

- Thai religion. *Mankind* 7: 245-255.
- 1977 Matriclans or female cults: A problem in Northern Thai ethnography. *Mankind* 11: 19-25.
- 1981 Scrubbing Surf: Medium and deity in Chiang Mai. *Mankind* 13(1): 1-14.
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MALAYSIA

- WERNER, ROLAND. *Bomoh/Dukun. The Practices and Philosophies of the Traditional Malay Healer*. Studia Ethnologica Bernensia 3. Berne/Switzerland: The University of Berne, Institute of Ethnology, 1986. 106 pages. Drawings, photos and references. Paper sFr 21.—; ISBN 3-260-05152-X.
- WERNER, ROLAND. *Bomoh-Poyang. Traditional Medicine and Ceremonial Art of the Aborigines of Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Department of Publications, University of Malaysia, 1986. xxxii+632 pages. Map, plates, figures, references. Paperback ISBN 967-9940-10-1; Hardcover ISBN 967-9940-11-X.

Roland Werner is a physician with a long-standing interest in anthropology and ethno-medicine who has lived in Malaysia as an educator as well as a researcher. He is the author of several books on indigenous peoples of Malaysia (Werner 1974; 1975), and with the publication of *Bomoh-Poyang: Traditional Medicine and Ceremonial Art of the Aborigines of Malaysia* he has completed what he refers to as his "trilogy" on select cultural and oral traditions of the Aborigines of West Malaysia" (ix). This trilogy is supplemented by the publication of *Bomoh/Dukun: The Practices and Philosophies of the Traditional Malay Healer* which Werner calls a "select documentary" on traditional medicine in Malaysia (10). The two books complement each other: *Bomoh-Poyang* is a lavishly illustrated volume on the traditional medical beliefs and healing practices of the Mah Meri and Jah-Hët of West Malaysia, while *Bomoh/Dukun* is a brief, and more general, description of traditional Malay healing. In both books, Werner is careful to point out that he is not comparing traditional Malay medicine with Western medicine, and he draws the reader's attention to "the relationship between health, disease, and the wider moral, social and cultural environment in which members of society participate" (*Bomoh/Dukun* 11).

In *Bomoh/Dukun* Werner describes the training of Malay healers (*bomoh*, or *dukun*), and traditional concepts about anatomy, physiology, principles of diagnosis, etiology of "spiritual" and "physical" illnesses, the philosophy of healing, and various means of treating patients. The text is supplemented by many helpful illustrations, including drawings of ritual paraphernalia required for ceremonies, diagrams and photographs of these ceremonies, and schematic representations of Malay concepts of physiology and anatomy. Werner has distilled an immense amount of information into 106 pages by, in effect, presenting an annotated outline of traditional Malay medicine. The advantage to such a telegraphic approach is that the author covers a great deal of material quickly, and the scope of the traditional healers' knowl-

edge is readily apparent. The disadvantage is that fuller explanation is sacrificed, and the reader is left wanting more information to fill in details. *Bomoh/Dukun* is descriptive rather than analytical, and is a useful reference book for those with a previous knowledge of traditional Malay medicine; its brevity could be frustrating to those with no prior knowledge of Werner's subject.

In his earlier works, Werner has provided detailed descriptions of Mah Meri and Jah-Hët life; in *Bomoh-Poyang* he limits himself to documenting various curing ceremonies, and the carvings and offerings used in these ceremonies. Werner has included over 700 black and white photographs and drawings and the texts of dozens of incantations. The book is divided into two sections; the first on the range of treatments provided by Mah Meri healers, and the second on Jah-Hët healers and concepts of illness and healing.

In Part One, Werner presents over hundred Mah Meri incantations for avoiding illness (unfortunately, no English translations are provided), a list of causes and symptoms of a large number of illnesses, concise descriptions of healing ceremonies, and renderings of Mah Meri anatomical drawings. He focusses on the four stages of "spiritually combatting disease," beginning with the preparation of a tray of offerings for the spirits causing the illness, and continuing through the preparation of a "spirit basket," a "spirit house" and a "spirit boat" for increasingly severe illnesses, with the "spirit boat" used to remove sickness from an entire community. The photographs accompanying the text are fascinating, and detailed diagrams illustrate how the offerings are assembled as well as what each ceremony entails. The photographs include carved models of people, musical instruments, kitchen utensils and local flora and fauna which are used in the "spirit house" and on the "spirit boat." The simple carvings are very appealing, in the best tradition of what is commonly referred to as folk art, and range from figures of fruits and trees to a woman preparing betel nut, and pairs of birds, animals, fish and insects.

In Part Two Werner briefly describes the procedure involved in becoming a Jah-Hët healer (*poyang*), and presents a number of incantations (again, in Malay with no translation) used in ceremonies during which the healer contacts illness-causing spirits. He provides long lists of etiological factors in disease, the types and locations of various harmful spirits, and the available means of combatting illness. In spite of the helpful diagrams throughout, one wishes that Werner had chosen to go into more detail rather than simply give lists.

The remainder of Part Two is devoted to a short description of *sepili*, "small crude ceremonial figures in the shape of an animal or a mythological concept of a spirit's appearance, action or behaviour" (171). The Jah-Hët *poyang* use *sepili* to remove illness from the patient, and the carvings are quickly disposed of once the illness has been transferred to them; for this reason, as Werner observes, specimens are hard to come by. However, Werner has managed to provide hundreds of full-page photographs of the 504 *sepili*, each with its proper name and a caption describing the illness caused by the spirit it represents. Some of the carvings are rather abstract, resembling humanoid sticks, while others are more realistic representations of insects, animals and human forms. They are spare, and intriguing.

Both books display editorial oversights. In *Bomoh/Dukun* the English is occasionally awkward, and the occasional typographical errors are distracting. Several incantations are printed in their entirety in what appears to be an unspecified local language and in Malay, without translation or explanation in English. Similarly, *Bomoh-Poyang* contains over hundred incantations and five pages of a "Sepili Tale" narrated by a *poyang*, all in Malay without English translations, summaries or titles.

This is unfortunate, as it renders the material inaccessible to people who do not read Malay (or Indonesian), but who are interested in folklore or comparative studies in traditional medical systems. While most of the photographs in *Bomoh-Poyang* are very clear, the few that are blurry detract from the overall quality of the book.

Werner and his editors write that they hope that *Bomoh/Dukun* and *Bomoh/Poyang* will be of interest to Malay and Western physicians who work among people for whom traditional Malay medical treatment is still an option: they hope that these doctors will gain insights into the importance that traditional medical philosophies and practices have for their patients. Both books should be useful sources of information for the intended audience. In addition, the wealth of illustrations and photographs complement extant material on Malay and Indonesian traditional medicine (for example, Endicott 1970; Gimlette and Thompson 1939; Gimlette 1971; Weck 1937) and are, in and of themselves, valuable reference materials. Werner deserves thanks for having provided photographic documentation of Mah Meri and Jah-Hët healing ceremonies and the art associated with them.

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INDONESIA

SMITH KIPP, RITA and SUSAN RODGERS, editors. *Indonesian Religions in Transition*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1987. Maps, bibliography, index. X+304 pages. Clothbound US\$29.95; ISBN 0-8165-1020-2.

Being asked to write a review of this volume on Indonesia by anthropologists, I as a rather philosophically oriented student of Japanese religion, feel like the proverbial dog on the bowling lane. While thus many of the finer points undoubtedly escaped me, I was nevertheless greatly fascinated by the book, apparently for the following two reasons. One, Indonesia, which is as religiously complex as it is socially diverse and where modernization and the efforts of the government to forge a unified state provoke a rapid pace of change, appears to be a unique "laboratory of religion." The Introduction does not seem to overstate the case when it says: "This profusion of reli-