

author, year, and shelfmark. Unlike earlier parts, the manuscripts are not ordered thematically (Buddhist texts, grammatical works, etc.), nor is such a breakdown given in the introduction, which would have been useful.

This is an extremely fine piece of thorough scholarship, combining crucial information on the location and contents with some critical evaluation of the texts, with only a few small lapses – such as the location of the Bavarian State Library in Berlin instead of Munich (pp. 102, 181, 249, 252). However, current improvements in word processing, scanning, and printing might have been employed to greater advantage. All Burmese or Pali texts reproduced in this and the previous parts have been transliterated into Roman script. This renders reading more cumbersome since there is not one universally acknowledged system of transliteration, and even within the series of Burmese Manuscripts, the system was changed between parts 2 and 3, without providing a new transliteration table so far. Including text passages in Burmese script might therefore have rendered the extracts more accessible. Publication of the complete catalogue on CD-ROM might enable rectification of the corrigenda, which are so far listed at the end of each volume, consolidation of the system of transliteration and inclusion of larger parts of Burmese script. This would aid interested researchers in their decision as to which library to approach. The completed catalogue should also include a classified index of all manuscripts and a cumulative bibliography.

Jörg Schendel

RUTH MCVEY (ed.), *Money and Power in Provincial Thailand*. Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS), 2000. XVI, 288 pages, 1 map, € 14.99, ISBN 87-87062-70-4 (pb.). £ 40.00, ISBN 87-87062-67-4 (hb.)

This detailed analysis of power and corruption brings provincial Thailand into focus. In the last decade the so-called *chao poh*, the provincial godfathers became politically influential people in Thailand. Nowadays some of them are even elected members of parliament in Bangkok.

In the first chapter, Ruth McVey presents a historical background to the emergence of local power in Thailand's provinces. Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker describe the figure of the *chao poh* and explain how it differs from that of the urban godfathers of Chinese descent. Sombat Chantornvong illustrates the history of the godfather in Thai politics. He cites, for instance, the example of the famous Kamnan Poh, the most influential godfather of Chonburi who, by the way, is now being brought to trial. The so called *phu mi itthiphon*, literally 'man with influence', are long established in the hierarchical order of Thai society. During the Vietnam war when the United States supported the military regime in Thailand, a lot of money flowed into the provinces to build up infrastructure projects. This contributed greatly to the rise of the provincial godfathers who are admired and feared at the same time by the local population. James Ockey

analyzes how the *hua khanaen*, the vote canvassers, use vote buying and how their methods have become even more criminal over the last years. Powerful godfathers dominate officials in the provinces and sometimes they even force governors to resign in times of power struggles. In the year 1996, 4 billion US-dollars were spent for vote buying. Daniel Arghiros illustrates precisely how the election campaign of a *kamnan*, a local politician, was conducted in the central plain. For instance, identity cards are bought before the election to prevent the owners from voting. The role of a business association of brick manufacturers which supports political campaigns is also presented. In Yoko Ueda's contribution the links between provincial politicians, in this case business men of Chinese origin from Korat, and politicians in Bangkok are described. The reader is informed how these business men started and extended their economic activities. Business and politics in Khon Kaen in the northeast is the topic of Kevin Hewison and Maniemay Thongyou. Young successful business men have been interviewed to show their attitude towards local politics. Michael J. Montesano describes the rise of Chinese business men in different provinces and their political ties. The last chapter by James P. Logerfo deals with the events of the bloody May in 1992 and the role of the middle class. Certain segments of the so-called middle class like lawyers, teachers and academics helped to topple the military while the business-oriented segments kept a low profile. Indeed, most of the victims came from the lower class. But it must be stated that the protest movement in the provinces had a middle class leadership and contributed considerably to the interference of the king and the resignation of the generals. Not only Bangkok but the provinces as well stood up for democracy.

The publication can be highly recommended – thanks to the field studies the reader is provided with a vivid picture of the development of corruption and abuse of power in the provinces which have become an important feature of Thai politics. All contributors are well known researchers of Thai politics and society. Until the end of the eighties political power was concentrated in Bangkok. The local godfathers hovered in the background. Now their importance is rising. The tragedy is that, with its liberal constitution of 1997, Thailand is on the road to democracy. Yet money dominates politics more than ever before.

Roland Platz

SISOUPHANTHONG BOUNTHAVY / CHRISTIAN TAILLARD, *Atlas of Laos: Spatial Structures of the Economic and Social Development of the Lao People's Democratic Republic*. Copenhagen/Chiang Mai: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies (NIAS)/Silkworm Books, 2000. 160 pages, 279 maps, £ 19.99. ISBN 87-87062-87-9 (NIAS), ISBN 974-7551-41-1 (Silkworm)

Few reliable data are available for Laos, the only land-locked country in South-east Asia. The number of solid scholarly pieces of work on Lao history, culture and society is still limited. The Atlas of Laos under review helps to narrow the