

# A REVISED DATING OF AYUDHYA ARCHITECTURE (II)

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In the previous issue of the *Journal of the Siam Society* (Vol. 80.1 1992, 37-55) this writer proposed in an article entitled "A Revised Dating of Ayudhya Architecture" that H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab's dating of Ayudhya monuments first set forth in the *Tamnan Phuttha Chedi Sayam* (*Chronicle of the Monuments of the Buddha in Siam*), published in 1926, should be revised on account of misconceptions in its basic methodology, for the Prince correlated the structures remaining today with those mentioned in the *Phraratcha Phongsawadan* (*Royal Chronicles*). Furthermore, he did not take into account the possibility that the monuments we see today may have been built at a later period, nor did he attempt to verify the credibility of the *Royal Chronicles* by comparing them with foreign sources. Thus, after having compared the existing monuments at Ayudhya with their depictions in seventeenth century charts and maps and cross-checking with contemporary foreigners' accounts, this writer has concluded that the monuments identified by the author of the *Tamnan* as belonging to the First Sub-Period (1350-1488), namely, the prang of Wat Phutthai Sawan, the prang of Wat Mahathat, the prang of Wat Ratchaburana and the prang of Wat Phra Ram, all assumed their present forms in the 18th century. Hence the Prince's rule of thumb for identifying Ayudhya architecture of the First Sub-Period, i.e. that it is characterized by the Lop Buri-period prangs, has to be revised.

## *Tamnan Phuttha Chedi Sayam's* Second Sub-Period (1463-1628)

According to the author of the *Tamnan Phuttha Chedi Sayam* the Second Sub-Period commences in 1463, when King Borommatrailokanat (1448-1488) moved the capital from Ayudhya to Phitsanulok, and ends with the death of King Song Tham in 1628. Examples of the architecture from the Second Sub-Period show influences from Sukhothai, espe-

cially the Sinhalese-type stupas. These are the two great stupas enshrining the ashes of King Borommatrailokanat and King Borommaracha III in the Temple Royal of Wat Phra Sri Sanphet, as well as the colossal image of a standing Buddha called Phra Sri Sanphet, all built by King Ramathibodi II (1491-1529). The author of the *Tamnan Phuttha Chedi Sayam* later surmised that the third great in the same Temple Royal of Wat Phra Sri Sanphet was built by a later king to enshrine the ashes of King Ramathibodi II, which explains why there are three great stupas in Wat Phra Sri Sanphet.<sup>1</sup>

Another example of the monuments from the *Tamnan Phuttha Chedi Sayam's* Second Sub-Period is the Victory Chedi of King Naresuan the Great (1590-1605), built at the spot where he had won an elephant duel with the Crown Prince of Hamsavati (Pegu), which was a copy of the Victory Chedi of King Dutthagamani of Sri Lanka.

The author of the *Tamnan* also gave a rule of thumb to identify monuments of his Second Sub-Period: "Instead of prangs, nearly all the principal monuments built during this period were stupas of Sinhalese type."<sup>2</sup>

H.S.H. Prince Subhadradis Diskul later added to this list the chedi at Wat Yai Chai Mongkon as another example of Ayudhya architecture of the Second Sub-Period.<sup>3</sup>

## The Three Great Stupas in Wat Phra Sri Sanphet

Whereas the "*Phanchanthanumat* (Choem) version" of the *Royal Chronicle of Ayudhya* says that in 1474 King Ramathibodi II had the ashes of King Borommatrailokanat enshrined in a stupa,<sup>4</sup> it did not say that those of King Borommaracha III also were enshrined at the same time. This additional information comes from the "*Luang Prasaoet* version" of the *Royal Chronicle* which says that in the year 1492 King Ramathibodi II had the ashes of King Borommatrailokanat as well as those of King Borommaracha III enshrined in the great stupa.<sup>5</sup>

Figure 1 The Three Great Stupas in Wat Phra Sri Sanphet, Ayudhya. Collection of the Siam Society.



Figure 2 The vihara of the Phra Sri Sanphet image. Detail from the oil painting of "Iudea," anonymous Dutch school, c. 1650, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

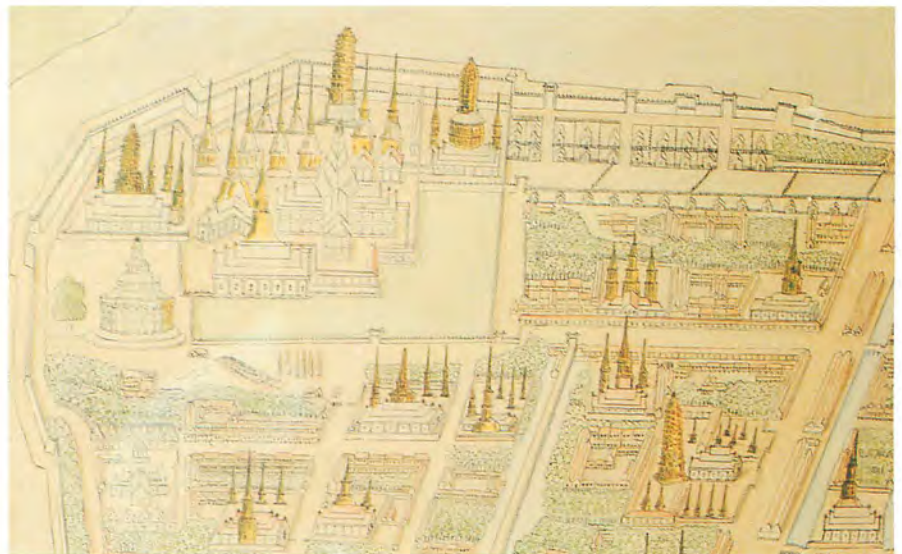


Figure 3 The vihara of the Phra Sri Sanphet image. Detail from a water-color copy of the "Afooldinge der Stadt Iudiad Hooft des Chooninrick Siam," Johannes Vingboons, c. 1665, Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague. Collection of the Siam Society.

Although the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" does not specify whether the ashes of these two kings were placed together in the same stupa or were placed in separate ones, the author of the *Tamnan* surmised that two stupas were constructed, one for each king. Also, neither of the two recensions of the *Royal Chronicle* says in which city and in which monastery the stupas were located; the author of the *Tamnan* again surmised that

These great stupas must be the big chedis in Wat Phra Sri Sanphet. Two were built then. A later king built another one to enshrine the ashes of King Ramathibodi II. Hence there are three great stupas existing today.<sup>6</sup> (Figure 1)

Since both the oil painting of "Iudea" of c. 1659 in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (Figure 2) and the watercolor painting from Johannes Vingboons' atlas of 1665 (Figure 3) show that there is no stupa to the rear of the *vihara* of the Phra Sri Sanphet image, the hypothesis of the author of the *Tamnan* that two of the three great stupas were built by King Ramathibodi II in 1492, and the third one after his death in 1529, must be revised.

However, the earliest depiction of stupas at the rear of the *vihara* of the Phra Sri Sanphet image is shown in the "Plan of the Royal Palace of Siam" (Figures 4 and 4a), published by Dr. Engelbert Kaempfer, a German doctor employed by the Dutch East India Company, who visited Ayudhya in 1690. Judging from Kaempfer's plan, there are to the front (east) of the *vihara* of the Phra Sri Sanphet image one small building and a chedi, while to the back (west) of it are three large buildings separated by two chedis and one prang. These chedis appear to have been the multi-storeyed *prasat* type, not the bell-shaped Sinhalese type we see today. Since all of these additional structures are absent in Vingboons' atlas of 1665 (see Figure 3), they most probably would have had to be built between 1665 and 1688 during the reign of King Narai the Great.

According to the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*," in 1741 King Borommakot commanded the heir apparent to renovate Wat Phra Sri Sanphet, which took over one year to complete.<sup>7</sup> The "*Royal Autograph version*," however, says that the renovation took place between 1742–1744.<sup>8</sup>

When one compares the Fine Arts Department's present plan of Wat Phra Sri Sanphet (Figure 5) with Kaempfer's plan of 1690 (Figure 4), one can see that with the possible exception of the Phra Sri Sanphet image, all of the structures mentioned earlier have been demolished and replaced by three Sinhalese-type stupas alternating with three *mondops* which used to enshrine Footprints of the Buddha, all laid out along an east–west axis. Also, given the symmetrically designed plan and the uniformity in style of the *mondop*, the three great stupas, *viharas* and subsidiary stupas (Figure 5) in Wat Phra Sri Sanphet, it is reasonable to assume that most of the monuments we see today were reconstructed after a master plan drawn in the early 1740s.

As for the Phra Sri Sanphet image itself, the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*" says,

In 841, the year of the pig [1479], the *vihara* of the Wat Phra Sri Sanphet was first constructed. Somdet Phra Ramathibodi [II] first cast the Phra Sri Sanphet image on Sunday the 8th of the waxing 6th month. Then in 845, the year of the rabbit [1483], on Friday the 11th of the waxing 8th month, the statue was dedicated. The dimensions were from the feet to the crest 8 *wah* and the face was 4 *sok* long and 3 *sok* wide, the breast 11 *sok*. The metal used weighed 53,000 catties; the gold for covering the statue weighed 286 catties. The gold was of a fineness in front of seven and behind of six.<sup>9</sup>

Since King Rama I had the Phra Sri Sanphet image brought to Bangkok and enshrined in the Sri Sanphet Dayan Chedi in Wat Phra Chetuphon in B.E. 2332 (1789),<sup>10</sup> its exact measurements and weight must have been known to the compiler of the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*," who completed his work in 1795.

The "*Luang Prasaoet version*," however, has it that the construction of the *vihara* and the casting of the image occurred in two successive years. Although the day of the first casting of the image and the day of its dedication and their respective moon's phases remain the same, the years given in the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" differ from the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*" by as much as 20 years. It states as follows:

In 861, the year of the goat [1499], he [Somdet Phra Ramathibodi II] built the *vihara* of Wat Phra Sri Sanphet. In 862, the year of the monkey [1500], he gave orders for the casting of the Phra Sri Sanphet. It was commenced on Sunday the 8th of the waxing 6th month, and in 865, the year of the pig (1503), on Friday the 11th of the waxing 8th month, the statue was dedicated. The dimensions were from the feet to the crest 8 *wah* and the face was 4 *sok* long and three *sok* wide, the breast 11 *sok*. The metal used weighed 53,000 catties, the gold for covering the statue weighed 286 catties. The gold was of a fineness in front of seven and behind six.<sup>11</sup>

It should be remarked here that the dimensions and weight of the image given in the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" are exactly the same as those of the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*."

However, contemporary Western accounts from the 1680s challenge the statements given in the "*Luang Prasaoet version*," which according to its own exordium dates from 1680, that the *vihara* of Wat Phra Sri Sanphet was constructed before the casting of the Phra Sri Sanphet image. Nicolas Gervaise wrote in 1688: "It [the Phra Sri Sanphet image] was made on the spot and the pagoda where it is now worshipped was not built until it had been put in place."<sup>12</sup>

According to Father Tachard's account of 1685, "They say that this Prodigious Colossus was cast in the same place



Figure 4 Wat Phra Sri Sanphet from the Plan of the Royal Palace of Siam in Kaempfer's *A Description of the Kingdom of Siam*, 1690.

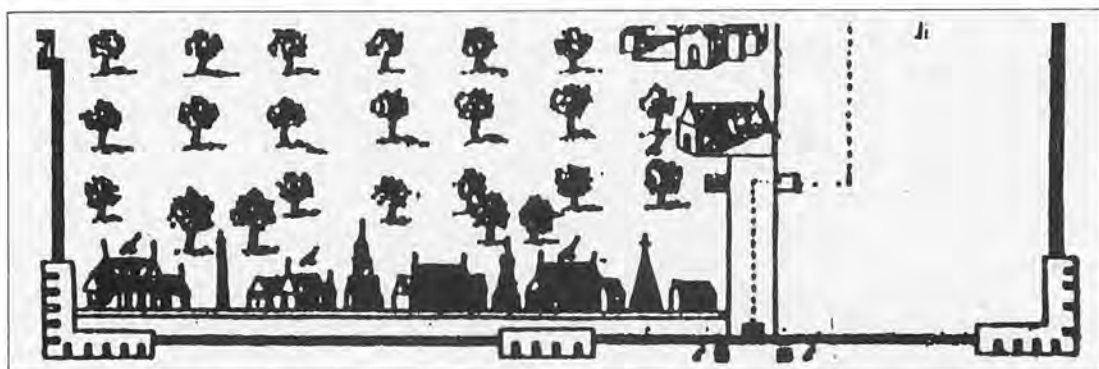
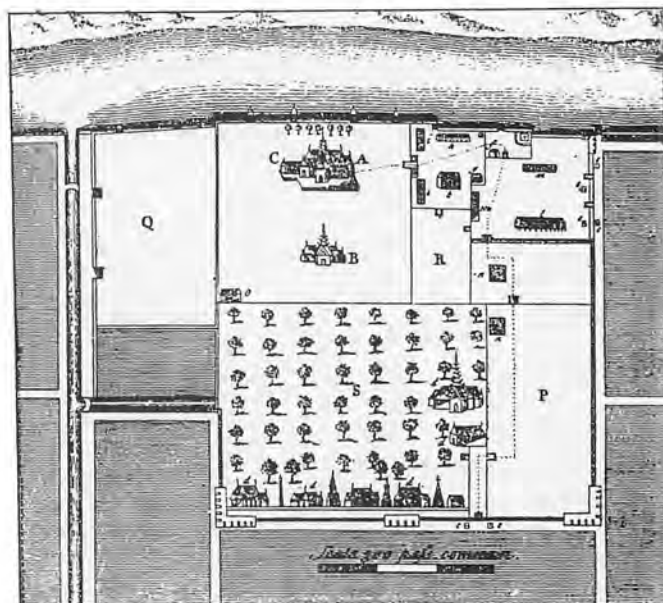


Figure 4a Detail of Figure 4.

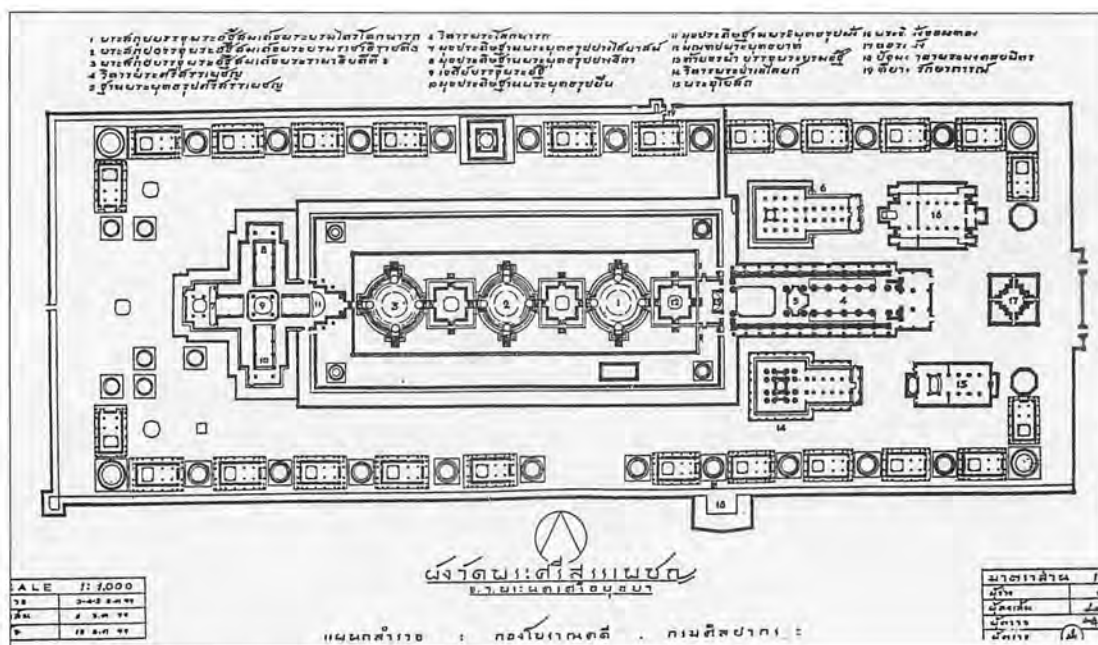


Figure 5 Plan of Wat Phra Sri Sanphet. Fine Arts Department.

where it stands, and that afterwards they built the Temple over it."<sup>13</sup>

Father Tachard's statement that "This Pagod is pretty long, but very narrow,"<sup>14</sup> supports the popular belief that the image was cast first, after which the vihara was built to house the image. For the narrowness of the vihara would have facilitated the roofing of the building.

This is the first instance where the compiler of the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" shows that he was out of touch with his contemporaries. For, had the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" been compiled in 1680, as it claims, it would have placed the casting of the Buddha image before the construction of the vihara. This incongruity together with the same measurements and weight of the Phra Sri Sanphet image given in the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*," as well as the 20 years correction for the date of the construction of the vihara of the Phra Sri Sanphet image, all indicate that the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" probably was based on the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*."

Not only do Western accounts cast doubt as to the credibility of the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" and the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*" on the casting of the Phra Sri Sanphet image, but both the *Khamhaikan Khun Luang Ha Wat Chabap Luang*, (*Statement of Khun Luang Ha Wat*; Ex-King Uthumphon) and the *Khamhaikan Chao Krung Kao* (*Statements of the Residents of the Old Capital*) contradict them also. For, according to Ex-King Uthumphon, the Phra Sri Sanphet image was cast by King Ekathotsarot (1605–1611). Its height was 18 *sok*, it was made of tin, and the gold covering the statue weighed 173 catties.<sup>15</sup> The former residents of the old capital also said that King Ekathotsarot had the image cast but the gold covering weighed 179 catties.<sup>16</sup>

Since there is no other evidence to support either the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*" and the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" of the *Royal Chronicle*, both of which say that the Phra Sri Sanphet image was cast by King Ramathibodi II, or the *Statements of Khun Luang Ha Wat and the Statements of the Residents of the Old Capital*, which claim that the image was cast by King Ekathotsarot, these traditional sources may have been equally unreliable. Circumstantial evidence, however, suggests that the Phra Sri Sanphet image may well have been cast in the reign of King Prasat Thong, for these is an entry in the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*" and its recensions which says "In the year that the [Prasat] Nakhon Luang was built, Wat Phra Sri Sanphet was founded; completed, a ceremony was held to celebrate it."<sup>17</sup>

Judging by the oil painting of "Iudea" of c. 1650 in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (see Figure 2), the vihara of the Phra Sri Sanphet image looks as if it had been built recently, for it is shown in isolated splendor. Thus the painting gives credence to the above entry in the *Royal Chronicle*. This assertion contradicts the chronicle's own earlier statement that King Ramathibodi II built the vihara of the Phra Sri Sanphet image. Moreover, van Vliet wrote in 1636 in the *Description of the Kingdom of Siam* that "...with the treasures lying under the idols of wat Sy-Ser-Pudt and Nappetat a ruined kingdom could be restored."<sup>18</sup>

This suggests that the value of the treasures buried underneath the image was greater than that of the image itself. For had the Phra Sri Sanphet image been cast before 1636, van Vliet probably would have mentioned the value of the image itself and not that of the treasures. Also, had the image been cast before 1640, when he wrote *The Short History of the Kings of Siam*, he might have referred to it as an example of King Prasat Thong's extravagance.

If King Prasat Thong's treatment of Wat Chi Chiang can be any indication, a similar fate may have been the lot of Wat Phra Sri Sanphet also. For, according to van Vliet, writing in February 1640,

A few months ago the ruling King [Prasat Thong] demolished the temple to its very base and had a large copper heathen image [the Phra Mongkhon Bophit image] which was located there pulled back several rods so that another temple like the last could be built over the image.<sup>19</sup>

Van Vliet thought that King Prasat Thong had hoped to find great treasures in the demolition of the temple, because "He is more avaricious than any other former Siamese King. He had temples torn down and their foundations dug up to search for gold and silver."<sup>20</sup>

Hence it is possible to suggest that King Prasat Thong might have removed an earlier presiding image in the Temple Royal of Wat Phra Sri Sanphet to search for its fabled foundation deposits and then had the image replaced by a standing image which he named Phra Sri Sanphet.

## The Victory Chedi of King Naresuan the Great

The *Tamnan Phra Phuttha Chedi Sayam* also classified the chedi commemorating the victory of King Naresuan the Great in an elephant duel with the Maha Uparat (Crown Prince) of Hamsavati as an example of the architecture of the Second Sub-Period. He also surmised that King Naresuan was following the example set by King Dutthagamani of Sri Lanka, who built a chedi to commemorate his victory over the Tamil King Elara.<sup>21</sup> A.B. Griswold identified King Dutthagamani's Victory Chedi as the present day Ruvanvali Thupa at Anuradhapura.<sup>22</sup>

According to the author of the *Tamnan*, he had been trying to find the Victory Chedi of King Naresuan for over ten years, on account of the statement in the *Royal Chronicle* which says that King Naresuan commanded a chedi to be built over the remains of the Maha Uparat in the District of Phang Tru. However, he was unable to locate it until the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" was discovered in 1907 and he read in it that the Maha Uparat had established his camp in Taphang Tru District of Suphanburi province and had the elephant duel with King Naresuan at Nong Sarai. He thus requested the Governor of Suphanburi province to look for Nong Sarai as well as to find a chedi nearby. When both were located the author of the *Tamnan* went to inspect the chedi himself. The lone chedi was covered with vegetation, but after it had been cleared one



Figure 6 Chedi Yuddhahatthi, Don Chedi District, Suphanburi Province. Photographed in 1912.

could see a square base measuring 10 *wah* (20 meters) on each side. The height of the ruin was six *wah* (12 meters). Old people said that they had heard from their forefathers that an elephant duel had taken place at this spot. When King Vajiravudh heard of this, he said that the evidence was strong enough to accept this chedi as the monument built by King Naresuan at the place where he had the elephant duel with the Maha Uparat in the war to liberate Siam.<sup>23</sup>

However, in a letter date 23 October 1942 to his half-brother, H.R.H. Prince Naritsaranuwattiwong, the author of the *Tamnan* admitted that the old people said that this spot was where "Phra Naresuan had an elephant duel with Phra Narai." Moreover, he did not go to inspect the site himself but only read the report of the Governor of Suphanburi and saw the chedi in photographs.<sup>24</sup>

Judging from an old photograph, the chedi was in such a ruinous state that its original form could not be discerned with the exception of its plain plastered base (Figure 6). Since the ruined chedi does not bear any stylistic resemblance to the Ruvanvali Thupa, the author of the *Tamnan* probably meant that the Victory Chedi of King Dutthagamani was a precedent for subsequent victory chedis, not that the ruined chedi was a copy of it.

Francis H. Giles noted in his essay, "A critical analysis of van Vliet's Historical Account of Siam in the 17th century," published in the *Journal of the Siam Society*, that

Burmese history insists that this battle was fought just outside the walls of Ayudhya, whereas Siamese history says it took place at Taphang Tru (ตะพังตรู) in the district of Suphan, which is many miles distant from Ayudhya. Van Vliet, who was in Ayudhya thirty-nine years after the event, says in the report that the battle was fought half a mile above the town near a ruined temple. Van Vliet's statement is in accord with Burmese history.<sup>25</sup>

Giles, however, did not refer to Kaempfer's illustration of the Chedi Phukhao Thong in his *Description of the Kingdom of Siam* 1690 (Figure 7), the caption of which reads "The Pyramid Pukathon near Juthia. It was built in memory of a victory, which the Siamites obtained over the Peguans, and thereby recovered their liberty."<sup>26</sup>

Kaempfer also gives a detailed description of its architecture which generally corresponds with the Chedi Phukhao Thong (Figure 8). He also gives its location: "[it] stands on a



Figure 7 Chedi Phukhao Thong as illustrated in Kaempfer's *A Description of the Kingdom of Siam*, 1690.

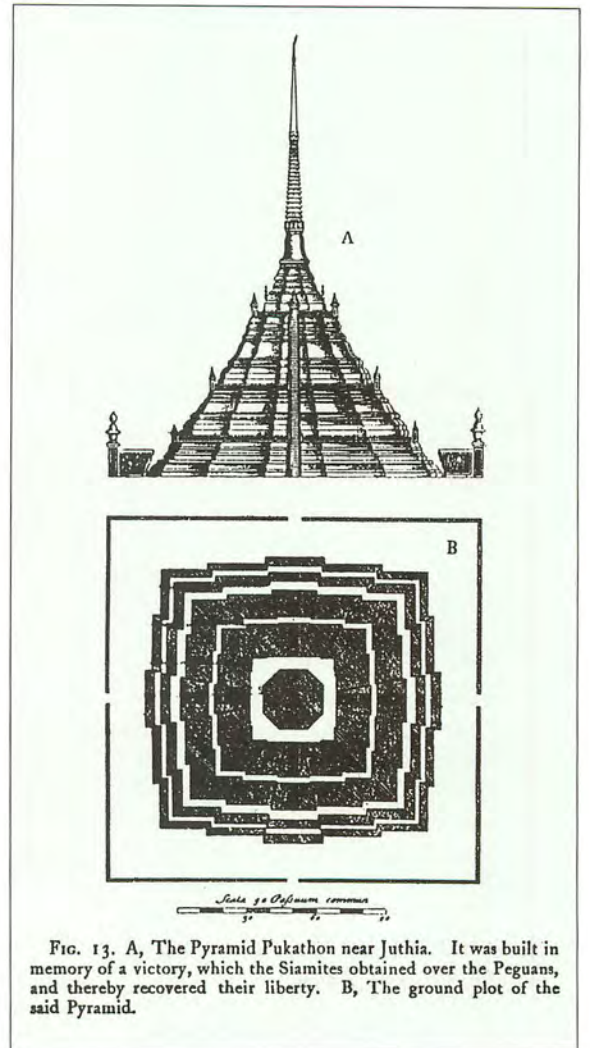


FIG. 13. A, The Pyramid Pukathon near Juthia. It was built in memory of a victory, which the Siamites obtained over the Peguans, and thereby recovered their liberty. B, The ground plot of the said Pyramid.



Figure 8 Chedi Phukhao Thong from the air. Photograph by Luca Invernizzi Tettoni.

plain one League North West of the City."<sup>27</sup> Even though the distance given by Kaempfer differs from that given by van Vliet, its location outside the walls of Ayudhya is the same as in van Vliet's account. According to the *Description of the Kingdom of Siam*, which van Vliet wrote in 1636,

At last they appeared before Judia which town they thought to conquer very easily. But the Siamese prince marched with his army against the enemy and met them half a mile above the town near a ruined temple which is still existing.<sup>28</sup>

A similar account appears in van Vliet's *The Short History of the Kings of Siam* of 1640, as follows:

The King of Pegu appeared with a mighty army before the city of Ayudhya. Phra Naret arrived with the Siamese army at a certain ruined temple (the remains of which are still visible today) called Creng or Nong Sarai to meet the Peguans.<sup>29</sup>

The above accounts, coming as they do from van Vliet, who was a resident of Ayudhya from 1633 to 1641, are more reliable than the account of the same event given in the "*Luang Prasaoet version*," which gives the location as in Suphanburi. Furthermore, it also refers to King Naresuan as Phra Narai, whereas van Vliet called him Phra Naret. Here is Frankfurter's translation of the relevant passage of the "*Luang Prasaoet version*:"

In 954, the year of the dragon, on Friday the 2nd of the 12th waxing moon, the Uparaj came from Pegu... In the second month the Mahauparaj arrived at the frontier of Suphanburi and established his camp at Phang Tru. On Sunday the 9th of the 2nd waxing moon at 10.12, the King came by water with his army and celebrated the ceremony of the consecration of arms at Lomphli and established his camp at Muang Wan, and on Wednesday the 12th of the 2nd waxing moon, at 8.54 a.m. the King proceeded on Land. About dawn on the 12th day the relics of the Buddha were seen to be floating [in the air] in the way the King took. On Monday the 2nd of the 2nd waxing moon, at 11.18, the King rode on his chief elephant Phraya Jayanubhab and fought with the Mahauparaj at Nong Sarai. This was not done exactly at the auspicious moment. Whilst the elephant fight was going on with the Mahauparaj, the King Phra Narayana was slightly wounded in the right arm. Further the Mahauparaj came out riding on his elephant and his hat fell off; but he was able to put it on again, and then he died on his elephant.<sup>30</sup>

The above account may have been composed to lend credibility to the claim in the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" that it was

compiled from astrological calendars (*Phum Hora*),<sup>31</sup> giving as it does the precise hours and minutes. However, it stretches one's credulity to believe that there were astrologers present at the battle to keep the exact time. Ironically, the collected astrological calendar called *Chotmaiher Hora*, which includes events from the Ayudhya period, does not register this momentous occasion at all.<sup>32</sup>

Although the *Statements of Khun Luang Ha Wat* says that the battle took place in the district of Len Tae Khao Ngam, it does not specify in which province that district was located.<sup>33</sup> However, the *Statements of the Residents of the Old Capital* gives the location as being near the town of Suphanburi.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the *Statements of the Residents of the Old Capital* says that before the battle took place a relic of the Buddha also flew past,<sup>35</sup> just as is recorded in the "*Luang Prasaoet version*." The discrepancy between the location given by van Vliet and the Burmese and that in the "*Luang Prasaoet version*" is the second incongruity in its claim to have been compiled in 1680, because its story is closer to the *Statements of the Residents of the Old Capital* from the late 18th-century than to its own contemporary accounts. This discrepancy again casts doubt as to the authenticity of the 1680 date given in the exordium of the "*Luang Prasaoet version*."

The probability that the Chedi Phukhao Thong was built to commemorate King Naresuan's victory over the Crown Prince of Burma is alluded to in the *Phongsawadan Nuea (Chronicle of the North)*. However, the *Phongsawadan Nuea* confuses King Naresuan with the Crown Prince of Hamsavati, for King Naresuan is called Phra Naresuan Hongsa, who was a son of a king of Thaton. Phra Naresuan Hongsa came with "four million men" to surround the city of Ayudhya. He then challenged Phra Narai, the ruler of Ayudhya, to a chedi-building competition.

After 15 days Phra Naresuan was able to build to the height of the topmost molding of the base (บัวกลม) and gave it the name Wat Phukhao Thong. Phra Narai thought that he was going to be defeated, so he resorted to a ruse by building his chedi with bamboo scaffoldings and covered them with white cloth. Phra Naresuan saw the chedi and was afraid, so he retreated with all his men. Phra Narai commanded that the chedi be completed and gave it the name Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon.

Then Phra Narai built the Phra Prang (Wat Maha That) at Muang Lavo. He called his new city Lop Buri.<sup>36</sup>

On this particular episode the *Phongsawadan Nuea* appears to be closer to the truth than the "*Luang Prasaoet version*," for the location where Phra Naresuan built his chedi is the same as given in both van Vliet's and Kaempfer's accounts. Hence there is no reason to doubt that the Chedi Phukhao Thong was founded by King Naresuan to commemorate his victory.



The *Statements of the Residents of the Old Capital*, on the other hand, says that when the king of Hamsavati (Bayinnaung) was staying at Ayudhya he caused a big chedi to be built in the Thung Khao Thong District and gave it the name of Chedi Phukhao Thong.<sup>37</sup> Thus it appears that when Ayudhya fell in 1767 the people living there knew that the Chedi Phukhao Thong had something to do with Hamsavati, so perhaps to please their Burmese captors, the former residents of the Old Capital who were taken as prisoners to Ava attributed it to Bayinnaung.<sup>38</sup>

When the "*Phanchanthanumat (Choem) version*" of the *Royal Chronicle* was compiled in 1795, the compiler must have vaguely remembered that Phra Naresuan founded the Chedi Phukhao Thong. But since popular belief identified Phra Naresuan with a king of Hamsavati as told in the *Phongsawadan Nuea*, the compiler attributed the founding of the Chedi Phukhao Thong to another king with a similar-sounding name, King Ramesuan, in 1387.<sup>39</sup> The "*Luang Prasaoet version*," on the other hand, does not mention it at all.

Although the Chedi Phukhao Thong was founded by King Naresuan on the spot where he obtained victory over the Crown Prince of Hamsavati, the chedi shown in Kaempfer's illustration (Figure 7) probably was built after 1640, for van Vliet specified that the battle was fought "at a certain ruined temple (the remains of which are still visible today)."<sup>40</sup> Had the Chedi Phukhao Thong as illustrated in Kaempfer's book been built before 1640, he would have said where the great pyramid now stands, for at the time of its construction the Chedi Phukhao Thong would have been the tallest chedi at Ayudhya. However, taking into account van Vliet's and Kaempfer's statements together with that of the *Phongsawadan Nuea*, it can be inferred that after the great battle was fought and won outside the walls of Ayudhya, King Naresuan commanded that a great chedi be built to commemorate his victory. But his grandiose scheme had not been completed as planned, for having attained the height of the topmost course of mouldings of the base, the great chedi was abandoned. By 1640 it was covered with overgrowth, which explains why van Vliet referred to it as "a ruined temple," for its unfinished state would have resembled a small hillock covered with vegetation.

Thus the Chedi Phukhao Thong depicted by Kaempfer (Figure 7) must have been built after 1640 and before 1690, either during the latter half of King Prasat Thong's reign (1640–1656) or in the reign of King Narai (1656–1688).

If the substratum of fact from the *Phongsawadan Nuea* can be of any help it may indicate that King Prasat Thong had the Chedi Phukhao Thong rebuilt between 1640–1656, for according to the *Phongsawadan Nuea*, Phra Chao Prasat Thong, King of Ayudhya, sent a delegation to Hamsavati to give offerings to the Phra Mali Chedi.<sup>41</sup> Although the Phra Mali Chedi is mythical, the description suggests that it might have been based on the Mahazedi of King Bayinnaung (1551–1581) (Figure 9). It is possible to assume that the delegation was sent to Hamsavati to collect more information on the Mahazedi for King Prasat Thong's reconstruction of the Chedi Phukhao Thong, since King Prasat Thong might have known that King

Naresuan's original intention for the Chedi Phukhao Thong was to build a replica of the Mahazedi at Pegu, in which city he had spent his youth as a hostage. As the Chedi Phukhao Thong was modeled after the Mahazedi of Bayinnaung, its correlation with Bayinnaung, as told in the *Statements of the Residents of the Old Capital*, may contain a modicum of truth after all.

Kaempfer gives a detailed description of the Chedi Phukhao Thong as he saw it in 1690, which is here quoted in full, as follows:

It is a bulky, but magnificent structure, forty odd fathoms high, standing in a square taken in with a low neat wall. It consists of two structures which are built one upon the other. The lowermost structure is square, each side being one hundred and fifteen paces long, and rises to the height of twelve fathoms and upwards. Three corners jet out some few paces on each side, which are continu'd up to the top, and altering its square figure make it appear, as it were, multangular. It consists of four Stories, built one upon the other, the uppermost of which growing narrower leaves at the top of that below it an empty space, or walk to go round. Every Story hath its Cornishes curiously diversify'd, and all the walks, the lowermost only excepted, are taken in with low neat walls adorn'd in each corner with fine columns. The middlemost corner of each Story represents the frontispiece of the Building. It exceeds the others in beauty and ornaments, especially in a magnificent gable it ends into. The Staircase is in the middle of it, which leads up to the upper area on which is built the second structure, and consists of seventy four steps, each nine Inches high, and four paces long. The second structure is built on the upper surface of the first, which is square, each side being thirty six paces long. It stands out in the middle for ornament's sake, and is taken in like the rest, with a low neat wall. It hath a walk five paces broad to go about the second structure. The Stair-case ends into this walk, each side of its entry being adorn'd with columns. The basis, or pedestal of the second structure is octangular, consisting of eight sides of different length, those facing South, East, West and North, being eleven, but the North East, South East, South West, and North West sides, each twelve paces long. It hath its Cornishes much after the manner of the lowermost structure to the height of some fathoms. It then becomes not unlike a Steeple, on whose top stand several short columns at some distances from each other, the spaces between being left empty. These columns support a pile of globes, which run up tapering, their diameters decreasing in proportion to the height. The whole ends into a very long Spire, and withal so sharp, that it is very surprizing, how it could hold out for so



Figure 9 The Mahazedi at Pegu. Photograph by the author.

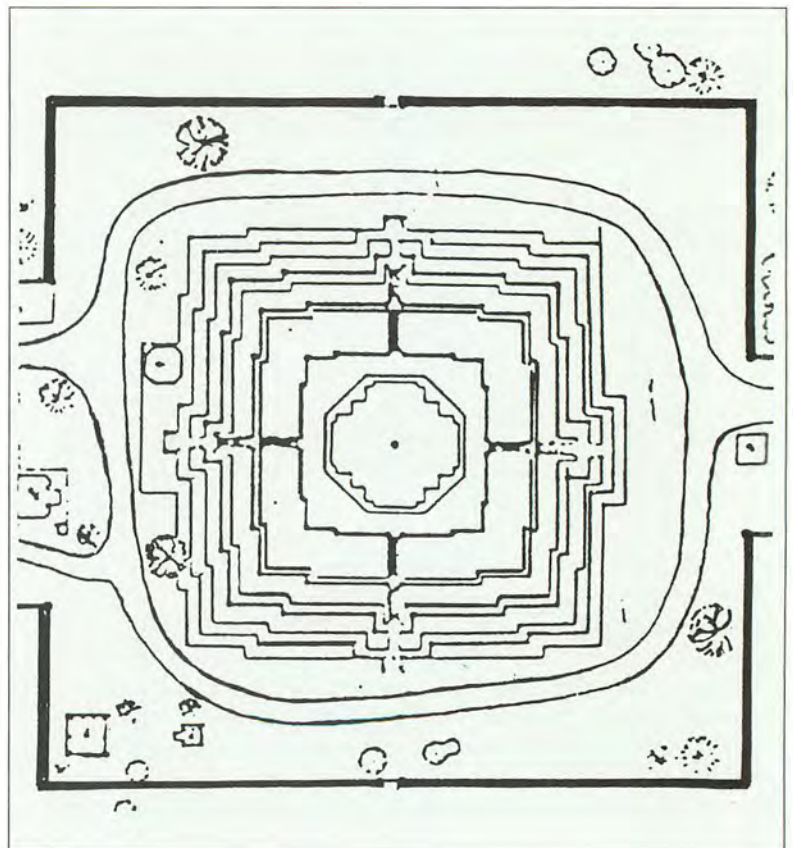


Figure 10 Plan of chedi Phukhao Thong. Fine Arts Department.

considerable a space of time against all the Injuries of wind and weather. Next to this Pyramid are some Temples and Colleges of the Talapoins, which are taken in with particular neat brick walls.<sup>42</sup>

A comparison of Kaempfer's drawing (see Figure 7) and description with the Chedi Phukhao Thong as it stands today (Figure 8) shows that substantial modifications took place after 1690. The most obvious is the change in the lower structure where, instead of having "Three corners [which] jet out some few paces on each side," there are only two today, for the central projection which housed the stairway has been removed (Figure 10). Otherwise, the mouldings on each of the four storeys of the lower structure remain essentially the same as in the drawing. The upper structure from the base to the top of the platform on which stand the "several short columns" has been modified beyond recognition. Kaempfer's drawing shows that it has a projection on each of the four sides, making it an added-angle type chedi (*chedi phoem mum*), and the course of mouldings of the upper structure repeat that of the lowermost structure. The present upper structure, on the other hand, is an elaborate redented added-angle type chedi whose sequences of mouldings, consisting of three sets of superimposed lower and upper cyma recta moldings decorated with torus mouldings, are typical of the 18th-century. Also an extra projection was added to the center of each side to contain an image niche. The cylindrical dome was changed to one of a square plan with rabbeted angles. The form of the "steeple," however, has not been changed. This transformation must have been the result of the restoration undertaken in 1745, as recorded in the *Phum Hora (Astrological Calendar)*.<sup>43</sup>

## The Chedi of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon

Although the author of the *Tamnan* did not choose the chedi of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon as an example of his Second Sub-Period, Professor H.S.H. Prince Subhadradis Diskul classified it as such. Moreover the chedi of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon is today identified as another Victory Chedi of King Naresuan the Great. So it is appropriate here to trace the development of the myth that leads to the identification of the chedi of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon with King Naresuan's Victory Chedi.

The myth had its beginning in an article called "Roeng Wat Pa Kao," written by H.R.H. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab. According to the author,

Among the large royal monastic foundations in the Old City [Ayudhya] there is one that today is called Wat Yai. In the time of Ayudhya this monastery was called Wat Chao Phraya Thai. The name Wat Chao Phraya Thai does not appear in the ecclesiastical registrar from the Ayudhya period. In that list a Patriarch with the ecclesiastical title of Somdet Phra Wannarat resided at Wat Pa Kao. When Wat Pa Kao could not be located, I thought that it might have been Wat Chao Phraya Thai, which is the same as Wat Yai.<sup>44</sup>

Prince Damrong later speculated that after King Naresuan had won his elephant duel with the Maha Uparat, he built a chedi at the spot where he was victorious and also had a large chedi called "Phra Chedi Chai Mongkhon" ("The Chedi of the Auspicious Victory") built at "Wat Chao Phraya Thai" where the patriarch of the "Pa Kao" sect resided.<sup>45</sup>

Once Prince Damrong made the correlation between Wat Chao Phraya Thai, the chedi of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon and Wat Pa Kao, further speculation was rife. For, according to the "*Phanchanathanumat (Choem) version*," a Somdet Phra Wannarat, the abbot of Wat Pa Kao, asked King Naresuan to spare the lives of military commanders whom the king had condemned to death for failing to join him in Suphanburi in time for the elephant duel with the Crown Prince of Hamsavati.<sup>46</sup> Although the "*Phanchanathanumat (Choem) version*" does not say that during this audience with King Naresuan, Somdet Phra Wannarat also suggested to the king that he should construct a chedi to commemorate that victory, a later writer assumed that Somdet Phra Wannarat did so. Following Prince Damrong, he state that King Naresuan commanded that a chedi be built at Nong Sarai where the Crown Prince of Hamsavati was killed, and also

...had the big chedi at Wat Chao Phraya Thai constructed, so as to make a pair with the Chedi Phukhao Thong which the king of Hamsavati had built when he defeated the Thais. The chedi that King Naresuan built was named "Phra Chedi Chai Mongkhon." People commonly called it "Phra Chedi Yai." After a long time had passed people began to call it by another name, namely "Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon."<sup>47</sup>

The above hypothesis has no factual evidence at all, for the sequence of events as told in the "*Phanchanathanumat (Choem) version*" has King Naresuan constructing a chedi to cover the body of the Maha Uparat of Hamsavati in Phang Tru District before the Somdet Phra Wannarat came to see him. So the identification of the chedi of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon with King Naresuan's Victory Chedi is a myth based on Prince Damrong's conjecture.

The contemporary Western record of Jacques de Coutre, who came to Ayudhya in 1595, three years after King Naresuan's elephant duel with the Maha Uparat, says that "Maharraya died in the city of Tavai [Tavoy] of a lance stab to the throat."<sup>48</sup>

That the Maha Uparat died from a stab wound is found also in van Vliet's account.<sup>49</sup> The difference is that contrary to van Vliet's version, the Maha Uparat did not "[fall] to the ground dead" there and then. De Coutre's account is supported by the "*Ukala Mahayaza Wingyi version*" of the *Chronicle of Burma*, which says that the body of the Maha Uparat was brought back to Hamsavati.<sup>50</sup> Since the most reliable source for this event is that of Jacques de Coutre, the account of the "*Phanchanathanumat (Choem) version*" that King Naresuan built a chedi to cover the body of the Maha Uparat in the Phang Tru District must be rejected as fictitious.

Even though the correlation between Wat Pa Kao with Wat Chao Phraya Thai remains hypothetical, the iden-



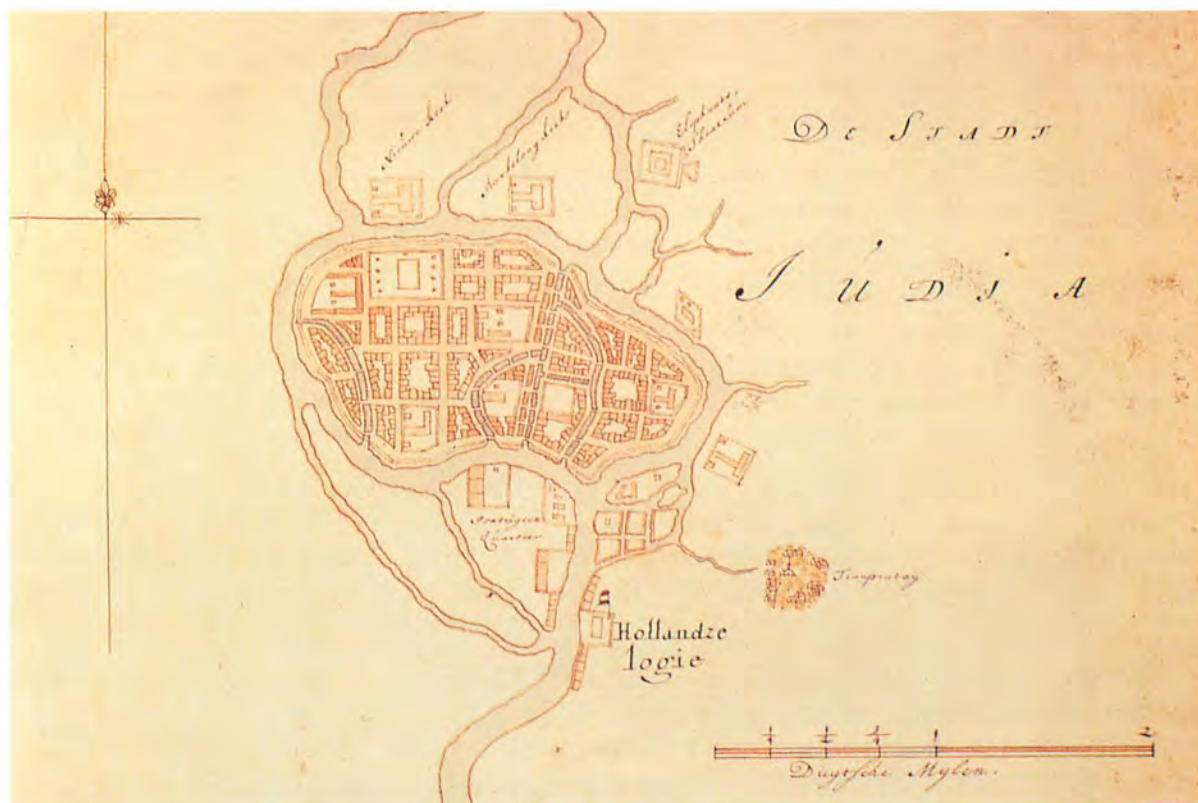


Figure 11 Wat Tianpiatay in the map of De Stadt Judia with the Dutch Lodge, c. 1650. Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague.

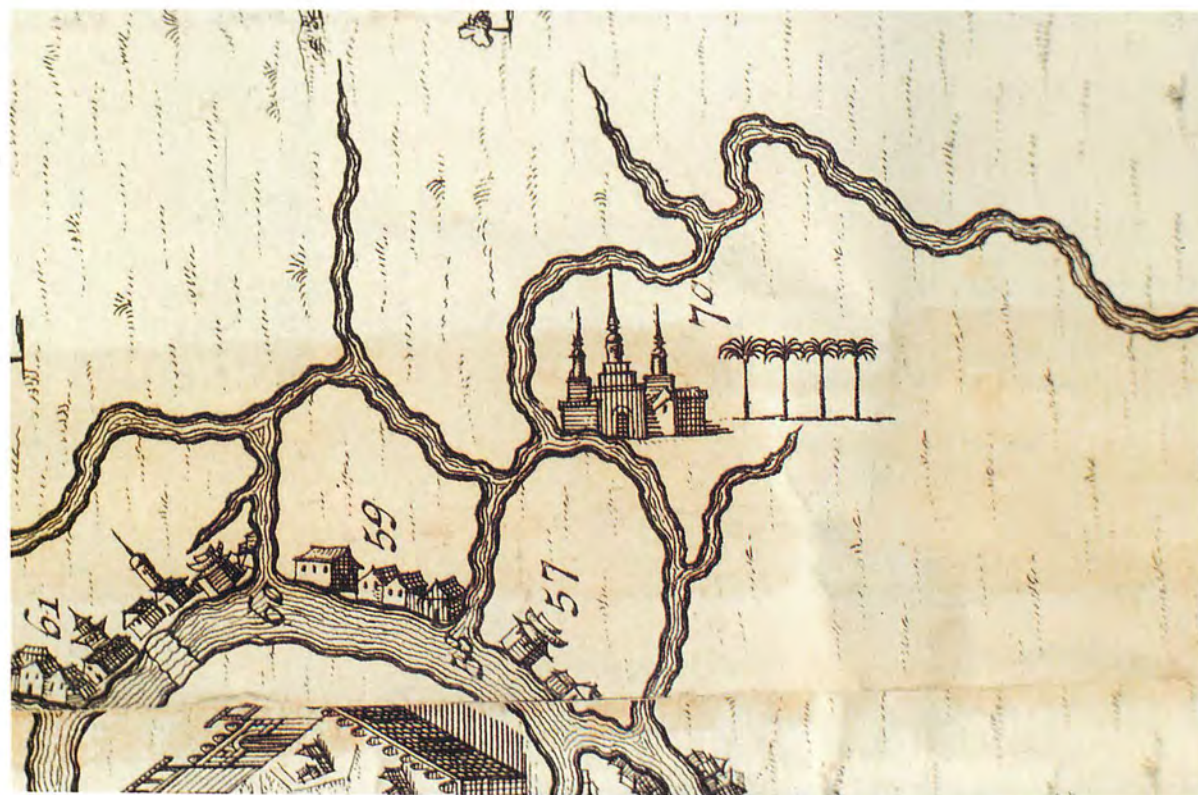


Figure 12 Wat Tiau Tia Teu. Detail from map of De Groote Siamse Rievier Me-Nam by Francois Valentijn, 1726.

tification of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon with Wat Chao Phraya Thai is more plausible since the two appear to have been different names for the same monastery. The earliest mention of Wat Chao Phraya Thai is in van Vliet's *Description of the Kingdom of Siam*, written in 1636. According to him, Wat Thimphiathey (Chao Phraya Thai) was one of the four principal temples of the whole country.<sup>51</sup> He also says in the same work that "In the pointed tower Thimphiathey there is a costly ruby, the value of which can hardly be estimated."<sup>52</sup>

His mentioning of the "pointed tower" suggests that there was a chedi there whose finial was topped by a jewel bouquet (*dokmai phet*) in which the legendary ruby was the principal adornment.

Interestingly, the fabled jewel atop the spire of the chedi at Wat Chao Phraya Thai also figures in the early 19th-century romance of *Khun Chang Khun Phaen* in connection with the birth of the two protagonists. Khun Chang and Khun Phaen were born when the Emperor of China presented the King of Ayudhya with a brilliant crystal in order that it be placed atop the great chedi, called from time immemorial Wat Chao Phraya Thai, which was built at the time of the Hamsavati occupation of Ayudhya.<sup>53</sup> This mentioning of the Hamsavati occupation most probably refers to the popular belief that the chedi of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon was built by Phra Narai during the chedi-building competition with Phra Naresuan Hongsa as told in the *Phongsawadan Nuea*, quoted earlier.

In a Dutch manuscript map of De Stadt Judia of about 1650 (Figure 11) showing the Dutch Lodge, Wat Tianpiatay (Chao Phraya Thai) is depicted in the same location as where Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon now stands. It also shows a spired structure that confirms van Vliet's description of Wat Chao Phraya Thai as being a "pointed tower" (chedi). However, in the map of De Groote Siamse Rievier Me-Nam (Figure 12), published in *Francois Valentijn in Beschrijvinge van Siam en onsen Handel aldaar* of 1726, Wat Tiau Tia Teu (Chao Phraya Thai) is represented by a building with three spires, the central one being taller than the lateral ones. This depiction of three chedis may well represent the present five-spired chedi of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon (Figure 13), for only three of the five spires can be seen on any one side. Also the central spire towers above the other four. Since the chedi of Wat Chao Phraya Thai has only one spire in the map of De Stadt Judia of c. 1650, but has three spires in the map of De Groote Siamse Rievier Me-Nam of 1726, there must have been a major reconstruction undertaken between these two dates.

If the substratum of fact in the *Phongsawadan Nuea* can again be of any help as an indication, the most likely candidate for having undertaken the reconstruction of the chedi of Wat Chao Phraya Thai would be King Narai. Since the construction of the octagonal base section of the stupa in the form of a domed chamber is unusual for traditional stupa construction

(Figure 14), its appearance here can only be attributed to Iranian influences, for we know from the account of the Iranian ambassador sent by Shah Sulaiman the Safavid in 1685 that "The King's estates include temples built of wood and bricks as well as private houses which were actually constructed by the Iranians."<sup>54</sup>

Hence it is quite possible that the chedi of Wat Chao Phraya Thai was rebuilt by the command of King Narai. Since its height is comparable to that of the Chedi Phukhao Thong, King Narai probably had in mind to make it a pair with the Chedi Phukhao Thong that his father had reconstructed between 1640–1656. There probably was some truth to the popular belief, as recorded in the *Phongsawadan Nuea*, that King Narai had the chedi of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon constructed before he went to build the Phra Prang at Wat Mahathat, Lop Buri, and founded a new city there, so that the chedi of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon would probably have had to be built in the first decade of his reign (1656–1666),<sup>55</sup> during which time the Iranians had the strongest influence over the king, as attested by the account of the Iranian ambassador:

From the beginning of this king's reign up until just recently, all important business and matters of states were in the hands of the Iranians. They were the very source of the king's power.<sup>56</sup>

## Conclusion to the Second Sub-Period

The author of the *Tamnan Phuttha Chedi Sayam* has chosen the Three Great Stupas in Wat Phra Sri Sanphet to represent Ayudhya architecture of the Second Sub-Period (1463–1628). Since these stupas are in the Sinhalese style he formulated a hypothesis that Sinhalese-type stupas represent the architecture of the Second Sub-Period. However, the Three Great Stupas were probably built between 1742–1744, which qualify them for architecture of the *Tamnan's* Fourth Sub-Period (1733–1767). Moreover, in the Victory Chedi of King Naresuan, the author of the *Tamnan* was led to the wrong chedi by the "Luang Prasaoet version" of the *Royal Chronicle*, while he overlooked the correct one pointed out by Kaempfer. As for the example chosen by Professor H.S.H. Prince Subhadradis Diskul, namely the chedi of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon, it probably was constructed between 1656–1666, which would make it an example of the *Tamnan's* Third Sub-Period (1629–1733).

Hence none of the examples chosen to represent Ayudhya architecture of the Second Sub-Period (1463–1628) was built at the time assigned to it. Thus it can be concluded that the rule of thumb given by the author of the *Tamnan* that the Sinhalese type stupas represent Ayudhya architecture of the Second Sub-Period must be revised.

(To be concluded in a subsequent issue  
of the *Journal of the Siam Society*.)



Figure 13 Chedi of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon, Ayudhya, before restoration. Siam Society.

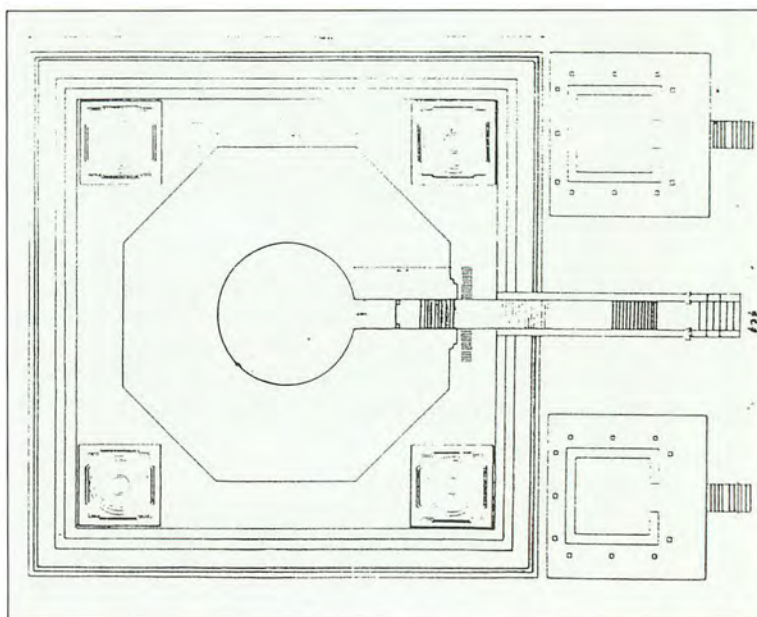


Figure 14 Plan of the chedi of Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon. Fine Arts Department.



## ENDNOTES

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2. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Monuments of the Buddha in Siam*. Trans. Sulak Sivaraksa and A.B. Griswold (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1973), p. 24.
3. Prince Subhadradis Diskul, *Art in Thailand: A Brief History* (Bangkok: Krung Siam Press, 1970), p. 21.
4. "Phongsawadan Krung Si Ayudhya chabap phanchanthanumat (Choem)," *Prachum phongsawadan*, Pt. 64. Vol. 38-39 (Bangkok: Suksaphanphanit, B.E. 2512), Vol. 38, p. 21.
5. The "Luang Prasoe version" was translated into English by O. Frankfurter, entitled "Events in Ayudhya from Chulasakaraj 686-966," *JSS*, Vol. VI, part 3 (1909), pp. 1-21. Reprinted in *The Siam Society Fiftieth Anniversary Commemorative Publication: Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal Volume I, 1904-29*, (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1954), p. 51.
6. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Phraratcha phongsawadan chabap phraratchahatthalekha*, Vol. 1, p. 488.
7. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 39, p. 259.
8. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Phraratcha phongsawadan chabap phraratchahatthalekha*, Vol. 2, p. 223.
9. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 38, p. 22.
10. Prachum charuk Wat Phra Chetuphon Lem 1 champhuak khwamriang (Bangkok: Rongphim Sophonphiphatthanakon, B.E. 2472), p. 1.
11. Frankfurter, pp. 51-52.
12. Nicolas Gervaise, *The Natural and Political History of the Kingdom of Siam (1688)*. Trans. John Villiers (Bangkok: White Lotus Co., Ltd. 1989), p. 219. According to Gervaise, the image was of pure gold and was 42 ft. high, "even though it is seated with legs crossed in the Siamese fashion." During the most recent war with the Peguans, the Peguans cut off one of its arms. The Siamese had a replacement made, but the gold of the new arm was much paler than that of the rest of the body." Since the Phra Sri Sanphet image was a standing figure, Gervaise must have confused it with a seated image whose arm might have been cut off during the First Burmese War.
13. Guy Tachard, *A Relation of the Voyage to Siam: Performed by Six Jesuits sent by the French King, to the Indies and China in the year 1685* (Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 1981), p. 181.
14. *Ibid.* p. 180.
15. *Khamhaikan Khun Luang Ha Wat Chabap Luang* (Bangkok: Rongphim sophonphiphatthanakon, B.E. 2459), p. 18.
16. *Khamhaikan Chao Krung Kao* (Bangkok: Rongphim Thai, B.E. 2457), p. 93.
17. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 39, p. 113.
18. Jeremias van Vliet, *Description of the Kingdom of Siam*, Trans. L.F. van Ravenswaay, *JSS*, Vol. VII, pt. 1. (1910), p. 74.
19. Jeremias van Vliet, *The Short History of the Kings of Siam*, Trans. Leonard Andaya; ed. David K. Wyatt (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1975), p. 97.
20. *Ibid.* p. 96.
21. Prince Damrong, *Monuments...*, p. 25.
22. *Ibid.* p. 54, note 126.
23. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, "Roeng suk Phra Maha Uparacha khrang thi song khrao chon chang," *Phraratcha phongsawadan chabap phraratchahatthalekha*. Vol. 1, p. 651.24. "Roeng Phra Chedi Yutthahatthi," *San somdet*, Vol. 24 (Bangkok: Suksaphanphanich, B.E. 2505), pp. 282-286.
24. "Roeng Phra Chedi Yutthahatthi," *San somdet*, Vol. 24 (Bangkok: Suksaphanphanich, B.E. 2505), pp. 282-286.
25. Francis H. Giles, "A Critical Analysis of van Vliet's Historical Account of Siam in the 17th Century," *Selected Articles from the Siam Society Journal Volume VII: Relationship with Portugal, Holland and the Vatican*, (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1959), pp. 138-139.
26. Engelbert Kaempfer, *A Description of the Kingdom of Siam, 1690* (Bangkok: White Orchid Press, 1987), caption to Figure 13.
27. *Ibid.* p. 52.
28. Van Vliet, *Description...*, p. 32.
29. Van Vliet, *The Short History...*, p. 80.
30. Frankfurter, p. 61.
31. *Ibid.* p. 46.
32. "Chotmaiher Hora," *Prachum phongsawadan phak thi 8*, (Bangkok: Rongphim Thai, B.E. 2460), p. 4.
33. *Khamhaikan Khun Luang Ha Wat Chabap Luang*, p. 8.
34. *Khamhaikan Chao Krung Kao*, p. 87.
35. *Ibid.* p. 88.
36. "Phongsawadan Nuea," *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 1, p. 48.
37. *Khamhaikan Chao Krung Kao*, p. 84.
38. Thep Sukratni, "Wat Phukhao Thong," *Phraratchawang lae wat boran nai changwat Phra Nakhon Sri Ayudhya* (Bangkok: Krom Silpakorn, B.E. 2511), p. 122.
39. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 38, p. 10.
40. Van Vliet, *The Short History...*, p. 80.
41. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 1, pp. 56-65.
42. Kaempfer, p. 52 and p. 54.
43. *Prachum phongsawadan phak thi 8*, p. 6.
44. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, "Roeng Wat Pa Kaero," *Phraratchaphongsawadan chabap phraratchahatthalekha*, Vol. 1, p. 655.
45. Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *San somdet*, Vol. 24, p. 282.
46. *Prachum phongsawadan*, Vol. 38, pp. 251-254.
47. Somphorn Upho, "Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon," *Phraratchawang lae wat boran...*, p. 57.
48. Jacques de Coutre, Vida; Johan Verberckmoes and Eddy Stols (ed.), *Aziatische Omzweryingen, Het Leven van Jacques de Coutre, en Brugs diamanthandelaar 1591-1627*. (Berchem-Anvers, EPO, 1988). Unpublished

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49. Van Vliet, *The Short History...*, p. 81.
  50. Sunait Chutintaranond, "Myanmar - Sayamyut nai Myanmar Yazawin" *Journal of Asian Review*, Vol. 13, pt. 3. (September - December, 1992), p. 27.
  51. Van Vliet, *Description...*, p. 73.
  52. Ibid. p. 74.
  53. Quoted in Somphorn Upho, "Wat Yai Chai Mongkhon," p. 59.
  54. *The Ship of Sulaiman*. Trans. John O'Kane (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 139.
  55. King Narai founded Lop Buri in 1665; see Krom Silpakorn, *Somdet Phra Narai lae Phra Chao Louis thi 14* (Bangkok: Krom Silpakorn, B.E. 2529-2530), p. 7. This date is in accordance with that given by Ex-king Uthumphon in Khamhaikan Khun Luang Ha Wat, Chabap Luang, p. 28.
  56. *The Ship of Sulaiman*, p. 58.