

Appendices

APPENDIX A

Miscellaneous notes on “soul stuff” and “prowess”

I became interested in the phenomenon of “soul stuff” when I was studying the “Hinduism” of seventh-century Cambodia and suspected that Hindu devotionalism (*bhakti*) made sense to the Khmers by a process of self-Hinduization generated by their own notions of what Thomas A. Kirsch, writing about the hill tribes of mainland Southeast Asia, calls “inequality of souls”.¹ Among the hill tribes, a person’s “soul stuff” can be distinguished from his personal “fate” and the spirit attached to him at birth. “Both the internal quality and the external forces are evidence of his social status”.² The notion of inequality of souls seems to be reflected in the way the Khmer chiefs equate political status with different levels of devotional capacity.

I then began to observe that scholars sometimes found it necessary to call attention to cultural elements in different parts of the lowlands of Southeast Asia which seemed to be connected with the belief that personal success was attributable to an abnormal endowment of spiritual quality. For example, Shelly Errington in her forthcoming book, *Memory in Luwu*, chapter I, discusses what constitutes a “person” in Luwu, South Sulawesi. In Luwu society, *sumange* is the primary source for animating health and effective action in the world, and *kerre* (“effect”) is the visible sign of a dense concentration of *sumange*. Potent humans and also potent rocks, for example, are said to be in “the state of *kerre* (*makerre*)”. *Sumange* is associated with

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1. Thomas A. Kirsch, *Feasting and Social Oscillation: Religion and Society in Upland Southeast Asia*, p. 15.
 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 13–15.

descent from the Creator God and signified by white blood, but this is not always so. Individuals with remarkable prowess can suddenly appear from nowhere, and the explanation is that they are *makerre*: *Kerre* is not invariably contingent on white blood.

In Bali the Sanskrit word *sakti* (“spiritual energy”) is associated with Viṣṇu. Viṣṇu represents *sakti* engaged in the world, and a well formed ancestor group is the social form required to actualize *sakti*.³ But *sakti* in Bali is not related to immobile social situations, for Viṣṇu’s preferred vehicle is “an ascendant, expanding ancestor group”.⁴ Such a group is led by someone of remarkable prowess.

Benedict Anderson, in his essay on “The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture”, does not refer to “soulstuff”; his focus is on Power, or the divine energy which animates the universe. The quantum of Power is constant, but its distribution may vary. All rule is based on the belief in energetic Power at the centre, and a ruler, often of relatively humble origins, would emerge when he showed signs of his capacity for concentrating and preserving cosmic Power by, for example, ascetic practices. His feat would then be accompanied by other visible signs such as a “divine radiance”.⁵ The Javanese notion of the absorption of cosmic Power by one person presupposes that only a person of unusual innate quality could set in motion processes for concentrating cosmic Power by personal effort. On the other hand, the Power this person could deploy in his lifetime inevitably tended to become diffused over the generations unless it was renewed and reintegrated by the personal efforts of a particular descendant.

Anderson’s analysis may recall the situation I seemed to detect in seventh-century Cambodia. In both instances ascetic performance distinguished outstanding men from their fellows, and in Luwu as well as in Java visible signs revealed men of prowess and marked them out as leaders in their generation.

Again, according to Vietnamese folklore, the effect of a personal spiritual quality is suggested by the automatic response of local tutelary spirits to a ruler’s presence, provided that the ruler had already shown signs of achievement and leadership. A local spirit is expected to recognize and be attracted by a ruler’s superior quality and compelled to put himself at such a ruler’s disposal.

I have introduced the topics of “soul stuff” and “prowess” in a discussion of the cultural matrix, and we can suppose that these and other indigenous beliefs remained dominant in the protohistoric

3. Boon, *The Anthropological Romance of Bali*, pp. 204–5.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 203.

5. Benedict Anderson, “The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture”, pp. 1–69.

period in spite of the appearance of "Hindu" features in documentary evidence. I take the view that leadership in the so-called "Hinduized" countries continued to depend on the attribution of personal spiritual prowess. Signs of spiritual quality would have been a more effective source of leadership than institutional support. The "Hinduized" politics were elaborations or amplifications of the pre-"Hindu" ones.

Did the appearance of Theravāda Buddhism on mainland Southeast Asia make a difference? Historians and anthropologists with special knowledge must address this question. I shall content myself with noting a piece of evidence brought to my attention by U Tun Aung Chain which refers to the Buddhist concept of "merit". The Burman ruler Alaungmīntayā of the second half of the eighteenth century is recorded as having said to the Ayudhyā ruler: "My *hpon* (derived from *puñña*, or "merit") is clearly not on the same level as yours. It would be like comparing a garuda with a dragon-fly, a naga with an earthworm, or the sun with a fire-fly". Addressing local chiefs, he said: "When a man of *hpon* comes, the man without *hpon* disappears". Here is Buddhist rendering of superior performance in terms of merit-earning in previous lives and the present one, and we are again dealing with the tradition of inequality of spiritual prowess and political status. Are we far removed from other instances of spiritual inequality noted above? The king's accumulated merit had been earned by ascetic performance; the self had to be mastered by steadfastness, mindfulness, and right effort, and only persons of unusual capacity were believed to be able to follow the Path consistently and successfully during their past and present lives. Such a person in Thailand would be hailed for his *pāramī*, or possession of the ten transcendent virtues of Buddhism. A Thai friend tells me that *pāramī* evokes *bhakti* ("devotion"), and the linguistic association suggests a rapport comparable with what is indicated in seventh-century Cambodia and in Vietnamese folklore about the tutelary spirits.

In all the instances I have sketched, beliefs associated with an individual's spiritual quality rather than with institutional props seem to be responsible for success. Perhaps de la Loubère sensed the same situation in Ayudhyā at the end of the seventeenth century when he remarked: "the sceptre of this country soon falls from hands that need a support to sustain it".⁶ His observation is similar to that of Francisco Colin in the Philippines in the seventeenth century:

6. De la Loubère, *A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam* (reproduced by the Duopage Process in the U.S.A.), p. 107.

“honoured parents or relatives” were of no avail to an undistinguished son.

Others may wish to develop or modify the basis I have proposed for studying leadership in the early societies of Southeast Asia. Explanations of personal performance, achievement, and leadership are required to reify the cultural background reflected in the historical records, and this in turn requires study by historians and anthropologists, working in concert, of the indigenous beliefs behind foreign religious terminology.

APPENDIX B

Six Vietnamese poems of the second half of the fourteenth century

I

Lines written when wandering on the Phật Tích mountain

Chanting and whipping his horse, the poet climbs the lofty ridge.
Treading the monastery grounds, I remove myself from the world's clamour.

Waves of pine sway in the wind and chill the grotto's mouth.¹
The primeval spirit draws a silken girdle around the mountain's waist.

Among the numberless peaks in the mist are the Three Islands of the spirits.

Among the myriad pipes and drums [of nature] are the nine parts of [Thieu's = Shun's] music.

Let us talk no more of Master Tù-'s marvels.²

Roaming everywhere, I have stopped chanting and am now playing my flute.

Phạm Su-Mạnh, *Thơ-văn Lý-Trần*, vol. 3, p. 93.

2

Lines written at the grotto on the Bảo Phúc cliff in the Hiệp mountain

Bảo Phúc, a magic grotto, is above the blue sea.

Today, with official leave, I have been free to roam.

Phu-o-ng Hô and Viên Kiệu appear through the clouds.

Tũ-Phũ and Thanh Đô are floating over the water.³

1. Grottos signify supernatural mystery. See Schafer, *The Vermilion Bird*, p. 144, on their Taoist associations in China. Grottos were "the ante-chambers of holy worlds and subterranean paradises." Phạm Su-Mạnh uses the word "grotto" to intensify the mystery of the Phật Tích mountain in his first couplet in parallel verse.

2. Master Tù- is Tù- Dao Hanh, an eclectic twelfth century Buddhist and also a magician. He lived for some time in the Thiên Phúc monastery on this mountain.

3. Tũ-Phũ and Thanh Đô are references to the toponyms associated with the abode of the Celestial Emperor, where wondrous music, alluded to in poem 6, is heard. The references are from *The Book of Lieh-tzũ*.

The world's most marvellous sight is the rising of the sun at Du-o-ng Cốc.

The purest air of the rivers and mountains is Bạch-Đẳng's autumn. As I versify I wish to ask old Cát Tiên.⁴

Whether he will give me a half share of these green mountains.

Phạm Su-Mạnh, *Thơ-văn Lý-Trần*, vol. 3, p. 106.

3

Lines written on the Hoa cliff in-Đông Triều

It thrusts itself into the blue heavens like a jade lotus.

A magnificent scene through the ages. This heroic coastal province! Bamboo shadows and blossom shade. A green-screened monastery. Immortals have fashioned and spirits carved a palace among the white clouds.

To the north I am girded by Vạn Kiếp like a range of chilled halberds.

To the south I am held by the Xuân river like a gushing crystalline rainbow.

In the setting sun and leaning on my stick at the high look-out point, The invigorating air of the mountains and streams fills my breast.

Phạm Su-Mạnh, *Thơ-văn Lý-Trần*, vol. 3, p. 108.

4

Visiting Côn mountain

A tall bamboo on the mountain top pierces through the cloud mist. I glance behind me at the defilement of the world. The road has separated me from it by great distance.

The sound of the spring after the rain is the flow of splashing water.

The mountain air when the sky clears is transparently clear.

Throughout lifetime in the fleeting world, men are all phantasms.

After half a day of stolen leisure, I am indeed an immortal.

4. Cát Tiên (Ko Hung) was a Chinese Taoist of the fourth century who sought the ingredients of the elixir of life. See Schafer, *The Vermilion Bird*, pp. 87-88. Ko Hung is supposed to have hoped to find what he wanted in Vietnam but was unable to go there. Phạm Su-Mạnh is claiming equality with the Chinese magician; both have access to the supernatural forces of the universe.

After my elation passes, I want to make my way to the monk's courtyard and spend the night.
The evening bell speeds on the moon and poises it in front of the peak.

Nguyễn Phi Khanh, *Thơ văn Lý-Trần*, vol. 3, p. 423.

5

The Tiên Du monastery

Tiên Dú-c's mountains and rivers. The former [Lý] emperors' capital.
The setting of this famous monastery is sublime. Indeed, it is a little Phu-o-ng Hồ.
In the world of men where are there no traces?
In vain one asks of the immortals what has survived or disappeared.

Nguyễn Phi Khanh, *Thơ văn Lý-Trần*, vol. 3, p. 481.

6

Rising early at the Thiên Thánh Huệ Quốc monastery

This palace tower of the company of immortals seems near to Bồng Lai.
The ear hears the music at Heaven's zenith. I easily awaken from my dream.⁵
I rise from sleep on this spring morning without a care.
The wind from the east [the spring wind] is in the courtyard. I watch the blossom open.

Nguyễn Phi Khanh, *Thơ văn Lý-Trần*, vol. 3, p. 474.

5. "The music at Heaven's zenith" alludes to a passage in the *Shih-chi* about an invalid who dreams that he ascends to the heavens. When he reaches the Celestial Emperor's palace in the heavenly heights, he hears wondrously beautiful music.

APPENDIX C

Kakawin and *Hikayat*

Zoetmulder has examined the *manggala* verses which introduce the Old-Javanese *kakawins*, or poetry written in Indian metres.¹ The verses were written as acts of worship in honour of a god and Zoetmulder is able to show that the poet's prayer for divine guidance is uttered in a Javanese cultural setting. The *manggala*s contain the word *dewāśraya*, the literal Sanskrit meaning of which is "having recourse to a god". In Java, however, the loan word signifies "seeking union with the deity", and this is why the poet is writing. Poetry was a yoga exercise.² Thus, poets sometimes described their works as "literary temples"³ in the sense that a god would descend into a poem when the poet's mystical contemplation during the act of writing was intense enough to infuse his poetic language with divinity in the same way that intense worship animated a temple image. Here is a Javanese attitude towards poetry, and Zoetmulder remarks that, "as regards literary yoga, it should be noted that the characteristic form of the *manggala* in Old-Javanese *kakawins*, from which we have deduced its existence, seems to have been unknown in Sanskrit literature".⁴

The *kakawins* belong to a devotional genre of writing. They are written under the influence of a personal religious experience, and the poets use the language they deem "natural" for the experience. The linguistic evidence of what was "natural" is found in language used for poeticizing their wanderings in the countryside. According to Zoetmulder, the linguistic terms for "wandering" are often those normally used for ascetics "in quest of saintliness or supernatural power", and two of the terms have a double meaning: "to seek death by letting oneself be carried away by a stream" and also giving oneself up entirely to "aesthetic pleasure".⁵ Landscape can be rendered in religious language because divinity, no matter what name the god of the poet's devotion bears, is immanent in all forms of beauty. To experience beauty means to be in union with the divinity in a trance-like rapture, and the rapture is expressed in the language

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1. P.J. Zoetmulder, *Kalangwan. A survey of Old Javanese Literature*.
 2. *Ibid.*, pp. 177-78.
 3. *Ibid.*, p. 185.
 4. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
 5. *Ibid.*, p. 171.

of landscape poetry.⁶ What is actually seen in nature does not reveal the immanent divinity. Only a poet can sense divinity, and his poem has to capture and celebrate what is concealed from the eye. He does so by means of elaborate linguistic equivalences, and this is why the “literariness” of the *kakawins*, including their sound effects, strives to embellish the natural scene in order to produce the presence of its concealed divinity. The beauty of language rather than of nature itself reveals the vision and the ecstasy of the aesthetic experience. The language is of one who “is able to sense the approach of that mystical union with the divinity in which all consciousness of the self vanishes”.⁷ And so one poet of the Old-Javanese period writes under the influence of yogic rapture that he is able “to bud forth sprouts of beauty because yoga unites him with the god who is beauty itself”.⁸ In this state of rapture, a poet hopes that his poem may be a temple to receive the god of beauty. “May Kāma receive his *candi* (temple) from me when I pursue the quest for beauty at the tip of my writing-style [stylus]”.⁹ Language and not scenery creates beauty.

A.J. Day, another student of Javanese literature, has defined very exactly how these texts should be read. The poet’s literary purpose is not with what is natural about the Javanese landscape. Landscape is “a setting for poetic composition which does not refer to the natural world but to the processes of poetic writing”.¹⁰

Day has recently examined the “ornamentation” and “embellishment” which continued to be distinctive features of Javanese literature into the nineteenth century.¹¹ He, as Zoetmulder does, notes that “verbal ornamentation”, known in Sanskrit poetics as *alamkāra*, was already a prominent feature in the earliest Old-Javanese poetic text, written on an inscription from Central Java and dated 856. De Casparis, who edited the inscription, observes that the poet’s description of a recently planted tree in a temple compound displays ornamentation that “goes far beyond the discrete limits fixed by the classical poets of India”.¹² In 1365, almost exactly five hundred years after this inscription was composed, Prapañca acknowledges the same convention when he writes that the Majapahit king enjoyed reading and re-reading a temple’s bas-relief which “is illuminating a

6. On “rapture” (*langö*, etc.), see *ibid.*, pp. 172–73.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 184.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 179.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

10. A.J. Day, *Meanings of Change in the Poetry of Nineteenth-Century Java*, p. 71.

11. *Ibid.*

12. De Casparis, *Prasasti Indonesia II*, p. 285; and Zoetmulder, *Kalangwan*, p. 230.

language ornament, a *kakawin*".¹³ Prapañca himself may be practising the same technique when he refers to the crowds of women awaiting the arrival of touring princes:

Those whose houses were far away there tried to get at high trees.
Dangling in bunches from their branches were girls, old and young, [like] luxuriant [fruit].¹⁴

Zoetmulder's study provides a vivid example of one genre of writing in a local literature. The attention he pays to the significance of words and to the use of language for producing the feeling of rapture rather than describing the external scene belongs to the apparatus of textual study. His chapter entitled "The world of the poem" shows a similar concern with language effects by means of metaphors and similes. For example, he is examining equivalences when he says that "under the guise of Sanskrit personal and place names the poet is presenting a picture of his own country and his own society".¹⁵ By considering figures of speech, Zoetmulder is able to make a general observation of considerable interest. The Old-Javanese poet's depiction of the relationship between man and nature shows "that he saw this world in a way that was unnatural to him and his audience: namely essentially as one".¹⁶ Here is one way in which a cultural ambience can be explored.

When we study Javanese poetry we are, as it were, present when something is actually happening: the poets are creating divine beauty in a state of rapture. We know from other sources that tantric meditation was practised in Javanese society, though we cannot assume that tantric yoga meant the same to the Javanese as it did to the Indians.¹⁷ But being in the presence of those who are meditating, as we are when we study how they produced language meaning, is more worthwhile than merely knowing that yogic meditation was practised in Java. Zoetmulder's textual study makes this possible.

To the best of my knowledge, no other earlier Southeast Asian literature has been studied in this way. Shelly Errington's discussion of the Malay *hikayat* genre of literature should, however, be mentioned.¹⁸ Wilkinson defines *hikayat* as "a tale, a history, a narrative,"

13. Pigeaud, *Java in the fourteenth century*, vol. 3, canto 32, stanza 4.

14. *Ibid.*, canto 59, stanza 6.

15. Zoetmulder, *Kalangwan*, pp. 187-88.

16. *Ibid.*, p. 214.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 179-80.

18. Shelly Errington, "Some comments on Style in the Meanings of the Past", *JAS* 38, no. 2 (1979); 231-44.

while Errington defines it more precisely as a written text to be recited in court. Her study is based on the use of language.

These prose texts contain a great deal of material strung together paratactically and often repetitively. The paratactic effect is assisted by the absence of tense in the Malay language, and Errington cites A.L. Becker's observation that certain Austronesian languages do not use a "narrative presupposition" to produce coherence in texts. The *hikayats* were drawn from conventional stories and episodes, and Errington suggests that images from the visible world were brought into being simply by the use of words. The words were listened to for their sounds rather than read. *Hikayats* were written to be recited. Their contents therefore took the form of sounds, and they produced a particular effect. The effect was no less than the experience of listening to the spoken Malay language, a language (*bahasa*) which was essentially the language of politeness. Language defined the shape of human relations; polite behaviour was synonymous with addressing people properly. One result was that nothing induced self-esteem more than hearing one's name mentioned frequently, and so "name" (*nama*) also signified "reputation". *Nama* was nowhere more enhanced than when it was heard or acquired in the context of the ruler's service. Thus, the *hikayats* reflected a preoccupation with being spoken about not only in the present but in the future as well. Indeed, Errington suggests, "the desire to be spoken about, for one's *nama* to be mentioned in other countries and by people in the last age, becomes what we can only translate as a 'motive' for action".¹⁹

Errington's analysis was presented to a symposium on Southeast Asian attitudes towards the past, and her conclusion was that the *hikayat's* purpose was not to record the past but to perpetuate it. "One begins to feel, in reading *hikayat*, that the idea that the world is real and words or language artificial is reversed in traditional Malaya where, if anything, *bahasa* was real, solid, present, and almost palpable, while the world was something which would not endure."²⁰

One can suppose that, because language registered social behaviour on the Malay Peninsula or in those parts of the archipelago where the language was spoken, the Malay raja in this cultural *mandala* would feel at home when he listened to Malay texts resonant with the sounds of polite language. If Old-Javanese literature is the product of meditative achievement and the poetry of nature is more beautiful than the landscape itself, Malay literature may be read as language schooling for raja society in an anonymous landscape.

19. Ibid., p. 242. The significance of *nama* in traditional Malay court society is discussed in A.C. Milner, *The Malay Raja*, pp. 206-18.

20. Ibid., p. 242.