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PHILIPPINES

LUMICAO-LORA, MARIA LUISA. *Gaddang Literature*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1984. 152 pages. Softbound US\$7.50; ISBN 971-10-0174-8. (Exclusive North American distributor: The Cellar Book Shop, Detroit).

The dominance of the Tagalog/Filipino language in the socio-linguistic milieu of the Philippines, though explainable through its intrinsic characteristics, can also be traced from a relatively wider documentation of its literature.

Ferdinand Magellan's chroniclers and the 16th and 17th century Christian missionaries have provided us a glimpse of the richness of the Tagalog language and culture through samplings of the early forms of traditional literature, and more specifically, through studies of the Tagalog language (i.e., dictionaries made by the aforesaid pioneers). José Rizal (1861-1896), the Philippines' national hero, made intensive studies on the Tagalog language and literature in his campaign for independence during the Spanish regime. Such an historical background can be said to have contributed to the continuance and dynamism that Tagalog/Filipino is now enjoying.

But lest we forget, the Philippines is a mixture of ethno-linguistic groups. There are eight major Philippine languages and scores more of minor languages. Gaddang (a people and language of Northeastern Luzon island, especially the southern portion of the Cagayan Valley, with an estimated population of 30,000) belongs in the last category. Offhand, one can readily say that documentation and research on minority languages and literatures of the Philippines is meager, if not too scarce.

It is in this light that one must proceed in appreciating *Gaddang Literature* by Maria Luisa Lumicao-Lora, a Gaddang herself from Nueva Viscaya. The book attempts to introduce Gaddang literature not only to preserve what is left of it, but more so, to assimilate it into the whole gamut of Philippine literature.

The book is divided into six sections, or rather, six traditional literary/cultural forms: Folksongs, proverbs, riddles, poems, legends and an epic. Through these six sections, the book attempts to bring forth the Gaddang's daily life, thoughts, aspirations, philosophy and the like that add up to an indirect definition of what it means to be Gaddang. All literary entries in this book are translated into English from the original Gaddang.

The book pictures the Gaddang in a landscape of external influences that have affected their culture. Their hospitality, as with other Filipinos, often paves the way for these external influences to enter and be assimilated, as in the following folksong:

Hospitality

I am extending my praise and thanks—

Your goodness for taking us in;
 I hope you'll never regret
 That you willingly took us in. (p. 41)

Who "willingly took us in?" As in the case of the Philippine experience, the Spaniards and the Americans, though coming in as conquerors, were made to appear as the benevolent host and teacher. And the conquered, portraided as the "us," is now made to appear as the one indebted.

Many Spanish, American, and Tagalog influences can be seen throughout the entire collection of these texts which the book would now call original Gaddang. For example:

One, two, get set,
 Saint Michael Parakel
 Is chased by old Julian
 Across the river bank. (p. 53)

The mention of saints, Spanish names, Christmas, miracles and even the ultrasubmissiveness of the Gaddang are definitely of Spanish influence. These are not words alone by themselves that have proliferated in the various literary forms including legends, but are byproducts of socio-economic and political events.

As such, the book falls short in segregating what is truly Gaddang and that which has been assimilated from outside influences. Surely, one would contest the originality of the following riddle:

As Juan walked,
 The lane split. (p. 80)

The riddle describes a zipper, a gadget of the 20th century imported by the Philippines from another country. Unless the zipper was invented by a Gaddang, the proverb is not original. Or, it may also be said that this reflects the Gaddang reaction to modern inventions.

Or, there is the similarity of Gaddang entries with Tagalog texts. The following Gaddang proverb is exactly the same as one in Tagalog. One may therefore ask, is the similarity a product of Tagalog dominance? Or is the proverb an original Gaddang item which the Tagalogs have claimed as theirs? Or, is the proverb a national cultural expression? This is only one example for a lot of unanswered questions.

He who never looks back to
 Where he came from
 Never reaches his destination. (p. 70)

The previous discussion is not to belittle the book, but rather to push further its subtle call and intention. No doubt, the book is a pioneering effort, thus, it must be used for further studies on the Gaddang to help make up for the evident lack of such studies: "It is sad to note that although Gaddang literature is rich, not much has been written about it to stir national sentiment or create an ethnocentric wave of study, research or cultural preservation . . ." (p. 7).

Truly, an aspect of Gaddang culture has been preserved by the book. The epic alone, with mentions of Sumarta (Sumatra) and Faru (old name of Aparri, a seaport

at the northern tip of Luzon) is worth digging into for the benefit of pre-colonial studies. The same interest can be generated from the mention of ethnic wars, Gaddang versus Ilonggot. And if such studies would be generated, as has been postulated by the book, the entire Cagayan Valley in the precolonial days would then appear to be Gaddang territory. The territory would contain a seaport and would include mountainous areas; a vast territory that would require a relatively advanced social set-up for its upkeep.

The book fulfills what it promised, i.e., it introduces Gaddang literature. To use it as a springboard for further studies is its challenge.

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THAILAND

DAVIS, RICHARD. *Muang Metaphysics. A Study of Northern Thai Myth and Ritual*. Studies in Thai Anthropology 1. Bangkok: Pandora, 1984. 324 pages. Maps, figures, plates, references and index. Hardcover. ISBN 974-86226-0-6.

Over the past millennium the Tai spread from the uplands of South China and northern Vietnam westward as far as Assam in India, and southward into the lowlands of mainland Southeast Asia and part way down the Malay peninsula. Widely dispersed and sometimes isolated, the Tai evolved into a family of related but ethnically distinct peoples. Within this family, once Siamese, Shan, Tai Yuan (Northern Thai) and Lao lived in what today is Thailand. All were Tai peoples, yet none were Thai as we know the word today. Who, then are the Thai?

Over the past century a Siamese ruled polity has swallowed up these other Tai and even non-Tai, making—or trying to make—the lot of them into Thai. Legally, “Thai” refers to citizens of Thailand, but culturally “Thai” stresses Siamese ways that made and still rule the realm. While many social scientists have let the state define ethnicity, accepting this nation-building conflation, others such as Moerman and Keyes have addressed the ethnographic and ultimately theoretical problem of disentangling other Tai from the Siamese/Thai amalgam. The book under review, Richard Davis’ *Muang Metaphysics*, represents an important contribution to this latter school. Any scholar who seeks to understand the Tai and their ethnic variations will value Davis’ ethnography for its sensitivity to Northern Thai life and many insightful comparisons to other Tai peoples.

Davis sees himself as recording a vanishing culture. The Northern Thai, or Muang as he prefers to call them, are becoming Thai. He regrets the change and has been instrumental in reviving their traditional Muang script. In his enthusiasm for the Muang way, Davis readily accepts the ‘we are one’ belief necessary to an ethnic revival. While recognizing that Muang culture has “subregional variations,” he deems these “not significant” (26). Yet one wonders if the Muang have become ‘one’ only under recent Siamese pressure to assimilate. As Ronald Renard’s research shows (personal communication) and Davis realizes (37), these Tai traditionally identified themselves as people of one or another specific *muang*, not Muang people as a whole.

Davis’ study focuses on Northern Thai calendric rituals although he incorporates many other aspects of daily life. His initial chapter offers a theoretical discussion of