

## Annual General Meeting of the Society.

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The Annual General Meeting of the Siam Society was held at the Oriental Hôtel, Bangkok, on Monday, January 30th, 1905. The President, Mr. W. R. D. Beckett, was in the Chair, and there were also present :—Colonel Gerini, Dr. O. Frankfurter, Rev. J. Carrington, Dr. T. Masao, Dr. T. Heyward Hays, Messrs. J. Antonio, R. Belhomme, M. E. F. Baird, E. Bock, E. Brande, Th. Collmann, A. Cecil Carter, Frank H. Giles, W. H. Mundie, P. Petithuguenin, and C. H. Ramsay.

The report prepared by Dr. Frankfurter (Hon. Secretary), on the first year's work of the Society, and the statement of the accounts for 1904, prepared by Mr. A. Cecil Carter (Hon. Treasurer), first came up for consideration. These have been printed in Volume I. of this Journal.

MR. GILES suggested that the amount due from members who had not paid should be shown in the accounts as outstandings.

MR. CARTER explained that it had been impossible to get all the subscriptions in before the end of the year, as a good many were elected members only recently, while others did not live in Bangkok. What was shown was the money actually received up to the 31st December.

It was pointed out that as 100 subscriptions had been received, and there were 134 members, the outstandings amounted to Ticals 680.

DR. HAYS moved that the reports be adopted, but that in future the outstandings be shewn in the Treasurer's report.

MR. COLLMANN seconded, and this was carried.

The next business was the election of the Council and officers.

MR. BELHOMME moved, and Mr. Carrington seconded, that the old Council be re-elected, with power to elect its own officers and fill up vacancies.

DR. MASAO moved, and Mr. Ramsay seconded, that the same procedure be followed as at the inaugural meeting and that the officers and Council be elected in the ordinary way.

MR. BELHOMME's proposition was carried.

DR. FRANKFURTER moved that the number of members of Council be increased by two, making the total 15 instead of 13.

MR. CARTER seconded this proposal, and after discussion it was carried.

Half a dozen members were then nominated for the two vacancies, and on a ballot Dr. Hays and Mr. Petithuguenin were elected.

The CHAIRMAN next laid before the meeting a recommendation of the Council that Mr. G. Coates, the German Minister-Resident, be elected an honorary member of the Society. Mr. Coates, he pointed out, practically started the Society, and the Council all thought that the least they could do was to elect him an honorary member.

The proposal was carried unanimously.

MR. BELHOMME moved that, in writing to inform Mr. Coates of his appointment as an Hon. member, the Hon. Secretary be instructed to convey to him at the same time the thanks of the Society for all he had done for it. Mr. Coates had been the father of the Society, and he fully deserved this honour.

COLONEL GERINI seconded, and the proposal was passed with acclamation.

The meeting then terminated with a vote of thanks to the Council.



# Ordinary General Meetings of the Society.

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(Session 1905)

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## FIRST GENERAL MEETING.

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An ordinary general meeting of the Society was held at the Bangkok United Club on the evening of Wednesday the 1st March, 1905. In the unavoidable absence of the President, the chair was taken by Mr. Francis H. Giles, Vice-President.

DR. H. CAMPBELL HIGHET showed the bacillus of bubonic plague under a powerful microscope. The specimen was taken from one of the Bangkok cases, and was viewed with much interest.

The CHAIRMAN introduced Mr. Paul Petithuguenin who read his paper entitled "A propos des origines et de l'histoire ancienne du Siam."

In inviting discussion the Chairman pointed out that the subject was one on which scholars held very different opinions.

COLONEL GERINI then read the following notes which he had prepared on M. Aymonier's book :—

"M. Petithuguenin is fully entitled to the thanks and congratulations of us all for the very able and lucid exposition he has just presented to us of M. Aymonier's views on the subject of the ancient history and ethnography of Siam.

Anything that has been written or said by oriental scholars on matters concerning this country is always interesting to hear, whether for the purpose of instruction when it is a question of new facts acquired for science, or of discussion when debatable points are involved on which there is a divergency of opinion or a conflict of views. We are all anxious to better our knowledge of the country we live in, and of its people, history and customs : so we are ever ready to absorb whatever new facts enlightened

research has disclosed, and to investigate deeper if possible those questions on which further light is still needed. This is, indeed, the purpose for which we have formed ourselves into this Society, whose aim is to acquire knowledge for our mutual benefit and to diffuse it for the benefit of others. Here, however, is by no means an end to our programme; for, besides the passive part of receiving and the active one of diffusing and popularizing the knowledge we have absorbed, adding to it to the best of our ability, we have also—in my opinion—a duty of an eclectic,—I should perhaps say prophylactic nature to perform; and that is to see that only sound knowledge and well authenticated facts be accepted and diffused, using at the same time our endeavours towards preventing or checking the spread of error and the perdurance of many false notions which have been long current among the public or which are from time to time put in circulation.

Everyone of you, gentlemen, is perfectly aware of the enormous amount of arrant nonsense, in comparison with the paucity of useful information, which has been from time immemorable, and is still being, written and talked about this country! Leaving aside as quite unworthy of our notice the effusions of globe-trotters and other occasional writers gifted more with imaginative powers than with the capacity and perseverance for research; and turning merely to the publications of those fairly proficient in oriental lore who have devoted some attention to the study of their subject,—we have had even during the brief course of the last decade or so, to put up with by no means a few would be scholarly works purporting to elucidate all that there is to be known about Siamese archeology, history, ethnography, language, and so forth. Such publications have been only in some cases the outcome of a flying visit to this country, where during a few weeks of rambling in the precincts of the glittering pagodas or roving among the ruins of dilapidated cities, the all comprehensive genius of the writer, seized at one grasp the whole mystery of an almost unfathomable past, of racial characteristics, and ethical evolution.

But in a few other cases the ponderous volumes have been the production of “arm chair” specialists who, never having set a foot upon Siamese soil, viewed Siam at a few thousand miles’ distance, through the dangerous telescope of a fertile imagination assisted, so to speak, by an ill-digested fill of motley material absorbed from anti-



quoted works on the country written by *Pioneers* and therefore liable to a considerable amount of error, both of omission and commission. It appears, in fact, to have become the fashion for some amateur orientlists at home, to pose as past masters in all matters related to Siam, and imperturbably to play the self assumed rôle of oracles or Cicerones for the general public, and Mentors for the special benefit of ourselves who reside out here.

Thus it comes to pass that we, puny ignoramuses living in this country with eyes not to see and ears not to hear, are being taught the gospel of Siamese origins, history, philology, and what not, by these portentous supermen. True it is that their esoteric deliverances are in not a few instances very exhilarating ones—the more so, indeed, as to make one pardon in such cases the way in which they are magnanimously being bestowed upon us. One or two of this class are worth quoting. They are gleaned hap-hazard out of the many pearls scattered broadcast in a booklet by the late Professor Schlegel of Sinological fame, entitled “Siamese Studies” (Leiden, 1902) and written, as he gravely declares (p. 1), “for furnishing to the scholars of Siamese the means to restore the Siamese transcription of foreign words to their original form, and enable them to make an etymological dictionary of the Siamese language, the want of which is sadly felt [quite true].” Here is now the first one of the priceless gems just referred to.

“The Sanskrit word *sāranga* which, among others means an Elephant, was curtailed [in Siamese] to *sán*, written *sár* [สาร์]. In order to show that an elephant, and not a gazelle [another meaning of *sāranga*], was meant, the Siamese added the Chinese word *Hsiang*, Canton *Ts’öng*, elephant, to the Sanskrit word and so we get the hybrid and curtailed Siamese word *chàng-sán* [ช้างสาร์]—*Tsöng* (elephant) + Skr. *sāranga* (elephant) with the special meaning of “robust elephant” (p. 89).

So you are warned, gentlemen, that when you say, for instance, *Khàusán* (ข้าวสาร์), you are liable to be misunderstood as meaning *gazelle rice*, *elephant rice*, or something to that effect. As a matter of fact, we, the humble pupils for which the above sublime teaching is intended, are well aware that *sán*, สาร์, does not at all derive from *sāranga* (elephant, gazelle, etc.), but from the Sanskrit and Pali *sāra* meaning

'essence, pith, vigour'; so that ข้าวสาร *Khàu sán* signifies 'rice of the best or choicest quality', 'perfect rice', and in the customary conventional acceptation 'cleaned rice'; just as *c'háng-sán*, ช้าง สาร connotes a valuable or vigorous elephant.

Here is again another gem to match with the above. Twice on two different pages (21 and 32), the highly imaginative Leiden Professor tells us that Pallegoix was utterly wrong in translating *king-ká* [กิ้งก่า] by 'chameleon', as this is "a kind of lizard not existing in Siam," the correct meaning is instead a 'centipede.' Remember therefore, gentlemen, when you see the Changeable Garden Lizard commonly styled 'chameloen' and in Siamese *king-ká* (กิ้งก่า) basking in the sun on the top of your outhouses, that it is *not* a lizard, but a *centipede* that you behold. Even should you clearly distinguish a simply four-footed body with a long tail, and a dirty greenish hue changeable at times to a ruddy colour, do not believe your eyes: they too often deceive us, and our forefathers have left us the aphorism "Trust not to appearances." Lieut. S. M. Flower must have been, of course, a victim to such an optical illusion, else he would not have told us in his "Notes on the Fauna of Siam," that *King-ká* is a lizard.

However, it just happens that we, the humble pupils for which the superior mental food of the sort just cited is destined, feel like all students before which too transcendental bits of lore are put for absorption, a little restive, not to say taken a back, and feel just the shadow of a suspicion that the illusion may have occurred instead on the part of Professor Schlegel, however infallible he may have thought himself to be. In our humble opinion, in fact, the worthy Professor must have been mistaken *King-ka* กิ้งก่า for a *King-kü* or *Küng-kü* (กิ้งกือ, กิ้งกือ) which may be described as a centipede with another cipher added to the number of its lower extremities; that is, in a word, a *millipede*. His telescope must therefore owing to the enormous distance intervening between Leiden and this country have played him false this time too.

Such is, gentlemen, the transcendental philology that Siamese scholars are asked to imbibe. Instances of similar peerless oracular deliveries might be multiplied *ad libitum* by a cursory glancing through the one hundred and odd pages of Professor Schlegel's brochure.



At this juncture it occurs to me that you may have asked yourselves what remote relation can possibly exist between what I have been saying and the subject of the paper that has occupied our attention. I sorely feel I owe you an explanation for digressing, apparently, so far from the topic under discussion. And the apology for my long digression is this, that I have thought it useful and expedient for the purpose of illustration, in order to being out my point the more clearly.

However extravagant Professor Schlegel's deductions may appear to you, it is yet fairly sound logic in comparison of the so-called, history of Sukhōthai and of the foundation of Ayuthia which M. Aymonier has attempted to reconstitute after his own ideas. Only, there is a difference, and that in M. Aymonier's disfavour too.

Professor Schlegel, whose theories in the end nobody came to take *au sérieux*, may to a certain extent be excused on the ground that he had no opportunity of visiting either Siam or other parts of Indo-China and seeing for himself, amongst other things, whether green lizards are centipedes or *vice versa*. But no such plea exists for M. Aymonier who had ample opportunity, during a long residence in Kamboja and some brief strolls into Siamese territory, to collect the materials, and if not, the information necessary for an adequate treatment of the subject he has felt himself tempted to brooch. This he, assuredly, has not done; while devoting on the other hand all his time and attention to the antiquities of Kamboja and Champa, especially the language and vernacular epigraphy, through the painstaking study of which he has quite deservedly risen to a high standing in the oriental world, and qualified as a first rate authority on such subjects. He may, in fact, be regarded as one of the principal founders and ablest expounders of the study of Cham and Kambojan antiquities. Owing to such brilliant precedents and distinguished career, exemplified in the results embodied in a number of publications, among which stands *facile princeps* his latest productions, the monumental work in three bulky volumes he has devoted to Kamboja ("Le Cambodge;" Paris, 1900-1-4), his views naturally command respect and find ready endorsement among the general public, even when they concern the archaeology or

history of countries which, like Siam, not only are situated on the very borders of the special field of his labour; but actually include outlying portions of it. His share of responsibility becomes therefore so much heavier for what he has to say on the subject, and correspondingly greater the danger wrought by his short comings in the event of the statements he makes or the inferences he draws proving not to be sufficiently founded on fact and scholarship.

With those who take up such arduous subjects it would, of course, be decidedly unfair to show one's self anything like hypercritical, in view of the difficulties of every kind which beset the inquirer. If it is admitted as a general thesis that man is liable to errors of judgment, the concession must be made far more liberally to those whose paths take them through the mazes of historical investigation concerning this country. And we should as a consequence be considerably more lenient if on questions on which he is not competent to judge whether for insufficiency of documentary material at his disposal or for lack of an adequate philological preparation, M. Aymonier had merely set up working hypotheses or given us his views of the different questions involved under a certain reserve which is always wise to impose on one's self in such matters, leaving it to others to confirm, to correct, or to modify them in the light of further researches.

However, I much regret to say, if a plea of this sort holds good up to a certain extent for the ethnographical theories he unfolds which, by the way are by no means the fruit of his own observations entirely, but have been already in substance, expounded by others; if some extenuation could again be found for the extraordinary jumble he makes of Chinese toponymy relative to Indo-Chinese countries, resulting in his utter failure to identify with anything like approximation hardly a single one of the place-names he examines; no excuse whatever can be claimed for the liberties he takes in shuffling and muddling the ancient history of Siam both of the Sukhōthai and Ayuthia periods, and the cocksureness he displays in contesting the universally accepted date of the foundation of Ayuthia which he would have us place forward no less than one century.

If one were to judge from the indictments he so apodictically delivers, one would be led to infer that M. Aymonier must have ransacked the whole country for records,



and discovered heaven knows what vast amount of evidence in favour of his views. But here is exactly where one, after the perusal of the very first few pages of his effusion, becomes completely disillusioned, not to say dumbfounded. On what rocky foundations would you think he has based all his structure of bewildering sophisms? Well, as he himself tells us ( "Cambodge," t. III, pp. 658 et seqq.), on two partial translations made by a Kambojan youngster of the ten first books of what he calls the Annals of Martaban (commonly known in Siam under the name of *Rājādhirāj*), and of the chronicle of Northern Siam (*Phongsāwadān Nua*).

I must leave entirely out of question the competency of the translator; he may, for all we know, have acquitted himself pretty well of his task. But I wonder upon what corrupt and mutilated MS. his translation of the Northern Chronicle was made. A translations of the same work published many years ago by Captain ( afterwards Colonel ) Low in the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago* well exemplifies how careful one must be in the selection of the MSS. one works upon. The same applies to a considerable extent also to the versions of the same chronicle that have more recently appeared in print in this capital. At the same time I do not in the least intend to palliate the very serious shortcomings that characterise even the best recensions obtainable of the Northern Chronicle. This is a most difficult instrument to handle. It may, in fact, be aptly compared to a double-edged weapon, exceedingly dangerous to wield to the inexperienced who do not possess other sources of information and have not well digested and critically examined a host of fragmentary records, wherewith to check its often jumbled statements and rectify its too usually wrong dates for the various events narrated therein.

Of the as yet untranslated first part of the so-called "Annals of Ayuthia" extending down to the middle of the seventeenth century, M. Aymonier seems not to have had a translation made for his own use; for he, in so far as can be gathered from the content of his exposition, appears to rely throughout on the short extracts or summaries published by Pallegoix and others. He plainly shows, however, he is fully aware that this kind of records, though commonly dubbed "Annals" have but little to do with the original Annals of Ayuthia which became lost in the destruction of that capital in 1767; and that they are on the contrary but a compilation—

in reality a patchwork more or less successfully brought out together—of whatever fragments of the old records could be recovered, with an attempt here and there to fill up the widest gaps, from motley information gathered out of the documents to which the compiler had access in his time. Though open to a certain measure of criticism and not always reliable in their chronology, their dates which by the way are seldom out more than a few years, can in most instances be easily enough rectified from other sources both local and foreign. At all events, these “Annals” do by no means deserve the sweeping condemnation M. Aymonier makes of them. For, while rightly contesting the incorrectness of some of the dates they give, due to the negligence as well as ignorance of generations of scribes as well as to the imperfect manner in which dates were recorded in the numerous stray documents drawn upon for their compilation, he casts the most grave suspicions also on those dates which are given with a wealth of particulars, holding that such an abundance of details is a proof of such dates having been purposely concocted in order to falsify history. Hence he concludes that for the first two centuries at least that they deal with, these Annals are almost entirely apocryphal; a base forgery, in fact (pp. 662, 729.) “Although appearing scientifically exact they possess no value whatever, especially in what concerns their initial period” (p. 661). “The *Annals of Ayuthia* have been dangerously masked and disguised under a series of chronological dates which follow one another very rigorously, but have been generally applied without good reason. Almost apocryphal for the two first centuries, these modern chronicles have falsified the history of the country”. (p. 662). Having laid down such strange premisses, M. Aymonier proceeds to give us, you understand, the *genuine* history of the country re-constituted, he declares, from a critical examination of *all the sources* he was able to consult, adding there to the evidence from Chinese authors, of the statements and place-names of whom he makes the most pitiful jumble. And concludes his preamble as follows: “We have been under the necessity of playing—willingly or not—the much unexpected rôle of executioner, and of concluding this chapter with ascertained results which constitute a real ‘coup de théâtre.’” (p. 663) We will examine this wonderful theatrical dénouement directly, and see whether it is really a tragedy or simply a farce.



In the meantime it behoves us to add that, besides the very meagre sources referred to above, a few inscriptions from Sukhōthai translated by late Père Schmitt of whom we mourn the recent loss from our midst, complete the stock-in-trade of M. Aymonier for dealing with the two centuries of "apocryphal history" of Ayuthia and with the century that precedes it at Sukhōthai. These few inscriptions naturally form the mainstay of his argument, and it goes as a matter of course that in order to make their statements suit his point of view, he twists them in the most arbitrary manner. And after having made confusion worst confounded he utters forth the triumphal statement: "Thus, aroused from their secular lethargy, these stelas stand forth in order to proclaim the historical truth. It would be necessary, in order to give the lie to their evidence, so neat, so probatory something else than apocryphal MSS., compiled after the lapse of four centuries, and rehandled at pleasure by vainglorious princes or historiographers devoid of scruple" (p. 730).

The fact is that there is no need of believing such epigraphic evidence, for it agrees entirely with that to be obtained from local records and from those of the neighbouring States of which, as we have seen, M. Aymonier knows next to nothing. Fully sensible from my own experience of the difficulty of procuring a sufficient number of such rare texts, of translating and collating them, I shall be lenient with M. Aymonier's ignorance about their contents or even their existence, although bound to observe that before setting on an undertaking of this kind he should for the sake of fair-play have made some endeavour to learn something of what they tell us. But no excuse whatever exists, for him as regards such texts, historical or otherwise as have been published in Siam during the last three or four decades; and far less yet as regards the publications of European scholars that have appeared on Siamese history, antiquities, or subjects akin. Had M. Aymonier taken at least the pains of reading such studies, he would have been able to avoid many pitfalls, and to commit himself to a far less extent in his denunciation of the first two centuries of Ayuthian history and other matters. Among the Siamese publications which would have readily convinced M. Aymonier of his grossest blunder, are the two volumes of the ancient Laws of Siam, which form one of the most authentic sources for the history of the country,

although the dates given require in some instances rectification owing to the causes above referred to when dealing with the chronicles. The text published of these laws is, in fact not the official one that was preserved in the old Siamese capital as this was like all other documents destroyed ; but has been collected from different incomplete copies of the original laws found in various parts of the country after its liberation from the Burmese invaders. Most of the laws are dated and record besides the name of the monarch who has enacted them, many useful particulars helping to establish their true date when this has been wrongly handed down, as well as the place of their promulgation. Any scholar who respects himself cannot omit looking a bit into such valuable documents before attempting anything in the line of historical, philological, or ethnographical inquiry as regards this country. The fact of M. Aymonier having so light-mindedly set forth on his inquiry without having seen even the back cover of these two volumes of laws, lays himself open to the severest criticism. He would have found therein as we shall see directly, more than one incontrovertible confirmation that his theory relative to the date of the foundation of Ayuthia is wrong from beginning to end. But gravest yet is his negligence, I may repeat, in not having put himself au courant of various recent publications where a good portion of the ground he is concerned with has been covered with the help of far more historical sources of information than he will ever be able to procure. He would also have found there readily identified many ancient place-names, occurring both in local and Chinese records, which he has vainly sought to locate. It may suffice to refer here to the much debated question of the location of Sajjanálai, which in his usual muddling manner he makes out to be Sukhòthai (pp. 658, 697-8). I have shown years ago that this ancient capital of Siam, the name and site of which have been a puzzle to Père Schmitt, Fournereau, and *tutti quanti* who have treated of Siamese antiquities up to this day, is unmistakeably Swankhalòk, whose governor has for centuries borne its name in his own official title. But what topographical identifications can be expected from one who, like M. Aymonier, is at a loss to identify even as common and widely known name as *C'honlabúri* (*Jalapuri*, จาลปุรี), which still exists to this very day, and as the majority of those here present are fully aware, is



simply the official name for the province of Bangplasoi. This gives you the measure of Aymonier's proficiency in the historical geography of this country. I may add that of its language he knows practically nothing; much less of its literature, laws, customs; whereas he has never put his foot on territory of either of the ancient cities of Sukhōthai and Swankhalōk he talks so much about, and is far from posted up on the publications that have appeared on Simese history, antiquities, etc., even in European languages. It is therefore quite plain that to attempt to confute his arguments or to correct his grossest blunders serially would be a waste of time and labour.

I shall therefore merely confine myself to a short exposure of his masterpiece, his stage surprise or *coup-de-théâtre*, as he calls it. This consists as you are all aware, in denying that the foundation of Ayuthia took place at the date stated in the local Annals, viz. 1350 A. D.; and holding that that capital was not founded until 1459-60 or there about. I take it that if I can demonstrate on incontrovertible evidence that Ayuthia existed for fully one century back from Aymonier's apodictically assumed date, and therefore practically at the time stated in the local Annals, M. Aymonier's edifice of fanciful history crumbles down entirely to the ground, and the worthlessness of all his would be reconstruction of the ancient history both of Sukhōthai and Ayuthia will become glaringly manifest. Here then is just a small portion of the evidence I can bring. In selecting it I have purposely avoided citing rare texts or scarcely known MSS. works which it would be difficult to consult or to procure. I simply avail myself of what is readily accessible to anyone who cares to refer to it in order to control the correctness of my statements. As you will see all my data are drawn from works published through the press during recent years.

I shall begin by stating the position of the Ayuthia Annals as regards the date of the foundation of Ayuthia. These declare it to have been founded and formerly inaugurated by King Rāmāthibodi (afterwards styled the first of that name), on Friday, the 6th of the 5th month, year 712 of the Little Era) Culla-sakkarāj), bearing the cyclical sign of the tiger and the number of order 2 in the decade at 9 h. 54 of the morning. This corresponds, according to my

computations, to Friday, 19th March, 1350, (old style). Such a luxuriance of details, as we have already observed is what constitutes for M. Aymonier a proof of apocryphicalness of the dates concerned. As regards the one now under discussion, it goes as a matter of course that he does not omit to question its validity. This, I propose to demonstrate, only more fully evidences his ignorance of the customs of these populations. For it is a well known fact that in all of these countries which derive their early civilization from India, it is customary to preserve the horoscope or what is called the "birth-date of the city", *C'hátá Müang* (ชาติเมือง) in all its most trifling details, down to hours and minutes, for astrological purposes, so as to be able to consult the stars and predict the destinies of the city at any time of calamity or distress. Of such a fact there is ample evidence in all chronicles of this and neighbouring countries. Judging from the fact that even the horoscopes of children are carefully kept for similar purposes, it is easy to guess how far more anxious these nations must be to preserve the horoscope of the capital city on which the welfare of so many citizens depends according to the generally accepted notion. It thus happens that however little reliable the chronicles of these countries may be in the dates of other events, they invariably tell us the date of the foundation of the capital with the very identical luxuriance of particulars. So do the Peguan Annals for the date of foundation of Hamsávatí; the Láu Annals for those of C'hieng Mai, C'hieng Sên, Lamp'hun, etc.; the Burmese annals for several of their capitals and principal cities and so forth. Hence, the presence of the details aforesaid in connection with the date of Ayuthia is perfectly justifiable, and so is the reason why such a date escaped being forgotten like many others after the destruction of the capital, for many astrologers as well as many citizens with a bent for astrological pursuits, would have duly entered it in their own *Púms* (ปุม) or books of ephemerides, for consultation whenever it might seem expedient.

Before proceeding to an enumeration of the evidence collected by myself, I deem it worth the while to briefly touch upon the evidence already gathered up on the subject by others, and very distinguished and reliable scholars too.



First of all, it is generally known from John Bowring's book on Siam, that H. M. the late King Maha Mongkut had expressed to him his full conviction as regards the correctness of the date of the foundation of Ayuthia as handed down in local records. To any one who knows anything about the upright character of the learned King intolerant of nonsense of any kind whether in laical or religious matters, and of the long extended trips up country, and years spent in investigation of the records of the country, such a testimony as cited by John Bowring cannot but carry great weight.

But there is another point yet. La Loubère, the distinguished ambassador from King Louis XIV. of France to the Court of Ayuthia in 1687, records among other things, the date obtained by him from his informants at that Court, for the foundation of Ayuthia; and says this took place in the year 1894 of the Buddhist Era, which corresponds to the year 1350 (May 1350 to May 1351), thus agreeing with the date of the Annals of Ayuthia, and still more so with the date in the Buddhist Era occurring for the same event in other local records. Now, the most startling thing is this, that M. Aymonier, while fully aware of the date recorded by La Loubère, prefers to adopt that of the missionary Gervaise, who vaguely assigns the foundation of Ayuthia to about one century later (pp. 728-9). This gives you the measure of the critical acumen displayed through and through his reasonings by M. Aymonier. Just think of what enormous difference there must be in reliability between the information taken direct from officials of the Court by such a distinguished personage as La Loubère who clearly shows in his book that he had ample opportunities for obtaining important items, and the vague statement of an obscure—however intelligent missionary—who throughout the book he has published has committed other blunders of a similar kind. Of course, M. Aymonier, is naturally not aware that the Annals of the country were sedulously kept in the royal library at Ayuthia for the use chiefly of the King, and that copies were forbidden to be made for any other purpose. So it was only among the highest officials that extracts or resums could be found and occasional copies of one portion or other of the Annals surreptitiously taken, and that is the reason why so little could be recovered of the original Annals of Siam in the country whereas much more could

be found of its laws. Every governor of the highest class provinces, like Ligor, Phisnulok, Korat, etc. was in fact provided with a duly authenticated copy of the laws for the administration of justice within his provincial jurisdiction, while he was denied copies of the National Annals. Now it is plain that the date obtained by La Loubère more than two centuries ago, when the original Annals of Ayuthia existed intact, and the tradition of its foundation must have been still quite vivid in the country, cannot be but the correct date. What purpose could have been served by antedating it one century or so? If such had been the intention of the rulers at the time being, why not carry the date of the foundation of the city further back for half a dozen centuries or more, bringing it down, say, to the mythical period of Rāma or Krishna after whose capitals the city was named? In conclusion, the rejection by M. Aymonier of La Loubère's date fully gives us the measure, as I said, of his critical accumen.

But here are now a few bits of evidence for him to ponder upon and to upset if he can.

Among the Old Laws of Siam above referred to, there are over half a dozen enacted by the very King Rāmāthibodī I., who founded Ayuthia. They all range in dates between A. D. 1350 and 1360 or so. I shall simply select a few of the most important not only from the standpoint of their legal contents, but also from the fact that they contain clearly defined dates, give pretty well in full the King's name and title, and in some instances declare him also to be the ruler of the great capital *Srī Ayudhyā* (กรุงเทพฯ พระมหา นคร ศรี ยุทธยา). Subjoined is their list.

1.—ลักษณะ พยาน Law of Evidence; date, 6th June, 1350, (1894 B. E.) or only two and a half months after the foundation of the capital (กฎหมาย เมืองไทย), vol. I., p. 409). This law has been in force until A. D. 1895, when it was repealed by a new one.

2.—ลักษณะ ลักพา Law on Abduction; date 1355. Refers to slaves and serfs running away or being abducted to the State



of Sukhōthai and other northern provinces ; mentions twice the capital Ayuthia in which the king ( Ramathibodi ) enacted the law. ( Op. cit., vol. I, p. 316 ).

3 — สักขณ ฎบ ฟ้อง Law on the receiving of Plaints, date 1355 ( op. cit., vol. I, p. 73 ).

4.— Law on Land and Boundaries, in สักขณ เป็ด เสรีจ date 1359 ( 1903 B. E. ), mentions besides king Rāmātthipati, the capital Ayuthia ( op. cit., I, p. 372 ).

*N. B.* Clause 4 of this Law was abolished only as recently as May 1st 1901.

5.— สักขณ ะ ฌ ฌ ฌ Duties of Man and Wife—date, 1360 and 1361 ( op. cit., vol. I, p. 224 ). Mentions likewise king Rāmāthibodi and the capital Ayuthia.

And I might add a few more of the same reign not however so clear about the points that interest us. As nearly all these laws bear on judicature, they make clear how anxious was the founder of Ayuthia, after having consolidated his power, to regulate the administration of justice in his dominions. This shows him to have been possessed of the rare qualities that characterize all great conquerors.

Now, might I enquire, what has M. Aymonier to say to all this ? That these laws are all apocryphal, that they have been antedated for the purpose of falsifying history and so forth ? I may observe that the archaic language in which they are couched, which closely resembles that of the oldest Sukhōthai inscription of circa 1300, and makes certain passages of these laws not a little difficult of understanding even to cultured Siamese, bears ample testimony to their antiquity.

As I have declared, besides the above points I could bring lots more of other evidence to bear on the correctness of the date of the foundation of Ayuthia from other records, not however so easily accessible, or which it would take me a longer time than I now have at my disposal to glance over after passages bearing on the subject at hand. At the same time, I think after all, my labour would not repay the trouble, for M.

Aymonier might yet be inclined to question their authenticity. If so, I have something here in store as a last *cartouche*. This time, gentlemen, it is not a question of a local record, but of one preserved in a foreign country which had early established friendly relations with Siam. That country, gentlemen, is Java, which was then the centre of a mighty empire with its capital at Májápáhit.

Well, then, a poem has been handed down from that period, composed in honour of king Hayam Wuruk, the greatest sovereign who ever sat on the throne of Májápáhit. He reigned from 1350 to 1389, and the poem was written during the latter part of his reign, in about 1380. It has recently been edited with his customary ability by Dr. Brandes, one of the foremost Javanese scholars, whom it is an honour to our Society to have among us as a Corresponding Member. The poet *Prapañca*, for such is the name of the author of that poem, in the course of his description of mightiness of the empire of Májápáhit, goes into a long enumeration of the continental States on the Indo-Chinese Peninsula, with which the mighty empire had established friendly as well as trading relations. Now, among the names of such States, gentlemen, occurs that of *Ayodhyápura* which, I need not point out, is the same as *Ayudhya*, the capital of Siam at the time being.

This, gentlemen is the very pin-prick that by itself alone is more than sufficient to burst the bubble set agoing by M. Aymonier with his pretentious reconstitution of ancient Siamese history. He will not, I hope, plead that date of that poem is false also, for he cannot. So he is defeated on the very lines he challenges for testimony. Here is foreign evidence for him, and more could be brought together if necessary. But so much will suffice for the present, and further comments would be wasted. Here is another *coup de théâtre* set up as a pendant to that prepared by M. Aymonier. Which is the drama and which the farce? To the public the ultimate judgement. As for myself I feel I have done my duty in exposing one of the most empty fads it has been my lot to come across. M. Aymonier I should frankly say has always my high respect as an exponent of Kambojan epigraphy but in point of historic criticism, and geography, or of reconstitution of ancient histories, I sincerely regret I must rank him



even below the ruck of the compilers of the jumbled chronicles he so much contemns.

MR PETITHUGUENIN, in reply, said that M. Aymonier's work was one of great interest, but it was quite true he was insufficiently supplied with records on which to base his conclusions. M. Finot, he might mention, had been unable to accept M. Aymonier's conclusions. Colonel Gerini himself, however, would no doubt soon replace these speculations by an authoritative work.

The discussion was continued by the Rev. John Carrington and Mr. J. W. Hinchley, and the meeting ended with the usual votes of thanks.

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## SECOND GENERAL MEETING.

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An Ordinary General Meeting of the Society was held at the Bangkok United Club on the evening of Friday, March 31st, 1905. Mr. Francis H. Giles, Vice-President, was in the chair.

The first business was the paper by Dr. T. Masao entitled "Researches into indigenous Law of Siam as a study of Comparative Jurisprudence."

After it had been read, Dr. Masao said, in reply to a question by M. Petithuguenin, that while there was no doubt the ancient Siamese laws were of Hindu origin, he was not in a position to say definitely whether they came from Cambodia, or Burma by way of Pegu.

DR. FRANKFURTER said he believed the introduction to the Siamese code says plainly that they got it by way of Pegu. Cambodian law is not mentioned at all. Cambodian law seems to be identical with Siamese, and they may go back to the same source, but more probably, as M. Aymonier puts it, they do go back to the same source simply because the Cambodian laws are the old laws of Siam.

COLONEL GERINI agreed with this view. He said the Siamese went for their law to a Dhammasat which was not in Sanscrit, but in Pali. It was not the same Dhammasat as that of Manu, but a modification made by Buddhists, or evolved in Buddhist countries out of the Dhammasat of Manu, and taken as a basis for all legislation in eastern countries. But a wave of barbarism passed over Cambodia, and the modern laws of that country had been derived from the laws of Siam because the Cambodians had lost their own laws. Many of the differences which Dr. Masao had brought forward between Siamese law and the Code of Manu were, he believed, due to the fact he had mentioned that Siamese law was not derived directly from the Code of Manu, but from the Buddhist Code, a modification of the Code of Manu. The title Buddhist Law



was the one given by Sir John Jardine, who had long made a study of the Buddhist laws of Burma, but it was not quite appropriate ; Brahman-Buddhist would perhaps be a better designation.

THE REV. J. CARRINGTON thought the old Siamese Code, set forth so well by Dr. Masao, showed that the Siamese understood well what they were about. But he thought exception might be taken to limiting the age of witnesses to 70 years.

DR. MASAO said the provisions of the ancient laws he had referred to were mostly repealed. At the present time he had no doubt a Siamese Court would accept the evidence of a witness of 80 or 90 years of age if the Court satisfied itself that he was fit to be a witness.

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The next business before the meeting was an exhibition of slides showing ancient monuments in Southern Siam. The views had all been taken by Mr. P. A. Thompson, who kindly gave explanations about each. The lantern was manipulated by Mr. Pruss. The ancient monuments shown included those of Lopburi, Phrapatom, Ayuthia, Korat, Supan, etc., and the exhibition proved of very great interest

A vote of thanks was cordially accorded to Dr. Masao and Mr. Thompson, on the motion of the Chairman, and the proceedings terminated.

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### THIRD GENERAL MEETING.

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An ordinary general meeting of the Society was held at the Bangkok United Club on the evening of Monday, the 15th May, 1905. Colonel Gerini, Vice-President was in the chair, and the attendance was somewhat larger than usual, over forty being present. The meeting was called to hear Dr. Jean Brengues read his paper entitled "Note sur les populations de la région des Montagnes des Cardamones"

In introducing the lecturer, the Chairman said that, as many present were already aware, Dr. Brengues had been working for several years about the Siamese frontier and had devoted all his spare time to ethnological researches, while he was also an enthusiastic student of folk-lore.

At the conclusion of the paper, the Chairman said that the populations of which Dr. Brengues had given them so scholarly an account, inhabited the region of the mountains between Chantaboon and the Tale Sap. No scientific study had ever been made of these tribes before, and it was the great good fortune of the Siam Society to be the first to be given the results of the extensive and highly important observations made by Dr. Brengues. For this they had to thank not only Dr. Brengues, himself, but also the Boundary Commission, the members of which he was very glad to see present. One important thing Dr. Brengues had done was to demonstrate homogeneity between the Chong and the Porr. Before it was believed they were different tribes. On the Siamese side they were called Chong, and on the Cambodian, Porr, while in some places they were known as Samrae; but Dr. Brengues had established that they form one race. And there was a still more important point that followed from his observations.—Dr. Brengues had found traces of negrito blood. It had long been imagined that not only the coast of the Gulf of Siam but the whole Indo-China peninsula had been inhabited by people of negrito blood. Even not very far from here, in Chaiya, there were traces of this at the present day—a fact to which Dr. Dunlap drew attention at the first meeting of the Society. Travellers had reported the same thing from the eastern side of the Gulf, but such reports were not the result



of scientific studies at all. Now, however, in Dr. Brengues' paper we had proof that there were distinct traces of negrito blood—about 20 per cent.—evidenced by their black complexions and woolly hair. In addition they had in the paper very scholarly notes about the festivals and customs of the tribes. There were among them traces of the totem, and the mode of worship described represented the earliest form of spirit worship in these countries. After discussing the significance of the musical instruments of the Porr, the Chairman concluded by again congratulating the Society on having been favoured with such an important paper.

A series of slides from admirable photographs taken by Dr. Brengues in the district, was then shown on a screen with the aid of a lantern manipulated by Mr. Emil Groote.

After according a very cordial vote of thanks to Dr. Brengues, and another to Mr. Groote for his assistance, the meeting terminated.



## FOURTH GENERAL MEETING.

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An ordinary general meeting of the Society was held at the Bangkok United Club on the evening of Monday August 28th, 1905. Colonel G. E. Gerini, Vice-President, was in the chair.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Council the Chairman proposed the appointment as Corresponding Members of Count F. L. Pullé (Professor of Sanskrit and Indian Languages in the University of Bologna) and of Signor L. Nocentini (Professor of Chinese in the University of Rome. The proposal was at once accepted.

The Chairman then referred to the sad news of the death of Dr. Brandes, renowned for his researches into the antiquities of Java, and a Corresponding Member of the Siam Society. He called on Mr. van der Heide to read a Note he had prepared at the request of the Council concerning Dr. Brandes, (see paper).

The Chairman next introduced Mr. H. Walter Bourke, of the Royal Department of Mines, who read his paper entitled "Some Archaeological Notes on Monthon Puket."

At the conclusion of the paper the Chairman expressed his sense of the value of the researches made by Mr. Bourke, who was the first investigator in that part of the Peninsula.

The REV. JOHN CARRINGTON, who has also a considerable knowledge of the district, continued the discussion, and, at the request of the Chairman, promised a paper on Monthon Puket but treating more of the history and present conditions of the people.

MR. BOURKE had prepared a large number of maps, plans and photographs, which were handed round, and, he also showed a highly interesting collection of Indian and other re-



mains from Monthon Puket. These were examined with much interest by all present. Afterwards photographs of the statues, of works of Siamese art, and of tin-mining were shown on a screen with the aid of a lantern. The proceedings terminated with a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Bourke.

## REPORT FOR 1905.

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(PRESENTED TO THE SECOND ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON  
JANUARY 31ST 1906.

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The Council can look with a certain amount of satisfaction on the work of the second year of the Society. The first volume of the Journal, for 1904, was issued to members in August 1905 after some delay, which though regrettable could not be entirely avoided. The second part of Volume ii containing a monograph by Colonel Gerini on Bhuket was issued to members in December, and the first part, which will contain the papers read during 1905, will be in the hands of members at a very early date. The delay in publishing is due to the fact that the revised manuscripts did not come to hand at the proper time and to difficulty in printing.

The first number of Volume iii (1906, will be issued in June and the second part during the latter half of this year, so that it is hoped that the Journal will be issued in future at regular intervals.

The Society naturally works under certain disadvantages compared with other Societies established for similar purposes in the Far East. Foremost among these disadvantages is the fact that Siamese is not yet, as are Chinese and Japanese, a recognised literary language, and that consequently the labours of the scholars of the country written in that language do not find due recognition, and to this must be added a certain want of publicity given to these labours. We must further look for reasons to the fact that there is no central authority from which these researches can be directed ; and the establishment of a National Library may be hailed with satisfaction as the first step in that direction. We also work under this disadvantage, that the foreigners resorting to this country, whether they are in the service of their own Government or take



service under the State, in no instance, make Siam their permanent home. They are, so far as they do not resort here as merchants, naturally busy in those branches of the service for which they were engaged owing to their special aptitude for them. They are called upon to introduce new methods or report upon present conditions, and this leaves them no time for original research, nor can they, for want of material easily accessible, develop what has been done by others.

It must always be remembered that Siam is a young country, which only during the last hundred years has taken a permanent place amongst the nations of the world. A break in its history occurred with the sack of Ayuddhya by the Burmans; the history before the foundation of Ayuddhya is in most cases a matter of hypothesis. The kings who reigned there, so far as we know, found their fame more in the records of piety, than in records of conquest. Conquests are not recorded in inscriptions, although conquests there were, as the political conditions even at the present time show. We have not, and cannot therefore expect in Siam to have, profane history as it is recorded in the cuneiform inscriptions.

The attention of our Society must then be called in the first instance to the history of culture and civilization in Siam, and there certainly a wide field opens to which every one may contribute.

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The Society has to deplore the death of its honorary member Geheimrat Bastian and of its corresponding member Dr. Brandes. Short notices on them appear in the first part of our Journal.

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Certain additions have been made to the Library consisting of Journals, sent to us in exchange for our publications.

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Colonel Gerini, one of our Vice-Presidents, will leave Siam at an early date after a residence of over 25 years in this country. Here is not the place to record the services which he has rendered to "Siamology" and also to our Journal, but the Council trusts that this meeting will unanimously agree to their proposal to appoint him an Honorary Member.

From the financial statement attached to this report it will be seen that the number of our members remains stationary: It is of course owing to the peculiar position in the East, that, whilst the number of members remains the same, the individual members are shifting.

## ( ). FRANKFURTER.

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### Balance Sheet, Siam Society. 1904.

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Balance from last year	...	...	...	Tcs.	1,605	94
Eighty-two subscriptions	...	...	...	"	1,640	—
Sale of Journal	...	...	...	"	30	—
Total Tcs.					3,275	94
Printing Journal 1904.	...	...	Tcs.	1,762.63		
Printing, Postage etc.	...	...	"	167.66		
Clerk's Salary	...	...	"	100.—		
Binding Journal	...	...	"	24.—		
Hire of Room and Lamp	...	...	"	44.—	2,098	29
Balance					1,177	65
Total Tcs.					3,275	94

A. C, CARTER,

*Hon. Treasurer.*

Bangkok, December, 31st, 1905.