

เอกสารประกอบการสัมมนาวิชาการ
ของ 30 ปี ความสัมพันธ์ไทย - จีน 600 ปี ชำปองกง/เจิ้งเหอ กับอยุธยาและอุษาคเนย์
วันศุกร์ที่ 25 พฤศจิกายน 2548

เอกสารหมายเลข 6

Zheng He - Sam Po Kong: History and Myth in Thailand

Charnvit Kasetsiri



三十周年泰—中关系
六百周年三保公
郑和与大城和东南亚

ไทย-จีน ใช้อื่นไกล...

ที่มา: คีตซุนย์ ตายโป่งที่ พิพิธภัณฑ์เมืองเก่าเมือง 1 ตุลาคม 2518

ขอเชิญร่วมงานสัมมนาวิชาการประจำปี 25

30 ปีความสัมพันธ์ไทย-จีน 600 ปี ข้าป๋อง/เจิ้งเหอ กับอยุธยาและสุโขทัย

ในวันศุกร์ที่ 25 พฤศจิกายน 2548 ณ หอประชุมกองทัพเรือ กรุงเทพฯ ตั้งแต่เวลา 8.00 - 17.00

เปิดงานโดย ฯพณฯ พลเอก เปรม ติณสูลานนท์ ประธานองคมนตรีและรัฐบุรุษ
กล่าวรายงานโดย พล.ต.อ.ภา สารสิน ปีกงานโดย ศ.เสนต์ จาม

เสวนา "ปัจจุบันและอนาคตของความสัมพันธ์ไทย-จีน" โดย สุทธิพันธ์ จิระวิวัฒน์, วรศักดิ์ มัทธโนบล, กุญแจกิจดาว, ประทุมพร วัชร

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"ข้าป๋อง/เจิ้งเหอ จีน อยุธยากับอยุธยาคนย์" โดย สิบแสง พรหมบุญ, วิไลจน์ ตั้งวางฉวย, Bai Chun, เวิจิ้นฉัน จันทร, ชาญวิทย์ เกษ

ทรงศักดิ์ เพชรเลิศอนันต์, ทรงยศ นวพรหม, สมฤทธิ์

ค่าลงทะเบียน ท่านละ 500 บาท พร้อมบัตรของที่ระลึกและหนังสือ "พระเจ้ากรุงสยาม กับ เรือว่าจอห์น เม

โธมัสเงินเข้าญูรี "30 ปี ความสัมพันธ์ไทยจีน" ธนาคารกรุงไทยจำกัด สาขาอยุธยาพหลโยธิน เลขที่ 196-0-0227

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โทรสาร 0-2433-8713 e-mail : kitsunee_tai@yahoo.com รับประทานอาหาร

ชมและซื้อ
หนังสือ
ความสัมพันธ์
ไทย-จีน



มูลนิธิสถาบันเอเชียศึกษา



Zheng He-Sam Po Kong: History and Myth in Thailand

Chanvit Kasetsiri

Introduction

In Thailand there are three very well-known Buddhist temples (*wat*) which are associated with the name of Sam Po Kong/Zheng He. These are Wat Phanan Choeng in Ayutthaya, an old capital of Siam, Wat Kalayanamit in Bangkok-Thonburi, and Wat Uphai in Chacheongsao. The first temple is reported to have been built in 1324 or eighty-one years before the first 1405 expedition of the Grand Eunuch-Admiral. The latter two, however, are relatively new, probably belonging to the first half of the nineteenth century. They are like spiritual extension, continuation, and reproduction of the original one in Ayutthaya.

In the main hall of each of these temples there is a huge seated Buddha image known as Luang Pho To (Big Buddha). The temples and the images are very popular and frequently visited by Thai, Sino-Thai

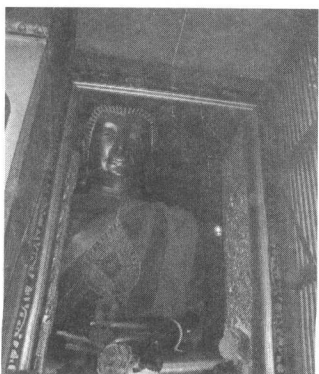


Wat Kalaya, Sam Po Kong Temple in Bangkok



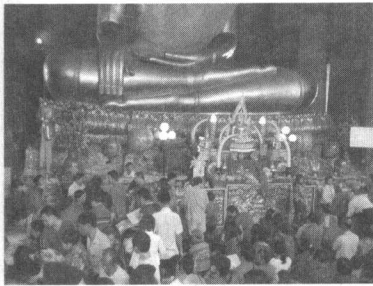
Wat Phanan Choeng Ayutthaya

and other worshippers. Interestingly, every August the temples hold a merit making ceremony known as *thing kachad*. Again this is very popular and attracts a good number of believers and tourists. It is possibly that the *thing kachad* ceremony originated from that of the 'Hungry Ghost Festival' in China. Formerly, before the days of the Thai nation-state, the *thing kachad* had been practiced by early Kings of Bangkok from Rama I (1782-1809) to Mongkut or Rama IV (1851-1868).

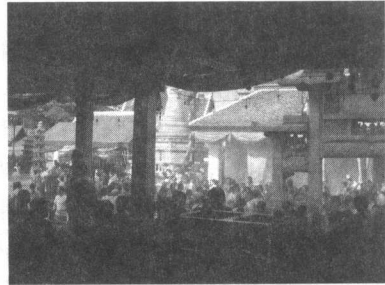
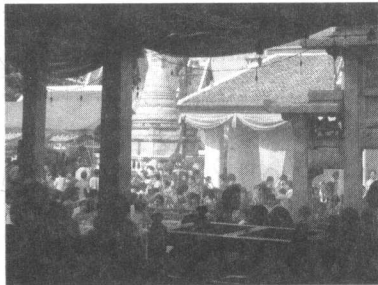


Luang Pho To หลวงพ่อโต
Big Buddha Wat Phanan Choeng Ayutthaya

It is because of these temples, their devotees and festivals that memories of Sam Po Kong/Zheng He is kept alive in Thailand for hundred of years. However, it is debatable whether Zheng He had personally visited Hsien-lo or Siam i.e. Ayutthaya, during some of his seven expeditions (1405-1433). Besides it is also problematic since the meaning of Sam Po Kong and/or Zheng He to Sino-Thai and local Thai are not one of the same. This paper, therefore, will explore myth and reality of Sam Po Kong/Zheng He in Thailand. It will try to show how historians have come to believe of 'what actually happened'. At the same time it will present views of common people: those of Sino-Thai who are true believers and those local Thai who never know or even have heard of Zheng He.



It is because of the temples and their devotees that memory of Zheng He has been kept alive in Thailand for hundred of years.



Wat Kalaya Temple in Bangkok 2005

Zheng He: History and Myth

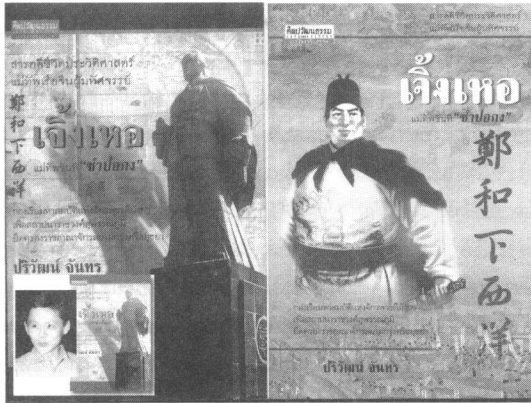
Historians of Thailand believe that Zheng He came to Ayutthaya (Sien-lo). They conclude that the presence of the Eunuch-Admiral and his Chinese crews had a strong impact on internal politics of the Thai kingdom. It was because of its intimate relationship with the Ming Court, the Suphanburi Dynasty was able to gain firm control over the throne of Ayutthaya. It should be noted here that the first fifty years of the Ayutthaya kingdom, i.e. the second half of the fourteenth century, there was a fierce and bloody struggle between two ruling Houses: the Uthong and the Suphanburi Dynasties. Power changed hand back and forth between members of the two Houses. But it seems that after close relations were cultivated with the Ming Court and that with an 'audience' with Zheng He, the Suphanburi Dynasty was able to establish itself as the only major power of central Siam. This was from the reign of King Intharacha (1408-1424) on till the second half of the sixteenth century. King Intharacha, himself, was believed to have been to China and that he also met Zheng He.

In his 1970 Ph.D. thesis at the University of Wisconsin, Dr. Suebsaeng Promboon, a well-known Thai historian concludes that it was during his second expedition (1407-9) that Zheng He personally visited Ayutthaya and that a Suphanburi prince (Intharacha) who later became king was reported to have had an audience with him. (Suebsaeng, p. 75). It is suggested that the audience might have taken place at or nearby Wat Phanan Choeng. Suebsaeng's hypothesis seems to be well accepted and has been faithfully followed by Charnvit (1976) and D.K. Wyatt (1999).

As late as in July 2003, Phiset Chiachanphong, a senior specialist on archeology and museum of Thailand Fine Arts Department has gone further by stating that "[The new] King Intharacha's legitimacy was new and that it came from the Chinese Emperor, Son of Heaven, bestowing to him by way of Zheng He's fleet. It replaced the old legitimacy which is '*thewa sommut*' [*devaraja*] of the old founding

dynasty of Ayutthya (Hsien-lo)” In effect, Phiset’s statement suggests that Thai kingship had moved from that of ‘Indianized’ to ‘Sinized’!.

Likewise, Pariwat Chanthon, a young writer of Sino-Thai background published a book in the Thai language called ‘Cheng Ho-Sam Po Kong: the Eunuch Admiral’. The book became one of the best sellers of the year 2003. Pariwat devotes one chapter of his 13 chapters (280 pages) to the role of Zheng He in Ayutthaya, Melaka, and Sri Lanka. The young writer follows the traditional line of Thai historiography as mentioned above, i.e. Zheng He’s visit had propped up the Suphanburi Dynasty. However, he raised some light questions whether the Admiral really visited Ayutthaya and that whether his huge junks could sail all the way up the (Menam) Chao Phraya River and gave an audience to Prince Intharacha.. Ayutthaya is 100 kilometers from the sea and that its mouth has a natural bar obstructing big ships to sail through.



Zheng He:
A bestseller-Thai Version
Pariwat Chanthon

G.W. Skinner, a noted scholar on China and Southeast Asia, has earlier expressed his doubt about Zheng He’s personal visit to Siam. In his 1957 monumental work: *Chinese Society in Thailand*, (pp. 2-3) Skinner says “It cannot be shown that Cheng Ho himself ever went to Ayutthaya, but certainly the capital and probably other parts of Siam were visited by several important members of his suites, including Ma Huan (C 5), Hung Pao (C 6), and Fei Hsin (C 7).”

If one looks at Ma Huan's record '*Ying-Yai Sheng-Lan: 'The Overall Survey of the Ocean Shores'* [1433] *translated from the Chinese Text edited by Feng Ch'eng-Chun with introduction, notes and appendices by J.V.G. Mills, 1970*', of the seven expeditions between 1405-33, only three paid visit to Siam-Ayutthaya. They were the second (1407-09), the sixth (1421-22), and the seventh (1431-33).

According to Ma Huan the second expedition (1407-09) was rather unimportant; there were 249 ships as compared to 317 ships and 27,872 men of the first 1405 expedition. Zheng He himself probably was not on this second trip. As for the sixth expedition (1421-22) in which foreign ambassadors were 'escorted' home, and that the fleet visited Southeast Asian water and went as far as Hormuz (Persia), Aden, Mogadishu (now in Somalia), and Brava (in Somalia); Siam was visited only on the return journey. It was the same for the seventh and the last expedition (1431-33), Siam and many parts of the 'western ocean' including Africa were visited by Zheng He's emissaries, but not himself. Therefore, it is likely that the grand eunuch admiral Zheng He never came to Siam-Ayutthaya.

We do not know for certain why or why not Zheng He did visit Ayutthaya (Hsien-lo)? Was it out of the main sea-route, rather unimportant, or unfavorable? (Wade 2000, p. 255, 1505 episode). Ayutthaya, established in 1351 as a new capital of Siam, was becoming a very important *enterpot* of Southeast Asia. It sent regular tributary missions to China and at the same time it attempted to extend influence down to the Malay Peninsula in the area of Melaka and what is present-day Singapore. At one time China had to reprimand Ayutthaya not to attack polities, i.e. Melaka, in the island Southeast Asia. This was in 1419 when Emperor Yong-le sent an instruction to "San-lai Po-mo-li-za-di-lai" (Somdet Borommarachathirat) reprimanding the 'king of Siam'. The king in question must be Intharacha who earlier was supposed to have had an audience with Zheng He. Since it is very revealing the translation (Wade 2000) should be quoted in full:

"I reverently took on the mandate of Heaven and I rule the Chinese and

the yi. In my rule, I embody Heaven and Earth's love and concern for the welfare of all things and look on all equally, without distinguishing between one and other. You, king, have been able to respect Heaven and serve the superior and have fulfilled your tribute duties. I have been greatly pleased by this for a long time.

Recently Yi-si-han-da-er-Sha [=Iskander Shah], the king of the country of Melaka, inherited the throne [of Melaka]. He had been able to carry on his father's will and has personally brought his wife and children to the Court to offer tribute. This loyalty in serving the superior is no different from yours. However, I have learned that, without reason, you have intended to send troops against him. With the dangerous weapons troops carry, when two sides meet in combat, it is inevitable that there will be great injuries on both sides. Thus, those we are fond of employing troops do not have virtuous hearts. The king of the country of Melaka has already become part of "the within", and he is a minister of the Court. If he has committed an offence, you should report details to the Court. You must not rashly send troops on this account

If you do so, it is not the same as having no Court? Such actions will certainly not be your wishes. Perhaps it is your ministers using your name in dispatching troops to pursue private quarrels. You should consider such matters deeply and not allow yourself to be deceived. If you develop good relations with neighbouring countries and do not engage in mutual aggression, the prosperity which will result will be limitless. You, king, should bear this in mind!"

We do not know if the Ayutthayan King Intharacha obeyed this imperial 'instruction'. Perhaps he did. And there is no record of wars between Ayutthaya and Melaka until mid fifteenth century or some thirty years later. This was during the reign of King Trilok (1448-88), a grand-son of Intharacha, who sent a fleet to attack Melaka. It was possible that the Melakans defeated this Thai invasion as recorded in Malay annals.

Whether Zheng He was in Ayutthaya or not, his memory lives on and frequently reproduced or reinvented in Siam-Thailand. Looking into Chinese sources G. Wade of Singapore NUS Asian Research Institute came up with this information:

Under the “Landmarks” section of its account of Siam, the Dong-xi-yang kao (Tung-hsi-yang k’ao) of 1618 says:

“Tin Gate: A place where all the Chinese who come and go must pass. Here Zheng He erected a lofty frame with a horizontal sign-board inscribed ‘The Country of Tian-zhu’” [Tian-zhu usually refers to India] **“The Li-bai temple: A temple built during the Yong-le reign. It is very large and beautiful, and the Buddha image is tall and as large as the hall.”**

“San-bao Temple: Located at the second gate [probably custom house]. **Here they worship the eunuch director Zheng He”**

“The Western Stupa: This stupa has no spire. It is said that when the barbarians first built the stupa, they completed it successfully. However, Zheng He ordered that it be razed and later, despite repeated efforts, they could never complete it again.”

An earlier entry notes “San-bao Port [mean a channel or landing place]: **In this port there are no crocodiles.”**

Gathering from these information it is clear that by the early seventeenth century Zheng He was deified; and that the temple with large Buddha image, where Zheng He was worshiped, and where there was no crocodiles, must be Wat Phanan Choeng or area very nearby.

Again, G.W. Skinner (pp. 129-130) has this to say:

“One type of Thai Buddhist temple in particular came, by a chance similarity of name, to be major places of worship for the Siam Chinese. The leader of the great Ming maritime expeditions, Cheng Ho, had another name, San-pao, and is commonly known as San-pao T’ai—chien (C44). In Buddhism there is a basic concept of the ‘Three Treasures’ which refers to the three essentials of the faith: the Buddha, the Doctrine, and the Priesthood. The concept of the Three Treasures was literally translated into Chinese, both in China and in Siam, as San-pao (C45)

Although the pao in Cheng Ho’s small name is written with another character and has quite a different meaning (“protection”) from the pao of the Buddhist concept, the two words are pronounced exactly the same.

In the old capital of Ayutthaya, Thailand, historically known to the Chinese as Hsien-lo, there is a gigantic temple named Wat Phanan Choeng. The Wat has a big Buddha image and is one of the oldest in Thailand. It was probably established in 1324. To local Chinese and Sino-Thai the temple is known as Sam Po Kong. This indicates the connection of the temple and Zheng He and that the Grand Admiral had visited Ayutthaya during some of his seven voyages (1405-1433).

It is hardly surprising, therefore, the largely illiterate Chinese of Siam confused the two homophonous names in their folklore. Cheng Ho was deified in Siam perhaps as early as the seventeenth century, and his name, San-pao Kung, is more often written as "Three Treasures" than as "three-protections." There is an allusion in the Ming History to a "Three Treasure" temple in Siam established by Cheng Ho, and this compounding of errors indicated that during the Ayutthayan period the confusion had already been made between the deified San-pao Kung and the Buddhist concept."

Therefore, the Buddha has become Zheng He and vice versa simply by the fusion of the pronunciation of the *pao* (treasure and/or protection). It also eased the transition for local born Chinese to the Thai form of Buddhism' fitting well with Skinner's hypothesis of Chinese 'assimilation' in Thailand.

In addition it should be noted that by the fifteenth century, Ayutthaya must have close connection with the China trade and that the Siamese capitol must have a sizable and influential Chinese community. This can be verified by archeological evidence and artifacts. In 1429, contemporarily to Zheng He and seventy-eight years after the foundation of Ayutthaya (1351), local Chinese community was so influential that it joined with the Thai king in building Wat Ratburana, one of the most important and impressive temples in Ayutthaya. The temple built by King Sam Phraya, or Boromracha II, in memory of his two brothers, Chao Ai and Chao Yi, who died in an elephant duel over the throne of Ayutthaya.

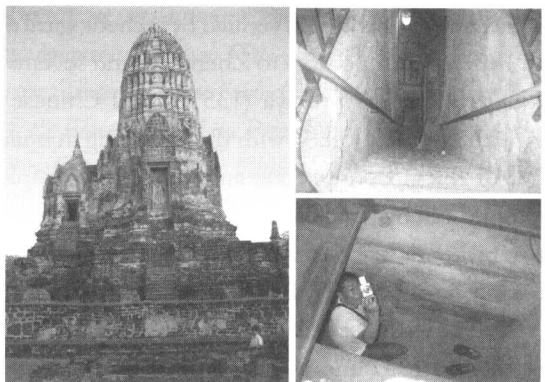
The chamber beneath the main tower of the temple was accidentally opened in 1957 and yielded a great number of Buddha images and

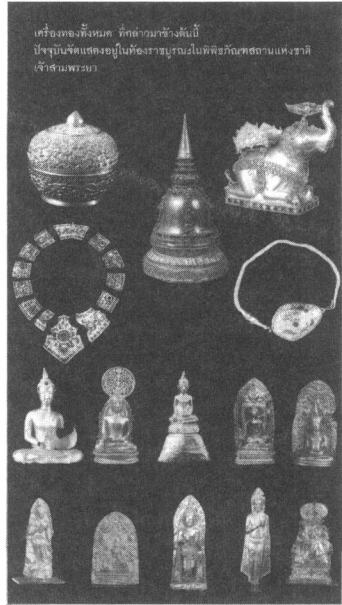
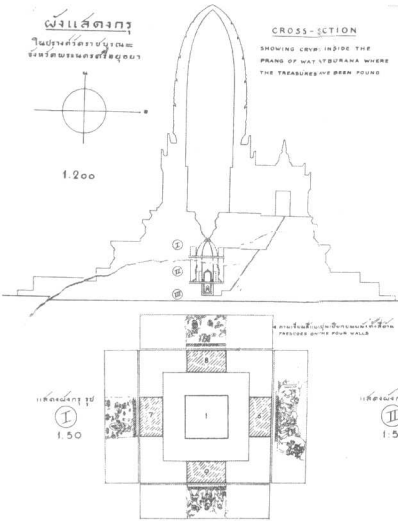


Wat Ratburana 1424

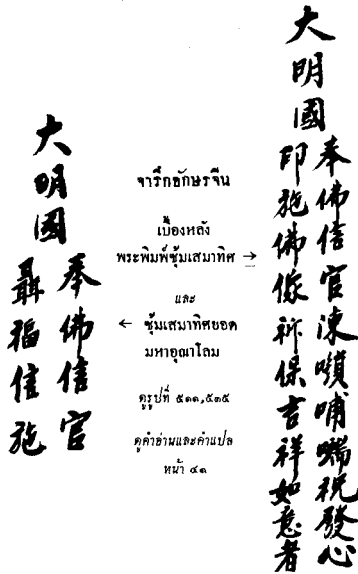
votive tablets, including various kinds of artifacts: gold regalias, miniature stupa, mural paintings, etc. A few inscriptions, written in Arabic, Chinese, Thai, and Khmer, were also discovered there. It is interesting to find that Chinese inscription indicates that there were many Chinese with various family names who joined in this royal religious activity, helping to build the temple and placing religious artifacts in the main tower.

Wat Ratburana built in 1424, accidentally opened in 1957, with much historical evidence





The Crypt of Wat Ratburana and its Discoveries" Fresco Mural Painting: Monks and Devotees



According to *Thailand, Krom Sinlapakorn, Phraphuttharup lae phraphim nai kru phraprang Wat Ratburana* [Buddha Images and Votive Tablets in the Crypt of Wat Ratburana], Bangkok 1959, a great number some small Buddha images of various art styles were discovered there. Some were incised with the so-called *Ye Dhamma* mantra (in Pali and mixed with Sanskrit, Devanagari scripts). Small numbers of these images are from South India, Sri Lanka, Burma, Nepal-Tibet. But a large number is from Thailand and nearby area divided according to their art styles: 6 Dvaravati, 6 Srivijaya, 6 Sukhothai, 36 Ayutthaya, 191 Bayon-Lopburi, and the most number is 389 of Uthong. Curiously and difficult to explain, the findings do not include Chinese style of images.

This 1957 discovery shows clearly that there was a sizeable Chinese community in the capital of Siam. Eventhough Zheng He, himself, might not have visited Ayutthaya but the impact of Chinese fleet must have been felt here. And this is why his story has been remembered, reconstructed, and reproduced for the last six hundred years.

Did Zheng He's Fleet cross the bar of the Menam Chao Phraya River?

It is interesting to point out here that some people in Thailand have raised questions about Zheng He's sailing to Ayutthaya. If his ships were so large (450 feet long, nine masts and twelve sails, 7,000 tonnes), they might not be able to sail up the Menam Chao Phraya River. I am very thankful to Chung Chee Kit who is one of specialists on ship size. This is what he has said:

“The issue of the size of the Baochuan is complex and really cannot be addressed fully in just a few paragraphs.

Essentially there are two main sources of records:-

The first source are written documents including the official history of the Ming Dynasty and the famous novel (fictional) written many years later. This suggests that the vessel was 44.4 zhang (1 zhang = 10 chinese feet) long and 18 zhang wide. The Chinese foot was shorter than the US foot, therefore the vessel was estimated to be in the region of about 350 feet (not the 450 feet). These written records also mentioned that the vessel carried 9 masts and 12 sails.

The second source came from a fragment of a steele found at the Jinghai Temple in Nanjing, commemorating the first two voyages. The text on the steele recorded that Emperor Yongle dispatched vessels of 2000 liao and 150 liao during the first 2 voyages. The liao is a volumetric measure of the size of the ship. From subsequent shipbuilding records in the late Ming and early Qing period, scholars established that the 2000 liao vessel would be about 62 metres long. From another source, the “Tian Fei Jing” or Sutra to the Goddess of the Sea, a frontispiece illustration of the Baochuan fleet was recorded, showing the vessel had 6 masts, displacing a rather high bow and stern. This “Tian Fei Jing” was written during the period of the 6th voyage, and as far as can be established, is the only contemporary drawing of the

Baochuan, albeit in a stylistic fashion.

For a long time, there had been debates regarding the true size of the Baochuan. In summary, scholars are divided into two camps, the 'Romantics', who insists that the larger 44 zhang vessel of the historical records to be correct, and the 'Realists' who feel that the smaller 2000 liao vessel is nearer to the truth. Debates between the two groups had been quite heated. The Romantics' strongest argument is that we have to rely on the historical records ... unless they can be proven wrong. Sentimentally, they also feel that the 600th anniversary is not a good time to revise history. The Realists point to the fact that both the Jinghai Temple steele fragment and the Tian Fei Jing illustrations are contemporaneous, and therefore should be more accurate.

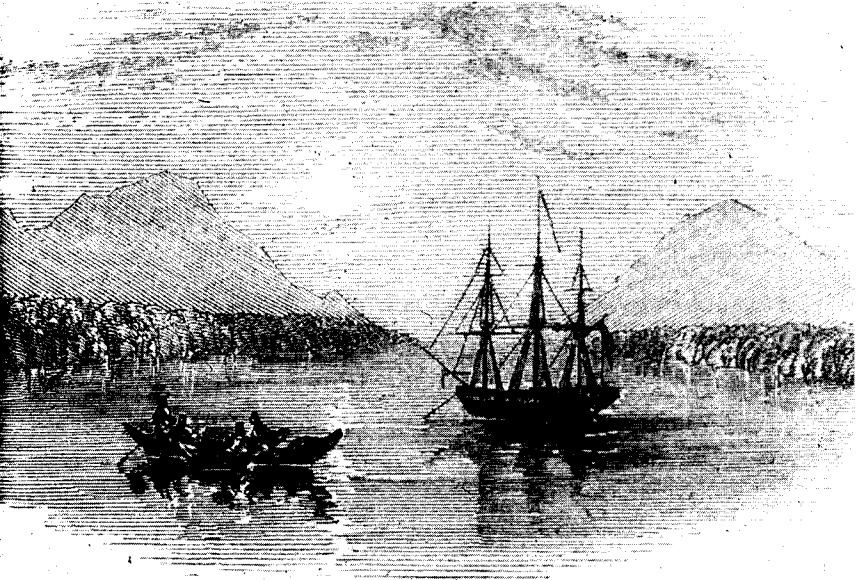
The 'Romantics' tend to be more vocal, and many overseas Chinese tend to want to believe them because the larger vessel strokes their cultural pride (hence the popularity of Gavin Menzies). The Realists are more quiet, but many academic papers have been written to support their view. Their ranks are also growing, because China has in recent years been developing as a major shipbuilding and maritime nation, and there are many marine engineers and naval architects there who know the physical constraints imposed by material, method of ship construction, economic considerations, ship operation etc. These constraints cannot be ignore through denial.

The greatest flaw of the 44 zhang design is not in its size. The pyramids are real, but that does not mean that we can build them again even with today's technology. The Romantics have always argued that just because there are no vessels of this size built in recent times, we cannot assume that it could not be built previously. The greatest flaw is the length/ beam ratio of the 44 zhang, which is an obese 2.58. With this L/ B ratio, any sailor who has handled a sailboat will know that it is impossible to tack or sail close to the wind. There are other serious technical and operational constraints, but I shall not mention them here. The 2000 liao ship is smaller, but is definitely possible. Sizewise, it would be of the order of Lord Nelson's HMS

Victory - still a grand achievement by any standard. Accepting the 2000 liao reality in no way diminishes the Chinese' cultural pride.

Other Romantics used other arguments to justify their stand. One argument is that the large Baochuan did not actually put to sea. It was a large floating palace/ reviewing stand for the Celestial Emperor to review his fleet prior to their departure."

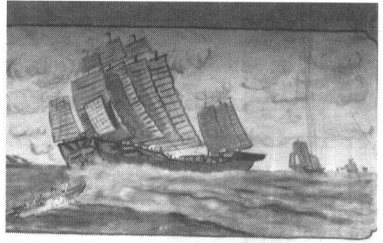
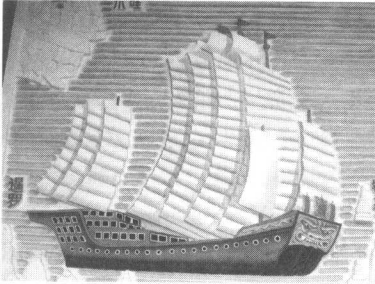
Likewise G. Wade has come up with this: The ships were at most 250 feet long and would have been able to sail up the Chao Phraya to Ayudhya quite easily.



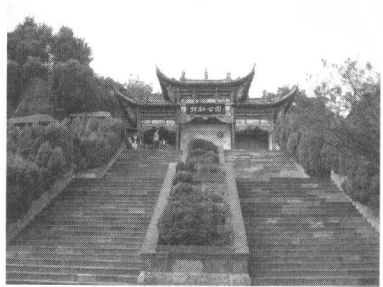
ANCHORAGE OFF THE BAR OF SIAM.

*1852 Western Impression of the Bar at the mouth
of the Menam Chao Phraya River: Gateway
to Bangkok and Ayutthaya*

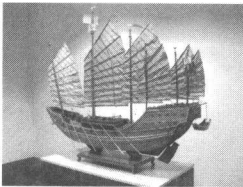
350 feet or 450, 9 masts and 12 sails or less ?



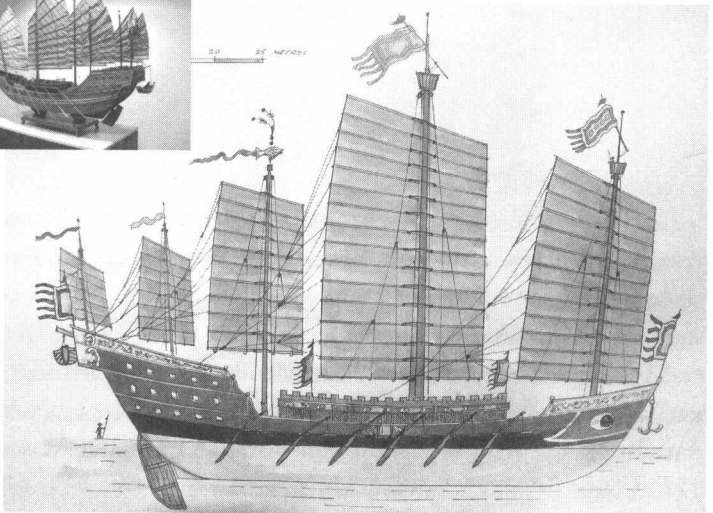
Too big to cross the Bar?

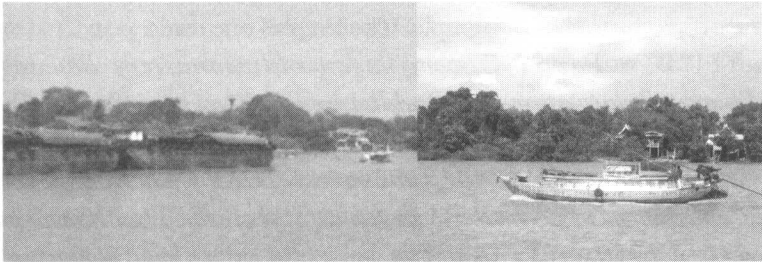
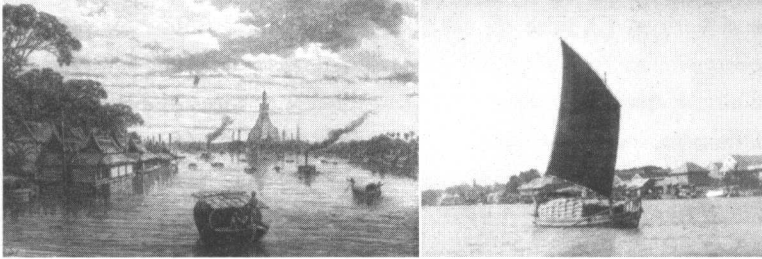


Pictures of the Ships at Zheng He's Hometown in Kunming



Model in Singapore



The Menam and Bangkok: Gateway to Ayutthaya, 19th Century*Present day, the Menam in Ayutthaya***Oral Tradition and local Thai**

During the course of writing this paper, a few field trips was conducted in April and June, 2004. Visits were made to Wat Phanan Choeng in Ayutthaya, Wat Kalayanamit in Bangkok-Thonburi, plus some adjacent areas. I watched people worship the Big Buddha Images; I interviewed locals, I made photography. My observation is that as for Sino-Thai, Zheng He is their ancestor as well as a protecting deity. For locals who are not well educated nor globally connected, they could hardly know or have ever heard of the name Zheng He. Of course they know of the name Sam Po Kong. But it is rather doubtful whether Zheng He and Sam Po Kong are the same thing to them.

As mentioned above the most important temple connecting to Zheng He/Sam Po Kong is Wat Phanan Choeng (the so-called Sam Po Kong Temple) in Ayutthaya. The temple is extremely popular among worshippers and tourists. It is rich, loud, well kept, colorfully and constantly renovated. People move around at all time, donating money,

lighting up candles and joss-sticks, paying homage to Buddha images and various Chinese deities. Chinese characters are seen almost everywhere. To my astonishment there is no statue of Zheng He and Chinese characters are those of the Three Treasures (the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha) not Three Protections signifying the Eunuch Admiral.

Before entering the main building of the Big Buddha Image one can see two big inscribed stones, one in Thai and one in English. These are official history of the temple. The English one reads:

“Wat Panan Choeng is an old monastery housing Thailand’s largest ancient Buddha image, known as “Luang Po To”. A historical chronicle states that this gilded stucco image was made in A.D. 1344, some twenty-six (26) years before the establishment of Ayutthaya as the capital of the Thai Kingdom in A.D. 1350.

Originally, the Buddha image was exposed to the elements of nature in accordance with Thai tradition where no covering structure was made over a large statue so that the magnificence of the image could well be admired from any angle as well as from any visible distance.

Chinese followers revere the Buddha image as their “Sum Po Hud Kong”, or the god protector of those who sail, since much sailing was done by the Chinese then, for trade or for migration.

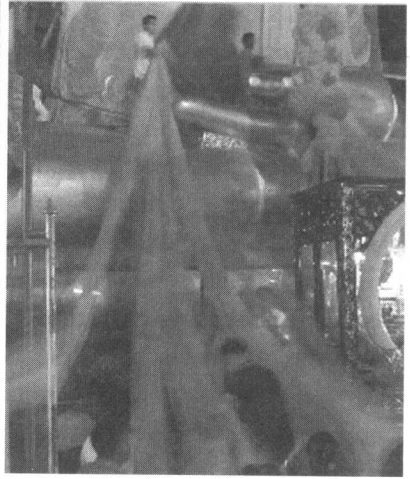
Though an old temple, Wat Panan Choeng has never been deserted by its followers. In fact, continuous development has been made through time, as evidenced by the existing landscape and Thai architectural structures ornated by decorative art motifs attributed to different periods, side by side. The interior and its facilities have constantly changed in adaption to time, to ease the process of worshipping and study.

It is also said that the beginnings of the temple is related to a love myth between a Thai prince and a Chinese Princess of long ago”.

One can see that there is no mention of Zheng He here. Though there is a romanization of the word “Sum Po Hud Kong”, it is too uncertain to interpret it as referring the Eunuch Admiral. Sum Po Hud Kong in this case is probably the Big Buddha Image in the main hall of the temple. Interestingly, the end of the inscription talks about a Chinese princess. This is what is widely known in Thailand as the legend of Princess Soi Dok Mak (princess of areca nut garland) and King Sai Nam Phung (king of honey stream!) The Princess is supposed to be Chinese sent by the Emperor of China to be married to an Aytthayan king. The story goes on to say that because she was mistreated by the King so she held her breath and committed suicide. She was created (not buried!) and the site is where the Big Buddha Image (Sam Po Hud Kong) was later erected. Next to the main temple hall, stands a shrine dedicated to the Princess. She is locally remembered as a kind heart and would bless people who come to pray for off-springs. However, now, people come to ask about lottery tickets and numbers more than children. Her shrine is now crowded with many more additional Chinese deities including Kuan-in. In short, I would say that unlike Chinese temples in Melaka or Semarang, Zheng He is not visible here.



Sam Po Hud Kong Plate at the Wat



It is possible that this Princess (of areca nut garland) was originally Ma Zu, goddess of the sea (commonly known in Thailand as Chao Mae Thap Thim),. But she has been localized and reinvented to fit with the environment.



Princess Soi Dok Mak is believed to be sent from China to be consort of Prince Sai Nam Phung in Siam. Because of some love-story misunderstanding she committed suicide. After her cremation, a gigantic seated Buddha image and a shrine were dedicated to her.

Kuan Im



Again, to my surprise when talking and interviewing with the chief abbot and monks of the Phanan Choeng temple. They looked rather puzzled and have no idea about the name Zheng He. When I asked which one is Sam Po Kong, one monk reluctantly pointed to the Big Buddha Image inside the main hall. And at one *wat* building there was a small poster advertising Pariwat Chanthon's best seller book, 'Cheng Ho-Sam Po Kong: the Eunuch Admiral'. But you could hardly see it. I wonder though with Zheng He being a popular topic for books, articles, films, vcd, dvd, and many international conferences, we will soon see the Eunuch Admiral being conceived and invented in Ayutthaya.

Another interview was made with a Sino-Thai seller in front of the Temple. The old man sells iced coffee and rice/pig leg; he seems to have more information. The old man told me that the Big Buddha Image is a deity with Chinese name: *Sum Po Hud Kong*. He, *Sum Po Hud Kong*, protects Chinese from time immemorial. The old man went on to say that this temple was built by Kwangtung people when they came to settle in Thailand. And every year there is a festival of *thing krachad*

(Hungry Ghost Festival). The festival is sacred, auspicious, and one could get cured and live long life, etc.

The old man's story led us further. He said he has heard of Sam Po Kong and that there are books written about the great man. Down the river, a few kilometers from this Wat Phanan Choeng, there is small Chinese temple dedicated to a leading soldier of Sam Po Kong. This soldier is also a deity protecting Chinese who sailed from the sea. The small temple is in the area called Paknam Mae Bia. He believed that it was more likely that junks and ships coming from overseas and China would dock here rather at the Wat Phanan Cheong itself. The Wat is too important and close to the city wall. It is unlikely that the authority in Ayutthaya would allow foreign ships to dock that close. We went to the temple and took some more pictures.

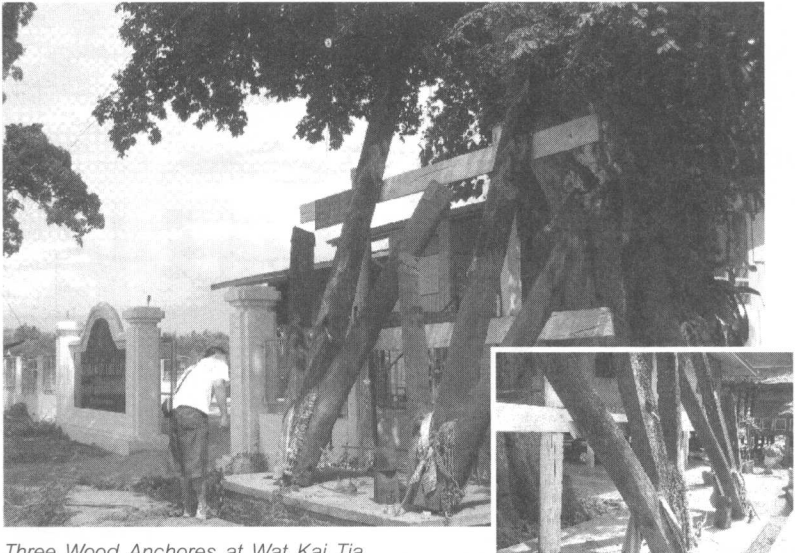


The Paknam Mae Bia small Chinese temple led us further down. This is the unknown Wat Kai Tia Temple on the opposite bank. To our surprise the monks have dugged up some huge wooden anchors plus broken pots and chinawares. The three anchors are in the open-air, under

sun and rain, while the pots and sherds are housed in a small temple museum; these discoveries need to be properly and academically studied.



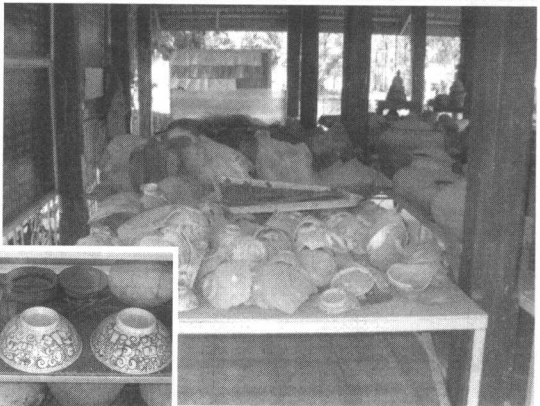
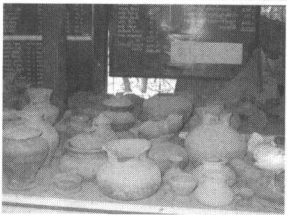
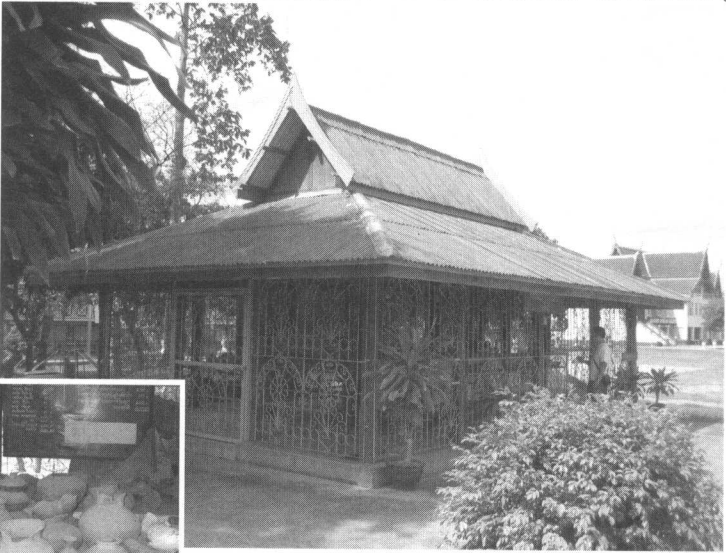
Wat Kai Tia, some kilometers down the River, on the opposite site, it is said that ships would be docking here."Wooden anchors and pottery sherds were found.



Three Wood Anchores at Wat Kai Tia



Wat Kai Tia Museum "and its Findings



*Wat Kai Tia-Temple
Ayutthaya*



I will end here that as for historians there is much to be done to really appreciate Zheng He as a man himself, his place in history in Thailand as well as for the world. Zheng He may mean the Grand Eunuch Admiral, diplomat, good-will mission, show of force and power or even domination to certain people. He is obscure, blur, mysterious, and somewhat benign to others. I believe this is why Zheng He/Sam Po Kong is alive in Thailand.



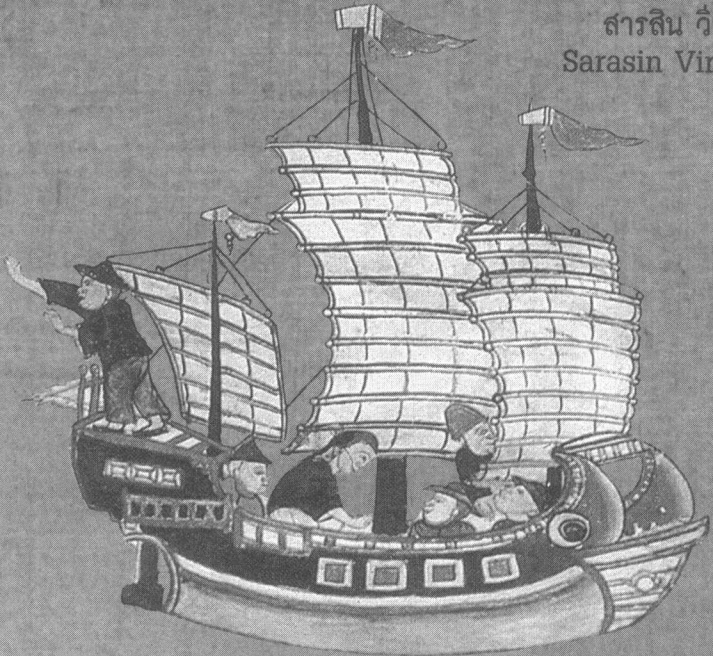


นตติ ปัญญาสมา อาภา
แสงสว่าง เสมอด้วยปัญญา ไม่มี

Tribute and Profit Sino-Siamese Trade 1652-1853

จิ้มก้องและกำไร: การค้าไทย-จีน 2196-2396

สารสิน วีระผล
Sarasin Virapol



บรรณาธิการ : ชาญวิทย์ เกษตรศิริ และ กัณฐิกา ศรีอุดม
ผู้แปล : พรรณงาม เน่าธรรมสาร, รัชชี่ ฮันโสภา, สมภาพ แลคโซ



เลขอนุญาต ที่ ค. ๒/๒๕๑๙

เลขที่คำขอ ที่ ๒/๒๕๑๙

ใบอนุญาตจัดตั้งสมาคมหรือองค์การ

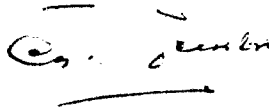
คำที่
ได้ขออนุญาตจัดตั้ง
โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อ

- นายบ็วย อึ้งภากรณ์
มูลนิธิโครงการตำราสังคมศาสตร์และมนุษยศาสตร์
๑. ส่งเสริมการจัดทำตำราภาษาไทยในแขนงสังคมศาสตร์และมนุษยศาสตร์ ทั้งระดับมหาวิทยาลัย และก่อนมหาวิทยาลัย
 ๒. เผยแพร่ตำราของมูลนิธิในหมู่ผู้สอนวิชาสังคมศาสตร์และมนุษยศาสตร์ ที่วราชนานาชาติ
 ๓. ส่งเสริมการเรียบเรียงงานวิจัย และตำราชั้นสูง และรวบรวมเอกสารทางวิชาการออกตีพิมพ์
 ๔. ส่งเสริมกิจกรรมทางวิชาการด้านสังคมศาสตร์และมนุษยศาสตร์
 ๕. ไม่ทำการค้ากำไร และไม่เกี่ยวข้องกับการเมือง

และมีที่ตั้งสำนักงานแห่งใหญ่ ณ มหาวิทยาลัยธรรมศาสตร์ เขตพระนคร กรุงเทพมหานคร นั้น

กรรมการศาสนาได้พิจารณาแล้ว อนุญาตให้ดำเนินการจัดตั้งได้ และขอให้ปฏิบัติตามคำสั่งและข้อบังคับของกรรมการศาสนา โดยเคร่งครัด

อนุญาต ณ วันที่ ๒๓ มกราคม พุทธศักราช ๒๕๑๙



(นายวัชร เอี่ยมโรติ)
อธิบดีกรมการศาสนา

กำหนดการสัมมนาวิชาการเรื่อง
30 ปี ความสัมพันธ์ไทย - จีน
600 ปี ซำปอกง/เจิ้งเหอ กับ อยุธยาและอุษาคเนย์"
30 Years Sino - Thai Relationships
600 Years Sam Po Kong / Zheng He & Ayutthaya and Southeast Asia

วันศุกร์ที่ 25 พฤศจิกายน พ.ศ. 2548 ณ หอประชุมกองทัพเรือ
จัดโดยมูลนิธิโตโยต้าประเทศไทย บริษัท โตโยต้า มอเตอร์ ประเทศไทย จำกัด
และมูลนิธิโครงการตำราสังคมศาสตร์และมนุษยศาสตร์

ภาคเช้า

- 08.00 - 09.30 น. ลงทะเบียน
- 09.30 - 10.00 น. พิธีเปิดการประชุมสัมมนา
กล่าวรายงาน โดย พล.ต.อ. เกา สารสิน ประธานมูลนิธิโตโยต้าประเทศไทย
กล่าวเปิดงาน โดย ฯพณฯ พลเอก เปรม ติณสูลานนท์ ประธานองคมนตรีและรัฐบุรุษ
- 10.00 - 10.30 น. พักรับประทานอาหารว่าง
- 10.30 - 12.00 น. "ปัจจุบันและอนาคตของความสัมพันธ์ไทย-จีน" โดย
ดร.สุทธิพันธ์ จิราธิวัฒน์
ดร.วรศักดิ์ มหัทธโนบล
คุณทวี จงกิจถาวร
รศ.ประทุมพร วัชรเสถียร ดำเนินรายการ
- 12.00 - 13.30 น. พักรับประทานอาหารกลางวัน

ภาคบ่าย

- 13.30 - 14.00 น. แนะนำหนังสือชุด "30 ปีความสัมพันธ์ไทยจีน" โดย
ดร.สารสิน วีระพล, อ. ทรงยศ แววมงคล และ พศ. ธำรงค์ศักดิ์ เพชรเสถียรบัณฑิต
- 14.00 - 14.30 น.ปาฐกถาพิเศษเรื่อง "600 ปี ซำปอกง" โดย
Dr. Geoff Wade, National University of Singapore
- 14.30 - 15.00 น. พักรับประทานอาหารว่าง
- 15.00 - 17.00 น. "ซำปอกง จีน อยุธยากับอุษาคเนย์" โดย
ดร.สืบแสง พรหมบุญ
อ.วีโรจน์ ตั้งวานิชย์
Bai Chun
คุณปรวีวัฒน์ จันทร์
ดร.ชาญวิทย์ เกษตรศิริ ดำเนินรายการ
- 17.00 - 17.15 น. ปิดการสัมมนา โดย ศ.เสน่ห์ จามริก ประธานมูลนิธิโครงการตำรา
บรรเลงดนตรีไทยจากคณะนักเรียนโรงเรียนรุ่งอรุณ
- พิธีกรประจำวัน : *สมฤกษ์ สือชัย*