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COVER BAS-RELIEF AT 'MO I DAENG,' PRASAT PHRA VIHARN

Prasat Phra Viharn

BY PROFESSOR M.C. SUBHADRADIS DISKUL

Prasat Phra Viharn is one of the most beautiful ruins of antiquity. Situated at a majestic height on the Dongrek Mountain Range, which marks the frontier between Cambodia and south-east Thailand, it is a Khmer shrine built between the 11th and 13th centuries. A series of sanctuaries and flights of stone stairways leads up the mountain to the temple tower, the centre of the worship of the god Siva, to whom the shrine was dedicated. The extensive ruins, older than Angkor Wat, are evocatively preserved; roofs and columns have fallen, but the great native stone walls remain, and the massive carvings have been only softened and mellowed by the centuries.

A visitor from Bangkok should allow three days for the round trip if he wishes to see the shrine at leisure. The best plan is to take the express train that leaves Bangkok every day at 21:00 o'clock, bound for Ubon Ratcha Thani. The overnight trip brings the visitor to his disembarkation point, the town of Sisaket, at 6:00 o'clock the following morning. the rest of the journey must be made by car. From Sisaket, a highway leads to Amphoe Kantharalak, 62 kms. away. From here, a road winds for 24 kms. among jungle and small villages to the last settlement, the village of Phumsarol. The last stretch of 10 kms. goes up the mountain to the foot of the shrine. The whole cartrip takes about one hour; the visitor arrives in time before lunch. He can then make the ascent of stairs and gates to the temple at the summit. The return to Sisaket should be made in time to board the 20:07 o'clock train, which arrives in Bangkok at 5:20 o'clock the next morning.

The best time to visit Prasat Phra Viharn is between December and March, when the weather is temperate and there is no rain.

Prasat Phra Viharn, constructed as a succession of *gopura* (gate) and stairs ascending the mountain to the main sanctuary at the summit, is narrow but very long. Built from the northern slope up to the southern summit (about 657 m. above sea-level), it totals 896.50m. in length. Each of the four *gopura* is larger than the last, with more wings and additional rooms, as one approaches the shrine. A detailed description is here given (see the accompanying

plan):

First, as one walks from the slope towards the sanctuary, one is confronted by a gigantic stone staircase of 162 steps, some of them hewn from the living stone. At the upper end of this great flight is a smaller flight of 54 steps. Both sides of this staircase were cut into pedestals for stone lions, most of which have broken or crumbled. The staircase leads to a wide stone pavement sweeping gently upward to the first gopura and balustraded on east and west by the great recumbent stone bodies of two naga (snake), supported by low stone pedestals, each lifting its seven heads to face the slopes below (fig.1). the absence of haloes around these heads is a peculiarity that, when compared with other Khmer works of art and correlated with many inscriptions in this temple to be described below, indicates that these naga were constructed in the 11th century A.D. On the west lies a stone-paved passage probably used for transporting stone for the construction of the temple.

The first gopura is an open, fourfaced pavilion, the roof of which was originally a wooden structure covered with tiles. The wood has disappeared, but some of the tiles lie nearby (fig.2) To the east of this gopura is a descent through the jungle to Lower Cambodia; this is called Bandai Hak (Broken Stairs) because all the steps have collapsed. Behind this gopura, a flight of steps leads to a stone-paved avenue 275 m. long, rising up to the second gate. This avenue is lined on each side with stone pillars 2.15 m. high, each capped by a great carved lotus-bud. Most of these pillars are not in their original places; it is said that they were toppled by wild elephants. On the right of this avenue are many traces of the cutting of stone for use in the construction of the sanctuary. On the left can be seen a small passage that leads to a stone-paved pond, called Sra Song (fig. 3) The stones were arranged in steps leading down to the bottom but now many of them are broken, preventing the capture of much water here.

More steps lead up to the second gopura which, larger than the first, is built in the architectural plan of a Greek cross (fig.4). The sculptures on the lintels and pediments are superb, especially those of the southernmost entrance. On the lintel here, Vishnu is represented lying on the Naga in the episode of the creation of the world, and on the pediment his incarnation as a tortoise during the episode of churning the Milk Ocean for nectar is depicted. (Though Prasat Phra Viharn was dedicated to Siva, many sculptured scenes portray the incarnation of Vishnu as Krishna). These sculptures indicate an 11th century origin again, in such features as naga without haloes, a garuda (king of birds) having wings but no arms, and the particular costumes of various angels and demons (fig. 5).

From the second gate, another flight of stairs leads to another stone-paved avenue, 148 m. long and lined on each side with more stone pillars terminating in carved lotus-buds. Beyond these, tall trees rise against the sky. Prasat Phra Viharn differs from other Khmer sanctuaries in that here architecture and nature mingle.

On the left of the avenue are steps leading to a small passage and another stone-paved pond which also has steps leading down to the bottom. This pond was probably made for lustral water, since in the middle of the southern embankment is a stone lion head from whose mouth, now broken, water once flowed. It is a great pity that this stone lion head has now been stolen. As one ascends the steps to the third gopura, one can see, in front of its right wing, another small stone structure, which was probably built in the 13th century, later than the other buildings in the same vicinity (fig 6). The third gopura, also in the Greek-cross plan, is much larger than the first two, having a small parapet around the buildings as well as additions to both its wings. Wood covered with bricks composed the roof of this gate; though the wooden structure has vanished, its existence is attested to by square holes cut into the stone pediments to hold the wooden beams that made the triangular, brick-covered roof. Some bricks can still be seen on the remaining roof-tip. On one of the southern pediments of this gate is a very beautiful carving representing the Lord Siva and his consort riding on a sacred bull and flanked by attendants holding emblems of royalty. Only a few figures appear in the scene, leaving the large background vacant. This restraint accentuates the depth of the reliefs and heightens the effect of beauty. This scene very much resembles those of Banteay Srei, one of the most beautiful Khmer sanctuaries, created in 967 A.D. (fig.7).

An avenue 34 m. long leads from the

third to the fourth *gopura*, which is composed of many wings and adjacent rooms. This short avenue is lined by stone pillars and *naga* without haloes. Some sections of this gopura are covered with bricks. Nearby, on the east and west, stand two separate edifices made of stone and beautifully carved. They are probably the type of architecture termed 'libraries' by French archaeologists; their precise function is unknown.

A passage leads from this fourth gopura through a large room to the stone galleries surrounding the main sanctuary. These galleries are walled on the outer side, pierced only by two doors on the east and west; the inside walls are cut into many windows. This architecture illustrates the evolution of Khmer technique, for at that time the Khmer architects had just mastered the method of roofing galleries with stone; they did not yet dare to build broad ones or to create open galleries supported only by pillars. Though the wings of the fourth gate consist of open galleries supported on the front by pillars, their superstructure was of wood. This evolution in technique is demonstrated by the successive methods of roofing with wooden structures, brick, and stone; these three materials co-exist at Prasat Phra Viharn. Sometimes sandstone was used as a base for brick roof.

Inside the galleries is a court, in the middle of which was a main sanctuary with a porch; the main edifice has unfortunately crumbled, (fig. 8) leaving only a northern porch with a bas-relief representing the figure of Siva dancing on its

pediment. It is curious that Siva is standing on an elephant's head instead of a bull, his usual mount. It is possible that the sculptor combined Siva's act of dancing with that of destroying the elephant demon, Gaiasura. Though the main sanctuary has fallen in ruin, there fortunately remains a model of it which was originally fixed as a decoration on the roof, after the Indian fashion, and which will be most useful when this sanctuary is restored by the Anastylosis Method. In the porch, many late Buddha images are now installed for worship. Outside the eastern and western galleries are two other large buildings whose functions are not altogether certain. The eastern edifice was perhaps the place where worshippers came for a sacred bath, since the four corners of the inner room are basins, which in the old days were used to hold lustral water. The western structure was probably for girl dancers, since the stone screens in front of the doors, and the high windows, give it privacy. Each window is barred by two rows of typical Khmer balustrade. In front of this western building are traces of a large pond.

The southern gallery of the sanctuary is solid, and exit can be made only through the door of the western one, which opens to a terrace named Pei Ta Di. From this terrace, where traces of the cutting of stone for construction can be seen, a sheer precipice drops 547 metres to the plains of Lower Cambodia, stretching to the horizon (fig. 9). Beneath an overhanging ledge of this cliff is an open cave where one can descend to rest and enjoy the view. Many inscriptions found at Prasat Phra Viharn aid in determining its age fairly clearly:

1. One stone inscription, which fortunately was reproduced before it disappeared from its site, is in Sanskrit and includes the date equivalent to 893 A.D., falling in the reign of King Yasovarman I of Cambodia (889-900). But if the details of Prasat Phra Viharn are compared to those of other buildings by Yasovarman-for instance, the Phnom Bakheng in Cambodia -it can be seen that the decorations at Prasat Phra Viharn are not so early. It is therefore probable that, if Prasat Phra Viharn was actually erected in the reign of Yasovarman, it was constructed in wood and has totally disappeared. What exists here now was built later.

2. Many Sanskrit and Khmer inscriptions on the third and fourth gates, and one stone inscription indicate dates in the reign of King Suryavarman I (1002-1050). These dates correspond to many decorations which, as has been said already, indicate an 11th century origin; and we can therefore surmise that Prasat Phra Viharn began to be constructed in stone during that period.

3. Another stone inscription in Sanskrit and Khmer has a date equivalent to 1119, in the reign of King Suryavarman II (1113 - after 1145), the builder of the famous Angkor Wat. This date fits in very well with the additional structures and some works of art in the Angkor Wat style at Prasat Phra Viharn, for instance, a many-headed naga furnished with halo and trunk, as well as some figures of deities. These sculptures were found lying in the court behind the fourth gate (fig. 10).

Some other structures indicate that they were built at an even later period, i.e. the above-mentioned stone tower in front of the eastern wing of the third gate. This tower was probably built in the 13th century (fig 6).

That Prasat Phra Viharn was dedicated to Siva can be inferred from the first stone inscription in which the sanctuary is referred to as 'Cikharecvara' (Lord of the mountain, which implies Siva). A Sivalinga (phallic emblem of Siva) was probably installed in the main sanctuary. Such carved scenes as those of Siva dancing and Siva and his consort riding a bull seem to support this theory. Though there are many Vishnuite scenes, Vishnu was probably regarded as secondary to Siva.

Though Prasat Phra Viharn was built by ancient Khmer artists, this great shrine was undoubtedly meant for the people of the northern highland which now forms one part of the Thai kingdom. Usually Khmer sanctuaries faced east, since the east was the most important direction to oriental people. Only necessity could force them to build their temples facing in other directions. Thus, Angkor Wat faces west either because the sanctuary was destined to be the tomb of King Survavarman II, the founder, or because the builders of the temple, wishing to situate it on an important road running north and south, were

forced by exigencies of space or the existence of such earlier temples as Phnom Bakheng and Baksei Chamkrong on the western side of the road facing east, to place Angkor Wat on the east of the road and facing it west. The Phimai Temple in Thailand faces south because a road from Cambodia had already been cut that way. Prasat Phra Viharn faces north in order to greet the peoples from the north, from such places as Sisaket and Ubon Ratcha Thani. A big pond called Sra Trao, for the people, was also built in the north, not far from the slope at the base of the shrine.

Now that the Cambodian Government allows us, Thai people, to visit this great shrine it is indeed a good omen for a better understanding between the two countries.

Near Prasat Phra Viharn, there is a bas-relief carved on a hill in Thailand on the east. We may go down the cliff to see this sculpture. It represents a seated divinity flanked by two female attendants (fig. 11). The male divinity might represent Siva or Kubera, the god of wealth. The figure is thought to be Kubera because he wears a flower on each of his ears. This characteristic belongs to a demon as can be seen from a demon dvarapala (door-guardian) in Khmer art. Therefore the figure might portray Kubera who is a demon. These three figures might have been carved in about the 10th century A.D. if one will judge from the designs on their diadems. Nearby are unfinished sketches of four-armed Vishnu (?) seated on a naga and flanked by two wild boars. This site is called in Thai 'Mo I Daeng'.



FIGURE 2. THE FIRST GOPURA (GATE)



FIGURE 1. THE SEVEN-HEADED NAGA IN FRONT OF PRASAT PHRA VIHARN ON THE NORTH



FIGURE 3. THE POND CALLED SRA SONG NEAR THE SECOND GOPURA



FIGURE 4. THE SECOND GOPURA







FIGURE 6. A TOWER IN FRONT OF THE THIRD GOPURA



FIGURE 7. A PEDIMENT ON THE SOUTH OF THE THIRD *COPURA* REPRESENTING SIVA AND UMA RIDING ON THE BULL, NANDIN



FFGURE 8. THE FRONT PORCH OF THE MAIN STANCTUARY OF PRASAT PHRA VIHARN



FIGURE 9. THE SCENERY BEHIND PRASAT PHRA VIHARN



FIGURE 10. NAGA OF ANGKOR WAT STYLE (FIRST HALF OF THE 12TH CENTURY A.D.) IN THE BOUNDARY OF THE FOURTH *GOPURA*



FIGURE 11. BAS-RELIEF AT "MO I DAENG"



Iamgo Mundi: Cosmology and Cartography

BY KWA CHONG GUAN

Adapted from a Keynote Address at the Sarbica Seminar on the Management of Architectural and Cartographic Records, Singapore, 6th-8th November 1991.

This paper begins with an old problem in the historiography of early Southeast Asia. The problem is: what can a map of the world allegedly drawn by an obscure 2nd century Greek cartographer and astronomer Klaudios Ptolemaios tell us about the history of Southeast Asia in the 2nd century A.D.? By now three, perhaps four generations of scholars have dedicated a vast amount of energy into unravelling what Ptolemy may have been telling us. This unravelling is a complex task because the earliest surviving copies of the Ptolemic text in question, the *Geographia* or *Cosmographia*, are copies made by Byzantine monks in the late 13th and early 14th centuries. And there are several different versions of these early copies of the *Geographia*. The map that we have all been studying is part of a series of 26 or 64 maps, depending upon which version one consults.

Of the series, the map in question outlines a Golden Peninsula and the accompanying text provides a list of co-ordinates for about 30 settlements on that Aurea Khersonesus. Is this Golden Peninsula the Malayan Peninsula? If the Golden Peninsula is the Malavan Peninsula, as most scholars assume, then is the Sabara emporion located at the southern tip of this peninsula the island we know as Singapore today? It will indeed be wonderful and reassuring to know that Singapore has been around for a thousand and eight hundred years.

I will not discuss the identification of Ptolemaic place-names in early Southeast Asia, but I will discuss what is, for me, the more fundamental issue and its implications, of why we have devoted so much attention to the work of a 2nd century Greek cartographer and astronomer.

This attention to Ptolemy has to some extent been at the expense of other geographers like the 15th century Arab *mu' allim* Ahmad ibn Majid or the Tang dynasty scholar Jia Dan. Paul Pelliot's study of Jia Dan is still the only major and definitive study of the Huang hua si da ji. It was published in 1904. Ibn Majid has been more fortunate. G.R. Tibbetts in 1971 published a major study and translation of Ibn Majid's Kitab al' Fawa'id fi usul al' bahr wa' l-qawa' id. Before that we were dependent on Gabriel Ferrand's 1925 study. In contrast, Ptolemy continues to hold the attention of major scholars like Louis Malleret, Paul Wheatley and W J. van der Meulen.

I find this attention to Ptolemy especially strange since most of us have accepted the conclusions of Leo Bagrow's 1943 study that the Byzantine copies of Ptolemy's Geographia were not faithful and accurate copies of earlier texts written by Ptolemy and now lost or no longer existing. Bagrow argued that Ptolemy probably wrote only the first of the eight books of the Geographia attributed to him. The other seven books are the result of 12 centuries of compilation and edition and attributed to Ptolemy to give it more credence and authority. The maps are an even later addition. The only map that may be of an earlier date is the world map by Agathodaimon. In other words, Ptolemy's Geographia gives us a map of the world, a mappa mundi, in the 14th century, and not the 2nd century.

But all this is not to decry Ptolemy. For Ptolemy and the *Geographia* attributed to him were critical to the historical development of our world. Ptolemy is important because he developed in the first book of his *Geographia* a system of describing and mapping the world which later generations and we today accept. Ptolemy developed a grid system for mapping the world which remains the basis of cartography today. For this system of mapping the world, Ptolemy borrowed from earlier Greek geographers, especially Strabo (64 B.C.? - A.D. 24?), Eratosthenes (276-196 B.C.?) and Hipparchus of Nicaea (c. 165-c. 127 B.C.). Common to these early Greek geographers was the assumption that geography was more a science derived from philosophy and developed by philosophers than a tradition of sailors and navigators. These Greek philosophers were not interested in compiling descriptions and accounts of foreign lands brought back by sailors and travellers. They were more interested in fundamental questions of the nature and shape of the earth - was it a flat disc floating on the sea or a segment of a cylinder or a sphere?

As far as we can ascertain it was Plato in his Phaedo who argued that the earth must be spherical because the sphere is the most perfect mathematical form. Later Greek philosophers like Aristotle refined the mathematics for a spherical earth and provided some astronomical observations to back up their ideas. It was Eratosthenes, perhaps the greatest of the ancient Greek geographers, to first calculate the circumference of the earth from the difference in the length of the shadows cast by the sun at noon at Alexandria (where he resided and at modern Aswan). Svene (or Eratosthenes, incidentally, was only 15% off in his calculation of the circumference of the earth at 28,700 miles. Eratosthenes also attempted to develop a grid for his maps based, in deference to the demands of sailors and human convenience, on prominent landmarks such as Alexandria, the Pillars of Hercules, Sicily, among others. It was an irregular network which his successor the astronomer Hipparchus radically improved upon.

Hipparchus refused to peg his grid to geographical and historical landmarks, and instead worked out a grid pegged to the position of stars and other astronomical phenomena. The idea of dividing the world into 360 latitude parts and 180 parallel longitude parts is Hipparchus'. Ptolemy's skill and greatness was his ability to synthesise and attempt to improve upon the work of his predecessors. But, like his predecessors, Ptolemy lacked facts and data to verify and corroborate his theories and ideas. The consequences of this lack of facts and data we shall examine later.

If historians of early Southeast Asia see more value in the Ptolemic image of early Southeast Asia than in a medieval European world map, it is because the Ptolemic image of early Southeast Asia and its accompanying list of coordinates for toponym is based upon an imago mundi and cosmography that we subscribe to and identify with today. In contrast, the medieval European world maps offer a view of the world we would have difficulty identifying with today. Take for example the well known 13th century world map found in a Benedictine monastery in Ebstorf, near Ulzenon the Luneburg Heath which was rediscovered in 1830 but unfortunately destroyed in World War II. The circular map has Jerusalem in the centre and is drawn on a background of the figure of Christ crucified, with the head at the top of the map, the feet at the bottom and the two hands protruding out of the left and right of the map. The 'shoe' of Italy can just about be discerned, while the rest of the Europe can hardly be identified and Africa is distorted.

This Ebstorf world map and other medieval European world maps project a 'Christian topography' which rejects the shape of the world as a globe and reverts to the older concept of a flat disc-shaped earth surrounded by ocean. It is an imago mundi based on the Topographia Christiana of the 6th century monk Cosmas with the nickname Indicopleustes or 'Indian traveller' because he was a Byzantine traveller and trader who travelled as far east as Ceylon before becoming a convert to Christianity. His Topographia Christiana is a literal interpretation of what Saint Paul and the other disciples said about the geography of their world and set the framework for the cartography of Europe for the next six centuries. It is an imago mundi based upon a cosmography which none of us would subscribe to today. Not surprisingly, no historian of early Southeast Asia has even considered any medieval European map as a possible evidence on Southeast Asian history.

The relevance of the very few early Indian maps as evidence for early Southeast Asian history is also very little, in spite of the strong Indian link to the region through much of the first millenium. This is because the early Indian maps, like the medieval European maps, are based upon a vision of the nature and shape of the world described in the sacred literature known as the *Puranas*. In the puranic vision, the world is structured around the mythical home of the gods on Mount Meru located in the Himalayas.

This Mount Meru, or Sumeru for the Buddhist, is situated in the middle of the continent Jambudvipa or India. Surrounding Jambudvipa is the ocean and four other continents located at the cardinal points of Jambudvipa. According to chapter 48 of the Vayu Purana, the parts of Southeast Asia better known to Indians–Sumatra and Java–are one of the six provinces of Jambudvipa.

This puranic structure of the world can be discerned in a Maratha map of unknown date (now deposited in the India Office Library). The puranic cosmos is inscribed in the circle on the left of the map. The puranic continents are listed in the lower left corner of the map. This puranic cosmos sits at the north of the Indian subcontinent, which is surrounded by a heavily patterned sea. The triangular island on the extreme right of the map (i.e. south) is Lanka. The puranic cosmos is divided from the rest of the Indian subcontinent by the Himalayan range. For the historian of early Southeast Asia, making sense of these classical Indian textual references to the region has not been easy.

The Islamic maps in contrast appear more relevant for early Southeast Asian history. That may be because the early Islamic maps were largely based upon the Ptolemic image of the world. But the Arab geographers did not blindly follow Ptolemy. They challenged and changed parts of the Ptolemic vision. This is quite clearly seen in one of the earliest surviving Islamic world maps drawn by the astronomermathematician Mohammed Ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi in his Kitab Surat al-ard written in the early half of the ninth century. In the Ptolemic vision, east of the Golden Khersonese is a large gulf Sinus magnus, to the east of which is the coast of China which extends southwards and then runs west to link up with Africa, completely enclosing the Indian Ocean. Khwarizmi in contrast, has the Chinese coast extending south as a large peninsula, parallel to the Golden Khersonese. Khwarizmi has in effect, created two peninsulas in the east and a new ocean he names Bahr al Muslim, the Sea of Darkness.

Khwarizmi, as an astronomermathematician did not attempt to incorporate his map of the world with the descriptions brought back by Arab sailors and traders, but other cartographers and geographers did. And they amended and changed the Ptolemic vision even more. The mid-ninth century Ibn Khurdadhbih, an official in the postal service of the Caliph Al-Mu' tamid, was commissioned by the Caliph to compile a Kitab al-masalik al' I-mamalik (Book of the roads and kingdoms). His conception of Southeast Asia, based on the

descriptions of sailors and traders is very different from that of Khwarizmi. Unfortunately Ibn Khurdadhbih did not leave us any charts or maps, only sailing directions. The Arab vision of Southeast Asia was to continue to change over the next six centuries as Arab sailors and traders brought back more detailed accounts of places they visited and their navigational techniques improved. We find Ptolemy, the Arab geographers of the ninth to the fourteenth centuries and the Arab navigators of the 15th and 16th centuries more reliable recorders of what may have been the state of our region than the Indian or medieval European cartographers. It is because the Greeks and the Arabs based their descriptions of our region upon a set of assumptions and more improtant, a vision of the shape and nature of the world which we subscribe to and therefore we can identify with.

In this context it may be interesting to speculate on the potential for Indian cartography if it had not adopted the puranic cosmogony of the world as a clod of earth bobbing on the cosmic ocean, which Indra as king of the Gods, pegged to the ocean floor with a great shaft. What if they perceived the world shaped as the Hiranyagarbha, the Golden Embryo or Cosmic Egg of the Vedas from which the universe developed?

Which brings us to an important implication. Our disagreement with the cosmography underlying a map is no justification to disregard and discard that map. It would be, I want to suggest, rather Eurocentric to evaluate maps according to how accurately and objectively they represent the landscape. Maps are not only a scaled two-dimensional representation of a landscape. Maps are more a graphic representation of how we experience and structure the space around us. And to the extent that we experience the world and the space around us differently, then the maps we draw will be very different. To dismiss Indian maps would be to fail to understand Indian concepts and cognition of space.

Maps can therefore be very revealing of how the cartographer and his society experiences the space around them and how they perceive the world they are mapping. Ptolemy's location of an Aurea Khersonese or the Ramayana description of Southeast Asia as a Suvarnadvipa, Golden Island or Peninsula may not only be an attempt to indicate that there were gold mines in Southeast Aisa, but perhaps more a perception of Southeast Aisa as a wealthy and rich region. By way of studying Ptolemy we can see that maps shape how others should view and perceive the landscape they depict. Ptolemy's influence on the course of our historical development has in this context, I suggest, been rather under rated.

Going back to Ptolemy, refugees fleeing the Turkish advance on Constantinople brought with them to Italy a number of Byzantine manuscripts, including Ptolemy's *Geographia*. The 1405 Latin translation of the *Geographia* caused a sensation for at least two reasons. European sailors and navigators were starting to sail further in the search for alternative sea routes to the east. They were revising and expanding the classical navigation guides or periplus to the coasts they sailed along. The Italian navigators started producing from the 14th century a series of sea charts now known to us as portolanos to accompany the navigational guides. Understandably, the Italian navigators found Ptolemy's imago mundi and system of longitude and latitude coordinates a far better guide to their work than the medieval world maps. Furthermore, Ptolemy's maps and description of what lay over the horizon of the ocean provided a more credible guide and inspiration than the Topographia Christiana.

Ptolemy's influence is clear among

the leading cartographers of the 16th century. Sebastian Munster for example produced a new edition of Ptolemy in 1540 with 12 new maps and a major text Cosmographia in 1544 which went through 56 editions in six languages in one century. Munster's world map follows Ptolemy's imago mundi of continents, all linked and enclosing the Indian Ocean. Martin Waldseemuller also produced an edition of Ptolemy and a world map which shows Ptolemy's influence. It was only in the 17th century that this Ptolemic image of Asia was corrected and revised when the European navigators became more familiar with our terrain.

Ptolemy not only provided European but also earlier Arab navigators the techniques to chart the waters they were exploring; more important, he provided the vision and inspiration of rich and vast lands -of golden peninsulas-waiting to be explored and exploited. The Ptolemic maps also helped shape European perceptions of Asia and influenced European attitudes and actions towards Asia.

As archivists we should not only evaluate and collect maps which meet western cartographic standards of accurate and objective representation of terrain. I have tried to show how we tend to accept or reject maps because of the cosmography underlying the map. And I argue this should not be the case. A map based on a cosmography we do not subscribe to and depicting the landscape in a manner we cannot identify with is still valuable because it can shape the attitude and behaviour of its viewers to the landscape depicted in the map.

National Artists and Artists' Welfare

BY ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DR. CHUA SOO PONG

Adapted from a paper presented to the National Seminar on National Artists organized by the Office of the National Culture Commission, Thailand, at the Thailand Cultural Centre, Bangkok 25th-26th Feb, 1992.

Last year in Manila, a week before an international dance festival, hosted by the Cultural Centre of the Philippines, a National Artist, Atang de la Rama, who contributed enormously to popularization of folk drama, sarsuwela, passed away. I joined the officials and hundreds of lovers of sarsuwela who attended the funeral. To my surprise, President Corazon Aquino came. Her Excellency was not only the guest of honour, but the keynote speaker who read the eulogy. The Cultural Centre invited top artists and its resident artists to stage excerpts of Atang de la Rama's famous sarsuwelas and the excellent performances once again brought the audience to tears. The coffin of the beloved National Artist was covered by the country's flag. Accompanied by a symphonic band, the funeral march was grand and moving. Such a symbolic and significant act was a display of sincere respect towards an artiste who devoted her life to the art of the sarsuwela. It was a touching event indeed.

I also noticed, in the following week, a practice of showing respect to living National Artists, that is, whenever a National Artist enters the auditorium or theatre, his or her name would be announced and a spot light would follow until he or she is seated. The audience, would undoubtedly give the artistes warm applause.

The examples mentioned, illustrate the admirable practises of showing respect to National Artists in the Philippines. However, it is also widely reported that a large number of trained artists in all fields are unemployed and many outstanding artists simply cannot devote all their time to their arts because of the almost total lack of material remuneration. In a country which has faced a great number of calamities in the recent years, economic recovery is understandably seen as the national priority. Thus the welfare of the great number of struggling artists is neglected. Many do not receive social security benefits, or health insurance.

The abovementioned accounts thus highlight two dimensions in the issue of National Artists and artists' welfare: prestige and economics.

Without arts, a country is sterile and boring, the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Goh Chok Tong once said. An artist, according to the Chinese, is the 'Engineer of the Soul'. Artists inspire. They think the unthinkable. They are creative creatures who dream the impossible dreams. But the place of art and culture in nation building is easily neglected as priority is always given to economic growth and political modernization. In many developing countries, the traditional patrons of the arts, the kings or village chiefs are no longer in the centre of economic and political power. The centrality of arts and culture to nation building has even come under serious questioning by politicians.

Artists in developing countries have three critical problems.

The first is the mass produced outpouring of commercial popular arts from the west and local communities. For example the domination of the entire world information system by a few news agencies poses a serious challenge to the economically less powerful peoples.

Artists who have not yet acquired the skills of packaging and marketing their arts lose out in our highly competitive consumarist modern society. It is sad to note that some of those not so good second or third rate 'artists' manage to capture the attention of the press or public precisely because they have learnt the tricks of marketing. For those artists who are unwilling to channel their creative energy to commercialization, they are in danger of losing out.

Cultural domination and dependence fostered by such information patterns invisibly change the cultural perspective of the peoples. Many indigenous art forms today find no audience. The battle for the preservation and innovation of the indigenous artists will be fierce as consumerism and the global culture prevail.

The second problem is how artists deal with changes in their support system. In many traditional societies, there is a long tradition of voluntary individual and community collaboration for the public good. Performances at temple fairs or village harvest festivals are funded collectively or organized under royal patronage. In modernized societies, art becomes an economic product. It loses its importance as a creative cultural expression.

The third problem is the imported idea of professionalism in the arts. Visitors are always fascinated by the lively Balinese music and dance presented at social gatherings or rituals at the top tourist destination of Indonesia. Yet many do not quite know that these outstanding performers are NOT professional musicians or dancers. Dance and music are part of their village life. Everyone is an artist. The danger of organizing professional theatre and dance companies based on western models is that only a small group of people will be paid to engage in creative activities. Theatre performances will be separated from rituals. Music and dance making activities will not be social processes that involve all in the community. Rather, they will be staged by a small group of professional artistes for the large number of non artistes. If we are to keep our tradition of involving the masses in creative activities, then it would be more sensible to continue to fund the large number of amateur artistes, along with the funding of selected reputable professional companies. Maintaining a large base to promote the arts at the grassroots level is more important than creating an ivory tower of arts for the privileged.

There are essentially two criteria for the selection of a National Artist. One is to judge the artist entirely on his or her own artistic achievement and the other to assess his or her contribution to the promotion of the art, for example, in educating the public and disseminating information about the art form.

In Singapore the Cultural Medallion was instituted in 1979 to give recognition to individuals who have shown artistic talent, creativity and commendable achievements in the arts. This award is now administered by the National Arts Council, which is a newly formed statutory board to spearhead the promotion of the arts in Singapore. The award is conferred by the Minister for Information and the Arts. The selection criteria for the Cultural Medallion are as follows: The recipient must be a citizen of Singapore or permanent resident. The recipient must have attained artistic excellence. The recipient's works must have benefitted or helped in the cultural development of Singapore. There is no restriction on the age of the recipient. Persons who have received National Day Awards for community services rendered are eligible for consideration.

In some countries, it is felt that awards should also be given to those who contribute substantial financial resources to the arts. For example, in Singapore, the Patron of the Arts Awards, first instituted in 1983, are given in acknowledgement of financial contributions of over S\$ 300,000 over three years, by private organizations to culture and the arts.

The Friends of the Arts and Associate of the Arts Awards were introduced in 1986 in recognition of smaller contributions of \$\$ 100,000 to \$\$ 299,999 and \$\$ 50,000 to \$\$ 99,999 respectively.

The selection of the National Artist

must not be carried out as a cake slicing exercise where each artist can expect to receive a piece sometime in their life. Potential National Artists must be very carefully screened for suitability as they will serve as an inspiration to others. To cite examples from Singapore, the Ministry of Information and the Arts has two types of grants for artists. The first are grants to artists/arts groups for exposure. To promote Singaporean talent overseas, travel grants are awarded to established arts organizations and individuals to participate in international arts events and festivals. Ad hoc project grants are also awarded to artists and arts groups to perform or exhibit works abroad.

The second type of grants nurture talents. Training grants for artists are disbursed to help talented individuals develop their skills. There are Overseas Tertiary Training Subsidies for the arts for potential artists to receive training in arts institutions abroad. There are arts institutions grants to subsidise students studying at local arts institutions. There are grants to practising artists for upgrading through short courses / attachment abroad. There are ad hoc grants for artists to participate in workshops and seminars, both held abroad and in Singapore.

This however does not imply that we should create an artificial inequality among artists. There should be plans to provide the names of artists and art educators with an infrastructure of financial assistance, scholarships, venues, health insurance and pension.

The arts are not only transmmitted, they are products of creative processes. They are not simply historical and only related to the past. There are meaningful and functional and vitally concerned with the present. Honouring outstanding artists as national treasures is a way of showing our respect to the unsung heroes who have in very special creative ways helped to shape our cultural destiny.

National Artists, no doubt, will continue to find their source and inspiration from their land and countryman and to dedicate their achievements to the people.

Jatra A Traditional Theatre of Bangladesh

BY SAYEED AHMAD



the several traditional theatrical arts of Bangladesh, jatra is perhaps the most exciting, colourful and durable.

Some experts hold that some forms of dance, drama and music which could be termed as a precursor of jatra can be seen in the Dravidian culture of the sub-continent 3,000 years before Christ. Later with the arrival of the Aryans the two cultures helped shape jatra's spiritual qualities on the one hand and entertainment value on the other.

Famous Chinese historian and traveller Faxien chronicled in the 5th century his impression of the jatra of Bengal. The great poet Jayadeva of the 10th century wrote the famous Gita Goviorda which can be taken as a Natyageeti (dance drama). Later on the poet Chandidas wrote many spiritual poems which were enacted before devotees. We come across the contribution of Chaitanya Deva of the 16th century who not only wrote pieces which were enacted but who also appeared in the female role of Radhika, a consort of Lord Krishna. It was a virile period for Jatra activity.

During the 17th century there was greater participation of the masses in the country due to the economic prosperity. The 18th century was a lean period. We find only a handful of writers and performers labouring under difficult social and economic conditions. We can remember only Rai Sunakar Bhart Chandra whose writing garnered some popularity.

The British came to the Sub-continent in the late 18th century. In the 19th century Mir Mosharraf Hussain wrote the landmark "Behula". This was played in dance-drama form. The colonial government then caused much harm to the tradition by trying to inject its own art form in the conquered country. Jatra was naturally affected by the British theatrical tradition. But fortunately there were some local creative giants who turned the table in their favour. The disadvantage was changed to jatra's advantage. As a result there were interesting changes in the subject matter and the techniques of presentation during the last two hundred years. Jatra in the old days used more religious subject matter. It gradually gave way to historical kings and queens and later to ordinary social events. In 1849, in the drama "Nanda Bidaya" for the first time women appeared in female roles.

In the present day we find more variety of subject matter. There are portrayals of the madness of Hitler to an ordinary labourer's family problems. Some of the popular jatras of Bangladesh are "Jarina Surdari", "Gunai Bibi", "Rupban King Rahim", "King and Sirajuddowla", "From a Dismal Lane to an Illuninated Street" and "Poet Michel Madhusudan". Let me mention names of a few celebrated male performers, M.A. Hamid, P. Roy and late the Amalendu Biswas and amongst the female artists Jahanara Begum, Manjushri Mukherjee and Jyotsna Biswas.

The jatra stage is a rectangular one on a raised platform of 6 to 8 feet high. Located in the open air, three sides are covered. An elaborate system of make-up is evident in the mythological or historical play while expensive costumes are worn in both types of play. Colour of the costume, size of the sword, pattern of hair style often denotes the social position or the inner quality of the character. Usually,

performances begin at 11 p.m. and last till sunrise. In the days gone by I had seen jatras go on for 48 or 72 hours.

Let me state the order of a jatra performance. A group will first appear to consecrate the place where the jatra is being staged. Next another group will pay homage to God. They will sing to the accompaniment of percussions and stringed instruments. Then the character Nadi will sing further eulogy in a particular mudra (gesture). Thereafter Sutradhar will

recite verses of praise and shower garlands. He will sing and dance and will also give commentaries to the problems and characters of the play. He will then request the dancers (who had been waiting outside) to come on stage, to ofter their homage to the king, the courtiers and eminent personalities. The dancers sing to the accompaniment of music. And of course there will be intermittent appearances of clowns. There is another important character. He is



IN THE MAKE-UP ROOM. PERFORMERS DO THEIR OWN MAKE-UP. MR. AMALENDU BISWAS IS AT THE EXTREME RIGHT.

Vivek, or Conscience. He analizes the evil designs of the minister against the gentle king or a dishonest friend against the passionate handsome lover. He helps to build up the sentiment of the spectators while singing on stage or off stage.

In Bangladesh there are nearly 150 jatra companies and they are all privately owned and therefore they have to face continuous financial and social hazards. In order to run a company they have to borrow substantial amounts from the village money lender or a bank at a high rate of interest. The performance season is limited to the dry period only when villagers can easily come to see the open air shows. In the rainy season it is difficult to perform. If Nature is gentle they can hope for some profit otherwise loss will be Government great. and businessmen do not show much enthusiasm for financial support. On the contrary these jatra companies have to obtain a performance licence on payment of fees and permission from the local administrative

authority before they can play in a village. Bad elements of the village who would like to see vulgar dances even if they are irrelevent to the play create problems.

Inspite of great hardships and hazards, some of the jatra companies have made great strides in not only in keeping the tradition of several hundred years but also in innovating with the passage of time. Festivals are sponsored by the

government and enterprenuers in cities and villages of Bangladesh. In the old days they used to get patronage and financial support from kings and landlords. It is expected in time the government in particular and business organizations in general will come forward to support the Jatra artists, to provide good theatre for the millions of people and above all to keep the tradition alive.



BY OLYMPIO V. CAPARAS, VALENTINE MARIEL L. LIM AND NESTOR S. VARGAS

A rich and varied country of over 7,100 islands, the Philippines is in the heart of Southeast Asia. The islands are divided into three main groupings. Luzon, the biggest island with the historic capital of Manila, and several tiny islands surrounding it, make up the north. At the center are the Visayas, a scattered collection of small islands, and to the south is Mindanao with one major island surrounded by minor ones.

The Philippines is a country whose people are blessed with pebbles of talents, one of which is their ability to create and innovate with their hands, their feet, their whole being.

From north to south, each region in the country boasts of a traditional craft that gives a glimpse of the culture and traditions of its people, be it basketry, loom weaving, embroidery, pottery making, jewelry making, wood carving, shellcraft, or the creation of decorative and novelty items.

PHILIPPINE HANDICRAFTS AND FOLKCRAFTS: A SCENARIO Handicrafts have always found a strong linkage with the cultural heritage of a nation. It is one of the concrete representations of the spirit, the identity, and the life-style of its people. Within the Philippine archipelagic spread, between the Ivatan of the isolated Batanes Island group in the north to the sea-faring Samals of the Tawi-tawi Islands in the south, one finds a wide and diverse mix of cultural heritage, with a variety of traces ranging from ethnic, to Muslim, to Hispanic-Christian influences.

This same diversity is reflected in the richness and variety of Philippinemade handcrafted goods that are

penetrating First World markets. The variety of raw materials to work with, along with cultural diversity, creates for the Philippines a rich repository of native and ethnic handicrafts. A case in point are the handwoven textiles. Using the most basic of hip looms to the more modern wooden hand looms, the variety of designs, textiles, and colours vary from one ethnic tribe to another. From the north, we have the Ilocano woven blanket which is still popularly used even among city dwellers. From the mountains of the Cordilleras, the ethnic designs of the Ifugaos, the Kalings, and the Igorot have found their way into the

western world as table runners or as decorative tapestry. From Bicol, weaving from abaca still surives. In the Visayas, the Ilongo 'Hablon' is being revived as it finds popular use in the sartorial elegance of high fashion. The same can be said of a native textile derived from wild pineapple plant which is also gaining popular demand with the acceptance of 'Barong Pilipino' in formal social functions here and abroad. From Mindanao, the lost art of hip loom weaving was revived through the active intervention of NACIDA and the sisters of Notre Dame. Today, weaving bearing the ethinic patterns of the Yakans, the Tausogs, the Maranaos, and the Maguindanaos are finding popular use among the fashion-conscious youth in urban centers.

Bamboo is abundant all over the Philippines. But the designs, quality, uses and aplications vary, too, with The single major geography. influence in the development of bamboocraft in the Philippines have been the Japanese. When some of the facilities were turned over by the Government of Japan to the Government of the Philippines, they not only involved physical plants and facilities but also included an exchange of scholarship programs designed to improve skills among Filipino technicians and artisans. In addition, JICA, through the Philippine National Volunteer Coordinating Center, also set up a comprehensive bamboocraft pilot project in the province of Abra some time in the late 70s. The project included techniques ranging from the selection and cultivation of bamboo, processing and finishing, and

adaptation of designs, uses and applications of bamboo.

As part of its program for decentralizing research and development facilities, the NACIDA established the Bamboocraft Technology Center in Batac, Ilocos Norte. Another rich source of bamboo and bamboo products is Iloilo and Cotabato. To a large extent, and mainly through the effort of NACIDA, standardization in the quality of finished products has been achieved especially for those so-called table top items. Of late, the use of bamboo furniture is becoming popular, but a major drawback is in the quality of bamboo skin as well as in the technology for extraction of the bamboo resin. Quality depends on the culture and cultivation of bamboo, technology depends on the processing, finishing, and preservation of bamboo.

Another very popular Philippine handicraft are accesories made of seashell. Although different varieties of seashells abound in the Philippines, the state of the art in shellcraft production can be found in the island province of Cebu, especially in cottage industry shops located in and around Cebu Metropolis. The artisans of Cebu have evolved sophistication in design and workmanship which make their products among the most desired high fashion accesory items.

Mat weaving, too, is finding new uses and applications. Combined with other natural and artificial materials and with avant-garde and contemporary designs, mat weaving has found acceptance as high fashion personal accessories. Hats woven from buntal are still among the best worldwide, and the market demand for this product has indicated a steady position in the international market. There are other natural materials in common use such as buri, pandan, tikiw, and bamboo. Dyeing and weaving patterns also differ, depending on the ethnic tribe and geographic location.

Another product that has remained stable in the international market is clay which is also found in large quantities and in varying types and qualities all over the Philippines. Kaolin of the highest grade can be found in the province of Sorsogon in Bicol. More signinficantly, the native art of manufacturing items from natural clay is highly developed in the llocos region. The quality of its black clay and its ethnic design are seen in the 'Burnay' jars of various sizes and forms. These items are highly desired accents for home decors.

In Bacolod City in the island of Negros, NACIDA has also helped artists and artisans to come together. They produced an altogether new art form, contemporary paintings on glazed ceramic plates. NACIDA also encouraged the development of a fledgeling ceramics industry during the mid-70s. Today, Bacolod potters produce glazed and unglazed ceramics products primarily for use as accents in home decor in First World markets. In Los Banos, laguna, there are artists and artisans working on clay and ceramics as an art form. In general, the craft of making pots, pans, and other containers and utensils from clay is

common anywhere in the Philippines. The variables are in the state of the art, in the quality of the clay, and in the technique of glazing.

Wood carving is highly developed in three areas. For cooking and eating utensils, the most popular wares are those from the Cordillera tribal artisans. For carved figures and decorative items for home use, craftsmen from Pampanga and Laguna are most sought after. On the other hand, wood carving as an art form is most advanced among carvers in the town of Paete in Laguna as well as in Agnono, Rizal.

But the woodcraft industry is confronted with a government logging ban. Consequently, the art and the techniques in woodcraft production suffer.

Brassware is basically a Maranaw art form. The Maranaws are Muslim tribes located in Central Mindanao. For a time, the primary sources of brass were melted down cartridge casings. Today, the artisans engaged in brassware strongly need government intervention, specifically in the sourcing of brassware sheets. For a time, this problem was resolved when the national government, through the Cottage Industry Development Enterprise (CIDE), imported the raw materials and redistributed these at cost to individual firms.

PROSPECTS FOR PHILIPPINE HANDICRAFTS

The consumption forecasts in the first world markets for handicrafted personal items indicate an upward trend. But the demand patterns are seen to be changing. The advances in technology, especially in the field of composite and resin materials, are giving way to new designs, uses, and applications. This especially holds true in the demand for personal items and fashion accessories. The emerging trend points to a mix-use of ethnic and contemporary design concepts that combine natural and artificial materials in the finished products.

There is a pressing need to protect preserve and encourage traditional handicraft products. Some time in the future, as traditional art forms become rare, the value of handicraft items of the traditional way will be at a premium. Present market indicators seem to show that these events are taking place. Artisans must be preserved as national treasures if only to preserve these traditional art and crafts.

In the Philippines, there is evidence to indicate that the sources of ethnic and indigenous handicrafts are themselves threatended by the inroads of modern technology. First, environmental degradations are starting to encroach on indigenous sources of raw materials. The spread of urban lifestyles, coupled with advances in communications technology as well as access to manufactured goods, are eroding rural or native lifestyles. For some reason, the advertising media seems to have left a residual message of psychological inferiority that places native cultures and lifestyles at a risk of becoming extinct. Along with it, the handicrafts, tools and implements which support these

communities are likely to vanish. The basic art and skills required for producing these handcrafted goods are handed down from one generation to another through some form of aprenticeship. Unless these particular cultural heritages are preserved and documented, all these arts and skills can be lost forever. These issues are at the top on NACIDA's agenda. But at present, there is no other agency of the government that has been empowered to absorb these functions.

Within the last ten years, public and fiscal policies have been directed towards industrializing the Philippines economy. Despite such a direction, the country still remains basically agricultural. Some 65% of the Philippine population is found in the rural countryside which are still suffering from backwardness and underdevelopment. Farming activities are the primary, if not the only, source of family income. Agricultural practices are basically marginal considering that some 90% of landholdings are small farm lots. Α high percentage of the agricultural labor force is underemployed. Opportunities for investments are low if not nil. Likewise, locally sourced surplus income to generating capital formation is next to none.

In the same manner, the absence of basic development infrastractures in the rural areas such as communications facilities, banking services, roads reliable power services, serve as a major disincentive to the inflow of investment for initiating economic activities outside of primary agricultural production.

RECENT TRENDS IN PHILIPPINE HANDICRAFT INDUSTRIES

The business of handicrafts and folkcrafts in the Philippines has proven itself in the export market, earnings which double in digits from years 1985 - 1991. Data gathered from the Philippine Chamber of Handicraft Industries indicates that in 1985 handicraft sales amounted to US\$ 149m; US\$ 320m in 1990 and US\$ 344m in 1991. Earnings gained were to the Philippine attributed government's aggressive marketing campaign to design and develop new products for the world market. Agencies like the Department of Trade and Industry, CITEM, Technology & Livelihood Resource Center, Product Development and Design Center of the Philippines, CITC, etc. contribute to increasing demands of Philippine handicrafts in the United States, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom. Significant growth in sales are noted in countries in the European community. Philippine exports of Christmas decorations alone have increased by leaps and bounds over the past five years due to the foothold established in all major markets for Christmas decorations abroad, according to the Bureau of Export Trade Promotion's consumer manufactures division. From January to September 1991, Christmas decorations have already chalked up US \$39.423 million. The availability of indigenous raw materials which could be adopted in the production process, the low cost of skilled labor not to mention the ingenuity of the Filipino craftsmen are the major factors which contributed to the have largely

impressive growth of our Philippine craft exports.

The typical picture of a middle class Filipino housewife in her duster taking care of the children, doing house chores and whiling the time away until the man of the house comes home no longer holds true today. Philippine women discovered what potentials they had with their hands. These women are now working as seamstresses, handicraft makers and designers to sprouting community based businesses. They work on any available raw materials, and while scanning the pages of available craft magazines, they turn to create items like Christmas decors, ceramics, papier mache products, quilts, stuffed toys, and bags. They also sub-contract jobs from other manufacturers.

Government and non-government institutions alike have taken notice of the mushrooming of these livelihood centers. To serve as inspiration and reward for the efforts these people have, fundings have been made available to increase production. To name a few: the Philippine National Bank pushes lending to the countryside and continues to offer various lending packages to small and medium scale businesses to stimulate economic activities like its 'Pangkabuhayanng Bayan' project; the Development Bank of the Philippines has recently approved a P-6 million credit facility to ensure growth and development of the local footwear and leathergoods manufacturing sector; the approval of a P1.2 million financial assistance extended by the Private Investment and Trade Opportunities-Philippines

to exporters and sub-contractors of fashion accessories in Cebu.

President Corazon C. Aquino's 1991 State of the Nation address tackles congress' part in two significant bills signed into law which could help the handicraft industry particularly in the small and medium scale enterprises — RA 6477, the Magna Carta for Small Enterprises and RA 6810, the Kalakalan 20. But after the bills were signed into law, nothing has been heard. It is hoped that in the future, our lawmakers will take into account the value of handicrafts and folkcrafts in our society.

CONCLUSIONS

Outside of tilling the soil, the only other profitable enterprise engaged in at the farm level is the production of handicrafted items fashioned from indigenous materials for household use. Those who have eventually proved to be excellent in their crafts have ended up as suppliers to the needs of their community, and eventually those of other outlying towns. The process has been tedious and slow. With no two products being exactly the same. Production was cyclical and moved in counterflow with the planting season.

Traditions die hard. The continuing demand for handcrafted indigenous household goods and other personal items, even from among urbanized city folks, supported the emergence of home-based cottage industries in the rural sector. As past and current experiences have shown, there is a growing demand in the First World market for high quality handcrafted items with ethnic or native flavor. The consumption rates for handicrafts from the Third World countries are not showing signs of diminshing. Actual demands indicate a resurgence of handcrafted goods especially with the advent of new applied technologies in processing and the variety of available artificial materials to work with.

The impact of the presence of a cash generator, like the viable cottage industry in a cash-starved rural agricultural environment is easily seen and appreciated. It is within this setting that economic concepts like trickle-down effect and multiplier impact are best illustrated.

Based on records available from NACIDA, cottage industries have proved very effective in generating jobs and alternative sources of income for rural communities. On the average, it takes an investment of some P 1,500 per individual to create new job opportunities in the cottage industries sector. The impact of viable cottage industries on the local economy is there for all of us to see. At the height of the government's rebel-returnee rehabilitation program, cottage industries were among the key economic tools for developing jobs and alternative income sources. Despite the efforts to erase cottage from the official industries nomenclature of the DTI, the fact remains that handicrafts which are individual manufactured bv entrepreneurs from production facilities located in their communities outside population centers rank highly among the country's top nontraditional exports.

Today, with unemployment rates soaring high, with the population of the urban centers bursting at the seams, with rural economies mired in poverty and under-development, it may be wise for the present government to reconsider its position relative to the promotion of cottage industries vis-a-vis the development of the rural economies as an alternative approach to its industrialization agenda. For the past experiences have already proved that the Philippine handcrafted industries which have already penetrated the international market still have a very strong fighting chance against any product of similar import in the world of business.

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January

Advanced Training Course in Ethno-archaeology

Ethno-archaeology, a new branch of archaeology, was considered by the SPAFA Governing Board a very appropriate subject for a SPAFA training activity, since Southeast Asia is abundant with archaeological monuments, sites and artifacts as well as living ethnic groups who have little contact with the outside world. SPAFA has decided to conduct an advanced training course in ethno-archaeology to equip archaeologists with the knowledge, skills and general principles in the systematic and scientific observation of living communities.

The first training course was conducted in Thailand from 12 January to 11 March 1992, in Bangkok and Trang Province in the South of Thailand, in cooperation with Silpakorn University.

The course consists of both theoretical and practical studies, which took place in Trang, in the Semang or Orang Asli ethnic community. From 13 to 24 January the trainees listened to lectures on relevant subjects such as research methodology in anthropology and archaeology, theories in ethnoarchaeology, the ethnology of mainland Southeast Asia, prehistory in Thailand, folklore, medicinal plants of the Semang, nutrition system of the Semang, pollen ananlyis, soil and geology of Southern Thailand. The fieldwork was executed at the site of Kuan Mai Dam and lasted one

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month.

There were 12 participants, two each from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and four from Thailand. They studied theories and had first hand experience in applying ethno-archaeological methodology. Some new findings achieved by the trainees include ethnobotany of the Semang and their nutrition system. The data, thus gathered will be used for understanding, to a certain extent, the prehistory of Thailand.

February

The Return of Cultural Property During the last two decades there has been much concern about the return of cultural property which has been illicitly exported from their country of origin. In 1970 UNESCO, in its General Assembly, adopted a Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Propery. This Convention leads to the recognition that cultural property which has to be protected includes not only monuments and works of art, but also flora, fuana, mineral and paleontological specimens, archaeological and ethnological artifacts, decorative arts, manuscripts, books, sound, photographic and cinematic archives. Nevertheless, since 1970, only eleven Member States in Asia have ratified, accepted and accessioned the Convention. Therefore, in order to further stress the neccessity of implementation of the Convention, the UNESCO Principle Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific organized a five-day regional workshop on the Convention during 24-28 February 1992, at Jomtein Thailand, in cooperation with SPAFA.

The objectives of the workshop were: 1. to ascertain the present state of implementation of various Member States signatory to the Convention;

 to exchange experiences and discuss difficulties in implementation of the Convention;

 to promote dissemination of information on the Convention;

 to encourage administrative, legal, financial and other measures to be adopted to curb illicit traffic in cultural property.

Participants of the workshop were Member States signatory to the Convention, as well as those who are not. Altogether there were 15 participants and 11 observers from countries and international organizations. The participants were from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Democratic Peolpe's Republic of Korea, China, India, Indonesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, The Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The observers invited to participate were from Australia, the United States of Amercia, Canada, International Council of Museums, International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), Custums Cooperation Council (CCC) and SPAFA.

In the openning of the workshop, Professor M.C. Subhadradis Diskul, SPAFA Centre Director, in his welcoming speech, pointed out the importance of the Convention and of the workshop, which is the first one to be held in Asia. He hoped that the discussion would be related to laying the groundwork for future cooperation, and the events of the past related to this issue would be left to bilateral talks beteween the countries concerned.

After the presentation of the Convention by Dr. Istiaq Khan, UNESCO Regional Advisor for Culture in Asia and the Pacicific, and by Mr. E. Clement, UNESCO Division of Physical Heritage, the country delegates presented their country reports. The country reports provided information on problems in illicit traffic, measures undertaken to prevent it and some examples of actions and cooperation from the countries concerned as well as those of the international organizations, for the returrning of cultural property to their countries. The repesentatives of international organizations distributed publications about the activities of their organizations, and explained importnat issues. Much attention was given to the works of INTERPOL, CCC, and ICOM especially on the ICOM Code of Ethics concerning the SPAFA Affairs

illicit import, which all museums must observe.

As a result of long and lively discussions the workshop produced 30 recommendations. Out of these, 11 were addressed to UNESCO, 4 to ICOM, and 15 to Member States. Among other urgent actions, UNESCO is urged to contact UNTAC forces and seek their cooperation in stopping illicit traffic in cultural property, vandalism and pillage in Cambodia and to provide assistence to Cambodia under emergency measures. It is also recommended that UNESCO should continue its efforts to persuade states non-signatory to become party to the Convention. ICOM is requested to set up a computerized data base on cultural properties which are stolen or subjected to illict traffic. It is also recommended to continue its Code of Ethics, particularly with regard to the acquisition of foreign cultural materials.

The 15 recommendations addressed to Member States emphasize the importance of setting up a clearing house network, close cooperation among Member States and international organizations concerned. They were also urged to develop educational programmes, both in the primary and secondary schools on the creation of awareness regarding the importance of cultural property and the need to protect it. As regards legal measures, Member States are recommended to tighten existing laws with the provision of deterrent punishments for offenders. Effective checks should also be made on diplomatic baggages.

SPAFA was represented by M.C. Subhadradis Diskul the Centre and Pisit Director Mr. Charoenwongsa, Senior Specialist in Archaeology. M.C. Subhadradis was also representative of Thailand and was elected chairman. Mr. Pisit Charoenwongsa presented a paper on ehtics concerning laws and management of the world's cultural property.

March

SPAFA Regional Seminar on Contempory Theatre in Southeast Asia

Having successfully organized a seminar on traditional theatre in Southeast Asia in March 1991, SPAFA, with financial contribution from the Japan Foundation convened another seminar on contemporary theatre in order to explore the whole spectrum of theatrical activities in its member states. The seminar took place at the SPAFA headquartes, Sukhumvit Road, Bangkok, Thailand from 15 to 21 March 1992. The main objectives of the seminar were to explore the current state of theatrical arts from different angles incuding their administrative aspects and to publish reports from various countries concerned.

The 11 participants are experts in contemporary theatres, university professors, as well as practitioners, two each from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Three observers were from Thailand, two from Singapore and one from the United States.

Informative reports focussed on the following topics: the development of contemporary theatre, youth theatre movement in Brunei Darussalam; contemporary theatre in Indonesia and its aesthetics and historical background; the contemporary Malay theatre in Kuala Lumpur: a fragile experience of change; current trends in the training and performance of young people's theatre in Malaysia; contempoary social contexts and theatre in the Philippines; the growth and development of playwrighting in English in Singapore; contemporary Thai theatre: neo-classicism vs social realism: and drama and theatre for youth in Thailand.

Dr. Chua Soo Pong, SPAFA Senior Specialist in Performing Arts was in charge of the organization of the seminar, and was elected chairperson. The delegates from Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore, Mr. Subakdi Sumanto, Miss Pornrat Damrung and Mr. Haresh Sharma were elected as vice chairpersons and rapporteur SPAFA Affairs

respectively. After the opening session and the election of officers. Dr. Chua delivered a lecture on contemporary theatre in Souhteast Asia, providing an overview on theatrical development in the region. Group discussions took place on the afternoon of 19 March. After a lively cross-cultural exchangre of opinions and experiences, the delegates adopted pertinent recommendations addressed to SPAFA, the Japan Foundation and member states, to be considered to further solve problems, to further strengthen close cooperation in meeting the challenge of the new decade. M.C. Subhadradis Diskul, in his closing speech, emphasized social and artistic roles of the theatre. The theatre can and should meet the demands of our changing societies and lead them through an uncertain future, he said.



SPAFA Director's Cultural Mission In 1992 apart from going to Brunei for the 27th SEAMEC Conference from February 9-12, the Director of SPAFA was invited abroad three times for conferences and a cultural tour.

From April 8-19, he was invited to Turin for the conference of CESMEO on Valmiki's Ramavana. The Director presented a paper on "The Difference between Valmiki's Ramayana and the Thai Ramamkien of King Rama I of Thailand". He also took the opportunity to visit Berlin in Germany after the unifcation of Western and Eastern Germany. He went to the town of Potsdam to visit the Sans Souci Palace of King Frederic the Great of Prussia. He then went on to Munich and Turin. On his return trip he visited Milan and then Amsterdam were he took the opportunity to see the flower show.





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