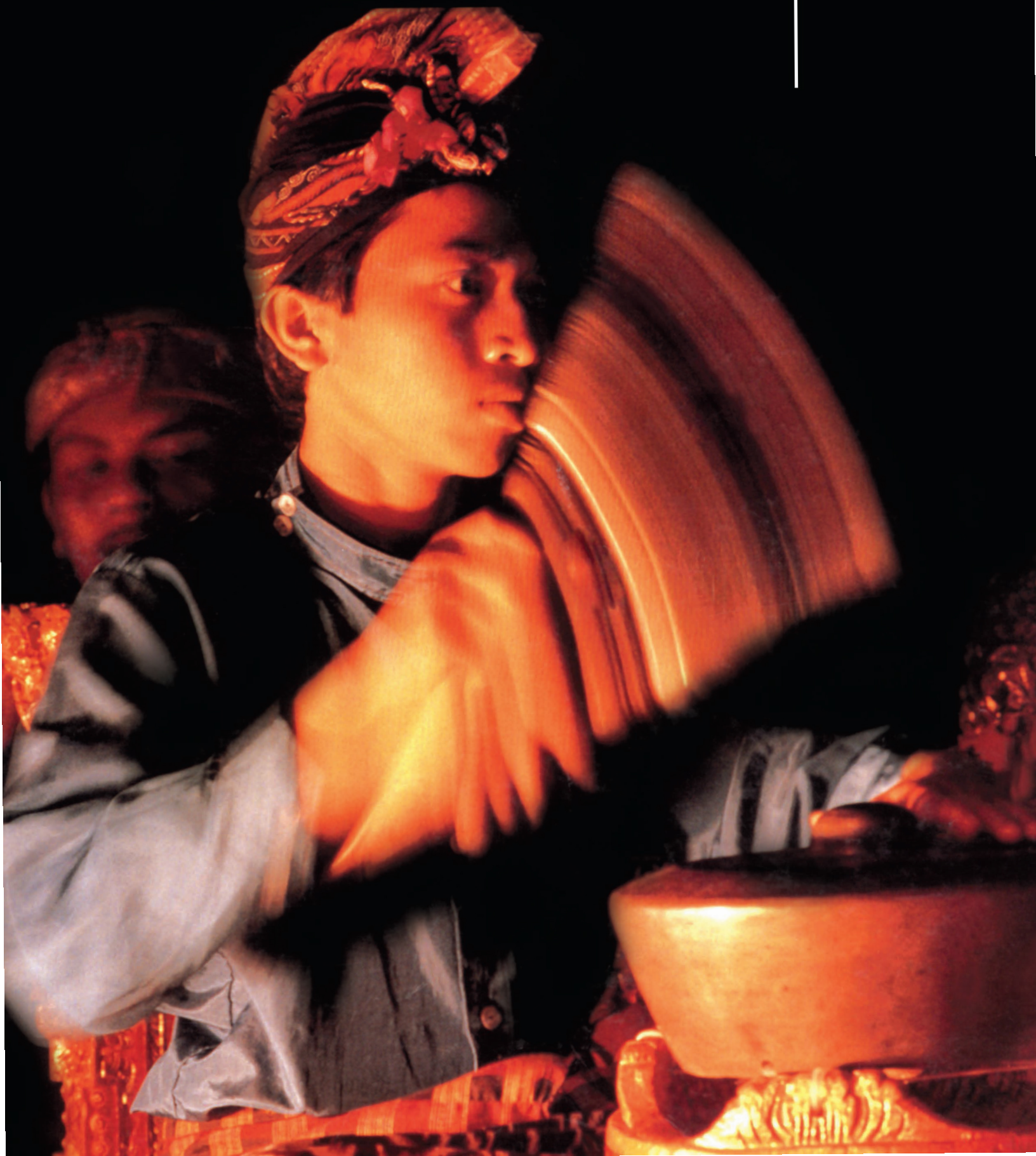


# Southeast Asia

THE  
GARLAND  
ENCYCLOPEDIA  
OF  
WORLD MUSIC



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The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music  
*Volume 4*

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# Southeast Asia

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THE GARLAND ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WORLD MUSIC

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edited by Ruth M. Stone

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The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music  
*Volume 4*

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# Southeast Asia

Terry E. Miller and Sean Williams  
*Editors*



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Parts of "The Indigenous Peoples (Orang Asli) of the Malay Peninsula" adapted from *Healing Sounds from the Malaysian Rainforest*, by Marina Roseman, 1991. Courtesy of University of California Press.

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CD materials can be found at <https://www.routledge.com/9780824060404>

The following examples are included on the accompanying audio compact disc packaged with this volume. Track numbers are also indicated on the pages listed below for easy reference to text discussions. Complete notes on each example may be found on pages 985–988.

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## About *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*

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Scholars have created many kinds of encyclopedias devoted to preserving and transmitting knowledge about the world. The study of music has itself been the subject of numerous encyclopedias in many languages. Yet until now the term *music encyclopedia* has been synonymous with surveys of the history, theory, and performance practice of European-based traditions.

In July 1988, the editors of *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* gathered for a meeting to determine the nature and scope of a massive new undertaking. For this, the first encyclopedia devoted to the music of all the world's peoples, the editors decided against the traditional alphabetic approach to compartmentalizing knowledge from A to Z. Instead, they chose a geographic approach, with each volume devoted to a single region and coverage assigned to the world's experts on specific music cultures.

For several decades, ethnomusicologists (following the practice of previous generations of comparative musicologists) have been documenting the music of the world through fieldwork, recording, and analysis. Now, for the first time, they have created an encyclopedia that summarizes in one place the major findings that have resulted from the explosion in such documentation since the 1960s. The volumes in this series comprise contributions from all those specialists who have from the start defined the field of ethnomusicology: anthropologists, linguists, dance ethnologists, cultural historians, folklorists, literary scholars, and—of course—musicologists, composers, and performers. This multidisciplinary approach continues to enrich the field, and future generations of students and scholars will find *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* to be an invaluable resource that contributes to knowledge in all its varieties.

Each volume has a similar design and organization: three large sections that cover the major topics of a region from broad general issues to specific music practices. Each section consists of articles written by leading researchers, and extensive glossaries and indexes give the reader easy access to terms, names, and places of interest.


Part 1: an introduction to the region, its culture, and its music as well as a survey of previous music scholarship and research

Part 2: major issues and processes that link the musics of the region

Part 3: detailed accounts of individual music cultures

The editors of each volume have determined how this three-part structure is to be constructed and applied depending on the nature of their regions of interest. The concepts covered in Part 2 will therefore differ from volume to volume; likewise, the articles in Part 3 might be about the music of nations, ethnic groups, islands, or sub-regions. The picture of music presented in each volume is thus comprehensive yet remains focused on critical ideas and issues.



Complementing the texts of the encyclopedia's articles are numerous illustrations: photographs, drawings, maps, charts, song texts, and music examples. At the end of each volume is a useful set of study and research tools, including a glossary of terms, lists of audio and visual resources, and an extensive bibliography. An audio compact disc will be found inside the back cover of each volume, with sound examples that are linked (with a  in the margin) to discussions in the text.

*The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* represents the work of hundreds of specialists guided by a team of distinguished editors. With a sense of pride, Garland Publishing offers this new series to readers everywhere.

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# Preface

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This volume of *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* covers one of the most diverse places on the planet, home to hundreds of millions of people. Yet Southeast Asia is considered by some to be utterly remote and inaccessible because of its perceived physical and cultural distance from the West. Numerous images of the region may come to mind. With these conceptions shaped partly by such dramatic fictions as *The King and I*, partly by colonial and wartime experiences, and partly by glorious travel footage on television and in magazines, Westerners of the twentieth century have been dazzled and confused by what Southeast Asia represents. Is it a tropical earthly paradise? A dense group of forests with landmines and former headhunters? A sweeping panorama of breathtaking terraced rice fields and volcanoes? Trance-dancing rituals, extraordinary wildlife, and incredibly crowded urban scenes? Southeast Asia is certainly all of these, but for the writers of this volume it is the music that has brought us together to explore and write about this extraordinary region.

Our authors hail from many parts of the world, but all share several things in common: an enjoyment of and respect for the musics and musicians of Southeast Asia, direct fieldwork and performing experiences, and a strong record of scholarship. We have tried to make these articles as accurate as possible, yet we recognize that we are limited not only by time and publication deadlines but also by the shifting, developing nature of music as we fix these words in print. And we have tried also to keep the language direct and straightforward. We want this volume to speak to the widest audience, from high school students to professors to interested readers from all backgrounds.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA AND THE STUDY OF WORLD MUSIC

The island of Java was one of the first sites of research by Westerners in the young field of ethnomusicology in the early twentieth century. In fact, the Javanese gamelan orchestra was at one time virtually synonymous with the relatively new field of “world music.” Worldwide knowledge of Southeast Asian musical traditions had been scattered and uneven for hundreds of years, but in the 1960s and 1970s the appearance of gamelan ensembles at colleges and universities in North America and Europe made them foremost in the minds of those interested in “exotic” music.

Mainland Southeast Asian musics, on the other hand, are still largely unknown in the West despite years of contact during wartime and following the exodus of more than a million refugees after 1975. Until the 1980s, only a few books and articles on Southeast Asian music were available in Western libraries. Since then, broader knowledge of and interest in Southeast Asian expressive culture have led to a large cohort of younger ethnomusicologists—the second and third generations of the field—discovering new excitement in Southeast Asia and exploring the region far beyond the limits of what might appear in a typical college survey of world music.

The traditional image of an encyclopedia includes catalogs of data, places, instruments, and names, with brief summaries of the most basic information. In *The*

*Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, however, our goal is to reach beyond superficial descriptions to a broader grasp of the context, meaning, and issues affecting music and the lives of musicians. For example, we have written about the impact of war on Cambodian music, about the uneasy relationship between Islam and music in the islands, and about Southeast Asian responses to Western popular music. Yet no encyclopedia could possibly be complete in covering an area this diverse. The Human Relations Area Files name 151 separate ethnic groups in mainland Southeast Asia and 91 in island Southeast Asia. Although many of these groups have small populations, most have musical systems distinctive enough to warrant separate study. If we were unable to explore every musical system within Southeast Asia, we are nevertheless pleased to present the results of years of research on the part of so many authors.

Our goals for this encyclopedia include offering new perspectives on well-established Southeast Asian musics; providing a single source that can function as every scholar's first place to search; including resources for further exploration (such as the expanded bibliography, discography, and filmography at the end of the volume); and moving beyond the best known of the traditional musics to include dance, theater, popular, religious, ritual, and syncretic musics. Some musics that are only mentioned in passing here may leap to the fore as the "traditional" music of three generations hence, while some traditions (and the musics that go with them) are disappearing with their contexts and may be noted here for the last time. This encyclopedia is the first major resource to discuss upland and tribal traditions, as well as musics of some of the more remote islands.

Ironically, some of these very areas are the most rapidly changing of the entire region. As this volume goes to press, thousands of acres of Borneo's forests are burning out of control, destroying countless villages and gutting communities even as land is cleared for world-class golf courses, multinational hotels, and other development projects. Musical reactions to these and other events have been stunning to observe, from the development of Balinese rap to the gradual disappearance of Laotian repartee singing to a dazzling renewal of Cambodian classical performing arts. The nature of change as a constant in music has kept our work exciting and challenging, from blending Hans Oesch's fieldwork from the 1960s with that of Marina Roseman in the 1980s and 1990s, to adding the very latest on Filipino popular music in the mid-1990s.

We selected our contributors from both older and younger generations of researchers, all of whom emphasize different aspects of the area in which they worked. The editors of this volume have felt fortunate to work with authors not only from within Southeast Asia but also from the United States, Japan, Australia, and Europe. We deeply regret that two of the authors, Ruriko Uchida of Japan and Hans Oesch of Germany, died before this volume was finished. Both of these scholars specialized in the upland musics of mainland Southeast Asia and conducted extensive fieldwork in Thailand and Malaysia, respectively. Since the initial shaping of this encyclopedia, many new specialists in the area have established themselves. We wish to offer those people our apologies for not having been able to include their work, and we welcome the publication of their research in the future.

## HOW THIS VOLUME IS ORGANIZED

In Part 1, we provide an overview of the entire region, focusing on issues of geography, diversity, and scholarship. We include a section on what to listen for in Southeast Asian music as a "first-stop" introduction to the area. In Part 2, the focus is on concepts common to the musics and cultures of the region as a whole. For readers interested in issues that cross national boundaries, such as colonialism, mass media,

spirituality, and war, the articles in this section are important in gaining historical, political, and social perspective. For example, Wessing's article on bamboo, rice, and water covers the importance of these three near-ubiquitous features of Southeast Asian life, with examples from most of the region's nations. Deborah Wong and René Lysloff have combined their efforts in exploring the cultural politics of popular music in two nations: Thailand and Indonesia. The editors, Terry E. Miller and Sean Williams, have written jointly on the impact of multiple layers of influence on the region in the past two thousand years, whether it has been spiritual, colonial, or economic. These and other articles serve to link regions and their musics, to highlight their differences, and to place the musical details found later in the volume in a much broader cultural perspective.

Part 3 is by far the largest part of this volume. Its division into two main sections—mainland Southeast Asia and island Southeast Asia—reflects the important cultural and historical traditions that have shaped the region. Despite our presentation of discrete articles on each modern nation, readers will nevertheless find musical traditions and instruments that cross national and cultural boundaries (changing their local spelling and often their context as well). Terry E. Miller, responsible for editing the mainland articles, also undertook the enormous task of writing several of them. Other scholars for the mainland include Panya Roongrüang, Sam-Ang Sam, Amy Catlin, Patricia Matusky, Hans Oesch, James Chopyak, Ruriko Uchida, Marina Roseman, Deborah Wong, Phong T. Nguyễn, and Lee Tong Soon. In the island section, edited by Sean Williams, contributors include R. Anderson Sutton, Endo Suanda, Margaret J. Kartomi, David Harnish, José Maceda, Corazon Canave-Dioquino, Ramón P. Santos, Arnold Cabalza, Christopher Basile, René T. A. Lysloff, Janet Hoskins, Patricia Matusky, and Sean Williams.

### **Research tools**

The editors do not expect readers to read the book from cover to cover. The amount of detailed information, with seemingly endless terms for genres, ensembles, and instruments, may overwhelm readers seeking a less comprehensive view. Each reader must glean the information needed for the moment, saving the remainder for times when more knowledge is required.

To help guide readers in their searches, we have provided outlines at the start of each article as well as numerous headings and subheadings. At the tops of many pages, we have placed important definitions as well as key excerpts from the text. To make further exploration and reading easier, we have followed several conventions. The list of References at the end of each article generally lists only those items actually cited in the article, but at the end of the volume readers will find a much more inclusive bibliography, discography, and filmography listing materials (mostly in Western languages) that are currently available in the West. There is also a comprehensive glossary with definitions of major terms and names, plus a useful index for locating topics. Maps appear near the beginning of most major areas, and photographs offer frequent glimpses of musical instruments, musicians, and musical contexts.

### **Musical examples**

Some readers new to Southeast Asian music may be surprised to find that Western musical notation does not appear frequently in this volume. In most cases, standard notation is ill-equipped to handle the kind of tones, timbres, and musical motions that occur in Southeast Asian musics. Instead, contributors have often used local conventions to describe music (such as a numerical system for Indonesian gamelan), and these conventions are explained in each article. We recommend that you listen to

the actual music rather than try to reproduce it on a Western instrument the way you could reproduce a reduced Mozart score.

### ***Compact disc***

An accompanying compact disc offers examples of some of the music of Southeast Asia. Because many fine recordings of the mainstream traditions are readily available (see the Discography), we have chosen important but under-recorded traditions for inclusion on the compact disc. Most of them are field recordings by the contributors to this volume and often represent the “first hearing” of these musics outside of their traditional context. A booklet of brief notes on the recordings is packaged with the compact disc inside the back cover of the volume; the notes themselves are duplicated on pages 985–988 of the text, preceding the index.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Because work on this volume began in 1988, the people who have contributed to it over the years could staff an entire Central Javanese gamelan. For the first six years, however, Terry E. Miller was the sole coordinator; he commissioned articles, met with other volume editors in the series, and did the initial editing. He was joined in early 1994 by Sean Williams, who took responsibility for the sections on island Southeast Asia. We have worked (electronically, at least) side by side since then, dividing our duties and seeing our partnership enable the volume to move toward completion. Together, we wrote many of the articles in Parts 1 and 2, and we were pleased to see that our thoughts blended on paper. We were lucky to find diligent, expert authors who were willing to write their articles in a timely manner, put up with multiple stages of edits, re-edits, and copy edits, and in some cases delay their own projects in order to help us finish on time. We thank them for their years of patience and good humor in their dealings with us. The Southeast Asian musicians with whom we all have lived and worked—and whose original knowledge forms the core of this volume—deserve more appreciation, acknowledgment, and celebration than any of us could begin to offer.

We also want to acknowledge the efforts of our many assistants, including Scott Bullard, who spent many hours doing the initial copyediting. Later, Denise Seachrist and Andrew Shahriari, both of Kent State University, helped with numerous tasks, including entering edited material into computer files, searching for maps, copyediting, and making glossaries. We also thank Lawrence Rubens of Kent State University’s audiovisual services department for converting Macintosh discs to PC format, often on short notice. Seán Johnson of The Evergreen State College helped with the island portion of the general reference section at the end of the volume, and the photographic services staff at Evergreen also deserve our acknowledgment for quick assistance. Our thanks go to Roy Hamilton and Gini Gorlinski, who examined several of the articles as outside readers, and to Janet Hoskins and Arnold Cabalza who contributed significant information to the Sumba and Filipino sections, respectively.

We are both grateful for the continuous assistance of Jacob W. Love, the volume’s copyeditor, and Richard Wallis, the managing editor of the series. Jacob spotted endless details that kept us busy tracking down information for months, and Richard was both a no-nonsense advisor on nuts and bolts as well as a coordinator and occasional go-between for us and our contributors. Leo Balk and Barbara Curialle Gerr at Garland Publishing have each offered substantial support to our efforts, and we thank them for their time and energy. Philip Yampolsky took portions of the volume with him to some of the most remote regions of Borneo while com-

pleting his duties as an outside reader on time for us; we were impressed with his ability to send e-mail from nearly anywhere on the planet.

Finally, we want to express our genuine and heartfelt appreciation to our spouses, Sara Stone Miller and Cary Black, and to Sean's daughter Morgan (just an infant when Sean joined the project), who supported our long hours of work and endured our frequent excuses and absences on behalf of this volume. We are honored by their understanding and willingness to help us see this work through to completion.

We have done our best to prevent any errors from sneaking unnoticed into the final versions of the articles in this encyclopedia, but we recognize that a few may surface. We bear sole responsibility for these.

—Terry E. Miller and Sean Williams



# Guide to Pronunciation

*Thomas John Hudak*

Listed below are approximate English equivalents to the sounds that appear in the Southeast Asian–language terms used in this volume.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

Unless otherwise indicated, vowels and consonants in Southeast Asian languages have the following English equivalents.

### Vowels

Character	Pronounced as in English...
a	<i>father</i>
ae, ac	<i>bat</i>
e	<i>bait</i>
i	<i>beat</i>
o	<i>boat</i>
u	<i>boot</i>

### Consonants

The consonants *p*, *t*, and *k* are unaspirated stops (without a puff of air) as in the English *spill*, *still*, and *skill*. The consonant *c* is similar to the English sequence *t-y* in the phrase *next year*. The consonant cluster *ny* is similar to the English sequence *n-y* in the word *canyon*.

In contrast, *ph*, *th*, *ch*, and *kh* are aspirated stops (with a puff of air) as in the English *pill*, *till*, *chill*, and *kill*. The consonant *q* indicates a glottal stop, as in the sound that appears in the middle of the English sequence *oh-oh*. Glottal stops are also indicated in some languages with a ' symbol.

## SPECIFIC LANGUAGE GROUPS

For names and terms in the articles listed below, exceptions to the general guidelines can be found in the appropriate chart. In all cases, vowels precede consonants, with both in English alphabetical order.

### Khmer

For Khmer names and terms that appear in the article on the music of Cambodia, the following additional equivalents are suggested.

Character	Pronounced as in English...
ai	<i>aisle</i>
ao	<i>go</i>
au	<i>cow</i>
ea	<i>bait</i> plus the vowel in <i>but</i>

Character	Pronounced as in English...
eu	<i>but</i>
ey	<i>but</i> plus the vowel in <i>beat</i>
ie	<i>beat</i> plus the vowel in <i>but</i>
oa	<i>Noah</i>
oeu	<i>new</i> (with lips spread) + the vowel in <i>but</i>
ou	<i>boot</i>
uo	<i>boot</i> plus the vowel in <i>but</i>

**Thailand**

aw	<i>law</i>
oe	<i>but</i>
ü	<i>new</i> (with lips spread)
u	<i>boot</i>

**Burma**

ai	<i>sign</i>
au	<i>sound</i>
e	<i>bet</i>
ei	<i>sane</i>
o	<i>saw</i>
ñ	(nasalizes the vowel that precedes it)
hy	<i>shore</i>
th	<i>thaw</i>
ç, <u>hc</u>	<i>judge</i>
<u>k</u> , <u>hk</u>	<i>good</i>
<u>p</u>	<i>big</i>
<u>s</u>	<i>zoo</i>
<u>r</u>	<i>do</i>

Tones (shown with vowel *a*)

a (unmarked tone)	low, level, long
à	high, long, falling toward the end
á	high, short, falling (with catch of breath)
a	high, short (with sharp catch of breath)

**Laos**

ae	<i>bat</i>
aw	<i>law</i>
oe	<i>but</i>
ou	<i>boot</i>
ü, eu	<i>new</i> (with lips spread)
x	<i>sing</i>

**Vietnam**

â	<i>but</i>
e	<i>bet</i>
ê	<i>bait</i>
i, y	between <i>beat</i> and <i>bit</i>
o	<i>law</i>
ô	<i>no</i>
oa	<i>want</i>
o	<i>doe</i> (with lips spread)

Character	Pronounced as in English...
u	<i>new</i> (with lips spread)
d	<i>zero</i>
d	<i>do</i>
gi	<i>zero</i>
nh	<i>canyon</i>
ph	<i>fun</i>
r	<i>zero</i>
x	<i>son</i>

Tones (shown with vowel *a*)

a (unmarked)	midtone
á	high rising
à	low falling
a	falling, then rising
ã	high (with break in voice)
a	low (with break in voice)

### Upland minorities

#### **Akha people**

ö	<i>baít</i> (with lips rounded)
ü	<i>beat</i> (with lips rounded)

#### **Hmong**

Final consonants indicate tone. Double vowels are nasalized.

b	high level
j	high falling
v	mid-rising
[no consonant]	mid-level
s	lower mid-level
g	low breathy
m	low glottalized ending
d	low rising

#### **Lisu people**

ü	<i>new</i> (with lips spread)
---	-------------------------------

### Indigenous people of the Malay Peninsula

ɛ	<i>bet</i>
ə	<i>but</i>
i	<i>new</i> (with lips spread)
ɔ	<i>law</i>
ɲ	<i>canyon</i>
ŋ	<i>sing</i>
ʔ	oh-oh (glottal stop between syllables)

### Indonesia

é	<i>baít</i>
è	<i>bet</i>
eu	<i>book</i> (with lips spread)
dh	<i>done</i>

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*Part 1*  
Introduction to Southeast Asia  
as a Musical Area

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Most major Southeast Asian musics bear strong similarities to one another, crossing boundaries of culture, language, and land. But although bronze gongs, xylophones, and bamboo flutes link the musics of the region, there is nevertheless a remarkable diversity of peoples and musical styles. For centuries, the unique sounds and organizational systems of these musics have attracted outsiders—including dozens of scholars and the Western composers Debussy, Britten, and Reich.

Musicians of the restored court ensemble perform at the former Forbidden City in Huế, Vietnam. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1993.

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# Southeast Asian Musics: An Overview

*Terry E. Miller*

*Sean Williams*

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## Regional Issues

### How to Listen to Southeast Asian Musics

### A Representative List

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Scholars are trained to focus on significant details, and the deeper they go into a musical culture, the more they must deal with minutiae. The articles in Part 3, MUSICAL CULTURES AND REGIONS, as readers may rightly expect, go into detail about individual places, and for beginners this can be a daunting foray into a vortex of non-English words, technical terms, and conceptual diversity.

It would be good to have a broad view of the landscape before landing in any particular place. Then you could know the lay of the land—where the great rivers flow, where the mountain ranges divide regions, where the cities rise, where the main roads run. Such an overview is necessary for readers, but challenging to write, since no one knows everything. Nevertheless, we shall try to identify the most salient features of the Southeast Asian musical landscape.

## REGIONAL ISSUES

The world is too large for holistic treatment; therefore, it is divided into continents and subcontinents. The subcontinent of Southeast Asia is also too large to be treated holistically; therefore, it is divided into two parts: mainland and islands. Within each division, the most obvious subdivision is the nation-state. Mainland Southeast Asia consists of seven nations (Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam); island Southeast Asia consists of three (Brunei, Indonesia, the Philippines). Malaysia, extending into both divisions, is treated here as part of the mainland. Irian Jaya, the Indonesian province that occupies the western section of the island of New Guinea, is covered in the Oceania volume.

The national boundaries that demarcate Southeast Asia into its countries are recent and largely colonial inventions. Laos, a landlocked country, sandwiched among Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, and China, is a cobbled-together remnant of the spoils of war. The Republic of Indonesia came into being when Indonesians attained self-rule over the Netherlands East Indies. The Philippines was once a group of islands united in the name of a Spanish king's son, Felipe. Few of these countries developed an indigenous national consciousness before their national creation. Indeed, even within areas that have used the same linguistic and political

systems for centuries, we have no reason to assume any kind of social, political, or musical unity.

The names of some nations (for example, Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand) denote a dominant and mainstream culture, but the names of others do not. Culturally, the population of every country under consideration is far more complex than its national boundaries suggest. Consequently, it becomes problematic to describe everything within a country as particular to it: Filipino music, Thai music, Vietnamese music. Indeed, a term like *Indonesian music* suggests the existence of an artistic unity that represents all of Indonesia and no particular part or group. As with the commonly used term *African music*, there is not, in fact, any one Indonesian music; instead, there are Javanese musics, Balinese musics, Sundanese musics, and so on.

English terms that categorize musical types are rarely helpful when used outside the West (and can be misleading, even there). Applying such terms as *classical*, *folk*, and *popular* to musics in Southeast Asia can lead to frustration and misunderstanding because scholars only partially agree on what these terms denote. Other terms, such as *court*, *ritual*, *village*, and *mediated*, have been tried; some help, but some only raise further questions. Categories are rarely self-contained, because boundaries cannot be precisely established. Scholars are known for wringing their hands over terminology, for terminology speaks volumes about hierarchies, values, power, and other concepts of social relationships that affect music. Faced with the practical necessity of using the English language and denoting musical phenomena with specific terms, we step into the terminological minefield fully aware of its dangers, but having no guarantee of safety.

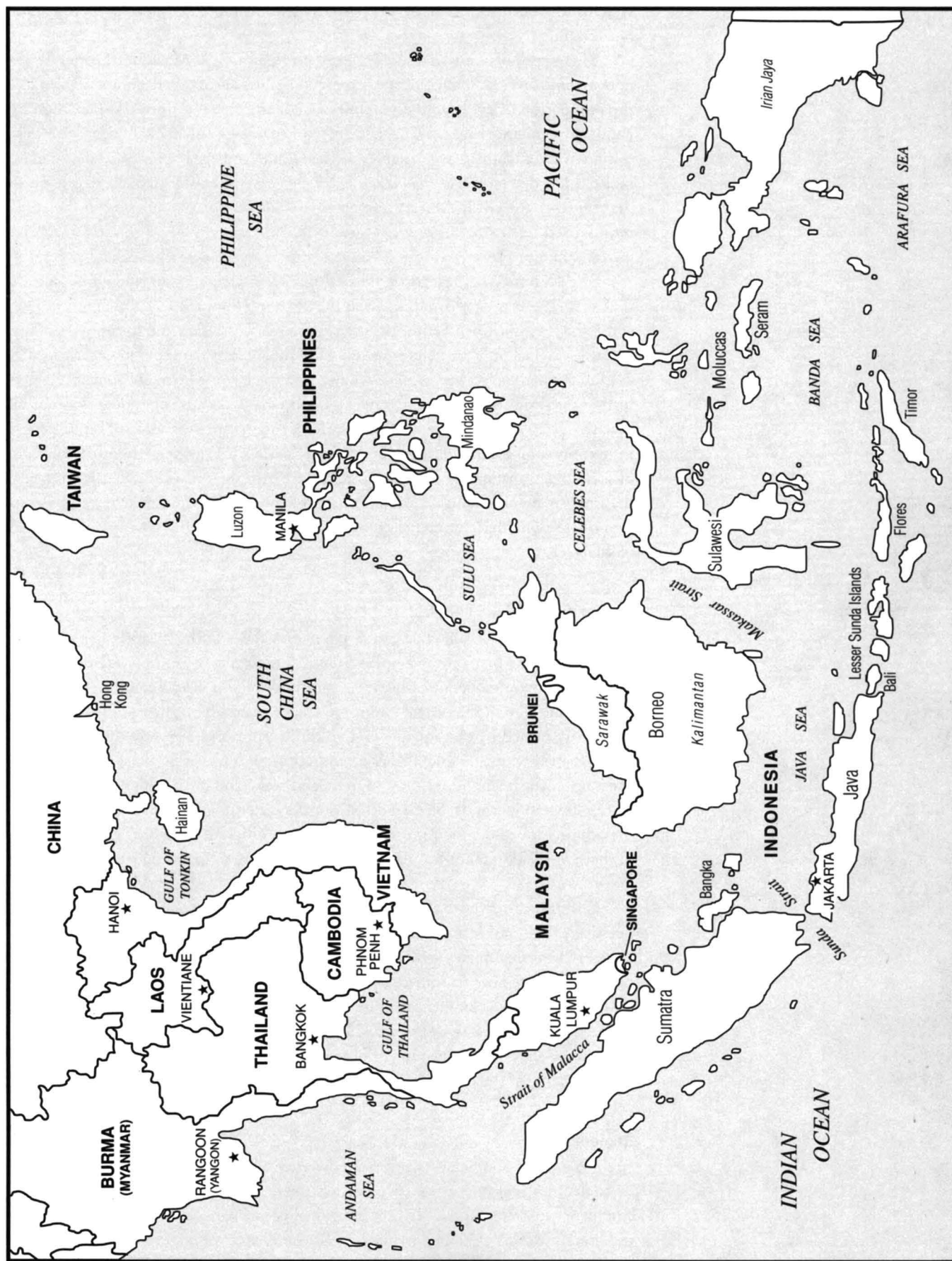
### **Lowland and upland peoples**

Except for Singapore, all Southeast Asian nations have both lowland plains, usually drained by a major river, and upland areas, which may be either vast plateaus or rugged mountain ranges. Nearly every country or region discussed in this volume is tied in some way to the ocean, and some areas (especially in the island regions) are frequently rattled by earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The way the land shapes and is shaped by its inhabitants has an impact on differences in musical production. Most nonmainstream minorities live in upland areas, and most of the dominant population lives in lowlands. Since most minorities differ in language and life-style from the dominant people, their musics are usually so different as to bear no comparison to those of the dominant people. Thus, it makes sense to treat minority musics separately.

Cultural differences affected by local geography lead scholars to a variety of questions about music and land. How has the isolation of upland tribes affected their choices in musical instrumentation? To what extent does the cultivation and consumption of rice have an impact on ritual performances? Does interisland commerce lead to musical trade among the islands? Is there any type of musical communication between upland and lowland peoples? Does the presence of volcanoes lead to the creation of certain types of musical performance? Each of these questions takes the physical geography of the region into account, and hundreds of others could be devised.

### **Regionalism**

Each country of Southeast Asia displays diversity of culture and population. Each has more than one cultural region, even within the majority population. These are never completely discrete but may exhibit individuality in language (dialect or accent), central literary works, clothing, architecture, cuisine, musical instruments, and musical styles. In some countries (such as Thailand), a regional culture has been adopted



as the national culture. Whether the other regional cultures are viewed as challenges to the dominant culture or as complements to it depends on the time and place.

Regionalism is most likely to be tolerated, even celebrated, in countries that have achieved stability based on the “national” culture—true of both Thailand and Indonesia. Where such a consensus has not been reached, or where the lack of mass communications allows the maintenance of regional distinctiveness, all regions may be near-equals, or even rivals; in the latter case, regionalism works against nationhood and may consequently be suppressed. Regionalism is mainly an issue within the dominant culture, leaving minority groups largely on the outside.

### Urban and rural

Asian cities reflect least the distinctiveness of “traditional” and especially regional culture. Many of the first centers of population in Southeast Asia were Hindu-Buddhist courts and commercial cities. The courts functioned as places to house the person in power with accompanying family, personnel, and regalia; the entire city would be laid out according to its relationship to the center. Many of these cities were inland. Commercial cities drew most of their population from those interested in profiting from trade; these cities tended to be located either at the crossroads of major inland trade routes or in ports. Commercial cities are laid out according to needs of access in relation to the market. Once Islam had become established in Southeast Asia, a kind of Muslim city developed, particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia; it included a large mosque located at the center of the city. Last, colonial administrative cities were created by various colonial empires, either on the foundations of other types of cities, or out of areas that appeared convenient for administration and commerce.

Cities are the most modern places in a country, and the main cities are the most internationalized. The most modern cities of Southeast Asia are Singapore, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Manila, and Hồ Chí Minh City (Saigon); the least modern include Rangoon (Yangon), Vientiane, Phnom Penh, and Hanoi (though Hanoi is rapidly changing). The largest cities often attract the regional poor, seeking opportunities. Money earned from urban wages is frequently channeled back to villages, and most urbanites maintain close ties to family and friends in villages. Cities, then, tend to develop pan-urban cultures, though pockets of regional populations sometimes maintain aspects of their culture. Urban populations have the greatest choices of musical styles, especially from the media, and are most thoroughly exposed to mass culture.

(opposite) Southeast Asia

FIGURE 1 Hôi An, Vietnam, one of the country's first ports of entry, preserves architecture reflecting the coming of the Chinese, Japanese, Europeans, and other foreigners. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1993.





It is largely true that if you do not live in a city, you live in a village. Depending on the country's level of poverty or prosperity, village life may be slow to change (as in Borneo, Burma, certain areas of Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam) or much affected by modernization (as in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand). Some villagers with homes that once stood on the outskirts of Southeast Asia's cities now find themselves surrounded by factories, airports, bus terminals, and housing developments. Dispersed throughout many of the largest cities are village enclaves, complete with chickens, wells, tiny plots of cultivated land, and rural people (figure 2).

The poverty of village life tends to preserve its traditionality. At least in earlier times, village cultural life centered on cycles related to agriculture, religion, and the calendar. Songs and rituals are, or were, associated with various stages of agriculture (especially the growing of rice) and seasonal rituals and festivities. In general, musical activities ceased during the rainy season, which in Theravada Buddhist countries (Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand) coincides with the Buddhist period of withdrawal, when rice requires little attention, allowing males to be ordained and to withdraw into a temple to earn spiritual merit.

Because this music originated in villages, where people must work year-round to maintain house, family, and food supply, it tends to be simpler than that found in cities, particularly in the mainland regions. Few music specialists support themselves through performance, and anyone with a modicum of talent may sing and play music. Musical instruments tend to be user friendly and simple, made from locally available materials (though exceptions occur).

The theme of courtship permeates village musics throughout Southeast Asia. Courtship was formerly ritualized and in places remains so. Males and females alternated performing various forms of repartee, creating veritable gender wars, based on wit and double entendre. The texts of repartee transmitted rural wisdoms, reminding listeners of their history, literature, role models, religion, and sometimes even "the facts of life." In its fundamental forms, ritualized courtship could be spoken (as with Lao *phanya*), but most forms involve some kind of heightened speech or song, with or without an instrument. In some places, certain performers grew so highly skilled that they became professional or semiprofessional entertainers, and the original function of courtship metamorphosed into a paid exhibition of talent.

### Classical, folk, popular

A tripartite division of music into classical, folk, and popular has limited validity in Southeast Asia. Each term creates dilemmas. *Classical* has connotations of sophistication, high value, being representative of the best of a culture and expressive of political and economic power, what Milton Singer has called Great Tradition of a culture. In Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand, scholars agree on what genres fit the classical category; for Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam, they do not. Substituting *court* for *classical*, as some writers do with Cambodian, Javanese, and Thai musics, is not necessarily better, for the music described as *court* was never restricted to a court and survives today—at least in Thailand and Cambodia—entirely outside the context of a court, even in villages.

Regardless of the term, "classical" musics have several traits in common. Musical instruments play a prominent role. Some are complex and highly decorated, and performance on them requires advanced technical skills. The repertoire is usually extensive, requiring the undivided attention of musicians who must memorize complex works, practice long hours, and play for a variety of occasions, some ceremonial, some ritualistic, some for entertainment. These musics often require enough surplus wealth to allow the musicians to give their full attention to the art of music and to be

FIGURE 2 In Yogyakarta, Java, small villages co-exist with modern urban accouterments within the boundaries of the city. Photo by Sean Williams, 1989.



relieved of any necessity of growing their food, providing their shelter, and securing their safety. Consequently, musics called classical are often associated with an aristocracy, or at least a wealthy elite. There is also a consensus among the wealthy elite that these musics best represent the culture of the nation to the outside world, whether the citizenry commonly listens to them or not.

Such definitions create few problems in categorizing some Burmese, Thai, Cambodian, and Indonesian musics as “classical,” but elsewhere the issue becomes thorny. Though Laos has a “classical” music similar to that of Thailand, it is less extensive and sophisticated. Laos arguably has a classical music, but the tradition was damaged when the Pathet Lao (a Communist party) banned such “aristocratic decadence” in 1975, and the country’s poverty and lack of an aristocracy prevent this kind of music from flowering beyond a minimal level. Vietnam’s imperial court is long gone, and though its music survived until the 1970s, it was never widely known or played. Today, it has been revived, but more as a symbol of the city of Huế than as a symbol of the country. Malaysia, formerly a collection of sultanates, had royal music and entertainment, but these barely survive in isolated pockets. The term *Malaysian classical music*, like *Vietnamese classical music*, has no clear meaning. The Philippines has been so deeply Christianized that its current classical-music traditions are direct responses to Western European classical music; its nearest relative to other Southeast Asian classical traditions, the *kulintang*, is not locally promoted as a classical music.

For there to be folk music, there must be an identifiable group of people who constitute the folk. Urban people assume these folks are other people, usually villagers. If the term has any currency, it usually denotes the music heard in villages, frequently performed by nonspecialists, and usually associated with “functional” contexts, like rituals, festivals, and daily activities. The accessibility of bamboo for large portions of the rural Southeast Asian population has led to the prevalence of bamboo flutes, rattles, and other musical instruments. By a similar token, the need for inexpensive, easily available, lightweight instruments (such as small plucked lutes and Jew’s harps) by certain inland and upland groups throughout Southeast Asia is understandable, considering the limits on resources, craftsmen, and portability. Villagers also perform on both flat and bossed gongs in what appear to be some of the most remote areas; however, the gongs and their methods of suspension tend to be less elaborate than in the courts or cities. Vocal music, wordplay, and poetic competition are strongly valued in most Southeast Asian rural traditions.

FIGURE 3 Villagers pump water in a quiet village in northeast Thailand. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1992.



Important objects—including certain daggers, bronze drums, gongs, and masks—carry their own special kind of power and are believed to have an impact on people, places, and other objects.

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In countries such as Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand, scholars make a clear distinction between classical and folk musics, but for Vietnam, no such distinction can be made. Since Vietnam does not have an agreed-upon classical music, Vietnamese musics are usually distinguished as traditional or modernized. Vietnam has the strongest Western classical-music tradition in mainland Southeast Asia, with Malaysia and Singapore running a close second and third, and its intellectual and cultural elite has received training in Western music in the conservatories of France, the former Soviet Union, and other Eastern European states. They prefer that Vietnam be represented by modernized compositions, leaving traditional music to fend for itself. At the same time, the kinds of traditional music being used to represent the nation to the outside world—water-puppet theater and chamber music—clearly derive from village culture. Folk songs may be sung by farmers in a rough voice, but they are also played by skilled amateurs (nonprofessionals) on finely decorated instruments in formal situations.

Whether derived from traditional indigenous music or influenced by outside cultures (especially the United States, Hong Kong, India, the Middle East, and Japan), the popular-music category is least debatable. Primarily disseminated through the media to almost all members of society, regardless of regional origin, income level, or degree of musical sophistication, this music has become predominant, or at least present, in people's lives. Not surprisingly, it is most developed in countries having the greatest wealth and urbanization—Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Utilizing a creative combination of Western instrumentation and blended linguistic and musical features, it may be heard not only within the borders of such cities as Bangkok, Manila, and Singapore, but also in the remotest villages. It draws from a variety of traditions to appeal to the broadest number of listeners and therefore to become as commercially successful as possible. Vietnam's popular tradition derives from a movement to modernize the country, which led to the creation of both entertainment and revolutionary songs in Western style. Though Vietnam is considerably urbanized, it remains too poor to afford the music videos, spectacular pop concerts, compact discs, and slick nightclubs that make popular music powerful elsewhere. In other mainland Southeast Asian countries, the popular-music industry is modest, little more than a cottage industry of small shops copying small quantities of locally produced cassettes.

### **Networks of power and influence**

Southeast Asian lands support millions of people, from kings and presidents to roadside vendors and beggars. Its alluvial plains and terraced hillsides are fertile ground for agriculture; indeed, most Southeast Asians are involved in agricultural endeavors. In addition to agriculture, every Southeast Asian country supports its own versions of governmental, economic, educational, religious, and legal systems. The diversity of systems within each nation reflects that nation's history, colonial ties, and current

phase of modernization. What each country has in common with the others, however, is a local understanding of the concentration and dispersal of power.

In some areas of the world (particularly the West), power has often been measured by the strength of a nation's borders and that nation's ability to accumulate land. In Southeast Asia, power is usually centered in a person, a place, or an object. Strong, dynamic rulers who have gathered a large number of followers can wield power in a radiating field; those closest to the ruler have more power, while those farther away have less. Places such as Java's Borobudur or Cambodia's Angkor Wat are invested locally with the power ascribed to sacred sites that have withstood the ravages of time and wars. Important objects—including certain daggers, bronze drums, gongs, and masks—carry their own special kind of power and are believed to have an impact on people, places, and other objects.

Southeast Asian musical contexts tend to reflect the influences and behavior of persons believed to have some kind of power. Patrons of music might be responsible for owning and protecting an ensemble's musical instruments, for arranging performances, and for paying the musicians. The musical leader of an ensemble, however, might attract fellow musicians on the basis of outstanding musicianship. In Muslim countries or regions, a musician who has been to Mecca is usually considered purer and therefore more powerful than one who has not. In some cases, fame (as from a hit recording) confers power; however, it may be locally considered less enduring than power achieved through other means. As with Southeast Asian political leaders, power ascribed to particular musicians or patrons is fleeting and can shift to other people as circumstances dictate.

The traditional investment of inanimate objects with power has an impact on musical performance and functions as a determinant of musical hierarchies across Southeast Asia. This situation is more widely encountered in the islands than on the mainland. Within a typically stratified gong-chime ensemble, instrumentation usually includes one or more large gongs (or their equivalents), smaller gongs, a gong chime, multiple xylophones or metallophones, a set of drums, and stringed or wind instruments that serve an ornamental or melodic function. The gong or gong equivalent is the spiritual center of the ensemble. It acts as the periodic marker for the beginning, ending, and cyclic points within each performance. Ritual offerings, if

FIGURE 4 Java's eighth-century Borobudur temple, covered with detailed stone carvings, reflects the ruler's power as deriving from the gods themselves. Photo by Sean Williams.



they are made, are traditionally offered to the gong, which guides the entire ensemble. Though the gong typically has the easiest musical role to play (in terms of how it is struck during a performance), its spiritual weight is considerable. Instruments considered difficult to play may have little spiritual weight. In a musical performance, any Southeast Asian ensemble could probably do without many of the instruments that play a decorative function, but a performance without a gong is unthinkable.

### **Unresolved questions**

Some fundamental questions regarding the musics of Southeast Asia, particularly their interrelationships, beg for resolution, but require evidence that is either unavailable or nonexistent. National pride sometimes clashes with conclusions suggested by the evidence. This is particularly true regarding questions of what is indigenous and what is acculturated. The following represent a sampling of these questions.

#### ***Identities***

Who are the Burmese, the Cambodians, the Filipinos, the Indonesians, the Lao, the Malay, the Thai, and the Vietnamese? In prehistoric times, were there original and identifiable cultures directly related to those of today? Did these people migrate from somewhere, particularly an area of present-day China, to their present location? To what extent are these mainstream groups actually the result of the mixing of earlier groups and therefore the sum of their parts? For example, if the X people allegedly migrated from Yunnan, China, what happened to the indigenous people who were then occupying X's present-day lands? These questions are particularly pertinent in Thailand (and its Ban Chiang culture) and Vietnam (and its Đông Sơn and Hoà Bình cultures). If there is no "ethnic purity," how and when did the people who came to be called X develop a distinctive culture?

#### ***Authenticities***

Relative to music, what is indigenous and what is acculturated? Outsiders, with their panoramic (but oftentimes superficial) views of Asian musics, are quick to see similarities among cultures, particularly in their organologies. They have few inhibitions about pointing out similarities that may or may not demonstrate relationships. Indigenous scholars and musicians, however, are more likely to assert the uniqueness of their own culture and may even resent the implication that their forebears borrowed this or that from another culture, particularly from a supposedly greater one. They are right to complain that outsiders often assume that "Indochina" had little culture of its own until it was "civilized" by Asia's two most prominent civilizations, China and India, and the term *Indochina* implies such. Why, they ask, could it not be the other way around? The fact that China and India can provide earlier documents does not, of course, prove their precedence.

In some cases, relationships are obvious, but the direction of the influence may not be. The hammered zither in mainland Southeast Asia appears to be of Chinese origin; some scholars believe that the Italian missionary Matteo Ricci took the instrument to China from Western Asia, but there is evidence that he visited Vietnam first. Many Southeast Asian two-stringed fiddles resemble those of China, but were they derived from China? Balinese, Burmese, Javanese, Khmer, Lao, Sundanese, and Thai classical dances might be dismissed as local manifestations of Indian dances because both traditions use a vocabulary of gestures of the hands, but whether this is true or not, the question is, To what extent did each culture modify the Indian system? Most of the musical cultures under discussion have cyclic metrical systems. Can we assume this trait came also from India because we know of the system of talas? or is this a logic with no single origin? Similarities do not prove relationships.

At least part of this debate, one that boils down to “originality” and “native creativity” versus “dependency” and “inferiority,” is based on the false premise that the “great” donor nations themselves had invented the phenomena in question. Much of what is Chinese or Indian was earlier borrowed or acculturated from elsewhere too, and the original source—if there be one—could in some cases have been Southeast Asia.

Regardless of the source of its cultural artifacts, each country in Southeast Asia has evolved an individualized expression. Whether the Thai *saw duang* derives from the Chinese Chaozhou *touxian* or not, the former has a distinct shape, timbre, and playing technique separate from those of the latter. Even when a borrowed instrument remains unchanged, the musical style of the original culture seldom comes with it.

### **Retentions**

Which cultures represent the earliest stages of culture in Southeast Asia? Eventually this question becomes an issue of whether the upland, minority, and usually marginalized peoples represent the earliest surviving stages of culture or merely echo the majority, dominant cultures. To say it another way: do the musical artifacts found in, say, the mountains of Vietnam indicate the earliest stages of Southeast Asian music? If so, then these instruments are most likely indigenous because these peoples show the least Indian, Chinese, or other outside influence. Since many speak distinct languages, did they precede the majority groups? And if this is so, did they formerly live in the lowlands and get forced into the uplands by newly arriving peoples?

If upland peoples preserve indigenous culture, then we can suppose that instruments like knobbed bronze gongs, bamboo and metal Jew’s harps, bronze-drum idio-phones, free-reed pipes and mouth organs, and vertically strung bamboo xylophones are fundamental to Southeast Asia. Can we further assume, then, that gong-chime ensembles, like the Thai *piphat*, the Cambodian *pinn peat*, and the Indonesian gamelan, developed from these organological layers? Can we assume that island Southeast Asia received its bronze instruments from the mainland? Does the presence of some of these allegedly original instruments on Borneo and beyond suggest an earlier transmission of culture, either over a prehistoric land bridge or by migrating sailors?

### **Conquests**

If, as in the case of early Siam, the victors of war traditionally carried off much of the vanquished population, including entire musical organizations, thereby implanting new instruments, genres, and styles into their own culture, does this mean that Thai music reflects an earlier stage of Cambodian music? Was there also Cambodian influence in Lao court music because the Luang Phrabang court was established with the help of the Khmer? Did the Burmese acquire instruments similar to Thai instruments only after 1767, when the Burmese conquered Ayuthaya? Does current Balinese music sound anything like fourteenth-century Javanese music, which was at least partially transplanted to Bali?

### **Languages**

Are there musical characteristics unique to language families? If we knew everything about all branches of a given language family (say, the Tai), could we find certain traits that are distinctively Tai? In the case of the Tai, we would want to know which branches are closest to the original Tai, the least influenced by outside cultures. Can we assume the groups living closest to a probably original homeland are the most conservative of related groups?

Each Southeast Asian music can be heard as a unique mixture of spices: some cuisines are spicier than others; some are an acquired taste.

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### ***Documentation***

Do historical documents shed light on any of these processes? The writing of a history of Southeast Asian music has yet to occur. Historical documents are nonexistent in many cases and are often incomplete, undatable, or unreliable. Recording and preserving documents related to music seems not to have been a priority. Wars and the ravages of humidity, insects, fires, and floods guarantee that even where such documents exist, they are fragile. Often the most detailed and reliable documents were created by foreigners, especially Chinese visitors.

Iconographical evidence in stone carvings, murals, and other sources is valuable, though sometimes difficult to date. Unrestored paintings may show great deterioration, and restored paintings raise questions of authenticity, especially when the original had completely flaked away before the restoration. Early accounts written by Westerners, though invariably ethnocentric and sometimes condescending, shed valuable light in some areas, particularly organology, function, and the existence of certain genres, especially theatrical ones.

## **HOW TO LISTEN TO SOUTHEAST ASIAN MUSICS**

This volume was not designed to be a sound-centered textbook, but we offer the reader a framework on which to become familiar with the musical sounds of the region. The compact disc included with the volume offers representative examples of music, but it is too limited to provide an ideal spectrum of sounds. For a fairly complete list of available recordings, the reader is referred to the discography at the end of the volume, with the caveat that not everything listed has equal value in representation, performance quality, recording quality, annotational quality, and accuracy. The following essay is intended to be a preliminary guide for listeners with little previous experience listening to Southeast Asian musics.

### **Two approaches to listening**

One can respond to music on at least two levels, sensually and intellectually. Perhaps too often pedagogues take an intellectual, cognitive approach, insisting that listeners “understand,” “know,” and “appreciate” the music being heard. Ultimately, this is necessary, especially if one is to teach or explain the music to someone else. Such communication also requires the use of a technical vocabulary, which, though often denoting concepts that exist only in the mind, are customarily described in analogous terms—timbre, texture, melodic contour, and extramusicality. Even without this kind of knowledge, however, we can respond on sensual and emotional levels to the beauty and power of the music. This approach is not to be avoided if the novice listener has reservations about his or her ability to understand the sounds of these musics.

### ***The sensual response***

Music consists of vibrations, perceived as sound when transmitted through the ear to the brain. For sounds to be perceived as music, the listener must perceive them as an ordered process, playing out in real time. John Blacking defined music as “humanly organized sound” (1973:10). In a sense, then, music is a microcosm of order, which proceeds according to a known and perceivable plan. To go beyond this notion is to enter the realm of the intellect and its cognitive abilities—which leads to the intellectualization of music. Preceding this stage, however, is one where the listener may respond to music as a purely sensual experience, a series of sensed physical vibrations that feel good in the way a massage, a pleasant smell or taste, or a beautiful image feels good. One possibility is for the listener simply to let go, relax, and allow the vibrations to wash over without reference to cognitive knowledge. In doing so, the listener can appreciate Southeast Asian musics on one level, possibly the level on which many Southeast Asians appreciate it.

Who, having heard the heavy, golden, bronze instruments of a gamelan, can resist its siren call? This is music you can feel. Softly struck metal, slow rates of decay, clashing vibrations, produce a quality of sound that is nearly irresistible. No wonder that French composer Claude Debussy was enthralled on hearing and feeling the Javanese gamelan that in 1889 visited Paris! No wonder that so many Western educational institutions have purchased gamelans! No wonder that some Westerners go into voluntary exile in the land of the gamelan, or become obsessed with playing its music! And a consumer of music has choices: the power and stateliness of the Javanese gamelan’s loud style, the dreaminess of its soft style, the hyperenergy of the Balinese *gong kebyar*.

Something can be said for an analogy between cuisine and music. Each Southeast Asian music can be heard as a unique mixture of spices: some cuisines are spicier than others; some are an acquired taste. Certain musics, such as Thai classical, Javanese court gamelan, and Lao *lam*, have a smoothness and consistency quite dissimilar to the pungent flavors of Burmese *hsaiñ*, Vietnamese chamber music, or Balinese gamelans. Just as some foods may not appeal to us on first tasting, some musics may not appeal on first hearing. Perhaps we could draw an analogy between

FIGURE 5 An intricately crafted mother-of-pearl design on a door at Bangkok’s Wut Rajabophit illustrates the Thai penchant for symmetry with-in a totally decorated panel, a visual analog to the construction of Thai classical music. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1992.





the feeling one gets from a cup of strong Southeast Asian coffee and listening to the nervous busyness of Toba Batak (Sumatran) melodies.

### ***The intellectual response***

Perceiving music is not only a holistic experience but also one that occurs out of sight and beyond touch—within the brain. Verbalizing music, what Charles Seeger called speech about music, partakes of an altogether different realm, language. To intellectualize about music, the listener must dissect the holism of sound systematically into constituent elements, all of which must be expressed in analogous terms or through physical demonstration. These elements of music are commonly listed as *medium* (what makes the sound), *melody* (an organized succession of tones), *rhythm* and *meter* (the organization of sounds in time), *texture* (the relationship among the music's constituent elements), *form* (structural organization), *timbre* (qualities of sound), and *extramusicality* (nonmusical meaning). We cannot possibly discuss all these elements in all the musics covered in this volume, but we do wish to point out certain of their more obvious challenges.

In-tuneness and out-of-tuneness are culturally learned norms. Westerners, not to mention many non-Westerners, have been conditioned to accept a twelve-tone, equal-tempered system of tuning as the norm of in-tuneness. Many Southeast Asian musics, however, use systems of tuning that are neither equally tempered nor organized in twelve steps. The fixed-pitch instruments of the Thai classical ensemble are tuned to seven equidistant tones, many of them out of tune in comparison with the Western system, but nonfixed-pitch instruments (such as bowed lutes and the voice) or flexibly pitched instruments (such as the flute) diverge even more, through portamentos and subtle ornamentation. Certain intervals in many Vietnamese scales diverge from any found in the Western equal-tempered system. Indonesian gamelans are uniquely tuned in nonequidistant steps. These systems of tuning contradict the Western notion that tuning is a natural process (equal temperament aside), based on the overtone series.

If anything is challenging to listeners unfamiliar with Southeast Asian musics, it is their timbres. Western ideas of pleasant and beautiful sounds may be encountered, but a great many instruments—including the human voice—produce sounds perceived as unpleasant and even ugly by some uninitiated listeners. It is difficult to describe timbres except by analogy, and using words like *nasal*, *raspy*, *strident*, *piercing*, and *clunky* may tell more about the listener's norms than about the music. Timbre may pose the greatest challenge to people meeting Southeast Asian musics for the first time.

As quoted above, Blacking's assertion that music is "humanly organized sound" presumes that music is organized. An understanding of all the constituent elements of music does not guarantee that the listener will perceive that organization, however. Formal order, though present, is often difficult or even impossible to recognize. Without detailed analysis from a fully notated transcription or a crystal-clear oral interpretation from an insider (or at least an informed outsider), there is little chance the listener can perceive the subtle recurrence of unifying motives or a sophisticated rondolike structure.

Knowing that music is organized raises a question: how is it created? Those accustomed to European-American traditions expect to find the name of a composer specified on a notated score. But the absence of scores—and in most cases, composers' names—does not mean the absence of composers. Musicians do play compositions throughout Southeast Asia, but these works are rarely notated, are performatively flexible, and are customarily transmitted orally.

The term *improvisation* comes immediately to mind as a second possibility for

creating music. In English, that term implies a process that is free, loose, and unpredictable; in a negative sense, it is something musicians do when they cannot perform a composition or have forgotten one—a strategy for getting out of trouble, or worse, “faking it.” In Asia, the term is normally associated with the concept of mode. In English usage, a mode is simply a scale that is neither minor nor major, as in the ecclesiastical modes of Europe (Dorian, Mixolydian, and so on). In Asian contexts, the term denotes a complex of elements, both musical and extramusical, that are together the basis for the creation—that is, composition—of music. These include pitch-based material, which can be ordered in ascending and descending patterns (scales); a hierarchy of tones, starting from or implying a resting point (the tonic); particular melodic and rhythmic motives appropriate to a particular mode; obligatory ornaments; cadential formulas; and a customary character or mood. Mode can govern anything from fully written composition to on-the-spot improvisation, the latter being simply a nonpermanent composition, created simultaneously with its first performance. As such, modal improvisation is not an expression of freedom, but a disciplined and bounded process. Possibly the most famous Asian modal system is embodied in the Indian terms *rag* and *rāga*.

In many traditions, mode has been a nonformalized, unarticulated, and intuitively practiced process. This is true in Lao and northeastern Thai music for the free-reed mouth organ (*khaen*). Northeastern Thai players customarily use five named modes (*lai sutsanaen*, *lai yai*, and so on), each preceded by the word *lai*. Though few players would explain this systematically, all will stay within a given set of constraints when spontaneously creating compositions in a given *lai*.

In the Javanese system, the term *pathet* embodies the concept of mode and governs the creation of relatively fixed compositions. Though only the skeletal structure of the composition is firmly fixed, the elements added in performance are also controlled by the conventions of a particular mode. Musicians in Java are well aware of their modal system, but Thai classical musicians, though they also operate within a modal system, are less aware of it, and do not articulate its conventions. Burma has modal systems too, and they are unusually complex because their terminologies vary according to the instrument, especially between the harp and *hsaiñ*-ensemble instruments.

Vietnam preserves Southeast Asia's fullest modal system, the *điệu* system, which governs the creation of fixed compositions and extended improvisations. Each mode consists of a set of tones, certain of which require ornamentation or vibrato. Each has a specific modal character or mood. Though ensembles play fixed compositions, each musician customarily warms up with a brief, free modal improvisation (*rao*) before all join together in playing the piece. Within the piece, each musician maintains the fixed structure but realizes the melody according to the mode and the idiom of the instrument.

Texture creates challenges equal to those of timbre. Southeast Asian ensemble musics may confront hearers with a seemingly chaotic matrix of sounds. Knowing that all performers are playing the same composition may even deepen the confusion, since it may sound more like each musician is playing a *different* composition simultaneously. These statements are more true of some Southeast Asian musics than others, but certain of them—Thai, Vietnamese, Indonesian, and especially Burmese—are particularly daunting to sort out aurally.

After listening to such an ensemble, we might draw an analogy with Southeast Asian traffic patterns. The degree of confusion varies from one city to another, and the rules of negotiation vary dramatically, but one can observe this phenomenon in virtually any Asian city choked with traffic—Bangkok, Hồ Chí Minh City, Manila, Jakarta. The roads have clearly painted lanes, but few drivers stay within them; they

In much Southeast Asian ensemble music, individual players are free to vary their parts each time they play a composition. The result may sound as chaotic as Bangkok's traffic appears, but both processes have a logic of their own.

FIGURE 6 Many busy intersections in Vietnam's Hồ Chí Minh City lack traffic controls, but drivers carefully negotiate to keep all four directions flowing at once. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1993.



treat the lanes merely as suggestions. All manner of vehicles use every bit of pavement, even the sidewalks. The object is to arrive at a final destination, but normally this requires passing through periodic points of control—traffic signals, traffic police, and roundabouts. Between these intersections, each driver is free to use whatever space is open, weaving this way and that, cutting in, holding back, rushing ahead, to arrive at the next point of control, where all drivers must come together again before proceeding.

Much Southeast Asian ensemble music moves in this way. In Thai classical music, the composition consists of a skeletal structure whose tones regularly occur at points articulated by a pair of small cymbals (*ching*), which play two strokes, *ching* and *chap*. The *chap* falls on the last beat of each cycle, making Thai music end-accented, rather than front-accented, as is usual in Western music. These points are like the controlled intersections negotiated by Bangkok's traffic: the *chap*, at the end of each cycle, are more highly controlled moments than the other sounds. Between these points, however, individual players, working within the constraints of their own instrument's idiom, are free in most cases to vary their parts each time they play the composition. The result may sound as chaotic as Bangkok's traffic appears, but both processes have a logic of their own. And the rules vary from one city to another. Bangkok drivers would most likely get into trouble driving in Hồ Chí Minh City, where major intersections are sometimes without controls and all four directions proceed continuously. Not surprisingly, Vietnamese music is less clearly controlled, and sometimes the musicians seem to be apart in their beats.

### Individual regions

These thoughts should make sense when read in conjunction with performances of various Southeast Asian musics. The following paragraphs offer more specific pointers for the most prominently known musics of each country.

#### **Mainland Southeast Asia**

##### *Vietnam*

Vietnamese music is played largely on instruments derived from China, modified to suit the Vietnamese musical aesthetic, but the two musical systems differ fundamentally. Vietnamese music is created within a modal system that allows both improvisation and composition. These modes often require ornaments or vibrato on specified tones, and indeed, one of the salient features of Vietnamese music is its ornateness.

Vietnamese chordophones have unusually high frets and loose strings, allowing for much bending of tones. Vietnamese music is also noteworthy for the syncopation of its rhythms, made all the clearer by a rhythmic instrument that marks certain beats in the cycle. In texture, there are often striking differences among instruments, in both melodic contour and rhythm. The pervasive bending of tones is especially expressive in the sadder, more minor-sounding modes, giving the music a somewhat plaintive flavor.

##### *Thailand*

Much has been said about the texture of Thai classical music and its seeming chaos upon first hearing. Though the listener may know intellectually that Thai music is actually highly organized, even square, he or she may not be able to hear the organization easily. First, one must listen for duple metrical organization, articulated by the cymbals (*ching*), with their constantly alternating *ching* and *chap* (some pieces use nothing but *ching*). One can also focus on the drums, which usually play regular cyclic patterns with little variation. These cycles provide a clear and rather rigid matrix, within which Thai composers and performers are required to play.

One can then focus on individual instruments. Unless a *piphat* or *mahori* is clearly recorded with a microphone on the larger gong circle (which plays the fundamental form of the composition), the listener will more likely focus on the leading instruments—the higher xylophone (*ranat ek*), or the higher fiddle (*saw duang*). The fiddle tends to play a fairly clear melodic form of the work, but the xylophone plays a variation of it, usually in constantly and evenly moving octaves. This motion, however, masks the articulation of phrases, and one sometimes wonders how the player could possibly memorize this seemingly random peregrination of tones, the aural equivalent of unwinding a large ball of string. If the ensemble includes a double-reed oboe (*pi nai*), its part is usually so different from those of the rest of the ensemble, so free in rhythm, so flexible in pitch, that the listener may wonder what it has to do with the work at all. Such are the challenges of listening to Thai classical music, especially the “high” repertory associated with ceremony. But actually, a great number of pieces are primarily organized as memorable melodic phrases; these constitute the “light classical” repertory and include some of the country’s favorite pieces.

##### *Cambodia*

In comparison to the classical music of Thailand (especially the “high” repertory), Cambodian classical music seems simpler and easier to follow. This situation is due in part to less individual virtuosity and the fact that the double-reed oboe (*sralai*) plays a basic form of the melody rather than an elaborated one. Another easy way to distin-

guish Cambodian music from Thai is the former's tendency to unequal pairs of notes, a kind of dotted rhythm, which contrasts to the evenness of Thai rhythm.

To many, Cambodian village music, especially that for weddings (*kar*) and spirit-related ceremonies (*arakk*), is among the most attractive musics of Southeast Asia. The melodic inflections, especially those played by the reed instruments, have a bouncy, almost jazzlike feel, while the chest-resonated monochord (*khse muoy*) provides a distinctively resonant plucking sound.

### *Laos*

The main challenge for outsiders wishing to listen to Lao (and by extension, northeast Thai) music is that the predominant genres (*khap* and *lam*) are closely bound to their lyrics. Though the melodies of *khap* and *lam* can be intriguing and the accompaniments attractive, the listener cannot fully appreciate Lao music without knowing the language and its dialects. It could be said about any music that hearing it live is better than hearing a recording, but this is especially true of Lao singing, in that the singers usually dance and often engage in suggestive horseplay.

The sound of the main Lao instrument, the *khene* free-reed mouth organ, is unusual in Asia because it produces vertical sonorities, not unlike chords. They do not function in a Western functional harmonic sense, but they do produce different degrees of tension and relaxation, providing a full-bodied, homorhythmic sound. Other instruments, including the plucked lute (*phin*) and the fiddle (*saw pip*), are rarer. The sound of the plucked lute is intriguing, especially when the player produces a succession of parallel fifths over a drone.

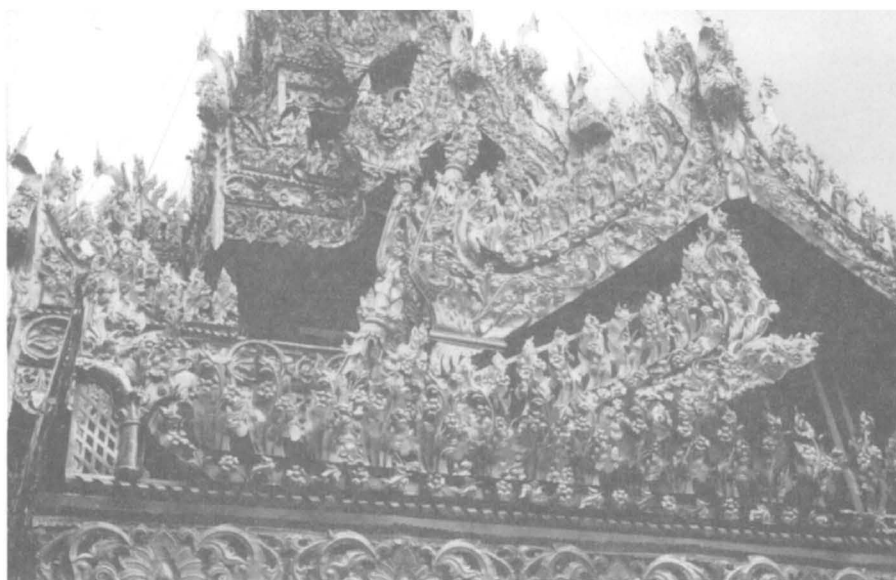
Regional Lao styles are distinguishable in melody and rhythm. Some, like that of the *khap ngeum*, sound rather dreamy because of their nonmetered, speechlike rhythms, but others are catchy in their rhythms, often reinforced by drums and small metal cymbals. Certain of them, especially *lam salavane* and *lam tang vay*, are so attractive that with little change they have become danceable popular types of song. In northeast Thailand, where central Thai influence is strong, the *lam* styles have been transformed into actual popular songs, accompanied by electrified local and standard rock instruments, brass instruments, and a set of drums. Indeed, since 1989, the rise of *lam sing*, a popularized form of *lam*, has been setting the pace for all sorts of other genres in Thailand.

### *Burma*

On first hearing, Burmese classical music, especially that for the *hsaiñwain* ensemble, resembles utter chaos. Western students, on first hearing Burmese music, are often unable to stifle looks of amazement, laughter, or verbal comments. This is because few other musics in the world exhibit such joyfully sudden shifts in rhythm, changes of texture and timbre, and a most disjunct melodic style. Thai and Cambodian classical musics (and their styles of dancing) could be described as smooth, continuous, and more or less relaxed, but Burmese music and dance are seemingly unpredictable, jagged, mercurial, and energetic. In this respect, the most similar (but somewhat tamer) style within Southeast Asia is the music of the Balinese *gong kebyar*.

Knowing cognitively how Burmese melody is constructed, like knowing how serial music is composed, does not necessarily mean that the listener can actually hear the process. In Thai classical music, the large gong circle plays the basic and straightforward version of the composition, as does the double-reed oboe in Cambodian classical music. These you can hear. But in Burmese music, nobody plays a coherent, intact version of any melody. Following a fixed structure that exists only in players' minds, even the lead musicians sound their instruments in an idiom comprising octave displacements, beat displacements, and other melodic "rearrangements."

FIGURE 7 The busy tinwork on Rangoon, Burma's Sule Pagoda suggests a Burmese aesthetic that is also heard in its music. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1994.



Perhaps a visual comparison to the formal displacements of European cubist art will help the listener discern what has happened to the composition. A good way to understand this process is to ask a Burmese musician to play a familiar Western tune, as pianist Û Ko Ko does on a recent compact disc, when he plays “When the Saints Come Marching In” (*Piano birman / Burmese piano* 1995:17). Perhaps two valid analogies to the process of displacement would be Schönberg’s concept of *Klangfarbenmelodie*, in which the listener must connect disjointed bits of melody into a continuous whole, and Seurat’s technique of pointillism, in which the viewer must connect discrete dots of color into a coherent image.

When listening to Burmese music, one cannot help but be struck by the distinctiveness and unblendedness of its timbres. Most Burmese solo instruments are individualistic, even unique in Southeast Asia—the set of twenty-one tuned drums, the harp, and the piano (at least as a “traditional” instrument). The sudden shifts in the music, which to foreigners can make it seem jerky and nervous, are also seen in Burmese dance, which, like the music, is energetic and kinetically sudden; it is unlike Thai dance, which (like Thai music) is smooth and continuous. That it also has a regular, underlying structure is confirmed in a repertory that requires two small idiophones to articulate cyclic patterns—a pair of tiny cymbals and a pair of hollowed-out wooden shells, hinged at one end.

### *Malaysia*

On hearing Malaysian traditional music for the first time (such as the music for the royal coronation played on the double-reed oboe, or the accompanying music of the *ma’yong* theater played on the spike fiddle), one might be forgiven for confusing it with music from Western Asia. The melody flows continuously, using small intervals with little phrasal articulation while remaining within a narrow range. Nor does the cyclicity of its meter set it apart from Western Asian music, for the same is true there. What announces its Southeast Asianness is the presence of hanging gongs, which play on prescribed beats in temporal cycles.

Because Malaysia was colonized by Britain and remains multiethnic (Chinese, Indian, Malay), its music is also multiethnic, and the term *Malaysian music* covers a wide variety of somewhat unrelated styles. Some of them, such as for *ronggeng*, sound quite Western; others are purely Chinese. Some were borrowed from the popular-music traditions of Southern and Western Asia. “Malaysian” music, then, is the sum

*kulintang* Horizontal bronze gong-chime and ensemble

*gamelan* Stratified bronze gong-chime ensemble

**colotomic structure** The organization of music by periodic punctuation

*rebab* Two-stringed bowed spiked lute

*gong kebyar* Balinese dynamic, modern gamelan style

of its parts, but the music of the Malay is distinctive for blending Western and Southeast Asian traits.

### ***Island Southeast Asia***

The overall sound of island Southeast Asian music is often described as sonorous, probably referring to the fact that some of the most visible and audible music from the islands is performed on resonant bronze instruments, especially gongs. Indeed, a big portion of this music is played on stratified bronze ensembles, known collectively in Indonesia as *gamelans* and in the southern Philippines as *kulintang*. Variations on the basic *gamelan* and *kulintang* formats are common throughout the island nations and Borneo, and hundreds of different names are applied to what is basically a gong-chime ensemble.

In addition to gong-chime ensembles, thousands of other genres—European-style orchestras, indigenous vocal groups, solo instrumental performances—are spread across the islands of Southeast Asia, reflecting diverse musical priorities, contexts, and influences. While focusing on the sound and structure of the gong-chime ensemble, the reader should recognize that certain features of gong-chime music are readily applicable to other regional musics.

What makes a gong-chime ensemble? The basic component is a gong chime—a rack, usually horizontal, of small, tuned, bossed kettlepots. These pots may be laid out in a single row (as with the Filipino *kulintang* and the Balinese *trompong*), they may be arranged in double rows (as with the Javanese *bonang*), or they may be in a V- or U-shaped formation (as with the Sundanese *bonang*). Other main components of the ensemble are one or more hanging or horizontal bossed gongs, one or more drums (usually shaped like barrels, cones, or goblets), and xylophones made of wood or bamboo, or metallophones (especially bronze and iron). Many ensembles in the islands also have bamboo flutes, double-reed oboes, bowed lutes, or plucked zithers. The presence or absence of male or female singers varies according to repertorial requirements.

Gong-chime ensembles are often called stratified—a term that offers an indication of the musical texture. Within a piece of music, certain instruments have a punctuating function, said to be colotomic when they regularly mark temporal cycles. Much as a period (full stop) ends written sentences, the largest gong—or the instrument that has the function of that gong—ends musical sentences. Unlike most Western musics, island music of Southeast Asia tends to have a stronger emphasis on the last note of a four-beat pattern rather than the first note. Smaller hanging and horizontal gongs act as commas, occurring regularly at intervals that may be divided into two or four segments. Still smaller hanging or horizontal gongs may further punctuate a musical sentence. This texture then serves as the framework for the main theme, often played by large metallophones. Other instruments—including small metallophones, gong chimes, flutes, and zithers—may serve an elaborating function,

decorating the main musical theme in dense musical patterns. The drum serves not only as the timekeeper and the keeper of the tempo, but as the instrument that usually outlines the form of the piece. Therefore, a stratified gong-chime ensemble has a four-part texture: colotomic gongs, a main musical theme, elaborating instruments, and drum patterns. Some ensembles (particularly in Central Java) may also have an “inner melody” performed on the rebab, which takes precedence over the more prominently heard main musical theme (Sumarsam 1975).

Much of island Southeast Asian music is performed cyclically. In the basic form of a cycle (Javanese *gongan*), each time the largest gong is struck, a cycle has been completed. In some pieces, several different cycles (each requiring the striking of a large gong) may be performed for the completion of a single, large-scale cycle. Once a cycle has been played, it may be repeated with variations on the elaborating instruments, or the piece may move on to a new cycle. The length of these cycles varies widely, from perhaps five seconds to many minutes. Individual variation from region to region and genre to genre determines the length of a cycle. What is often baffling to nonindigenous observers is the apparent lack of a sense of forward motion in this type of performance: how does the music move forward if the musicians keep repeating the same parts?

A partial answer to this question is that in many cases, the musicians use variation rather than exact repetition. The colotomic structure and the main musical theme may remain the same (at various densities), but the drummer and the musicians who play the elaborating instruments often spice up their playing with variations. The drummer may speed up or slow down the ensemble, allowing more open musical space for intricate rhythmic or melodic patterns to be performed. Small metallophones may be played in interlocking patterns or in a succession of melodic figures appropriate for certain types of performances. A flutist or an oboist may use ten or twenty cycles to complete a melody and may then use the same number of cycles each time to perform variations on the initial melody. Vocalists may perform when the colotomic instrumentation is quite sparse or (conversely) when it is dense enough to serve as a melodic outline on its own. Tension—and thus a sense of movement toward release—is created as the listeners learn to wait for the stroke of the gong at the end of each cycle. These and many more factors shape a different kind of listening experience for the uninitiated.

Island Southeast Asian music spans a continuum from note-for-note composition to improvisation. Tourists in Bali may be dazzled by promoters who claim that the intense, high-speed playing of the *gamelan gong kebyar* ensemble is totally improvised; however, *kebyar* musicians spend months working out intricate patterns and negotiating repertorial changes. At another extreme, a boy sprawled across the back of a water buffalo may improvise melodic figures appropriate to his culture and the capabilities of his bamboo flute without having to negotiate those patterns with anyone else.

Improvisation always occurs within certain musical contexts. In the gong-chime ensemble, neither the colotomy nor the main musical theme is improvised; however, the players of elaborating instruments and drums may choose from a variety of musical options: hundreds of short melodic phrases, ornaments, rhythmic flourishes, or minor variants. In the southern Philippines, the player of the *kulintang*, the instrument that functions as the primary carrier of the melody, works in a gradual ascending and descending progression through a series of patterns appropriate for each piece; the player has the option of repeating single patterns or groups of patterns. For solo instruments, the player's skill may be judged on the basis of improvisations, from the degree of the improvisations' appropriateness within the genre to the accuracy and fluidity of the melodic ornaments.



New listeners are also likely to notice the tonality of island Southeast Asian music. The term *pentatonic*, loosely and mistakenly applied to Asian music for decades, does not take into consideration either individual tonal variation, or the concept that Asian musics do not simply lift five out of the twelve tones of the chromatic scale and use them in music. The tuning of each ensemble in island Southeast Asia is internally coherent: all the instruments in a given ensemble are tuned to match each other. However, the instruments from one ensemble generally cannot play with those of another, because they do not use any standard tuning, such as equal temperament and  $A = 440$ . Though some master craftsmen may deliberately imitate either a prestigious or a commonly accepted tuning, variations in tuning between ensembles give each ensemble a unique sound and perceived temperament, such as “sweet” or “bright.”

Informed islanders recognize good music on the basis of the ensemble’s rhythmic coherence, dynamic balance among players, improvisational virtuosity, and improvisational appropriateness according to local modal rules, musicians’ on-stage demeanor (said to be audible in their music), and seamless transitions from one section to the next. Good musicians know that if they play together long enough and listen closely to one another, all the above features will fall into place. Within the context of good music, all the joys and competitive urges that have a place in Southeast Asian society are given free rein, and informed audiences are free to appreciate musical events from the standpoints of both passion and reason.

## A REPRESENTATIVE LIST

Knowing that students of Southeast Asian musics cannot possibly collect and know every kind of music, it is useful to ask what would constitute a must-know list of a Southeast Asian music-appreciation repertoire. Taking into consideration readily available recorded materials [see DISCOGRAPHY] and acknowledging the possibility of an idiosyncratic view, the editors offer the following list as both minimal and fundamental.

### Burma

1. A composition played by a *hsaiñwain*.
2. A composition for harp (*saiñ*).
3. A classical song for xylophone (*pa’talà*) and voice.
4. A classical composition played on a piano.

### Thailand

1. A ritual or court composition played by the *piphat* ensemble.
2. A tuneful composition played by the *khruang sai* or *mahori* ensemble with voice.
3. A virtuoso solo played on a xylophone (*ranat ek*).
4. Traditional village folk song of the *phleng phün ban* variety, with alternation of male and female soloists, each answered by a chorus of observers.
5. Traditional *lam klawn* accompanied by *khaen*, from the northeast.
6. The *salaw-süng-pi* ensemble of the north.
7. A song from the *manora* theater in the south.
8. An example of the music of any upland people from the north.

### Laos

1. *Lam khon savan* from central southern Laos.
2. *Lam salavane* from southern Laos.
3. *Khap ngeum* from the Vientiane area.
4. *Khap thum* from Luang Phrabang.

5. Lao classical music from Vientiane.
6. An unaccompanied poem sung by the Hmong, followed by its rendition on a free-reed mouth organ.

### Cambodia

1. A classical composition for the *pinn peat* ensemble with voice.
2. An entertainment song accompanied by *mahori* ensemble.
3. A village nuptial song (*phleng kar*).
4. Village vocal repartee with instrumental ensemble (*ayai*).
5. An excerpt of the narrative genre *chrieng chapey*, accompanied by a long-necked lute (*chapey*).

### Malaysia

1. A song with choral response from *ma'yong* theater.
2. Music from a shadow play (*wayang kulit*).
3. Ceremonial music for a sultan played by a *nobat* ensemble.
4. Music for the *ronggeng* dance.

### Vietnam

1. *Chèo* theater from the north.
2. *Tuồng* or *hát bội* theater from the central region.
3. A *ca trù* chamber song from the north.
4. A *ca Huế* chamber song from the central region.
5. A *nhạc tài tử* chamber song from the south.
6. An accompanied folk song from any region.
7. An upland gong ensemble.
8. An upland free-reed gourd mouth organ.

### Indonesia

1. Gamelan *pélog* or *sléndro* from central Java.
2. Gamelan *gong kebyar* from Bali.
3. *Tembang Sunda* from Sunda.
4. *Gondang* music of the Batak of Sumatra.
5. *Gendang raya* of the Iban of Borneo.
6. Bamboo flute (*saluang*) from Sumatra.
7. Tube zither (*sasandu*) from Roti.
8. Vocal duets (*berasi*) from East Flores.
9. Popular music (*dangdut*).

### The Philippines

1. Plucked-string ensemble (*comparsa* or *rondalla*) of lowland Christians.
2. Flat gongs (*gangsa*) from the northern uplands.
3. *Kulintang* from Mindanao.
4. Dramatic opera (*sarswela*) of lowland Christians.

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# A Survey of Scholarship on Southeast Asian Musics

*Terry E. Miller*

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**Mainland Southeast Asia**    *Terry E. Miller*

**Island Southeast Asia**    *Sean Williams*

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## MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Until the 1970s, published information about the musics of mainland Southeast Asia was sparse. In some areas, it was unreliable. Several facts explain this situation. First, the countries of the region had produced few native scholars. In some of these countries, music was not considered an academic discipline, and where it was, Western music tended to take precedence. Second, since the growth of ethnomusicology has been limited by academia's inability to create sufficient jobs for graduating ethnomusicologists, and since there are many countries and cultures in the world, academia has not produced enough scholars to cover all musical cultures. Because the pioneering program at UCLA focused on Indonesia, Western musical studies of Southeast Asia have been skewed toward the gamelan traditions of the islands. Third, war and oppression have made several mainland nations problematic for scholars. Until the 1990s, outsiders could barely get into Burma. Cambodia was completely disrupted by civil violence after 1975 and was basically closed to researchers until the late 1980s. Laos was closed to Western scholars from 1975 until 1990, and the ability to travel freely within the country was restored only in 1994. Vietnam was disrupted by war from the 1950s, and after 1975 was mostly closed to outsiders; since about 1990, policies there have been liberalized, and today the country is reasonably open to foreign scholars.

Before fighting and political chaos put several countries off limits, there had been even fewer ethnomusicologists, and few of them had been interested in mainland Southeast Asia. Thailand and Malaysia have remained mostly peaceful throughout the period, and for years, scholars have conducted research there with few or no restrictions.

The development of musical scholarship proceeded in three phases: *early*, *recent*, and *contemporary*. Few of the *early* writers on music knew anything of ethnomusicology; they were variously travelers, colonial officials, native-born (but Western-oriented) officials and academics, and in some cases armchair scholars working in Europe. *Recent* scholars include the generation first active in the 1960s, as ethnomusicology began to permeate academia, more in the United States than Europe. Some of them were composers seeking alternative ideas and sounds—musicians who ended up as

scholars. With ethnomusicology programs firmly established throughout the United States, Europe, and (in limited ways) Southeast Asia, a *contemporary* generation of scholars, both Western and native-born, has begun to produce important work. The region, whose music had been so little known as recently as 1975 (when the author began teaching), has seen steady growth, but in fact, most of its musics, especially those of its minority peoples, have not been studied by academics.

A meeting of all scholars specializing in the musics of mainland Southeast Asia would not require a large room. Though the roster is growing, the scholar-to-population ratio is tiny, compared even with that of Indonesia. A comparable ratio in Western classical music would demonstrate how few people are working in mainland Southeast Asia. The number of scholars native to the region is likely to grow in Thailand, Vietnam, and perhaps Malaysia; but in Laos, Cambodia, and Burma, little change can be expected in the near future. With respect to the job market in the West, there are already too many ethnomusicologists, but with respect to the task, there are too few.

### **Vietnam**

Of all the countries in mainland Southeast Asia, Vietnam has the longest tradition of musical scholarship. Documents written in Sino-Vietnamese (a form of classical Chinese, known only to the learned in Vietnam) go back hundreds of years. Until the 1990s, all scholars in this area were Vietnamese. The most prominent was Trần văn Khê, whose dissertation at the University of Paris, published as *La musique vietnamienne traditionnelle* (1962), remains the only comprehensive study in print. Phạm Duy, a composer of popular songs in Vietnam before 1975, published a book in 1975. Among the newest generation of scholars, most prominent is Dr. Phong T. Nguyễn, who has done comprehensive fieldwork in Vietnam since 1991. There are also numerous scholars in Vietnam, such as Mịch Quang, Hà văn Cầu, and Lu Nhật Vũ. Younger scholars include Dr. Lê Tuấn Hùng of Australia, Miranda Arana of the United States, and Barley Norton of the United Kingdom. Since 1991, Vietnam has opened itself to fieldwork, but cultural-service officers in the Ministry of Culture still maintain control over access.

### **Cambodia**

Khmer music received little scholarly attention until the 1960s, when Alain Daniélou and Jacques Brunet of France contributed brief studies. Dr. Sam-Ang Sam, a Khmer native, has become the most active researcher, advocate, and performer of Khmer music living in the United States; his wife, Chan Moly Sam, while maintaining a career in teaching and performing Khmer dance, has contributed several valuable studies. Dr. Eileen Blumenthal has also studied Khmer dance, and Dr. Toni Shapiro and Dr. Kathy McKinley have recently become specialists in Khmer music. Research in Cambodia is difficult, mostly because of poor security and infrastructure.

### **Laos**

Laos is likely the most underresearched country in mainland Southeast Asia. Nothing substantial was published before 1975, and from then until the early 1990s, the country was closed to most outside scholars. No scholar had specialized in this country's music until 1991, when Dr. Terry E. Miller received access to a broad spectrum of Lao musics recorded on site throughout Laos. Dr. Therese Mahoney has written a dissertation on Lao classical music, based on work in Vientiane in 1991–1992. Dr. Carol Compton has contributed scholarship on Lao singers' poetry, but not on their music. Two other scholars are likely to make contributions: Dr. Jarernchai Chonpairot of northeast Thailand, who wrote a dissertation on one Lao vocal genre;

and Mr. Phoxay Sunnalath of Laos, who has earned a master's degree in Thai studies and ethnomusicology in northeast Thailand.

### **Upland minority peoples**

Though the remoteness of upland minority groups would suggest that their musics are the least studied, a fair amount of information has resulted from missionaries' efforts, especially in northern Thailand. The minorities of Burma remain little known, and only the Hmong (of Laos) have been studied in detail, mostly as immigrant communities in the United States, by Dr. Amy Catlin. The late Dr. Ruriko Uchida of Japan documented a great amount of music in upland Thailand and to a lesser extent Laos, and a compact disc of Karenni music (of the Thai-Burmese border) appeared in 1993. Dr. Gretel Schwörer-Kohl, a scholar at the University of Mainz, has begun to contribute work in this area. In Malaysia, the Temiar have attracted the most scholarly attention, and Dr. Marina Roseman has written extensively on their music. Before her work, the late Dr. Hans Oesch of Germany had done extensive fieldwork in upland Malaysia, and had produced commercial recordings for Bärenreiter. Upland Vietnamese groups were first documented by French officials and scholars, most prominent being Georges de Gironcourt with his work on upland and lowland musics, published as a single issue of the *Bulletin de la Société des études indochinoises* (1943).

### **Thailand**

Compared to other areas, the number of scholars who have studied musics in Thailand is legion and growing. Some of them are Thai; indeed, Thai scholars comprised the earliest group. They included Phra Chen Duriyanga (born Peter Feit, son of Thai and American parents), Dr. Utit Naksawat, Montri Tramote, and Dhanit Yupho. Among Westerners, the primary scholar for Thai music for years was Dr. David Morton, a protégé of Dr. Mantle Hood and a faculty member at UCLA. His books, articles, and translations remain the foundation of Thai music studies. With his retirement, growing numbers of younger scholars from various countries began making contributions. In Thailand, they have included Dr. Jarernchai Chonpairot, Dr. Somsak Ketukaenchan, Professor Anant Narkong, and Professor Panya Roongrüang; in Japan, Dr. Yoko Tanese-Ito; in England, Dr. Francis Silkstone; and in the United States, Dr. Terry E. Miller, Dr. Pamela A. Moro, and Dr. Deborah Wong. Despite all this scholarly work, the musics of three of Thailand's four regions remain little known, and only that of the northeast has been extensively studied (by Dr. Terry E. Miller). With the rise of regional studies and the beginning of ethnomusicological study in Thailand, it is likely that more Thai scholars will appear on the scene.

### **Burma**

Before Burma's government sealed the country from outside influence (around 1970), few outsiders had studied Burmese music. A Burmese scholar, Û Khin Zaw, had published his most important work in the 1940s. After that, material on Burmese music became scarce, and with scholars either denied access or severely restricted, little work could occur. Dr. Judith Becker, Dr. Robert Garfias, and Dr. Muriel Williamson made significant contributions, but none specialized only in Burmese music. Since then, only Dr. Ward Keeler, an anthropologist, has worked extensively on Burmese music. With the founding of the University of Culture (in 1993) and its offering courses in Burmese music, more Burmese scholars may be able to offer their knowledge to the outside world.

### **Malaysia**

Though Malaysia has been hospitable to research on music, only a few scholars have worked there. In the early 1970s, two nonmusic specialists, Mubin Sheppard and P.

L. Amin Sweeney, made useful contributions, and Dr. William Malm, a specialist in Japanese music, documented traditional theater in northeast Malaysia. The first person to specialize in the study of Malaysian music was Dr. Patricia Matusky (of the United States), who continues to contribute publications on the subject. Two younger scholars have now become active: in several books, Dr. Tan Sooi Beng has focused on theater and dance, and Dr. Margaret Sarkissian has focused on the Portuguese-derived music of Melaka (Malacca).

### Singapore

Significant as an economic power in Southeast Asia, the city-state of Singapore is easily overlooked in reference to music. As a kind of cultural stew, its music(s) is (or are) difficult to define, and require(s) attention to questions of cultural change and interaction. Tong Soon Lee (of Singapore) is likely the first scholar to focus on Singapore's musical traditions.

## ISLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA

Examining the existing ethnomusicological literature for island Southeast Asia is much easier than for the mainland, because island Southeast Asia has only two countries (Indonesia and the Philippines), plus one multinational island (Borneo). Furthermore, as this article will attest, the bulk of current research on music of the region has centered on Indonesia—specifically, the gong-chime court musics of Java and Bali. One of the most important aspects of this volume is that it tries to balance the wealth of information about mainstream Southeast Asian court traditions with important new work on places that are not so famous abroad. Each of these island areas has its own history of research, which can be explored in the bibliography at the back of this volume, and in the references at the end of each article.

In a dramatic contrast to the mainland, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Borneo have not been so deeply disrupted by war and postcolonial chaos. As a result of years of relative peace in the islands, both foreign and domestic researchers have had access to musicians, dancers, and actors in ways that would be impossible in, say, Burma. Though acquiring a research permit is a burdensome process, the average foreign researcher can be reasonably confident of working with local performers and scholars. It may always be the case that certain areas and people, such as the Baduy of West Java, are declared off limits to outside researchers; but most local officials recognize the potential benefits of allowing researchers to learn about and publicize the diversity of local arts.

As in musical studies of the mainland, most early outside scholars of the area were not professional ethnomusicologists, if only because the discipline had not yet been established. Instead, our earliest accounts of musical activity in island Southeast Asia come from travelers' accounts, colonial reports and diaries, notes written by missionaries and friars, and the occasional local scholarly treatise. Later sources came primarily in the form of master's theses and doctoral dissertations, most of which have remained unpublished but can be acquired through library loans. By the late 1970s, articles containing the essence of researchers' work had become the main form of publication for all of island Southeast Asia, and the trend continues, as the pace of publishing books begins to pick up momentum. Interested readers can look for relevant articles in issues of *Asian Music*, *Ethnomusicology*, *Indonesia*, *The World of Music*, and the *Yearbook for Traditional Music*. The following review of the literature is restricted to sources in English.

Huge areas within island Southeast Asia remain open for study. Among these are the broad range of Indonesia's Outer Islands, most of the upland and minority groups of the Philippines, and most of Borneo. The court traditions of Indonesia, a

mainstay of Western scholarship for most of the twentieth century, remain a rich and varied source. As the shape of our field begins to shift, the level of our knowledge must also shift. Most ethnomusicologists know at least something about central Javanese and Balinese court traditions, but how many know about the diversity of Flores, or about the hundreds of Filipino genres found outside the *kulintang* traditions?

The late twentieth century has seen an upswing in the training and research of local ethnomusicologists, whose perspectives on their own music continue to add depth and breadth to research on the music of the islands. Collaborative research and publishing on the part of cultural outsiders and insiders is one of the field's most important new directions. Within the Philippines (where English is already a major language) and Indonesia (where Bahasa Indonesia is an easily learned lingua franca), ethnomusicology is likely to expand. The twenty-first century is certain to bring more musical information into the light of international publication than Jaap Kunst, Colin McPhee, and all the Spanish friars working in the Philippines ever dreamed of.

### Indonesia

Two classic works of Indonesian ethnomusicology remain indispensable: *Music in Java*, by Jaap Kunst (1973 [1934]), and *Music in Bali*, by Colin McPhee (1966). Each of these ethnomusicologists wrote many other works, but these books are landmarks of the field. Written at the dawn of modern ethnomusicology, they differ dramatically from current scholarship in that they try to be comprehensive; they do not focus on a single style or genre but include as many styles and genres as possible. Both books, widely available in libraries, recall the period when Westerners discovered the elegance, logic, and beauty of Indonesian music—and realized that they could play it while studying it.

With the establishment of ethnomusicology as a discipline, Indonesian music was among the first non-Western musics to be brought to the United States and Europe. In particular, gamelans (ensembles of stratified gongs and gong chimes) began to be imported from the 1960s on, to the point that nearly every major university or college ethnomusicology program eagerly sought to purchase an ensemble. These ensembles were nearly always central Javanese court gamelans; more rarely, Balinese. In part as a result of emphasis on Javanese and Balinese court music, a large proportion of the first U.S. and European graduate-student researchers in Indonesia worked in central Java and Bali.

Two important studies of the 1990s bring aspects of Javanese and Balinese music into more accessible prominence; these are R. Anderson Sutton's *Traditions of Gamelan Music in Java* (1991) and Michael Tenzer's *Balinese Music* (1991). What sets Sutton's book apart from other current works is that it moves away from a focus on the central Javanese court to recognize the diversity and the relationships among multiple Javanese traditions. Tenzer presents current Balinese music in a lavishly illustrated volume, which focuses on a specific genre of dance as its centerpiece; he also provides clues about how to understand Balinese music—information that makes his work accessible to nonspecialists.

Outside the library on central Java and Bali are works on west Java and Sumatra but surprisingly little else. West Java (also known as Sunda) has its share of unpublished doctoral and master's works. The most important book about the area is Wim Van Zanten's *Sundanese Music in the Cianjuran Style* (1989). It provides useful information about the Sundanese and focuses on the aristocratic music of the area. Almost no books with information about other genres have been published. The bulk of research and English-language discussion of Sumatra has been done in articles by

Margaret Kartomi of Monash University. Musical traditions of the Outer Islands of Indonesia (which include the Maluku, Sulawesi, Flores, Timor, and other areas) are so understudied that information about local music traditions is not readily available in any language. This situation is gradually changing as Indonesian and Australian scholars begin to cover more ground; for example, Christopher Basile's three years of research in Nusa Tenggara Timur are expected to yield more publications than the articles in this volume, which are among the only recent ones on the area.

### The Philippines

Music of the southern Philippines ensembles (*kulintang*) became widely known among ethnomusicologists after the release of several discs of their music (on the Lyrichord label) and the establishment of several ensembles in the western United States. Usopay Cadar's M.A. thesis (1971) and doctoral dissertation (1980), both at the University of Washington, were among the first studies of *kulintang*; many ensuing works on the Philippines have focused on its traditions. The performance of Spanish-influenced Filipino music outside the Philippines usually occurs within immigrant Filipino communities.

As with Indonesia, most current studies of the performing arts in the Philippines are genre-specific. No book-length overview of Filipino music has been published, though individual scholars, including José Maceda and Usopay Cadar, plus Ramón Santos and Corazon Dioquino (two of the Filipino authors of this volume), have made important contributions. Some information appears on the liner notes of LP recordings and in journals specific to the Philippines, including *Filipino Heritage* and *Philippine Sociological Review*. This volume may inspire scholars, both from inside and outside the Philippines, to recognize the wealth of underexplored genres in the Philippines and to consider adding to the research on the subject.

### Borneo

Some outsiders, misled by such adventure novels as *Into the Heart of Borneo*, have acquired stereotyped ideas about Borneo as the last bastion of twentieth-century headhunting. No musical ensembles from the island have pride of place in international ethnomusicology departments, and the glamor associated with mainstream Asian court traditions has passed Borneo by. The diversity of ethnolinguistic groups in Borneo has made even the creation of the Borneo survey article for this volume daunting, and the lack of recent research has kept available material inadequate.

Several scholars have made inroads in the area of music in Borneo; among them are Patricia Matusky and Virginia K. Grolinski, whose doctoral dissertations are important area-specific resources. *Traditional Music and Drama of Southeast Asia* (Osman 1974), a useful volume, has several articles about the musical traditions of Borneo.

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## *Part 2*

# Issues and Processes in Southeast Asian Music

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Many are surprised to learn that the forging of bronze and iron, the cultivation of rice, and the domestication of farm animals began thousands of years ago among the peoples of Southeast Asia, independent of influences from India and China. Some of the largest—and most advanced—urban societies in the ancient world lived here. They developed large and complex musical ensembles as well as sophisticated theater and dance, created from within and yet adaptable to successive waves of outside cultural influences.

Vietnamese monks of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition in Hội An chant the sutras at an afternoon ritual. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1993.

# Southeast Asia in Prehistory

*Karl L. Hutterer*

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## Early Prehistory

**The Beginnings of Agriculture in Mainland Southeast Asia**

**Early Agricultural Communities**

**The Spread of Neolithic Cultures in Island Southeast Asia**

**The Coming of Civilization**

**Prehistory in the Islands**

**Asian Art and Music in Prehistory**

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It has been known for more than a century that Southeast Asia has had one of the longest histories of human settlement of any part of the world, rivaled only by East and South Africa and East Asia. Fossils of ancient hominids (human ancestors), discovered in Java in 1891 by the Dutch physician Eugene Dubois and classified by scientists as *Homo erectus*, played an important role in the early debates over human evolution. Since then, the Javanese sites have yielded a rich series of fossils, covering much of the history of the biological evolution of humankind. Unfortunately, that it has proven difficult to date the earliest human remains with confidence has resulted in a lively and continuing debate, which places their age anywhere from somewhat less than one million years to nearly two million years.

## EARLY PREHISTORY

No other area of Southeast Asia has produced a record of hominid fossils as rich as that discovered in Java, though fragmentary finds have been made, notably in Vietnam and southern China. Together, these finds indicate that early hominids had spread from Africa into Asia by at least one million, and possibly two million, years ago, and dispersed over the whole Southeast Asian region.

None of the fossilized hominid bones has so far been found associated with artifacts, so we know virtually nothing about the culture and life of these pioneers. Archaeological research conducted during the first half of the twentieth century had tried, in the absence of clear stratigraphic information or other reliable methods of dating, to associate scattered finds of stone tools made of pebbles with the hominid fossils. On the basis of such speculation, the Harvard anthropologist H. L. Movius proposed a "chopper / chopping tool industry" as the earliest form of material culture in the region. This concept has been abandoned as unfounded in the light of more recent investigations. We do know that the earliest Southeast Asians lived when the earth was experiencing a series of major climatic fluctuations. During that period, commonly called the Ice Age (Pleistocene), several episodes of worldwide climatic cooling occurred. These episodes caused the formation of continental sheets of ice in the northern latitudes of Asia, Europe, and North America. The tropical latitudes of Southeast Asia, while remaining warm, likely experienced drastic shifts in rainfall

patterns, and thus in forest cover. Also, the binding up of massive amounts of water in the northern sheets of ice resulted in a drop of worldwide sea levels, exposing in Southeast Asia a large, shallow shelf, extending from the continent toward Sumatra, Java, and Borneo. Thus, during the periods of climatic cooling, these islands were linked with the Asian mainland in a contiguous continental area. Though these must have been drastic changes in the ecology of the region, it is not known how they affected the development of hominid culture or how the early hominids adjusted to them.

The archaeological record improves dramatically by about forty thousand to fifty thousand years ago, with the regional appearance of biologically modern humans (*Homo sapiens sapiens*). Our evidence comes from a good handful of sites, mostly caves, in southern China, Vietnam, the Malay Peninsula, the Philippines, Borneo, and Sulawesi. It indicates the presence of small groups of people making their living by hunting and gathering, exploiting a broad range of resources from the tropical forests and savannas of the region. They used simple stone tools, some made of pebbles, most made of flakes. Few of these tools had highly refined and standardized forms, giving an image of primitiveness, particularly if compared with stone-tool technologies of a similar age in Europe or the Middle East. However, the Southeast Asian stone implements were likely used with an array of possibly quite sophisticated tools, made of wood and bamboo, to hunt and collect a broad spectrum of animals and plants from the tropical environment. The scantiness of the archaeological record suggests that, in stone-tool technology, local variations on the basic theme may have occurred, with somewhat more specialized forms in certain areas, as in northeast Borneo and southern Sulawesi. It is not known whether these variations reflect local cultural idiosyncrasies or an adaptation to specific environmental conditions or challenges.

### Hoabinhian culture

In mainland Southeast Asia, the end of the Ice Age is clearly associated with a significant shift in cultural patterns. Starting roughly around fifteen thousand years ago, pebbles chipped into a variety of tools of characteristic shapes began to dominate stone-tool technologies. The new archaeological manifestation is known as the Hoabinhian culture or tradition, after the province (in northern Vietnam) where French scholars in the 1930s first observed it. Since this change in stone tools coincides more or less with the worldwide amelioration of climates toward the end of the last Ice Age, it is tempting to see it as a response to environmental change; however, that the technological change is seen over a wide area, which would have included a range of different environments, speaks against such an interpretation. Also, despite the technological shift, broad subsistence patterns do not seem to have changed much from the earlier period and continued to rely on the hunting and collecting of a broad range of wild resources from the seashore and the forest. Cultural patterns that seem characteristic of the Hoabinhian include human burial in a flexed position, and the extensive use of red ochre.

Vietnamese archaeologists distinguish three Hoabinhian phases: Son Vi, Hoabinhian proper, and Bacsonian. The Bacsonian is distinguished by the addition to the technological repertory of simple pottery and chipped stone axes whose cutting edges have been ground smooth. Next to southern China and Japan, Southeast Asia claims one of the oldest records of pottery manufacture. Research by Chester Gorman at Spirit Cave in northwestern Thailand in the 1970s suggested that Hoabinhian communities might have engaged in incipient forms of agriculture as long as ten thousand years ago; this claim, however, has not been sustained by subsequent research.

Hunters and gatherers have historically been involved in the collecting of highly prized forest products (including resins, beeswax, and aromatic woods) for the worldwide trade in exotic Southeast Asian raw materials.

Hoabinhian sites occur in three contexts: as caves, as wide scatters of stone tools in open areas, and as shell middens along the seacoast. The last are mounds built up from the discarded shells of shellfish collected for food. The Hoabinhian Period is clearly documented for all of mainland Southeast Asia, including the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra. There is some scattered evidence of tools of the Hoabinhian type in the Philippines and on the island of Borneo. The rest of island Southeast Asia does not seem to share in the Hoabinhian tradition; rather, the earlier tradition of stone-tool technologies based chiefly on the use of flake tools seems to continue without significant change for several thousand years beyond the Pleistocene.

#### **THE BEGINNINGS OF AGRICULTURE IN MAINLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA**

Not only the use of flaked stone tools but also the tradition of hunting and gathering survived in Southeast Asia for a long time. Hunting economies were not universally replaced by the development and spread of subsequent agricultural technologies and economies. Indeed, hunting and gathering are still practiced by some small tribal groups, even though they have adopted iron and other modern materials for their weapons. It does appear that, in the later prehistory and early history of the region, hunting changed from a primary subsistence activity to a more specialized economic endeavor, in which hunters focused mostly on the collecting of wild resources for trade with agricultural communities who provided in exchange manufactured products and starch staples. In many cases, hunters and gatherers have historically (and probably also in late prehistory) been involved in the collecting of highly prized forest products, including resins, beeswax, and aromatic woods, for the worldwide trade in exotic Southeast Asian raw materials. The further course of Southeast Asian prehistory does not involve a simple wholesale replacement of earlier traditions by subsequent innovations but resembles the development of an increasingly complex mosaic of interacting traditions.

In the Southeast Asian islands, stone-tool technologies probably tied to the continuing hunter-gatherer tradition show some peculiar innovations in some areas in the addition of more highly formalized and specialized stone tools around 7000 B.C. At various sites in the Philippines, Sulawesi, Java, and Timor, stone tools are found made of blades, elongated flakes with straight parallel sides, produced by a more sophisticated technique. In some cases, they are further worked to produce tiny cutting tools with one blunted edge, resembling European microliths. In southern Sulawesi, archaeologists also find small stone projectile points, some with serrated edges. The historical implications of these developments are unclear. Some of them persisted for a long time, in some cases well into the historic period, suggesting once more both coexistence and interaction between expanding agricultural communities and bands of hunter-gatherers.

Specifics about the beginning of agriculture in Southeast Asia, and with it the creation of more permanently settled communities, remain somewhat obscure. Much

of the archaeological research on early agriculture in the region has focused on the elucidation of the history of the domestication and cultivation of rice, even though archaeologists recognize that Southeast Asian agricultural systems involve many indigenous crops, some of which may have preceded the emergence of rice as a dominant staple. Actual remains of prehistoric rice have been found in many sites throughout south China and Southeast Asia.

The oldest evidence for rice comes from Hemudu, a site in the Hangzhou Bay area of Zhejiang Province, and dates to 5000 B.C. At Hemudu, a thick layer of the remains of rice, including straw, husks, and seeds, is associated with agricultural tools, domesticated animals, and substantial houses, indicative of a permanent settlement. The period of the Hemudu settlement predates the time of the ethnic Han expansion to the south and represents a time when south China was occupied by populations related ethnically and linguistically to populations in Southeast Asia. The ethnic-minority nationalities of south China are the descendants of these inhabitants.

### EARLY AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES

On the mainland of Southeast Asia proper, good evidence for early agricultural communities comes from well-studied sites in Thailand (including Ban Chiang, Non Nok Tha, and Ban Na Di in the northeast, and Khok Phanom Di and the Bang Pakong Valley in the Chao Phraya floodplain, near the coast of the Gulf of Siam) and in northern and central Vietnam. Though the evidence is indirect, studies of sediments containing prehistoric charcoal, pollen, and phytoliths (microscopic silica grains, found in plant structures) strongly suggest that rice cultivators were settled in the coastal area of the Gulf of Siam by at least the fifth, and maybe the sixth, millennium B.C.

The oldest direct evidence for settled agricultural villages comes from northeastern Thailand (the sites of Ban Chiang, Non Nok Tha) and northern Vietnam (the sites of the Phùng Nguyên Period), and dates back to at least 3000 B.C. or earlier. Most of the sites occur as low mounds, which rise from a meter to three meters above the surrounding plain and are the result of the activities of generations of early villagers. These farmers tended to settle on slightly elevated ground along the margins of floodplains. The remains of their villages include evidence of houses on stilts, cemetery areas, well-made pottery, and a variety of utilitarian and ornamental artifacts. The presence of burials and associated artifacts has helped archaeologists define cultural sequences and has allowed them to engage in tentative studies of demography and social organization.

In the early settlement phase (dating from the beginning of the third millennium B.C. to about 2000 B.C.), the technology of these villages was typically neolithic, marked by ground and polished stone axes and pottery, most of it decorated with cord impressions and occasionally incised designs. The dead were buried in extended position, lying on their backs, and usually accompanied by some pottery and occasionally other artifacts, including ornaments. In some cases, whole animals, or portions of animals, were buried with the dead, presumably as offerings.

There is indubitable evidence of rice and domesticated animals, including pigs, cattle, and dogs. The agricultural economy was complemented by some amount of hunting and exploiting of freshwater resources (fish and shellfish). There is considerable variety in the forms of pottery vessels, including utilitarian styles and others evidently meant for ritual or other special purposes. Clay spindle whorls indicate the practice of spinning and weaving. Ornaments include beads and bangles of shell and stone. At some sites, such as Khok Phanom Di, situated in a resource-rich estuarine environment, prehistoric villagers seem to have commanded considerable wealth.

During the second phase of settlement history, we can tentatively trace some

broad social developments in northeastern Thailand. There is evidence for population growth, an expansion and intensification of agricultural systems, craft specialization (in the manufacture of pottery and bronze, the latter discussed below), some differentiation in the size and function of settlements, and distinctions in the way people were treated in burial. Together, the evidence suggests both an expansion of social systems and increasing complexity in their organization, particularly the emergence of social ranking. The second settlement phase is also associated with the appearance of bronze metallurgy, a prehistoric development often seen as a sign of social intensification.

### **Early metallurgy**

Dating the first appearance of metals has been one of the thorniest and most controversial issues in Southeast Asian archaeology. Until the excavation of Non Nok Tha (in the late 1960s), it was thought that bronze and iron had been introduced to the region more or less simultaneously, late in the first millennium B.C. The work at Non Nok Tha, and at subsequent excavations at Ban Chiang and Ban Nadi, leaves no doubt that bronze metallurgy made its appearance in mainland Southeast Asia much earlier—at least by the late, and possibly by the beginning of the second millennium B.C.

Bronze manufacture apparently started out as a local village craft and is in evidence at most sites of that period. Recent excavations by Vincent Piggott at Non Pa Wai and other sites in central Thailand suggest that the manufacture and distribution of bronze artifacts may actually have involved a more complex system, with specialized communities smelting copper from ore and distributing it as ingots. Local artisans seem to have then remelted the copper with tin and cast it as bronze artifacts. The range of artifacts produced included axes, points of spears, fishhooks, bells, and bracelets. Many of them were cast by a fairly sophisticated process in bivalve molds made from sandstone.

### **Phùng Nguyên culture of Vietnam**

Neolithic developments in northern Vietnam parallel fairly well those in northeastern Thailand. At the confluence of the Red and Black rivers, settled villages appeared toward the latter part of the third millennium B.C. Similar to their counterparts in Thailand, the archaeological sites form low mounds, located on slightly elevated ground along the margins of floodplains. Vietnamese archaeologists call the first phase of this development the Phùng Nguyên culture. Sites of this period are rich in stone adzes of a variety of forms, stone bracelets and other ornaments, and pottery. Many of the pots are decorated with incised parallel lines, filled with multiple impressions made by a small tool to create a typical design. Similar designs are found in sites of a comparable age in Thailand. Evidence of rice has been found in Phùng Nguyên sites. The working of bronze seems to have made its appearance toward the end of this phase, though extant bronze artifacts remain rare.

Around 1500 B.C., Phùng Nguyên culture was replaced by the Đồng Đậu culture, associated not only with a different type of pottery—vessels decorated with multiple parallel incised lines, rarely with impressions—but also with a great blossoming of the use of bronze. The bronze technology was quite similar to that of Thailand and involved the use of rather sophisticated bivalve molds. The range and style of bronze artifacts produced resembled, once again, those in Thailand, including socketed axes, points of spears, bracelets, and a variety of other ornaments. Around 1100 B.C., the Đồng Đậu culture was succeeded by the Gò Mun culture, which lasted until about the fifth century B.C.

There has been much discussion about the historical source of metallurgy in

Southeast Asia. Before the excavations in Thailand and Vietnam, it had been assumed that the knowledge of metals and their manufacture had been introduced to the region in protohistoric times from China or India or both regions. The early dates we now have for metal in Southeast Asia make this assumption more difficult to sustain, particularly since the early metal sites are not associated with other materials derived from these distant sources. Both the technology and the cultural forms it is associated with are quite different from the working of bronze and bronze artifacts found in either China or India and exhibit a strongly local character. Few archaeologists would suggest that bronze metallurgy in Southeast Asia represents an independent invention, but its historical sources remain obscure.

### THE SPREAD OF NEOLITHIC CULTURES IN ISLAND SOUTHEAST ASIA

The introduction and spread of agriculture in island Southeast Asia is less well defined. There is, once again, considerable debate over dating. More importantly, few sites have yielded remains of cultivated plants, so the presence of agriculture is inferred on the basis of indirect evidence, including the presence of pottery and tools interpreted to be agricultural in function. The Southeast Asian islands also lack, for the most part, excavations of permanent village settlements until a much later stage of prehistory.

Nevertheless, it appears that agricultural communities first appeared in the north and spread from there to the south and east. The earliest sites are reported from Taiwan (again an area that was prehistorically in the Southeast Asian, rather than the Chinese, cultural sphere), with sites ascribed by K. C. Chang and others to the Ta-p'en-k'eng culture, sites of which date to 4300–2500 B.C., and are characterized by cord-marked pottery with incised decorations, polished stone axes and adzes, and chipped stone hoes. The Yüan-shan culture—related, but somewhat later—dates to 2500 B.C. and later. It is associated with globular vessels that are not cord marked but are occasionally decorated with punctations, incised patterns, and fine red or brown clay slips. Other artifacts include polished stone axes and adzes, chipped stone hoes, clay spindle whorls, and stone knives formally reminiscent of later metal knives used for harvesting rice. The Australian archaeologist Peter Bellwood has argued that the predecessor to the Ta-p'en-k'eng and Yüan-shan cultures is found in coastal south China, particularly in the culture represented by the Hemudu site (Bellwood 1985). Evidence for the presence of rice is reported from one site in Taiwan in the form of the impressions that grains of rice had made in pottery dating to ca. 3000 B.C. Foxtail millet may have been another important crop.

From Taiwan, Neolithic communities appear to have spread to the Philippines. Pottery with similarities to the ceramics of Yüan-shan has been found at Dimolit, a site on the coast of northeastern Luzon. Dating to between 2500 and 1500 B.C., this site also yielded the outlines of two small houses, with postholes and hearths. Other sites with similar pottery have been found throughout the Philippines, though they vary from each other in other details.

Red-slip pottery reminiscent of Taiwanese and Philippine wares have been unearthed in parts of Indonesia, including the Talaud Islands to the north of Sulawesi, in southern Sulawesi, northern Borneo, and Timor. The Timorese sites are of particular importance, as they have also yielded bones of pigs dating to about 3000 B.C., indicating husbandry in the context of a neolithic agricultural economy. Remains of the Tahitian chestnut (*Inocarpus* sp.), bamboo, and gourds have also been recovered from these sites.

Not so much is known about the early Neolithic cultures in the islands as about early farming communities on the mainland of Southeast Asia, particularly those excavated in Thailand and Vietnam. Bellwood believes that the appearance of



Though the late prehistory of Southeast Asia remains difficult to interpret, there is now ample evidence that indigenous peoples formed complex social and political systems before the rise of the earliest recognizable Hinduized states.

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Neolithic cultures in the islands is due to an expansion of a distinctive and identifiable cultural group from the South China coast, the ancestors of the contemporary Austronesian-speaking peoples, who predominate in the Southeast Asian islands, and settled the farther Pacific reaches of Micronesia and Polynesia. These colonists, he believes, brought to Taiwan, the Philippines, and western Indonesia the cultivation of rice, millet, and sugarcane, the raising of pigs and dogs, and the crafts of weaving, making bark-derived cloth, and manufacturing sophisticated tools of polished stone.

More on the basis of evidence derived from historical linguistics than archaeology, Bellwood further argues that, as these populations moved into the southern Philippines and Borneo around 2500 B.C., they added from local sources a range of new items to their agricultural repertory, including yams, taro, breadfruit, bananas, the ingredients associated with chewing betel, and domestic fowl. In their marine technology, they added the sail to their canoes, which gave them greater mobility and aided them eventually in moving out into the wider Pacific. As they reached more equatorial areas, and particularly as they spread into eastern Indonesia, local environments proved less congenial to the cultivation of rice. Rice thus declined in importance as a crop and was completely abandoned in the settlement of the Pacific Islands.

The further development of Neolithic cultures in the islands is even less well defined. Sites have been recorded in the Philippines, Sulawesi, and Timor dating to 1500 B.C. and later, and containing pottery with incised and stamp-impressed decorations of broadly similar patterns. They include decorations of impressed dots, circles, and semicircles, sometimes applied within borders of incised lines. This pottery is reminiscent of Lapita ware, a ceramic ware typically associated with the settlement of the islands of the western Pacific around 1500 to 1000 B.C. by a population of highly efficient sailors, who clearly traced their cultural ancestry to somewhere in Southeast Asia.

Bellwood proposes either the Philippines or eastern Indonesia as the homeland of the people producing Lapita pottery, and thus of the Pacific Islanders. Recent excavations at the Bukit Tengkorak rock shelter in Sabah, northern Borneo, testify to the mobility and wide-flung contacts of late Neolithic communities in island Southeast Asia: besides pottery with Lapita affinities, the site yielded also obsidian flakes that, based on their chemical composition, were determined to have come from Talasea in the Bismarck Archipelago, about 6,500 kilometers to the east of Borneo. Talasea was a major source of obsidian for Lapita people, and Talasea obsidian is known to have been widely traded throughout the western Pacific. The finds in Sabah extend this network well into Southeast Asia.

#### **THE COMING OF CIVILIZATION**

The study of Southeast Asian civilizations has always been affected by the manifest dominance of religious, philosophical, and political systems derived from India and,

to a lesser extent, China. Until after the 1950s, when modern prehistoric research was introduced to the region, it was not unreasonable to assume that what culture historians like to call civilizations were due in Southeast Asia almost entirely to derivation from the outside. In this interpretation, Indian and Chinese systems of statecraft and administration were seen as having been superimposed on unsophisticated local societies. Though the late prehistory of Southeast Asia remains difficult to interpret in many ways, there is now ample evidence that indigenous peoples formed complex social and political systems before the rise of the earliest recognizable Hinduized states.

By the end of the second settlement phase in northeastern Thailand, the treatment of select burials suggests strongly that local societies had become stratified. The presence of exotic artifacts in the form of nonlocal pottery and ornaments of marine shells indicates far-flung trading connections—which, in turn, attest to the presence of an elite social stratum interested in obtaining exotic goods to use as manifestations of power and to manipulate as instruments of social control. This developmental trend took one big step further in the third settlement phase, beginning sometime in the early first millennium B.C.

There is extensive evidence during this phase for social and political competition among communities, typical of systems on the way to coalescing into larger political organizations. This evidence includes indications of increased warfare, indicated by burials with decapitated heads. Among bronze artifacts, weapons became more common. Some villages appear to have been pillaged. The valleys of the Mun and Chi rivers of the southern Khorat Plateau, northeastern Thailand, saw the development of fortified sites surrounded by moats. There was at least a threefold division in the size of these sites, ranging from 15 to 20 hectares for the small sites to 68 hectares for the largest. This hierarchy of settlements suggests regionally organized political systems, beyond the level of autonomous agricultural villages, under centralized control.

Consistent with the evidence for political systems that expand in size and complexity was an increased sophistication of locally produced artifacts, including pottery covered with fine red slip or elaborately painted decoration, of which the painted wares from Ban Chiang have received by far the greatest fame. Indeed, although fine painted pottery has been found in most sites of that period, none has yielded ceramics in the numbers or of the elaboration as those recovered from Ban Chiang. The growing power of elites is indicated also by a great increase in the variety of exotic goods present, including beads of glass and carnelian, the latter an import from India. As part of an economy managed by central political powers and geared, in part, to an extensive trading network, salt was apparently produced from deposits in northeastern Thailand for trade to other parts of Southeast Asia and southern China. Toward the end of the phase, burial customs changed from inhumation to cremation, signaling a dramatic shift in one of the most central rituals.

One of the more important technological innovations of the late settlement phase involved the addition of iron to the metallurgical repertory, probably sometime between 600 and 500 B.C. It appeared first in the form of such bimetallic artifacts as points of spears with forged iron blades, to which a bronze socket was cast on. Iron artifacts became more common during the later part of the phase but never replaced bronze. At about the same time, excavations at the site of Ban Don Ta Phet in western Thailand revealed, besides iron implements, a large number of bronze artifacts that stand out for their variety and technological sophistication. Most of the artifacts have a high tin content, which produces a shiny, silvery metal (the Romans called a similar bronze *speculum*), brittle and difficult to work. Extremely thin-walled and often remarkably large, vessels were first cast in a lost-wax process, then forged, and eventually finished by being polished on a lathe. Many of them are decorated with



FIGURE 1 Bronze drum-gong in the collection of the Institute of Culture and Arts, Hồ Chí Minh City, Vietnam. Photo by Terry E. Miller.

engraved geometric patterns and figurative designs. There is also excellent evidence at Ban Don Ta Phet of trade interactions with distant India and northern Vietnam.

### Vietnam

In Vietnam, the working of bronze blossomed greatly during the Gò Mun Period (from c. 1100 to 500 B.C.). Artifacts previously made of stone were now made of bronze, retaining their traditional forms. New types of bronze artifacts appeared and became standard items during the Đông Sơn Period, which followed. Pottery was more highly fired than during the previous periods, indicating improvements in manufacturing technology (and probably more sophisticated demands), and was decorated with incised curvilinear and rectangular lines.

The Phùng Nguyên–Đông Đậu–Gò Mun sequence of cultural phases applies primarily to the Red River Valley. Vietnamese archaeologists report finding local variants of that sequence in other parts of northern Vietnam; however, all of them converge in the final phase of Vietnamese prehistory, the Đông Sơn Period (about 700 to 100 B.C.). The period takes its name from a site located on the banks of the Mã River in Thanh Hóa Province, where Olov Janse excavated parts of a large cemetery in the second half of the 1930s. Other Đông Sơn sites have meanwhile been found, and many have been excavated. They yield a rich array of bronze artifacts, some iron artifacts, personal ornaments of semiprecious stone, and pottery. Though technologically well made, the pottery of this period is little adorned. Much artistic effort, however, was lavished on bronze artifacts.

The most spectacular items in that regard are bronze drums, cast in complex piece molds and highly decorated, both on top and on the sides Đông Sơn (figure 1). The top (tympanum) always has a star in the center, surrounded by multiple concentric circles, filled variably with geometric motifs and stylized animals, particularly common among them birds identified as cranes. On the edge of the tympanum are often four frogs, cast in the round. The side (mantle) is normally decorated, in some cases with incised scenes of boats filled with fantastically dressed humans, sometimes brandishing spears or bows and arrows. Other decorations on drums show domestic scenes, processions, and what may be interpreted as ritual performances, which appear to include mouth organs and other instruments. Much valuable information about life during the Đông Sơn Period can be derived from the information on the drums, though the interpretation of the scenes, often highly stylized, is open to interpretation.

The information gleaned from the drums is of importance, however, because archaeological research on the Đông Sơn Period is deficient in two important kinds of evidence: few settlement sites are known for the period, so our knowledge almost exclusively derives from cemetery sites; and because of soil conditions, few traces of the bodies have survived with the graves, so the presence of a grave must often be inferred on the basis of clusters of artifacts. This deprives archaeologists of important evidence in the interpretation of the cemeteries. One significant settlement has been found in the site of Cổ Loa, which may furnish us with the earliest evidence of urbanism in Southeast Asia. The first phase of Cổ Loa as a central settlement is associated with Đông Sơn pottery, a large bronze drum, and many other bronze artifacts, and probably dates to 300 B.C. or earlier. The area defined by the outermost of three ramparts encloses some 600 hectares, though this probably represents an expansion sometime after the Đông Sơn Period.

In some of the richest graves of the Đông Sơn Period, one finds Chinese artifacts such as bronze mirrors and daggers (*ko*), and some of the graves themselves, particularly of the late Đông Sonian phase, are constructed of brick in a Chinese manner. This has sometimes been taken to indicate actual Chinese presence—and, indeed,

the infiltration of the Đông Sơn social and political elite by Chinese immigrants, who may have come to Vietnam in advance of the general Han expansion. Han military expeditions into south China did lead to the formal annexation of northern Vietnam by the Chinese emperor Wu Tì in 111 B.C. and the creation of three commanderies: Chiao Chih (Tongking), Chiu Chen (Thanh Hóa), and Jenan (North Annam), though local administration remained for some time in the hands of traditional local authorities. However, an alternative, and probably better, explanation of the presence of Chinese artifacts in Đông Sơn sites is that they were obtained in trade from China by local lords. That Đông Sơn communities entertained an impressive network of trade over long distances is also indicated by the fact that Đông Sơn drums have been found scattered throughout mainland and island Southeast Asia, except the Philippines and Borneo. They can be traced as far as Burma to the west, and eastern Indonesia to the south.

### **The Dian culture of Yunnan**

The Đông Sơn culture of Vietnam finds a parallel in the Dian culture of central Yunnan. There can be no doubt about the extremely close cultural relationship between the Đông Sơn and the Dian cultures, though the artifactual record recovered from burials of the latter is even more elaborated and spectacular than that for Đông Sơn. Once again, information about the Dian culture derives exclusively from several fabulously rich cemetery sites. No settlement sites have so far been identified or excavated, and nothing is known about the settlement pattern of that period. The richness of Dian bronze artifacts is hard to describe briefly. They include great drums of the Đông Sơn type—drums that, as with the Đông Sơn situation, are found distributed far beyond the Dian core area in the provinces of Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou, and Sichuan. Some of the drums in the Dian area—and many large containers, some of which have been found filled with cowrie shells—are topped with platforms or lids covered with elaborate scenes executed in figures cast in the round. They include market scenes, religious and political rituals with processions, and domestic scenes. Some of the lids are topped by martial scenes of men on horses, the finest ones being gilded. There is a profusion of bronze sculptures (representations of a longhorn, humpback type of cattle are common, as are attacking tigers and other wildlife), models of houses (replete with a full set of domestic activities), agricultural tools, and weapons (including daggers, swords, points of spears, maces, the release mechanisms for crossbows, and body armor). Many of the bronze artifacts are further decorated with ornamental motifs or scenes, either executed in low relief or engraved.

Together, the bronze artifacts furnish a remarkably detailed picture of Dian society. They attest to a highly stratified social system, which had the population and other resources to maintain an elaborate and expensive elite culture. Dian clearly emerged out of local roots and shared this trait with Đông Sơn and other, less well-known, local south Chinese Bronze Age cultures.

Both Đông Sơn and Dian leaders maintained trade interactions with distant areas, among them the Chinese empire. It may well have been this trade that brought the southern peoples and their polities to the attention of the Han. Several Chinese historical records surviving from that period provide useful, though often skewed, descriptions of the “Southern Barbarians.” Sima Qian reports in his famous history that in 109 B.C. the Chinese emperor Wu Tì prepared to send troops to the south to conquer and destroy the barbarian kingdoms. The king of Dian submitted freely. He was rewarded by being entrusted with the continued administration of his territory, now however designated as the commandery of Yizhou, and was presented with a golden seal. A golden seal corresponding to the historical description has been found at the site of Shizhaishan.

The picture changed suddenly and drastically around 500 to 400 B.C., when both bronze and iron appeared simultaneously in the Philippines and in Indonesia, where the imported technology was adapted to local aesthetic and ceremonial needs.

### **The Sa Huynh culture in Vietnam**

While Đông Sơn has a close cultural relationship to the north in the Dian culture, another Vietnamese bronze culture has been found to the south. It was documented first in a cemetery near the village of Sa Huynh on the coast of central Vietnam; other sites have been found, some predating Sa Huynh itself, once again illustrating a continuous local development. The Sa Huynh culture stands out by the fact that it practiced cremation. The ashes were interred in earthenware jars with finely made pottery, iron and bronze artifacts and various ornaments of semiprecious stone. The incised decorations of pottery found in Sa Huynh burial urns shares some similarities with various other prehistoric pottery in mainland Southeast Asia, including north-east Thailand and northern Vietnam, but it has its closest affinities in the Philippines. In addition, some personal ornaments found at Sa Huynh, interpreted as pendants and earrings, are encountered in virtual duplicate in the islands. The dean of Southeast Asian archaeologists, W. G. Solheim, II, proposed the concept of a Sa Huynh–Kalanay ceramic tradition, which he saw linked with a late prehistoric movement of Austronesian-speaking peoples from the coast of Vietnam to the Philippines. More recently, he suggested that the formal affinities may rather be the result of interactions with a group of Austronesian-speakers he calls Nusantao, who he believes were resident in the Southeast Asian islands and were a maritime-based people, engaging in the exploitation of marine resources and trade.

In all, the evidence indicates that throughout mainland Southeast Asia and southern China, the last millennium B.C. was a time when out of local farming communities arose larger social and political systems, which brought communities within a region together under centralized political leadership. This process was correlated with another development, the emergence of social stratification. It was further linked with the intensification of agricultural economies, with increasing craft specialization (and increasing artistic elaboration of elite material culture), the control of subsistence and craft economy by the central elites, and an ever-widening network of trade. In other words, we see the emergence of chiefdoms, first small and localized in their respective spheres of control, but over time growing in size and complexity. This development did not occur in synchrony across the subcontinent; rather, the cultural and social landscape of Southeast Asia remained, as it had been for some time, a mosaic of diverse components. Indeed, the degree of diversity intensified. The largest and most complex systems are seen in northern Vietnam and central Yunnan, where the development almost certainly crossed the threshold into state organization. The same may perhaps also be true for the Mun and Chi River area of northeastern Thailand, and possibly also for some other parts of the region, for which we still have insufficient archaeological evidence.

The important point is that we can observe the evolution of social complexity as an internal process. Typically of aristocracies and their political leaders, the Southeast Asian elites reached out to distant areas for trade and other interactions. It was this

development that prepared for the next stage, signaling the dawn of history for the region, and entailing the importation not only of Indian and Chinese artifacts but also of religious ideas, social philosophies, and systems of political administration. It was with the tools of these intellectual imports that some Southeast Asian chiefs and princes then effected a further expansion of their powers and established the earliest historical empires of Champa and Funan.

### PREHISTORY IN THE ISLANDS

Turning from the Southeast Asian mainland to the islands, we find that the archaeological record for the last two or three millennia B.C. is sparse and incoherent. We do know, however, that prehistoric communities in the islands did not share with their mainland counterparts an early involvement in bronze metallurgy. This situation may reflect the fact that there was no mechanism for transmitting the knowledge of bronze technology to the islands (possibly because of a lack of contact between the mainland and the islands), or that island communities were socially unreceptive to this technology. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, it appears that until the middle of the first millennium B.C., island societies remained organized in small, autonomous units, focused on subsistence economies based on agriculture and fishing. There was evidently a great deal of mobility among island societies during the last fifteen hundred years B.C., with far-flung exchange contacts, but it occurred in the context of a maritime-oriented subsistence economy.

The picture changed suddenly and drastically around 500 to 400 B.C., when both bronze and iron appeared simultaneously through many of the islands. In the Philippines, the source seems to have been Sa Huynh. This is suggested by other exchange goods and similar pottery shared with that site. In Indonesia, however, the source was more likely Đông Sơn, as the scattering of Đông Sơn drums throughout much of the archipelago suggests.

The occurrence of Đông Sơn drums in Indonesia raises a problem. Clearly, these artifacts must have been of enormous value, given the skill and labor invested in their manufacture and the long distance they traveled. How could small autonomous farming and fishing communities afford such treasures? Did they possess exchange goods of equal value to the Đông Sonians? Or is the currently available archaeological record greatly understating the level of development of island societies in the late first millennium B.C.?

It is important to note that centers of metallurgy began to appear quickly in some parts of Indonesia, where the imported technology was adapted to local aesthetic and ceremonial needs. Some of the bronze artifacts made locally still retain a Đông Sonian flavor, whereas others deviate greatly from the Đông Sơn model. Many of the artifacts are exceedingly elaborate, almost baroque in their ornateness. Their construction indicates that their function was almost certainly ceremonial or representational rather than utilitarian. These developments do indicate the presence of social and political systems above the village level during that period, when leaders could command the means for such specialized craft production.

There were several early, historically recognizable states in the islands, the largest and most expansionary of them Srivijaya. They are documented both through Chinese historical records and through inscriptions that survive from the sixth and seventh centuries A.D. The archaeological record is insufficient to link these historical empires with preceding prehistoric communities and political organizations.

### ASIAN ART AND MUSIC IN PREHISTORY

Even though the archaeological record remains inadequate in many respects and is full of gaps, an ever more coherent picture of the ancient cultural development of the region has emerged over the past four decades. It tells us not only about the great

changes that have occurred but also of long-term cultural-historical continuities. It demonstrates clearly a strong internal dynamic, in which Southeast Asia interacted with surrounding parts of the world as both a recipient of cultural innovations and a source of demographic, social, and cultural developments. We are now able to perceive deep, indigenous roots for the Hinduized and Sinicized historical civilizations of the region. Pursuing this generalized insight in a more specific context, can we trace the autochthonous prehistoric sources for the historic arts of Southeast Asia?

In investigating this question, we are highly constrained, not only by the facts that the number of well-excavated archaeological sites is remarkably small and the recovered materials are often poorly reported, but also by the peculiarities of archaeological preservation. In the decorative and figurative arts, our evidence is limited almost exclusively to ceramics and, for the last two millennia B.C. or so, to metal artifacts. Surely, prehistoric communities must also have expressed themselves artistically through wood, basketry, cloth, and other media. We know from contemporary ethnographic analogs that artistic endeavors in different media tend to share certain design principles and stylistic elements even though each medium also tends to be invested with a series of forms and motifs peculiar to it, and each is usually employed in specific and circumscribed contexts.

A review of the record of prehistoric pottery shows that many of the decorative motifs found among the early Neolithic communities throughout the region have endured over many millennia. Allowing for a large amount of local and subregional variability, we nevertheless find broad regional similarities and continuities. The elements of triangles, curvilinear designs, interlocking spirals, and concentric circles, the manner in which open spaces are filled in between major design elements, approaches to the way in which space is apportioned within a design, and other elements have endured into contemporary designs found on textiles, metalwork in the southern Philippines and Indonesia, and decorative woodwork. Within this broad generalization, art historians have tried, with varying degrees of success, to trace more specific historical and cultural relationships.

Until the late Bronze Age (ca. 500 B.C.), we have almost no records of Southeast Asian figurative art. Rare exceptions include small figurines of people and animals (cattle, elephants) made of baked clay from the earlier bronze period of northeastern Thailand and paintings on rocks found in many parts of the region but never well dated. We have, therefore, virtually no knowledge of the symbolic content of prehistoric Southeast Asian art. From ethnographic parallels and early historic accounts, we may assume that much of the content dealt with the animistic world of ancestors and natural spirits, some of which survives in contemporary tribal art and has not been completely superseded, even by the conversion of historic Southeast Asian civilizations to the great world religions. A fine example of this are the carved images of the thirty-seven natural spirits (*na'*), venerated in a chapel of the Swe Dagon pagoda in Rangoon, Burma.

The most elaborate artistic legacy survives in the bronzework of the Đông Sơn and Dian cultures of Vietnam and Yunnan. It includes a rich ornamental record, a wealth of individual figures, extensive scenes rendered by engraving or cast in low relief, and a large body of bronze sculptures. This art bears witness to specific artistic traditions, among them the textile art of the period. Many of the representations allow us to gain insights as to the rich ceremonial costumes of the period.

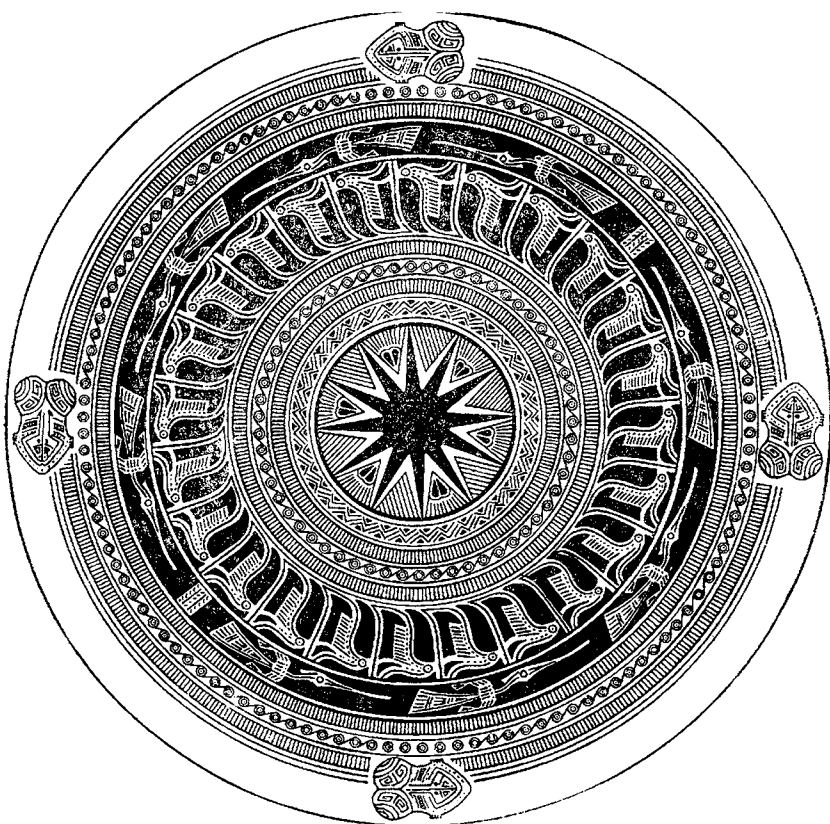
### Music

Among the arts represented in the Đông Sơn and Dian record is music. Much discussion has taken place about the function and use of the drums themselves. Given the enormous effort, skill, and cost involved in their manufacture, it is logical to assume

that they were made for, and closely associated with, powerful leaders. Some writers have claimed that the drums were seen as representations of the king or a paramount chief. By the same token, it is claimed that they were sacred instruments, invested with great supernatural powers.

We are fortunate in having, on the mantles of drums and in sculpted scenes, illustrations that show drums in use. Some show an individual drum under a platform in the aft section of a boat filled with warriors in ceremonial garb; in one sculpted scene on the lid of a cowrie-shell container from Yunnan, three drums are stacked on top of each other in the center of a grouping that seems to portray a human sacrifice; and several engraved scenes depict drums arrayed under a raised platform on which humans are placed with staffs, as if to play the drums. On a drum excavated at Cổ Loa, four players have their staffs alternately raised and lowered. These latter scenes are particularly interesting. While they do not exclude the possibility that bronze drums were beaten as isolated rhythmic instruments (as to call people to assembly or to war), they indicate that bronze drums were used in musical ensembles. Similar to the bronze gongs in Southeast Asian ensembles, Đông Sơnian drums come in a range of sizes. In 1990, Vietnamese archaeologists surveyed 115 drums found in Vietnam. The heights of the instruments ranged from 17 to 67 centimeters, and the diameters from 20 to 90 centimeters. Chinese archaeologists have studied scraping marks on the inside of Dian drums and believe that they are the result of tuning. All this suggests that individual drums were manufactured to conform to a specific pitch and that several drums could be, and were, combined into ensembles. Since each drum in such an ensemble seems to have been played by an individual musician, it is tempting to infer that this involved either a simple form of ostinato or that they were used in a way akin to bell choirs (figure 2).

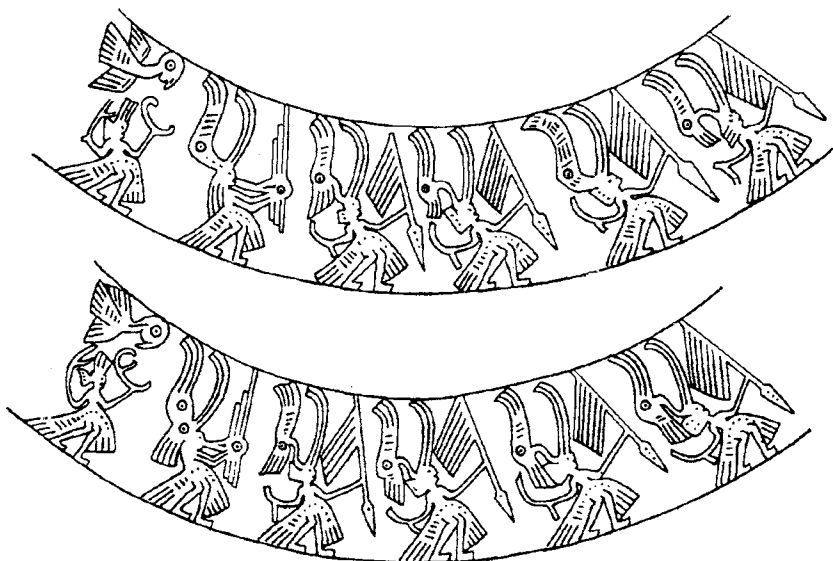
FIGURE 2 Drawing of the tympanum (top) of a bronze drum-gong from Vietnam. From Nguyễn Văn Huyền and Hoàng Vinh, *Những Trống Đồng Đông Sơn Đã Phát Hiện Ở Việt Nam* (Viện Bảo Tàng Lịch Sử, 1975), p. 279.





Since each drum in such an ensemble seems to have been played by an individual musician, it is tempting to infer that this involved either a simple form of ostinato or that they were used in a way akin to bell choirs.

FIGURE 3 Detail of martial dancers and players of free-reed mouth organs, from a Vietnamese bronze drum-gong. From Nguyễn Văn Huyền and Hoàng Vinh, *Những Trống Đồng Đông Sơn Đã Phát Hiện Ở Việt Nam* (Viện Bảo Tàng Lịch Sử, 1975), p. 175.



Decorations on bronze drums show other musical instruments in use. Among them is an instrument strongly reminiscent of the contemporary Lao free-reed mouth organ (*khaen*), something that may be interpreted as hand-held cymbals similar to those now familiar from traditional Thai ensembles (*ching*), flutes, and bells. The mouth organs occur repeatedly, usually in the context of a row of dancers. Sculpted scenes from the Dian culture portray also several other instruments in action, in groups of musicians or groups of dancers and musicians. These instruments include hand-held drums and wind instruments related by Chinese archaeologists to the Chinese mouth organ (*sheng*). Examples of the latter have also been found as artifacts made of bronze in some of the Dian sites, at least one of them shaped like a calabash and adorned with a small cattle figurine. These instruments are less reminiscent of their Han counterparts than of similar wind instruments found today among south Chinese minorities (figure 3).

A full study of the musical traditions of the Đông Sơn and Dian cultures is yet to be carried out, but it is clear that there is a wealth of valuable archaeological information. The music of Southeast Asia appears to have ancient indigenous roots.

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# Bamboo, Rice, and Water

*Robert Wessing*

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## **Agriculture**

### **The Spiritual Context**

### **The Origin of Rice**

### **The Spirit of Rice**

### **Rice and Bamboo**

### **The Goddess of Rice**

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Three features that strike a visitor to lowland Southeast Asia are the roles played in daily life by bamboo, rice, and water. Bamboo seems to grow everywhere, and the peoples of Southeast Asia have been characterized as having bamboo cultures (Burling 1965:29). Bamboo serves as a building material, in crafts and household utensils, and as irrigation pipes, leading water into households and fields. Even the word by which we know it comes from Southeast Asia—the Malay *bambu*.

Water too seems abundant, especially to those from arid parts of the world. It flows alongside roads and paths to flood the fields of rice stretching to the horizon and patterning the lower mountainsides in their terraces, growing the crop that may be said to be the defining feature of life. Indeed, to a great part of the population of the area, to eat a meal is to eat rice, and a meal without rice is thought to be incomplete, leaving one dissatisfied. In fact, the eating of rice may be seen as one of the defining characteristics of being human; visitors are asked “if they are able to eat rice yet” and in some mythologies, spirits became human after consuming it (Terwiel 1994:18).

The presence of these features is set by the ecological conditions of the landscape, which contrasts mountain chains, valleys, and lowlands (Dobby 1961). In most of the islands, the landscape is simplified to a mountain-lowland contrast, without major continental rivers. The lowlands are often swampy, extended by riverine flooding. The climate is tropical, with distinct wet and dry monsoons in many places, bringing alternate periods of hot, dry weather and cool, rainy weather, the latter being the time of activity for subsistence agriculture. The mountains modulate the intensity of the rains, creating a mosaic of areas receiving heavy rainfall and areas receiving much less.

The floodplains of the major rivers were not the preferred areas of early human settlement, owing to their swampiness and the difficulty of clearing their land (Demaine 1978:49–50). Human habitations were mostly concentrated in areas of more moderate rainfall—along tributary rivers, where the land was more easily cleared for both settlements and agriculture. Although easier to cope with, rainfall in this environment could be insufficient, especially for wet-rice agriculture, leading to the need for a variety of schemes of managing water. The success of these is attested

in some areas by some of the highest rural population densities in the world. The earliest settlers seem to have come primarily from the north (Huggan 1995:262), bringing a developed agricultural technology. The culture of these people was later influenced by ideas emanating from India—a script, literature, and religious concepts, which became adapted to meet local needs.

## AGRICULTURE

Southeast Asian farmers cultivate a wide variety of crops, including roots, vegetables, fruits, beans, coconuts, ginger, and peppers. Alongside these, trees and bamboo are grown specifically for use as firewood and in construction. Bamboo is especially valued because it can be put to many uses (Austin and Ueda 1970). Its seeds can be eaten, and it figures in rituals, including those associated with rice agriculture.

The most important subsistence crop is rice, a plant so old that the origin and method of its first cultivation remain unknown. Its cultivation may have started as long as ten thousand years ago in an area ranging from the Ganges plains across northern Southeast Asia into southern China (Oka 1988).

Rice can grow in dry, rain-watered fields, and in wet, flooded ones. Some scholars believe dry planting was the earlier method; others think that the crop originated as a weed, associated with the cultivation of taro in wet gardens (Barrau 1965). In traditions of East Java, Kalimantan, the Philippines, and Taiwan, the cultivation of rice followed that of root crops (Mabuchi 1954), but since not all these crops are grown in wet fields, these traditions cannot answer this question. Since rice is quite adaptable, the perfect crop for Southeast Asia, both techniques may have developed simultaneously, in response to local conditions.

Whether grown on wet fields or dry ones, rice needs water. Where water occurs, either naturally or through irrigation, it is led to the fields; where it does not, as at higher elevations, the fields depend on rainfall. To be useful, water must be managed; uncontrolled water, as from floods, can devastate the crop. This trait led some observers to postulate hydraulic societies, in which grand systems of irrigation were controlled from the center by a despotic monarch. More recent analysis has concluded that such systems were constructed on smaller scales and adapted to varying needs and conditions, often crosscutting local political authorities.

The management and construction of these systems involves creating ditches, (bamboo) pipes, and floodgates, and developing the proper gradient of the field for a slow but steady flow of water. Each system demands cooperation among farmers to arrive at a reliable supply and an equitable distribution of the commodity; relationships between humans and water have indeed been called the defining feature of the region (Huggan 1995:263; Rigg 1992:1).

## THE SPIRITUAL CONTEXT

Though many people in Southeast Asia are adherents of major religions (including Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam), people everywhere in the region believe the landscape is populated by spirits, the original owners of the land, water, and trees, and their cooperation is necessary for any enterprise, including agriculture, to succeed (Mus 1975). The spirits are related to humans; some people maintain that they originally were one group, which differentiated into humans and spirits. Natural spirits are one category, and ancestors are another; living humans may be seen as embodied spirits, which in some mythologies are said to have come about due to the spirits' eating rice. Spirits can imbue almost anything: rocks, rivers, and the forest are said to be owned or guarded by natural spirits, while ancestral ones guard their descendants' welfare.

Since these spirits are perceived to be touchy about their prerogatives, people perform rituals to ensure their cooperation. Offerings, sometimes including live sacrifices, are made to village guardians and to the more important spirits in the forest; ancestral spirits are invited to attend life-cycle rituals and are asked for their blessing.

Important to the welfare of the people, and central to beliefs about rice, bamboo, and water, is the spirits' control over the fertility of the fields and the crops, because without their cooperation no crops will grow. In Java, this fertility is sometimes seen as resulting from a marriage between the male sky and the female earth (Mabuchi 1954:71); in Malaysia, such a marriage also produced the first people (Hervey 1882:189). These perceptions are based on the observation that during the dry season, nothing grows on the land, which seems lifeless and barren; the coming of the rains turns the earth green once more.

Human sexual behavior is often taken as the model on which nature operates, and in Southeast Asia, sexual practices and taboos are part of the process of growing rice. These include adulterous men's exclusion from cultivation in Sarawak and a taboo on sexual intercourse during harvest among a variety of peoples. Since the emission of semen is seen as analogous to the flow of water, coitus might bring rain, which would ruin the harvest and chase away the spirit of the rice. Similarly, reports from Java, Burma, and Thailand tell of people actually or symbolically copulating in their fields to bring on the rains that will vivify the crops (Demaine 1978:51–52; Wilken 1912:41). Another method of ending a prolonged dry spell is bathing a cat, reversing the animal's natural proclivities, and, it is hoped, reversing the conditions of nature.

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Water, then, is seen as a source of life, controlled by spirits, reviving nature, and stimulating the growth of crops (figure 1). Because of its importance, the spirits controlling it are especially remembered at festivals and celebrations. During annual village-cleansing ceremonies in Java, in which social strains caused by daily frictions are ritually removed and harmony is restored, offerings are brought to the local source of water; this is often also the location of the village guardian spirit, remembered at family celebrations (including weddings and circumcisions), either at the source or at the place where the family usually obtains its water for daily use.

Irrigation water also receives special treatment, turning ordinary water into a fertility- or life-enhancing substance. In Java, people make offerings to this end at the

FIGURE 1 Offering to the spirit of the water in West Java, Indonesia. Photo by Robert Wessing, 1971.



Bamboo is seen as embodying the forces of growth and fertility and is closely linked with water and rice. It can sometimes be seen to grow: at least one variety can grow 30 centimeters a day.

place where the water enters the fields, while in Burma an image of a “lady of the weir” guards the water supply (Demaine 1978:61). The Chām of Vietnam call her Patao Kumei, and credit her with the introduction of irrigation (LeBar et al. 1964:247). Sometimes the water is made to flow through graveyards, where it receives ancestors’ blessing or is imbued by their spirit, linking the dead with their descendants and the fertility of their soil.

### THE ORIGIN OF RICE

A variety of myths account for the origin of rice and for why people have to work to obtain it (Mabuchi 1954). The former have been classified into those where grain is obtained (1) from heaven or a place overseas; (2) from the underworld, sometimes brought by an ancestor; or (3) from the dead body of a (usually female) supernatural being or ancestor. Various versions of the latter type of myth usually refer to a time when rice was already in the world and readily available.

In one such myth, the kernels of grain were huge, fragrant, and sweet, and one kernel would feed a family. One day a widow, while building a barn, became annoyed when the abundance of rice hampered her work. She hit the grain with a stick, breaking it into pieces, which fell into both the forest and the water. The former became upland, dry rice, while the latter turned into wet-field rice. The grain became angry at being treated cruelly—and ever since, people have had to plant and nourish it (Tambiah 1970:351–354).

In most origin myths, rice originates from the body of a spirit, in Sundanese a spirit (*pohaci*) named Tisnawati, in some cases a goddess. The idea of a spirit or nymph is the more widespread. She is said to be vain and to like facial powder, perfumes, and mirrors, with which she is thought to primp—all traits more in keeping with spirits and nymphs than with goddesses (Hazeu 1901:90).

In a continuation of the myth, this spirit is killed and buried, and out of her body grows a variety of plants, among which are rice and sometimes bamboo. The spirit is often portrayed as coming from heaven to bathe in a pool, where a young man or a prince finds her. This man then hides her clothes, preventing her from returning to the sky. She consents to marry him, stipulating that no one may ever lift the lid of the cooking pot. When this is eventually done anyway, either by the young man or someone in their household, a single grain, an ear of rice, or a little girl is found there. The spirit, after leaving instructions about the planting and care of the grain, then dies or returns to the sky.

In other versions, the spirit emerges from a jewel at the bottom of the sea, or from a tear shed by a snake, traditionally categorized as a thing of the underworld. From there, she is transported to the sky. This transportation is the cause of her death, after which her body is brought to earth to be the source of rice (Hidding 1929).

In all these myths, the spirit of rice is originally associated with the underworld

and water, the source of life. The spirit had to die before rice could grow—associating both the spirit and the rice with the ancestors, whose blessings are crucial to the maintenance of human society.

### THE SPIRIT OF RICE



FIGURE 2 The mother of rice in West Java, Indonesia. Photo by Robert Wessing, 1971.

Rice is often spoken of as having a soul or as being identical to the spirit or goddess. Nash (1965:176) mentions a mother of rice, which sometimes seems identical to the Burmese soul of rice. The soul of rice should be understood in this context as a spirit, related to human spirits, whose essence is the growing power and nourishment of rice. The mother of rice is a number (often seven) of specially selected ears of rice, harvested before the rest of the crop, in which this essence is thought to reside. Never eaten, she may, in association with other selected portions of the harvest, be used as seed in the next cycle of planting (Kruyt 1903:398). The Minangkabau of Sumatra call this seed the heart of the rice (Cole 1945:263), and the Malays speak of it as the baby of rice, *Seri Bumi* (Essence of the Earth). Just as among humans, therefore, the essence (*semangat*) is passed on through the mother to the offspring, and without it the crop would fail (figure 2).

The Dusun of Kalimantan believe ancestral spirits can influence the rice for good or evil, depending on whether their descendants remember to venerate them (Liang 1985:90). More specifically, the Iban say there is a cycle in which ancestral spirits, in the form of a nourishing dew, bring the rice to life, and the spirit of the rice gives life to people, who, when they in turn become ancestors, give life to the grain.

Conceptions about the identity of the rice crop with the spirit vary considerably. Some observers state specifically that the two are identical. In West Java and Sulawesi, the spirit of rice only impregnates the crop (Kruyt 1935:109), while according to the Malays, rice is cared for and animated by spirits of the earth, who may be personified as the Islamized prophet Ketap or 'Tap (Endicott 1970:114). In Thailand, this caring and animating is done by Mae Phosop, variously called a goddess of rice, the guardian deity of mankind, and the mother of rice (Hanks 1972:97).

### RICE AND BAMBOO

Bamboo is seen as embodying the forces of growth and fertility and is closely linked with water and rice. The ecological requirements of bamboo resemble those of rice grown on dry fields. It can sometimes be seen to grow: at least one variety can grow 30 centimeters a day. The Dusun pay homage to a sacred bamboo to assure fertility in general; yellow bamboo is thought to ward off evil influences. The tree is occasionally characterized as the container of the water of life or is used to catch the blessings given by the spirits of fertility.

Both in Taiwan and in India, myths tell how rice originated in bamboo. In Taiwan, bamboo was brought to earth by a man from heaven, who shortly after returned there (Mabuchi 1954:25). The Indian myth tells how king Rama's wife, Sita, had an extra finger on one hand, which she cut off and planted. From it grew a bamboo plant, which in its sections contained all kinds of grain, which became available to humankind through a hole in the bamboo, chewed there by a pig (Fuchs 1960:422).

In harvest ceremonies, some Sundanese make five holes in a bamboo; they then plug these holes with rice seed (ASS 1990:34). The people of Tengger, Java, do something similar during a ceremony at which they invoke ancestors and supernatural guardians (Hefner 1985:117, 123). In the Tanimbar Islands, some cooked rice is placed in three bamboos called seedlings, establishing the link between bamboo, (cooking) water, and rice, and enacting the local belief that cooked rice is the last step

in a circle that includes young bamboo, water, and “old” (cooked) rice (van der Weijden 1981:193).

The seed of bamboo, which flowers only once and then dies, is edible, and both looks like and can be cooked like rice. Both in India (Fuchs 1960:68) and among the Chin of Burma (Lehman 1963:50) there is a belief that famine follows the flowering of bamboo, perhaps due to the close association between the two grasses; Lehman, however, makes a connection between rats attracted to the bamboo that then eat the rice. A reflection of the rice-from-bamboo myth may be found in the old Sundanese practice of planting bamboos with holes in them along the ricefields. The sound made by the wind playing through these holes is said to be music to entertain the spirit of rice (Wilken 1912:40). The Balinese are said to build musical irrigation tubes from bamboo, in which the water rushing through it makes a musical sound, entertaining the spirit of rice and encouraging growth.

The ceremony in which the Sundanese place rice in the bamboo is accompanied by a musical performance using tuned, shaken bamboo rattles (*angklung*), instruments essential to the planting and harvesting rituals in various areas of Indonesia (Baier 1986). In West Java, this music was formerly essential to securing an abundant crop, its music enchanting the spirit or goddess of rice, enticing her to come and bring prosperity on earth (Baier 1985:9) (figure 3).

### THE GODDESS OF RICE

If the spiritual beliefs discussed above can be seen as dealing with village-level interests, with Sita we arrive at wider, state-level concerns, and with clear Indian religious influence on Southeast Asian beliefs. One of the consequences of Indian influence is that spirits are now called *widyadhari*, a kind of nymph or goddess, rulers of spirits. Their origin as Southeast Asian spirits remains clear from the traits ascribed to them—the previously mentioned love of powder and mirrors, and that the *widyadhari*, originally nymphs of mountains and the sky, are here associated with water and the underworld.

In Java and Bali, the Indianized goddess of agriculture is called Dewi Sri, a namesake of Sri, the Indian goddess of wealth, who has nothing to do with agriculture. In Thailand, she retained her original name, Mae Phosop. Sita is usually associated with a royal house rather than with agriculture, but both she and Sri are manifestations of the goddess Lakshmi, sometimes in Indian myth said to have been born in a plowed furrow, and sometimes during the churning of the ocean—stories that associate her with both agriculture and water (Dowson 1972:176).

Sita is sometimes portrayed as being found as a princess or a maiden inside a mysterious bamboo, which only the king can cut down; at other times, she is discovered in a clump of foam, floating on the ocean. She and the king then marry and found a royal dynasty (Wessing 1990). In Java, this myth is expressed in the relation between the Goddess of the Indian Ocean, Nyai Roro Kidul, and prince Senopati, the founder of the royal house of Mataram in the 1600s. This goddess is often portrayed as having scales, relating her to the cult of the snake (*naga* in Indonesia, *nagi* in Cambodia), thought to be the original owner of the soil in much of Southeast Asia (Jordaan 1984). In ancient Cambodia, King Kaundinya is said to have made a source of water at the site of his capital by piercing the soil, creating a spring in the shape of the snake-princess Soma (Bosch 1951:127). He was said to cohabit nightly with this snake-consort to assure the fertility and the continuity of his realm (Gaudes 1993). In Java, the rulers of the principalities of Yogyakarta and Surakarta (the successors to Mataram) are said to continue the practice regularly with Nyai Roro Kidul.

Like Sita, Sri is associated with royal houses in her incarnation as queen to the god Vishnu, who appears as king. In Javanese tales (Rassers 1959:10–19), she

FIGURE 3 Offerings to the spirit of rice (Dewi Sri) in West Java, Indonesia. Photo by Robert Wessing, 1971.







FIGURE 4 *Kaca-kaca*, uniting rice and bamboo in a representation of Mount Meru in West Java, Indonesia. Photo by Robert Wessing, 1971.

emerges from a magical jewel, brought from the bottom of the ocean to the heavens. She is adopted by the god Batara Guru, who falls in love with her. His advances rejected, he persists, and she consents if he can fulfill certain conditions, among which is to provide her with an instrument that will make music without being played (van der Weijden 1981:36). The affair ends tragically with Batara Guru's rape of Sri, who dies and is buried, to become the origin of settled life and certain plants (including rice, bamboo, and coconuts).

Sita and Sri are linked by bamboo, rice, water, and the Indianized royal house. One symbol of such a house is Mount Meru, the center of the universe and source of the cosmic power that maintains the state (figure 4). In Bali and West Java, this mountain is symbolized by a striking structure (in West Java called *kaca-kaca*)—a tall bamboo pole, from which a basket for rice is hung, realizing an integration of bamboo and rice (Wessing 1978:24). For life-cycle ceremonies, it is erected at the entrance, where musical performances take place; guests arriving for such an event need only look for the *kaca-kaca* to find their way. Kings often plow the first furrow of the season, and they are associated with spirits or sources of water. These sources are not always used for irrigation; Jordaan (1991) points out that they also supply life-giving holy water (*tirtha*) for the benefit of the state.

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# Waves of Cultural Influence

*Terry E. Miller*

*Sean Williams*

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## **Precontact Musical Sources**

**Indian Culture in Southeast Asia**

**Chinese Music in Southeast Asia and Its Legacy**

**Islam in Southeast Asia**

**The West**

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To the extent that scholars can reconstruct a chronology and a history for Southeast Asia, the process is complex. People prefer to assert their national and regional identities. Often they do not see, and sometimes they even deny, that this individuality has resulted from a process extending back into the mists of history and prehistory, in which layer after layer of outside influence transformed, and was transformed by, the cultures that received it. We cannot speak of cultural purity in any sense, and the people of Southeast Asia recognize themselves as participants in multiple levels of society: as Southeast Asians, as citizens of a nation, as carriers of a regional tradition, as groups distinct from those of another province, district, village, or even family. It is therefore appropriate to understand that Southeast Asian cultures were formed from waves of cultural influence, from both nearby and distant societies.

An examination of Southeast Asian terminology easily shows how each language has absorbed words and writing systems from others, including those of India, China, Arabia, France, the United States, and Japan. The process is obvious in the case of musical instruments. Still, though terms for instruments (and even the instruments themselves) migrate easily, the musical styles to which they contribute are too individually expressive of a given people to travel. Anyone who dismisses Vietnamese musical instruments as simply Chinese does not understand that Vietnamese melodies, being modally based, require an entirely different approach to ornamentation and the bending of tones—which proves impossible to realize on Chinese instruments; hence, to embody the Vietnamese aesthetic, Vietnamese musicians modified Chinese-derived instruments with high frets, looser strings, and a different style of decoration.

In most Southeast Asian nations, people know that their culture has foreign origins, and they are aware of enclaves of resident foreigners, foreign invasions, and their own attraction to artistic foreignness. The Burmese repertory of classical songs includes *yòudayà*, songs said to have derived from Siamese taken to Burma after 1767, when the Siamese capital (Ayuthaya) was defeated. Many Thai classical compositions invoke one of the so-called twelve languages (*sipsawng phasa*). For example, the term *khaek* in the Thai composition “*Khaek Lopburi*” suggests a Malaysian or Indian origin, but it is actually a composition by Choi Suntarawathin. Similarly, the

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<b>organology</b>	The study of musical instruments	<b>ranat</b>	Thai xylophones
<b>lithophone</b>	Stone xylophone	<b>lanat</b>	Laotian suspended horizontal xylophone
<b>animism</b>	Religion that personifies natural elements	<b>roneat</b>	Khmer xylophones
<b>pa'tala</b>	Burmese suspended bamboo xylophone with twenty-four keys		

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*jin* in "*Jin Rua*" suggests a Chinese origin, but it is by Luang Pradit Phairoh. Vietnamese in Thọ Xuân Village in Thanh Hóa Province perform masked dances invoking the Cham, the Chinese, the Dutch, and the Lao. Sundanese vocalists in West Java occasionally intersperse rhymed couplets in Dutch, Japanese, or English with classical Sundanese couplets, primarily so audiences may enjoy the exoticism of those languages. Filipinos perform elaborate song-and-dance creations, celebrating the Spanish era of the Philippines. Awareness of foreigners and foreign cultures has been a part of Southeast Asia throughout its known history. Though its peoples have not been equally affected by foreign influences, few have remained isolated from them.

## PRECONTACT MUSICAL SOURCES

Southeast Asia is distinctive for the uniqueness of each culture's response to outside influences, especially from India, China, and the West. The idea of assessing the region's precontact musical resources presumes that we can isolate them, but we cannot be sure we can. Nevertheless, a discussion of possible precontact resources is reasonable. Two topics, organology and animistic rites, include aspects most likely to have predated the coming of foreign religions, languages, and instruments.

### Musical Instruments

Southeast Asia, or the areas from which the peoples of Southeast Asia originated, probably gave rise to types of instruments that did not derive from donor cultures. Some are unique to the subcontinent, some exemplify universal types, and some likely became modified into instruments found elsewhere. The most difficult questions to answer are who created these instruments, where the creation occurred, and when.

Since some instruments are associated with upland groups, which reflect little influence from India or China, their instruments probably represent the oldest organological layer. Many are found in both the mainland and the islands, suggesting a relationship. The direction of cultural diffusion is more likely from the former to the latter, but there is no way to determine whether this diffusion occurred during prehistoric periods (when land bridges between the areas arose), or whether it occurred by sea. Cultural diffusion may have proceeded from or through Taiwan to the Philippines as early as 3000 B.C. [see SOUTHEAST ASIA IN PREHISTORY].

### Lithophones

The oldest extant Southeast Asian musical instruments are the lithophones unearthed in Vietnam since about 1950 (figure 1). Some nine or ten sets have been discovered, but they have attracted little attention from prehistoric specialists despite their having come to light nearly fifty years ago (Condominas 1952). Each set consists of eight to twelve narrow, variously shaped stones, each capable of producing a pitch when struck with a hammer. Since no one knows when they were made, by whom, or for what reason, it follows that we know nothing of the music played on them. They are

FIGURE 1 Lithophone discovered at Khánh Sơn, a village in the central highlands of Vietnam, in September 1979; now housed at Institute of Culture and Arts, Hồ Chí Minh City. Photo by Phong T. Nguyễn, 1991.



likely associated with some phase of the Hoabinhian culture, dating from ten thousand to a few thousand years ago. Ancient lithophones are still being discovered, and copies of them are being made on which newly composed music is performed.

#### ***Xylophones***

Xylophones made of bamboo or hardwood, hung vertically from a post or set horizontally over a trough resonator, appear to have originated in Southeast Asia. Hanging bamboo xylophones, likely the oldest configuration, are primarily found in the mountains that straddle the borders of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos. Examples made of hardwood logs appear in Thailand's Kalasin Province (figure 2). Others appear in the Philippines and on various Indonesian islands, where they are played in both hanging and horizontal configurations.

The classical xylophones of lowland Burma (*pa'talà*), Thailand (*ranat*), Laos (*lanat*), and Cambodia (*roneat*) consist of hardwood or bamboo keys suspended on

FIGURE 2 The northeastern Thai vertical-log xylophone (*khaw law*, also *pong lang*), Kalasin Province. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1973.



FIGURE 3 A large hanging gong with boss, from Central Java. Photo by Sean Williams.



two cords over a wooden resonator. In Indonesia, Javanese gamelans include the *gambang*, with wooden keys lying flat on the edges of a resonator (for a comprehensive survey of Southeast Asian xylophones, see Miller and Chonpairot 1981). Highland groups in the Philippines use hanging bamboo or wooden keys. Whether the Southeast Asian xylophones spread to Africa with the migration of Malayo-Polynesian-speakers, as some think (Jones 1971), remains open to question.

#### **Bronze instruments**

Bronze metallurgy in the mainland dates to the early second millennium B.C. or before. Bronze instruments with keys, plus bossed and flat gongs, are distinctive to Southeast Asia. The boss, a large raised knob in the center of the gong, enables the instrument to be precisely tuned. Hanging gongs, most with bosses, are found widely in both mainland and island areas.

The uplands of the mainland are distinguished for their ensembles of individually held gongs. Lowland musicians play on sets of small, horizontally mounted gongs. In the islands, the great gamelans, especially those of Java, include the largest hanging gongs in Asia, and probably in the world (figure 3).

The most distinctive bronze instruments are so-called bronze drums, which have drum-shaped bodies with a flat bottom and top. At least 138 such instruments have been discovered since 1730 throughout Southeast Asia, including Vietnam, Yunnan Province (China), Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Sumatra, Java, and some of Indonesia's lesser-known islands (including Luang, Roti, Salajar, and Sangeang). The historical specimens date to the *Đông Sơn* Period (late fourth century B.C.), but such instruments are still made and are occasionally used in Thai Buddhist temples. In Vietnam, artisans stand ready to make replicas for anyone willing to pay the price. While we know little of the drums' original use, the presence of sculpted frogs along the rims suggests a connection to ceremonies of rainmaking. The tops of some drums show figures that appear to be dancing and playing mouth organs.

#### **Other widespread instruments**

At least three other instruments appear to be indigenous: free-reed pipes and mouth organs, Jew's harps, and tube zithers. Though free-reed instruments are now used in East Asia, Europe, and the Americas, there is evidence that they spread to these areas from Southeast Asia. Within Southeast Asia, there are six types of free-reed instru-



FIGURE 4 A Hmong free-reed mouth organ (*qeej*) from central Laos. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1973.

ments: a free-reed animal horn, a free-reed pipe with holes for fingering, a free-reed pipe and a gourd wind chest, a gourd wind-chest mouth organ, a Hmong mouth organ (figure 4), and a Lao raft mouth organ. A seventh, a rounded bundle of pipes in a circular wind chest, occurs in East Asia (for a complete survey, see Miller 1981).

Jew's harps, mostly of bamboo but some of metal, are found widely, more often than not used as disguisers of the voice (figure 5). Such instruments are distributed worldwide and are probably a universal type, suggesting multiple points of origin.

Bamboo tube zithers (figure 6) are less commonly used. They are most prevalent in upland regions, and are also found throughout Borneo and among some lowland Lao. There is reason to believe that the *valiha*, the tube zither of Madagascar (now the Republic of Malagasy) came with the Malayo-Polynesian-speaking peoples who migrated there from regions of Indonesia about A.D. 500.

#### **Locally unique instruments**

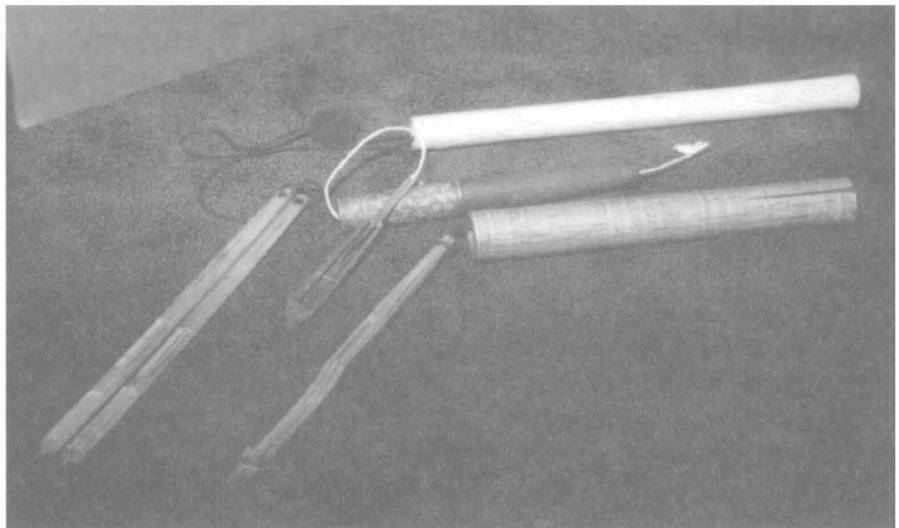
Throughout the subcontinent, instruments unique to one area or people are likely of ancient origin. Some are monochords. The Vietnamese *dàn bầu* has a single string, extending diagonally from a long, box resonator to a flexible wand at one end, allowing the player to bend the harmonics produced by plucking at the nodes. In the uplands of Vietnam, a bowed monochord stick zither (*k'ni*) is resonated through a string connecting the main string to the player's mouth. In lowland Cambodia and northern Thailand, monochordal stick zithers are resonated through a coconut shell placed on the player's chest.

The Lao, the northeastern Thai, and the Malay attach rattan-strung bows to large kites, which they fly during the cold, windy months; the air currents make the rattan vibrate, producing random successions of pitches (figure 7). Many rural Southeast Asians use bamboo to create music generated by the forces of nature, such as musical irrigation tubes, aeolian flutes (played by the wind), and the like.

#### **Animistic rites**

Foreign religions, and the cultures from which they sprang, have long been part of the cultural matrix that defines each people or country. Few of these religions are practiced in a "pure" form. The rites, practices, and beliefs associated with indigenous manifestations of animism are often absorbed into the major religions or coexist with them. Most Southeast Asians perceive no contradiction in honoring the Lord Buddha, a supreme deity, and a pantheon of spirits. Roman Catholics in Vietnam

FIGURE 5 Jew's harps from upland Mainland Southeast Asia. The bamboo double Jew's harp (*left*) and bamboo single Jew's harp (*right*) are from Sino-Tibetan groups; the metal example (*center*) is Hmong. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1995.



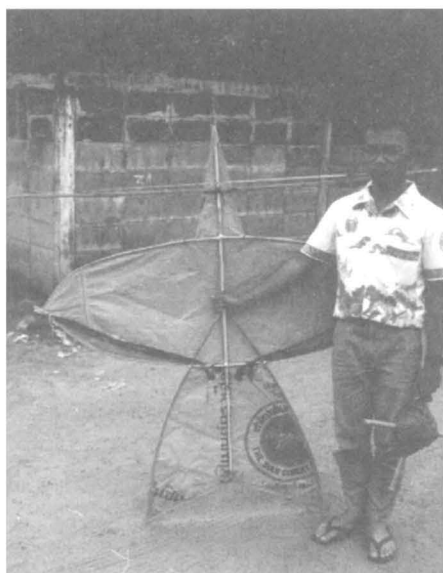
*chầu văn* Vietnamese possession ritual  
*mawlam* Singer from northeast Thailand

*khaen* Free-reed mouth organ from northeast Thailand

FIGURE 6 Thảo Giang, a Bahnar minority member living in Pleiku, Vietnam, plays a tube zither (*dinh goong*). Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1994.



FIGURE 7 A musical bow (*sanu*) mounted on a homemade kite (*chula*), northeastern Thailand. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1988.



often have altars for spirits. Muslims in Indonesia maintain remnants of the old pantheon of Hindu-Buddhist gods, some of whom derived from local forms of animism. The mixing of precontact animism with later “official” religions is the norm, not the exception, in Southeast Asia.

The kinds of animistic rites are legion, and we do not intend to discuss them systematically. Those that include some kind of heightened speech or music are fewer, though still numerous. We can mention only a few representative specimens.

In many areas, particularly the upland regions of Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, an annual sacrifice of a buffalo is an event of major importance. Music, particularly gong ensembles with dancing, plays a major role at these festivals. In Vietnam, mediums (*chầu văn*), accompanied by instruments and singing, go into trance to be possessed by spirits and thereby learn information that can help solve problems. Though the current government has banned such rituals, in isolated places they continue to occur, but the music can be performed alone as well.

Few upland peoples have been exposed to the major religions of their respective countries, and they continue to practice all manner of animistic rituals. The major exception is in areas where Christian missionaries have been active, but even there, old habits persist, sometimes reinterpreted into a Christian system of beliefs. In a Roman Catholic village near Kontum in Vietnam’s central highlands, a visitor may nevertheless observe animistic funeral practices, including the traditional gong ensembles.



FIGURE 8 A curing ceremony (*lam phi fa*) is accompanied by a free-reed mouth organ (*khaen*), northeastern Thailand, 1973. Photo by Terry E. Miller.



In northeast Thailand and Laos, when someone is ill and does not respond to treatment by a medical doctor, spirits are suspected to have caused the illness. Among the mediums who may intercede are *mawlam phi fa*, mostly females, who sing and dance around an altar of objects considered to be attractive to spirits, accompanied by a free-reed mouth organ (*khaen*). When possessed, the mediums behave as if they are the spirits inhabiting their bodies and provide an explanation for the victim's illness (figure 8). In Burma, Buddhist temples include shrines to a pantheon of thirty-seven spirits (*na'*). Of various origins, these deities are worshipped with music in a three-day ritual, *na'pwè*, which includes possession (Rodrigue 1992). In upland Malaysia, Temiar shamans go on spiritual journeys and dream songs—communications that tell the reasons for the community's problems (Roseman 1991).

In East Java, Muslim performers of hobbyhorse trance dancing become possessed by the spirits of horses. To the accompaniment of gongs, drums, and an oboe, they make horselike movements and commit potentially dangerous acts, like breaking and eating glass. In the Toraja area of Sulawesi, as part of elaborate funerals sending the spirit of the deceased to the next world, Roman Catholic Torajans join in large circles and dance. They leave an effigy (*tau-tau*) to guard the grave. In east central Flores, Roman Catholic Lio people maintain dwellings to house their ancestors' bones (figure 9). During seasonal agricultural festivities, they invoke these ancestors' spirits.

### INDIAN CULTURE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The term *Indo-China*, though Eurocentric in character, correctly suggests the importance of Indic and Chinese influences on Southeast Asia. Assuming that Southeast Asian cultures *are* Indic or Chinese, however, would misrepresent reality. These civilizations did indeed influence the foundations of most civilizations in Southeast Asia, but in every case, those receiving the Chinese and Indic cultures transformed them into new cultures, in which visiting Indians and Chinese would likely still feel foreign. The cultural distinctiveness of every group that adopted and adapted the Indic and Chinese cultures, both historical kingdoms and contemporary nation-states, is what makes Southeast Asia one of the most colorful and attractive areas on earth. Yet there is truth to the statement that without the influences of India and China, Southeast Asia might be less distinctive.



FIGURE 9 An east central Flores house for spirits (left) echoes the shape of the volcanic cone seen to the right. Photo by Cary Black.



When we speak of India and Indian culture, we must differentiate between historical and contemporary influences. There is a world of difference between the culture of a state overseen by a Hindu-Buddhist god-king residing in a great temple and the culture of recent immigrants and their entertainments, especially Indian films and the ubiquitous genre of *filmi* songs. A visitor to Bali, Burma, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam therefore finds both the great Indian-style temples of antiquity and recently built Hindu temples for merchants living in the neighborhood.

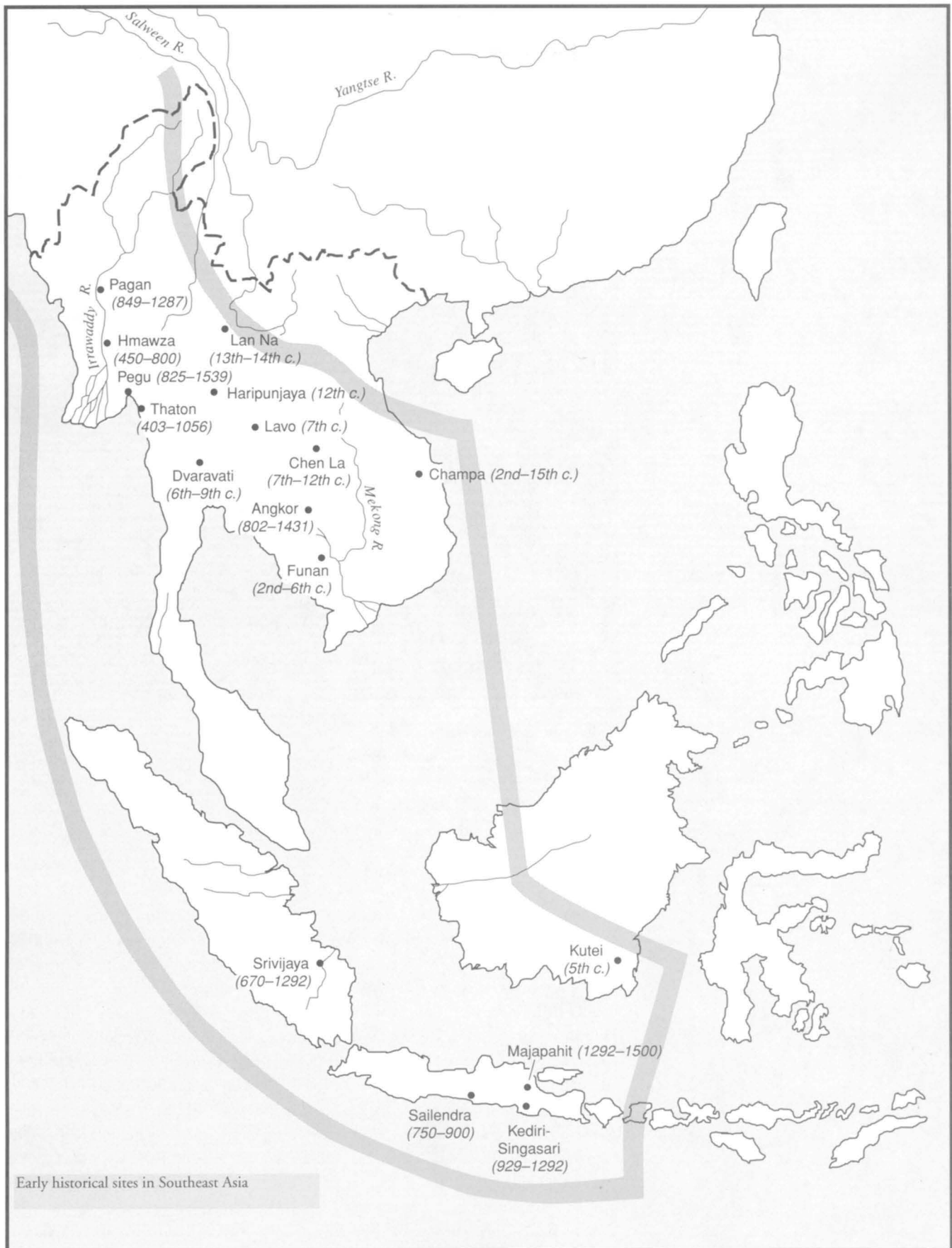
The study of early Southeast Asian history is daunting because the reader must sort out a bewildering succession of vaguely located and dated Indianized kingdoms. These historical kingdoms—including Angkor, Champa, Chenla, Dvaravati, Funan, Majapahit, Pagan, Pajajaran, Pegu, Srivijaya, and Sukhothai—speak to us through their mute statues, Buddha heads, and ruined temples, and we can feel something of their past as we visit their greatest monuments, the Angkorean temple complexes (Cambodia), the great Khmer temples at Phimai and Khao Phanom Rung (Thailand) (figure 10), the Chām towers at Phan Rang (Vietnam), the vast expanse of temples at Pagan (Burma), and the great Javanese temples of Borobudur and Prambanan. These cultures were the foundations of modern Burmese, Cambodian, Javanese, and Thai civilizations.

The place where this culture originated is not contemporary India, for great changes have occurred in both the South and the Southeast Asian subcontinents. About two thousand years ago, contact occurred primarily for two reasons—trade and religion. Some influence came to Southeast Asia indirectly, through China. Contemporary cultures of southern India more likely resemble the source than do those of northern India. Before this contact, small political entities probably dotted the landscape of Southeast Asia, ruled by local chiefs. The concept of a nation under a king descended from gods living at a temple representing a holy mountain is said to have come from India. The official religion of Southeast Asian kingdoms was usually a form of Hinduism, but Buddhism played a major role among the common people. The mixing of Buddhism and Hinduism with local forms of animism occurred widely and contributes to the individuality of Southeast Asian cultures. In fact, the magnificent Buddhist temple of Borobudur in central Java is only half an hour's drive from Prambanan, a great Hindu temple.

Over time, contacts with Indian culture and the intermarriage of culture-bearing

FIGURE 10 Prasat Phanom Rung, the ninth-century, Indian-influenced Khmer temple on Phanom Rung Hill, Surin Province, northeastern Thailand. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1988.





Traditional literature is written on palm-leaf strips. Writers scratch the letters into the leaf, fill them with carbon powder, then bind the leaves with a cord or cords.

FIGURE 11 A *sukhwan* takes place around a holy-tree altar. Northeast Thailand. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1973.



Indians with Southeast Asians transformed all those living within the radiating power of the sacred temple of the mountain. Those at the margins, especially people living at higher elevations, were least and last affected. Southeast Asian peoples received and adapted to their own needs many aspects of Indian civilization, including religion, architecture, sculpture, decoration, literature, language, scripts, farming practices, rituals, concepts—and music.

### Spiritual matters

The essentials of this process include an understanding that Hinduism is not a unified and bounded religion but the sum of disparate parts, and when scholars invoke the general term *Hinduism*, they are likely referring to the systems of belief surrounding a particular deity, such as Shiva. While Hindu concepts, beliefs, and practices deeply influenced the leaders of the early Southeast Asian kingdoms, this kind of Hinduism survives only marginally on the mainland. A Brahman remains at the Thai court, responsible for rituals that maintain the kingdom's prosperity and stability. Though music is associated with these rituals, outsiders know little about it.

In areas of Thailand, Laos, and the Shan State of Burma, a *phram* (from *Brahman*) oversees the *sukhwan* or *bai si* ritual (figure 11). In heightened speech, before an altar of ritual objects, he calls back a person's *khwan* (a timid, spiritual essence, which tends to flee during times of stress or transition), which he figuratively binds to the person by tying threads around the person's wrist. At the Cambodian court, female dancers are seen as heavenly maidens (*apsara*), who link the kingdom to the gods. Thai classical musicians must be initiated through a series of *wai khru* ritu-

als before altars bearing masks of deified Hindu and Buddhist figures from Indian religious literature, principally the *Ramayana*, the great pan-Asian epic. Indeed, the literary Rama himself is seen as an incarnation of the god Vishnu.

Bali, considered by many to be an earthly paradise, is the center of Hinduism in Indonesia. An unofficial system of castes (*tingkat* 'levels') still exists, and Hindu priests preside over local religious festivals, hundreds of which require artistic performance. The image of the god-king was much more powerful and prevalent before the twentieth century arrived in Bali, but many aspects of Hinduism are accepted and practiced on the island. People make offerings at all gateways, borders, and boundaries (such as crossroads, springs, doors, beaches, and volcanoes) and gateway events (such as births, deaths, and marriages). Most important, to be a Hindu in Bali means that creating art—music, dance, sculpture, painting—is a fundamental means of practicing one's religion.

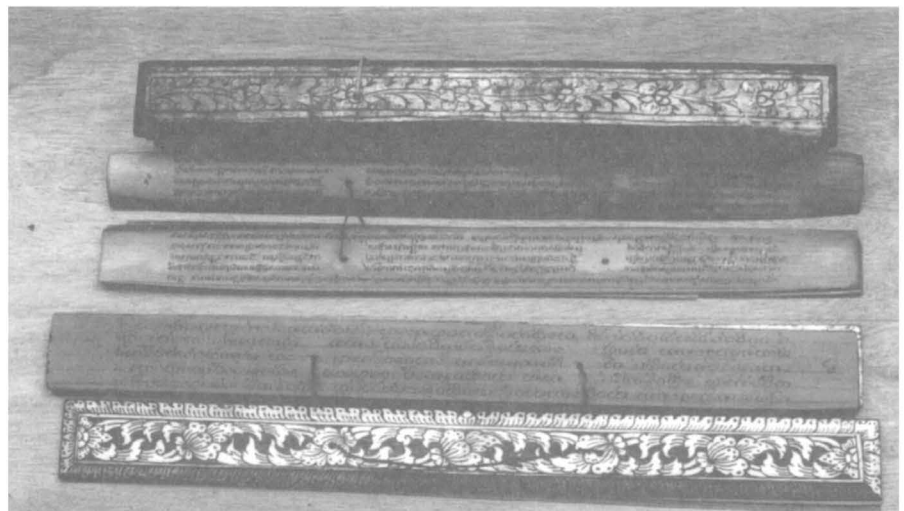
### Literacy, literature, and the imagination

The scripts of the Balinese, the Burmese, the Javanese, the Khmer, the Lao, the Shan, and the Thai, including local variants (like Sundanese and northern [*lanna*] Thai), derive from phonetic Indic scripts, which allowed these (non-Indic) vocabularies to be written and pronounced in their own ways. The transformations, however, are of such a magnitude that readers of modern Indic scripts can discern little. With them came a great deal of vocabulary, especially from Buddhist writings in both Sanskrit and Pali.

The more Indianized the culture, the more words of Indian origin in the language. Within Southeast Asian languages, the higher ranking the class of vocabulary, the more Indian-derived words it has. The levels of language reserved for Buddhism and for royal speech are so thoroughly Indian that learned individuals from Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand can converse using this vocabulary, though their everyday languages are quite different and mutually unintelligible. Multiple levels of language (with separate vocabularies for each level) occur in Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese in Indonesia. Though some words are shared (or at least markedly similar) among the three areas, the least refined levels of each usually have the least in common.

Many early written documents were those of the court and its activities, but those with musical implications derive from religion (primarily Buddhism and Hinduism) and literature. Traditional literature and Buddhist sermons or Hindu tales and texts of chants were, and in some places continue to be, written on palm-leaf strips (figure 12). Writers scratch the letters into the leaf, and fill them in with carbon

FIGURE 12 Three palm-leaf manuscripts from Thailand. Photo by Terry E. Miller.



powder (lampblack); they then bind the leaves with a cord or cords. In Thailand, these manuscripts preserve traditional stories, which serve as the foundations for preaching, solo narrative, and theater. Among them are a great number of local stories, stories of Buddha's birth (*jataka*), and the *Ramayana*.

Two Indian epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, are central to the literature of all Indianized cultures. Since, like the (Nordic) *Ring of the Nibelungs*, the stories are long and complicated, only episodes can be told or acted at one time. Throughout Indianized Southeast Asia, the general population is familiar with the main characters and the basic plots. The *Ramayana*'s monkey-general, Hanuman, is as well known to Southeast Asian children as Mickey Mouse is to Western children. Dances, human theater, shadow-puppet theater, doll-puppet theater, and the decorative motifs that permeate society—all derive from these epics. In addition, the main characters of the stories are so well understood, that humans may formally or casually be called by the names of characters (as "He's a real Arjuna") in indication of their psychological makeup.

### Musical influences

Trying to distinguish what *is* of Indian origin from what merely *resembles* it is the scholarly equivalent of walking in quicksand. Comparing the contemporary musical artifacts of Southeast Asia with those of India while seeking conclusions about a relational process that occurred possibly two thousand years ago can produce distorted results. Nevertheless, several topics require exploration, among them terminology, organology, musical process, and style. We must bear in mind several caveats: terms may travel apart from their objects, instruments may travel without their styles, similarities do not prove relationships, and proven relationships do not demonstrate the direction of transmission.

### Terms and their objects

A great many Southeast Asian instruments bear Indian-derived names, but these instruments are not necessarily derived from India. Certain Indian terms are also found widely, denoting a variety of instrumental types in nearly endless verbal permutations. In Indian usage, the term *vīṇā* merely denotes stringed instruments, but Southeast Asian usage has transformed it into *phin*, referring to the northern Thai chest-resonated stick zither (*phin nam tao*) and multi-stringed stick zither (*phin phia*), and to the northeastern Thai-Lao plucked lute (*phin*).

Several lutes and board zithers derive their names from a common linguistic ancestor; they include the Sundanese boat-shaped zither (*kacapi*), the central Thai long-necked lute (*krajappi*), the Cambodian long-necked lute (*chapey*), a lute in the Philippines (*kudyapi*), and various lutes in Borneo and Sumatra (including the *sapeh*, the *safē*, and the *husapi*). The north Indian term *sitār*, which names a long-necked plucked lute, becomes *siter* in central and west Java, where it denotes small board zithers.

In seeking relationships between Indian and Southeast Asian instruments, we cannot be sure similarities between contemporary specimens proves a historical connection, but a few types seem clearly of Indian origin. Southeast Asian drums with laced heads are most likely of Indian origin, especially the pairs of long drums common to Malaysia (*gendang*), Indonesia (*kendang*), Thailand (*klawng khaek*), and Cambodia (*skor khék*). The Thai term *khaek* 'guest' denotes Malaysians and Indians. Indeed, these drums are somewhat similar to the Indian *tavil*, *pakhavaj*, and *mridanga*, and to the Sri Lankan *gata bera*.

Conical double-reed aerophones, including the Malaysian *serunai* and the Thai *pi chanai*, often bear a name related to that of the Indian *shenai*. But the Filipino



FIGURE 13 An East Javanese *terompet*. Photo by Sean Williams.

*serunai* is a set of small, tuned, metal plates in a frame, on which musicians practice for playing the *kulintang*. The Sundanese and east Javanese double-reed aerophone sidesteps the *shenai* name altogether, using the term *tarompet* or *terompet* (borrowed from a Western term reflected in Dutch as *trompet* and English as *trumpet*), though the instrument is clearly not a trumpet (figure 13). A more obvious relationship is seen between small Indian cymbals (*talam*) and those of the Burmese (*si*), the Thai (*ching*), the Lao (*sing*), the Khmer (*chhing*), and the Balinese (*cengceng*).

### Dance

Southeast Asian dancers perform episodes from some of the same stories that Indian dancers do, and both traditions bear a major similarity: dancers tell stories gesturally; movements and poses represent encoded objects, actions, emotions, and ideas. For communication to take place, a connoisseur must know the dancer's codes, though in many cases a singer simultaneously performs the text. This is not to say that Khmer dance is Indian dance; clearly, it is not. Each Indianized Southeast Asian tradition of dance—Balinese, Burmese, Cham, Javanese, Khmer, Lao, Sundanese, Thai, and perhaps some in Malaysia—is distinctive, but all usually follow the same process of Indian dance, which differs strikingly from the concept of aesthetically pleasing but nonlexical movement ("pure dance") that predominates in some genres in the West.

Even in modern choreography, the reliance on Indian models is prominently in evidence. Choreographers recognize that to build bridges to their audiences, certain aspects of the dance should be based on familiar, Indianized material. The result often takes the form of a dance that reacts to or against Indian models of gestural expression and spatial orientation. In either case, the audience uses the prevailing mode of dance-based storytelling and gestures as its cultural referent.

### Musical processes

There are two basic ways of playing music or singing: to reproduce a preexisting melody, with or without ornamentation and individual or idiomatic expression; or to create a composition while playing it, by following a set of conventions collectively called mode. India has both, and so does Southeast Asia. It is also possible to play fixed compositions that have been created according to the conventions of a given mode. Mode provides a musician with tonal material, a hierarchy of tones (allowing for the creation of tension and its release), typical melodic phrases and ornaments, and an emotional character. The Indian modal system (*raga*) is widely known and even more complex.

Metrically free modal improvisation, as heard in the *alap* of an Indian *raga*, is not the norm in Southeast Asia, but the Vietnamese system of modes (*điệu*) is nearly as complex as that of India. In Vietnamese chamber music, each musician usually warms up with a brief, unmetered improvisation (*rao*) before all begin the fixed composition. In addition, soloists improvise long and elaborate compositions based on modal principles. Another tradition of modal improvisation, though much simpler, is that of the northeastern Thai-Lao *khaen*, whose players improvise in two scalar systems, each having three modes (*lai*).

An analysis of the musics of Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand suggests an underlying modal system, but the classical traditions are almost entirely made up of fixed compositions, capable of shifting tonal centers throughout—what Western harmonic theory calls modulation and non-Western melodic theory calls *metabole*. The generation of melody in Malaysia, with arabesquelike streams of melody, spinning small intervals in a seamless web, points to Western Asian origins.

The system of *pathet* in central Java denotes not just a repertory of allowable tones but also a tonal hierarchy that defines a mood, a general character, or another nonmusical element. The tonal hierarchy sets up boundaries (clear in every musi-



Chinese influence on the cultures of Southeast Asia has been a factor for centuries, especially in Vietnam, a Chinese colony for more than a thousand years.

cian's mind) as to which melodic patterns, elaborations, and variations are appropriate. The correct performance of improvised elaborations and variations must be carried out according to the rules of individual *pathet*.

Indian influence is also likely where rhythmic-metrical cycles exist. The Indian system of *talas*, in which a closed cycle of beats underlies the melodic system (*raga*), is not unlike the cycles found throughout Southeast Asia, especially in classical musics. As in India, Southeast Asian drummers know individual drumstrokes by name and initially memorize a fundamental form of the cycle (but may improvise to a limited degree on it). In Burmese, Cambodian, Lao, and Thai classical traditions, small bronze cymbals mark the cycle; in Vietnam, a slit drum or castanet-like instruments mark certain beats. Cyclic meters distinguish Vietnamese music from Chinese, placing Vietnam within the Southeast Asian musical world despite its superficial similarities to that of East Asia.

It is difficult to say that the concepts of melodic modes and metrical cycles in Southeast Asia came directly from India, since both are found elsewhere (especially in Western Asia), but the similarities make the connection compelling. Aside from the process indicated by modal and cyclic construction, however, little else about Southeast Asian musical styles points toward India.

### Contemporary Indian influence

Contemporary Indian culture exists in enclaves in Burma, east Java, Thailand, and Vietnam, and around 10 percent of the population of Malaysia is of contemporary Indian extraction. Many Indians in Burmese cities, brought there by the British during the colonial period, operate shops and restaurants. Most in Thailand migrated to open businesses, primarily fabric shops, but they also established temples and shrines, to which even the ethnically Thai pay homage. To our knowledge, except in Malaysia, Indian musics do not flourish within these communities, and where they do, they are not classical genres. The Malaysian *bangsawan*, a theater that mixed cultures to increase its popular appeal, traditionally had Indian elements, but modern, government-sanctioned *bangsawan* has largely been stripped of them.

Throughout Southeast Asia, theaters show Indian films, and shops sell cassettes of Indian *filmi* popular songs. The flood of popular Indian culture through films and their sound tracks has led to a spectacular local response in Indonesia. By the 1960s, Indonesian films based on Indian successes had caught the public imagination, and sound tracks featured *dangdut*, the genre that mimics the tabla, the flute, and the vocal ornamentation of *filmi*. Sung in Indonesian (more rarely in a local language), *dangdut* is the one musical genre that can be heard virtually anywhere in Indonesia. The elite consider it a music of the masses, but even the elite enjoy dancing to it when they let their guard down. Indian films and *filmi* remain popular in Indonesia, but they are outstripped by *dangdut*, with its use of the national language and Indonesian subjects.

### CHINESE MUSIC IN SOUTHEAST ASIA AND ITS LEGACY

It would be hard to imagine Southeast Asia without the Chinese. The so-called Overseas Chinese vary from being unassimilated (and therefore easily noticed) to nearly assimilated. Although some Chinese had come to Southeast Asia by about 1600, most came from southern China during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They established businesses in the cities, major and minor. Many Southeast Asian cities retain a Chinese atmosphere, especially in their business sections. As in other parts of the world, many Chinese established restaurants, and the commercial cuisines of each country include Chinese dishes, modified to appeal to local palates. Because of success in business, the Chinese have come to dominate the economies of several countries, sparking resentment during tough times. As a result, they have been made scapegoats in times of stress and have suffered when local populations turned on them. Some fled, some suffered but survived, and some died.

Chinese influence on the cultures of Southeast Asia has been a factor for centuries, especially in Vietnam, a Chinese colony for more than a thousand years. Unlike the (mostly peaceful) relationship between India and Southeast Asia, that with China—especially for Vietnam—was violent. Many battles were fought, against both the Chinese and the Mongols, who controlled China during the Yuan Dynasty. Despite resentment toward the Chinese, the Vietnamese adopted Chinese ideographs long before converting to a romanized script, and the ability to read Chinese remains a requirement for Vietnamese scholars and religious people. The Vietnamese language is permeated with words of Chinese origin, much as Burmese, Khmer, Lao, and Thai are permeated with words of Pali and Sanskrit origin—and as English is permeated with words of Latin origin. As in these cases, it was a foreign religion—Mahayana Buddhism—that brought much Chinese culture to Vietnam (figure 14).

Chinese musical influence manifests itself in two ways: through the maintenance of genuinely Chinese musical genres, and through the apparent influence of those genres on Southeast Asian musics, both in style and in organology. Indeed, some Chinese musical activities in Southeast Asia are examples of survivals, for genres played in such places as Bangkok, Ipoh (Malaysia), and Hồ Chí Minh City are often older versions of types that have changed in the People's Republic of China. The following must be considered a tentative survey, since a systematic study of Chinese musics in Southeast Asia remains to be done.

FIGURE 14 A Chinese Buddhist temple to Quan Âm, the goddess of mercy, in the Chỗ Lớn section of Hồ Chí Minh City, Vietnam. Photo by Terry E. Miller.





### Vietnam

The Chinese are a prominent minority in lowland Vietnam, especially in the cities of the south, including those of the Mekong Delta. Visitors to these cities, especially the Chợ Lớn section of Hồ Chí Minh City, will find Chinese-descended people, spectacular temples, schools, restaurants, and shops. Today's Chinese population has little connection to the history of Chinese domination of the Vietnamese kingdoms. Of all Southeast Asian nations, Vietnam shows the most Chinese influence, modified to local tastes. The historical Vietnamese courts followed the Chinese model in both aesthetics and organization. The last series of Vietnamese emperors, the Nguyễn Dynasty, which governed in Huế from 1802 to 1945, established a "forbidden city" inside a larger walled city, the citadel. The court's musical establishment included Chinese-type ensembles, which played, at least in part, imported Chinese pieces.

Many of Vietnam's musical instruments originated in China. The *đàn tranh* zither is virtually identical to an older, sixteen-stringed *zheng*, the pear-shaped lute (*đàn tỳ bà*) derives from the *pipa*, and the moon-shaped lute (*đàn nguyệt*) resembles both the *yue qin* and the *ruan*. Though these instruments appear to be Chinese, they have been modified to accommodate the Vietnamese musical system. Much of the latter requires tones outside the pentatonic tuning of the Chinese-derived instruments, plus ornaments peculiar to Vietnamese music. These can be realized only on instruments whose frets have been raised (to allow for the bending of tones) and whose strings have been made looser. These modifications make the instruments Vietnamese, not Chinese.

Today's Chinese population in Vietnam enjoys instrumental music at least as much as vocal music. It is played on familiar, unmodified instruments: a fiddle (*er hu*), a moon-shaped lute (*yue qin*), a pear-shaped lute (*pipa*), an oboe (*suona*), and various kinds of percussive instruments. Most Chinese music is played in private situations and cultural clubs, at funerals and festivals, and in theatrical performances for the linguistic communities, the Tiều (Chaozhou), the Quảng (Guangdong), and the Phước Kiến (Fujian). The Quảng and Tiều traditions are the most famous in Vietnam. After 1960 in Saigon, Quảng and Tiều musicians formed professional-level music clubs (*yue she*), where players rehearsed to play for fundraisers, commemorations, and funerals. Some Chinese instrumental pieces and melodies are known to Vietnamese musicians, who have adopted them into chamber music (*nhạc tài tử*) and theater (*cải lương*). These tunes are modally classified into a Vietnamese subcategory, *hỏi quảng* 'Cantonese tunes'. Though Vietnamese and Chinese musicians share instruments and tunes, they cannot play together because Vietnamese musicians change the character of the Chinese tunes.

### Thailand

At Ayuthaya, the former Siamese capital, Chinese music and theater existed by the 1600s, for several French visitors to the court—Bouvet, Chaumont, Choisy, La Loubere, Tachard—wrote at length about the Chinese entertainments they had to watch there (Miller and Chonpairat 1994:34–40). These entertainments included both Chaozhou and Guangdong opera. By the 1800s or before, street and restaurant performances of Chinese shadow-puppet theater also occurred in Bangkok.

Modern Thai cities include people of Chinese descent; some have lived in Thailand for only a generation, others for many generations. Most, constituting the vast majority of the country's shopkeepers, operators of hotels, and restaurateurs, engage in business and professional activities. Thai cities have at least one Chinese temple, plus Chinese organizations that organize festival activities and the hiring of opera troupes. The dominant Chinese-language group in Thailand is the Chaozhou (locally pronounced Taejiu), people who migrated from eastern Guangdong

FIGURE 15 A performance of Taejiu-language Chinese opera in Mahasarakham, Thailand, 1973. Photo by Terry E. Miller.



Province, in southern China. The internal business language of Thailand has been, and continues to be, Taejiu. But the Chinese-descended people have also taken Thai names, speak, read, and write Thai as their first language, and participate fully in Thai cultural life. Though the community retains Chinese music, Chinese students usually learn to play Thai classical music at school.

The Chinese temples and community organizations maintain at least three kinds of musical activity. First, numerous professional Taejiu opera troupes tour the nation's cities during most of the year, performing in eight-night runs in the traditional ritual setting, on a temporary stage facing the temple's main deity. This performance occurs around the deity's birthday. In many cities, the festival follows an all-day parade, involving student-musicians playing *daluogu* instruments (drums, gongs, cymbals) and sometimes *chuida* instruments (double reeds, side-blown flutes). The performances of operas occur each night, but during the day apprentice singers may have a chance to perform. Chaozhou opera requires a chorus of children, most of whom speak Thai-Lao as their native language. They come from the northeast and attach themselves to the opera troupe to get money. When grown up, they become the main actors and actresses; many do not speak Taejiu but can sing it. Fewer and fewer Chinese-Thai can understand Taejiu, and a simultaneous translation into Thai is sometimes read through loudspeakers (figure 15).



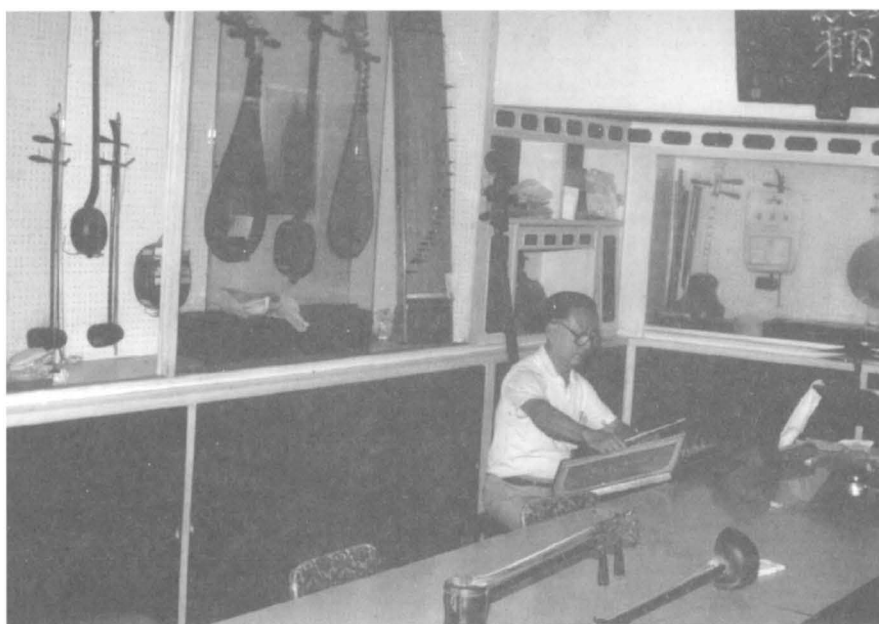
Many temple clubs support a silk-and-bamboo (*sizhu*) club, which plays traditional Taejiu music. This style is distinctive for its use of a nasal-toned, two-stringed fiddle (*tou xian*, closely resembling the Thai *saw duang*) and a tradition of patterned rhythmic variations of the tunes. Local businessmen enjoy playing this music in its traditional setting, purely for their own enjoyment (figure 16). Some temples maintain Chinese-funeral musicians (*chuida* 'blowing and hitting'), who use a variety of melodic instruments, led by a *suona* and accompanied by percussion. Various Taejiu instruments imported from China are available at shops in Bangkok's old Chinese section, on New Road and Yaowarat Road.

### Malaysia

Malaysia is a multiethnic country whose population is 31 percent Chinese. We should expect that Chinese music and theater would be performed there, but little information has been published on the subject. Most performances occur in ritual contexts—before a deity on the deity's birthday. Human theater is said to be per-

In Southeast Asia, the overwhelming majority of Muslims live in Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Brunei. Islam's position as the fastest-growing religion in the world is due in part to the rate of Southeast Asia's Muslim population's growth.

FIGURE 16 A Taejiu-speaking Chinese-Thai musician prepares for the rehearsal of a silk-and-bamboo ensemble in Khorat, Thailand. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1988.



formed as it is in Thailand, and troupes from Thailand are said to perform in Malaysia. Puppet theater, however, is quite common, and has been documented. Three forms are maintained. The Hokkien-dialect glove-puppet theater was brought to Malaysia around the turn of the twentieth century. Small, boxlike stages are set up. The manipulators sit in the lower portion, working the puppets on a small stage above their heads. Musicians play lutes, fiddles, and perhaps a flute behind them. The performances of a Hokkien marionette theater are reserved for the Jade Emperor deity. There are also Chaozhou rod puppets (Stalberg 1984).

Nothing is known to have been written in the West about Chinese music or theater in Burma, Cambodia, or Singapore. The level of activity, if there is one, is probably modest, though Singapore likely has active Chinese musicians. The Chinese do not figure in Laos at all, and many Chinese-Cambodians either fled the Khmer Rouge or died.

### Indonesia

To Indonesia, Dutch administrators brought Hokkien-speaking Chinese men (and later, Hakka and Chaozhou men) to establish commerce, and they offered marked political, educational, and economic advantages to men who migrated. These advantages bred resentment among local populations, which, in the months after the aborted coup of 1965, culminated in a large-scale massacre of at least five hundred thousand people, many of whom were Chinese-Indonesians. Though most Chinese-Indonesians are of mixed ancestry, local populations still consider them Chinese.

At least partially as a result of the troubles surrounding the massacre, public expressions of Chinese culture have been minimal. In the area around Jakarta (the national capital), local amalgams of Chinese and Indonesian music have developed. The main genre of Chinese-oriented music, *gambang kromong*, uses an eighteen-key xylophone (*gambang*), a ten-pitch gong chime (*kromong*), one or more two-stringed bowed lutes (*tehyang*), a side-blown flute (*suling*), and local percussion instruments, with singers and (for the modern repertoire only) optional Western band instruments (Yampolsky 1991). Though the ensemble once had a large number of Chinese melodies as part of its repertoire, the events of the mid-1960s have led to a gradual disappearance of these Chinese pieces and their replacement by local songs; nevertheless, the current ensemble performs at weddings and other Peranakan (mixed-blood, Chinese-Indonesian) cultural events.

### The Philippines

The Chinese experience in the Philippines bears a marked similarity to that of Indonesia. Chinese merchants have maintained a presence in the Philippines for hundreds of years, ever since Manila developed as a center for Asian trade before the appearance of Spanish colonists. Even today, more than half the Chinese in the Philippines live in Manila. As in Indonesia, every urban center in the Philippines has numerous Chinese residents, who involve themselves in businesses and restaurants. Chinese men came to the country from Fujian Province (southern China). They intermarried with Filipinas and converted to Roman Catholicism; however, their complete integration with the Filipinos has not occurred. At the start of Spanish rule, the Chinese were forced to live together in limited areas; once that rule was relaxed, the Chinese continued staying together. In the twentieth century, younger generations of Chinese-Filipinos have begun to assimilate more closely with young Filipinos, and further cultural intermixing is likely.

Because Chinese expressions of cultural identity in the Philippines do not have to function in a post-massacre climate (like that of Indonesia), festive celebrations of boat races, weddings, Chinese operas, and Chinese New Year celebrations are common, accompanied by various types of music. Older Chinese immigrants still play in silk-and-bamboo ensembles. The far greater preservation of Chinese musical culture in the Philippines (especially in Manila) may reflect the government's tolerance of Chinese culture, plus the fact that many of the most important leaders of the Philippines (José Rizal and others) are or were of partial Chinese ancestry.

### ISLAM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Islam, with roots in the Arabian peninsula of the seventh century, is based on God's teachings to the Prophet Mohammed. The basic Islamic system of beliefs includes the testimony of faith, *La ilaha illa Allah, Muhammad rasul Allah* 'There is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God'. Being a Muslim also means believing in angels, prophets, scriptures, final judgment, divine decrees, and predestination. Muslims pray five times daily, facing the holy city of Mecca, and revere Friday as the holy day of the week. The five main elements ("pillars") of Islam include the testimony of faith (*shahada*), the ritual prayer (*salat*), almsgiving (*zakat*), fasting during the holy month of Ramadan (*sawm*), and the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*). Prayers are held at local mosques; nearly every Muslim neighborhood in Southeast Asia includes a mosque, so the calls to prayer may sometimes be heard from the loudspeakers of more than thirty mosques simultaneously. Islam has two primary branches, the Shi'a and the Sunni; most of Southeast Asia's Muslims belong to the Sunni branch (figure 17).

In Southeast Asia, the overwhelming majority of Muslims live in Indonesia,

FIGURE 17 An Islamic mosque (*masjid*) in Penang, Malaysia. Photo by Terry E. Miller, 1973.



Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Brunei. Islam's position as the fastest-growing religion in the world is due in part to the growth rate of Southeast Asia's Muslim population. Indonesia has a majority Muslim population (about 90 percent). Though Muslims make up significant numbers in the populations of Brunei (68 percent) and Malaysia (47 percent), and lesser numbers in Thailand (4 percent) and the Philippines (4 percent), they do not comprise the entire ruling class of those nations. Islam in Southeast Asia is characterized by variety (rather than unity), because, over hundreds of years, the beliefs embraced by each ethnic group have become intertwined with Islamic beliefs.

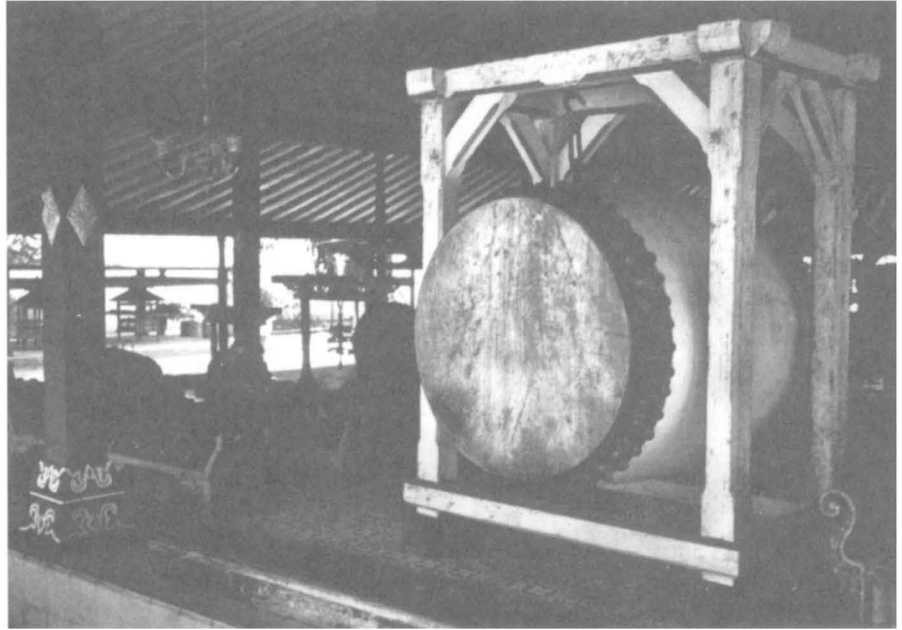
### Islam and music

Though relations between Islamic leaders and Muslim musicians have occasionally been problematic, most Southeast Asian Muslims regularly enjoy both instrumental and vocal music. Part of the congeniality between music and Islam in Southeast Asia reflects an Islamic adaptation to local customs concerning the performance of music. Spoken and chanted words, because of their links to Muhammad's reception of the word of God, are important to Muslims; as a result, vocal music and vocalists have always been regarded more highly than instrumental music and musicians. Furthermore, female vocalists are often granted a higher social (and sometimes, economic) status than male instrumentalists. As in many areas of the world, Southeast Asian musicians are sometimes regarded by religious authorities to be just short of respectability, and as Muslims themselves, musicians must tread a fine line between perpetuating their art and following their faith.

The type of music that receives the strongest censure from Islamic authorities is popular music [see POPULAR MUSIC AND CULTURAL POLITICS] because of its associations with dancing and drinking. Similarly, Islam officially discourages traditional musics associated with prostitution. Regional traditions of music, however, are accepted as part of local cultures to which Islam must adapt.

Certain instruments associated with Islam have become established in Southeast Asia. These include frame drums, huge barrel drums (used for the call to prayer), plucked lutes, and oboes (figure 18). These instruments have fit in with, and become absorbed by, local traditions, but the frame drums remain closely linked with an Islamic sound when used to accompany singing. Though Islamic music is a part of Southeast Asian culture generally, it has closer associations with Mecca and the roots

FIGURE 18 A huge Islamic barrel drum (*bedug*) from central Java, used to signal the call to prayer. Photo by Sean Williams.



of Islamic culture than some of the more locally derived traditions. Like the layers of religious influence that characterize many modern Southeast Asian systems of belief, Islamic music is yet another layer that enriches the spectrum of Southeast Asian music.

### Indonesia

Before the full-scale introduction of Islam (between the 1200s and the 1600s), the systems of belief of the Indonesian peoples ranged from animism to Hindu-Buddhism. The kingdom of Majapahit (1200s to 1500s), essentially the last Hindu-Buddhist kingdom in Java, was the first Indonesian kingdom since Srivijaya (600s to 800s) to exercise control over trade routes. This power was significant to the entry of Islam because sea trade was the primary means of early Islamic penetration into Indonesia.

Though a large part of Indonesia was Hindu-Buddhist during the pre-Islamic period, not all residents of Hindu-Buddhist areas were exclusively adherents of an established religion. Locally dominant systems of belief were largely combinations of animist and Hindu beliefs. Hindu beliefs emphasized ritual actions and their correct execution and the charismatic image of the divine ruler. These aspects of worship became important contrasts to Islam; some aided in the conversion of locals to the new religion, while others altered the new religion substantially.

Though Majapahit rule remained dominant until the 1500s, Islamic influences had entered Indonesia centuries before. The first Muslims in Indonesia were probably traders from South Asia. Opinions about the precise location of their origin differ, but the area of Gujarat (western India) is commonly believed to have been the origin of Muslim traders to Indonesia and other parts of Southeast Asia. The adaptations of Islam to local conditions and beliefs in India had helped to pave the way for its adoption in Indonesia; it was brought to Indonesia by non-Arab Muslims, and it lacked the cultural unity that characterized its later development in West Asia. Arriving in Indonesia with individual traders first, and later with Sufis (a segment of Islam that emphasizes mystical practices and adaptation to local customs), Islam was absorbed into an already highly syncretic culture.

As early Muslim traders from India began to settle in Indonesia's coastal towns (especially in north Sumatra and the north coast of Java), being a Muslim gradually

Wayang, the drama that used characters from the old Hindu epics as heroes, simply developed a new offshoot, celebrating Islamic heroes. Since Islam discourages human representation, modifications were made to the puppets over time to make them appear less human.

became advantageous. Expansions in trade, made possible by increased contact between coastal Muslims and Indian traders, led to alliances with the Javanese merchant class. Once a substantial number of Muslim traders had begun to establish themselves in coastal areas (like Aceh, Banten, and Demak), a process of gradual incorporation with local communities took place. Inter-marriage was effective because it ensured a steady supply of goods to a local administrator; it also increased traders' status and elevated them to positions of greater standing in the community.

The fall of Majapahit eventually occurred, at least in part, because Muslim communities in the coastal areas had grown in power. In the 1500s, the Mataram kingdom arose in Central Java. It differed from Majapahit significantly; it had borrowed Islamic elements that increased its influence locally. The adoption of Islam enabled it to subdue the local administrators in the coastal cities, who had previously used Islam as their main ideological weapon against Majapahit.

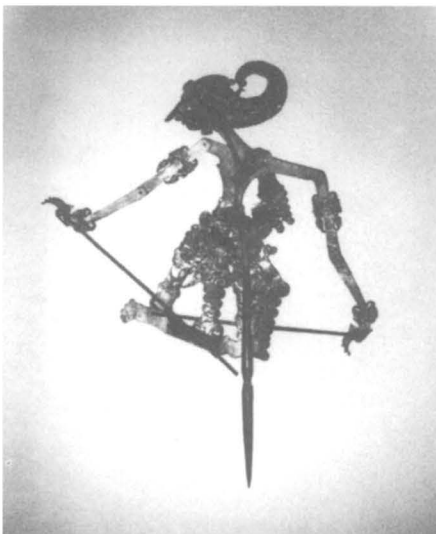
The kingdom of Mataram chose certain aspects of Islam to emphasize. First, as a means for maintaining traditional authority, it relied on earlier Hindu ideals of divine rulership and attention to ritual; it relied on charismatic leaders, not political platforms. Second, Islam in Indonesia in the 1500s and 1600s was permeated with individual interpretation. It was an almost secularized religion, in that it adapted to the social structure of the merchant cities, supporting the existing network of the distribution of power. In many ways, it was a means for continuing the traditional authority that had been in existence before its appearance; it was a justification for continued division of society based on ideological lines. Though Islam was a tool used by the elite for personal gain, it appealed to commoners, whom it made feel part of a larger community, not so spiritually subordinate to the upper classes as before, and united against non-Muslims.

Two features of Indonesian life between the 1200s and the 1600s were important in the spread of Islam: the deliberate use of Hindu-Javanese forms of art as tools of propaganda, and the arrival of Sufism. Though the latter was far more important in terms of direct public influence, the former had a great deal to do with converting the local populace. Thus, wayang, the drama that used characters from the old Hindu epics as heroes, simply developed a new offshoot, celebrating Islamic heroes. Since Islam discourages human representation, modifications were made to the puppets over time to make them appear less human (figure 19).

Sufism was the main means by which Islam entered Indonesia. The influence of Sufis began in the 1400s and 1500s on a nonpolitical level; an individual would gather a group of followers and teach the mysteries of inner revelation and spiritual journeying. It was not until later that Sufis became more politically active; their earliest activities had been to settle in the formerly Hindu-Buddhist schools of the countryside. In a few years after Sufis entered Indonesia, many of these rural hermitages and monasteries became Islamic schools (*pesantren*).

When the Sufis migrated inland, the schools were a natural place for them to

FIGURE 19 A Javanese shadow-puppet figure (wayang). Photo by Sean Williams.





settle. They had already been welcomed by the coastal rulers, who saw an alignment with them as a means for gaining personal prestige, so they enjoyed essentially free rein when it came to attempts to convert inland people. Many students came to *pesantren* from remote areas, and upon their return they often set up schools of their own. Thus, the actual conversion of the Indonesians was hardly formal; it began as a mild overlay onto a variety of syncretic beliefs and did not undergo the far more rigid process of total acceptance that was supposed to be typical of the Arabian Peninsula.

Because Sufi teachings varied, a unified type of Islam was not established in Indonesia. Such religious diversity resulted in a wide range of types of Islamic practice, from extreme reformists to nominal Muslims; yet all exhibit some tendency derived in part from a Hindu-Buddhist heritage. Relations between the two groups have not always been friendly. Though Mataram used certain aspects of Islamic belief to its advantage, it was strongly Hindu in origin. Short-lived efforts to discourage Islam from developing occurred, but Java became almost entirely Muslim within a century. Islam flourished in the north Sumatran area of Aceh, where it remains one of the country's strongholds of traditional Islam. Aceh was one of the most powerful Islamic areas in the islands in the early 1600s, when it established centers of learning and attracted Muslim traders.

The Dutch colonists chose Java as the colonial capital. Relying on existing centers and routes of trade, they gradually altered the traditional relationships that had characterized the leadership of Java. Rather than looking to individual members of the Islamic hierarchy or to the charismatic leaders of inland communities, the Dutch selected members of the elite to serve as administrators. A major effect that this process had on Islam in Indonesia was that it limited communication between Indonesian Muslims and those outside the archipelago, discouraging political organization and leading to the development of a more internally coherent Islam within Java, in which the expansion of European and Chinese communities served to unite Muslims in both a system of belief and a life-style.

After intensive Dutch pressure, the Javanese elite began to loosen their grip on the idea of Islam as a unifying agent. In doing so, they lost their ideological hold on inland peasants. The result was a groundswell of interest in Islam from the lowest levels of society, which opposed the religious officials and reacted against their cooperation with the Dutch. At the same time (the mid-1800s), travel to Mecca was made easier, in part by developments in shipbuilding, and in part by the opening of the Suez Canal (1869).

With eased travel to Mecca and an increasing disparity between the local administration and the colonial administration, Indonesians focused on how other Muslim nations functioned. The number of Indonesians in Mecca increased dramatically in the late 1800s until they became the largest community there. Encountering their first foreign noncolonial city served as an inspiration for them to consider the realities of home rule and to recognize the political importance of establishing Islam as a single, nonsyncretic religion. Arabic and Egyptian writers had a profound influence on Indonesian nationalists who visited Mecca; they inspired an Islamic revivalist movement that continued into the twentieth century.

A reason for Islam's success in Indonesia has been its adaptation to local conditions. Every Indonesian is required to carry a personal identity card (*kartu tanda penduduk*, also KTP) which indicates the religion of the bearer, but the range of Islamic belief runs from fundamentalist to what some Indonesians jokingly call Muslim KTP ("I'm a Muslim only insofar as that is the religion printed on my personal identity card"). Not everyone prays five times a day, but nearly all Muslims fast during Ramadan. Some women cover all but their hands and faces, but others wear Western skirts and blouses. The flexibility of Islamic cultural practice reflects the Indonesian



government's requirement of religious tolerance, written into the national constitution.

The conversion of Indonesia was a gradual process which took hundreds of years. Beginning with merchants and continuing with Sufis, the number of Muslims entering Indonesia peacefully increased from the 1400s on. In many cases, Indonesians carried on the process of conversion, particularly outside Java. In the late twentieth century, Muslim leaders are no longer synonymous with political leaders, and local attempts to agitate for the creation of an Islamic state are swiftly and severely put down by the government. Though the majority of Indonesians are Muslims, agreement on issues is rare and further unification unlikely.

### **Malaysia**

The blend of Malay Muslims with Chinese and Indians in the population of Malaysia has led to a slightly different manifestation of Islam than in Indonesia, but its roots are similar. The Malay Peninsula was once called Malaya, but has been part of Malaysia since 1963, when the federation of Malaya, North Borneo, and Singapore was created (Singapore left the federation in 1965). The peninsula is quite close to the east coast of Sumatra, and the same merchants and Sufi mystics who traveled past Sumatra also stopped at Malay ports. Sea trade throughout the region was almost completely controlled by Muslims by the 1500s, and the expansion of Islam that characterized Indonesia's history during the past five centuries applies also to Malaysia.

The city of Melaka (Malacca), on Malaya's southwest coast, was a major center of trade, a base from which Muslims spread their influence along major routes. It was an extremely influential place in trade, culture, and religion, and though it fell to Portuguese rule in the early 1500s, it remained one of the most important cities in Malaysia. The presence of Sufis (who often came on board with traders) promoted the local expansion of Islam. They tended to shun politics, preferring to gather in rural schools to teach their disciples.

In the late 1800s, when the British came to govern Malaya, they did not discourage Islam. They were motivated primarily by economic and political goals. The British colonial experience in Malaya left intact the existing system of sultanates and general religious hierarchies. Because change so often begins in ports, it was appropriate that the beginnings of an Islamic reformist movement began in the Malay ports. These reformers were called the Kaum Muda (Young Group), as opposed to the Kaum Tua (Old Group) of religious conservatives, but their impact was felt much more strongly in the Dutch East Indies (soon to be Indonesia) than in Malaya. The nonreformist Muslims of the mid-twentieth century formed an alliance with the Chinese and Indian residents of the country as the colonial empire collapsed, and the Alliance Party won the elections in newly independent Malaysia.

The current Malaysian Islamic community is dominated by a conservative but adaptive majority, which recognizes the need for cooperation with the other two large groups of Malay society. That Muslims in Malaysia had to avoid both a fundamentalist and a heavily reformist movement to gain cooperation from the Indian and Chinese members of society meant that nationalism had to come before Islam. Though Malaysia and Indonesia both have pluralist societies, what differentiates them is that most of Indonesia's ethnic groups are Muslims, while it is primarily the Malays of Malaysia who are Muslim and therefore more culturally unified.

### **The Philippines**

The Philippines, because of their location as an eastern point in a square including China to the north, Borneo and Sulawesi to the south, and Vietnam to the west, are

particularly well suited to trade and communication. Most of the Muslims in the Philippines live in the southernmost islands—Mindanao, Palawan, and the Sulu Archipelago, which links the Philippines to northeastern Borneo. Though there were once more Muslims in the northern islands, since the 1500s the Spanish colonial effort resulted in a concentration of the Muslim population in the south, where Muslims have always been more closely oriented culturally toward the southwest than toward the north and their Christian fellow citizens.

The spread of Islam into Sumatra and the Malay peninsula led to its eventual establishment in the Sulu Archipelago on one of the routes from Melaka. The first real stronghold of Islam in the Philippines was the Sulu sultanate, dating from the mid-1400s. By the 1500s, the area of Maguindanao (on the western part of Mindanao) had become an Islamic area. Gradually, through trade and Sufism, most of the island became Islamic. Most of the country at that time comprised autonomous societies that traded with each other but lacked a unifying force. Only in western Mindanao and Sulu, where Islam had developed a strong presence, was there any semblance of a government whose influence extended beyond its immediate area.

In 1521, when the Spanish came to colonize and convert the Philippines, the Islamic populations of the south were the only ones able to resist encroachment into their territory and culture. As a result, Muslims of the southern Philippines maintain a strong cultural presence, despite an overwhelmingly Christian majority and the increasing presence of Christians in Muslim areas. In the decades just after World War II, the Bangsa Moro (Muslim Nation movement) has become a strong insurgent force and has grown in power.

### **Thailand**

Thailand is mostly a Buddhist nation, but it has a small Muslim population of Malays, concentrated primarily in the southern peninsula. From the beginning, one of Thailand's main contacts with the Muslim world was through its networks of trade set up with the city of Melaka. When the Portuguese took over Melaka, trade with Muslims through that city was disrupted and replaced by Portuguese trade; however, the Muslim network continued for several more centuries, leading to the establishment of Muslim communities in various parts of the country.

The extension of Thai control onto its southern peninsula and its sharing a border with Malaysia have led to a greater concentration of Muslims in the south. Because of Muslim attempts to develop autonomously, Muslims have been at the forefront of Thai domestic difficulties during the twentieth century. In the early 1900s, the southern Patani sultanate was divided so its southern half would fall under British control and become part of Malaya, while its northern half would remain in Thailand. The outlawing of Malay and Islamic organizations and special schools in the 1940s and 1950s contributed to the isolation of the Muslim population. More recent attempts by the Thai government to exercise control over the area have resulted in Muslim resistance, aided by support from Muslims in Malaysia and other nations with large Muslim communities.

### **Brunei**

The sultanate of Brunei occupies the northeastern part of Borneo. Like Malaysia, Brunei supports a large Chinese population (25 percent). It works closely with its Chinese community, but its government is more fundamentally Islamic than that of Malaysia. Brunei was an important stopover for Muslim traders and Sufi mystics during the early days of Islamic expansion into the area. Its location enabled it to become a major trading power by the early 1500s, when it controlled all of the island of Borneo and several smaller islands. Until 1971, it was a British protectorate, but

Certain countries, Burma and Singapore in particular, have sought to curb what they view as the excesses of Western culture. Others, especially the Philippines and Thailand, have been open to as much westernization as people desire.

because conversion to Christianity was not a motivating factor in the establishment of political and economic control, the British did not interfere with local religion.

Brunei enjoys a high standard of living; a large proportion of its Muslim population can afford the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once a year. Because of this contact with Arab culture, the Muslims of Brunei have been closely allied with Arabic Islam. Other Muslims in island Southeast Asia (especially Indonesia) tend to regard the Muslims of Brunei as being truer to Arabic forms and perhaps practicing a purer form of Islam because of the regularity of this contact.

## THE WEST

### **Mainland Southeast Asia**

Though all of Southeast Asia has been influenced from time to time by foreign cultures, and much of that influence has been acculturated into the identities of individual groups or nations, Western influence is in most ways more apparent, more recent, and perhaps more disruptive. Some of that influence has been imposed from the outside, particularly through colonialism and military occupation, but much of it has come about voluntarily, even enthusiastically. During colonial times, European influence was quite strong. In the postcolonial period, but particularly during the fighting in Vietnam, U.S. influence increased dramatically. Since then, however, at least part of what appears to be Western influence has actually come from Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, (South) Korea, and Taiwan.

The dynamics of the relationships are complex, with emotions running the gamut from love to hate. Certain countries, Burma and Singapore in particular, have sought to curb what they view as the excesses of Western culture. Others, especially the Philippines and Thailand, have been open to as much westernization as people desire. In some places, Western (mostly American) popular culture dominates the scene, and American popular music has been widely available on pirated cassettes. The rise of the music industry in the urban centers of Southeast Asia is a major theme in the music histories of Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Thailand [see POPULAR MUSIC AND CULTURAL POLITICS].

### **Vietnam**

Vietnam's culture has undergone profound influence from at least two outside cultures, China and the West. During the late 1500s and early 1600s, Westerners—Dutch, French, Italians, Portuguese, Spanish, and others—entered Vietnam through the port of Hội An, just south of Đà Nẵng. Over the centuries, the Roman Catholic Church and the efforts of its missionaries wrought many cultural changes, some of which involved music. A group of Portuguese, French, and Spanish Jesuits and at least two Vietnamese converts created the system used for romanizing the Vietnamese language, but the French more cleverly used the church as a tool in efforts to make Vietnam a protectorate during the 1800s. This they did by convert-

ing those in power and granting power to those who converted. French-style Roman Catholic music, including Gregorian chant, came to Vietnam during the 1600s, and in one form or another, it continues to be sung.

The development of French schools, a preference for all things French by the Vietnamese elite, and the return of Vietnamese teachers and performers educated in France (and elsewhere in the West) brought to Vietnam the earliest and perhaps most complete Western musical establishment. Eventually this included conservatories, orchestras, opera performances, chamber music, and active composers. After people in the north turned to Eastern Europe for help, the conservatories and universities of such countries as the former Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Romania, the former Czechoslovakia, and (East) Germany began providing both European and Vietnamese teachers to maintain Vietnam's Western music. Despite the war and the feelings many Vietnamese have about Western culture, Hanoi still has an active symphony orchestra and a conservatory devoted to Western classical music. The conservatory in Hồ Chí Minh City continues to train performers of Western classical music.

The Vietnamese have been warm to returning Westerners, particularly Americans and French, but they have not become so enamored of American popular musical culture that it is replacing Vietnamese styles. The Vietnamese remain attracted to their own kinds of popular music, including modernized folk songs (*dân ca*). As the country modernizes, however, especially in the south (Hồ Chí Minh City is fast becoming a Vietnamese Hong Kong), American influence may grow. Within a few years, the local appreciation of popular music could change drastically.

### **Laos**

With regard to westernization, there is little to say about Laos. Though the United States once had a strong presence (which influenced the nightclub scene in Vientiane), since 1975 the combination of poverty, isolation, and political conservatism has allowed for little growth in Western culture. Aside from a few clubs where rock may be heard, the Lao have few opportunities to develop aspects of Western culture. The French school is long closed and abandoned, foreign publications are unavailable, and foreigners maintain a low profile.

### **Cambodia**

Whatever impact the West had on colonial and postcolonial Cambodia vanished under the Khmer Rouge, who stripped the country of its existing culture and killed or caused to die nearly 2 million people. Before 1970, when Prince Sihanouk and his wife ruled in Phnom Penh, the French atmosphere of the capital included performances of both classical and light European music. The nightclub scene included popular songs and dancing. The School of Fine Arts maintained a small Western orchestra. All this has vanished, and the continuing poverty of the country has precluded the reappearance of nearly everything except popular music in Phnom Penh.

### **Thailand**

Ironically, as Western and modern Japanese influences have increased in Thailand, so has the strength of Thai classical music, though regional musics have fared less well. Never having been colonized, the Thai have viewed the West differently from their neighbors. Though the French had tried to convert King Narai and gain influence in old Siam during the late 1600s, their plan failed, and foreigners were kept at bay until the early 1800s. During that century and the twentieth, the Thai have done remarkably well at dealing with Western powers. Rather than resist westernization because of its association with colonialism, the Thai actually encouraged it after the

1932 coup d'état. The military régimes that followed encouraged the Thai to behave as they thought Westerners did—for everyone to wear shoes, for men to wear hats and ties, for husbands to kiss their wives when leaving and returning, and so on. Governments encouraged social dancing—and the cha-cha, the rumba, the tango, swing, and other dances became fashionable. The Thai created their own social dance, *ramwong*, done in a circle by men and women using simple gestures with their hands.

During the 1800s, foreign powers' brass bands made a strong impression, and from 1850 to 1900, the Thai court had its own band. Such bands became fixtures in schools and universities and continue to this day. Western classical music, however, penetrated Thailand slowly. Before about 1980, most classical music was performed by visiting Western ensembles, soloists, and members of the expatriate community. With the founding of the (semiprofessional) Bangkok Symphony Orchestra and various student orchestras, particularly at the College of Dramatic Arts and Chulalongkorn University, the country had at least a modest Western-music presence.

Western instruments—especially the piano, the violin, the guitar, and, more recently, all types of pop instruments, including synthesizers—have proven to be particularly popular in Thailand. As in the West, the children of cultured families are often expected to study piano or violin, but there is less prejudice against popular music, and many young people learn to play popular instruments. The Yamaha School in Bangkok is large and active.

The impact of the West is not so prominent in music as it is in all other aspects of modern Thai life, particularly in the cities. Not only Bangkok and Chiang Mai, the country's largest cities, but regional cities are rapidly showing evidence of affluence and modernization, some of it of Japanese origin, some American. This includes technology, popular music, fast food, films, shopping malls, life-styles, and a preference for English. Yet much of this kind of westernization appears to be superficial, retaining a particularly Thai character.

### **Burma**

Outside the capital (Rangoon, now called Yangon), Western influence is a non-issue. Western influence gives the capital a slightly cosmopolitan air, but it feels more like the 1940s and 1950s than the present day. Having been colonized by the British, the Burmese have little love for their former masters and their culture, but the Americans are more fondly remembered for helping liberate Burma from the Japanese during World War II. Remnants of American efforts—including old military vehicles—still serve the Burmese. Though American pop culture must pass censorship committees, young Burmese are showing a particular fondness for it, including its music, but this kind of activity maintains a low profile.

### **Malaysia**

At least superficially, the former British colony of Malaya (including Singapore) appears to be the most deeply Westernized country in mainland Southeast Asia. This situation has affected many aspects of modern Malaysian life, from its well-organized traffic to its educational system. Musically, Malaysia reflects the multiculturalism of its population, and its affluence permits the importation of foreign films, recordings, and instruments. Western classical music is taught and performed in major urban areas, and earlier types of British ballroom music have helped mold such genres of dance as *ronggeng*.