

J.C. EADE, *The Thai Historical Record. A Computer Analysis*. Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for Unesco. The Toyo Bunko, 1996. XIX, 265 pp., DM 103,-. ISBN 4-89656-109-0

One of the nightmares of historians of South East Asian countries are the dates found on inscriptions, in chronicles or in colophons to manuscripts, because they contain detailed information on days, month, years and on the positions of the planets, including, of course, sun and moon on the particular date the text was completed or an inscription made. All this can be understood and evaluated in full only by those few specialists equipped with a solid knowledge of traditional astrology/astronomy. Even then, according to the author, calculating a date exactly might well take up to six hours for every single *duang* or diagram depicted on top of a stone inscription or described in a text. Still, an exact calculation is necessary to check the correctness of the dates given. Consequently, it is a boon that J.C. Eade has developed a computer programme which makes it possible to find any date quickly. To demonstrate its usefulness, a large number of dates from inscriptions and from Thai chronicles such as the *Jinakâlamâlinî* have been calculated, sometimes correcting earlier errors and discussing difficulties arising from insufficient data or from mistakes in the dates as found in the inscriptions or texts. The results are presented in this volume in great detail. Moreover, the relevant technical terms are also explained. Thus this volume together with J.C. Eade's earlier contribution to the *Handbuch der Orientalistik* (1995) proves to be an excellent research tool for historians and an indispensable handbook for any scholar working on the history of this area.

Oskar von Hinüber

WILLIAM J.F. JENNER, *The Tyranny of History. The Roots of China's Crisis*. (Penguin History). London: Penguin, 1994. 288 pages, £ 7.99. ISBN 0-14-014677-6

Over the last two decades a transformation has occurred in the People's Republic of China (PRC). Shortly after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976, the "open door" policy was introduced by the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This has produced a transformation in the economic conditions and economic performance of the PRC. It has also had profound implications for social and political structures in China. In particular, it has meant prodigious growth rates of 10% and more over much of this period