

and their heroes around the Mongolian center. What is then left are the potentially rich, yet only very fragmentary traditions of Manchuria (Stary) and of populations to the west of China, like Lolo and Miao (Eberhard). China itself has produced no epic, possibly due to a political structure that is markedly different from that of the epic world and to an early knowledge of writing that may have killed off an even earlier epic tradition (Eberhard). The last contribution reports on efforts being made to establish an index of motifs in Chinese novels in order to be able to check possible connections on the level of motifs with Mongolian epics (Banck).

If this symposium was meant to explore new questions in relation to Mongolian epics (Veit), then it was certainly successful. In spite of the shortness of all and the unfinished nature of some of the contributions, most of them are truly stimulating, open fresh outlooks and provoke new approaches. Some of the problems and questions raised have been brought closer to solution by later publications, but still the volume gives a valuable account of the problems encountered in the area of epic studies at that particular time.

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SARMELA, MATTI. *Paikalliskulttuurin Rakennemuutos*. Raportti Pohjois-Thaimaan riisikylistä (Structural change in local culture. De-localization and cultural imperialism in rural North Thailand). Transactions of the Finnish Anthropological Society No. 6. Helsinki: The Finnish Anthropological Society, 1979. Paper, 380 pp. ISSN 0356-0481, ISBN 951-95433-6-8 (Finnish, with large English summary).

This book is an attempt to describe the changes taking place in the northern Thailand province of Lampang primarily through reliance on the author's field interviews. The following points can be noted as being characteristic of his methodology: (1) He understands the traditional village culture in terms of "local culture," and the urban culture in terms of "superculture"; and (2), he regards the ecosystem as central core of the culture of the area, and thinks that changes in this ecosystem influence the entire culture.

The most important aspects of his point of view can be summarized as follows. The "local ecosystem" (that is, the overall economic, social and cultural structure of the area as adapted to its geographical and historical environment), which has been the core of the "local culture," is gradually being replaced by a "global ecosystem" (a centralized and primarily urban production and social system, operating within the context of an international economy), which is the core of a "superculture." The village will then disappear from the world, its place being taken by a rural landscape that is all but dead, composed of a western style "house and surrounding land production structure" and scattered settlements. He of course sees this process as being more advanced in the towns than in the villages.

Let me then offer some of my impressions of this book. First, I have my doubts that the reality of the area can be fully explained by the schema noted above. This is primarily because it goes against all common sense to think that the traditional culture of Thai villages and towns can ever be fully Westernized. For this reason, it seems to me that we would be better off thinking of cultural changes in terms of the content (as opposed to structure) of the culture, or in terms of the idea of "adaptation."

If this seems negative, certain phenomena noted in this book, such as the cultural gaps existing among the Thai people, the movement of large numbers of villagers to urban slums, and the religious changes that accompany this, cannot be ignored when thinking about the future of Thai society.

In sum, this book definitely offers suggestions to researchers engaged in the study of "industrialization" or "cultural change" in Thai society.

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SWEENEY, AMIN. *Authors and Audiences in Traditional Malay Literature*. Center for South and Southeast Asia Studies, Monograph Series No. 20. Berkeley: University of California, 1980. 3+83 pp., appendix, bibliography, footnotes. \$7.00 (Available exclusively from the Cellar Book Shop, 18090 Wyoming, Detroit MI 48221 USA).

At the outset of his book, *Authors and Audiences in Traditional Malay Literature*, Sweeney states, "... it shall be my task in this study to examine some aspects of presentation, consumption and composition in the specific context of Malay literature" (p. 12). It is a laudable goal, yet not one with which the author is unfamiliar, having pursued it with some success in his other works: *The Ramayana and the Malay Shadow Play* (1972) and "Professional Malay Story Telling: Some Questions of Style and Presentation" (1974). Aside from some fairly superficial, and in regard to the bulk of the material in the book, unimportant theoretical comments, Sweeney's only discussion original to this work is his explanation of the nature of Malay oral and traditional literature, and his rebuttal of the unflattering commentaries of Winstedt, Wilkinson and other scholars of the colonial era on "classical" Malay literature (pp. 1-12).

Sweeney describes at some length the styles of story tellers and of the *Wayang Kulit* puppet drama. The chapter here entitled "Three Hours From Three Minutes" traces a shadow play performance from the skeletal outlines of the plot the *dalang* (puppeteer) builds on to the fleshed-out three hour presentation. A more readable description of this process may be found in Sweeney 1972 (pp. 49-72), which also illustrates the point with transcripts of the plays and a schedule of motifs. Sweeney provides "grammars" of motifs in *Authors and Audiences* (pp. 44-50), but unfortunately, his inordinate fondness for algebraic symbols, which marred already *The Ramayana and the Malay Shadow Play*, also makes some of these pages well-nigh unreadable.

Sweeney has made great contributions to the study of traditional Malay art forms, but in this book he offers no new material, and few new insights.

#### REFERENCES CITED:

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