

Introduction

Burma and India, two of the earlier nations to gain their independence in the post-World War II period, are now in the second decade of modern nationhood. It is appropriate that most of the papers in this second volume of *Studies on Asia* should deal with these two countries which have succeeded remarkably well in maintaining democratic processes of government despite severe stresses and strains. During the difficult initial years of national sovereignty, continuity and stability have been provided by the leaders of the independence movement who continued in positions of power largely by virtue of their prestige and popularity. The people of these countries now are in a position to assess their recent experiences with some deliberateness.

The second decade of nationhood may witness a gradual shift of power to a new generation of leaders whose major concern will be national reconstruction rather than revolution. In the process of reconstruction there already have developed rival claims of regionalism, of class interests, of traditionalism versus modernism. These conflicts will influence the development of democracy, the political structure of the nation, the nature of the economic system, and the national educational policies.

It is timely, therefore, that several of the authors in this volume have suggested the need for new approaches and re-appraisals in the study of Asian societies. Professors Crane, Miwa, and Sarkisyanz are concerned that contemporary interpretations of Indian nationalism, Japanese imperialism, and Burmese socialism respectively are often imprecise, inadequate, and at times misleading. Coincident with the thesis presented by Professor Crane on divergent nationalisms in India is the recent warning sounded by Prime Minister Nehru that one of the gravest dangers to India today is "regional nationalism."

In his analysis of the ideology of Japanese imperialism, Professor Miwa denies that it was simply the product of aberrant minds. Though the theorists used proto-Marxian terms to denounce Western imperialism in order, paradoxically, to justify Japanese aggrandizement, the arguments of these ultranational-

ists did have a certain consistency with the economic facts. Miwa seeks to explain the factors which made the rationale of Japanese imperialism plausible and acceptable to the prewar Japanese. The unstated implicit question he raises is whether or not the historic conditions he describes have been altered substantially in the present period.

Professor Thomas examines the prevailing economic views regarding a fundamental question in contemporary India, namely, how is she to use her limited capital resources for the maximum benefit of the country? After demonstrating the virtual impossibility of applying an economic yardstick to measure some of the social benefits of capital investment, he proposes his own formula which seeks to take into account such intangible derivatives. His method of analysis has the merit of keeping in the foreground the needs of the individual, which in a democratic society must not be submerged for the good of the total society.

The account which Professor Adenwalla has given on the influence of Hindu concepts in the Indian nationalist movement not only complements Crane's study, but also provides an interesting comparison with Sarkisyanz' analysis of Buddhist underpinnings for Burmese socialism. Both Adenwalla and Sarkisyanz show that there are bridges which link such modern movements as nationalism and socialism with the cultural traditions of these Asian societies.

The emphasis which Professor Von der Mehden has given to his description of Burmese politics stands in contrast to that of Sarkisyanz. The two essays bring out the issue of the significance of Buddhism in the contemporary life of Burma. It appears that no definitive answer can be given as yet. Another aspect of Buddhist politics, which is treated by Professor Butwell, is that of the rivalry between the military and the civilian groups. This poses for the Burmese an intriguing choice between the army's efficiency and U Nu's popularity and affinity for traditional symbols. Here again, the studies of Von der Mehden and Sarkisyanz lend depth to Butwell's report.

Each of the papers in this volume is exploratory in nature. They suggest the vast opportunities for research which exist in an area of the world where the past and the present have come into bewildering conjunction. With one exception, the papers

were originally presented at the Ninth Annual Conference on Asian Affairs which met at the University of Oklahoma, October 28-29, 1960. Professor Thomas' paper was first presented at the Seventh Conference which convened at the University of Missouri. It is hoped that the publication of these articles, selected for their excellence, will promote the general objectives of the Conference of stimulating scholarly research, disseminating the results thereof, and broadening the area of understanding of Asian affairs.

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