

rather than the translators'. For example; on page 2, line 12, the phrase "the 10 epics", is a translation of "yu shaxam tuuli" in the Mongol version, which must be an error in the Cyrillic text. The Mongol *xedeed*—many thousands becomes "a thousand" and so on. Because random errors occur in both versions the reader is left wondering which version is the more correct.

Other papers are clearly short summaries of on-going work or reprises of earlier papers, as in the case of the excellent article by Charles Bawden on "Vitality and Death in the Mongolian Epic." This paper is, in reality, a linguistic analysis of certain recurring terms in epic poetry, specifically, *sur*, *sulde*, *kei mori*, *sunesu*, and *tolge*.

Perhaps the most difficult, but most intriguing of all the articles in this volume, is that of Roberte Hamayon, entitled "The One in the Middle: The Unwelcome Third as a Brother, Irreplaceable Mediator as a Son." Hamayon alone among most scholars studying the epic tradition, has departed from the linguistic and philological approach that dominates this work and almost all other works in this field. Her work here, and in other works as well, attempts to systematize and conceptualize epic themes in a schematic form. Her work rationalizes thematic material across the entire genre, without being side-tracked into the minimalist philological quarrels that have traditionally bogged down the study of these epics.

This volume might also have benefitted from an attempt to place the epic material in the large context of current Mongol scholarship in the fields of archaeology, history, folklore, ethnicity, and epigraphy, all of which are available in such Mongol journals as *Studia Mongolica*, *Studia Historica*, and *Studia Arxeologica*. In the past quarter of a century Mongol scholars have made such important strides in all fields of study, that the western scholar who presents his views on Mongol topics without a grounding in modern Mongol contributions runs the risk of falling behind. Some of the contributions in the volume under review demonstrate that short-coming.

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PHILIPPINES

MARASINGAN, VICENTE. *A Banahaw Guru. Symbolic Deeds of Agapito Illustrisimo*. Quezon City Metro Manila: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1985. 190 pages. Color and black/white photographs. Paperback. ISBN 971-113-046-7.

A Banahaw Guru is the fruit of a theological seminar workshop concerning problems of inculturation in the Philippines. Among others it addresses questions like the relationship between official and popular religion. While the first part of the book follows an order given by points in B. Lonergan's theological method, the second contains a lengthy text in Tagalog with English translation. To some extent the first part can be considered a commentary on the second, if we do not forget that the author approaches the problem from a theological standpoint.

Notwithstanding its primarily theological intent, the book has considerable interest also for the folklorist. In order to study the relationship between official and popular religion it takes the Samahan ng Tatlong Persona Solo Dios, a religious movement founded by Agapito Illustrisimo on 27 August 1936, as a case study. The author, a catholic priest, relates in the first part his experiences in communicating with the group

and his reflections thereupon. This becomes something like a commentary on selected parts of the text, the *Mga Dakilang Kasaysayan ng Amang Illustrisimo*. This text has been composed by "The Twelve" (the *Labindalawahan*), elders of the community on Mt. Banahaw, after they were told by the Voice to collect "all the anecdotes they could gather from the surviving contemporaries of their founder" (4). It is therefore a collection of episodes centered on the miraculous deeds of the founder.

Although the text is not annotated it is likely to be of great interest to the folklorist as a document of mythmaking. It demonstrates how a person only a few years after death is presented as a mythical being imbued with supernatural powers like healing or repeated rebirth.

The book is not a detailed study about this group, but in the first part some of its basic beliefs are introduced. Their guiding force in all enterprises is the "Voice" and the voices of (nature) spirits. In an attitude of listening to them the group conducts what the author calls "spiritual warfare," a kind of complete dedication to the goal of spiritual liberation which transcends any political, social or other sectarian creed and is, almost paradoxically, based on an attitude of strict nonviolence (*mahinahon*). Eventually, this kind of spiritual liberation is expected to bring about the unification of all Filipinos into one nation. So it is no surprise to find José Rizal as the most important saint of the group. The leaders include men and women, but the priestly order is given entirely to a college of seven priestesses, a fact which according to the author underlines the basically matriarchal nature of Filipino society. Generally, he stresses the group's tendency to found its religious experiences on indigenous Filipino values. Apparently this is not a prerogative of this group. Mt. Banahaw itself is a mythical center attracting a great number of indigenous religious groups (see Somera 1986). It would have been helpful had the author placed this particular group more in context and clarified its relation with the other groups on the mountain.

A second point of interest for the folklorist could be the manner in which the author treats his subject. He makes no secret of the empathy he feels for the group. He is very much attracted by their sincerity and hears himself the wispering of spirits, but he also tries to keep his "scientific" distance as an observer. I cannot but agree with his position that such movements, originating among the common people, have to be taken seriously on their own terms and in what they have to say about the basic orientations of the people. This may not be obvious yet for theologians, but contrary to what the author seems to assume anthropologists for their part have come a long way since Tylor or Frazer to appreciate such positions. Along the way they have learned quite some time ago to forgo easy comparison with e.g. "Western" positions. In this regard the author seems to beat a dead horse. What is of more interest to the folklorist, however, is the author's own kind of mythmaking when he emotionally advocates the group's religiosity as being representative of something like a true and untampered in contrast to a westernized Filipino religiosity. At the same time he points out that they themselves have undergone certain outside influences evident in their use of Christian symbols and certain prayers. As a whole it seems that this volume has particular value as a rare guide to modern religious movements in the Philippines, and as a document on how traditional values also on the religious level are being reappraised in the search for national identity.

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LAOS

JOHNS, BRENDA and DAVID STRECKER, editors. *The Hmong World 1*. New Haven: Yale University, Southeast Asia Studies, 1986. ii+258 pages. Illustrations, bibliographies, sketches, maps. Paper US\$6.00; ISSN 0890-6335.

This premier issue of a new series, *The Hmong World*, deserves to be called to the attention of all Southeast Asian specialists. The editors, Brenda Johns and David Strecker, have demonstrated good common sense in selecting articles that come together in a smoothly integrated volume, a kind of verbal *pandau* (Hmong appliqué), where one article informs those that follow. All of the colorful threads and intricate pieces are brought together in the final article, "My Life," a first-person narrative of what it was like for a young Hmong girl, May Xiong, to grow up during the "secret war" in Laos, to survive a two-year exodus of starvation, disease and death with three young children in tow, escape into Thailand and participate in one of the truly remarkable diaspora of a minority people in modern times. At the absolute nadir of their trials in the jungle, May drily tells of how some of the band of survivors cut up their clothes and ate them just to have something to put into their stomachs. And this is the people best known to us as weavers and wearers of fine, hand-fashioned pieces of cloth!

A healthy departure from much of the earlier publication on ethnic minorities in Southeast Asia and elsewhere, the twelve articles are mostly by Hmong themselves—in some instances with an American collaborator-translator. Thus we have an inside view of the Hmong world as it was and never will be again. The unusual tenacity of the Hmong, labeled by the Chinese as "barbarian" and laughed at by American kids as "Chinese," can be understood in the article on "White Hmong Kinship Terminology" by Gary Lee and "Hmong Customs on Marriage, Divorce and the Rights of Married Women" by T. Christopher Thao, the first Hmong to earn a law degree in the U.S.

Dwight Conquergood, a specialist in the ethnography of performance at Northwestern University, collaborated with Paja Thao and the latter's son, Xa Thao, to produce "I Am A Shaman," part of the script to a video-documentary, "Between Two Worlds: The Hmong Shaman in America" that won the Silver Plaque Award at the Chicago International Film and Video Festival. This evocative first-person narrative account of shamanistic rituals encompassing the Hmong epistemology of birth, disease, and death touches as well upon the poignant feelings of the shaman himself experiencing the slow but inevitable extinction of his priesthood, religion, and a large portion of Hmong culture in the new world of the U.S. midlands. The reader is veritably transported to the Hmong vision of heaven, step-by-step up the shaman's trance-induced ladder to the skies.

Articles on "White Hmong Sung Poetry" by Brenda Johns and Megan McNamer's "Musical Change and Change in Music" inform us about the uniqueness