

# THE "PONGSAWADAN OF LUANG PRASÖT".

---

Notes on the late Dr. Frankfurter's translation of :  
(Journal of Siam Society, Vol VI, Part 3).

---

By W. A. R. WOOD, C. I. E.

---

The Chronicle known as the "Pongsāwadān of Luang Prasöt" is a document of the greatest importance to students of Siamese History, being the means whereby some of the events narrated in Bradley's and other old editions of the Siamese "Pongsāwadān" can be connected with the annals of neighbouring countries. Before "Luang Prasöt's Pongsāwadān" was discovered in 1907, native histories of Siam stood by themselves, and bore little traceable relationship; particularly as regards chronology, with any other documents existing in the world.

The late Dr. Frankfurter's able translation of "Luang Prasöt", entitled by him "Events at Ayuddhya" remains the only English translation in existence. The last thing which I desire to do is to cast any doubts upon the correctness of Dr. Frankfurter's translation as a whole. I think, nevertheless, that it is time to correct one or two errors into which the translator fell, and which he would doubtless have himself corrected long since, had he been spared to do so.

In the first place, I must point out that the following statement, appearing in Dr. Frankfurter's Introduction to his translation is extremely misleading:—

"The dates given in the new version do not agree with those " given in the Bradley edition, which, however, agree with those " recorded in the History of Burma and Cambodia. Now that would " appear to militate against the genuineness of the new version, if it " were not that the Burmese and Cambodian chronicles were compiled " at a date later than our present version".

This statement is diametrically opposed to the facts. The dates given in Bradley's "Pongsāwadān" agree with *no other docu-*

ment on earth, except with a *Siamese translation* of a Peguan Chronicle<sup>(1)</sup> (published in Part I of the National Library's "Prachum P'ongsāwadān"). I know nothing of the origin of this Peguan Chronicle, and will therefore say no more than that the translation's agreement with the dates in Bradley's "P'ongsāwadān," which are now known to be false, is most suspicious.

Considering that Part I of Nai Thien's excellent *précis* of the Burmese chronicle had already appeared in the Siam Society's Journal (Vol V Part I), I cannot understand the above statement made by Dr. Frankfurter. Almost every important date given in "Luang Prasöt" is practically identical with the corresponding date in the Burmese chronicle, and also in the annals of Chiengmai, Luang Prabang, Nān, and Cambodia.

It is unnecessary for me to cite examples to prove this. Anyone can compare Nai Thien's *Précis* of Burmese History with Dr. Frankfurter's "Events in Ayuddhya," and with the late P'ya Prajakit's "P'ongsāwadān Yōnōk." The result of such comparison will reveal an almost complete harmony among the three works in question.

The dates given in Bradley's and other old versions of the "P'ongsāwadān" do not even possess the comparative degree of merit of being *consistently* wrong; they spring about in the most disconcerting way, the error ranging from two up to twenty or more years. Very important events are, moreover, narrated in their wrong order. The errors in the "P'ongsāwadān" can never now be explained or disentangled, as the original documents from which they were compiled, after the foundation of Bangkok, have not been preserved.

Having now, I trust, said enough to show that "Luang Prasöt's P'ongsāwadān", is the only reliable Siamese Chronicle in existence, I will venture to correct a few slips made by the late Dr. Frankfurter in his otherwise excellent translation.

1. "In 740,<sup>(2)</sup> the year of the horse, the King again conquered"

(1) *Peguan Chronicle*. This Siamese translation was made in 1857, and the original document has not been preserved.

(2) The reference here is to the Chula Sakarūt, or "The Little Era" (Ed.).

“Chakangrao, and at that time Mahadharmaraja (of Chiengmai)”  
 “tried to resist the King's army, but as he saw he could not do so,”  
 “he paid homage.”

Chakangrao is the old name of Kampengp'et, which was the western capital of the Kingdom of Suk'ot'ai. Maha Dharmaraja (I retain Dr. Frankfurter's spelling) was the generic title of most of the kings of Suk'ot'ai. The ruler here referred to was Dharmaraja II. The same title was retained for the rulers of Suk'ot'ai after it became subject to Ayut'ia; the best-known holder of this title was the son-in-law of King Maha Chakrap'at, who himself became King of Siam in 1568, and is known to Siamese historians as King Maha Dharmaraja or T'ammaraaja.

The words “ of Chiengmai ”, which are not in the original, are misleading. None of the Kings of Chiengmai were called Maha Dharmaraja, and Chakangrao (Kampengp'et) at no time formed a part of the Chiengmai dominions.

2. “In 781, the year of the pig, a report was spread that “the Phra Maha Dharmaraja (of Chiengmai) was dead and that all “the Northern cities were in a state of unrest”.

Here again, the reference is to the King of Suk'ot'ai, Dharmaraja III, not to the King of Chiengmai. The words “Northern Cities” (เมืองเหนือ) mean northern Siamese cities, not cities of the then independent Kingdom of Chiengmai, or Lannat'ai.

3. “In 806, the year of the rat, the King suppressed the “contending factions, and erected a camp at Pathai Khasem, and “having made 120,000 prisoners of war, the army returned”.

The original version reads “เสด็จไปปราบพรรค”. The whole meaning is obscure. I suggest that “ปราบพรรค” does not mean “contending factions” but is a corruption of the name of a place. If the reference is to internal disputes, how could 120,000 prisoners be taken? On the other hand, histories of neighbouring countries supply no clue. I confess that I cannot supply a reliable translation, and should be grateful if any member of the Siam Society would suggest one. This is the most obscure paragraph in the whole document.

4. “In 822, the year of the dragon.....Phya Saliang created a rebellion”.

In a footnote the reader is referred to Professor Bradley's translation of King Ramkamheng's stone, published in the Journal of the Siam Society, Vol VI, in which "Saliang" or "Chalieng" is stated to be Mūang Long, not far from Phré. This is incorrect. Prince Damrong, in his notes to the Royal Autograph Edition of the "P'ongsāwadān" has clearly shown that "Chalieng" means either Sawank'alok or some city practically on the same site. A careful perusal of the "P'ongsāwadān Yōnōk" also makes it quite apparent that Chalieng was Sawank'alok.

5. "In 825, the year of the goat.....the Maharaj (of "Chiengmai) sent his son on an expedition for the conquest of "Suk'ot'ai."

The original says "มหาราช ท้าวลูก ยก พล มาเอาเมืองสุโขทัย"; "มหาราช ท้าวลูก" does not mean "the Maharaj sent his son". It is the author's rendering of the name of Maharaja Lok, or Tilōk, a celebrated King of Chiengmai, who reigned from 1442 to 1487. His death is duly recorded under the year 849 (1487), and here again Dr. Frankfurter mistakenly translates "มหาราชลูก" as "son of the Maharaja", instead of, "Maharaja Luk, or Lōk".

Under the year 830 (1468) Dr. Frankfurter correctly translates "ท้าวลูก" as "Thao Luk".

"Lok (or Luk)" means "Sixth". This ruler was the sixth son (Prince Sextus) of the preceding King of Chiengmai, and seized the the throne from his father.

It used to be very common among the Siamese, Shans and Laos to name their children on a numerical system. We read of Chao Ai P'ya, Chao Yi P'ya and Chao Sam P'ya (Princes Primus, Secundus and Tertius) of Ayut'ia, and King Boromoraja I of Ayut'ia was known as "Pagnoa", or "Ngoa", meaning "fifth".

The names used were:—

1. Ai; 2 Yi; 3 Sām; 4 Sai; 5 Ngoa; 6 Lok; 7 Chet; 8 Pet; 9 Chao; 10 Chong.

6. "In 952, the year of the tiger,..... Somdet Phra Vriddharaj died".

Anyone reading the translation through would suppose that this was some King or Prince, whether of Siam or another country, not mentioned before.

The Siamese says สมเด็จพระพุทธเจ้าหลวง พุทธมาราชนฤพาน". The word " พุทธมา " is a Sanscrit word meaning " Old " and the sentence means:—" His Majesty the old King " died ". This old King was Maha Dharmaraja, whom I referred to under Note No. I, and he is here called the old King, as opposed to his son Narésuen, the young King, who was reigning as Uparat in P'itsanulok, as mentioned in " Luang Prasöt's P'ongsāwadān ", under the years 933 and 946.

There are a few other cases in which Dr. Frankfurter has not quite represented the meaning of the original, but they are unimportant. My intention is not to try to provide a better translation in every instance, but merely to point out those cases in which misunderstanding might be caused with regard to some actual historical event.

---