

Australia : Flowing Water Will Erode Stone

DALMENY, NEW SOUTH WALES, AUSTRALIA, November 3, 2015 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The following reviews of 'The Dance of Destiny' by Raja Arasa Ratnam complement the pre-publication endorsements shown in 'Australia is shown its destiny' (Newswire Press Release of 2 November 2015)

Kirkus Discoveries:

"A detailed exploration of a personal journey through varying cultures and countries. ... Ratnam has a rare view of spiritual destiny, colonial politics and cultural identity. This memoir traces his childhood ... to his move to Australia ... creating a diverse array of cross-cultural situations. From the arrogance of British colonials disparaging the Asian cultures in '40s-era Malaysia, to the fight for immigrant equality in present-day Australia, the author examines racial and cultural divisions. He also speculates on the role that destiny places on life's journey.

... his difficult time in Australia enabled the author to write three books related to migrant settlement and sociological issues, fulfilling his destiny in bridging Eastern and Western cultures. Ratnam writes with convincing authority, and his details of Malaysian and Australian society reveal a sharp eye for cultural nuances."

The US Review of Books – 'Recommended' :

"...my personal river of Destiny took me to where I had to go, no matter how hard I paddled to change directions."

"What path does a man's life take, and why? This nonfiction narrative is the author's personal account of his journey. Born into a Ceylon Tamil family living in British-colonized Malaya, he was used to a multi-cultural environment. ... After the war, he was accepted to school in Australia and later had a distinguished career working with refugees and immigrants in the midst of racism.

This 411-page work does not get bogged down. Ratnam gives enough explanation to keep his story flowing without belabouring the issue. ... It is not only the author's life that is interesting, but it is how his background mixed with the larger significance of events happening around him that makes this book stand out.

Ratnam discusses both harmony and prejudice based on race, religion, language, and customs, providing insight for any college student of sociology, race relations (including job discrimination), history of Malaya and Australia, Hinduism, or migrant settlement policies."

BookReview.com

"Raja Ratnam's 'The Dance of Destiny' can be read in a number of ways. The most approachable for a Westerner is as memoir and history. ... Australia (very like the USA) is a land of immigrants and 'The Dance of Destiny' is as much a coming-of-age story for Australia as it is Ratnam's. We follow the nation from political and cultural adolescence after WWII as reflected in its unconscious assumption that White is, quite naturally, the superior skin colour and Christianity, quite supernaturally, the only

way to God.

Ratnam's social and professional experiences are one long litany of injustices, but by the end of his career in government he records major advances in immigration and ethnic policies and develops a true affection for his chosen country. "Thus" he writes, "In terms of humanity, and a very necessary ethnic diversity, I saw the beginnings of a new Australia."

So, this a very interesting and thought provoking book and made even more so where the narrative is interspersed with the author's metaphysical meditations. Ratnam has read deeply and written at length about religion and spirituality. Such contemplation has made him more able to accept what he calls his wheels-falling-off experiences as mere "manifestations of human will-power and folly, in a universe whose external and internal trajectories are symbolically signified by the flight of dragons," ... Believing as he does in reincarnation and the role of Destiny in his life, there is no closure to his story. One thinks, rightly so."

Comment

Destiny, particularly a personal destiny, is unpredictable. Intuitively, however, one may attempt to perceive the destiny path of the deeper frameworks of the nested destinies which (surely) are in necessary operation. For instance, one could have foreseen the end of European colonialism in Asia, when a small nation drove out the interlopers from their lofty perch.

The author, forever seeking patterns (or even visualising possible patterns) of significance, in order to understand whatever he is contemplating, eventually worked out the trajectory (and implicit meaning) of his personal river of life. Long after his retirement, after examining the contents of his memory bank in order to write (as suggested by the spirit of his uncle), he could objectively perceive the lessons learnt, and the contributions to his personal growth, through surviving the whirlpools, the rocky impediments, the alligators (racists and tribalists), the rapids and the falls.

It is clear that Australia's post-war destiny was influenced, for the better, by the participation of young Asians of competence and composure. As flowing water erodes stone, so Australia's walls of prejudice were undermined.

But the price paid by the author was high. Qualified as a psychologist, he was rejected as 'too black' (confirmed by a witness). Further qualified as an economist, he was told (through the head of his university's head of graduate employment office) that 'the Australian worker is not yet ready for a foreign executive, especially a coloured one.'

Yet, as a public official, he was promoted rapidly – until he reached too far – to join the Senior Executive Service. Perhaps that was his destiny.

Retiring early to avoid further discrimination, he has focused on his spiritual development. That is obviously his destiny.

Raja RATNAM

None

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