

This faithfulness to the text sometimes interrupts the flow of the sentence, but allows for at least some, if only limited, possibility to grasp something of the character of the text or the suitability of a particular translation.

As a whole the smoothness of the translation gives further testimony to Poppe's expertise. Yet I felt a certain unevenness between parts, especially in epic no. 16, which happens to be the longest of all. By a simple reading of the text one gains the impression that in comparison with other epics in the volume the rhythm has shifted. It is however difficult to judge whether this is the result of the special character of this one chapter or rather a sign that the translator is growing weary. Unfortunately, one encounters irritating errors in grammatical relationships (gender and number) in practically all the texts, but in chapter 16 they appear to be more frequent. Sometimes it is as if the translator in the course of his labors has forgotten how the words had to be related to one another over the length of a sentence. Thus one ends up having to read a sentence more than once in order to see what belongs to what. Were it only a technical translation, such errors could be largely disregarded, but in a poetic work such as this the language itself is part of the experience, and so a careful proof-reading of the final text would have been a valuable and necessary service to the readers.

Although he does not state it explicitly in this volume, Poppe follows a policy applied in his earlier translation and therefore leaves technical or untranslatable terms as in the original. In contrast, however, to the former translation, there is no glossary in this volume where some of the more important terms are described and some of the frequent names and their epithets explained. Yet a good deal of this sort of information can in fact be gathered from the earlier volume's glossary. The reader might therefore like to have the former volume close at hand while he reads the present one, also for reasons of comparison with the Mongol tradition of the texts.

The epics in this collection are not only interesting for a reader concerned with epic poetry; they also yield much information in religion and other customs. A heavy Buddhist coloring is evident from the outset, but at the same time the epics reveal a rich array of folk conceptions in such things as the role allotted to demons, the importance of numbers and directions, and so forth. In this way the texts present us with a precious document of a living epic tradition and at the same time with a rich source for the study of a number of other aspects of Kalmuck culture, and last, but not least, they make us wish that the translation of all the songs in this collection may be completed in the near future.

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Peter Knecht

#### PHILIPPINES

WEIN, CLEMENT. *Raja of Madaya. A Philippine Folk-Epic*. Cebu City / Philippines: Folklore Studies Program, University of San Carlos. 180 pages. Text and translation. Paper US\$4.25 (postage included).

The volume under review is a monument to the efforts of Clement Wein, SVD, who spent a large block of his years in the Philippines undertaking research among the

Magindanaon in Cotabato, Mindanao Island. *Rajah of Madaya* is in fact one of the many narratives that had been brought to light by the unceasing efforts of dedicated researchers like Father Wein.<sup>1</sup> Such being the case, however, the published work, unlike those referred to in Note 1, below, *Rajah of Madaya*, as a book, lacks some of the elements that are important, if not crucial, in the understanding of the narrative, particularly as it is being published for the first time.

For the piece of literature that is just coming into the full light of folk history, Clement Wein did not provide the reader a description of the setting of the narrative. The reader who is not familiar with the Magindanao peoples who inhabit the Cotabato area in Southern Mindanao may find the narrative out of the geographic setting in which it was nurtured.<sup>2</sup> Then, too, when Father Wein wrote of the "Sources of King of Madaya" (9) and the "Origins" (11), it would have been more appropriate if he had discussed the narrative in historical perspective (cf. Francisco 1969: 8-10). Since he was writing of the narrative's possible relations with Arab as well as Indian sources, it could have been more meaningful if he had presented a discussion of the story in the context of Asia (cf. Francisco 1969: 10-12).

This reviewer finds it difficult to understand that while the narrative is being published for the first time, Father Wein ignored the fact that anyone who reads the literature will seek substantial background materials for a better and broader understanding of the story. While it is true that

as this is one of the first attempts to become acquainted with the considerable amount of Magindanao traditions, it would be premature to subject them to a deepgoing academic reflection and analysis (Foreword, p. 1-2),

This is not acceptable as a justification for not giving the narrative a thorough introductory presentation, because, indeed, it is predictable that the narrative may be subjected to a "deepgoing academic reflection and analysis" some five, or ten years hence. Moreover, even just one merely interested in the story will always seek some kind of perspective, either historical or socio-cultural. And, to dismiss this so lightly as ". . . because any work in this line up to now is no more than an isolated breach and foray into largely unexplored territory" (12) is not acceptable. The *Rajah of Madaya* is as important as the *Maharadia Lawana* (see Note below) or *Raja Indarapatra*, which has a Maranaw (Madale 1982), as well as a Magindanaw (Aliman Ali 1986), version. These were brought to light with all the perspectives that the researchers have within their command. These, certainly, constitute very significant contributions to the fund of knowledge on the pre-Islamic Philippine literary culture.

While Father Wein is to be commended for the presentation of the text and translation, together with preliminary discussions on the structure of the narrative as well as extensive notes in the Magindanao text and the English translation, he failed to present an idea of the transmutation of sound into symbol to allow the reader who may not be familiar with Magindanao, at least to determine distinctions between sound and meaning as the oral tradition is reduced to writing. He would have been expected to present a phonemic rendering of Magindanaon in terms of the transcribed text (see Francisco 1969: 3-4).

Finally, however, Father Wein's contribution to the world of folk literature studies must be recognized. But let the one who uses this particular work, or even those who read it for pleasure be cautioned. There is too much to be explained and clarified. But let not these "deficiencies" detract the reader from the very reason for which the publication of the narrative had been underlined.

## NOTES:

1. Cf. Nicole Revel-Macdonald (1983, for a review see AFS vol. XLIV, 1985: 132-134). Also, see *Kinaadman* [(Wisdom), since 1979], which published some of the most recently discovered folk narratives in Mindanao.

2. Cf. *Maharadia Lawana* which when it was brought into the light of literature studies, carried with it a presentation of the geographic setting in which it was found (Francisco 1969: 5-8).

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## SARAWAK

RUBENSTEIN, CAROL. *The Honey Tree Song: Poems and Chants of Sarawak Dayaks*. Athens / Ohio and London: Ohio University Press, 1985. Xxiv+380 pages. Illustrations, map. Hardcover US\$36.95. ISBN 0-8214-0413-X.

This publication is the second to arise from a survey of oral literature in Sarawak. How the survey came about is explained in the introduction. Carol Rubenstein had always, she tells us, written poetry. In the early 1970's she set out to travel in Southeast Asia, notebook in hand. She was distressed by the "mad materialism" of Hong Kong, and by Saigon, "city of death," and so she set out for Borneo which she thought "far from the corruptions of the modern world." There she had the idea of studying the poetry of interior folk. She approached the staff of the Sarawak Museum, the main locus of research in the state, and convinced them that the project was feasible despite the great diversity of languages involved, and her own lack of training in linguistics or anthropology. With their help, she obtained funding from the Ford Foundation. The Museum provided strings of guides and translators, allowing her to make brief collecting trips to different parts of Sarawak, and to work over her tapes at the Museum in Kuching.

The results of this research were first published by the Sarawak Museum as a two-volume special issue of their *Journal* (Rubenstein 1973). It contains a remarkable two hundred and twenty six items, totalling over a thousand pages of texts from at least a