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A HISTORY OF THAILAND

This lively, accessible book is the first new history of Thailand in English for two decades. Drawing on new Thai-language research, it ranges widely over political, economic, social, and cultural themes.

Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit reveal how a world of mandarin nobles and unfree labour evolved into a rural society of smallholder peasants and an urban society populated mainly by migrants from southern China. They trace how a Buddhist cosmography adapted to new ideas of time and space, and a traditional polity was transformed into a new nation-state under a strengthened monarchy.

The authors cover the contests between urban nationalists, ambitious generals, communist rebels, business politicians, and social movements to control the nation-state and redefine its purpose. They describe the dramatic changes wrought by a booming economy, globalization, and the evolution of mass society. Finally, they show how Thailand's path is still being contested by those who believe in change from above and those who fight for democracy and liberal values.

Chris Baker taught Asian history at Cambridge University, and has lived in Thailand for over twenty years. He is now an independent writer, researcher, and translator. **Pasuk Phongpaichit** is Professor of Economics at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. She has written widely in Thai and English on the Thai economy, sex industry, corruption, illegal economy, and social movements. Together, they have co-authored *Thailand: Economics and Politics*, *Thailand's Boom and Bust*, *Thailand's Crisis*, and *Thaksin: The Business of Politics in Thailand*.

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Preface

History was invented for the nation-state. It has a tendency to imagine 'the false unity of a self-same, national subject evolving through time' (Prasenjit Duara). All too easily, the nation becomes something natural which always existed but was only properly realized in the nation-state. In reaction against this tendency, historians today prefer to write about people, things, ideas, localities, regions, or the globe – anything but the nation. Or else they write reflective histories about the interplay between the nation and the production of its own history.

The approach adopted here is to make the career of the nation-state the explicit focus of the story. One of the themes of this book is about how the idea of the nation and the machinery of the nation-state were established in Thailand, and then how different social forces tried to make use of it – by reinterpreting what the nation meant, and by seeking to control or influence the use of state power. The second major theme is about the evolution of the social forces involved. After the introductory chapter, the chapters alternate between these two themes, though the division is rough not rigid.

The publishers want the books in this series to be accessible to a wide readership, not too long and not overloaded with academic referencing. Our policy has been to limit footnoting to the sources for direct quotations. The appendix of 'Readings' cites major published works in English, but rather little has been published in English on modern Thailand over the past generation. In Thai there has been a huge amount, and even more exists in unpublished theses in both Thai and English. Our dependence on these works should be easily recognizable by their authors and other experts. Some of the most important are: Srisak Vallibhotama, Geoff Wade, Phiset Jiajanphong, Sratsawadi Ongsakun on early history; Nidhi Eoseewong, Saichon Sattayanurak on early Bangkok society; Davisakdi Puaksom, Attachak Sattayanurak, Rujaya Abhakorn on the Chulalongkorn reform era; Phimpraphai Phisanbut, Chamnongsri Rutnin, Panni Bualek on city society; Chatthip Nartsupha, David Johnston,

Preface

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Atsushi Kitahara on rural society; Nakharin Mektrairat, Eiji Murashima, Thamrongsak Petchloetanan, Chanida Phromphayak Puaksom, Saichon Sattayanurak, Chaloeemkiat Phianuan, Morakot Jewachinda, Vichitvong na Pombejra, Phenphisut Intraphirom, Matt Copeland on nationalisms; Chalong Soontravanich, Somsak Jeamteerasakul, Suthachai Yimprasoet, Charnvit Kasetsiri on the American era; Praphat Pintobtaeng, Thirayuth Boonmi, Anek Laothamatas, Ubonrat Siriyuvasak, James Ockey, Kasian Tejapira, Thongchai Winichakul on Thailand since 1975. We would like to record our appreciation and thanks, along with apologies for any shortcomings in our use of these works.

The book was written in Thailand but with indispensable help from forays to libraries and research centres. We are especially grateful to the Center of Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto University, Nordic Institute of Asian Studies in Copenhagen, Johns Hopkins SAIS in Washington, and the libraries of the Australian National University and Cambridge University.

We would like to thank Kevin Hewison, Craig Reynolds, Malcom Falkus, Grant Evans, Andrew Brown, and John Funston who commented on earlier drafts of the manuscript.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION AND NAMES

Official spellings are used for kings and places, and conventional forms for some well-known names. Otherwise, Thai is translated using the Royal Institute system, with the exception of using 'j' for *jo jan*.

Abbreviations

BAAC	Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives
CDA	Constitution Drafting Assembly
CEO	chief executive officer
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CP	Charoen Pokphand group of companies
CPD	Campaign for Popular Democracy
CPT	Communist Party of Thailand
GDP	gross domestic product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISOC	Internal Security Operations Command
ITV	Independent Television
JPPCC	Joint Private Public Consultative Committee
KMT	Kuomintang
MP	member of parliament
NESDB	National Economic and Social Development Board, the planning agency
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIO	National Identity Office
NPKC	National Peacekeeping Council
PFT	Peasants Federation of Thailand
PPB	Privy Purse Bureau
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
TRT	Thai Rak Thai Party (Thai love Thai)
UN	United Nations
USAID	US Agency for International Development

Glossary

<i>angyi</i>	Chinese secret society
baht	unit of currency
<i>barami</i>	charisma, innate authority
Bodhisatta	a future Buddha
<i>cakkavatin</i>	the universal emperor in Buddhist cosmology
<i>chaiyaphum</i>	‘victorious emplacement’; the science of siting a city
Chakri	the name of the Bangkok dynasty; adapted from King Rama I’s former title as a minister of the military
<i>chaophraya</i>	one of the highest non-royal titles in traditional ranking system
<i>chat</i>	birth, race, nation
<i>chatprathet</i>	nation-state
<i>chedi</i>	stupa, reliquary temple
<i>choduek</i>	traditional title for head of the Chinese community
compradore	agent of colonial firm, liaising with local partners or customers
corvée	labour exacted by a feudal lord
<i>ekkarat</i>	a unified and independent kingdom
<i>farang</i>	westerner, European, foreigner
Isan	the northeast region
<i>itthiphon</i>	influence
<i>jao</i>	lord, ruler; member of the royal family/clan
<i>jao pho</i>	godfather, mafia
<i>jao sua</i>	merchant prince, especially Chinese (Thai adaptation of a Chinese phrase)
<i>jap jong</i>	process of staking a claim to unused land

<i>jataka</i>	collection of tales of the former lives of the Buddha; often used for preaching, or as the subjects of temple murals
<i>jek</i>	pejorative term for Chinese in Thailand
<i>kamnan</i>	the head of a group of villages
<i>kanmueang ning</i>	quiet or calm politics
<i>kathin</i>	ceremony of presenting new robes to Buddhist monks
<i>kha ratchakan</i>	bureaucrat; originally, the servant of the king
<i>khon samai mai</i>	modern people
<i>khun nang</i>	nobility; collective term for the old service bureaucracy
<i>khwaen</i>	a confederation of <i>mueang</i>
<i>lak ratchakan</i>	the principle of service to the king
<i>lak wicha</i>	the principle of law and rationality
<i>luk thung</i>	‘child of the field’, a music style
<i>lukjin</i>	‘child of China’, term for Thai-born descendants of a Chinese immigrant
<i>mahanakhon</i>	‘great cities’
<i>mankhong</i>	security
<i>manutsayatham</i>	humanitarianism, or a belief in people
<i>muang fai</i>	weir-and-channel irrigation system
<i>mueang</i>	a political unit, originally a city-state, but applicable to countries
<i>munnai</i>	overseer
<i>naga</i>	mythological serpent
<i>nai</i>	boss, overseer
<i>nakleng</i>	tough guy
<i>nibbana</i>	nirvana, release from worldly existence in Buddhist teaching
<i>nirat</i>	a poetic form combining travel, remembrance of loved one(s), and observation of nature
<i>phatthana</i>	development
<i>phleng phua chiwit</i>	songs for life
<i>pho khun</i>	a paternal ruler in the legendary mode of the Sukhothai kings
<i>pho liang</i>	patron
<i>pho yu pho kin</i>	‘enough to live and eat’, sufficiency
<i>phrai</i>	in the traditional order, a freeman commoner bound to corvée

Glossary

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<i>phrai mangmi</i>	rich commoners
<i>phrakhleng</i>	the royal treasury (and its minister) in traditional government
<i>phramahakasat</i>	great king
<i>phu di</i>	'good people'; the aristocracy
<i>phu noi</i>	little (ordinary) people
<i>phu yai</i>	big (powerful) people
<i>phumibun</i>	'man of merit', person of special or supernatural power, sometimes leader of millenarian revolt
<i>phung ton eng</i>	self-reliance
<i>prachakhom</i>	people's assemblies
<i>prathet</i>	country
<i>prathetchat</i>	nation-state
<i>protégé</i>	someone under the protection of a colonial power (Britain, France) under the extraterritorial provisions of colonial treaties
<i>rachasap</i>	'royal language'; a specialized vocabulary for addressing kings
<i>rai</i>	unit of area, = 0.16 hectare
<i>ratchathani</i>	abode of kings; the inner, core kingdom
<i>ratthaniyom</i>	cultural mandate; state edict
<i>sae</i>	Chinese clan name
<i>sakdina</i>	'power over fields'; traditional system of numerical ranks; sometimes used as referent for Thai equivalent of feudalism
<i>samakkhi(tham)</i>	unity
<i>samakhom lap</i>	secret society
<i>sanchat thai</i>	of Thai nationality
<i>sawatdi</i>	greeting
<i>Seri Thai</i>	Free Thai, resistance movement against the Japanese during Second World War
<i>siwilai</i>	Thai adaptation of the word 'civilized', encapsulating aspirations for 'progress'
<i>sukhaphiban</i>	sanitary districts
<i>tambon</i>	administrative unit consisting of a group of villages
<i>thamma</i>	dharma, the teachings of the Buddha; righteous conduct
<i>thammaracha</i>	dharmaraja, a ruler adhering to Buddhist morality
<i>thammatthut</i>	ambassadors of <i>thamma</i>

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<i>that</i>	slave
<i>thesaphiban</i>	‘control over territory’
<i>thotsaphit</i>	the ten laws of royal conduct
<i>thudochutham</i>	pilgrimage
<i>Traiphum</i>	‘Three Worlds’; an early Buddhist cosmology, perhaps written in the fourteenth century
<i>wat</i>	Buddhist temple, monastery
<i>wiang</i>	fortified settlement
<i>wihan</i>	assembly hall in a Buddhist temple
<i>winaya</i>	the code of discipline for Buddhist monks

Chronology

- 1351 Legendary foundation of Ayutthaya
- 1569 First fall of Ayutthaya to the Burmese
- 1767 Second fall of Ayutthaya
- 1782 New capital established at Bangkok; accession of King Yotfa, Rama I
- 1822 First trade treaty with Britain, negotiated by John Crawfurd
- 1851 Accession of King Mongkut, Rama IV
- 1855 Bowring treaty
- 1863 French protectorate of Cambodia
- 1868 Accession of King Chulalongkorn, Rama V
- 1872 Chulalongkorn's visit to India
- 1874 Front Palace Incident; Anglo-Siam Treaty over Chiang Mai; edict abolishing slavery
- 1885 Prince Prisdang's memorial on a constitution
- 1890 Establishment of Privy Purse Bureau
- 1892 Formation of ministerial council
- 1893 French gunboats threaten Bangkok (Paknam Incident); foundation of Ministry of Interior
- 1897 Chulalongkorn's first visit to Europe
- 1901 Ubon *phumibun* revolt
- 1902 Phrae revolt; southern states revolt; Sangha Act
- 1905 Conscription edict
- 1908 Sun Yat Sen visit to Bangkok
- 1909 Anglo-Siamese Treaty finalizes Siam's boundaries
- 1910 Accession of King Vajiravudh, Rama VI; Chinese strike in Bangkok
- 1912 Plot uncovered in military
- 1913 Nationality Act; Surname Act; Vajiravudh's *The Jews of the East*
- 1916 Foundation of Chulalongkorn University

- 1917 Siamese contingent to fight on Allied side in Europe; first 'political newspaper' published
- 1920 First publication of Prince Damrong's *Our Wars with the Burmese*
- 1923 Press Act; W. C. Dodd's *The Tai Race* published
- 1925 Accession of King Prajadhipok, Rama VII
- 1927 People's Party founded in Paris
- 1928 Kulap Saipradit's *Luk phu chai* (A real man); Khun Wichitmatra's *Lak thai* (Origins of the Thai); Wichit Wathakan's *Mahaburut* (Great men); boycott of Japanese goods
- 1930 Ho Chi Minh (intermittently in Siam since 1928 organizing Vietnamese émigrés) forms Communist Party of Siam
- 1932 Revolution converts absolute to constitutional monarchy (24 June)
- 1933 Boworadet Revolt
- 1934 Foundation of Thammasat University; Phibun becomes minister of defence and army chief
- 1935 Abdication of King Prajadhipok
- 1936 Wichit Wathakan's play *Luat suphan* (Blood of Suphanburi)
- 1937 Second boycott of Japanese imports
- 1938 Phibun becomes prime minister; Thai Rice Company formed
- 1939 Siam renamed as Thailand; series of state edicts starts; Constitution Monument completed
- 1941 Japanese army enters Thailand; Thailand declares war on Allies; battle with French
- 1942 Phibun's Sangha Act; Communist Party of Thailand refounded
- 1944 Seri Thai network established; Phibun ousted as prime minister; foundation of Bangkok Bank
- 1945 Seni Pramoj recalled from US to front peace negotiations
- 1946 Pridi's constitution; death of King Ananda Mahidol, Rama VIII; accession of King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Rama IX
- 1946 First May Day rally
- 1947 First national labour federation; coup returns Phibun to power
- 1948 Troubles in Muslim south after Haji Sulong's arrest; CPT adopts Maoist strategy
- 1949 Palace Rebellion, Pridi flees
- 1950 Phibun's sweep against Peace Movement
- 1951 King Rama IX returns to Thailand; Silent or Radio Coup; first US military aid
- 1954 SEATO formed
- 1955 Phibun's democracy interlude

Chronology

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- 1957 Sarit Thanarat takes power by coup; completion of Mitraphap highway
- 1958 Sarit's second coup and repression
- 1960 Thai troops fight in Laos
- 1961 Khrong Chandawong executed; CPT forms first rural base in Phuphan
- 1962 Sarit's Sangha Act; Rusk-Khoman agreement confirms US security alliance
- 1963 Death of Sarit, succeeded by Thanom Kittikhachon; *Social Science Review* founded
- 1964 First air strike on Vietnam flown from Thailand
- 1965 'First shot' of communist insurgency
- 1966 Jit Phumisak shot dead in Phuphan
- 1967 Thai troops fight in South Vietnam; Hmong rebellion in northern hills
- 1968 Restoration of constitution
- 1971 Thanom coup against own government and abrogation of constitution; Village Scouts formed
- 1972 Student protest against Japanese goods, and for restoration of constitution
- 1973 Student uprising fells Thanom (14 October)
- 1974 Peasants Federation of Thailand formed; Dusit Thani strike
- 1975 Elected governments headed by Kukrit and Seni Pramoj; *Nawaphon* and Red Gaurs formed; US troops start to depart
- 1976 Massacre at Thammasat University and military coup (6 October)
- 1979 Restoration of elections and parliament
- 1980 Prem Tinsulanond as prime minister; political policy to end insurgency
- 1981 Failed April Fool's Day Coup
- 1984 Devaluation of baht
- 1985 Failed coup; Chamlong Srimuang elected mayor of Bangkok
- 1986 Nidhi Eoseewong's study of King Taksin published
- 1987 Remnants of CPT arrested; Sujit Wongthet's *Jek pon lao* published
- 1988 Chatichai Choonhavan becomes first elected prime minister since 1976; Nam Choan dam project cancelled
- 1991 Military coup by NPKC; Anand Panyarachun as prime minister

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1992	NPKC prime minister Suchinda Kraprayun forced out by street demonstrations of ‘Black May’; <i>Kho Jo Ko</i> protest against forest resettlement; death of Phumpuang Duangjan; Chuan Leekpai as prime minister
1994	Thai Culture Promotion Year; King Bhumibol’s sufficiency farming scheme; Pak Mun dam completed
1995	Establishment of Constitution Drafting Assembly; Assembly of the Poor founded
1996	Banharn Silpa-archa ousted after no-confidence debate
1997	Assembly of the Poor 99-day protest; passage of ‘People’s Constitution’; onset of economic crisis
1998	Foundation of Thai Rak Thai Party by Thaksin Shinawatra
2001	Thaksin Shinawatra becomes prime minister