

and characteristic artifact of the Dong Son culture” and “the Dong Son drum, symbol of the ancient civilization of Viet Nam,” culminating in the bold statement that the drums are “the key to understanding Dong Son culture and thus the spirit of Viet Nam” (269). Although some expressions, formulations, and ideas may be a little irksome to the Western reader, such as the frequent use of “correct” or “not correct” in the assessment of work done by non-Vietnamese (“colonial” and other) archaeologists, Prof. Thông’s article provides us with an understanding of the Vietnamese government’s view of Vietnam’s past and hence its role in present eastern Asia. After all, Vietnam is a Socialist country and there is a “correct” attitude towards everything, including the past.

“The past must serve the present,” Chairman Mao once said (at a time when Sino-Vietnamese relations were, on the surface at least, cordial), and Ho Chi Minh applied the same precept to Vietnam, albeit with an ironical twist. For, while archaeology is for China a means to demonstrate to the world the long-standing greatness of Chinese civilization (the Cultural Revolution notwithstanding), for Vietnam it became a matter of proving its equally long-standing cultural independence from China, so as to forestall a repetition of Chinese attempts to simply take over the country and turn it into another province of the “motherland.” It had thus to be shown that the Viet Bronze Age not only owed nothing to Chinese influence (which is patently true), but also was as remarkable (also true) and as ancient as the northern Chinese Bronze Age, if not even older than the latter (not true). To this end a legend invented in the 14th century A.D., about the Hung Kings who ruled over a powerful Viet kingdom from 2879 to 258 B.C. was again promoted from the 1960s onwards, and it was officially claimed that the Bronze Age began in Vietnam in the 3rd millennium B.C. (repeated on p. 262), although archaeological proof for this claim has not been found. The Dong Son culture proper is seen as the final phase of this long-lasting Bronze Age, but in popular belief this distinction is somewhat blurred and Dong Son symbolism—including the drums—stands for the entire imagined Hung Kings period. This Dong Son symbolism now pervades life in Vietnam to such an extent that it seems to have become a truly national symbolism: a nation has finally found its roots!

While this is a wonderful thing to have happened, one wishes it could have been achieved without having recourse to pretence, as the Dong Son culture ranks in its own right amongst the great bronze cultures of the world, and there can be little doubt that its creators were the distant ancestors of the Vietnamese. *Dong Son Drums in Viet Nam* must be read and perused with the above considerations in mind.

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LINDELL, KRISTINA, JAN-ÖJVIND SWAHN, and DAMRONG TAYANIN. *Folk Tales from Kammu—IV: A Master-Teller's Tales*. Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies Monograph Series, No. 56. London: Curzon Press, 1989. 229 pages. Nine illustrations, indices of motifs and tale-types, bibliography, sample story in the vernacular. Paper £6.75; ISSN 0069-1712; ISBN 0-7007-0214-8.

This volume is part of an ambitious project started in 1972 that set out to study Kammu

language and folklore and the Kammu village. The Kammu people are a minority distributed across a large area of Northern Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and Southern China; they are the largest minority group in Northern Laos. *Folk Tales from Kammu—IV* is a part of an on-going series of publications on this folklore by the Scandinavian Institute of Asian Studies (SIAS); other volumes in this series include:

- 1) Kristina Lindell, Jan-Öjvind Swahn, and Damrong Tayanin. *Folk Tales from Kammu: A Kammu Story-Listener's Tales*. SIAS Monograph Series, no. 33, 1977;
- 2) ——. *Folk Tales from Kammu—II: A Kammu Story-Teller's Tales*. SIAS Monograph Series, no. 40, 1980;
- 3) ——. *Folk Tales from Kammu—III: Pearls of Kammu Literature*. SIAS Monograph Series, no. 51, 1984;
- 4) Kristina Lindell, Håkan Lundström, Jan-Olof Svantesson, and Damrong Tayanin. *The Kammu Year: Its Lore and Music*. SIAS Studies on Asian Topics no. 4, 1982.

The authors refer to these works as FTK 1, FTK 2, FTK 3, and *Kammu Year* (in the early volumes roman numerals were used, and in later volumes, arabic). I shall follow these abbreviations as well. The present volume under review, in keeping with this convention, will be referred to as FTK 4.

With fifteen more stories, part four of the folktale series continues to document the over six hundred stories collected by this project in about a sixteen-year period. It uses a list of categories developed by the researchers to characterize the stories, and not all categories are represented by the stories included in this volume. A section on ethics of Kammu folktales describes them as primarily depicting relationships between animals and man, a kind of karmic relationship in which "if you are kind to animals, animals are kind to you" (18). The volume also includes an index of Stith Thompson's motifs, including new, asterisked motifs befitting the Kammu materials. A very short section, "Folklore Comments on the Tales," explains themes and refers to the Thompson motifs. An appendix preserves one story in its original form in transliteration.

The uniqueness of this particular volume concerns the storyteller represented. FTK 3 presented the stories of Kam Raw, and this volume presents the stories of Duang Sæng, a Kammu storyteller of Samtaw origin. He is dubbed a master-teller by the authors for his formidable ability to paint a picture with words using numerous synonyms and alliterations for emphasis, techniques that caused ensuing difficulties for the translators (and most of which apparently do not translate into English). Duang Sæng also abides by three rules that make his stories especially valuable: 1) the story should be true to tradition; 2) the story should develop in a logical way; 3) the heroes and villains of the story should be psychologically consistent (28). According to the author's own list of themes, most of Duang Sæng's stories are "Tales of Wonder." Duang Sæng's tales are also characterized by their length; they are longer and more involved than those of Kam Raw, whose tales tend to be just a little longer than Zen koans.

The importance and ephemeral nature of this project is emphasized often when data-gathering techniques and problems are discussed. This is most clear in the case of Duang Sæng. The authors figure that the fifteen stories included here are only a small portion of the teller's repertoire of over a hundred. In all, the authors spent about six weeks with Duang Sæng, and in that time his voice often failed him. In fact, his vocal cords needed medical attention, but the teller continued on, aware of his "mastership as a storyteller" and eager to preserve the oral literature of the Kammu

people. While the authors recognize that the sample here is limited, the stories "are of such a quality that they deserve being preserved for . . . future research" (22).

The reader should be aware that this single volume is of little value alone. In order to understand the entire formidable collection of folklore, it is necessary to juggle and make references to the other volumes. This is true for several reasons. First, in FTK 3 (xxx), we are told that FTK 1 set out ten categories of stories, but by FTK 2 this already required a "slight revision." In FTK 3, the authors establish a more complete set of categories, and this is the list that is also reprinted at the beginning of FTK 4. In order to understand this unfolding of categories, the reader is left to refer to several different volumes. Second, if the reader wishes to know about the Kammu people, he will be referred to FTK 1 for a "very brief" introduction (FTK 4, p. 11); however, we are told that there is a much more extensive article of the same name in *Kammu Year*. And to grasp the importance of the section entitled "Folklore Comments on the Tales," the reader is often referred back to stories and themes in other volumes in this series and to the Stith Thompson index of motifs. I think you get the picture.

The look of the volume under review—because of the use of a laser printer and a modified, diacritical Apple Macintosh Geneva font—is superior to many of the other volumes. For some odd reason, however, the density of the typeface varies from section to section. A list of errata leads me to believe that the producers of this volume were the victims of a bug in Microsoft WORD 3.x that seemingly indiscriminately cut off lines at the tops of pages (this was corrected in version 4).

After looking through several volumes in this series of Kammu folklore, the reader cannot help but be impressed by this project's breadth; he also cannot help but note that the series is still evolving, and there is nothing wrong with that, except that this makes the going a bit rough at many turns. This is indeed a valuable (albeit occasionally arcane) collection of stories and we should be grateful for the tenacity of everyone involved. This reviewer, however, will wait to purchase the whole collection after it has been reedited with a comprehensive and more definitive introduction—or wait to see the movie.

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CONDOMINAS, GEORGES. *From Lawa to Mon, from Saa' to Thai: Historical and Anthropological Aspects of Southeast Asian Social Spaces*. Occasional Paper of the Department of Anthropology. Translated by Stephanie Anderson, Maria Magannon, and Gehan Wijeyewardene. Canberra: Department of Anthropology, Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University, 1990. xi+114 pages. Maps, illustrations, glossary, bibliography. \$A15.00; US\$15.00; ISBN 0 7315 0891 2.

It is hoped that these painstaking efforts of a whole team to translate into English two early essays (respectively published in 1974 and 1976) by Prof. Georges Condominas, and reprinted in his *L'espace social à propos de l'Asie du Sud-Est* already ten years ago, will stimulate new research in English-speaking anthropological circles, especially in the context of the Thai-Yunnan Project. Both essays deal with fields very close to Yunnan: the Lawa of Northern Thailand and the Tai of North Vietnam.