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The Editor-in-Chief wishes to express thanks to Roger Jackson and Rena Crispin for their assistance in the production of this issue.

Bardwell L. Smith (Ed), *Religion and the Legitimation of Power in South Asia*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1978. 186+X pp.;
Religion and Legitimation of Power in Sri Lanka. Chambersburg, Pa.: Anima Books, 1978. 244+ix pp.;
Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand, Laos and Burma. Chambersburg, Pa.: Anima Books, 1978. 231+ix pp.

These three volumes have a total of thirty-six essays written by as many as twenty-seven scholars. Of the thirty-six essays, nine are contributed by three authors (Reynolds 4, Bechert 3 and Smith 2). The idea behind these volumes is "to present together several reflections on a common theme" which is described by the Editor as "how political leaders or a politicized group with a specific religious tradition and membership . . . made use of 'religious' beliefs, practices and institutions to provide cohesiveness to the realm and legitimacy to the holding of power." The two major religious traditions so examined are those of Hinduism and Theravada Buddhism, for only one essay (McDonough in the South Asia Volume) deals with Islam.

In a review of this kind it is not possible to deal in detail with each contribution and its special virtues. Each volume deals with two separate themes, namely the nature and structure of the religions tradition on the one hand and the nature and structure of political power in the south and southeast Asian countries dealt with. The term religious tradition is broadly understood as covering the whole range of religious thinking and practice, from a unitary conceptualization of complex and long systems of beliefs and practices such as Hinduism and Buddhism to specifics such as single leaders, (Rajaji and Nehru), sects, (the Aiyappan sect), movements, (the Mahar movement), pieces of legislation, (the *Archaka* legislation of Tamil Nadu). While this contributes a richness of variety to the contents of the volumes it also makes for a degree of diffuseness, which is inevitable in collections of this kind.

The South Asia volume has nine essays of which four (Clothey, Spencer, Waghorne and Presler) deal with south Indian themes, two (Larsen, McDonough) treat of religion and politics in northern India, one (Baird) focusses on Nehru's ideas on a secular state, one (Zelliot) is concerned with the religious content of the Mahar movement in western India and another (Goonetilleke) is bibliographical essay on the Sri Lanka Insurrection of 1971, which should have been a part of the volume on Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lanka volume of thirteen essays has two broad themes, historiography and history. As many as five (Bechert, Greenwald, Clifford, Smith, Obeyesekere) essays are concerned with Ceylonese Buddhist perceptions of the dhamma, samgha and political power, four

(Smith, Guanwardana, Kiribamune, Senaviratne) treat of relevant aspects of various periods of the Ceylonese past—from Anuradhapura to Kandy—as related to the theme of religion and legitimation, two (Bechert, Kemper) are concerned with modern Sri Lankan politics, while two others (Smith, Bechert) are extensive and interpretative bibliographical essays.

The southeast Asian volume is largely focused on Thailand. It is in two parts, of which the first is entitled the dynamics of legitimation and the second, ritual, symbolism and patterns of legitimation. Of the ten essays of the first part, eight (Watson, Andaya, Swearer, Premchit, Butt, Kirsch, Reynolds, Tambiah, Reynolds, and Keyes) cover the entire spectrum of Thai history, from the Sukhodaya kingdom to contemporary Thailand, while two (Fergusson and Sarkisyanz) deal with aspects of Burmese religious and political history. The second part has four essays, of which three are by Reynolds and one by Eisenstadt. Reynolds discusses aspects of traditional religion in Laos and Thailand while Eisenstadt examines the conceptual and practical implications of elements in the dynamics of traditions, such as rituals and symbols.

The contributors to these volumes are scholars eminent in their own special fields and their perceptions greatly contribute to our understanding of the complexities of interactions between religion and power in south and southeast Asia. Not all of the material is new nor can a few essays be described as anything more than descriptive ventures. But such criticism does not detract from the value of these volumes, for together they form a substantial contribution to a theme which is both challenging and difficult. They fulfill a definite need, as they bring together material which otherwise would be scattered through a number of divergent works and journals. The discussions on key concepts, such as the nature of power, its contents, patterns of its exercise and means of legitimation, presented in these volumes will stimulate further debate. Professor Smith has accomplished a remarkable feat in editing and publishing these volumes and our thanks are due to him.

B.G. Gokhale