

TRANSLATION  
OF  
Jeremias van Vliet's  
DESCRIPTION  
OF THE  
KINGDOM OF SIAM.

BY

L. F. VAN RAVENSWAAY.

## PREFACE.

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Jeremias van Vliet was a servant of the Dutch East India Company, who in the course of his career spent some years in Siam and wrote a book descriptive of this country, its people, history, and customs for the benefit of his countrymen. It is my hope that this English version of his book may enable a number of others interested in Siamese history to add to their knowledge of the conditions prevailing here at the commencement of the 17th century and earlier.

In 1602 the Dutch East India Company established a factory in Patani, and the next year Daniel van der Leek—the chief of that station—paid a visit to Siam with the result that in 1604 he sent Cornelius Speex to establish a depôt at Ayuthia. Speex was succeeded in turn by Tourneman, van der Perre, Lambrecht Jacobs, and others, whose records doubtless afforded van Vliet much assistance when he took charge and commenced writing his interesting book,

van Vliet's immediate predecessor at Ayuthia was one Joost Schouten, who was Agent from 1624 to 1629, and himself wrote a description of Siam; and it is evident that van Vliet derived much of his information from this source.

van Vliet had charge of the Dutch East India Company's interests in Siam from 1629 to 1634. By that time the position of the Company in this country had been established on a firm footing, and van Vliet had excellent opportunities of making himself acquainted not merely with mercantile matters but also with the social life and conditions of the people as they existed in his time. A careful observer and diligent investigator he made the most of these opportunities; but his book was not published until after his death, a fact which probably accounts for certain vagaries of spelling occurring here and there in the text. I have explained these variations as far as possible in an appendix, but certain towns I have been unable to identify with any certainty; the locality of others it has been beyond my powers to discover.

As the translation has been from the Old Dutch into a language foreign to me I would ask the indulgence of my readers for any idiomatic errors.

My thanks are due to Mr. René Sheridan for a translation of the paragraph relating to Inheritance, which I have adopted in extenso, and particularly to Dr. O. Frankfurter, Director of the National Library, for the explanation of certain words whose orthography puzzled me, and of a number of geographical names as well as for his ready assistance in various other ways.

(Signed) L. F. VAN RAVENSWAAY.

Bangkok, 28th March, 1910.



# DESCRIPTION

OF THE

## KINGDOM OF SIAM

AND THE

Account of the Origin, the political government, the distinctive characteristics, the religion, the manner of living of the nobles and common people, the commerce and other remarkable things concerning the Kingdom of Siam.

Described by Jeremias van Vliet, formerly Chief of the Factory of the Dutch East India Company in Siam, afterwards Governor of Malacca and counsellor of India,

[and further

The Account of the revolution in Siam in the year 1688 from the manuscript of the Chief of the Dutch establishment,

and

The life and deeds of Constantyn Faulcon, principal privy counsellor of the Kingdom of Siam.]

Leyden,  
Frederik Haaring, 1692.



Dedicated to  
the noble, very learned, honourable and celebrated :—

Mister Feye Johan Winter,  
Doctor of medicine, formerly member of the Council of the Province of Friesland and burgomaster of Leeuwarden, and lately re-appointed plenipotentiary to the assembly of the states of the above mentioned province, and member of the civic-council of above named city, and its oldest medical doctor.

Sir,

Among all the prominent Sciences concerning ecclesiastical as well as worldly affairs by which a man becomes famous, not the least, in my opinion, is that Science which is based on the knowledge of foreign countries in regard to their origin as well as to their peculiar situation, race, government, religion, manner of living, commerce, wars and so forth.

This Science seems to me to be one of the principal means to acquire a thorough knowledge of the large as well as of the small countries.

For who can deny that, as the physician, in order to get a thorough knowledge of the fluid and solid parts of the human body, has to operate on several animals (that the health of mankind may be kept up by good remedies and health may be restored), the theologian, the naturalist, the merchant, etc., will need to his own advantage the knowledge of different ceremonies, laws, habits and the nature of land and people of other countries (non enim omnis fert omnia tellus), their population, laws, religion, and manner of living.

They will need this knowledge in order to distinguish the true religion from the false one, to reform bad habits, to appreciate the reasons of the acts of God, to continue and to establish and to extend the trade.

But why should I try with my weak pen to describe all this to you, Sir, as I am convinced that you already have a high knowledge of this science! For you, Sir have not only held many honourable and high political offices, but also you have been occupied during many years as a naturalist and specially as a physician, to the welfare of many unhappy persons and the enrichment of our true knowledge of Nature.

Shall I therefore try to recommend this book to you? No, I will not annoy you (who are occupied by more important things) by a poor explanation. Suffice it to mention that I most respectfully come to dedicate to you an account of the Origin of the Kingdom of Siam, its government, the religion of the inhabitants, the manner of living of the nobles and common people, the Commerce etc., written by Jeremias van Vliet, formerly Chief of the factory in Siam, afterwards Governor of Malacca and Counsellor of India.

I hope that this service of mine, although small, will not be disagreeable to you, Sir, the more as you know how little of this matter has been described. As far as is known to me there have been only a few Jesuits (people whom one cannot trust very much and who present things with prejudice) who have written about the Kingdom of Siam, such as P. d' Orleans, who gave an account of the life of Constantius Phaulcon, formerly prime Minister of the King of France in Siam, and M. de Choisy and Pater Tachard, who gave descriptions of their journeys in Siam. These books have, moreover, not been translated into our mother-tongue.

Therefore receive, very learned Sir, and with a favourable mind this dedication, which I offer to you to prove that I am,

Sir,

Your most obedient and obliged servant,

FREDERIK HAARING.

Leyden, at the Bookshop.

December 1st, 1692.



# DESCRIPTION

OF THE

## KINGDOM OF SIAM

WITH THE

Account of the Origin of the Siamese race, the situation of the country, the political government, the religious ceremonies and the manner of living of nobles and common people, the commerce and other remarkable things concerning the Kingdom of Siam.

**Introduction  
to this  
description.**

The situation of the country, the government, the army in war time, the customs in the administration of Justice, the education of children, the laws of marriage, the means of existence of the population, the traffic and other important things concerning the Kingdom of Siam have been described by some curious Netherlanders who have visited Siam, and Joost Schouten (who from 1624 to 1629 has been the first representative of the Dutch East India Company in Siam) has accurately described the situation of the country and so well pointed out the most remarkable things at that time that, for his successors, there is hardly anything else to describe but the events which have occurred since he left.

However I will try to increase the information about the proposed subjects, namely, political government, religion, manner of living of the nobles and common people and commerce as far as I could gather during the period of five years which I spent in Siam. Only such information as I thought to be true, I have mentioned in this book and beg that the will may be taken for the deed and that these few lines may be received favourably which will in the near future encourage me to greater freedom.



In order to better analyze the proposed subjects I will on general lines (in order not to detain the reader unnecessarily) describe the origin of the Siamese race and the situation of the Kingdom of Siam, referring the reader to the book of Schouten in the year 1632, which he has presented to the Governor General and Council of India.

**When and by  
whom Siam  
was discovered  
and explored.**

More than two thousand years ago the country of Siam was an uninhabited wilderness. In a few places there lived some hermits and heathens (who had offered their bodies to the gods) and as we have heard from some reliable persons (yes, even from some old learned men) there was in China at that time an Emperor's son who attempted his father's life and to take the imperial crown, in which attempt however he did not succeed. The Emperor intended to have his rebellious son and his followers executed for this crime, but as he suspected that the nobility and the community had taken the side of his son (who was very intelligent and had many remarkable gifts of nature) his Majesty after many supplications was persuaded not to take the life of his son and his followers, provided that they all should leave China and that they should wander as outlaws and never return again.

These exiles tried to populate uninhabited countries and to extend their power. They travelled first through the land of Chiampa, after that Cambodia, from where they sailed with their boats to the Gulf of Siam. They first landed at the cape now called Cuy, settled down there and built a town and to show their thankfulness to the gods erected a fine temple and many pyramids. Their new king sent from that place his men to look for the best lands. Some spies went to the South as far as Jamby, others to the North and found a beautiful valley, which was embraced by the branches of a river. These people built the town of Picelouck there with many temples, monasteries and pyramids. The province of Poucelouck is still looked

upon as being the most sacred of the Kingdom. The government of this province is still only given to Princes of the blood and, failing these, most prominent men in compensation for great services. At last the place Judia was found where at that time there stood only a small temple (which is still existing) and where seven hermits were living, who resembled each other exactly, and were all children of parents who had also the same appearance. Although the town was situated amidst fertile fields everybody was afraid to live there as every year a dreadful dragon appeared out of a stinking marsh which poisoned the air to such a degree that nobody except the hermits could live there. The new king (when he heard of this) consulted the hermits about the best way to get rid of this stinking marsh and to kill the dragon.

The hermits declared that according to a prophecy this was only possible if seven brothers were thrown into this marsh (being holy men, children from a father and a mother who resembled each other entirely as well as the children); but as such could not be found after the whole country had been searched for seven years the aforesaid hermits had to sacrifice their own bodies to the marsh in order to kill the dragon. The hermits declared that they were happy to be the expiatory sacrifice of the Gods and were willing to be thrown into the marsh in order to end the life of this terrible monster and to free the whole country and so many people from such misery. When dying they advised the King and his people that if they wanted to live a healthy life they had to bathe every morning in the river (except in the months of December and January when the cold forbids them to do this), after this rub their body with sandal mixed with some betel leaf and then eat some betel leaf rolled tightly around the betel nut. These three prescriptions have still remained unchanged to prove the truth of what has been described.



**How Judia  
has been built  
and where it is  
situated.**

On the spot thus found and on the surrounding fields the new king ordered to be built the big town now called Judia, situated  $13\frac{1}{2}$  degrees north of the equator, about 20 miles from the sea, on the bank of a beautiful river which flows around the city walls, the town thus being on a flat little island. The surrounding land is entirely flat, and once in every year (as Egypt by the Nile) is flooded by the water which comes from the mountains.

This water gives fertility to the earth and enables the inhabitants to cultivate rice and fruits. This town has been and still is the principal town of the whole kingdom and is the residence of the kings. The circumference of the town is more than two miles and besides the palace of the king the town is adorned with 350 to 400 temples which are very well built with many towers and pyramids, of which almost every one is gilded. But the houses are, after the Indian fashion, of bad construction and usually covered with tiles.

This description shows that Judia is a well situated and thickly populated town and a worthy residence for a great king.

**What respect  
the Siamese  
pay to their  
first King and  
why.**

The inhabitants of Siam and especially the learned men still speak with admiration and great respect of the Chinese exile, their first king. Many still worship his spirit which, they think, is living amidst them. They praise him as a wonder of the world, saying, that he has not only been the founder of such a powerful Kingdom but that he also has ruled the entire country of Cauchenchina up to Jamby, that he has subjected by wars the inhabited countries and has ruled many years in peace. Besides this he has been the first legislator and the founder of their heathen religion, and although he kept the sovereign power over the worldly as well as over the ecclesiastical affairs in his own hands, he made orderly, excellent and praiseworthy rules for the various



branches of Government as far as was necessary for a country ruled by a monarch. Also he has given rules for the administration of justice, criminal as well as civil. All these laws and foundations of religion he has written himself and has bequeathed them to his subjects. These original books, together with many others which were added in later years, are still kept in Judia in the King's finest temple, now called Wat Siserputt, and are held in great honour. At last this King, having lived more than two hundred years, came to the end of his days and died as emperor over one hundred and one crowned Kings, leaving to his successors a founded and populated monarchy well provided with excellent written laws and perfect prescriptions.

**Where Siam  
is situated.**

The Kingdom of Siam, situated in Asia, North of the equator, is an old and famous country and one of the largest in the East. In the North the boundary line runs along Pegu and Jangoma, in the East Siam has as neighbours Langsiangh and Cambodia, in the South there are Patany and the Indian Ocean ( which with a bend forms the Gulf o Siam). in the West the country reaches to the Bay of Bengal. The whole country has a circumferenec of about 450 miles and has the shape of a half moon.

**The nature of  
the country.**

Many parts of Siam are mountainous, others are flat, wooded or marshy. The country is intersected by many big and small rivers, which have an abundance of fish, there are many large and middle sized towns and villages and the country is well populated. In many places there are plenty of Indian fruits of various kinds and the country produces many kinds of grain especially rice, with which they could feed and still can feed several other countries. There are many kinds of birds, tame and wild animals, especially big and fine elephants, deer and elks. In short Siam is a country that has more than most other countries of everything that the human being needs.

**The character  
of the  
inhabitants.**

In general the Siamese nation loves peace, commerce and agriculture. At present the Siamese are poor soldiers, but during the life of warlike kings they proved to be pretty good fighters.

They used to go to war after the Indian fashion armed with various weapons including muskets, and long and short pikes. They had even heavy artillery, which reminds us of the European way of making war, though many have only little experience (yet more than in former years) in handling these guns. Galleys and frigates were pretty well built for the sea; some of these vessels could be provided with heavy guns. But as the Siamese are poor sailors they had little use of these boats. Although lately 120 new war vessels have been built to make an assault on Patany, the Siamese did not use them, as peace was made before these boats started.

As these boats have not been kept in repair, they are decaying and are only used for defence.

**The written  
laws were not  
followed and  
became  
corrupted.**

The old written laws were very good and were greatly valued, but although the Kings ought to have kept these laws, as they also had been made for their Majesties' honour and fame, only few of them were followed.

By the encroachment of many prerogatives the power of the Kings became absolute, the laws were bent according to Their will and were changed and corrupted to Their advantage and pleasure. By the natural avarice and dishonesty of the Mandarins, the criminal as well as the civil Justice has been very badly administered, so that (notwithstanding excellent rules have been given and pertinently prescribed in all cases) the most powerful or the richest men generally won their cases, usually by bribery or other corrupt means, and only the poor were made to suffer.



**The religion remained unchanged.**

The religion remained unchanged; most of the inhabitants are very devout and superstitious heathens. Witness of that, are their beautiful temples and monasteries with innumerable costly gilded images made of all kinds of materials.

**What the first subject to be described will be.**

Having on general lines told much about the origin and the situation of the Kingdom of Siam, we will now describe the first subject, namely, the political government and every thing that is connected with this subject as far as we can ascertain the truth.

**First part, concerning the political government, statement of the principal provinces, towns and villages and population.**

As has been said before, the country of Siam is large in circumference and, in general, thickly populated. There are many well cultivated provinces. The total number of towns and villages is not known for certain. But the principal towns are as follows:—

Judia, which is the capital; Poucelouck, Sorkelouck, Capheyn, Succethay, Kepenpit, Conseywan, Sianclangh, Bonrerongh, Leconsuan, Poucenongh, t' Siantebon, Corassima, Lyoure, Thenau, Martenaya, Tanassery, Lygoor Bordelongh, Sangora.

These eighteen towns are all provincial capitals and residences of the governors of the provinces.

Besides these towns there are many other smaller towns, as the Island Mirghy, being the key and the mouth of Tanassery further Cuy, t'Siaya, Pypery, Pitsiabouty, Batsjabonay, Melongh, Taatsyn, Bannae, Paranthongh, Bion, Banckock; all which have also a local government although of less importance. Further there are in the whole country many more towns, villages and populated places all the names of which we cannot possibly ascertain.



**Why many city  
walls are  
decaying.**

Some hundred years ago, during the rule of warlike kings, many of the above mentioned Provincial towns and those of less importance have been walled, and after the oriental method fortified and provided with a ditch around these walls. But during the reign of peaceful princes, and during a period in which there were no wars with the enemies from the Highlands (as the Ava, Hontscha, etc.) most of these city walls have entirely decayed. Also the slowness of the Siamese must account for this, so that in the whole kingdom there is hardly to be found a single well walled city or a good fort. Only the Island Mirghy and the town Tannassery, which are strong places by nature, have been fortified a few years ago and are still occupied for fear of an attack of people from Arracand. But as Siam during the yearly inundation is unconquerable by the neighbouring Indian kings, the walled cities or forts are not very necessary in the interior. It is sufficient to provide the biggest river "Menam" and the places along its banks with means of defence.

**Description of  
the Capital  
Judia and the  
palace of the  
King.**

We have already mentioned the Capital Judia which is the most important town of the country and the residence of the king and the most prominent men and nobles. Therefore we will describe this town a little more in detail. It is situated on the river called Menam (or in our language Mother of the Waters) and amidst a fertile plain. The town has been built on a little island of roundish shape and is surrounded by a heavy stone wall which has a length of more than two Netherlands miles. This wall has been for the greatest part renewed in 1634, and provided with a heavy stone footing. All round the town and on the other side of the river there are many villages, residences, houses of farmers, temples, monasteries and pyramids, and the population here is just as thick as in the town itself. The walled city has only a few long,

broad and straight streets but several good canals. The greater part of the city is one great conglomeration of streets, alleys, canals and ditches. During high water boats can cross most of the streets and even reach the houses.

The houses are of poor construction, but the town is adorned with about 400 fine temples and monasteries, which are all cleverly and sumptuously built with a great number of towers, pyramids and innumerable images made of all kind of materials. The palace of the king is great and magnificent and lies on the bank of the river like a separate well built town, embellished with 5 high towers and many fine gilded buildings. The palace has been very much improved by the present king. At the land side there is a large square which lately has been surrounded by a stone wall. Only one street and two little pathways lead to the palace: so that it is now better protected against an attack of the population during times of revolution or of neighbouring enemies. But this stone wall will not be able to withstand a European army. This city wall is thick and heavy and built of brick and follows the course of the river. It has no proper foundation nor projections nor bastions like a real fortress and could be destroyed easily by artillery. But considering Indian conditions, Judia is a strong, beautiful, well situated, safe and well populated town, and is unconquerable for hostile Indian kings as they could not stay any longer than six months for the yearly inundation by the river would force them to leave the plains.

**The sovereign  
government  
and power of  
the king.**

Since the time that the Kingdom of Siam was established the King has always had almost sovereign power, but according to the written laws His Majesty had to consult the imperial council, and where His Majesty used bad judgment, partiality or exaggeration, the Mandarins had the power to check him.



But when the empire ( to which some hundreds of years ago were subjected many nations and countries) began to decay, more and more power and privileges were given to the king as the people believed that by doing so the other nations would fear them more. The kings have ruled during a long period as monarchs with entire authority over peace, war, treaties, justice, remission of penalties and all other affairs concerning the empire and the population. The kings could make laws and prescriptions as they pleased, and they did not consult or ask the counsel of the most influential men or nobles nor of the different classes of people, unless His Majesty of his own free will thought it advisable to consult them.

But if the king proposes important matters to his most powerful mandarins of the secret council, they usually, in conformity with the old laws, take these matters into consideration and, after thorough deliberation, demand the opinion of their inferiors, after which with humble supplications they make their decision known to the king. But the king may accept, change or reject the advice of the secret council, stating that His Majesty thought it better for the welfare of the country but, in reality, to better satisfy his own will. Nobody dares to show dissatisfaction about the decision of the king, for his life and his position would be in danger.

All dignities, positions and offices of the kingdom were given away by the king as His Majesty pleased to nobles or commoners, although in conformity with the written laws only the nobility and the most influential men had a right to such. Sometimes positions are given away to persons for promised services or in compensation for services already done by them.



But one cannot rely much on the favour of the king, and for little mistakes, sometimes even without any reason, men filling high positions were discharged and from being great men became insignificant. All the inhabitants are really the king's slaves, which name is an honourable title even among the greatest, as His Majesty is in fact the chief person and has supreme power and authority over the Kingdom and the life and goods of his vassals and subjects. The king may introduce such laws as he thinks necessary in conformity with his pleasure and advantage. But by this assumed authority everything had the appearance of fairness, being founded on the laws and rights of the country which formerly had been made for worldly as well as for ecclesiastical affairs.

**Praiseworthy laws and administration of justice but not used anymore while the king has absolute power.**

The written laws of the country prescribe a certain and praiseworthy rule for the administration of justice, namely, that nobody either in criminal or in civil cases may be condemned unless his case has been examined four times by the ordinary or by the specially appointed judges.

The accused may not be punished in consequence of being accused only, but on his request the judges must allow him to defend himself against his accusers by certain ordeals, namely:—dive under water, dip the hand into hot oil, walk barefooted over red-hot coals or eat a lump of rice over which a charm has been pronounced. These trials by ordeal were performed in public in presence of the judge, and in case the accused was not able to perform any one of them he was punished in proportion to the importance of the case. But as the king became absolute, these praiseworthy prescriptions are now never, or very seldom followed; every thing depends on His Majesty so that often innocent people get punished.

Especially this is the case with the present king, who does not believe complaints very soon and besides this is inconsiderate and rash in his judgment. Even when the culprit's innocence is known to the most influential men, nobody dares to tell this to the king for fear of being suspected or of incurring disgrace by His Majesty's intemperate anger.

**The arrogant  
titles of the  
king.**

The titles of the king are very bombastic and more than human, but are believed to be due to him by the great men and nobles as well as by the rich and poor people. Some of these titles we will mention here. If anybody talks to the king, however unimportant the subject may be, he never gives the king a lower title than one of these:—Pro, Boo, Dy Tsaeu kha choral, Proom Can, Sey Claen Seycke, Moom, which presumptuous words are very difficult to translate in the Netherlands language but as near as possible they have the following meaning:—Oh, Master of the air and the earth, Whose fame is known up to the tops of heaven and who is worshipped like the bright sun, whose commands are performed by me, your poor slave, and whose words are carried by me on the crown of my head.

When His Majesty has answered the petitions or proposals, he is honoured with Pon t'Yaekhae, Chorap, Proem, Can, Sey claeu Seycke Moom t'Yaeu Yehoua, which are still more proud titles than those already mentioned. In writing letters to foreign kings or princes he assumes more than divine titles. At the Siamese Court there are existing rules for titles due to foreign potentates; the greater the friendship with those foreign kings is, the more arrogant the titles become.



Usually this titles for absolute kings (after the dignity of the legation had been set forth in the introduction of the message) are the divine, illustrious, invincible, most powerful and highest Master of a hundred and one Golden Crowns and of kings adorned with nine kinds of precious stones, the greatest and highest divine Master of the immortal Souls, the most holy, all seeing and overshadowing supreme ruler of the most noble and great empire of Siam. His kingly throne is the beautiful and immense town of Judia. The many roads leading to this brilliant town are crowded with people. This is the supreme capital of the world adorned with nine kinds of precious stones.

The ruler of this beautiful country is more than the gods, and his house is made of gold and precious stones. He is the divine Master of the golden thrones of the towers, of the white, red and round tailed elephants, all three of which are excellent walkers and which the supreme god of the nine various gods has given to nobody else. He is the god-like Master of the victorious sword by the perceiving of which many have become frightened and defeated. He is the greatest Master who is equal to the four-armed god of war.

The king is very fond of these arrogant titles and as the people were told that he really deserved these titles nobody dared to oppose the king or to resist his pride

Also nobody hardly dares to carry a wicked intention in his mind, as they have the idea (although this is absurd) that there is living a Divine Majesty in the king and that they for that reason ought not to do wrong.

The fear of His Majesty is so great that nobody, however powerful he may be, dares to mention His name, His head or His royal crown in public, even

when important affairs are being discussed. In cases when it is necessary to talk about him or to call his name, the people whisper the words respectfully in each other's ear. His Majesty is honoured and worshipped by his subjects more than a god.

**Horrible Offerings in building the Kings' Palace.**

By the usurped authority of the kings and by the continuous praise of the people the pride of the former kings had reached such a height that it looked as if the king was not there for the good of his community, but that the whole country and the people were for his pleasure alone. The kings counted their subjects so little that if palaces, towers or resting places had to be built for them, under each post which was put into the ground a pregnant woman was thrown and the more near this woman was to her time the better. For this reason there was often great misery in Judah during the time that palaces or towers had to be built or repaired. For as all houses in Siam are built at a certain height above the ground and stand on wooden posts many women have endured this suffering. Although this description seems to be fabulous, these executions have really taken place.

The people, who are very superstitious, believe that these women after dying turn into terrible monsters or devils, who defend not only the post below which they are thrown but the whole house against misfortune. The King usually ordered a few slaves to catch without regard all the women who were in a pregnant state. But out of the houses no women were taken unless *in the streets nobody could be found*. These women were brought to the queen, who treated them as if they were of high birth. After they had been there for a few days, they were (excuse these rude words) thrown into the pit with the stomach turned upwards.



After this the post was put on the stomach and driven right through it.

**Wonderful  
escape of some  
women who had  
been pointed  
out to under-  
go a terrible  
treatment.**

Through Judia there are running eight rivers. At the places where these rivers enter and leave the town, gates have been built consisting of two straight vertical posts about eight fathoms long and one and a half fathoms thick. These posts are on top connected by two horizontal beams and the space between these beams is provided with some wooden ornamentation.

Including the Petoutsiau or Gate of the Hearts (the entrance to the court) there are thus seventeen gateways. In the commencement of 1634 the present King renewed them all, and as these gates, whether they belonged to temples, monasteries, houses or courts (however ugly or unimportant they might be) are sacred places in Siam, His Majesty ordered to throw two pregnant women under each post. There were thus necessary 68 women for the 17 gates. For this purpose some women had already been brought into the palace. But at that time it happened that on each of two succeeding days five women were caught who at the same moment that they were brought inside the palace gave birth. This caused great dejection in the court of the king, and it was believed to be a miracle. Oya Syery (who has at present the title of Oya Sucethay and who is a man of great self confidence) was so bold as to tell the king that apparently the supreme god of his Majesty's gods did not approve of women being thrown under each post of the gates. But in order to reconcile the devil (who as the Siamese think has taken possession of these gates), Oya Syery proposed to the king to perform this ceremony at the Petoutsiau only. His Majesty agreed with this and ordered to keep only four of the pregnant women.

The other women (those who already had given birth as well as those who had not) had their hair shaved off and received two cuts on the head and they were told that God had given their lives into the hands of the king and that they ought to die but as the king was merciful and more gracious than the gods they could all go home, except the four already mentioned women who were thrown under the posts of the Petoutsiau.

**The Luxury and  
Extravagance of  
the King.**

With the great authority and the usurped powers of the king we must also notice that the present luxury and extravagance even surpass those of former times. For the wives of the greatest mandarins (being healthy and of good appearance) were not allowed to stay longer than 3 or 4 days outside the court of the queen. They were brought inside the palace under pretext that they had to greet the king. Sometimes his Majesty himself selected the prettiest maidens and daughters of the greatest men, and these women were given him as concubines.

When he became king, his Majesty took also his first wife's sister and her mother as his concubines under pretext that they were too noble to be given away to others. With this mother and the daughter he has had children. The mother died in 1633 and the funeral ceremonies were more brilliant than those of any other queens during the last centuries.

Although the religion and the laws forbid the mandarins and especially the kings to drink spirits, and moreover this is looked upon as being very scandalous, his Majesty is usually under the influence of drink three times a day, viz., during the morning after breakfast, during the afternoon and during the evening when he has given audience to his mandarins and has returned from his throne into his palace.



This drunkenness (which occurs very often and often reaches a dangerous limit) has caused many evils during his reign and is frequently the reason why innocent blood has been shed.

**How  
His Majesty  
three times a  
day appears  
amongst His  
Mandarins.**

His Majesty's state and suite are great and magnificent. The king appears little in public but usually receives three times a day the greatest men and officials of the country. In the morning very early his Majesty gives audience to his factors and to those who bring presents to him. In the afternoon the king consults his secret Council and the greatest men, and at sunset goes to the meeting place for all the mandarins. Usually the king appears in a costly dress, sitting on a magnificent gilded throne and wearing the Royal Crown.

Many musicians escort the king to the throne playing melodiously. At the front of the throne are present many nobles, courtiers, and armed soldiers, who are all respectfully kneeling. Besides this there is present a body-guard of 30 to 40 armed men in the inner-court. As was told to me the king is always addressed with many ceremonies, reverences, arrogant titles and great praise. His Majesty's words are considered as those of an oracle, but by the dishonesty and avarice of the mandarins his mandates are seldom carried out or maintained. If his Majesty appears outside the palace (which is seldom) much splendour is displayed and his Majesty is then accompanied by a great suite.

Although the king has all over the country many fine residences and resting houses where he may amuse himself, His Majesty very seldom goes outside the palace. He only visits 3 or 4 times during the year the temple, Wat Syserput, to make offerings to the gods. This temple, which is of renowned holiness, is situated near the king's

palace. To this temple His Majesty goes either afoot or carried by men while sitting in a little house of pyramidal shape ingeniously made of costly materials.

The men who carry this house on their shoulders are well dressed and wear golden crowns also of pyramidal shape. The greatest mandarins with their suites and some priests accompany the king to the temple. But when the king leaves the palace on other occasions, his Majesty is accompanied by many great men, nobles, courtiers, slaves and body-guards, horses and elephants. The king is then sitting on an elephant. It would be difficult to describe the whole train in detail as the number of persons and animals is not always the same, but generally there are 600 to 800 persons. Everything goes in stately order and silence and great splendour is displayed. When the king passes, all the people along the roads kneel down, fold their hands and bend the head to the ground. This way of greeting comes nearer to superstitious idolatry than to paying reverence to a king

**The king comes  
out on water.**

Also on water the king appears but seldom. When he does go on the river usually 12 to 16 very beautiful, cosbly, gilded and decorated boats, each of which is rowed by 70, to 100 rowers, accompany the king. His Majesty is then sitting in the best boat on a gilded throne surrounded by many courtiers. The other boats are for the queen and three of his principal wives. Each of these women is seated with her suite and her daughters in a beautiful boat.

These four women generally accompany his Majesty also the suites and body-guards of 800 to 900 men. Also several noblemen go with the king and each of them has his own beautiful boat and sits in a small gilded pavilion. Although the total number of persons who accompany the king is not always the same, usually it amounts to about 2000.



With what splendour the King appears once a year in public when going to the Nappetat.

It is an old custom in Siam that the king every year at the end of October or in the beginning of November comes outside the palace with the greatest splendour and followed by his whole court, and all the mandarins, nobles and officers of the country. First one procession on land is organised and after this many trips on water. A visit is paid to the principal temple to make offerings to the gods and to pray for a long life for the king and the welfare of the country.

The procession on land is not arranged in the same way every year but occasionally it is as follows:— First come in stately order going from the palace to the principal temple called Nappetat about 80 to 100 elephants, which are sumptuously decorated. On each of these elephants is seated, besides two armed men, a mandarin in his gilded little house having in front of him a golden basin containing cloth and presents for the priests. Then follow 50 to 60 elephants, on each of which are sitting 2 to 3 men, each of whom is armed with bows and arrows. After this come, also seated on elephants, the 5 to 6 greatest men of the kingdom, some of them wearing golden crowns but each with his golden or silver oetei box or any other mark of honour given to him by the king. They are accompanied by their suites of 30 to 60 men afoot. Following those come 800 to 1,000 men armed with pikes, knives, arrows, bows and muskets and also carrying many banners streamers and flags. Among these armed men are mixed about 70 or 80 Japanese who are gorgeously dressed and carry excellent arms. The musicians who follow the soldiers play on pipes, trombones, horns and drums and the sound of all these instruments together is very melodious. The horses and elephants of the king are adorned copiously with gold and precious stones and are followed by many servants of the court carrying

fruits and other things to offer. Many mandarins accompany these servants.

Then follow on foot with folded hands and stooping bodies (like everyone who rides or walks in front of the king) many nobles, among them some who are crowned. Then comes the red elephant decorated very nicely with gold and precious stones. Behind this elephant follow two distinguished men, one of them carrying the royal sword and the other one the golden standard, to which a banner is attached. A gilded throne follows after them showing how former kings used to be carried on the shoulders of the people, and then follows His Majesty sitting on an elephant and wearing his royal garments and his golden crown of pyramidal shape. He is surrounded by many nobles and courtiers. Behind his Majesty comes a young prince, the legal child of the supreme king, who at present is eleven years old. The king's brother, being the nearest heir to the throne, follows then with great splendor, and seated on elephants in little closed houses come after this the king's mother, the queen and his Majesty's children and the concubines. Finally many courtiers and great men on horseback, and 300 to 400 soldiers who close the procession.

Altogether about six to seven thousand persons participate in this ceremony, but only his Majesty, his wives, his children, his brother, the four highest bishops and other high priests enter the temple. Having stayed inside the temple for about two hours the king and the whole splendid train return to the palace in the same order as here described. The streets are very crowded with people from the palace to the temple but every one is lying with folded hands and the head bent to the earth. It is forbidden to any one to look at the king's mother, his wives or children and the people



turn their faces when the royal family passes. Only strangers or foreign ambassadors are allowed to look at them.

**The triumphant manner in which His Majesty goes out on the water to sacrifice to the Gods.**

When His Majesty makes his first trip on water this is arranged as follows:—In front go about 200 mandarins every one with his own beautiful boat and sitting in a small pavilion which is gilded and decorated according to the rank of the owner. These boats are rowed by 30 to 60 rowers. Then follow the boats for the luggage and kitchen necessaries. After these boats come the state boats of the king, wherein nobody else but the rowers are sitting whose number amounts to from 50 to 70 men. Each of these boats carries a little gilded pavilion of pyramidal shape or other decoration.

Then come four or five boats with musicians and finally four or five ingeniously shaped, varnished and gilded boats. Also the oars are partly varnished and partly gilded. Each of these boats is manned with 60 to 100 rowers.

In the finest boat the king is seated under a decorated canopy. His Majesty is sitting there as a worldly God hidden in all kinds of costly things, so that neither his body nor his face can be seen. He is surrounded by nobles and courtiers who pay him reverence at the foot of his seat with folded hands and with their bodies bent to the floor. In front of the boat and opposite the king is sitting a distinguished person holding between his folded hands the golden banners of the king.

Then follows the king's brother with a suite of eight to ten beautifully painted and gilded boats. He himself is seated in the best boat under a canopy less beautiful than that of the king. Opposite to his Royal Highness, in front of the boat, is sitting one of the mandarins also with folded hands and the body bent down to the floor. The king's

mother, the queen, his Majesty's children and some concubines have all their own boats and are sitting in gilded pavilions.

At last follows Oya Berkelangh with all who are in his service. The total number of boats amounts to 350 to 400, and 20,000 to 25,000 persons take part in this procession. Along the whole way which his Majesty passes, the houses, monasteries and temples are closed with mats, and nobody is allowed to stay in them in order that nobody may look at the king from a place higher than that of his Majesty.

Both sides of the river, for a length of two miles from the palace of the king to the temples Watdeun, Thunphiat-haai, and Bankkedan, are crowded with boats and innumerable persons who bring reverence to the king with folded hands and bent heads. Towards the evening the king returns in another boat. His Majesty's boat is then in front, leaving behind all the boats, which follow without any order in groups.

In the same way as has been described here the king makes many trips on the water to the most holy temple and to bring offerings to the gods of the water. But on these occasions the crowd of spectators is not so large.

**Income of the  
King.**

It would be difficult to state accurately the income of the king. Rice cultivation produces the greatest revenue, as Siam is an excellent paddi growing country. For each plough his Majesty receives one fuangh or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  stuiver, and also the tenth, eighth or seventh part of the paddi in proportion to the fertility of the fields. Besides this the king has his own paddi fields and also gets rent from houses which belong to him. His estates yearly bring in a considerable amount of money. Sappan wood, tin, lead, and saltpeter, which are the principal



products of the country, may be sold to foreigners only from his Majesty's warehouses. Also the king gets profits from the foreign as well as the native products. He also receives presents from his subjects, and the most influential men and governors of the provinces pay a certain taxation to the king. His Majesty further enjoys many profits from the trade to Choromandel and China. Also the inland trade produces a large sum of money and many trading stations have been established in the various provinces. When all the boats return safely, the yearly profits are immense. If foreign traders had been treated well and if they had been encouraged to stay in the country, the profits would have been still much larger. The inhabitants of the highlands, as the Laos, the Langjangs and the Jangems have left Siam for Cambodia, in consequence of monopolies, rude treatment and the excessive dishonesty of the king's factories. There they are treated well, and moreover they can bring their products such as gold, gum benjamin and gum malakka in a shorter time to the market in Cambodia by boat. For in going to Judia they had to cross the mountains with their wagons up to Poucelouck, and from thence they reached the capital by boat. As gold is not imported any more in such quantities as before, the income of the king has grown less. The greater part of the gold used to be wasted on temples, monasteries and pyramids.

**The treasurers  
of the King.**

Several officers are engaged in collecting the revenue for the king. Once a year or at any time wanted these officers have to give account to Oya Awangh, president of the king's Counsel, to Oya Poelethip, chief purveyor of the kingdom, to Oya Sycry, chief of the army and the navy and minister of interior, and to Oya Berkelangh, chief of the king's warehouses, keeper of the great seal and intermediary for the foreigners who are in the country.

Each of these men has about one fourth part of the administration of the country, and also receives one fourth part of the revenue.

They make up their accounts in presence of the representatives of the king. The moneys are deposited in the treasury of the king, but the greater part is spent on buildings and on repair of temples, images and so on. Also his Majesty's state and court cost much money. The remainder of the moneys. (which in my opinion cannot amount to much), is kept in the king's treasury for other necessities. As Siam has no gold or silver mines, and also does not receive any tributes from vassal princes the king cannot possibly be very rich.

**The armed  
forces of the  
country.**

As already mentioned the Siamese are more or less cowardly and by no means warriors by nature. But there is much war material in order to be able to attack on water and on land or to defend the country against invaders. Although there are few or no soldiers in actual service, within two days a force of 60,000 to 80,000 armed men can be gathered. However they have bad weapons such as short and long pikes, shield and sword, bow and arrow, old muskets and guns. They have good artillery but the men who have to handle it are inexperienced and have never seen war. The soldiers are for the greater part inhabitants of the the country or of the vassal states. Also foreigners join the army. The most numerous are the Pegus ; further there are Moors, Portuguese mestizoes, Malays and a few of other nationalities. But the Japanese (numbering 70 to 80) are the best soldiers and have always been highly esteemed by the various kings for their bravery. The greater number of the soldiers are cowardly Siamese. Usually the king every year calls together 10,000 to 30,000 soldiers and orders the frigates and galleys to be equipped. This is done with the purpose of preventing the



weapons getting blunt or growing rusty and to let the Siamese not altogether forget the idea of war. But no offensive campaigns are made. These forces the king maintains, without any expenditure from the treasury. On the king's command his subjects must take up their arms and march, without receiving any wages. In all the provinces the necessary number of men may at any moment be called to arms. The number of men called to headquarters may amount to one hundredth, one fiftieth, one twentieth, one tenth or one fifth of the total number of men available. The men know the company to which they belong, and if necessary can assemble within a short time in order to go to war. When going to war the mandarins are accompanied by their own slaves and servants. In this way the king is able to call together two hundred thousand to three hundred thousand men and even more. But very seldom more than a hundred thousand men are collected, and usually not more than 20,000 to 60,000 men are sent to the field.

When the Siamese tried to subdue Patany in 1634 the army only numbered about 50,000. From lack of courage and bad management the Siamese had to retreat. The king then ordered one hundred new frigates and galleys to be built in addition to the old war vessels. These new boats were equipped with men and weapons, and the intention was to call a large army to the field. If the king had not been persuaded by the king of Queda and the predictions of the Siamese priests not to go to war, most probably an army of more than a hundred thousand men would have started for the field of operations.

**The elephants  
and cavalry.**

In Siam there are more than three thousand elephants belonging to the king. Around Judia are 400 to 500 tame elephants. Some of them are taught to fight, others to carry artillery and

provisions. These elephants are attended by two or three men, are fed in stables and get every day a bath in the river. They are highly valued for their strength, ability and intelligence. Some are trained every day in the art of fighting; others, males as well as females, are taught to carry artillery, tents, provisions and other necessities for the army. The army also possesses ponies but no special horsemen are provided for. The cavalry are armed with old muskets and leather shields, so that an army provided with modern weapons does not need to fear an attack of the Siamese cavalry.

#### The navy.

The king's navy consists of 130 to 140 frigates and galleys. Some of the vessels are at Siaya and Sangora, but the greater number are lying in the river around Judia. These boats contain the necessary materials, excepting guns, and they are covered with a roof to keep out the rain. Some of the galleys are built to carry heavy artillery but the Siamese are just as bad sailors as they are soldiers and have no experience in handling artillery. There is an incredible number of boats for use on the river, and the Siamese are expert rowers. They are, however, not well armed, they have no experience, and they could not maintain a fight against a European navy. As, however, the neighbouring nations are not better armed, the Siamese navy may be of some use. During the rule of warlike kings the Siamese have fought big battles, have gained many victories and have conquered foreign countries. As the kings had absolute power and as their rule was very strong, they could make good soldiers of their subjects. During a long period the kings of Siam have ruled over neighbouring countries. Under peaceful kings the tributary nations managed to regain their independence. Although the present king is a man of courage, he seems not to have the desire to



enlarge his country or to make rebellious princes pay homage to him. For his luxury and daily drunkenness have enervated his mind, and his conduct is not in accordance with what might be expected of a sovereign king. As most of the mandarins are effeminate men they, if possible, dissuade the king from making offensive wars. But besides all this the king has exhausted the means of the nobility and the inhabitants of the whole country by forcing them to contribute towards the erection of the city walls of Judia and towards building temples. So that a war could not be carried on without causing great misery.

**Former wars  
with various  
nations.**

During the past the kings of Siam, the emperors of Ava and those of Pegu have fought many wars. They all, and especially the chiefs of Ava, have made several attempts to conquer the neighbouring countries. Siam has been for many years tributary to Ava. But at last the Siamese, with the aid of a man whom they called "the black king" threw off the foreign yoke. He was the heir to the throne of Siam, and when still a youth he was hostage to the court of Pegu. As, however, he had to endure many insults he made up his mind to flee. One night he escaped with 300 nobles, who all belonged to his suite. They took their way back to Siam. But when the news of their departure reached the court of Ava the king ordered the fugitives to be pursued. But the Prince of Siam plundered and burned down all the villages which he passed through, and his pursuers found the country entirely desolated. Forced by famine they had to return, and the prince arrived with his company safe in Siam. Their arrival caused great uneasiness at the court of Siam as the king and his mandarins feared an attack of the Avas. But they all were inspired by the prince, who proposed to invade the frontiers of Pegu. As, however, the Siamese were unaccustomed to war, their arms had

grown rusty and the other war materials were scattered all over the country, so the Pegu soldiers were ready before the Siamese and destroyed many of their towns. At last they appeared before Judia which town they thought to conquer very easily. But the Siamese prince marched with his army against the enemy and met them half a mile above the town near a ruined temple which is still existing. Scarcely had the two armies taken position opposite each other, when the Pegu prince and the young Siamese prince (both seated on elephants and dressed in royal garb) lost all self control, left both their armies and attacked each other furiously. The Siamese prince ran his adversary with his lance through the body and took the other's elephant. His slaves, who followed him very closely, killed a Portuguese who sat behind the Pegu prince to guide the elephant. The Pegu soldiers, seeing that their chief had been slain, fled away, but were at once pursued by the Siamese. Many thousands were slaughtered and the rest dispersed, so that only a few of the enemy's army reached Pegu again. Since that time the crown of Siam has not been tributary again to any other country. After a few years of rest Pegu and Siam have attacked each other several times, but these wars were of little importance and an army of 20,000 to 30,000 men, which the Siamese kings usually sent to the frontier of Pegu in the dry season, proved to be sufficient to check the attacks of the Pegues.

**The Pegu  
ambassador in  
Siam.**

In 1634 the king of Pegu sent an ambassador to Siam in order to stop the state of war and to make a treaty of peace. But the ambassador made the condition that the prince of Siam, who is the king's only brother and heir to the crown of Siam, should marry the king of Pegu's daughter and go and live in Pegu as hostage. The king of Siam did not like this proposition at all, but treated the ambassador very well and dissembled kindness, but



did not promise him anything. Soon after the ambassador had left for his country about a hundred thousand inhabitants of Pegu fled away to Siam, as revolutions were going on in their country and times were very hard there. They were received kindly by the king and the mandarins and, although by special messenger the king of Pegu tried to force these people to go back to Pegu his Majesty refused to let them go. He gave them chiefs and officers of their own nationality and also good sites for settlement.

**The ambassador  
of Ava, emperor  
of Pegu.**

Last year an ambassador from Pegu or Ava (*sic*) arrived in Siam and asked assistance against Honscha, king of Pegu, who threatened Ava with a war. But as the ambassador's petition and complaints were suspected not to be founded on natural reasons, his Majesty took them for fables and thought the arrival of this man to be a stratagem to deprive Siam of war materials and soldiers in order to attack the country afterwards with the combined armies of Honscha and Ava.

The ambassador was detained a long time at the court and was treated politely, but at last his petitions were refused and he returned to his country.

So we may conclude that the kings of Siam and Pegu are not on friendly terms at present. However it is my opinion that peace will not lightly be disturbed, because in the first place neither in Pegu nor in Siam are there enough soldiers at present, and in the second place owing to former wars large tracts of land along the frontiers have grown wild and the march through this country would cause much trouble and only an army consisting of a very large force of men would have a chance of success.

**How the  
Siamese King  
has taken  
Lycoon and  
how he has  
treated the  
inhabitants.**

For various reasons the Siamese kings have often attacked the neighbouring countries like Jangoma, Taiyou, Langsiangh and others. There was peace during a long period until the king of Siam, in 1632, took Lycoon by stratagem, destroyed the town and took the inhabitants as prisoners to Judia. These people came under the government of five mandarins who treated them so badly that many tried to flee away in 1633. But their intention became known before they could go. The chief conspirators were thrown into prison, some were killed by elephants, others thrown into the river and their bodies cut in two, etc.

The reason for this war was an old claim which the Siamese kings had on the province and the town. But as the chiefs and the population at the commencement of the rule of the present king, refused to pay homage and the yearly taxes, his Majesty decided to force them to do so, and in order to frighten the Patanese (who were rebellious at that time) the king accompanied the army. On leaving his palace the king swore that the four women whom he should meet first would be made an offering to the gods and that his vessels would be besmeared with the women's flesh and blood. This was done; before His Majesty was out of the town he met four young girls sitting in a boat, and on these girls he fulfilled his oath.

Satisfied he now continued his journey and imagined that victory would be his. I wanted to describe this cruelty in order to show what great authority the Siamese kings possess and how little their subjects are cared for.

**Doubtful  
friendship  
between the  
Prince of  
Jangoma and  
Siam.**

The Princes of Jangoma and their neighbours were not at all frightened by the war with Lycoon. But the princes of Langsiangh have sent an ambassador to the Siamese Court with presents in 1633. These presents were made more or less



with selfish reasons. For the ambassador brought with him many products from the highlands, such as gold, benjamin and malacca gum with a view to exchange these for cloth, for which there was great want in Langsiangh at that time. Many private merchants accompanied the ambassador in order to be able to sell their goods with less trouble in the name of the ambassador. But the ambassador and all the people with him had to stop about two miles above the town and was not allowed to enter the town before the day that His Majesty gave audience to him and the day the Ambassador took leave. They were also so annoyed in their trade by all kinds of monopolies and ill treatment by the king's factors that they never came back to Siam again. The Siamese king, seeing afterwards that the absence of the highlanders was a drawback for him and his country, ordered Oya Poucelouck and Berckelangh to send several ambassadors to Langsiangh to invite the people to come back and promising them better treatment and more freedom than on their last visit. But no highlanders appeared in Judia (apparently kept away by distrust), some of them went as far as Poucelouck with their goods. In December last the king has sent an ambassador to Langsiangh to remove any objections and to ask the king of Langsiangh to send his subjects again to Siam as in former days promising his people many privileges and much freedom.

Up to now it is uncertain what has been the result of this mission.

**The rebellion  
of Cambodia  
against Siam  
is still  
continued.**

The kings of Cambodia are from olden times vassals and subjects of the Siamese kings, but on several occasions they have revolted.

Although brave kings and powerful Princes of Siam have several times subdued the vassal and with arms forced him to pay obeisance, the Cambodians did

not remain in proper subjection. They made themselves ready for war and plundered the towns situated on the Siamese rivers. To prevent such to happen again and to tie Cambodia to Siam, the predecessor of the present king has sent two very large armies to Cambodia in 1622. One of the armies went by water and the other one by land, and the king himself accompanied the army to Cambodia. After the Armada (consisting of many large armed galleys and ships of less importance) had been lying for a long time on the river of Cambodia (without going into action or doing anything), it returned again. The Cambodians, encouraged by the departure of the Siamese boats, went to meet the army which came by land. They united in the valleys and the low fields and by false guides brought the Siamese from the good roads. They attacked the Siamese and many thousands of men were slain. Many great men, elephants and horses were killed in that unfortunate battle. The Cambodians took about 250 living elephants. After this victorious defence the one party has left the other in peace. Several times afterwards the Siamese have made preparations for war and the news spread that they wanted to attack Cambodia, but all this never had any result. I believe that the proud and thoughtless Siamese have spoiled a double chance by treating the foreign merchants and Dutch so badly a few years ago. For now not only no war vessels for the conquest of Cambodia could be expected from the Governor General at Batavia (as was promised by letter in 1637), but also the Governor General had established a Comptoir in Cambodia, where his factors resided, so that the Siamese certainly will leave Cambodia in peace in future.



**Rebellion of Patany, the Siamese king's vassal state, and the unsuccessful attempt to subject Patany.**

The kingdom of Patany has been subjected to Siam since olden times but was only bound to bring, every year, homage to his Majesty the king of Siam with the golden and silver flowers and in times of war to send in assistance a few thousand soldiers. The princes and princesses of Patany received titles from the Siamese king. They received the title of Pra 'tJiau. From that may be concluded the good right of the Siamese king over the government of Patany. But by the ambition of the late princess to obtain the highest power and by the great authority of some mandarins especially Dato Bestaar (who were not loved by most of the Orangh Cayos) the people of Patany became rebellious against Siam during the change of succession in that country.

The ambitious princess and mandarins already mentioned made known in public that the king of Siam did not have the right to wear the crown and that he has killed the true kings and their heirs. For this reason the Patanese regents could not recognise him as a legal king but as a tyrannic conqueror to whom the kingdom did not need to pay homage. To show their intention the Patanese have attacked the provinces of Bordelough and Lygoor during the first year of the rule of the present king and afterwards they have taken two of His Majesty's vessels which were going to Batavia and which traded with the East-India Company's factors. At last they have treated His Majesty's ambassador very unworthily and refused to negotiate with governor Caan who in 1632 was sent to Patany to promote peace. The Batavian community (burchers) could not expect any restitution and the king of Siam had given up all hope that the Patanese would be obedient to him or make friendship with him. After having conquered the provinces of Lycoon and Lygoor and after having made peace with Queda and Sangora, the king of Siam therefore wanted to force Patany to pay obeisance and

to give Siam again the same power as before. To do this His Majesty called to arms in Lygoor an army of 60,000 men with plenty of elephants, horses, artillery and ammunition, and placed over this army four generals namely the Oyas: Lygoor, Calahom, Berckelangh and Rabisit, Moreover an armada of 40 junks and galleys with ammunition and the necessary provisions were sent there. The four chiefs got the order to attack the town of Patany at the end of April or to besiege and take the town by starving it. But in order to carry on the war with more glory and to frighten the Patanese and their neighbours more the king and the mandarins of Siam asked for the assistance of a few ships of the Governor General and Council of India. This request was founded on various motives, namely, 1° the friendship with the Netherlands nation, which His Majesty had kept up for a long time, 2° the assistance of which his Kingly Grace, the Prince of Orange, has assured the king by various missions, 3° the assistance which the late noble general Koen has given the late king many years ago by sending two ships to fight Cambodia, 4° the assistance which the noble general Speck gave in the year 1632, without any requisition, by sending five well armed ships under the command of Anthonio Caar, to fight against the Castilians, 5° that all relations with the Castilians and Portuguese were trade relations, but that there was great friendship with the Netherlands nation. This was proved by several actions of the Siamese government as: 1° the punishment of Don Fernando de Silva by the late king for taking the yacht Zeeland and the goods of Caspir Swaris who in 1630 came from Maccouw to Siam with Chinese products, 2° the pursuit of the Maccou prisoners in 1633 by many mandarins.

For which reasons the king and the mandarins firmly believed that the requested assistance could not be refused by the Governor General.



By this assistance Patany should be forced to pay obeisance to Siam. The noble Governor General and the Council of India have taken the claim on Patany and the urgent requests into consideration, and sent to Patany the ship Velsen ahead and afterwards six well armed boats with a junk under the flag of Commander Claas Bruyn to assist the king of Siam. But these ships came too late as the Siamese army had already returned. The Siamese had besieged the town for about one month, had fought many skirmishes and even had been in the fortress of Patany. Oya Lygoor, who thought that the Siamese had already conquered the town, ordered that the whole town should be kept for the king and that nobody be allowed to take anything of the booty. The soldiers then retired from the town and went back to their camp. Now the Patanese regained courage, defeated the Siamese and made them flee away. After many defeats the Siamese lost all hope of conquering Patany and returned to their fleet at Sangora. But when the chiefs of the army afterwards started to regret the mistakes which they had made, they tried to give the blame to our nation. They sent their false information to the king and made him believe that the Netherlanders by keeping back their war-ships (which, as they said, were promised to them for certain), were the cause of the defeat. Without any consideration the credulous king believed all this. An immediate result of this was that we became in trouble; we were quite isolated from the outside world, lived as prisoners in the Company's house and expected still worse things for the future. But when the king afterwards heard of the good-will which the Governor General had shown, His Majesty's disgrace turned from us. After the army with a loss of many thousands returned in parts to Siam, the principal officers (among whom were those who had falsely accused us) were not allowed to appear

before the king to pay the usual reverence and to report of their doings. They were sharply examined about their conduct by a commission. After information had been gathered it was found that many hundreds of Siamese had been inside the fortress of Patany, but that they had the order from Oya Lygoor, general of the army, to retire as he feared that his soldiers would plunder and destroy the town. Having received this information the king concluded that Patany had not been conquered on account of two mistakes of His officers, firstly, they had left the town too early and, secondly, they had not waited for the assistance of the Dutch. In his rage the king said that they all (although some had shown much ambition) deserved the severest punishment. One of the Captains was beheaded and his head was put on a post, and his Majesty ordered the others to sit around the post for three days under the open sky in order that they might consider whether their captain had been punished in the right way. Also his Majesty made known to them that this punishment was the best compensation for their brave deeds, In such condition the officers had to sit for two days in public as an example for everybody though it was dangerous for their health. At last they were thrown into prison by Oya Poucelouk and Oya Sycry, but were released again with the fearful understanding that, if they should be sent for a second time to Patany and if they should return without having gained success, the king would put to death not only them but also all their relatives. The king showed thankfulness for the Dutch assistance although it came too late, and as recompense he discharged the Company for about half a year of the usual taxes. If Patany had been conquered by the assistance from Batavia, the Company would have enjoyed many more advantages.



**Great preparations for a second campaign but by intervention of the king of Queda peace was made between Siam and Patany.**

After the first war great numbers of new soldiers were called to arms for the second campaign which had been postponed for one year on account of the bad harvest of rice. In the meantime more than one hundred new vessels had been built in Siam and the neighbouring countries, and the old vessels had been repaired. All these vessels were to take part in a second war with Patany, so that according to all appearances Patany would have had a hard time in 1636. But by intervention of the king of Queda, and from the predictions of the Siamese priests, the king changed his mind. By order of the king, Berkelangh sent ambassadors to Patany in order to offer for the last time peace to the queen and the mandarins (as a warning and under pretence of having pity for the Patanese). The ambassadors had also to tell the Patanese that the war had been prevented by the king of Queda and the Siamese priests, and if the Patanese would send legates to Siam to ask mercy his Majesty without any hesitation would be very glad to grant such. In March 1636 appeared thereupon some ambassadors, who were received by Berkelangh. They were as much humble as the Siamese showed pride. The result of the preliminary negotiations was that in August next a distinguished person appeared as a legate. He presented the golden and the silver flowers to the king as a sign of subjection. This was accepted by his Majesty with great pleasure, and herewith peace was made between the two kingdoms. No claims were made from either side for insults suffered or for damages.

**Uncertain friendship between Arracan and Siam.**

The kings of the Arracan and Siam have lived in peace and in alliance for a very long time without either of them being a vassal or tributary to the other. To maintain this alliance they sent each other ambassadors every year. This was done, not only to promote commerce, but also for reasons of policy.

The alliance lasted until the death of the great king. But as soon as this king had passed away the friendship was finished between the two kingdoms, for the present king having been crowned and having reached the supreme power sent his ambassadors to Arracan as before, although no ambassadors had come from Arracan. The king of Arracan did not receive the legation, saying that he could not recognise an illegal usurper as king of Siam, and he therefore refused to give audience to the ambassadors or to pay any honour to them. The king of Arracan did not allow the ambassadors to return, but did send a boat with some of his subjects to Tannassary to trade as usual. The governors out there reported this to the Siamese king, and asked the king's advice what to do with these people from Arracan. His Majesty commanded that their boats and their goods should be seized and the men taken prisoners and brought to Judia. For more than two years these people from Arracan have been kept prisoners, and during all this time no negotiations about these men have taken place, nor has any hostility been shown by either side, both parties keeping quiet until November last year. At that time some galleys and other small ships were sent from Arracan to the island of Mirghy and to Tannassary with a view to plunder, but as many Moors had left for Masilipatham and as those who had not left were on their guard the Arracans could do very little.

At last the people of Tannassary have seized some Arracans and sent them to Judia. These prisoners after a sharp investigation confessed that the king of Arracan intended to conquer Myrghy and Tannassary, but from want of a sufficient army had postponed the expedition until he might have a better chance. In the meanwhile he wanted



to make the rivers in the neighbourhood unsafe in order to prevent the Moors from the coast of Choramandel from coming to Tannassary. The king had moreover asked the assistance of the Dutch and the Portuguese. The Dutch resident had refused such assistance, but the Portuguese had promised to help as much as they were able to. The Siamese king then released the prisoners and sent them over Tannassary, to their own country. They were given a Traak'hausa Ty-bydy, or missive, from Berkelangh, in which was mentioned the friendship which for so long time had been maintained between the two kingdoms.

If the king of Arracan wished to continue this friendship, the king of Siam would be very much pleased, but in case the king of Arracan did not wish to act like this a strong Siamese army would be sent to his country. As no answer has yet been received from Arracan it cannot be stated for certain whether the two kings remain enemies or will become friends.

**That the proceedings of the king of Siam toward the ambassadors of Aatchyn probably will lead to making of peace between Siam and Aatchyn.**

The kings of Aatchyn and Siam have been allied friends from olden times. They never have been a vassal or a tributary to each other. To maintain the friendship they often sent to each other their ambassadors with letters full of exaggerated titles and compliments and with presents. But during the life of the great king one of the ambassadors from Siam on his own account told the Aatchynese that the king of Siam was willing to give his daughter to the king of Aatchyn in order to bind the two countries inviolably to each other. The Aatchynese listened to this talk with open ears, and as that rascal of an ambassador made himself very agreeable to the king and the mandarins, he was given a higher rank and he was respected more than all the other ambassadors. But as this rogue knew very well that his lies would

lead to his ruin, he secretly fled away without taking leave. Having returned to Siam he made a false report of the Aatchynese and the actions of his mission. The result of this was that each of the two kings kept his ambassadors at home and the mutual friendship seemed to have disappeared entirely until the great king died. The present king, however, has tried to renew the friendly relations for political reasons and to satisfy his personal desire. For when he had reached the supreme power and had killed the true heirs and rooted out these relations, he found himself in the midst of revolutions and in enmity with the neighbouring princes and kings like those of Ava and Pegu, whose friendship he could not rely upon any farther than he could on that of the Cambodians, or the Patanese. There were further the rebellion of Lycoon and Lygoor, and the doubtful attitude of Queda and Sangora. The Portuguese took a doubtful attitude, and had blockaded the mouth of the river. For all these reasons and in order to make his enemies fear him more, the king sent a distinguished legation with a costly present to the king of Aatchyn and asked for His Majesty's friendship. The Aatchynese received the ambassador and after royal entertainments sent him back with great pomp. He promised by letter the continuation of the former alliance to the Siamese king. Since then many ambassadors with letters written on gold have gone from Siam and Aatchyn. These ambassadors were usually treated with great honour so that the friendship seemed to be firm and indissoluble. But this friendship was but founded on sand, for which later events were the proofs.

In 1634, about in September, a certain ambassador from Aatchyn arrived in Siam and brought as usual a letter engraved on gold and a present for the king. In respect of this he was welcomed brilliantly, and the king gave him an audience with much pomp very soon after his arrival.



And when his Majesty brought his offerings to the temple Nappetat (as is the fashion in Siam) this was done with much splendour, and the ambassador from Aatchyn with all the other foreign ambassadors and the most prominent foreigners were also allowed to take their place in the temple. From his seat the Aatchyn ambassador had the opportunity to watch his Majesty with the women, children and the whole suite. The ambassador having returned to Aatchyn boasted to the king and the mandarins about the unusual honour which he had enjoyed in Siam, and made his king believe that the king of Siam had made the trip to Nappetat in order to be able to show the ambassador his brilliant state, his women and children.

From all this the king of Aatchyn and the mandarins concluded that the Siamese king would not be unwilling to give his daughter in marriage to the crown of Aatchyn. They thought that the Siamese king did not like to tell this frankly, but by the honour bestowed on the ambassador he had shown clearly his intention. In order to know for certain what his Majesty's intention was the king of Aatchyn sent the same ambassador with two deputies again to Siam at the end of 1636. These men were received brilliantly as before and the letters were handed over with great pomp. This being done the three men were asked whether besides these letters still other affairs had to be discussed. The two deputies then gave an account of what the ambassador had told to the king of Aatchyn about his last reception out here, and they also told that the king of Aatchyn had verbally ordered them to investigate whether matters were standing in conformity with the report of the ambassador and whether his Majesty was willing to give his consent to the marriage. In this case they had to send word at once to Aatchyn in order that the king of Aatchyn

might make preparations to welcome the bride. But if it should prove that the ambassador had only been boasting and had been reporting things which were not true and in so doing had abused the king and the mandarins of Aatchyn, his Majesty the king of Siam was asked to put the ambassador to death in Siam. All this was told to the king by Berkelangh, and his Majesty fell into such a passion that when after a sharp examination the ambassador was found guilty he was deprived of all his dignities and thrown into prison. He was chained in seven places of his body, and so he was kept for six months. During this time the deputies had been received in audience by the king and they presented their letter and the presents to his Majesty. These presents were accepted with dissembled friendship and according to such the two deputies have been treated. They lived out here so luxuriously and frivolously that on command of the king they also were thrown into prison. Although they have asked several times to return to their country after they had left the prison such was refused unjustly. They were neglected to such a degree that they had to live on charity.

The future will show us how the king of Aatchyn shall act on the already mentioned proceedings and detention, but many of the mandarins in Siam believe that the Aatchynese did not like this alliance with Siam as it only could be maintained by heavy expenses. They therefore thought that the Aatchynese were looking for a chance to get rid of this alliance. But as it went the Siamese did not approve the measures taken by the king and they wished that the king had acted more moderately against the ambassadors for they feared the Aatchynese power and the revenge of its king.



The former  
and the  
present  
position of the  
Japanese in  
Siam.

A few Japanese merchants have since long ago frequented the kingdom of Siam. They came every year with their junks, their capital and merchandise to enjoy the profits which the Siamese deer and roeskins gave in Japan. They were so fond of this rich profit that some of them remained in Siam and the affection of the Siamese kings (who have always favoured foreign trades) for the Japanese nation (especially for the silver money which the merchants brought into Siam with their junks) became so great that they sent several legations with presents and letters full of kind compliments to the Emperor of Japan. The Siamese ambassadors were usually well treated out there by the Japanese, proofs of which are the receptions which the last ambassadors to Japan enjoyed in Japan in 1629 and 1630. But as the confluence of Japanese increased considerably their natural pride and impudence grew so great that at last they dared to attack the palace and to seize the king in his own room. They did not let him free again from their tyrannic hands before his Majesty had sworn that he never would remember the harm done to him nor take any revenge and that he would take the Japanese in his service as soldiers and as bodyguards to the end of his life. These promises remained in force by which the rogues, not only enjoyed the usurped advantages, but they practised also great impudence and violence against the natives and against the foreign traders. But fortune, which usually gives her favourites bitter compensations, made the Japanese incur the ruling king's disgrace to such a degree (notwithstanding they had assisted his Majesty very much in usurping the crown) that his Majesty, for fear of ambitious conceptions and treason (which from their impudent talk was very near) and for punishment of their disloyal deeds against the legal princes and heirs of the kingdom, has killed by trick and by force many of

the Japanese, has driven the rest of them out of the country (to the gladness of the inhabitants) and in doing so his Majesty has freed and cleared Siam of them. The great men in the country and the nobles were very glad of this as they have always suspected the Japanese for their desperate, bold and treacherous attempt to make their king a prisoner (as was described here above).

Moreover they thought the presence of the Japanese a drawback for the country. Of the 600 Japanese who were here only 60 to 70 have returned to Japan in a junk after many miseries ; the rest have been killed or have fled away to various quarters.

For good reasons we may conclude that in future not lightly Japanese will be engaged as soldiers by the Siamese kings, nor junks will be sent from Japan to Siam for fear of by occasion the one party taking revenge on the other. But against the will of many persons, His Majesty, for fear of revenge of the Japanese, after a short time called those who had fled away back again and when their number amounted 70 to 80 the king gave them a fine tract of land to live on and bestowed on the three most prominent Japanese titles of honour, appointed these men as chiefs over the others and placed them all under one of his mandarins. Also the king ordered Oya Berkelangh on several occasions to send ambassadors with letters and presents to the governors of Naagasacque in Japan in order to make good for his actions to offer friendship and to invite the Japanese merchants to come again to Siam. But the legations were never received with the proper honour by the governors of Naagasacque. They even refused roughly the last legation, saying that the master who had sent them was not a legal king but a usurper, a traitor, and a murderer who had killed



the real heirs and the princes of the blood. Although the ambassador with his junk still loaded had to leave Japan, his duty undone and an object of disdain, his Majesty decided at the time when I was going to leave Siam to send a person in his name to the Emperor of Japan and the council of Japan to beg for the former friendship and to give a friendly invitation to the Japanese merchants. This request (in my opinion) was the result of many considerations and was advised to the king by some secret fortune-hunters (who thought to gain much profit by the trade with Japan). Also the Japanese in Siam used their influence to the same end, as they had become poor and little esteemed. They hoped (and not without reason) that when the junks from Japan appeared they would increase their means and would regain their lost influence and reputation. But it is against the natural course and in contradiction with the Siamese arrogance that a king for hope of a little profit should debase himself so far for people who cannot trouble him much. Also it can hardly be expected that during the life of the present Japanese Emperor any Japanese should leave their country or those who are abroad should return. Why then try to gain friendship by such a humiliation? But the astute Siamese rulers know how to disguise all this and to colour this case as if his Majesty feels very much attached to all foreigners, and as if His Majesty has the intention of making friendship with all neighbouring kings, princes and potentates in order that his kingdom may have rest and that His Majesty may die in peace.

**That the  
friendship  
between China  
and Siam has  
lasted long  
and by what  
means.**

Although the Siamese nation (as pointed out by old traditions) originally descended from a rebellious Chinese who was the son of the king, who for the wicked plans of his party was expelled and banished from his country (as described and pointed out already) the kings of China and Siam have

been friends and allies from olden times. In order to maintain this friendship they often have sent each other letters engraved on gold, which is considered to be the highest distinction. But the king of China in the commencement could not explain the thoughts of his heart (by lack of a man who knew the Siamese language), so he sent to the Siamese king four learned men as permanent servants for the crown of Siam in the town of Judia. These men were accepted at the court and they were allowed to appear in audience before the king when they wanted to, just like the other mandarins. Thus they became so well acquainted with the language, the customs of the country and the highest eloquence, that the Chinese as well as the Siamese letters could be translated thoroughly according to the original text. By this the friendship between the kings was kept up and has remained strong and durable, notwithstanding that no legation has been maintained in Siam nor in China, owing to the change in succession of the kings in the two countries. This neglect (in my opinion) has to be ascribed to the carelessness of the Siamese king. For by force of an old privilege His Majesty has the right to send his ambassador every year to Canton, and the Siamese under this pretext may negotiate and trade, which (as far as known to me) is not allowed to any neighbouring nor to any far away country, and this advantage is greater than the king even can perceive. But the Siamese by pride and arrogance are so blind (although His Majesty's factors believe that they are excellent merchants) that no notice has been taken of such a good opportunity that has been given to them during a long period. For by way of this yearly embassy Siam could have established an important Chinese trade in Siam and could have bound all the foreign traders to herself. But by carelessness that splendid opportunity has passed.



Sometimes the king still sends his junks to the province of Canton with a load of sappangh, lead and small quantities of other products in order to change them for good Chinese merchandise. But while the embassies from both sides had stopped, the traders were to such a degree detained by monopolies and hindrances that they often had to stay very nearly two years before their merchandise could be sold properly.

Moreover they make but small profits and get no proper cargo to bring back, usually returning to Siam with a lot of paltry wares. But the Chinese from Chiuseeuw, who used to appear every year in Siam with their junks and various cargoes, were detained by the deceit of the mandarins (apparently with the knowledge of the king), just in the same way as his Majesty's subjects are detained in Canton. In consequence of this, Siam (in order to escape distress as the Siamese could not make any more profitable journeys) had to admit the Chinese. So the Siamese kings have neglected a double chance, firstly, in that they let the fine chance pass by to bind the Chinese trade to their country and, secondly, in that they by arrogance did not allow the foreigners sufficient access to the court (taking also into consideration the fraud of the mandarins), by which the foreign traders were scared away and expelled from the country. But in the kingdom of Siam many Chinese are still living who enjoy reasonable freedom in trade throughout the whole country and are well respected by the previous as well as the present king, so that some of them have been appointed to high positions and offices and others are considered the best factors, traders and sailors.

Many years before the arrival of the Netherlanders in Siam and in India the Portuguese have enjoyed great friendship, communications and free trade in this kingdom. They were so well esteemed by the kings that the ambassadors from the

Viceroy of Goa and governors and bishops of Mallacca, who sometimes sent letters to His Majesty and proper presents, not only were entertained well and rich presents were bestowed on them, but also some of the residing Portuguese received honour and high positions. Besides the free trade in the entire country the public church and worship of the Roman Catholic religion were allowed to them, yes, even monthly salary was granted for assistance. Also His Majesty licensed his vassals to trade with their junks full with cargo to Mallacca.

Thus the Portuguese have enjoyed for many years prosperity and good reputation in Siam, until the servants of the Netherlands Company also took hold of the country. From time to time on several occasions (as the taking of vessels, promoting of the trade in Santhome and Negepatam) they caused the Portuguese so many losses that at present the Portuguese trade has much declined. In 1624 a certain Netherlands yacht was taken in the Siamese waters by Don Fernando de Silva, which deed was taken so ill by the king that his Majesty punished the Spaniards succesfully by arms and returned the yacht and the cargo to the Company, for which act he became engaged in war with Manilha. And although the Portuguese did not care much for what had happened, although they continued their correspondence and remained in Siam, they were since that time in disgrace with the king and the mandarins. The vicar who had been appointed their chief by the governor and the bishop of Mallacca, could never again get proper access to the court. Then followed the hostile action of the two war galleys in 1628 under Don Jan d'Alcrassa (by order of the governor and the representatives at Manilha) on the Siamese river. On this occasion not only the Cantonese junk of His Majesty was treacherously taken and after being plundered



burned with many persons, but the same was done with a Japanese junk from Nagesacque. This increased the hatred of the king and the mandarins to such a degree that His Majesty, not only took and confiscated the galley with the cargo belonging to Casper Swares, a Portuguese, coming, 1630, with Chinese goods from Maccau, but also kept the Portuguese in strict captivity during three years and made them go about begging in the streets. Those in Mallacca sent in 1633, in the month of July, a captain named Sebastiaan Montos d'Avilla, with a galley (manned with 10 white men and 30 coloured men), as ambassador bearing a letter and a small present to the king of Siam. In this message the release of the captive Portuguese was requested, and although this embassy was not agreeable to the king he allowed d'Avilla an audience. d'Avilla was received at the court with little honour and (after promises of friendship) was treated with dissimulation. However, the king agreed with the request and released the prisoners. But d'Avilla seeing that he could not attain his aim and that his petition was going to be refused, fled with his galley and all the prisoners down the river in September last. Notwithstanding that he was inimically followed by many mandarins and influential men, they were just able to escape the danger and left with Siam in enmity. The discontent of the king about the sudden departure was so great that from that moment he hated the Portuguese just as much as the Castilians; also because in that same year they blockaded the river of Tannassary with two frigates, prevented the Cantonese junks from coming to Siam and afterwards committed hostilities. The Siamese king has taken revenge on a few Castilians, in the same cold season. For a certain Chinese named Wancangh with some Spaniards of high rank (of whom the most prominent was Don Luis de

Gusman, sergeant mayor of the Spanish fortress Illa Formosa), had started from Kelangh for Manilha, but during a storm lost the mast and helm and was driven to Lygoor. There they were taken prisoner by command of the king, and with their junks (containing together with some other Chinese goods about 125 piculs rough silk) brought to Judia. This cargo was kept in the king's warehouses. In 1635 some Portuguese galley was driven to Tannassary, whereupon the captain Francisco Cotringh de Magalano, with 14 Portuguese and some slaves, was also brought to Judia. Like the Castilians these prisoners were also kept very poorly, although they were not put in chains. But as these hostilities had a bad influence on the trade with Canton and Coromandel, His Majesty, as if he wanted to show pity with the prisoners, had them all released and sent them with an ambassador and letters to Manilha and Malacca, to remind the governors of these places of the former friendship. The ambassador has returned from Malacca to Siam again, and the king's letters were taken by Luis de Gusman, sergeant mayor, to Manilha and were sent to Goa by the Governor of Malacca. No answer has been received to these letters. Probably the Portuguese will visit Siam once more, but as there are in this country only a few poor Portuguese, Mestizoes and Indian Christians, they will most probably not regain their former influence and no great traders will appear again to settle out here.

**The position  
of the  
Netherlands  
Company  
in Siam.**

It is now more than 30 years ago since the Netherlanders came to Siam. They won the confidence of the king, so that the United East India Company found it advisable to establish a comptoir for the trade and enter into an alliance with the king. In pursuance thereof a house or factory of wood was built in Judia. In this house



they traded for many years; and native products, cloths, deer skins and hart skins, sappangh wood and other merchandise were sent every year to Japan. Although the Company did not make much profit by this trade (as many misfortunes happened, such as the burning of cargoes, and uncompleted voyages) the Company entered into great friendship with the kings and was honoured more and enjoyed a higher reputation than any other European nationalities. Many ships and junks with provisions, timber, and other necessities were brought from Siam to Batavia. This friendship was maintained for a long time, notwithstanding that many princes succeeded each other and many changes took place in the factory of the Company. Various letters from the illustrious princes of Orange, as Mauritius of Nassouw, his princely grace's brother Frederic Heindrik of Nassouw, and the noble generals of Netherlands India, have been sent to the Siamese kings, who in their turn replied to these letters. In this way the friendship was maintained and even strengthened.

The good reputation and friendship which the company enjoyed out here, the hatred of the king against the Castilians, the profitable trade, the fertility and the safety of the country and the strong position of the Netherlands in India seemed to encourage the maintenance of the friendship with the Siamese kings. And the noble governor general and the councils of India in the year 1633 gave permission to restore the factory out here and to renew the trade with Japan. This plan was founded on good reasons, for the king had driven away the Japanese and apparently they would not return again (afterwards they came back any way). So it was considered that from that side no hindrances would be met with. As it was found

that after Japan had been opened for the trade of the Company, the Siamese products could be sold with much profit in that silver-rich country, an excellent house or lodge was erected of stone and lime, in order that the company's goods might be better secured against fire and other misfortunes and also to be able to accommodate and to manage wisely the resumed trade. This building was very commodious and large, and it proved of great advantage for the company's trade, but (in my opinion) it was disadvantageous for many reasons. For during the change of rulers many malicious mandarins have crept in and have reached high positions, so that at present there is hardly one single distinguished person of upright mind. These jealous rascals imagine wrongly that the company enjoys incredible profit from the trade with Japan and Tayouan, and that the noble general for this reason and also in regard to the newly erected building will not lightly decide to recall the servants of the company and the whole establishment connected with their trade. Apparently they tried to make the king (who is very credulous) believe this, whenever they had an opportunity; also because they did not get a certain share in the profits, so they wanted to make our nation odious in the eyes of the king. Besides all this we must mention that the king did not like to sell the Siamese rice to us, particularly to the town of Batavia unless the governor general by sending presents every year should ask for it, and in order to increase the dignity of his reputation he did not want to send more rice than he thought advisable. His Majesty by doing so, hoped to weaken secretly the increasing power of the government of the governor general. The intention of the king was shown clearly some years ago when the export of grains was very little. Quantities which had been promised were refused afterwards with frivolous subterfuges, notwithstanding from



time to time many kind requests were made for the necessary quantities. All this was taken amiss by the governor general and not without reason. He showed his just discontent in his letters to the king. Although the tenour of the messages was unpleasant to the king and His Majesty was discontented (believing that the proper respect had not been paid to his assumed dignity), he did not show the least what he thought, and concealed the poison in his murderous heart. Shortly after this it happened that some of the company's servants by dissolute lewdness offended against the Siamese laws and against the clergy. These mistakes of our men were by false accusations explained to the prince and to the king as if the men had committed an important crime. In his rage and drunkenness the king thereupon condemned all the Netherlanders to death without hearing them, and proceeded so tyrannically against them and the position of the company, that the affair is almost without parallel. But when it had been pointed out what mistakes His Majesty had made, and what effect the fulfilment of his intention would cause, all the men were released and also the Company was allowed to trade with its former freedom. But although no blood has been shed on this occasion the shame and disdain which our men have suffered are never to be forgotten. Also the governor general and the councils of India saw the importance of what had happened, and that it could not fail to have many bad results for us. The friendship which always had been honoured and laudably maintained by the kings of Siam, has much decreased and has almost disappeared during the rule of this king usurper. And probably this friendship will not flourish again as before, unless this cowardly nation is brought to better sense, and unless the disgrace which we have suffered has been washed away by the sword, in which may God Almighty help.

**With what Nations the Siamese king still keeps up correspondence and why he does not cease to do so.**

Having told much of the quality, authority and state of the king, the armed forces and alliances with far off and neighbouring kings, princes and potentates, we still have to mention the correspondence which His Majesty maintains with some governors, as the Nawab of Bengale, the Sajachan of Coptochiae and other places on the coast of Coromandel. But as the friendship with these governors did not influence matters of state and was only kept up to accommodate the trade, so I do not think it necessary to describe this matter diffusively. In the next part I shall have an opportunity to talk about it "en passant," and I will now continue and describe the position of the Siamese mandarins. For this has not yet been done in the first part.

**The quality and authority of the mandarins in Judia.**

Besides the sovereign power and the authority of the king, the government is divided into several ranks and various departments standing under the supervision of the mandarins. These mandarins are chosen from the noble as well as from the not-noble families, but before anybody can become a mandarin he is raised to nobility by the king, and new names and marks of honour are given to him. The nobility rises by degrees : from Opans, Omans, Ockans, Olaanghs, Opraas, Oyas which are the highest names and the highest titles. Among this nobility everyone receives donations in conformity with his quality and his rank. The Oyas receive golden betel boxes, some Opraas silver ones, but many only get a wooden box. The gifts are kept in high honour as they have come from the king. Some of the Olaanghs and Ockans have golden swords, which is also a great mark of honour as these are only given to persons of good standing. But the Omans or Opans seldom receive any other mark of honour than the title. In general the king gives to everybody in proportion to his state more than human titles. And everybody is very proud of these titles as they fancy that His Majesty



cannot fail and as they receive these titles from the king they imagine that they are men of dignity and good breeding in conformity with their titles. The marks of honour given by the king are always carried about with the owner wherever he goes, and by them he is recognised and honoured. From the nobility are chosen all the regents, the king's councillors, chief of the army, judges, captains, factors, etc. I will mention here the dignities of some of these men, namely: Oya Oubrad, first mandarin and *stadholder* of the king; Oya Awangh, president of His Majesty's secret council; Oya Poeletip, chief purveyor of the kingdom; Oya Sycry, chief over the political, military, ecclesiastical and civil affairs; Oya Calahom, general over the elephants and over the armed forces afoot and on horseback; Oya Berckelagh, counsel and leader of all foreign affairs at the court and keeper of the great seal; Oya Jammerad, chief judge for criminal and civil cases in Judia. These (besides some governors of quality and with high titles) are the greatest and most influential mandarins of the whole kingdom. For in case the king came to die suddenly before anybody had been chosen to succeed him and without leaving any legal heir, the Oyas Oubrat, Awangh, Poeletip, Sycry and Berckelagh have to represent the king and have to rule under the royal standard of the kingdom until a king is chosen out of the complete assembly of mandarins and crowned as a sovereign. But the power and authority of the king do not allow anybody to perform his duty according to the written laws. For His Majesty has usurped supreme power since long ago and has taken all honour and dignity to himself, so that nobody will refer to the dignity of his position or will dare to oppose anything. Everybody must be pleased with as much influence and dignity as the king out of his own free will may allow him.

**What authority  
the governors  
of the  
provinces have.**

The governors have also great authority, especially those of the four most important provinces, Poucelouck, Capheyn, Sorcelouck and Suekothay. These governments are due to princes of the blood and only if these fail are they given to the greatest and most influential men as a great privilege. In all the provinces, capitals and governments there are plenipotentiary colleges and officers for the criminal and civil justice and for settling of various affairs to the welfare of the country. But the Oya or governor of the province rules with absolute power and supreme authority over justice, pardons, remittals and other affairs concerning the province and its inhabitants. However he is not allowed to commence wars, to break peace or to change the written laws and the prescriptions without advice or consent of the king. But as each of these governors in his province is honoured and respected as a king and is worshipped by his subjects with more than human honour, they can bend and change all laws as they please and without any danger for themselves, for nobody may leave the province or town without proper consent. So if anybody should have the intention to complain at the court of Judia or at the plenipotentiary courts about violence or any trouble, his departure would be prevented and no consent would be given to him. And as complaints are secretly sent over by friends the plaintiff would not be heard or received, because the mandarins are very jealous of each other and usually are political intriguers.

**What dislike  
the mistrust of  
the king has  
caused.**

Under former kings it was customary that the governors resided in their provinces and their governments, in order that everything might be done regularly and that the subjects might be ruled with proper fairness.

Those from adjacent places sometimes came once or twice to the court at Judia, and those from



far off places once every three years to attend state ceremonies and to report about their governments. In the meantime the province or town was ruled by an influential mandarin or plenipotentiary college, and all important affairs were postponed until the return of the governor. But this custom was not maintained by the present king. For as the governors of the far off provinces used great authority, His Majesty does not allow anybody to stay on very long. But the greatest mandarins (except Oubrat, who is incapable by old age) were all transferred after 4 to 8 months from one office to the other, so that they could not have an opportunity to have a stronghold in one position. For this reason he does not allow them to go to their governments, except to Tannassary, where usually a competent chief has to reside on account of the foreign traders and the bad character of the inhabitants. Also Lygoor, Bordelongh and Sangora have governors who reside out there, but the governors of the other provinces usually stay in Judia, and the government is carried on by substitutes of less quality, who have to come and report all their actions at any time the king or the master pleases. But many affairs have to suffer by the many changes of governors and by the stinginess of the substitutes; the community is troubled very much by taxes and duties. Although often well founded complaints were made at the court against the regents, such were seldom or never accepted and remedied. The true cause of this wrong state of things is the king himself. For as he is not an anointed David but only a little Absalom, he does not trust anybody. He keeps all the mandarins under his eyes at the court, in order that they may not form a party or cause a conspiracy, knowing very well with what cunning he himself from a sharper has come to the royal crown.

**How slavish  
the king keeps  
his mandarins  
and how  
humbly they  
appear before  
the king.**

A result of the king's usurped authority and distrust was that all the mandarins (particularly the most influential of them, who have a state and a position) are kept very slavishly in Judia. They are entirely deprived of the former freedom. Only in the public assembly room and in presence of and the hearing of everybody, even of the slaves, are the mandarins allowed to talk to each other. Should they not follow this rule, their life and position would be in danger. The father is not allowed to visit his child, nor the child its father, without the knowledge and consent of the king, even in cases of illness or death.

By the natural stinginess the jealousy and malice have increased to such a degree that nobody spares another when accusing him before the king if they expect some profit or if they fancy that such might be agreeable to the king. But they always understand how to exalt their action with an artificial glow as if it is done for a good reason and as if the aim of it is only to increase the glory of the king and the welfare of the country. Besides this all the influential men, namely, those of His Majesty's secret council, the governors of the provinces and of the most important towns, some officers, judges and factors have to appear every day at court at the public audience. Three times a day, namely, at noon, in the afternoon and towards evening, a secretary of the king writes down everybody's name, and if anybody is absent his servants must give the clerk the reason of his absence. They have no other reason for being absent than illness, and then the suspicious king (under pretence of pity) at once sends his surgeon to visit the person who is ill and if possible to cure the illness. But this is not done out of affection for the patient but always to intrigue and to know what is going on amongst the mandarins in order that he may not be deceived by secret conspira-



cies and may not one day receive his reward (which he has well deserved from his real Master). Towards the evening the mandarins have to go to audience and everybody goes with his clothes tucked up, which is a sign of humility and is customary amongst slaves who appear before their masters. While going to their places they kneel down several times, bend the head to the ground and with folded hands pay humble reverence towards the palace and to His Majesty's seat. But while approaching the throne they creep on hands and feet. When the king appears on his throne, they all have to show humility in the way already described, and have to bend the head with the face on the floor until they are addressed by the king. All this takes place in the utmost silence, for nobody dares to move and hardly dares to breathe. Sometimes six to eight thousand persons are sitting close to each other in this assembly, and the silence is then so great that one can distinctly hear the singing of small birds and the sound of their wings. Usually the king talks with a pleasant voice, first with the four or five greatest men of the country, viz., to Oya Berckelagh, Jamerad and the Brahman priests. If anybody else is addressed by the king or if he has received a special command, he thinks it a great honour and is very proud of it. Even his walk and bearing show this clearly, and from that date he is more honoured and respected by the other mandarins.

**What authority  
the Mandarins  
exercise over  
their house  
mates  
and over  
their slaves.**

Although the mandarins in general are slavish and have to appear before the king with great humility, they are very arrogant, proud, and haughty, especially in regard to the titles and marks of honour which they have received from the king. Yes, everyone of them wants to be served, honoured and feared as if he were a worldly god. They usually practise great authority over those who are in their houses and over their slaves. Although the

greater number have to live on their slaves, they have to keep up a certain state and they do not allow themselves to be addressed otherwise than with bent body, folded hands, and with ceremonious praisings. Besides this they often tyrannise their concubines (or small wives) and their slaves. They make them die for small mistakes or throw them into prison and treat them very harshly. For all this an excuse is very easily found for the king, and as much fault is imposed on the victim as their large conscience may care for, and in the meantime the poor victim lies smothered in his blood without being able to give account. In their houses, and on the streets the mandarins are honoured like small kings among their subjects, but coming to court they are only slaves.

**What incomes  
the mandarins  
have.**

I have already given an account of the king's possessions and yearly income. It ought to be understood that the king enjoys profits of the rice over the whole country, without giving pensions or compensations to anybody. Only the governor of Tannassary with his council receive  $6\frac{1}{2}$  per cent of the cloths which the Moors from Coromandel and other places bring out there or of cloths which pass that place. But on all cargo which is returned from Siam to the coasts of Bengale or Suratte taxes are paid where the goods are bought, so the Tannassary government does not derive any other profit than that from a little tin which comes to that port. Also they rob the merchants by trick or with force, and this has often been done so roughly that serious complaints were made in Judia. The swindlers have there-upon often been punished; they were turned out of their office or they were condemned to pay a fine in money. But the greatest mandarins, governors of provinces and principal towns and some factors receive from the king a few *bunders* or measured land, which they have to plough, to sow, and to reap, with their own slaves. During fertile



times they get very rich profits from their fields. Some mandarins and especially Oya Berckelangh get benefits from the foreign traders who frequent Siam. But as the king, in order to accommodate and to allure the foreign traders, has made all taxes lighter a few years ago, and has provided the Berckelangh and each Sabandaar with an official sealed permit in proper form, the stinginess and avidity are now moderated and everyone's portion has been cut down considerably and does not amount to much. But most of the mandarins have no other profits than from their own slaves, whom they may treat kindly or harshly just as they please. These slaves are divided into three classes, each of which has a certain position. Firstly, there are the slaves who follow their masters daily in their suite, and who have to do court or private services. They get every month 50 pounds of paddy, two maas, Siamese coins (equal to 15 stuiver), and once a year a new (but common) coat. With this they have to make shift and have to provide themselves everything else which they may need for their living, or else they have to suffer want. Others have to pay their masters monthly 6, 8, 10 to 12 maas (one maas is seven and a half stuiver) in accordance with their diligence and strength and in accordance with their masters being poor, avaricious or liberal, and besides this they have to buy for themselves everything else that they may need. Some get six months in a year to work for themselves, and what they earn during the rest of the year they have to bring to their masters. On the sweat of their slaves the master and his family are able to live, to keep up state, to offer presents to the king and to the priest. What the servant has won is easily spent by the master. From this may be judged what riches there is among the Siamese nobility. Each whose turn it is squeezes the foreigners as much as he can. Also we must

mention that in the whole country the common class of people, who are not slaves, are divided under quarter-masters. The latter have control over 1,000, 500, 400, 300, 200, or 100 men. This is done for the accommodation of the king, for if His Majesty needs people, these quarter-masters are requested to provide the required number. From this often big profits can be made. For the quarter-masters usually first force the poorest people, or those who are in worst circumstances, to leave their houses, and only by bribery are they allowed to stay at home. Also those who come from other places are divided under quarter-masters, as the Pegus, who are standing under Oya Poeletip; the Lauws under Oya Awangh; the Japanese under Oya Pitsjasencram; the Chinese under the Oopras Sysembat and Thonsuy; the Malays under the Oopra Alaks Amane; the Portuguese under Opra Ray Montry. These officers never let any opportunity pass of drawing profits from their subjects. Only the Moors are still free from this slavery, which is rather surprising, but it seems that they (for some special reasons) are under the protection of the king.

**Where the principal provinces and towns are situated and also what products come from the various places.**

Hereinbefore we have already mentioned which are the principal fortresses, fortified places, chief provinces and towns in Siam, and we ought now to describe their situation. But this I am not able to do as I could never obtain proper information about this matter, and have never seen any maps nor any sketches, which could give any indications. For these reasons I will only point out from which places the most important products come, and where these places are situated.

**Timber for boats, etc.**

Parathon and Rion are small unwallied towns, are situated on a small stream east of the river, amidst many villages and populous places. As pretty much timber is growing out there,



many barges and big prauws (to use on river and in the interior) are built there. Also some deerskins come from there.

**Agerwood and small quantities of deer skins.**

Bannae is a poor country town and is lying inside a decayed stone wall. The town is surrounded by many populous places and is close to the frontier and the mountains of Camdodia. It is the only place in the whole country which produces aguel. Also deerskins are exported, but in small quantities, as it is difficult to bring them to the water side, from where they could be transported by prauws.

**Gitta Gomma.**

t'Siantobon is a poor but unwallled town and is situated east of the river near the mountains of Cambodia. All the gitta gomma produced in Siam comes from that place.

**Where most of the deerskins, djattiposts and black sugar come from.**

Poucelouk, Sorkelouk, Capheyn, Suckothay and Kepenpit are all provincial towns and have had good strong walls, which, however, are in decay. The nearest of these towns is more than 100 miles north of Judia, measured along the river. From these provinces and particularly from Poucelouk and Capheyn come most of the deerskins, teak posts, black sugar and gomma malacca. This wax together with some benjuin is brought to Poucelouk by the highlanders, and from there it is transported to Judia.

**Black wax or Sieran.**

Loconsuan is a famous provincial town and is walled. It is situated on the bank of the river about 120 miles northwest from Judia. From there comes the best Sieran or Vamrak in Siam. But when the yearly crop is bad, no great quantities can be obtained from there, whilst in fertile times much can be got.

**Tin, Sappang-wood and rice.**

Tannassary has become famous by the important passing through of foreign traders who have to visit Siam. It is one of the keys for the whole kingdom and is situated favorably for ships

and junks. A great quantity of tin comes from there at a cheaper price than anywhere else in Siam. Also sappang and rice. But for the transport of rice and sappang the regents out there cannot give a license but such has to be asked in Judia from the king.

**Where the best Sappang Wood comes from that can be obtained in Siam.**

Poucenough is a big walled ( but decayed ) provincial town. It is situated at the branch of the river about 40 miles east from Judia amidst a forest of sappangwood. This wood is imported in abundance and is the best which can be obtained in the whole of Siam.

**Where a little rice but an abundance of sappangwood and salt come from.**

Meclough, Pypry, Rappry, Pitsjeboury, Ratsjeboury and Cuy are all open places, situated west of the river not far from the sea. Besides rice these places produce an abundance of sappangwood. And with ships and junks these products can easily be brought from there. The Chinese and Japanese used to take the cargoes always out there in former times on account of the weight. But the license for the transport has to be asked first from the king in Judia. Also tin and lead are to be found out there, but this may not be transported from there and has first to be delivered to the king's factors in Judia and brought into His Majesty's warehouses.

**Tin, Lead, and a little pepper.**

Lygoor, Sangora, and Berdelongh are all seaports and are known by the Netherlanders since a long period of navigation. Besides tin and lead, also pretty big quantities of heavy peppers used to be imported every year from these places, so that the United Company for many years had a factory in Sangora ( made of lime and stone ), but as the trade did not pay sufficiently, this building was abandoned. During the rebellion of Patany against Siam all pepper plants in these places have been destroyed. As the country is in peace at present the plantations are increasing, so that now again very much pepper is exported and the production will most probably increase.



It has also to be mentioned that from the river of Siam up to near Patany every year many deer are caught. The skins of these deer are brought to Judia by people of various nations, but afterwards they are sent to Japan and are sold there usually at a great profit.

**Garden fruits.**

Banckok is a small walled town situated on the river about 7 miles from the sea and amidst fertile fields. The rivers Menam and Taatsyn meet at this point. Around the town there are many houses and rich farms. Banckok is strong by nature and can easily be fortified. In case the little town should be taken, fortified, and kept by a prince, the supply of salt and fruits to the town of Judia would be prevented. Also all navigation on sea and passage of the Moors from Tannassary would be cut off.

There is still something more to be said about some other provinces and towns, but as the situation of those is not known to me, I will break off here and will refer the curious investigator to those who have better information about the true situation.

**How the Courts  
and the  
highest judica-  
ture are  
composed.**

In the whole kingdom there are law courts of mandarins to administer justly criminal and civil cases and the written laws after the old fashion. But in Judia is a court of nine councillors, namely, five oyas, two opras (opraa Olak, chief Secretary of the king, is one of them) and two olanghs. In this assembly oya Jammerad is, in accordance with the dignity of his position, president for life. This council is the highest court of justice, and all civil and criminal cases are finally decided by it—after defence, appeal, reformation or first instance. From the decision of this court no appeal can be made; but, at great cost, a revision may be obtained from the king or his council, who generally confirm the sentence and have it

executed promptly, so that the decision of the council is seldom changed or reversed.

**How justice  
is administered  
in civil,  
criminal and  
doubtful cases.**

Besides the court mentioned, there are still several courts of justice, as that of oya Berckelagh, who is attorney to the court and judge for all foreigners, further opra Mathip Mamontry, who is chief of the court where all civil questions and all ordinary cases are pleaded and decided; oya Syserputh is permanent chief of the court where all secret and uncertain cases, criminal and civil are treated and decided by ordeal. The accusations and defences are brought before the courts of the Berckelagh and Mathip by the plaintiff or defendant or by attorneys, verbally or in writing. Usually the case is pleaded before the commissioners, and the parties and witnesses are examined. The substantial content of the lawsuit is written in a book by the secretary, and the parties or their deputies have to sign this. The book is then sealed and kept by the judge until the next audience. But as there are no regular court days, the parties may not appear before they are summoned by a message of the court by command of the presiding judge. The books are then opened in public, the parties are heard, their accounts and debates are noted down and sealed as before. By much delay, laziness and selfish proceedings of the judges, this ceremony has to be done so often and the progress is so slow, that some cases remain undecided for many years to the great disadvantage, yes, ruin of the parties. After many solicitations the cases at last are opened and examined before the entire court. From the sentences of these courts, appeal, reformation or revision may be obtained in the highest court, after humble solicitations. When there are no witnesses or when no sufficient indictments can be obtained the parties must undergo an ordeal, namely, diving under water, dipping the hands into hot oil, walking bare



footed through fire, or eating a lump of rice, which has been consecrated with an oath. This must be performed with many ceremonies before judges and people near a temple or public holy place. Also some priests are present, who with many prayers strengthen justice and, by doing so, take away all sorcery and exorcism. After this the parties take off their ordinary clothes and they are dressed with a thin linen cloth, which reaches from the head to the soles of the feet and are washed by a priest with holy water, in order that the one might not encourage the other with conjurations and they might not abuse the judges. The diving under water is done with two sticks which are put with one end into the ground. Parties have to pull themselves down along these sticks at the same time and the one who remains down the longest, wins the case. The one who remains unburned, or who gets the least wounds in dipping the hands into hot oil, or who two or three times with four or five slow steps can walk unhurt through a glowing fire of coal, wins also the case.

The lump of rice which has been consecrated by an oath is given to be eaten by a priest. He who can get the rice into his stomach without spitting gains his case. The winning party receives a favourable and quick sentence by the judge and returns home happy. But the plaintiff who makes a wrong statement or who denies the facts in connection with criminal cases, is punished according to the law for such cases. But in civil cases the false plaintiff is fined in money, and is discharged of office and dignity, thrown into prison, and has to become a slave carrying chains or is condemned to other punishments. But usually the head of the criminal is tied up and put into irons. Three successive days the criminal is conducted in all principal streets of the town to cry out his crime

and his sentence in public for all people. So long as he keeps silent or does not cry loud enough he is made to do so by blows administered by the jailors.

**That sinning  
against the  
king and  
the priests  
is punished  
severely.**

Of all crimes, none are so heavily punished as sinning against the authority of the king, against the priests, or the temples. If anybody should try to usurp any honour due to the king secretly or in public, should act against him or his state or should show any disrespect, should treat the priests badly, rob their properties, profane churches or idols, he or the suspected would be punished with a cruel death without trial. But in case of other crimes, as injuries, adultery, murder, treachery, theft, arson, etc., the accused, after public proofs or sufficient indictments, is apprehended by oya Jammerat, thrown into severe imprisonment, accused, sharply questioned by the court of judges and then allowed to give account. In case, after sufficient information has been given, it is proved that the accused has given a wrong statement, he is forced to confess by cruel torture (namely, by standing on a red-hot plate barefooted, by besmearing the entire body to the feet with hot mud, by winding a rope with knots around the head, etc.). His confession is noted down in a book and presented to the assembled judges, who thereupon in accordance with this, pass sentence and see it carried out. But great crimes are submitted to the king and the condemned is pardoned, kept in prison, or executed in conformity with the sentence, which is in accordance with the rigorous or merciful nature of the king. All criminal cases are usually punished more severely than necessary. Seldom the prisoners are punished with fines or simple deportation, but usually they are banished to deserted places in the interior as slaves carrying chains, their properties are confiscated, hands, feet and tongue cut off, fried in



a pan, overpoured with oil and burnt alive, quartered, beheaded, cut into two pieces, and other severe executions. But in case of adultery the accused, in conformity with the laws of the country, must be thrown in front of an elephant in order to be put to death by that terrible monster. From that moment the property of the killed person belongs to the king.

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**Second Part**  
 telling about  
 the ecclesiastical affairs,  
 the religion  
 and the  
 temples.

The inhabitants of Siam are heathens and superstitious servants of idols. So that throughout the whole country there are many large and small temples, built expensively and ingeniously of stone, lime and wood. The appearance of these temples is often more beautiful than that of churches in Europe, only they are dark as no glass is used. The roofs are covered with red tiles, some with planks and lead. Within the jurisdiction of Judia are the four principal temples of the whole country, namely the king's temple, wat Sy-serpudt, the Nappetat, wat Deun ( which temple is devoted to the moon and where the highest school is established ) and Thimphiathey. Besides these there are inside the town and in the neighbourhood 400 other beautiful temples, which are adorned with many gilded towers and pyramids. Each temple is filled with innumerable idols made of various minerals, metals, and other materials. Some temples are covered with gold, silver, and copper, so that they look elegant and ingenious and costly. In each temple is a big idol, 4, 6, 8, to 10 fathoms in height usually sitting on an elevated altar. One of these sitting idols would even reach 20 fathoms or 120 feet when standing upright. Under the seats of the idols in some temples, big treasures of gold and silver have been buried, also many rubies, precious stones and other jewels have been put away in the highest tops of some towers and pyramids and

these things remain there for always for the service of the gods. Among the Siamese fabulous stories about the immense value of these treasures are told. The people say that with the treasures lying under the idols of wat Sy-ser-pudt and Nap-petat a ruined kingdom could be restored. As the people told me, in the pointed tower Thimphiathey there is a costly ruby, the value of which can hardly be estimated and in order that nobody may take away the buried riches from the gods there are many dead guards placed there. This is to be explained in the following manner. If any mandarin—he may be rich or poor—has the intention to make an offering of a human body to the temple or to the gods, he chooses one or more of the most faithful, most able and most capable men amongst his slaves; he treats this slave like his own child and shows him much friendship. By this the slave becomes so attached to his master, that he cannot refuse any request. And when the day has come that the treasures will be offered, the master tells this to his slave and asks him to be the guard of the offerings. The slave has been won so strongly by the honor which he has enjoyed that he accepts the proposition voluntarily. He is then cut into two pieces at once, thrown into a pit and the money is placed on his dead body. The spirit of the killed person goes into a terrible monster, who has the power to guard the offerings so that they cannot be stolen by anybody.

**Wonders of a  
ruined temple  
in Judia.**

The Siamese count the ages, or time, by thousand years and at the end of a period of a thousand years, they say that the whole country, with everything that is in it, is going to be reborn and renewed, the nature of the people as well as the customs and laws. In the opinion of the Braman priests no king nor mandarius will



remain, but everything will come to an end and must be renewed. Last year was the last of the previous age, and for this reason the king ordered all the Bramans and mandarins before him and requested the opinion of each of them, concerning the end of the ages. The Bramans persisted in what has just been mentioned and confirmed their opinion with such strong reasons, that the mandarins all kept silent and did not express their thought. This displeased the king (as he feared that he would have to lose the worldly crown) and he himself made an explanation on the prophecy of a thousand years, saying that he would be the renewer of everything, and that the people, by building and repairing of many new temples, had to serve the gods, so that everybody might receive rewards for his good deeds from the gods. In such a way the king thought to change everything spiritually. In view of this the king had all the principal temples in the entire country, and even in uninhabited places, repaired. In Judia, on the courtyard of the king's palace, stands a temple of such extraordinary size and height that a similar cannot be found in the whole country. The pillars are more than three fathoms thick. But everything is decayed by age and as some people say it has been thrown down by thunder and lightning. This temple is of renowned holiness and it is said that great treasures are buried under this temple. But the priests have an old prophecy that this temple may not be rebuilt unless by the king who is a true heir and comes from the old pure stock. Many of the previous kings have commenced the repair of the temple, but everybody who worked at it died soon. The chiefs, overseers, and work-masters lost their senses, got mad, blind, and so on, so that after loss of many persons the work had to be stopped. Although the prophecy and what has happened in connection with this temple, is well known to the

king and he is also convinced that he has usurped the crown unlawfully, his arrogance and pride have carried him so far, that last year he had the intention to begin with the repair of the temple. But by the dissuasion of the Braman priests (who said that it was not a lucky time) and of other resolute mandarins it was prevented. Still much more remains to be told of this temple, but as I could not guarantee the truth of everything, I hope to be excused for stopping here.

**The houses  
and life of the  
priests.**

The houses and monasteries of the priests are built all round the temples. Usually they are made of wood. The front and back are ingeniously and expensively decorated with panels and relief work, the inside and outside are beautifully gilded and painted; the roof is covered with tiles; the corners are plastered with lime and are provided with nicely cut wooden decoration. In some houses the beams, roofbeams and the tile-laths are entirely gilded or painted. In these monasteries are many priests (who live in peace), who are divided under priors and other ecclesiastical officers (who rule with great discipline and have much power), and they again have to obey the highest regents, namely the four bishops of the principal temples of Judia. The bishop of the Nappetat has the supreme dignity.

The ecclesiastical power of these bishops is astonishingly great, their person is held in great respect and honor but they have to obey the king in worldly affairs. In Judia there are about 20,000 ecclesiastics. Their number in the whole country cannot be exactly ascertained but without doubt it is more than four times the number in Judia. All monks, without any exception, are clad in bad and common yellow linen cloth; only a few principal ones have a red cloth over the right shoulder. Their heads are shaved. The most



learned become priests, and from these priests the chiefs of the temples are chosen, who are held in high honour by the people. Marriage is forbidden to the ecclesiastical persons under penalty of being burned. Also conversation with women is forbidden but (as their weakness is well known), they may leave the priesthood, which is done by many out of sensuality. But when tired of marriage they may put on the priestly robes again, and even persons who do so are kept in great honour. In all monasteries the headpriests, priests, clerks, and temple servants read and sing during the evening and the morning, they do not accumulate any treasures, nor are they eager for any other worldly goods or riches. They live partly on what the king and the mandarins bestow on them, also on fruits and profits derived from the grounds which belong to the church. But most they receive from the common people, who furnish them with food and other necessities. From each monastery each morning some priests and clerks are sent out with a wallet. But they do not collect more than is sufficient for one day. They are not allowed to drink wine or spirits, but only ordinary water or coconut water, and they may partake only of common food, and when the sun has passed the zenith they may only chew some betel. From all this we may conclude that the priests have to live in a very modest way. Besides these male priests, there are connected with the principal temples many old women, who also have to shave their heads. They are dressed in white linen, and they are present at all sermons, songs, ceremonies and other occasions connected with the religion. They are not, however, subject to any extraordinary rules, and they do everything out of religious fervour and free will. Also they have to live on the alms which they receive from the people. There are no young maidens or pregnant women among them.

**Foundations of  
their heathen  
religion.**

These heathens have various opinions about their religion, but in general they believe that there is a supreme god (and many other smaller gods) in the heaven, who is eternal, who has created everything and by His divine power maintains everything. Also they believe that the world will once perish by God's anger over human wickedness, but that the soul is immortal and on parting from the human body goes into all sorts of animals, as elephants, horses, cows and other cattle, and poultry, in conformity with their life on earth and what they have deserved from the Gods. But after the world has been destroyed every body gets alive again and receives rewards or punishments in conformity with their deeds. The welldoers afterwards will live happily with the gods, and the sinners will be tortured terribly by the devils. This is the principal foundation of their religion, the rules for which, they say, were written down more than two thousand years ago, and have been confirmed by many holy men. In remembrance of this the people erected images for these holy men (as if they were small gods) and worship them superstitiously. Besides giving alms to the churches, the idols, the priests, and the poor people, they try to do works of mercy for everything that has received life. They try to please god and the heaven in order to escape from the terrible torments of the devils. The most devout and religious people, on festivals of the temples, let free many birds and fishes, which for this purpose are sold in great number. For it is sin only to help the human beings, and not the animals at the end of their completed time, as it is believed that persons after their death are transformed into animals. All evils which man commits by his actions are also in the Siamese religion reckoned as sins. Notwithstanding this such sins are very often committed. The priests are continually trying to better the



people by way of precept in their way of living, preaching, teaching and warning, but often with little success. For seldom are people persuaded to show penitence. It is more the king's strong hand and tyrannic rule, which brings people to repentance and to amend their ways.

**The principal  
ceremonies  
and the  
devotion.**

On new moon, full moon and quarter moon the people very devoutly visit the temples, usually four days a month. Several times in the year (particularly in March and October) there are extraordinary and large festivities, which are celebrated very solemnly by a great many people (yes, even by women and distinguished mandarins who else go out seldom). The principal ceremonies of this heathen religion (which is read by priests from printed (*sic*) books) are doctrines, as pointed out here afore, concerning the praise, the life, and the deeds of old famous kings, songs, morning and evening tides, offerings to the priests, which is done in the temples with many torches, candles, incense, herbs, and flowers. Before the commencement and the end of the sermon, a great number of people walk with folded hands and bent bodies around the temples and pay great respect to the idols, who represent their Opuis (*sic*) the supreme god, the smaller gods, and holy men. By doing so the people believe to keep off the ire of the gods against human wickedness. In order better to chastise themselves, they refuse to take several kinds of food every year for three successive months. But the present king is so devout that he has added to this another three months of fasting, during which time nobody (on penalty of his life) may catch any cattle or fish, and especially he is not allowed to kill any living being or to drink spirit. They have to subsist simply on the products which God and nature have made grow in the fields. This of course is a wrong compassion and a strange super-

stitution, as man has to suffer in order to protect the animals. They also pray for the souls, and worship the people who have passed away. These are superstitiously washed, shaven, anointed, prayed over, lamented daily and preserved with many ceremonies, until the best friends, and slaves (men and women) have shaved their heads and have prepared everything for the burning ceremony. This ceremony which has to be done in conformity with the position of the deceased, takes much time, so that sometimes the deceased remains 12 to 13 months, above the earth in a box. At last the deceased is burned near the temple, with prayers of the priests, theatrical performances, music of many melodious instruments, fireworks and other demonstrations, in conformity with the importance of the deceased. The ashes are then collected and kept in a little box. After being anointed this box is then buried near the temple. On these burying places wealthy people build elegant and costly gilded pyramids. From the above we may conclude that great riches is spent and thrown away. There is no other thing in the world for which the Siamese care more than the burying of the body after death. However poor and foolhardy they may have been during their life, they will always try to keep something, that they may be burned. But those who get drowned by accident, who get killed, or who die of small-pox, may not be burned, but must be thrown in the river or in the wilderness. But sometimes they are secretly burned (without the presence of anybody and far from the temples), which the priests connive at.

**About the  
moderate  
respect for  
other religions.**

Although among the clergymen and worldly persons there are opinions prevalent about their religion, they live very quietly and there are no disputes, quarrels, ruptures, or sects. They behave very moderately even against the Christian and Ma-



homedan religion, without blaming anybody's opinion, and even less do they try to force anybody's conscience. But the present king has tried to force some Moors (of Mahomedan parents, born in Siam) to embrace the heathen religion. The priests opposed this, saying that one can come into heaven in various religions and that many religions are agreeable to the supreme Master. However their own religion is the best of all, of which they are firmly convinced by laws and books, and changes will not easily be made. And to prove this they refer to the attempts with little or no result of the Portuguese, who with several of their priests have tried to introduce the Roman Catholic religion. Also the Mahomedans did not have any success, notwithstanding they as well as the Portuguese were allowed free execution of their religion. The little success of the Portuguese we cannot ascribe to the little ardor of their priests, but principally to the old customs and the obstinacy of the Siamese.

**Terrible sacrifice in order to get reconciled with the devil.**

As already described, these heathens are very superstitious and devout, however they serve (against the opinion and the learning of many priests) in public the hellish devil, who is (in the opinion of the priests) the cause of the evil, like the Gods of the good. In case of sickness they have strange feasts with many ceremonies, gambling, drinking, dancing, jumping. Several fruits and animals are offered and when these animals die when the dancing and singing is going on, this is a sign that they have reconciled the devil and that the sick will recover. When sacrificing to the devil, often such terrible abominations and incredible actions are done, that it is not proper for a Christian to look at them. For at these feasts sometimes women are engaged, who by old age are bent and stiff and who are incapable of dancing, but who by influence of the devil are able to make such

demonstrations and strange jumps, as is not in accordance with their weak nature and high age. If young maidens are taken to dance, it is believed that the devil gets more pleasure out of it, yes even that he has also carnal intercourse with them. With such offerings and sacrifices the poor, strayed people try to reconcile their mighty Master and for this reason we may conclude that they are delivered entirely to the wickedness of the devils, and that the Almighty has been rejected entirely.

**Third Part**  
telling about  
the life of the  
nobles and  
the common  
people, good  
breeding and  
condition of  
the Siamese.

In general the Siamese are well proportioned, their stature is pretty long, brown between black and yellow. They are cowardly soldiers, but cruel towards the subdued enemy, or to those who are rejected by the king and who are found guilty by justice. Also they are proud and fancy that no other nation can be compared with them, and that their laws, customs, and learning are better than anywhere else on earth. Their bearing and face are proud and they are decent in conversation. Their character is volatile, cowardly, distrustful, dissembling, deceitful, talkative and full of lies. Besides this the men are in general lazy and slow, so that the women, ( who are well built and pretty ), do most work in the fields. These women also row the boats on the river and besides many other things and ( in contrary with other nations ) do the same work as their slaves and take care of their family with great diligence. On the other hand many men do nothing else but attending at court, and army services or walk idle in the streets. They love to sit chatting in the public court, in the public houses or in their houses, and they use their time very badly and idly.

**Their houses**  
and house  
furniture.

The houses in Judia are not built along both sides of the streets; and after the fashion in India they are not placed in proper



order. The houses of the mandarins and rich men are made of wood; the wide walls and front are provided with panels and the roofs are covered with red earthen tiles. Nothing on these houses is gilt or painted, for to such only the king and the priests are competent. But the common and poor people live very poorly in reed and bamboo houses. The roofs are covered with cocos leaves or bad tiles, the floor of all houses is usually 4 to 6 feet above the ground and the houses have no story or garret. Most times there is a front and a back door but these are far from being good. Their sleeping rooms and resting places are bad, without any decoration and without curtains; the people sleep on stitched matrasses or twisted such. The noble, rich and poor alike, do not need more furniture than is necessary for sleeping, cooking and eating.

**Their daily food  
and with what  
food they  
entertain their  
friends.**

They are not excessive with their food, but usually only take ordinary rice, dried as well as fresh and salt fish and vegetables. As sauce or dessert they take bladsjan (prepared of shrimps, crabs, mussels and fish mixed with some pepper and salt), fish and pepper sauce, which has a very bad smell, but which they find delicious. They have no knowledge of cakes or other dainties. Their drink is usually ordinary or cocos water; during recent years however the habit of drinking arak has increased among all classes, very much by the bad example which the king has given in drinking so much. For towards evening both the common and the high class of people usually drink, filling their stomach. But after dinner they don't use any spirits, as such would be sinning: for the rice is one of their sacred things and may not be made heavier by arak. During fasting time they have to be very modest with food and drinks, but during festivities they eat and drink lavishly. The rich people treat

each other with good food, but the cakes of sugar and cakes fried in cocos oil are bad. Also there are all sorts of native fruits and Chinese sweets and distilled water, which is strong but not delicious.

The common people treat each other with their ordinary food, tobacco, betelnut and fruits; but they also drink so much arak or wine until they are full and drunk.

**Their dress**

As the climate of this country is hot the people dress light. Men as well as women cover the lower part of the body with a painted cloth and they pay much attention to this part of their dress. The men wear also a short shirt with half sleeves. The feet are not shod nor the head covered. The hair is carefully cut all around the head up above the ears, getting shorter close to the neck, and the lower part is shaven. They have no beards, and when the mandarins go to the palace or to the court they put on a fine linen cap of pyramidical shape and bind it with a twisted string around the chin, in order that it may not drop when they pay reverence to the king.

The women hang a thin cloth with both ends over the shoulders so that the breasts are covered. As decoration they wear a golden pin in their hair and a few golden rings on the fingers. This is the common dress of the rich and the poor, and no difference in the value of the cloth and the number of rings can be noted. But the powerful and rich people are easily recognised by their suite of servants, of which they are very proud. The nobles and mandarins and also their wives are accompanied by 10 to 40 slaves male or female (the number is in accordance with their state); the wealthy people go out with less servants, while the common men and women take one to three servants along.



**Marriages  
among people  
of quality  
and Matrimony.**

Although the Siamese are luxurious and voluptuous they keep marriage in high value. The adulterers (men or women) are in conformity with the written laws condemned to die and must be killed by elephants. There are various customs with regard to matrimony, for the children of the most influential men when coming of age are often by the will or the consent of the king married to each other. Also widows of deceased or punished mandarins have been given to other mandarins as first or principal wife, or as small wife, and for fear of the king they will not easily leave their new husbands and marry somebody else. But usually marriages are made with the consent of the parents or friends, and among powerful people, people of quality, and the rich it is customary that each of the two parties gives the other goods to a certain value.

The marriages are performed without religious ceremonies, but there are always music and wedding festivities. It is always possible to divorce by partition of goods and children for various reasons, and this can be done without scandal or punishment by the magistrate for unlawful acts. The husband may, besides the woman whom he has married (even when a wife has been given to him by the king) without asking anybody's consent, take as many small wives in his house as he likes, but all these women must be obedient to the principal wife, who is satisfied with having power over the other women and with the idea that her children will be the heirs of their father's goods, for the children of the concubines have to be satisfied with only small portions.

**Marriages of  
the common  
and low people.**

Among the low people there are other customs. The bridegroom comes first to an understanding with the parents and the friends of the bride, and buys her for a certain sum. The daughter is then given away and a small feast is arranged.

The marriage can always be dissolved with consent of both parties and with partition of the children. This always is done with sufficient reasons and without scandal. After the death of the parents, each of the children takes the same part of the goods, only the eldest son enjoys some advantages. But the low class of people very seldom leave any means, for if they have some fortune, they use it in order to receive some honorable title from His Majesty. They offer the king all that they possibly can spare in exchange for his favour. With what remains, they entertain the priests and make offerings to the temples and the idols. If after this still something remains, this is spent for the burning ceremonies of their dead bodies. There are many other customs in connection with marriages, but they are not nice to describe and they would be too tedious for the reader, and for this reason I break off here.

#### **Inheritance.**

According to Siamese laws the property of the aristocracy is divided upon death in three parts.

One part goes to the King. Another part goes to the priests and cremation ceremonies. The third part goes to the principal wife and children, and out of this last part a small share is given to the concubines and their children. But this rule is not strictly followed. As a rule it is left to the discretion of the heirs and also depends on the number of concubines and children.

As to this last third part the concubines and their children having received their shares, the remainder is divided into two equal parts, of which one goes to the mother and the other to the children.

This only holds good when the father has not disposed of his property by will. But owing to the avarice of the King the old laws have little effect. When the King hears of the death of any mandarin or other high class person who is rich, the principal



wives and the principal persons of the deceased's household are arrested and minutely questioned as to the estate of the deceased, and they are often brought to confess by horrible tortures. Then, deceased's property goes to the King, only a small portion being given to the wives and children.

If any person of the rich or middle class (not being a slave of the King) dies without having made a will and being childless his heirs are his children (*sic*). If there are no children, the heirs are the brothers and sisters.

In case there are neither brothers nor sisters the parents receive half of the estate, the other half going to the husband or wife whichever survives the other. If it is the husband who is still living, a small portion of the estate is given to the concubines and their children with the consent of the friends, but if the husband dies first the concubines and the children receive a small share of the joint property (?)

In case there are no heirs as above mentioned, the heirs are the children of brothers and sisters. No relatives of a more distant degree can inherit. In such case everything goes to the King.

It happens very often that married people having no children set apart their personal property and earnings, each of them providing for himself or herself; he or she dying intestate the heirs get the property which deceased had amassed and earned in his life time.

**Education of  
the children.**

The Siamese have several ways of educating their children, and I will only describe shortly how the children of decent people are educated. The sons are kept idly in the houses of their parents until they have reached their fifth or sixth year, and then they are sent to the priests in order to learn to read, to write and other necessary things. These boys have

also to assist the priests during their services and during the time that they are under the control of the priests they very seldom go to their homes. As soon as they know to write and read fairly well, they take up a profession or any other business. But usually, the ablest in order to learn more (the priests are the teachers for both the secular and the religious learning) are kept in the monasteries and they continue their study. When they have learned enough to fill government positions, they are glad to put off the yellow robes. But many bright boys and those who hope to be promoted, remain in the monasteries in order to become chiefs of the temples or of schools or to become priests. The daughters stay continuously in the houses of their parents; they very seldom learn to write and read, but in their youth they are taught good sewing, spinning, etc.

**The boasting  
and  
unfaithfulness  
of the Siamese.**

In general, the Siamese—they may be nobles, influential men, common, or poor people—are boasting among each other as well as against strangers about their good-nature, uprightness, love for truth and faithfulness and how honoured and loved they are by the king, and how feared they are by their equals, and honoured and loved by their inferiors. The prominent men also have the peculiarity that they are very quick in offering their services, especially to foreigners, if these have to go for important matters to the king or if they have petitions to send to the king. This friendship lasts as long as some presents are received, but after the petitioners have been kept in uncertainty for a long time, they impudently acknowledge their incapability with many excuses. With pretence of good reason they say, that in consequence of many considerations they are sorry not to be able to fulfil their intention. These people are unfaithful, deceitful and treacherous, yes, even the king is not upright-minded, and keeps



his word only as long as he is able to think with his drunken brains, as has been shown clearly in the case of oya Poucelouk, who has placed the crown on the king's head and who has helped him to become from an insignificant man king of such a powerful kingdom. The king has often drunk the blood of oya Poucelouk, and with an oath promised, that nobody could do any harm to this oya, and no hair on his head would be hurt. But notwithstanding his oath, he had him thrown into prison for a simulated reason. After many supplications (yes, even of Poucelock's child) his Majesty pardoned him in the morning and promised that he would be taken out of the prison before the evening. But the very same day he ordered the oya to be cut into two pieces. Many more such examples could be told, but as I am sure that the reader would not care to read them, I will not write them down, and in conclusion I will only mention that one cannot rely upon the Siamese nation and that nobody can be trusted, or believed.

**Fourth Part**  
 concerning  
 the Commerce,  
 further what  
 trade is done in  
 Siam and by  
 what nations.

In several provinces, towns, and small places of the kingdom trade with various merchandise is transacted, and especially in Judia. There we find cloths from Choromandel and Surratte, made and painted after the fashion in Siam. These goods are in great quantities imported by the Moors, the Gentiles, the Siamese and other nations at Tannasary. The trade in these goods did not bring much profit to the Company, and as long as the Netherlands comptoir is established in Massulipatan, this cannot be remedied. If this comptoir could be transplanted to a more favourable place, Siam would prove to us to be a splendid market for cloths. Rough and fine porcelain and a few other Chinese goods are every year brought by the Company's ship from Tajouan and with 2 to 3 junks from Chinscheeuw. By this continuous supply and the little demand, the market was to such a degree overstocked with these

goods, that nobody could make sufficient profit. Further there are in Siam.....mace, light and heavy peppers, sandal wood, Japanese copper, iron and some small miscellaneous goods, but European manufactures or other goods are not in favor, except red cloth, and small mirrors in small quantity. But the king is a fervent lover of jewels, especially big, nicely watered, pointed diamonds, while tables or diamonds cut in facettes, however beautiful they may be, are not in favor and cannot fetch the market value.

**The inland trade and why it has decreased considerably.**

Also in native products, such as sappangh and ager wood, a great trade used to exist and the king still enjoys great profits from this trade as only the king's factors may sell these products. In former time a trade also existed in black sugar, roe skins and a great quantity of deer skins, but principally in all kinds of provisions, so that yearly more than two thousand loads used to be exported to the neighbouring countries. In consequence of the flourishing trade Judia was frequented by land and by water by many nations from Asia and also by European nations and by heathen, Moorish, and Christian merchants. But during the negligent rule of the present king the trade has suffered much by monopolies and other hindrances. Also the bad crops of some time ago had their influence on the trade. But the main cause of the present state of things is the king, who in consequence of his usurped power and ideas has kept his country closed, so that during the last five years not even 2000 loads of grains have been exported to foreign countries. This quantity is very small in comparison with former years. Through the strange actions of the king and many vexations, many foreign merchants left the country; while some of them were sent away or expelled, so that at present there are in Siam only a few rich merchants ( two or three rich Moors and a few rich Chinese ).



**With whom and what trade his Majesty's factors did in former times.**

In former years the king's factors used to trade with Pegu, Ava, Jangoma, Langhsiangh and other neighbouring places in order to exchange cloths against jewels, gold, benjamin, gommalacca and wax. This trade produced immense profits, so that throughout the whole kingdom there was a flourishing trade. However the trade has decreased considerably by the uncertain friendship of the Prince of Ava and by the fact, that the highlanders do not come any more. Through the Siamese king himself this state of things was caused, but, notwithstanding this, Siam is a country where still much trade is done.

**Earnings of the inhabitants.**

Inside the towns and other centres of population, the people earn their living by trade, court services, navigating with junks, barges, and prauws, fishery and industries, and handicraft by making of ingeniously worked golden and silver objects. The inhabitants of the villages and the country do slave services, work their fields, cultivate all sorts of grains, especially rice, and also great quantities of wet indigo. Further they plant all sorts of fruit trees and especially the cocos, siri, and penang trees. They also keep ponies, cows, pigs, goats, geese, ducks, chickens, doves and many other tame animals. All provisions (during fertile years, because eatables are dependent on the high or low price of the rice) are very cheap and in consequence, with the abundance of products, much can be exported to neighbouring countries.

**The materials of the country.**

Besides Siam being very fertile and there being an abundance of victuals, there are also many other materials such as bricks, tiles, timber, a little iron (coming from the province of Corassema) and other materials in abundance necessary for the building of forts, churches, houses, vessels, junks, barges, and all other sorts of boats. For the working of these labour can be found in Siam. Although the country

is closed, as there is a sufficient provision of salt, the inhabitants can sustain themselves with the materials and fruits of their own country. They can thus do very well without the products of other countries, for a sufficient quantity of cotton, necessary for the clothing of the people could be easily produced throughout the whole country.

**That Siam has  
no great naviga-  
tion of itself.**

Although Siam is favourably situated for navigation and the kings (including the present one) have been great traders, the Siamese, during the past and present ages have never traded to far away countries. The king and his brother, the prince, every year, send a ship with a valuable cargo over Tanassary to Choromandel, also to Canton, and 2 or 3 junks to other places in China (for which his Majesty by an old treaty has the privilege from the Chinese kings.) Also to Couchinchina, Benjermassingh, Jamby and Lygoor little junks were sent from time to time, principally for the import of the black pepper of good quality for the use of the Chinese inhabitants. This trade does certainly give off big profits to the king and His Highness ; but on the other hand it is a hindrance for the private merchants. By the Chinese in Siam also every year one to three small junks, loaded with sappangh, lead, rice, paddy and other products are sent to Couchinchina.

From the above may be judged the amount of trade done by the Siamese themselves.

**That in former  
times foreign  
traders used to  
frequent Siam  
pretty much,  
and the reason  
why this has  
grown less.**

Siam used to be visited pretty frequently by foreign ships, namely from Jamby, Malacca, Patany, Borneo, Makkasser and most all southern places. Especially ships from Jamby, Malacca and Patany frequented Siam for provisions and good commodities. But within a few years the navigation has grown less by the quarrels with the Portuguese, the rebellion of Patany, and by the fact, that the king very sparsely gives licenses for export of grains, and has vexed the foreign traders covetously. Also the



Japanese used to appear yearly with a large supply of money, which they spent in buying deer and roe skins, sappang wood, ager wood and other merchandise. But also this trade was stopped by the hostile action of the king against the Japanese in 1630 and by the proclamation of the emperor of Japan.

The Chinese from Chincheeu and Couchinchina were trading in former days to a greater extent to Siam than at present. They used to bring pretty large cargoes of all kinds of Chinese goods to this country, and returned with big loads of sappang wood, lead, and other merchandise. By the trade of these nations to Siam the income of the king and the welfare of the people increased and trade flourished. But as the present king preferred to force the market by his factors, the prices of the goods which are imported by the Moors, the Chinese, etc., and further lays taxes upon them and does not pay market prices, nobody comes to Siam unless compelled to do so. This is the reason, that the king's resources have grown less and that all trade has suffered.

**With whom the Siamese king keeps correspondence to promote his trades.**

The Siamese king has during his reign made alliances and has kept up friendship with the kings of Rammaradt Cotopsia, on the coast of Choromandel, and with the Nawab of Bengal. Every year ambassadors are sent out from both sides with letters full of praisings and compliments and also with small presents. This is only done to promote trade, for the Moorish and Gentile merchants often try to secure the assistance of the embassy in order to pay less duties and to become more free in their trade. The Siamese subjects in the above named places try to get the same advantages. So that this friendship is not kept up for political considerations, but only to get more profits. The governors of Paliacata, seeing that their neighbours

through the gorgeous embassy had gained the king's favour and enjoyed many profits, have imitated the same comedy and have abased themselves so far, that besides a rich present, they offered the king during five successive years the golden and silver flowers. This means, that the town Paliacatta is subjected to the Siamese Crown. The principal object was to get a few elephants. It was dishonour for the towns and Moorish castes and by this action great disrespect was also shown towards the (Dutch) Company's servants. For now the arrogant Siamese believe, that they have the supreme power, not only over Paliacatta, but also over the Netherlands fortress and everything connected with our trade. It means also that the Company's servants reside out there under the shadow of the king. Notwithstanding their humbleness the ambassadors from Paliacatta were so little respected, that they have never been allowed to appear in audience before the king or His Majesty's council, but they have only been received by the Berckelagh in the public court.

**The exports.**

On several occasions we have spoken about the fertility and the products of Siam. During good crops two thousand loads of rice and even more can be spared and exported. Also we have mentioned that peas, beans, bacon, arak, butter, sugar, tamarind, dried and salt fish and many other things are in abundance in Siam. We have already pointed out from which provinces or towns the most common necessities come, but we still have to note down what export cargoes to the fatherland Siam can produce.

2000 to 3000 picul lead in small pieces.

1500 to 2000 picul tin.

30000 to 40000 picul sappan wood.

50 to 60 picul elephant tusks.

60 to 70 picul ager wood.

10 to 12 picul gitta gomma.

70 to 80 picul tsieran or black wet wax.



3000 to 4000 picul black cane sugar.  
 600 to 800 picul Cambodian nuts.  
 120000 to 130000 pieces deer skins.  
 35000 to 40000 pieces roe skins.  
 200 to 300 buffalo skins.  
 2000 to 3000 buffalo horns.  
 200 to 300 rhinoceros horns.  
 1500 to 20000 pots of coconut oil.  
 150 to 2000 pots of cow butter.  
 5000 to 6000 pots of wet indigo.  
 400 to 500 pieces Teak posts. (? Dutch quiaty).  
 800 to 1000 pieces of Teak planks (? Dutch  
 Jaty).  
 Quantities of bent wood.  
 3000 to 4000 pieces of bird skins.  
 1500 to 20000 coyang salt.

For gold, benjin, gommemalacca, heavy peppers and much other merchandise no reliable account can be given, because these are products which mostly come from far away places.

**That Siam is favorably situated for shipbuilding.**

Taking into consideration that Siam has a river and as there is an abundance of timber, moss, cotton, galla galla, etc., small as well as large ships can be launched successfully. The free people build their ships, junks, and other vessels, and also the company has often ordered boats to be built.

**The money, the measures and the weights.**

The Siamese money is made of very fine silver, has the proper weight, is cast in round shape and is minted with the king's seal. The common people are very curious about such seals, so that one has great trouble in paying it out, for out of ten pieces they sometimes do not want to take a single one, not because the silver alloy is not good, but because the seal of the king is not according to the rule. There are three kinds of coins, namely ticals, maas, and foeanghs, which in Netherlands money are worth 30,  $7\frac{1}{2}$ , and  $3\frac{3}{4}$  stuiver. Usually the Siamese make their accounts in catties of silver, each

of which is worth 20 tayls of 6 guilders, or 48 reals of 50 stuiver each. Each tayl is worth 4 ticals, each tical 4 maas or 8 foeangs. Only these coins are used in trade and for payment. But for the use of the common people, small shells are used, which come from Manilla and Borneo. 600 to 700 of these are worth one foeang, and the daily provisions and other little necessaries are paid with them. With 5 to 20 of these shells, or even with less, the people may buy on the market sufficient supplies for one day.

All grains as peas, beans, paddy, and rice are measured by coyang, sat, and sioup. One sioup of rice is almost one catty weight, one sat is equal to 64 sioup, and one coyang is 40 sat. One coyang of Siamese rice weighs about 3000 Dutch pounds. But there are two kinds of coyangs, namely sombrat (which is the king's measurement) and sarra (with which all grains are sold among the common people and to the foreigners). Also the sat and the sioup are much used for measuring rice. One sat sombrat holds 40 sioup, so that 8 coyangs sombrat are equal to 5 coyangs sarra

All liquids such as black wax, butter, oil, indigo, etc., are also measured by the sioup. One Siamese pot is equal to 45 sioup, and in buying, care must be taken not to be deceived with too small pots. When measuring lands, towers, temples, monasteries or things which are sold by measure, the fathom, asta, and inch are used. 24 inches is one asta (sok), and 4 asta one fathom (wa). One fathom is equal to about  $5\frac{1}{2}$  Rynland feet. All timber, as posts, planks, etc., are measured by canat and Siamese inches. One canat is long  $3\frac{1}{2}$  fathom, thick 12 and broad 14 Siamese inches.

But all rough materials, like sappangh, tin, lead are weighed by picol (118 Dutch pounds).



**The manner of writing of the Siamese. They have no fundamental knowledge of the orthography.**

The Siamese do not write with characters like the Japanese and the Chinese, but in lines, and form the words with their A. B. C. of 46 letters. Although they are very fond of their way of writing, they have no fundamental knowledge of the orthography. Only at the end of the words they use the correct characters [ according to grammar ] but they do not make [ in the middle of the word ] any difference between vowels and consonants. They have also no knowledge of proper names and do not begin sentences with capital letters. When writing they do not use signs such as apostrophes full stops, colons, parentheses, or hyphens, but they know how to express the past, the present, and the future time. They also make difference between the masculine and the feminine. God, emperor, king, and everything that is procreating and not generating, is masculine; the moon, the earth, the sea, and everything that is producing and not multiplying, is feminine. A difference is also made between the singular and the plural.

Many of their characters are not unlike the Roman characters, so that the Siamese writing is elegant to look at.

**The way of writing in ordinary cases.**

All daily happenings, (messages, sessions of the court, etc.) are written as open letters on bad paper with a little round pen of soft baked earth. The signature is wanting, but the letter is confirmed with a mark or with a seal, with which the king has honoured the writer. Those who have not received any mark from the king, use a little cross or stroke where the name ought to be.

**The way of writing for important cases.**

Everything concerning the trade, the courts, and other public places, is daily noted down in books of black paper and every day these books are closed and sealed.

But all definite and important affairs such as letters from the king and mandarins, commands, ordinances, sentences of law, contracts, prescriptions, obligations and so on, are written on fine Chinese paper with black ink. When the letter consists of more than one sheet of paper, each sheet is signed at the corner, so that it can not be changed for another or forged.

**The Siamese have an ingenious but long method of writing.**

When writing letters in common as well as for important cases, they use a flowery but long-winded style, which does not in the least resemble the Netherlands way of writing. This of course causes much difficulty when transacting business. Another difficulty is that, every time a name is written, the various titles are also added, so that the letters are often filled with arrogant titles.

**The manner of book keeping.**

Although much trade is transacted in this country, and although there are among the king's factors very good merchants, they have a complicated and difficult method for making entries in their books. They have no knowledge of the Italian book keeping. Some have books according to the letter of their alphabet A., B., C., and others make all entries together in the form of a memorandum, so that when errors creep in, they have much trouble in looking through their accounts, and the books are corrected with much trouble.

**About the arithmetic.**

The Siamese have a fairly good knowledge of geometry and arithmetic, and they also know five rules, but they do not use them in the same way as the Europeans. They calculate by units, tens, hundreds, etc., and multiply and subtract by a cross, but this is done in such a peculiar way, that it can not be very well described. Also the method of dividing is not the same as ours, for instead of crossing the figures, they are rubbed out. The method of addition is almost similar to ours and the



units, numbers of ten, etc., are added separately, but the Siamese begin from the left side. Taken as a whole, the method of figuring is very correct, but slow.

**Historical  
description of  
the Siamese.**

However much old chronicles and trustworthy historians of the past, are witnesses of the times, councillors for the present and signposts for the future, the Siamese have little knowledge thereof. The position, Government, power, religion, manners and customs and other remarkable things of foreign or outlandish nations are unknown to them, they have also no curiosity to inquire into them: of antiquities of their country, of the beginning of war, of the conclusion of peace, of the loss of countries and towns, victories or defeats in battles, famous heroes or excellent persons in virtue and knowledge, etc., they have few descriptions, thus that their principal descriptions consist in the laws of the country, the fundamentals of their religion, the lives, deeds and praise of some dead kings whose fame was not so much based on Royal respect as on service rendered to the gods, temples and priests living in their country, and these descriptions were mostly committed to the care of the priests, by whom also their ceremonies, punishments, exhortations, consolations and instructions are formed. Thus amongst the nobility, the rich or civil population, not many chronicles or historical records are known, with exception of those which are reported verbally or are related in discourses.

**Cattle and  
some strange  
stories about  
them.**

Although I have already described shortly, what cattle and what wild and tame animals there are in Siam, I will extend this account in conformity with what I have seen and with information which I know to be reliable.

There are fine and big elephants in great number; some reach a height of 6 to 7 asta (9 to

10½ feet). I will not describe how these elephants are caught by artifice, are tamed, are fed, are housed, and are made to do several services; nor what power, intellect and other extraordinary qualities these animals may develop, as much has already been told about all this by others. I will only remark, that the king's elephants are held in such high value, that in case they get sick or if they have met with an accident, they have to be guarded and fed by the most prominent mandarins. Sometimes a white elephant is caught in Siam, and such an animal is considered as a *wonder* of nature by the Siamese and the neighbouring nations, and is honoured as a prince of the elephants.

Usually the Siamese kings have one white elephant in their court, which is there well lodged, ornamented, well treated and provided with attendants and a suite; the king often pays it a visit and the mandarins honour it, and it is fed from plates of pure gold.

In the commencement of the reign of the present king, a young white elephant was caught which suddenly died in 1633. His Majesty was so upset by this, that all the slaves, who had guarded and assisted the animal were executed. Besides this, the king paid reverence to the dead animal, ordered it to be buried near one of the most famous temples, and a small house of a pyramidal shape was built over the grave. But after it had been buried a short time, it was dug up and was burned with a splendor, even greater than that which ever has been displayed for the most famous mandarins. All remains which had not been consumed by the fire, were collected in a box, buried at the temple, and a beautiful pyramid was erected over it. The Siamese pretend that, besides royal dignity there is also something divine in these animals.



The people know how to appreciate the qualities of the white elephant; for not only is it respected for its white colour, but also for its natural intelligence and for its sensitiveness for honour and treatment. It becomes sad and melancholy when not properly honoured and treated, in which case the black elephants do not respect it like formerly. This seems fabulous but long experience has taught the Siamese to believe it. In 1635, in the month of May, a miracle happened. It was reported to the king that about 20 miles up the river, north of Judia, a white elephant was born in the jungle. His Majesty thereupon sent oya Poucelouck with four of the greatest mandarins at once to the spot in order to ascertain the facts. The men, having reached the indicated place, found the animal of the same appearance as had been reported to the king, and they sent at once word to Judia. His Majesty (thinking that great fortune had been bestowed on him) was very happy, and went accompanied by many mandarins and a brilliant suite to the place, in order to see the honoured animal and to bring it with much pomp to the town. But as soon as he had left his boat to inspect the Elephant, it turned black. The mandarins became thereby deadly frightened, as they expected that the king would say that they had deceived him. But oya Poucelouck regained his courage and reported what had happened. The king was as much surprised as astonished, and had the animal brought to Judia. After it had been out there for one night, it became copper red and it kept this colour for its life.

Oya Poucelouck himself has told me everything that has been described above. Although the story seems fabulous, I could not refrain from noting it down, because it was related to me by such a trustworthy man.

Last year a young white elephant was caught in the neighbourhood of Corassima ( near the mountains of Cambodia ) and the king was much rejoiced. As the animal was still too young to be sent down it was nursed there.

Besides the white elephant, the king has also in his court a full grown copper red one, which for its extraordinary size and beauty is honoured almost like a prince of the elephants. However it has less value than a white elephant, but it has a beautiful stall assigned to it and is often visited by the king and the mandarins. Also this elephant is fed from golden and silver plates and when it comes out it is beautifully ornamented with gold and precious jewels, so that those who have never seen it themselves would hardly believe it. Also about the red elephant wonderful stories are told, but as they are more or less like fables I deemed it better not to note them down.

There are also a great number of rhinoceros in Siam, they are very seldom caught alive, but are caught in snares and shot with a silver or tin musket bullet. Everything from these animals is held to be good medicine. The Siamese even collect their sweat. Further there are tigers, buffaloes, bulls, cows, cats, elks, deer and hinds in abundance, each of which is caught in a different way. They are killed on account of their skin. The Siamese told me that the farmers, who are used to go into the forest every day, are intrepid and do not fear the wildest or most cruel animal, and after avoiding the attack of the elephant or the springing of the tiger, they attack in their turn. There is also a multitude of buffaloes, oxen, cows, goats. The Siamese are also fond of riding. The tame buffaloes, oxen, and cows usually graze near the temples as they are dedicated to the gods. These animals are neither killed nor milked, so that only a small



number of milk-producing animals is raised and fed by the farmers. The Chinese and especially the Peguans keep many pigs. Of these pigs, the following fabulous story is known. When the boars are 2 to 3 months old, the testicles are cut out, so that nothing is left but the rod, but in spite of this, and taking into consideration the fertility of the country, they are still fit for procreation, and if anybody should inquire after an uncut boar, he would be sneered and laughed at.

The country is also full of all kinds of birds, as eagles, peacocks, geese, ducks, chickens, doves, sparrows, parrots, and others with beautiful feathers of various colours. The skins of these birds are very much in request by the Chinese. Crows are there in such an abundance as to my knowledge in no other place of the world, and these birds are so impudent as to take their food often out of shops and boats, yes, even from one's hands. This the owner allows willingly, as the idea is prevalent in Siam that the soul of man lives in these birds and for this reason the people only in case of necessity will do them any harm.

#### The crocodile

I have never heard about strange sea monsters in the sea around Siam, except that in the gulf and on the bar of Siam sometimes big fish, very much like whales, are seen. But in all small waters throughout the whole country, and particularly in the big river Menam, there are many crocodiles. The Siamese firmly believe that in the neighbourhood of Judia no crocodiles or beasts of prey may live, but that they are banished by the priests below Bangkok, outside Ban-thiau-phia. When it becomes known that a crocodile has killed and eaten a person, the animal is compelled by incantations to come to the surface to receive its punishment. In case it refuses to do so, other crocodiles are caught

in such numbers that the others force the evil-doer to appear.

The Siamese catch a crocodile in the following way. They take a dog, which by incantation of the priests has been prepared, bind a chain with a hook, through which a piece of bacon has been put, around the hind legs, hang its body with bells, wind around it some ropes, and pull it forward and backward, until the crocodile seduced by the sound of the bells goes eagerly towards the groaning dog, and devours the bacon. The hook remains in the throat and then the monster is seized, tied and killed like a worthless person. Many witnesses maintain that the people, living along the river, feed the crocodiles themselves. A result of this is, that the crocodiles become very tame and do not do harm to anybody. When the people bathe in the river, they often play with them. But it has happened often, that cattle have been surprised and devoured by them, while drinking out of a small stream. In case an unknown person drops into the water, close to some crocodiles, he will not be spared.

Many persons pretend that there are crocodiles with four eyes, of which two are in the front of the head and two at the back, and these monsters never go straight for their prey, but pass it by and bring it with the tail, in seizing it, to the mouth.

Although this description about the crocodiles may seem fabulous, all that has been told here is believed to be true by the Siamese.

For this reason I could not keep quiet about this matter, and I beg the willing reader not to take offence at it and to believe as much of what has been told as he may judge in conformity with the truth.



**Conclusion of  
this descrip-  
tion.**

Thus I have tried to give an account, in conformity with the truth and to my best knowledge, of the origin, the situation and customs in Siam, which I have studied with ardor during my stay in this country. If the reader does not find enough information in this book, I kindly refer him to the better and more detailed descriptions of other writers about these subjects.

The End.



## LIST EXPLANATORY OF WORDS



## NAMES OF PROVINCES AND TOWNS.

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Couseywan	Nagorn Sawarn
Corassima	Rāja Simā
Hongscha	Hong Sā
Bannae	Bān Nōy
Bouwerongh. Bordelough	Bhadhalung
Capheyn Batsjabonay	Kambheng
Judia	Ohayudliya
Jangema	Jiengmai
Leconsuan	Lang Suan
Kepenpit	Kambhengbhet
Martenaya	Mātaban
Melough	Mēglolng
Picelouck, Poucelouck, } Poncenough }	Blhitsanulok
Sorkelouck	Sawarngalok
Tanassary	Dhanasirin
Bion	Bān Dohn
Taatsyn	Dhā Chin
't Siaya	Jaiya



LIST EXPLANATION OF WORDS

**TITLES.**

Oya	Ok ya = Praya (Ok = Khun)
Awangh	Wang
Poelethip	Phonthep
Oubrad	Uparat
Sycry	Chakree
Ockhan	Ok Khun
Ocklangh	Ok Luang
Opan	Ok Phan
Opra	Ok Pra
Mathip Mamonty	Mahamontree

**OTHER WORDS.**

Nappetut	Na Pra Thate
Siserpuht	Sisampaphet
Pro, Boo, Dy Tsacua Kha chorab	Pra putta chao Kha chorap
Proom Can, Sey clæu Seycke, } Moom Klau	Thoea Klau, Sai Klao Sai Kramom
Traak'hausa ty-by-dy	Tra Kosadhipadi