

THAILAND IN THE LIGHT OF OFFICIAL  
CHINESE HISTORIOGRAPHY  
A CHAPTER IN THE  
"HISTORY OF THE MING DYNASTY"

by

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## 1. Introduction

Being situated close to China, the country of Thailand has long since been part of the Chinese geographer's and historiographer's interest. The first account of the country—not the people—seems to have been taken during the Mongol period, at least it is the "History of the Mongol dynasty" (Yüan-shih),<sup>1</sup> which contains in its chapter 210 a short paragraph on Hsian.<sup>2</sup> This paragraph follows those on Burma and Champa and in a few lines only reports on some tribute sending missions and the favorable reaction of the then Mongol-Chinese Emperor.<sup>3</sup> During the reign of the Ming dynasty (A.D. 1368-1644), however, Thailand with the name "Hsian-Lo"<sup>4</sup> had been a firmly established "foreign nation"<sup>5</sup> with whom to have friendly relations was somewhat important. We do know of the third Ming Emperor's (Yung-lo) grandiose design to incorporate oversea trade into the Chinese state monopoly.<sup>6</sup> Thus Thailand became one of the great countries on the way, and we need not be surprised at the more detailed information that is given in the official Ming history about "Hsian-Lo". It is contained in book 324, fifth chapter dealing with foreign nations together with Champa (South Vietnam), Cambodia and others.

The narration is based on earlier accounts like the well-known Tung-hsi-yang k'ao<sup>7</sup> (Inquiries into Eastern and Western countries, first edited in 1618), but these again draw material from the lively account of the Cheng Ho voyages (see note 6) by Ma Huan (Ying-yai sheng-lan,<sup>8</sup> first edited 1451, the title meaning something like "Wonderful Views on Oceans and Shores").

Later compilations generally follow this line of approach, i.e. that of a traveller's note book, curious, not systematic, putting down what seemed different from the Chinese way. On the other hand it is the "Veritable Records" (Shih-lu)<sup>9</sup> that give the background for the annalistic pattern of recounting the steady flow of incoming tribute missions and outgoing Imperial envoys. Official secretaries made short notes about the daily Court procedure to write them down later in square office style. After the death of every Emperor the whole file was collected and checked over by the highest dignitaries to produce a combined annalistic account of the deceased Emperor's reigning period. So we have to look at the following narration to be an excerpt from an office file, and only in the last part the picture becomes more colourful, though a predilection for the anecdote never can be overlooked. Still, the facts given seem to deserve some interest as to the peculiar way the Chinese Imperial Court thought fit to deal with foreign nations about 500 and more years ago.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. Narration \*

Hsian-Lo is to the southwest of Champa. By favorable wind one may arrive there in ten days and nights. It is the 'Red Soil Country' in the Sui and T'ang (dynasty records).<sup>11</sup> Later it was divided into two countries Lo-hu and Hsian. In Hsian the soil is barren and not suitable for agriculture. The terrain of Lo-hu is a fine, level plain and most of the plantations yield good crops, and Hsian depended upon them for supplies.<sup>12</sup> In the time of the Yüan (Mongol) dynasty Hsian frequently brought tributes to China. Later on Lo-hu became powerful and ruled equally over the territory of Hsian. Thereupon it was called the country of Hsian-Lohu.<sup>13</sup>

In the third year of Hung-wu (A.D. 1370) (the Emperor) ordered the envoys Lü Tsung-chün<sup>13a</sup> and others to transmit the

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\* I have to thank Prince Dhani for the pains he has taken to help identifying the Ayudhyā Kings. Thanks are due also to Mr. Chen of Rangoon University who gave some valuable suggestions for the rendering of the text.

Imperial Proclamation for official notice to that country.<sup>14</sup> In the fourth year (1371) their king<sup>15</sup> sent envoys to present a letter of homage,<sup>16</sup> and together with (Lü) Tsung-chün and his mission they came to submit tributes of tame elephants, six-legged-tortoise, and other home products. (The Emperor) decreed to present their king with brocade and fine silk and to give the envoys silks varying (as to their ranks). After that, when envoys were sent again to offer New Year's congratulations in the following year, (the Emperor) ordered to present the Imperial Calendar and coloured silks. In the fifth year (1372) a black bear, white monkeys, and other local products were sent as tribute.

In the following year (1373) again they came with tribute offers. The elder sister of their king<sup>17</sup> separately sent envoys to hand over a tributary note made of gold leaves with tribute offers of native products to the Empress. They were refused. But the king's sister again sent envoys who came to submit tributes. The Emperor still declined them, though he feasted and rewarded the envoys.

At that time their king was timid and not warlike. The people in the country elected the king's uncle<sup>18</sup> to administer the affairs of state. He sent envoys who came to make the announcement (of the throne change) and to present local products. They were feasted and rewarded as usual. But when afterwards the new king sent envoys with tributes to give thanks for the favours granted and the messengers also had presents with them, the Emperor did not accept.<sup>19</sup> Later envoys were sent to congratulate on the New Year festival of next year and to present native products. Moreover, they submitted a map of their own country.

In the seventh year (1374) the envoy Shalipa<sup>20</sup> came with tributes and made the following statement: 'Last year, when our ship had reached the Black-Pig-Sea,<sup>21</sup> we met with a storm which ruined the ship and whirled it up to Hainan Island. We relied on the officials there for help and rescue. We still have with us what is left over from the storm, as tula-cotton, laka-and

sapan-wood and other things for submission.' The Kwangtung province authorities reported the matter. The Emperor wondered why he had no list of the goods (as befitted an official tribute mission). And since he had stated his boat had capsized but native products still were left over, he was suspected to be (just) a foreign merchant.<sup>22</sup> Order was given to reject him and a note passed to the Central Secretariat and the officials of the Board of Ceremonies (dealing with tribute missions) saying: 'In olden times the nobles of China made a minor visit to the Son of Heaven every second year and a major visit every third year. Outside China (the nine regions) there was one visit to the throne once in a reign. Submission of local products signifies that they are sincere and respectful and nothing else. Only Korea knows the rites and music (of Chinese state ceremonials) well enough, so I order (them) to send one tribute mission every third year. As for the other remote countries like Champa, Annam, Southern India, Soli,<sup>23</sup> Java, Borneo, Srivijaya, Thailand, Cambodia, since their tribute missions come incessantly, the toil and cost are too heavy. Now it is not necessary for them to resume (their tribute missions). You (officials) should prepare the documents for all these countries to let them know about it.'— However, the visitors (from Hsian-Lo) did not stop to come.<sup>24</sup>

Their heir-apparent, the Prince (Governor) of Supan, Chao Nakon In,<sup>25</sup> also sent envoys to present a written document to the Crown Prince with tribute offerings. It was ordered to admit the envoys to an audience before the Crown Prince. They were feasted and rewarded and sent back. In the eighth year (1375) again tribute was brought to China. Also the hereditary prince to the former Prince (Governor) of Ming-t'ai<sup>26</sup> sent envoys to present a list with tribute offerings, and they were feasted and rewarded like royal envoys.<sup>27</sup> In the tenth year (1377) Chao Nakon In received an order from his father<sup>28</sup> to come to Court (at Nanking). The Emperor was pleased and ordered, that Wang Heng, department secretary in the Board of Ceremonies, and others presented an Imperial document with a seal and hand it

over to him; the text on it read: 'Seal for the King of the Hsian-Lo Country.' Moreover, he presented the hereditary prince with robes, silks, and the travel expenses. From this time onwards, their country complied with the Imperial orders, and it was called Hsian-Lo for the first time. Every second year one tribute mission was sent, or two missions every year, or as after the Cheng-t'ung reign (since 1450) one mission in several years (only) as is told (in the records).<sup>29</sup>

In the sixteenth year (1383) documents of mutual confirmation as well as embroidered brocades and China ware were presented to Cambodia and other countries. In the twentieth year (1387) ten thousand catties of black pepper and ten thousand catties of sapan-wood were sent as tribute. The Emperor sent officials who recompensed (the envoys) generously. At this time among the people in Wen-chou<sup>30</sup> there were some who traded with lign-aloes and other products. The local magistrate ruled, that because of their collusion with the foreigners they should be executed in public. The Emperor announced: 'Wen-chou is the place where (the envoys from) Hsian-Lo must pass by, it is because of their coming and going that (the people) are able to trade there. It is not (a case of) illicit collusion with foreigners.' Then they were pardoned.

In the twenty-first year (1388) thirty elephants and sixty foreign slaves were offered. In the following year Prince Chao Nakon In sent envoys who came with tribute. In the following year black pepper, sapan-wood and laka-wood were offered, 170,000 catties. In 1395 (28th year) Chao Nakon In sent envoys with tribute and the announcement of the father's death.<sup>31</sup> The eunuch Chao Ta and others were ordered to go and offer sacrifices with a decree for the hereditary prince to follow on the king's throne. An edict was added to the gifts conferred saying: 'Since Our accession to the throne envoys were ordered to leave China and go around in all four directions. Those whose feet reached their destination were 36, and those from whom notice came to Our ears were 31. If we compare to the present time all the 18 large

countries and the 149 small ones whose customs are different and whose habits are strange, Hsian-Lo is the most familiar one. When recently envoys arrived we learnt, that your former king has already passed away. The (new) king should follow the reign of the former king and rule the country in the right way so that the officials and the people will rejoice. Herewith we send someone to confer the (following) Imperial order: May the king not neglect the principles of law, may he not be licentious in his pleasures, that he glorifies the illustrious ancestors. Due respect.<sup>32</sup>

When Ch'eng-tsu (the Yung-lo Emperor) ascended the throne, he sent an edict as proclamation to that country. In the first year of Yung-lo (1403) a gold-plated silver camel-hair knotted seal<sup>32a</sup> was presented to their king.<sup>33</sup> The king thereupon sent envoys to thank for the favour. In the sixth month (of that year), because the posthumous title was conferred to the High-Lofty Emperor,<sup>34</sup> envoys were sent who brought the proclamation with presents. In the eighth month the Government Adviser Wang Che and the Envoy Ch'eng Wu<sup>35</sup> presented their king with brocade and silk. In the ninth month the eunuch Li Hsing<sup>36</sup> and others were ordered to hand over a proclamation and rewarding presents to their king, and both their civil and military officials received presents as well.

In the second year (1404) a foreign ship floated up to the Fukien coast. On investigation it was found to be from Hsian-Lo on a friendship mission to the Liu-kiu Islands.<sup>37</sup> The officials seized the goods and reported to the throne. The Emperor told them: 'If these two countries are on friendly terms, it is a very fine thing after all. Unfortunately (these people) met with a storm, it would be just and appropriate to have pity on them. How could it be allowed to use this event for personal gain! The officials concerned should repair the ship and provide food. Wait for the wind and then send them off to the Liu-Kiu Islands.'

In this month, because the Emperor had sent down an Imperial letter and rewarding presents, their king sent envoys to offer thanks and native products. They were rewarded more

than usual, and also hundred copies of the 'Biographies of Virtuous Ladies'<sup>38</sup> were presented. The envoys asked for delivery of weights and measures for constant models in their country, which was permitted.

Previously, tribute envoys from Champa were on their way home. A storm swept their ship to Pahang. Hsian-Lo forcibly extorted these envoys, kept them in custody and did not send them on. Sumatra<sup>39</sup> and Malakka, moreover, made complaints (to the Chinese court) that Hsian-Lo had taken the strong stand, sent troops and taken away the seal and patent the Heavenly Dynasty had bestowed on them. The Emperor released a decree to reprimand them saying: 'Champa, Sumatra, Malakka, and you, all have received the Imperial orders. How can you presume on power, seize their tribute envoys or rob their letter patents and seals? Heaven has its clear way, it blesses the good and gives mischief to the wicked. The Li-bandits<sup>40</sup> of Annam may be regarded as a strong warning. You will have to return the Champa envoys and restore the seals and letter patents to Sumatra and Malakka. From now on obey the law, follow the right principles, keep your boundary, and be honest to your neighbours, that you may enjoy eternally the blessings of the great peace.'<sup>41</sup>

At that time a tribute mission sent from Hsian-Lo was wrecked and swept to Annam, where they were killed by the Li-bandits. Only one man named Pohe<sup>42</sup> was spared. When later the Imperial troops marched into Annam, they got hold of him and sent him to the capital, where the Emperor treated him with sympathy. In the eighth month of the sixth year (1408) the eunuch Chang Yüan<sup>43</sup> was ordered to bring him back to his country. He presented their king with silk and ordered him to compensate the families of the slain (merchants and sailors) generously. In the ninth month the eunuch Cheng Ho<sup>44</sup> was sent to their country. The king then sent envoys to offer native products as tribute and to apologize for the former offence.

In the seventh year (1409) envoys came to offer sacrifices on behalf of the Benevolent-Pious Empress.<sup>45</sup> Eunuchs were ordered to announce it to the deceased person's spirit. At this time traitorous people, Ho Pa-kuan<sup>46</sup> and others, fled into Hsian-Lo. The Emperor ordered the (Siamese) envoys (then in Nan-

king) to return and tell their lord, that he should not receive the absconders. The king immediately obeyed the order, sent envoys who presented horses and native products and also returned Pa-kuan and his people. Chang Yüan then was ordered to hand over a proclamation with presents of silks to reward him.

In the tenth year (1412) the eunuch Hung Pao<sup>47</sup> and others were ordered to go there and present silk. In the fourteenth year (1416)<sup>48</sup> the Prince Somdeč P̄ra Boromarājādhirāj<sup>49</sup> sent envoys to announce the father's death. The eunuch Kuo Wen<sup>50</sup> was ordered to go on a visit of condolence (to offer sacrifices). Other officials were delegated to present an edict nominating the son as king, presenting him with plain brocade and plain silk (for mourning). Thereupon he in return sent envoys to thank for the favours. In the seventeenth year (1419) order was given to the eunuch Yang Min<sup>51</sup> and others to escort (the Siamese envoy) home, and because Hsian-Lo had raided Malakka, envoys were sent to reprimand and give order to keep peaceful relations. The king then once more sent messengers to apologize.

In the eighth year Hsüan-te (1433) the king<sup>52</sup> sent envoys to the court with tribute. Before that a subordinate officer of that country named Naisanto<sup>53</sup> and others had anchored with their tribute ship at Hsin-chou harbour<sup>54</sup> in Champa, and had been plundered completely by the people of that country. In 1436 Naisanto managed to come secretly on a small boat to the capital (then in Peking) to complain in an accusation of robbery committed by Champa. The Emperor ordered the envoys from Champa to bear witness, but the envoys had nothing to answer, so he decreed to the king of Champa ordering full restoration of the robbed men and goods. Champa replied officially to the Board of Ceremonies saying: 'When our country last year sent envoys to proceed to Sumatra,<sup>54a</sup> they also were robbed by Hsian-Lo pirates. First Hsian-Lo must restore what has been taken away, then our country will surely do the same.' When two years later (1438) a Hsian-Lo tribute mission again arrived, they were notified of this opinion by special decree ordering them immediately to restore the Champa men and goods.

In 1446 the king Boromarājādhirāj (II.) sent envoys with tribute.<sup>55</sup> In 1453 the Government Adviser Liu Chiu and the Envoy Liu T'ai<sup>56</sup> were ordered to condole (offer sacrifice) because of the late king Boromarājādhirāj, and to bestow on his heir Pra Rāmesvara<sup>57</sup> the royal title. In 1457 their tribute envoy was presented with metal ornaments and a golden girdle. In 1462 King Boromatrailokanāth<sup>58</sup> sent envoys to the court with tribute. In 1473 the tribute envoys reported, that (their part of) the tally that had been given in 1457 was eaten up by insects, and they asked to issue a new one, which was permitted.

In 1481 the tribute envoys, when they were halfway on their return route, stealthily bought children and women and, moreover, carried away much unlicensed salt. Order was given to send officials who should reprimand these foreigners. Previously, a man from Ting-chou named Hsie Wen-pin<sup>59</sup> had smuggled salt out on sea and was drifted to their country. There he served up to the Royal Father-in-Law's retinue,<sup>60</sup> which was like a Han-lin secretary to the Celestial Dynasty. Later on he came to the court as envoy and traded with forbidden goods. His affairs became known and he was demoted.

In 1482 (Ch'eng-hua 18th year)<sup>61</sup> envoys were sent to court with tribute and the announcement of the father's death. The Government Adviser Lin Hsiao and the Envoy Yao Lung<sup>62</sup> were ordered to go there and bestow on the son<sup>63</sup> the royal title.

In 1497, when the tribute mission came, the Foreign Languages Department<sup>63a</sup> had no interpreter for Thai, so the Grand Secretary Hsü P'u<sup>64</sup> asked to send a dispatch to Kwangtung (provincial government) to investigate whether there was someone who understood to speak and write in that language, that he might come to the capital for official use. It was so done.

In 1509 there was among the ships from Hsian-Lo one which had been floated to Kwangtung. The Naval Officer, eunuch Hsiung Hsüan,<sup>65</sup> conferred with the garrison officers to tax its goods in order to support military expenditures. This was brought

to court resulting in a strong reprimand against Hsüan, that he had misused his power and should immediately return to Nan-king.

In 1515 the court tribute was listed on gold leaves, but in the (Languages-) Department nobody knew the letters, so the Grand Secretary Liang Ch'u<sup>66</sup> asked to select and keep one or two of the envoys to enter the office for language training. This was allowed.

In 1522 Hsian-Lo and Champa cargo boats reached Kwang-tung. The Naval Officer, eunuch Niu Jung,<sup>66a</sup> let his family members privately trade with them. He was sentenced to death according to law. In 1553 envoys were sent to present a white elephant and local products. The elephant died on the way. The envoys adorned its tusks with pearls and jewels, put it into a golden plate, and together with the tail (for proof of its whiteness)<sup>66b</sup> they came to present it. The Emperor was very pleased at their intention and sent them home with rich presents.<sup>67</sup>

During the Lung-ch'ing reign (1567-72) their neighbour country Burma<sup>68</sup> asked for a marriage relation but was refused. Ashamed and angered (the Burmese king) levied many troops, attacked and defeated this country (Hsian-Lo). The (Burmese) king himself planned to seize their crown prince together with the seal bestowed by the Celestial Dynasty and then to return. When the second son inherited the (Thai) throne, he presented a tribute list and asked for a (new) seal which was given to him. From that time they were controlled by the Burmese. But the king successor bent his will on revenge. During the Wan-li era (from 1573 on) the enemy troops once more arrived. The king led the troops, attacked them fiercely and inflicted a crushing defeat on them. The enemy (king's) son was killed, the rest escaped by night. From then on Hsian-Lo was master on the sea. She led her troops to attack and destroy Cambodia<sup>69</sup> and subdued their king. Thence year after year they made war and so became the leading power among all these countries. In 1579 they sent envoys with tribute.

In 1592, when Japan overwhelmed Korea, Hsian-Lo asked to move troops secretly so as to launch a direct attack on Japan and involve her in the rear. Shih Hsing<sup>70</sup> from the Central Command counselled on it, and it was agreed upon. But the governor of the two Kwang provinces, Hsiao Yen,<sup>71</sup> insisted on its inadmissibility. So it was put off. Later on the tribute missions were not interrupted. Even in 1643 (one year before the Ming collapsed) tribute was brought.

Their country is round about a thousand miles wide. Their manner is strong and fierce. They are used to naval fight. The general uses a special cuirass to cover his body, swords and arrows cannot pierce it. This cuirass is made from human skulls. The kings are from Soli.<sup>72</sup> The officials are divided into ten ranks. When there is business from the king down to the common people, everything is decided upon by their women. In determination and skill their women in fact surpass the men. If the wife commits adultery with a Chinese, the husband will give a wine feast and drink together (with the guest). He will be calm and not feel strange, and he will say: It is because my wife is pretty that she is liked by the Chinese. They reverently believe in Buddhism, men and women often become monks and nuns, they also stay in nunneries and monasteries, keep to their fasts and obey the precepts. Their dresses very much resemble those in China. The well-to-do revere the Buddha still more. From a profit of a hundred pieces of gold they offer one half. The climate is not temperate, either cold or hot. The land is low and wet, people live in elevated dwellings. Men and women knot their hair and cover their heads with white cloths. When well-to-do die, they use quicksilver and pour it (for embalment) into their mouths before they inter them. The poor expose their dead on the sea shore, where there are swarms of crows flying and pecking, and in a moment all is finished. The family collect their bones, lament and cry and throw them into the sea. They call it the birds funeral. But they also invite monks to prepare almsfood honouring the Buddha. For trade they use precious sea shells. The very year they do not use them a serious pestilence will be in the country.

Among their tribute goods are:

elephants, ivory, rhinoceros horn, peacock feathers, kingfisher feathers, tortoise shells, six legged tortoise, precious stones, corals, Borneo camphor, camphor grains, camphor powder, camphor oil, camphor wood, rose water, talc (?), Malay cinnamon, asafoetida, wistaria, resin, gamboge, sulphur, myrrh, tea lumps, gum benzoin, Lopburi aloe, aloe, sandal wood, aloe resin, laka wood, frankincense, incense putchuck, cloves, opium, pepper, sapan wood, nutmeg, cardamon, long pepper, ebony, sweet gum, liquid amber scented and other kinds of Indian cloth.

In their country there is a Three Jewel Temple, where the eunuch (-admiral) Cheng Ho is honoured.<sup>73</sup>

### 3. Final remarks

The text of the account on ancient Thailand as contained in the Ming-History (chapter 324 fol. 14b to 20a) is clearly divided into three parts: the chronology of diplomatic and trade relations, a description of the land and the people, and a list of the most common goods exported to China. Within the chronology the two first reigns of Hung-wu and Yung-lo cover about two thirds of the whole narration, which coincides with the view generally held among historians that this period was the apogee of Ming power. Between the two, however, a certain difference in content may be noticed: during the Hung-wu period a long series of incoming tribute missions and the regulations for them are listed, whereas the Yung-lo period shows much more activity abroad. Chinese envoys, among them many eunuchs, visited foreign countries and kept continuous diplomatic relations. Temporarily, it seems, the frequency of missions mutually exchanged comes close to the system of standing *chargés d'affaires*. This problem awaits further research.

As to the list of merchandise annexed to the account on ancient Thailand, it is interesting to note that it is by far the longest one (44 items) among the tribute lists given in several of the foreign nations accounts, although in the number of incoming tribute missions, Thailand ranks only sixth after Liu-kiu, Annam,

Tibet, Hami and Champa. In chapter 324 under review, for example, Champa is noted to have offered only six different goods, since "their country is not very rich" (fol. 11b). As to Cambodia nothing special is mentioned, and for Palembang<sup>74</sup> only eight different kinds are recorded. The longest list apart from Hsian-Lo is given with Malakka (26), followed by Bengal (24), North Sumatra (19), Ceylon (17), Johore (15) and Calicut (14). Thus the 44 items of goods mentioned in this narration arouse some curiosity not only in the economic situation of Thailand during the Ayudhyā era, but also regarding the procedure and structure of foreign trade in that time.<sup>75</sup> The chapter on trade in Asia before the advent of European powers still awaits detailed research. Some of the above merchandise has been identified with the help of a book that is just stepping in.<sup>76</sup>

Modified and corrected (as is done partly, see the notes) the given facts still seem to show, that the Chinese of those days kept a lively interest in foreign countries and the relations with them. This resulted in a still sketchy but sometimes fairly agreeable picture of the outside world as seen, to be sure, through the eyes of Confucian world philosophy. So it does not seem proper to assume that Imperial China was closed in within her own walls defying contact with the outside world—improper as that would be to-day. If the official records do not clearly refute this assumption, we may rightly infer a busy coming and going along the China coast all through the centuries, perhaps more so towards the second half of the Ming rule. And we are not mistaken in assuming that Ming China as a state was keenly conscious of her role as a very strong member of the Asian world, apparently more so during the first part of her development. The sometimes haughty style of writing may be taken to express the then official Chinese view of the "Heaven's Son" to be the centre of the world to which everybody on earth owed respect and allegiance. One should not overlook, however, that the historical facts did hardly, if ever, coincide with this view. From time to time even this account gives an idea of what really was going on in the lands of Southeast Asia so many centuries ago.

## NOTES

### "HISTORY OF THE MING DYNASTY"

1. 元史 Yüan-shih. Compiled in a very short time right after the Ming had established their rule, commonly regarded as one of the poorest among the dynastic histories. But see G.H. Luce, *The early Syām in Burma's History*, J.S.S. vol. XLVI Pt. 2 (August 1958) p. 204 note 269.
2. 遼 Hsian. Translated by G.H. Luce op. cit., J.S.S. vol. XLVII Pt. 1 (June 1959) p. 90, before him by P. Pelliot in BEFEO t. IV p. 242 f.
3. In order to learn more about the Chinese accounts of the Thai *people* in that period see the article of G.H. Luce referred to above, especially J.S.S. vol. XLVI Pt. 2 p. 145 ff. and p. 164 ff.
4. 遼羅 Hsian-Lo.
5. 外國 wai-kuo.
6. This view follows John. K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, Cambridge Mass., 1953, pp. 33-38; but see also J.J.L. Duyvendak, *Ma Huan re-examined*, Amsterdam 1933; and P. Pelliot in *T'oung Pao* vols. XXX, XXXI, XXXII, among other authorities.
7. 東西洋考 Tung-hsi-yang k'ao.
8. 瀛涯勝覽 Ying-yai sheng-lan.
9. 寶錄 Shih-lu.
10. The best account on the compilation of the Ming-shih is given in Li Chin-hua's 李晉華 treatise, *Ming-shih tsuan-hsiu k'ao 明史纂修考* (Researches into the compilation of the Ming history), Yenching Monograph No. 3, Peking 1933 (in Chinese).
11. The Sui-history (A.D. 581-618), book 82, contains this statement which has been argued long since, Japanese scholars have stressed the situation of the "Red-Soil-Country" somewhere in Indonesia, probably near Palembang in Sumatra, see Kuwada Rokurō in *Tōyō gaku* vols. 9 and 10. The Chinese term is 赤土國 Ch'ih-t'u kuo.

12. Lo-Hu after all must be Lopburi, although the first syllable has no ancient or at least archaic final labial; the second syllable has no initial labial either, but "hu" and "fu" are similar in Fukienese, thus a "Lo-fu" for "Lavo" might be established.

13. The present Chinese name for Thailand, Hsian-lo, apparently derives from this combination.

13a. 呂宗俊

14. The Hungwu Emperor announced his accession to the throne to all the countries surrounding China at the same time asking for their submission. The sentence here apparently refers to this diplomatic action.

15. Here follow five Chinese characters reading in Mandarin like ts'an-lie chao-pi-ya, 參烈昭毘牙 apparently to render the title Somdeč Chaoprayā. Since the king of Ayudhyā from 1369 was Boromarājā I, the title must refer to him, although the throne change and a slightly differing title or name for him are given a few lines below, see note 18. The Chinese text as given here seems to point to two different persons which might be explained as misunderstanding on the side of the Ming redactors.

16. 奉表 feng piao. At the same time this refers to a list formally drawn up to give notice of the tribute gifts offered.

17. Here follow four Chinese characters reading Ts'an-lie ssü-ning 參烈思寧

18. The ten characters following read like Ts'an-lie pao pi-hsie-ssu-li ch'e-lo-lu 參烈寶毘邪噁哩哆囉祿. What the Chinese redactors had in mind is not easily guessed at, but something like 'Somdeč Pra Boromarājādhirāj' must have been the source obscured by wrong transmittance. The event and the person are clear.

19. Apparently this together with the refusal referred to above are to be understood as precaution against foreign trade slipping out of state control, see notes 22 and 24.

20. 沙里拔 Sha-li-pa.

21. This otherwise not identifiable name probably points to the South China Sea somewhere north of the Paracel Islands. The Chinese term is 烏猪洋 Wu-chu-yang.

22. 番商 fan-shang, i.e. not a tribute mission envoy. The term seems to imply some reluctance on the side of the Chinese Emperor to deal with these "merchants" who would upset state control.
23. A country with this name 璦里 is recorded in Ming-shih book 325 as lying somewhere in India.
24. Here the explanation is given for the repeated refusals of tribute missions as well as the rejection of the "foreign merchant."
25. The Chinese characters read Chao Lu-ch'ün-ying 昭祿羣膺 in modern Mandarin, ch'ün could represent a more ancient k'un. The term 世子 shih-tzŭ, hereditary prince, seems to point to the heir of the then reigning king Boromarājā I., although he himself became king only 35 years later. See note 28.
26. 明臺. The four characters following read Chao Po-lo chü, 昭字羅局.
27. This entry shows that there were more groups to promote trade with China than the Supan family alone, see note 28.
28. The Chinese text makes us believe this "father" to be the ruling king, but it could also mean the real father, who was not king but governor of Supan. Some of the errors in the text below can be explained by assuming that it was the Supan family who were apparently interested especially to promote a Chinese rapprochement. This note and others modifying or correcting the Chinese data on ancient Thailand (see notes 15, 18, 25 and below) have been made possible through the kindness of Prince Dhani, who informed the present writer of many details he else would have had to leave unexplained.
29. In other words, the strong reprimand three years earlier was of no great effect, and the relations down to the middle of the 15th century seem to have been rather close.
30. 温州 Wen-chou. A harbour in Southern Chekiang.
31. Here the Chinese annalist again is wrong. It was not Chao Nakon In's father who died in 1395 but his cousin, King Rāme-suan. Either the Chinese have copied it out according to their pattern, or, as seems more probable, they actually did not really

know who was who. Chao Nakon In it was whom they knew and trusted. His information could well have been the source of this mistake.

32. 欽哉 ch'in tsai. The well known formula at the end of Imperial decrees does not in the first line demand obeisance on the part of the recipients but was included in the document as ending formula by the high Chinese officials who dealt with and handed down that document.

32a. It could not be ascertained as to what really was referred to as a "t'o-niu" 駝紐 (camel-hair knotted) seal.

33. The name given is Chao Nakon In with something like Ch'e-lo ti-la 哆羅諦刺 (Rājādhirāj?). This time he is taken to be the king although this happened six years later only, again showing how he was able to handle the affairs in the eyes of his Chinese counterparts.

34. Hung-wu had died in 1398.

35. 王哲 Wang Che. 成務 Ch'eng wu.

36. 李興 Li Hsing.

37. During a time of growing trade in Far Eastern waters—"piracy" in the eyes of the Chinese state authorities especially under the menace of the so-called "Japanese pirates" (Wo-k'ou) or simply "Sea pirates" (Hai-k'ou)—the Liukiu-islands, having developed a leading position in Far Eastern trade, could become a dangerous "pirate resort."

38. Lieh-nü-chuan 列女傳. This text goes back to a Han-time version. It was regarded as the standard text on right behaviour of women according to the orthodox Confucian view.

39. The Chinese Su-men-ta-la 蘇門答刺 points to a place named Samudra on Sumatra. Both names are not identical, but for convenience we keep the latter.

40. 黎 Li. For the events see D.G.E. Hall, A History of Southeast Asia, London, 1955, p. 173.

41. This is the well known Chinese term T'ai-p'ing 太平, so often used to describe the final goal of Confucian Imperial rule.

42. 字黑 Pohe.
43. 張原, Chang Yüan.
44. 鄭和 Cheng Ho, the famous eunuch-admiral and explorer of Asian sea routes.
45. The empress of Yung-lo died in 1407, see Ming-shih ch. 113.
46. 何人觀 Ho Pa-kuan.
47. 洪保 Hung Pao.
48. This date apparently is wrong again. Neither the death of Rām, king 1395-1409, could have been the cause of this mission: Boromarājādhirāj II. never had been his son, and seven years delay in announcing the king's death seems a bit improbable—nor the death of Chao Nakon In, the actual father of the new king, who died eight years later. But since the whole passage points to the latter's death who had been a great friend to China, I suggest to explain the wrong date as slip in the filing of court events or as a copist's error. On the other hand, the Chinese recording takes so much pain in accuracy, that a supplementary note should be added later when more source material will have been made available.
49. The Chinese transcript is San-lai po-lo-mo-la-cha ti-lai 三賴波羅摩刺劉的賴.
50. 郭文 Kuo Wen.
51. 楊敏 Yang Min.
52. Following are five characters 悉里麻哈賴 Hsi-li ma-ho-lai (Śri Mahārājā ?).
53. 柰三鐸 Nai-san-to.
54. 新州 Hsin-chou, to be taken as Vijaya, the capital of Champa, its harbour perhaps the present Binh Dinh on the South Vietnam coast.
- 54a. 順文達那 is another version of 蘇門答刺 see note 39.
55. The Chinese transcript is 思利波羅麻那惹智刺 Szu-li po-lo-ma-na-je chih-lu, Szu-li perhaps Śri? The dates in the following part of the narration are given according to the Western calendar only.

56. 劉泰 Liu T'ai.

57. The Chinese transcript here is 把羅蘭米孫刺 Pa-lo lau-mi-sun-la, it is *Pra Rāmesuan* or King *Boromatrailokanāth*.

58. The Chinese transcript is 李刺藍羅者直波智 Po-la lan-lo-che chih-po-chih, not offering much clarity, though the king surely is *Boromatrailokanāth*, see note 57.

59. 汀州 Ting-chou, in Southern Fukien. 謝文彬 Hsie Wen-pin.

60. k'un-yo 坤岳. K'un is representing the female side of the family, with yo as describing the wife's parents. Tentative explanation only.

61. Here again a wrong date is given in the official Chinese documentation, the true date of *Trailokanāth's* death being 1488 and not 1482. The reason is not clear, see note 48.

62. 姚隆 Yao Lung.

63. The Chinese characters following read 國隆勃刺略坤息刺尤地 Kuo-lung po-la lüä-k'un hsi-la yu-ti, apparently *Krung Pra Nakon Sri Ayudhyā*, "King of Siam." Identification by Prince Dhani.

63a. This is the Szu-i-kuan 四夷館 Office for the Barbarians in all four directions.

64. 徐溥 Hsü P'u. I leave out the character 等 teng, "and others," since this is always representing the *Nei-ko*, Inner Cabinet with its group of officials.

65. 熊宣 Hsiung Hsüan.

66. 梁儲 Liang Ch'u. 等 teng is omitted, see note 64.

66a. 牛榮

66b. This explanation follows the one given in *Tung-hsi-yang k'ao*.

67. This anecdote belongs to the reign of King *Pra Mahā Chakrapat*, who was famous for his many white elephants he acquired, so that he was named "King of the White Elephant." By kind information of Prince Dhani.

68. The Chinese text actually has *Tung-man-niu* 東蠻牛, which is reversed order for *Tung-niu Man*, and the *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao* (see note 7) adds: the common name is *Fan-sha*, 丹沙 which is

Hantha (waddy) i.e. Pegu, see also *Pai-i-chuan*, 1. ed. 1397, which has 東胡蠻 Tung-hu Man. Tung-niu and Tung-hu both refer to Toungoo, whence the Burmese kings came to rule in Pegu, see Hall, *History of Southeast Asia*, p. 210.

69. Chen-la 真臘.

70. 石星 Shih Hsing.

71. 蕭彥 Hsiao Yen.

72. 瑣里 So-li. The characters are the same as for a country so named somewhere in India, see note 23. Does this hint at the general cultural influence from India?

73. This second mention at the very end of our report of the famed eunuch-admiral and explorer of Asian coasts and countries for China points to the fact that much of the Ming government's knowledge of Asia derived from the accounts of his voyages, and that his reputation ran high although he was only a eunuch.

74. San-fo-ch'i 三佛齊.

75. Since a list almost identical with this one was published already in a text of 1520 (*Hsi-yang ch'ao-kung tien-lu* 西洋朝貢點錄 Records of the tributes from Western countries), the question may point to the 15th century already. If we compare this list with the one given in *Tung-hsi yang-k'ao* (note 7) ed. 1618, where "native products" (fang-wu 方物) are listed, something like 22 items in our list can be regarded as foreign i.e. imported from other countries irrespective of 14 different kinds of cloth from India or farther West. Further research here would be most gratifying.

76. *Tō-Sei kōyaku shi* 東西番藥史 (History of Spices and Medicines in East and West), by Yamada Kentaro, Tokyo 1956, 2. ed. 1958.— Apart from Chinese and Japanese scholars the works of F. Hirth, W.W. Rockhill, P. Pelliot, B. Laufer, J.J.L. Duyvendak and others are still most useful contributions to this field. A recent study published in the *Journal of the Malayan Branch Royal Asiatic Society* vol. XXXI pt. 2, p. 109 ff. by Wang Gungwu, *The Nanhai Trade, A study of the early history of Chinese trade in the South China Sea*, is of specific value here.