Mr. William Soame, evidently a merchant attached to the British East India Company, sent a letter on 20 December 1688 to "some friend" at Madras in which he described the recent "Revolution of Siam": the intrigues surrounding the death of King Narai, the execution of Constance Phaulkon, the accession to the throne of Phetracha, and the turbulence surrounding the French military presence in Siam. All these events had occurred between May and October of the same year. Soame writes not as an eyewitness, but as one who has composed for the record "such an Imperfect Account as has been collected from such informations as in [his] judgement appeared most credible." So far as is known his account has never before been published.

The letter forms part of the collection of the late Mr. Prakaipet Indhusophon, Thailand's premier philatelist and one of the most prominent in the world. It has been made available to the JSS though the kindness of his widow, Mrs. Boonkrong Indhusophon, who has so kindly sponsored this issue.

Mrs. Boonkrong informs us that she first saw the letter some ten years ago in the collection of a friend in Singapore. It was later sold to a Thai collector, Mr. Anatchai Rattakul, who in turn sold it to an auction house in England, from which Mr. Prakaipet acquired it. It was translated into Thai by Dr. Usanee Laothamatat, presumably for its first Thai owner.

The letter, browned with age, is seven pages long and is written on both sides of the sheets, which measure 20 x 30 cm. The ink has seeped through, which adds to the difficulty in reading it. It was transcribed first in 1991 by Mr. Martin E. Hardy, Assistant Director, Western Hemisphere Department, International Monetary Fund, Washington, D.C., and has been reexamined by the Honorary Editor and Mrs. Virginia M. Di Crocco.

The text is presented here both in modern script, with the punctuation and spelling of the original preserved, and in facsimile. (Photographs by Noppadol Suwanveerakorn.)

Malaca 20th December 1688

Worshipfull sir

You may probably before this have understood the Revolution of Siam from those more advantagiously Qualified to Informe - nevertheless such an Imperfect Account as hath been collected from such Informations as in my judgement appeared most credible, Please to take as followeth.

The Beginning of March the then King being Disabled to the affairs of Government was pleased to appoint and Impower for Officitating Royall Authoritye Upra Pipera Chai the Siam Genall. Frape [Phra Pi] his adopted son, & Oya Phaulkon, the Princess Daughter to be made acquainted with and consenting to all their Proceedings. The.2. Princes His Brothers (and according to their Law, Heirs to the Crowne) the iLegitimate Son had been particularly and most Effectu­ally excluded as may be perceived by the Sequell.

The thus Excluding the Royall Line wholly consisting in the Disinhereited Princes highly favoured and Incourraged the aspirement of Both Partyes yt. designed themselves Candidates for the Crowne. The King's Illness increasing to past Hopes ( or rather Feares of Recoverye ) Each Partye drawes His Friends to Court, and Forces to ad­jacent villages. And Oya Phaulkon with Consent of Councell, Regent in the Kings Name Required the French Genall. with a Certaine Number of his Souldiers to Repair to Levo, Who by the waye touching att Siam, then received Such advices from the French Bishopp, as caused His Return to Bancoccke, Excusing itt to the Oya Phaulkon on account of a Rumor then generally Credited, of the Kings being Dead, Both Partyes in this Councell Regent concurr'd in having a Partye of the French Soldiers up to Court, The one to be strengthened by theire Assistance, the other by Separateing the Force to Facilitate their Destruction. Wherefore a Second Requiry was made in Complyance wherewith the Genall. only accompanied with
his Eldest Son makes his appearance, whose coming in that Manner and too late for Assistance of the Frapian Party frustrates the designes of Both. The Siam Generall. Upra Pipra Chai prospering in His designes was by this time ready for repossession of their Forts. In order whereunto the French Generall leaving His two Sons in Hostages was admitted down. But noe Invitations could ever after Intice Him to Leave His Fort, till Businesses were Honourably accommodated for His departing the Kingdome.

About the 10th of May Frape the Adopted Son was by procurement of the Siam Generall Upra Pipra Chai cutt to pieces in the Palace In whose Scritore =escritoire= was found a paper with names of a Partye of Mandereens, wherein upon the Kings Decease the Crowne was allotted to Frape the Adopted Son, the chief Princedom to Oya Phaulkon, and offices of State how to be disposed. The Generall. Upra Pipra Chai hauving as yett Seemingly favoured the Succession of the Royal Line was hereby Sufficently - fortified in prooving treasonable Designes of the Frapean Partye and thereupon Oya Phaulkon Sent for to answere the Charge, was uppon Entering the Palace being Seiz'd, Narrowly Scapeed Execution, wch. for Some reasons of State was Reprieved till the 25th. att Night when in His Irons, and after the Manner of a Common Malefactor He was carried to Execution without that Gate of the Citye bearing ye. Regent Upra's Name. A Padre for Confession with other Requests being denied, His Speech in the Siam Language ( avouching that Loyaltie to their King was the Cause of his Suffering ) concluded rising up from Devotion, tooke of His Relicaro Consacrado given by the Pope containing pieces of Bones of Severall reputed Roman Saints, and desired it might be given to one of the Christian Padress, but happened to John Spens out of whose in a Coffin of Silver within one of wood) was putt into a Purchaseing Consideration. Thus while Standeing, the Executioner att one Stroke Severed the Head, the Body falling to Remayne without any Remarkable Demonstration.

As to the Suffering of His Lady few Particulars have come to our Knowledge Save yt. her Selfe, and her Fathers Famillie have been deprived of all yt by a Scrutinous Search assisted with Corporal Tortures for Confession could possibly be found.

The 2. Princes by means of Severe chastisements from the King their Brother, hauving as was reported threatened Revenge uppon His Corps, which being made Knowne. His Matie. was onely prevailed with to Reprieve their Executions till the time of His Decease Should draw neare, wch. for Some reasons of State was Reprieved till the 3d. November He Sett Saile. But noe Invitations could ever after Intice Him to Leave His Fort, till Businesses were Honourably accommodated for His departing the Kingdome. The Hurly Burly att Court beginning Now to appease and dye of fortune Cast, the Siamese betake themselves by Force of Armes to Recover Possession of their Forts, but not prevailinge, in Some time a Cessation of Armes was agreed during wch. Intervall the French fitt out a Sloop for Information of their Shipping, expectant the then approaching Monsoon, wch. grounding in the River was overpowered and Boarded by the Ennemy, whereupon one of the Soldiers with Himselfe as is Reported, blew up about 200 of them. After wch. a Peace was concluded, Ships. Provisions &c given for Transportation and with much difficultye Permission obtained for Captain Williams, Captain Howell, & a Certain Number of English Sailors to assist the Navigation.

About the 25th. September the Lady Phaulkon with Her Son assisted by the Jesuets of her late Husbands Canonical Privy Council made Her escape to Bankoce wch. putt a Stopp to all proceedings Save the Reneweing of Hostile Preparations. The French Generall. and Councill of Warr finding, as may be Supposed, that their Honble. come off was like to be obstructed & the Christian Interest in that Kingdome more Severely - persecuted Solely upon Account of detaineing the Distressed Lady and Son, did after 12 Dayes Consutlations consent to terms of surrender, wch. the 8th of October was done accordingly.

October the 25th [sic] the French with their two Siam Hostages marched on Board their Shippes 30 and odd pieces of Ordnance--. & with Some Soldiers in Boates, Looseing Companie with the Shippes in the Night were intercepted wch. occasioned the Hostages on both Sides to be detained Save the French Chief & Generalls younger Son coming neare the Shippes, forced or frightened their Guard Mandereen to carry them on Board. See yt. of the French Hostages the Bishop only is remaininge.

The Generall. after about .3. days Stay att the Barr, Sent the Siamers word, yt He would Stay Six dayes longer att the Duch Iland Expecteinge the intercepted Boates, but noe answer coming in that time, the 3d. November He Sett Saile.

July the 4th. Mr. Joseph Baspoole was Seiz'd, Fetter'd, and Imprisoned, whose treatment to extort Confessions concerning the late Lord Phaulkon's Estate hath not been free from Corporall tortures.

Mr. Hodges the Honble. Companye Commr. happeninge to be at Levo, in the time of Revolution was Seiz'd, Plundered, Gongooed, chained, as futtered for Severall dayes and Nights in the Lucumberds [= Thai ริวคามาน riukaman, ships] and for the more Honble. advancement in Degrees of that Universitye, admitted a Fellow Commoner of the Daily Relicks of His Keepers Rice, till the Councell takinge into Consideration His particular Circumstances were pleased to order His Releasement, after wch. the 31st. July the Said Mr. Hodges wayted on Mumpann, late Ambassador to France being the first day of Publick appearance in His office as Barcalong who expresss Himselfe to this effect.

To you of the English Nation I Shall Speak in Generall. and first as to the Business of Fensaire. [Tenasserim] yr. people were in fault, and ours not without. But the things yt. there happned cannot be recalled.

The Late King was pleased Some years agoe to take into Favour and putt into great Employments Mr. Constant Phaulkon, who for great Crimes has received His Chattise-
ment But for time to come, if the English are Inclined to have a Trade with us according to the Customs and Privileges formerly granted they shall be welcome to it. Out Friend at Mergen according to the advices yt arrived 2 dayes before I left Syam, have been very Severely dealt with. wch. Extraordinary Severity, as is believed, hath occasioned Mr. Threders Death.

We expect to follow this Conveyance in 8. or 10 dayes after wch. in due time I hope to have the Honr. of Seeing you in good Health att Madrass being what offerrs at present from Yr. oblied Humble Servant to Command

William Soame

[Written on the back of one of the folds of the letter:] Malacca 20 Decbr 1688 From Mr. Soame to some freind in India about the Revolution at Syam.
of Edmund Pexet, on the Kings Name Regency.

The French General, with a certain number of his soldiers to depose to James, who by the King
knowing at Sevres then received such advice from the French Bishop, he sent out the Return
at Bangorke, sending it to the Oga Moullen
in council of a Pope, then generally suspected
of the King being dead, with part of the the Council Regent concerned in banishing a Pape
of the French Soldiers up to Caux. The same
to be strengthened by these Receptions, the
other by separating the Force to facilitate the
Deposition. Wherefore a second. Regent arose
in compliance who with the Geneva only accompanied
with some of the men under his appearance, while
coming in, he Marner and too late after
of the French Pape, frustrates the Pompous of
both. The same genealogies of Pape
their preparing on this Pompous was by this
same study for Replication of these Franks
in order wherein the French General
his two Sons in Hostage was admitted in
but his jurisdiction could ever after
him to leave this Fort, but Boginnes occurs
Annually accommodated for his Departing the
Kingdom.

About the 16 of May Tove the Adrested
for was by permission of the same General the
Aprian Pape. Their last to proceed in the Palace
wherein Tove was found a Paper with
name of a Pater of Montreux, wherein
upon the Kings Pecce, the Pope was pleased to
From the Archives...

To the Right Hon.

To His Excellency

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the Right Hon.

To the RightHon.
As the Sufferings of the Lady for Sundays
have come to my knowledge, hence my self,
and, that the family have been deprived of
all by a Severe and Search; I wish with
Gentleman, Fortune for Congestion could public
be found.

The 2d Instant by means of Seerest
Armament from the King then Insu;
Guards it was reported, that an Armament,
under the Corps, were manned. However
this was only intended, I wish to Remind
their Excellence, till the time of the Success
shall, be able to act and Happening, The
Bengal Opera on the 23d June at 11 Le:
could them to be Slain at Death with Sandal
Fortune, I wish not Expecting the 30th of
June by the last Bengal Opera, when the
Royalty to Ambelina and the Towns.

The Party Body all Crowd becoming
so strong, and of Fortune,| I wish to
take them behind to Force of Arms to Remind
their Funds but not promising,
None to Gestion of Arms and except
ordering and Governing the French yet out.
Keep for Information of their Being under
the Ship Assembling Montes, the ground
in the Tense not upon and Council of
the Treasury, whereupon one of the Soldiers
with Providence at it Reminds, lay up about
200 of them. After all a Peace, notwithstanding
Ship, President, Mr. even for Prandatis,
and with much difficulty, Reminds as
for Captain Williams, Captain Howard, &c.
Men of English Loyalty to enlight the Province
About the 24th September the Lady Plantagenet would be sent by the Duke of Soissons. The Parliament Council, Pape, Council made the escape to Enrique's ship, and put as Pape to the title of the authority of the Parliament Council. The French Senate and Council of War were found. It may be supposed, what was the more the more of what was to be obtained. The Council of the Kingdom was severely perturbered. What appen to them of the Duke, the Lady and family, but after 20 days communication went to their business with the 50,000 soldiers to attend.

On the 22nd the French with their five armed vessels married on Board the New Royal and 20,000 men, and every vessel some companies with the ships in the fleet. It was ordered not to ordain the vessels on both sides to be attended. Since the French Chief to generalize his son, commanding the ships, forced to fight near the Guard. The boats in order of the French vessels, the ships early came amonging.

The men all after about 3 days stay at the Barr. Told the smallest word of the word, they stayed longer at the Dog and also by the intercepted boats, but now expecting the intercepted boats, but never coming on that time, the 3rd November. The rest follow.

July the 4th the 1st Order. Real parts and only the 4th Light of the World, with salut, well and improved.
to what extent and concerning the late Lord
Phaudont's Estate hath not been free from
Corporate Dominick.

Mr. Rodger, the Hon. Company
Committee happening to be at Sea in the
time of Revolution was heard, Phaudont
Gomage, Church, an Office for Seamen's
Cases, and Rights on the Seamen, and for the
promotion of the Navigation in Persons of the
University, admitted a Fellow Commission
of the Thirty styled of the Regent's
Rite.

The committee taking into Consideration the
particular Commission was pleased to order
the Retrenchment after the 31st July, the last
Mr. Rodger report in the papers. The Committee
for the first day of Publick
in this office of Barratly who can explain the
to this affect.

Go Ager of the English Nation,
Not speak in Generall, and first as to the Body
of Tens of 35 People were in fault, and

But not Without. Both the things of those
happened cannot be recalled.

The late King was pleased some years
ago to take into Consideration and put into great
Employment to Constant Phaudont, who
for great Crimes has received the查士丁
But to come to come of the English magistrates
to have a Place with all according to the
Conditions and Privileges formerly granted
they shall be Welcome to it.
Our Friends all Morgan according to the
Arrival of arrived 2 days before I left
Syren I have been very severely sick
with what extraordinary Severity as not
Believed hath occasioned Mr. Rhedos
Death
We expect to offer Mr. Conveyance
in 23 or 24 days after which in due time
I hope to have the honor of seeing you
in good Health at Madison being still
Absent the present from
Wm Dreadnought
Servant to Command
William Davis