

# Ordinary General Meetings of the Society.

(1904)

## First General Meeting.

Minutes of the first ordinary general meeting held at the Bangkok United Club on the 7th April, 1904, at 9 p. m.

THE PRESIDENT, Mr. W. R. D. Beckett, took the chair. In opening the proceedings he informed the members of the changes that had taken place in the Council since the meeting at which it was elected, viz. the appointment of Mr. A. Cecil Carter as Honorary Treasurer in place of Mr. Williamson, who had found himself unable to take up the duties, and the appointment of Dr. Poix as a councillor. He further announced that on the invitation of the Council, H. R. H. the Crown Prince of Siam had been graciously pleased to accept the honorary post of Patron of the Society, and H. R. H. Prince Damrong the honorary post of Vice-Patron. This announcement was received with applause, and later in the evening the satisfaction of the members was expressed by the passing of a formal vote of thanks to their Royal Highnesses, on the motion of the President.

The President afterwards submitted on behalf of the Council the names of Chao Phya Bhaskarawongse, the Right Rev. Bishop Vey, Sir Ernest Mason Satow, Sir George Scott, Mr. W. J. Archer, M. Lorgeou, Geheimrat Bastian and M. Pavie, for election as honorary members; and the names of Mr. James McCarthy, Mr. H. Warington Smyth and Mr. G. C. B. Stirling for election as corresponding members.

Approved.

DR. O. FRANKFURTER then read a paper on the aims and objects of the Society.

MR. HAMILTON KING suggested the advisability of having resumés of papers distributed beforehand, as it was in many instances, without such a guide, difficult to follow the Lecturer.

COLONEL GERINI said he might call attention to some points of detail in order to emphasise what had been so ably set forth in the paper

as to how much there was still to be done in the field that lay before the Society. Especially he wished to point out that everyone might be able to contribute to this work. To take first History and Archæology, one of the first things should be to have a list of all the antiquarian remains existing in the country. Such a work could only be accomplished if every one, especially those living up-country, sent accurate and detailed information regarding the ruins of ancient monuments, etc. and inscriptions they might come across. In that way in the course of time it might be possible to have an extensive list of inscriptions and other antiquities. The Pavie Mission had collected some 40 or 50 inscriptions from different parts of the country, and these had been translated by Père Schmitt. But there were many more which had not been reproduced, and, he was confident, far more than was so far known. One of their members, Mr. Bourke, had recently discovered a very important inscription at Takûa-Pā, in the Malay Peninsula, which in his (Col. Gerini's) opinion belonged to the third or fourth century A. D. That was in a district where no inscription had been found before and he was firmly convinced that many more could be brought to light in looking through antiquarian remains. When inscriptions were found the best thing was to take a squeezing. Then again, though it was not very easy to come across them, all members might on occasion help also in finding old chronicles and pagoda histories. These were not entirely to be relied upon, but there was always a foundation of truth to be got after proper examination.

In ethnology a very wide field opened up, for practically nothing was known of the races inhabiting Siam—apart, of course, from the Siamese. There were many races whose very names were hardly known. For example he had heard but recently of a tribe living up the Kanburī river and some on the hills of Nakhon Nāyok—the Khā Ut—who were so far entirely unknown to science. Other better known but still interesting examples were the Karens in the P'hejburī province, the Karens and Karangs in Rājburī province, and in the North the Lavā and the Khmuḥ. If members helped by taking vocabularies and photographs of such tribes much useful information might be acquired.

Again very few anthropometric measurements had been taken so far. And those taken had been for the most part among the people on the coast where there was a mixture of different races, so that it was almost impossible to classify the facts that had been ascertained. It would be of interest if such measurements were taken up country in the recesses of the valleys where the Thai race especially had preserved some-

thing of its original purity. So far as the wild tribes were concerned we had no measurements at all.

Useful work might be done too in noting other characteristics, such as the blue spots on the sacro-lumbar region of the body. These had only been noticed a few years ago; but already they were said to be distinctive of the Mongolian race. That might be going too far without more extensive observations, and certainly there should be an investigation to see if all the wild tribes had these spots.

Then there was folklore and there were the sciences. As to botany for example, he believed there were few plants here of which the species had been determined, and he hoped the society would have contributions on that topic from its botanist members and officials of the Forest Department.

The REV. DR. E. P. DUNLAP stated that the botany of the country was investigated by Dr. Bradley in former years but unfortunately all his materials had been lost. He went on to point out the interest that would attach to a collection of agricultural and other implements, which for the most part were unknown in Bangkok. As to the less well known tribes mentioned, he had himself had experience of the C'hâu Nam, a people who were leading a gipsy life towards the Burmah side; and he knew there were 4 or 500 of dwarf people hidden away in the interior of C'haiyā province. They had no houses, and their only cooking utensils were green bamboo joints. \*

The REV JOHN CARRINGTON pointed to the similarity of the soil two-thirds of the way up to Khôrât, to that in the great pepper growing district of Trang; and suggested that the former might also be made a pepper district. Travelling all over the country he had been struck by the fact that the Siamo-Laos people were a very plain folk and very susceptible to the reception of anything that is good. And really the universal characteristic of the people of this country was their gentleness and their kindness.

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\* These people are *Semang* Negritos, and have been cursorily alluded to in H. Warington Smyth's "Five Years in Siam," vol. II, pp. 76-77. He erroneously calls them *Sakai*, having mistakenly inverted the generally accepted meaning of the two ethnological terms *Sakai* and *Semang*. Here is a most interesting opening for members of the Siam Society having occasion to travel through the C'haiyā district. Photographs of most characteristic types of this tribe, vocabularies, and if possible other information as to their customs, beliefs, etc., should be taken as soon as possible and laid before the Siam Society.—G. E. G.

DR TRUMPP gave a detailed account of the differences he had observed between the Lāo and the Lü in the C'hieng-Kham and Thā Fā district, and also some notes on the hill tribe known as the P'hi Pā (𑜋𑜨𑜃𑜫) in the same part of the country. The Lāo and Lü, he said, differed in dress, stature, and complexion. Their dialects were different, as were also the arms they bore, and the Lü children seemed to have distinctive games. The Lü were richer than the Lāo; they had better houses, and they were also much prouder. They would not work on Government service unless they were forced. The P'hi Pā so far as he could gather, had no houses and no dress. They hunted with spears, having no fire-arms.

In closing the discussion THE PRESIDENT touched on a number of the points raised. He gave an instance of what might be done in the way of preserving old documents that were disappearing in out of the way places. The documents he referred to were found, riddled with white ants, in an old cave, near a steep bank of the Mō-P'hing (C'hieng-Mai River); he had them translated and they were proved to refer to important historical events. With regard to the P'hi-Pā or Phi-Thong-liang referred to by Dr. Trumpp, the President said he had been close to them in the P'hayāu district. They lived in the forests under the sun-dried banana leaf. Their food was meat principally, but they went down to the bazaars of the towns to beg or buy rice. They never, however, brought down their women or children. A surprising thing was that they knew a large number of dialects. They knew certainly Burmese, Lāo, Siamese and Karen.

As to the red soil referred to by Mr. Carrington, he believ'd it extended from the Tonli Sāp to the lower range of the Khôrāt hills. The rice grown on it had a red colour and was not very tasty.

He might add to what had been said about the Lü in Northern Siam that Lü caravans came regularly from C'hieng Rung (Kieng Hung) in the Sib-song P'han-nā. Lü, he took it, was the original dialect of Siamese; at any rate he found he could understand it very much better than he could understand Lāo.

He agreed with Dr. Dunlap as to the desirability of a collection being made of the agricultural and other implements used by the people, and the particulars given by Dr. Trumpp regarding the dress of the people in the north had reminded him that an interesting collection might be made for the Siam Society's museum of the costumes of the various tribes as well as of their instruments, arms, etc.

A vote of thanks was accorded to Dr. Frankfurter for his paper, and the meeting then adjourned.

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ADDITIONAL NOTE.

On the congenital spots in the sacro-lumbar region appearing on infants of coloured races.

As my reference to the blue spots that have been observed on the sacro-lumbar region of infants, of Mongolian extraction especially, seems to have aroused no little interest among those present at the first ordinary general meeting of the Siam Society, I take the liberty of subjoining herewith a few more remarks in elucidation of this important subject. The reason of its being as yet comparatively unknown to the general public is that its discovery is quite recent, and merely goes back some twenty-two years, when Dr. Baelz, the eminent anthropologist so well known for his researches on the races of Japan and the Far East in general, first called attention to the occurrence of such spots on Japanese new born children. It was in December, 1902, while at the Hanoi Congress and in the course of a lecture given by Dr. Baelz himself on the Races of Eastern Asia, that I first learned of the peculiar somatic characteristic in question, and had the advantage of becoming acquainted with its main features through a look at the many photographs exhibited by the lecturer in illustration of his theme.

In the sacral region—the eminent anthropologist then pointed out—and often all over the trunk of new-born infants of the Eastern Asian races, peculiar blue spots occur which disappear in the course of the next few years. Similar spots are invariably absent in children of the pure white race. Their presence thus evidences an admixture of coloured blood, even when every other sign of intercrossing has disappeared, as such spots are then still traceable. This fact is well known to Brazilian women. [See *Compte Rendu* of the "Premier Congrès International des Etudes d'Extrême Orient, Hanoi 1902," p. 102] (a) In a paper contributed by him to the Berlin Anthropological and Ethnological Society in 1901, Dr. Baelz drew attention in still greater detail to the phenomenon of the

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(a) According to a popularly accepted notion that I have often heard repeated here in the East it seems that the coloration of the naevi peculiar to persons of Eurasian blood, persists the whole life long. But perhaps this characteristic is not invariably so easily detected as the spots alluded to.

blue spots, and expressed the view that it forms the most important and powerful distinctive mark separating the Mongol race from others. [See "*Verhand. der Berlin Gesellschaft für Anthrop., Ethnol., and Urgesch.*," 1901, pp. 166-189 and 202-220.]

Almost contemporaneously Mr. Deniker, the author of several well-known publications on anthropology, presented a paper on the same subject to the Paris Anthropological Society. ["Les taches congénitales dans la région sacro-lombaire considérés comme caractère de race"—in *Bulletin et Mém. de la Soc. d'Anthrop. de Paris*, 1901, pp. 274-281]. Therein the author points out that the presence of the blue spots in question has been observed in the Japanese, while it is totally absent in the Ainu. It has further been ascertained in Chinese by Matignon; in Tagals (Philippines) by Collignon; in Malays by Kohlbrugge and Ten Kate; in Annamese and Siamese by Chemin; and lastly, in Eskimos by Sören Hansen. Mr. Deniker sees in such spots a characteristic distinctive mark of the race which he vaguely terms "Indonesian." Such generalisations are, however, too premature until investigations on a larger scale are prosecuted all over at least the Far East, and it becomes precisely known among what and how many races and tribes the phenomenon occurs. (b)

In the face of the foregoing facts, it will be evident to everyone how important it is to extend such researches as soon as possible to the wide geographical area and the so varied ethnographical field coming within the scope of the Siam Society.

G. E. GERINI.




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(b) I point out with pleasure that being unable to obtain access to the two original publications last referred to, I have availed myself, for these remarks, of the able notice that appeared on them in *Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême Orient*, t. II., p. 92, Hanoi, 1902. I find, however, the subject briefly touched upon in Dr. Deniker's recent volume "The Races of Man"; London, 1900, p. 51.

## Second General Meeting

The second general meeting of the Siam Society took place at the Bangkok United Club on the evening of Wednesday 11th May, 1904. Mr. W. P. D. Beckett (President) was in the chair.

In opening the proceedings, THE PRESIDENT submitted the names of Taw Sein Kho (Rangoon), M. Finot (Hanoi), and Dr. Brandes (Batavia), recommended by the Council for election as corresponding members. Their election was agreed to.

The President then said the Hon. Secretary had received a couple of letters which he should like to lay before the meeting. H. R. H. Prince Damrong had written acknowledging the vote of thanks accorded him at the last meeting. In this letter his Royal Highness said: "It will always give me pleasure to render you such assistance in the aims you have in view as I have in my power." (applause). Then Chao Phya Bhaskarawongse wrote to say that he would be very pleased to accept the position of an honorary member. He also added he was willing to put his library at the disposal of any member who wished. He had a very good library of Siamese literature, and it was an excellent offer he had made.

Continuing the President said that the next business was Prince Damrong's paper, and he was sure they were all very grateful to his Royal Highness for the very great assistance he has rendering the Society in giving it a paper so early in its career, since no one knew Siam better than he did. The paper was written originally in Siamese, and, at the Prince's request, had been translated by Dr. Frankfurter.

MR. A. CECIL CARTER then read the English translation of his Royal Highness's paper "On the foundation of Ayuthia."

At its conclusion, COLONEL GERINI said he agreed on the point that was raised, that very likely King U-thong did not come down straight from the north, because there was another piece of evidence which he had observed in Ayuthia. We had different accounts about the foundation of Ayuthia; at least he had occasion to see three or four of these accounts, and all agreed in the fact that when King U-thong founded Ayuthia he came down opposite the southern side of the island. All accounts agreed that when he came with his army to Nong Sanô he stopped on the southern bank of the river; and at the place where he stopped he erected a temporary pavilion until the building of the city on

the island opposite was completed. That place was called "Tamnak Wieng-lek" but it is not generally known now where this place is. Afterwards King U-thong founded a temple *Wat P'hutthai-sawan* at this place Wieng-lek. Now he (Col. Gerini) had been to see for himself and the site of this temple is on the south bank of the river flowing round the city, on the south side of the latter. Col. Gerini had himself no independent evidence on which to criticise the views so ably advanced by Prince Damrong. But if the King U thong came from Thep'ha-nakhon he must have come down by the banks of the Sup'han river. If he had come down by the present branch of the river he would have met with great opposition from the dominant power that had Sukhōthai as a centre. The Sup'han river is now a very insignificant watercourse but in olden times it was far more important. The most ancient site of a capital of Siam we have evidence of was near where P'hrah Prathom-chedi is now. In those days the river was far important and more to the west.

MR. A. CECIL CARTER said it seemed to him that rather too much stress had been laid on the fact that when King U-thong founded the city of Ayuthia he took up his temporary residence on the south bank of the river opposite the island. If he came from the north, having seen a good place, it seemed more natural that he should encamp to the south of it, than that he should come from the south, stop, and send his people on ahead of him to build the city. They had been told that the fact that King U-thong made his temporary residence to the south was evidence that he came from the south. Personally Mr. Carter thought it was evidence that he came from the north, that he came through the place, saw it was good, and had a city built on the site he had already surveyed.

Two old coins and a signet ring (found at P'hrah Prathom and Sup'han) had been sent by Prince Damrong, and were examined by those present with considerable interest.

COLONEL GERINI then read his paper on "Siamese Proverbs and Idiomatic Expressions"

At its close on the motion of THE PRESIDENT a unanimous vote of thanks was passed to H. R. H. Prince Damrong and Colonel Gerini for their very interesting and learned papers.

### Third General Meeting.

The third ordinary general meeting of the Siam Society was held at the Bangkok United Club on the evening of Monday the 27th June, 1904. The President (Mr. W. R. D. Beckett) was in the chair.

In opening the proceedings THE PRESIDENT said the first business was a paper which M. Pierre Morin had been good enough to contribute on certain characteristics of the Lāo people up in Wieng-Chan. M. Morin was up there as a Resident of the second class, for several years, and had acquired a very intimate knowledge of the people and their customs. His paper dealt with the ceremony "*Ba Sri*," which is called by the Siamese "*Tham Kwan*," or "*Sao Kwan*" by people of lower rank.

MR. A CECIL CARTER read a resumé of the paper which he had prepared in English.

In M. Morin's absence his paper was then read by M. PETITHUGUENIN.

P'HYA PRAJAKICH gave some account of the same ceremony in Lower Siam.

THE PRESIDENT afterwards said he had next to call on P'hyā Prajākich to read his paper on the Mēnan Mūn and the Provinces in the East. In 1891, he had himself the pleasure of meeting P'hyā Prajākich at Ubon. P'hyā Prajākich was second Commissioner there under Prince Bijit at that time, and he resided in the Ubon district for some three years, so that he was giving them a paper on a subject about which he had knew a good deal.

P'HYA PRAJAKICH read his paper in Siamese, and afterwards exhibited some Hindoo figures from Muang Surindr.

THE PRESIDENT then said that if any gentleman had been in that part of the world, the basin of the Nam Mūn more especially, they would be glad to learn how he found the country. Mr. Giblin was there in 1894 or 1895, and he (the President) was there in 1891; if there were any others present he thought the meeting might hear their experience. The whole district was of great interest, having been sandwiched in between a Hindooized population to the south and Buddhist Thai tribes advancing from the north. The forts of Nakhon Wat were repeated at Pathai-Saman, but were more irregular. The arches, which are characteristic of them, were formed from blocks of iron ore. These places were called Prāsād and the only practical interpretation, he thought, was "castle"—

a place of refuge for the people at times when the whole country was at war. \* They had beautifully arched galleries underground which could have been used only for refuges, and he took it they formed castles for the people and the Chows who exercised dominion over them. The wonderful part of these Prāsād was the curious form of arched stone formation; each stone was whole, and they must have been pulled up by ropes. The iron ore was dug out of the moats that surround the castles, and the form of architecture was after the same style as at Nakhon Wat. With regard to the Hindoo figures that are found Prince Bijit had a theory that these images were left by the Hindoo fugitives who came up from Angkor Wat when they were expelled by the Chāms from the Champā country. † If so, they left these images all along this whole range, for the figures had been dug up in large numbers, but none have been found north of the Nam Mūn. Then there was a theory that the Kamoos and Khās are a remnant of the old Hindooized population whose ancestors built Nakhon Wat.

The Nam Mūn itself was an interesting river, but very difficult to go down in the dry weather—in that respect it is in fact very much like the Mē Ing. There is a drop of 50 feet into the Mē-Khong, but except in the high water the current is almost imperceptible owing to the high barrier of rocks. When he was there a steamer was running from Thā-Cheng, and if that barrier of rock could be exploded navigation might be very much facilitated. As it was, a steamer was still running and doing rather well from a business point of view. The country was sandy, flat and uninteresting; the carts were very slow and dreadful; the road itself passed to the north of the Nam Mūn. There was a sparse jungle of scrubby trees, but the country was generally very flat. The water was not good to drink—it was so stagnant and fish so numerous that it was not sweet—and the people drink well water.

He had, by the way, never seen women coolies before his visit to that district. It was women who brought his luggage

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\* The real castles or forts are the constructions termed Banthai, P'htai, etc. Prāsād properly means "palace" or princely residence.—G. E. G.

† The fact, as evidenced by the ancient inscriptions of Kamboja is, however, that the country above alluded to lay within the area of the Kambojan kingdom at the time of its grandeur. Thus the buildings and the images in question have undoubtedly been erected on the spot by the Khmers.—G. E. G.

from Khemarāt to Ubon, and they proved quite as good as men. The country was good for cattle breeding, but was only slightly developed at present. It required developing in many ways.

MR. GIBLIN said he was so much impressed by what he had seen at Nakhon Wat that he had no thought for anything else. But he was struck by the fact that the towns were far apart, with very few villages in between. There was cultivation all round the towns, but the interior part seemed very desolate, though that no doubt was to be attributed to the question of water and the time of the year he was there. He passed though Sangkā, Khukhan, Surindr and Buriram.

On the motion of THE PRESIDENT a vote of thanks was accorded to M. Morin and P'hya Prajakich for their interesting papers and the trouble they had taken.

The meeting then terminated.

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#### Fourth General Meeting.

The fourth ordinary general meeting of the Society was held at the Bangkok United Club on Thursday the 5th January, 1905, the business of the evening being a paper on King Mongkut by the Hon. Secretary, Dr. O. Frankfurter.

THE PRESIDENT, MR. W. R. D. BECKETT, was in the chair, and, in introduction, said Dr. Frankfurter had prepared a paper which dealt with one of the most famous of the Siamese Kings, one whom all of them had read about in Bowring's "Siam" and elsewhere. This paper was originally intended to have been read on the 17th October, 1904, on the occasion of the centenary of the late King's birth, but for various reasons it had to be postponed.

MR. A. CECIL CARTER then read Dr. Frankfurter's paper.

On the discussion being opened, DR. T. HEYWARD HAYS gave further particulars about one or two points of interest in connection with the reign of King Mongkut. He pointed out that till the reign of King Mongkut's predecessor vaccination was absolutely unknown in Siam. In 1833-39, when Dr. Bradley was here, there was a terrible scourge of small-pox. Dr. Bradley was an intimate friend of Chao Fa Mongkut then still in the temple, and he pointed out the value of vaccination. Shortly after Chao Fa Mongkut came to the throne, and allowed Dr. Bradley to vaccinate the prisoners. The results were good, vaccination became more general, and thousands of people were saved. Now

vaccination is gladly accepted even by the commonest people. But it was owing to King Mongkut's democratic open-mindedness that it became general in Siam ; and but for him it might have been delayed for years.

Dr. Hays also touched on the interest attaching to the total solar eclipse which happened at the end of the reign, and which was visible to the greatest advantage from Siamese territory. The occasion was one which greatly attracted the attention of the King, who studied the whole matter for himself, and it was at his invitation that the scientists of the world came out to Siam to see the eclipse.

THE REV JOHN CARRINGTON, who arrived in the country in 1869, gave further interesting particulars with regard to the now obsolete coins of the last reign. He also touched on the various figures of interest in the missionary world in the time of King Mongkut, including Dr. Bradley, Mr. Caswell, Mr. Jones, Dr. House and Mrs. McFarland.

THE PRESIDENT moved a very hearty vote of thanks to Dr. Frankfurter for his interesting paper, and at the same time appealed to the members for papers. It was not an easy thing to write a paper on Siam, he admitted, owing to the difficulty experienced in putting one's hand on the information one wanted. They therefore felt all the more greatly indebted to Dr. Frankfurter for his able paper.

The vote of thanks was cordially passed, and the meeting terminated.

