

This reviewer can recommend *The Secret Vietnam War*, with some caution, for readers who already know something about the air war and are looking for further details.

EDWIN E. MOISE
Clemson University

Later Ceramics in South-East Asia Sixteenth to Twentieth Centuries. By BARBARA HARRISSON. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1995. xxii, 116 pp. \$90.00 (cloth).

Barbara Harrisson's attractive, well-illustrated, and useful book is primarily a study of Chinese porcelain imported into Indonesia after 1550, as known from the collections of the Princessehof Museum in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands.

There are six chapters. The first is called "The Swatow Style: Favourite in South-East Asia, 1550–1650." On technical and stylistic grounds, Harrisson has divided the wares known as "Swatow" (the actual Chinese kiln site being unidentified) into separate families, which she calls "conservative," "persistent," and "versatile." The nomenclature may be awkward, but the groups have coherence, and her views concerning dates are reasonable. Chapter 2 is called "The Wares of Jingdezhen: Trendsetter World-wide, 1550–1700," in recognition of the fact that many of the types of wares found in Southeast Asia were also exported to the Middle East and to Europe. In chapter 3, "Wares of Special Character, 1550–1750," Harrisson describes Japanese porcelain, stonewares from Guandong, and bowls, dishes, and jarlets she attributes to Vietnam. "Chinese Porcelain: Splendid and Plain, 1700–1930," the fourth chapter, takes up Chinese enameled wares made for the Southeast Asian market and mass-produced blue-and-white dishes. "Painted and Printed Wares, 1700–1900" includes a fascinating discussion of little-known Scotch and Dutch dishes and bowls exported to Indonesia. The sixth chapter, "The Colour of the Present, 1860–1960," is a brief discussion of opposing tendencies—one toward the continuation of importation, the other toward local manufacture.

Even this brief summary makes clear what the virtues of *Later Ceramics* are—as a guide to types of ware, their characteristics, and their dates. Less well covered are contexts—which, given the nature of the material, are many. The first would be that of the site of manufacture. What was produced in a certain place, and what might be the relationship of the objects found in Southeast Asia to the totality of production. These are questions, however, that cannot be discussed easily on the basis of data now available. The next context would be that of the ships that carried the ceramics to Southeast Asia. Harrisson does make use of the evidence of wrecks that have been recovered in recent years: *Witte Leeuw* (1613); *Hatcher* (ca. 1643); *Vung Tau* (ca. 1690); *Geldermalsen* (1752); and *Griffin* (1760). (In passing she also mentions wrecks of 1579 [p. 13] and ca. 1728 [color plate 41]. She wrote before the recovery of the *San Diego* [ca. 1600].)

At no point, however, does Harrisson pause to examine, from either a qualitative or quantitative point of view, any of these recoveries as an assemblage—as a body of material that might shed light on the nature of the objects that reached Southeast Asia. The third context would be the local one. "Commonly," she writes in her introduction, "ceramics in South-East Asia were family heirlooms. Even in humble homes, they were reverently passed down from one generation to the next and carefully stored in between use." The reader who might be curious about just how valid such

a generalization might be given nothing in the way of help—not a single concrete example and few clues in the bibliography (where at least one important account of heirloom vessels does not appear—Fay Cooper-Cole, *Chinese Pottery in the Philippines* [Chicago, 1912]). Ceramics are also found archaeologically, most importantly, in graves. Harrisson does not overlook the sad wholesale despoliation of sites in recent years, but, once again, she does not say all she might about what a grave might hold, where graves can be found, or how their contents relate to the holdings of the Princessehof or to the corpus of illustrations in her book.

These considerations do not undermine the value of *Later Ceramics in South-East Asia* but they help to draw boundaries between what does not raise questions and what does—mostly matters of cultural interpretation and of ascription of motivation or choice to the local population. Take, for instance, the title of the first chapter: “The Swatow Style: Favourite in South-East Asia.” Is this like saying “Coca-Cola and Pepsi: Favorite Soft Drink Companies”? Less questionable, perhaps, is her characterization of the vessel known as the *kendi* as “very highly valued” (p. 30). In the period around 1600, Harrisson has identified “customers who preferred an old-fashioned decoration” (p. 38). And around 1680, she asserts, was a “general public” that was “attracted to novelties” (p. 57). Unfortunately, in order to make such characterizations more plausible in the absence of written evidence, a good deal of cross-cultural comparison would have to be carried out.

Harrison’s identifications of types of ware and her dates are sound, and she makes an effort to allow the reader to understand when new discoveries might prove her wrong (though in the case of the enameled “Bencharong” wares made for the Thai market, she may have accepted too readily the hypotheses of others). Types of wares that will be unknown to all but a handful of readers are presented in attractive reproductions. The outstanding collections of the Princessehof are now available in good-sized plates, between hard covers. *Later Ceramics in South-East Asia* will long be consulted.

HIRAM W. WOODWARD, JR.
The Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore

Thai Law: Buddhist Law. Essays on the Legal History of Thailand, Laos and Burma. Edited by ANDREW HUXLEY. Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 1996. vi, 211 pp.

We are currently entering what may be the most promising period in the study of premodern mainland Southeast Asia. New and established scholars in the field are carefully sifting through old records and other texts that have been “rediscovered” by local and international researchers. As a result, key aspects of the mainland Southeast Asian past, such as legal traditions, are getting a second look.

In the present contribution to scholarship on mainland Southeast Asian legal traditions, *Thai Law: Buddhist Law*, we have a new generation of scholars who have reexamined, and have gone well beyond, the legacy of colonial-era scholars whose outdated work has been very much in need of revision for some time. This valuable collection of six essays on various aspects of Thai, Lao, and Burmese legal history, was edited by Andrew Huxley who also wrote the (lengthy) introduction and contributed the fifth essay. Other contributors include Aroonrut Wichienkeo, Pitinai