

NOTES AND COMMENTS
NOTES ON KRUNG KAO

by
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Mr. J.J. Boeles, Director of the Siam Society's Research Center, kindly brought to my attention Nai Sumet Jumsai Na Ayutya's 'Notes Concerning Ayutya' which appeared under the Notes and Comment section of *The Social Science Review* (mainly in Thai) vol 3 no 2 for September 1965, pages 85-86. Since, two further articles on Krung Kao by Nai Jumsai have appeared; one in *ข่าวสารสำนักผังเมือง (Journal of the Office of Town Planning)*,¹ the other in *สถา (ASA)*.² As these journals are virtually unknown outside Thailand (in truth, being rather specialized, they are little known inside Thailand) brief resumés of the pertinent articles are warranted; more particularly in that there is advanced an argument different from that in 'Krung Kao: The Old Capital of Ayutthaya', an article which appeared in the January 1965 issue of *The Journal of the Siam Society*.

The gist of Nai Jumsai's remarks in 'Notes Concerning Ayutya' concerns the dating of a plan included as figure 6 in 'Krung Kao ...' and labeled *Dutch Oblique Plan-View of Ayutthaya; c. 1725*. Reproduced from a recent color reproduction, this is referred to the *original* in Valentyn, F., *Beschryving van Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien*, vol 3, 1726. Nai Jumsai points out that the so-called original in Valentyn is actually a copy of an earlier 'water colour painting in Johannes Vingboons' atlas preserved at 's-Cravenhage [sic], Algemeen Rijksarchief and dated c. 1665', and, further, that this 'original water colour version itself was probably based on an earlier Siamese version since it

- 1 Nai Sumet Jumsai Na Ayutya, 'อยุธยาจาก พ.ศ. ๑๘๙๓-๒๓๑๐' ('Ayutthaya from B.E. 1893-2310') *ข่าวสารสำนักผังเมือง กระทรวงมหาดไทย, ฉบับที่ ๙, กรกฎาคม ๒๕๐๘ (Journal of the Office of Town Planning Ministry of Interior, no 9, July 1965)* pages 28-41.
- 2 Nai Sumet Jumsai Na Ayutya, 'Some Comparative Aspects of Angkor Thom and Ayutya', *สถา (ASA; The Association of Siamese Architects)* no 2, 1965, pages unnumbered.

bears distinct traces of native handling'. Continuing this line of reasoning, in introducing the existence of a quite similar oil painting of Ayutthaya preserved at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam captioned: 'cat. nr. 87. Anonymous Dutch School, 1st. half of 17th cent. Judea . . . canvas 97×140 cm.', he concludes that it is quite probable that both these efforts date from the 1630's when Joost Schouten was Dutch factor at Ayutthaya. I cannot but agree with this hypothesis (though from the information supplied it appears that the water color in Vingboons' atlas may well have proceeded from the oil in the Rijksmuseum); hastening to add that though well acquainted with the nature of Valentyn's work—it being a compilation of others' observations rather than those of his own—yet this significant fact did not intrude at the proper time to cause me to consider possible antecedents to the included plans. Again, misgivings attended the positioning of this plan-view at the end of a sequence of maps dated some thirty-five to forty years previous, for I could not reconcile the obvious sophistication of the 'earlier' European plans as compared with the 'later' Dutch view—more particularly, indeed, because this 'later' view is *Dutch*. Finally, the style of the plan-view, being of a type current in Europe during the early 17th century (employed, for example, in the *civitates orbis terrarum*), occasioned a certain hesitancy.

Nai Jumsai's critical information, then, allows a redating of the *Dutch Oblique Plan-View of Ayutthaya* to the early 17th century (probably c. 1635) and consequently, a relieving repositioning at the beginning of the sequence of 17th century maps of the capital and an end to puzzlement over style. The source note (wanting a more precise reference) should read: 'A recent color reproduction after that in J. Vingboons' Atlas at 'sGravenhage, Algemeen Rijksarchief, c. 1665'; the caption may be retained minus the phrase 'a century before'. Similarly, *Portion of a Dutch Map of the Chao Phraya; c. 1725*, should, in all likelihood, be redated as early 17th century, the source note altered and the last line in the caption deleted. A repositioning, then, as the first in the sequence of 17th century plans referred to would allow for a reasonable continuity in presentation since this view encompasses a much greater area than do the others.

The first eight pages, in Thai, of ‘อยุธยาจาก พ.ศ. ๑๘๓๕-๒๓๑๐’, that is, ‘Ayutthaya A.D. 1350-1767’ which appeared in the *Journal of the Office of Town Planning*, set out the aims of the paper, briefly discuss (through quotes) the so-called history of the planning of Ayutthaya, and offer the author’s proposal for restoration and preservation of the site as a National Historical Park—the last being, in fact, one of two professed goals;

The other aim for presenting Ayutya here is directed to students of Siamese history, sociology, urban hydraulics, urbanism, urban geography, etc., and especially, those engaged in the particular case-study of Ayutya.³

Nothing in the Thai section deserves further notice here, and though the English portion of the text merely alludes to its contents, this is sufficient. A ‘map’ supplement together with the ‘Notes and references to plates’ included in the English section ‘probably constitute the most complete working material up to date’⁴—an invaluable compilation.

Among these plates is one indicating the evolution of major Ayutthayan waterways; here faithfully reproduced⁵ in order that the difference between Nai Jumsai’s conjecture and my own—here diagrammed from the discussion in ‘Krung Kao . . .’ pages 86-90—may be made clear; particularly in that there appears to be no reason to alter my original argument. Nai Jumsai’s reasoning, while discernible from the diagram, is perhaps more readily grasped from the following:

The geographical advantage was inherent in the given ox-bow as formed by the Pasak river . . . The city could be quickly defined, defended, serviced and drained by

3 Nai Sumet Jumsai Na Ayutya, ‘อยุธยาจาก พ.ศ. ๑๘๓๕-๒๓๑๐’ (‘Ayutthaya A.D. 1350-1767’) *op. cit.*, p. 38.

4 *Ibid.*

5 An ‘Exposition Ayuth’ya’, held by Nai Jumsai at the Alliance Française, Centre Cultural in Bangkok during November 1965 included a blown-up reproduction of this plate. Oddly, it was shown lacking unequivocal identification of the ox-bow as being formed by the Pasak, without indication of the Chao Phraya’s location east of the ox-bow, and minus the ‘1st’ in ‘1st moat’—the very argument at which I balk.

the simple method of completing the ox-bow with a canal or moat joining its narrower part and rendering it thereby into an island.⁶

Chao Phya river at first ran east of the ox-bow but was joined on to the latter by means of a canal during the early period of Ayutya well after Utong's reign.⁷

Phya Boran's foot-note 2 discounts any other first moat than ชัยพนา which is the present channel of the Pasak river.⁸

Thus Nai Jumsai's argument considers neither the 'exterior moat . . . in addition to the already existing moat'⁹ dug about 1550 nor that the eastern wall was 'pulled down and re-erected near the river bank'¹⁰ in 1580, points which profoundly influence my conjecture. Again, unfortunately, the source from which was derived information of the Chao Phraya's former course *east* of the ox-bow is not indicated and

6 Nai Sumet Jumsai Na Ayutya, 'อโยธยา จาก พ.ศ. ๑๙๙๓-๒๓๑๐' ('Ayutthaya A.D. 1350-1767') *op. cit.*, p. 38.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 41.

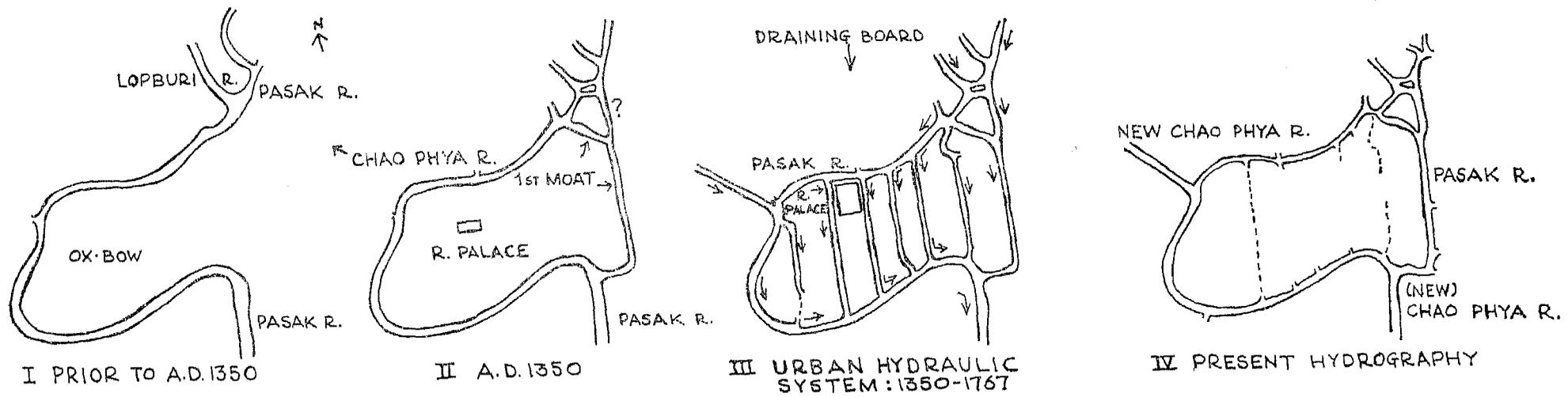
8 *Ibid.* But Nai Jumsai includes also the following possibilities gathered 'From a conversation with Phya Anuman Rajadhon':

1. ชัยพนา or its traces might have existed before as a moat or canal to the city of Ayotya (11th century) immediately to its eastern side, having in mind that Ayotya was an outpost for Louvo, it [sic] was possible that ชัยพนา also acted as the by-pass canal for the Lopburi-Pasak ox-bow to shorten the distance from the Gulf up to Louvo (Lopburi) in which case Ayotya would have also been a garrison town guarding this important by-pass canal, much in the same way as the citadel of Bangkok which in turn guarded the by-pass canal for Ayutya.
2. That Phya Utong constructed (or reconditioned) ชัยพนา in order to separate the old town of Ayotya from his newly founded city of Ayutya, apart from its being merely a moat.

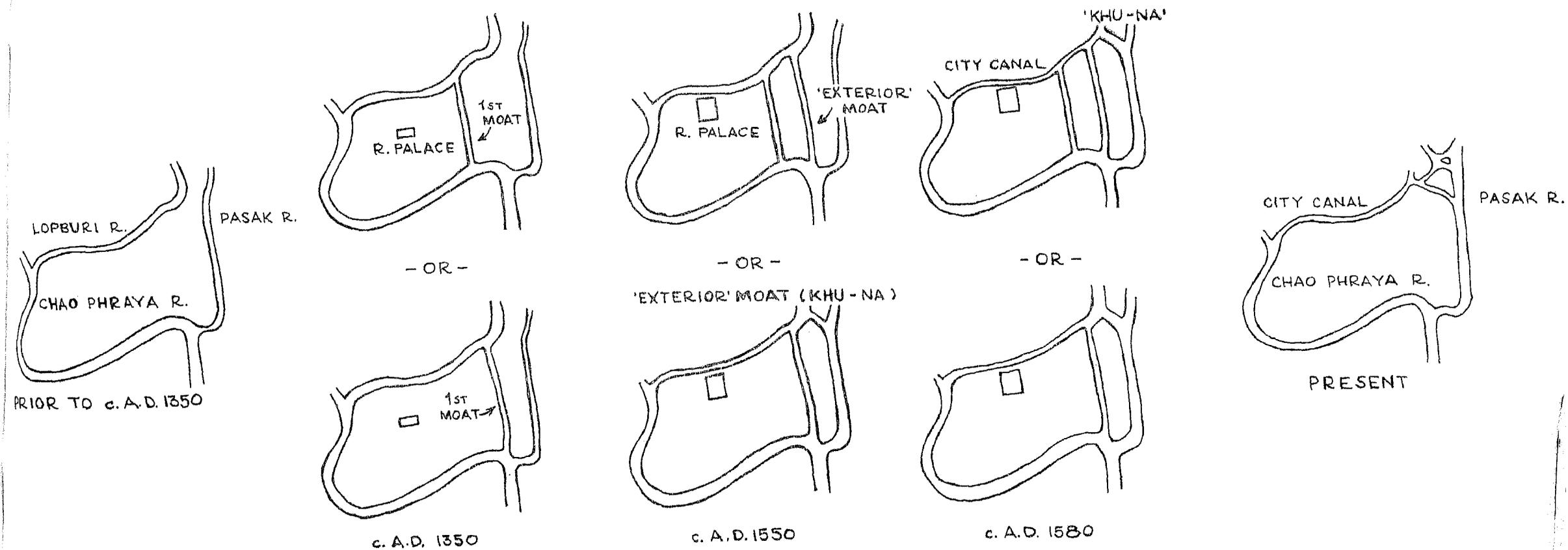
Note that if the 'moat or canal to the city of Ayotya . . . [was] immediately to its *eastern* [my italics] side' than no amount of construction or reconstruction would enable a separation of Ayotya from Ayutya.

9 Wood, W.A.R., *A History of Siam*, 1924, p. 114.

10 Frankfurter, 'Events in Ayuddhya from Chulasakaraj 686-966', *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal* vol 1 (1904-1929), 1954, p. 58.



Diagrammatic representation of the evolution of major Ayutthayan waterways from Nai S. Jumsai Na Ayutya 'อยุธยาจาก พ.ศ. ๑๘๕๓-๒๓๑๐' ('Ayutthaya A.D. 1350-1767')
 ข่าวสารสำนักผังเมือง กระทรวงมหาดไทย, ฉบับที่ ๘, กรกฎาคม ๒๕๐๘, หน้า ๑๗ (*Journal of the Office of Town Planning Ministry of Interior, no 9, July 1965, plate 17*).



Diagrammatic representation of the possible evolution of major Ayutthayan waterways from Sternstein 'Krung Kao: The Old Capital of Ayutthaya' *Journal of the Siam Society* vol 53 part 1, 1965, pp. 88-90.

my research has not disclosed it. Phya Boran, of course, has the 'former' Chao Phraya forming the ox-bow¹¹ and H.R.H. Prince Damrong has the Chao Phraya to the south and west, the Pasak to the east and the Lopburi to the north-the latter streams being connected, subsequently, by a short canal rendered the 'peninsula' an island (this argument is depicted on figure 1).¹² Since Nai Jumsai is well acquainted with Phya Boran's work and, in all likelihood, with that of Prince Damrong, this siting of the river must spring from an unimpeachable source. However, it appears that only a change of name *could* be involved (though that Nai Jumsai has the Chao Phraya joined by a canal to the ox-bow at a later date would argue against his holding this view): an original location east of the ox-bow would behead the so-called original Chao Phraya making it an unlikely candidate for receipt of so auspicious a title, and the wholesale movement of the Chao Phraya to its present course would require an east-west sidling through at least two major stream channels. My basic reasons for questioning the contention that the present Pasak channel was the former 1st moat are, I think, already clear and will be augmented presently.¹³ Here, however, I would introduce an argument used by Nai Jumsai (gleaned from Groslier) to account for the innumerable parallel east-west canal traces at Ayutthaya, that 'it was easier in the days when dredging could not be done, to dig a new channel rather than trying to deepen the old one'.¹⁴ Though I think this doubtful-

11 See Phya Boranrajadhanin, *ประชุมพงศาวดาร (Annals: A Compilation)* part 63, 1936, Fine Arts Department, footnote 2.

12 See Damrong, H.R.H. Prince, *เที่ยวตามทางรถไฟ และรวมเรื่องเมืองนครราชสีมา (Tour by Railroad and information about Nakorn Ratchasima)* in *อนุสรณ์ที่ระลึกในงานพระราชทานเพลิงศพ อำมาตย์ตรี พระพลราชภูว์บำรุง (แสง อุเทนสุต) ณ เมรุสมานมิตร จังหวัดนครราชสีมา วันที่ ๒๑ เมษายน ๒๕๐๕ หน้า ๙-๑๒ (Cremation Memento for Amatri Phra-Pol-Rat-Bamrung (Saeng Utainsut) at Samanmitr Crematorium; Nakorn Ratchasima, 21 April 1962, pp. 9-12; or an English version: Ayudhya, Guide Book to the Chief Monuments of Bangkok, Bang Pa-In, Ayudhya and Lopburi with an Introduction on Siamese History and Religion The Bangkok Time Press, Ltd., August 1930, pp 27-30.*

13 The argument may be found on pages 88-90 of 'Krung Kao . . .', *op. cit.*

14 Nai Sumet Jumsai Na Ayutya, 'Some Comparative Aspects . . .', *op. cit.*

more particularly in that the area experiences a marked dry period, accepting this as true may we not question the widening (to ten *wa*) and deepening (to three *wa*) of the 'Pasak' 1st moat during the reign of King Maha T'ammaraaja (1569-90)¹⁵-particularly in that the eastern wall was 'pulled down and re-erected near the *river* [my italics] bank'¹⁶ at this time?

The geomantic principle in the siting of the Royal Palace¹⁷ is wholly discounted in 'Some Comparative Aspects of Angkor Thom and Ayutya', in which it is proposed to introduce the 'problem of water as a sculptural medium to urbanism and to examine . . . the two extremely interesting plans and systems of Angkor Thom and Ayutya'. Groslier is relied upon for Angkor Thom; personal research for Ayutthaya. Here, we need briefly consider only the pertinent portion of Nai Jumsai's general conclusion that at Ayutthaya axiality was 'incidental' to an overall informality¹⁸ while Angkor was 'a definite axial scheme'. Now, in truth, much hinges on the position of the original ^๓๓๓๓. For, in placing this moat at the present Pasak channel, Nai Jumsai's argument, which sees no design in the siting of the Royal Palace, in fact, it is stated flatly that 'the Royal Palace was not intended to be the city centre'¹⁹, follows quite naturally. In

15 See Phya Boranrajadhanin, *op. cit.*, footnote 2.

16 Frankfurter, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

17 See Sternstein, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88.

18 Here, Nai Jumsai confusedly holds that 'the idea of a definite centre for an amoeboid form is hardly valid and as in the amoeba, the centre or nucleus is necessarily one which is in a constant movement and has flexibility for its positioning'.

19 The reason for the 'incidental' order present is laid, simply, to the fact that 'a conglomeration of up to one million inhabitants needed to be organized and coordinated into some social, spiritual and physical frame work'. That Ayutthaya, generously delimited, ever held even a half-million inhabitants is doubtful and that but a small proportion of the total population actually occupied the 'ordered' area would seem to argue against 'needs of the people' as good cause for that amount of 'incidental' planning evident. No, though benefits obviously accrue to the people, I believe we must look to reasons other than these; to factors—such as those underlying the internal arrangement of wats and the ordering of the Palace area—which would necessitate planning regardless.

assuming that the palace was centrally sited (amongst other things) I am led to position the first moat west of the present bed of the Pasak.²⁰

To my mind, the matter is in doubt and will remain so until further evidence allows a choice between, or perhaps rejects, these hypotheses. At present, however, I find Nai Jumsai's argument less satisfying than my own.²¹

Thinking to aid further constructive criticism, I wish to indicate several minor discrepancies in the published text of 'Krung Kao . . . ' which might cause difficulty in interpretation: on page 83, substitute

20 In this regard, though acknowledging the 'convenience and practicality' of such a channel, Nai Jumsai rejects the possibility that the Makamriang canal could have been an early moat for

according to the Dutch map and painting dating back to the 1630's . . . it was a natural and meandering water way. This must have silted up at some point and was completely redug and straightened out by the 1680's as could of course be seen in the French plan of 1687 and in Dr. Kaempfer's plan of 1690.

Now, clearly, the Dutch view has not that 'exactness' necessary to such use (in fact, there is shown a canal which could be the Makam-riang) and it is folly to so base an unequivocal rejection.

21 I have experienced some difficulty in interpreting Nai Jumsai's English; apparently, he has also had some trouble in following mine and that of others as well: for example, footnote 20 to 'Some Comparative Aspects . . . ' *op. cit.*, reads

Phya Utong, founder of medieval Siam shifted his capital from Utong to Ayutya for the prime reason of strategic and therefore political factors, namely that the new capital would control the sea trade and communication—wise, the major rice growing area of the Central Delta and the northern states up to Chiengmai. Cf. Prince Damrong: 1959: Siamese History Prior to the Founding of Ayutya, Selected Articles from the Siam Soc. Journal, vol 3. An epidemic outbreak at Utong was a secondary reason as held by Dr. Sternstein. *Op. Cit* p. 85.

In fact, Damrong, sensibly, does not consider 'sea trade' in his brief remark in this regard and I do not 'hold' the traditional reason for the move from U Thong—an 'epidemic outbreak'—a secondary cause. Nai Jumsai's gross misrepresentation, of my argument is immediately clear from a reading of Krung Kao . . . ' *op. cit.*, p. 86.

site' for 'side' in line three; on page 92, insert 'well as' between lines nine and ten; on page 94, insert 'Kingdom, and the seat of the' between lines three and four; on page 99, substitute 'straitned' for 'strained' in line six from the foot; on page 106, close parenthesis after 'copper' in line sixteen of the paragraph; on page 108, substitute 'of' for 'or' in line ten of the quote; on page 110, delete 'both' in line three from the foot; and on page 111, insert 'coast' between 'east' and 'at' in line five from the foot.