

peasant, the worker, they could toil as hard and as long as possible but would almost never bring about positive changes. Han Suyin knew this system, and - in her own way - rebelled against it. To do this, as a Chinese woman, was even more difficult. This one should perhaps bear in mind while criticizing her political writings.

The photos show the cosy atmosphere of private homes and the destruction of war and civil war. Prominent figures appear on the pages, as well as anonymous misery. These are no "silent pictures". They impressively tell and clearly demonstrate what happened. Thus helping us to understand the consequences that led to the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, when - in the words of Mao - the Chinese people stood up.

The photos are simultaneously depressing and brilliant making the book an extremely informative volume.

Werner Pfennig

KLAUS FLEISCHMANN: Die neue Verfassung der Union von Birma. Vorgeschichte, Inhalte, Wirklichkeit. (Mitteilungen des Instituts für Asienkunde Hamburg, No. 82). Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde, 1976. 538 pp., 1 pl., DM 29.-

The volume combines the official English translation of the Burmese text of the Constitution of the Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma as promulgated in 1974 (pp. 366-422) with a comprehensive analysis of Burma's political development since General Ne Win's take-over on March 2, 1962, when the Constitution of 1947 was abrogated. The modern history of Burma before 1962 is dealt with in works by, among others, John F. Cady, Maung Maung, and Hugh Tinker, and the aspect of the political relevance of religion in modern Burma before 1962 has been described by Donald E. Smith, Fred R. von der Mehden and the reviewer (in: "Buddhismus, Staat und Gesellschaft", vol. 2 (Wiesbaden 1967)). Since the "revolution" of 1962 Burma has been a more or less "closed country", and it is difficult to obtain information on the internal policies of Ne Win's government. Dr. Fleischmann had the advantage of living in Burma for two years, and he has succeeded in gathering an enormous amount of knowledge on various aspects of Burma's development in 1962-1976. He presents the results of these studies in the first two parts of the present work: "Pre-history" of the constitution (pp. 15-157) and "Constitution and Political Reality" (pp. 159-362). The historical material is systematically arranged in chapters on the coup d'état of 1962, the emergence of the Burma Socialist Programme

Party, the way to planned economy, the "reform" of the administrative and judiciary system, and the stages in working out the new constitution. In the discussion of the provisions of the constitution the author combines a juridical interpretation with detailed information on political and legal practice. Six appendices provide us with the names of the members of the Commission which drafted the constitution, a compilation of and excerpts from the drafts of the constitution of 1971-1973, a list of the members of the first Pyithu Hluttaw (Parlament), and of the Government, a list of Burmese laws passed from 1973 to 1976, and other relevant material.

The study is carefully documented. Most of the information was collected from Burma's press and from other official publications. The author's viewpoint is that of a sympathetic observer, but he does not abstain from critical remarks wherever it seems appropriate, particularly in cases where there is far-reaching disagreement between constitutional theory and socio-political reality. Accordingly, his chapter on the "unsolved problems" of Burma (pp. 345-362) provides us with a realistic evaluation of the present political and economic situation of the country.

Dr. Fleischmann's monograph is far more than a study of the constitution only. It is the best description and analysis of the socio-political history of Burma between 1963 and 1976, and therefore an indispensable source-book for all future research on modern Burma.

Heinz Bechert

HEINZ BECHERT (ed.): *Buddhism in Ceylon and Studies on Religious Syncretism in Buddhist Countries. Report on a Symposium in Göttingen.* (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Phil.-hist. Klasse, Folge 3, 108.) Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Rupprecht 1978. 341 pages, DM 110. -

In 1974, the Committee for Buddhist Studies of the 'Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen' organized the first of a series of symposia dealing with Buddhist research. The papers then delivered have now been collected by Heinz Bechert, and make up an impressive volume which covers aspects of Buddhism and religious syncretism in places as far apart as Ceylon and Japan, Nepal and Indonesia. Most of the papers take cognizance of the discussion during the meeting, adding new material or defending the original position against criticism. In addition, the introduction by the editor traces the flow of discus-