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Mini Dragons II

(Pt.1) Indonesia
(Pt.2) Malaysia
(Pt.3) Thailand

PRODUCED BY
MARYLAND PUBLIC TELEVISION

(MPT) PRODUCTION AND FILM
AUSTRALIA

DISTRIBUTED BY
AMBROSE VIDEO PUBLISHING
NEW YORK 1993.

Three Southeast Asian countries with high rates of economic growth over the last decade, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand, are the subjects of this series originally aired on television in one-hour segments. The filmmakers were concerned to show the trade-offs of rapid

development in this region where industrialization, an expanding middle class, and higher incomes for many families have led to environmental deterioration, human displacement, and other social ills.

Most successful at achieving a balanced view of these trade-offs are the films on Thailand and Malaysia. These introduce us to people who represent a cross-section of two variegated societies: a feminist, Islamic labor organizer; a middle-class manager of a rubber plantation and his wife who opens a bakery; a Murut community of slash and burn cultivators in Sabah ravaged by logging; a fabulously wealthy Chinese family in Bangkok that is building a new shopping mall; a confrontational monk who agitates and preaches to save the forest; and a poor couple who leave

their children behind in a rural village and move to a squalid slum in Bangkok near the docks where they labor.

In contrast, the Indonesia film shows mostly the bright side of economic growth and spends a great deal of time following men who are not only wealthy but at the very pinnacle of power in that country. The poor, the transmigrants, the environmental wasteland around the Freeport mine, the depletion of forests, the congestion of Jakarta—none of this enters the glowing picture. The very silences and omissions in this segment, however, hint at another significant cost of economic development in Asia, where the openness of democratic political process has often been sacrificed or postponed in order to give the state the power to engineer economic growth.

This series is useful for teach-

ers of high school or university undergraduate students. Narrated in English, with multiple languages and English subtitles, it is a rich stimulus for classroom discussion. When combined with readings that fill the silences in the Indonesian segment and that contextualize the life stories depicted in the other two segments, these films can also reveal the region's religious and ethnic diversity, suggest how women's roles and work opportunities are changing, and how post-colonial nationalism fuels leaders' keen ambitions to catch up with the West economically.

Rita Smith Kipp

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Japanese History and Literature

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ON ASIA IN THE CORE
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Designed as a resource for teachers of world history and literature courses, this group of materials can be used as part of faculty development institutes, in-service workshops, or as a resource for individual instructors. Three video tapes survey premodern Japanese history with special reference to selected works of literature: (1) *Classical Japan and "The Tale of Genji"* (45 minutes), (2) *Medieval Japan and Buddhism in Literature* (45 minutes), (3) *Tokugawa Japan and Puppet Theater, Novels, and the Haiku*

of Bashō (70 minutes).

A printed guide includes a script of the narration, plus materials to be xeroxed for video viewers—study questions and excerpts from literature being discussed. An appendix provides an instructor's overview, map exercises, bibliography, and recommended resources.

The project team has addressed an extremely difficult problem—how, with a limited budget, to use a visual, action-oriented medium to create enthusiasm for the study of texts. The video programs primarily consist of what the TV

generation calls "talking heads," but the speakers are impressive authorities: Donald Keene, Paul Varley, Carol Gluck, Haruo Sirane, and Henry Smith. The narrator is Robert Oxnam, President Emeritus of the Asia Society. Even luminaries can be deadly on camera, and taped lectures hardly engage the potential of the video medium. The best that can be hoped for is that the lecturers will communicate their personal enthusiasm for the topics. These "heads" deliver. Experiencing Sirane's explication of a Bashō haiku is a

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