

EARLY TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN DENMARK AND SIAM

by

HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE DHANI NIVAT AND MAJOR ERIK SEIDENFADEN

While the history of the trade relations between Siam and the Portuguese, Dutch, English and French during the 16th and 17th centuries is more or less well-known to those interested in Siamese history, it is not so well-known that Denmark in the beginning of the 17th century also made a bid for a share in the commerce with Siam. As a matter of fact the trade relations between the Danish colonies on the East coast of India and the Siamese provinces on the Bay of Bengal, which commenced in 1620, were kept up for a very long time.

Denmark was governed in the beginning of the 17th century by King Christian IV (1588-1648) an energetic and well-informed monarch who, like so many of his contemporaries, saw in mercantilism a means whereby to enrich his country and himself. He therefore favoured lively trade relations with overseas lands, and, due to his encouragement, there was founded in 1616 in Copenhagen the Danish East India Company (*Dansk Ostindisk Kompagni*) which, with intervals, and under changing names, practically lasted for more than two hundred years until it was finally dissolved in 1843.

This trading company was founded on the proposal of two Dutchmen, Jan de Willum and Herman Rosenkrantz, and it was granted a trade monopoly for twelve years to start with in order to trade with the East Indies, China and Japan. Its capital was, to begin with, quite a small one, amounting only to 190,000 Danish *Dollars of the Realm* which, if one estimates the value of the money of the period to be three times as much as that of the present day, should be about £50,000.

In 1617 the Dutchman, Marcellin de Boshouwer, who was in the service of the so-called Emperor of Ceylon, arrived in Denmark in order to obtain the Danish King's assistance against the enemies of Ceylon. It was therefore decided to join political aims to those of commerce and a small fleet was fitted out and sent to Ceylon under the command of Ove Gjedde, later Admiral of the Realm. This man, though quite a young person of only twenty-four years of age, proved himself to be the right man in the right place under the most difficult circumstances.

The fleet consisted of two men-of-war, the *Elefanten* and the *David*, two merchant vessels, *Kristian* and *Kjøbenhavn*, besides a small Dutch ship loaded with provisions for the fleet. The fleet weighed anchor and left Copenhagen on the 14th November 1618. A yacht named *Øresund*, commanded by the Dutchman, Roland Crappé, of whom we shall hear more anon, preceded the fleet as a kind of scout.

After the long and perilous voyage of those days the fleet finally arrived at Ceylon where the so-called Emperor or King of Kandy had promised certain pieces of territory to Denmark. It became soon clear, however, that the Danes were not wanted in this island, and Admiral Gjedde had to give up all further efforts at treaty making. The enterprising Captain Crappé had meanwhile not been idle but had gone on to the coast of Coromandel and started negotiations with the Naik or Raja of Tanjore for the cession of a port to the Danish trading concern. On the 9th September 1620, Gjedde arrived at the small port of Tranquebar, and after a meeting with the Naik the Danes obtained the port of Tranquebar and a small piece of surrounding country. Here the walled brick fortress, Dansborg, was constructed, which can still be seen to-day. Captain Crappé was appointed the first Danish governor of Tranquebar, after which Admiral Gjedde returned with his squadron to Denmark,

Tranquebar became the headquarters for the subsequent Danish colonial activities. The so-called Lodge of Serampore, with Frederiksnagor on the Hoogli, was added to the Danish colonies. So was the archipelago of the Nicobars consisting of seven large and thirteen lesser islands.

It is not, however, the aim of this paper to relate the history of the Danish Indian colonies. Suffice it to say that a short-sighted

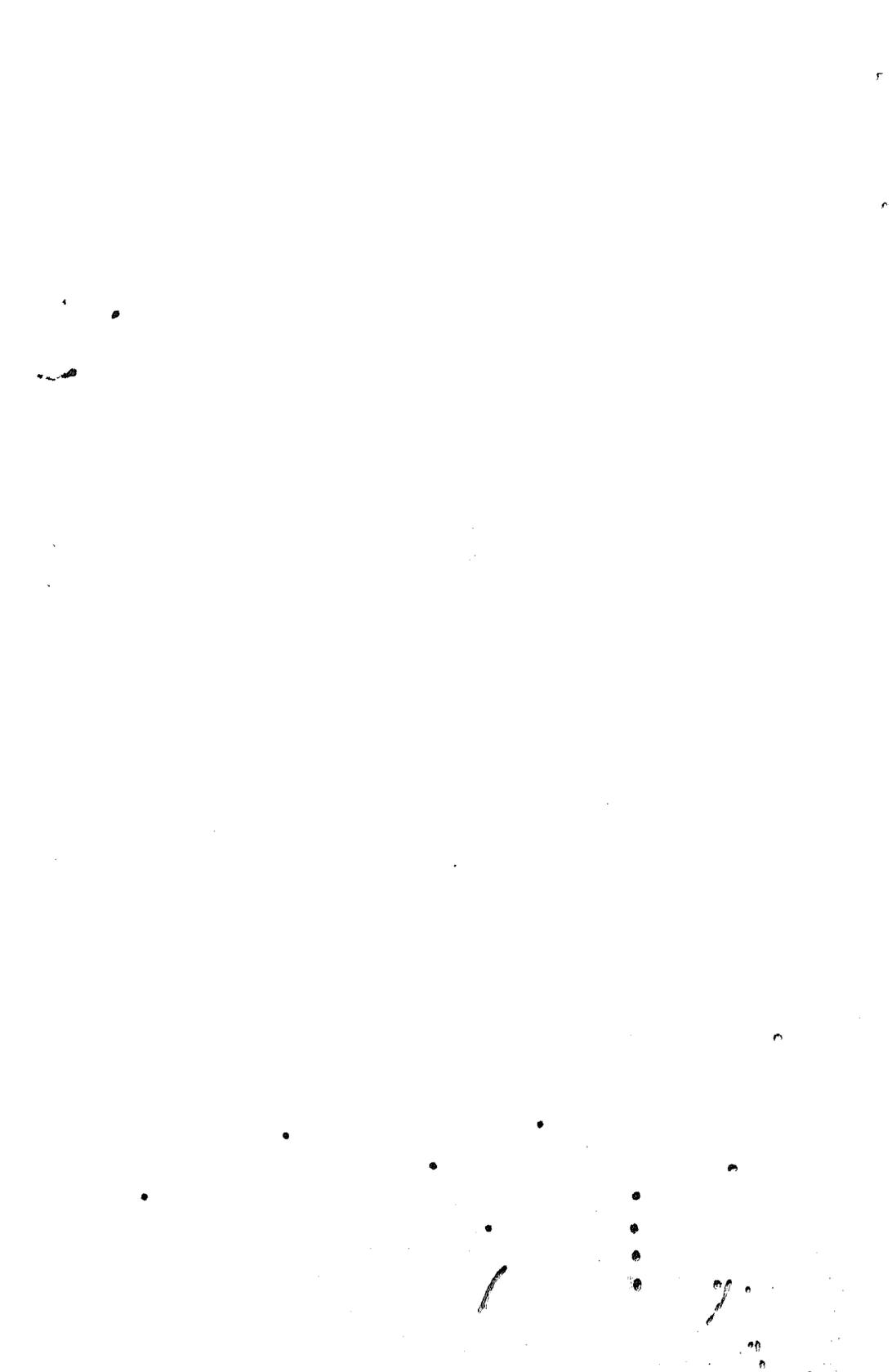
government in Denmark gave up most of the Danish possessions over the seas by the middle of the last century. Tranquebar was thus sold in February 1845 to the British East India Company for £125,000; the colony on the Gold Coast, a most flourishing possession, went in 1850 for the paltry sum of £10,000 also to Great Britain and the Nicobars were given up in 1848, to be annexed by the British in 1869.

From the annals of the Danish East India Company we know something about the trade relations between Tranquebar and Siam. These were limited to the Siamese provinces on the coast of the Bay of Bengal. As far as we have been able to find out, Danish ships never visited Ayudhya. Among the *produce* brought from Siam to Tranquebar were sometimes elephants. Danish manufactured guns, dating from the middle of the 18th century, were sold to Siam and some of them can still be seen in the old fortress at Samut Sakorn (Tachin) and in Singora. The famous long Danish muskets of the end of the 18th century were also well known in Kedah, at that time under Siamese suzerainty.

The port mostly frequented by the Danish ships from Tranquebar seems to have been Tenasserim, called by the Siamese of that time Müang or Nakhon Tranauwasri,—though curiously enough this fact is not mentioned at all in Maurice Collis' book on that arch scoundrel and pirate *Siamese White*, who resided there as Siamese governor during the latter years of King Phra Narai Maharaj's reign. The first Danish ship to call at Tenasserim was commanded by the above mentioned Captain Crappé, the Dutchman in Danish service who became the first Governor of Tranquebar. His visit took place in the year 1621, during the reign of King Song Tham (1610-1628), and thus shortly after the Danes had taken possession of Tranquebar.

Our knowledge of this visit to Tenasserim is due to His Excellency State Councillor H. N. Andersen,⁽¹⁾ the founder of the new Danish East Asiatic Company. Quite a number of years ago His Excellency, during a visit to the Archives of the Realm (*Rigsarkivet*) in Copenhagen, came upon three documents written in pencil on Siamese home-made paper (*kradat khot*). He had them photographed and forwarded to His Royal Highness Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, at that time President of the National Library. The reproductions of these

(1) Since this was written His Excellency has passed away (30/12/37).



๑๐ ครั้นมหาศรบรรณราชปรเวณแต่ก่อน แดงค้ำในเมืองอัครีตมาศ
 จได้ไปแจ้งแวงนชนชได้มาแห่งเมืองครเนาครั้นมหาศร
 ๑๕ ได้ยกยงไปแจ้ง ครวงนเรชอัครีตมาศคึดคความสั่นตเสณหาจเป็นไม
 ครด้วยเวว่า แดให้กบตคณกรเบศอัครีตมาศ นำเอาภบนต่านงเข้ามา
 ยงท่าเมืองครเนาครั้นมหาศร แดกบตคณกรเบศอัครีตมาศเรียน
 แต่เวว่า เวชอัครีตมาศอยู่สูกขสวคึดด้วยมุขยมนครได้นาบคึด
 ทงหลาย แดเมืองอัครีตมาศสูกขสวคึดเปรมปรชานัน เว่ากญนคึดแจ้ง
 ๒๐ นกนา จงเว่ากให้รบสูกขสวคึด กบตคณกรเบศอัครีตมาศแดทหาทง
 ปวง แดเว่ากให้ชอชยตามปรภณาทูกปรการ แต่ชงเป็นจกบอบคึด
 แกเว่า แดรคิบนคาคคึดแกมุขยมนครคึดตามทำเนียมไว้แต่บรรณราชนัน
 กให้ตคกกับตคณกรเบศอัครีตมาศ เพราะจโคเป็นพันชมิศร ส
 ๒๕ หนคึด เณหาด้วยเรชอัครีตมาศ คึดงคึดแแดเมืองครเนาครั้นมหา
 ๓๐ คอรแแดเมืองอัครีตมาศจเป็นอนนงอนคึดยแแดตูกค้ำในเมืองอัครี
 มาศจไปมาค้ำชยในเมืองครเนาครั้นมหาศรคึดมิชชาติคึดไว้คึดคึด
 บันญาเรชอัครีตมาศ อักษรมาจันคึดกรคึดอนอัยแรมคึดบค้ำกรกา

ครันศก



LETTER I.

Translation:

Letter of Okyā Chaiyāthibodī Srīronarongaltichai Aphaiphiriyaba-
 rākromaphāhu, Governor of the great city of Tranauwasri to the
 Reth of Ath'lamās;

The following royal decree is given to the great city of Tranauwasri. It is hereby decreed that should foreign merchants enter the harbour of the great city of Tranauwasri to trade, and, having accomplished their business, should either be leaving the city (seawards) or be going on (?by land) to the metropolis of Thawārāwadi Srī Ayuthayā, they are to be given every facility to carry on their business without cause for irritation. Between Athilamās and Tranauwasri an old tradition exists that merchants from Athilamās be enabled to travel within the territory belonging to the great city of Tranauwasri. And now the *Reth* of Athilamās, in consideration of (our mutual) regards, wishing (to establish) friendship with us, has instructed Captain Karabés of Athilamās to bring a ship into the port of the great city of Tranauwasri. Captain Karabés of Athilamās informs us that the *Reth* of Athilamās is in good health and in the good company of all his chief councillors and generals and that the country of Athilamās is happy and prosperous. The which we are glad to hear of, and have therefore had Captain Karabés of Athilamās and his soldiers entertained as our guests; and have moreover permitted them to carry on their trade in accordance with all their wishes. As to duties accruing to us as well as fees due to our chief councillors by old custom, they have been lightened for Captain Karabés of Athilamās because of our will to establish a close friendship with the *Reth* of Athilamās. Whatever will tend to further cement the ties (of friendship) between the great city of Tranauwasri and Athilamās, and (whatever will facilitate) merchants from Athilamās in their continued trade in the great city of Tranauwasri, that (we) leave to the wits of the *Reth* of Athilamās.

Given on Friday, the 13th of the waning moon of the first month of the year of the Cock, being the third of the decade (corresponding to the 10th December 1621).



NAGA SEAL



LETTER 2.

Text:

หนังสือออกพระจอมเมืองศรีราชโกษา ออกหดวงจันดราษยภักตร์
มาเถิง เรฐิตตมาศด้วย กาบัตตนักกราแม็กดัดมาศนำเอาดีเพา
ดำนิงเข้ามาซื้อชายยังท่าเมืองครเนาวศรีมหาณครแด พณ
หัวเจ้าท่านออกญาไชยาทัพดีศรีวังรงคฤไชยอภัยพิริยบารกรมภา

- 5 หุ่ท่านออกญาตรนาวศรีมหาณครกให้เดียงดูกาบัตตนักกรา
แม็กดัดมาศแต่ฝารังผู้มาทั้งปวง แดให้กาบัตตนักกราแม็กดัดมาศ
ซื้อชายเป็นสัตว์ก ซึ่งจังกอบแตริตขามันดาไคแก่พณหัวเจ้า
ท่านแตริตขามันดาไคแก่พระหดวงหัวเมืองแลกรมการยตามทำเนียม
นินพณหัวเจ้าท่านกให้ยกใจแก่กาบัตตนักกราแม็กดัดมาศแต่พณ
10 หัวเจ้าท่านกให้แต่งเส้บียงแลอาหารกนกัน (?) ให้แก่กาบัตต
นักกราแม็กดัดมาศแต่ฝารังทวารทั้งปวงเดา อนึ่งก็จุกทุกกา
บัตตนักกราแม็กดัดมาศ ซึ่งจปรารถหนานนพณหัวเจ้าท่านกให้พระหดวง
หัวเมืองลำเมฤจการ ซึ่งกาบัตตนักกราแม็กดัดมาศปรารถหนานนแต่ฤจ
ทุกปรवार อนึ่งแผนดินเมืองตรนาวศรีมหาณครแดแผนดินเมืองดัด
15 มาศได้เป็นแผนดินเดียวแลวแด ขอเรฐิตตมาศให้กาบัตตนักกราแม็ก
ดัดมาศแต่ลูกคาทั้งปวงให้ไปมาซื้อชายอย่าใดขาด
บอกมาให้ทราบในวันจันท์เดือนอ้ายแรมเก้าค่ำวารีนีคก

ตรา

LETTER 2.

Translation :

Letter from Okphra Chom-mtiang Sri Rājakoṣā, and Okluang Chindārāj, the Inspector, to the *Rethò* of Dīlamās :

Captain Karābek of Dīlamās brought a ship to trade in the port of the great city of Tranauwasri, and His Excellency the Governor Ok-yā Chaiyāthibodī Sīronarongartūchai Aphaiphiriyabarākromaphāhu, Lord Governor of the great city of Tranauwasri, had Captain Karābek of Dīlamās and all the farangs who came with him duly entertained and allowed him to carry on buying and selling with expedience. All dues and fees accruing by law to His Excellency and all fees accruing by law to the provincial officials have been waived by His Excellency's order for Captain Karābek of Dīlamās. His Excellency has further ordered the delivery of food to Captain Karābek of Dīlamās and the farang soldiers who accompany him. Moreover the welfare of Captain Karābek of Dīlamās which His Excellency has ordered the provincial officials and Captain Karābek of Dīlamās have been all accomplished. Further, the land of Tranauwasri and the land of Dīlamās shall be as one. May the *Rethò* of Dīlamās instruct Captain Karābek of Dīlamās and all his agents to come and carry on their trade without.

Given on Monday, the 9th of the waning moon of the first month, year of the Cock, being the third of the decade (corresponding to the 6th December 1621).

LETTER 3.

(Only the left half of this being available, the missing right half seems possible of being supplied from Letter 2 and in the translation has been inserted in italics).

Text :

หนังสือออกพระจอมเมืองศรีวิราช โทษา ออกหอดวงจินตวราชยุครบตรี

มาเถิงเรฐ

คิตกมาคี่ ดวยกาบคิตกนกราเบกคิตกมาคี่นำเอาล่เพาด่านงเขามาขอ

ชายยงทล



Handwritten text in an ancient script, possibly Tamil, covering the majority of the page. The text is arranged in approximately 12 horizontal lines, with some characters appearing to be grouped or underlined. The script is dense and difficult to decipher due to the high contrast and grain of the image.

เมืองครเนาศรีมหานคร ซึ่ง พณหัวเจ้าท่านออกญาไชยาธิบดีศรี
วังมงคลไชย

อภัยพิริยบรากรมพาหุ ท่านออกญา าตรเนาศรีมหานครกให้เลี้ยง
ดูกาบิต

5 ดันการาเบ็กดีดมาศแต่ทหารผู้ มาทั้งปวงแต่ใหญ่บิตตันการาเบ็กดีด
กมาศซื้อขายเป็นอันสดวก ซึ่ง จังกอปเดริชบาบันดาได้แก่พณหัว
เจ้าท่านแลพระ

หุดวงหัวเมืองแดกรมการตามทำ เนยมนนพณหัวเจ้าท่านกให้ยก
ใจแก่กา

บิตตันการาเบ็กดีดมาศแต่ พณหัวเจ้าท่านกให้แต่งเส้มียงแลอาหาร
 กนกินให้แก่กาบิตตันการา บีกดีดมาศแต่ทหารทั้งปวง

10 นันเดา อนึ่งกิดจตุทุกกาบิต ตันการาเบ็กดีดมาศซึ่งจปราถหน้า
นัน พณหัวเจ้าท่านกให้พ ระหุดวงหัวด้าเมฤจการซึ่งกาบิตตัน
การาเบ็กดีดมาศปราถหน้า

Translation (word for word):

Letter from Okphra Chom-Müang Sri Rājakosā
 and Okluang Chindārāj the Inspector, to the Rethð of
 Dilakamās : Captain Kārābek of Dī-

lakamās brought a ship to trade in the port of
 the great city of Tranauwasri and

His Excellency Okyā Chaiyāthibodī Srironarongarūchai
 Aphaiphiriya Barākromaphāhu, Lord Governor

of the great city of Tranauwasri, duly entertained Cap-
 5 tain Kārābek of Dilamās and the soldiers who

came with him, and allowed Captain Kārābek of Dila-
 kamās to buy and sell with expedience. As to

dues and fees, whichever accrue to His Excellency and

- the provincial officials according to custom, *His Excellency caused to be waived in favour of Captain Kārābek of Dilakamās and His Excellency caused to be served food and provisions for the use of Captain Kārābek of Dilakamās and all the soldiers.*
- 10 As for the welfare and happiness of Captain Kārābek of Dilakamās and whatever they may wish for, His Excellency has given orders to the provincial officials to satisfy them, according as Captain Kārābek of Dilakamās may desire.

We have here three letters addressed to a certain personage called the *rethð* of Denmark. Their purport is practically identical.—friendship and amity. This word *rethð* presents a little problem. *Rez* has been suggested, in which case it would refer to the King of Denmark. The wording, however, of all three letters is hardly proper for such an exalted recipient, for not only the Governor of Tenasserim but also his subordinates addressed this *rethð* on terms of equality, using the personal pronoun *We* in an authoritative tone. It would of course be unreasonable to expect provincial officials in a far off country in East Asia to be conversant with all the exactitudes of diplomatic protocol as practiced in Europe. It would perhaps be even more unreasonable to expect the same from a Dutch mariner and adventurer like Crappé. It is nevertheless difficult to believe that everybody concerned should have been so ignorant as to the status of a King of Denmark! There is perhaps a possible explanation. The word for a head of state in colloquial Siamese happens to be the same as that used for a provincial Governor—*Chao Müang*. Interpreters have been known to be men unaccustomed to the language of diplomacy, resulting, in several actual cases in history, even in the breaking off of diplomatic conversations. Could it have been that in the case of these letters the interpreters—there must have been at least one to translate from the Dutch into, possibly, Malay and another from that language into Siamese—made use of this colloquial expression from which the Siamese authorities understood that they were dealing with some Governor of a foreign province whose status was not so very different from their own?

The foreign captain is mentioned invariably as *Captain Karabes of Ath'ilamās* in the first, and *Captain Karābek of Dilamās* in the second, and either Krābek or Kārābek in the third letter with a slight difference in the way of indicating his nationality, due perhaps to negligence. The man has been identified with a certain *Crappé* who, however, was not a Dane but a Dutchman. The final *s* in the name is obviously superfluous, and cannot be explained with any certainty. It might have been due to the assimilative influence of the next word which we will now consider.

The word indicating the nation with which they were dealing is written *Ath'ilamās* (letter 1), *Dilamās* (letters 2 and 3), and *Dilakamās* (letter 3). Whether the interpreter was keeping to the Danish pronunciation or any other, it could never have ended in an *s*. That *s*, however, was invariably the guttural sibilant *ศ*. Had the word been written with the soft guttural *ก*, *ค*, instead of its sibilant, the transcription would have been normal. One hesitates to be for ever blaming the ignorance of the interpreter; but here again it is more than tempting to imagine that either he or the official scribe was to be blamed for confusing the two letters which were, after all, rather similar in look. In the first letter, moreover, we come to the expression of เรขอ^๑ลิมาศ, as opposed to the เรข^๑ดีลิมาศ of letters 2 and 3. It should be mentioned here that if we consider the expression in the first letter as เรข^๑+อ^๑ลิมาศ, we should be having something comparatively uniform for all three of them. Unfortunately the scribe who wrote the first letter—probably less familiar with the sound of foreign languages than the man who wrote the second and third—considered the expression to be เรข^๑+อ^๑ลิมาศ rather than เรข^๑+อ^๑ลิมาศ. Hence the superfluous *a*-of the first letter.

From a linguistic point of view, these letters are interesting for their archaisms in syntax, vocabulary and spelling. Though they only date from the early part of the XVII century, few Siamese manuscripts in existence can boast of an older age. The way moreover in which Siamese was written in those days not only shows that considerable modifications in this respect have taken place since then, but also suggests problems of intonation which do not seem to have engaged the attention as yet of scholars who have written about the language. As regards orthography, the vowel ^๑ is invariably represented by its long counterpart ^๑, e. g. ^๑ (for ^๑); and the diphthong ^๑ seems

freely interchangeable with เ-⁴อ, e. g. เมือง (and เมือง). Many words are written with a *mai malai* (๑) instead of a *mai muan* (๑) as we write them, e. g. ไคร. The glottal stop, now qualifying only the vowel *a*, is found with both of the other simple vowels, e. g. กหุะ and สวັศด๊ะ. With regard to the tones, it is to be noted that the diacritical mark of *mai ek* was very freely used to indicate the least presence of stress, as for instance: บัวอ, กิ (modern กิ). Certain accentuations suggest that the spoken language of those days was intonated somewhat differently from the standard modern Siamese of Bangkok. Take for instance the word ปรากนา, which is now pronounced as ปราก-กะหนา. One of the letters here shows by its phonetic transcription that the word was pronounced differently, thus: ปรากหน่า. There is of course the possibility that the man who wrote this particular letter was a provincial and therefore adopted a different intonation from that used in the capital, which would presumably be the standard and the medium of culture of the day; and yet no educated provincial nowadays writes the language in a different way from that used everywhere else. Incidentally it might be mentioned that this particular mode of accentuation of the word ปรากนา would be identical with what an uneducated man from Supan or Nakon Chaisri would adopt with spontaneity were he called upon to read the word written in the ordinary way: that is to say, he would read ปรากนา as ปรากะหน่า.

The word ฝรั่งเศส—Farang—is again an interesting one. Its occurrence in this letter seems to be perhaps the earliest yet found in any writing. It is now written ฝรั่งเศส and denotes primarily *Europeans* and secondarily all Westerners. It has been explained that the origin of the word is from the Persian *feringhi*, which referred to the *Franks*, and later applied to Westerners in general. In the reign of King Narai, towards the end of the 17th century, we find the word ฝรั่งเศส used for France, and ฝรั่งเศสต for *français*, in the sense of French nationals (*JSS. XIV. 2 p. 15*), hence the modern word ฝรั่งเศส. We do not know the exact date of the commencement of relationship with Persia, but the presence of the word in these letters proves that it dates at least from an early part of the 17th century.

Siamese histories written during the Bangkok period record that when the old capital was founded it was given the name of *Thawā-rāwadī Srī Ayuthayā (Dvāravatī Srī Ayudhyā)* in order to carry

on the analogy of the hero Rāma in India whose name the founder of our Ayudhyā adopted as his official style. Now, the capital of the Indian hero was, as is well-known, Ayodhyā. How then did the first part *Thawārāwadi* come in? The point is being dealt with in a separate note,⁽³⁾ and it is to be noted here that our Governor of Tenasserim was already alluding to the capital in 1620 by this twin name. This is the earliest use again of the name *Thawārāwadi* yet found in the written contemporary literature of Ayudhya.

In the first letter it is mentioned that all duties and fees had been lightened in favour of the Danish traders. The word translated by *duties* here is จังกอป, *changkop*; and by *fees*, รัช, *rid*. In the second letter the first word again occurs, but the second is slightly different, thus: รัชชา, *ridchā*. The third letter does not contain the words. Dealing first with *changkop*, this word has been the subject of considerable discussion. It occurred first in the inscription of Rāma Kamhaeng in a slightly different form, thus: *chkōp*; and was translated by Cœdès as *tax*. It next occurred in the Franco-Siamese treaty of 1688, ratified by Louis XIV in 1689 (*JSS. XIV, 2. pl. V*). It was there, however, coupled with two other words, thus: จังกอป ขนออก และ รัชชา, which appeared in the French text as *droits d'entrée et de sortie*. Cœdès rendered this into English as *import and export duties* (*ibid.* p. 36), with a footnote explaining that the word was obsolete and meant (*import*) *duty*. Quaritch Wales says of this word that it had, throughout the Ayudhyā and early Bangkok periods, the special meaning of "customs and inland transit duties" (*Ancient Siamese Government and Administration, 1934, p. 197*). He was probably translating *changkop* by *customs*, for *inland transit duties* is usually understood to be the equivalent of the word ขนออก, a fact which he himself confirms (*ibid.* p. 209). At any rate his translation into *customs* would seem to be, not a contradiction of Cœdès' *tax*, but rather a specification of it. On the other hand Cœdès' (*import*) *duty*, seems to be questionable—as regards the *import*... part of it. The simple word *duty* has therefore been adopted in this place. The word *ridchā*, more correctly รัช, transcribed *rija* by Wales, is now used for *fees* and seems from the context of our letters to have had that meaning all along. La Loubère, in describing emoluments to

(3) Owing to lack of space this note has been held over for publication in the next number. Ed.

which a provincial governor was entitled (La Loubère: *English translation by A. P. Sen, 1689, p. 83*) said: *In the maritime governments, the Tehaou-Meuang sometimes takes customs of the merchant ships, but it is generally inconsiderable. At Tenasserim it is eight per cent. in the kind, according to the Relations of the Foreign Missions.*

Among the archaisms in the syntax, may be mentioned the following interesting passages:

Letter 1, line 5 ช้อชายแล้ว แลจคั่นออกไปแล้ว

The co-ordinative conjunctions (in italics) are, except in one expression ไม่รู้จักแล้วรู้จัก meaning *never ending*, obsolete.

In line 5 also we have the archaic conditional preposition of ถ้าแล meaning *if*, now reduced to ถ้า.

In line 14, the expression ถึนดีถึง is out of use, and is now replaced by ยินดีด้วย.

In line 15, the expression รับสู่เลี้ยงดู is now obsolete.

Archaisms in spelling abound. In fact it would seem that there could not have been a hard and fast standard of spelling in general use. One hears always complaints about there being no definite standard of spelling nowadays, but from a glance at these letters it would seem that the evil is an old one!

Going on then to deal with the letters one by one, we have in letter 1 an official communication from the Governor dated *Friday the thirteenth of the waning moon of the first month of the year of the Cock, the third in the decade*. The orthography, especially in its accentuation, is variable; but the writing is clear and legible. It contains expressions of friendship and amity and sanction for all forms of commerce, in which all duties and fees are lightened in favour of friendship for Denmark on the part of the local Government.

As is customary with Siamese letters and communications in olden days, the name of the sender is written in full at the beginning and no signature is appended. Official correspondence, however, bore official seals of the sender which practically took the place of the signature. The title of the Governor is identical with that ordained in the Statutes of Sakdina. Tenasserim was written *Tranauwasri*, indicating the presence then of an extra syllable after the second which is no longer pronounced now. The seal at the end of the letter was no doubt the seal of office for the Governorship of Tenasserim. It is

rather like the royal seal called *Nāgapallang noy*, the use of which was revived by the late King Rama VI in favour of the heads of the bigger departments in the then extensive jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain. It is quite likely that the seal used in this letter might have also been such a royal seal too, and therefore what has come down to the senior subordinates of the Lord Chamberlain might well have been the seals of office of the Governors of the maritime provinces, for *Nāgapallang* signifies the *snake-couch* of Vishnu *in the oceans*.

The second letter was written on Monday, the ninth of the waning moon of the first month in the same year. It was therefore four days older than the Governor's letter. It was from Okphra Chom-muang Srirājakosā, probably the Deputy-Governor, and Okluang Chindārāj, the Inspector. Its purport was probably a covering letter for that of the Governor, though it does not say so. What it says is approximately the same as the contents of the Governor's letter, without the preamble citing the Royal Command, for that prerogative would more naturally belong to the Governor alone. The handwriting is careless and given to marked flourishes.

The third letter, written on the same day as the second, was from the same persons. The handwriting looks almost the same, with identical flourishes. Its right half is lost. If we compare the contents of these two letters, it becomes more than tempting to think that the lost half of the part we have could be easily supplemented by filling in with passages from the second letter which have been here underlined. What we have in the third letter is identical with the second—word for word, except for just two or three which do not alter the sense—minus half a line at every regular pause. Whether this third letter went on to deal with anything else later it is quite impossible to say, for the last portion of it is also lost.

Bangkok, September 1937.

