two major collections discussed above. Only one or two items in the *Beauty of Fired Clay* book have been treated with reserve by Dawn Rooney, as indicated by

the phrase “authenticated by the owner” in the caption. Almost all the items in the Osotspa collection are above suspicion except possibly the showiest of them all, the large Khmer elephant on the cover, which has not convinced everybody. The battle of wits between expert and faker is by no means over.

To sum up, *The Beauty of Fired Clay* is a valuable addition to a long line of ceramic books, catalogues and articles on Thai ceramics. It combines the comprehensive scholarship of the introduction with a more abundant number of fine photographs than almost any comparable publication. Ever since he became an enthusiastic student of Thai ceramics some dozen years ago, this reviewer has fantasized about producing that ideal book on Thai ceramics many of us dream about in our idle moments: balanced, comprehensive, and very copiously illustrated. Now that “*The Beauty of Fired Clay*” has come out, that pipe-dream of a task seems a little less necessary.

Peter M. Ahn

(Note on author)

Professor Ahn is a British soil scientist who worked all his life on tropical soils. He is the author of many publications, including three books, the latest of which “Tropical soils and fertiliser use” is published by Longmans in their Intermediate Tropical Agriculture series. He came to work in Thailand in 1987. In 1990 he decided he did not have enough time both to work and study Thai ceramics—so of course he gave up work, retired, and has followed his interests in ceramics ever since.



John Guy

*Woven Cargoes: Indian Textiles in the East*  
London: Thames and Hudson 1998, pp. 192;  
241 illustrations, 145 in colour, Hardcover.

In this splendid book, John Guy, who has already proved the brilliance and profundity of his scholarship in the field of Southeast Asian ceramics, turns his attention to the trade in Indian textiles with the countries to the east of India. The main premise of his argument is that the

huge appetite for spices, aromatic woods, resin and gold generated in the Mediterranean and in Han China helped successively in the formation of states in Southeast Asia, in the spread of Islam and the four hundred years of European involvement in Asia, and that in all these developments Indian textiles feature as the principal trading commodity, because textiles have always played, as they still play today, a central role in the ceremonial, ritual and social life of most Southeast and East Asian societies. The boldness of these generalizations is matched by the immense geographical and chronological span of the book's subject-matter, which ranges from ninth-century fragments found in the Red Sea and Lower Egypt to the *sarasa* still produced at the end of the twentieth century for the Japanese market.

One difficulty inherent in any study of the history of textiles, at least in Asia, is, as Guy observes, that the principal sources are the textiles themselves. These not only have a relatively poor survival rate, but are often difficult to date, while it is seldom possible to identify textiles precisely from the rare written descriptions and representations in painting and sculpture. However, Guy's encyclopaedic knowledge of the technology of Indian textile production and of the history of trade in the Indian Ocean, Southeast and East Asia more than compensates for these limitations of his sources.

Most of the textiles produced in India for the Southeast and East Asian markets were the so-called 'painted cottons', consisting of plain woven cloths decorated either by mordant- or resist-dyeing or a combination of the two. He uses van Rheede's remarkable account of the painting of chintz on the Coromandel Coast, written in 1688 to describe the complex processes of dyeing and double-dyeing needed to produce certain colours, and gives his own detailed description of the magnificent ikat silk cloths known as *patola* that were produced in Gujarat, chiefly for the Indonesian market. He then goes on to discuss the mechanisms of the trade in the Middle East and Southeast Asia and observes, as did Tom Pires, that invaluable source of information on Asian trade, almost five hundred years ago, that Indian cloths traded to the Middle East and to Southeast Asia

belonged to a single continuum in which Gujarati textiles provided a link between the two regions, a link strengthened by the *hajj* and by the insatiable demand throughout the Middle East and the Mediterranean for the spices of eastern Indonesia. He draws fascinating parallels in West Indian art between textile designs, manuscript painting and decorative stonework and traces the influence of *patola* designs on the floral patterns used on ikat cloths in Indonesia from the *geringsing* double ikat of Tenganana in Bali to the East Sumbanese *hinggi*.

There follows a survey of the countries with which Indian textiles have been traded through the ages. After a brief glance at Pagan, which obtained most of its prestige textiles from nearby Bengal, and Angkor, where Indian textiles enjoyed a similarly high status, Guy looks at Melaka, which became the "axial point through which Indian textiles were disseminated in Southeast Asian and East Asian trading networks" (p. 66), at Sumatra, where there was a huge demand for Indian cloths for dress and for a variety of social, ceremonial and ritual uses among both the cosmopolitan coastal Malays and the people of the interior such as the Bataks, at Java, where gift lists on ninth-century inscriptions and Hindu and Buddhist sculpture provide valuable evidence; and at other islands in the Indonesian archipelago.

Guy gives much fascinating and recondite information on the *dodot*, produced on the Coromandel Coast for the Javanese nobility, the *antakusuma*, to which talismanic and supernatural protective powers were attributed, the *maa'* ceremonial banners of Toraja, the earliest of which dates back to c. 1430 and which feature in Toraja creation myths (one spectacular example is illustrated on p. 102), the large cotton chintz cloths known as *palampore*, also from the Coromandel Coast, that first appeared in Southeast Asia in the seventeenth century and were used as coverlets and hangings, and the *kalamkari* hand-painted, resist- and mordant-dyed cotton textiles painted on both sides that were exported all over Southeast Asia. He devotes a chapter to the splendid 'cloths in the fashion of Siam' that were specially produced for wear at the Thai court and for use as royal gifts and for the adornment of Buddhist monasteries, including

the *pha nung*, which he describes in considerable detail. Guy recounts the gradual decline of the important Thai market, first in the face of competition from Chinese silks, then as a result of the fashion among Thai noble ladies for weaving their own clothes and of the adoption of elements of European dress at court from the time of King Mongkut, and maintains that this was one of the factors that led to the appearance of the mass-produced, mud-resist, block-painted Indian fabrics known as *saudagiri*, which were superseded in turn by machine-printed textiles.

After a brief account of the limited export trade of Indian textiles to China, the book concludes with an extended description of the more substantial Japan trade. In his account of the export of Indian textiles to Japan before the seventeenth century, Guy indulges in some interesting speculations. He wonders, for instance, whether Indian painted cloths may have been among the goods traded between Thailand and Japan, and whether they may have been employed in addition to Chinese cloths for making the robes of Zen Buddhist priests and the costumes of the Noh theatre. Many of the examples that he cites for this period are of garments made of Indian cloth that were worn by foreigners in Japan, but were not made specifically for the Japanese market, notably the voluminous Portuguese *bombachas* that figure so prominently and picturesquely on *namban* screens, or of textiles that were used for ecclesiastical vestments, altar cloths and other objects by the Catholic missions in Japan, notably the Jesuits. Again, some of the Indian textiles that came into Japan in this early period were not strictly speaking trade goods but cloths given by foreigners as gifts to shoguns and *daimyo*, although Guy also points out that they did exchange such goods among themselves, as, for example, the 'hundred Indian gowns richly wrought' which the Tokugawa shogun Hiderada gave to his son Iemitsu in Kyoto in 1626.

Guy is on surer ground when he traces the fascinating story of the use of Indian *sarasa* in Japan for all manner of esoteric purposes, including the lining of samurai armour, tea-caddy pouches, book bindings, seal containers and other treasured objects or *meibitsu*, the textiles themselves often acquiring in the process the status of *meibitsu-gire* or famed fabrics.

There are a few inconsistencies of spelling and some small factual errors. For example, the city of Ambon is not the capital of Seram, but of the modern Indonesian province of Maluku, in which Seram is one island and Ambon another; Ayutthaya became the capital of the Thai kingdom in the fourteenth, not the fifteenth century, and was preceded by Sukhothai, not by Lopburi, which was a Khmer provincial capital and is situated 100 kms, not 41 kms, north of Ayutthaya; Afonso (not Alfonso) de Albuquerque conquered Goa and established it as the capital of Portuguese India in 1510 and governed from there, not from Cochin. But these are only very minor irritations in a book in which both text and illustrations do ample justice to the rich diversity of the subject-matter. One of its most satisfying features is that the illustrations, although they all portray textiles of historical significance or of exceptional beauty or both, have not been selected solely for these qualities, but because they also demonstrate a specific point made in the text. The result is a book that is itself a *meibitsu*—gorgeous to look at and absorbing and instructive to read.

John Villiers



Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing  
*In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-way Place.*  
Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993, pp. xvi, 350.

Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's study of marginality among the Meratus Dayaks in southeastern Kalimantan was widely acclaimed by scholars writing in academic journals. These reviewers praised her experimental depiction of the Meratus Dayaks and her use of non-conformist informants and innovative approaches. Tsing makes frequent reference to a woman named Uma Adang who follows a lifestyle differing from Meratus Dayak gender convention. Instead of eating or growing rice like other Meratus Dayak women, for example, Uma Adang grows and eats legumes and vegetables. She uses her time to engage in such "unfeminine" local political activities such

as creating a network for sharing the produce of community rice swiddens.

Tsing draws parallels between Uma Adang and the Diamond Queen, Ratu Intan one of surely few women to serve as the ruler of a state in the centuries-ago past of Kalimantan. The Diamond Queen came to rule a minor kingdom on the island's southeastern coast when a king from the larger kingdom of Majapahit died en route to taking the throne. Besides their being located within the territory of this ancient realm, Tsing traces conceptual parallels between the group to which Uma Adang belongs and that of the Diamond Queen.

Tsing uses post-modernist and feminist theory to place this people within the wide theoretical context appropriate for such a diverse people. Tsing aptly puts gender at the center of her analysis to "show the connections between intercommunity divisions, including gender difference, and Meratus regional and national marginality".

This approach describes the culturally diverse Meratus Dayaks who are located on edges of Indonesian society. So many variations of culture overlap these people that even finding a name to refer to this study group was problematic and required a considerable discussion in the book. Partly this is because the people lie outside the national educational system and practice a religion different from most people in the country. These and other non-indigenous belief systems are being introduced to these people at such a rate that they threaten social stability but also give rise to new cultural variations within them.

Other variations between the Meratus Dayaks and their neighbors, while perhaps conceptually less challenging, threaten the people's way of life more directly. The shifting cultivation with which they cultivate their crops is discouraged by national authorities. Resettlement plans and new roads entering their traditional settlement areas interrupt the daily life of the Meratus Dayaks. In addition, physical danger arises out of being located in an area of armed insurgencies.

What is surprising, and one reason why this work published in 1994 on a marginal group in Indonesia is being reviewed in this issue of the *Journal*, is the lack of reference to the many similar groups in Mainland Southeast Asia.

From at least the early-1950s when Edmund Leach began describing cultural variations in highland Burma, there has been a steady stream of observers beginning with (to name a few) Alting, Condominas, Geddes, Hinton, Kirsch, Kunstadter, Keyes, Lee, Lehman, Lemoine, Miles, Mischung, Walker, and Wall whose writings can readily be found in the journal literature. More recently, newer scholars such as Hayami, Huthseeing, Kammerer, Matras-Troubetzkoy, Radley, Tannenbaum, Rajah, Symonds, Tapp, and Tooker are adding to this literature. Their writings do not begin to cover authors writing in Thai and other languages of the area, indigenous people who are starting to tell their own story in ways that reach the media, and a sometimes rich but difficult to access body of writings in the publications of development organizations.

These scholars examined highlanders fully as marginalized as the Meratus Dayaks and beset by socio-political and cultural pressures the equal of those in southeastern Kalimantan. Some of have discussed individuals as idiosyncratic as Uma Adang. Many of these authors have written compellingly, innovatively, provocatively, and pertinently to issues covered in Tsing's discourse. It would seem thus that if Tsing could extend her discussion of Uma Adang to the literature on abortion in America, she could have taken interest in issues current in the discussion of highland groups in Mainland Southeast Asia.

Yet Tsing's seeming short-sightedness is shared by not only her colleagues writing on other insular Southeast Asian groups (such as in the Philippines) but by almost all the authors listed above working on the highland scene of Mainland Southeast Asia.

In order to avoid the lengthy assessment needed to uncover the rationale for this shared lack of concern, take but the example of a younger scholar, Hjorleifur (Leif) Jonsson, who in this issue of the *Journal* in an article dealing with the Mien in Thailand, refers to two of Tsing's writings. As more such "cross-reading" occurs it will enrich the literature of highland groups in this region and beyond.

Ronald D. Renard

## IN BRIEF

***Wat Chulamani Pi Kanchanaphisek*** [Wat Chulamani: The Golden Jubilee Year] Phitsanulok: The Third Army & Wat Chulamani, edited by Pranee Chaemkhunthian 1996.

A collection of articles on this important monastery in Phitsanulok where King Trailokanat was ordained as a monk and built a *vihara* in the mid-fifteenth century. The strength of Chiang Mai at the time demanded that the king move to this northern outpost of Ayutthaya to protect the kingdom. This book includes articles on the architecture, legal system, religion, and politics of Wat Chulamani with emphasis on the time of King Trailokanat. Edited by the doyen of Phitsanulok historians, Achan Pranee of the Pibun Songkhram Rajabhat Institute the articles are well-presented with a useful and comprehensive bibliography.



***Thung Maharat Kap Prawatisat Muang Kamphaeng Phet*** [*Thung Maharat* and the History of Kamphaeng Phet]. Kamphaeng Phet: Center for the Development of Thai Language Education, Wachiraprakan Secondary School, edited by Santi Aphairat and Supranee Saengthong, 1996.

The novel, *Thung Maharat*, set in Kamphaeng Phet in the period from 1890 until 1950, is among the most popular of Thailand. Its author, Malai Chuphinit, was born in Kamphaeng Phet, where his father was the head of Nakhon Chum commune (site of Wachiraprakan School). The novel describes the life and times of Kamphaeng Phet through the life of a young family. Featured in the story is a Karen timber merchant much resembling the real life Pha Po of Nakhon Chum at whose house King

Chulalongkorn once had lunch. In dealing with all aspects of Kamphaeng Phet life and customs, the editors from Wachiraprakan School provide much useful information on a province of importance often overlooked.



***Chitrakam Faphanang Wat Tha Sutthawat*** [The Murals of Wat Tha Sutthawat]. Ang Thong: Ang Thong Provincial Government, in Thai & English (translated by Kanokwan Rithiphairot & Richard Goldrich), [1996].

Wat Tha Sutthawat is a temple established during the Ayutthayan period at which King Naresuan once stayed in 1592. However, because of the extreme disrepair into which the temple fell, Princess Maha Chakri suggested on a visit there in 1986 that the ubosot be replaced. The provincial government with much help from the local people cooperated in rebuilding the ubosot. Murals inside the temple of the Maha Janaka Jataka (which His Majesty the King translated into English) were painted by students of the Handicraft Promotion Foundation under the patronage of Her Majesty the Queen. This book was prepared to mark the dedication of the ubosot. There are five sections: a general introduction, an introduction to Thai mural paintings, the ubosot of Wat Tha Sutthawat, the mural paintings, and the gilt designs on the door panels. The book is richly illustrated with many color prints of the murals. The excellent English translation allows for access to this book by a large audience.



***Phrabat Somdet Phrachaoyuhua Nai Phra-boromaracha Chakriwong Kap Nakhon***

**Chiang Mai** [The Kings of the Chakri Dynasty and Chiang Mai]. Bangkok: Historical Commission, Secretariat of the Prime Minister, 1996. Edited by Wina Rochanaratha, et al. Translated by Theera Nuchpiam and Winai Pongsripian.

This book presents the history of Chiang Mai from the perspective of the kings of Bangkok. Starting with a short review of Chiang Mai's history until the founding of the Chakri Dynasty in 1782, the book focusses on the ties between the Bangkok kings and the rulers of Chiang Mai until 1996. Excellently illustrated and well-researched, this bi-lingual book is the closest one can find to an English-language history of Chiang Mai.



**Ruam Sutyot Phrakhruang Muang Lamphun** [A Collection of Outstanding Amulets from Lamphun] Lamphun: Provincial Parian Council, 1998. Edited by Phra Mahaphayon Latthakhuno.

Rather than only a review of amulets from Lamphun, this work also presents the history of Lamphun from its founding of the kingdom of Hariphunchai by Queen Chamma Thewi, from the Mon city of Lavo (Lopburi) in the ninth century. Included are descriptions of the city design, famous monasteries in Lamphun (Wat Phrathat Hariphunchai, Wat Phrabat Tak Pha), and the well-known monks from Lamphun such as Khruba Siwichai, who built the road up Doi Suthep in 1938. With this framework, the description of the amulets, comprising the latter half of the book, is much better understood.



**Moradok Lok: Uthayan Prawatisat Sukhothai Si Satchanalai Kamphaeng Phet** [The World Heritage Sukhothai, Sri Satchanalai and Khampaeng Phet Historical Parks]. Bangkok: Fine Arts Department, n.d. [ca. 1996], by Anek Sihamart, translation into English by Surapol Natapintu.

Among the many books on Sukhothai and the other nearby early sites, this provides one of

the most outstanding overviews. All the major sites of the three cities are discussed. The photographs are well chosen and the translation well done. The fact that it is not available for sale will frustrate the interested visitor to Sukhothai who may already be discouraged because the book shop there is so often devoid of even less authoritative English language guidebooks.



**Uttaradit: Singwaetlom Sinlapakam Samrap Yaowachon Lae Kansupsap Wathanatham Thongthin** [Uttaradit: The Artistic Environment for Youth and the Preservation of Local Culture] Uttaradit: Rajabhat Institute, 1996, edited by Praphat Kusumanon.

During the Golden Jubilee year, all provincial cultural centers in Thailand produced books on theme of the artistic environment in that locality. Among the most interesting is this publication which covers the history, geography, architecture, blacksmithing, and contemporary culture of this city on the Nan River north of Phitsanulok. Also discussed is the work of the provincial cultural preservation unit to maintain certain traditions of Uttaradit.



**Chotmai het Nakhon Chiang Mai** [Records of Chiang Mai] Bangkok: Historical Commission, Secretariat of the Prime Minister, 1999, edited by Winai Pongsiphian, et al.

In honor of the Golden Jubilee year of 1996 and the 700th anniversary of Chiang Mai, the Historical Commission published this collection of unpublished manuscripts from the Epigraphy and Manuscript Section of the National Library from 1807 until 1868. Three main categories of documents are included: 1) official relations between Chiang Mai and Bangkok including tribute missions, the mediation of internal disputes, and the resettlement of such places as Chiang Rai, 2) the collection of intelligence on Burma, and 3) socio-economic conditions in Lan Na including agriculture, climatic conditions, and trade. The contribution of Chao

Wongsak Na Chiang Mai in making this publication possible should also be noted.



***Khrongkan Phathana Laksut Thongthin Nai Radap Prathom Suksa Chon Phao Pwakeryaw*** [Project to Draw Up a Primary School Curriculum on the Karen People]. Chiang Mai: Mae Wang Watershed Community Network, Chiang Mai Provincial Primary Education Headquarters et al. n.d. ca. 1997.

Conventional wisdom has it that Karens and other hilltribes are recent immigrants to Thailand, destroy the forest, and engage in other practices dangerous to the nation. In response, members of a local Karen community with roots in the area dating back 400 or more years, have with support from UNICEF and in cooperation with the provincial primary education authorities begun drafting a book on the highlights of Karen culture and history, including an account of their environmentally sound agricultural (rotational swiddening) practices that have enabled them to live in the area for centuries without degrading the forest (similar to Karens in Thung Yai, a forest in Kanchanaburi that has been declared a World Heritage Site). Although still in draft form, the preparation of this publication is in itself noteworthy and pioneering.



***Prawatisat Phrathat Doi Tung: History of Phra That Doi Tung.*** Chiang Rai: Committee to

Research the History of Phra That Doi Tung, Mae Fah Luang Foundation 1993. Edited by Hans Penth, et al. In Thai and English.

Doi Tung (mountain) and the Phra That (holy relic) atop it have long been a part of northern Thai history. Today the mountain is the site of a well-known highland development project initiated by Her Royal Highness the Princess Mother and administered by the Mae Fah Luang Foundation. This work explores the historical sources describing the mountain and assesses its place in the historical record. Well-illustrated and meticulously researched by an experienced team from Chiang Mai University, there is much information here not available elsewhere.



***Phrasuphanakalaya Chak Tamnan Su Na Prawatisat*** [Phra Suphanakalaya: From Historical Records to the Pages of History] Bangkok: Skyline Unity Company Ltd, 1999, by Sunait Chutinatharanon.

Suphanakalaya was the older sister of King Naresuan. Both were taken to the Burma after Burmese armies sacked Ayutthaya in 1588. Knowledge of her existence was found only in Thai oral literature. Dr. Sunait tracked down the few references to compile not only an account of her life insofar as possible but also a historiographical study of a subject of interest to both the Burmese and the Thai. Because of the significance of this book, a full review is being prepared for a future issue of the JSS.

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