

# JSS

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*The Journal of the Siam Society*

# The Journal of the Siam Society

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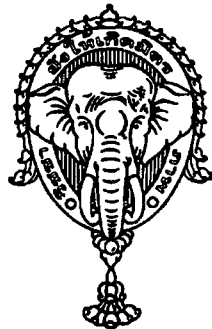
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## ABSTRACTS

### **Thai Women in Late Ayutthaya Style Paintings**

NAPAT SIRISAMBHAND

*Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute*

ALEC GORDON

*Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute*

Women's work as shown in murals of the Ayutthayan era is discussed. Murals in central Thailand from about 1660 to the late-eighteenth century were examined. Major findings show that women engaged in many activities including some, such as being a mahout, that are no longer considered "women's work". Such depictions indicate that gender relations in Ayutthayan period were not as clear-cut as many might have thought. Also shown are pictures of violence against women and latter attempts, both at monasteries themselves and in academic studies of the murals, to cover them up.

### **The Gardens of the Royal Palace at Ayutthaya**

KEITH BRANIGAN

*Department of Archaeology and Prehistory at the University of Sheffield*

COLIN MERRONY

*Department of Archaeology and Prehistory at the University of Sheffield*

The results of a geophysical survey of the garden areas of the Royal Palace at Ayutthaya are described and an interpretation is offered, combining the geophysical evidence with accounts from contemporary sources. It is suggested that in addition to an area of parkland with ponds and mature trees, enclosures, perhaps for fruit trees, can be identified. Two areas provided with small pavilions, paths, flower beds, fountains and water courses are also proposed.

### **Time in Transition: King Narai and the Luang Prasoet Chronicle of Ayutthaya**

IAN HODGES

*Military History Section of the Australian War Memorial*

In 1681 King Narai ordered his Chief Royal Astrologer to write a history of Siam. The astrologer followed Narai's instructions closely and produced a history of the kingdom unlike any that had been written before.



The Luang Prasoet Chronicle is widely recognised as the first Thai dynastic history. Although this distinction belongs to an earlier work, no other text influenced later histories to the extent that the Luang Prasoet Chronicle did. Its appearance on the Thai literary scene was the result of Narai's own background and interests. This article outlines Narai's role in shaping the Luang Prasoet Chronicle and traces the text's influence on later *phongsawadan* histories.

### **Forced Resettlement Campaigns in Northern Thailand During the Early Bangkok Period**

VOLKER GRABOWSKY

*Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster*

Forced resettlements of conquered populations constituted an important aspect of traditional warfare in underpopulated pre-colonial Southeast Asia where the control of manpower in general counted more than the conquest of land. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries the ruling elite of Chiang Mai and other Northern Thai principalities implemented the strategy of deporting significant populations from adjacent Tai-inhabited areas in eastern Burma and southern China in order to rebuild the shattered society and economy of their respective polities. This paper reconstructs the different stages of the forced resettlement campaigns, examines the rationale and discusses their impact on state and society in Thailand's upper north, the historical region of Lan Na.

### **The Image of Chiang Mai: the Making of a Beautiful City**

RONALD D. RENARD

The image of Chiang Mai as a land of beauty developed only in the twentieth century. When Bangkok took political control of northern Thailand. As this occurred the people of Chiang Mai stopped writing their history and largely accepted a history written by Bangkok authorities with the purpose of protecting Thailand from colonization. Many local customs and practices have also been changed in accord with national-level preferences. This has seriously impeded the study of Chiang Mai's history.

### **Moving House: Migration and the Place of the Household on the Thai Periphery**

HJORLEIFUR JONSSON

*Arizona State University*

This article examines social and ritual dynamics among upland ethnic minorities on the Thai periphery. Taking the case of a migration of Mien from the late-nineteenth century, it shows how population movements were involved in structuring relations among chiefs and commoners on the fringe of lowland kingdoms, and how political economic factors related to the shifting prominence of households and villages. The case reveals how migration and leadership have been reinterpreted in the context of national integration. Contemporary processes have undermined the previous prominence of the household in local social life, but an examination of household interiors suggests that photo-displays, like story-telling, can convey politics that assert household autonomy in spite of contemporary marginalization.

## EDITORIAL

With this issue, I take over editing the *Journal of the Siam Society* from the able hands of Ian Glover. Only time will tell if the Society's Council made the correct decision in asking me to be his successor. I hope that those who appreciated his erudite selection of contributions will grant me sufficient grace for whatever failings they find in Volume 87.

This, the 1999 volume, honors the 72<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the birth of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, the Honorary Patron of the Siam Society. In his recognition, we publish a tribute in both Thai and English. The Thai tribute, *Boromarachasiarawat*, (In Honor of His Majesty) was written in the classical *chan* poetic style by Dr. Saksi Yaemnadda, who, as his many students at the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University will attest, has mastered this challenging genre. Using alliteration, internal rhyme, the use of "dead" (*kham tai*) and "live" (*kham pen*) syllables, and other techniques according to a strict regimen, Dr. Saksi extols His Majesty's long reign and productive life as exemplifying the four qualities of an enlightened monarch. Dr. Saksi enlivens his tribute with various references including one, *Philai*, that just might be to President Bilaibhan Sampatisiri.

The remainder of the tribute to His Majesty includes pictures of some of his visits to the Society and excerpts from an article on his "New Theory" which emphasizes self-reliance, initiative, and sustainability. The implications of this approach extend far beyond the self-sufficiency His Majesty wants to bring to small farmers in the country's rural areas.

The articles in this issue represent both innovative approaches to traditional subjects and the exploration of new ideas and concepts. Much new scholarship on Thailand's culture is being undertaken by younger scholars and by others

using new tools. It is appropriate that the articles in the *Journal* reflect this.

The cover article by Napat Sirisambhand and Alec Gordon explores what mural paintings from the Ayutthayan period (ca. 1300 to 1767) tell about gender roles of that time. The cover picture shows a woman atop an elephant in the mahout's position; just outside of camera range are two other such figures. The article contends, although some traditionalist scholars might hold different interpretations, that the murals prove that women's roles were different at that time than many today believe. Nevertheless, there are other traditional mural paintings of women mahouts, such as the picture preceding the editorial. Although this picture from Wat Phumin in Nan Province was probably drawn in the early-nineteenth century (and thus after the Ayutthayan Period) this picture provides evidence supporting the thesis proposed in this article. The authors also point to a kind of reverse "cover up" by recent observers of the murals who found aspects of them distasteful.

In another innovative look at Ayutthayan life, Keith Branigan and Colin Merrony use scientific techniques new to Thai studies to study the gardens of the Ayutthayan palaces. The integrate their findings with contemporary descriptions of the royal palace in the seventeenth century.

Ian Hodge explores the most authoritative of the traditional Thai histories, the Luang Prasoet Chronicle. Hodge examines how the Chronicle deals with one of the best known but least understood of the Ayutthayan rulers, King Narai. In doing so, Hodge makes this important chronicle much more accessible and understandable to all scholars and better known to those who cannot read Thai.

Volker Grabowsky uses his exhaustive knowledge of the literature of Lan Na (the

traditional northern Thai kingdom) to review forced resettlement campaigns in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. This was a period of epochal change in the north especially when it is remembered that, as a Burmese vassalage, Chiang Mai sent thousands of soldiers to participate in the Burmese attacks that sacked Ayutthaya in 1767. The campaigns to bring new residents to the Chiang Mai area changed the demography of the north in profound ways which are reviewed in this article.

At the same time, Bangkok attitudes towards Chiang Mai were negative. They only began changing in the early-1900s following a visit of King Chulalongkorn to Paris where he saw *Madame Butterfly*. My paper explores how this was translated to a change in the image of Chiang Mai that made it a popular tourist destination with attractions ranging from a quaint dialect, fascinating handicrafts, and intriguing customs, to women who are seen as prettier than those elsewhere in the country.

The article by Iceland's contribution to Southeast Asian studies, Hjorleifur Jonsson, uses a wide conceptual focus to study the Mien (one of the Yao groups of the upper-Salween-Mekong region). Writing so complex contemporary anthropological discourses are accessible to the lay person, Jonsson examines social structure, migration, and the role of chance encounters with anthropologists (in this case, himself) in terms of local identity. In so doing he challenges traditional approaches to studying hill people and other minorities.

Also recognized in this issue are a number of recent Thai-language works of importance. This represents a revival of the section in the JSS which old Siamese hands will recall as

"Recent Siamese Publications". Because Thai literature is many times vaster than it was in the 1950s and 1960s, this section concentrates on publications not in the regular book trade such as academic works, temple histories, cremation volumes, and ephemera. This issue notes works from central and northern Thailand.

Thus are the highlights of the 1999 issue of the *Journal*. As the premier English-language cultural journal in Mainland Southeast Asia, the JSS has an audience beyond the borders of Thailand. Efforts are being made by various members of the Council to attract contributions by authors in the countries surrounding Thailand, particularly Myanmar (Burma), Laos, Cambodia, as well as on Tai areas of southern China and Vietnam.

Since the editorship of the *Journal* lives and dies with the Council to which he or she belongs, and since the present Council's term ends this year, I am in no position to speak authoritatively about the future of the JSS. But I certainly thank all Council members who made my life easier, including President Bilaibhan, Mrs. Monita Singhakowin, Mr. François Lagirarde, and Mr. Peter Skilling. I also owe the Advisory Committee and Editorial Board members, in particular to Khun Euayporn Kerdchouay and Khun Kanitha Kasina-ubol. Special thanks must go to the typesetter, Mr. Edward M. Stauffer, Mr. Geoffrey Goddard, who proofread the manuscript, and the new editorial assistant, Khun Achara Sangruji. By volunteering her time to the Society in quite a busy year for herself personally, she used her many personal and professional skills to make sure that, despite my frequent travels resulting in absences, sometime without leave from *Journal* business, the editorial and publication process stayed on course.