NOTES

THE AGE OF KING RAMA I OF THE CHAKRI DYNASTY.

In my article entitled, The Reconstruction of Rama I of the Chakri dynasty, in JSS. XLIII, 1, 1955, it was stated that that King died at the age of 74. My statement was based on the History of the First Reign by, Chaophya Dibakaravons, published in R.S. 120 (1901) and again by the Fine Arts Department in 1935 (p. 312).

Prince Prididebyabongs has now drawn my attention to the fact that this was a miscalculation, for the King was born on the 20th March 1737, and died on the 7th September 1809, thus leaving his span of life only 72 years, 5 months and 17 days, or, roughly speaking, 72 years and 6 months.

The miscalculation apparently arose from the prevalent method of reckoning age at that time when the King, having been born towards the end of the lunar year, would be considered as being 2 years old with the dawn of the new year. He was then regarded as being 2 years old when he was really only 11 days old.

In thanking Prince Prididebyabongs for the information, I naturally accept his correction,

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THE ORIGINS OF THE VIETNAMESE.

This problem has been subjected to various opinions. Some research workers believe that the Vietnamese people were a Mongoloid tribe that emigrated from Southeastern China to North Vietnam (Tongking); others, such as Colonel Henri Roux, thought that they were originally Siamese. The noted philologist, Professor A.G. Haudricourt, thinks, however, that the Vietnamese should be placed in the Austro-asiatic family, between the Wa-Palaung and the Môn-Khmer
group, because many of the basic roots of the Vietnamese language are Môn-Khmer. It has also been thought that the tones in the Vietnamese language are due to a former Thai influence. To this, Prof. Haudricourt says that the introduction of tones in the Vietnamese language is not due to Thai influence. He states that it is probable that at the beginning of our era neither the ancestor of the Siamese language, nor of the archaic Chinese, nor of the common Miao-Yao language had any tones; that the appearance of tones was begotten by the modification of the final and initial consonants, and that this took place in a parallel manner in all four languages because of Chinese influence. This Chinese influence is testified by the existence of many Chinese loan words (in the three other languages). In this matter of tones, Prof. Haudricourt agrees with Dr. Paul Benedict.

It seems that Prof. Haudricourt's placing of the Vietnamese language and the Vietnamese people in the Austro-asian family is based solely on linguistic grounds. Ethnology and the study of blood groups do not, however, agree with this view. Some fifteen years ago Dr. Maneffe and M. Bézacier carried out a series of blood group studies of the Vietnamese and other ethnic groups in North Vietnam, such as the Mường (rustic cousins of the Vietnamese), the Thô who are Thai, the Nùng, also Thai, and the Mán (Yao). The result of this investigation was that all these ethnic groups come nearer (biologically) to the Indonesian element than to the Mongol. In stating that the Thai are more closely related to the Indonesian (than to the Chinese), Dr. Maneffe and M. Bézacier are in agreement with Dr. Benedict (and also the noted German anthropologist, Prof. Egon Baron von Eickstedt). The first two

2. Idem.
authors say that the Indonesians are members of "the great Euro­
ploid family." 4,5

It seems that the Indonesian, like the other groups of the
Thai, Kadai and Indonesian alignment, originated somewhere in
Yunnan, and when the Môn-Khmer wave, coming from the south
(southwest?), and intruding like a wedge,6 separated the Thai and
the Kadai from the Indonesian group; the Thai were pushed north­
wards and the Kadai eastwards. The Indonesians were driven south­
wards, invading the whole of the farther Indian peninsula. A
wave of these Indonesians, who were people of a highly developed
neolithic culture, invaded and conquered the lands of what was until
recently French Indochina (and the remainder of farther India) where
they met a primitive population of Papua-Melanesian and Negrito
stock which they conquered, drove away, or absorbed. Next, a wave of
Môn-Khmer, following in the steps of the Indonesian, overran and
conquered Tongking (but not Champa or certain territories in the
Indo-Indian backlands, and Chiang Khwang). The result of the
last invasion was that the Vietnamese (Indonesian) of that day
adopted more or less the language of their conquerers, a process in
which history shows many similar examples. In spite of all this,
we think we are justified in maintaining that the Vietnamese are
aussi Indonésiens. That this assertion is correct is borne out by
Dr. Manesse's and M. Bézacier's investigations of the blood groups
of the people of North Vietnam as well as by several cultural
traits which link up the Vietnamese with the Indonesian of
Insulinde. As regards the culture and language of the present-day
Vietnamese, they were heavily influenced at first by the Chinese
conquest during the Han period (cir. 200 B.C. to cir. 200 A.D.), and
afterwards during the long Chinese occupation that lasted for many

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hundreds of years. It is well known that the population of Central Vietnam (Annam) consists mainly of former Cham people from the once flourishing hindnized and highly civilized Kingdom of Champa, which was utterly destroyed by the ruthless and iconoclastic Vietnamese to such a degree that only a few tens of thousand very poor descendants of this formerly proud people are now left. The Cham are of course Indonesians, both by blood and language.

Sorgenfri per Virum, Denmark
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Erik Seidenfaden