

THE ORIGINS OF THE SUKHODAYA SCRIPT⁽¹⁾

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It is well known that Rāma Gāmhèn in his famous inscription definitely stated, that he was the inventor of the particular style of script of which that very same inscription affords the first known instance, and which ever since has been preserved by the Siamese as their national script.

What, however, Rāma Gāmhèn exactly said is, that he had invented ทูลเกล้าฯ ถวาย , that is to say that he had invented *this particular style of Tai script*, as we venture to translate his phrase in English. He did not say that he was the inventor of the Tai script, generally speaking; or, at any rate, his words admit of a construction which leaves us at liberty to imagine that before Rāma Gāmhèn's script there was some other Tai script on which Rāma Gāmhèn's rests.

Let us discuss then the question whether there was a Tai alphabet previous to Rāma Gāmhèn.

The first mention of that view is to be found in Aymonier's *Cambodge*, III pp. 701-703. Aymonier thought that some inscriptions recorded by the Mission Pavie (Mission Pavie, inscr. IV and XVI) as found in Northern Siam were older than Rāma Gāmhèn's and that consequently we had an authentic specimen of a Tai script anterior to Rāma Gāmhèn. It was eventually found that the inscriptions, on which Aymonier relied, were but recent inscriptions in a somewhat archaic style.

(1) We are indebted to Mr. R. S. le May for a revision of the manuscript of this paper, which was read at a Sectional Meeting of the Society, July 28, 1927.

However, in Mr. Finot's opinion, Aymonier's view must be correct, although not for the reasons on which Aymonier relied. In his "Recherches sur la Littérature laotienne," (BEFEO, XVII, v, p. 12), M. Finot says in substance that Aymonier was wrong in believing that these inscriptions were really older than Rāma Gāmhèn's, and that consequently we possessed specimens of the old Tai writing anterior to Rāma Gāmhèn, but that in itself his hypothesis is very probable.

Then M. Finot comes to a discussion as to what was Rāma Gāmhèn's contribution, and consequently as to what sort of script the older Tai writing was⁽¹⁾.

If Rāma Gāmhèn borrowed his script directly from the Khmer, why did he not adopt the monumental form of Khmer writing known through the greater number of Khmer inscriptions? Why did he choose a cursive form of Khmer script which, although it appears in some inscriptions, was considered inferior to the monumental form?

It has been proved beyond doubt by M. Finot's own disquisitions, that the Tai script known as Rāma Gāmhèn's script is based on a cursive form of the Khmer script.

As M. Finot thus puts the question, we can readily understand, if there was before Rāma Gāmhèn's time a Tai script (derived, it is true, from the Khmer script, but still, Tai already), why Rāma Gāmhèn chose that older Tai script as a basis for his own. We can easily understand how the older Tai script, being a non-official one, borrowed with a view only to meet business requirements and for private use, should be based on the unofficial form of Khmer script used for daily transactions. We can understand also why, there being a script with a national tradition attached to it already, it should be that one that Rāma Gāmhèn selected, as we have good reasons to imagine Rāma Gāmhèn as a Sovereign with strong national feelings. As an independent lord, Rāma Gāmhèn in forming his new official

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script (and a very clever device too) wished to have it clearly understood that it was something Tai in spite of the actual origin of the system being Khmer.

So far, therefore, we make the claim that Rāma Gāmhên's script was not an entirely new one, but an improved form of a Tai script in use before that King's time.

M. Finot describes that older proto-Siamese writing, as it may be termed to avoid ambiguity, as provided with the necessary means to render the main features of the language as regards vowels and tones. This formula is none too clear, but it is correct, in so far as we take it to mean that Rāma Gāmhên's contribution was to improve the tone notation, or better, to set it up altogether.

Indeed, Mr. Finot has done more than half the work towards solving the problem, as it is he who has evolved the method we propose to follow.

The problem is: what was the form of that old Tai alphabet, and in what respects was it different from the one we know?

M. Finot answers: the Black Tai alphabets are its true reflection, but we answer: the true reflection is the Lao alphabet, as used by the Lao of Luang Prabang. But the principle of our methods of deduction is the same.

We shall have first to discuss M. Finot's views, as they cannot be dismissed without careful consideration. According to M. Finot, three Black Tai alphabets have been published so far as belonging to the same type. They were collected, the first at Lai-châu by M. Lefèvre-Pontalis, the second at Nghĩa-lộ and Van-bu by General Diguët, and the third at Hu'ng-hoá by M. Silvestre. Each of them tabulates the signs in a different order, none of which is the one laid down by tradition. This, M. Finot says, is a noteworthy peculiarity. Nothing, indeed, has a more permanent character than alphabetical order. It is generally handed down from generation to generation with the most scrupulous faithfulness. It passes from the memory of the parents to that of the children, crystallized like a formula. This is so far true that, in the brains of the Chams, the Sanskrit alphabet has been preserved, without the slightest

alteration, as a sacred "*mantra*" now no longer intelligible to themselves. Now, says M. Finot, how are we to explain why the Tai of Tongking should have forsaken, under no compulsion, the immemorial order of the Indian alphabets, so logical, with such a good rhythm, so easy to memorize, only to retain their component parts associated in a haphazard medley. Is it not more natural to believe that this inconsistent alphabet is a reflection of the first attempt at the adaptation of an Indian script to a tonal language? There is no reason why that attempt, clumsy and empirical as its result was, should not have proved successful in establishing an approximate correspondence between the consonants and the tones, and have determined the two great series of low and high characters, which form the framework of the Tai script. In M. Finot's opinion, Rāma Gāmhèi's contribution, therefore, probably consisted in remodelling the old rudimentary system adapted from the Indian alphabet, in completing it by the addition of a few new signs, and in making the notation of tones more precise (op. laud., p. 16).

Strong as M. Finot's argument is, we are not at all satisfied that the three alphabets, of which he avails himself in support of his claim, are not the result of a decadence, for which it would be easy to account, since we are dealing here with comparatively backward tribes. It is, besides, incontrovertible that such a decadence actually took place, so far as the *shapes* of the Black Tai characters are concerned, since they are but a degenerate form, though easy to recognize, of the characters used for the last six centuries by the eastern Lao.

If the Tai did borrow their script from the Khmer, they must have borrowed as well the Khmer alphabetical order, from which we have no reason to suspect that the Khmer ever deviated. Now, if the prestige of the alphabetical order is so great that it happens to be preserved under the conditions which M. Finot describes in the case of the Chams, how much stronger will be its power to impress itself on the mind at the very time when the alphabet is borrowed, that is to say, taught by a cultured people to another people which is eager to acquire culture. It is the more difficult to understand

why the Tai should have upset the alphabetical order of Khmer and Sanskrit, seeing that, as we intend to explain on another occasion, the chief division of that alphabet into two main classes of consonants exactly fits in with the two tonal classes of Tai. Even if we allow, which seems unavoidable, that the old Tai cursive script had nothing official about it, that it was destitute of prestige, and even that the position of the language it connoted was but a subordinate one as compared with that of Khmer, the fact remains that it cannot be the outcome of the exertions of a man of no culture.

It must needs have been the work of a disciple of a Khmer master, perhaps even of a Khmer himself; and, this being the case, how is it possible to conceive that one or the other of these men, who must have been possessed of culture at least to a certain extent, would have deviated, under no compulsion whatever, from the teachings of his master or from his own national tradition on a point of capital importance, never questioned before. We cannot subscribe, therefore, to M. Finot's theory that the old proto-Siamese script is at the present time correctly represented by its Black Tai descendants. We think, on the contrary, that these Black Tai alphabets are only degenerate forms of the script in use among the eastern Lao of French Laos, which in our theory plays the part which M. Finot entrusted, in his, to its Black Tai offspring.

Indeed, the theory that these Black Tai alphabets are only an offspring of the eastern Lao script is almost certain. It would be beyond the scope of this paper to discuss this matter here, owing to the many palaeographical details involved, but any one with some experience of the scripts in question would, we venture to assert, grant us the proposition. It seems then, that we might, *mutatis mutandis*, reasonably apply M. Finot's theory on the relation between the Black Tai alphabets and the proto-Siamese to the relation between the eastern Lao alphabet and the old proto-Siamese. But before doing so we must dispose of another of M. Finot's theories about that eastern Lao alphabet, which blocks our path.

In M. Finot's opinion this Lao alphabet is a simplified form of Rāma Gāmhèn's alphabet; it is to be distinguished from Rāma Gāmhèn's by a considerable simplification; it has done away with the

supradental series, with those consonants which we call secondary (ṅ, ṅ,), with the voiced aspirates, and with the tone signs (Finot, op. laud., p. 26). It is difficult to understand why M. Finot, who considers the simplicity of the Black Tai alphabet to be good evidence of its antiquity, does not apply the same reasoning to the Lao alphabet, and why in this case he considers the simplicity of the Lao alphabet to be the result of a simplification, some signs having been discarded, instead of being evidence of its antiquity, as in the other case.

It is true, and this is apparently the origin of M. Finot's view, that the graphic shapes of the eastern Lao characters were taken from the Sukhodaya script. But this is not conclusive evidence as to the origin of the Lao alphabet.

We know of a Tai alphabet, which, while borrowing its graphic material from the Burmese script, is quite independent of Burmese as to the content of the alphabet itself: we are referring here to the Shan alphabet. The eastern Lao in the same way, may well have adopted a new garb, more fashionable than the old one, for their alphabet, without giving up more deeply rooted habits, closely connected with their linguistic tradition, on which, as we shall see, the system of that alphabet is actually based. It is rather difficult to understand why the eastern Lao, having borrowed from Sukhodaya a well constructed script (while in other directions maintaining a fairly high standard of culture), should have attempted to simplify that script — a script which suited their language perfectly well as it stood. It is much easier to understand that, being already possessed of a more simple alphabet derived from the Khmer cursive script, they modified its outward appearance in accordance with a new fashion, without changing its content. It must be borne in mind that a graphical analysis of the eastern Lao script points to the beginning of the XIVth. century as the date of the borrowing of the Sukhodaya shape of letters, a time when, in Rāma Gāmhēn's own words, the sway of Sukhodaya extended as far as the Tai living on the banks of the U river and the Mekhong river (Cœdès, CIS, I, iv, 13), that is to say, as far as that eastern Laos of whom we are speaking.

We have now arrived at a point where the main features of our theory appear to be outlined. We have endeavoured to show, that some of the reasons adduced by M. Finot in support of his own theory that the Black Tai alphabets are a faithful reflection of the old proto-Siamese script, although they do not serve that particular purpose, can be applied alternately to the eastern Lao script. At the same time, we hope to have shown that the reasons adduced by M. Finot to prove that the Lao script was derived from the Sukhodaya script appear to be rather inconclusive in character.

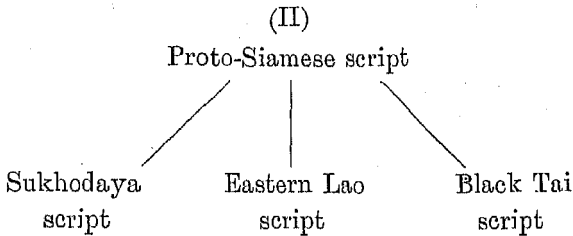
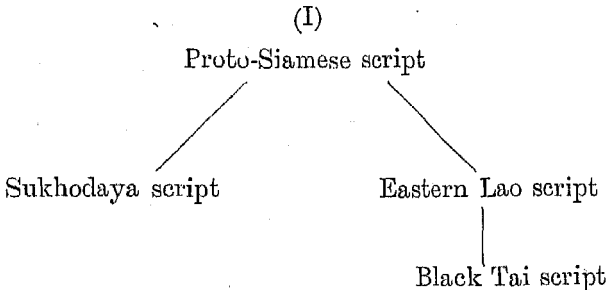
We believe it to be highly probable that the true reflection of the proto-Siamese is to be looked for in the eastern Lao script, which, to put it more strikingly, is probably nothing but the old proto-Siamese alphabet, with a superficial dressing borrowed from Sukhodaya.

It might be objected in opposition to our theory that we have been indulging in the same laxity of logic with which we were but a moment ago reproaching M. Finot. We have said that conclusive evidence that the Black Tai alphabets are not the lawful representatives of the old proto-Siamese alphabet lies in the fact that those alphabets were borrowed from the eastern Lao. It seems that we ought to apply to the Black Tai alphabets the same reasoning that we have applied to the eastern Lao alphabet, and to say that the Black Tai have, after all, only borrowed the shapes of the letters.

But: (1) Our theory would still hold good even if the arguments in favour of M. Finot's views were stronger, because we only contend that the eastern Lao alphabet is the direct offspring of the proto-Siamese alphabet, and we have no objection to the view that the Black Tai alphabet may, in a way, though indirect, represent the old proto-Siamese alphabet.

(2) We know that the Black Tai came to their present habitation from the neighbourhood of the country occupied by the eastern Lao; and moreover, that they are appreciably below the eastern Lao in culture, the relative position of the eastern Lao and the Sukhodaya Tai being quite different and one of equality. There is thus a good chance that the Black Tai did borrow their script

from the Lao, since the two scripts are almost exactly the same after all, and the contact between the two people at an early period is an acknowledged fact, as well as the superiority of the eastern Lao over the Black Tai. This latter fact, coupled with the later separation of the Black Tai from the eastern Lao would fully account for the decadence in the script of the latter which we mentioned above. But, if these reasons do not seem conclusive, we may say that the genealogy of the Lao alphabet can be represented in one of the two following ways :—



In either case our conclusions will be the same, since the material derived from the Black Tai script is to the same effect as that derived from the eastern Lao script. The only difference is that, in the case of the eastern Lao script, the facts are clearer, while, in our opinion, the eastern Lao script is at least nearer to the proto-Siamese script than is the Black Tai script.

Let us now assume it to be likely that the genealogy of the two alphabets, i. e. the Sukhodaya form and the eastern Lao, is as follows :—

Proto-Siamese script

Sukhodaya script

Eastern Lao script (the shape of letters only being borrowed from Sukhodaya)

We have so far tried to show that the eastern Lao script is an independent offspring of the proto-Siamese script. What we wish to prove now is that the content of the eastern Lao alphabet is, except in one or two particulars, the same as the content of the old proto-Siamese alphabet, or, to put it in other words, that *the Sukhodaya script is a modification of an alphabet the content of which was identical with that of the eastern Lao alphabet.*

The best evidence in favour of such identity is that the eastern Lao alphabet is the very form of alphabet we should expect to find, when given the Khmer script as a model on the one hand and Tai as the language to be written on the other.

One of the chief requisites of the old Siamese script in order to fit a Tai language was, according to M. Finot, that it should be able to render the chief features of the tonal system.

This is true. But what are we to understand by "*the chief features of the tonal system of the Tai languages*"? The only answer is to describe that system as M. Finot does, namely that it rests entirely on the opposition between the low and high consonants (the middle group being secondary from the point of view of tones).

This is a proposition acknowledged by all students of Siamese, but, curiously enough, it is altogether a mistake to think it applies to modern Siamese as it is spoken. It applies only to the written form. In the case of Siamese, as in so many other instances the spelling, being conservative, has preserved a reflection of the language which is by no means true to its present condition, as spoken.

In Siamese ๑, ๓, ๕ etc., are phonetically exactly the same as ๑, ๓, ๕ that is to say, phonetically:

๑ = ๑ = /c'

๓ = ๓ = /t'

๕ = ๕ = /p'

Thus *k'*, *t'*, *p'*, can appear as initial consonants of syllables, which may equally be uttered in any one of the five standard tones. Similarly *ɰ* and *ɶ* etc., being *ṇ* etc. and *ṅ* etc., can also be uttered in any one of the five tones.

On the other hand, the so-called middle class consonants, generally speaking, exclude the use of two out of the five tones. So that there are now two tonal classes of consonants, one which includes all the high and low, and another which covers the so-called middle class consonants. Moreover, there is only an indistinct separation between the two classes with which we are left. The middle class has no tone peculiar to itself, so that it is now almost true to say that the initial consonant is without influence on the nature of the tone, a condition which is the exact reverse of what we gather from the written language.

The gap between means of notation and what is actually to be noted in writing is even wider in Siamese than in English or French, and, if the Siamese script is now a convenient means of notation on the whole, the reason is that it affords, as a consequence of its many methods of noting one and the same sound, an easy way of distinguishing words which are homophones, except for the tone, and which would be far less clearly distinguished by means of purely diacritical signs.

The fact, however, remains that the two classes which we know from the script must have been the tone classes of the old spoken language.

Let us now revert to our main subject. Suppose that, when the Tai script was invented, the phonetic condition of the language was the same as it is now. It is not possible to imagine that the inventors should have resorted to the system of tone classes that we know. We must admit that, at the time when the script was invented, even regardless of tone, the letter *ṇ* was pronounced in a different way from *ṅ*. This being admitted, no other condition is required to account for the difference in notation. This is in fact exactly what we find to be the system of the eastern Lao script, as in that dialect there is only one single character for each phonetic series in each tone class. We have: *ṅ*, *ṇ*; *ṅ*, *ṇ*; *ṅ*, *ṇ* and no *ṅ*, *ṇ*.

According to M. Finot's theory these latter consonants must have been dropped by the Lao. Our view is that this is not at all obvious, and that Rāma Gāmhèn may just as well have added them to the old Tai alphabet. In the Lao alphabet there is, of course, a third class of consonants, namely the non-aspirate surds, the middle consonants of Siamese, ဝ, etc., but actually these do not make up a tonal class of their own, as they are subject to exactly the same rules as the high class consonants.

Now there is another point with the eastern Lao writing. It lacks the tonal signs which we have in Siamese. "They have been discarded by the Lao," says M. Finot, but we maintain that Rāma Gāmhèn added them to the old Tai script. If we consider the tonal system of the eastern Lao, as it appears in Guignard, we shall at once notice that not one single tone is common to the two classes.

High class

a_2 a_1 a_3

Low class

a a^5 a_8

If a word is written with an initial ခ, we know beyond doubt that it is not to be pronounced in any one of the three tones a , a^5 , a_8 . We are left to choose among the three tones a_2 , a_1 , a_3 , which, for a Lao, would not be a puzzling choice at all.

If we are to write a word, whose tone we know to be either a_2 , a_1 , a_3 , we know that the initial consonant belongs to the high class and we cannot *hesitate in our choice* in that respect.

The only difficulty about this system is that ခၢ may be read in three different ways, viz. $k'\bar{a}_2$, $k'\bar{a}_1$, and $k'\bar{a}_3$; while ခၢၣ် may, in its turn, be read either $k'\bar{a}^5$ or $k'\bar{a}^8$ and ခၢၣ် $k'ak^5$ or $k'ak^8$. To a foreigner this seems extremely inconvenient, whereas to a Lao born it does not make any difference. The context always precludes any hesitation in deciding which is the correct tone.

The fact is that Siamese is the only Tai language where a special contrivance has been set up to mark the tones, and this feature is something absolutely foreign to Tai usages. A Tai does not need anything of the sort. The only difficult point with Siamese is the twofold notation of one and the same tone, in the case of ခါ and ခါ, read $k'\bar{a}_8$.

It is difficult not to suppose that $\overset{2}{\text{ჩ}}$ and $\overset{1}{\text{ქ}}$ have become phonetically the same only after the Khmer alphabet was borrowed by the proto-Siamese, because we cannot understand otherwise how it is that we have $\overset{2}{\text{ჩ}}$ by the side of $\overset{1}{\text{ქ}}$, always occurring where it is required by the phonetic laws.

Therefore, although we do not know what the sounds, that ჩ and ქ were intended to represent, actually were at that time, we cannot escape the necessity of admitting that they were different from each other.

Therefore, even if ჩ and ქ , in that particular case, already commanded the same tone, there was as much difference between the two as between ჩ and ქ at the present time. Nevertheless, if such was the true state of affairs(1), then in any case the system used was not so convenient, as in the Lao tonal system, where *each set of consonants has its own set of tones*.

We have now the full data of the problem. We agree with M. Finot that one of the improvements to be ascribed to Rāma Gāinhèn was to make the tone notation more precise. We have shown that, on this point of tone notation, the tradition of the proto-Siamese script has been preserved by the eastern Lao script, and that most probably, therefore, the proto-Siamese script contented itself with the system which we know to be quite clear enough for a Tai. In fact, it had no tone-marks. Nothing had been done towards marking tones. The only thing was that, the tones depending on the quality of the initial consonant, the latter was a help towards recognizing the proper tone in reading. Then, why is it that Rāma Gāinhèn took the revolutionary course of setting up a tone-marking system, a system absolutely foreign to Tai usage ?

As it was and still is of no use to Tai born people, Rāma Gāinhèn had most probably in view the non-Tai people upon whom

(1) In fact we do not believe that it was. $\overset{2}{\text{ჩ}}$ and $\overset{1}{\text{ქ}}$ remained distinct from each other in tone long after Rāma Gāinhèn's time. (Cf. infra "Note sur les tons et les initiales....p. 103")

he intended to enforce the use of Siamese as their language, and who had, up to Rāma Gāmhèn's time, spoken non-tonal languages.

This view is supported by the curious fact that Rāma Gāmhèn's alphabet, as an Indian alphabet, is complete, though from the outset half the letters we find in it, must have been superfluous. Here again we think that the old proto-Siamese alphabet must have been what the eastern Lao alphabet is now. It only contained what was necessary to note the Tai consonants which we cannot suppose to have ever been as numerous as in Sanskrit. Both novelties are the outcome of the same policy that aimed at assimilating the Mon-Khmer peoples of the Menam valley. They are but an application of the long tested maxims of a clever imperialism.

It is no use repeating here what has been said by one of the authors in "The origins of the Sukhodaya dynasty (JSS, XIV, 1). In this respect, as in so many others, the Tai of Sukhodaya were only following in the wake of the Khmer whose inheritance they were appropriating at that time. Rāma Gāmhèn, "that ambitious sovereign" as M. Finot says, wanted to give the Tai language, which was his own, which he was importing into new territories, the same facilities that the Khmer language possessed for the purpose of conveying the ideas underlying the civilization of India. His aim was to do with the Tai language what the Khmer had achieved with their tongue. Equipped with an Indian alphabet, now complete, Tai was thenceforward able to preserve, for the terms borrowed from India, all of them expressing ideas of civilization, their written appearance if not their original pronunciation, and to enlist them in its own vocabulary without making them unrecognizable. Even if we do not grant that Rāma Gāmhèn may have had such a deliberate design and such a clear foresight of Siamese destiny, it must be allowed that such a consequence was involved in a reform, the purpose of which, in Rāma Gāmhèn's mind, was then only to raise the Tai language to the same level as the Khmer, but which in fact at the same time provided it with means to replace

the latter completely, seeing that the Tai conquerors had on their side military and political supremacy.

The task was made easier owing to the fact that the Tai were confronted with a population with no unity of language. The Menam valley, it is true, was the seat of Mon-Khmer languages, but not of one only, although Khmer was spreading at the expense of Mon, as it had been doing from an early period, and as it was still doing at the outset of XIIIth. century A. D. The blow dealt by Rāma Gāmhèn at the Khmer supremacy had done something towards crushing the prestige of a language, which up to that time had been the chief vehicle of civilization, and before which Mon, in the Khmer territory, was withdrawing. The Khmer and the Mon of the Menam Valley, from now onward, will be Siamese subjects on the same footing. Their common language will be Siamese, and Rāma Gāmhèn's plan will be to give Siamese all the necessary means to overcome the Khmer tongue in the territories newly conquered by the Tai armies.

But this was not the only task to be achieved, Siamese being a language with a complicated system of tones, ill-suited to the habits of the new subjects of the Siamese crown, whose tongues were uniformly non-tonal.

The very clever idea which then occurred to Rāma Gāmhèn was to make it easier to master the tones by noting them, an idea which under ordinary circumstances would have seemed almost stupid to a Tai, since tone marks, as already indicated, were of but very little use to him. It seems that nothing but the unprecedented conditions with which the Tai ruler was confronted at that time can account for such a unique fact. The truth of our view appears even more clearly if it is remembered that, as soon as the position of the Siamese became a strong one, the notation of tones became far less regular. A short time after Rāma Gāmhèn, the inscription's note the tones only erratically and carelessly. If Rāma Gāmhèn's tradition was restored later on, so that nowadays the tones are always consistently marked, the reason for this fact seems to be that a fresh expansion of Siamese power during the Ayudhya period made it

necessary to revert to the policy launched at the time when Sukhodaya was rising under the first of Tai conquerors in Siam.

Another historical fact points to the same conclusion. The codification movement initiated in the reign of Rāmādhīpātī I, the first King of Ayudhya, coming just after the formation by means of conquest of a new Tai kingdom, peopled by men of a non-Tai stock, almost all of them speaking Khmer, seems to have been started to enforce upon a heterogenous people a uniform code of laws.

All this is a strong support of the view that the system of tone marking cannot be assigned to a date prior to 1292.

The consequence which follows from all the evidence both linguistical and historical recorded above is then that the proto-Siamese alphabet was identical with the Lao alphabet.

The manifold origins of those who were now the greater mass of Siamese-speaking people makes it improbable that the minor shades of tone, easy to preserve for a Tai-born speaker, should be maintained.

In spite of its great ingenuity, Rāma Gāinhèn's contrivance was bound to be inefficient, wherever the niceties of the tone system should be concerned. One of these niceties was probably the distinction between the tone of ๑ and the tone of ๑. This view is confirmed by the fact that in eastern Lao the two corresponding tones are but little different from one another, a_1 and a_2 . Such a nice difference could hardly be preserved by speakers unfamiliar with tones. This fact, moreover, belongs to one of the most widely spread types of linguistic change which is met with, whenever a people adopts a new language in place of its old one. The niceties of the borrowed language are to a very large extent blurred in the process. It must be noted now that this powerful cause of change was only brought into full action at the time of Rāma Gāinhèn, when for the first time, large masses of Mon-Khmer population were subjugated by Tai conquerors, who were in a position to impose their language upon their new subjects.

The technical questions raised by the facts we have just recalled and replaced in their original setting will be fully discussed in the two essays which we publish in French in this issue, under the titles: "Note sur les tons et les initiales du vieux siamois à l'époque de Sukhodaya", and "๑ et ๓ et leur origine."