

THE THAI 'KAṬA MAṆḌIARAPĀLA' AND MALACCA^o

by

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The Thai 'Palatine Law' (*Kaṭa Maṇḍiarapāla* or *Kot Monthianbān*) invariably figures in any discussion of the early history of Malacca. Its ostensible date, Culaśākarāja 720 or A.D. 1358, has long puzzled scholars who rightly but uncertainly have felt it necessary to dismiss on external grounds its inclusion of Malacca and other peninsular states in its list of the tributaries of the Empire of Ayudhya.¹ As a result, however, not only has the law been held as irrelevant to the study of the history of the Malay Peninsula in the fourteenth century, but it also has been neglected in considering the fifteenth century, primarily because of the difficulty in dating it. The recent chronological research of Phiphat Sukhathit makes possible a fresh examination of this law as a piece of historical evidence in its own right and allows a more plausible date to be assigned to it.²

The 'Palatine Law' is a lengthy piece of legislation framed primarily to regulate the royal succession and the position and status of the royal family in old Thai society. Only two brief sections need concern us here: the preamble of the law (Clause 1), which bears upon its date; and its first substantive clause (Clause 2), the list of tributary states.

* The following abbreviations are employed:

KTSI = Lingat, R. (ed), *Kaṭahmāya trā sām duān* (*Laws of the Three Seals*) 5 vols, Bangkok 1962. Identical to Thammasat University edition of 1938.

Bradley = Bradley, D.B. (ed), *Iniānsi rbañ kaṭahmāya mbañ daiya* (*Book on the Laws of Thailand*) 10th ed, 2 vols, Bangkok 1896.

Ratburi = Prince Ratburi Direkrit (ed), *Kaṭahmāya* (*Law*) 2nd ed, 2 vols, Bangkok 1901.

Transcription throughout, except for proper nouns, is according to the graphic system, from Coedès, G., *Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam* vol 1 Bangkok 1924 p. 10; reprinted in Griswold, A.B. 'Afterthoughts on the Romanization of Siamese,' *Journal of the Siam Society* vol 48 pt 1, 1960 p. 63.

- 1) See, for example, Wheatley, P. *The Golden Khersonese* Kuala Lumpur 1961 pp. 301 & 307; and Coedès, G. *Les États hindouisés d'Indochine et d'Indonésie* Paris 1964 p. 266.
- 2) Phiphat Sukhathit, 'Sākarāja Cuḷāmaṇi,' *Silpākara* Jan 1963 vol 6 no 5 pp. 47-57; and 'Kāra nap pi hēn buddhasākarāja (Counting the Years of the Buddhist Era),' *Silpākara* May 1963 vol 7 no 1 pp. 48-58.

TEXT³

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ศุภมัศัตตศักราช ๐๗๒ วันเสาเดือนห้าขึ้นหกค่ำ ชวคนวัสัตตก
สมเด็จพระเจ้ารามาริทธิบรมไตรโลกนารถมหามงกุฎเทพมุนิวิสุทธิ
สุริยวงของกพุทธางกูรบรมบพิตรพระพุทธเจ้าอยู่หัว ฯลฯ

2

ฝ่ายกระษัตริย์⁴ แต่ได้ถวายดอกไม้ทองเงินทั้งนั้น ๒๐ เมือง คือ
เมืองนครหลวง เมืองศรีสัตนาคณหุต เมืองเชียงใหม่ เมืองทอง
เมืองเชียงไกร⁵ เมืองเชียงทราน⁶ เมืองเชียงแสน เมืองเชียงรุ่ง เมือง
เชียงราย เมืองแสนหวี เมืองเขมวาท เมืองแพ้ว เมืองง่าม เมือง
ไตทอง เมืองโคตรบอง เมืองเวรแก้ว⁷ ๑๖ เมืองนี้ฝ่ายเหนือ เมือง
ฝ่ายใต้ เมืองอุยงตะหนะ เมืองมลากา⁸ เมืองมลายู เมืองวรวารี
๔ เมืองเข้ากัน ๒๐ เมือง ถวายดอกไม้ทองเงิน

พญามหานคร แต่ได้ถือน้ำพระพิพัฒน์⁹ ๘ เมือง คือ เมืองพิศณุ-
โลก¹⁰ เมืองสัชชาไล¹¹ เมืองสุโขไทย¹² เมืองกำแพงเพชร¹³ เมืองนคร
ศรีธรรมราช เมืองนครราชสีมา เมืองทนาวศรี เมืองทวาย

3) Following *KTSID* vol 1 pp. 69-70.

4) กระษัตริย์ in *Bradley* vol 2 p. 91; and *Ratburi* vol 2 p. 53.

5) เชียงไตรย *loc. cit.*

6) เชียงทราน *loc. cit.*

7) เวรแก้ว in *Ratburi* vol 2 p. 54; and *เวรแก้ว* in *Bradley* vol 2 p. 91.

8) มลกา in *Bradley* vol 2 p. 92.

9) พระพัฒน์ in *Ratburi* vol 2 p. 54.

10) พิศณุโลก in *Bradley* vol 2 p. 92.

11) สัชชาไล *loc. cit.* and *Ratburi* vol 2 p. 54.

12) สุโขไทย *loc. cit.*

TRANSLATION

Clause 1

Auspicious moment, 720 of the era; on Saturday, the sixth day of the waxing moon of the fifth month in the year of the Rat, King Rāmādhipatī Paramaṭrailokanāratha . . .

Clause 2

Altogether, twenty towns (*mōaṅ*) send the gold and silver flowers to the King: Nagara Hluan, Śrī Sātanāgaṇahuta, Chiengmai, Tōn Ū, Chiengkrai, Chiengkran, Chiengsaen, Chiengrung, Chiengrai, Hsenwi, Khemarāja, Phrae, Nan, Taidōn, Goṭrapōn and Reo Kaeo, these sixteen in the north; and, in the south, Ujong Tanah, Malacca, Malāyū and Varavāri, four towns; together twenty towns which send the gold and silver flowers.

There are eight rulers of great cities (*mahānagara*) who bear only the water of allegiance: Phitsanulok, Sajanalai, Sukhothai, Kamphaengphet, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Nakhon Rajasima, Tenasserim and Tavoy.

The Date of the Law

Four elements in the law's preamble have a bearing upon its date: (1) the year, 720, of an unspecified era; (2) the cyclical Year of the Rat; (3) the day on which the law was promulgated, expressed in terms of the lunar calendar; and (4) the name of the king who ordered its promulgation, Rāmādhipatī Paramaṭrailokanāratha. The name of the king alone would appear to point to the reign of King Trailok (A.D. 1448-1488); but there is one section of the 'Law on Rebellion' which includes his name in terms almost identical to those of this law, and which dates unmistakably from the year A.D. 1434.¹⁴ While this is the only such case, it is sufficiently an exception to urge the advisability of relying primarily upon other elements of the law in determining its date.

13) กำแพงเพชร *loc. cit.*

14) *KTSD* vol 4 p. 132 (Brah̄ aiyakāra kraḥbata sūḥ, Clause 15).

There were four distinct dating systems employed in the laws of the Ayudhya period: (1) Culaśākarāja, the Lesser Era (+ 638 = A.D.); (2) Mahāśākarāja, the Greater Era (+ 78 = A.D.); (3) Buddhaśākarāja, the Buddhist Era (– 543 = A.D.);¹⁵ and (4) Cuḷāmaṇīśākarāja, Cuḷāmaṇī Era, or, as Prince Damrong termed it, Śākarāja Kaṭahmāya, Legal Era (+ 188 = A.D.).¹⁶ Faced with a law or inscription of the Ayudhya period bearing a date between 712 and 1129, one's most ready inclination is to assume that the date is expressed in the Lesser Era. With the 'Palatine Law', this temptation is nearly irresistible, as conversion yields a date of A.D. 1358, eight years after the founding of a new dynasty at Ayudhya and at a time when one would expect such a law as this to be framed. The 1358 date, however, cannot be correct, as 1358 was the Year of the Dog and not the Year of the Rat.¹⁷ One may take it as a cardinal rule that, however much scribes and copyists may confuse dates, the animal cyclical years are almost never incorrect. As the law's date yields no tenable dates by conversion from any of the other eras,¹⁸ one is forced to assume either that the figure given was miscopied, or that it was incorrectly converted from another era to 720 of the Lesser Era.

Prince Damrong, in his study of the Thai laws, took the first alternative and suggested that the date should read 820, *i.e.*, A.D. 1458;¹⁹ but 820 was the Year of the Tiger. In cases where a miscopied

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- 15) Until early in the seventeenth century, Buddhist Era was expressed in Thailand in the Sinhalese manner, in terms of current rather than expired years. Phiphat, 'Kāra nāp pī . . . *op. cit.* p. 48.
- 16) See Prince Damrong Rajanubhab (ed), *Brahmājābhāṣṇāvatāra chapāp bhū-rājahāthalekhā* (*Royal Chronicles, Royal Autograph Edition*) vol 1 p. 641 Bangkok 1962; and, especially, Phiphat, 'Śākarāja cuḷāmaṇī,' *op. cit.*
- 17) Established by means of the Luang Prasoet version of the Royal Chronicles of Ayudhya (an English translation of which, by O. Frankfurter, appears in *Journal of the Siam Society* 1909 vol 6 pt 3 pp. 1-21) and the inscriptions, Coedès, G., *Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam* vol 1 and Thailand, Office of the Prime Minister, Commission for the Publication of Historical, Cultural, and Archeological Records (comps.), *Prahjumsilā cārūk, bhāg 3* (*Recueil des Inscriptions du Siam, III*) Bangkok 2508/1965.
- 18) Read with an assumed thousand digit as Mahāśākarāja 1720, it becomes A.D. 1798, Year of the Horse; as Buddhist Era 1720 it becomes A.D. 1177; and as Cuḷāmaṇī Era 1720 it becomes A.D. 1908.
- 19) *Royal Autograph Edition* vol 1 p. 643.

digit is suspected, the likelihood is that the animal year and final digit are correct, the latter because it must coincide with the correct cyclical year of the decade (in this case, the tenth year). The 'Palatine Law', then, on this test, probably was framed in 710, 770, 830 . . . of the Lesser Era, all of which were years of the Rat. Of these, only 830 (A.D. 1468) falls within the reign of King Trailok.

Similarly, in the event of incorrect conversion from one era to another, the year A.D. 1468 also is indicated. First, the 'Palatine Law' bears by far the lowest-numbered date of almost fifty pre-eighteenth century Thai laws. The next nearest is 796, the law already mentioned of A.D. 1434; while the next after it are two laws of 955 (B.E. 1955 ?), each mentioning a different year of the animal cycle, neither of which corresponds to the correct animal year.²⁰ The possibility of an incorrect conversion is further strengthened by the fact that the only other laws known definitely to date from the reign of King Trailok are both dated 1298 in an unspecified era.²¹ If the 'Palatine Law' dated from the reign of King Trailok, one would expect it to bear a date of *ca.* 1300 in the same era. Of six possible misconversions,²² only one is reasonable: that a scribe, assuming a date of 1280 to be expressed in Mahāsūkarāja, converted it to Culaśakarāja by subtracting 560 to obtain C.S. 720; when the date actually was expressed in Cuḷāmaṇṣākarāja, and he should have subtracted 450 to obtain a date of C.S. 830, A.D. 1468. The likelihood that this indeed occurred is increased by the fact that the Cuḷāmaṇṣī Era was imperfectly known in the nineteenth century when the present collection of old Thai laws was compiled, and only recently has been identified and conclusively dated.²³

20) *KTSI* vol 1 p. 197 (Bramaśākti); and IV, 155 (Kraḥpata sūk, Clause 68).

21) *KTSI* vol 1 p. 219 (Brah aiyakāra tāmhnēn nā balarōan, Clause 1), and 316 (Brah aiyakāra tāmhnēn nādahār hua mōaṅ, Clause 30).

22) The two permutations of Buddhist Era yield Lesser Era 1341 (by Greater Era rules) or 1451 (by Legal Era rules); the two permutations of Legal Era yield Lesser Era-11 (by Buddhist Era rules) or 610 (by Greater Era rules); and the other Greater Era permutation yields Lesser Era 99 by Buddhist Era rules.

23) Phiphat, 'Śākaraja Cuḷāmaṇṣī' *op. cit.*

Both possibilities, then—the possibility of misread digits and the possibility of misconversion from one era to another—suggest the same year, C.S. 830 or A.D. 1468/69, as the date of the 'Palatine Law'.

An empirical check on the accuracy of this date is possible through reference to the weekday, Saturday, on which the law is said to have been promulgated. The Burmese, Lao, and Cambodian chronological systems all prescribe *Tuesday* for the sixth day of the waxing moon of the fifth month in the year in question, a discrepancy of three days; but they also miss by three days the correct weekdate of the Vāt Cuḷāmaṇī inscription of 1465.²⁴ If the date of the 1465 inscription is used as a basis for calculation of the weekday of the sixth of the waxing moon of the fifth month three years later, the result is the expected Saturday. Thus the empirical consistency between the inscription and the law lends certainty to a date of mid-April, A.D. 1468, for the 'Palatine Law'.²⁵

The Tributary States

Of the twenty tributary states mentioned in Clause 2, most are readily identifiable, and the list as a whole fits much more readily into the context of fifteenth century Southeast Asian history than into either the preceding or succeeding centuries. The sixteen northern tributaries were a product of the wars begun in the reign of King Paramarājā I (1370-1388) which continued through much of the fifteenth century. By the middle of the sixteenth century, however, almost all of them had fallen to the Burmese. Chiangmai, Chiengsaen, Chiengrai, Phrae, and Nan are present-day provincial centers in North Thailand, while Hsenwi in the Burmese Shan States and Chiengrung (Keng Hung) in Yunnan are readily identifiable. The remainder require some explanation:

24) Irwin, A.M.B. *The Burmese & Arakanese Calendars* Rangoon 1909; Tiao Maha Upahat Phetsarath, 'The Laotian Calendar,' in Rene de Berval (ed). *Kingdom of Laos* Saigon 1959 pp. 97-125; and Faraut, F.G. *Astronomie Cambodgienne* Phnom Penh 1910. The Vāt Cuḷāmaṇī inscription is published in *Prahjūm bānsāvātāra (Collected Chronicles)* vol 1 Bangkok: Progress Bookstote 2506/1963 pp. 139-42.

25) The only available tables for conversion to the Julian calendar are those for the Hindu and Chinese calendars, neither of which fit the Indo-Chinese cases.

Nagara Hluān: This term is used in the chronicles in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries to refer to Angkor, the date of the first capture of which has now been firmly established as 1369 by O.W. Wolters.²⁶ Its inclusion among the northern tributaries is no more unusual than the inclusion of some eastern provinces among those administered by the Department of the North (*Kram Mahātadai*) in the latter portion of the Ayudhya and in the Bangkok period.

Śrī Sātanaṅgaṇahuta: Luang Prabang, capital of the Lao kingdom of Lan Xang until 1560.

Tōn Ū: Either Toungoo in Burma, or, possibly, Tang Au, an old town on the Mekong River about twenty-five miles north of Chiengsaen.²⁷

Jiaṅkrai and *Jiaṅkrān*: Two paired towns, mentioned in the Luang Prasoet version of the Royal Chronicles under the date Culasakarāja 900 (1538). Wood reads the two as a single town, Gyaing, in the Moulmein district of Burma, which was tributary to Siam in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.²⁸

Khemarāja: The name used in the old Pali-Thai chronicles for Chiengtung, or Keng Tung, in the Burmese Shan States.²⁹

Taidōn: ?

Gotrapōn: Probably Nakhon Phanom in Northeast Thailand.³⁰

Rev Kēv: Possibly a town in the region of Ubon ?

- 26) Wolters, O.W., 'The Khmer King at Basan (1371-3) and the Restoration of the Cambodian Chronology During the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries,' *Asia Major* new series, vol 12 pt 1, 1966 pp. 44-89.
- 27) Sternstein, L., 'An "Historical Atlas of Thailand",' *Journal of the Siam Society* vol 52 pt 1, 1964 map 2.
- 28) See Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, 'Our Wars With the Burmese: A Work in Thai Language by Prince Damrong and Translated (by) U Aung Thein (a) Phra Phraison Salarak,' *Journal of the Burma Research Society* vol 38 pt 2, 1955 pp. 129-31; and Wood, W.A.R., *A History of Siam* Bangkok 1959 p. 102.
- 29) Phraya Prajakitkaracak *Baṅsāvatāra yonaka (Chronicle of Yonok)* Bangkok 1961; earlier edn. followed by Notton, C. *Annales du Siam* vol 1 Paris 1926 pp. 143-44 n. 5; and vol 3 Paris 1932 p. 77.
- 30) See Prince Damrong Rajanubhab and Luang Boribal Buribhand *Rōai porānagatī* Bangkok 1959 pp. 122-26; and Phraya Anuman Rajadhon and Prince Naris Pānduk rōai *gvānṛī tāitān* vol 3 Bangkok 1963 pp. 9-12.

As for the four southern vassals, only Malacca's identification is both clear and reasonable, the chronicles recording a Thai attack on Malacca and the lower peninsula in Culasūkarāja 817 (A.D. 1455/56).³¹ In the course of this expedition the enlistment of tributaries might be expected, but there is no indication of whom they may have been, outside this reference in the 1468 'Palatine Law': Ujong Tanah, Malāyū, and Varavāri. Johore seems indicated by the first. Gerini long ago suggested Muar for Varavāri and 'the district on and about the Malāyū river, immediately adjoining Johor on the West' for Malāyū;³² and Coedès has been able to carry their identifications no further.³³ At least the establishing of the later date of 1468 for the 'Palatine Law' removes the conflict of claims between it and the *Nāgarakritāgama*. It would be hoped that the resolution of this conflict of evidence might lead to a closer examination of what may now be viewed as two equally valid claims of peninsular territory separated by a century.

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- 31) Luang Prasoet Version. The argument presented by Marrison, G.E. 'The Siamese Wars with Malacca During the Reign of Muzaffar Shah,' *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* vol 22 pt 1, 1949 pp. 61-66, remains unconvincing.
- 32) Gerini, G.E., 'Historical Retrospect of Junkceylon Island, Part I,' *Journal of the Siam Society* vol 2 pt 2, 1905 p. 11. Blagden, C.O., 'Antiquity of Malacca,' *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* vol 57, 1910 pp. 189-90, expressed his dissatisfaction with these identifications, but could propose no alternatives.
- 33) Coedès, *Les États . . . op. cit.* pp. 266-67 & 439.