EXPLORATIONS

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An Obsessed Mariner's Notes on the *Ningpo*

A Vessel from the Junk Trade

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Notes

The topic of Chinese shipping to and from Southeast Asia has fascinated me for quite a while now. One of the reasons I find it so interesting is that it's such a difficult subject to research. One of the main problems seems to be that many aspects of the private commercial sea-going trade simply went unrecorded. Often only the barest information of "size of ship" and "number of crew" was ever committed to register, while the efforts of ship construction, fitting out, manning, and the details of the actual voyages, remained known only at the village or family level. And as has been noted by many observers, officially the Chinese government had very little interest in the activities of those Chinese who went abroad, those who were foolish enough to want to travel so many miles away from home. Yet the influence of what is commonly known as the Junk Trade, especially in the eighteeth and nineteenth centuries, is no small subject. A wide variety of necessities, and an increasing number of emigrants or "sojourners," was shipped to overseas communities, and remittances and important trade goods made the return voyage to China.

With the establishment of the Maritime Customs Administration under international (read British) control in the mid nineteenth century, one might expect that some of this mystery might have been cleared away. This is not really the case. As Sir Robert Hart put it in 1873: "Of native trade in the interior, and the movement of native produce and foreign goods along the coast in Chinese junks, we know nothing...."[1] (Hart was the man who, more than anyone else, was responsible for the creation of the Customs Inspectorate in China.) Fortunately, several more contemporary sources deal directly with the Junk Trade. Sarasin Viraphol, Jennifer Cushman, Ng Chin-Keong, and Tien Ju-kang have all produced excellent works regarding selected aspects of eighteenth and nineteenthth century Chinese trade with Southeast Asia. Leonard Blusse provides a detailed analysis of Chinese overseas trade with Batavia, including some information on conditions on board ships. And G.R.G. Worcester has produced an immense work on junks and sampans of the Yangzi River.[2] Yet all these sources fail to really address the question of the ocean-going (not riverine) ships themselves: what did these things really look like? How were they built?

A junk from Amoy arriving in Victoria, British Columbia, in the 1920s (photo courtesy of the San Francisco National Maritime Museum).

There is almost no end of information on western maritime topics from this period. Archives are full of ships' plans, construction details, first-hand accounts of the lifestyle "before the mast," and even Marxist reinterpretations of shipboard community and labor protest.[3] Individual volumes take on rigging, fasteners, sail technology, sheathing and the like as separate topics. Anyone familiar with the VK section of Hamilton library will have seen some of this material. If so much as a cleat or a marlin spike were out of place on a depiction of any given man-of-war, somebody would know it! In other words, there's usually enough there to keep even the saltiest of sea-dogs happily browsing for the next decade or two. But, when it comes to discussing centuries of Chinese overseas trade with Southeast Asia, the technical sections are often forced to fall back onto a few well-worn, well-copied sketches of some rather large and cumbersome looking vessels...perhaps back to some block prints of late Ming dynasty...perhaps all the way to the descriptions by Marco Polo! There is simply not very much that tells us exactly what these ships looked like. All this complaining can be neatly summed up in a couple of suspiciously Chinese-sounding phrases: sources scarce, field wide open.

So with all that in mind, the hunt began. And now, after what seems like several lifetimes spent toiling away like a character in a Dickens novel, pursuing some unreachable goal (but what was, in fact, a graduate degree), there are a few things that turned up: a scattering of descriptive articles from the *Mariner's Mirror* on the construction of certain late nineteenthth early twentieth century junks, the locations around the world of collections of junk models, and shipwrecks. Academically speaking, shipwrecks fall into the realm of the archaeologists, and are, therefore, conveniently located in another department, so to speak. For me, however, it's all history. It's the history of the Chinese trade with Southeast Asia; it's the history of Fujian and Guangdong maritime society; it's the history of technology, the technical evolution of the sea-going vessel; it's the history of Chinese overseas emigration. Whatever you call it, it has something to do with ships, so perhaps we had best leave it at that.

So here is one piece of that maritime history, an artifact that has cut an historical swath down through the centuries to arrive, finally, on the very pages of the journal you now hold in your hands: the ship *Ningpo*. This is exactly the type of ship, if not one of *the* very ships, that were making those long voyages to and from Southeast Asia with passengers and goods. Now, it must be kept in mind that the chief reason we know anything about the *Ningpo* today is that she was one of a handful of large old junks that crossed the Pacific and ended up on the West Coast of the United States.[4] And it must also be remembered that these exotic vessels from the East served as floating museums for a while; what sold the most tickets were stories of bizarre tortures, blood flowing in the scuppers, rebel heads bouncing across the decks...that sort of thing. So there is no real confirmation of many of the details of the ship's individual story beyond that fact that she is a very old Chinese craft of a certain size and shape.[5] Nonetheless, here's the story.

The *Ningpo* on display at Catalina Island, probably around 1913 (photo courtesy of the San Francisco National Maritime Museum).

The *Ningpo*, 138 feet in length and 31 in beam, was a medium-sized (300 ton) three-masted Fujian style ocean-going ship, very similar to what's called the Fuzhou pole junk design. Her upper works were teak, with a hull and numerous bulkheads of camphor wood and ironwood hull.[6] The ornately carved oval stern, complete with bird motif and images of the immortals, is typically Fujianese in character. If historical sources can be believed, she was built originally as the *Kin Tai Fong*, either in 1753, or maybe 1806.[7] And here is where things start to get really interesting.

Apparently, soon after being launched, the *Kin Tai Fong* soon turned smuggler and slaver, taking part in a rebellion against the government in 1796, a time when pirates were particularly active in Southern China. Next, she was seized for smuggling (silk and opium) and piracy in 1806, and again in 1814, and again in 1823. In 1834, the *Kin Tai Fong* was reportedly confiscated by Lord Napier for smuggling and carrying slave girls to Canton. In 1841, she began her seven year stint of serving the imperial government as a prison ship. Reportedly, 158 rebels were summarily executed during this time, hence the blood in the scuppers and heads bouncing across the decks. In 1861, she was seized by Taiping rebels and converted into a fast transport. Retaken by English forces, her name was changed (by "Chinese" Gordon?) to *Ningpo*. In 1864, she fought in the battle of Nanjing. And then, at last, the tourism begins.

It is reported that for some years after 1884 the *Ningpo* made a pretty good living preying on wealthy European tourists in and around Hong Kong. Lured by fine cuisine and an enchanting moonlight tour of the local islands around the harbor, unsuspecting passengers would soon find themselves robbed of all personal belongings (including clothing?) and quickly set ashore on some distant spot. British authorities soon sent the H.M.S. *Calliope* after the *Ningpo*. The crew was imprisoned and the vessel, again confiscated, was sold in Hong Kong. Now for the big move: Hollywood.

The *Ningpo* on the rocks at San Pedro, (photo courtesy of the San Francisco National Maritime Museum).

In 1911 she was sold to Americans for $50,000. After having been damaged in a couple typhoons, abandoned by a mutinous crew, and *rowed* 320 miles back to port after yet another storm, the *Ningpo* finally sailed across the Pacific to San Pedro, California in a fast 58 days. There she began her career as floating attraction and museum of bizarre torture implements in Los Angeles, Long Beach, and San Diego. By 1917, the *Ningpo* was towed to Catalina Island, where she eventually began to sink (literally) into oblivion but not before appearing in the background of several Hollywood adventure films. In fact, it was during one of these Hollywood productions that a prop replica of a fire ship drifted out of control when the winds shifted and ran into the slumbering hulk of the *Ningpo*, burning the topsides to the waterline. What is left of the ship is covered with mud off Ballast point at Cat Harbor, along with an assortment of artifacts at the Casino in Avalon on Catalina Island.

How much of this is believable? Well, that's hard to say...perhaps a fair portion, but that would take more indepth research. The *Ningpo* was, most assuredly, a large traditional style Chinese merchant vessel built during the Junk Trade with Southeast Asia. Many photographs exist of her. Is that not enough? This is not some line drawing or some 300-year old sketch from Batavia. This is *the ship itself* (or what's left of her). Jack Hunter, an archaeologist for the California Department of Transportation, and Sheli Smith, the director of the Newport Maritime Museum, are two other archaeologist/historian types who have a hankering to spend a summer wading around in the mud with fire hoses, clearing things away so we can get to the lower decks. (The site's not very far away from the local tavern either, perfect!) Of course, this is a classic case of one of those "back-burner" projects, or "things I'm going to get around to doing once I'm wealthy and have lots of spare time." But here's the kicker: I don't know of any other way of learning how these ships were built other than to find what's left of them and take the measurements. There are all kinds of fascinating small details that might still be apparent from the remains: "longevity" holes and sea spirit perforations performed the same roll for Chinese

mariners that placing a coin under the mast did for the Europeans. There is a lot of cultural and historic information in the details of ship construction, but I'd better climb off of this soapbox.

Of course, we'd like to build one of these some day, but that goes without saying. I mean, who wouldn't?

Still, it may be a little while before we get around to funding ourselves into this one. The Ph.D program does have a way of making demands on one's time, after all. And, the truth be told, the remains of the *Ningpo* are not the only traces left of eighteenth or nineteenth century Chinese working vessels. The *other* one is a little further north. And it's not buried by mud at all, but sitting in a dry dock covered with someone else's laundry. But that's another story altogether.

Notes

1 Stanley F. Wright, *Hart and the Chinese Customs* (Belfast: W.M. Mullen and Son, 1950), 400.

2 Sarasin Viraphol, *Tribute and Profit: Sino-Siamese Trade, 1652-1853* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977); Jennifer Wayne Cushman, *Fields from the Sea: Chinese Junk Trade with Siam during the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, Southeast Asia Program, 1993); Ng Chin-Keong, *Trade and Society: The Amoy Network on the China Coast, 1683-1735* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983); Leonard Blusse, *Strange Company: Chinese Settlers, Mestizo Women, and the Dutch in VOC Batavia* (Holland: Foris Publications, 1986); Worcester, G.R.G., *The Junks and Sampans of the Yangtze* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1971); and Tien Ju-kang, " The Place of Chinese Sailing Ships in Shipping and Trade of Southeast Asia from the 17th to the mid-19th centuries, " *Li-shih Yen-chiu* 12: 1-12.

3 Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

4 The Whang Ho, the Amoy, and the Free China are a few of the other 19th century junks which ended up on the West Coast. Today's modern pleasure junks from Hong Kong are not representative of traditional working craft.

5 Worcester, customs inspector for the maritime service in Shanghai, recorded several large Fujian craft in the early decades of the twentieth century as having been more than 150 years old, a testimony to their extremely overbuilt construction.

6 Interestingly, the size, time period built, and use of teak on the Ning Po are all indicators suggesting that this vessel may have been built in Siam, Chinese ship construction being fairly common there at the time due to cheap labor and materials. See John Crawfurd, *Journal of an*

Embassy from the Governor General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China (London: Henry Colburn, 1828).

7 Sources for the popular description of the Ning Po history include: William F. Brown, " Ning Po: Chinese Pirate Junk, " *Mains'l Haul: A Journal of Maritime History* 29, no. 4 (1993): 19-23; Donald Kennedy, " The Infamous Ningpo, " *American Neptune* (October 1969): 262-274; H.K. Ravmenton, "The Venerable Ning Po," *San Diego Historical Society Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (1958): 50-54.

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Postmarked Can Tho, Viet Nam

Buddhism and the Researcher in the Mekong Delta

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Notes

Emanating from numerous Mahayana pagodas in the bustling city of Cân Thô, Viêt Nam's largest city in the Mekong delta, are the vibrating sounds of large brass bells being struck before dawn and again after dusk. Traditionally, the striking of the bells was meant to call Buddhist monks, nuns, and followers to enter the *Ch nh diên* (sanctuary) for worship. Yet, according to one monk at Cây Bàng pagoda, the simple act of ringing the bells and the humming sound they produce is a Buddhist gesture of great significance. On one level, the sound is meant to "awaken," within the Buddhist laity, their potential "Buddha nature," a type of positive force that when cultivated by properly following Buddhist concepts of right action, will create better kharma and relieve suffering. As a Buddhist gesture, the ringing of the bells is also one example of how the pagoda, the monks, and the nuns seek to help society, reminding Buddhist followers in the range of its sound of their own potential to be released from suffering. Yet, when digging a little deeper, a more profound process is revealed. The action and the sound it produces is believed to travel beyond normal conceptualizations of time and space, to affect those much further from the area in and around the pagoda, and, ultimately, to reach the realms of "the non-living."

This particular multi-level perception of action and reality hints at a sophisticated Buddhist cosmology that stems from the two thousand year history of Buddhism-drawing on both Northern and Southern traditions-in Viêt Nam.[1] My purpose as a researcher, an undergraduate spending her last semester in Viêt Nam studying the language and researching Buddhism, is two fold: first, to contemplate the meaning and the manifestation of Buddhist cosmology within some of the pagodas; and second to contextualize the pagodas within a contemporary urban Mekong delta setting. As I am still in the process of researching Buddhism, this informational piece represents only a small part of my field notes and is meant to be a summary of some of my research findings. Much of the information I have obtained thus far has been through interviews conducted with the help of a translator.

When situating Buddhism within the Mekong delta it is important to note that the region is one of great ethnic and religious diversity. Parts of the Mekong delta have been occupied by the Khmer peoples,[2] most notably during the Funanese empire (third century-sixth century) and later during the Angkorean period (ninth century-fifteenth century). The Chinese and the Cham presence in the region also pre-dates the arrival of the Vietnamese in the sixteenth and seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, as a colony of France, the area was further developed and the population continued to increase. One result of these historical developments has been the creation of an environment in which numerous ethnic groups and religious traditions[3] have coexisted and, at times, influenced one another.

In the city of Cân Thô, although there are two Theravada-Khmer pagodas, Mahayana influenced pagodas predominate. They can be found throughout the city on streets, tucked away within the city's markets, or along the *hem* (narrow alley-ways crowded with shops and small living spaces). The most visible pagodas, however, are located on the main thoroughfare of downtown Cân Thô city. Next to the Theravada Muniransyarama pagoda (people typically refer to this pagoda as *Chùa Khmer*) is the Mahayana influenced Tin Do Cu Si pagoda.[4] Directly across the street (next to the newly built Viêtcom Bank) are two more Mahayana pagodas, Phât Hoc pagoda and Khánh Quang pagoda, both of which provide housing for monks (*Ty kheo*) and those who are studying to become monks (*Sa di*).[5] The type of Mahayana Buddhism practiced within these two pagodas is a combination of different meditation techniques (*Thién tông*) and the chanting of different sutras, especially those of the Pure Land tradition: namely, the chanting of Amitabha (Phât A di dà).[6] Khánh Quang pagoda is also the home of the government sponsored Cân Thô City Buddhist Association which, along with other government sponsored religious organizations, helps administer the pagodas within the city and the province.

Although subscribing in general to Mahayana doctrines, there are some important differences between the many Mahayana pagodas of the city. The pagodas differ in how they practice Buddhism and in how they perceive their spiritual space. For example, in Thiên tông pagodas, there are men and women who choose to lead a monastic life. The men are called Ty kheo (monks that observes 227 precepts), the women Ty kheo ni (nuns that observes 348 precepts),[7] within the monastic setting they observe rules that are outlined by the Buddhist Association and those expressed by the Buddha in the Pali Tipitaka and the Mahayana sutras. Monks and nuns

observe a vegetarian diet, shave their heads, wear a certain type and color of robe,[8] study the sutras, and practice meditation. The general idea is that nuns and monks are removed from the normal day-to-day social concerns in order to cultivate their Buddha nature that will, in turn, enable them to better help society. The pagoda depends on money, food, medicine, and clothing donations made by the laity. Based on my observations and interviews at Phât Hoc pagoda, Khánh Quang pagoda, and Van Hang pagoda (located in the important research and administrative hub of Ho Chi Minh City) many of the Thiên tông pagodas within the region adhere to the same guidelines. Though I would not assert that the pagodas are carbon copies of one another, they do maintain a standard in dress, vows, and time schedule for the recitation of sutras, meditation, and so on.

Within the Dàng Tiên pagoda, and in contrast to the Thiên tông pagodas, the followers assert that, although keeping with the Mahayana traditions, they follow *Tam giáo* (a religion that is influenced by Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism). At this pagoda, the followers[9] belong to the tradition of Cu si tai gia (at home believers).[10] Essentially, followers are still involved in society and take time out from their daily schedule to participate in religious ceremonies several times a week.

During the course of my research, I have noticed three characteristics shared by "at home believers":

1. they consider themselves very devout Buddhist followers, more so than other Buddhist believers;
2. they do not always have a standard body of knowledge, theology, and practice that is honored by several pagodas and, athough they may use similar Buddhist doctrines as those found within the meditation sects, they do not go through the same standardized educational and religious training as monks and nuns; and
3. they do not shave their heads or wear special garments (outside of ceremonial occasions).

Some of the Cu si tai gia that I have interviewed, whether it was in their home or at a pagoda, are proud of the fact that they are "a part of society." Some assered that they demonstrate their religious sincerity and simplicity by not caring about their appearance. Thus, they do not feel the need to shave their heads or wear special clothing.

In terms of religious practice within the Dàng Tiên pagoda, the Cu si tai gia are older (generally over 50) and only a small sector of society attend the ceremonies. In this Tam giáo pagoda, the followers would come to the pagoda only for ceremonies, returning home when they were over. Their ceremonies are complex in that they require numerous ritual acts such as bowing in different directions,[11] pouring water, sending sacred messages to the Buddha,[12] and so on. These rituals are also accompanied by chanting, the ringing of a bell, and the burning of incense. They take place in the presence of other sacred objects. According to followers, they attend and perform these rituals because the rituals give them a sense of security and provide them with moral guidance. For one elderly man (over 70 years of age) the importance of the ceremonies

and his desire to be a part of this community are evidenced by his walking about five kilometers in order to participate in the rituals. The irony regarding the Tam giáo pagodas is that although its members consider themselves a part of society, they hold no religious "sermons" nor do they engage in activities that link the pagoda to the "outside" world. The exception here is their performing burial ceremonies upon request. Thus, their religious community is small and private, having little contact with the "outside" world.

In contrast to this and other pagodas constituted by "at home followers," in Thiên tông pagodas, even though a formal division exists between the laity (Buddhist followers) and the monastic community (monks and nuns), the two groups interact and are dependent on one another. For example, the laity comes to the pagoda to seek advice, bring offerings, and attend the morning chanting and evening meditation. The Thên tông pagodas also perform rituals, though much simpler than those performed in the Tam giáo pagodas, during the chanting and meditation ceremonies and Buddhist holidays.

Probably one of the most interesting and yet difficult ideas to comprehend is that of religious space within the pagoda. Depending on who I spoke with, the definition of religious space would differ. For example, my initial approach in trying to understand the religious space of the pagoda was to ask questions regarding the physical appearance of the pagoda and its contents. Cu si tai gia, and perhaps the Buddhist laity, orient themselves within the pagoda based on, at least on one level, the physical appearance or the symbolic nature of the pagoda: knowing which room is more sacred, which statue to pay homage to first, when to bow or prostrate one's self, when to chant, when to use incense, and so on. Thus, performing ritual actions are one way religious space is created within the pagodas. Of course the relationship between the religious symbol and the ritual act is not uni-directional because the symbol also gains sacred legitimacy through religious/ritual action.

Having asked monks and nuns similar questions about physical space, I felt they were more apt to regard the relationship between symbolic and ritual action as only one aspect of the Buddhist/ religious space created within the pagodas. For many, especially with monks and nuns, the philosophy of the Buddhist doctrines is also an important tool that orients their religious actions and creates religious space within the pagoda. For example, I have learned from my interviews that a part of both monk's and nun's religious training is to contemplate the physical reality around them as impermanent in order to help release them from ideas of attachment associated with suffering and, thus, free them to help others. According to one monk, it is only when you see the true emptiness (impermanence) of the physical reality, including the Dharma, the statues, and the pagoda, that one is able to practice the Buddha's teachings. Due to limited space I am unable to describe the depth of this idea. Essentially, for the meditation sects, it is developing this kind of wisdom which enables them to fulfill their Bodhisattva vow to help those who come to the pagoda seeking their advice. Thus, Buddhist religious space is cultivated on many levels, two of which are linked with ritual actions produced by the followers and oriented by the physical appearance of the pagoda and another that is linked intimately with the philosophy of the Buddhist doctrines.

Notes

1 Typically Mahayana sects incorporate Therevadin and, of course, Mahayana Buddhist doctrines and ideology many of which are borrowed form China. Yet, in the Mekong delta the Terevadin school of thought is also important which is seen within the Khmer Pagodas and within the newly developed Therevadin Vietnamese pagodas (around fifty years old). In addition to these two sects is a third, the Vietnamese Mendicant sect (*Khat si*). The Khat si which developed in 1944 in Vinh Long province, honors both the Therevadin and Mahayana doctrines. But unlike the Mahayana sects, they seek alms and advocate living a lifestyle that is closer to the historical Buddha.

2 For example, in the province of Tra Vinh there are currently over 300,000 ethnic Khmer.

3 The Department of Religion for Cân Thô province has, for example, informed me that the five most "popular religions" in its province are: Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism, Cao dài, and the Hóa hao.

4 This pagoda follows a Mahayana sect called Tu Tai gia, which means at home Buddhism. The people here are essentially devout Buddhist followers and do not shave their head. There main purpose is to help the sick and needy with traditional Vietnamese medicine combined with Buddhist teachings.

5 There are a few Mahayana Buddhist pagodas for nuns and women studying to become nuns, one of which I was able to visit. Called Buu Ân pagoda, it was used as a handicraft shop by the government from 1975 until it was returned to the Buddhist Association six years ago.

6 Amitabha is a Buddha associated with the Pure Land school of Buddhism. It is believed that by chanting the name of Amitabha one can ensure entrance into the Western Paradise. The chant is: "Nam mô A Di Dà Phât (I call on the name of Amitabha)."

7 There are other titles such as *Sa di*, those who observe 10 precepts and are on their way to becoming a monk or nun, as well as *Hóa thuong* (most venerable). To be a Hóa thuong one must have studied for over 40 years, have a university education, and be at least sixty years of age.

8 Typically, gray is worn when in the pagoda, dark brown when traveling outside the pagoda, and bright yellow during Buddhist ceremonies.

9 Males are called *Uu bà tac* and females are called *Uu bà di*.

10 This is not to say that followers practice only in their homes. In some cases "home" is, in fact, within a persons living quarters, in other cases it is located within a pagoda.

11 This is done in order to pay homage to the numerous statues: the past, present, and future Buddhas, Quan Am and other Bodhisattvas, the Jade Emperor, Confucius, and Lao Tzu to name just a few.

12 This was done by putting sacred words in a box and then burning it sending the messages on their way.

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Southeast Asia Homepage

A Guide to Southeast Asian Resources on the Net

The World Wide Web's continued expansion in recent years has brought with it a deluge of information possibilities. One can sit in the comfort of one's home and scan through any number of virtual mini-malls, peruse a copy of USA Today, or find out if the "men in black" really do exist. All of this is well and good if you've got a whole mess of time to kill. But come on, we're Southeast Asianists! We haven't got time for this drivel!

The internet and specifically the World Wide Web, however, remain central to the future of information dissemination and retrieval. Its potential for overcoming spatial constraints offers the promise of increased convenience and, in turn, the holy grail of research: time savings, savings, savings. But the vast sea of hyperlinks which seem to lead only to other hyperlinks begs the question: "where's all the good stuff?"

What follows is a brief listing designed with the intention of making *useful* Southeast Asian resources on the Web more readily accessible to the time starved Southeast Asianist. This introductory installment covers a broad range of internet related resources including online newspapers, bibliographies, virtual libraries, news groups, computer enhancements, and internet access and resources available through the University of Hawaii. Every effort has been made to insure that the resources listed below are correct but please keep in mind that addresses change, sites disappear, and new sites come online every day.

You can help us make the internet Southeast Asia friendly by forwarding your suggestions, comments, and address corrections to Explorations via e-mail at **seassa@hawaii.edu** or, alternatively, to the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 1890 East-West Road, Honolulu HI 96822.

Internet Access and Resources Available at UH Manoa

Computer Labs:

- Second floor Keller Hall just makai from Hamilton Library.
- CLIC located on the first floor of Sinclair Library.
- Additional internet access sites have recently been made available throughout Hamilton Library.

Internet Access:

- Internet accounts can be opened by students and faculty at either computer lab. Just bring your **validated** ID and they'll set you up. It's **free** (you've already paid for it).

Have your own computer at home and want to get online? If you are a student or faculty member you can receive free internet software.

Software:

- Internet access software (Netscape, NCSA telnet, etc.) for both IBM and Mac platforms is available **free** of charge from the ITS help desk on the first floor of Keller Hall. Just remember to bring two blank high-density disks with you.

Southeast Asian Internet Sites

Asian Studies Virtual Library

The Asian Studies WWW Virtual Library is a collaborative project designed as a guide to the documents and resources available on the web specifically concerned with the study of Asia. As the sites listed below are networked it is possible to follow the hyperlinks between the various page. I have chosen here, however, to give a brief overview of sites specifically focused on Southeast Asia.

http://iias.leidenuniv.nl/wwwvl/southeast.html

http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVLpages/IndonPages/WWWVL-Indonesia.html

http://www.univie.ac.at/Sinologie/sg-wwwvl.htm

http://www.monash.edu.au/ftp/pub/bane_lao/laoweb/laoVL.htm

http://www.mtc.com.my/Virtual-Library/Malaysia.html

http://www.nectec.or.th/WWW-VL-Thailand.html

http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVLPages/VietPages/WWWVL-Vietnam.html

General Information (stats etc.)

http://www.yahoo.com/Regional/Countries/[name of country]

Great generalsearch engine for sites related to a specific country.

http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/95fact/index.html

Listing of general CIA factoids (e.g., population, armed forces, GNP, etc.). Handy for those last minute fattening techniques.

http://www.umich.edu./~umimsa/Malaysia

Super clearinghouse fo links to sites on Malaysia. Perhaps most useful for its dirrect links to Malaysian radio, television, and print media

http://neal.ctstateeu.edu/history/world_history/archives/archive5.html

Links to historical documents relating to Southeast Asia. Although this site does exist as of this time I have been unable to lestablish a connection with it.

http://mp.cs.niu.edu/~henry/SEAsite/homepage.html

Neat experimental Indonesian language learning site. Combines various readings in Indonesian (liturature or links to the newspaper of your choice) with an online dictionary. Seems to still be under construction but it may be a site to keep you eye on.

Bibliographies

ftp://coombs.anu.edu.au/CoombswebPages/BiblioClear.html

List of bibliographies by topic. A refreshing dose of something usefull. But be advised , this site contains bibliographies covering topics outside of Southeast Asia

http://nectec.or.th/pub/mirrors/dharma/
http://etext.archive.umich.edu/Religious.Texts/DharmaNet/.

Dharma Electronic File Archive. This site contains files on Buddhism taken from a variety of sources and is divided by style of Buddhism. A listing of the files contained at the site can be view at: **gopher://nectec.or.th:70/00/bureaux/dharma/dharma.1st**.
or at a probably faster link: **http://etext.archive.umich.edu/Religious.Texts/DharmaNet/dharma.lst**.

http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVLPages/VietPages/WWWVL-Vietnam-06.html

This site contains lists of links to bibliographies and documents relating specifically to Vietnam including works by Carl Thayer and David Marr. See also the ANU Virtual Library site listed above for more links.

SEA Newspapers

Indonesia: (Thanks to Wandi Syamsu)

Kompas **http://kompas.com/**

Indonesian language daily with english language sections

Republika- **http://www.republika.co.id/**

Indonesian language daily with english language sections

See also- **http://coombs.anu.edu.au/Special Proj/AJC/IND/Indonesia/jrnls.html**

Contains selected articles from journals published in Indonesia.

See also-**http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVLPages/IndonPages/Serials.html**

Contains large listing of journals published in Indonesia.

Thailand:

Bangkok Post- **http://www.bangkokpost.net**

English language daily

Business Day- **http://www.loxinfo.co.th/~bday/**

English language daily devoted specifically to Business news.

Travel Trade Report Bangkok- **http://www.siam.net/ttr**

Specialty publication specifically serving the travel and tourist industry.

Cambodia:

Cambodia Times- **http://www.jaring.my/atasia/camb_asia/camb_times/ct_bist.html**

English language daily.

Phnom Penh Post- **http://www.vais.net/~tapang/ppp/**

English language bi-weekly.

Malaysia: (Thanks to Jeff Esmond)

Berita Harian- **http://www.jaring.my/bharian/**

Malay language daily. One of the "two big Malay language papers.", the other being Utusan Malaysia (below).

Nanyang Siang Pau- **http://www.asia-online.com/nsp/**

Chinese language daily.

The Star- **http://www1.jaring.my:80/star**

The most widely read English language daily.

Utusan Malaysia- **http://www.ssiaconnect.com.my/utusan**

Malay language with some English sections.

Philippines:

Philippine Star- **http://www.philstar.com/**

English language dailypublished in Manila.

Sun Star- **http://www.gsilink.com/~sunstar**

English language daily of Cebu.

Brunei:

Borneo Bulletin- **http://web3.asia1.com.sg/borneo/bbonline/mon/mon.htm**

Only english language daily published in Brunei.

Media Permata- **http://brunet.bn/news/mp/mponline.htm**

Malay language daily.

Burma:

New Light of Myanmar- **http://www.myanmar.com/gov/news/articles**

English language publication which contains editorials and selected articles.

Fonts and Southeast Asian Computer Enhancements

Burmese: **http://www.nandawon.demon.co.uk/burmese-fonts/index.htm**

Thats right, Burmese fonts!

Lao: **http://fusion.stockton.net/~eternal/fonts/**

Both IBM and Mac fonts are available from this site.

Thai:**http://sashimi.wwa.com:80/~yingthai/filepage.htm**

Thai fonts for the other system (IBM).

http://thaigate.rd.nacsis.ac.jp/krit/

Contains additional resources to expand the Thai capability of you computer. Mainly software that will allow you to view e-mail and web sites in Thai.

http://thaigate.rd.nacsis.ac.jp/krit/macosthaienabler.html

Site from which to download the Mac OS thai system. This OS enabler includes three different fonts.

Khmer: **http://www.cambodia.org/fonts/**

Both IBM and Mac fonts are available from this site.

Vietnamese: **http://www.trichlor.org/**

Both IBM and Mac fonts, keyboard drivers, and more.

http://www/.vietinfo.com/VNI/index.html

Great selection of fonts for a wide variety of platforms.

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Gambuh: A Dance-Drama of the Balinese Courts

Continuity and Change in the spiritual and Political Power of Balinese Performing Arts

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Introduction

With a few notable exceptions, Balinese performing arts[1] are discussed independent of historical and political developments. Because the ties between religion, spiritual belief, and the arts are so strong, it seems almost acceptable to discuss the performing arts solely as they are related to this realm. While the spiritual power of the performing arts is clearly its most profound inspiration and is recognized by most Balinese artists as its most important function, the arts have not developed independently of other aspects of Balinese life: Balinese performers have been responding to socio-cultural changes for centuries. It is often sufficient to state that a certain style or form developed during a particular period. What is frequently left un-addressed is the context in which these developments occurred.

Discussions with Balinese artists in the 1990's reveals that the larger Balinese social context has an extremely strong influence on the final "product" as well as the process of artistic creation. I would argue that the strong relationship between artists and the communities in which they work and perform has meant that artists have always been responsive to societal changes. Therefore, if we are to consider the current state of the arts in Bali it would be short-sighted to exclude a serious discussion of the Balinese historical context: a context in which dramatic changes in Bali's political-economy in the last century have had an unmistakable influence on the performing arts.

For example, Bali's cultural wealth, in the context of the capitalist world economic system, has become an important source of recognition and income for the island. Often the "traditional" arts are sold as part of a package deal to visitors: Thursday, the art market; Friday, the beach; Saturday, "Trance dance" performance. In the 1990's, forms such as *kebyar* and *sendratari* flourish.[2] They are performed nightly throughout the island at ceremonies and tourist performances. Tourists get a glimpse of "Balinese culture" and the Balinese economy booms. At the same time, however, the context in which Balinese cultural, and specifically the performing arts, develop has been altered.

In addition to the influence of the tourist market, one must not overlook the pivotal role political powers have for centuries played on developments in the arts. For example, current discourse on Balinese performing arts places much emphasis on the creation of the nation of Indonesia.[3] Indonesia's "guided" democracy did away with the many kingdoms of the archipelago, including those of Bali. These kingdoms had been the primary participants in the development of the "court" arts by providing exceptional artists with specialized training, opportunities to perform, as well as financial support. Because of the close association with the courts, these arts developed according to the tastes and needs of the kings and the royal families. When the kingdoms were dis-empowered, the court arts were no longer under the exclusive protection and sponsorship of the royalty. This was a critical, recent, historical development for the performing

arts.

The symbiotic relationship between court and performing arts was severely disrupted by the transition into the world of capitalist nation-states exemplified by Indonesian nationalism and the advent of Western influence through media entertainment and tourism. In the wake of this disruption, Balinese performing arts have been both "preserved" in a classical style and created anew using new literary and choreographic elements resulting in a rich array of styles and repertoire. Balinese performing arts have undergone tremendous changes in form. Yet, within these very changes can be seen a philosophical continuity in which spiritual and religious functions have continued to be central to the very existence of the Balinese performing arts and which, in turn, has allowed for the incorporation and adaptation of new ideas and forms into the already existing layered whole.

In this paper I will consider the nature of continuity and change in Balinese dance-dramas with particular attention paid to the form developed between the fifteenth and sixteenth century that constitutes the oldest extant form of Balinese dance-drama: namely, *Gambuh*. My aim is to give historical perspective to current developments in the Balinese performing arts by illuminating some aspects of Gambuh's history and form. It is hoped that this process will shed some light on the challenges facing one form of the court arts in modern Indonesia.

I will begin with a brief discussion of Bali's general geological and geographic endowments which have played a critical part in shaping political and socio-cultural developments. Then I will look at two cultures that are central to Balinese culture as we know it today: Bali Aga, the "original", non-Hindu Balinese villages; and the Hindu-Javanese courts that established themselves in Bali. Following this discussion, I will look specifically at Gambuh's emergence at the meeting of these two traditions. I will discuss Gambuh's significance in the history of Balinese performing arts and examine some of its the dramatic, literary, choreographic and musical elements.

In order to look at the historical developments in Balinese performing arts, I will tread on ground that lacks substantial historical documentation. One of the challenges of Balinese history is the lack of written historical records. Many major texts, such as the *Babad Buleleng* which focuses on fifteenth and sixteenth century, Bali are undated and probably date from no earlier than the mid-eighteenth century.[4] There are dated copper inscriptions in the main temple of the village of Trunyan,[5] but, in general, there are few reliably dated historical documents available. Unlike Java, which had extensive interaction with the Dutch and Chinese, Bali was quite isolated, and, thus, there are not extensive colonial documents or trade records that might allow us more insight into Bali's history. For the purposes of this paper, I will look at the group of Bali Aga, the only Balinese who resisted major Hindu influence. Although there are certainly limitations and problems with this method, it will allow us at least some insight into non-Hindu Bali: essential if we are to attempt to understand the significance of the performing arts in Bali.

The point of this discussion is not to reconstruct a Bali without or before Hinduism. Rather it is

to illuminate some cultural and, particularly, artistic and spiritual concepts that are indigenous to Bali in order to create a base from which to continue our discussion of the Javanese influences on Balinese performing arts: particular, dance-drama.

In my analysis and interpretation of the state of Gambuh in the twentieth century, I have drawn upon interviews, conversations, and observations that took place while I was in Bali between August 1994-October 1995 and December 1996-January 1997. These discussions and my observations during these visits were critical in the shaping of my interpretation of the development and the state of Gambuh and the performing arts in the late twentieth century.

Let us turn now to the discussion of Bali's physical geography and the influence that it has had on the social and political developments in Bali.

Geology and Geography

Bali's location on the Java Sea put it in a strategic position to participate in the trade that criss-crossed Southeast Asia for thousands of years. However, the lack of safe natural harbors kept large scale international trade to a minimum.[6] This is not to say that Bali was *inactive* in trade. It exported cloth, pigs, copra, rice, and later, slaves.[7] However, as Raffles noted in the early nineteenth century, "having an iron-bound coast, without harbours or good anchorage, [Bali] has been in a great measure shut out from external commerce, particularly with traders in large vessels."[8]

Clifford Geertz also pointed out the fact that the large majority of Bali's population (located mainly in southern Bali) faces onto the relatively dangerous Indian Ocean rather than the gentle Java Sea. Bali's reputation for "seclusion and isolation" is related to this geographical fact.[9] This was particularly true when Dutch colonial trade restrictions further underlined the isolation brought on by the island's physiography.

A chain of volcanic mountains runs East-West across Bali separating the North from the South. (This is part of the geological formation that also runs through Java and Lombok.)[10] These mountains, including Gunung Agung and Gunung Batur (considered to be the two most powerful), are an absolutely essential part of the Balinese religious and spiritual belief system and are seen as the center not only of Balinese Hinduism but also of the world.

To the north of these mountains lies the hot, dry, narrow strip of Singaraja. It was this area along the Java Sea that saw the most interaction with the outside world and, to this day, is distinct not only geologically but also culturally. This is expressed in the architecture of temples[11] and homes, nuances of spoken Balinese, and, of course, the performing arts.[12]

To the south of the great mountains lies most of Bali's land mass, almost all of its wet rice agriculture, and the great majority of the Balinese population. Large streams flow down the

gentle slopes of Southern Bali bearing volcanic ash, regularly replenishing the soil, and allowing the irrigation of the rich alluvial plains of the South.

The physical features of Bali have been important in shaping the nature of interaction not only between Balinese people and outsiders but also between the Balinese people themselves. The mountains separated Bali into distinct physical regions and encouraged regional loyalties which, in turn, were manifest in ways, including styles of dance and music, that clearly "belong" to certain areas.

In addition to being important in the sphere of human interactions, both the mountains and the seas are a central part of the spiritual and religious beliefs and activities in Bali. The natural environment-including mountains, ocean, streams, and trees-is an integral part of the supernatural beliefs that developed prior to the arrival of Hinduism.

Every aspect of Balinese life is literally oriented around Gunung Agung. One is constantly aware of one's position relative to the physical features of the earth. The Balinese concepts of *Kaja* and *Kelod* , or "toward the mountain" and "toward the sea,"[13] and the supernatural powers of Bali were integrated with Hindu religion and became the distinct form of Hinduism that permeates Balinese life.[14]

There are some regions and villages in Bali that pride themselves in their conservatism and have consciously avoided outside influence, whether it be Hindu, Muslim, "Indonesian", or Western. These people are the *Bali Aga*, the mountain Balinese, or the *Bali Mula*, the original Balinese.[15] In order to look at some of the developments in the performing arts of Bali, it is necessary to attempt a basic understanding of some of the non-Hindu-Javanese elements of Balinese dance.

It would be idealistic to think that we can simply study the Bali Aga villages and from that research draw direct conclusions about Bali prior to the periods of Warmadewa and Majapahit influence. Just as we cannot say that Bali is a living museum of Java, we cannot say that Tenganan is a living museum of tenth century Bali. However, the areas of the Bali Aga may shed light on certain aspects of beliefs and perhaps artistic function and aesthetics that are indigenous to Bali.

I will discuss the Bali Aga briefly, including some aspects of dance and music, then look at the Hindu courtly influence in Bali before turning the discussion to the more specific genre of Gambuh

Bali Aga

The Bali Aga have separated themselves both geographically and culturally from the majority Balinese Hindu population and proudly maintain Bali's supernatural belief system. The Asak and Tenganan villages on the southern slopes of Gunung Agung and the village of Trunyan in Bangli are the largest and most well-known.

Let me turn my attention specifically to the area of Trunyan which lies below the rim of Gunung Batur on the edge of the sacred Lake Batur. Geographic location and Trunyan conservatism, including strong rules of endogamy, allowed this area to resist heavy Majapahit influence during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Trunyan maintained its independence and experienced only minor Hindu influence. Because of this deliberate conservatism and isolation, these villages offer valuable information about indigenous Balinese social concerns as well as art forms.

James Danandjaja observes that Trunyan, whose subsistence economy is in large part based on swidden agriculture, has two "castes": the *Banjar Jero* and the *Banjar Jaba*. These castes are not based on the Hindu ideas of purity; instead, they are determined by descent during the period of the Gelgel.[16] This is an important example of when outside influence did make headway into Trunyan, for there is a distinction between those of the Banjar Jero, the descendants of those appointed to *rule* by the king of Gelgel, and the Banjar Jaba,[17] those who were the *people* under the Banjar Jero.[18]

Danandjaja comments on Trunyanese prestige consciousness in the context of wedding ceremonies which "should be impressive or not held at all." He notes that there are several married couples with children who continue to postpone the ceremonial celebrations because of the expense.[19] For the Bali Aga, as for many cultures, the hosting of a major ceremony is the time when a family can raise its prestige within its community. It is significant that such a small community is so strongly prestige conscious, particularly, considering the difficulty with which wealth is accumulated in Trunyan's "subsistence economy." This consciousness is manifested in an even more extreme form, as discussed later, in the Hindu Balinese communities and kingdoms.

Bali Aga: Spiritual Power and Performance

The most important Trunyanese (and for that matter Balinese) forms of music and dance are associated with religious ceremony and are a way to maintain a balance between the natural and supernatural worlds. According to copper plate inscriptions in one of the *pelinggih*[20] in Trunyan, the village's main temple dates to the tenth century A.D. (833 Caka), although the village of Trunyan itself is believed to be much older than the temple.[21] In this section, I will consider two examples of performance which are strongly associated with religious rite and supernatural power: the *Berutuk* of Trunyan and *Rejang* from Asak and Tenganan. Perhaps by examining these forms we will be able to better understand the elements of Balinese dance that are indigenous to Bali and Balinese beliefs.

Berutuk

The Berutuk is at once performance, ceremony, and rite.[22] The performers are a selected group of unmarried men who must undergo a period of ritual purification and isolation prior to performing. During this time they sleep in the temple, abstain from sexual contact, and learn the

prayers for the ceremony from the temple priest. The Berutuk performers don sacred masks and wear two aprons of dried banana leaf fiber; one is tied around the neck and hangs over the torso and the other is tied around the waist. There is no musical accompaniment for the performance.

Berutuk reenacts the historical legend of the Trunyan migration from the other Bali Aga areas in East Bali. However, this is not a mere dramatization. The Berutuk performance requires the purification of the actors and appropriate offerings and prayers which will allow the young men to be possessed by *Bethara Berutuk*. At one point, the Berutuk are presented with offerings and members of the audience barter with the Berutuk in order to take part of the offering. In addition, the banana fiber costumes are now charged with powerful magic and spectators attempt to steal bits of the hanging fibers which become protective amulets.

The king and queen Berutuk engage in a courtship dance inspired by the movements of a bird common to the Trunyan area[23] and the queen must be successfully captured by the king in order to ensure the fertility of both the village of Trunyan as well as that of the performer himself.[24] Only after the performance will the young men be eligible for official marriage.[25] The performance ends after the queen is captured and the dancers bathe in the sacred Lake Batur.

The performances happen at irregular intervals depending on the needs of the villages and require that the village not be tainted, for example, by plague or crop failure.[26]

The performers are not trained in the movement of the *Berutuk* but in the necessary prayers. It is not the dance technique but the selection and ritual preparation of the dancers that is important, as they will become temporary vessels for the Bethara Berutuk: *Ratu Pancering Jagat*. Thus, the performance places an emphasis on the ritual readiness of the performers, not technical training. It is a recounting of legendary history, a fertility rite for both land and humans, a passage into adulthood, and a time when the spirits enter humans and the tumultuous interaction between performer and audience mimics the interaction between the human, spirit, and natural worlds.

Rejang

In contrast to Berutuk, Rejang is found throughout Bali, performed only by women, and does not generally involve the dancers becoming possessed by visiting spirits. However, like Berutuk, Rejang is not for human entertainment. It is intended to honor the gods and spirits and, thus, maintain the well-being of the community.

Rejang is a processional dance to entertain the gods and spirits who descend to their *pelinggih* in the temple during a ceremony. In some areas, such as Tenganan and Asak, dancers must be young unmarried women.[27] In other areas, any woman who may enter the temple may perform.[28]

Although, each village has its own style, Rejang is considered sacred throughout the island and is

not performed for tourists or monetary compensation. The women enter and circle around the inner temple approaching the *pelinggih* from which the gods observe the ceremony. The dancers are wrapped in their finest cloth, their hair adorned with gold flowers and fragrant blossoms. They are accompanied by the gamelan whose slow melodies and drum patterns are simple but exquisitely dignified. In some areas the sacred gamelan *selonding* or *gong gede*[29] are used. In areas that do not possess such gamelans, any available gamelan is utilized.

Rejang is one of the most ancient Balinese dances. The movements, like the music, are slow, simple, stately, and present a contrast with the dynamic and dramatic forms that are so much a part of more recent forms of Balinese dance. Neither the movements nor music are technically difficult and, again, there is no formal training for participants. One learns simply by following the other women and girls who are dancing in the temple courtyard. What is important is not complexity or virtuosity but rather the solemn and peaceful offering of the Rejang itself: essentially equivalent to prayer. Thus, in both Rejang and Berutuk the ceremonial function of the dances is the most critical part of the performance. Devotion is primary; technical skill is secondary.[30]

These are considered among the most sacred of Balinese dances. They are one of the aspects of Balinese life that has not been strongly affected by the establishment of a "guided democracy" or the influx of tourists. They remain in the innermost sacred temple; the Balinese people, both Bali Aga and Bali Hindu, refuse to allow these forms to become the secular entertainment in such high demand in the twentieth century.

Hindu Bali and the Majapahit Dynasty

Bali and Java had extensive interaction, particularly, between the ninth and sixteenth centuries, and it was during this period that Bali began to incorporate aspects of Javanese Hinduism into its own already complex culture.[31] Under Airlangga (r. 991-1049), the Warmadewa dynasty brought Java and Bali under one ruling kingship.[32] After the decline of the Warmadewa dynasty, interaction probably subsided into trade and exchange relations, with political and, most likely, cultural influences also being somewhat reduced. However, with the rise of the Singasari and especially the Majapahit period, interaction intensified again. This period was critical, for, as Adrian Vickers points out, "[e]ven today Balinese see their culture as essentially Majapahit culture."[33]

If one examines the friezes on the East Javanese temples built during the Majapahit dynasty when Bali became a tributary of East Java and music and dance-dramas were part of major celebrations in the court.[34] , such as Candi Panataran, Candi Surawana and Candi Kedaton (all fourteenth century),[35] one can see that headdresses of the figures are almost identical to those still used and being made for dance-drama throughout Bali today. They are, likewise, virtually the same as those of Balinese wayang kulit puppets. Headdresses are not merely a part of a Balinese costume; certain headdresses are considered holy and spiritually powerful and are handed down from generation to generation. We can see by looking at the reliefs on these

fourteenth century East Javanese temples that headdresses used today in Bali demonstrate a remarkable unbroken continuity of form at least six hundred years old.

Clifford Geertz has discussed the importance of status and pomp in the nineteenth century Hindu courts of Bali.[36] Ceremonial display, including the support of large performing arts groups as well as elaborate cremation ceremonies, played an important part in legitimizing the king's power.[37] This was not unique to nineteenth century Bali and was clearly a continuation of a pattern well established in the courts of Majapahit and even further back in the Mataram period.

The development of the court arts takes on a different meaning when we examine them in the context of competitive ceremonial display. The *Negarakertagama* gives accounts of festivals where musicians and choral singers accompany the ruler's procession. There are also accounts of the *raket*, a form of dance-drama in which the king himself was said to be an active and talented performer, as were other members of the royal family.[38] Thus, from as far back as the fourteenth century, we see that royalty not only supported the performing arts but were themselves performers. This was a pattern that continued in the courts of Bali where much of the Majapahit royalty relocated following the fall of the dynasty. It was in the present regency of Klungkung that the first major kingdom of Bali was established: the kingdom of Gelgel.

The Courts of Bali: Gelgel and Dalem Baturenggong

The "Golden Age" of Bali was under the kingdom of Gelgel. Gelgel is associated with King Dalem Baturenggong who, to this day, remains a legend not only for his political and military prowess but also for his visionary support of the arts. It is believed that under Dalem Baturenggong the arts of Bali began to flourish. Dance-dramas, particularly masked dance-dramas, continue to tell the historical legends of Dalem Baturenggong: the great patron of the arts. It is perhaps his great love of the arts that established the pattern of royal patronage of the arts in Bali, for all kings that followed tried to emulate as closely as possible the greatness and wisdom of the legendary Dalem Baturenggong.

The sixteenth century kingdom of Gelgel held power over an area that included Blambangan, East Java, the island of Bali, and the islands of Lombok and Sumbawa. The king was the "World Ruler" and provided an "epic vision of kingship" for the future kings of Bali.[39] It was during the Gelgel dynasty that Hindu ideas became integrally incorporated into the Balinese belief system.

However, as with all "Golden Ages," this one also came to an end. In 1651, following a dispute over succession, Gusti Agung Maruti, a prime minister, declared himself ruler of Bali. This marked the end of the united Gelgel dynasty. The kingdom began to disintegrate. It was not until 1800 that Bali would again become stable: this time with not one kingdom, but nine.[40]

The fragmentation of political power had a significant impact on Balinese arts. If there had been cultural unity under Gelgel, it was split along with political power in 1651. This was the

beginning, or perhaps re-establishment, of regional loyalties and strong competition between the royal families of each region.[41] Since politics, religion, society, and the arts are not independent of one another, the arts now had a competitive arena in which to perform.

Although the original rulers of Gelgel may have been from Java, they were living in Bali and had little further cultural exchange with now Muslim Java. Under Dalem Baturenggong, the courtly arts of Majapahit had met with the supernatural power of Balinese forms. This is when the Balinese courtly arts, which are so familiar to us now, began to take neither a purely Hindu-Javanese, nor purely Balinese form. They became much more complex dramatically, more technically demanding, and a new function was added to the Balinese arts' powerful religious function: to serve a large and powerful court.

Although the ancient ritual performances remained, due to the dramatically changing political and cultural Balinese context, new forms of art began to emerge to serve the needs of royalty. One of these newly emerging forms of dance-drama was to become the base of all dance-drama in Bali. Its name comes from the old Balinese word for "mixture" or "to combine": Gambuh.[42]

Gambuh and the Balinese Performing Arts

Gambuh is the oldest form of dance-drama in Bali.[43] Although it is not clear exactly when the form as it exists today emerged, it was probably between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Bandem and deBoer consider it a "direct descendant" of the *raket* dance-dramas of Majapahit which have undergone very little, if any, change since first developed.[44]

When the dance-dramas of Majapahit came to Bali, they had the new task of *preserving* the tradition of a fallen dynasty. Gambuh is said to preserve the "manners and ideals of the highly civilized Javanese/Balinese court life of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries."[45] Perhaps it is this preservationist function that has encouraged such conservatism in the Gambuh tradition. This is perhaps even more true today in Indonesia's guided democracy, where the courts have been dis-empowered and replaced by the national government.

Gambuh is critical to the study of Balinese performing arts, as it is seen as the source of all Balinese dance-drama that exists today. Gambuh brought a narrative element to Balinese performance.[46] This narrative form was very quickly adopted and incorporated into new forms, resulting in the great variety of dance-drama forms now so famous in Bali .include: *Arja, Wayang Wong, Topeng, Calonarang, Parwa, Drama Gong,* and *Sendratari.* They represent a variety of dance and music styles, dramatic forms, literary traditions, and a wide range of ritual necessity and function. Yet, they are all related to the Gambuh tradition.

In addition to its literary contributions to the arts, Gambuh also made significant choreographic contributions to Balinese dance. Gambuh has a rich vocabulary of dance movements which are the basis for much of Balinese dance except, of course, for forms indigenous to Bali (e.g., Rejang

and Berutuk). The increasingly complex movements that developed with Gambuh supported the development of the narrative element by providing a greater vocabulary and range of movement which could be utilized in character development. This type of characterization by movement has been developed to a high art form in both Bali and Java.

Also of great importance are the musical contributions that Gambuh made to the Balinese performing arts. The complex melodies and drum patterns of Gambuh became the base from which almost all of the now "classical" forms of Balinese music arose, and the relationship between the music and the dance became a model for forms that were to follow.

Despite its great contributions to the development of Balinese performing arts, in the 1990's Gambuh is extremely rare. There is a clear lack of popularity among even the most dedicated of young Balinese artists who may respect the form but are unlikely to want to study it or even go out of their way to see a performance. The general Balinese audience is even less likely to be interested.[47]

Gambuh is a highly demanding art form involving not only demanding dance technique but also dialogue in *Kawi*. It requires that both the musicians and dancers understand a form of music that is extremely complex and subtle. The long performances (originally four to five hours), refined language, complex musical and choreographic form, and, perhaps most significantly, the absence of comic relief are also demanding of the audience.

According to one artist, Gambuh is seldom truly appreciated by the audience; thus, there is little emotional or financial incentive to perform this dance-drama. In addition, according to this artist, few people have the *keturunan* (lines of descent, ancestry) to be able to "feel" and give *jiwa* (spirit) to the form.[48]

Another artist, a teacher of Gambuh, noted that when the royalty sponsored artistic groups, including very large Gambuh troupes, they were quite protective of certain roles. Talented non-royal artists were encouraged to dance; however, they were discouraged from taking roles such as the refined princes and princesses. These were reserved for the real royalty. Thus, those who wished to study these roles were forced to *mencuri* (steal) by learning without formal study and without performing these roles in public.[49]

This exclusivity may be having repercussions now. There are few who are able to perform Gambuh. At present only one or two villages have active Gambuh groups. In total there are perhaps only four groups that perform in the Gambuh style. This is in contrast to groups that perform *gong kebyar*, the form that at present is the most popular performing art form. These groups very easily number in the hundreds for the regency of Gianyar alone, where the number of *gong kebyar* in one village can easily outnumber the total number of Gambuh groups on the entire island.

Let us look now at the form of Gambuh itself: its literature, dance, and music. Then we can turn

to a discussion of some of its functions: that is where, when, and *why* it was performed in the Balinese courts. This will perhaps shed light on the reasons for the difficult state of Gambuh in Bali today.

Gambuh: The Telling of Literary Legend

There are several sources from which Gambuh derives its dramatic material including the accounts of Amad Mohamad and Rangga Lawe.[50] However, the most famous and beloved Gambuh episodes are from the Panji cycle which are known as the Malat in Bali.

The Panji cycle, probably composed in the fourteenth century,[51] is a complex and extensive combination of literature and legend that is indigenous to Southeast Asia. Panji is known as Inao in mainland Southeast Asia and is found in Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Malaysia.[52] In Java and Bali, the hero, Raden Panji, is considered to be a descendant of the Pandawas and a reincarnation of Wisnu. His beloved Candra Kirana (Radiant Ray of the Moon,)[53] is an incarnation of Dewi Sri. On the Buddhist mainland, Raden Panji is a future Buddha.[54]

The Malat chronicles tell of the adventures of Raden Panji who has been separated from his fiancee, Candra Kirana, on the night before their wedding. They spend years searching for one another, venturing through historical East Javanese kingdoms such as Kediri, Mataram, and Kahuripan. They assume a number of different disguises, resulting in their meeting a number of times without recognizing one another. Panji is devastatingly handsome, a talented musician, and a fine warrior. He has numerous romantic and military adventures but is endlessly searching for Candra Kirana.

Candra Kirana is as beautiful as the moon: refined, radiant, and graceful. However, she is also a great warrior. She disguises herself as a man, is clever and skillful, and wages war campaigns throughout East Java until she becomes a great ruler. Finally, she and Panji meet in battle. They do not recognize each other initially, but eventually realize that their seemingly endless search has indeed ended. They are reunited and live peacefully until their deaths reunited them once again in heaven in their original forms of Wisnu and Dewi Sri.

This is of course one extremely short synopsis of a complex oral and literary tradition. Bandem, Robson, and Poerbatjaraka provide interesting versions of the Panji stories, including many of the numerous, confusing, and often contradictory details of the adventures.[55]

It is interesting to note that Candra Kirana in Gambuh is generally depicted as the beautiful princess rather than in her disguise as a warrior. The series of stories about Candra Kirana as warrior has not been forgotten however. It is told in Bali and is performed in the *kebyar* (a more modern) tradition of dance in the piece *Panji Semirang*. In general, the stately Gambuh focuses on the political exploits of Panji. In contrast, other forms such as *Arja*, focus on the romantic drama between Raden Panji and Candra Kirana. This may be one reason that Gambuh is less popular than forms such as Arja which have a much more romantic tone. There are strong

political and romantic elements in the Malat cycle, and the differences are a matter of emphasis.

Gambuh: Aspects of the Dance

The movement and choreography of each character in Gambuh reflects Balinese philosophy and ideals. Made Wiratini's fascinating thesis points out that when Gambuh was first developed, women did not participate. Polite women only danced in the temple for ceremonies that included Rejang, etc. Gambuh was developed and performed by men and reflects the values and ideals of men.[56] The women's roles were choreographed and performed by men and reflect the male ideal of the feminine rather than reality or the female ideal of the feminine. For example, this could be the reason that in Gambuh, Candra Kirana does not appear in her warrior prince disguise.

In Gambuh, as in many forms of Southeast Asian dance, the movements of the performers generally emphasize a connection to the power of the earth. The basic body stance is called *agem*, and each type of character has an *agem* appropriate to the character and genre. Gambuh has a style and quality of movement and *agem* which are distinct and easily distinguishable from other forms of Balinese dance.[57]

In the movements of Gambuh, we see elements that are similar to the ancient Rejang[58] in some of the female roles as well as movement phrases which imitate the Balinese environs, such as the swaying of palms and lizards crossing water. These choreographic elements are purely Balinese artistic developments that have been created and kept in Balinese performing arts. Thus, much of Gambuh reflects Balinese creativity and aesthetics.

There are, however, significant contributions from outside. One of the most noticeable is the presence of mudras, similar to the movements of the Balinese priests who, of course, learned these mudras as part of the Hindu religion. Certain characters, such as Panji, have special hand gestures that belong only to that particular character. Other gestures are used by several characters, although with stylistic differences.

Balinese mudras, with a few exceptions, do not refer to a specific thing or idea. There are very few mudras used in Balinese dance relative to Bharat Natyam, for example. In Gambuh the dancers/actors speak, the clowns interpret Kawi into Balinese, and a dalang narrates important information that cannot be communicated by the actors/dancers themselves. Thus, there are a variety of ways that the plot can be carried and elaborated upon. Mudras are not used for this purpose. The mudras may have their origins in India, but the meaning was virtually left behind. They became, in some cases purely, ornamental.

However, mudras did greatly increase the movement vocabulary in Balinese dance, and, through Java, there came an increased complexity and formality of choreography. In Gambuh, more than in any other dance-dramas, there is a wide vocabulary of movement for the dancers, but the movements are tightly choreographed and allow little room for improvisation on the part of the

artists.[59]

This is true also of the dialogue and other spoken parts of the dance-drama, which are not improvised. The *penasar*, the servant characters in other forms of dance-drama such as *prembon* and *calonarang,* have quite a bit of freedom and are almost required to make a long series of lewd jokes and tales. However, Gambuh *penasar* are much more limited in the scope of their dialogue. This is due to the fact that these performances were originally sponsored by the king and the courts and were usually for court occasions and ceremonies.[60] It was risky to allow the actors too much freedom. Thus, both the choreography and spoken texts are restricted and rehearsed.

Characterization in Gambuh

Within this tightly rehearsed choreography, there is a very sophisticated development of character and characterization through movement, language, voice, and music. Each of the main characters makes his/her first entrance with an *igel ngugal* (a solo introductory section in which the dancer and the musicians establish the character of the person entering).[61] It is possible that the very existence of solo dancing in Bali may have its origins in Gambuh. The technical training of the dancers and the increased complexity of the choreography itself support solo dance interludes that allow the skill of the dancer, the beauty of the dance, and the nature of the entering character to be appreciated. This is in contrast to the slow, simple movements of Rejang, performed in a group of sixty women, all dancing in one ceremonial gesture.

The costume itself will allow a knowledgeable viewer to ascertain much about a character's rank, age, degree of refinement, etc.[62] The headdresses, in particular, are important indicators of character.[63]

Most Balinese dance-dramas have four stock-character types: refined female, strong female, refined male, and strong male. All of the main characters fit into one of these four categories which, in their theoretical bases, are identical to the division of characters in Javanese dance.

The refined male and female characters are called *manis* (sweet). They are the princes and princesses, such as Raden Panji and Candra Kirana. Their movements are slow, smooth, fluid, and dignified. They speak in Kawi using high-pitched stylized voices. Their hand gestures are delicate, refined, and deliberate. The dancers who take on these roles must have small supple bodies and nothing less than beautifully delicate faces.[64]

The strong characters are called *keras* (coarse, unrefined). These are the lower ranking characters and the high ranking "bad guys." They are usually servants, prime ministers, and soldiers. Their movements are much more outwardly energetic. Their arms, legs, eyes, and faces are thrust up, a sign of arrogance and lack of refinement. Their movements tend to be jerky and sudden. Their hand gestures and language are less polite; they may point at one another, clench their fists, and speak in loud rough voices. The male dancers must have larger bodies than those

of the refined characters.

All characters of high rank whether *manis* or *keras* are costumed in the finest clothes the performing group or its sponsoring court can afford. They are draped and bound in gold painted and beaded cloth. The dancers heads are adorned with fragrant flowers and intricately carved leather headdresses that indicate rank and status.

Language and body gestures are also important indicators of character status. Wiratini points out that in addition to the *keras*/*manis* and male/female division, there is the division between the Triwangsa and the Sudra characters: that is between the royal characters and the servant/subject characters.[65]

Wiratini points out the clear division in Gambuh of the royal characters, who speak only Kawi, and the servant characters, who speak only Balinese. The servant characters interpret the words of the royal characters for the audience, the large majority of whom cannot understand Kawi. The *penasar* take on critical roles as liasons between the heroes and the common audience and must be polite and attentive in language and gesture in the presence of the high ranking heroes.[66] Thus, the ideal roles and attitudes of the royalty and the *penasar* are clear through gesture, body posture, costume, and language.

The clarity with which the status of each character is defined and the importance placed on making the social hierarchy clear through language, costume, and movement underlines the importance not simply of caste but also the importance of knowing *how* one's social and caste status should be manifeste in one's daily life and in every aspect on one's existence.

Mudras and the style of headdress distinguish Panji from others such as Arjuna or Rama, but they all occupy approximately the same niche in Balinese dance-drama: the refined, handsome prince. With the prominent use of stock character-types and stock scenes, the individual personality becomes less important than the niche that he or she occupies. One could infer that the message conveyed is that the cultivation of the individual self-that which makes one unique-is less important than the perfection of the roles that one plays relative to others in the community.

As dance and drama are essentially inseparable from the music, I will now discuss briefly the musical aspects of Gambuh.

Gamelan Gambuh

Among the most important changes that came to Balinese performing arts with the development of Gambuh were

1. the increased complexity of musical form, melody, and composition
2. an increasingly tight coordination between the dance and music, and

3. the prominent role of the drums.[67]

The musical accompaniment for Gambuh is called simply gamelan Gambuh and is recognized as one of the most complex and difficult genres of Balinese music.[68] Gamelan Gambuh is characterized by the prominence of the long bamboo flutes (approximately 90 cm in length), called *suling Gambuh*.[69] These flutes, along with the *rebab* (bowed fiddle), carry and elaborate the series of long complex melodies of gamelan Gambuh. Hanging gongs function as colotomic markers. The *ceng-ceng* (cymbals), *kajar* (horizontal gong struck with a wooden mallet), and the *kendang* (drums) have complex rhythmic patterns that are closely associated with the dancers' movements. Other instruments include the *gentorag* (bell tree) and the *gumanak* (pair of bronze tubes that subdivides the gong cycle).

The melodies of gamelan Gambuh have different *tetekep*[70] (scales), similar to the modes of Javanese gamelan. Each of the modes has a distinct mood and suggests a different character. For example, the *tetekep lebeng*, the highest of the *tetekep*, is considered sweet and is associated with Candra Kirana.[71] Each main character has his or her own specific melody in an appropriate *tetekep*. The melody and *tetekep* establish and support the "character" and the appropriate mood, such as that of the dignified and sweet, but sad, Candra Kirana. Music becomes a key element to character development and is inseparable from the dance and drama.

The *kendang* have an extremely important role in gamelan Gambuh. It is in the interlocking rhythmic patterns of the drum and in its importance hierarchically in the ensemble that we are able to appreciate some of the most important contributions that Gambuh has made to the performing arts of Bali.

Before the development of Gambuh, it seems that the *kendang* had a predominantly colotomic rather than rhythmic role and did not serve as a key intermediary between dancer and musician. In Gambuh, the pair of *kendang*, which are significantly called *lanang* (male)and *wadon* (female), incorporate interlocking rhythmic patterns, establish the formal structure of the *pegambuhan* pieces and are the key link between musicians and dancers.[72]

Thus, Gambuh has made significant contributions to the performing arts: the meeting of Balinese and Javanese styles and aesthetics; the incorporation of narrative elements as well as Hindu mudras; the further development of characterization through movement, language, gesture and music; the heightened complexity of the melodic line and structure; and the increased prominence of the drum as a leading instrument functioning as essential link between the music and dance.

Let us look now at the context of the Gambuh performance in the twentieth century and then consider its historic roots in the courts of Bali and how these interact to create a uniquely challenging situation for Gambuh today.

Gambuh: The Performance

A Balinese performance is not merely entertainment. Gambuh's courtly tradition gives it strong roots in the political and spiritual world of the Balinese courts, a world that is slowly giving way to the guided democracy of Indonesia and the unguided economy of Western capitalism.

However, Gambuh and all Balinese arts still have their most fundamental existence in the spiritual world of Bali. This is an existence that began long before the temples of Bali were Hindu. Clearly the oldest forms of Balinese dance such as Rejang and Berutuk are as much ceremony as they are "dance." The spiritual and religious power of the performances are more important than the execution of technique.

With Hinduism and Javanese culture came more elaborate ceremony and more elaborate dramatic forms. It was the meeting of these that was the birth of the complex world of the Balinese arts and Hindu Bali today where each major ceremony is a theatrical as well as religious event.[73]

The most important performances in Bali happen in the temple which is generally divided into three areas: the *jeroan*, the *jaba tengah,* and the *jaba*. Bandem and deBoer provide a detailed examination of these parts of the temple, their structural and spiritual significance, and the forms of performing arts that "belong" to each courtyard.[74] Each courtyard has certain forms of dance and music that are appropriate for that area. The three divisions of the performing arts in the temple-the *Wali*, *Bebali,* and *Bali-balihan* which are performed in the *jeroan, jaba tengah,* and *jaba* respectively are-like many aspects of Balinese Hindu philosophy-flexible. Sometimes *Bebali* forms such as Gambuh are performed in the outermost courtyard, although forms such as *Rejang* and *Berutuk* or *Sang Hyang Dedari* are less likely to be moved out of their normal performance context.

The performing arts are a key element, inextricable from the ceremonial and religious activities, of Balinese Hinduism. At times they serve as vehicles through which the spirits themselves perform. Sometimes they serve as offerings and entertainment for the gods who have come to the temple for the ceremony. At other times they are geared towards the human audience serving to entertain the worshippers and, thus, create a bustling and exquisite center of human activity and interaction. A Balinese temple ceremony is religious, artistic, and intensely social.

If there is a large ceremony in a village that has enough money, they may invite a Gambuh group to perform. To invite a Gambuh group is quite expensive as even a "skeleton" group requires about forty musicians and dancers. The groups that still exist are supported by the village community and by their own work. They are not "professional" in the sense that they cannot make their living by performing Gambuh. The quality of the performance may far exceed that of a professional group in the West, but the demand for Gambuh performances is low so that these performances are not a steady source of income.[75]

This is where the political situation of the state and the artistic activities in the community meet.

Prior to both the Dutch occupation and Indonesian independence, very large retinues of performers, often in the hundreds, were supported by the courts. The kings supported artists by giving them rice fields to work, providing costumes, and sponsoring regular performances for special occasions and ceremonies, such as tooth-filings, weddings, and cremations, in the palace. Thus, artists had both the financial and artistic support necessary to maintain the art form.

Today, although the artists may be able to find other sources of financial support, the rarity of performance opportunities is problematic. A full Gambuh performance, which was originally four to five hours in duration, is extremely rare. In the 1920's a three hour performance was considered full. Now, it is difficult to find even a two hour performance.

According to Bapak I Ketut Kantor, head of one of the Gambuh groups in Batuan, the king had a significant role in the artistic decisions for the Gambuh groups and wanted only full Gambuh performances.**76** Now, however, there is no king and the Gambuh audience is composed of tourists and Balinese who are accustomed to half hour television soap operas imported from the United States, Venezuela, and China. Twentieth century Indonesia offers a different audience.

In the nineteenth century courts of Bali, there was intense rivalry between the kings and princes of various areas.**77** For the performing arts of Bali, this is very significant. The nineteenth century was also the "Golden Age" of Gambuh.**78** It seems highly unlikely that this is mere coincidence. The arts were part of this competition, and the courts put on the most extravagant ceremonies possible. These ceremonies included the performing arts. The arts were a tool for the political and social status competition between the courts. The performances were a direct reflection of the courts ability or inability to nurture the tradition of the legendary Dalem Baturenggong.**79**

Gambuh was the first of the dance-dramas nurtured by the courts. Through its conservatism and pride in its dignity, it has remained the most courtly of the courtly arts. This presents a special problem in the late twentieth century.

In the 1990's some art forms flourish and ride a wave of great popularity. These include those of the *kebyar* genre: the powerful, exciting style from North Bali. This style is pure dance and music. The pieces may be inspired by a story or legend; however, they are not dance-dramas but rather short pieces of about twelve to fifteen minutes. They require neither the cast of sixty to seventy highly trained dancers and musicians nor the long attention span required by Gambuh.

If we look at Gambuh's function in the courts, we can understand how it has developed into a very complex and demanding art form. It is demanding not only of the performers but also of the audience who must be able to appreciate the subtlety of the musical form and the beauty of the language and literature. Gambuh served an important political function: it glorified the ruler and told the tales of political and romantic exploits of Raden Panji and the courts of East Java. It was part of religious ceremony and part of political competition. As such, it was required to maintain and reflect the dignity of the court and, thus, the highly developed music, the use of

Kawi, and the relative lack of improvisational freedom given to the performers. Even the servants were dignified and would not make remarks inappropriate to a very formal court situation. All of the characters must reflect the ideals of the court.[80] This is in contrast to later forms of dance-drama such as *prembon* where the *penasar* improvise extensive comedic scenes, interacting with one another as well as the audience members. Talented performers have the audience in tears of laughter with a seemingly endless routine that borders on obscene stand up comedy.

These forms are very popular and are able to compete nicely with the new edition of Star Wars and even televised soccer. They are less formal and more entertaining. At this time in Bali, these forms are able to exist simultaneously with the Gambuh and Bob Marley. However, clearly Gambuh faces stiff competition.

Spies and de Zoete point out that the Balinese are not interested in Gambuh because they can find what they like about Gambuh in newer and more entertaining forms.[81] This keen observation is indicative of an important pattern of development whereby older forms generally do not simply become extinct but are kept in purely ceremonial (i.e., not "entertainment") forms, though elements of these forms may be borrowed by newer forms. Throughout, the arts maintain a critical role in the ceremonial life of Bali, and the religious and powerful spiritual life of the arts in Bali is still the most significant aspect of most of the Balinese arts.

The political and social hierarchy are changing, and the court arts no longer have their place as court jewels. Although forms like Gambuh are performed for weddings, cremations, and other large ceremonies, they have lost their political function. They have maintained their ritual value but have lost their principal sponsor, the royal courts. It remains to be seen what the fate of forms such as Gambuh will be. This is true not only in Bali but in other areas of Indonesia where the courts that once sponsored artistic activity no longer have substantial political power.

In Bali there is a reshaping of the arts, a continuation of the Balinese adeptness at finding creative ways to fit an artistic form with the political, social, and economic situation. The life of the arts in Bali continues with great vitality; however, not all forms are flourishing. There is a strong tendency to cultivate simpler forms of dance-drama that leave out one or more of the more difficult aspects of older forms such as the use of Kawi, singing, dialogue, and highly complicated and refined dance technique like those found in Gambuh.

Summary and Conclusion

The performing arts of Bali have both strong threads of continuity and dynamic elements of change. The Balinese people have developed and refined their arts perhaps since the very beginning of organized spirit worship. The arts of Bali seem to have been born in and from spiritual belief. Balinese beliefs, whether they be Hindu or indigenous, are tied both to the arts and to the physical features of the island itself. The sacred mountains, the powerful sea, the harborless coasts that discouraged extensive outside contact, the banyan trees, and rivers are all

part of the Balinese physical and spiritual world. When the fall of the Majapahit dynasty brought intensified Javanese-Hindu belief and court systems to Bali, many Balinese integrated the new ideas with the old. For most of Bali they became one entity: Hindu Bali, Balinese Hinduism.

Javanese influence was substantial and brought an increased complexity and formal structure to the already well developed Balinese belief system and artistic tradition. The performing arts to the Balinese are innately spiritually powerful. Thus, it is not surprising that a ruler would want to collect the arts and their power. Just as the Javanese kings collected krises, dwarves, and other symbols of power, so they also nurtured the performing arts to heighten their glory, honor the past, and to make their ceremonies more "complete."

Balinese court arts were nurtured over centuries by various kings and kingdoms. One could argue that political competition became one with regional loyalty and style in the performing arts. The arts became powerful political and ceremonial ammunition.

The Dutch occupation and the devastation of the courts of Bali during the *puputan*s of the early twentieth century marked a major change in Balinese history. The royalty that had its roots in the arrival of the Majapahit courtiers in the fifteenth century was devastated. *Puput* means "to end", and the *puputan* were indeed a tragically artistic and dramatic ending for the kings of Bali.

Indonesian nationalism and democracy succeeded the Dutch occupation. It has no place for courts and kings, except in cultural museums and in the research of anthropologists. The artists who had been protected and sponsored by the kings are now on their own. Some have fared well; their work found beautiful by the increasingly thick mass of tourists that came to visit Bali. Others have struggled to tell the tales of the heroic Panji and his political exploits, speaking in Kawi, and maintaining the dignity of the courts that truly met their end in the *puputan*.

It is difficult to say what the next generation of artists will bring to their tradition. Many have a deep respect for the practitioners and the history of older courtly forms. However, this does not necessarily mean that they themselves wish to become practitioners of these forms. Today's young Balinese artists never lived under the kings of the Gelgel tradition. Suharto has reigned as president for two generations of artists. Television, movie theatres, discotheques, and music videos are easily accessible not only physically but mentally. Serious artists of the young generation recognize this competition. The challenge that faces them is to maintain, once again, the powerful ties of history and spirituality in the Balinese performing arts and respond to the changing world that will no longer be hindered by Bali's iron-bound coasts.

Notes

1 For the purposes of this paper, "performing arts" will refer primarily to dance, drama, dance-drama, and music. The developments in shadow puppet theatre are fascinating and of great

importance; however, they are beyond the scope of this paper.

2 *Kebyar* (explosion) is the name of the dynamic form of dance and music which was born early in this century in North Bali. It is known for its flashy choreographic and compositional elements and currently dominates the Balinese performing arts. It is popular among the younger musicians and dancers. *Sendratari* is a form of danced drama which was developed after kebyar. However, the two forms are related, and are exceedingly popular with both Balinese and non-Balinese audiences. Unlike many other forms of dance and drama in Bali, in these forms, the dancers are not required to speak or sing, and thus the forms are considerable less demanding than other, less popular, forms which require speaking and singing in addition to dancing.

3 Michel Picard's work includes fascinating discussions of cultural tourism as well as the developments of dance and drama in Bali and their relationship to the ongoing search for a national, Indonesian dance style. See Michel Picard, "Dance and Drama in Bali: The Making of and Indonesian Art Form," in *Being Modern in Bali: Image and Change*, ed. Adrian Vickers, Yale Southeast Asia Studies Monograph series, no. 43 (New Haven: Yale University Press, Southeast Asian Series, 1996).

4 David Stuart-Fox, "Pura Besakih: Temple and State Relations from Precolonial Times to Modern Times," in *State and Society in Bali*, ed. Hildred Geertz (Leiden : KITLV Press, 1991), 11-41.

5 P.V. Van Stein Callenfels, "Epigraphia Balica," *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasche Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, 66, no. 3: 20-26; Roelof Goris, *Prasasti Bali*, vol. 1 (Bandung: Masa Baru, 1954), 6-7, 56-59; Roelof Goris, *Prasasti Bali*, vol. 2 (Bandung: Masa Baru, 1954), 122-126, 183, 193-194; and James Danandjaja, "The Trunyanese: the People who Descended from the Sky," in *Dynamics of Indonesian History*, ed. Haryati Soebadio (Amsterdam; North-Holland Publishing Company, 1978), 43.

6 E. Dobby, *Southeast Asia* (London: University of London Press, 1950), 258.

7 Adrian Vickers, *A Paradise Created* (Berkeley: Periplus Editions, 1989), 60-91. There is evidence of contact with India as early as two thousand years ago as evidenced by Bellwood and Ardika's work in Sembiran, North Bali. For a discussion of the findings of their work see, I Wayan Ardika and Peter Bellwood, "Sembiran: the beginnings of Indian contact with Bali," *Antiquity* 65 (1991): 221-232.

8 Sir Thomas Raffles, *The History of Java* (London: Oxford University Press, 1817), Appendix K.

9 Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 87-88.

10 Dobby, *Southeast Asia*, 255.

11 Miguel Covarrubias, *Island of Bali* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1937. Reprinted 1965), 185-186.

12 Personal observation. Both people from South and North Bali make the North-South Bali distinction both for geography as well as culture.

13 This concept of "toward tthe mountain" and "toward the sea," is of course, not unique to Bali. For example, Hawaiian also has "Mauka" and "Makai."

14 I Made Bandem and Fredrik deBoer's work *Kaja and Kelod: Balinese Dance in Transition* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995) gives a comprehensive discussion of the concepts of Kaja and Kelod and their manifestation in the Hindu Balinese temples and performing arts.

15 Danandjaja, "Trunyanes," 43.

16 The Kingdom of Gelgel arose in sixteenth century Bali following massive changes in Balinese social and political structure as result of the influence of the Majapahit kingdom and the relocation of much of the Majapahit royalty to Bali following Majapahit's decline in East Java. Vickers, *Bali*, 41-53.

17 Interestingly, the terms *Jaba* and *Jero* are the same terms used by Hindu Balinese to differentiate between the Sudra and the Triwangsa (Brahman, Satria, Wesia). Jaba (outside), refers to the Sudra. Jero (inside), refers to the Triwangsa. Thus, there has clearly been some outside influence.

18 Danandjaja, "Trunyanese," 52.

19 Danandjaja, "Trunyanese," 49.

20 *Pelinggih* are the pagoda-like structures found in Balinese temples. They are believed to be the sitting place of visiting deities. The word *pelinggih* comes from the Balinese word *melinggih*. (sit or to be seated).

21 Callenfels. "Epigraphia Balica," 20-26; Goris, *Prasasti Bali*, vol. 1, 6-7, 56-59; Goris, *Prasasti Bali*, vol. 1, 122-126, 183, 193-194; and Danadjaja, "Trunyanese."

22 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*, 9.

23 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*, 5-8

24 Danandjaja, "Trunyanese," 57.

25 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*. Bandem and deBoer also note that some participants may actually have been "married" for all practical purposes-some may have children, etc.-prior to the ceremony. However, only after the Berutuk performance were they considered eligible for the official ceremony.

26 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*, 3.

27 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*, 16.

28 There are certain times when a person may not enter the innermost courtyard of a temple, such as the twelve days following a death in the family. Women may not enter the temple if they are menstruating. Under these conditions, a woman is considered unclean and may neither enter the temple nor participate in holy worship, including prayer and performing Rejang.

29 Both the *selonding* and *gamelan gong gede* (great or large gong gamelan) ensembles are extremely rare in Bali. The iron selonding are found mostly in the Bali Aga areas, and many of the very large gong gede ensembles have been melted down to make the brighter sounding gong kebyar instruments. For a comprehensive, yet accessible, discussion of Balinese music see Michael Tenzer's *Balinese Music* (Berkeley: Periplus Editions, 1991).

30 Personal observation and discussions with numerous teachers and dancers while studying dance and conducting fieldwork in the Gianyar and Badung areas of South Bali in 1994, 1995, and 1996.

31 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*, 26.

32 Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia: Continuities and Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), 66-67.

33 Adrian Vickers, *Bali*, 46.

34 Theodore Pigeaud, *Java in the Fourteenth Century* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962)

35 Claire Holt, *Art in Indonesia*, 82-87.

36 These Balinese kings were, of course, descendants of the rulers of Majapahit who fled to Bali after the decline of Majapahit.

37 Clifford Geertz, *Negara*.

38 Pigeaud, *Java in the Fourteenth Century*.

39 Adrian Vickers, *Bali*, 41.

40 Adrian Vickers, *Bali*, 53-57.

41 In *Negara* Geertz discusses in detail the seemingly endless struggle for power through shows of courtly pomp that characterized nineteenth century Balinese kingdoms.

42 Personal communication with Bapak I Ketut Kantor, Desa Batuan, Bali.

43 I Made Bandem, "Pandji Characterization in the Gambuh Dance Drama" (Thesis, University of California at Los Angeles, 1972), 47.

44 I Made Bandem and Fredrik deBoer, "Gambuh: A Classical Balinese Dance-Drama," *Asian Music*, 10, no.1: 115-127.

45 Bandem and Deboer, "Gambuh," 115.

46 Bandem and Deboer, "Gambuh," 116.

47 Personal observation; Ketut Gede Asnawa, "The Kendang Gambuh in Balinese Music" (Thesis, University of Maryland, 1991), 27; Beryl de Zoete and Walter Spies, *Dance and Drama in Bali* (London: Faber and Faber, 1938), 135.

48 Personal communication, I Dewa Putu Berata, Banjar Pengosekan, Ubud, 9 January 1997.

49 Personal communication, Bapak I Ketut Kantor, Banjar Pekandelan, Batuan, 11 January 1997.

50 Marianne Ariyanto "Gambuh: The Source of Balinese Dance" *Asian Theatre Journal* 2, no. 2 (1985): 221-230.

51 James Brandon, *Theatre in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 46.

52 Brandon, *Theatre in Southeast Asia*, 26.

53 Bandem, *Pandji*, 1.

54 Brandon, *Theatre in Southeast Asia*, 106.

55 Bandem, *Pandji*; S.O. Robson trans., *Wangbang Wideya* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971); Poerbatjaraka, *Cerita Panji Dalam Perbandingan* (Jakarta: Gunung Agung, 1968). *Cerita Panji Dalam Perbandingan* is one of the texts that is consulted by Bapak I Ketut Kantor for both

Gambuh and other types of performances.

56 Ni Made Wiratini, "Condong and its Roles in Balinese Dance-Drama" (Thesis, University of California at Los Angeles, 1991), 18.

57 Bandem, *Pandji*, 49.

58 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*, 33.

59 Wiratini, *Condong*, 30.

60 Wiratini, *Condong*, 80.

61 Wiratini, *Condong*.

62 Komang Gede Urip Tribhuana, "Tokoh Putra Halus Drama Tari Gambuh" *Wreta Cita* 3, no. 6 (1996): 19-20.

63 Some headdresses are believed to be especially powerful and may be kept in special places. There is a clear hierarchy even in clothes (this is not only true of dance costumes, but is especially important if a headdress is sacred). A head piece should not be put on the floor and should never be covered by pants or a cloth that is used to wrap the lower part of the body.

64 Bandem, *Pandji*.

65 *Triwangsa* is a Balinese term that refers to the three castes *Brahman*, *Ksatria*, and *Wesia*.

66 Wiratini points out that the word *penasar* comes from the Balinese word *dasar* (base or foundation).

67 For a detailed discussion of Gamelan Gambuh and the role of the drum see Asnawa's, "Kendang," 1991.

68 I Dewa Putu Berata, personal communication, 7 January 1997. This was a sentiment expressed to me by several students at Sekolah Tinggi Seni Indonesia, Denpasar who had substantial difficulty learning the dance because the musical accompaniment was very complex and subtle. Exceptionally talented music students who were excellent gamelan gong kebyar performers had great difficulty memorizing the long melodies and complicated drum patterns of gamelan Gambuh. Personal observation, August 1994-June 1995.

69 Asnawa, "Kendang," 29.

70 The five different *tetekep* are: *tetekep selisir*, *tetekep sunaren*, *tetekep tembung*, *tetekep baro,* and *tetekep lebeng*..

71 Asnawa, "Kendang," 36.

72 Asnawa, "Kendang," 106-107.

73 I Wayan Dibia, "Odalan of Hindu Bali: A Religious Festival, a Social Occasion, and a Theatrical Event," *Asian Theatre Journal* 2, no.1 (1985): 61-65.

74 Bandem and deBoer, *Kaja and Kelod*.

75 There is one group in the village of Batuan that performs twice a month and is supported by a grant from the Ford Foundation. This is the only such group on the island. The other groups perform quite infrequently, perhaps once every few months, depending on "demand."

76 Personal communication. Bapak I Ketut Kantor, 7 January 1997.

77 Geertz, *Negara*.

78 Ariyanto, "Gambuh," 221.

79 To a certain extent this still happens in the *puri* (palaces) for very important occasions. In January 1997, I witnessed the cremation of the last king of Ubud. The ceremonies and performances, including gambuh, went on for several days and nights. The Gambuh group, however, did not "belong" to the palace; they were visitng guests who were paying their respects to the king rather than the personal retinue of performers that were supported directly by the courts themselves.

80 Wiratini, "Condong," 25-26.

81 de Zoete and Spies, *Dance*, 135.

Explorations
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Exploring the History of Women's Education and Activism in Thailand

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Notes

Introduction

While the history of education[1] in Thailand has been a productive area of research for numerous authors, particularly in its relationship to nationalism and modernization, it remains only a partial history. For this history has primarily documented the evolution and "progress" of Thai men's education as if it could represent the experiences of Thai women as well. This is indeed not the case. In an exploratory examination of the mainstream historical literature, I found that emphasis was typically placed on the education of royal and elite men, especially in connection with the rise of the Thai bureaucracy and state centralization under the reign of King Chulalongkorn.[2] Thus, in many instances, women remain an undeniable absence in Thai history.[3] In order to outline a tentative history of women's education to complement that of men, it was necessary to rely on sources from a number of disciplines, including education, history, anthropology, political science, economics, and population studies. A book entitled *A History of Thai Education*, published by the Thai Ministry of Education, proved to be the most sensitive to issues of gender in Thailand's educational history.[4] That may be a result of the fact

that the majority of committee members compiling the book were Thai women: nine out of a total thirteen.[5]

What follows is a preliminary attempt to map the evolution of formal education for women in Thai society in order to discover the possible relationship that education, in particular tertiary education, has had with the development of women's political activism in the contemporary period. I intend to show that the significant gains made in tertiary education by women of various classes since the 1970's have indeed had an influence upon the heightened politicization of women and have had at least a partial role in the formation of numerous organizations and associations within civil society that have the potential, and in many cases the established goal, of instigating critical social change in the future. As history tells us, the majority of Thai women have only had access to formal education for the past seventy years. Furthermore, it has been only in the past fifteen to twenty years that women's political organizing has emerged as a significant phenomenon. Yet, there are two clearly opposing viewpoints evidenced in the literature on education in Thailand regarding its liberatory potential. Education is viewed by some authors as a disciplinary technology of nationalism that serves to mold bodies into docile manifestations of Thai national identity,[6] while for others education is seen as a tool of empowerment and a means of resistance against larger structures of social and political authority.[7] While both arguments are equally valid, and perhaps more provocative when held in tension, I shall argue that the latter position is more relevant to the case of Thai women in the context of their recent political efforts. I therefore begin this essay with a brief review of crucial historical moments in the development of Thailand's educational system and the resultant ramifications for women. Because much of the literature is centrist in focus (i.e., Bangkok), generalizations and comparisons about education in the provinces are more difficult to make. Nevertheless, because I am interested in women's education as a whole and its linkages to women's political participation, I do attempt to provide information on and examples from the rural countryside when possible. This opening section will be followed by a short discussion of both the oppressive and liberatory aspects of formal education in the Thai context. The contemporary situation of Thai women's political activism and organizing will then be examined, albeit briefly, in relation to the preceding discussion.

A Partial, Yet Gendered, History of Education in Thailand

Historically, formal education has been the privilege of Thai men. During the pre-modern era, two kinds of instruction existed:

1. royal institutional instruction for princes and sons of nobles (*rajpundits*) and
2. religious and family instruction in the monastery and home.

Both elite and peasant men had the opportunity to study at the local *wat* (temple) as a necessary requisite for entering the *sangha* (monkhood), a rite of passage ritually performed by the majority of Thai men. At the *wat,* men learned the sacred languages of Pali and Sanskrit in order to read Buddhist texts and perform religious chants. They also gained expertise in fields such as

astrology, medicine, poetry, and customary law. However, as women were barred from the monkhood by virtue of their sex,[8] they were denied learning at the *wat* and, as a result, prohibited access to an enormous body of knowledge considered to be culturally and socially valuable. Women did have other bodies of knowledge relevant to their life worlds: for example, relating to the home and childrearing, the marketplace, the rice fields, and support of the *sangha*.[9] While these bodies of knowledge were important resources for women, they were not useful in providing them with the kinds of understanding necessary to participate in the larger social and political worlds of men.[10]

It is also important to consider class distinctions when discussing "women" in Thailand, as they are by no means a homogenous group.[11] In this paper "class" refers primarily to the distinction between elites (royalty and nobility) and commoners (peasants). Since Thailand is a society characterized by social relationships of hierarchy (superior-subordinate),[12] such distinctions certainly require incorporation into the analysis. Further divisions could be made to include the merchant class (predominantly Chinese) and slaves (though slavery was gradually abolished during King Chulalongkorn's reign, 1868-1910). However, because information on these latter two groups is less substantial, only brief references will be made to them.

Because of its royalist nature, much of Thai history focuses on the Thai nobility and elite. For example, Prince Damrong Rajanubhab (1862-1943) wrote about the education of princes and princesses during the Ayuthaya period. According to him, boys and girls studied together under the auspices of a female teacher at the Royal Palace compound from the age of three to seven.[13] When children reached the age of seven, they were separated by gender, so that boys studied with male teachers while girls studied with female teachers. At 13, princes began to learn about Buddhism and other topics such as politics. Princesses, at the age of 11, studied morality and domestic subjects and were trained to become "refined ladies."[14] It is clear that elite women *did* receive formal education in the palace, though subjects were gender specific. For example, women were taught what was considered to be culturally appropriate forms of manner and speech, as well as craft making and how to run a household.[15] On the other hand, peasant women, the vast majority of women in Thailand, had virtually no opportunity to learn to read unless a male family member took the time to teach them. Whether or not particular men chose to do so is open to speculation. Sir John Bowring describes the role of Thai women in the nineteenth century as follows:

> The education of Siamese women is little advanced. Many of them are good musicians, but their principal business is to attend to domestic affairs; they are frequently seen as men in charge of boats on the Meinam; they generally distribute alms to the bonzes, and attend the temples bringing their offerings of flowers and fruit. In the country they are busied with agricultural pursuits. They have seldom the art of plying the needle, as the Siamese garments almost invariably consist of a single piece of cloth.[16]

By the end of the nineteenth century, Thailand had entered a period of nation building which had critical consequences for education. The Thai government began to acknowledge that *wat* schools and missionary schools (which had been in existence since 1848) were no longer sufficient to meet the needs of its growing and modernizing bureaucracy.[17] In order to hold the colonial powers of Britain, France, the United States, and the Netherlands at bay, Thailand had to prove both its modernity and power. A passage published by the Ministry of Education succinctly sums up the feeling of this nationalizing period: "As the politics of reform in the reign of King Chulalongkorn evidently points out, 'New Siam' requires 'Modern elites', a new generation of a progressive group to counter-balance the reluctant old one."[18] At this time, three kinds of schools existed alongside traditional monastic *wat* schools: missionary schools, Chinese schools, and palace schools.[19] In 1889, the Ministry of Education was established by King Chulalongkorn, organized around the previously existing Department of Public Instruction. This enactment wrested control of education from foreign missionaries and began to establish a state administered education system that could assist in nationalizing and disciplining the populace. Soon after, in 1892, King Chulalongkorn issued an edict resulting in the restructuring of the entire Thai bureaucracy and the founding of twelve ministries as components of the new government.

King Chulalongkorn commissioned Prince Wachirayan (supreme patriarch of the monks) to carry out his "Plan for the Organization of Provincial Education" in 1898. This plan invested traditional *wat* schools with a new function: to teach modern education curricula.[20] A centralized and uniform educational system was created with standardized textbooks, syllabi, and language (Central Thai). Undoubtedly, this attempt at homogenizing the general public was a significant step in assimilating physically, culturally, and ideologically disparate groups and placing them under the twin disciplinary regimes of monarchy and nation.[21] These "hybrid" schools accepted only boys, as Prince Wachirayan decided to postpone addressing the education of girls until a later date.[22] These boys' schools remained in operation until 1921. At that time state sponsored education became compulsory for both genders, and monks were replaced with teachers formally trained by the centralized education system. The Chinese and lesser nobility were given an opportunity for upward mobility with the founding of these new schools since they became available for attendance by different groups of men at the turn of the century. Commoner men were also increasingly recruited for ministry work and sent abroad for proper training.[23]

In 1915, the government initiated another education plan attempted to give girls more educational opportunities. But prevailing cultural attitudes slowed such advancement for a number of reasons. First, the general public still believed that women should care for the home and family and that book learning was unsuitable for girls. Second, the majority of schools were located in provincial monasteries, and it was thought indecorous for women to attend school in these principally male religious spaces. Third, a shortage of teachers, especially in the provincial areas, made it even more difficult for peasant girls to receive formal education.[24] Charles Keyes mentions that "some women in pre-modern urban settings did become literate, but rural women were almost without exception, illiterate until after compulsory primary education was

instituted."[25] This occurred in 1921 when universal compulsory education, four years of primary schooling, was declared a legal requirement for both boys and girls of all classes. Between 1921 and 1925, the number of female students in Thailand rose from 7% to 38%.[26]

The period from the 1930's to the 1970's saw considerable expansion in the educational system, although there is a lack of specific information. According to Keyes, by the 1930's the national school system was well ensconced in Thai villages, and as other evidence reveals, also in Bangkok.[27] But the literature reveals little about education in Thailand from the 1930's to the 1960's. It would be interesting to see the differences between male and female educational attainment during this period, as women are likely to have made significant gains based on the data we do have from the 1960's forward. During the 1960's, government control further penetrated distant villages via newly constructed highways, visual and aural media (television and radio), and a growing bureaucracy administered from the center, Bangkok. Rural areas saw thousands of primary schools built, and, by the 1970's, most children, boys and girls, completed the mandatory four years of education. A new wave of investment capital, coinciding with the Vietnam era, further infiltrated the countryside.

Tertiary education began to gain importance in Thailand during the second decade of the twentieth century, resulting in far reaching effects on Thai society and the Thai populace, both men and women. The first tertiary institution in Thailand, Chulalongkorn University, was established in 1917. Its primary purpose was to train individuals that had been educated in the new centralized school system to work for Thai government agencies. Initially, the privileges of attending university and being employed by the government were enjoyed only by men. Not until 1927 did Chulalongkorn University admit its first seven female students. Five years later, in 1932, three of them graduated with a B.A. in medicine. This was the same year that the Thai monarchy, under the reign of King Prajadhipok, was superseded by a coup instituting parliamentary democracy.[28] In 1932, Thai women were also granted the right to vote, only eleven years after compulsory education had been made law.[29]

In evaluating this enactment, it is important to note that it was strategically crucial for the Thai government to educate Thai women not only to prove that Thais were "modern," capable members of the increasingly internationalized world of which they were a part, but also to discipline Thai women's minds and bodies into becoming model Thai citizens (*chaat*). Since women had (and continue to have) important roles in socializing children, the state required assurance that mothers would appropriately shape these future generations, reproducing good Thai citizens and a model social order. If women were not inculcated with the new paradigm of the Thai "geo-body," metaphorically expressed in the nation-monarchy-religion triad, they might pose a threat to state authority and the national image in the international context. Without education, women represented the "backwardness" of particular "traditional"[30] aspects of Thai society.[31] While the successors of King Chulalongkorn also wanted to maintain some aspects of "traditional" Thai culture, they also wanted Siam to be considered as modern and as advanced as other European powers. On one level, based upon their long term goals to prove their progressiveness, Thai leaders had little choice in granting women formal education in

addition to other jural rights.

It is unclear from the literature whether there was either any grassroots activity among the peasants or pressure from the upper classes to commence education for women of any class. Because Thai historical literature has typically been royalist and nationalist in focus, as well as earnestly androcentric, it is often noticeably silent on the activities of the masses,[32] particularly women. Thus, it is difficult to know whether there was any social activity challenging the state to provide more access to education. Likewise, it is not easy to gauge whether much group organizing among women occurred or not. The first formally recognized voluntary organization in Thailand, it is reported, was established by a group of elite women in 1885. This was the Sapa Unalom Daeng, which has since become the Thai Red Cross.[33] Darunee and Pandey cite a "brief emergence of 'new enthusiasm'" among highly educated middle class women prior to the overthrow in 1932.[34] There was some discussion in women's magazines and newspapers concerning the desire to attain equal rights with men. But women's organizations do not seem to emerge until after the 1932 revolution. Nonetheless, although Darunee and Pandey state that some elite women's groups were established after the democratic era of 1932, they do not provide many examples.[35]

Higher education continued to expand from the 1960's onward. With a growing emphasis on regional development within Thailand, the first regional university was opened in Chiang Mai in 1960. The Private College Act, which allowed for the foundation of private colleges and universities, was passed in 1969. In 1971, Ramkhamhaeng University, the first "open" university in Thailand, was founded. This meant that many more Thais, regardless of class position, could attain a university level education provided they could afford to purchase books and live in Bangkok. A statistical chart provided by Wyatt demonstrates that from 1937 to 1947 there was a 25.2% increase in women's literacy, a 20.9% increase by 1960, and a 13.8% increase by 1970, bringing women's literacy to 74.8%.[36]

Not surprisingly, the period from the 1970's to the present has seen the greatest improvement in women's education as well as women's rights in general. Between 1961 and 1972, the number of Thai universities expanded from five to seventeen, and student enrollment increased from 15,000 to 100,000.[37] Until 1972, tertiary education was still focused upon preparing individuals, primarily men, for civil service. But, after 1972, the civil service was saturated, and the need for bureaucrats declined, channeling Thais into other careers, especially in the rapidly developing export-oriented market economy. For the first time in history, a larger number of university students came from small towns of lower-middle class status. This may partially have been a result of the time lag as primary schools gradually became firmly established in the rural countryside. As the number of rural peasant students increased in the university, the atmosphere began to change, and students increasingly met to discuss social and political issues. It was precisely at this time that left-wing literature and political organizations were banned by the government.[38] Students began challenging the government curricula[39] and questioning many assumptions about their society.[40] The 1973 student foment culminated in an unprecedented revolution on October 14.

The new found optimism generated by the students and their success led to many changes in the university system as well as larger bureaucratic and jural structures. This included the production of a new constitution, passed in 1974, that guaranteed equality between men and women and legislated the revision of all discriminatory laws.[41] However, just as the political sphere finally appeared to be opening up to a broader range of voices in Thailand, the spirit of democracy embodied in thousands of students protesting throughout the country was violently crushed by the right wing military on October 6, 1976-a day now enshrined in the memories of Thai people as *hok tulaa* (the sixth of October).[42] Many of the reforms were later reversed, but the universities remained a place where students could gather and discuss political issues, though perhaps more cautiously.

The 1990 census indicated that the historical gender gap between men and women in educational attainment had finally closed at all levels. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that, since 1980, the number of women attaining a tertiary education has surpassed that of men.[43] This is but one of the consequences of the increase in compulsory education for both genders from four years to six in 1978 and six to nine years in 1994.[44] The longer students remain in primary and secondary school, the more likely they are to continue on to higher education. Between 1970 and 1991, the number of tertiary educated people in the work force multiplied ten times[45] giving rise to what is now generally recognized as a Thai "middle class."[46] Knodel argues that this reversal in educational attainment on the part of women reflects differences in the socialization of gender roles in society, where boys and men are granted far more freedom and social mobility than women, and women are viewed as the loci of responsibility and stability. Women are assumed to be better disciplined and more focused on their studies and thus more likely to succeed.

This points to a number of underlying gender differentiated cultural attitudes that could perhaps be traced back through the pre-modern era, as some historical sources suggest.[47] Various studies of male/female family remittances regularly demonstrate that women send more money home than men and Knodel cites the 1986 national survey as confirming this fact.[48] In the end, the education of daughters may result in a better "pay off" for parents than the education of sons, argues Knodel, especially if the daughter remains single, as she will be more likely to send money home. Since the censuses report a clear trend toward later marriage by women, this may in fact be the case.[49] Furthermore, it is now generally assumed by the Thai populace, rural and urban, that higher education is a guarantee of better employment opportunities and, hence, upward social mobility.

More current census data confirms the feminization of tertiary education in Thailand (both as students and teachers) and the prevalence of women in all tertiary institutions except vocational schools.[50] Will the status of educational employment be lowered as a result of the field's feminization as appears to have been the case in the United States? Are academic subjects in Thailand stereotypically dichotimized into male "hard" and female "soft" subjects? Contrary to

popular assumptions, this does not appear to be the case in Thailand. However, while these are important questions, this is not the direction in which I would like to take the present discussion. More interesting, I argue, are the potential effects women's newly acquired education might have on Thai society in the future. In particular, might this new knowledge and awareness result in the increased politicization of women and the growth of voluntary associations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)? I take up these issues in the remainder of the paper.

Education: Nationalist Discipline or Political Empowerment?

As mentioned in the introduction, education is one of the most efficient disciplinary techniques of the nation-state. Through centralized curriculum development and teacher training administered from the capital, those in power can mold individuals into citizens of the new nation-state, constituting an "imagined community."[51] Whether or not this happened in Thailand is not at issue here. Charles Keyes and Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, among others, make persuasive arguments in this regard.[52] Keyes states that the crucial role of national schools was "preparing villagers to accept a subordinate position in the centralized bureaucratic world of the Thai nation-state,"[53] while Chayan similarly argues that rural schools prepare "village children to be agents of production as well as members of their national community."[54] Thus, in their liberal haste to interpret compulsory education as a human right and necessary path to upward mobility, some Western scholars and Thai activists may have underestimated the possibility that such education was *also* utilized to keep certain classes of Thai individuals in their place-"to accept existing social contradictions and inequalities"[55] -: to maintain, as it were, the social hierarchy. Keyes argues that the "spatial culture" of the school serves as a "model of the state" on a smaller scale, one to which villagers can relate in their everyday lives. It teaches peasants how to interact with government officials and prepares them for smooth entry into the burgeoning capitalist economy. As such, the Thai school may be best termed, in Foucault's words, a "technology of the body."[56] Indeed, Chayan states categorically that national schools "produce docile, submissive and loyal citizens who accept the legitimacy of the social order."[57] These bodies are the micro-targets of a national power that is both pervasive and intense, as well as productive. In many instances, schoolteachers, already embodiments of national discourse, were the first central government officials to enter rural locations.[58] They brought with them new sources of knowledge and power that not only challenged local knowledge but identified state and "modern" knowledge as superior.[59] Thus, the teacher has played and perhaps continues to play an important role in orienting villagers properly towards the state.[60]

However, this view suggests that teachers, as well as students, were, and are, completely passive tools of the state, empty vessels into which nationalist doctrine was poured and from which it was then reproduced. Such an interpretation removes any agency these teachers may have had and effaces any differences of opinion voiced by teachers or students to each other and to the wider community. While national discourses and structures of power in the form of education may constrain individual agency, they may also be a source of creation and imagination. In fact, many times only a few key individuals are necessary to begin the questioning of dominant

discourses and/or structures of power and to persuasively convey their doubts and challenges to a wider community. Education, I assert, may indeed provide those tools of challenge by showing people alternatives and expanding their conceptual and practical horizons.

This raises a more critical question about school teachers. Women have virtually taken over the field of education in Thailand at all levels. We might ask if this is because women are more easily inculcated with nationalist doctrine. For example, do women conform to nation-state expectations in a different and more comprehensive way than men? And, if so, how? Does women's entry into the field of education represent an attempt by women to enter a previously male dominated and privileged position? If women enter the teaching profession merely to reproduce nationalist policies, images, and identities, are they not in fact contributing to their own subordination and discipline in a kind of "false consciousness"? On the other hand, what if teachers, male and female, are actually turning some of that same power of the state against itself through processes of subversion? What sorts of everyday resistance might be occurring at the micro level that are not so easily observed?**61** It would be interesting to examine some of the tactics teachers use inside and outside of the classroom in order to see if and how those tactics actually intervene and subvert nationalist ideologies in any way.**62** Again, this raises more questions than I am prepared to address in this short essay. Nevertheless, I raise them in order to suggest some of the more positive potential possibilities of education. In other words, can education make women into able activists rather than merely compliant members of the nation-state?

In addition to being a tool of nationalism, education may be conversely and yet simultaneously viewed as one of the most powerful tools for individual and community empowerment. Researchers in various disciplines have identified a clear link between education, literacy, and women's social status: the higher one's educational and literacy level, the higher one's social status. Relatedly, Keyes draws on Bourdieu's concept of cultural or symbolic capital in his discussion of education and its links to status in rural Thai villages.**63** Keyes states, "Literacy is always associated with a social division of knowledge that, in turn, contributes as much to the structuring of the realm of social relations as does the social division in the ownership of the means of production."**64** Due to his larger interest in class difference, Keyes pays less attention to the gendered nature of symbolic capital. However, he does note that women have a complementary symbolic capital related to the domestic arena, marketing, as well as in their supportive role of the *sangha:***65** a "separate but equal" type of argument. This of course sidesteps the possibility that such a division might operate to keep women in an inferior social position relative to men.**66** Yet it does appear quite obvious that peasant and, perhaps, merchant women were excluded from attaining the symbolic capital of literacy and formal education until the mid twentieth century, several generations after peasant men.

Keyes, referring specifically to Southeast Asian villages, states that "one of the striking changes in social structure that has come about with the introduction of compulsory education has been that females as well as males have been given access to schooling" which has allowed women to "visualize a world very different from that known by their grandmothers."**67** With more

education, a higher level of literacy, and the exposure to new ideas and new worlds, women's horizons have been broadened and their interests piqued. Likewise, female school teachers provide new and different role models for village girls and point to possibilities beyond the home and village.[68] Suteera and Maytinee note that because women play key roles in educating and socializing children (particularly in school and the family unit), they are crucial "social change agents" and contributors to development in Thailand. They argue that, when women understand their equality with men and their important roles in society, they will pass these beliefs on to their children, thus altering "backward social values and traditions."[69]

It has only been in the past twenty years that women outside of the elite class could be said to have attained the knowledge and symbolic capital necessary for entre into certain realms of civil society such as politics. It is thus not surprising to find that the emergence of women's voluntary associations and NGOs and the slow ingress of women into the formal political sphere has occurred only in the recent past. What *is* surprising is that significant changes have occurred so rapidly and in such a short period of time-the last fifteen to twenty years-and that women now play crucial and visible roles in welfare and political organizations agitating for change.

Women's Political Activism in the Contemporary Period

While it is perhaps common knowledge among scholars of Thailand that Thai women have long been relatively absent from formal politics,[70] it is far less acknowledged that women currently play prominent roles in NGOs and other informal arenas of power and decision making. Consequently, I see these developments in women's formal and informal political activism as inextricably tied to the gains made in educational attainment over the past seventy years. I turn now to a few of these developments. Due to the exploratory nature of this paper, the discussion is regrettably a cursory one. Nonetheless, I do believe it will provide another way to view recent changes in Thailand's civil society.

Suteera and Maytinee argue that the UN Decade for Women (1975-1985) was crucial in making women more visible in Thai society.[71] Members of NGOs, many women's groups, and even the government participated in various events promoting the status of women. The 1980's and 90's have seen an explosion of NGOs, with three hundred and seventy-five NGOs formally registered in 1990.[72] The enthusiasm among women's groups was most recently bolstered by the 1995 United Nations World Conference on Women and the preceding NGO forum in Beijing, China. A number of Thai NGOs and smaller grass-roots organizations attended, along with several Thai academics. Thus, during a preliminary research trip in October 1996, many NGO members with whom I spoke were still reveling in the energy stirred up by the Beijing conference and subsequent events organized within Thailand.

Some of the larger and more visible Thai women's NGOs include the Foundation for Women, Friends of Women, Gender Watch, EMPOWER, and the Gender Development and Research Institute. These groups are progressive and emancipatory in that they are working towards structural change. Their activities include, but are not limited to, the following: developing

media and educational resources for women's consciousness raising, monitoring images of women in all forms of public media, offering health services to prostitutes and the poor, teaching women new and practical skills, providing shelters for battered women, incorporating women's rights into the constitution, and providing conferences and programs for leadership training. Other women's organizations which are more conservative in approach include the National Council of Women in Thailand, the Girl Guides Association of Thailand, and the Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women. Additionally, smaller women's organizations and grass-roots groups, whose memberships range in size from one to thousands, exist throughout the country.

These developments in social and political activism have occurred together with an increase in tertiary education for the Thai populace and the slow but steady entrance of women into formal politics. Over the past fifteen years, the number of men and women attending university have surged, with many Thais taking the opportunity to be educated abroad.[73] In fact, many of the leaders of women's NGOs are women with higher degrees (M.A.s and B.A.s), and often they are also of a higher class than the target population of their organizations' programs. Leaders typically have the resources-educational, financial, and social-to initiate organizations and activities and, frequently, the charismatic personality necessary to rally others to action. Meetings with NGO leaders and members in Thailand in October 1996 revealed both a highly educated NGO network and a few key individuals who were well-recognized and avidly admired. The importance of tertiary education cannot be underplayed. Most of the younger women at the few organizations I visited noted that they had become politicized during their university years, while several of the older women had actively participated in the 1970's student movement during their university years.

Women's gains in formal politics have unfortunately been less pronounced than their gains in education, yet there have been some key developments. For example, in 1993, two female governors were appointed for the first time in the nation's history, and, in 1995, 15% of the nation's judges were women. The Constitution promulgated in February 1995 enshrined women's rights.[74] Although women's participation in the formal political arena remains extremely low relative to men, with approximately 4% of the decision-making positions at the national level filled by women and only 6% at the local level,[75] women's participation in the informal arena as campaign organizers and supporters, NGO members, and voters has increased.[76] According to Suteera, 300,000 more women than men voted in the 1992 election. She boldly asserts that "Thai women may be more updated and knowledgeable about politics than men."[77] The 1996 election saw a number of women running for office, although none were considered for the role of Prime Minister. Currently, the composition of the House is 5.6% female. Notably, the female Ministers of Parliament, when considered relative to men, consistently have a higher level of education than their male counterparts.[78]

The 1990's have seen a general societal acceptance of and perhaps even a growing dependence upon voluntary organizations to agitate for their interests.[79] Even Thai academics are discussing the significance NGOs have for future social change.[80] That it took as long as it did for some of

these groups to establish themselves is partially a result of the hostile environment the frequently authoritarian Thai government fostered toward any groups not towing the official party line, especially following the October 6 events.**81** Yet, as I have endeavored to show here, these developments are also related to the advances made in women's educational opportunities during the past seventy years, from 1927 to 1997. As education has become increasingly accessible for both men and women of all classes, the boundaries of what is "possible" have expanded and blurred, opening doors to new opportunities and profound challenges.

Conclusion

Based upon this brief exploration into the history of education in Thailand, it appears quite clear that Thai women's activism, especially among non-elite women, did not appear until after education became not merely a right for women but firmly entrenched even in remote villages. The increase in women's activism seems closely tied to women's attainment of tertiary levels of education, both undergraduate and graduate. This is not surprising. However, the issues regarding education as both a tool of nationalism and a tool of empowerment are not so easily addressed. What I have tried to suggest is that, as much as education can be interpreted as the handmaiden of nationalist discipline, it can also be understood as an empowering process that has the potential to politicize the populace. Whether or not women's education has had negative effects on their aspirations to political participation and improved status is still open to debate. The tensions between tradition and modernity are complex and function within multiple and shifting fields of power at the local, national, and international levels. "Progress" and modernity, as has been well demonstrated in many nations of the world, can have detrimental as well as positive results, and, in this respect, differences of class, ethnicity, and region among women require further attention. As more Thai women attain higher degrees and knowledge of local and national problems and transnational issues that affect women differentially in all classes and societies, they may further contribute to the grass-roots activism occurring in Thailand and the larger Southeast Asian region.

Notes

1 In the context of this paper "education" is generally defined in a formal sense and refers to learning in a structured and institutionalized context such as that typically found in state sponsored schools and monastery schools. In these kinds of contexts education usually occurs as a process of transmission of knowledge and information from an instructor to one or more students. When I refer to other types of more informal education (e.g., in the home or other social spaces), it shall be noted for the reader.

2 See, for example, Wyatt's discussion of "boys" and "men." David K. Wyatt, "Education and the Modernization of Thai Society," in *Change and Persistence in Thai Society: Essays in Honor of Lauriston Sharp*, ed. G. William Skinner and A. Thomas Kirsch (Ithaca: Cornell University

Press, 1975).

3 See Reynold's crucial article which discusses the neglect of gender relations in studies of the Thai past. Craig J. Reynolds, "Predicaments of Modern Thai History," *South East Asia Research* 2, no. 1 (1993): 64-90.

4 Ministry of Education, *A History of Thai Education* (Bangkok: Kurusapha Ladprao Press, 1976).

5 Ministry of Education, *History*, ii, lists the participants' names.

6 Charles F. Keyes, "The Proposed World of the School," in *Reshaping Local Worlds: Formal Education and Cultural Change in Rural Southeast Asia*, ed. Charles Keyes, Yale University Southeast Asian Studies, Yale Center for International and Area Studies Monograph Series, no. 36 (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asian Studies, Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1991); Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, *Thailand: Economy and Politics* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995).

7 Suteera Thomson and Maytinee Bhongsvej, *Women Reshaping the Society: A Challenge for the Remaining Decade* (Bangkok: Gender & Development Research Institute, 1995); Fred W. Riggs, *Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity* (Honolulu: East-West Center, 1966).

8 In this text the term "sex" is used to refer to a socially and culturally determined biological category based on physical (gonadal) attributes. Similarly, "gender" is a category that refers to the ways in which societies and cultures organize people into groups of male and female and attribute specific meanings to those categories. However, following Ginsburg and Tsing, I do not see gender as fixed but as constantly negotiated in social life. Faye Ginsburg and Anna Tsing, *Uncertain Terms: Negotiating Gender in American Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1990), 2.

9 For example, Reid argues for women's "domestic literacy" in Southeast Asia in the pre-modern period. Anthony Reid, *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce, 1450-1680*, vol. 1, *The Lands below the Winds* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

10 See Darunee and Pandey for a more strident critique of patriarchy in this regard. Darunee Tantiwiramanond and Shashi Pandey, "The Status and Role of Thai Women in the Pre-Modern Period: A Historical and Cultural Perspective," *Sojourn* 2, no. 1 (1987): 124-149, 131.

11 As many feminist theorists have pointed out, "woman" is never a homogenous category. It is always differentiated by class, ethnicity, race, region, religion, and sexuality. Such arguments have been effectively made by women of color in the United States and postcolonial feminists in the developing world. See for example: bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Boston: South End Press, 1984); Cherri Moraga and Gloria Anzaldua, ed., *This Bridge Called*

My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color (Latham, NY: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press, 1983); Chandra T. Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," in *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*, ed., Chandra T. Mohanty, Ann Russo, and Lourdes Torres (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991); Karen Sacks, "Toward a Unified Theory of Class, Race and Gender," *American Ethnologist* 16, no. 3 (1989): 534-50. However, in the case of education in Thailand, I maintain that class remains the most salient category in differentiating amongst groups of women. While other categories of difference may contribute to further explicating the problem, such categories are not always easy to distinguish in the literature. Thus, they will not be addressed herein.

12 There has been some debate over whether Thailand may in fact be defined as a society characterized by patron-client ties and/or clientelism. See, for example, Clark D. Neher, "Political Interaction in Northern Thailand," *Crossroads* 4, no. 2 (1989): 35-52. Fishel provides a more current interrogation of the patron-client model. Thamora Fishel, "Mothers, Teachers and *Hua Kanaen*: Gender and the Culture of Local Politics in Thailand," Paper presented at the Sixth International Conference on Thai Studies, Chiang Mai, Thailand. October 14-17, 1996.

13 Anna Leonowens is probably the most famous, albeit controversial, of such female teachers. See David K. Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 163fn.

14 Ministry of Education, *History*, 9.

15 The Thai Ministry of Education's history of Thai education notes that Nang Revadi Nopamas, a court lady who lived during the Sukhothai period, wrote Nopamas' Story. It points out that this reveals that girl's education was not confined to home crafts but also included literacy and literary skill. However, the authors fail to tell us how Nang Revadi received such skills. Are we to assume that all court ladies were literate? That only those interested in reading were literate? Or that Nang Revadi gained such knowledge by other means? This is an issue that begs further research. Ministry of Education, *History*, 1. See also Reid for more on women's literacy in the pre-modern period. Reid, *Southeast Asia*, 216-222.

16 Ministry of Education, *History*, 4.

17 Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform;* Wyatt, "Education and the Modernization"; David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

18 Ministry of Education, *History*, 22.

19 Keyes, "The Proposed World," 1991.

20 Keyes, "The Proposed World," 1991.

21 See Streckfuss's engaging discussion of race and ethnicity in Thailand and the creative construction of Thai citizens (*chaat*) during this period. David Streckfuss, "The Mixed Colonial Legacy in Siam: Origins of Thai Racialist Thought," in *Autonomous Histories, Particular Truths: Essays in Honor of John R.W. Smail*, ed. Laurie J. Sears University of Wisconsin-Madison, Center for Southeast Asian Studies Monograph Series, no. 11 (Madison: University of Wisconsin, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Monograph no. 11, 1993), 123-53.

22 Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform*, 327.

23 Wyatt, *Thailand*, 219.

24 Ministry of Education, *History*, 36.

25 Keyes, "The Proposed World," 123.

26 Keyes, "The Proposed World," 94. The Thai Ministry of Education does report a number of educational institutions for girls prior to 1921. In 1874, the first boarding school for girls, Kulasatri Wanglang, was established by Miss Harriet M. House (an American). In 1880, King Chulalongkorn established a second boarding school in Bangkok, called Sunandalai School, in honor of his consort, Princess Sunanda Kumariratana. Queen Sribajarindra established the Saowabha School for girls in 1897 and in 1907 a women's teacher training program was organized at the Satri Widya School to train women as primary school teachers. The year 1913 saw the establishment of Benchama Rajali School for teacher training. However, it is unclear which women were allowed to attend these schools and how many actually did so. I assume these schools were set up primarily for elite women, though this requires further investigation. Ministry of Education, *History*.

27 Keyes, "The Proposed World."

28 See Benjamin Batson for one perspective on the 1932 overthrow of the Siamese monarchy. Batson also discusses Prajadhipokh's contributions to developing the education system. Benjamin Batson, *The End of the Absolute Monarchy in Siam*, Southeast Asia Publication series, no. 10 (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984), 77-78.

29 Because women received the vote so soon after receiving the right to education, it is no surprise that generally women were not very active in formal politics during this period (1930's). Without literacy and knowledge of "modern" concerns, it would be difficult especially for peasant women to understand the formal politics of the emergent nation-state. On the other hand, experience begets other kinds of knowledge relevant to political decision-making. I would surmise that, during this period, only elite women took advantage of the franchise, as they clearly had more education, were highly literate, and had access to affairs of state via their spatial proximity and their male family members.

30 By placing the term "traditional" in quotation marks I seek to reference the now quite substantial body of literature that has interrogated the concept of "tradition", arguing that tradition is always constructed in the present for political and practical reasons. See for example: Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, ed., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin, "Tradition: Genuine or Spurious?", *Journal of American Folklore* 97 (1984): 273-90. For a recent analysis of "tradition" in the Thai context see Rosalind C. Morris, "Crises of the Modern, Memories of the Vanished: Ritual, Tradition and the New Value of Pastness in Northern Thailand." Paper presented at the Sixth International Thai Studies Conference, Chiang Mai, Thailand. October 14-17, 1996.

31 According to Vella, King Vajiravudh believed that the status of women in a society was a symbol of that society's degree of civilization. Thus, he instituted a number of reforms during his reign (1910-1925) that he thought would improve Thai women's status, especially education. What may seem more superficial included changes in women's fashions. Women were encouraged to grow out their short hair and to cease chewing betel nut. Walter F. Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1978): 151-167.

32 See enlightening arguments made by Reynolds and Thongchai in this regard. Craig J. Reynolds, "The Plot of Thai History: Theory and Practice," in *Patterns and Illusions: Thai History and Thought*, ed. Gehan Wijeyewardene and E.C. Chapman (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Aian Studies, 1992); Thongchai Winichakul, "The Changing Landscape of the Past: New Histories in Thailand since 1973." *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 26, no. 1 (1995): 99-120.

33 Amara Pongsapich and Nitaya Kataleeradabhan, *Philanthropy, NGO Activities and Corporate Funding in Thailand* (Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, 1994), 23.

34 Darunee and Pandey, *By Women*, 27; see also Reynolds, "Predicaments," 66-7.

35 Darunee and Pandey, *By Women*, 5, 26-7.

36 Wyatt, *Thailand*, 291.

37 Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand: Economy*, 301.

38 Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand: Economy*, 301.

39 Thongchai, "Changing," 110.

40 At the same time, popular based movements around the world were emerging. In Malaysia and Indonesia the *dakwha* movement made its appearance, while the Philippines saw the

declaration of martial law in 1972, giving rise to underground movements and liberation theology. In the United States, the anti-Vietnam war demonstrations continued, and civil rights and women's movements also gained momentum.

41 Juree Vichit-Vadakan, "Women in Politics in Thailand," in *Women in Politics*: *Australia, India, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand*, ed. Latika Padgaonkar, Social and Human Sciences in Asia and Pacific, RUSHCAP Series on Monographs and Occasional Papers, 36 (Bangkok: UNESCO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, 1993).

42 For further discussion of the Thai student movement and the turbulent period of the 1970's see David K. Wyatt, *Thailand*, 299-303; Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand: Economy*, 304-314. The year 1996 marked the twenty year anniversary of *hok tulaa*, and was commemorated both in Bangkok and universities throughout Thailand. The commemoration also resulted in a number of Thai books about the events and their remembering. See for example Chavalit Winichakul, ed., *Rao Kheu Phu Borisut* (*We the Innocents*) (Bangkok: Khana Kammakaan Prasan Ngan Yii Sip Pii Hok Dulaa, 1996); Anusorn Yuwasut et al, *Tulaakaan* (*The Time of October*) (Bangkok: Khana Kammakaan Prasan Ngan Yii Sip Pii Hok Dulaa, 1996). For a non-Thai viewpoint on the commemoration, see Bryce Beemer, "Bangkok Postcard: Forgetting and Remembering 'Hok Tulaa,' the October 6 Massacre," *Explorations in Southeast Asian Studies* 1, no 1 (1996): 69-76.

43 John Knodel, *Gender and Schooling in Thailand*, Research Division Working Papers, no. 60 (New York: The Population Council, 1994), 9.

44 See Suteera Thomson and Maytinee Bhongsvej, *Women Reshaping the Society: A Challenge for the Remaining Decade* (Bangkok: Gender and Development Research Institute, 1995), 18-19.

45 Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand: Economy*, 368.

46 The "middle class" remains an ambiguous category in Thai studies that many scholars seem reluctant (or perhaps unable) to define. See application of the term by Peter F. Bell, "Gender and Economic Development in Thailand," in *Gender and Development in Southeast Asia*, ed. Penny and John Van Esterik (CCEAS XX, Vol. II, 1992); Edwin Zehner, "Reform Symbolism of a Thai Middle-Class Sect: The Growth and Appeal of the Thammakai Movement," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 21, no. 2 (1990): 402-426; Christina Blanc-Szanton, "Gender and Intergenerational Resource Allocations: Thai and Sino-Thai Households in Central Thailand," in *Structures and Strategies: Women, Work and Family in Asia*, ed. Leela Dube and Fajni Palriwala (Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990). For an attempt by Thai scholars to further discipline the category, see Sungsidh Piriyarangsan and Pasuk Phongpaichit, ed., *The Middle Class and Thai Democracy* (Bangkok: The Political Economy Centre Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 1993).

47 See for example, Darunee and Pandey, "The Status," 141. For further discussion of cultural attitudes and practices concerning women in particular, see the following works: Mary Beth Mills, "Modernity and Gender Vulnerability: Rural women working in Bangkok," in *Gender and*

Development in Southeast Asia, ed. Penny and John Van Esterik, CCSEAS, York University, Oct. 28-20); Marjorie Muecke, "Mother Sold Food, Daughter Sells Her Body, The Cultural Continuity of Prostitution," *Social Scientific Medicine* 35, no 7 (1992): 891-901; Khin Thitsa, *Providence and Prostitution: Image and Reality for Women in Buddhist Thailand* (London: Change, 1980); Pasuk Phongpaichit, *From Peasant Girls*.

48 Knodel, *Gender and Schooling*, 29; see also Pasuk, *From Peasant Girls*.

49 The 1980 census reported that 44% of women aged 20-24 were not married, while the 1990 census reported that 49% of women aged 20-24 were not married. Knodel, *Gender and Schooling*, 43. Yet Knodel also presents contradictory evidence in this matter. He notes that the cultural belief that daughters are the appropriate caretakers of elderly parents is one reason given by parents for their decision to give *boys* a higher education rather than girls, especially in the northern and northeastern regions. Knodel, *Gender and Schooling*, 28.

50 At the tertiary level, women comprise 58% of general university students, 66% of teacher's college students, and 91% of graduate nursing students. They comprise only 45% of vocational students as reported in the 1989-90 Thai census. Knodel, *Gender and Schooling*, 15.

51 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: *Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

52 Keyes, "The Proposed World"; Chayan Vaddhanaphuti, "Social and Ideological Reproduction in Rural Northern Thai Schools," in *Reshaping Local Worlds: Formal Education and Cultural Change in Rural Southeast Asia*, ed. Charles Keyes Yale University Southeast Asian Studies, Yale Center for Internationl and Area Studies Monograph Series, no. 36 (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asian Studies, Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1991). See also Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994).

53 Keyes, "The Proposed World," 89.

54 Chayan, "Social and Ideological," 153.

55 Chayan, "Social and Ideological," 154.

56 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*: *The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977). It should be noted that the arguments by Keyes and Chayan draw heavily on concepts generally associated with the work of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, though neither of them cite him in the body of their works, or in their bibliographies.

57 Chayan, "Social and Ideological," 165.

58 Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand: Economy*, 75.

59 See Gesick for one example in the case of Thai history for how local knowledges and discourses are decentered and superseded by the knowledge and discursive practices of the nation-state. She demonstrates how this occurred in the case of stories and legends surrounding Lady White Blood in southern Thailand. Lorraine M. Gesick, *In the Land of Lady White Blood: Southern Thailand and the Meaning of History*, Studies on Southeast Asia, no. 18 (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1995).

60 Keyes, "The Proposed World," 103.

61 What I am thinking of here can be found in Vandergeest's excellent interpretation of how Thai peasants appropriated discourses of the state (including that of science, natural causality, progress, and law) and utilized them to undermine the state's hegemony from within. Peter Vandergeest, "Constructing Thailand: Regulation, Everyday Resistance, and Citizenship," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35, no. 1 (1993):133-158.

62 The notion of "tactics" is borrowed from de Certeau. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984). To what extent teachers actually follow centralized plans of instruction is open to debate. In my experience as a teacher in Thailand (1989-90), I was allowed to use any material I selected in class instruction. No rules were imposed upon me from local or central administration. However, the fact that I was a foreign teacher is likely to have been a crucial factor in this relative freedom. I am unsure if my Thai colleagues ever utilized materials and lessons not sanctioned by the state. This would be a provocative topic for future ethnographic research.

63 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

64 Keyes, "The Proposed World," 93.

65 Keyes, "The Proposed World," 94. See also Charles F. Keyes, "Mother or Mistress but Never a Monk: Culture of Gender and Rural Women in Buddhist Thailand," *American Anthropologist* 11, no. 2 (1984): 223-41; Charles F. Keyes, *Thailand: Buddhist Kingdom as Modern Nation-State* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986).

66 This is the thrust of Darunee and Pandey's argument. Darunee and Pandey, "The Status."

67 Keyes, "The Proposed World", 11; see also Mary Beth Mills, "'We are not like our mothers': Migrants, Modernity and Identity in Northeast Thailand" (Ph.D. Diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1993).

68 Keyes, "The Proposed World," 11.

69 Suteera and Maytinee, *Women Reshaping*, 6. It should be noted that, while I agree with Suteera and Maytinee's goals, I take umbrage at their indelicate choice of words.

70 This point has been made in regard to Thailand by a number of authors. See A. Thomas Kirsch, "Economy, Polity and Religion in Thailand," in *Change and Persistence in Thai Society*, ed. G. William Skinner and A. Thomas Kirsch (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975); Jack M. Potter, *Thai Peasant Social Structure* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976); Juree Vichit-Vadakan, *Women in Politics.*

71 Suteera and Maytinee, *Women Reshaping*.

72 *Directory of Public Interest Non-Government Organizations in Thailand*. (Bangkok: Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University, Social Research Institute Chiang Mai University, Research and Development Institute Khon Kaen University, 1990). I would imagine the numbers have increased in the past six years.

73 By 1990 it was documented that 91.3% of women were literate and 94.7% of men. Suteera and Maytinee, *Women Reshaping*, 16.

74 The year 1974 was the first time that women's rights were explicitly guaranteed in the national constitution, partly as a result of the Thai Student Movement of 1973-1976. However, this victory was short lived as Thailand fell back into despotic hands in 1976. Over the past twenty years, equal rights have continued to be elaborated in successive versions of the Thai constitution. It will be interesting to see if and how women's rights are incorporated into the constitution currently being drafted.

75 Suteera and Maytinee, *Women Reshaping*, 3.

76 For one example, see Fishel on the participation of women as supporters of male political campaigns. Fishel, *Mothers, Teachers.*

77 Suteera and Maytinee, *Women Reshaping*, 3.

78 Which only proves that women still have to be more highly educated and work harder than men. Sanitsuda Ekachai, "Women MPs Need all the Help," *Bangkok Post*, 21 November 1996.

79 In December 1996, *Asiaweek* published an issue whose headline was: "Activist Power: From Miss World to APEC, Pressure Groups Keep Governments on Edge," focusing on the importance of NGOs as a force for social and political change. *Asiaweek* 6 December 1996. Similar country specific articles focusing on the Southeast Asian region have also appeared in the *Far Eastern Economic Review* during the last few years.

80 Thai NGO Support Project, *Thai NGOs: The Continuing Struggle for Democracy* (Bangkok: Edison Press, 1995).

81 See discussions by Pasuk and Baker, *Thailand: Economy*; Amara and Nitaya, *Philosophy*.

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Transformation of the State Budget and Budgetary Process in Vietnam

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Notes

Introduction

This paper describes the transformation of the State budget and budgetary process in Vietnam with reference to the changing relationship of the State to economic activity from the "neo-Stalinist" period of command economy to the liberalized economy under *doi moi* (renovation). The lack of distinction between the State and the economy under the command system of the neo-Stalinist period linked all elements of public policy, including the planning and budgetary processes, inextricably to the (presumably integrated) national economy. Subsequent failures in economic performance contributed to the demise of the State budgetary system under the centrally planned economy. The reform of the budget in Vietnam reflects a process common to the experiences of socialist States that had adopted similar economic programs. The fiscal survival of these states required the reformation of their budgetary structures and processes to complement their newly liberalized economic programs. Increasingly, both economic policy and budgetary regulations incorporated "rational" market principles requiring various forms of administrative regulations.

The principles guiding the budgetary process in Vietnam prior to its recent re-design differed

significantly from those directing the current effort. Recent re-evaluations by State and academic institutions in Vietnam of the problems of the State's budgetary process under the command economy system conclude that the root of its failures was the result of a number of factors. One factor suggested is the unavoidable failure of the central command system itself, explained as a misinterpretation of "socialist economics" for Vietnam's particular conditions of underdevelopment. This politically acceptable hypothesis, which continues to preserve the "goal of socialism," became the logic behind the gradual abandonment of the "neo-Stalinist" model of transition to socialism for the "market mechanism" in economic as well as administrative reform. Another explanation for the abandonment of the pre-existing budgetary structure and process is that it was, along with State administration in general, highly unsystematic and poorly regulated. The enormous changes envisioned in the current economic plan for rapid industrialization and modernization for the year 2010 *(Cong nghiep hoa va hien dai hoa den nam 2010)* have tremendous implications for the budgetary process, including the expansion of the administrative apparatus for its effective standardization, as well as for the budget's composition. The focus on balancing the budget and the shifts in the areas of public spending reveal the newly defined role of the State on the path to modernization and socialism via the market path in the *doi moi* period.

The Socialist State Budget under the "Neo-Stalinist" Transition Model

As previously noted, no distinction between State and economy officially existed in the neo-Stalinist model adopted by the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) at its founding in 1945. Thus, the State's budget and economic activities were conceived of as parts of one and the same system geared towards the centralized regulation of all life activity toward the realization of a socialist society, one which was defined in heavily economic and nationalistic terms. As the instrument for carrying out the agenda of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP), the State was empowered to dominate all aspects of economic activity, including the determination of production input and targets, wages, and prices for goods, as well as their collection and redistribution. Its budget in turn was in large part described by the flow of resources within this production and monetary circulation. In addition, foreign aid, primarily from the Soviet Union, contributed to the national budget. Such contributions helped to sustain areas of public spending critical to the DRV's infrastructural development, including public works and public institutions such as educational and health facilities, during this period of intensifying international political conflict.

The intertwining of the State budget with economic production and circulation under this system linked the failures of the latter inextricably with the problems of the former. While the failure of the neo-Stalinist economic system was multi-dimensional, these problems were rooted in the State's inability to control economic activity. The primary role of the State's budget within the command economy was to regulate prices and wages for the development of the urban industrial sector and to finance its operation. Under the design of this program, the rural sector bore the greatest burden and reaped the least benefit. The State determined the prices for agricultural goods sold to it and also set the production targets for these goods. While per capita grain production did increase from 1956-1968, when rural producers were effectively organized

into cooperative units in order to maximize output, a shift from the norms of the neo-Stalinist economic model can be observed as early as the first five-year plan of 1961-1965. That is, beginning in 1966, local responses to the cooperativization drive and State control are clear, reflecting "spontaneous bottom-up" reforms in agricultural production.[1] It has been demonstrated elsewhere that the declining productivity in agriculture resulted from the artificially low prices for agricultural goods required because of the urban sector's budgetary burden on the State.[2]

The urban sector was privileged under the State economic plan for rapid industrialization and thus not subject to budgetary constraints. This "soft budgetary constraint" basically meant that enterprises within this sector were not held accountable for maintaining a fiscal balance for their operation.[3] This situation is a major factor in the decline in productivity in this sector and the increasing reliance on State finance to sustain the existence of public enterprises. As a result, the State budget and finance system became primarily a subsidy program for industrial enterprises, as well as urban prices and wages. In addition, new pressures, arising specifically from the effort to integrate the former Republic of Vietnam into the national economy and address the tremendous physical damages incurred during the course of the war with the United States (US), were placed on the national budget after 1975. As a result of the war's impact on the rural areas throughout the country, the cities were flooded with refugees from the war, especially in the South. The State plan's reliance on agricultural production required tremendous investments in repopulating and renewing farmlands in the rural areas in order to alleviate the labor shortage in rural production and urban unemployment. The State also undertook the project of establishing new economic zones (NEZs) during this time.

Up to this point, the State's huge budgetary expenditures relied almost exclusively on foreign aid, especially from its socialist allies. However, reflecting the severity of the increasing stress on the budget during the postwar period and the increasingly strained relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC), until then one of its major allies, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (renamed in July 1976) made moves towards drawing other sources of foreign capital. In April 1977, a new law was passed in the hope of attracting foreign aid and investment from nonsocialist countries, which had been extremely low during and as a result of the war. The law enabled two types of joint ventures. It also permitted foreign-owned companies to produce entirely for export. Various concerns held by potential investors regarding Vietnamese economic and political institutions, not to mention the impact of the US-led international embargo on trade, discouraged foreign capital from investing. Due to these factors, the SRV would remain largely isolated from nonsocialist economies for another decade.

In 1978, the project of unifying the national economy under one State budget, banking system, and currency was completed. By 1979, however, major reforms began to take place in the economic plan. During this year, foreign aid from the PRC decreased dramatically in response to the SRV's incursion into Kampuchea which toppled the PRC's ally regime. Western aid also declined in reaction to both this event and the geopolitics taking place in the region, as reflected in the US-PRC relationship emerging with the Shanghai Communique. As a result, the SRV was forced to become more self-reliant in budgetary matters. From 1978, the SRV's budget became

increasingly dependent on credit from the Vietnam State Bank and its issuance of new currency, which resulted in high inflation. While the State budget continued to be dependent on the national financial institutions, revenues decreased significantly during the 1979-1981 period as a result of the impact of spontaneous abandonment of the rural cooperative system, especially in the hastily collectivized South. This latter event refers to the widespread evasion by rural producers of surrendering production to State procurement, depriving the State of the revenue side of its budget. De-collectivization also meant the emergence of markets independent of State control.

The abandonment of the State-ordered cooperatives by the rural populations of many regions in the country reflects the general shift from the command logic of economic and State organization beginning in this period, described as "bureaucratic centralism." Resolution Six, which was passed in the VCP's Sixth Plenum in August 1979, responded to criticisms of the organizational model of bureaucratic centralism in economic management and public administration, which were voiced as early as 1976 by Prime Minister Phan Van Dong. The Resolution called for the restructuring of the economy for overall decentralization, allowing for more flexibility to the lower administrative units and shifting responsibility for "self-reliance," including the management of resources and responsibility for loss and/or profit, down to the provincial and, especially, district levels. A system of "economic accounting" was implemented under the principle of cost-efficiency. This system required all economic units to make calculations to formulate plans and implement them. Changes in the tax regulations in 1980 shifted some of the control over fiscal matters and resources to localities and villages, which were permitted to retain all proceeds. The new tax code also offered various reduction and exemption rates on income tax to stimulate activity in cottage industries and animal husbandry.

The policy reforms of Resolution Six were quite cautious during this time, however, as the State continued to play a strong role in controlling the financial system. The State price and wage structure remained in place, but prices for most goods were raised in order to stimulate production. In the summer of 1981, the price structure became partially rationalized (market-determined), leading to a drastic increase in prices and requiring further State subsidies of wages in urban areas. Meanwhile, the State still offered higher prices on some goods in order to stimulate production, and the *dong* (the SRV's currency unit) was devalued in order to encourage foreign investment, particularly from within the Asian region. State targets continued to be issued for industrial production, but State export producers under Resolution Six were allowed to retain and invest some foreign exchange earnings as an incentive to improve productivity: up to 10% from goods produced for the State plan and up to 50% earned from goods produced in excess of the plan.

By the September meeting of the Council of Ministries in 1981, the economy was racked by inflation and other "negative phenomena" from the reform of two years earlier. Resolution Two passed by the policy-making body limited the free market activities of State-owned enterprises (SOEs). These restrictions were felt most heavily in Ho Chi Minh City. This cycle of economic (including price) liberalization followed by inflation and restriction was a common problem in the partial reforms undertaken by socialist economies shifting towards "market socialism."[4]

"Negative phenomena," as defined by the State to include cultural influences and the impact of imports on consumption levels, were treated even more deliberately by the State. As a result of Resolution Two, by 1982 imports from capitalist countries decreased 48% of the 1979 value, while imports from socialist countries increased from 52% to 81% of Vietnam's total imports. The impact, however, was that overall imports decreased 14% in 1980s. The decline in imports diminished the supplies available to SOEs. This, in turn, caused the State to become even more financially burdened by its own industries, which it refused to abandon.

At this point, the State's response to the economic changes can be viewed as more concerned with the problems of its budget and the anxieties caused by the emerging private economic sector. Solutions continued to emphasize fostering greater productivity and profits from its industries as well as making the administration of the budgetary process more effective. During the Fifth Party Congress of March 1982, members of all official levels criticized the existing economic and financial management system of the public sector. Participants at the Congress reiterated the need to shift from the old bureaucratic system of State finance to one based on the principles of economic accounting and business applied all the way down to the district level. The Fifth Party Congress was also most concerned with the urgent need to ease inflation. In July 1984, the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee concretized the Fifth Party Congress Resolution when the Council of Ministers decided to make effective the National Industrial Management (also referred to as the "new management system" in official documents) in late 1984 with the goal of lessening the burden on the budget by making SOEs more responsible for their expenditures and losses and by providing material incentives to increase productivity and profitability.

The State's caution against the strengthening private economy is also indicated in another drive to stimulate the agricultural cooperative sector. A wide-ranging tax reform passed in early 1983 aimed at curtailing the rapid expansion of the private commercial sector, which had been occurring most dramatically in the rural sector, with taxes and fines on licenses and profits. In reaction against the effects of the 1980 changes in tax regulation, the new law also sought to promote cooperative forms of production and to distribute this through tax exemptions. A fixed tax on land was instituted in place of the previous progressive income tax. However, the State was slow to establish a rural credit system. Therefore, rural markets improved, but not substantially, until after the Sixth Party Congress in 1986 when the Party decreed the banking reforms of 1987-1988 that established rural lending institutions.

The various tasks of this reform required the expansion of the State administration for these regulations. This expansion of the administrative apparatus became the focus of the reform of the budgetary process after the formal acknowledgment of the role of the private economic sector in the *doi moi* policy adopted in 1986 at the Sixth Party Congress, in which reformist participants emerged after the death of long-time anti-reformist Party General Secretary Le Duan in July of that year. The *doi moi* policy indicated the official abandonment of partial economic reforms for the fostering of a "socialist market economy." *Doi moi* was enacted after inflation levels reached uncontrollable levels in 1985 (at 700% between September 1985 and September 1986) when the State Bank was forced to react by continuing to expand the currency

supply. The State's role in relation to economic activity was thereby redefined in the shift away from the State-dominated economy and subsidy system.

Changes in the Budget and Budgetary Process after *Doi Moi*

As discussed in the previous section, under the neo-Stalinist command economy and early partial reform policies, the State hoped that its ability to manipulate production targets, prices, wages, and state credit would serve as mechanisms to both balance the national budget in the SRV and control economic activity. However, after the broadening of economic liberalization in 1986 with the *doi moi* policy, a large proportion of economic activity became a sphere independent from the State, challenging the basis of the command economy model. The irrepressible emergence of a distinct economic sphere required a redefinition of the State's role in relation to economic activity. The problem for the reform of the State budgetary process in the post-*doi moi* period is linked to new questions of how to estimate economic production more accurately and how to foster an environment in which economic activity would be regularized.

Policy guidelines made at the 1986 Party Congress also reflected a move towards decentralization of the political process, which Huynh Kim Khanh perceived as an expression of a formal commitment to the democratization of Vietnamese politics.[5] Huynh noted that Party members demanded genuine participation in the policy-making process during the Sixth Congress. Lively discussion took place at local and regional meetings in preparation for the Congress, especially in regard to the Political Report, which is the most important document expressing the will of the Party in a Congress. As a result, Party members in the various localities overwhelmingly rejected the Report for its failure to reflect the *real* situation of the Party and the country. The Congress's Political Report was revised accordingly. Without disguising the defects of the command system, the document enabled the official shift towards broadening economic liberalization.

The post-*doi moi* budgeting process gradually, but nonetheless increasingly, reflected and conformed to the competitive economic environment resulting from the expansion of private economic activity. By 1986, free market economic production had already accounted for 40% of all retail trade in Vietnam. However, despite this climate seemingly dominated by economic rationalism, the State refrained from hasty transition to a market-sensitive budgetary system by preserving long-standing resource distribution patterns. In January 1986 the rationing of several food items was reinstated and some in-kind payments of wages resumed due to high inflation. Credit policies also remained absurdly low in order to benefit SOEs in the face of a growing private sector. On the other hand, the careful shift in the direction towards a market economy was apparent in other decisions regarding SOEs made at the Sixth Party Congress held in 1986. These aimed at weeding out the most unproductive SOEs, previously subsidized under the regime of "soft budgetary constraints." In large part to ease the burdens on the State budget, hard budget constraints on SOEs were instituted in 1986, resulting in the closing or merging of over 6,000 SOEs between 1986 and 1994. This left approximately 5,000 SOEs remaining operation at the end of that period.[6]

The State's ineffective administrative apparatus was also seen as a crucial area to reform in the process of adapting to the emerging market environment. For example, one crucial policy attempted to create free internal trade by closing customs posts and checkpoints previously put up by cities and provinces to tax commerce. Understanding that this policy was not easy to enforce, given an "underdeveloped" administrative system, the notion of "rule of law" became popular among the ranks of the Party and State in the quest for appropriate administrative reforms. The process of rationalizing procedure and organization thus extended to the public administration structure as well, echoing the common strategy and goal of shifting fiscal responsibility. Between 1986 and 1994, government offices were reduced in number from 76 to 49 offices as a result of "streamlining" the bureaucracy, cutting administrative expenses, and "rationalizing" government functions.[7] Demonstrating its success in reforming administrative enforcement of new laws in import-export taxes on such goods, in early 1988 the State reported an increase of 50 billion *dong* in budget revenue. Of this figure, 3.8 billion came from exported goods, 7.2 billion from imported goods, 22.5 billion from imported commercial goods, and 8 billion from imported noncommercial goods.

Alongside market-inspired economic growth and administrative rationalization, a new budgetary system began to crystallize in this context of market, rather than command, production. However, despite the increase in tax revenue reported earlier that year, in December 1988 the National Assembly passed its Resolution on the State Budget reflecting the State's growing consciousness of and focus on balancing the national budget as indicated in its Resolution for the 1989 socioeconomic plan. The Resolution on the State Budget called for a reduction of budgetary overspending and the creation of additional sources of revenue through the "(mobilization of) more sources of idle capital from various economic organizations and from among the people for use as the main source of capital for credit operation" as well as through the readjustment of credit interest rates and the provision of credit capital to the production sectors. It also ordered a tremendous withdrawal of the State from certain areas of economic activity. The new policies included the rationalization of wages and the commercialization of grain prices, which ended State subsidization of grain business losses and, as a result, the administration's role in procurement and distribution. Beginning in 1989, buying and selling in the grain business took place on a commercial basis through direct contact between producer and consumer. This minimized circulation costs by eliminating middlemen and hindrance from administrative boundaries.

A package of anti-inflationary measures, passed during the Sixth Party Congress in 1986, was implemented in early 1989. These included policies aiming for: (1) the end of widespread subsidization and market disequilibrium, by ensuring that basic macro-variables were set realistically at levels that met general approval from International Monetary Fund and World Bank staff; (2) positive interest rates after a long period of very negative real interest rates; and (3) tying the official exchange rate to within approximately 5% of the free market rate. Moves towards a market economy were also reflected in the resolution of the Sixth Party Plenum of the Central Committee, which met in March 1989. The resolution included decrees which: (1) permitted capitalist trade to operate under State control; (2) acknowledged that various economic sectors would exist long-term; and (3) guaranteed the right to do business in

conformity with the law. As a result of the implementation of these measures in 1989, inflation decreased, credit interest rates increased, and exports increased. To take advantage of the increased economic activity, this National Assembly Resolution called on the Council of Ministers to formulate a unified and rationalized system of tax laws to encourage and regulate production and business (private, cooperative, or otherwise).

Under the legislative body's resolution, the State budget was redefined as one which represented a "uniform system from top to bottom" in which the "division of responsibility for management of the budget must be carried out in such a way as to suit the tasks and the socioeconomic development level of each locality."[8] Local and lower-level governmental branches were thus delegated the responsibility of "making arrangements to ensure rational and economical expenditures and to reduce those items of expenditure which allow for reductions to gradually cut down on budget deficits."[9]

The decentralization of budget management from the central to local authorities was described as an urgent measure in order to create favorable conditions for localities to take the initiative in shaping their own budgets for the performance of all socioeconomic tasks that had been assigned to them by the State. The Resolution, however, also attempted to maintain the State's power to control capital investments and spending, stating that funds earmarked from the central budget must be "first of all reserved for key State projects, for infrastructure projects and for investment in and support of certain socioeconomic objectives in those localities, whose budgets are too tight, as well as in those areas hardest hit by natural calamities." What the policies in the resolution package point towards is the expansion of the role of the State in the attempt to reform the budgetary system into a more systematic and controlled one. The resolution responds to this by also including a policy for the Renovation of Management and Organization of Cadres: "the Council of Ministers' function regarding State economic management and that of echelons of people's committees-they should guide and create favorable conditions for grassroots economic units to really take the lead in formulating plans and organizing production and business *in line with State plans and market requirements*."

It is from the passing of this Resolution in late 1988 when the State budget clearly becomes a central matter of importance in the public policy-making process as well as in the ongoing process of the economic development. In a January 1989 editorial in the national daily newspaper of the Party, *Nhan Dan* ("The People"), titled "The People's Role in Implementing the State Budget," the Party voice explains:

> For years now, due to an irrational economic structure, to the fact that the mechanism of economic management still in the process of renovation, and also because of weaknesses in activities related to monetary administration, there has continuously been enormous budgetary overspending.[10]

Although the problem of the previous budgetary process identified here is an administrative one, the editorial goes on also to accuse "the people," local governments, and lower level

administrative offices of demanding too much allocation from the State budget. This criticism is targeted at the unintended and undesired effect of a plurality of political interests being articulated in response to the anxieties within a new condition of limited budget. The "people's role" apparently refers to their continued contribution in the form of the national income tax, which increased from 20% of the State budget's revenue in 1988 to 23-25% in 1989. The "people's role" is also defined in the negative, in allowing the State to determine the spending which would serve the people's interests.

Therefore, the apparent decentralization and reform of administration implied by the Renovation of Management and Organization of Cadres is primarily a devolution of responsibility, rather than of participation, in the budgetary process. The State began to stress the desirability of fostering conformity to certain budgetary practices. In July 1989, the State Budget Committee under the National Assembly announced a Draft Tax Law that criticized the existing budgetary process for lacking a "systematic nature, inconsistency, and lack of uniformity."[11] The initial reform of the budgetary process relied heavily on the reform of the administrative apparatus for a more standardized and effective one, especially in the area of tax collection.

Instituting the Budgetary Process in the 1990's: Decentralization and Recentralization

The process of systematically redefining the budgetary process seems to have begun in the months just prior to 1992, the year when the National Assembly (*Quoc Hoi*) approved the latest Constitution of the Socialist Republic. The reform of the budgetary process is consistent with the reform of the State overall, whose role in relation to economic activity was redefined in the 1992 Constitution as one which fostered the conditions appropriate for economic development leading towards the goal of socialism. Official criticism of the State administration, especially its budgetary system, pointed out the *ad hoc* character of administrative organization and procedure. These became complicated, however, given all the remedial measures to enhance the State's effectiveness in realizing its budgetary requirements, as described throughout this paper. Therefore, by the 1990's, there existed a sprawling ineffective bureaucracy with little logic to its organization.

Another concern for the political leadership was the impact of the economic liberalization policy that began in previous years. *Doi moi* delivered what were perceived as "mixed blessings" such as the increase in foreign investment in Vietnam, especially from 1990, when a notable increase in the number of visits to Vietnam by economic delegations from other countries were recorded. While the mere presence of foreign enterprises did not directly threaten the political climate that the Party leadership wanted to preserve, it did coincide with increasing demands within the political apparatus for pluralist politics, including that by Politburo member Tran Xuan Bach, which prompted the Party's reaction. Xuan's ouster from the Politburo that year reflected the limits of the Party's toleration for political liberalization. The limits of political reform were also reflected in other moves, such as the passing of a new press law calling for greater control over the press and new regulations over religious activities.[12] News accounts from 1989 and 1990 reflect a high reportage of Party purification and disciplining activities: such as, building and

renovating the Party as well as stepping up efforts in mass proselytizing programs and mass mobilization. This was perhaps another factor as to why the effort to maintain central control of State administration became a top concern.

Reform of the structure and administration of the State budget also kept in mind the potentially negative political effects of decentralizing fiscal accountability and practices in public sector units. In March 1990, the Ministry of Finance set up a new State Treasury system. The new treasuries operated from the central to district levels and had some functions and duties as "special banks." Aside from managing State reserve financial funds to be turned over by the banks, the State treasuries also managed the State's centralized foreign currency fund, budgetary fund, and various State reserve funds nationwide. The idea was to enable the treasuries to concentrate revenue quickly, regulate capital and funds promptly from wherever there is a surplus to wherever there was a shortage, and ensure timely payments of expenditure drains from the State budget. At the same time, the treasuries held the power to control all expenditures strictly in accordance with State regulations and procedures, thereby contributing to consolidation and enhancement of budgetary and financial discipline.[13] The Finance Minister was responsible for reviewing the results and evaluating the implementation of financial and budgetary tasks for half-year periods. The Minister also planned the tasks and measures necessary for fulfilling the program of actions for the coming half-year. Also participating in the creation of the new treasury system were the comrade heads of finance offices, industry, trade, agriculture, and State revenue services from provinces, cities, and special sectors.

The budget deficit reported by the National Assembly in 1990 was explained by the inaccuracy of initial estimates of budget revenue from tax collection. The actual revenue from taxes was far off the targets estimated during the drafting of the budget: only 47% from SOEs, 41% from industry and trade sector, 98% from agriculture, 57% from commercial goods import and export. In response to this, the Finance Ministry called for the development of positive measures to cope with tax collection shortfall and evasion, the exploitation of new sources of budget revenues, the tightening of control over sources of foreign currency, and the tightening of control over spending strictly according to Council of Minister's directive. Real tax revenue did grow extremely rapidly from 1992 to 1994.[14]

While the State continued with its effort to cut costs and to streamline public administration organization and process (approximately 550,000 civil servants were discharged from their positions in 1990[15]), the low productivity of SOEs remained protected from criticism and harsh measures. In the following two years, the rationalization of administrative and economic activity continued alongside retractions of political freedoms. At the same time, foreign investment, joint ventures, and international aid increased dramatically (foreign banks entered Vietnam in 1992). The State's continued protectiveness over the SOEs may be interpreted as a reaction to the events of private, especially foreign, commercial expansion in Vietnam. In addition, while Western aid remained extremely limited throughout the 1980's, in the 1990's, the State was able to rely on foreign aid from the West for particular areas of public spending. As a result, the State's resources were more available for artificially sustaining SOEs. Evidence of this may be

inferred from the clear shift in budgetary spending from public services, such as education and health, to capital investment in the 1990's when foreign aid in the former area has enabled the State to shirk on its responsibility in public welfare.

This is not to say that the SRV did not recognize the precarious nature of foreign aid. However, shifts in budgetary distribution are difficult to change in the reformed system, given that such spending patterns have a tendency to become entrenched. Therefore, the privileging of the SOEs had to be justified within a longer term vision of their role in the SRV's ongoing economic development. Under the State plan, public sector enterprises were designated to play an important role in the process of modernization and national prosperity. Therefore, despite the failure of the SOEs to produce, the centrality of this sector in the program for national prosperity justified the State's refusal to abandon it. Subsequently, the State continued to explain the low productivity and inefficiency of the SOEs as a result of poor management technique. Protection of the State economic sector was secured alongside the renovation of its management mechanism. The concept of the "new economic management" prevalent in State documents, especially since 1990, reflects the expectation that the magic of this market-inspired system of organization and accounting will soon deliver.

However, Adam Fforde, an authority on the Vietnamese economy notes what he observes as a clear trend towards recentralization from mid-1992. According to Fforde (and his co-authors), the trend towards recentralization of power was apparent in finance, including the areas of financial management, tax collection, and approval of investments by State businesses.[16] The State Finance and Monetary Council was established in 1992 to oversee these tasks.[17] Along with the recentralization in management of the country and the reassertion of Party involvement, the role of SOEs in the national economy became ever more important. The Sixth Party Plenum of July 1994 concluded in an official commitment to rapid industrialization, justifying the need for SOEs to continue to dominate high-tech sectors. The requirement for better planning towards this goal justified greater power for the State planning apparatus, which encouraged large State sector conglomerates. Within the new plan, the State's most important role is the management of large-scale commerce by the control and influence of resources (which in theory includes increased tax revenues, such as import duties). This role entails numerous tasks by the State, such as maintaining its borrowing capacity. The State also assumes the task of encouraging higher deposits at banks, increased overseas development aid (ODA), and a flood of FDI (subject to State approval and special incentives). And, at the same, it should establish greater regulatory capacity, enhanced control over international borders, and better economic information and databases.

A range of general departments was set up directly under the central guidance of the Ministry of Finance, including the departments of Taxation, Development Investment, Business, Public Assets, and the State Auditor. The Auditor, which emerges as a key element of the "rule by law" program, is responsible for assisting the Head of Government in deciding upon the accuracy of documents and reports relating to organizations that use State funds. Its annual work plan has to be approved by the Head of Government.[18] In January of 1995, the Head of the Government, Vo Van Kiet, laid down Vietnam's eight main tasks for the year, including the three important

activities of: ensuring better control over State finance through measures to improve fiscal control and to stimulate ODA; finalizing the National Economic Development Strategy for the period to 2010; and formalizing the State management of SOEs and cooperatives through legislation. Therefore, the change in the State's function from direct involvement in the economy to one of indirect management through laws and policies has not reduced the scope of the State sector but actually enlarged it despite the official promotion of streamlining State administration to cut waste and expenses. This overhaul of the organizational structure included the merging of eight governmental departments into three new super-ministries in 1995. Ostensibly to cut red tape in administrative process, this re-organization also centralized the process. In addition, by 1995 all research aimed at setting up development plans was forced into amalgamation into the State Planning Committee (SPC), including the radical reformist Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM) in 1994 and the absorption of the State Commission for Cooperation and Investment (SCCI) in 1995. This concentration of power in the SPC reflects the recentralization of research and policy-making to ensure that no other organizations can oppose or dispute the Committee.

This trend towards recentralization is also revealed in the Law on the State Budget (*Luat Ngan sach Nha nuoc*) adopted in 1995, which instituted the systematic reform of the budget in conformity with the new role of the State in economic activity, as redefined in the 1992 Constitution. Article 22 of the Law vests the Ministry of Finance with authority over the SPC, which must coordinate its proposals with the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry, however, primarily serves to uphold the budgetary decisions made by the National Assembly (*Quoc Hoi*), which is the State body with the highest authority in the budgetary process. The Law on the State Budget defines it as an estimation of programs and offices within the jurisdiction of the State, including local governments. The National Assembly's Committee on the Economy and Budget (*Uy ban Kinh te Ngan sach Quoc Hoi*) proposes the budget estimate and allocations to the Assembly after considering annual draft proposals from programs, offices and local governments. The Assembly's Committee for Commercial Affairs (*Uy ban Thuong vu Quoc Hoi*) decides on the apportioning of budgetary funds to each ministry, branch, etc. of the State. The National Assembly also approves the budget balance sheets of previous periods. The Ministry of Finance, however, has incredible leverage in its responsibility for implementing the State budget, such as revenue collection and management of the budget fund. The State Bank comes under its authority. One problem is that the State Bank has been functioning as a credit financing arm for the Ministry, which apparently had permitted it to lend without limit to the Government and SOEs. In practice, the Ministry of Finance may exercise more power than officially circumscribed, given the numerous departments under its direct authority.

Despite the apparent success at finding new sources of budget revenues and making tax collection more effective during previous years, tax revenues declined in 1995. The problem was in part due to the extent to which the economic growth rate differed from what was predicted. The official estimation was somewhere around 25%, with an inflation rate of below 10%. Instead, inflation was high in 1995, above 20%. The problem of such faulty economic predictions by the State was partially due to the wishful thinking that continues to color the frantic vision of attaining the goal of prosperity with the phenomenal rapidity of the neighboring states, which

the SRV leadership apparently seeks to emulate. The State responded to such unexpected strong inflationary pressures by selectively curbing spending in particular areas as well as by delaying the disbursement of funds to non-priority programs. Continuing with a trend that began earlier in this decade, health and education were officially dubbed lower priority areas in 1995, and disbursements in these areas were cut back sharply.[19] Given the rapid industrialization program, spending priority is given to large-scale capital-intensive projects, such as in transport and communications, telecommunications, power, construction, irrigation, and forestry. Each of these is considered the basic infrastructural requirements deemed necessary for rapid economic development and growth, while the SOEs are seen to ensure the State's ability to control economic activity, despite their potential to become heavy burdens on the State budget.

Budgetary spending patterns which privilege the State-dominated rapid development plan are also reflected in the prioritization of State's national economic plan over the development programs and social concerns put forth by local governmental units. Despite the rejection of the centralized command model, the restructuring is overshadowed by the political leadership's ability to assert its agenda, given the new budgetary system and the concentration of decision-making for development planning. Contrary to the empowerment of local governmental units suggested by the notion of administrative decentralization and by the seemingly ubiquitous call for the application of the "market mechanism" in recent policy resolutions, the new budgetary structure and procedure have limited the possibilities of negotiating social policy and development patterns by establishing the imperative of budgetary balance, which requires the fiscal accountability of individual units. While there was a strong push from local authorities for State resources to finance the "strategic plans" for local development that they designed, it is unlikely that State resources would be made available for even a minor proportion of these projects.

Two possible developments would threaten the formula for rapid development with a strong State role. First, the private economic sector may gain strength despite the State's hope to make use of private enterprise initiatives at local levels within the limits of its larger "national purpose." A second, more pressing problem for the State is the soaring trade deficit, which was recorded at almost $3.5 billion in the beginning of the last quarter in 1996, in comparison to $2.3 billion in all of 1995. Earlier that year, the State made a move to protect SOEs with a revised foreign investment law that excludes foreign firms from participating in certain sectors of the economy. This move reflects, in part, the fact that the salaries of SOE government officials and managers are dependent on whether companies will survive, which is unlikely if exposed to private, especially foreign, competition.

Closing Comments

In this essay I do not wish to suggest that the complete liberalization of the SRV economy by eliminating its public sector is a preferred solution to the fiscal crisis of the State. Rather, I hope to point out some of the areas of tension that might arise given the imperative of a balanced budget in the context of the new structures promoting decentralized economic accountability and centralized decision-making. While the entrenched interests that may emerge, given the

privileging of the SOE's, obviously might thwart the State's goal of a balanced budget, the strategy to protect the country's key industries and economy from domination by foreign or other private interests is not an entirely faulty one. However, at the same time, the welfare of the population is treated as fiscal expenditure and neglected in the budgetary structure. The nature of "new management mechanism" behind the SOEs' operations is another area requiring closer study. Furthermore, given the current budgetary structure, if revenues are to come from taxation of private economic activity rather than from the profits from SOEs, such developments in Vietnam's economic liberalization within the context of the global economy is also an important one to explore. These all contribute to the State's legitimacy, which is at stake and in danger of diminishing with the increasing degree of sacrifice required by the people given the new budgetary priorities during this uncertain period of change.

Notes

1 Stefan de Vylder and Adam Fforde, *Vietnam: An Economy in Transition* (Stockholm: Swedish International Development Authority, 1988).

2 See William Turley and Mark Selden, ed., *Reinventing Vietnamese Socialism: Doi Moi in Comparative Perspective* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993) and David Marr and Christine White, eds., *Postwar Vietnam: Dilemmas in Socialist Development* (Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1988).

3 The problem of "soft budgetary constraints" in socialist enterprises is discussed by Janos Kornai in *The Road to a Free Economy: Shifting from a Socialist System: The Example of Hungary* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1990).

4 John P. Burns, "China's Administrative Reforms for a Market Economy," *Public Administration and Development* 13, no. 4 (October 1993): 347.

5 Huynh Kim Khanh, *Indochina Issues,* 1988.

6 FBIS-EAS, 25 August 1988, 60.

7 *Nhan Dan* (Hanoi), 1995, editorial: "Mot So Van De Ve Cai Cach Bo May Nha Nuoc Hanh Chinh" ("Some Issues in the Reform of the State Administrative Apparatus").

8 FBIS-EAS, 30 December 1988.

9 FBIS-EAS, 30 December 1988.

10 FBIS-EAS, 17 January 1989, 71.

11 FBIS-EAS, 17 July 1989, 68.

12 FBIS-EAS, 6 May 1991, 43.

13 FBIS-EAS, 29 March 1990, 69-70.

14 Adam Fforde, *Vietnam Economic Commentary and Analysis*, no. 7 (Canberra: ADUKI, 1995), 68.

15 FBIS-EAS, 22 January 1991, 55.

16 Fforde, *Vietnam*.

17 FBIS-EAS, 20 November 1992, 55.

18 Fforde, *Vietnam*, 110.

19 Fforde, *Vietnam*, 69.

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New Perspectives on Dien Bien Phu

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Pierre Asselin has recently received his Ph.D. in History at the University of Hawai'i, Manoa. His research interests have focused mainly on Vietnam.

Notes

Rien ne saurait interrompre les actions généreusement bienfaisantes de la France en Indochine.1

Indochina Governor-General Pierre Pasquier, 1930

Introduction

In World War Two, Japan occupied Indochina and, in March 1945, overthrew the French colonial regime.2 The sum of these actions dealt a grievous blow to French interests in Indochina. That blow, however, was not decisive. After the war, a large contingent of French troops and experienced colonial officials remained in Indochina, along with symbolic colonial institutions such as schools, banks, and prisons. Their presence created conditions conducive to the restoration of French political, social, and economic jurisdiction over the region beginning in late 1945.3 Hence, the overthrow of the French ruling order by the Japanese assisted in the liberation of Vietnam only to the extent that it demonstrated the colonial structure in Indochina was not invulnerable.4 The coup acted as a catalyst in the eventual demise of France in Southeast Asia, but, in 1945, it failed to deter Paris from resuming its colonial venture. For

France, the final deterrent was its eight-year long "dirty war" (*sale guerre*) that ended with the unequivocal victory of Vietnamese nationalist forces at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. Dien Bien Phu sealed the fate of the French in Indochina and forced Paris to abandon the pursuit of colonial interests.

Though a momentous event in recent history, the battle of Dien Bien Phu remains misunderstood in the West as most pertinent accounts are speculative and plagued by erroneous assumptions. This paper aims to clarify the historical record by highlighting some of the main misconceptions about the engagement and providing more accurate descriptions of its origins and implications. Moreover, it stresses the importance of the announcement of the opening of peace talks in Geneva in February 1954 and discusses the little-known fact that the leaders of the Vietnamese anti-French resistance originally planned to launch the assault on Dien Bien Phu on 26 January but revised their plans at the last minute. This brief analysis, intended to be preliminary, is based on a systematic study of primary and secondary sources collected from repositories in Vietnam and France.

The Strategy

The decision to establish a garrison at Dien Bien Phu was the product of the "Navarre Plan" (*Plan Navarre*). In 1953, the French *Corps expéditionnaire* (CE) had been fighting inconclusively in Indochina for six years. Progress could not be measured since no fronts existed in this colonial war (*guerre coloniale*). The conflict against Vietnamese revolutionaries of the *Viet-minh*[5] had never been localized, and the CE's units were overstretched. After his nomination as commander-in-chief of the CE in May 1953, General Henri Navarre and his advisors devised a two-phase strategy to remedy these problems and better coordinate the activities of French units in Indochina. The first phase of the plan (eventually known as the Navarre Plan), from the spring of 1953 to the autumn of 1954, called for the pacification of Vietnam below the eighteenth parallel and the consolidation of friendly bases and positions in the South. In the North, the objective for the same period was to maintain a "defensive mentality" (*mentalité défensive*) and avoid large-scale confrontations with the enemy. Having achieved supremacy in the South, Navarre would then implement the second phase of his plan. From late 1954 to 1956, the CE would launch offensives against enemy strongholds throughout the North to provoke what Navarre called *la bataille générale*.[6]

Navarre's ultimate strategic objective was limited. His intention was not to crush the enemy and definitively eliminate the revolutionary threat in Indochina. "According to the orders he had been issued," Army chief-of-staff Paul Élyexplained, "[Navarre's] goal was to create military conditions that would allow the government to negotiate a satisfactory, honorable solution to the Indochinese affair. He had to show the Viet-minh it had no chance of winning by force of arms, and, consequently, should agree to negotiate."[7] By 1953, Paris understood that a military victory in Indochina was impossible. Its aim, therefore, was to prepare for negotiations and a political settlement from a position of strength.

On 24 July 1953, a meeting of the *Commité de la Défense Nationale de France* held in Paris concluded that France must give highest priority to the defense of Laos and the pro-French government in Vientiane.[8] Failure to contain enemy aggression in Laos, government and military leaders believed, would inevitably lead to the demise of the pro-French governments of Cambodia and Vietnam.[9] On 28 October 1953, Laos signed a Treaty of Amity and Association with France by which Paris recognized Laotian independence and sovereignty "within the French Union."[10] In return, Vientiane pledged loyalty to France and "freely reaffirms its membership in the French Union."[11] The signing of that pact reinforced the conviction of the authorities in Paris that Laos had to be defended at all cost. With the treaty, Laos became the most loyal of France's territorial possessions overseas and a model state of the French Union as it was the first to sign its adherence.[12] Thereafter, Paris refused to let the territorial integrity of that country be violated, for that would signal that France did not take its responsibilities as head of that Union seriously.[13] Not to defend Laos, General Commissioner of the Republic in Saigon Maurice Dejean and Minister of the Associated States Marc Jaquet surmised, was "unthinkable" (*impensable*).[14]

Navarre's response to the plight for the defense of Laos was Operation *Castor*. On 20 November 1953, six battalions of the CE parachuted into Muong Thanh valley in the district of Dien Bien Phu in Lai Chau province.[15] Contrary to popular belief, the French High Command (*État majeur*) in Hanoi did not station a large garrison at Dien Bien Phu to provoke the enemy, draw him out of the jungle, and annihilate him with superior firepower in a "pitched battle."[16] The *raison d'être* of the outpost at Dien Bien Phu was, in accordance with instructions received from Paris, to "lock the door to Laos."[17] Dien Bien Phu was situated along route 41, at a crossroads (*carrefour*) which commanded the main access routes running into Laos from Vietnam. The French High Command estimated that control of this strategic point would not only halt the flow of supplies entering Laos from Vietnam and choke rebel aggression but also deter further Vietnamese involvement in Laos. In the war against Vietnamese rebels, the French had in the past repeatedly positioned troops at Dien Bien Phu. Not until the second half of 1953, however, did they decide to establish a fortified outpost capable of accommodating a dozen regiments.

Initially, the leaders of the Vietnamese resistance against France (*khang chien chong Phap*) ignored the presence of a large concentration of enemy troops at Dien Bien Phu. They assumed the French intended to occupy the area momentarily, long enough to "pacify" it, and move on from there.[18] Eight years into the war, the Vietnamese harbored little confidence that their resistance against French intrusion would soon end. In fact, on 26 November 1953, Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRVN)[19] President Ho Chi Minh signaled his government's intent to seek a negotiated settlement with Paris in an interview with *Expressen*, a Swedish daily. "If the French Government have [sic] drawn a lesson from the war they have been waging these last few years and want to negotiate an armistice in Viet Nam and solve the Viet Nam problem by peaceful means," Ho Chi Minh declared, "the people and Government of the Democratic Republic of Viet Nam are ready to meet this desire."[20] When France did not respond, Vietnamese authorities decided to lay more emphasis on military activity.[21]

Beginning in December 1953, DRVN Defense Minister Vo Nguyen Giap and his advisors in the Army Party Central Committee searched for ways to precipitate the end of the war. After a careful assessment of the military situation, they decided to challenge the French at Dien Bien Phu.[22] At that point, they did not expect that the battle of Dien Bien Phu would be of paramount significance. Victory in this battle, they reckoned, would merely assist in the favorable progression of the war. "Our victory at Dien Bien Phu," wrote Vo Nguyen Giap in instructions to field commanders, "will make it possible for our forces to intensify their actions on various fronts, thus creating conditions for the annihilation of important enemy forces and foiling his plans for pacification."[23] In late December, the DRVN authorities approved the plan to destroy Dien Bien Phu and named Vo Nguyen Giap campaign commander.[24]

Informed of the enemy's preparations, Navarre elected not to pull out the troops. On 3 December 1953, he ordered that the remote outpost (*camp retranché*) at Dien Bien Phu be fortified, thereby accepting the risk of a decisive confrontation with the Viet-minh. Aware of the implications of the decision, Navarre instructed his subordinates that, in the event of attack, the position "must be defended at all cost."[25] Navarre and France thus crossed the Rubicon.

After Ho Chi Minh announced that his government was prepared to arrive at a political solution of the conflict, French National Assembly deputy Pierre Mendès-France became a vocal advocate of negotiations. Mendès-France's activities and the growing disillusionment of the masses compelled the rightist Laniel government to respond. On 18 February 1954, it agreed to peace talks to resolve the situation in Indochina. Following consultations with foreign governments, Paris decided to hold the meetings in Geneva as part of an international conference to be held there to discuss the Korean armistice. At the conclusion of the talks on Korea, the Indochina phase of the Geneva Conference would begin. The DRVN approved that arrangement.[26] The scheduled date for the start of those negotiations was 8 May 1954.[27]

The decision to convene an international conference on Indochina raised the stakes markedly in Vietnam. After announcement of the conference, Navarre understood that there would be a battle at Dien Bien Phu and the fate of France in the region would depend on its outcome. A decisive victory at Dien Bien Phu thereafter became imperative for the French High Command.[28] The Vietnamese revolutionaries, for their part, interpreted France's manifest interest in negotiations to mean that Paris was eager to end its military intervention in Indochina. A Viet-minh document captured by French forces in late February 1954 commented that the Geneva Conference was a significant victory (*thang loi*) that reflected the Laniel government's increasing frustration over the war.[29] More importantly, the policy-making elite of the DRVN saw the Geneva Conference as an opportunity to precipitate the end of the French intervention in Vietnam. If Dien Bien Phu were overwhelmed "to co-ordinate with the diplomatic activities . . . about to start in Geneva," revolutionary authorities recognized, France would have to make important concessions.[30] To strengthen his bargaining position and improve the prospects of victory, Ho Chi Minh ordered Vo Nguyen Giap "to throw all available

forces against the Expeditionary Corps" at Dien Bien Phu.[31] Giap understood the importance of a victory over the French. He believed that the destruction of the enemy outpost could alter the physiognomy of the war, end the stalemate, and assure future victories. Considering the ever-increasing American commitment to the French cause, the Viet-minh needed an unparalleled success on the battlefield to prevent an extension of the conflict.[32]

Recognizing the importance of the moment for the Vietnamese anti-colonial movement, the People's Republic of China (PRC) considerably increased its assistance to the DRVN after mid-February.[33] For the month of March, China provided 4,000 tons of material aid and 2,000 tons in food supplies to the Vietnamese.[34] The material assistance consisted mainly of guns and artillery pieces of various calibers captured from retreating South Korean and United Nations/ American units during the Korean conflict. Since the Viet-minh did not possess the knowledge necessary to efficiently operate this equipment, China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) dispatched several Chinese technicians, advisors, and artillery crews to Vietnam.[35] In his memoirs, former French President Joseph Laniel contended that the established presence of Chinese military personnel in Vietnam constituted a direct military intervention in the Indochinese conflict.[36]

China's more generous contributions to the DRVN improved the morale and fighting capabilities of the Viet-minh and offset the Navarre Plan. Navarre himself had stated in mid-1953 that his plan was viable provided the flow of supplies entering Vietnam from China did not increase significantly.[37] In a 23 July 1953 memo, Navarre wrote of his plan that "its stipulations remain valid as long as Chinese aid to the Viet-minh does not exceed current levels." With an increase in Chinese aid, "the whole situation would have to be reconsidered."[38] To counterbalance increased Chinese assistance to the DRVN, Paris asked the United States for still more aid in early 1954. Washington eventually shouldered 80% of the cost of the French military effort in Indochina.[39]

The Politburo of the Vietnamese Communist Party and the Army Party Central Committee planned to launch the attack on Dien Bien Phu in the late afternoon of 26 January.[40] That very morning, however, Giap called off the attack. In a recent article, Giap admitted to having postponed the attack because "we were not 100% certain of victory." He was distressed mainly by the fact that most gun/cannon emplacements were exposed and easy to spot and, therefore, "would become targets of enemy air strikes and artillery bombardments." The decision of 26 January, Giap recalled, was "the most difficult decision I had ever had to make in my time as commander-in-chief." Although most unit commanders at Dien Bien Phu were initially reluctant to go along with the verdict, the Politburo eventually endorsed it.[41]

On 13 March, after they made the necessary adjustments, the Vietnamese launched their attack on Dien Bien Phu. The attack started a few minutes before dusk to give Viet-minh artillery crews time to register their targets appropriately and avoid exposing their positions long enough for French artillery and aircraft to locate them.[42] The intensity of the shelling surprised and

paralyzed the French, who lost two resistance centers (*centres de resistance*) in the first three days of fighting. The use of human wave attacks reminiscent of Chinese infantry charges in Korea characterized Vietnamese assaults on French positions during the early stages of the battle. The decision to resort to that tactic was influenced by two PLA generals advising the Vietnamese at Dien Bien Phu, Wei Guo-qing and Li Cheng-hu.[43] Though effective, that approach was costly. Between 13 and 16 March, the Viet-minh suffered more than 9,000 casualties, including 2,000 dead.[44] On 17 March, Giap modified his strategy to protract the hostilities and rely less on Chinese "expertise." "We estimated that in launching a swift attack," Giap wrote later, "we could not be certain of victory. . . . If we wanted a swift victory when our forces lacked experience in attacking remote outposts, success could not be absolutely guaranteed."[45]

The Vietnamese eventually ceased conducting human wave raids. Instead, they dug trenches and tunnels to get close to the enemy. [46] Though slower to pay dividends, Giap felt that protracted warfare guaranteed victory. "In striking surely and advancing cautiously," he wrote,

> We could keep complete initiative, attack the enemy at any time and at any fronts as we liked; we would attack him only when we were sufficiently prepared and sure of victory, otherwise we would not attack or would delay the attack; we would defend only the positions which had to be defended and could be defended, otherwise we would not defend; after a battle, we would wage another one immediately if possible, otherwise we could take a rest to reorganize our forces and make better preparations for the next battle.[47]

The decision to besiege Dien Bien Phu and not precipitate the outcome proved a sound one. Vietnamese casualties decreased dramatically after the first week of combat, and progress was steady. In the French camp, food and ammunition shortages made it increasingly difficult for the 16,000 strong garrison to contain Viet-minh advances.[48] Hoping to rectify the situation, Paris dispatched Army chief-of-staff Paul Élyto Washington to discuss an American intervention.[49] The idea took the form of an operation code-named *Vulture*. Its objective was to relieve the pressures on the garrison at Dien Bien Phu with massive nighttime bombardments of Viet-minh positions and supply lines.[50] The project, however, did not get accreditation from the Eisenhower White House.[51] Instead, on 8 April, the day Washington communicated news of its objection to Paris, American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles offered French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault two atomic bombs to save the outpost.[52] The French government rejected the offer.[53]

On 7 May, coincidentally less than twenty-four hours before the scheduled opening of the talks on Indochina in Geneva, Dien Bien Phu fell to the Viet-minh. The siege lasted for fifty-five days. The French suffered 7,184 casualties, including 1,142 dead and 1,606 missing; Viet-minh losses were 7,900 dead and more than 15,000 wounded.[54] Of the many factors explaining the outcome, the heavy artillery provided by the PRC and deployed by the Viet-minh in the higher

grounds surrounding the valley was highly significant. Large-caliber artillery positioned on mountain tops not only confused the enemy but also exacted a toll on his fighting capabilities and morale.[55] "The real surprise to the French was not that the Communists had that kind of artillery," wrote Bernard Fall. "What surprised the French completely was the Viet-Minh's ability to transport a considerable mass of heavy artillery pieces across roadless mountains to Dien Bien Phu and to keep it supplied with a sufficient amount of ammunition to make the huge effort worthwhile."[56] The Vietnamese relied on twenty-four 105mm howitzers during the campaign, all of which had been captured by the PLA in Korea and manufactured in the United States.[57] In retrospect, Giap's decision to cancel the attack scheduled for 26 January to more effectively prepare his artillery units for the battle was sound.

The logistical effort undertaken to sustain Viet-minh units sent to the front was no less significant. The DRVN mobilized 33,500 *dân công* (patriotic workers) to assist and support the Viet-minh contingent at Dien Bien Phu. Using 2,724 modified bicycles known as *xe thô*, 2,673 junks, and 17,400 horses, those workers carried to the front 20,584 tons of rice, in addition to ammunition and other necessities. Their contribution was essential to enable Giap to wage a protracted conflict. For the period January-May 1954, the *dân công* contributed five million work-days to the anti-French resistance.[58]

Overconfidence and underestimation of the potential of the Viet-minh by Paris and the High Command in Hanoi was a last factor that proved detrimental to the French cause. "It is obvious that there was, on the part of our commanding structure," wrote French general Georges Catroux in his memoirs, "an excess of confidence in the merit of our troops and in the superiority of our material means."[59] The French also failed to appraise correctly the firepower of the Viet-minh and its ability to sustain the siege and its 40,000 troops for as long as it did. Most significantly, they underestimated the dedication and resilience of those involved in the Vietnamese resistance.

Judgment

The fall of the French garrison at Dien Bien Phu in May 1954 ended ninety years of direct French involvement in Vietnam. With the Geneva Accords of July 1954, France formally renounced its *mission civilisatrice* in Indochina, and the Vietnamese were promised peace. The months and years to follow, however, brought more frustration to Vietnamese nationalists. Unity and independence, they soon found out, were not about to be achieved. Picking up where France left off, another Western nation would increase its military commitment in Indochina and defer the restoration of peace and stability in Vietnam.

Notes

1 From an address by Governor-General of French Indochina Pierre Pasquier in Grand Conseil des Interêts Économiques et Financiers de l'Indochine, Session Ordinaire de 1930, *Discours prononcé le 15 octobre 1930 par M.P. Pasquier, Gouverneur général de l'Indochine* (Hanoi: Imprimerie d'Extrême Orient, 1930), 118.

2 On World War Two in Indochina see David G. Marr, "World War II and the Indochinese Revolution," in *Southeast Asia Under Japanese Occupation,* ed. Alfred W. McCoy, Yale University Southeast Asia Monograph Series, no. 22 (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1980), 126-58.

3 Phillipe Devillers, *Histoire du Viêt-Nam, de 1940 à 1954* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1952), 81; and Archimedes L.A. Patti, *Why Vietnam? Prelude to America's Albatross* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 25-34.

4 The argument that after March 1945 Indochina "ceased to be French" is presented in Huynh Kim Khanh, *Vietnamese Communism, 1925-1945* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 292.

5 Short for *Viet Nam doc lap dong minh* (Vietnamese Independence League), the Viet-minh was a paramilitary front formed in 1941 to resist the Japanese occupation. After 1945, it led the fight against the restoration of French control in Indochina. On the Viet-minh see Bernard B. Fall, *The Viet-Minh Regime: Government and Administration in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1956).

6 Henri Navarre, *Agonie de l'Indochine* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1958), 80-2; and Bernard Fall, "Indochina, The Last Year of the War: The Navarre Plan," *Military Review* 4 (December 1956): 23-8.

7 Paul Ély, *L'Indochine dans la tourmente* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1964), 25. This translation and all others are the author's.

8 Bernard B. Fall, *Street Without Joy* (Harrisburg: The Stackpole Co., 1961), 282; and Le Monde (Paris), 22 April 1954.

9 This "domino theory" is explained in Alphonse Juin, *Le Viêt Minh, mon adversaire* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1956), 237.

10 The French Union (1946-1958), or *Union Française,* was a commonwealth of states. Paris described it as an association of sovereign and independent peoples, free and equal in their rights and duties, under the protection of France. Xavier Yacono, *Histoire de la colonisation française* (Paris: Presses universitaire de France, 1969), 110-7..

11 The treaty is reproduced in Press and Information Division, French Embassy, Washington, D. C., *Indochinese Affairs* 1 (February 1954): 25-28.

12 *Le Monde* (Paris), 3 May 1954.

13 Georges Catroux, *Deux actes du drame indochinois* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1959), 168-9.

14 Le Monde, (Paris), 3 May 1954.

15 The operation is described in Bernard B. Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place: The Siege of Dien Bien Phu* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1966), 1-26.

16 See the chapters on Dien Bien Phu in both Cecil B. Currey, *Victory at Any Cost: The Genius of Viet Nam's Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap* (McLean, VA: Brassey's, 1996) and John Colvin, *Giap: Volcano Under the Snow* (New York: Soho, 1996).

17 Jules Roy, *La bataille de Diên Biên Phu* (Paris: René Julliard, 1963), 37.

18 Bui Dinh Phong, "Ho Chi Minh voi Dien Bien Phu," *Nghien cuu Lich su* 2 (1994), 14.

19 The DRVN was proclaimed on 2 September 1945. In December 1946, after the French reasserted their control over Hanoi, it became a clandestine government based at Pac Bo in the mountains of northern Vietnam.

20 Quoted in Ho Chi Minh, *Selected Writings* (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1976), 154.

21 Le Mau Han, *Dang cong san Viet Nam: Cac Dai hoi va Hoi nghi Trung uong* (Ha Noi: Nha xuat ban Chinh tri quoc gia, 1995), 58.

22 Bo Quoc phong - Vien lich su quan su Viet Nam, *Lich su nghe thuat chien dich Viet Nam trong 30 nam chien tranh chong Phap, chong My (1945-1975), Tap I: Trong khang chien chong Phap (1945-1954)* (Ha Noi: Nha xuat ban Quan doi nhan dan, 1994), 211-12.

23 From "Contributions to the History of Dien Bien Phu," *Vietnamese Studies* 3 (1965): 51.

24 Ban nghien cuu lich su quan doi, *Lich su Quan doi nhan dan Viet Nam, Tap I* (Ha Noi: Nha xuat ban Quan doi nhan dan, 1974), 562.

25 From the passage quoted in Catroux, *Deux actes*, 155. See also Roy, *La bataille*, 83.

26 Luu Van Loi, *Nam muoi nam ngoai giao Viet Nam (1945-1995), Tap I: Ngoai giao Viet Nam, 1945-1975* (Ha Noi: Nha xuat ban Cong an nhan dan, 1996), 170.

27 For a good account of the genesis of the Conference refer to Robert F. Randle, *Geneva 1954:*

The Settlement of the Indochinese War (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 3-156.

28 Navarre, *Agonie*, 211.

29 Pierre Rocolle, *Pourquoi Diên Biên Phu?* (Paris: Flammarion, 1968), 46.

30 Tran Do, *Stories of Dien Bien Phu* (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1962), 27.

31 Nguyen Khac Huyen, *Vision Accomplished: The Enigma of Ho Chi Minh* (New York: Collier Books, 1971), 229.

32 Vo Nguyen Giap, *Guerre du peuple, armée de peuple* (Hanoi: Éditions en Langues Étrangères, 1973), 199-200.

33 *Su that ve quan he Viet Nam-Trung Quoc trong 30 nam qua* (Ha Noi: Nha xuat ban Su that, 1979), 28.

34 From a 24 March 1954 speech to the Overseas Press Club by American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles reproduced in Melvin Gurtov, *The First Vietnam Crisis: Chinese Communist Strategy and the United States Involvement, 1953-1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 188.

35 François Joyaux, *La Chine et le règlement du premier conflit d'Indochine - Genève 1954* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonnes, 1979), 66; and *Le Monde* (Paris), 4 May 1954.

36 Joseph Laniel, *De Diên Biên Phu au pari de Genève* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1957), 84.

37 Roy, *La bataille*, 77.

38 Navarre is quoted in Rocolle, *Pourquoi*, 68-9.

39 George C. Herring, "Franco-American Conflict in Indochina, 1950-1954" in *Dien Bien Phu and the Crisis of Franco-American Relations, 1954-1955* , ed. Lawrence S. Kaplan, Denise Artaud, and Mark R. Rubin (Wilmington, Del: SR Books, 1990), 40.

40 Originally planned for 25 January, the attack was later postponed for twenty-four hours.

41 Hoang Xuan Thuy, interview by author, 19 June 1990, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Thuy was Giap's *aide de camps* at Dien Bien Phu. See also Vo Nguyen Giap, *Dien Bien Phu: The Most Difficult Decision and Other Writings* (Hanoi: The Gioi Publishers, 1992), 39, 40, 45.

42 Vien lich su quan su Viet Nam - Bo Tu lenh binh chung phao binh, *Lich su nghe thuat su*

dung phao binh trong chien dich (1945-1975) (Ha Noi: Nha xuat ban Quan doi nhan dan, 1996), 62.

43 Peter Macdonald, *Giap: The Victor in Vietnam* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1993), 129.

44 Bo Quoc phong - Vien lich su quan su Viet Nam, *Lich su cuoc khang chien chong thuc dan Phap, Tap V* (Ha Noi: Nha xuat ban Quan doi nhan dan, 1992), 229; Erwan Bergot, *Les 170 jours de Diên Biên Phu* (Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1979), 144.

45 Giap quoted in Gérard Le Quang, *Giap, ou la guerre du peuple* (Paris: Éditions Denol, 1973), 155.

46 Macdonald, *Giap*, 145; and Vo Nguyen Giap, *Guerre du peuple*, 209-10.

47 Vo Nguyen Giap, *Diên Biên Phu* (Hanoi: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1984), 89.

48 On the state of French morale during the battle see Jean Pouget, *Nous étions à Dien Bien Phu* (Paris: Presses de la Cité, 1964), 255-310.

49 An account of the late March 1954 visit to Washington is provided in Ély, *Indochine*, 59-62.

50 George C. Herring and Richard Immerman, "Eisenhower, Dulles, and Dienbienphu: 'The Day We Didn't Go to War' Revisited," in *Light at the End of the Tunnel: A Vietnam War Anthology*, ed. Andrew J. Rotter (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 80.

51 Lack of congressional support was the main reason behind the decision not to intervene. A concise presentation of the American presidential position appears in "Telegram from Dulles to Dillon," 5 April 1954, United States-Vietnam Relations, 1945-1967: Study Prepared by Department of Defense (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971), Book 9, 359.

52 Dulles is quoted in J.R. Tournoux, *Secrets d'État* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1960), 56. See also Georges Bidault, *D'une résistance à l'autre* (Paris: Les Presses du Siècle, 1965), 198.

53 In his memoirs, Ély contended that Paris never intended to use nuclear weapons. Ély, *Indochine*, 90. On the entire episode consult Melanie Billings-Yun, *Decision Against War: Eisenhower and Dien Bien Phu, 1954* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

54 Roy, *La bataille*, 566, 568; Bo Quoc phong, *Khang chien*, 266.

55 Tran Do, *Stories*, 29-32; Rocolle, *Pourquoi*, 251; and Vien lich su quan su, *Su dung phao binh*, 69.

56 Fall, *Hell*, 127.

57 Doan Khue, "Chien thang Dien Bien Phu vi dai va cong cuoc bao ve To quoc chu nghia xa hoi ngay nay," *Quoc phong toan dan* 4 (1994): 4.

58 Dinh Van Ty, "La brigade des chevaux de fer," *Études Vietnamiennes* 3 (1965): 47-61; Bo Quoc phong, *Lich su nghe thuet chien dich Viet Nam*, 271; and Luu Van Trac, "Dong bao dan toc it nguoi voi chien dich Dien Bien Phu," *Nghien cuu Lich su* 1 (1984): 43.

59 Catroux, *Deux actes*, 190.