

the satisfaction of both kinds of readers, and taking the present issue as an example, it is the scholars who are most rewarded. Scholarly contributions tip the balance in their favor, but some of these contributions are written in such a way that they will please the non-specialist too.

The slender volume of eighty odd pages is introduced with a number of poems in Cambodian. If they were accompanied by a German translation they might be as appealing and charming as the two children's stories, both a kind of animal fable, which follow them. The rest of the volume is of a more academic genre starting with a mainly descriptive article by San Sarin about the circumstantial setting and the celebration of the Cambodian festival for the dead and the ancestors. There follows Saveros Pou's spirited and provocative discussion of the relationship of Siamese with Khmer. Harvesting some of the fruits of her longstanding research on Khmer linguistics, she shows that Siamese has borrowed heavily from Old Khmer rather than directly from Sanskrit, quite contrary to widespread assumptions. Her argument allows a glimpse at the importance of Khmer culture for the Indochinese peninsula and is at the same time a comment on the state of certain linguistic studies concerning this area. In a review of J. M. Jacob's *Reamker* she extends her critical assessment to a European attempt. Her polemic contributions differ sharply from the tone of the other texts, but they are the most stimulating. Hess-Lüttich's comparison of German and Khmer is, in contrast, dry but equally well argued. In this outline of characteristic features of the Khmer language he isolates the particular difficulties speakers of Khmer have to face when trying to learn German, in order to have the German teachers appreciate those difficulties. The last article is a report by W. Lobo about the most fortunate recent rediscovery in Berlin of a large collection of paper molds from reliefs of Angkor which had miraculously survived the war.

In the report section Ang describes the activities of a Cambodian Buddhist monastery in Créteil, France, which increasingly provides a religious and cultural focus for Cambodians in France and is about to expand its services to Germany. A number of book reviews and a list of recent publications related to Cambodian culture complete the volume.

We can only congratulate the editors on the fine result of their efforts and hope that they may receive the continued support of institutions and individuals to keep up their promising and important work. The publisher, the *Society for the Study of Cambodian Culture* would welcome any support and may be contacted at the following address: Studiengemeinschaft Kambodschanische Kultur e.V., c/o Dr. Thonevath Pou, Gleditschstrasse 44, D-1000 Berlin 30, Federal Republic of Germany.

#### REFERENCE CITED:

JACOB, Judith M., transl.

- 1986 *Reamker (Rāmakerti), the Cambodian version of Rāmāyana*. With the assistance of Kuoch Haksrea. The Royal Asiatic Society, Oriental translation fund, new series XLV. London.

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#### SARAWAK

GRAHAM, PENELOPE. *Iban Shamanism. An Analysis of the Ethnographic Literature*. Occasional Paper, Australian National University, Department of Anthropology. Canberra: The Australian National Univer-

sity, Department of Anthropology, 1987. x+174 pages. Maps, figure, table, references, glossary. Paper Aus. \$12.00; overseas US\$12.00; ISBN 0-7315-0048-2.

Hoping that fieldwork opportunities and first-rate analytical insights fall to the same people, anthropologists sometimes regard second-hand analyses of ethnographic material as second-best and even suspect especially when conducted by junior scholars. Penelope Graham's book *Iban Shamanism* offers a welcome exception to that formulation. Originally written as an M. A. thesis at the Australian National University, *Iban Shamanism* presents a penetrating appraisal and reanalysis of a century of diverse ethnographic observations and speculations about a key institution among the Iban of north-western Borneo, known for their longhouse organization, their historically expansionistic practices of swidden farming and warfare, and their increasing engagement in the Malaysian cash economy. At the ANU, Graham clearly benefited from the presence and counsel of resident experts on Insular Southeast Asia, Borneo, and the Iban—among them Derek Freeman, who granted her access to his own unpublished materials on Iban shamanism. Graham took the opportunity to test her insights on ethnographers as well as on ethnographies. The result is a book that should ring true to ethnographers of the region. Written modestly and well, it offers fresh perspectives on an important complex of Iban thought and practice.

Graham presents in successive chapters an introduction to the Iban and the literature on Iban shamanism, an exploration of the shaman (*manang*) as represented in ritual language and engaged in ritual practice, an examination of the celebrated "transvestite" or 'transformed shaman' (*manang bali*)—always in the minority, but significant nonetheless—and finally a consideration of the shaman in the wider social and cultural context. Perhaps her finest achievement is her reanalysis of the *manang bali* which offers new insights into Iban shamanism, cosmology, gender, social life, and social change.

After reviewing a range of biological, psychological, sociological, and cultural historical explanations of the *manang bali* proposed by scholars of Borneo, Graham develops her own cultural interpretation of the institution. She draws on ORTNER and WHITEHEAD's argument that gender symbolism is a function of male systems of prestige as they intersect with structures of male-female relations (1981). Graham contributes to our understanding of shamanism and gender in the Iban case by exploring parallel systems of prestige for Iban women and men, both modelled on men's headhunting. In one notable section, Graham offers a wonderful reanalysis of the mythic charter for Iban headhunting festivities wherein the severed head was treated polysemically as a headhunter's trophy, as a wailing infant in need of maternal comfort, and as a repository of generative seeds, including rice seed. The third reading, propounded by the *manang bali*, sees "beyond its gender-marked symbolism to perceive the head's essence as seed; 'sacred seed' which generates the reproductive cycle of Iban social and cultural life" (115). The fact that a gender-crossing shaman asserts a common societal purpose here may very well have to do with how the shared humanity of Iban women and men ultimately overshadows the distinctions drawn by a "a fragile hierarchy of men over women" (112) that asserts male control of societal reproduction.

Many scholars have pointed to the lack of emphasis placed on gender in Iban society. Claiming that traditional prestigious activities in Iban society were highly inflected by gender, Graham rejects cross-cultural studies that correlate institutiona-

lized transvestism with the relative unimportance of gender for governing social behavior and group membership. This stance may account for her failure to remark on the striking similarities between the Iban institution of *manang bali* and the Native American *berdache* which Whitehead analyzes in terms of the framework she and Ortner proposed and Graham herself employs. Both cases of gender-crossing occur in conjunction with parallel systems of prestige for women and men, *and* a marked lack of gender inequality. And in both cases, gender-crossing is a source of ritual and cosmological mediation that acknowledges women's and men's contributions to, and participation in, societal reproduction and well-being.

I think Graham is error to substitute the claim that gender is highly salient for the Iban for the claim that it is not. Instead, some attention to contexts and domains of gender's salience is in order. Gender distinctions in many facets of social life are either unelaborated or phrased in complementary terms—not only among the Iban, but in Island Southeast Asia more generally. Where prestige is at stake, however, gender emerges—sometimes in cultural formulations, usually in practice—as what Bateson would term a “difference that makes a difference.” Graham's book is a fine contribution to our understanding of one of those powerful domains.

REFERENCE CITED:

ORTNER, Sherry B. and Harriet WHITEHEAD, editors  
1981 *Sexual Meanings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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THAILAND

*Phun Thin-Phun Than: Miti Mai Khong Katichonwittaya Lae Withi Chiwit Saman Khong Phun Ban-Phun Muang* [Folklore-Folklife: New Dimensions in Folklore and Folklife Studies] *Special Issue of Arts and Culture*. Wannu Wibulswasdi Anderson, ed., Bangkok: Silapa Wattanatham Press, 1988. 224 pages. \$2.50. (in Thai)

Folklore as a discipline was introduced to Thai academics only twenty years ago. Once the importance of preserving folklore materials was pointed out, a tremendous amount of various kinds of folklore materials has been collected from village storytellers, folk-song singers, etc., by teachers and students from regional universities and teachers' colleges all over Thailand.

Until now, these folklore materials have only been categorized into different genres, or folktales have been categorized into different types of stories; analyses from socio-cultural perspectives, however, have been very limited. One of the important reasons for such a state of affairs is that those who did the collecting and have folklore materials at hand are academics in the field of literature who are, by training, keen in textual analysis, yet have little training to analyze the material from a socio-cultural point of view.

In 1982, *Arts and Culture* presented a special issue on *Phun Ban-Phun Muang* (Folklore-Folklife), composed of papers written by Pranee Wongthet, a Thai folklorist-anthropologist. In these papers she analyzed folk songs, lullabies, folktales, etc., from an anthropological point of view. This was probably the first time socio-cultural