

a generalization might be given nothing in the way of help—not a single concrete example and few clues in the bibliography (where at least one important account of heirloom vessels does not appear—Fay Cooper-Cole, *Chinese Pottery in the Philippines* [Chicago, 1912]). Ceramics are also found archaeologically, most importantly, in graves. Harrisson does not overlook the sad wholesale despoliation of sites in recent years, but, once again, she does not say all she might about what a grave might hold, where graves can be found, or how their contents relate to the holdings of the Princessehof or to the corpus of illustrations in her book.

These considerations do not undermine the value of *Later Ceramics in South-East Asia* but they help to draw boundaries between what does not raise questions and what does—mostly matters of cultural interpretation and of ascription of motivation or choice to the local population. Take, for instance, the title of the first chapter: “The Swatow Style: Favourite in South-East Asia.” Is this like saying “Coca-Cola and Pepsi: Favorite Soft Drink Companies”? Less questionable, perhaps, is her characterization of the vessel known as the *kendi* as “very highly valued” (p. 30). In the period around 1600, Harrisson has identified “customers who preferred an old-fashioned decoration” (p. 38). And around 1680, she asserts, was a “general public” that was “attracted to novelties” (p. 57). Unfortunately, in order to make such characterizations more plausible in the absence of written evidence, a good deal of cross-cultural comparison would have to be carried out.

Harrison’s identifications of types of ware and her dates are sound, and she makes an effort to allow the reader to understand when new discoveries might prove her wrong (though in the case of the enameled “Bencharong” wares made for the Thai market, she may have accepted too readily the hypotheses of others). Types of wares that will be unknown to all but a handful of readers are presented in attractive reproductions. The outstanding collections of the Princessehof are now available in good-sized plates, between hard covers. *Later Ceramics in South-East Asia* will long be consulted.

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Thai Law: Buddhist Law. Essays on the Legal History of Thailand, Laos and Burma. Edited by ANDREW HUXLEY. Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 1996. vi, 211 pp.

We are currently entering what may be the most promising period in the study of premodern mainland Southeast Asia. New and established scholars in the field are carefully sifting through old records and other texts that have been “rediscovered” by local and international researchers. As a result, key aspects of the mainland Southeast Asian past, such as legal traditions, are getting a second look.

In the present contribution to scholarship on mainland Southeast Asian legal traditions, *Thai Law: Buddhist Law*, we have a new generation of scholars who have reexamined, and have gone well beyond, the legacy of colonial-era scholars whose outdated work has been very much in need of revision for some time. This valuable collection of six essays on various aspects of Thai, Lao, and Burmese legal history, was edited by Andrew Huxley who also wrote the (lengthy) introduction and contributed the fifth essay. Other contributors include Aroonrut Wichienkeo, Pitinai

Chaisaengsukkul, Sarup Ritchu, Mayoury Ngaosyvathn, and Michael Vickery, although the two articles by Vickery and Huxley together form the bulk of the book.

The justification for this collection is the relatively recent discovery and collection of an incredible number of premodern Thai legal texts, which have only begun to be examined for what they have to say about western mainland Southeast Asian legal history. I find Aronrut Wichienkeo's "Lanna Customary Law" an especially useful piece, as growing work on Chiangmai (Lanna) continues to demonstrate the important role which fifteenth century Chiangmai played in the construction of mainland Southeast Asian culture. As one of a number of smaller polities which did not survive premodern Southeast Asian state competition, Chiangmai's contributions and impact chiefly affected the course of development of the lowland polities that absorbed it, first Burma and then Thailand.

Also highly valuable is the groundwork being laid for a comprehensive analysis of the production of Thai legal tradition and its influence on legal developments elsewhere in mainland Southeast Asia in Mayoury Ngaosyvathn's "An Introduction to the Laws of Khun Borom." Three of the remaining articles, Pitinai Chaisaengsukkul's "Newly Discovered Source Material . . . of the Siamese Kingdom," Sarup Ritchu's "Legal Manuscripts from Southern Thailand," and Michael Vickery's "The Constitution of Ayutthaya: An Investigation into the Three Seals Code," point to the incredible wealth of information now available on the lowland legal history of Thailand and the production of Thai legal texts as we find them by the beginning of the nineteenth century.

In the editor's own article on Burmese law, "Thai, Mon & Burmese Dhammathats—Who influenced Whom?" Huxley challenges the prevailing view that Mon legal texts by themselves were the sole source for western mainland Southeast Asian legal tradition. Huxley suggests that there is really very little archeological evidence for any claim that the tenth-century Mon kingdom in Lower Burma served as "a flourishing base for legal inventiveness" (p. 82). Pointing to archeological and chronicle evidence, Huxley suggests that Srikshetra, Arakan, and Haripunjaya, to name but a few other contemporaneous and important centers, were just as likely to have been bases for the early formation of legal traditions in premodern western and central mainland Southeast Asia.

Huxley also provides some suggestions for the periodization of premodern Southeast Asian history, based on his examination of the *dharmathats* (legal texts). To summarize this periodization briefly, Huxley holds that *dharmathat* development was multicentered prior to the twelfth century, legal influence then spread from Pagan into the emerging Tai polities during the 1270–1320 period, and the "main themes" of *dharmathat* literature had been set by the end of the fourteenth century. This seems sound enough, although my own view is that we should be thinking more of the last half of the fifteenth century, rather than of the fourteenth century, as the real ending point of the early formative period in the development of the western and mainland Southeast Asian legal thought.

Huxley's analysis of materials on the *dharmathats* (legal texts) available in English is exhaustive, and often convincing. We can praise him for raising some very important questions of legal origins, and thus cultural origins and influence, in Burmese history. I agree with Huxley, for example, that too much emphasis has been placed on the Mon origins of Burmese (and Thai) law (as well as on the origins of Burmese culture). While Mon influence was significant, Huxley is likely right to point our attention to a more multicentered base of cultural and legal formation. From my research on early Burmese culture, I happily noted that Huxley's suggests that Arakan might easily

have been just as important an influence on the direction of Burmese development as the Mons of Ramannadesa.

It is a very unusual thing for so many good articles on premodern Burma and Thailand to be concentrated into one volume. But this does not limit its utility to the specialist on Burma or Thailand alone, as it will certainly serve as a major contribution to researchers of general Southeast Asian legal development. This collection will certainly be a valued acquisition by the specialist and the student alike.

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The United States and the Struggle for Southeast Asia, 1945–1975. By ALAN J. LEVINE. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1995. vii, 190 pp. \$49.95.

This book makes some effort to cover the U.S. role in Southeast Asia as a whole during thirty years of Cold War history; however, its primary focus is the Vietnam War. Of ten chapters, there is one chapter on the First Indochina War and six chapters which deal with the Second Indochina War. Of the remaining three chapters, one briefly discusses the global context and the domino theory, another focuses on the “Southeast Asian Revolts of 1948,” and a third briefly discusses Indonesia up to 1965.

As a contribution to the already compendious literature on the U.S. war in Vietnam and its wider context, this book has little to recommend it. Apart from the Department of State’s *Foreign Relations of the United States*, a well-known and voluminous selection of edited primary documents, the sources used by the author are a selection of the standard published histories and memoirs for the period. Nor does it offer a new interpretive synthesis which would allow it to stand out among the array of studies of the Indochina conflicts. Ultimately this book is another contribution to that subgroup of Vietnam war literature which is preoccupied with demonstrating that the U.S. could have won the war. Alan Levine criticizes the Johnson administration for its lack of leadership and its “failure to develop a sound military strategy” in Vietnam, while the role of the U.S. media and the North American intelligentsia is characterized as “a spectacle of shambling incompetence” (pp. 152–53). He concludes that “the task of opposing the Soviet Union, which was growing stronger militarily, was made immensely more difficult by the double mistake of intervening in Indochina, and then failing to fight there in a sensible and effective way” (p. 154).

While Levine criticizes the apparent inconsistency and lack of direction of U.S. policy, especially in the 1960s and early 1970s, his analysis attributes a high degree of coherence and effectiveness to Soviet policy in Southeast Asia after World War II. He argues that Southeast Asia “was drawn into” the Cold War “struggle partly through the independent initiative of the Vietnamese Communists, but mostly by deliberate Soviet action” (p. 1). Despite their complex dynamics and very different contexts, the now famously unsuccessful revolts of 1948 are treated as little more than the result of the Zhdanov line of 1947–48. While Levine points to an apparent Soviet recognition of the complexity of the situation on the ground by the early 1950s, he continues to see Soviet policy as the driving force of the communist movements in Southeast Asia (pp. 39–40). He argues that in 1951 the Soviet Union “let” the various communist parties in the region “follow a more flexible policy.” This meant that the Communist Party in Indonesia, for example, began to work in alliance with Sukarno