



## WHIRLIGIG OF DIPLOMACY: A TALE OF THAI-PORTUGUESE RELATIONS, 1613–9

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### **Abstract**

The oldest-known handwritten document in the Thai language is in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. It is a message sent in 1616 to the Portuguese viceroy in Goa. This paper discusses the document in terms of Thai concerns with military security at that time and in the context of numerous diplomatic missions, extending from Japan and China to South Asia and Europe.

This research began as an identification and translation of the oldest-known Thai manuscript, which belongs to the Bodleian Library of the University of Oxford. Transcriptions of the text in modern type (Prasan 1960 and Kongkaew 1996) and photographs of the original manuscript (Kongkaew 1996: 57 and Ginsburg 2000: 21) have been published. The identification is obvious from internal evidence in the text itself: it is a diplomatic message from a Thai king in Ayutthaya to a Portuguese viceroy in Goa. The subjects specified in the text are relatively minor: a general statement about friendly official relations and assurances about freedom to trade and inheritance of property. But a translation would not be very helpful without an explanation of the diplomatic mission for which the message was written, and some indication of what the diplomats were supposed to accomplish. Most historians would not understand the context in which the document was written, partly because the message itself does not mention the foremost diplomatic concerns of either the Thai court or the viceroy.

### **Is This Episode Important?**

The Bodleian manuscript is the only Thai record of a mission carried out by three Thai ambassadors and a young royal page, who went to India four centuries ago. They expected to sail onward to Portugal aboard a ship of the annual Portuguese fleet, but never went beyond the capital of the viceroy at Goa. Eventually their host sent them home, with apologies and excuses for not providing passage to Europe. They happened to be in Goa at the same time as rival ambassadors from the king of Burma, who had recently been at war with the Portuguese, was at that moment at war with the Thai, and was seeking Portuguese help to launch a war



against another enemy: the kingdom of Arakan. To complicate matters, less than a half year earlier, the Portuguese themselves had attacked Arakan unsuccessfully, and the Arakanese had subsequently massacred a Portuguese garrison. Moreover, ambassadors from Arakan soon arrived in Ayutthaya with proposals for a joint campaign against their common enemy: the Burmese. In the midst of these dealings, ambassadors of the European Catholic powers (Portugal and Spain), who were at war with the Dutch, arrived at the Thai court, in the hopes of persuading King Song Tham to ban all Protestant traders from his realm.

From the Thai viewpoint, this tale is interesting more for its intrigue than for its results. It is not surprising that no mention of these entanglements can be found in Thai records, and very little is included in modern historical studies, because there was no outcome of international importance. A lot of diplomatic activity took place but ended in a few changes of benefit only to the Portuguese residents of Thai ports and to other petty traders. The office of the head of the Portuguese community in Ayutthaya was recognised by both governments as an institution for future dealings between Thai officials and Portuguese residents and visiting traders. Procedures were established for inheritances passing from a Portuguese trader, who died in the kingdom, to his children and other heirs. Portuguese merchants in Melaka were encouraged to visit the Thai capital, and Ayutthaya's merchants were urged to reciprocate by trading in Melaka. Promises were made by both sides that trading conditions for these merchants would be improved. All these changes were potentially a boon to the traders but were not matters of national concern. Indeed, the trade itself is almost undocumented, and the traders are nearly invisible players in this aspect of Thai economic history. This paper thus recounts a brief but event-filled episode in social and economic history, and fills a small gap in the historical record of this poorly chronicled decade in Ayutthaya's history.

Relations with the Portuguese were the earliest by far of contacts between the Thai court and Europeans. These relations began in 1511 and have been treated in numerous publications, although in sparse detail. By contrast, historians of Thailand have written extensively about the brief period from 1684 to 1688, when the Thai and French sovereigns exchanged a series of embassies. The French adventures likewise came to nought, and yet are the subject of seemingly endless research and commentary, because so much documentation is available in French and English, and because so many historians of Thailand are able to work in both those languages. Also, that documentation has been much more accessible to Thai researchers than is the documentation about Portuguese relations with Ayutthaya, much of which has been little explored.

The imbalance of detail in the Thai annals for the House of Sukhothai is striking. The reigns of the first two kings (Maha Thamma Racha 1569–90 and

Naresuan 1590–1605) are recorded in great detail, largely in terms of the military operations of that period, especially the successive operations against the Burmese from 1585 to 1605. By contrast, the other five kings are scarcely chronicled at all. Few details of political events and no dates at all are recorded for the reign of Ekathotsarot (1605 to probably early 1611, although the exact date of his death has not yet been determined). Almost nothing is known about the young Si Saowaphak (a very short reign, perhaps only days, in early 1611), except his overthrow and execution by an older half-brother of lesser rank.

Most curious of all, the reign of Song Tham (1611–28), second-longest of the dynasty, receives only a few entries in the Thai chronicles, in spite of the great changes that took place in domestic and foreign affairs, particularly during the first decade of his rule. The Royal Autograph version of the annals devotes fewer than three pages to the reign (Royal Autograph 1973 ii: 1–4, Cushman 2000: 208–10). In addition to the king's accession and death, the Thai annalists mention only seven subjects: the appointment and death of the heir apparent, a rebellion by Japanese guards, the construction of a building to house a Buddha image, the Burmese attack on Tenasserim, the construction of a site for royal cremations, the Sacred Footprint in Saraburi and the compilation of royal editions of two Buddhist texts.

Why is Song Tham's reign so poorly recorded in the Thai annals? Did no one bother to write down anything about the whole period 1605–28 until much later, perhaps as late as 1680, when King Narai ordered the compilation of an abbreviated annal (Prasoet 1963)? Could no one remember, by that time, any other events of importance that had taken place during the last five reigns of the House of Sukhothai? Had few written records survived up to the time the detailed annals of the reign were compiled? The gap in the Thai records is even more puzzling, when considering that the third and fifth sovereigns of the dynasty were, respectively, the great-grandfather and maternal grandfather of King Narai. He was born only five years after his grandfather died, and he must have heard stories about that reign from his mother, other palace ladies and government officials. Given King Narai's keen interest in history, it seems probable that detailed records were indeed compiled in his reign, if not before, and that they ultimately disappeared in the destruction of Ayutthaya in 1767.

In the near-absence of Thai records, historians must look abroad when trying to document most of the reign of Song Tham. Japanese records provide details of the diplomatic exchanges between Japan and Ayutthaya, and some Japanese trading activities, but tell us little of domestic Thai affairs (Satow 1885 and Nagazumi 1999). Chinese records document the Thai tribute missions to Beijing but nothing of substance about Ayutthaya itself (Wade 1994). English records (for example, Danvers 1896 and Foster 1897–1902) provide much detail about English trading in Ayutthaya and some information about Thai affairs, but nothing about

the Portuguese-Thai diplomatic exchanges. Dutch records are outlined by Smith (1977) and will surely yield much additional detail not recorded elsewhere. Danvers (1894) attempted to describe Thai-Burmese relations in the 1610s using published Portuguese records available in his day, but much that he says about Thai-Burmese and Portuguese-Thai relations is inaccurate and should be treated with caution. The near-contemporary account compiled by Joost Schouten in 1636 provides far more detail about Song Tham's reign than the Thai records do. His discussion of the troubled early years of the reign, however, is very brief, and his assertions about Portuguese-Thai relations may be inaccurate, misleading and tinged with Protestant Dutch prejudices. The history of the kings of Ayutthaya compiled by Jeremias van Vliet in 1640 provides another brief sketch of the reign.

During the period from 1615 to 1619, there were continuous exchanges of envoys between the court of King Song Tham in Ayutthaya and the viceroy and council of the Portuguese government in Goa. These may have been the first intensive exchanges since the flurry of diplomatic exchanges that followed the initial Portuguese contact with the court of Ayutthaya in 1511. This period also marks a high point in cordial relations, preceded by a long interval in the final decades of the 1500s, when the Portuguese carefully maintained their contacts with the Burmese at the port of Pegu, relegating the Thai to a distant secondary position.

### **Early Ayutthaya's Western Buffer**

For nearly two centuries after its founding in 1351, the Thai kingdom of Ayutthaya enjoyed relative security along its western borders. The Mon kingdom of Ramanyadesa extended across the northern and north-eastern coastlines of the Andaman Sea, from the Irrawaddy delta east to Martaban (on the estuary of the Salween, Thoung-yen and Zami rivers) and then southward. The Tenasserim range, running north-to-south, provided a natural mountainous frontier between the Mon and Thai kingdoms. Farther down the Andaman Coast, the Thai gained control of Tenasserim in the mid-1400s and began to develop the anchorages there as a gateway to the Indian Ocean and its innumerable ports. Descriptions of the early 1500s portray Tenasserim as a prosperous destination for traders, and the Mon capital at Pegu as an even richer trading centre. To judge from the annals of the Mon and Thai, their relationship was relatively peaceful. This quiet coexistence ended abruptly in the 1540s, after the Mon kingdom was conquered by the Burmese, who moved their capital from the deep interior of the Irrawaddy basin to Pegu, in the newly acquired coastal territory.

The Burmese then attempted to add the lower Chao Phraya basin (Ayutthaya's territory) to their expanding empire, but the initial attempt in late 1548 and early 1549 failed, and the Burmese armies withdrew after an unsuccess-

ful siege of Ayutthaya. The second attempt was only partly successful, ending in a negotiated surrender by the Thai in early 1564, followed by the withdrawal of Burmese forces. The third attempt brought Ayutthaya fully under Burmese control in 1569, after a long siege. For the next decade and a half, the newly installed Thai monarch, first of the House of Sukhothai, ruled a weakened kingdom, which had lost much of its populace and was reduced to dependency status. Early in the reign of the next Burmese king, however, the Thai renounced their allegiance and severed their ties with the Burmese court. The Thai defended themselves successfully against a series of Burmese attacks, beginning in 1585. The final Burmese invasion was repelled by the Thai in early 1593, and no further attempts were made. During the next few years the Burmese empire weakened, many of the non-Burmese dependencies renounced their allegiance and some of the Burmese princes made their respective fiefs effectively independent.

At the turn of the century, the great centre of empire came under siege, and Pegu itself was sacked by an army under the command of the king's first cousin, who in turn came under siege by Thai forces, now on the offensive and in alliance with the Burmese king's half-brother, who had been appointed as king of Lan Na and ruled at Chiang Mai. When Pegu first came under attack, one of the besiegers was the king of Arakan, who brought his naval forces around from the coast facing the Bay of Bengal, and landed on the coast south of the Burmese capital. Portuguese adventurers and their ships were among his auxiliaries, and they took up positions at Syriam, on the coast near modern Rangoon. The Arakanese fleet eventually withdrew, but the Portuguese stayed. They soon made themselves independent of their patron, and the fort at Syriam (near modern Rangoon) eventually became one of the many Portuguese forts along the shores of the Indian Ocean, controlled by the Portuguese viceroy from his base at Goa.

From the viewpoint of the Thai court at Ayutthaya, these changes restored the security along the western frontier, which had long been beneficial to the Thai. During the final offensive in early 1600 against Pegu, Thai forces arrived too late to join in the sack of the city, but they succeeded in bringing the Mon territory around Martaban under their control. At the end of the campaign, the Thai claimed suzerainty over the Andaman coastline as far north as Martaban. Beyond that point and to the west, the Portuguese had effective command of the coast. The Mon territory and the Portuguese fort created a buffer region, which separated the Thai from the Burmese, just as the old Mon kingdom had done. This arrangement lasted for more than a decade. During that time, however, Anauk-hpet-lun, a nephew of the last king of Pegu brought the heartland of Burma in the interior under his control, together with some of the Tai-speaking dependencies that had broken away. In March 1613 his forces captured Syriam (Bocarro 1876: 153, Guedes 1994: 146 n. 158), and the Mon governor of Martaban, receiving no protection from the Thai,

had no choice but to proclaim allegiance to him. The Burmese were, once again, on the fringes of Thai territory.

The Thai court had little time to ponder the sudden disappearance of its western buffer. Burmese forces moved down the coast and took up positions at Ye; Thai-controlled forces came up from Tavoy to attack them; then Burmese reinforcements arrived and attacked Tavoy (Thien 1911: 71). In January 1614, a Burmese fleet sailed south and attacked Tenasserim, intending to eject the Thai from their main stronghold on the west coast of the peninsula. But the plan faltered as the small Burmese vessels moved into the bay. Under ordinary circumstances, they would have confronted Thai vessels that were comparable to their own in design and firepower, and perhaps they hoped for the additional advantage of surprise. But the Thai were forewarned and solicited the help of Portuguese traders, who happened to be in port. The Portuguese readily agreed to reinforce the defences of the port, no doubt partly to take vengeance for the slaughter of fellow Portuguese at Syriam less than a year earlier. More importantly they risked the loss of their own ships and merchandise to the Burmese. If the Portuguese claims are to be believed, four Portuguese merchant galliots led the attack on the invading Burmese fleet and repelled it.<sup>1</sup>

The Burmese did not make another attempt in this direction.<sup>2</sup> Instead, Anauk-hpet-lun was occupied with a major campaign into the interior. He set out from Martaban in the lunar month of Vaisakha (10 April to 9 May 1614) for Chiang Mai (Thien 1911: 73). Why did he wait until so late in the dry season to leave Martaban? There are several possible explanations. He may have assumed he could take possession of Chiang Mai quickly, spend the rainy season there while putting in place new leaders loyal to him and depart early in the dry season before the end of 1614. Or, there may have been delays in the mobilisation, and perhaps his forces were unable to reach Martaban sooner. But was the real reason an abrupt change of plan? On this point, we can only conjecture, in an attempt to explain why the Thai court was in such great alarm at this time.

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<sup>1</sup> See Bocarro 1876: 186. The various versions of the Thai annals reveal absolutely nothing of the events discussed in this paper, except for the 1614 naval attack—which is recorded erroneously as a Burmese victory (Cushman 2000: 209).

<sup>2</sup> According to van Neijenrode (1871: 288), Burmese from Ava and Lao from Lan Sang jointly attacked Ayutthaya in February 1615 but did not succeed. Van Neijenrode worked at the Dutch trading office in Ayutthaya during 1611–2 and 1617–21. His report was probably compiled in 1621, and he was not in Ayutthaya during 1615. He cited the wrong year for the invasion of Lao forces from Lan Sang (which took place in early 1612), and the wrong year for the Burmese attack on Tenasserim (which took place in January 1614).



The Burmese generals may have planned a campaign entirely different from the one they actually fought. No doubt they expected an easy victory in mid-January 1614 at Tenasserim. At that juncture, they could have sent reinforcements to Tenasserim, who would have proceeded overland to the Gulf and then northward. This column could have joined, in a pincer movement against Ayutthaya, with other troops proceeding from Martaban across the hills to the central Ping River and then south down-river. A third column could have taken the more difficult route by way of the Three Pagodas border crossing and then marched east to Ayutthaya. The defeat of the Burmese flotilla in January 1614 may have forced the generals to change their strategy entirely and to move instead into the Tai kingdom of Lan Na.

Anauk-hpet-lun's first cousin, Min-yè Deik-ba, was king of Chiang Mai. At the end of 1612, he had sent envoys to the Thai court,<sup>3</sup> but he had died during the next year or in early 1614. The deceased king's younger brother, Thado-kyaw, succeeded and, according to one of the Chiang Mai annals (Wyatt and Wichienkeo 1995: 125), a rebellion arose against him. The Burmese king must have regarded this succession struggle as an opportunity to intervene and restore Burmese suzerainty over Lan Na. Shortly before the 1614 rainy season, he led his forces from Martaban, went to Chiang Mai and entered the city without a battle. He also received the allegiance of the king of Nan. Officials in Nan may have allied themselves with the Burmese partly as a safeguard against further threats from the Lao of Lan Sang, who had invaded Nan's territory at the end of the 1613 rainy season but had been beaten off (Saratsawadi 1996: 22).

The campaign to gain control of Lan Na did not end quickly. Thado-kyaw and his Lan Na forces held out in the fortified town of Lampang, where the Burmese became bogged down in a long but eventually successful siege, in which Thado-kyaw died (Thien 1911: 74). After installing the king of Nan as the new ruler of Chiang Mai, and placing the new king's brother in charge of Nan, Anauk-hpet-lun left Chiang Mai by the end of May 1615 and returned to Pegu.<sup>4</sup>

He had devoted more than a year to the campaign. About this time, he discovered that the Thai had stolen a march on him and were already deeply engaged in renewing their relations with the Portuguese and negotiating an alliance against him.

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<sup>3</sup> Letter, Marten Houtman (at Ayutthaya) to Heynrick Janssen (at Patani), 26 December 1612 [5 January 1613 in the Gregorian calendar] in Thaemsuk 1969: 39–40.

<sup>4</sup> Other annals (Sitthi 1972: 55–6 and Ratchasomphan 1994: 69–70) provide different perspectives of these events but no additional political details.

### Thai-Portuguese Exchanges of Embassies, 1615–9

A century earlier, when Portuguese forces first arrived in Southeast Asian waters in 1511, the commander immediately sent representatives to seek friendly relations with the Thai king. A series of diplomatic exchanges continued into the 1520s, and thereafter Portuguese-Thai contacts were limited mainly to private trading by the Portuguese and contacts with the Captain of Melaka—that is, the office of the Portuguese official who governed the tiny enclave on the lower west coast of the Malay peninsula, under the supervision of the viceroy in Goa. Ayutthaya did not become a port of call for the great Portuguese crown ships that sailed from India by way of Melaka to Macau and Japan. Instead, the Captain of Melaka sent his ships there, or gave permits to private traders to go there, and some Portuguese traders settled in Ayutthaya and other Thai market centres. The number of permanent Portuguese residents in Ayutthaya appears to have been very small during the wartime years of the 1580s and 1590s, but it must have increased a little after the Portuguese gained control of Syriam and shipping became regular again to Thai ports on the Andaman coast. Thus, when King Song Tham came to the throne in 1611, the Portuguese were regarded as a friendly power, although no diplomatic exchange had taken place in living memory.<sup>5</sup>

Almost immediately after news of the fall of Portuguese Syriam reached Ayutthaya, the king and his ministers formulated a plan to restore the defensive buffer. The Thai were correct in supposing that the Portuguese would consider a new and more easily defensible site for a fort to replace the one they had lost, and that the Burmese slaughter of the Syriam garrison had made the Burmese bitter enemies in the eyes of the Portuguese. In fact, neither assumption had any practical value except in the very short term. But the Thai proposal was attractive enough to capture Portuguese attention and hold it for several years. With the town of Martaban as the centrepiece of his plan, King Song Tham offered to cede some territory at this port, where the Portuguese could build a fort and maintain a garrison. The offer was sweetened by a pledge to supply Thai land and naval forces to assist in the defence of the fort, if it came under attack by the Burmese. In return, the Thai

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<sup>5</sup> Jacques de Coutre (Jacob van de Coutere) arrived in Ayutthaya in mid-1595, on a ship sent by the Portuguese Captain of Melaka. He accompanied a Dominican missionary who had been sent to Melaka the previous year by King Naresuan on official business. On its return to Melaka, the Portuguese ship was accompanied by one of the king's junks, carrying his envoys to the Captain of Melaka (Coutre 1991: 127). There may be other examples of official representatives sent by the Captains of Melaka to the Thai court, and vice-versa, but these contacts were for trading purposes and had no diplomatic character. In 1595 King Naresuan was considering the possibility of an embassy to Portugal, which would have included the son of his foreign minister and a Portuguese missionary (Coutre 1991: 120), but no such mission was ever sent.



expected the arrangement to provide a bulwark against future Burmese incursions into Thai territory and also to enable the Thai to regain and maintain suzerainty over the Mon territory south of Martaban. The port itself was on a point of land in a large estuary, and could be reinforced across the narrow stretch of water from Moulmein on the opposite shore. Its strategic value to the Thai was that it blocked three major routes of invasion into Thai territory: first along one of the rivers (Thoung-yen to the Burmese, Moei to the Thai) and east across the hills to the middle Ping River valley, second to the south-east by way of the Three Pagodas border crossing and third along the coast to the south, thereby ensuring Thai suzerainty over Tavoy and Thai security at the busy port of Tenasserim.

The Martaban plan was initially carried by a Thai official, who went from Ayutthaya to Tenasserim and then out on the Andaman Sea, in search of the Portuguese squadron that had been sent to save the garrison at Syriam. The squadron commander had arrived too late for that purpose and sailed south towards Melaka, and the Thai offer in 1614 never reached him.

Later that year, King Song Tham decided to send a formal embassy, consisting of the customary three ambassadors. They arrived in Goa probably in early 1615 and presented the Martaban plan to the viceroy and his council.<sup>6</sup> The Portuguese thought the offer was not precise enough and thus decided to appoint an envoy, who would accompany the Thai on their voyage home, would negotiate more precise details of the plan and would conclude a tentative agreement (Bocarro 1876: 517). At this juncture, encouraged by the Thai overture, the viceroy and his council formulated a much broader proposal for a political and commercial agreement between Portugal and the Thai, which the envoy would negotiate with the ministers at the Thai court.

The man chosen for this mission was Francisco de Anunciação, a Dominican missionary. Father Francisco already had some knowledge of the Tai-speaking kingdoms and apparently had acquired some speaking knowledge of Tai dialects. He had sailed to Syriam in 1605 with a Portuguese squadron, and continued from

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<sup>6</sup> The Thai offer in 1615 was not the first time that officials in Goa and Lisbon had thought about Martaban as a potential Portuguese site. The idea of a Portuguese fort there, to reinforce the nearby Syriam fortress, was taken into consideration in Lisbon as early as 1607, when the viceroy was instructed to report on Martaban (letter, king to Belchior Dias Preto, 15 October 1607 in BFUP 1960 16: 848; see also letter, king to viceroy, 20 February 1610 in Pato 1880: 347). These orders could not have reached Goa until 1608. By that time, the Portuguese were firmly entrenched at Syriam, and it had been designated as a customs post for collecting duties from Portuguese trading ships plying the waters of the Andaman Sea. Also, the son of the Portuguese commander at Syriam married the daughter of the Martaban governor, thereby cementing relations with that area independently of the Thai court. The earlier Portuguese idea of a fort at Martaban thus receded into the background.

there on an earlier diplomatic mission to the court of the king of Lan Na. The reason for that mission was to reach an agreement with King Min-nawra-hta-saw of Chiang Mai, who was a younger brother of the last king of Pegu and was regarded by the Portuguese as a legitimate heir to the Burmese throne. He gave a positive verbal reply to the Portuguese request to occupy Syriam and use it as a Portuguese crown fort, and that reply was interpreted by the Portuguese as a legal basis for their garrison at Syriam (Bocarro 1876: 133, 136). Now, almost a decade later, Father Francisco's knowledge of Syriam, Martaban and the surrounding region, and his familiarity with court etiquette, made him a useful envoy to Ayutthaya.

Father Francisco was in Ayutthaya during most of the second half of 1616 to discuss the Martaban plan, but he also had a list of other matters to discuss with Thai officials.<sup>7</sup> When he left Ayutthaya near the end of November 1616, he was accompanied by a second formal Thai embassy. He reached Goa again in 1617. The three Thai ambassadors, and a royal page whom King Song Tham had sent with them, were carrying gifts and letters not only to the viceroy in Goa but also to King Filipe II of Portugal. They intended to continue on to Lisbon with the Portuguese fleet, which ordinarily sailed for home during January, February or March. By the time they reached Goa in early 1617, it was too late to accommodate them aboard the fleet. Only one ship from Portugal had reached Goa in late 1616,<sup>8</sup> and space aboard the home-bound fleet must have been unusually limited. The Thai stayed in Goa for more than a year, but for reasons that are not clearly recorded, they were still unable to continue on to Portugal. Eventually they were escorted back to Ayutthaya by another representative of the viceroy.

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<sup>7</sup> The dates of Father Francisco's arrival in Ayutthaya and his return to Goa are not recorded. According to Teixeira (1961 ii: 65, 122), the party left Goa on 3 March 1616 and attended the twenty-fifth birthday celebration for Song Tham in April 1616. But Teixeira cites Bocarro, and Bocarro (1876: 517) also includes the text of Viceroy Azevedo's letter to King Song Tham, dated 28 April 1616. Possibly orders were given on 3 March to equip a ship, whereas the party did not leave Goa until after the letter was prepared. April was the best sailing season for reaching Melaka, and the voyage usually took about a month. The party may thus have reached Ayutthaya in June or July 1616, sailing from Melaka on the best north-bound winds, which blow during those months. In any case, a ship bound for Siam could leave Melaka as late as July or August (Flores 1995: 89, n. 29), and the Melaka-Ayutthaya voyage should have taken no longer than half a month, given good winds typical of that season. It seems safe to assume that Father Francisco arrived no later than July 1616 and that he spent at least four full months in Ayutthaya, departing about 20 November at the beginning of the season of south-bound winds. In that case, he could have reached Goa by the end of January on the good west-bound winds from Melaka.

<sup>8</sup> Letter, viceroy to king, 29 December 1616 in BFUP 1955 4: 858. Note that few full texts are published in the BFUP. Most entries are inventories of documents with abstracts of the contents.

In the meantime, the viceroy had sent a report to Lisbon concerning the Martaban plan. The cycle of reporting and receiving instructions was a lengthy one, because ship departures and arrivals were determined by the prevailing winds. Typically a report left Goa in the first quarter of the year and reached Lisbon about six months later. The reply typically left Lisbon about March or April the next year and, at the very earliest, might reach Goa in the first days of September. The viceroy's initial report concerning the Martaban plan was considered in Lisbon, and instructions were sent, authorising him to make a decision, if the Thai offer appeared to be advantageous to the Portuguese government, rather than delaying for another year and a half, while his next report and instructions were en route to and back from Portugal.

Prior to the arrival in Goa of an embassy from Burma at the end of 1616, the viceroy was still contemplating the renewed possibility of a fortress at Martaban. He had instructed Father Francisco earlier in the year to discuss with Thai officials an offensive alliance for a joint Portuguese-Thai attack against their common enemy, including the recovery of Thai control in the Martaban region (Bocarro 1876: 520–1). Even after meeting the ambassadors from Burma, the viceroy was still keeping his options open for advantageous alliances. He must have been encouraged by the January 1615 instructions from King Filipe II, expressing the hope that Syriam could be re-occupied. The viceroy appears to have replied cautiously to this hope as late as December 1616 (after receiving the Burmese embassy but before Father Francisco arrived with the second Thai embassy), pointing out that the port of Martaban had more advantages for a fortress than Syriam did.<sup>9</sup> But in another letter, which likewise left for Lisbon with the fleet in early 1617, he recommended maintaining friendly relations with both the Thai and the Burmese and avoiding giving any offence to either,<sup>10</sup> which suggests that he had personally, although not yet officially, rejected the Martaban plan. Meanwhile, by the time that the March 1617 instructions were written in Lisbon, King Filipe II had accepted the permanent loss of the Syriam fortress as well as the arguments against the Martaban plan.

Identical conclusions seem to have been reached independently, in both Goa and Lisbon. King Song Tham did not, after 1613, have any control over Martaban, and accepting his offer would have been tantamount to starting a war with the Burmese. Although the Portuguese had been stung by the Burmese capture of Syriam, that action had to be considered not only in the context of the strategic value of Syriam as a fort (which appears to have been minimal) but also and more importantly in terms of Melaka's food supplies. Melaka had always been

<sup>9</sup> Letter, viceroy to king, 29 December 1616 in BFUP 1955 4: 855.

<sup>10</sup> Letter, king to viceroy, 17 January 1618 in Pato 1893: 260.

dependent on the rich agricultural areas along the coast in the region of Martaban, and for that reason alone, the Portuguese regarded friendly relations with the Burmese as an essential pillar of their security policy. Ejecting the Burmese from Martaban would have created a perpetual problem for defence against the Burmese and for secure shipping. Thus nothing further was said about the Martaban plan. By this time the Thai court must have ceased to be alarmed about potential Burmese attacks, lost interest in the proposal and did not pursue it.

### **Francisco de Anunciação's 1616 Embassy to Ayutthaya**

The Thai annals tell us nothing of any of these diplomatic exchanges. The correspondence of the English trading post in Ayutthaya has been published, and it documents extensively the activities of the merchants of the English East India Company during this period, but does not mention Father Francisco. The records of the Dutch trading post may contain some relevant information not yet published. These are the only sources for this period other than the Portuguese records, and we must therefore rely on Portuguese sources for most of the details concerning this interlude of friendly diplomatic exchanges.<sup>11</sup> The only mission that is well documented is Father Francisco's, and fortunately some additional information about it can be drawn from the sole record from this year in Thai—which may be the oldest handwritten document in the Thai language.

The purpose of the first Thai embassy to Goa (1615–6) was to negotiate a defensive alliance, in which the Portuguese would fortify Martaban and, with Thai reinforcements during emergencies, would subsequently defend the Salween estuary. The Portuguese fort was envisaged by the Thai as a buffer to prevent Burmese forces from using the western approaches into Thai territory. The Portuguese expressed interest in this plan, as indicated in the formal letter from Viceroy Jerónimo de Azevedo to King Song Tham, dated 28 April 1616 (see the appended transcription). But the immediate concerns of the viceroy and his council

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<sup>11</sup> Contemporary, first-hand Portuguese sources, moreover, are limited to official correspondence. There seems little hope of finding missionary records for this entire period. The last Dominican priests left Ayutthaya by 1605, and no others seem to have been sent there until 1640. A single Augustinian visited in the mid-1580s, and no others went to Ayutthaya for nearly a century. During King Ekathotsarot's reign, only three missionaries are known. A Jesuit worked in Ayutthaya for about two years and died in Tenasserim. Two Franciscans (André do Espírito Santo and André da Santa Maria) worked in Ayutthaya throughout the reign. The first died in 1611, and the second was still there in 1616, when Father Francisco visited for a few months as envoy of the viceroy. Unfortunately the Franciscan archives in Rome were destroyed, and those in Goa have disappeared. The fact that Ayutthaya had only one resident priest during the first half of Song Tham's reign suggests that the Portuguese community in the city was small.

lay elsewhere. The letter does not specify what these concerns were, although it indicates that Father Francisco was fully empowered to explain and negotiate them. His mission to Ayutthaya in 1616 was in fact to seek three concessions from the Thai government as part of the renewed friendly relations between the two powers.

First, the Portuguese were concerned with trading conditions. King Song Tham agreed to give duty-free privileges to Portuguese ships and to allow the Portuguese to trade without hindrance in Thai ports. Traders based in Thai ports had stopped going to Melaka some time earlier, because they were dissatisfied with the way the Portuguese authorities treated them. The discussions about this problem ended with Thai assurances that the traders would be encouraged to resume shipping to Melaka. If Thai crown ships called at Melaka, they presumably received reciprocal duty-free trading privileges, although that point is not specified in the records. While Father Francisco was in Ayutthaya, some trading on the new basis was carried out by a captain-merchant, who was sent by the Captain of Melaka to accompany the embassy. Whether this trade became established with any regularity in the succeeding years is a matter of conjecture. It probably remained very limited, partly because Melaka was under pressure from Lisbon to discontinue the customary practice of duty-free trading by ambassadors, who visited the port as representatives of Southeast Asian sovereigns (Pinto 1997: 146).

Second, the viceroy and his council wanted to improve social conditions for Portuguese residents and traders and to resolve some injustices. Sixty or seventy Portuguese prisoners, about half of whom were Luso-Asians, were brought to Ayutthaya as prisoners in April 1613.<sup>12</sup> They came overland from Tenasserim and may have been captured in March during the fighting along the west coast. Father Francisco must have received instructions to assist them. During his voyage to Ayutthaya, he received some details about grave injustices committed by a Thai governor against Portuguese traders on the Andaman coast. He also carried with him a request concerning inheritances, which complemented the agreement on trading conditions.

According to Thai law, when a Thai official died, the crown received a large share of the estate. Nothing was due to the crown when Thai commoners died, but there was no provision in the law for resident foreigners or visiting traders. The Thai practice was to confiscate everything that a Portuguese trader possessed, if he died in Thai territory. Father Francisco argued convincingly that Portuguese private traders would be reluctant to go to Thai ports, unless they were assured that their property would go to their heirs, either to wives and children in the Thai kingdom itself or to heirs elsewhere.

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<sup>12</sup> Letter, Marten Houtman (Ayutthaya) to Heynrick Janssen (Patani), 24 April 1613 [4 May in the Gregorian calendar] in Thaemsuk 1969: 43–4.

The Thai inheritance laws, issued at the beginning of King Song Tham's reign, prescribe an equitable division of the possessions of a deceased person among the surviving members of the family. The laws include procedures for making last wills and testaments. According to the November 1611 Law of Inheritances, the estate was taken by the crown only in cases when a person died without any relations or testament (Three-Seals Law Code 1986 ii: 166). It is therefore not obvious why the children of Portuguese merchants were denied inheritances, even though the Thai laws did not include specific provisions for foreigners.

Even at the lowest level of Thai society, under clause 51 of the August 1614 Law of Inheritances (*ibid.* p. 171), any surviving parent, wife and child divided the estate in equal proportions, and a provision was made to protect the inheritance rights of even a posthumously born child. If a foreign trader received a Thai rank and title, and thus became an official of the crown, only then did his estate fall under the provisions of the May 1611 Law of Inheritances (*ibid.* pp. 144–5). For high-ranking officials, the crown received a quarter of the estate automatically and, if there was no widow, received her quarter of the estate, also. But these crown shares were justified by the fact that a high official enjoyed many rights from crown resources (land, buildings, labour and so on) placed at his disposal for his official duties, and these rights enabled him to acquire considerable wealth.<sup>13</sup> The crown thus took back a portion of the accumulated wealth at the time of death. For lesser officials, the crown shares were proportionately less.

It is odd that no provision was made for the estates of private foreign traders, given the many nationalities represented in Ayutthaya and the large number of cases that must have arisen in the course of time. Although Song Tham's laws were new ones, procedures for dealing with foreign traders existed long before. By comparison, 30–40 years earlier, the Burmese crown took one-third of the goods of a deceased foreign merchant (Federici 1588: 40–verso). And about the same time, the Portuguese king decreed (February 1587) that the goods of people who died intestate in the Portuguese territories of Asia should henceforth be sent to Portugal,<sup>14</sup> which implies that the crown took all of the property. Moreover, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese were first beginning to arrive in Southeast Asia, a precedent already existed in Thai

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<sup>13</sup> For a discussion of the official class and its acquisition of wealth through control of state resources (including manpower) and by engaging in foreign trade, see Manop (1993). This phenomenon began to re-emerge only a few years before the inheritance laws were handed down, and it is characteristic of only the final decades of the House of Sukhothai. During the first two-thirds of the dynasty (1569–1605), when the court was occupied with constant deprivations and war with the Burmese, the economic activities of officials were severely restricted, and most power was concentrated in the hands of the king, for purposes of defensive and offensive warfare.

<sup>14</sup> Letter, king to viceroy, 6 February 1587 in BFUP 1955 2: 267.



practice, if not in written law. When a Muslim merchant died at Tenasserim, his children inherited his property, although the estate went to the Thai treasury in the case of other foreign traders (Varthema 1963: 175).

King Song Tham accepted Father Francisco's arguments concerning the Portuguese residents and traders, but a mechanism was needed to ensure that the agreements would be carried out in the interests of individuals concerned. Thus the king also agreed to a new institutional arrangement. The viceroy would designate a Portuguese resident as official head of the Portuguese community in the kingdom, and the Thai minister (the Phra Khlang) responsible for resident foreigners and maritime trade would conduct his business with the Portuguese traders through this individual, as the official head of the Portuguese community. This position empowered the incumbent to act as an intermediary to resolve disagreements and legal cases and, in cases of serious crimes, to administer the punishments prescribed by the Thai courts. He ensured, for example, that inheritances were divided equitably among the heirs and that inheritances would be forwarded to heirs in other countries, and he acted as an advocate on behalf of Portuguese individuals in legal cases. The king agreed also to transfer to the capital any serious cases (such as death sentences or confiscation of goods) brought against Portuguese in the provincial courts, to prevent the recurrence of abuses such as the incident (executions of innocent traders by the Tenasserim governor) cited by Father Francisco (Bocarro 1876: 522). These privileges were valuable to Portuguese traders and residents in seaport towns such as Ujung Salang (on Phuket Island), where they had a large trading house and shipped tin to the west coast of India (Peyton 1905: 308), and at Tenasserim, which was frequented by Portuguese ships.

The system was a very old one, and the Thai themselves had enjoyed even greater privileges long before, when a Thai trading community existed in the time of the Melaka sultanate in the late 1400s:

People of many nations were continuously in Melaka, and each nation maintained its own customs and justice separately. In the city was the *bendahara* of the natives, the *bendahara* of the foreigners, the *bendahara* of foreign merchants, and each group kept separate from the others, that is, Chinese, Ryukyans, those from Siam, from Pegu, the Gujaratis, merchants from Cape Cormorin, merchants from India and merchants from Bengal. (Correa 1860 ii: 253)

Similarly, on the coast of Vietnam in the 1610s, the Chinese and Japanese traders lived in their own communities under their own laws and customs (Lê Thành Khôi 1955: 285–6).

Although the mechanism itself was not new, the title of office (*òk phra* in Thai, *capitão mór* in Portuguese) may have been. In the English records, the office of the *òk phra* appears about 1617, in one instance as the head of the local English community and in the other as the head of the Japanese.<sup>15</sup> The head of the Dutch trading house at Ayutthaya must have been the *ex officio* head of his countrymen. Since Chinese residents were employed to sail crown junks on many trading voyages and diplomatic missions, the ministry responsible for maritime trade and foreign relations had a Chinese deputy minister (with the rank and title of Phraya Chodük) who served as *ex officio* head of the Chinese community. A prominent Portuguese resident may have served as a leader of and spokesman for the Portuguese community before 1616, but there seems to be no evidence that this post was officially recognised by both sides prior to Father Francisco's mission.<sup>16</sup> Now the Portuguese gained the same standing and protection as other nationalities, such as the Chinese, Japanese, Dutch and English, each of which had its community head.

Third and finally, we must remember that the Portuguese viceroy and council were the representatives in Asia of a Catholic monarch, who was king of both Portugal and Spain. Both countries, for more than a century, had divided between them the rights to the trade between Asian ports and Europe, excluding all potential European competitors.<sup>17</sup> Thus the third concession—the one that the Portuguese viceroy desired most and occasionally got in his agreements with Asian rulers—was a ban on the detested Protestant traders, who had become increasingly involved in Asian trade during the preceding two decades. This issue was always raised in negotiations, always with a request to ban or expel Dutchmen and the English.<sup>18</sup> Among the requests made by Father Francisco, the ban was the only one

<sup>15</sup> Entry of December 1617 in Richard Cocks's diary, cited in Foster 1901 v: 267 n. 1; letter, Richard Cocks (Japan) to John Johnson and Richard Pitt (Ayutthaya), 23 December 1617 [2 January 1618 in the Gregorian calendar] in Foster 1902 vi: 265.

<sup>16</sup> In 1585 the Melaka Captain was given powers to appoint captains (that is, heads of the local Portuguese communities) in several ports, including Ayutthaya (Pinto 1997: 31 n. 8). Coutre (1991), who visited Ayutthaya in 1595, does not mention such a post in his time.

<sup>17</sup> King Felipe II of Spain (r. 1556–98) inherited the Portuguese throne in 1580 and subsequently ruled concurrently as King Filipe I of Portugal. His son and grandson likewise ruled as kings of both countries. A separate Portuguese dynasty was re-established in 1640.

<sup>18</sup> When the Portuguese negotiated agreements everywhere in the early 1600s, they attempted to persuade the local rulers to agree to ban Dutch and English traders. The Portuguese agreement of 1617 with the Singhalese king and the 1620 agreement with Arakan, for example, excluded the Dutch and English (Veen 2000: 209, 215). The Chinese government had banned the Dutch, in a decision unrelated to Portuguese requests, and the June 1615 Portuguese agreement with the Mughal empire banned the traders of both Protestant kingdoms (Shirodkar 1989: 127). The Thai kingdom is often cited in sixteenth-century works as the third great kingdom of Asia, after China and Mughal India. With bans already in effect in those two countries, the viceroy may have decided that the next step was to isolate Protestants from Ayutthaya.

that received a clearly negative reply. Traders of the English East India Company had arrived in Ayutthaya only four years earlier. They were already well established and on friendly terms with the Thai authorities. The Dutch had been trading in Ayutthaya for twelve years and had established a permanent trading post there eight years before. The Thai authorities pointed out the great contrast in trading between the Catholic and Protestant sides, the hitherto irregular and small volume of trade carried on by the Portuguese with the Thai, and added that it would be unjust in any case to punish Protestant traders who had done no wrong under Thai law and custom.

### **Thai Ambassadors in Goa, 1617–8**

On the return voyage to Goa, Father Francisco's ship carried the second formal Thai embassy comprising three ambassadors. Accompanying them was a young royal page, whom King Song Tham picked to serve as his independent set of eyes and ears. The Thai ambassadors had instructions to go to Goa and present the details of the agreements that had been reached with Father Francisco. They carried with them a message from King Song Tham to Viceroy Azevedo, composed in the form of a speech shortly before their 20 November 1616 departure from Ayutthaya. After discussions with the viceroy, the Thai party was supposed to sail with the annual Portuguese fleet from Goa to Portugal. They were then to visit the court of King Filipe II and present a royal letter and gifts from King Song Tham.

Among these records, only one contemporary document has been found thus far: a copy in Thai of King Song Tham's speech to the viceroy. A transcription of the speech and a translation in English are appended to this paper. A comparison between the viceroy's April 1616 letter to King Song Tham and the king's reply in November suggests a shift of priorities during the brief interval between the times the two documents were written. The viceroy mentions the security issues (the fall of Syriam and the Martaban site) but not the mundane matters of trade privileges and social conditions. The reply does just the opposite: it mentions trading and inheritances but not the offer of Martaban as a site for a Portuguese fortress. The differences might be merely a result of different official styles of writing, but it is also probable that, by 1616, the Thai court had ceased to be alarmed about the potential threat from the Burmese and, more importantly, deduced in the course of discussions with Father Francisco that the Portuguese were unlikely to form an alliance with the Thai against the Burmese.

In fact, the Thai already knew, from the viceroy himself, that the council at Goa was conducting talks with ambassadors sent by the Burmese court to Goa (see lines 15–7 of the appended speech). Father Francisco was instructed to inform the

Thai court about the viceroy's intention to send a parallel embassy to the court of King Anauk-hpet-lun, as recommended in instructions to the viceroy written in Lisbon in January 1615. No doubt these negotiations were represented in a way that would not be offensive to the Thai king and ministers, perhaps by explaining that the intention was to restore relations with the Burmese as a means of preventing the Dutch from gaining access to Syriam or any other site along that coast.

Many details of the 1616 negotiations in Ayutthaya are known, because Father Francisco recorded them in his report, submitted on his return to Goa. He even included some discussions that he had directly with King Song Tham. Less than two decades later, António Bocarro had access to the report and copied many of the details into his history of this period. Unfortunately, the extant records reveal very little about official Portuguese deliberations concerning relations with Ayutthaya, and nothing is recorded about the Thai ambassadors while they were staying in Goa. They did not continue on to Portugal but were given passage home to Ayutthaya on one of the viceroy's ships. The royal letter and gifts to the Portuguese king, however, were forwarded when the next Portuguese fleet sailed for home.<sup>19</sup>

### Portuguese Embassy to Ayutthaya in 1618

The date of the Thai ambassadors' return to Ayutthaya is not mentioned in any of the sources consulted for this study. The ambassadors made great representations to the viceroy, no doubt worried that their king would be offended if they did not carry out the mission assigned to them. The viceroy's response was to send a ship to Ayutthaya under the command of Captain João da Silva, with a letter explaining why the embassy was unable to proceed to Lisbon.<sup>20</sup> In this letter, the viceroy expressed a desire to maintain friendship and asked the king to instruct his subjects to resume the trading that they had done in the past, in Melaka as well as other Portuguese ports.

According to a report in February 1619 by João Coutinho, the new viceroy who arrived in Goa in November 1617, two missionaries (André Pereira and Constantino Falcão) and a merchant (Gaspar Pacheco de Mesquita) were sent to Ayutthaya, probably accompanying Captain João da Silva and the returning Thai ambassadors. If their itinerary was roughly the same as Father Francisco's, and during the same sailing seasons, they must have been in Ayutthaya from about the middle of 1618 to November 1618, and their reports must have reached Goa by February 1619, before the viceroy's February 1619 despatch about them was

<sup>19</sup> Letter, viceroy to king (Filipe II), 8 February 1619 in Pato 1893: 261.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

written. The viceroy reported that these representatives were talented and experienced and that they had discussed with their Thai counterparts the main issues concerning peaceful relations. They had reported to him that they had obtained agreement for the most advantageous conditions for the Portuguese government and Portuguese traders.<sup>21</sup> Although the published records provide only the gist of the exchanges between Goa and Ayutthaya, there is adequate detail to show that each side obtained something of value.

### **Thai Embassy to Goa in 1619 and Subsequent Relations**

To confirm all these arrangements, King Song Tham sent a third embassy to Goa. His ambassadors must have sailed from Ayutthaya in late 1618 with the Portuguese who had escorted the previous Thai ambassadors home to Ayutthaya. The published documents dealing with the diplomatic exchanges end at this juncture, and the author does not have access at present to unpublished records. Even though it may be possible to continue the story chronologically, it is obvious that nothing further was negotiated.

The Portuguese historian Faria y Sousa (1971 iii: 237–8) cited the 1616 duty-free terms of trade negotiated by Father Francisco as the important ones, and did not mention a written treaty. Presumably the Portuguese mission to Ayutthaya in 1618 clarified the terms and obtained further small concessions from the Thai, whereas the Thai ambassadors who were in Goa in early 1618 and others in early 1619 confirmed verbally to the successive viceroys the terms of the agreements reached at the Thai court by Father Francisco in 1616 and the Portuguese negotiators in 1618.

One additional advantage gained by the Portuguese, although not from the Thai court, was the opening of the port of Patani. The potentially profitable trade from Melaka to ports around the Gulf did not include Patani during the 1610s, because of hostilities between the Portuguese and the Malay of Patani. After Sultana Raja Ijau (r. 1584–1616) died, the court of her successor (Raja Biru, r. 1616–24) reached agreement with the Portuguese and a trading agreement was concluded in 1619 at Melaka (Boxer 1952: 321), giving Portuguese ships access to this port and partly resolving the annoyance expressed by the Thai (Bocarro 1876: 525) because of Portuguese seizures of junks operating from Patani.

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<sup>21</sup> Letter, viceroy to king, 8 February 1619 in Pato 1893: 262. A contemporary translation of this letter into English was published in Vajiranana 1915 i: 93–4 but is dated 29 January 1619 (modified by the translator to the Julian calendar system still in use in England at that time).

The friendly relations and generous terms of trade that were negotiated during this period of intense diplomatic exchanges did not last for long. In 1624 two Spanish ships were in the river below Ayutthaya. Both had sailed from Macau, intending to return directly to Manila, but they were forced by a storm into the Gulf and took shelter in Ayutthaya. Spain was still at war with the Netherlands, and when the Spaniards on these ships received a report (albeit a false one) that their Dutch enemies had seized a Spanish vessel off the Thai coast, they attacked and captured a Dutch ship at anchor in the river. King Song Tham's orders to return the ship to the Dutch were ignored with defiance, and Thai forces then attacked the Spaniards, killing most of them, arresting those who survived and confiscating the Spanish ships and goods.

This incident poisoned Spanish-Thai relations. The hapless Portuguese were dragged into the political arena, since Felipe IV of Spain was also their king, although no Portuguese were involved in the fighting on the river. Portuguese-Thai relations were thus ruptured. They improved slightly as the result of efforts by missionaries, sent on a diplomatic mission to Ayutthaya in 1626 to try to repair the damage, and an envoy sent by Macau in the early 1630s. But relations did not become cordial again until the late 1630s, very shortly before the Portuguese lost control of Melaka and were replaced there by the Dutch.

### **A Cavalcade of Diplomats**

Thus far, only two themes have been examined: the Thai court's concern with the security of its western frontier, and the viceroy's concern with the conditions of the Portuguese residents and traders in the Thai kingdom. The stage on which these events were played was a scene of continually changing backdrops and a complex succession of diplomatic initiatives, all of them relevant to the immediate Thai security concerns. King Anauk-hpet-lun had invaded Lan Na in mid-1614 and had remained there for a year. He had attacked Tenasserim in January 1614, and it must have seemed likely that he would attack Thai territory again. At this juncture, the Thai court was uncertain of Burmese intentions and was anxiously seeking allies. To appreciate these events from the Thai perspective, one needs to return to early 1616, after the first Thai embassy set out for Goa.

#### *Junks to China and Japan*

King Song Tham had sent an embassy with tribute to China during the first year of his reign, but none subsequently. His second tribute was already overdue. The Thai-Chinese tributary relationship was an old one, and the Thai court must have decided in early 1616 that some special effort should be made. (China had



never provided any direct military help, but it must have seemed like a good idea to ensure Chinese sympathy for the Thai, in case of war with the Burmese.) Possibly with these ideas in mind, and since King Song Tham had neglected to send tribute to Beijing during the previous three or four years, an unusual and unique gesture was made. Tribute arrived in Beijing in 1616 not from the king but from his queen, and it was duly presented before the emperor in September 1616 (Wade 1994: 2,463).

The junk carrying this tribute must have been fitted out in Ayutthaya at the end of May or early June 1616. At that juncture, the Thai court had probably not yet received any news about the diplomatic mission sent to Goa to seek a renewed alliance with the Portuguese. Father Francisco was, unknown to anyone in Ayutthaya, still en route to the Thai capital with the viceroy's friendly reply. The Chinese records do not indicate the subjects of discussion with the Thai envoys in 1616, but threats from Burma (known to be a sometimes violent and always troublesome neighbour on China's Yunnanese frontier) must have been foremost in the agenda. Tribute from Song Tham himself was sent to Beijing in 1617, no doubt to strengthen relations with China, in case of further threats from Burma.

At exactly the same time, another diplomatic mission set sail for a more distant destination. The earliest-known relations between the Thai and Japanese courts are recorded in a letter from the shogunate in 1606, requesting goods from Ayutthaya. By this time, Japanese seamen were bringing junks regularly to Ayutthaya. After Japan closed its doors to most foreign trade in the 1630s, the Japanese in Ayutthaya were not allowed to return home and were cut off from Japan, and the Japanese settlement dwindled. But in the mid-1610s the community of Japanese residing in Ayutthaya was still expanding. About a quarter of all Japanese junks were trading with the Thai at this time (Gunji 1941: 351–2). The strength of the Japanese trading community in Ayutthaya, the importance of the Japanese guard in King Song Tham's palace, Japanese co-operation with the English East India Company (in both Ayutthaya and Japan) and other rôles are well documented during this period. Thus far, however, official relations were limited to letters carried between the two capitals by junk captains.

In 1616 King Song Tham sent the first formal diplomatic mission to Japan. It was accompanied by Kii Kyuemon, head of the Japanese merchants residing in Ayutthaya, who had the Thai rank and title of Khun Sun Sattru (Ishii 1971: 163). Given the prevailing winds, the junk must have left Ayutthaya at some time between late May and early July, arriving in Japan in July or August 1616. The only documentation concerning the 1616 mission is a Japanese translation of the Thai letter, listing members of the party and requesting certain Japanese manufactured goods, and one can do no more than speculate about the motives of the Thai court in initiating this formal diplomatic contact.

One political objective may have been to ensure the support of the Japanese community in Ayutthaya, in case of war with the Burmese, and to obtain supplies of swords and other arms. A related economic objective was to restore trade that had previously existed with Japan. In 1612, only one year into the new reign, the Japanese palace guard and others in the Japanese community were involved in a conspiracy against King Song Tham and were expelled from the capital. The junks that went to Japan during the mid-1612 sailing season would have spread word of hostile conditions in Ayutthaya, and according to the Thai annals, Japanese junks no longer called at Ayutthaya thereafter. If a stoppage did occur during the junk-arrival seasons from early 1613 to early 1616, an obvious task for the Thai envoys was to restore confidence and give reassurances that Japanese traders were welcome. Finally, a military objective may have been river defence. Japanese and Chinese junks always arrived during the dry season, which was the time of year that a Burmese army was most likely to attack. The presence of large numbers of Japanese and Chinese junks on the river, all well armed (because of danger from pirates on the high seas), was an additional safeguard for the city, even if the crews fought the invaders only to save their own property.

#### *Burmese and Arakanese Intrigues*

In March 1615, when the first group of Thai ambassadors arrived in Goa (Bocarro 1876: 516), King Anauk-hpet-lun was completing his conquest of Lan Na. He left after installing the new administration, and in the lunar month of Ashada (26 June–25 July 1615) he reached Pegu (Thien 1911: 74). The following year, after the Thai ambassadors sailed from India in the company of Father Francisco, King Anauk-hpet-lun sent an embassy to Goa for discussions with the viceroy. His reasons appear to be not about counterbalancing the growing friendship between the Thai and Portuguese but about dealing with another old enemy.

The Burmese of the Irrawaddy basin had never conquered the kingdom of Arakan. And thus, across the mountains, the western coastline facing the Bay of Bengal remained independent, even at the high point, four decades earlier, of the empire created by King Bayin-naung. When the empire began to collapse at the turn of the century, the Arakanese navy was among the besiegers of Pegu. Now that Anauk-hpet-lun had restored Burmese power in much of the empire built by his grandfather, he turned his attention to Arakan.

The outward purpose of the Burmese embassy to India, in addition to patching up the tattered relations after the massacre of the Syriam garrison, was to establish contact with the Portuguese viceroy and seek an alliance for a joint attack on Arakan. Taking into account the naval superiority of the Arakanese over the Burmese, the king and his ministers must have calculated that a Portuguese fleet would tip the scales and ensure a Burmese victory.

No doubt Anauk-hpet-lun's court also hoped to take advantage of the recent Portuguese conflict with Arakan. In the previous decade, when Portuguese adventurers first became established at Syriam, another group of adventurers became established on the island of Sundiva (Sandwip), in the easternmost channel of the delta of the Ganges and Brahmaputra and at the upper limit of Arakanese territory along the coastline. The adventurers at Sundiva, under the leadership of Sebastião Gonçalves Tibau, became allied with the viceroy, and King Filipe II himself had hopes of making use of them. In 1615 the viceroy sent a fleet to Bengal and Pegu waters.<sup>22</sup> In October 1615, a Portuguese squadron attacked Arakan but was defeated. The ships regrouped at Sundiva, but left the island in January 1616, apparently on orders from the viceroy, and moved to Meliapur, on the east coast of India.<sup>23</sup> The Arakanese moved in, attacked, captured the island, and took many Portuguese prisoners (Guedes 1994: 165).

The embassy from the Burmese court, which arrived in India about half a year later, also had economic motives. It consisted of two Muslims (possibly traders of Indian origin) and a Mon, but no Burmese officials. Their instructions included restoring friendly relations, persuading the Portuguese to restore the annual trading voyage to Pegu (which had ceased since the massacre at Syriam) and seeking an alliance against a common enemy. It may be significant, moreover, that they were accompanied to Goa by the Bishop of Meliapur from the seat of his diocese at São Thomé—the port on the east coast of India where they stopped, to await the seasonal change in the winds before sailing on to Goa (Bocarro 1876: 652).

The bishop had a strong financial interest in the ports of the Andaman Sea, although they were not part of his diocese. Prior to 1606, when this bishopric was created, there was no resident bishop between Cochin (on the south-west coast of India) and Melaka (in the lower Malay peninsula). These two bishops had, up to that time, divided the responsibility for the region between their residences: the entire east coast of India, the coast of Arakan, the old Mon kingdom (now absorbed into the Burmese empire) and the Malay peninsula. The dividing line of the two dioceses was between the kingdoms of Arakan and Pegu (Couto 1974 xvii: 182). The first Bishop of Meliapur, although confirmed in January 1606, did not take up residence in his diocese until 1611 (López 1978: 47). In the succeeding years, he became involved in shipping and trading to the ports around the Andaman Sea.<sup>24</sup> The diocese thus acquired a strong financial interest in ensuring friendly trading relationships with both the Burmese (who dominated the northern part of this trad-

<sup>22</sup> Letter 27, viceroy to king, December 1615 in BFUP 1955 4: 779.

<sup>23</sup> Letter 109, viceroy to king, 4 January 1616 in BFUP 1955 4: 803.

<sup>24</sup> Letter, king to viceroy, 15 March 1513 in Pato 1884: 394.

ing area) and the Thai (who dominated the central part of the Malay peninsula, from Tenasserim down to the area below Phuket Island).

The embassy from Burma arrived on the east coast of India at Meliapur, with a Portuguese squadron commander. The arrival date is not recorded but may have been during the January and February 1616 sailing season. A messenger was sent overland to announce their arrival. (The overland route took about a month each way and was used when seasonal weather conditions made travel by sea impossible. The messenger could therefore have reached Goa before Father Francisco sailed for Ayutthaya.) The viceroy's council in Goa decided to receive the Burmese embassy but to take no decision without first receiving and considering the reply from King Song Tham.<sup>25</sup>

Anauk-hpet-lun's ambassadors finally reached Goa in December 1616 (Bocarro 1876: 692–3). They were at least a month ahead of the Thai, but one embassy behind. Shortly before, on 20 November 1616, the second Thai embassy sailed from Ayutthaya with Father Francisco, on the voyage to Goa. Their ship must have crossed paths on the Gulf of Siam, if not on the river, with an embassy from Arakan, which arrived at King Song Tham's court only days after their departure (Bocarro 1876: 531–1). The ambassadors of the king of Arakan (Min-kamaun, r. 1612–22) carried news that brought some relief to a worried court: the Burmese king had renounced his plans for further campaigns, including an invasion of the Thai kingdom, and he had disbanded his armies (Bocarro 1876: 530–1). The Arakanese had probably learned of the growing friendship between the Thai and Portuguese, and they now proposed an alliance with the Thai, for a joint attack on their common enemy: the Burmese. One can hardly doubt that the replies made by Thai court officials were friendly and positive, but King Song Tham must have indicated that no decision could be made until after a firm Thai alliance with the Portuguese had been concluded.

While these talks were under way, the ship carrying the Thai ambassadors and Father Francisco was making its way down to Melaka and from there to Goa. Their arrival date in India is not recorded, but given the seasonal winds and the month-long voyage, they must have arrived in January or February 1617. Since the ambassadors from Ava took their leave in April 1617, both parties were hosted by the Portuguese viceroy simultaneously, probably for at least two or three months. It seems unlikely, however, that their presence together in the same city created an awkward situation. Indeed, each party may have been interested in obtaining information from the other. The Thai wanted more information about the court of the new Burmese king, and they may have sought economic information from the Muslim ambassador-traders.

<sup>25</sup> Letter, viceroy to king, 29 December 1616 in BFUP 1955 4: 855.

During almost the entire period that these embassies were in motion, the viceroy was guided by instructions from King Filipe II, which were carried with the annual fleet from Portugal and must have reached him about September or October 1615. These instructions were the first response from Portugal to the Burmese capture of Syriam. In spite of the loss of the Portuguese fortress, the king instructed the viceroy to conduct parallel relations with officials of both Ava and Ayutthaya. These instructions arrived when the first Thai embassy was in Goa, and they were the basis for his subsequent talks with all parties. When the fleet bound for Portugal left India in early 1617, at which time the embassy from Burma and the second embassy from Ayutthaya were in Goa, the viceroy's policy was to maintain friendly relations with both kingdoms, to avoid giving any offence to either side and to seek any practical advantages that might be obtained for the benefit of the Portuguese.<sup>26</sup> This policy reflects the viceroy's conclusions, after he had met and had discussions with both embassies, and had received Father Francisco's report of his mission to Ayutthaya.

The embassy from Burma set out for home, accompanied by Martim Cotta Falcão, who was sent as the viceroy's return ambassador (Bocarro 1876: 694). By the time he reached Ava, Anauk-hpet-lun appears to have lost interest in his own proposal and must have realised that the Portuguese were unwilling to enter into a military alliance. This mission may have been conducted under a cloud of suspicion. The Burmese knew that a rival embassy was currently in Goa and that the ambassadors were planning to continue to Portugal in early 1618. The long stay of the Thai ambassadors in Goa (more than a year from early 1617 to early 1618) must have aroused further suspicions at the Burmese court about Portuguese intentions.

Although specific details of Goa-Pegu relations during 1618–20 are missing, there is evidence of intensive diplomatic activity among the Portuguese, Burmese and Arakanese up to 1620, including both crown and private Portuguese trading with the Burmese coast (Guedes 1994: 172). As late as February 1619, just before the annual reports left Goa for Portugal, nothing had resulted from Falcão's mission, although the viceroy was still hoping that something useful might emerge.<sup>27</sup> But in fact Falcão, who had gone to secure the release of prisoners, was himself imprisoned, as were successive Portuguese representatives who were sent to try to ransom him. In 1620, in the absence of news about Falcão, the Portuguese crown voyages to Pegu were suspended again (Guedes 1994: 184).

To complete this tale of embassies, four others should be mentioned.

<sup>26</sup> Letter, king to viceroy, 17 January 1618 in Pato 1893: 259–60.

<sup>27</sup> Letter, viceroy to king, 8 February 1619 in Pato 1893: 262.

*Bijapur and the Opening of Trade with Dabul*

There are no records of what the Thai ambassadors did in Goa during the long period from their arrival in early 1617 until they finally set out for home, probably during the April 1618 sailing season. They may have gathered information about trade along the west coast of India and in the Persian Gulf and Arab ports. By this time, the ancestor of the Bunnag family of Thailand, who came from the Persian Gulf area, was established at Ayutthaya and was probably already assisting with the reorganisation of the crown's maritime trade. The ambassadors in 1617 may therefore have been commissioned by King Song Tham to gather information to confirm and expand the recommendations made to the ministry concerning trade on the west coast of India and its potential benefits for the Thai treasury. No doubt senior Thai officials were eager to be involved, too. The men of Song Tham's court were the first for more than a generation to be free to engage in trade for personal profit, after nearly four decades of severe economic restrictions imposed during periods of deprivation and war from 1568 to 1605 (Manop 1993).

It seems likely that the Thai ambassadors visited the king of Bijapur's port of Dabul, which was not far from Goa. The kingdom of Bijapur had recently sent ambassadors to Ayutthaya to open relations with the Thai court. They received permission to establish a trading office to purchase goods in the kingdom and to import goods on ships from Bijapur's west-coast ports and from Masulipatnam on the east coast of India. They also promised to provide any quantities of Indian textiles and war materiel that King Song Tham might require (Bocarro 1876: 531-2). Expectations of profitable trade with this Muslim kingdom, in addition to the trade that already existed with the Muslim network of South Asia, rendered Portuguese chances of gaining an important trading rôle in Thai ports even less than they had been before.

The king of Bijapur appears to have expanded his trading contacts into Southeast Asia during a period of several years prior to making contact with King Song Tham's court. About 1616 his merchants were following the successful examples of the Dutch and English, and were seeking a permanent post in Thai territory to serve as a collection centre and warehouse for local products, as well as a sales centre for goods brought into the country by the ships of Bijapur's merchants arriving from both the east and the west coasts of India. Although the records are not explicit, one of their trading posts was in Tenasserim, because the ambassadors asked specifically for trade between Dabul and Tenasserim. There, they came into direct competition not with the Dutch or English (whose operations were on the Gulf of Siam side of the peninsula) but with the Portuguese, both official and private, and with others involved in the lucrative trans-peninsular trade between



this port and Ayutthaya.<sup>28</sup> Trading relations with Bijapur were, however, short lived. The merchants from Dabul left Ayutthaya by 1620, declaring that they would not return.<sup>29</sup> The context of their departure is not explicit, but clearly they were dissatisfied with trading conditions.

*Friendly Trading, Political Reconnoitring: Champa and Aceh*

Nothing is known about the visit of Champa's ambassadors to Ayutthaya during this period, except that it took place.<sup>30</sup> Given the geographical position of tiny Champa, along the coast north of the Mekong delta, between Khmer and Viet territory, the ambassadors probably set out for the Thai capital during the south-bound sailing season at the end of 1616, with a junk-load of goods to sell. The results of their political mission to the Thai court in early 1617 are unknown, although a plausible reason for the mission is a common enemy. About this time, the southern Viet kingdom, ruled by the Nguyen family in Hué, was beginning to make contacts with the king of Cambodia, who was a vassal of the Thai king. Viet support for Khmer resistance against the Thai later became a major problem for the Thai court. Since the Viets had long been the enemies of the Cham, the king of Champa may have been seeking support from Ayutthaya against Hué, ostensibly to protect Thai interests in Cambodia. But these are merely speculations, and the purposes of the mission, other than the customary trading, may never be identified.

Trade was prominent in the agenda of the Thai ambassadors who were sent to Aceh before the crisis began and remained there until July 1613. Again, there is no record of their mission, other than their solicitous assurances that traders were welcome in the Thai capital (Best 1934: 53–5). An obvious political objective for sending them was to ensure that this powerful kingdom, facing the Andaman Sea from northern Sumatra, remained on friendly terms with the Thai court, particularly at a time when the sultan was known to be shifting away from the rapprochement achieved with the Portuguese by his two predecessors. The sultanate was enjoying a high point of political power under Iskandar Muda (r. 1607–36) and

<sup>28</sup> Although Tenasserim was a source of food supplies for Melaka, the viceroy did not regard it as a port of much economic importance and agreed to give Bijapur assistance in establishing new trading contacts in such places (letter 85, viceroy to king, 30 December 1615 in BFUP 1955 4: 796). Nonetheless, it was a neutral port and safe haven for Portuguese ships, in case of conflict with enemy powers on the Andaman Sea (Bocarro 1876: 369). Note that the kingdom of Bijapur is called Idalcão in Portuguese records.

<sup>29</sup> Letter, Richard Cocks (Japan) to East India Company (London), 13 December 1620 [23 December in the Gregorian calendar] in Sainsbury 1870: 398.

<sup>30</sup> Letter, John Johnson and Richard Pitts (Ayutthaya) to Japan (Richard Cocks?), 23 May 1617 [2 June in the Gregorian calendar] in Sainsbury 1870: 33.

great prosperity as an international market place for traders from Europe and everywhere in Asia. Its fleet and other capabilities gave it a reputation as a formidable military power. Its political influence extended to the lower Malay peninsula, and it shared with Thai ports the shipping lanes of the Andaman Sea and Strait of Melaka. In spite of the geographical proximity with this southern neighbour, however, there seems to be no record of serious conflict between Aceh and the Thai coastal towns of the Andaman Sea. King Song Tham was probably renewing old ties of friendship early in his reign, and his envoys no doubt collected the current political, diplomatic and commercial information that Aceh's cosmopolitan port had to offer.

### *Spaniards in Ayutthaya*

Given the close association between Portugal and Spain during this period, Spanish trading and political interests should not be overlooked. A Spanish envoy from the Philippines arrived at the Thai court, possibly while Father Francisco was still there.<sup>31</sup> The Spanish had first established official contacts with the Thai court more than 20 years earlier, but apparently not much trade had developed because the Portuguese claimed the mainland of Southeast Asia as a Portuguese zone, where Spaniards were technically excluded under their mutual treaty. Meanwhile, the Dutch, soon after they began trading at Thai ports (Patani in 1601, Ayutthaya in 1604), made repeated attacks on the Spanish in the Philippines from 1609 to 1616. In late 1615, the Spanish and Portuguese attempted to launch a joint expedition against the Dutch, and while Father Francisco was in Ayutthaya, the English and Dutch were expecting to engage in a battle in the straits near Singapore Island against the combined Spanish and Portuguese fleets.<sup>32</sup> In fact, the Dutch fleet had already defeated the Portuguese arm of the fleet, which went only as far east as Melaka and never joined the Spanish forces. The governor of the Philippines personally led the Spanish fleet to Melaka, but died unexpectedly, and the fleet withdrew to Manila (Pinto 1997: 131–2).

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<sup>31</sup> The date of arrival is not recorded. The embassy was sent by the Audiencia Real, which took charge in Manila after Governor Juan de Silva's death (Bocarro 1876: 351). Silva died in April 1616, and the Audiencia managed Philippine political affairs until the next governor arrived in July 1618 (Blair and Robertson 1904 xvii: 289–90). The period from about August to November (or alternatively from February to May) is the good season for sailing from Manila to Ayutthaya and back again. The August–November 1616 season seems likely, in view of the 1615–6 efforts to mobilise a joint Portuguese and Spanish fleet against the Dutch—a common enemy, commercially active at the port of Ayutthaya.

<sup>32</sup> Letter, John Gourney (Banten) to William Nicholls (Aceh), 23 and 28 July 1616 [2 and 7 August in the Gregorian calendar] in Foster 1900 iv: 147.

One reason for sending an envoy from Manila must have been to ask King Song Tham to expel the Protestant traders from his kingdom. The Spaniards were given a cordial reception, but the king treated their request in the same way as the parallel request brought by Father Francisco. Like the Portuguese, the Spaniards may have gained some minor advantages for Spanish traders and protection for any Spaniards who took up residence in Ayutthaya. Little is known about such residents, however, except that by the beginning of the 1620s, a Spanish community had formed in Ayutthaya.<sup>33</sup>

Another reason for a Spanish mission at this juncture may have been to gather information about the Thai embassy bound for Europe. Since King Filipe II of Portugal was also King Felipe III of Spain, the Thai ambassadors (had they succeeded in reaching Lisbon) might have been obliged to go to Madrid or Valladolid for their audience with the king.

### Thai Mission to Lisbon Abandoned, Early 1618

Why did the Thai ambassadors not sail for Portugal in early 1618? The reason cited in the viceroy's official report to Lisbon was that their interpreter, Cristovão Rebello, had failed to come to Goa, and the Thai were unable to make the voyage without him. The historian Bocarro repeated this simple excuse without comment. But from the viewpoints of the Thai and of Rebello himself, it is implausible. The following interpretation, although partly hypothetical, adheres to the known facts and offers a rational explanation for Rebello's behaviour.

Rebello was one of many criminals who sought refuge in other countries, thus placing themselves beyond the reach of Portuguese justice. In Portuguese legal terminology, he was a *homiziado*. He had committed crimes in Cochin and had found refuge in the Thai kingdom (Bocarro 1876: 185). He could not visit Goa or any other port under Portuguese control, without risking arrest, imprisonment and possibly execution. As long as he remained in Thai territory, he was safe from prosecution. He had, moreover, established himself as a leader among the Portuguese who resided in Tenasserim and Ayutthaya. He was praised by the Thai because of his rôle in the defence of Tenasserim during the Burmese naval attack (Bocarro 1876: 186). He must have been encouraged by the viceroy's recommendation (perhaps made without knowledge of his legal status) that both govern-

<sup>33</sup> Letter, Archbishop Miguel Serrano Garcia (Manila) to king, 30 July 1621 in Blair and Robertson 1904 xx: 99. A few Spanish Franciscans and one Augustinian were in the Thai kingdom ca. 1583–5, and other Franciscans and Dominicans were at Ayutthaya from 1594 to 1599. But from about 1600, there seems to be no record of Spanish missionaries working there until at least 1640 (author's database of missionaries in Thailand).

ments acknowledge him as the head of the Portuguese community residing in King Song Tham's realm (Bocarro 1876: 522).

When it was announced in 1616 that Song Tham intended to send another embassy from Ayutthaya to Goa, and that the ambassadors this time would continue on to Lisbon, Rebello spotted a chance to redeem himself under the Portuguese system of justice. He could not offer unconditionally to accompany the Thai ambassadors to Goa, much less to Portugal, because he knew he might be arrested by the Portuguese authorities. So he must have accepted the position of interpreter of the embassy and agreed to accompany the Thai ambassadors, on condition that he obtain approval from the viceroy.

He had good reason to hope this offer would succeed, because the viceroys had been distributing royal pardons to criminals in refuge in various kingdoms in Asia for nearly 20 years. When the Portuguese Indies came under threat from its Protestant enemies, including severe competition from the Dutch and English trading companies in the 1590s, the Portuguese forts and fleets in Asia were already experiencing a shortage of manpower, and especially men with experience in Asia. As a means of attracting the criminals back to Portuguese towns and into Portuguese service, the viceroy was authorised to issue pardons. Moreover, the viceroy had recently received instructions to continue the practice.<sup>34</sup> In the case of the worst crimes, however, presumably including Rebello's involvement in a case of homicide, the pardoned man had to serve for a time in the fleet, possibly as an oarsman aboard a crown galley.<sup>35</sup> A well-established man such as Rebello would not have accepted such a degrading penance, and thus he must have expected to negotiate special terms for himself.

Rebello went by ship with Father Francisco and the Thai party as far as Tuticorin, a port slightly east of the southern tip of India. He disembarked (Bocarro 1876: 528) and must have sent a petition from there to the viceroy, requesting a full pardon, in return for the important services that he expected to carry out for the Portuguese crown, by accompanying the ambassadors in Goa and on to Portugal. The viceroy, however, may have had no authority to grant an unconditional pardon, and he probably was not inclined to pay the costs of sending the Thai ambassadors, the royal page, the Portuguese interpreter and their servants to Portugal. He therefore rejected the offer and, in his report to Lisbon, made no

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<sup>34</sup> In 1598 Filipe II instructed the viceroy to grant a general pardon for most crimes to Portuguese living in Bengal, because the government needed the extra manpower that they could provide (letter, king to viceroy, 21 November 1598 in BFUP 1955 2: 240). A 30 November 1614 royal decree (BFUP 1987 48: 152) authorised the viceroy to pardon various crimes and commute punishments and banishments.

<sup>35</sup> Letter 121, viceroy to king, 9 January 1616 in BFUP 1955 4: 807.

mention of it, laying the blame instead on Rebello for not proceeding to Goa and thus for causing the failure of the mission.

The viceroy's reply to Rebello could have been sent on a ship from Goa that stopped at Tuticorin. Perhaps it was the despatch of this letter than convinced the Thai ambassadors—never encouraged by the viceroy to continue to Lisbon anyway—to renounce their intended journey and return to Ayutthaya. Meanwhile, Rebello was able to return to his refuge and report to Thai officials that his offer of services had been rejected by the viceroy. We have no evidence from the Thai side, but this explanation is consistent with the known facts and resolves plausibly Rebello's dilemma as an agent of King Song Tham.

An alternative to Rebello as interpreter to the embassy was Father Francisco. He had never lived in the Thai kingdom, and the only time that he visited was during the 1616 embassy. He may not have had sufficient knowledge of the Thai language to serve effectively as an interpreter. Also, he had no instructions from the viceroy to discuss an embassy to Portugal. When King Song Tham asked whether a royal letter should be sent to the Portuguese king, the padre encouraged him to do so (Bocarro 1876: 527). It is possible that the good father far exceeded his instructions when the idea of an embassy to Lisbon arose. He may even have tried to create an important additional rôle for himself, in hopes of accompanying the ambassadors to Lisbon as their adviser. But Father Francisco apparently ceased to be involved in Thai affairs after he made his report to the viceroy. His abrupt disappearance from the records may be a sign of disfavour. Perhaps he received a slap on the wrist from the viceroy himself, for encouraging an extravagance such as an embassy to Europe, especially at a time when Portuguese resources were strained.

### **Weaknesses of Portuguese India**

In the course of the year spent in Goa, the Thai ambassadors had adequate time to discuss affairs with Portuguese officials at all levels and to observe at first hand the centre of Portuguese power in Asia. Their enquiries must have revealed many weaknesses that were obvious to the eye and others that were current topics of conversation and common complaint among the Portuguese themselves. Even Bocarro (1876: 530) candidly recorded an English opinion, expressed to Thai officials in 1616, that Portuguese power in Asia was waning and that the Portuguese could not defend a fortress in Martaban against a neighbour as powerful as the Burmese. The most evident weaknesses were shortages of manpower, military equipment, revenue and ships.

Manpower was a serious problem for Viceroy Azevedo. He reported in December 1615 that he got no net gain of Portuguese men available for service

from the fleets that arrived in 1614 and 1615, because most of the men on board died.<sup>36</sup> Those who did survive in 1615 arrived in such poor condition that they could not perform any work.<sup>37</sup> With the departures of the 1615, 1616 and 1617 fleets bound for Portugal, Azevedo had to cope with three successive net losses of manpower. He also faced a problem of military leadership. He complained that men of quality (the *fidalgos*) all aspired to become high officials, but they would not serve voluntarily when it became necessary to fight the Dutch.<sup>38</sup>

The government of Portuguese India was not in a healthy financial state during this decade. From the beginning of his viceroyalty, Azevedo made straightforward, frank and critical reports, declaring that revenues could not meet all the necessary expenditures.<sup>39</sup> He struggled constantly with a lack of money and men, and had to resort to merchants for loans to pay for artillery and ships.<sup>40</sup> Shortages of funds were especially acute in Melaka, and tax evasion was rampant. Both the Melaka Captain who served during 1615-6 and his successor who served during 1616-8 were under investigation for fiscal misconduct, and both were imprisoned on orders from the king himself in 1618 (Pinto 1997: 195). In 1616 the viceroy thought the only way to stop the tax evasion was to give the local authorities themselves a stake in the tax collections, and he also hoped to increase revenues by stimulating a greater volume of trade.<sup>41</sup> There was also a perennial shortage of artillery pieces for the fleet, with consequent mis-appropriations from Melaka's arsenal and from all other forts garrisoned by Portugal.

One reason why the viceroy did not want to send the embassy on to Portugal was the cost of passage both ways, which the viceroy was expected to pay from his treasury funds. A more immediate obstacle was the lack of ships. The average number of ships leaving Goa for Lisbon had declined in each successive decade from the 1580s to the 1610s (Veen 2000: 63, 251). Azevedo reported shortages of ships, for the voyages to and from Lisbon, from the very beginning of his term in office.<sup>42</sup> Thus in the 1610s departing fleets had 3.2 ships on average per year and were at a low point compared with the 1580s, when 5.1 per year on average set out from Portugal. During the decade 1611–20, an average of 2.8 carracks per year returned from India to Portugal, carrying an average of 487 people each (Veen 2000: 250).

<sup>36</sup> Letter 13, viceroy to king, 31 December 1615 in BFUP 1955 4: 776.

<sup>37</sup> Letter 90, viceroy to king, 31 December 1615 in BFUP 1955 4: 798.

<sup>38</sup> Letter 14, viceroy to king, March 1616 in BFUP 1955 4: 825.

<sup>39</sup> Letter, viceroy to king, April 1613 in BFUP 1955 4: 771.

<sup>40</sup> Letter, viceroy to king, 31 December 1614 in BFUP 1955 4: 768.

<sup>41</sup> Letter, viceroy to king, 27 December 1616 in BFUP 1955 4: 862–3.

<sup>42</sup> Letter, viceroy to king, April 1613 in BFUP 1955 4: 769–70.



In addition, the Portuguese fleet in Asian waters suffered many losses while the initial diplomatic exchanges with Ayutthaya were in progress. Azevedo himself was beaten by the English while in command in a naval battle in early 1615. More ships were lost later the same year in operations at Melaka. A joint Portuguese-Spanish fleet, which was intended to drive the Dutch and English from Asian waters never assembled. The Portuguese wing of the great fleet sailed from Goa to Melaka, but it suffered so many losses en route and in a battle at Melaka with the Dutch that it was unable to join forces with the Spanish wing (Pinto 1997: 132).

Only three ships left Portugal for India in 1616. One was lost en route in a battle with the English, one reached Goa, although no one on board was in physical condition for service, and the whereabouts of the third was still unknown at the end of the year.<sup>43</sup> Thus the viceroy had a net loss of ships when the fleet sailed in early 1617 for Portugal. That fleet reached Portugal in mid-1617 with its pepper cargo in a damaged condition, resulting in an enquiry to identify the causes and people responsible. A backlog of goods may have accumulated in India, and some men may have been overdue for repatriation during the period 1616–8, since only two ships from India had reached Portugal in 1615.<sup>44</sup>

Meanwhile, the 1617 fleet sailing in the opposite direction reached India in October and November 1617, while the Thai ambassadors were there. It consisted of three carracks and one galleon, plus two smaller vessels (a caravel and a pinnace). The carracks sailed back to Portugal in the first half of 1618 (Bocarro 1876: 754–5). That is the fleet with which the Thai ambassadors had expected to sail. Although the average number of ships made the voyage, this sailing was under several constraints, on orders from Lisbon.

The 1617 fleet arrived in Goa with special orders to supply a large quantity of hardwoods to meet the needs in Portugal for capstans, tenons and other shipbuilding components.<sup>45</sup> In addition to the usual pepper shipment (the orders for the enquiry had not yet arrived), the viceroy was under pressure to send as much saltpetre as possible to Portugal, for use in manufacturing gunpowder.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, the 1618 fleet bound for Portugal had another, highly unusual priority.

Jerónimo de Azevedo's term of office ended in November 1617, with the arrival in Goa of the new viceroy, João Coutinho. Azevedo was in disgrace for several reasons. He had led a fleet of 15 ships into battle at Surat in January 1615 and was beaten by a mere six English ships (Bocarro 1876: 342–4); he authorised the ill-fated attack on Arakan in October 1615, which resulted in the loss of the

<sup>43</sup> Letter, viceroy to king, 29 December 1616 in BFUP 1955 4: 858.

<sup>44</sup> Letter, king to Archbishop Miguel de Castro, 13 November 1615 in BFUP 1960 16: 892.

<sup>45</sup> Letter, king to viceroy, 30 March 1617 in Pato 1893: 218.

<sup>46</sup> Letter, king to viceroy, 8 March 1617 in Pato 1893: 97.

Portuguese fort on Sundiva Island; and he had lost the Portuguese wing of the long-planned joint armada. He was also under investigation for mis-use of treasury funds (Guedes 1994: 164 n. 171). He was placed under arrest by his successor, and the captains of the three carracks had orders to carry him to Europe with the utmost speed. On his return to Portugal, Azevedo was put in prison and remained there for the rest of his life.

The decision concerning the Thai ambassadors, and whether to provide them with passage to Portugal and back, was in the hands of the new viceroy. The total number in the Thai party at Goa at the end of 1617 is not recorded. (By comparison, the Thai embassy that set out for the Netherlands in 1607 had fifteen members, and the Dutch finally agreed to provide passage from Java to Europe and back for five.) No doubt the three ambassadors and the royal page in Goa had brought servants with them, and they would have pressed for some servants to accompany them, besides an interpreter. Thus the viceroy was expected to accommodate about seven or eight men, at the very minimum.

In spite of appeals from the Thai ambassadors, Coutinho decided against providing passage to Portugal, arguing that he would have to inform Lisbon first and await authorisation for the embassy. In addition to shortages of ships and space on board the three carracks in the returning fleet, Coutinho may have had other reasons for not pursuing his predecessor's plan. The initiative taken by Azevedo in promoting relations with Ayutthaya had come under close scrutiny, and Coutinho arrived with detailed instructions from the king. By the time he sailed from Portugal, officials in Lisbon had concluded that the Martaban plan was impractical and that the new viceroy's task would be to maintain friendly relations without making any commitments. An embassy to Europe, back to India and home to Ayutthaya, in the absence of affairs of great importance to discuss, was an unjustifiable extravagance.

The Thai ambassadors were fortunate to leave Goa when they did, probably during the April 1618 sailing season. In the course of the year 1618-9 an epidemic struck the city, the Indian population was reduced by half and about 2,000 Portuguese died (Veen 2000: 12).<sup>47</sup> Given the drastic reduction in population and loss of able men, it must have become evident to the Thai that the new viceroy could not undertake a major new venture at this juncture, such as establishing a Portuguese garrison at a site so distant and difficult to defend as Martaban.

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<sup>47</sup> The Thai ambassadors themselves fell ill in early 1618 (letter, viceroy to king, 8 February 1619 in Pato 1893: 261), but they escaped the epidemic.

### Thai Reaction to Failure, 1618

Neither the Portuguese records nor King Song Tham's letter to the viceroy indicates the purpose of the Thai embassy to Lisbon. The initial motivation may have been little more than a formal diplomatic gesture. During the ten years preceding Father Francisco's visit to Ayutthaya, the Thai court made its first direct contacts with sovereigns in distant places such as Japan, the Netherlands and England, and letters from the Thai king were sent to those countries. Before 1616, all three countries were represented by important trading communities in Ayutthaya. By contrast, the Portuguese had been trading in Thai ports for more than a century, but the Thai court had maintained relations only at the level of the viceroy in Goa. Thus one reason for an embassy to Portugal itself was to make direct sovereign-to-sovereign contact.

King Song Tham's 1616 letter to King Filipe II was forwarded to Lisbon and must have arrived with the annual fleet in mid-1618. Thus far, no trace of it has been found in the Portuguese archives, nor of the gifts that accompanied it, although some acknowledgement must have been sent. The last published record concerning these exchanges is a letter from King Filipe II to the viceroy, dated 17 January 1618.<sup>48</sup> The letter mentions the Martaban plan but, understandably, not King Song Tham's letter or gifts, which could not have reached him before mid-1618, when the annual fleet returned to Lisbon. One would expect to find a record of King Filipe II's reply and return gifts in the Portuguese archives among documents written in the second half of 1618 or early 1619 and carried by the annual fleet that sailed from Portugal in early 1619.

From the Thai viewpoint, the practical reason for the long voyage was to learn more, from first-hand observation, about Portugal and its power relative to other European nations. The first Thai ambassadors to Europe had visited the Netherlands and returned to Ayutthaya only five years earlier, with much eye-witness information about the Dutch. Among the nations maintaining friendly relations with Ayutthaya, the Portuguese and the Dutch were the two greatest rivals. The king and his court were already familiar, through reports based on personal observations by Thai officials and traders, with Portuguese fleets and fortresses such as Melaka, Syriam and Goa. No doubt they wanted to know more about Portugal itself, to help them guide their relations with Portugal's rivals in Ayutthaya. They may also have wanted to know more about the curious Iberian monarchy and the arrangement in which Portugal and Spain were separate and independent countries, although both were ruled by the same king.

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<sup>48</sup> Letter, king to viceroy, 17 January 1618 in Pato 1884: 259–60.

How did King Song Tham and his ministers react to the news of the failure of the second embassy? If the ambassadors left Goa during the best sailing season, about April 1618, they may have reached Ayutthaya as early as June. By that time, the lines of territorial control had been redrawn and appear to have become firm. The respective spheres of Thai and Burmese control, along the coast of the Andaman Sea and in the upper Chao Phraya basin, were once again fixed. By the time the Portuguese position became apparent—and the Portuguese probably never sent a definite negative reply concerning Martaban—the Thai ministers must have lost interest in the plan, realising that it was impractical.

Azevedo had already received instructions from Lisbon to maintain a politically neutral position in negotiations, and by 1616 he seems to have concluded that the Martaban plan was impractical. The Thai ambassadors must have known of these intentions, and there was thus no reason to appeal directly to King Filipe II to pursue the proposal. The certainty of failure at the courts in Lisbon and Madrid may have been offered to King Song Tham as a practical reason why the ambassadors finally agreed not to proceed to Portugal.

Perhaps the consensus at the Thai court by this time was to fall back on the proposal from Arakan as a substitute for the safeguards provided by a buffer territory. No Arakanese naval attack on Burma from the west, combined with an infantry attack by the Thai army from the east, actually took place. But as long as the Burmese ministers believed that such a plan could be set in motion, their caution might provide the desired checks against further aggression.

Among many other possible excuses offered to Song Tham for not sending the ambassadors to Portugal, Azevedo may have argued that a fleet had been sent to the archipelago in 1616, under King Filipe's orders to join forces with the Spanish fleet in operations against the Dutch,<sup>49</sup> thus making the shortage of ships even more acute. A war in progress would have been a diplomatically acceptable excuse for delaying the embassy to Portugal. Even better, could Thai diplomats be invited to travel to Europe in company with a viceroy who was under arrest and on his way to prison?

### **Practical Results of the Diplomatic Exchanges**

The successive embassies, received at and taking leave from the viceregal and royal courts, form a rapidly shifting and blurred background on this stage of diplomacy, and only a few details can be perceived clearly. Foremost, no defensive or offensive alliances were formed. The Thai did not ally themselves with the Arakanese against the Burmese, or with the Portuguese and Spanish against the Dutch and English. The Portuguese did not form alliances either with the Thai

<sup>49</sup> Letter 8, viceroy to king, January 1616 in BFUP 1955 4: 815.

against the Burmese or with the Burmese against the Arakanese or with anyone against the detested Protestants.<sup>50</sup> The main beneficiaries of the discussions with the Thai were the traders of all nationalities and the Portuguese residents in King Song Tham's domains.

From the viewpoint of Portuguese officials in Goa and Melaka, the exchanges of embassies with Ayutthaya from 1615 to 1619 renewed friendly relations at a diplomatic level, in contrast to the occasional commercial contacts made by Portuguese officials in Melaka and Macau. Such diplomatic relations were first established more than a century earlier but had lapsed for a very long time. The exchanges also helped the Portuguese to assess the rapidly changing balance of power in mainland Southeast Asia and to formulate a policy of prudent neutrality, keeping all avenues of trade open without making any political or military commitments.

The real gains for the Portuguese were the minor ones granted by King Song Tham. They are mentioned in his November 1616 message and in the viceroy's reports to Lisbon: the release of Christian captives (presumably the Portuguese held since early 1613), inheritances to be given to the heirs of deceased Portuguese traders and serious legal cases against Portuguese in provincial areas to be removed to Ayutthaya and tried in the ministerial courts. These arrangements were ensured by the agreement on the office of the Portuguese head of community, who would serve when necessary as an intermediary with Thai officials on behalf of Portuguese residents and visiting traders.<sup>51</sup> He could not sit as a judge, but he was responsible for administering punishments in cases of serious crimes. Since the people held in Thai prisons were given nothing by the government, they had to depend on relatives or charity for their food, clothing and other necessities. Imprisonment was rendered a little easier with the Portuguese community leader responsible for administering the punishment.

<sup>50</sup> The Arakanese persisted in their negotiations with the Portuguese and reached a peaceful agreement with Viceroy Coutinho's successor, who reported in February 1620 that Arakan's ambassadors had been sent to Goa (letter, viceroy to king, 17 February 1620 in BFUP 1962 21: 465–6). An agreement was concluded with them in April (Gune 1972 1: 114, 1A: 493–4).

<sup>51</sup> Documentation concerning this office is sparse, but some of the office-holders can be identified during the ensuing 150 years, while Ayutthaya was still the capital. A January 1655 report mentions the viceroy's appointment of Domingos Saraiva Barreto de Pina to the captaincy or head of community in Ayutthaya (letter, João de Sousa Pereira in Macau to viceroy, 10 January 1655 in BFUP 1963 24: 311). The man who assumed these responsibilities in 1684 received an official appointment from the Portuguese viceroy with the title of authorised agent for Portuguese residents (letter from António da Fonseca, *procurador dos ausentes* in Ayutthaya, to the viceroy, 2 September 1684 in BFUP 1970 41: 25). In 1684, as in 1616, the Thai king denied the request to give the community head the power to sit as the judge in legal cases brought against Portuguese residents. A Jesuit missionary, Father Francisco Teles, served as head of the Portuguese community for about 20 years up to his death in 1737 (Teixeira 1983: 395).

Bocarro's records of the exchanges between King Song Tham and Father Francisco show that both sides had grievances, and the Thai apparently had more of them than the Portuguese did. It is thus ironic that, from the Thai viewpoint, very little changed in practice, except for removing powers of judgment and punishment from provincial governors. Inheritances were a real concession, but given the typically small capital possessed by Portuguese residents and traders, inheritance was an issue of negligible importance to anyone but the few heirs who were affected. The system of heads of community for non-Thai ethnic groups was a very old one, and the official acknowledgment of a post for a Portuguese head was not a concession from the Thai perspective. Indeed, Thai officials may have been important beneficiaries of this arrangement, since the incumbent subsequently facilitated their work, improved communications with the Portuguese residents, mediated in disputes, probably helped to discipline unruly sailors and must have provided other services useful to the Thai ministry responsible for foreign residents.

One proposal that did succeed was the immediate re-opening of trade, which had stopped some years earlier, because junks from Ayutthaya bound for Melaka had been robbed many times in the straits, as they rounded the tip of the Malay peninsula, and had also been ill treated by a Portuguese squadron commander (Bocarro 1876: 523–4). Under the new agreement, the Thai ministry responsible for maritime trade not only sold some crown junks to the Portuguese to facilitate their trade but also provided the traders with goods and food supplies needed by Melaka (Bocarro 1876: 519). Under this arrangement, the Thai court was able to improve relations with the Portuguese and increase the overall volume of trade, by allowing Ayutthaya-based Portuguese to manage some of the Melaka-bound trade themselves. Even so, the viceroy continued to urge King Song Tham to instruct his own subjects to resume trading at Melaka and other Portuguese ports.<sup>52</sup>

The king also agreed to waive import duties on goods brought by Portuguese traders from India and Melaka, to waive export duties and to impose only the anchorage fee on their ships (Bocarro 1876: 523). This provision did not apply to the ports of the king's vassals—among them Tenasserim, Nakhòn Sithammarat and Patani—where the local rulers managed their own respective systems of taxation.<sup>53</sup> The initial flurry of trading activity reported in Portuguese records may not have lasted very long, however, and trading may have stopped abruptly in 1624 when Thai-Portuguese relations were broken.

<sup>52</sup> Letter, viceroy to king (Filipe II), 8 February 1619 in Pato 1893: 261.

<sup>53</sup> This arrangement can be deduced by Father Francisco's report that King Song Tham had asked the viceroy to issue regulations requiring Portuguese subjects to pay the duties and customs revenues established by the *reyes* ('kings') who were his vassals (Bocarro 1876: 526). Father Francisco used the term *reyes* when translating the Thai term *phraya*, which in the Thai context denotes high-ranking governors. From the Portuguese viewpoint, these local rulers must have appeared to be virtual sovereigns in their respective domains.



Nothing of international consequence emerged from all this diplomatic activity. The exchanges nonetheless leave us with the impression that the Thai court, although sharing many rituals and symbols of power with its Burmese counterpart, took a fundamentally different approach to its external relations. Ayutthaya's reach, moreover, was much greater, and its contacts were becoming global, extending from Japan in the east to the north-western coast of Europe—opposite and outer limits of the political world known up to that time.

## Epilogue

From 1548 to 1593, the Thai heartland was never secure from the threat of Burmese attack, and probably during this long period the Thai court became acutely conscious of the value of the old Mon buffer. After the collapse of Burmese power on the shores of the Andaman Sea at the turn of the century, and up to 1613, the Mon along the coast near Martaban (who accepted Thai suzerainty during this period), together with the newly established Portuguese fort at Syriam, provided a buffer once again.

The series of diplomatic exchanges, initiated in 1615 by the Thai with the Portuguese viceroy, represent a search for a renewed buffer. The Thai king, Song Tham, offered a site at Martaban for a new fort, to replace the one the Portuguese had lost to the Burmese. The new site had command not only of the northern limits of the coastline of the Malay peninsula (where the Thai had great trading and territorial interests) but also the eastern shore of the Gulf of Martaban, separating it from the once-powerful Burmese capital of Pegu. When talks began, the Thai were so eager for the Portuguese to fortify this site that Thai military reinforcements were offered to help defend the proposed fortress, in the event it came under Burmese attack.

Several years passed, during which the Burmese made counter-proposals to the Portuguese, and the Thai offer of Martaban was referred to Lisbon for instructions. Portuguese relations with the Thai had been minimal for at least a half century, and the Portuguese, for strategic reasons, had never supported the Thai in their conflicts with the Burmese. Food supplies (some of which came from Burmese ports) were vital to the defence of Melaka, and a consistent policy of friendly relations with the Burmese had been maintained in the final decades of the 1500s, when the Burmese still controlled the coastal areas.

Most important in the eventual Portuguese decision not to accept the Thai offer was a reversal of Thai fortunes from the very start of the negotiations. The young Thai king was ineffectual as a defender of Thai frontier interests. He was barely twenty years old when he came to the throne in 1611, and he watched helplessly two years later as the Mon leaders of Martaban switched allegiance to the

Burmese, who reached Martaban's territory when they overran Syriam in 1613. Even before the young king sent his first ambassadors to Goa, he had lost control of this part of the coastline, and the Portuguese soon became aware that he was offering a site that was in Burmese hands. The only way for the Portuguese crown to gain possession would be through a war with the Burmese, and the consequences of such an agreement were unthinkable.

King Song Tham's offer of Martaban to the Portuguese was a logical decision from the Thai viewpoint in 1614, but only at that moment in history. The Portuguese were known to be politically powerful, had many forts in India and China, a fort in the Melaka Strait (with a great need for food and other goods, which Martaban could supply), were a major power in Europe and were treated with caution even by the Chinese authorities.<sup>54</sup> By contrast, Dutchmen were numerically inferior, had no fortress anywhere nearby, had no base of political power (Batavia was not founded until five years later) and were relative newcomers to Southeast Asian waters. The English appeared to be even weaker, had been trading in Ayutthaya for only two years and were an unknown political quantity. Thus Portugal was the logical choice of defensive ally in the search for a new buffer against the Burmese. By the time King Song Tham died 14 years later, however, the Dutch had established their permanent base in Java and had overtaken the Portuguese in numbers of men arriving annually in Asia and volumes of cargoes shipped to Europe. In the longer term, a closer alliance with Portugal, as foreseen in the Martaban plan, could have been disastrous for Ayutthaya, perhaps even within King Song Tham's lifetime. He was attempting to ally himself with long-established Europeans who must have appeared, from the perspective of Ayutthaya, to be the foremost military and commercial power. They were—although it was not yet apparent to the Thai—on the point of irreversible decline in their power and fortunes.

### Appendix: Texts and Translations

*Viceroy Jerónimo de Azevedo's Letter to King Song Tham, Written in Goa, 28 April 1616*

The April 1616 letter from Viceroy Azevedo to King Song Tham was published in António Bocarro's *Década* (1879: 517–8) and is transcribed here from

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<sup>54</sup> A 1617 report from Guangzhou (Wade 1994: 2,454) encapsulates the Chinese view of and policy towards the Portuguese at Macau: the Portuguese had a small but strongly defended enclave, they should be treated with caution, they were best left alone and they could be driven out whenever the Chinese government wished to do so. Thai officials no doubt comprehended this policy and must also have perceived that, despite haughty posturing, even the Chinese were unwilling to act against the Portuguese except in extreme circumstances.

the first edition of that work. The spellings of the original text are retained in the transcription below. Bocarro was the state archivist of the viceroys of India in the 1630s, when he compiled his history, and he had access to a copy of the letter to King Song Tham as well as to Father Francisco's report.

It is fortunate that the text of this letter was preserved in the history by Bocarro, who had access to documents that either have not survived or have not yet been located. The Portuguese archives have a series of correspondence between the viceroys and Asian monarchs. The first volume (titled *Reis Vizinhos N.º 1*) encompasses the years 1619–20 and the second (*Reis Vizinhos N.º 2*) encompasses 1662–8 (BFUP 1956 11: 45–296), leaving a gap for 1621–61 inclusive and another for the entire period prior to 1619.

### *Text*

A carta de V.A. que estes seus enviados me trouxeram, recebi com muito contentamento, e o tive mui particular com as boas novas que me deram da saude de V.A., e postoque desejei tornassem logo com reposta, não foi possível, assim por chegarem tarde como por se não offerecer então commodidade de embarcação que os pudesse pôr nas terras de V.A. e assim vão agora em um navio que para isso mandei aprestar; e envio juntamente o padre frei Francisco da Annuniação por ser pessoa conhecida de V.A. e que poderá melhor que outrem significar-lhe o meu animo, e o grande desejo que tenho de que a nossa amisade torne ao que antigamente era, e representar-lhe outras cousas, e negocios que leva a cargo para tractar com V.A. E assim lhe poderá dar inteiro credito em tudo o que de minha parte disser a V.A.

Do que V.A. me escreve sobre a perda de Sirião e morte de Philippe de Brito estou eu mui certo, e que se o banha de Martavão cumprira o mandado de V.A. e se não rebellára, não conseguiria o rei de Ová sua pretensão. Eu mandei o anno passado uma armada a recuperar aquella fortaleza e para fazer o mesmo em Martavão, com ordem de V.A., mas ella occupou-se em outras cousas, e deixou de executar o que ácerca d'isto lhe ordenei, de que tive muito desprazer; e porém, como o tempo der logar, tractarei logo de mandar quem o execute melhor, e darei ordem para que vão mercadores a esses reinos de V.A. e tenham n'elles commercio, como V.A. me pede, a se costumou sempre.

O padre e o capitão de navio hão de apresentar a V.A. em signal de amor e boa vontade algumas mostras do que por cá ha, e V.A. veja o que manda,

porque em tudo se ha de procurar sempre dar-lhe satisfação e gosto; e por mui encommendado hei a V.A. o padre, e que ao capitão mande dar despacho e fazer todo o favor para se poder tornar logo, e me trazer boas novas de V.A. a quem Nosso Senhor, etc.

Escripta em Goa a 28 de abril de 616. Dom Hieronymo de Azevedo.

### *Translation*

It was with much pleasure that I received the letter from Your Highness,<sup>55</sup> which your envoys brought to me, with many details and the good news that was conveyed to me about the health of Your Highness. Although I wanted to send a reply immediately, it was not possible, as they arrived too late to offer them the facility of a ship that could convey them to the lands of Your Highness. And so a ship is going now, which I have ordered to be fitted out for this purpose. I am sending along *padre frei* [Father] Francisco de Anunciação, who is known to Your Highness and who can, better than anyone else, convey my thoughts and the great wish that I have, for our friendship to revert to what it was in the past. He will make representations about other matters and the negotiations that he is commissioned to carry out with Your Highness. And therefore, complete confidence can be given to all that he says on my behalf to Your Highness.

What Your Highness writes to me, concerning the loss of Syriam and the death of Filipe de Brito, is very accurate. And if the banya [governor] of Martaban carries out the orders of Your Highness and does not rebel, the king of Ava will not obtain his demands.<sup>56</sup> Last year I sent a fleet to regain that fortress and to do the same in Martaban, with the mandate of Your Highness, but it became involved in other matters and omitted to carry out the orders that were given to it, which was very displeasing to me. How-

<sup>55</sup> Modern usage requires 'Your Majesty' here, but the term Your Highness (*Vossa Alteza*) has been retained according to period usage. In Tudor England, the older form of address for the sovereign (Your Grace) was replaced by Your Highness. In the Act of Supremacy issued by Queen Elizabeth I (not long before the birth of King Song Tham), her subjects pledged loyalty to her with that terminology: 'I...do utterly declare and testify in my conscience the Queen's Highness is the only supreme governor of this realm.' Another passage refers to '...every other person having Your Highness's fee or wages in this realm'.

<sup>56</sup> The viceroy implies that the governor of Martaban might resist the efforts of King Anauk-hpet-lun to extend Burmese control over Martaban and towns farther south along that coast. In the absence of reinforcements from the Thai, however, the Mon governor had no choice but to submit to Burmese rule after Burmese forces captured Syriam in March 1613.



ever, in the proper time and place, I shall send someone who will perform better. And I shall issue orders for merchants to go to these kingdoms<sup>57</sup> of Your Highness and carry on trade with them, as Your Highness requests of me, and to make this a customary practice.

The priest and the captain of the ship are to present to Your Highness some tokens of my affection and good will, and Your Highness will see that orders have been given for every effort to be made to give satisfaction and pleasure to you in all things. The priest is greatly entrusted to the care of Your Highness, and the captain is instructed to make haste and show every courtesy, so that he can immediately come back and convey to me the good news from Your Highness, to whom Our Lord ... etc.

Written in Goa on the 28<sup>th</sup> of April 1616. Dom Jerónimo de Azevedo.

#### *Identification of the Bodleian Manuscript*

A manuscript in the Bodleian Library in Oxford may be the oldest handwritten document in the Thai language. A notation on the manuscript, added at the time of acquisition, indicates that it was ‘Bought from the widow of Ed. Bernard (see Wanley’s Catalogue) 8813’. The parenthetical note may refer to the catalogue of manuscripts attributed to Edward Bernard and indexed by Humphrey Wanley. It lists the other manuscripts in Bernard’s personal collection (Bernard 1697: 226–8) but makes no reference to a work in Thai.<sup>58</sup>

Bernard was a professor of astronomy in the University of Oxford. He often travelled abroad and acquired a personal library of more than 500 books, plus many manuscripts. After his death in 1696, his books were sold at auction in London in 1697. He had a special interest in the Middle East, and his collection included works in Turkish and Arabic. But the titles of his books do not reveal any particular interest in southern or eastern Asia, except for copies of the travellers’ accounts published by Samuel Purchas (London, 1625) and by Jean-Baptiste Tavernier (Paris, 1678).

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<sup>57</sup> By ‘kingdoms’ the viceroy meant any of the seaports that belonged to King Song Tham. Because of the nearly absolute powers wielded by the governors of such ports, they were typically called *reyes* (‘kings’) in Portuguese records. See note 53 above.

<sup>58</sup> My sincere thanks to Michael Charney of SOAS for examining the 1697 catalogue and providing this information about Bernard’s collection. His manuscripts are arranged by language, and there is no category for Thai (either Siamese or a Latin form such as *codex siamensis*). The number 8813, written on the manuscript, does not refer to this catalogue.

The auction catalogue does not include the manuscripts, which must have been sold separately. The compiler of the catalogue observed that ‘His Manuscripts Oriental, & c. left by him, among which I am informed there are some very Ancient Copies not printed, are of great value, perhaps not elsewhere to be found’ (Millington 1697: iii). The Bodleian must have purchased the Thai manuscript about the time of the auction, because it appears as entry number 8813 in the 1698 volume of the Bodleian’s ‘Summary Catalogue of Western Manuscripts’. This catalogue gives the shelfmark MS. Siam d.1, which has been superseded by MS. Asiat Misc.d.3.<sup>59</sup>

Given our knowledge of the 1615–9 diplomatic exchanges between Ayutthaya and Goa, internal evidence in the text of the manuscript clearly shows that it is a copy of a message from King Song Tham to Jerónimo de Azevedo, Viceroy of Portuguese India at Goa from 1612 to 1617.

The first two attempts to identify the manuscript were made by Khačhòn Sukkhaphanit (1960, 1961), who made guesses based on internal evidence in the text and subsequently published further details about it, probably copied from Faria y Sousa’s (1695) history. Many of Khačhòn’s initial guesses proved to be wrong, partly because he did not have access to the published Portuguese records and was misled by the corrupted chronology of the annals of Ayutthaya, recompiled in the Bangkok period. He believed the manuscript was a royal letter from King Ekathotsarot (Song Tham’s father) to King Filipe II of Portugal. The third attempt to describe the text (Kongkaew 1996) correctly identified Song Tham as the king, but went no further in placing the document in its historical context.

Thai researchers have tried to identify this document as a letter. But Thai kings customarily wrote only to fellow sovereigns. In the case of Portuguese affairs, however, official Thai correspondence had always been maintained with the viceroy at Goa, and no attempt had been made to send an embassy to Portugal itself. Indeed, the only Thai embassy to Europe thus far was the one to the Netherlands, which set out from Ayutthaya in 1607 and reached home again probably in 1611. The fourth publication of the text, as a photographic reproduction (Ginsburg 2000: 21), correctly identified the document as a speech and not a letter.

This is not a letter in the ordinary sense but a message, in the form of a royal speech or discourse. It informed the viceroy of various matters by making pronouncements, similar to those made by the king in audiences with Thai officials. It was probably intended to be read aloud, in the presence of the viceroy, by the senior Thai ambassador. (For a similar message in 1622 to Richard Fursland, the President of the Council of Defence of the English East India Company and commander of English forces in Southeast Asian waters, see Ginsburg 2000: 19.)

<sup>59</sup> My sincere thanks to Doris Nicholson of the Oriental Collections of the Bodleian Library for kindly providing this information from the old catalogues.



The substance was dictated by King Song Tham, in the presence of his Phra Khlung (the minister responsible for external relations and maritime trade), and was written down by scribes. It was probably then edited, and a Portuguese-language version may have been prepared in Ayutthaya, to ensure the accuracy of the translation. We can safely date the document to November 1616, shortly before the departure of the Thai ambassadors for India in company with Father Francisco.

The official letter from King Song Tham to King Filipe II of Portugal was a separate document—an elaborate ceremonial object. Following Thai diplomatic protocol, such letters were inscribed with a stylus on a thin sheet of pure gold, rolled into a scroll, enclosed in a silk bag and carried in a decorated case made of rare wood or ivory. The 1616 royal letter was forwarded from Goa to Lisbon and was on board one of the carracks that left Goa in early 1618. Since King Song Tham's message to the viceroy was likewise an official document, a finely lettered and dated copy in Thai, bearing the minister's seal, must have been presented to Azevedo in early 1617 by the Thai ambassadors.

Neither the royal letter to Filipe II nor the speech to the viceroy, nor a translation of either has been located thus far in the Portuguese archives. But a copy of the message to the viceroy has survived. That copy was obviously made for travelling, because it was written on a sheet of light-weight, soft paper that could be folded or rolled into a scroll and easily carried on a long journey. This type of locally manufactured paper was used for sending messages between Thai towns or between the capital and a town. By contrast, office copies kept by Thai court scribes were usually written on the stiff sheets of accordion-fold books called *samut dam*, which were durable but were also heavy, bulky and unsuited to travelling.

The undated, roughly written copy preserved in the Bodleian must have been taken to India by the ambassadors for their reference during the negotiations with the viceroy and his officials. It was obviously not intended to be presented to anyone or kept permanently, because it was written in pencil, and the handwriting is not the carefully lettered style of formal documents. It is also undated, and no seal was affixed. What happened to it after 1618, when the Thai ambassadors were still in Goa, and how did it come into the hands of Edward Bernard, whose widow sold it to the library in Oxford about 1697? The present author has not yet found any answers.

The message itself contains little of substance other than a summary of the exchange of embassies. This formal, diplomatic document did not contain the details that were of greatest concern to both sides. Those topics were brought by the Thai ambassadors, perhaps in the form of informal written memoranda to remind them of all the business that they were assigned to conclude.

Few other manuscripts have been found that are written in the same Thai script. Three were given to Danish traders at Tenasserim in December 1621 and have been preserved in the Danish archives. (See Dhani and Seidenfaden 1939,

who included photographic reproductions of the texts.) Two of those documents are letters written in finely penned script by a scribe, whereas the Bodleian manuscript was written hastily in pencil in a handwriting that is not always easy to read.

The Bodleian manuscript is written on a single sheet of paper, approximately 67 centimetres wide and 87 centimetres long. It is torn vertically down the right-hand side in a jagged line, and the last words on most lines are missing.

The translation below is divided into 46 lines, corresponding to the 46 lines of Thai text. At the ends of lines that can be fully reconstructed in Thai, the missing text is placed in square brackets. Three dots (...) indicate lacunae that have not been reconstructed. Numbers with % signs at the ends of lines are approximations of the proportion of text that is missing from the respective lines, including those that have been reconstructed.

Only six lines are complete, not counting the last one, which contains only two words. About an eighth to a fourth is missing from most other lines. Overall, it appears that about 15 percent of the text is missing from the right-hand side. In addition, some letters are missing or illegible within a few lines. The following translation is therefore only a rough rendering of the text in English.

*King Song Tham's Discourse to Viceroy Jerónimo de Azevedo, Written in Ayutthaya, November 1616*

Text (transcribed from Bodleian manuscript MS. Asiat Misc.d.3)<sup>60</sup>

คำที่ลบเลื่อนอ่านไม่ชัดหรือขาดหายไปจากต้นฉบับมีมากทีเดียว ผู้คัดลอกได้ชำระเติมขึ้น  
ในระหว่างวงเล็บ[-]พอจะเดาออกได้ โดยจะเพาะตอนปลายบรรทัดแทบทุกบรรทัดมีส่วนหนึ่ง  
ขาดหาย

- 1 พระบรมสพจนภาโดยโองการมานพระบัณฑูรพระบาทสมเด็จพระเอกาทศฐรทธิศวรบรมนาถ  
บรมบพิตรพระพุทธเจ้าอยู่หัว[กรุงพระมหานครทวาราว]
- 2 ดีศรีอยุธยามหาดิลกภพนพรัตน์ราชธานีบุรีรมย์อุดมสวามีศรีสุพรรณคฤหรัตัน เจ้าปราสาททอง  
เจ้ามงามคโล...

<sup>60</sup> I am grateful to Decha Tangseefa of Thammasat University for patiently working with me to transcribe into electronic form my hand-copied version of the Thai text. For the convenience of Thai readers, I have modified the placement of some vowels to conform to modern usage.

- 3 กว่าท้าวพระยาฝ่ายทิศตะวันออกทั้งปวงทรงพระกรุณามีพระราชเมตตาภาวามาถึงพระยา  
ไวซ์รอยด้วยพระยาไวซ์รอยแต่งบาทหลวงฟเร็นซิชโคเดอะนุนลียะ-
- 4 ลังและกัปตันมลเวรีเบนถือหนังสือและมงคลราชบรรณาการเข้าไปทูลเกล้าทูลกระหม่อม  
ถวายนั้น พระบาทสมเด็จพระเอก[าทศรุธอิศวบรมนาถบรมบพิตร]
- 5 พระพุทธเจ้าอยู่หัวก็ได้ดำรัสอรอดอักษรแห่งพระยาไวซ์รอยอันให้เข้าไปถวายนั้นเสร็จทุก  
ประการก็มีพระราชฤทัย...
- 6 ถ้อยคำพระยาไวซ์รอยอันได้มีน้ำใจอันชื่นชมยินดีต่อความสวามิภักดิ์อันเที่ยงแท้และจะใคร่รับ  
พระราชกิจจานุกิจในพระบาทสมเด็จพระเอก[าทศรุธอิศว]
- 7 บรมนาถบรมบพิตรพระพุทธเจ้าอยู่หัวทั้งปวงนั้นพระบาทสมเด็จพระเอก[าทศรุธอิศวบรมนาถ  
บรมบพิตรพระพุทธเจ้าอยู่หัวก็มีพระ...
- 8 กรุณาแก่พระยาไวซ์รอยหนักหนาหาสิ่งที่จะอุปมาก็ไม่ได้ประการหนึ่งซึ่งมีหนังสือพระยาไวซ์รอย  
ให้บาทหลวงฟเร็นซิชโคเดอะนุนลียะส่งทูลมา...
- 9 กฎพระยาปอร์ตูกัลว่าจะขอให้เป็นพระราชไมตรีด้วยพระบาทสมเด็จพระเอก[าทศรุธอิศว  
บรมนาถบรมบพิตรพระพุทธเจ้าอยู่หัว]...
- 10 อาทิตย์ก็ตีขอพระราชไมตรีนั้นอย่าได้ม้วย[สิ้นสุด]และซึ่งพระบาทสมเด็จพระเอก[าทศรุธ  
อิศวบรมนาถบรมบพิตรพระพุทธเจ้าอยู่หัว ...มีพระ]
- 11 ราชหฤทัยนิมลากยินดีหนักหนา และนำพระราชหฤทัยพระบาทสมเด็จพระเอก[าทศรุธอิศว  
บรมนาถบรมบพิตรพระพุทธเจ้าอยู่หัว ... เหมือน]
- 12 แต่ก่อนมาไซร์ เพราะจะใคร่ให้แผ่นดินเมืองปอร์ตูกัลและแผ่นดินกรุงพระมหานครทวาราวดี  
ศรีอยุธยาเป็นแผ่นดินกระดานทอง...
- 13 พระราชไมตรีนั้นเป็นอันสนิท[สนม]มั่นคงอันจะ...หา]ไม่ได้ตามประ[เพ]ณีสัจธรรมไมตรีอันมีใน  
พระมหากษัตริย์เจ้าทั้งหลาย... [ประ-]
- 14 การนี้ก็สมในพระราชหฤทัยอัน...[จะ]พึงมาแต่ก่อนบางอย่างนั้นประการหนึ่งด้วยพระยาไวซ์  
รอยให้ทูลพระกรุณาความสองประการ ...
- 15 หนังสือพระยาอังวะมาถึงพระยาไวซ์รอยว่าจะขอเป็นไมตรีและพระยาไวซ์รอยก็ไปไม่รับและ  
ให้งดไว้แต่ทำไม่มาบุงก่อนเมื่อใดและมี ...
- 16 ว่าประการใดไซร์ จึงให้ทำตามนั้น พระบาทสมเด็จพระเอก[าทศรุธอิศวบรมนาถบรมบพิตร  
พระพุทธเจ้าอยู่หัวก็มีพระราชหฤทัย...
- 17 เพราะเหตุพระยาไวซ์รอยมีความสวามิภักดิ์อันซื่ออันจริง จึงได้แถลงแจ้งกิจเนื้อคดีเข้าไป  
ถวายให้[ตรัสทราบ] ก็หากเป็นประ[เพ]ณี ...
- 18 ดีในพระมหากษัตริย์เจ้าอันยิ่ง และการอันจะเป็นมิตรก็ดีเป็นศัตรูก็ดีไซร์ย่อมพิจารณาหาสิ่ง  
อันจะเป็นประโยชน์และไม่เป็น ...
- 19 ไซร์ ก็เอาสิ่งนั้นจึงจะได้คิดอ่านตกแต่งการสิ่งนั้นประการที่ อันพระยาไวซ์รอยจะตกแต่งฝรั่ง  
ผู้ล้นท่ถือเรื่องนั้นมา ...
- 20 พระราชกำหนดนั้นก็สม[ใน]พระ[ราชหฤทัย]พระบาทสมเด็จพระเอก[าทศรุธอิศวบรมนาถ  
บรมบพิตรพระพุทธเจ้าอยู่หัว...กรุ-]

- 21 ณาแก่พระยาไวยรรอยเป็นอนึ่งนักราหาลิงจะเสมอด้วยไม่ได้ และความสองประการนี้ พระบาท  
สมเด็จพระเอกาทศรถธิศวร[บรมนาถบรมบพิตรพระพุ-]
- 22 ทธเจ้าอยู่หัวจะได้มีพระราชกำหนดให้แจ้งกิจคดีทั้งปวงไซร์ เกลือกท้าวพระยามหากษัตริราช  
อันมีในจัตุทิศภาคจ ...
- 23 จะร่วมพระราชหฤทัยคิดอ่านกิจการบ้านเมืองทั้งปวงไซร์ ยังจะมีอยู่เหตุดังนี้ พระบาทสมเด็จพระ  
พระเอกาทศรถธิศวร[บรมนาถบรมบพิตรพระพุทเจ้า-]
- 24 อยู่หัวไม่ได้พิพากษา ด้วยพระมหากษัตริย์เจ้าผู้อันได้เป็นบรมมิตรนั้นจะเป็นที่ติเตียนแห่ง  
ปรประเทศาที่ราชพ...
- 25 พระยามหากษัตริย์ และเป็นใหญ่กว่าเมืองฝรั่งทั้งปวงไซร์ยังมีเมื่อใดพระมหานครทั้งสองเป็น  
สะพาน ...
- 26 ได้ร่วมพระราชหฤทัยคิดดำริตรกิจ[งาน]ทั้งปวง และเห็นประโยชน์จะได้แก่เสนาบดีกระวีชน  
ชนกรอันไม่...
- 27 ตกแต่งการสิ่งนั้นไซร์ และประการ[หนึ่ง]พระยาไวยรรอย โ \_ \_ \_ ลพจ \_ ก \_ งว่าด้วยฝรั่ง  
ลูกค้าที่ดีฝรั่งทหารก็ได้ \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ] พระราชกำหนดประการใดก็ดีไซร์ ขอ
- 28 ให้เอาตัวฝรั่งนั้น[มากราบ]ทูลพระกรุณา \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ ]  
ชาหลวงผู้ใดและข่มเหงฝรั่งก็ดี ขอให้เอาตัวมากราบทูลพระกรุณาและให้ลงโทษโท
- 29 โทษ?]โทษานุผลแสง \_ \_ \_ รั \_ ราชชา \_ \_ \_ ให้กฎให้แก่ท้าวพระยาทุกเมืองอย่าให้  
ฆ่าฟันฝรั่งเสีย อนึ่งฝรั่งผู้ใดเข้ามาค้าขายครั้งและถูกไซร์จะพระราชทานทรัพย์
- 30 สิ่งสินทั้งปวงให้ไปแก่บุตรภรรยาผู้ถูกนั้น พระบาทสมเด็จพระเอกาทศรถธิศวรบรมนาถ  
บรมบพิตรพระพุทเจ้าอยู่หัวก็สมในพระราชหฤทัยโดย
- 31 ดำรินั้นทุกประการ ก็ให้มีพระราชกำหนดกฎหมายไปแก่ท้าวพระยาใหญ่น้อยทั้งปวงและเล่า  
กฎไปนั้นแก่ท้าวพระยาหัวเมืองใหญ่ทั้งปวง บาทหลวงฟเร็นซิส-
- 32 โคเดอะนูนลียะสังและกัปตันมลเวร์ริเบนก็ได้ทราบ[บ] \_ \_ \_ \_ ทุทุกประการ อนึ่งด้วยฝรั่ง  
ลูกค้าอันจะได้เข้ามาค้าขายในชั้นทเสมากรุงพระมหานครทวาราวดีศรีอยุธยา
- 33 ทั้งปวงนั้น ให้พระยาไวยรรอยกฎหมายให้แก่ฝรั่งลูกค้าทั้งปวง อย่าให้ข่มเหงเบียนฆ่าชนชาติสมา  
กรุงพระมหานครทวาราวดีศรีอยุธยา \_ \_ \_ \_ ใน \_ \_ \_ \_
- 34 ด้วยข้าชนชาติสมากรุงพระมหานครทวาราวดีศรีอยุธยา และให้ทำตามบังคับบัญชาเจ้าน้ำเจ้าท่า  
อันจะได้รักษาลูกค้าทั้งปวงตามพระราชกำหนดพาณิชย์-(?)
- 35 กรและลูกค้าทั้งปวง และได้ทำตามบังคับบัญชาเจ้าน้ำเจ้าท่าทั้งปวงแล้วไซร์ จึงสิ่งอันซึ่งอาจ  
เป็นความยากทั้งปวงนั้นและจะมีแก่...
- 36 สิบไปภายหน้าเห็นมีรางมีเลี้ยวประการใด แผ่นดินณเมืองปอร์ตูกัลแผ่นดิน[ดินกรุง]พระมหา  
นครทวาราวดีศรีอยุธยา และจะตั้งอยู่และทาน...
- 37 อันสนธิสนทนาและอันยอยิ่งกว่าโบราณราชประเพณีพระมหากษัตริย์เจ้าทั้งหลายแต่ก่อน ก็  
จะให้ราชทูตานุทูตสัญจรไปมา[...ระหว่างพระมหาน-]
- 38 ครทั้งปวงอย่าให้ขาด และจะให้ได้ประโยชน์แก่ราษฎรประชาพาณิชย์กรผู้เป็นข้าชนทเสมอ  
พระมหานครทั้งสองจงเป็นอันยัง [และให้พระยาไวย-]

- 39 รอยอันจะคิดอ่านแต่งแปลงกิจจานุกิจทั้งปวงจงทุกประการ จึงพระราชโองการมานพระบัณฑูร  
ตรัสให้บาทหลวงฟเร็นซิชโคเดอะ[นุนลิยะสังและพระยาสมุทร-]
- 40 สงครามและหลวงสมุทรไมตรี[หลวงสัมฤทธิ์ไมตรี?]ขุนอนุชิตราชาและศรีภูก้าหลวง  
ประกอบด้วยกปีตันมลเวรีเปนนือพระราชโองการมาน[พระบัณฑูร...]
- 41 ยาประสาธและพระราชทานมาแก่พระยาไวซ์รอย และให้แจ้งความสุขานุสุขทั้งปวง ครั้น  
บาทหลวงฟเร็นซิชโคเดอะนุนลิยะสัง[แ]ละพระยา[สมุทรสงครามหลวงสัมฤทธิ์ไมตรีขุน  
อนุชิตราชาและศรีภูก้าหลวง]
- 42 และกปีตันมลเวรีเปนมมาถึงพระยาไวซ์รอยแล้วไซร์ จงพระยาไวซ์รอยได้เลี้ยงดูบาทหลวง  
ฟเร็นซิชโคเดอะนุนลิยะสังและพระยา[สมุทรสงครามหลวงสัมฤทธิ์ไมตรีขุนอนุชิตราชา  
และศรีภูก้าหลวง]
- 43 แล้ว และได้ตกแต่งบาทหลวงฟเร็นซิชโคเดอะนุนลิยะสังและพระยาสมุทรสงครามและ  
หลวงสัมฤทธิ์ไมตรีขุนอนุชิตราชาแล[ะศรีภูก้าหลวงให้ถือสุพรรณ-]
- 44 ฌบัตร์พระราชสาส์นและราชมงคลบรรณาการไปถึงพระองค์ฟิลิเปพระยาปอร์ตุกัลให้แจ้งกิจ  
คตศรีสุภามิตรและกิจการความ...
- 45 พลันทันเทศกาล และพระบาทลิวเอกาทศรุทอิศวรบรมนาถบรมบพิตรพระพุทเจ้าอยู่หัวจะ  
คอยฟังข่าวลศสว[ามีภคของพระ-]
- 46 ยาปอร์ตุกัล

### Translation

- [1] These august words, by royal order and command of Phra Bat Somdet Phra  
[His Majesty King] Ekathotsarut<sup>61</sup> Isuan Baromma Nat Baromma Bòphit  
Phra Phuttha Čhao Yu Hua [Krung Phra Maha Nakhòn Thawarawa-] 19%
- [2] di Si Ayutthaya Maha Di Lokkaphop Noppa Rattana Ratcha Thani Buriya  
Rommaya Udom Sawami Si Suphanna Khathuha Rattana Čhao Prasat Thòng  
Čhao Maha Makka Lok- [kaphop?]. ...19%

<sup>61</sup> The popular title, Song Tham, literally means either ‘the king who listens to ecclesiastical chanting’ or ‘the king who upholds the Buddhist virtues’. The most important element in the lengthy formal title that appears in this document is Ekathotsarut. It is a generic element that was used by many kings, including Song Tham’s father, King Ekathotsarot (r. 1605–11). A similar title used by King Thai Sa (r. 1709–33) appears in an inscription dated 1727: Phra Bat Phra Si San Phet Somdet Ekathotsarut Isuan Baromma Nat Bòphit Phra Čhao Yu Hua Phra Čhao Prasat Thòng (Prasan 1967: 93). King Taksin (r. 1767–82) also used the same element: a royal order dated November 1781 gives his title as Phra Bat Somdet Ekathotsarot Isuan Baromma Nat Baromma Bòphit Phra Phuttha Čhao Yu Hua (Yim et alia 1982: 46), which is identical to the title used by Song Tham in the 1616 document, except for the present-day spelling (modified to Ekathotsarot). King Nanthasen’s letter of 5 July 1782, sent from Vientiane to the new King Rama I in Bangkok, likewise uses the title Phra Bat Somdet Ekathotsarot (National Library of Thailand, Manuscripts Division, manuscript number R1/1144/7).

- [3] more than all the lords of the East, convey his good will and earnest considerations to the Viceroy.<sup>62</sup> The Viceroy [has sent Father Francisco Anuncia-] 25%
- [4] ção and Captain Manuel Ribeiro (?)<sup>63</sup> to bring a letter and gifts to present to His Majesty King Eka- [thotsarut Isuan Baromma Nat Baromma Bòphit] 25%
- [5] Phra Phuttha Čhao Yu Hua. His Majesty has made pronouncements on all the points of the content of the letter of the Viceroy, which was sent in [to Ayutthaya] for presentation. His Majesty feels that ... 13%
- [6] the words of the Viceroy are refreshingly kind-hearted and are agreeably and genuinely sincere and seek to undertake all the royal business [requested by] His Majesty King [Ekathotsarut Isuan] 13%
- [7] Baromma Nat Baromma Bòphit Phra Phuttha Čhao Yu Hua. His Majesty King Ekathotsarut Isuan Baromma Nat Baromma Bòphit Phra Phuttha Čhao Yu Hua is ... 13%
- [8] extremely well disposed towards the Viceroy, and there is nothing that can be likened to it. In the matter of the Viceroy's having *Padre Frei* [Father] Francisco Anunciação bring the letter for presentation to His Majesty ... [with instruc-] 13%
- [9] tions from the King of Portugal, stating that friendly royal relations are requested with His Majesty King Ekathotsarut Isuan Baromma Nat Baromma Bòphit Phra Phu-[tha Čhao Yu Hua ... whether ... or?] 25%
- [10] a week (?), asking for these friendly relations to be without end. His Majesty King Ekathotsarut Isuan Baromma Nat Baromma Bòphit Phra Phuttha Chao [Yu Hua ...] 25%
- [11] feels delighted in the extreme, and that leads His Majest King Ekathotsarot Isuan Baromma Nat Baromma Bòphit Phra Phu- [tha Čhao Yu Hua to feel that royal relations will again be as they were] 25%

<sup>62</sup> Jerónimo de Azevedo, Portuguese Viceroy at Goa, 1612–7.

<sup>63</sup> In referring to the Portuguese and Thai parties in the diplomatic mission, Father Francisco's name is always followed by that of a captain (*kapitan ma-la-we-ri-ben* in Thai transliteration). The captain of Father Francisco's ship is mentioned in the viceroy's April 1616 letter but is not named. He may have been Captain Manuel (*ma-la-we*) Ribeiro (*ri-ben*), whose name is recorded by Bocarro (1876: 523).





- [12] in the past, because of the desire for the reign in Portugal and the reign in Krung Phra Maha Nakhòn Thawarawadi Si Ayutthaya to be firmly allied<sup>64</sup> ... 25%
- [13] that royal friendship shall be a close and firm one of a sort that cannot be found among the customary relations of any kings... 13%
- [14] These matters are in accord with some of His Majesty's past feelings in one way. Since the Viceroy has had two matters presented for His Majesty's consideration ... 13%
- [15] the letter of the King of Ava to the Viceroy asking for friendly relations, but the Viceroy did not accept and had them [the ambassadors from Burma] stop and wait at the port of Meliapur for the time being,<sup>65</sup> and whenever [a reply from Ayutthaya is received, he will inform them] 13%
- [16] what was said. Thus he had it done in that way. His Majesty King Ekathotsarut Isuan Baromma Nat Baromma Bòphit Phra Phuttha Čhao Yu Hua thus feels that... 19%
- [17] for the reason that the Viceroy has such honest and true loyalty and thus has sent a report on these affairs so that His Majesty will know about them. And if it were the custom... 19%
- [18] all the better among kings. And as to the matter of either being friends or being enemies, one should examine things that would be useful and would not ... 19%
- [19] and thus select that thing, in order to consider what thing to do. The Viceroy's sending of experienced Portuguese to bring these matters ... 25%
- [20] those royal laws are in accord with the feelings of His Majesty King Ekathotsarut [Isuan Baromma Nat Baromma Bòphit Phra Phuttha Čhao Yu Hua, who is so well dis-] 25%

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<sup>64</sup> This translation assumes that the term *phaen din* refers to the reigns of the respective kings, and not to the countries themselves. The paired term *phaen kradan* in the Thai text literally refers to a plank or hard solid surface. But in this context is obviously a metaphor for a firm alliance or firm friendship. Another metaphor commonly used at that time compared the friendship between two kingdoms with a continuous single sheet of gold.

<sup>65</sup> The Burmese king, Anauk-hpet-lun, was conducting parallel negotiations at this time for a Burmese-Portuguese alliance and had sent ambassadors to the viceroy. They landed at Meliapur, on the east coast of India, and were asked by the viceroy to wait there temporarily, until the reply was received from Ayutthaya.

- [21] posed towards the Viceroy that one cannot find anything equal to it. Concerning these two points, His Majesty King Ekathotsarut Isuan Ba- [romma Nat Baromma Bòphit Phra Phut-] 25%
- [22] -tha Čhao Yua Hua will have regulations issued to proclaim all these affairs. If by chance the lords and kings in all the four directions [were given instructions (?) ... and] 19%
- [23] should act in concert with His Majesty and ponder all official affairs, incidents such as these would still occur. His Majesty King Ekathotsarut Isuan [Baromma Nat Baromma Bòphit Phra Phuttha Čhao] 25%
- [24] Yu Hua has not made any judgment, since any king who is a great royal friend could be blamed by an enemy country ... [Portugal has such a (?)] 31%
- [25] king and is greater than any of the other European countries. Whenever the two kingdoms are bridged [as firm friends] ... 31%
- [26] shall be combined in his His Majesty's wishes, considerations and plans for all officials affairs, and considering benefits that would accrue to the Ministers of State and the people who ... not ... 31%
- [27] made those arrangements. And concerning the point the Viceroy ... whether in reference to Portuguese traders or to Portuguese soldiers ... or whatever royal regulations, you request that 0%
- [28] those Portuguese be brought to petition His Majesty's [benevolence, and be judged by (?)] some royal commissioner, and if they [Thai officials] oppress the Portuguese, you request that they [the officials] be brought before the king and be administered 0%
- [29] punishments ... [and you request that the regulations be proclaimed (?)] to the officials of all towns forbidding the killing of any Portuguese. Moreover, [you request that], whenever any Portuguese comes into the kingdom to trade and dies, His Majesty will give his possessions 0%
- [30] in their entirety to the children and wife of that deceased person. His Majesty King Ekathotsarut Isuan Baromma Nat Baromma Bòphit Phra Phuttha Čhao Yu Hua is in accord 0%
- [31] fully with this proposal. Therefore His Majesty is issuing regulations to all the officials, both high and low, and those regulations will be proclaimed to the officials of all the large provinces. *Padre Frei* [Father] Francis- 0%

- [32] co de Anunciação and Captain Manuel Ribeiro (?) have under[stood] ... every point. Moreover, all of the Portuguese traders who come to trade within the bounds of Krung Phra Maha Nakhòn Thawarawadi Si Ayutthaya 0%
- [33] should be given orders by the Viceroy, forbidding any of them from oppressing or troubling the subjects of Krung Phra Maha Nakhòn Thawarawadi Si Ayutthaya .... 13%
- [34] with the subjects of Krung Phra Maha Nakhòn Thawarawadi Si Ayutthaya, and having them act according to the authority exercised by the harbour masters, who are responsible for all the traders according to the roy-[al laws governing merch-] 13%
- [35] ants and traders and shall act according to the authority exercised by the harbour masters. Thus all the things that might become difficulties would be [resolved, and this arrangement shall (?)] 13%
- [36] continue into the future. Whatever is seen as indistinct or bad for the reign in Portugal and the reign in Phra Maha Nakhòn Thawarawadi Si Ayutthaya, and would establish and maintain [... friendship that is] 13%
- [37] close and higher than that of royal customs of any kings in the past. The royal ambassadors and deputy ambassadors would be despatched to travel back and forth and ... [between the two king-] 13%
- [38] doms, all of them, without cease, and so that it shall indeed be of the greatest benefit to the people and traders who are the subjects within the bounds of both kingdoms [and] ... [the Vice-] 13%
- [39] roy which shall be considered in arranging and modifying official matters of all kinds. His Majesty thus commanded *Padre Frei* [Father] Francisco A-[nunciação and Phraya Samut] 19%
- [40] Songkhram, Luang Samut [sic] Maitri,<sup>66</sup> Khun Anuchit Racha and Si Kuk, the king's commissioner, including Captain Manuel Ribeiro (?), to bring His Majesty's commands ... 19%
- [41] to impart ... and to present [these things] and express his felicitations to the Viceroy. And after *Padre Frei* [Father] Francisco Anunciação, [Phraya Samut Songkhram, Luang Samrit Maitri, Khun Anuchit Racha, Si Kuk, the king's commissioner,] 19%

<sup>66</sup> On line 43, the title of the second ambassador is Samrit Maitri, which is probably correct. The spelling 'Samut' appears on line 40 and may be an error by the copyist, duplicating the first element in the title of the senior ambassador, Samut Songkhram.

- [42] and Captain Manuel Ribeiro (?) come to the Viceroy, let the Viceroy entertain *Padre Frei* [Father] Francisco Anunci- [ação and Phraya Samut Songkhram, Luang Samut Maitri, Khun Anuchit Racha and Si Kuk] 19%
- [43] and then arrange to send *Padre Frei* [Father] Francisco Anunciação and Phraya Samut Songkhram, Luang Samrit Maitri, Khun Anuchit Racha and [Si Kuk, the king's commissioner, to carry the golden royal let-] 19%
- [44] ter and royal gifts to *Dom Filipe*,<sup>67</sup> the King of Portugal, to inform him of official affairs, judgments and matters relating to ... 19%
- [45] in time for the season.<sup>68</sup> His Majesty King Siwa Ekathotsarut Isuan Baromma Nat Baromma Bòphit Phra Phuttha Čhao Yu Hua shall await the latest news [from the King] 19%
- [46] of Portugal.<sup>69</sup> 0%

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<sup>67</sup> King Filipe II of Portugal (r. 1598–1621) was concurrently King Felipe III of Spain. When this text was composed, the three ambassadors and the royal page probably had hopes of reaching Goa in time for the early 1617 departure of the fleet and to be carried onward to Lisbon with King Song Tham's letter and gifts to Filipe II.

<sup>68</sup> The monsoon season for fleet departures from Goa bound for Portugal was from January to March annually. If ships did not leave within this period, they risked being delayed on the east coast of Africa or having to wait almost a year on that coast before rounding the Cape of Good Hope and proceeding north up the Atlantic. In the return sailing season, ships left Portugal in March or April and reached Goa in September or October.

<sup>69</sup> The 'latest news' is probably a reference to the favourable reply that was expected from King Filipe II. By the time the Thai ambassadors returned home in 1618, without making the voyage to Europe, both sides had lost interest in the negotiations, and the expected news from Lisbon probably never reached Ayutthaya. The formal reply from Filipe II, dated late 1618 or early 1619, may eventually be located in the Portuguese archives.

- BFUP. See *Boletim da Fimoteca Ultramarina Portuguesa*.
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