

Abstracts

Some Comments on Style in the Meanings of the Past

SHELLY ERRINGTON Pages 231–44

Like the European written genre *history*, court literature from the traditional kingdoms of Southeast Asia often relates historical events and possible or probable genealogies. Yet, like the myths of tribal peoples, these accounts are characterized by mythical elements and a somewhat repetitious style, and were recited aloud rather than read in private silence. But if we regard them as mixtures of historical and mythical elements, our understanding of their inner structure and meaning is inevitably compromised, for the notion of a mixture already imposes assumptions about the shape of the past and criteria of reality which are implicit in a historical consciousness. The *form* in which thought is couched, after all, *is* the thought, not a representation of something behind or outside it. This paper therefore attempts a rhetorical analysis of a Classical Malay text of the type called *bikayat*, one which dates from about the seventeenth century. It begins with an analysis of grammar and sentence structure, then moves to certain stylistic features of *bikayat*, contrasting them with some stylistic features of historical writing. I then comment on the context of texts—the meaning of audience, of performance, of language, of author—and end with some speculation about the notion of the past as revealed in Classical Malay *bikayat*.

Shifting Perspectives on Text and History: A Reflection on Shelly Errington's Paper

TU WEI-MING Pages 245–51

This reflection on Errington's thought-provoking paper, by an intellectual historian and a student of Chinese philosophy, does not dispute her interpretive position on classical Malay literature in general and on *bikayat* in particular. Rather, it attempts to challenge three salient points of her argument: that the distinction between "oral" and "written" is a hazy one in the paratactic style of the *bikayat*; that the "images" in this type of literature are flat, repetitive and without content; and that the Malay art of story-telling is diametrically opposed to the rhetorical style of history characteristic of the post-Renaissance West. It is hoped that such a discussion will bring about fruitful encounters between scholars in different fields and disciplines in Asian studies.

The Kataragama Pilgrimage: Hindu-Buddhist Interaction and Its Significance in Sri Lanka's Polyethnic Social System

BRYAN PFAFFENBERGER Pages 253–70

Tamil Hindu and Sinhalese Buddhist pilgrims gather each year at Sri Lanka's most important polyethnic shrine, Kataragama, where they worship the deity Skanda (or

Murukan). The remarkable tone of ecumenism and tolerance there stands in clear contrast to the mutual mistrust which has recently characterized Tamil-Sinhalese interaction in other social institutions. Does Kataragama help to quell mistrust and to create a bond of common identity between Hindus and Buddhists? The role of Kataragama in Sri Lanka's poly-ethnic social system is examined by comparing the role of the Kataragama pilgrimage in the religious lives of Hindu and Buddhist villagers. These roles are radically different; indeed, most Hindu and Buddhist pilgrims find themselves in disagreement about the qualities of the deity and about the way he ought to be worshipped. Despite the appearance of ethnic harmony at the site, pilgrims are today likely to leave with a sharp impression of the gulf that separates Tamil and Sinhalese people in Sri Lanka—yet there is evidence that the site may come to play a different role in the future.

Points of Departure: Comments on Religious Pilgrimage in Sri Lanka and Japan

WILLIAM LAFLEUR Pages 271–81

The anthropologist Victor Turner has proposed a new theory of religious pilgrimage, holding that people on pilgrimage have entered into a social modality that contrasts sharply with the one they ordinarily experience at home; roles, ranks, and social hierarchy have all been left behind, and what Turner calls *communitas* has come into being en route. Studies in Japanese by Eiki Hoshino confirm the cross-cultural applicability of Turner's theory, and show that it most adequately explains an ancient and famous pilgrimage tradition in Japan, that to the eighty-eight sites on Shikoku. It especially helps us account for the unusual tensions between pilgrims and government during the Tokugawa era. These materials and analyses are used, then, to suggest that in his study of the Kataragama pilgrimage, Bryan Pfaffenberger has misinterpreted Turner's theory and has overlooked ways in which it does, in fact, explain the materials from Sri Lanka.

Modernization and Reactionary Rebellions in Northern Siam

ANSIL RAMSAY Pages 283–97

Ted Robert Gurr's hypotheses on political violence and James C. Scott's on patron-client relations are used to explain why modernizing policies of the Siamese government provoked rebellions in Chiang Mai in 1889 and in Phrae in 1902. The article suggests that the rebellions resulted from Siamese government attempts to increase its revenues and control in the North. In Chiang Mai and Phrae these attempts simultaneously threatened the livelihood and security of ordinary peasants, who formed the base of the rebellions, and groups outside the ranks of ordinary peasants, who provided leadership. Modifications of Gurr's and Scott's work are suggested which can be tested and further refined, or rejected, in the study of other rebellions.