

## IN BRIEF

In the last few years, many studies and other material on Karen peoples have appeared in indigenous languages or in out of the way places. Often these have been in small runs produced disparate locations. The result is that a substantial amount of scholarship on these peoples is in danger of being unknown to scholars. Some of these titles are discussed below.

*Thesaurus of Karen Knowledge Comprising Traditions, Legends or Fables, Poetry, Customs, Superstitions, Demomology, Therapeutics, etc., Alphabetically arranged to form a Complete Native Karen (Sgaw) Language Dictionary with definitions, examples or illustrations of usage of every word.* Tavoy, 1847-1850. Sa Kaw-Too & Wade. Republished in Kanchanaburi: Committee for Internally Displaced Karen People 2001, 4 vols.

This *Thesaurus* in fact is more of an encyclopedia of all things Karen in the mid-nineteenth century. Long out of print and difficult to find, when an organization working with Karens in refugee camps retyped the entire four volumes to provide the refugees with information on their culture, a great service was provided the scholarly world. Rich this information is and valuable is this *Thesaurus* as no other printed source possesses such a vast array of information on an ethnic minority in Southeast Asia. A further service will be provided if another group, comprising the Rev. Edwin Hudspeth and members of the Karen Baptist Convention of Thailand, succeeds in completing its efforts to provide at least partial English translations to the *Thesaurus*.

*Banthuk Tha* [Collected *Hta* (aphorisms)]. Chiang Mai: Munlanithi Phak Nua. John Odochao. 1998. n.p.

John Odochao, headman of Nong Tao Village in the Mae Wang District of Chiang Mai Province, has become something of a folk

hero to development workers in the north. Well-versed in Karen lore from when he was a child listening to the village elders relating the traditional lessons to him, and living in a village he claims, on good authority, that has its roots in the Ping River Valley over 300 years ago, John is the most visible proponent of the traditional Karen way of shifting cultivation. He has now gained national recognition by being appointed an advisor to the National Economic and Social Development Board. This small book provides an insight to the values and customs of a swiddening people. The *hta* are written in Thai script, followed by a direct translation into Thai and sometimes by a fuller explanation. Although only twenty *hta* are found in the book, probably this is the only widely available publication in Thailand with any Sgaw Karen poetry that can be studied and appreciated.

*Bothlieng Khaprong Phakoe-yo* [Collected Karen Songs]. Bangkok: Foundation of Education for Life and Society 1995. Charan Maiyot, ed. 135 pp.

This publication is one with Karen songs written (by hand) in Sgaw Karen script, with transliterations and translations in Thai. Although no interpretations are given, the sixty-plus verses evince a love of the land and the need to preserve the environment. Two special sections, on marriage and on the Karen New Year include verses used on those occasions. The verses are from Karens in Mae Tom and Mae Mi villages of Muang Pan District of Lampang Province.

*Pa Chet Chut Pannya Prat Chak Khamboklao Khong Pho Luang Chom Odachao.* [Seven Layers of Forest. Philosophy as Told by Headman John Odachao]. Bangkok: Munlanithi Phumpaniya 1999. Kannika Phromsai &

Benchasitarak, eds. introduction by Ekawit Na Thalang, pp191.

Johni says he is not a philosopher. He just interprets what the elders have handed down to him. His interpretations shed much light on Karen traditions and adaptations to the twentieth century. According to Johni, a rich forest has seven layers. These comprise 1) small bushes and small animals, mushrooms, 2) small trees covering the ground, 3) small spreading trees and large bushes, 4) large trees with many branches, 5) aquatic vegetation such as algae, 6) many orchids and epiphytes, and 7) full of vines. This composite supports wildlife and allows the Karens to live a full and satisfactory life. In this book, Johni tells how Karens, inhabitants of the forest enjoyed a richly satisfying culture that has been threatened by various manifestations of modern life including the cash cropping of opium, commercial logging, and official reforestation. Mostly the Karens have suffered, becoming addicts, losing their bio-diversity and wildlife to the loggers, and seeing their forests go up in flames when the pine reforestation projects caught fire. The book tells of these matters biographically leading through Johni's childhood, schooling, life as a headman, and then leader in demonstrations for community forestry rights and more local autonomy.

*Khon Phakakayō* (The Pakakayō [Karen] People). Bangkok: Sangsan. Pho Le Pa, assisted by Kalaya and Wirasak Yotrabam. 1996, 158, pp.

Pho (father) Le Pa is a Karen headman from Mae Chaem District of Chiang Mai, and just west of Johni's village. The term, *Phakoe-yo* (pronounced more like "Pakayaw" to the non-Karen) is used by the Sgaw to refer to themselves but some modern Karens are starting to use it as a term for all Karens, including Pwo (the other main sub-group). In this autobiographical account, Pho Le Pa tells of growing up in the changing times of the second half of the twentieth century as Mae Chaem underwent major transformations. He tells of his traditional learning, the indigenous rituals, and their agriculture, handicrafts, and other customs. So compelling is his tale that the book has gone into its fifth printing.

*Phumpannya Nivasi Withaya Chon Phumuang: Suksa Korani Chumchon Kariang Nai Pa Thung Yai Naresuan* [Indigenous Wisdom of the Local People: Case Study of a Karen Community in Thung Yai Naresuan]. Bangkok: Khongkan Funfa Chiwit Lac Thammachat, 1996, Pinkaeo Luangaramst, 173 pp.

Thung Yai Naresuan, in Uthai Thani Province, has been declared a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1991 in recognition of its verdant forest and ample wildlife. In this study, following a review of Karen history and shifting cultivation, the author explains how the method of shifting cultivation employed by the Karens here has provided them a steady living while not endangering the forest. A comprehensive discussion of agricultural techniques, rituals, and forest use (including its preservation) follows. At the end of the book comes a review of recent events including the relationship of the Karens there with, as the author puts of, "adversarial relationship with two organizations of differing ideals, the state and the Communist Party of Thailand." Although the author suggests contacts with the CPT strengthened the Karens' production systems, the state, mostly through the Royal Forest Department and various Royal Forest Acts that call for the relocation of the Karen, has posed a far greater threat to the continued existence of the Karens there. Although the book is now a few years old, the basic conditions described remain and no other study of the people there has superseded it.

*Kanchanaburi Suksa: Chao Thai Chuaxai Kariang Nai Changwat Kanchanaburi* [Kanchanaburi Studies: Traits of Karen Descent in Kanchanaburi Province]. Kanchanaburi: Rajabhat Institute Cultural Center 1995, Monthon Khongthaeochoog, 64 pp.

Karens, mainly Pwo, have lived in Sangkhlaburi, Si Sawat, and Thongphaphum Districts of Kanchanaburi Province for at least two centuries. King Chulalongkorn visited the Sai Yok waterfalls three times and met Karens en route each time. The story of these Karens is told by a vice rector of the Kanchanaburi Rajabhat

Institute. Combining documentary research of such sources as *Samut Ratchaburi* (1923) by the authorities of Ratchaburi Circle, the writings of King Chulalongkorn, and more recent materials as well as interviews of many Karens (including descendants of the old local lord, Phra Si Suwannakhiri), Achan Monthon provides a useful overview of the Karens here. Besides providing the history of the Karen movement into the province, Achan Monthon discusses current socio-economic conditions.

*Wathanatham Luu Phunpansya Khong Chui Kariang Khong Suan Phung* [Culture and Indigenous Wisdom of the Karens in Suan Phung]. Chom Bung, Ratchaburi: Rajabhat Institute 1996. Suraset Bunket. 73 pp., appendix.

Suan Phung is known to Thais today more for the twin boys and the so-called God's Army whose insurgency spread across the border to Suan Phung. Suan Phung, however, has a much longer association with Karens, being one of the places visited by King Chulalongkorn en route to Sai Yok. Achan Suraset, a teacher in the Suan Phung School since 1979, has had ample time to learn about the Karen there. Chapters include the Karen people, marriage, textile weaving, jewelry, customs, beliefs, Karens and Wat Chaeng Charoen, language, the art of house building, and occupations.

*Nithan Phunhan Kariang Amphoe Suan Phung Changwat Ratchaburi*. [Karen Folktales: Suan Phung District, Ratchaburi Province] Chom Bung, Ratchaburi: Rajabhat Institute Culture Center 1998 *Bunhot Aramat*. 125 pp.

This collection of 52 folktales was made by a teacher at the Suan Phung School. The folktales, translated into Thai (with no Karen version) are grouped as follows: environment, geography, and settlement; the environment in general; way of life, local government; education; traditions and ritual; beliefs, and values. Introductory materials tells about the Karens in Suan Phung, folktales, and how folktales are told in Suan Phung (such as which are recited with musical accompaniment).

*Waihi Chiwit Chon Phao Kariang Changwat Phetchaburi*. [The Way of Life of the Karen People, Phetchaburi Province] Phetchaburi: Rajabhat Institute Cultural Center. 1998, no pagination.

Almost nothing has been written by scholars on Karens in Phetchaburi Province. However, members of the Phetchaburi Rajabhat Institute are aware of Karens in several districts of the province. Under the direction of Achan Sunan and others on the Institute staff, students have conducted research on Karens there. The results are available at the Institute's Cultural Institute. This is one of the more detailed such studies, looking at Karens in Nong Ya Plong District.

*Phoichananukrom Phasa Thai-Kariang Saka* [Thai-Sgaw Karen Dictionary] Salaya: Mahidol University Institute of Language and Culture for Rural Development 1986. Suriya Ratanakul, ed. 2 vols, 1277 pp.

Although not recently published, this dictionary is not sufficiently known except in a small circle of linguists in Thai institutions of higher learning. Following an introductory discussion (reproduced in both volumes) of the term, *kariang* and *vang* (new and old terms for Karen), the place of Karen in the linguistic family, tree; and Karen grammar, the dictionary, which is bilingual, follows. Thai words are followed by definitions in Sgaw Karen transliterated both into the International Phonetic Alphabet and into Thai characters. Definitions in both Thai and Sgaw provided as well as some examples of usage in Sgaw. In the introduction the editor explained the many difficulties in providing etymological information on the terms in the dictionary as a basis for not making the attempt.

*Phleng Kariang* [Karen Songs]. Salaya: Mahidol University 1996. Suriya Ratanakul. 55 pp.

When compiling the above dictionary, Professor Suriya came across much more useful information on the cultural aspects of the Karen

lexicon that she could include in her dictionary, noted above, that she decided to explore this subject in a separate volume. Although she admits that what she presents in this volume in far from an exhaustive study of the subject, there is much of interest to students of Karen culture as well as folklore and linguistics in general. Beginning with a survey of the Karen people and their languages, following the same general outline as in the dictionary but significantly updated, Professor Suriya provides detailed analyses of several Sgaw songs. Each word in the songs reviewed is transliterated into the International Phonetic Alphabet and Thai letters. A translation into Thai is also provided along with discussions of points of interest in the songs or regarding the meaning of some words. Songs include those for courting, house-raising, the picture of a girl, and on climbing a tree.

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*A Bruised Reed Shall He Not Break . . . : A History of the 16<sup>th</sup> District of the Church of Christ in Thailand.* Chiang Mai: Church of Christ in Thailand Office of Church History 1997. Maria Hovemyr, 96 pp.

The 16<sup>th</sup> District of the Church of Christ in Thailand is based in Sangkhlaburi, Kanchanaburi, just east of the Three Pagodas Pass and in an area almost totally populated by Karens although Thais and Mon have migrated here in recent years. This study, by a member of the Swedish Baptist Church who spent many years in Thailand, reviews the establishment of Christian churches in the region. Of particular interest to scholars will be the review of the efforts made to evangelize among the Telakhon sect, that was first written up by Stern in "Ariya and the Golden Book" in the *Journal of Asian Studies* in 1968. The study includes comprehensive references to pertinent documents of the American Baptist Mission and other records in the Payap University Archives.

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*A Preliminary Investigation of The Pwo Karen Dialects of Northern Thailand.* Chiang Mai: Payap University Research and Development

Institute Research Report 118, 1993. Martin M. Culy, 105 pp.

The abstract in this book describes the book as follows: The Pwo Karen are the second largest of the Karen ethnic groups which are found in both Burma and Thailand. Though some aspects of the Pwo Karen culture have been reported, little research has been undertaken to determine how the various dialects spoken by the Pwo Karen related to one another, or to the other Karen languages. In this study, we consider data gathered from 18 locations in six provinces of northern Thailand. Through a combination of village interviews, lexicostatistics, and phonostatistics, some preliminary conclusions are reached regarding dialect groupings among the Pwo Karen of northern Thailand. These data are then also compared to data gathered by others in central and southern Thailand as well as in Burma. A lexicostatistic and phonostatistic analysis of these speech varieties from three regions of Thailand and several locations in Burma indicate considerable variation in the Pwo Karen language.

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*Kansuksa Choeng Prawatisat Kiaokap Kra-huankan Klaipeithai Khong Chao Kariang Nai Muban Phae Amphoe Mae Sariang Changwat Mae Hong Son (A Historical Study of the Process of Thaiization among Karen at Ban Phae, Mae Sariang District, Mae Hong Son Province).* Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University M.A. thesis 2001. Premporn Khuntikaew, 133 pp.

This study investigated the meaning of Thaiization by asking what social socio-economic, political, and cultural conditions did Karens change their identity as well as how Karens define Thai-ness. The study found that the Karens maintained their cultural identity from the founding of the village in 1957 until about 1988. However, due to rapid changes affecting the village from then on the villagers opted for becoming Thai as a complex response taking diverse forms.

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*Khon Karenni (Karenni): A CD of music by Phary Rhe Bruce Lee.* Recorded in a Karenni

Refugee Camp in Mae Hong Son Province. Produced in Chiang Mai by Friends Without Borders, 2002.

When the Thai musician, Suwichanon, heard a young Karenni (sometimes known as Kayah) boy singing songs and playing his guitar, he was so impressed that he returned with an MD recorder. The songs tell the story of a group displaced by rebellion and its hopes for the future. Titles hint at the nature of the words: "Don't Worry Mother", "Welcome to Karenni State", "Sacrifice", and "Our People Our Homeland".

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*Karenni: Music for the border areas of Thailand and Burma.* A CD recorded in Kayah State as well as in Mae Hong Son Province by Fred Gale. Leiden: the Netherlands: Pan Records, 1994.

Music by five groups has been included, identified on the cover as Kayah, Kayoh, Padaung, Sqaw, Poku, and Pa-Oh. As noted in the notes in the accompanying booklet, "The recordings on this CD represent the different styles, but they are not comprehensive. Most songs are quite long. So, in order to pay tribute to the variety a number of songs are excerpts . . . cut randomly from a larger entity. As an antidote, the welcome song *Ami* has been completely included." The recordings were made on a Kenwood portable digital recorder in 1992 and 1993.

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*An Analysis of Cohesion in Sgaw Karen Folk Narratives.* Chiang Mai: Payap University M.A. thesis. Chaiyathip Katsura, 1994.

The thesis describes five major sources of cohesion in Sgaw Karen folk narrative discourse. Chapter 1 provides brief overviews of the discipline of discourse, the concept of cohesion, information about the Sgaw Karen and the background of data collection. Chapter 2 discusses the notational and surface structures of Sgaw Karen folk narratives. Chapter 3 focusses on cohesion through various types of linkage and conjunction. In chapter 4, cohesion through participants is discussed with the focus on a participant's initial identification and maintenance. Chapter 5 studies cohesion achieved by the selection of lexical terms. Substitution and ellipsis as cohesive devices are examined in chapter 6. The final chapter (7) draws conclusions on the cohesive mechanisms and their significance to textual cohesion.

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*Belief Systems and Environmental Conflict in Chom Thong, Thailand.* Swarthmore College Religion Department: Senior Honors Thesis 2000 (revised 2002) 2 vols, the first of text and the second of photographs. Gabriel Cumming.

The report studies relationships between local belief systems and local environments in the area where highlanders (Hmong and Karen) and lowlander Thai have come into conflict over water usage and other natural resources. This report examines the Sgaw Karen village of Hui Som Poi and the Thai village of Wang Nam Yat in Chom District of Chiang Mai Province. An examination of the local belief systems is used to analyze the conflict and to explore ways that reconciliation might take place. Ramifications of the study beyond Chom Thong are also considered. Unpublished.

## OTHER TITLES RECEIVED

- Anderson, Benedict R. O'G., ed. 2001. *Violence and the State in Suharto's Indonesia*. Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University.
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- Boussard, Pierre A. et al., eds. 2001. *King Chulalongkorn's Journeys to Belgium*. Bangkok: Institute of Asian Studies, Chulalongkorn University.
- Bradley, Mark Philip. 2000. *Imagining Vietnam & America: The Making of Postcolonial Vietnam, 1919-1950*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
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- South, Ashley. 2003. *Mon Nationalism and Civil War in Burma: The Golden Sheldrake*. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Werner, Jayne & Bélanger, Danièle, eds. 2002. *Gender, Household, State: Doi Moi in Viet Nam*. Ithaca: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University.
- Yamada, Teri Shaffer, ed. 2002. *Virtual Lotus: Modern Fiction of Southeast Asia*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

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1981 (or later edition), *Copy-Editing: the Cambridge Handbook*.

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**MONS: A CIVILIZATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, THE.** By Emmanuel Guillon. Translated and edited by James V. Di Crocco. 1999. 349 + xiv pp.; ill. Baht 990/US\$ 40.00 The Mon people produced one of the most brilliant civilizations of mainland Southeast Asia. It goes back well over a thousand years and can be divided into seven periods, ranging from protohistoric states to the contemporary world. Mon civilization profoundly interacted with at least three present-day countries, in which Mon communities still play an important role.

**THAI CULTURE IN TRANSITION** By William J. Klausner. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. 1998. Baht 300/US\$ 12.00 This book is mainly concerned with cultural transition and transformation and is thus a logical extension of the author's *Reflections*

*on Thai Culture*, which focused on traditional patterns of Thai culture. William J. Klausner arrived in Thailand in 1955 and, after undertaking a year of intensive field work in a Northeastern Thai Village, has served in staff, advisory, consultative, and other capacities in the Thai government and in numerous Thai and foreign foundations. He has taught at Thammasat and Chulalongkorn Universities and has been active in the World Fellowship of Buddhists.

**PHAULKON, THE GREEK FIRST COUNSELLOR AT THE COURT OF SIAM: AN APPRAISAL.** By George A. Storms. 1998. Baht 350/US\$ 15.00 This book represents a wide-ranging character appraisal by a fellow Greek of Constantine Gerakis, better known as Phaulkon, who was the brilliant and controversial Greek First Counsellor at the Court of Siam in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.

**CULTURAL REPRESENTATION IN TRANSITION: NEW VIETNAMESE PAINTING.** 1997. Baht 1490/US\$ 60.00 The arts are flourishing in Vietnam today. Hundreds of painters are at work in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and other Vietnamese cities. They work in a broad range of styles and themes, building on techniques developed in French colonial times, but related to the issues that concern Vietnamese people today. This full color trilingual catalogue (English, Vietnamese and Thai) includes essays by Mr. Charvichai Promudhattayedi, Mr. Nguyen Quan and Mr. Neil Jamieson that make scholarly contributions to the understanding of Vietnamese art.

## BACK LIST

**ARCHAEOLOGY OF PENINSULAR SIAM, THE.** Introduction by Stanley J. O'Connor.

1986. 163 pp., ill. Baht 300/US\$ 12.00 Fourteen articles by nine different authors, originally published in the *Journal of the Siam Society* between 1905 and 1983, present valuable evidence about the earliest human settlements of the peninsula.

**CHULAKANTAMANGALA: THE TONSURE CEREMONY AS PERFORMED IN SIAM.** By G. E. Gerini. 1976. 243 pp. Baht 120/US\$ 6.00 Authoritative and detailed information on topknots, and how the tonsure ceremony has traditionally been performed among royalty and commoners.

**CONNECTION PHUKET PENANG AND ADELAIDE, THE.** By Ian Morson, 1993. 126 pp., ill. Baht 290/US\$ 12.00 An account of Francis Light's 15 years in Phuket before he founded Penang, portraying the peoples of the islands between 1770 and 1794, with an intriguing connection between Phuket, Penang and the city of Adelaide.

**EARLY ACCOUNTS OF PHETCHABURI.** Introduction by Michael Smithies, 1987. 90 pp., ill. Baht 210/US\$ 8.00 Ten essays give a feeling for the enduring attraction of this 19<sup>th</sup> century point of excursion—popular even before King Mongkut built his palace there on the "Mountain of the Highest Heaven"

**ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE WITH EMPHASIS ON URBAN ISSUES.** 1993. 461 pp., ill. Baht 500/US\$ 20.00 Proceedings of the Siam Society symposium in Chiang Mai in February 1992, where 30 distinguished authorities from Thailand, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines presented their views on how to achieve sustainable growth in this urban age, while protecting our fragile environment.

**GARDENING IN BANGKOK.** By William Warren and Ping Amranand, 1996. 240 pp., ill. Baht 990/US\$ 40.00 A new printing of M.R. Pimsai's pioneering work, designed "...to assist Bangkok gardeners in a practical way." William Warren has brought this classic up-to-date, while retaining M.R. Pimsai's unique voice, described by John Blofeld as "...vivid, natural, and

compelling—a style based on the principle that people should write very much as they talk" (from the Preface). Ping Amranand's 136 photographs have been re-edited and integrated with the text.

**HISTORY OF WAT PHRA CHETUPHON AND ITS BUDDHA IMAGES, A.** By Kathleen I. Matics, 1979. 71 pp., ill. Baht 110/US\$ 5.00 Comprehensive introduction to the fascinating—and historically and artistically important—Bangkok temple popularly known as Wat Po.

**KINGDOM OF SIAM 1904, THE.** Edited by A. Cecil Carter; introduction by Michael Smithies, 1988. 280 pp., ill. Baht 360/US\$ 15.00 Reprint of the official guide for the Siamese exhibition at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis. Comprehensive and well-indexed.

**OLD PHUKET.** Introduction by H.E. Gérard André, 1986. 188 pp. Baht 230/US\$ 9.00 Three articles by Gerini, Carrington, and Burke, published in the *Journal of the Siam Society* in 1905-6, on the early history of "Junk Ceylon Island" provide interesting glimpses into a past largely unknown to modern tourists.

**RAMKHAMHAENG CONTROVERSY: SELECTED PAPERS, THE.** Edited by James F. Chamberlain; foreword by H.R.H. Princess Galyani Vadhana, 1991. 592 pp., ill. Baht 850/US\$ 35.00 The history of Thailand relies principally on evidence from Sukhothai where King Ram Khamhaeng's writing system was found on the stone known as "Inscription No.1." The authenticity of this inscription has been questioned, with some even branding it a fake. This illustrated volume presents the arguments and counter-arguments.

**SINGING APE: A JOURNEY TO THE JUNGLE OF THAILAND, THE.** By Jeremy and Patricia Raemaekers, 1990. 142 pp., ill. Baht 180/US\$ 7.00 A light-hearted account of the two years the authors spent studying gibbons in Thailand's tropical rain forests.

**STONE INSCRIPTIONS OF SUKHOTHAI.** English translation by H.R.H. Prince Wan

Wāithayakon. French by George Cœdès, 1965., 12 pp. Baht 20/ US\$ 1.00 Translations of King Ram Khamhaeng's "Inscription No. 1" by two of the greatest scholars of Thai history and epigraphy.

**WAT PRA YUN RECONSIDERED.** By A. B. Griswold, 1975, 88 pp., ill, Baht 70/US\$ 3.50 Constructed between 1901 and 1907, Wat Pra Yun was within 20 years attributed by scholars to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The author recounts how this innocent deception came about.

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