
The Diary of Kosa Pan (Thai Ambassador to France. June-July 1686), translated into English by Visudh Busayakul, introduced and annotated by Dirk Van der Cruysse, and edited by Michael Smithies

Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2002, 76 p.

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**Electronic version**

URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/moussons/1939>

ISSN: 2262-8363

Publisher

Presses Universitaires de Provence

Printed version

Date of publication: 1 December 2006

Number of pages: 373-374

ISBN: 978-2-7449-0693-0

ISSN: 1620-3224

Electronic reference

Frédéric Maurel, « *The Diary of Kosa Pan (Thai Ambassador to France. June-July 1686)*, translated into English by Visudh Busayakul, introduced and annotated by Dirk Van der Cruysse, and edited by Michael Smithies », *Moussons* [Online], 9-10 | 2006, Online since 18 January 2013, connection on 03 May 2019. URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/moussons/1939>



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By Frédéric MAUREL

As the title suggests, this account from Kosa Pan's journal describes the first visit to France in 1686 by a full Siamese embassy. The author of this journal, Ok-

phra Wisut Sunthorn, alias Kosa Pan, was the *ratchathut* (first ambassador) of that embassy, and later (1688) became *phra khlang* (minister in charge of the royal stores, ports, and relations with foreigners) under King Phetracha, after the death of King Narai (July 1688). Besides this first ambassador, the embassy was composed of the *uppathut* (second ambassador), Ok-luang Kanlaya Ratchamaitri (an experienced diplomat who had taken part in several missions to China), and the *trithut* (third ambassador), Ok-khun Siwisan Wacha (a thirty-year-old diplomat). In addition, there were a lot of attendants in their service: eight *khunnang* (nobles with conferred rank), some *khunmun* (mandarins of lower rank, serving as secretaries), numerous servants, and twelve young Siamese who were to study the French language, as well as the country's arts and crafts.

As far as can be ascertained, this text is a fragment of Kosa Pan's journal, apparently all that survives of a massive report on the activities of this embassy. It had been deposited at the AME (Archives des Missions Étrangères) in Paris by one missionary and, afterwards, coded as 'Volume 1081' by an archivist of the AME. Later, in the early 1980s, Mom Luang Manich Jumsai, a member of the Royal Institute, learnt of the existence of this journal and obtained a photocopy. His Chalermnit Bookstore produced a facsimile edition, in reduced format, entitled *The Original Report of Kosa Pan Drafted and Left in France* (1984). This text went to the National Library in Bangkok, to be transcribed into modern written form and published by philologists. This transliteration was published in January 1985 in the *Sipakorn Journal* (XXVI.6), with a short foreword by Kongkaew Viraprachaksa.

The diary starts on Thursday 20 June (or more exactly Wednesday 19) and stops on Thursday 4 July, five days before the departure of the Siamese ambassadors for Paris and Versailles via the Loire valley. It consists mainly of short descriptions of French customs and manners that the narrator could witness in Brest, and information about the spirit behind the diplomatic activities between Siamese and French officials. The addressee of this diary was probably Phra Narai, the King of Siam, who wanted to know the most minute details of Kosa Pan's voyage and stay in France.

The book is divided into four parts. The first part (pp. 1-26) is a general "Introduction," stating the nature of the manuscript and the historical context. It is

graced with reproductions of the main protagonists of this embassy and a map showing the places visited by the Siamese ambassadors. The second part (pp. 27-29) is a "Translator's Note," detailing how the translator identified obscure proper names and decoded difficult occurrences. The third part (pp. 31-75) is the translation into English of the Diary of Kosa Pan, accompanied by a substantial critical apparatus of 167 footnotes, which enables the authors of the book to display a vast amount of scholarly detail and learning in the interpretation of this sometimes problematic text. The last part (pp. 75-76) is an "Appendix on the Thai Calendar."

This serious work was elaborated by a Western-Thai team, composed of three scholars: Visudh Busayakul, the author of the original translation into English; Dirk Van der Cruyse (University of Antwerp), who has introduced and annotated the translation; and Michael Smithies (former editor of the *Journal of the Siam Society*), who edited all the text in English.

From an historiographical viewpoint, this text is warmly welcome to renew the 'Eurocentric view' on this period. Indeed, scholars do not really have sources in Thai about this Siamese embassy – except the manuscript (coded 317) discovered by Predee Phisphumvidhi at the Oriental Manuscripts Department (Division des Manuscrits orientaux) of the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, entitled *Ton Thang Farangset* ("The Way to France") and written in Siamese between 1686 and 1687 by one of the Siamese ambassadors or one of the secretaries of this embassy. So, in order to reconstruct the astonishing flurry of diplomatic exchange between France and Siam during this period, it can be said that this diary can fill in the gap.

In conclusion, this edition of this manuscript ought to be the standard point of reference for all future scholarship in this domain and, therefore, it is to be highly recommended to all historians working on this period.

• *Roots of Violence in Indonesia*, Freek Colombijn & J. Thomas Lindblad (eds.), Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002, vii+348 p.

By Glenn SMITH

This volume contains papers presented at the Leiden University workshop on "Violence in Indonesia. Its historical roots and its contemporary

manifestations" in December 2000. The revised papers take into account developments up to early 2001. This useful anthology of essays is divided into three parts. The first part, "Historical continuity," paints through case studies a picture of violence as an ever-present part of the Indonesian state. The second part, "Army violence," specifically looks at the role of the armed forces in organizing mass violence, particularly during the revolution, the New Order government (1965-1998), and in East Timor. The third part, "Communal violence," considers the phenomena of ethnic conflict and mob justice.

In the introduction, the editors identify seven points characterizing Indonesian patterns of violence: 1) violence is legitimized by its authors; 2) for violence to be legitimate, it must be aimed at outsiders, so victims must first be constructed as such; 3) when the outsider is dehumanized, the violence is particularly brutal; 4) violence is perpetrated mainly by male youth, who gain a heroic aura by taking on attributes of the *pemuda* youth fighters during the Indonesian independence struggle; 5) the actual violence is carried out by thugs employed by political and military elites; 6) the state has a history of using army and police violence against its own people; 7) communal violence in its many forms is rife, even among ordinary people, and is largely condoned by the security forces. Although here the editors (and later many of the authors) seek to identify cultural patterns specific to Indonesia, they have probably identified near-universals. This is no doubt due to the uniformity of violent training dispensed through colonization and globalization.

In "A Genealogy of violence," Henk Schulte Nordholt traces the roots of Indonesian violence to the Dutch colonial legacy, to the series of wars of pacification and repression that spanned the period from the late seventeenth century to the twentieth century. As Schulte Nordholt notes, "the colonial expansion created a state of violence which is only marginally recognized in Dutch history books" (p. 37). No more telling example than Aceh, where colonial troops killed about 75,000 Achenese (15% of the population), a figure that cannot be compared with the estimated 5,000 killed by the Indonesian army since the mid-1980s. Henk Maier's piece ("Telling tales, cutting throats: The guts of Putu Wijaya") on violence in Putu