

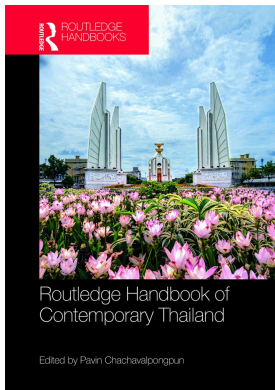
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3

THAI HISTORIOGRAPHY

Charnvit Kasetsiri

Tamnan, phongsawadan, prawatisat

Historiography, or the writing of history in Thailand, is one of the oldest tasks and is confined within limited groups of educated, strictly male members of the Buddhist temples and the palace. There were two types of such writings, namely the *tamnan* by Buddhist monks and the *phongsawadan* by the court literati. *Tamnan* means story, legend or myth. The main theme of *tamnan* history clearly revolves around religion. It is the Gautama Buddha who is the moving force in it. Its purpose is to describe the history of Buddhism in connection with a Buddhist kingdom or a certain Buddhist locality: certain temples or important monuments (*cetiya*, stupa, etc.). Kings, kingdoms and to a certain extent the laypeople come into the picture insofar as their actions contribute to promoting Buddhism. Therefore, history in this sense is concerned not only with the past. The past is continuous with the existence of the present and the present is also part of the future. Thus the past, the present and the future are parts of one whole – the history of Buddhism.¹

The best example of the *tamnan* type of historiography is the *Jinakalamalipakaranam* (“The Sheaf of Garlands of the Epochs of the Conqueror”), written in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand, in 1517. It gives a very clear statement of the *tamnan* concept of time and space. It says that “for therein, the Epoch of the Conqueror means the time as far as the lineal succession of the Dispensation commencing with the time of the aspiration of our Teacher, the Exalted One Gautama; and it is of divers aspects”.² The history then continues with the career of the Buddha, how he reached enlightenment and how he taught his law, the *dhamma/dharma*. After the passing of the Buddha, the history discusses various world Buddhist councils which took place in India and Sri Lanka. It also emphasises the role of the great Indian King Asoka in the promotion of Buddhism. Afterwards, the history deals with the events which occurred when Buddhism finally travelled to Chiang Mai in today’s northern Thailand. The “real history” of the Chiang Mai Kingdom begins at this point. Various kings and other kingdoms are portrayed, with the focus on their roles in supporting the religion. It is usually agreed in these documents that the kingdom under discussion will remain the centre of Buddhist religion until the year 5000 BE (4457 CE) from the time of the Buddha’s *nibbana/niravana*.

As for the other type of historiography which is known as the *phongsawadan*, the term derives from the two Pali words *vamsa* (genealogy) and *avatara* (reincarnation); it means the history,

chronicles or annals of members of a line, kings and kingdom. The *phongsawadan* historiography became popular within the palace circle sometime in the 17th century, probably during the reign of King Narai (1657–1688) of Ayutthaya Kingdom.

The *phongsawadan* type of palace history was the result of changes within the Thai society and to a lesser extent of the contacts which the Thai ruling elite of Ayutthaya had with foreigners, especially Europeans. By this time, learned men, or literati, were to make their careers at the royal court and were no longer strictly governed by the religious order as in previous days. After a long process of political development, kingship had developed into a powerful autonomous institution, which had increasingly taken the cultural initiative from the religious leadership. Therefore, historians were now men who served the court and belonged to it rather than to the religious order. The *Phraratchaphongsawadan Krung Si Ayutthaya Chabap Luang Prasoet* (“The Luang Prasoet Chronicle of Ayutthaya”) of the 17th century was written by a royal astrologer, not a monk. Moreover, the language of the new type of history was Thai, a secular and ethnic language, rather than Pali, a religious and international language of the Buddhist world. This is not to say that Buddhism had lost its influence in Thailand, but rather that religion played a different role from that of earlier days. Learned men were still being educated within the monastic order of Buddhism, but they now served their immediate superior – the king, not the religion.³

The *phongsawadan* type of palace history reached its height by the turn of the 19th century to the 20th, especially during the reign of King Chulalongkorn, Rama V (1868–1910). And later on, a new type of writings known as *prawatisat* became more acceptable by the time of King Vajiravudh, Rama VI (1910–1925); it became even more vigorous prior to and after the 1932 coup, a “soft revolution” which abolished absolute monarchy in Siam. A new word was coined, in the 1910s, to look more modern and scientific (i.e. *prawatisat*). The new Thai word comes from Pali-Sanskrit: *paravati* or *puravuttanta* + *sastra* = *prawatisat*, meaning scientific treatise or history, or literally “science of what happens”. It is nowadays commonly accepted as an equivalent to the English word “history”.

The new writing of *prawatisat* type was born out of modernity, colonialism and the concept of defined boundary nation-states in the middle of the 19th century. During this time, new ideas and modern technologies were brought into Siam from the West. The most important factor which contributed to the new history was the printing press. It is believed that the first printing machine for Thai alphabets was introduced in 1836 by Dr. D.B. Bradley, an American missionary. His main purpose for setting up a publishing house was to propagate Christian doctrines. However, he began to publish old Thai historical works which became widespread among the Thai elite and upper middle class.⁴ Moreover, during this period Siam faced the threat of colonialism: the country was caught between the British in India, Burma and Malaya and the French in Indochina. The Chakri kings had to give up their claims over territories bordering Burma, Malaya, Laos and Cambodia in order to remain independent. Therefore, the new boundaries of Siam were shaped to what is seen today as Thailand. In effect, the *prawatisat* history is one of a new nation-state.⁵

There are at least three main figures, of three different generations, who were responsible for the construction of this type of “modern” historiography. They are Prince Damrong (1862–1943), King Vajiravudh, and Luang Wichitwathakan (or Wichit Wichitwathakan; 1898–1962). Interestingly, Damrong is 18 years older than Vajiravudh, who in turn was 18 years older than Wichit.

Prince Damrong

Prince Damrong was one of 82 children of King Mongkut, Rama IV (1851–1868), and also one of the most celebrated statesmen of Siam. He grew up in a period of great change in Thai

society, when it faced modernisation and Western colonialism. Damrong was educated in both Western and classical Thai scholarship, thus he was able to bridge these two cultures for the development of a modern Thailand. During the reign of his brother King Chulalongkorn, Damrong rose to prominence in the Thai government, holding many important positions including minister of education (1888–1892) and minister of interior (1892–1915). In spite of his heavy responsibilities of governing the country, Damrong devoted much of his time – almost 30 years from the 1910s to 1943 – to the writing of history, particularly when he was free from administrative works and living overseas. Though maintaining his ministerial post for a few years under his nephew, King Vajiravudh, Damrong was released to pursue his writing habit. After a democratic coup in 1932, the prince was forced into exile in Penang. He left an extensive collection of writings, around 100 books and articles, to which very few scholars could lay claim.

As mentioned before, the works of Prince Damrong revealed a change in the writing of Thai history. The most notable is the usage and selection of sources. It is said that he was very much influenced by the method used by the great German historian Ranke.⁶ For example, his account of the foundation of the Kingdom of Ayutthaya introduced a new technique in examining Thai history. Formerly, the *tamnan* and *phongsawadan* schools of thought described the “birth” of the Kingdom of Ayutthaya by associating it with myths and external forces beyond human control. Ayutthaya came into existence, as the old schools see it, as a result of the Buddha’s prophecy and/or miraculous acts of certain individuals. However, Damrong explained it by presenting a tangible historical fact. According to him, Ayutthaya was a result of a long period of Thai settlement in the Menam Basin. It became the centre of the Thai when the Khmer began to lose control of the area. Various sources were taken into consideration and a hypothesis was set up to explicate the origin of Ayutthaya. Thus, he rejected the old methods of the *tamnan* and *phongsawadan*.⁷

In 1914 Prince Damrong wrote and established a new concept of historical periodisation in which “the history of Siam is divided into three periods, namely, (1) When Sukhothai was the capital, (2) When Ayutthaya was the capital, and (3) Since Bangkok (Chakri’s Ratanakosin) has been the capital”.⁸ This periodisation became known as *sam krung*, or “three capitals” (Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Ratanakosin-Chakri-Bangkok). It focuses on the periods when each capital and its kings were considered the centre of what had happened. It was possible that this sequence was influenced by European periodisation of “classical-medieval-modern”. Therefore, Sukhothai was “classical”, Ayutthaya “medieval” and Ratanakosin/Chakri/Bangkok “modern”. Interestingly enough, Damrong even went back beyond classical Sukhothai and added a lengthy elaboration on periods prior to the two ancient capitals (Sukhothai–Ayutthaya). He explained by way of focusing on territories (space) and races (ethnicities). Accordingly, “the territory of which Siam is now made up was originally occupied by people of two races, the Khmers (Khom) and the Lao (not the people of present day country of Laos but of an ethnic called Lawa)”.⁹ Since the Thais were not the original people of Siam, the prince had to look elsewhere further north in China. In short, the historian prince developed a new hypothesis of the “Thai southward migration” back some thousand years ago. And in their migration movement, the Thais made one major stop. They were able to establish the mighty Kingdom of Nanzhao in Yunnan. Here, from the 6th to the mid-13th centuries, the kingdom lasted for 700 years. Damrong labelled Nanzhao as *muang Thai doem*, literally the original country of the Thais.¹⁰ Nanzhao was defeated by Kublai Khan in 1253, but the link to present-day Thailand continued. Prince Damrong argued that while the Thais were still powerful in their “original home”, a great number had already migrated to settle in the valleys of the Salween and the Mekong, south of the present-day Golden Triangle.¹¹ Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and Bangkok/Rattanakosin followed, respectively.

In short, the concept of new historiography, as seen from Damrong’s works, commenced with the impact of Western penetration. It was influenced by the West, which contributed

new methods of using sources and “scientific” analyses. However, many of the old themes of the *phongsawadan* tradition still remained. Thus, although using new methods, Damrong still wrote history in which the monarchy remained the prime driving force in the new nation-state. Thai history became the history of a particular nation, a secular linear forward moving from the past to the present, surrounded by many other powerful countries, especially the Western ones, no longer in isolation.

King Vajiravudh

Besides Damrong, it is imperative to stress the impact of King Vajiravudh and his official nationalist policy. As suggested earlier, the latter part of King Chulalongkorn’s reign was crucial for the understanding of the changes within Thai society in connection with the emergence of the new “royal nation-state”. Vajiravudh, born in 1881, is one of Chulalongkorn’s 97 children. In 1893, at the age of 12, he was one of the first royal children to be sent to schools in Europe. He spent nine years in Great Britain, and through 1902 he went to various schools including the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and Oxford’s Christ Church College (law and history). In this light, being English educated, he was therefore different from his predecessors on the throne. As a prince and later as king, Vajiravudh was known to be rather aloof. He isolated himself from the large and active palace family of his father, his relatives, and from the bureaucracy. In the early years of his reign he often stayed at the newly built Sanam Chan Palace in Nakhon Pathom, some 50 km outside Bangkok. He also surrounded himself with a male entourage, the royal-national paramilitary “Wild Tiger Corps”, and kept himself busy in his own peculiar ways.

The 15 years he spent on the throne were caught between the very successful and long rule of his father, whose absolutist reign had lasted for 42 years. As the most prolific writer of all time in Siam, Vajiravudh is now officially remembered as Phra Maha Dhiraratchao, or the “Great Scholar King”. Under more than 100 pen names, he wrote travelogues, plays, poetry, songs, articles and sermons, totalling around 200 titles. The king is particularly known for his official nationalistic policy and is often labelled “The Father of Thai Nationalism”.¹² The reign of Vajiravudh was a time of change. The first strikes by Bangkok’s Chinese merchants and workers took place just before his first coronation on 11 November 1910. The following year, the Celestial Monarchy in Peking came to an abrupt end.¹³ The year 1912, in February, witnessed an attempted coup, known as “Kobot R.S. 130”, or the 1912 Rebellion, to overthrow Vajiravudh. It happened only a few months after the 13-day extravaganza of his second coronation in November 1911.

Indeed, the 1900s and the 1910s were a very different time. First, with domestic changes, a new, though rather small educated middle class had emerged, a good number of whom were Sino-Thai, who became critical of Siam’s absolute monarchy. To them, it had become anachronistic. The time was also marked by the spread of the free press, which claimed to represent *paksiang* (mouth and voice) of the common people. In addition, “print-capitalism” also allowed people to think and imagine their own place in society differently.¹⁴ Second, the rise of nationalism, along with the fall of monarchies in Asia and Europe (the Qing, the Ottomans, the Romanovs, and the Habsburgs), was a reason why Vajiravudh had to consolidate his rule and felt compelled to embark on his own nationalist policy.

Soon after his first coronation, the new king established two organisations: the Wild Tigers Corps (*sue pa*) and the Boy Scouts (*luk sua*, meaning cubs or male child of a tiger), on 1 May and 1 July 1911, respectively. Both were inspired by the British Volunteer Force and Lord Baden-Powell’s Boy Scouts. Both were aimed at “instilling the love of the nation among the Thai”. Of the two, the Wild Tigers Corps was criticised as *khong len* (“plaything” or “toy”) and as an extension of the king’s personal bodyguards. It did not fit well with the existing military. The

Wild Tigers, not the Boy Scouts, ceased to exist soon after the end of his reign. However, it was within the circle of the Wild Tigers that the king launched his nationalist programmes. He personally lectured them about *chat* (nation), *satsana* (religion), and *phra maha Kasat* (great king), which became the three pillars of the Siamese modern state ideology.¹⁵ Since then, this “Holy Trinity” has frequently been exploited by right-wingers and military regimes.

In terms of historiography and the construction of historical narratives, Vajiravudh employed various strategies to achieve his policy of *pluk chat-pluk chai* (“Waking up the Nation”). Interestingly, it was Vajiravudh who actually coined the new Thai word *prawatisat* (possibly from Pali-Sanskrit: *puravuttanta* = history + *sastra* = scientific treatise) for “history”. He may have found it unfitting to use the established Thai word *phongsawadan* in a global context because of its direct translation, such as the reincarnation of a royal family which did not fit with the modern time. The new term *prawatisat* caught on, and by 1917 the word was frequently used for titles of history texts.¹⁶

Luang Wichitwathakan

Among the post Damrong-Vajiravudh generation of the 1930s commoners, Luang Wichitwathakan was the most outstanding. Wichit was born of a very humble origin, possibly that of a Sino-Thai outside the Bangkok elite circle. He moved his way up by joining the *sangha*. For 12 years from 1906 to 1918, he was ordained, first as a novice and then as a monk. His main education came through this experience, studying Buddhist temple classics and self-educating with modern science and the English language. In 1918, at the age of 20, Wichit left the monkhood and joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He was sent as an assistant secretary to the Thai Legation in Paris, from 1920–1926; he was also assigned to the League of Nations in Geneva and served briefly in London. Upon his return, his first major writing in the Thai language was published in 1931. It is a magnum opus called *prawatsat sakon* (“world history”, 12 volumes). A year later, right after the 1932 anti-royalist coup, Wichit acted as a spokesman for the new regime and became intimate with Premier Field Marshal Phibun Songkhram. During his long service in the government, from 1934 until his death in 1962, Wichit held many extremely important posts including director of the Fine Arts Department, cabinet minister and ambassador to various countries. However, his most notable position was as advisor-administrator to the Phibun and Sarit military regimes. He displayed an ability of manipulating, writing and organising cultural activities which were directed towards arousing nationalistic feeling within the country. Similar to Prince Damrong, Luang Wichit was a prolific writer.

Since 1932, successive governments have been trying to create a new kind of legitimacy to replace the absolute monarchy. Military-bureaucratic-oriented nationalism became a means of rallying popular support. The period between 1932 to World War II witnessed the rise of military nationalism in Thailand. Wichit became a prime instigator of these movements. In 1942, he wrote a nationalistic account (in English) condemning the French imperialism, titled *Thailand's Case*. This short essay explained how Thailand unjustly lost its territory in Indochina to France and urged the public to support the Phibun government's irredentist policies.¹⁷ At the heart of Wichit's history, there were strong leaders leading the Thai race. He put aside the role of the monarchs (except Ramkhamhaeng, Naresuan, and Taksin), once predominant in the writings of the *phongsawadan* and of Prince Damrong. Thus Thai history was interpreted according to the purity and glory of the Thai race. Everything was aimed at creating a new nation in which the military and strong leaders took the roles of former kings. His interpretation of Thai history showed uncomfortable similarities to Nazi and fascist writings of the period.

Wichit's history was very popular. It became an ideological weapon of the new ruling elite who sought justifications to rule the country. Furthermore, Wichit had the advantage of exploiting the mass media to disseminate his interpretation of history. As director of the Fine Arts Department, he used this position to propagate his concepts of history through music, plays and songs. These were presented on stage and broadcast on the official Radio of Thailand. His skills in writing and sense of public sentiment contributed to the spread and popularisation of his version of Thai history, no matter how politically biased.¹⁸

In short, therefore, as far as the *pravatisat* type of official historiography is concerned, one can say that from 1900 to the 1920s, the royal nationalistic version of Damrong-Vajiravudh was vigorously promoted, and by the 1930s the military-bureaucratic version of Wichit and the new commoner elite had become dominant. However, by the 1960s these two were blended together to give birth to a hybrid nationalistic historiography. This outcome was a product of the very long 70-year reign of King Bhumibol, Rama IX (1946–2016), in which the king himself and his special new style of monarchy had become a hegemonic balancing force for Thai society and politics. It can be said that this hybrid version is a product of bureaucrats at various government offices, namely the Ministries of Education and Culture and the Departments of Fine Arts and Public Relations. The new agreeable version of Thai historiography seems to work out successfully.

However, in 1995, Thongchai Winichakul, one of the most prominent historians of Southeast Asia, wrote:

Historical studies in Thailand have been closely related to the formation of the nation . . . , and until recently the pattern of the past in this elitist craft changed but little. It presented a royal/national chronicle, a historiography modern in character but based upon traditional perceptions of the past and traditional materials. It was a collection of stories by and for the national elite celebrating their successful mission of building and protecting the country despite great difficulties, and promising a prosperous future.

Thongchai went on to say that

The popular uprising led by the student movement against the military dictatorship in 1973, a political as well as an intellectual revolution, shook this historical paradigm. Historical studies became a centre of intellectual interest for all disciplines as well as an arena of ideological struggles, with dramatic effect. The conventional knowledge of the past was challenged and negated. A new past was needed.¹⁹

Therefore, it would be misleading to say that development of official Thai historiography, seen from above, has been smooth and uninterrupted from (1) the times of the religious *tamnan*, (2) the royal *phongsawadan*, (3) the ruling elite *pravatisat* and (4) the hybrid royal-official nationalistic historiography constructed under the long, hegemonic reign of King Bhumibol. It would also be misleading to say that there was no need for a new past. But a closer look will tell a different story. Exactly two decades before the “intellectual revolution” in the 1970s, as mentioned above, it is worth looking back to the 1950s historical writings. This was the period of the Cold War when the “free world” clashed with the “Communist bloc” in Thailand and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. This brings us to what is known as a period of Thai “radical discourse”. There were numerous left-Socialist-Marxist history writings, historical novels and translations by well-known (and some less well-known) authors like Sri Burapha (1906–1974), Supha Sirimanond (1914–1986), Seni Saowaphong (1918–2014), Assani Pholachan (1918–1987), Udom Sisuan

(1920–1993), Plueng Wannasri (1922–1996) and Thaweep Woradilok (1928–2005). But the most outstanding of all was a young man named Jit Phumisak (1930–1966).

Jit Phumisak

Jit Phumisak is probably one of the few most original, immensely gifted, brave and committed Thai intellectuals of the 20th century. Although his father was merely a low-level official and his mother a school teacher, Jit's brilliant mind got him an entry to the conservative Chulalongkorn University. His writing career started when he was studying at the Faculty of Arts. In the middle of the 1950s, the Phibun semi-authoritative government began to lose its popularity; to compensate, the government allowed a certain degree of freedom of speech. A large number of Jit's writings came out during this time, including *Chomma Khong Sakdina Thai Nai Patchuban* ("The Real Face of Thai Feudalism Today"), which is a Marxist analysis of Thai history. Jit, together with other writers, were arrested and put in jail when Field Marshal Sarit staged two successive coups in 1957 and 1958. Jit spent six years (1958–1964) in prison for his iconoclastic writing. Despite being strictly banned, his most important writings passed illegally from hand to hand. Most of the time, he was able to smuggle out his articles and have them published under various pen names. At the end of 1964, Jit was released but was threatened and spied on by the regime until he decided to join the guerrilla forces of the Communist Party of Thailand. On 5 May 1966, at the age of 36, he was killed by agents of the military dictatorship.

Jit's creative legacy covered many subjects ranging from history, politics, literature and culture. His writings were very expressive and provocative. As in the cases of Damrong and Wichit, he had good command of the Thai language. However, his Thai was more forceful because he worked from a different social viewpoint. Moreover, he was a poet who had mastered classical Thai and used it accordingly – a quality which Damrong and Wichit did not possess. Jit composed poems and songs for the masses, which are now sung and cited by the Thai left wing and radical students. It should be pointed out that Jit's writings became very popular after the 1973 student uprising. Since then, a period of freedom of speech has flourished in Thailand. His books have been undergone several reprints, and his songs and poems continue to be sung and read. In fact, his name is controversial in Thailand even today.

Jit's approach to Thai history, employing Marxist theory, may not appear radical today. However, in Thailand, where communism was outlawed and Marxist ideas socially ostracised, Jit's writings represent the forbidden fruit and an alternative interpretation of Thai society. Most Thai historians either reject or ignore the question of class structures in Thailand. But Jit backed up his analysis by historical evidence. His knowledge of Thai history and his linguistic command added up the credibility of his interpretation. Thus it is not so much a question of a Marxist approach, which shows in his history, but rather the issues of class exploitation in the form of class differentiation, landownership, corvée labour and oppressive taxation.²⁰

In short, the masses were the main interest of Jit in describing history. His books speak out their misery and various means which the ruling class employed for its self-interest. It can be said that Jit's history is a political weapon against the ruling class in Thailand.

Conclusion

After portraying a general picture of Thai historiography from ancient time to the modern period, the chapter should end with today's major trend. During the three decades from the 1960s to the 1980s, history studies had for the first time (though it was well controlled and supervised by various governmental ministries and departments) become firmly established and

institutionalised in universities and colleges throughout the country. This was due to socio-economic booms in Thailand and the expansion of education. History departments and history lecturers have been cultivated to the point that there are new generations of historians outside the traditional official domain, unlike those of Damrong's, Vajiravudh's and Wichit's times. Some are direct or indirect outcomes of the unusual time of the 1950s and the 1970s as mentioned earlier. There are at least three different age groups of new historians with new interpretations.

The first group may be called avant-garde historians. They are led by senior academics like Nidhi Aeosriwong of Chiang Mai University. Born in 1940, he became an active promoter of a socio-cultural history breaking away from the traditional ruling elite interpretation.²¹ As for Srisak Vallibhotama of Sinlapakorn University, born in 1938, he applies archaeology and anthropology in searching for local history. Chatthip Nartsupha of Chulalongkorn University, born in 1941, introduced political economy into the study of history.²² In the meantime, Piriya Krairiksh of Thammasat University, born in 1942, interestingly applies art history to understand different parts and to introduce different interpretations of the history of Sukhothai and Ayutthya. Instead of classical or medieval, like historians in the past, it is more of the Thai elite's response to colonialism and survival tactics in the second half of the 19th century.²³

Then came the second group directly or indirectly connected to the Octobrist generation, the radical youth and student leaders of the mid-1970s. They were mostly male, born in the late 1950s, but it is notable that females had also been an important part of this batch. Leading historians include Winai Phongsripijan, Thanet Aphornsuwan, Sunait Chutintaranond, Chalongsuntharavanich, Suwit Therasatwat, Sarasawadi Ongskul, Aroonrat Wichiankeo, Suthachai Yimprasert and Attachak Sattayanurak. The most outstanding are probably Saichol Wannarat (born in 1953), Thongchai Winichakul (born in 1957) and Somsak Jeamteerasakul (born in 1958).²⁴ Most of these historians are over 60 years old and have officially retired from their universities, but many are still active. They come from many backgrounds and directions and their histories range from revised traditional to liberal and extremely radical ideology. Some of them attempt just to understand Thai society through the study of history. But many see and write history not only to understand the facts about what happens but also as part of their political struggle for a new Thailand.

It is possible that the third group of Thai historians is now in the making. They were born between the 1960s and the 1980s and are now in their forties and fifties; examples are Thamrongsak Petchlertanan (born in 1964), Natthapoll Chaiching (born in 1971), Chanida Chidbundid (born in 1977), Pokpong Chanan (born in 1984) and Warisara Tangkhawanit (born in 1986). They continue from where the second group left off and are inclined to study history from myriad directions, from the "opposite", "below", "subaltern", "post-colonial" and "post-modern", with greater attention paid to alternative issues of gender and LGBTIQ issues.²⁵

Notes

- 1 For *tamnan* and *phongsawadan* histories, see chapter 1 of my book *The Rise of Ayudhya: A History of Siam in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1976). See also Anthony Reid and David Marr, *Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Heinmann, 1978), pp. 156–170.
- 2 N.A. Jayawickrama (tr.), *The Sheaf of Garlands of the Epochs of the Conqueror* (London, 1968), p. 2.
- 3 At this same time, there was a change in Thai education and a new textbook was compiled. It is believed that the 17th-century textbook *Chindamani* was written for use in instruction as well as for the information of foreign diplomats. See D.K. Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 21–22.
- 4 Amphai Chanchira, *Wiwatthanakan Kanphim Nangsu Nai Prathet Thai* (Bangkok: Wannasin, 1973), pp. 88–91; and Kajorn Sukhapanich, *Kaoraek KhongNnangsuphim Nai Prathet Thai* (Bangkok: n.p., 1966),

- pp. 5–11. See also C.J. Reynolds, “The Case of K.S.R. Kulap: A Challenge to Royal Historical Writing in late Nineteenth Century Thailand”, *JSS*, Vol. 61, No. II (1973), p. 65; and Aemon Chaloeprak, *Prince Damrong Rajanubhab: His Writings and His Contribution to the National Library*, MA thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1968, p. 12.
- 5 See a brief account of Mongkut’s reign in A.B. Griswold, *King Mongkut of Siam* (New York: The Asia Society, 1961), ch. 4. For the reform of King Chulalongkorn, see for example Wyatt; F.W. Riggs, *The Modernisation of a Bureaucratic Polity* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966); W.J. Siffin, *The Thai Bureaucracy: Institutional Change and Development* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1966).
 - 6 Kobkua Suwannathat, “Kansuksa Prawatsat Sakun Damrong Rajanubhab”, *Aksansat Phichan*, Vol. 2, No. VI (1974), pp. 28–44.
 - 7 See *The Rise of Ayudhya*, ch. 4.
 - 8 See translation by O. Frankfurter, “The Story of the Records of Siamese History”, in *Miscellaneous Articles Written for the Journal of the Siam Society by His Royal Highness Prince Damrong* (Bangkok: Siam Society, 1962), p. 31.
 - 9 Interestingly, Prince Damrong mistook the word “Lao” for “Lawa”. The two are ethnically and linguistically different. Lao belongs to the Tai-Lao family and Lawa is Mon-Khmer. But he went on to say:

Who were the original Khmers and Lao? Today we only know that the peoples designated under the name of Kha, Khamu, Cambodians, Mons and Meng all speak languages which are of Khmer stock. We may conclude, therefore, that these peoples are descended from the Khmers. As for the original Lao, they are to be identified in the people styled today Lua or Lawa.
- See “History of Siam in the Period Antecedent to the Founding of Ayudhya by King Phra Chao U Thong”, in *Miscellaneous Articles Written for the Journal of the Siam Society by His Royal Highness Prince Damrong* (Bangkok: Siam Society, 1962), p. 49.
- 10 *Ibid.*, p. 61.
 - 11 *Ibid.*, pp. 50–65.
 - 12 The best favourable account of Vajiravudh in English comes from Walter F.Vella, *Chaiyo! King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1978). As for his official nationalism, see Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Community: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso: London, 1991); and Kullada Kesboonchoo, “Official Nationalism under King Chulalongkorn”, paper presented at the International Conference on Thai Studies (Canberra, 1987). See also Stephen L.W. Greene, *Absolute Dreams: Thai Government under Rama VI, 1910–1925* (White Lotus: Bangkok, 1999); and a provocative new treatment of the almost-all-male inner-court life of Vajiravudh by Pokpong Chanan, *Nai Nai (Inner Men)* (Bangkok: Matichon, 2013).
 - 13 Anderson, *Imagined Community: Reflection on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, ch. 6: Official Nationalism and Imperialism.
 - 14 *Ibid.*
 - 15 Anderson remarks that Vajiravudh’s triad echoes the theme of late Tsarist Russia: autocracy, orthodoxy and nationality, but in reversed order. Anderson, *Imagined Community*, p. 101. Many Thais believe that the king copied the English slogan of “God, King, and Country” and turned it into Thai in a different order.
 - 16 See Krommahun Phitthayalab, *Hokho Prawatisat Phak 1* [Headings of History, Part 1], 1917. The author claimed that he first saw this word used by Ramchitti, one of Vajiravudh’s many pen names, published in *Witthayachan*, No. 16, p. 104.
 - 17 However, Wichit ignored the rise of nationalism in Laos and Cambodia, which opposed all forms of imperialism including Thai and French. See Charnvit Kasetsiri, “The First Phibun Government and Its Involvement in World War II”, *JSS*, Vol. 62, No. II (1974) pp. 179–228.
 - 18 See a list of his plays in *ibid.*, pp. 9–41. See also Kobkua Suwannathat, “Kankhian Prawatsat Thai Baeb Chatniyom: Picharana Luang Wichitwathakan”, *Warasan Thammasat*, Vol. 6, No. I (1969), pp. 149–180.
 - 19 Thongchai Winichakul, “The Changing Landscape of the Past: New Histories in Thailand since 1973”, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (March 1995), pp. 99–120.
 - 20 See a discussion on his writings in Suchart Sawadsri (ed.), *Jit Phumisak*, Association of the Social Sciences (1974). See the best account and translation in English on Jit’s life and works by Craig J. Reynolds, *Thai Radical Discourse – The Real Face of Thai Feudalism Today* (Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 1994).
 - 21 For Nidhi Eoseewong, see *Pen and Sail: Literature and History in Early Bangkok*, 2006.

- 22 See Chatthip Nartsupha, *The Thai Village Economy in the Past*, translated by Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit, first published 1984. Reprint edition (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1999), p. 131.
- 23 For Piriya Krairiksh, see *Charuk Pho Khun Ramkhamhaeng* [Ramkhamhaeng Inscription], revised 2003 and J.S. Chamberlain, ed. *The Ramkhamhaeng Controversy: Collected Papers* (Bangkok: Siam Society, 1991).
- 24 For Saichol Wannarat, see *Somdet Krom Phraya Damrong Kan Sang Attalak Muang Thai* [Prince Damrong and the Construction of Muang Thai Identity] (2003); and *Kukrit Dap Praditdam Khwam Pen Thai* [Kukrit and the Invention of Thainess], 2 vols. 2007; for Thongchai Winichakul, see his well-known *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, 1994; and for Somsak Jeamteerasakul, see his *Prawatsat Thi Phueng Sang* [History Just Invented], 2001.
- 25 For Thamrongsak Petchlertanan, see *2475 Lae Nung Pi Lang Patiwat* [1932 Revolution and One Year After], 2001; for Natthapoll Chaiching, see *Kho Fan Fai Nai Fan An Lue Chua* [To Dream the Impossible Dream], 2013; for Chanida Chidbundid, see *Kan Sathapana Phra Ratcha Amnat Nam* [The Foundation of the Royal Hegemony], 2007; for Pokpong Chanan, see *Nai Nai* [Inner Men]; for Warisara Tangkawanich, see *Prawatsat Sukhothai Thi Pheng Sang* [Sukhothai History: Newly Invented], 2014.

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