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The principle mission of *Explorations* is to offer a forum for students to present disciplinary and interdisciplinary research on a broad range of issues relating principally to the region which today constitutes Southeast Asia. Embracing a diversity of academic interests and scholastic expertise it is hoped that this forum will introduce students to the work of their colleagues, encourage discussion both within and across disciplines, and foster a sense of community among those interested in Southeast Asia. Submissions for publication may come from students at any college or university, and are not limited to the University of Hawai'i. Submissions must follow the style guide, available at the website below.

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Could Installation Art be the New Medium for Southeast Asia?

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Introduction

The rise of three dimensional installation art as a medium of artistic expression in the developing countries of Southeast Asia over the past decade is irrefutably transforming paradigms of modern art throughout the region. Through its capacity to relate meaningful, controversial and often politically critical subject matter in an indirect and implied fashion, installation art has become a favorite tool for social commentary in social and political climates that are not always conducive to such analysis.

The developing countries of Southeast Asia, with the exception of the Philippines and Thailand to some extent, are tricky terrain for artistic protest involving political and social dissent in any form. Installation art gives the artists, thinkers and common people of these countries a medium of communication that in some ways transcends that of written language, in that in place of words, installation art provides a more tangible, and personal experience of the idea in question.

In this paper I will look at new traditions of installation art found in two countries of the region: Indonesia and Thailand. I chose these two countries because I feel that they represent two very different sides of Southeast Asia. Let me explain: After centuries of Dutch colonization, Indonesia fought bitterly for its independence. Since then, it has been governed by, until

recently, a strong military dictatorship that kept firm control over its people. Indonesia is a largely heterogeneous country in terms of religion, ethnicity as well as geography. These formative factors, among many others, have created a uniquely Indonesian method of conveying social commentary through various artistic media.

Thailand, in contrast to Indonesia, was never colonized, and due to its more homogenous reality, Thailand (in comparison to Indonesia) largely lacks the ethnic and religious tensions of its large island neighbor to the south. Likewise the modern art traditions to emerge from Thailand have generally been less political and less reactionary than those coming out of Indonesia. It is my contention that the many cultural differences between these two dichotomous examples of the new Southeast Asian nation have resulted in two different traditions in regard to installation art. In this paper I will compare and contrast these two traditions.

Through looking at some of the issues and nuances surrounding the general state of art and expression in both Thailand and Indonesia, I hope to find out why installation art has become such a successful phenomenon in both countries. To this end, I will look at the work of two artists from each country in hopes of gaining insight into the role that installation art can play as a means of personal, social and cultural expression in both societies. However, before addressing the topic, I think it is important to talk a bit about installation as an art form in itself.

What is installation art? : Definition and history

Installation art can be defined as the placement of objects in a certain context in order to convey a certain feeling, idea or experience. Through their placement, a relationship is created between the objects and the viewer. This relationship transforms the objects from their everyday uses into being a part of a specially created experience. According to San Francisco's Capp Street Project, a pioneer of installation art in the San Francisco Bay Area, "Installation Art is an art form that has no definite boundaries but is an environment created for a specific site. Often working with the physical or historical features of the space, the artist uses any combination of materials at the site he or she feels is most appropriate to express a concept or evoke a feeling."

An important aspect of installation as a medium is that it is an international phenomenon, applicable to any physical or cultural setting. The idea of flexibility is key, as essentially any setting can be used in combination with any variety of materials. Like all other forms of art it explores various aspects of life, from the intensely personal to the overtly political. However, one stipulation of installation as a medium is that it is site specific, meaning the artist creates the installation with a certain place in mind. Likewise, due to its sometimes temporary relevance and limited monetary value, installation is a far more ephemeral medium than traditional media such painting and sculpture.

Evolving from many artistic traditions, today's installation art is heavily indebted to early twentieth century movements in the visual and plastic arts, architecture, theater and music. New ideas regarding the literal and figurative interrelationships between space and form manifested themselves in new forms[1] of all of these disciplines.

The further manipulation of these new forms in art, theater, music and architecture by people and institutions like Picasso, Wagner, Marcel Duchamp and the Bauhaus school led to new understandings of art itself as a combination of any and all of the above disciplines. Out of this inventive adaptation[2] of various artistic media to the creative process, installation as an art form was born.

By the 1960's, installation had become a significant and established medium in the world of modern art. Eminent artists like Christo, Claes Oldenberg, Jim Dine, Frank Stella, Jannis Kounellis, Robert Rauschenburg and Donald Judd were all fluent in the use of this medium as an interpretation of and commentary on the rapidly modernizing world around them. It is the work of these artists that catapulted installation art into the global realm of artistic thought. By extension, it is generally the work of these artists that introduced artists in Southeast Asia, and throughout the world, to the use of installation as a means of artistic expression.

Adaptation of installation art to the Southeast Asian situation

As it stands, it is undeniable that installation art has caught on in a big way throughout Southeast Asia[3]. In this section I will look at some possible reasons for this phenomenon, and discuss how these reasons could relate to installation art.

All Southeast Asian cultures have very impressive traditions when it comes to the arts. As in the West, the artistic traditions of Southeast Asia generally ascribe to the fields of music, dance, theater, textile, plastic and visual arts. Over the past century, and the last 50-60 years especially, modern, updated versions of these indigenous artistic traditions have manifested themselves throughout the region. These new traditions in all disciplines, painting most noteworthy among them, have redefined the boundaries of each medium and often mirrored important social themes in the process.

The problem facing "traditional" modern art in Southeast Asia is its social implication of class status and exclusivity. Installation art, through its use of temporary, site specific and generally valueless materials, can bypass the exclusive nature of the gallery "scene" by focusing on the interpretive, rather than the monetary, value of the exhibition. Rejection of the economic value and inherent exclusivity of more traditional modern art is not the only reason installation art has caught on in Southeast Asia. There is a far more interesting reason. My research and experience has indicated that, unsurprisingly, Southeast Asian people are definitely predisposed to not only enjoying art, but having an interactive experience with it as well.[4]

Art in Southeast Asia, as in other places, works like language in that it facilitates the transmission of ideas. This language relates culture and experience through a visual vernacular that makes itself understood through the manipulation of space and form. Like the spread of writing based on the Devanagari script or the trade Malay spoken throughout the region during the seventeenth century[5], installation art can be seen as a similarly effective means of

communication because it is easily understood and easily applied to the Southeast Asian cultural context.

In addition to being a language, installation art is also a show capable of creating all the drama and emotion of acting or dance. Again, the long and highly evolved traditions in theater and music throughout Southeast Asia indicate that people there instinctively relate to performance. Performing a theatrical or shadow puppet version of the Ramayana or Mahabharata brought to life heroes who, in the words of Anthony Reid:

were transposed to a legendary past of the Southeast Asian country itself, where they were seen as intensely real progenitors of human society[6]

Thus, due to Southeast Asia's long history of understanding theater as a representation of life, the distinct lines drawn between fantasy and reality in Western culture are far more difficult to discern in the Southeast Asian situation. Going to see a wayang or nang yai performance of one of the old epics listed above, the Southeast Asian viewer can partake in the old tradition of understanding the story being told in the context of his or her own life, and also (especially in the case of Indonesia) in the context of politics as well.

Installation art, like the wayang, is a depiction of aspects of life presented in a fashion that is accessible and familiar to the audience. Southeast Asia's remaining personal and cultural connections to performance have paved the way for the acceptance of installation art as a means of self and societal expression. The acceptance of this medium by artists in the region shows that for Southeast Asians the lines between art and real life are fluid and arbitrary, blurred in a sense. This blurring of the lines between art and life is exactly what the western artists that pioneered the use of installation art sought to do[7].

In considering other aspects of Southeast Asian cultures that could conceivably explain the popularity of installation art, one more thing comes to mind: the Southeast Asian penchant for riddles. In Southeast Asian societies, where verbal and physical communication often revolves around, as opposed to centering upon, the main issue, riddles serve as an important cultural conduit, transferring specific knowledge and cultural nuance in a compelling and thought provoking fashion. Riddles teach us to look beyond the surface and encourage discreet analysis of the situation at hand. As quick wit, creative innuendo and analytic skill are social skills held in high esteem throughout Southeast Asia[8], the popularity of humorous and proverbial riddles is only natural. I contend that this preexisting orientation to having fun at figuring something out is yet another facet of Southeast Asian cultures that has translated into the success of installation art in the region.

Manifestations of social commentary and change: installation art in Indonesia and Thailand

In this section I will explore the role of installation art in the societies of Indonesia and Thailand.

I will be looking at the development of Installation as a medium in each country and then exploring how installation art relates specifically to the local audience. As part of my analysis, I will look at two artists from each country.

Installation art and Indonesian activism

Of the all the countries of Southeast Asia, Indonesia has embraced the idea of using installation art as a form of social activism in a way yet unmatched by any other. While the first uses of installation as a medium in Indonesia can be traced to the 1970's[9], it can be said to have really started with the advent of the "New Arts Movement" (Kelompok Seni Rupa Baru) in 1987. The New Arts Movement was a group of artists from various disciplines that sought to "smash the aesthetic hegemony of the "fine arts" over Indonesian art, and liberate a more pluralistic concept of art".[10]

In the words of Moelyono, this shift was an "invitation to democratize art" and signaled the inclusion of seni rupa keseharian, or everyday art, in the canon of what constitutes Indonesian modern art. Seni rupa keseharian can be defined as any of the common craft and trade traditions found in Indonesia (i.e. pottery, textiles, leatherwork, etc.). What this has translated into is the de-emphasis of modern art as a dry international aesthetic and the redirection of modern art in the country to a fecund and very Indonesian means of social commentary. Through its rejection of the status given to more lucrative forms of art and its inclusion of local idioms, Indonesian installation art has emerged as the ultimate embodiment of the New Arts Movement.

Here it is important to put the roots of a phenomenon like the New Arts Movement into context. As I touched upon in the introduction, the nation of Indonesia has had a somewhat tumultuous history. Many of the country's eminent modern artists (Hendra Gunawan and Sudjana Kerton for example) fought in the war for independence and used their art as an outlet for the emotions that accompany such an experience. Frequently their work focused on the suffering of the people around them.

After the events of September 1965 and the ensuing Orde Baru came into power, artists who dealt with the gritty downside of politics in a satirical or accusatory manner were dealt with swiftly and fiercely. Until recently, public discourse of the horrific events of 1965-66 was an extremely risky proposition[11]. With intense emotions like these so recently seething beneath the surface of an entire national conscience, finding an outlet for them is essential. Installation art has been able to take on such a role for the Indonesian people and by extension become a significant form of social activism as well. The key to the success of installation art as a medium in Indonesia is its wholesale accessibility. Because of its similarity to other familiar storytelling means like the wayang, installation art speaks to the Indonesian people nonverbally through its placement and contextualization of meaningful objects in a given space.

In looking at the installation art of Indonesia it is also necessary to look at the artists themselves; their motivations, aspirations and experience of the issues surrounding their work. Though many accomplished artists work in the medium of installation, very few can make a living from

it. What motivates the artists to get involved? As installation art in Indonesia is largely a critical comment on the injustices endured by the people of the country, it is safe to say that the artists involved in installation in Indonesia are activists themselves. This is significant in that in Indonesia, not only installation art, but also the artist who creates it, blurs the lines between art and society.

Looking at the socioeconomic background of these artists is also important. What is their stake in social progress? How do they relate to the situations that inspire their work? My research has shown that many of the Indonesian artists active in installation art today are from relatively middle class backgrounds and have mostly received western art training.[12] Of the artist biographies I could find, all seemed to echo the sentiments of FX Harsono, who believes that "a work of art should express social problems"[13]. In an internet posting for an exhibition of local artists in Bandung the opening remarks address the idea that "social corruption in many aspects has shocked our society, creating the general assumption that our art has fallen under corruption as well". The artist's collective statement goes on to explain that Indonesia is currently in the midst of a "deformation". This deformation is "not seen as part of the art process, but has indeed become inspiration for further evolution of art practices and theories". [14]

What this information shows me is that the artists involved in installation art are actually letting their work evolve around the events of their times. The issues that they interpret and depict in their work, as opposed to imported notions of what art should be, form the basis of their creative impetus. Thus it can be said that because the political and social environment in Indonesia demands it, in a way these artists are actually activists first, and artists second. To further exemplify this idea, I will now look at the work of two very prolific and controversial installation artists from Indonesia: Moelyono and Dadang Christanto. The work of these two artists presents a clear example of the issues treated in Indonesian installation art today.

Moelyono

A now internationally acclaimed artist and art theorist, Moelyono has made a name for himself through using his installations to tackle very controversial and ideologically dangerous subject matter. Recently he has taken his message and a few of his works abroad, building upon a resume of experience that has dealt head on with the touchy subjects of labor activism and land rights in his native Java. One of Moelyono's many compelling and powerful undertakings was 1993's "Pameran untuk Marsina" (exhibition for Marsina). A fine example of the adaptation of an extremely controversial event to installation art, "Pameran untuk Marsina" served to express the outrage of the Indonesian populace towards the powers that be in regard to the lack of labor rights in the newly industrializing country.

Marsinah herself was an outspoken factory worker who represented a group of workers protesting dismal working conditions and low pay in an East Java factory. This action led to her abduction, rape and murder at the hands of local authorities. Moelyono's installation explores the human implications of this barbarous crime.



Moelyono, *Pameran untuk Marsinah*

His work, entitled "interrogation scene" consists of human forms made of straw and hanging latex gloves set against a black and white checkerboard background embellished with the Javanese word "inggih", or yes. According to expert Astri Wright[15], "the use of left over rice straw to create anthropomorphic forms signifies the impermanence and lowly position of the human race in the context of the event." In agreement with Wright, I see the latex gloves hanging from above as a chilling testament to torture at the hands of the government, "actively oppressing from above". The stark black and white background hints at the struggle between good and evil; the word "inggih" a polite Javanese word for yes, illustrating the submission of the common people to their supposed superiors.

The powerful imagery and dangerous themes of *Pameran untuk Marsinah* did not go unnoticed by the Indonesian government. Just before opening the doors on the first day, the exhibition for Marsinah was closed by Surabaya police for "subversive" content.

Dadang Christanto

Another internationally known Indonesian installation artist, Dadang Christanto also uses his art to convey themes of cultural and political oppression. Drawing on a background in the performance arts, Dadang Christanto is known for staging powerful and compelling installations. His 1994 exhibition, *Perkara Tanah* (concerning land) sought to portray the struggles of the Indonesian people in regard to land and the relatively powerless status of the farmer in society.

Made up of four installations, *Kekerasan (Force/Violence) I-IV*, *Perkara Tanah* was timed to coincide with the 50th anniversary celebration of the Republic of Indonesia. Through hand building and firing scores of terracotta (the tanah) figures, Christanto conceptualized his statement. The deliberate use of terracotta, a material considered cheap and low class in his native Java[16], helps Christanto to set a tone of humbleness and simplicity in the installation.

Obviously related to the overall theme of the exhibition is his decision to use fired clay as a building material. The result, taking the form of the four Kekerasan installations, is a series of haunting visual and emotive experiences. Of these four, I will look at the first.



Dadang Christanto, *Kekerasan I* with detail.

Kekerasan I took the form of about one hundred of these terracotta figures arranged on top of concrete blocks in a pyramid form. Looking at the figures in this context it is easy to see the message intended for the audience. The inherent theme here is the representation of a sort of power structure. This installation is a powerful depiction of the stratified and many tiered system of social and class relations in Indonesia today. Reading further into the deliberate sameness of all the figures, the viewer finds that at the same time the forms are indeed all slightly different, very human, all sitting in silent acceptance of their position in the pyramid, and perhaps their lot in life.

Other Indonesian artists using installation

By no means are Moelyono and Dadang Christanto the only names in Indonesian installation art today. Many others, like FX Harsono and Heri Dono, have made names for themselves throughout the country for projects that continue to challenge the political and social structures of power that have just recently begun to loosen their stranglehold on artistic expression in Indonesia. Artists have also been known to work in anonymous groups. The prime example of this sort of cooperation was the wrapping of the TEMPO building in Yogyakarta after the magazine's closure by the government. Wrapped in a white shroud, significant to the Javanese as the color of mourning, the installation staged at the TEMPO building related the brilliant capacity of the Indonesian people to use art as a collective voice, shouting that they are unhappy with the status quo, that they are ready for a change.

Installation art and cultural commentary in Thailand

In contrast to Indonesia, modern art has never taken on a significantly subversive role in Thai society. The reasons for this are many, not least of which is the lack of sustained dissent among artists over a long period of time due to the relative freedom enjoyed by artists in Thailand. Surely the student uprisings of the early to mid 1970's, as well as 1992, have been the subject of much artistic interpretation, but on the whole, modern art in Thailand reflects the ideas of a people exploring the affects of interaction with the outside world on their culture and environment. It is important to remember that Thailand was never subjected to the humiliation of the colonial experience and the uncertainty of its aftermath. Thus, given this reality, the social and political elements that inspire the installation art of Indonesia are quite different from the cultural elements that inspire artists in Thailand.

Although the message is usually different, installation art appeals to Thai people in the same manner that it does to Indonesians. It is intellectually challenging, culturally relevant in its use of indigenous materials, but also extremely creative in its syncretic adaptation of a western process to an eastern context. Admittedly, installation art in Thailand can be treated much like other modern art, in that it is commodified and earns an attached value that has more to do with the artist than it does with the content of the art. This situation has everything to do with the idea that in Thailand, due to the absence of a government that is terribly oppressive in regard to the arts[17], installation art lacks the activist tendencies that it so actively promotes in Indonesia. Thus, in contrast to the idea of artists being activists first in Indonesia, installation art in Thailand seems more to be art imbued with cultural and environmental commentary, not social activism through art.

Still, some similarities remain. Installation art in both Thailand and Indonesia reflects important aspects of life in both places. The differences stem from the fact that different things are important to artists in different places. In Indonesia, people are upset about the disappearance and subsequent murder of factory workers at the hands of the government. If that sort of terror was as much of a reality in Thailand, installation artists would probably deal with that subject too. As it stands now, Thai people are affected by issues such as the adaptation of Buddhism to modern society or the affects of runaway growth on the environment. Likewise, these issues show up in installation art. Two artists that address these issues in their work are Montien Boonma and Kamol Phaosavasdi.

Montien Boonma



Montien Boonma, *Drawing of the Mind Training and the Bowls of the Mind*

With many of his works dealing with Buddhism and the transcendent human spirit, Montien Boonma's thoughtful installations appeal to a wide audience of Thai people and others interested in Thai culture. The son of a schoolteacher, Montien Boonma is said to have rediscovered the use of Thai elements in his art after returning from years of study in France. [18] He is an avid Buddhist, and Buddhist themes pervade much of his work. The following work, included in a 1994 joint Thai-Australian exhibition called "Thai Australian Cultural Space" mixes objects and illustrations to convey the ideas of meditation and the exploration of an internal, abstract space. In regard to this installation, Montien says: "I am fascinated by the monk bowl. For me its shape looks organic and geometric and ambiguous. I think about the space in the bowl. I prefer to be in this space which separates me from the outside world....I would like to place my mind inside the bowl." [19] Montien Boonma's work is a good example of the importance of Buddhism to the Thai spirit. Through working with the forms and ideas outlined by his beliefs, Montien Boonma uses installation art to compel the viewer, Thai or non Thai, to look within him or herself to find a meditative space.

Kamol Phaosavasdi

Like Montien Boonma, Kamol Phaosavasdi incorporates important elements of Thai social conscience into his work. For Mr. Phaosavasdi, however, Buddhism is not the issue, the recent and drastic transformation of the Thai urban environment is. In the following works, *Sewer* (1993) and *Out of balance, turn a blind eye on the Chao Phraya River* (1993) Kamol Phaosavasdi uses common materials to portray Bangkok's, as well as Thailand's, environment in the throes of death at the hands of the slow poison of unchecked industrialization. For Thai people, these installations need little explanation.



Out of Balance, to turn a blind eye on the Chao Phraya River



Sewer

Their cities hopelessly polluted and their once thriving rivers filthy and lifeless, People are finally starting to notice the graveness of the situation. This realization has led to the emergence of environmental concern and awareness on the part of many people. In his personal statement regarding this series of pieces on the Thai environment, Kamol Phaosavasdi says: "The project.... was gradually developed from my feeling of sorrow for the Chao Phraya river. Not only the Chao Phraya but rivers around the world. There is no time to ask what we should do - it's time to do whatever is good for them." [20] Phaosavasdi's ideas are echoed by a rapidly increasing segment of the Thai population. Likewise, his use of installation as a part of the dialogue surrounding the state of Thailand's environment shows just how installation art can be used to embody and relate the issues that concern Thai society.

Other Thai artists using installation

Montien Boonma and Kamol Phaosavasdi are just two of many artists in Thailand that have discovered and fine tuned the medium of installation to the Thai context. Likewise, not all Thai installation art is centered around the themes of Buddhism and the environment. Other artists, such as Vichoke Mukdamanee and Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook, focus their work on the effects of westernization or the traditions of sexism in modern Thailand. In the work to the right, Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook explores the role of women in Thai society, expressing that "women in Thai society are trapped by moralizing social norms and double standards." [21]



Araya Rasdjarmrearnsook, *Buang*

This idea is conveyed by the presence of a torso-less female effigy lying on her side in the context of what looks like a house. This sort of statement is indicative of the evolution of feminist thought within the culture of Thailand. It is clear that installation art will be used as a part of that evolution.

Conclusion

Given the facts and recent history of installation art in Southeast Asia, the answer to the question "Could installation be the new medium for Southeast Asia", in my mind, is an unequivocal yes. The cultures of Southeast Asia, long known for their adept and intelligent practice of adopting a foreign idea and making it indigenous, have definitely succeeded again. Throughout the region artists have discovered and actively pursued the development of installation as an artistic medium. Brilliantly suited to Southeast Asia in its similarity to preexisting forms of artistic expression such as shadow puppet theater and other forms of performance, installation art has proven itself as an effective means of communicating a wide range of ideas, dangerous to self-reflective, to a wide range of people.

As simply the placement of objects in a certain context and the manipulation of the space between them, installation art is a medium that can be used to convey just about any idea imaginable. Through this role, the observer can find the inner workings of a specific experience mirrored in an installation. As the artist and issue changes, so does the result. It is this flexibility and accessibility that makes installation art so applicable to the Southeast Asian cultural landscape. From its use as a form of activism in Indonesia to its role in the personal expression of a Thai artist, installation can be used to encompass the entire spectrum of artistic expression

in Southeast Asia. Given the long and intricate artistic histories of all Southeast Asian countries, this is indeed quite a feat.

Though I have tried to look closely at the reasons and events behind the emergence of installation as an art form in Southeast Asia, for me, many questions remain: Is the emergence of installation art indicative of a backlash against other, more "affluent" forms of modern art? and: Due to the lack of formal training needed to create installation art, how much is this medium being utilized by segments of the population (women, the poor, ethnic minorities) who are usually marginalized in terms of the arts? With further analysis of these and many other questions an increased understanding of this subject could be provided. For now, I hope that I have been able to convey some key aspects of the incredible success of installation art in the Southeast Asian context. It is always amazing to see how the many cultures of Southeast Asia are able to absorb, reinvent and indigenize outside traditions and ideas. With installation art, we have yet another example of this ingenious process.

Notes

- [1]Dadaism, Futurism, Surrealism etc.
- [2]Two words that are easily associated with Southeast Asia!
- [3]Julie Ewington, Five Elements... pg. 110
- [4]personal communication, Noel Klavaert
- [5]Reid, A. Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce pp.233
- [6]Ibid. pp. 203
- [7]Julie Ewington, Five Elements.... pp. 110
- [8]Reid, A. Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce pp.231
- [9]Julie Ewington, Five Elements... pg.110
- [10]Moelyono, Seni Rupa Kagunan pg.123
- [11]Rob Goodfellow, A fresh wind is blowing
- [12]Traditions/Tensions artist bios

[13]Traditions/Tensions artist bios

[14]Art Exhibition in Bandung!

[15]Astri Wright Resistance in the Visual Field: Activist Art in Indonesia in the 1990's pgs.120-121

[16]Astri Wright Resistance in the Visual Field.... pg 132

[17]My experience has shown that the most dangerous thing an artist could do is to portray His Majesty the King or another member of the royal family in an unflattering manner, for now a project that is not very interesting to anyone.

[18]The Integrative Art of Modern Thailand pg. 132

[19]Thai-Australian Cultural Space, cat. pg. 34

[20]Thai-Australian Cultural Space, pg. 52

[21]Traditions/tensions, artist bios

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Constance Phaulkon: Myth or Reality?

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Thesis Statement

In this paper I will expose common historical assumptions, which have been generally accepted throughout history as facts relating to Constance Phaulkon and his role in Southeast Asian history. In order to achieve this, I will first examine the historical framework of Siam in the period leading up to the arrival of Phaulkon with particular care given to external influences upon Siam. This will enable the reader to understand how these myths came in to existence and Phaulkon's true role in Siam. My goal is twofold. First, to attempt to portray Phaulkon in a neutral setting, and secondly, by debunking some common myths, I hope to take some of the focus off Phaulkon and redirect it towards Siamese foreign policy during the seventeenth century.

Preface

The Greek, Constance Phaulkon, expeditiously ascended through the ranks of King Narai's court to become the Prime Minister of Siam. He has been consistently vilified throughout history by scholars and contemporary authors, with such eccentric characterizations as adventurer, trader, pirate, caviler, smuggler and a rogue, who set forth to manipulate others solely to parlay political and economic supremacy. After a careful examination and assessment of the primary sources,

and a thorough discussion of the rebirth of Ayudhya, focusing on the underlying factors that contributed to the position it was in, leading towards a path of embracing western imperialistic powers, during Narai's reign. I will paint a different portrait of Phaulkon. He was a self-educated linguist and an entrepreneur who turned diplomat when he was abruptly thrust into the political area, a pawn of the establishment, he was manipulated by "interlopers" or private traders and an astute king, who was desperately trying to keep his nation's autonomy by pitting foreign usurpers against one another, while enacting measures to insure the strength and longevity of Ayudhya from neighboring states. Constance Phaulkon wasn't the first outsider to obtain a position of prominence in Siam or mainland Southeast Asia in his era, but he was able to achieve a position of prominence that was to be coveted but never duplicated. At the pinnacle of his power, he was in control of a nation. Power came with a price, loneliness and isolation, from those whom he suppressed in the political arena.

I. Rebirth of Ayudhya And External Influences Through The Seventeenth Century.

To commence the story with Constance Phaulkon without prior examination of the historical events, which preceded and enabled his role in Siamese history, would be doing a great injustice not only to Phaulkon and Siam, but also to the study of mainland Southeast Asia. The story of Phaulkon doesn't revolve around the controversial and perhaps misunderstood character, but rather the resurgence of the state of Ayudhya and it's charismatic King Narai. Only after understanding the remote causes will one be fully able to comprehend the immediate causes that took place later. I will first examine the rebirth of Ayudhya from the beginning of the Ayudhya period until the reign of King Narai, allowing the reader to comprehend the perpetual reforms that were taking place and the logic behind them. I will also introduce external sources, which arrive in Siam and discuss how each factored-in to the equation. These factors are not only significant to events, which took place in the seventeenth century, but they have also played a crucial role in the development of modern day Thailand.

As a capital city and a port, Ayudhya's geographic position was perfectly suitable to be the commercial and political center, as well as strategically easy to defend from invasions. Ayudhya was founded in the central Menam Basin in an enormous lowland area rich in both rice and fish, giving it the ability to support a large population. In addition to the three major rivers, Ayudhya Island also had an elaborate network of canals, both natural as well as artificial and has been coined the "Venice of the East." [1]

As a state, Ayudhya's geographical position, midway between India and China, and located on the way to Melaka from China was apt to become an international trading bazaar, linked to other states along the trade routes such as Borneo, Java, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Stations along peninsular Siam were especially important. For example, to the west there was Tanaosi, Marit and Phuket, which were relatively close to Coromandel, in India. To the east Songkhla and Nakhon Si Thammarat were significant, with Bangkok by far the most significant. [2] The current capital is located at the estuary of the Chao Phraya River, which converges with many rivers in the northern portion of the country, where products were sent to export.

The mighty kingdom of Ayudhya did not sprout up overnight. Rather it was built upon two existing civilizations. It emerged from the background of Mon-Khmer civilizations in the now Lopburi and Suphanburi areas of Thailand, which had been in existence since the fifth century. The period from the fifth to the eleventh century was known as the Dvaravati civilization. It is believed the Dvaravati civilization arose from trade between India and China. Traders en route to China preferred to use the Isthmus of Kra, a narrow stretch on the Thai peninsula separating the Bay of Bengal[3] on the west and the Gulf of Siam on the east, rather than sailing through the straits of Melaka and around the Malay Peninsula. This early contact allowed Indian influence to penetrate into central Siam. Dvaravati's inhabitants were believed to be Mon people. The Mons and their Buddhist culture spread from the Tenasserim mountain range bordering Myanmar, across the Menam Basin to the border of Cambodia. It also reached up to the north and northeast into the Laotian territories.[4] The rise, or rebirth of Ayudhya as we know it today, which began in the mid-fourteenth century, occurred when the population began to recover from what appears to have been the Black Death which ravaged Siam two decades earlier. This assists us in explaining the persistence of "Dvaravati" in the full name of the city, "Dvaravati Sri Ayudhya." However, Michael Wright claims the Siamese have had a tradition of coupling names of related cities. Thus Dvaravati Sri Ayudhya may be a "Conflation of the name of two related earlier cities." [5]

Like most "Indinized" capitals of Southeast Asia, Ayudhya was set up in a mandala, a circular polity, which aligns either four or eight periphery kingdoms to a central kingdom, which reigns supreme, with Ayudhya in the center possessing supreme hegemony. Surrounding Ayudhya were four cardinal cities, which gave the center its real territorial power. They were Lopburi to the north, Phrapradaeng (a suburb of Bangkok) to the south, Nakhon Nayok to the east, and Suphanburi to the west. These four cities were known as *muang luk luang*, or the cities of royal sons. In early Ayudhyan history, the king's sons or other relatives were appointed rulers of these cities. The cities were close enough to be controlled from the center, yet distant enough to be extensions of the center's power.[6] The acceptance of Ayudhya by the *muang* as the political center of the Menam Basin allowed the capital to survive. Had the *muang* broken apart from the center, they would have returned to their previous state of political autonomy from the center.

An immediate problem for the kings, which needed to be addressed, was that of manpower. Invasions by the Khmer and the Burmese, who took their conquered subjects back to their respectful kingdoms coupled with the Black Plague left Ayudhya's population decimated. To rebuild their empires, rulers used two methods, corvee labor and Brahmanistic religion. The first public works they undertook, even if it was for self-glorification, was the construction of temples. As was the case in Pagan, the land and *kha phra*, or temple "attachments", were donated to the Sangha by the court. Thus you had a large population living in permanent settlements in dense clusters, all within the king's reach. This guaranteed that a large population constantly surrounded the kingdom of Ayudhya, which was at the king's disposal when necessary. "Freemen" were also required to "donate" six months per year of labor to the court either in public works or in military service.[7] This gave the king the necessary manpower to work the land, as well as to reassemble the army to expand the kingdom. By the mid-fifteenth century,

Ayudhya had become a dominant state in Southeast Asia and was searching for ways to strengthen and expand its kingdom to avoid the fate of the "classical states." This was undertaken in a twofold process. The first was to cultivate international trade, and lastly a series of reforms intended to strengthen the center. King Nareusuan (1590-1605) welcomed foreign trade. During this period, Ayudhya was in a period of social and economic reconstruction. The capital itself wasn't the bustling commercial center it once was. The king actively sought Spanish trade and future kings welcomed the Dutch and later the English traders in Siam. Increased income was greatly needed for the reconstruction of the kingdom and support of the elaborate court.[8] Nareusuan wasn't just content opening up Siam to foreign trade, but also strengthening the Navy. Understanding the intricacies of international relations, he wanted to maintain a balance of power in international commerce as he sent ships to the Philippines, Japan China and Taiwan. Western traders began entering Siam in the early sixteenth century. Openness to trade, sakoku in Japan, and religious freedom were prime factors in attracting foreigners to Siam. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to arrive in Siam when Duarte de Coelho landed on her shores in 1516. Their treaty, the first between Siam and a western State, allowed the Portuguese the right to reside and trade at Ayudhya, Ligor, Pattani, Tenesserim and Meguri. In return, they agreed to supply Siam with guns and ammunition, which they used to fight battles with neighboring states.

The Portuguese Portugal's movement eastward was fueled by three dominant factors. The Portuguese government encouraged the exploration of sea-routes through the offer of financial assistance, men and ships to meet their goals. The first was to find a passage to Asia to purchase spices, silk, porcelain, ivory and other luxury goods for the European market. Ottoman Turks blocked the current trade route to Asia via Levant. Their second goal was the discovery of land for colonization. Finally, the use of the missionaries to facilitate the spread of Christianity throughout the region. The Treaty of Tordesillas between Portugal, Spain and the Pope was signed in 1494. It divided the world into two spheres of influence. The western hemisphere was for the Spanish and the eastern hemisphere was for the Portuguese. The Crown's openness to foreign trade, location, along with a relaxed religious policy made Siam an ideal location for the Portuguese to establish residence.

The Dutch

In 1601 the Dutch established the Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC), or the Dutch East India Company. The VOC set up several trading stations in Pattani and in 1604 at the request of the Thais they set up a trading post at Ayudhya, which was to be used as a depot for China trade. King Naresuan informed the Dutch in May 1604, that later that year he would be sending an embassy to China and that the Dutch had a chance of entering the trading market by sending a representative along with the Thai embassy. The Dutch were looking to enter the China market through the "sponsorship" of Ayudhya, which was on good terms with China. Thus the initial interest of the Dutch in Ayudhya was based on commercial interest in Chinese goods.[9]

The importance of Ayudhya for the Dutch rose after they established a trading post in Deshima, Japan in 1609. Under the Tokugawa shogunate, there was a great demand for deer hides for

Japanese warriors; a product which Siam had an abundant supply. The trade of hides became so profitable that on June 12, 1617 the Dutch signed first treaty with Siam, obtaining definite terms, a monopoly, for the purchase of hides as well as obtaining extraterritoriality. [10] [11]

The Crown's motives for developing relations with the Dutch were twofold. First, as a powerful and technologically advanced state, Siam welcomed trade with the Dutch not only as a source of revenue, but also as a way to obtain technologically superior weapons. The Siamese wanted guns and ammunition, and the personnel to teach Siamese how to operate them. This would allow Ayudhya to quash any unrest, which might challenge the kingdom from Angkor, Burma, or rival polities from the north.

The second was primarily for political reasons. The Siamese desired to politically involve the Dutch was predicated on the assumption that they would be able to provide a countervailing force, primarily in the Bay of Bengal, against the Portuguese, and the Burmese. [12] Ayudhya placed a high value on the Bay of Bengal due to the prevailing pattern of trade. Although it was possible for traders to sail around the Malay Peninsula, it was preferable to carry goods overland to or from Tenasserim, on the west side of the peninsula, and sail from there to the Indian ports. This method was faster and safer as the Straits of Melaka were infested with pirates. King Ekathotsarot (1605-1610) was so concerned about the Portuguese and their plans for the Bay of Bengal in 1610, six days after a meeting with the Portuguese in which they requested him to drive out the Dutch, that the king offered the Dutch the opportunity to build a fort in the town of Meguri. [13] Thus neutralizing the Portuguese and preserving the overland trade route to his kingdom. Having an ally in Meguri was also advantageous to Ekathotsarot in light of the reunification efforts of King Anaukpetlun taking place in Burma.

The British

British ships arrived in Siamese waters outside Bangkok on August 15, 1612. They established trading posts in Ayudhya and Pattani. Piracy and competition from the Dutch and the Portuguese hindered profits and these posts were closed in 1632. [14] It might be of note to mention that the English withdrew from Siam the first time, of their own accord, and no pressure was brought upon them.

The British returned to Ayudhya in 1661, after being forced to leave their factory in Cambodia after an invasion of the country by Annam in 1659. In 1678 King Narai offered to cede Pattani to the English East India Company as a means to offset the influence of the Dutch, who were at War with England at the beginning of Charles II's reign (1660-1685). The English were upset and alleged that Thai foreign trade was a monopoly, with certain exports, which could only be bought and sold through the Royal Warehouse Department. The English East India Company also desired its own monopoly and sought to prevent other Englishmen outside the company from trading in Thailand. However, some company members as well as Englishmen not affiliated with the company, or "interlopers", also engaged in trade. Among the most infamous of these interlopers were the White brothers Samuel and George. It was George White who introduced Constance Phaulkon to Siam.

The Japanese

Of the non-European nations, which held a place in the resurgence of Ayudhya, I will examine three: Japan, Persia, and Burma. While the Portuguese were the first western settlers in Siam, the Japanese were the first non-Thai settlers. At the zenith of their prosperity, the Japanese population in Ayudhya was said to have been around fifteen hundred. Many Japanese left Japan several decades prior to the sakoku (1633-1639), Japan's isolation from foreign influence. They fled to escape religious persecution from the Tokugawa shogunate, were Ronin, or lordless samurai, and ambitious merchants. They established settlements throughout Southeast Asia with significant establishments in Siam (Ayudhya), Vietnam (Hoi An), Cambodia (Phnom Penh), Philippines (Manila), and Java (Batavia). The merchants came without their wives and married Thai ladies and assimilated into the culture. The Japanese played an important role in Siamese history. When King Naresuan the Great fought a duel with the Burmese Crown Prince in 1593, he had five hundred Japanese soldiers in his army who defended the sovereignty of the kingdom. There were also Japanese who joined the King's service as guards. It was after the battle with the Burmese Crown Prince in 1593 that Iyeyasu Tokugawa of Japan learned of Siam's wealth and power and desired to open friendly relations with Siam. [15] During Japan's isolation period only China and Siam were able to conduct trade there.

The Persians

The Persians, which I will discuss in greater detail in section IV, took root in Siam in the Seventeenth Century. They became influential in trade and politics of Ayudhya. It was around this time that there was an eastward spread of Islam through trade. This appealed to many smaller Southeast Asian polities as the Muslims controlled three of the most powerful kingdoms in the world. They were Safavi, in Persia, Ottoman, in Turkey, and the Mughals in India. By joining Islam, they were automatically "linked" to a powerful network. Islam also appealed to them because it didn't replace their current indigenous beliefs but acted more as a supplement.

The Burmese

Finally, I have elected to discuss the Burmese. They have been the primary enemy of the Siamese, and are responsible for destroying Ayudhya in both 1569 and 1767; thereby making this assignment much more laborious than it otherwise would have been. The reason I have elected to incorporate Burma into this section is to examine the outcomes of the two states. In 1635 King Thalun moved the capital from Pegu back to Ava, cutting it off from international trade and in effect taking it out of the international loop. Burma's leaders didn't possess the negotiating skills that its neighbors to the east did; when juxtaposed with Siam, who had considerable experience in dealing with European powers. We can see that this played a role when the aggressive Europeans arrived in Burma in the nineteenth century. Of course this is an oversimplified model, as there were several elements which contributed to the colonization of Burma.

King Narai

I could not in good conscience continue without interjecting a few words about King Narai, a man who King Mongkut (Rama IV) himself called "the most distinguished of all Siamese rulers." [16] It was his adoption of western education practices and ideals as a path to modernization, with a unique vision of opening up his nation, which facilitated Siam's bid to retain its sovereignty against western imperial powers.

In 1656 Narai became King of Siam. He maintained more extensive intercourse with foreigners than his predecessors had. He tried to persuade foreigners to come and trade with Siam. He was also the first Siamese king to recognize the need for progress along European lines. [17] Some of his reforms included increased education of the people. He sent many students as well as officials to Europe with the French missionaries to acquire an education. Upon their return, Narai hoped they might utilize the knowledge they acquired abroad to benefit Siam. He set up schools in Ayudhya for the teaching of foreign languages and technical sciences. He studied the histories of the various European countries. He also saw to it that Siamese soldiers were given the same training as those in Europe. These practices were unique to Siam as other Southeast Asian nations practiced isolationism.

In examining the external influences as well as domestic policy, which contributed to the rebirth and centralization of Ayudhya up to the seventeenth century, the stage is now set for the introduction of Phaulkon. After analyzing the information presented in the previous section, the reader should now possess a greater understanding of the conditions, which were present in Siam in addition to a fundamental knowledge of why Phaulkon, Narai and the Siamese partook in the activities, which have been scrutinized for the past three hundred years.

II. Survey of Literature on Phaulkon

Hurdles to Research

All throughout my endeavors to construct an accurate non-biased account of Constance Phaulkon, I have run in to numerous hurdles throughout my research which I believe are worth mentioning so that the reader will understand why there are significant "gaps" and inconsistencies in the history of this topic, allowing for the crystallization and propagation of myths. Prior to this I would like to mention a few words with regards to my bibliographic search.

Since this was a scope and methods course, a considerable portion of the course was devoted to an exhaustive bibliographical search. The search netted more sources on my topic than I had expected at the outset. However, quantity does not necessarily equate to quality. Much like Phaulkon, the sources themselves were controversial. In seeking clarification from sources, I found myself asking the following questions. What is authentic? What is a primary source? How can we re-enact the life of Phaulkon when all the historical archives in Ayudhya were destroyed? Was this not one of the greatest tragedies in the historiography of Siam?

We do have the testimonies of the Jesuit missionaries, but to what degree is it historically fair to rely on foreign sources in the reconstruction of an era of a given country? I constantly wrestled with these issues when analyzing the data, trying to determine the proper weight and value to place on each individual source.

The first of the hurdles I encountered was a lack of Thai primary sources. It has been well documented that on April 7, 1767, after a siege of fourteen months, Ayudhya fell to the Burmese, who under King Hsinbyushin, vandalized and burned the city to the ground destroying the annals in the process.[18] Given no other alternative, one must then turn to the remaining sources, which are in various languages such as Chinese, Dutch, English, French Japanese, Latin, Persian, and Portuguese. To compound the problem, many are written in an "old style" which requires additional specialized knowledge and reference materials.

Provided one can overcome the previously mentioned hurdle, there still is the issue of compiling this wealth of information. The material is literally scattered around the world, with records in vaults and museums in The United Kingdom, India, The Hague in the Netherlands, the Oriental Museum in Tokyo, and in Paris, France. While the annals in Ayudhya were destroyed, the documents received in France, and the minutes of the letters sent to Siam have been preserved and are to be found in Paris in three places. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Archives of the Marine (which has since been incorporated into the National Archives), and the Ministry of the Colonies.[19]

My exhaustive bibliographical search netted a wealth of secondary sources, which can be categorized in two ways, historical and romanticized biographies. I will discuss both categories as well as call attention to why their perceptions and accounts of Phaulkon have not been accurate.

Historical Accounts

European sources, either primary or secondary, fail to paint a complete portrait of Phaulkon. Rather he is portrayed in the biased light in which he treated those who were in contact with him. For example, if Forbin and the French Jesuits didn't obtain what they wanted from Phaulkon and the Siamese, their single faced accounts of Phaulkon reflect this antipathy towards the Greek minister. Later sources written from these biased accounts also lack scope and breadth.

There are older accounts of Phaulkon which attempt to present him in an unbiased light, such as *A Greek Favourite of the King of Siam*[20] which lack the advantage of newly discovered or recently translated sources such as *The Ship of Sulaiman*[21] written by Muhammad Ibrahim, the secretary of the Persian envoy to Siam in 1685. This is the first major non-western account in which we see how Dutch and English traders were treated like other Asian traders.[22] While Sitsayamkanm makes a valid attempt at creating a non-biased biography of Phaulkon, his works lack a wide breadth of primary sources. He relies heavily on a handful of British and French first hand accounts, and on secondary sources to complete the rest. These sources were biased

towards the religious and/or economic crusades of these individuals and were not written with the interests of the Siamese nor the Southeast Asians in mind.

Next are the works of E.W. Hutchinson whose two greatest contributions include *Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century*[23] and *1688 Revolution In Siam*. [24] Even today with the discovery of additional sources, these books have not become outdated. They are well researched and properly analyzed, and contain a plethora of information. Hutchinson set out to produce an objective and scholastic assessment, but openly criticizes Phaulkon and appears to be negatively disposed. "Adventurers" leaves itself open to criticism when the reader's conclusion, based on the historical facts presented, contradicts that of the author's.

In searching through the *Dissertation Abstracts* for the past one hundred years, I found nearly two thousand works dealing with Siam and Thailand, but only one which bore a connection to my topic. "An Image of Asia: Analysis of Six Seventeenth-Century French Travel Accounts of Siam," written by Mary Rowan in 1968, examines the trials and tribulations of Five Jesuit missionaries in Siam. [25] Three years of research in Siam, a thorough examination of the French primary sources on the subject, and a thoughtful analysis of the material produced some interesting observations, which may be beneficial in understanding the attitudes of the French, which are manifest in the memoirs of Chaumont, Choisy, Forbin, La Loubere, and Tachard's two voyages. I will draw upon her observations in greater detail in section V during the discussion on myths pertaining to the French.

Romanticized Biographies

Although Phaulkon lived in Siam during one of the most eventful and glamorous chapters in Siamese history, surprisingly he is relatively unknown outside a small circle of scholars and historians. Perhaps this is why authors like Axel Aylwen with *Falcon of Siam*[26] and *The Falcon Takes Wing*[27] along with William Dalton, *Phaulkon the Adventurer, or Europeans in the East*[28] have produced "romanticized biographies" to introduce the masses to the subject. Unfortunately, the quality is typical of comparable material on fictional "best seller" lists. Thus they are further propagating the myth as they contain many historical inaccuracies. Aylwen's *The Falcon of Siam*, a romanticized biography of Phaulkon quickly became a best seller. The book, according to the publisher, is "an adventure story in the grand tradition" and according to one Thai critic is "a happy blending of history and imagination." [29] Though it appears as if the author did considerable historical research, his imagination often takes the upper hand, and in many ways resembles the novels of James Clavell, who made his mark in the field of similar writings with the Far East as an appealing background. The author's second book of the series *The Falcon Takes Wing*, also received negative critical remarks for its historical inaccuracies.

The final romanticized bibliography I would like to look at is William Dalton's *Phaulkon the Adventurer, or Europeans in the East*. As the author himself admits, the lengthy book is based on Jesuit accounts, mainly those of Pere d'Orleans and Pere Tachard, the main defenders of Constance Phaulkon. This explains the praiseworthy theme the book follows. Early in my research I found it very tempting to compare Aylwen's works to Dalton's. However, it should be

noted that there is a gap of approximately one hundred and thirty years between the two publications, and naturally the authors were influenced by the spirit of his time. Interestingly, Dalton previously wrote a biography of Will Adams, who was the first Englishman in Japan in the seventeenth century. Thus in terms of historical accuracy, perhaps giving his novel a psychological as well as chronological advantage.

The inaccessibility of Thai primary sources along with biased accounts of Phaulkon has left historians with an incomplete and often inaccurate account of the man. Unfortunately, romanticized biographies and fiction drastically out sell academic historical works, which lack the suspense of the "page turners." Although an aspiring scholar, I myself am guilty of supporting their cause as I have purchased and read all the novels by the previously mentioned authors. It is then these quasi-historical accounts, written to arouse an interest in the subject matter, which further propagate myths.

III. Background information on Phaulkon

Tradesman and Public Figure

Constantine Hierax was born on the island of Cephalonia in Greece in 1647. His father was an innkeeper from a respectable family, the son of a governor of Cephalonia, and his mother's forebears governed the island under the Republic of Venice. Rich in family lineage doesn't equate to family fortune, and in 1660 at age thirteen, with no formal training he left home in search of a better life than his family could provide.[30] He took up with an English master where he completed several voyages prior to migrating from the Mediterranean to England.

In England he studied the English language and sought employment in Prince Rupert's Fleet against the Dutch. Shortly thereafter, he sailed to India under another master who changed his name from Hierax to "Falcon," the equivalent of the Greek word. Then for unknown reasons, the Portuguese, who always called a man by his Christian name, dubbed him "Constans." [31] This is how he became to be known as Constance Phaulkon.

Constance made the most of his trip to the East Indies. He learned to handle and sail a ship and when he was ashore he learned the intimacy of native affairs. He felt a strong attachment to the Far East and upon his return to England knowing that he wanted to return and make his fortune as a tradesman. He signed on as an assistant gunner on the English vessel, the *Hopewell*, bound for Batam in 1669 in order to obtain passage back to The East Indies. Once he arrived in Batam he enlisted his services with the British East India Company where he was assigned as a junior clerk in their factory at Batam. Here he picked up yet another language, Malay. While on the *Hopewell*, Phaulkon met George White, the brother of Samuel White. George White was a free trader, also known as an "interloper." [32]

Although the East India Company had a monopoly on all trade in India and the Far East, White was able to trade outside the Company without punishment. Thus he must have some private

arrangement between White and the Company's officers. While he was in Batam he met Richard Burnaby, one of the Company's senior officials in that port, and his future employer.

Phaulkon was an assistant gunner on the ship that brought Burnaby from Batam to Ayudhya. Although not well educated, Burnaby was aware of Phaulkon's merits as a linguist and a conversationalist. He desired to keep him in Ayudhya, and when the Captain informed him that Phaulkon was not permitted to remain behind, Burnaby and the Captain devised a plan for Phaulkon to "disappear."

Phaulkon's first big break came on May 29, 1678 at a birthday party for King Charles II of England. A gunner, while loading a cannon, accidentally set fire to the gunpowder that spread to the well-stocked powder magazine nearby. When everyone fled, he alone remained poised, knowing all too well that magazine was too near and flight was meaningless. Instead, he entered the magazine, removing the open cask of gunpowder, thereby saving the magazine and the factory.[33]

For his heroism, his chief gave him a reward of one thousand crowns.[34] Having never before set his eyes on such a princely sum, he saw this as an opportunity to make his fortune. He resigned his post with the East India Company in Batam and invested in a modest vessel and cargo that he intended to sell in Aceh.

Upon entering the service of the King, which we will examine in detail in the following section, Phaulkon's ready apprehension and success in affairs entrusted to him were of small consequence. However, by degree of momentum, raised him in the space of eight years to the highest credit and authority. He was put at the head of the finances of the Kingdom, and also the direction of the King's household. Almost all public affairs of the most important concern were determined by his advice, and whoever had anything to solicit was required to apply to him.[35]

Although at the zenith of his power in 1685 his was in complete control of the country, he refused to accept official positions, rightly fearing to create more enemies than he already had. He placed nonentities, or marionettes, in the posts and held all the power in his hands. The Abbe De Choisy in his memoirs states; "Mr. Constance [Phaulkon], though neither Phra Klang, nor prime minister but having all their functions..."[36]

There is relatively little discrepancy regarding the details up until this point. The facts concerning his origin represent a shared common ground between a critic and a eulogist of Phaulkon. I will use these sources as well as additional primary sources in the following section of this paper to try and clarify the events which took place after his arrival in Siam.

IV. Story of Constance Phaulkon; History vs. Mythology

Myths are created and appear throughout history during times of change. Change is embraced equally by anxiety and fear. One need not look past the upcoming millennium to see this

exemplified. These myths are used to fill historical voids with plausible explanations to comfort and pacify. Providing answers that people want to or need to hear. These explanations are assumed and passed from generation to generation by historians who expand upon the work of previous historians. Thus accumulating into a "snowball effect." They are widely in existence all through history. One need not look further than Marco Polo to see how mythology affects history.

In fact, the story of Phaulkon, in these very history books, has been juxtaposed with Homer's classic Greek myth, The Odyssey. I have chosen five myths, which frequently surface in Phaulkon's history and examined them against what I found in the primary sources. The myth of Phaulkon's rise to power, the myth of Phaulkon's relations with the Persians, the myth surrounding his conversion to Christianity, the myth of his relations with the French, and finally, the myth that he was a big failure. I hope to enlighten the reader not only on Phaulkon, but also the mythology surrounding the radical changes taking place in Siam during the seventeenth century.

Myth: Phaulkon Wormed His Way Into Narai's Court

One of Phaulkon's many acquired talents was that of a linguist. He attained proficiency in Malay, Siamese, English, Greek, Latin and Portuguese, which at the time was the commercial language of the East. He was brought to Siam by Richard Burnaby, where he was reunited with George White. He was involved in the trade of sundries with White and Burnaby where he had the unfortunate experience of being shipwrecked three times.

About this time, when Singora (Song Khla) rebelled against Siamese rule, Burnaby saw this as a golden opportunity to make a princely profit by supplying the rebels in that town which was being besieged by the Siamese. He gave the command to Phaulkon who prepared a boat stocked with guns, magazine powder in barrels and provisions, and with a small crew headed out for Singora. However, during their voyage a storm broke out and the boat was broken into pieces by the violent sea off the coast of Ligor (present day Nakkon Sri Thammarat).[37] Prior to the destruction of his boat, Phaulkon attempted to lighten the load by throwing some of his contraband overboard.[38]

This unfortunate experience was observed by some locals, and the Siamese authorities were quickly notified. The Governor caught wind of what was going on and interrogated Phaulkon and his crew. Phaulkon, who had by this time mastered the Siamese language, replied to the governor in his mother tongue. He surprised the governor and was able to talk his way out of receiving any punishment by stating they were working for the East India Company and were bringing supplies to various towns in Siam when their ship had been wrecked. To avoid further suspicion from the Siamese that they were trading outside the Company and carrying contraband goods, Burnaby offered Phaulkon to the Barcalon or foreign minister, in 1680, to serve as an interpreter between himself and the English. To make his offer further appealing, Burnaby agreed to put up whatever funding was necessary. Phaulkon's critic, the "English Catholic," states that Burnaby went even further.

"Kance, whom we will now call Mr. Constance, was well received by the Barcalon, thanks to the loan and introduction furnished by our English merchants, who put up an even larger sum for him to become, through the Barcalon's influence, Calouan (Khaluang), which is a King's servantor man of the royal service. The duties assigned to him by the Barcalon were in the Goudans [go-downs] or store-houses of the King, and in matters pertaining to trade; for this King was the leading trader in his kingdom." [39]

I believe it is apparent that Phaulkon did not "worm" his way into the service of the Siamese, nor at this early stage in his career did he have his sights set on a career in politics. Rather, he was thrust into the King's service to further the interests of Richard Burnaby. He had chosen Phaulkon for the Singora venture for his ability to speak Malay. Impressed by his composure and the handling of the governor after their shipwreck, Burnaby pushed Phaulkon into the service of the Siamese. He did this for two reasons, first to protect himself against persecution, and secondly to further insure his financial stability as an independent entrepreneur, knowing that with a Crown monopoly, the King was the leading trader.

Phaulkon and the Persians

From the earliest listed sources, the Persians had great antipathy towards Phaulkon who they described as a "sly, ill-begotten Frank minister" and an "evil starred Frank." [40] I carefully examined the primary sources to bring to light the basis of their seeming premature prejudice. Many contemporary scholars, including Kennon Breazeale, a mainland Southeast Asia specialist at the East West Center, presume it was Phaulkon's religious orientation, given the spread of Islam at the time, which was seen as a threat to the Persians and the spread of Islam. [41] While this explanation is plausible, it should not have been so readily assumed. I will offer an alternative theory supported by historical content rather than myth.

The Persians came to Siam in the mid seventeenth century just prior to the reign of King Narai. As previously stated, Siam is on the trade route from India to China and the Persians often stopped in Siam when crossing the Isthmus of Kra en route to China. Approximately thirty Iranians settled in Ayudhya in order to take advantage of the great profits to be made in international trade, namely the buying and selling of elephants. These merchants were honored by Prasat Thong, King Narai's predecessor, and were given houses and positions in the king's administration.

From an early age, Narai took a liking to the Iranians. When he was still a young boy he used to visit the Iranians frequently and took a keen interest in their manners and customs. Thus when his father died and his elder brother was crowed, he along with the Iranians and the Dutch devised a scheme allowing Narai to assume the throne. [42] The king entrusted his affairs to the hands of foreigners. He viewed the Siamese as incompetent as seen in this observation from Muhammad Ibrham.

"The Siamese are devoid of intelligence and any practical abilities. They are unable to undertake a simple task with hope for success. Thus the king is cautious and

never confides to any great extent in the natives."[43]

When the king's minister and councilor Aqa Muhammad passed away, there was a power shift. Before, all important business matter were in the hands of the Iranians. According to them, they were the very source of his power. With the exception of Aqa Muhammad, the previous Persian prime ministers had been deficient in their work or blatantly disloyal. After the death of their father, Aqa Muhammad's sons, Chu Chi and Chu Kia held high rank in the king's court, visited the king's brother and in a covert meeting, brought with them tokens of their friendship. Their kind behavior was seen as a plot to overthrow the king and put his brother on the throne. This was aided by the fact that they were at liberty to come and go in the palace and no one had the authority to question them. The arrival of an embassy from Iran in 1685 was also viewed as part of a plan to strengthen the king's enemies. Aqa Muhammad's sons were relieved of their positions, arrested and exiled to an island. The king was now in need of foreign support and turned to Phaulkon to fill the void in his administration.

In addition to abrupt forfeiture of power, the Iranians, now numbering around 200, were dealt an additional setback at the hands of Phaulkon, further distancing them from the king's good graces. When Siamese envoy to Iran, Haji Salim returned from a mission to Iran in which he had spent five thousand tumans[44] of the king's money yet failed to accomplish the task he was sent to perform. Furthermore, he transported personal freight back to Siam on the embassy's ship.

From this point forward Phaulkon was in a position in which he was able to distance the Persians, whom he believed were disloyal, from the king. When the Persian embassy to Siam wanted to meet the king en route to Lubu, the king refused. During the Persians' appointment, foreign dignitaries were allowed to address the king directly. Phaulkon however, sensing disloyalty terminated that privilege. The Persians took this as an attempt by Phaulkon to pit Persians against the king as seen in this quote by Muhammad Ibrahim, secretary of the envoy reinforce the point.

At first he (the king) agreed to meet our official document despite the wish of his unscrupulous minister. But that ill-begotten Christian convinced the king to change his mind. He planted fear in the king.[45]

I believe this makes a strong case in favor of the argument that the root of the Persians hatred for Phaulkon did not arise from his religious convictions, but rather the political threat he posed to the Persians in Siam at that time. Phaulkon's rise to power signaled the end of Persians' status and good favor in the royal court, a capacity that they had enjoyed since their arrival.

Myth of His Religious Conversion

Phaulkon's first task in his new position was to entice the French into establishing a settlement in Ayudhya to counter the Dutch. One way Phaulkon is vilified is that he sold out the king by making a deal with the French. It is also rumored that he converted back to Catholicism to gain a treaty with the French. This is yet another myth.

Phaulkon himself stated that his parents were Catholic, but he converted to Anglicanism when he was with the English East India Company. He reverted back to Catholicism in 1682 after he had been in Siam for two years in order obtain a lady's hand in marriage. This was apparently not unusual at that time. In a seventeenth century letter from "an English Catholic" to Pere D'Orleans he describes a first hand account of Phaulkon's true motive for conversion.

In addition to that he had affairs with two Christian girls, and had promised marriage to each of them: one was the daughter of Don Joseph Castillan of Manila; the other was a 'creacaon' of a certain Monica Suarez, who lived and Still lives in the Portuguese quarter.

He had little difficulty in shaking off the first, but Monica Suarez pressed him

Hard to keep his word to her 'creacaon.' 'Creacaon is the name given by the Portuguese to the children brought up by them, whether belonging to their domestic slaves, or being orphans or others for whom sometimes they have as great affection as for their own offspring.

Mr. Constance was not able to marry Catona unless he turned Catholic. It was at this time that his conversion took place. Several Englishmen in India have gone over to Rome under similar circumstances.[46]

It is possible that this fact has not come to light even though it is mentioned in two major works by E.W. Hutchinson, because we know from history that Phaulkon married Madame Marie Guimard, a Japanese Portuguese mix whose mother was a Christian who fled Japan to escape religious persecution from Hideyoshi Ieyasu.[47]

Constance was prepared for the marriage to Catona, but it was broken off as the result of an "understanding" between the Jesuit, Fr. Thomas, head of the Jesuits at that time, Suarez senior, and Fr. John Baptist Maldonat.

This brings up yet another misconception. Reiko Hada, in her article about Madame Marie Guimard states;

Influenced by Marie, who was a pious Christian, Phaulkon was baptized. On 02 May 1682 they were married at a Portuguese church in Ayudhya.[48]

The author neglects to mention Phaulkon's previous engagement possibly due to his harem of ladies he possessed prior to marriage, which would have reflected negatively on her feminist glorifying account of Guimard. Her article also states that he "seized an opportunity to serve at the Royal Palace." However, she neglects to explain just how Phaulkon went about "seizing" power. This supports the propagation of the initial myth that Phaulkon "wormed" his way in to

power, which we have seen is incorrect.

Myth: Phaulkon "Sold Out" to the French

Perhaps one of the biggest controversies surrounding Constance Phaulkon, for which numerous works have been written, was his relationship with the French. To do justice to this topic, the research and analysis alone would consume an entire book. Not given the time or the resources to produce such, I have elected to expose this relationship using some rare and previously unmined primary sources as well as some familiar sources to support my cause.

I will begin by discussing the French authors who were previously mentioned in section II under the work of Mary Rowan, and in addition some keen observations her research produced. This will allow the reader to discover the crux of the French antipathy toward Phaulkon and the basis for the propagation of myths.

Royal power penetrated the inner thought process of those who surrounded Louis XIV. In the six books (written by French Jesuits) portraying Siam to France, each author's personal vision of Louis XIV clouded his ability to judge the Siamese king and court accurately. Western egalitarian society finds it difficult to grasp fully the respect which a king's subject accorded to his monarch.

The French authors faced many problems when portraying an exotic king (Narai) of a nearly unknown country, whose claims to royal supremacy in his own domain exceeded Louis XIV's pretensions to being Europe's greatest monarch. Each author wished Narai could be magnificent enough to merit the friendship of the Sun King, but not so overwhelming as to overshadow Louis' superiority.[49]

Rather than analyzing King Narai, his daughter, the Princess, and Phaulkon as different human beings functioning in a foreign culture, the authors dramatized these three people who represented Siamese royalty to them, by molding them into exotic royal types. Phaulkon appears as the king's favorite, who enjoyed a meteoric rise to power from humble beginnings, and whose fall would be sudden and fatal.[50] Since these sources were written by missionaries and French Ambassadors to Siam, the overwhelming majority of primary sources on Phaulkon's dealings with the French fail to remain unbiased based upon their prior dealings with him. With this in mind, we are now prepared to examine some historical discrepancies which have infiltrated history books stirring up controversy over Phaulkon and his allegiance.

The French missionaries first arrived in Ayudhya in 1662 and were surprised at the religious tolerance of the nation; as they along with anyone else were free to preach and convert at will. The king had shown his good will towards them by giving them a gift of land and houses as well as building monasteries. Since this was highly unusual of a Buddhist king, the missionaries believed Narai was attracted to their religion. Narai had his eyes set on something else.

In the mid 1680's, Narai had Phaulkon turn to the French in the hope of using them to counteract the Dutch influence in Siam. Initially the idea had merit since the Dutch and the French were enemies in Europe and fought the Franco-Dutch war of 1672-1678, the war of the League of Augsburg (1689-1697) and the war of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713). The credit for opening up the relations between Siam and France did not go to Phaulkon, but to the French Catholic missionaries whose main aim was to propagate Roman Catholicism in Annam, Tonkin, and China. Narai sent two embassies to France with the hopes of securing their "friendship." The first embassy was shipwrecked, and the second embassy was entrusted with the duty of inviting France to send an embassy to Siam with the idea of concluding a treaty of friendship. Louis XIV sent an embassy to Siam in hopes of converting Narai to Christianity.

While the French embassy itself was written off as a failure, it represented a great success for Phaulkon and Siam. For his master, Narai, he had obtained de Chaumont's agreement for the coveted alliance with France, without surrendering anything more than vague offers for the missionaries which were never published.

In Paris, the French were very critical in expressing their views that Phaulkon was too clever for De Chaumont. It can then be inferred that De Chaumont, De Choisy, and Forbin in their accounts were critical towards Phaulkon, and their antipathy towards the minister was rooted in their own failures.

Back in Siam, the Crown was criticized for its relationship with the French. Criticism of Narai for attempting to cultivate an exaggerated and dangerous relationship with France needs to be examined in relation to the previously mentioned historical background. This doesn't mean that France was approaching Siam out of pure idealism, without taking into consideration their own national interests. (Only a glance at the instructions to the embassy of La Loubere is enough to convince us about the imperialist mentality of the "friends.") Narai's phobia from his previous unpleasant experiences with the Dutch is an element which should always be included. The shadow of the Dutch influence in Java was not too distant either. Maurice Collins states, "This threat to Siam's independence worried the king and his advisers. The Dutch were steadily swallowing the island kings of Java and Sumatra. They might swallow Siam." [51]

History has written that Phaulkon had converted to Christianity to please the French missionaries (a myth we have already debunked), and making a secret treaty with the French promising them the King's conversion to Christianity and bringing the French into Siam, giving them the coveted garrison at Bangkok. It was deceitful in convincing us Phaulkon was attempting to usurp the throne.

Phaulkon was much too savvy to attempt this feat, knowing there was no way a foreigner would be able to sit on the throne of Siam. If he declined to accept the official title of Prime Minister, fearing it would bring greater resentment towards his person, he surely would have known that attempting to coronate himself would have been disastrous. By this time he was actually in control of Siam, and assuming any additional title was merely cosmetic. I will now produce evidence which will offer an alternative to these accusations.

First of all, careful examination of the primary sources consistently reveals Phaulkon was loyal to Narai and Siam. The Dutch, seeing Bangkok as the chief key to Siam, were conspiring to kidnap Constance Phaulkon, "since he was the only person who they believed could thwart their plans." [52] This tells us two things. First, the fear of the Dutch was general and Narai was looking for an existing counterweight (the French) against them. Secondly, Phaulkon aligned himself with Siam to the extent he became the main enemy of the Dutch.

Next, to counter the argument that he was cultivating a relationship with the French behind the King's back, it should be noted the French missionaries enjoyed the King's favor for upwards of twenty years before Phaulkon intervened. Knowing he had few friends in Siam, and without Narai he would wither, Phaulkon brought in French subjects to preserve his position.

His main accuser, Petracha coincidentally called on Dutch assistance in usurping the throne. Worried about granting too much to the French and a gravely ill Narai, Petracha had Phaulkon arrested by setting up an erroneous meeting, tortured, and finally executed on June 5, 1688. He was fearful of the French taking over Siam. For this Constance has also received a lot of bad publicity. If his motives for the coup were to remove the foreign advisor, why didn't Petracha just have Phaulkon arrested? Why then was it necessary to confront Narai, kill his stepson, two brothers Chao Fa Apaitot and Chao Fa Noi and place himself on the throne?

These accusations of Phaulkon having an eye on the throne can be further refuted by Vollant des Verquains a French officer at the garrison under General Desfarges.

M Constance believing that his master's glory was to secure Siam under this throne, might have convinced him to appoint one of his brothers as his successor. This proves that he had never encouraged the hopes of Mon Pi [Nari's stepson] that he might ascend to the throne as enemies were trying to blame him.[53]

Finally, what may be the most compelling of the evidence comes from a portion that survived the lost annals of Ayudhya and a former King of Siam. During my research, I came across *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, written by Sir John Bowring originally written in 1857. The book contains several appendices. One of them refers to the *History of Siam*, by King Mongkut (Rama IV). Since Dr. Aung-Thwin has drilled into my head that primary sources are always my goal, I looked at what the Siamese government had to say about Phaulkon. Keep in mind it was written long after the demise of Phaulkon and Narai.

Narai is characterized as "the most distinguished of all Siamese rulers" who were highly pleased with the services of Constance Phaulkon. This European provoked jealousy of many Siamese. Here the story becomes interesting as Mongkut tells a version which is seldom heard elsewhere: Phaulkon, he writes,

[at] length was accused of designing to put the King to death by inviting him to visit the church he built, between the walls of which, it is said, he had inserted a quantity

of gunpowder, which was to be ignited by a match at a given signal, and thus involve the death of the King. On this serious charge he was assassinated by private order of the King.[54]

King Mongkut continues with the following words, which coming from him, become extremely noteworthy:

This is the traditional story; the written annals state he was slain in his sedan while faithful to his King, by order of a rebel prince, who perceived he could not succeed in his nefarious plans against the throne while Constantine lived.[55]

From history, we know the "rebel prince" was Phra Petracha. Mongkut's argument was that there was a profoundly negative legend surrounding Phaulkon which contradicted the written annals, which not only vindicated Phaulkon but also constituted an accusation against Petracha as usurper of the throne. The annals Monkut refers to are obviously the chronicles of Ayudhya, but unfortunately, he does not state which annals they were or how he came to trace them.

I believe I have drawn upon reliable sources and produced a convincing argument that Phaulkon's dealing with the French were at times personal, and at no time did he consider turning against the King, his loyalty remaining to the Crown. Regardless of how much the French involvement has helped Phaulkon's purposes, writers like Kaempfer create the impression that the royal counselor had influenced Narai in dispatching the embassy of Siam to Louis XIV. They then must ignore, if they do not deliberately omit, the fact that the first embassy of Siam was sent in 1680, long before Phaulkon had secured his position and power and this at the initiative of Narai himself. It is here against that the failure and or jealousy of the French and Dutch, which have crystallized myths of Phaulkon which remain a part of history today.

Myth of Phaulkon as a Failure

The final myth deals with the effectiveness of Phaulkon's career in civil service. He is written in the history books as an overwhelming failure. "He was a dreamer who failed big" stated one. I believe the origin of this myth derives from the French. It was the French, in particular the Chevalier De Chaumont, who failed in Siam in the seventeenth century. Their failure was projected onto Phaulkon as they saw him as the source of their failure. They neglected to take into consideration that their objectives and Phaulkon's objectives were not one and the same. The French themselves were divided on their role in Siam.

Aylwen and Dalton further propagate this myth of Phaulkon as a failure with character-centered-historiography-in-romanticized-made-for-Hollywood script. He is unfairly stereotyped as a "Greek," possessing all of their negative behavior traits and vices. Throughout my research I have found accounts of Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch, English, French, and Persians in Siam, but Constantine Hierax was the only account of a Greek I found in Siam of the seventeenth century. Constance left home at the age of thirteen and with the exception of a few letters from his

mother and bottles of Greek wine which he lavishly entertained, he had no further contact with Greece.

Phaulkon was able to achieve his goals and Siam retained their sovereignty. The following quote is a good illustration of the accomplishments of Phaulkon in Narai's court.

As for Siam, the fact that then most powerful monarch in Europe sent an embassy to Ayudhya in a strange and distant land in Asia to cultivate the friendship of the King of Siam could not fail to have some measure of political significance. If nothing else, it was visible evidence of the warm and strong feeling of friendship which the "most Christian King" bore for the non-Christian King Narai, and this solid fact alone should prove a sufficient warning or deterrent to King Narai's political enemies, particularly the Dutch. Therefore, Phaulkon's achievement in this connection marked the high tide of his success.[56]

Conclusion

Constance Phaulkon fell in love with Southeast Asia as a young man and came to Siam in the seventeenth century, in times of daring seafarers, adventurers, men in love with danger, magnetized more and more by the mystique of the Far East. We see how their deeds are magnified or vilified according to the feelings of those who tried to narrate their exploits.

The truth is that Phaulkon made Siam his real home. He learnt its most difficult language, including the extremely refined and hierarchic court language, the famous rajasab of Khmer origin which is still used at court even today.

Accusations or stereotypes of "Greekness" should be dismissed. He left home when he was thirteen years old, too young to have developed stereotypical traits. As far as anyone can tell, aside from several letters from his mother along with a few bottles of wine she sent, he had no contact with Greece.

King Narai was very pleased with his Greek favourite, and thenceforward he invariably gave ear to whatever words or thoughts he might submit to him. Thus, Phaulkon had gradually become a man who was not to be argued with, but only to be obeyed. He had graduated into what we now call a dictator.

The rise of Ayudhya, the increased need for international trade, the strengthening of the crown and the subsequent need for outsiders, was ripe for Phaulkon. If there had been no Narai then, if the two personalities had not coincided in time, if Phaulkon had not reached the monarch and gained his trust, the phenomenon of "the Greek" in Siam would never have materialized. Constance might have lived in Siam quietly in the shadow of the British Company, or he might have withdrawn defeated and today I'd be writing on a different topic. The happy coincidence of Phaulkon's presence in Siam with the reign of this enlightened king allowed the "adventurer" to

become in due course the "First Counselor."

Narai, looking much farther than the men around him, was a strange but also a positive anachronism for Siam of the time. He had a wide spirit of religious tolerance and a positive interest in faraway lands, their customs, religions, language and peoples, provided the ideal environment in which the phenomenon of Constance could flourish.

We need not look further than the reign of Petracha, when Siam imposed isolation on itself to see this illustrated. During the entire Ayudhya period, the years of Narai were the period with the closest contact with the outside world.

The phenomenon of Phaulkon, may be unique for Siam, but not the rest of Asia: A few decades earlier, in distant Japan, another adventurer, Will Adams, hero of the famous novel *Shogun* by James Clavell, also received an official title coupled with the corresponding influence but without ever reaching the height of power as Phaulkon. The Portuguese adventurer Philip de Brito was the first to trace the route toward absolute power in Burma, who after winning over the king of Arakan, betrayed him.

If Phaulkon was not second-guessed by Narai, are the rest of us in a position to do so? Narai believed that he had found in the person of M. Constance a worthy Minister, an enlightened member of the council, full of fervor and courage for the job. He might have searched throughout his entire kingdom for a better tool for his glorious endeavors and for a man more capable than he for securing the alliance so much desired by him and our invincible monarch. [57]

Seventeenth century Thai experiences of the outside world taught them how fascinating it was to meet and learn from foreigners. At the same time, however, the Thais were quick to learn the lesson that the Japanese and Europeans could be very dangerous when they obtained too strong a foothold.

Phaulkon headed east out of a passion for the Far East and dreams of making money in trade. This is apparent from his escapades where he bought a recorded three vessels prior to service of the King. I have uncovered details suggesting he never lost sight of his original goal.

In 1692, four years after his death, 3 Siamese Sampans arrived in the Philippines to engage in trade. Official records have one of the Siamese Sampans listed as being owned by a Greek, [58] i. e. Phaulkon was the owner. There is little doubt that Phaulkon engaged in "illegal" acts while in Siam, as was the spirit of the times, and is reflected in the sources. This however, in addition to being irrelevant, cannot deter from the service he provided for the king and to Siam as a loyal subject who stood between the usurpers and Narai.

Now that we have examined the myths surrounding Constance Phaulkon, and their effect on the history of Siam, it is finally time to decide whether to put Constance Phaulkon in the mythology

books alongside mythical figures such as Iccarus, and Sisyphus or rewrite him into the history books.

Notes

[1] Khomkhan Diwongsa, "Domestic Trade during the Late Ayudhya Period," *Muang Boran Journal*, 10.2 (April-June 1984), p 75.

[2] Parichat Wilawan, "Export of Animal and Plant Products during the Ayudhya Period," *Muang Boran Journal*, 10.2, (April-June 1984), p 84.

[3] Although currently referred to as the Andaman Sea, historical maps such as those found in Wyatt's *A Short History of Thailand* incorporate the body of water on the west coast of Siam with the Bay of Bengal.

[4] Charnvit Kasetsiri, "Ayudhya: Capital-Port of Siam and it's Chinese Connection in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries," *Journal of the Siam Society*, 80.1, (1992), p 76.

[5] Michael Wright, "Ayudhya and its place in Pre-Modern Southeast Asia," *Journal of the Siam Society*, 80.1, (1992), p 84.

[6] Charnvit Kaesetsiri, *The Rise of Ayudhya* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford UP, 1976) p 97.

[7] David K. Wyatt, *A Short History of Thailand* p 71.

[8] George V. Smith, *The Dutch in Seventeenth-Century Thailand* (DeKalb: NIU, 1977) , p 11.

[9] George V. Smith, *The Dutch in Seventeenth-Century Thailand*. (DeKalb: NIU, 1977), p 11.

[10] It may be worth noting the treaty was signed following a blockade by Dutch ships.

[11] Rong Syamananda, *A History of Thailand*. (Bangkok: Kurusapha Ladpraro Press, 1971), p 63.

[12] George V. Smith, *Dutch in Seventeenth-Century Thailand*.

[13] Meguri is adjacent to Tenasserim.

[14] John Anderson M.D., *English Intercourse with Siam in the Seventeenth Century*. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1890), p 50.

- [15] Rong Syamanaanda. *A History of Thailand*. P 64.
- [16] Sir John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1977), p 346.
- [17] Luang Sitsayamkan, *The Greek Favourite of the King of Siam*, (Singapore: Donald Moore Press LTD., 1967), p 6.
- [18] W.A.R. Wood, *A History of Siam*. (Bangkok: Chalermnit Press, 1924) p 249.
- [19] George Coedes, "Siamese Documents of the Seventeenth Century," *The Journal of the Siam Society*, 14.2, (1921) 7-39.
- [20] Luang Sitsayamkan, *A Greek Favourite of the King of Siam* (Singapore: Donald Moore Press, 1967).
- [21] John O'Kane, *The Ship of Sulaiman* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972).
- [22] David K. Wyatt, *Studies in Thai History* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1994), p 93.
- [23] E.W. Hutchinson, *Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century*. (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1940).
- [24] E.W. Hutchinson, *1688 Revolution in Siam: The Memoir of Father de Beze, S.J.* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1968).
- [25] Rowan wrote her dissertation for the Department of Romance Languages and Literature at Harvard University.
- [26] Axel Aylwen, *Falcon of Siam* (London: Methuen, 1988).
- [27] Axel Aylwen, *The Falcon Takes Wing* (London: Meuthen, 1991).
- [28] William Dalton, *Phaulkon the Adventurer, or Europeans in the East* (London: Beeton, 1862).
- [29] Panya Panichsrisk, *The Nation* (Bangkok Newspaper), 25 June, 1989.
- [30] Luang Sitsayamkan, *The Greek Favourite of the King of Siam* p 12.
- [31] E.W. Hutchinson, *1688 Revolution in Siam, The Memoir of Father de Beze, S.J.* (Hong Kong: Hong University Press, 1968), p 7.

[32] Maurice Collins, *Siamese White* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1965), p 18.

[33] E.W. Hutchison, *1688 Revolution in Siam, The Memoir of Father de Beze, S.J.* p 8.

[34] £250; the ecu = the English Crown of 5 shillings.

[35] Engelbert Kaempfer, *A Description of the Kingdom of Siam 1690*. (Bangkok, White Orchid Press, 1987), p 31.

[36] Engelbert Kaempfer, *A Description of the Kingdom of Siam 1690*. p 31.

[37] Michael Smities ed., *The Chevalier De Chaumont & The Abbe De Choisy, Aspects of the Embassy to Siam 1685*, (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 1997), p194.

[38] Luang Sitsayamkan, *The Greek Favourite of the King of Siam*, p 20.

[39] W.A.R. Wood in his book *A History of Siam* in an interesting footnote on page 199, states that according to Tachard, Turpin and other writers, that after first settling in Siam Phaulkon bought a ship called the *Mary*, which was wrecked off the Malabar coast. He goes on to state that a ship called *Mary* was actually wrecked off Sumatra in 1679. Captain Burnaby was part owner of this vessel, and Gosfright and Ivatt, the East India Company's Agents at Ayudhya, have recorded that Phaulkon was the Captain of it. Phaulkon himself denied the claims, stating that after his first arrival in Siam he never left the confines of the Kingdom. My research supports the notion that Phaulkon was involved in three shipwrecks. Two near the Menam Basin Basin, and once at sea. I believe the latter of these was the disaster at Ligor. The fact that Phaulkon denied the incident would make sense since he was engaged in illegal trade at the time.

[40] E.W. Hutchinson, *Adventurers In Siam In the Seventeenth Century*, p 58.

[41] The author uses "Frank" to mean any European Christian.

[42] Kennon Breazeale, personal interview, 15 October 1999.

[43] John O'Kane, *The Ship of Sulaiman*, (New York: Colombia University Press, 1972), p 95.

[44] John O'Kane, *The Ship of Sulaiman*, p 59.

[45] 1 tuman = 10,000 dinars

[46] John O'Kane, *The Ship of Sulaiman* p 60.

- [47] E.W. Hutchinson, *Adventurers in Siam in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1940), p 251.
- [48] Reiko Hada, "Madame Marie Guimard Under the Ayudhya Dynast in the Seventeenth Century" *Journal of the Siam Society*. 80.1. (1992), p 71.
- [49] Reiko Hada, "Madame Marie Gumaird Under the Ayudhia Dynasty of the Seventeenth Century." p 72.
- [50] Mary Madeline Rowan, "An Image of Asia: Analysis of Six Seventeenth-Century French Travel Accounts of Siam," diss., Harvard University, 1968, p 233.
- [51] Mary Madeline Rowan, "An Image of Asia: Analysis of Six Seventeenth-Century French Travel Accounts of Siam," p 234.
- [52] Maurice Collins, *Siamese White*, (London: Farber and Farber, 1965), p 52.
- [53] Nicholas Gervaise, *The Natural and Political History of the Kingdom of Siam, 1688* (Bangkok: White Lotus, 1989), p 235.
- [54] Vollant des Verquains, *Particulrities de la Revolution de Siam en l'annee 1688, 1691* (Lille: Jeane Chrysostome, 1985), p 41.
- [55] Sir John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, v 2, (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1977), p 346.
- [56] Sir John Bowring, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, v 2, p 346.
- [57] Luang Sitsayamkan, *Greek Favourite of the King of Siam*, p 94.
- [58] George Sioris, *Phaulkon: The Greek First Counsellor at the Court of Siam*, (Bangkok, The Siam Society, 1998), p 36.
- [59] Pierre Chaunu *Les Philippines*, (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1960), p 172.

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