

## Communications to the Editor

### Stone Knives in Rice Agriculture in Korea

I was pleased to see the series of papers and discussion thereof on "The Origins of Rice Agriculture in Korea—A Symposium" that appeared in your May 1982 (41, no. 3) issue. I found them informative.

I would like to comment on the summary of stone knives that were presumably used for cutting grain, as presented by Chong-pil Choe on page 523. He states that

the stone knives originated in the Yangshao culture as a reaping tool for millet, changed into several forms, and diffused widely. . . . Although the Southeast Asian cultures were rice cultivators at that time, the reason that the stone knives are not found in their areas is probably due to their basically different cultural development. The Southeast Asian cultures were part of the Hoabinhian culture area from their early Neolithic period.

Although Choe may well be correct on the distribution of these stone knives in North China and farther north, he is far short of their distribution area to the south. Skinner (1968) has pointed out the presence of what he calls the *ulu* in New Caledonia, New Zealand, and Pitcairn in eastern Polynesia. They are also present in mainland Southeast Asia, found in late Hoabinhian sites and later.

Probably the best known of the possible reaping knives, from the top level of a Hoabinhian site, are from Spirit Cave in northwestern Thailand. Here Gorman (1971: 314) dates the surface of the layer on which some of these were found as 8806 ± 200 B.P. (GaK 1846), or 6656 B.C. ± 200. Gorman felt these were brought to the site by a non-Hoabinhian culture, but no such culture has yet been found and I suspect that knives of this sort were a Hoabinhian development. Some Hoabinhian artifacts called scrapers look very much like straight-backed, convex cutting edge knives (Colani 1928: plates III–10 and 11). Loewenstein (1958) has noted the presence of these knives in Malaya in an early post-Hoabinhian situation that I consider directly evolved out of the Hoabinhian with some outside input (Solheim 1980). Linehan (1968) has compared similar artifacts from Malaya to "sounding-stones" of northern China. Colani (1940) has shown that this style of knife, made of iron or wood, continues in use for rice harvesting in the ethnographic present in Southeast Asia. It appears possible that the use of this kind of knife for the reaping of grain originated in a Hoabinhian context.

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### On Review of *The Role of the Sangha in Modern Thailand*

Donald Swearer's review of my book *The Role of the Sangha in Modern Thailand* (41, no. 4 [1982]: 883–85) contains several misrepresentations.

By collecting 200 of my 300 questionnaires from the provinces of Chiang Mai, Udornthani and other parts of the country, I *did avoid* urban slant.

The geographical outlay of Wat Bovoranives served as the starting point for the discussion of a monastic environment and how it is shaped, changed, or preserved by individual abbots and monks in interaction with the laity (as stated on p. 119 and summarized on p. 139). Wat Bovoranives showed historically and functionally most of the features a Thai monastery can have. It could thus easily be compared with other wats in Bangkok, wats as community centers, missionary, meditation, and non-Theravāda wats.

The book contains 449 footnotes, a 35-page glossary, and a 30-page bibliography. Don't we all wish we could add more footnotes and more references?

The chapter on basic tenets in Thai Buddhism describes in equal length the development of Thai world views as it surveys motivational or behavioral themes. The survey is based on more than three secondary sources; in fact, it contains the summary of several years of participant observation.

The reviewer apparently failed to read the summaries of my findings throughout the book. For example, after I had travelled extensively throughout Thailand, after I had spoken to and even taught several hundred monks (in addition to the monks who volunteered to fill out my questionnaire), and after I had interviewed over two hundred laymen and laywomen from all socioeconomic groups, I was facing a wide range of opinions about who is considered an ideal monk—a monk who "keeps Dhamma alive" and stays in his monastery available for those who "request" his help, a monk who goes out to actively participate in solving the problems of his community, or a monk who gets involved in the political process (e.g., pp. 149, 198). Buddhism may be in transition in the heads of some people, but the tendency to preserve Buddhist ideas and institutions (p. 195) strongly prevailed during 1971–1974 when I conducted my fieldwork and wrote the book.