Nai Mot's Printing of the *Three Seals Law* in 1849/50

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Abstract—When Nai Mot Amatyakul (1819–1896) attempted the first printing of the *Three Seals Law* in 1849/50, King Rama III (r. 1824–1851) ordered the books seized and destroyed—a pivotal moment in Siam's confrontation with the West and modernity. Scholarly accounts of this incident vary on the details and lack any citation of the sources for their information. Several accounts state that only one volume of Mot's printing survives (in the National Library of Thailand). The recent unearthing of a second copy at the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris is an occasion to review the contemporary sources on the incident and locate it in the context of events before and after.

Keywords: Banned Books; Dan Beach Bradley; King Rama III; Mot Amatyakul; *Three Seals Law*

Introduction

In 1849/50,[3] a low-ranked Thai noble, Nai Mot Amatyakul (โหมด อมาตยกุล; 1819–1896),[4] had the *Three Seals Law* printed for the first time. King Rama III (r. 1824–1851) ordered the books seized and destroyed. This event is mentioned by several scholars with variations in the details.

> It was towards the end of the reign of Rama III that a progressive-minded young Siamese noble, Nai Mot Amatyakul, who was eventually promoted to the high rank of Phraya Krasap, attempted the first printing of *KTSD* [*Kotmai tra sam duang*; กฎหมายตราสามดวง; *Three Seals Law*] with the help of a missionary-printer, Dr. Dan Beach Bradley. The endeavour, however, only invited the king's anger and he ordered the confiscation of the printed laws to be destroyed by fire. Today, the National Library in Bangkok holds the only surviving copy of volume one of the Nai Mot edition of the Siamese corpus (Ishii 1986: 151).
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> Nāi Môt's edition was seized on the order of the Third King at the time of putting the first volume on sale in CS 1211 [1849/50 CE] and almost totally burnt by the authorities.

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[3] Years in the Thai calendar which straddle two years in the Western calendar are shown in this form. The date was *chula sakkarat* (CS = Lesser Era) 1211, a year which ran from 24 March 1849 to 13 March 1850 CE.

[4] His first name โหมด is variously transcribed as Mot, Môt, Mote, Mōte, Motte, and Moate. There is no record of his preference.

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Of those which escaped destruction, I know of only one example of the first volume, today kept in the Vajirāvudh Library (Burnay 1929: 118, n. 2).

Nai Mot Amatyakul (later elevated as Phraya Krasap) secured a complete copy of the law code of the First Reign and began to print without receiving official permission. The edition was to be a set of two volumes, but as soon as the first volume was put on sale, there was a royal command (*phraratcha-ongkan*; พระราช-โองการ) to have it all seized and taken to be burnt. Today there are some volumes extant such as one that has become the property of the National Library (Lingat 2526: 27–28).

An incident arose when Dr Bradley first set up a press and sought out Thai books to print for sale. Nai Mot Amatyakul was interested, and brought these laws for Dr Bradley to print. When one western-style book had been printed and this matter was known, King Rama III was angry and stated: if anyone without discrimination has the laws in their hands, pettifoggers[5] will use them as means for cheating, creating difficulty for the government; there must be an order to seize all the manuscripts and all the printed books. The manuscripts were seized and sent to the Department of Scribes since the Third Reign. As for the printed books, I once asked Phraya Phetphichai (Chuem Amatyakul) whether Nai Mot Amatyakul managed to keep any. He fetched one volume for me. I sent the book to the Department of Scribes which sent it on to the library (Prince Damrong, 18 March 1936, in Narisara & Damrong 2504: 33).[6]

The printing and seizure was a pivotal moment in Siam's confrontation with the West and modernity. Printing was a new technology with profound social consequences. The *Three Seals Law* was the first major local text to be submitted to this technology. The king's order has been described as the first banning of a book in Siam (Nakharin 2539). The incident straddles the transition from the Third to the Fourth Reign and the midpoint of the century by the western calendar. But what exactly happened? The four extracts above vary on such details as why the king gave this order, what punishment was prescribed, and what happened to the books.[7]

[5] Chao thoi mo khwam (เจ้าถ้อยหมอความ); pettifoggers, meaning "a lawyer whose methods are petty, underhanded, or disreputable" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

[6] Prince Damrong repeated this view, with some variation in the details and wording, in his correspondence with Phraya Anuman (Damrong 2521: 197–198). All translations from French and Thai originals are ours unless otherwise indicated.

[7] Sir John Bowring (2013 [orig. 1857], 1: 173–174) mentioned the printing, saying that the book was "now only obtainable by favour and with considerable difficulty". In his study of the Third Reign,

What these four extracts have in common is that none was written near the time of the incident and none has a footnote or other indication of the source of their information.

Several reasons have been offered for the king's decision: that the laws were considered sacred (Ishii 1985); that Mot had not sought royal permission (Lingat 2526); that the king feared the laws would be misused by pettifoggers (Damrong 2504); that the king was leery of innovations from the west (Smith 1873); or that the king took this opportunity to punish the missionaries for other offences (Thanet et al. 2549). In the absence of any record citing the king, this debate remains a matter of competitive speculation.

The motive for penning this article was the recent discovery that, apart from a single volume kept in the National Library, not all the books were destroyed, as there is one in Paris.[8] This article revisits this event by reviewing source material—official archives, mission records, family histories—and putting the incident in the context of events before and after.

We begin with some background on the *Three Seals Law* and on Nai Mot. This is followed by a translation of Mot's own account of the incident and extracts from other contemporary sources. The final sections trace the aftermath of the incident for Nai Mot and his family and the aftermath for the printing of the *Three Seals Law*.

Three Seals Law

In January 1805, King Rama I (r. 1782–1809) commissioned a team of eleven scribes, justices, and royal scholars to collect, edit, and publish all the documents on law and related matters found in the palace archive. Their output, completed 11 months later, was written in 41 volumes of the leporello folding books known as *samut thai* (สมุดไทย). The complete set covered around 5,000 folds and contained an estimated 350,000 Thai words.[9] Three sets were made for official use, identified by the seals of the three major ministries of the time stamped on the first page of each volume **[e.g., Figure 1]**. This collection became the law of the land until supplanted by modern law codes enacted between the 1890s and 1930s. *Three Seals Law* is a conventional title adopted in the 20th century. The original set carried no overall title and all the early printed editions have descriptive titles, such as Mot's *nangsue rueang kotmai* (หนังสือเรื่องกดหมาย), *A Book of Laws*. The title of the Thammasat University edition of 2481 BE (1938 CE) translates as "King Rama I's Law Code of

Walter Vella (1957: 37) only briefly mentions the king's concern over the printing, citing the passage from Bradley's journal quoted above, and does not mention the seizure.

[8] The book had been there since at least 1883 when it was listed as number XXX (30) in the *Notice des manuscrits siamois de la Bibliothèque nationale* published by Marquis de Croizier. There it is not identified as the Mot edition but described as "Recueil des lois siamoises, imprimé en 1849" with a reproduction of Clémenceau's note (see below). Jean Burnay (1929: 118, n. 2) saw the reference in Croizier and thought it might be Mot's edition but he did not verify this. It was subsequently classified as "Ms Indochinois 311". In February 2025, we asked to have it digitized. It is now accessible in Paris at https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b525252314 and in the Siam Society library.

[9] Our calculation from the photographs of the complete set of manuscripts in Royal Society of Thailand (2550).

Figure 1: Opening spread of the *Palace Law*, royal version, 1805, showing the three seals © National Library of Thailand

1805 Printed from the Royal Edition with Three Seals". This was shortened to *Kotmai tra sam duang* (KTSD = กฎหมายตราสามดวง), "Three Seals Law", on the cover of the reprint in 1962.

It has sometimes been assumed that such legal texts were considered sacred and access was restricted (e.g., Ishii 1985: 152). This was not the case. Several hundred copies and digests of the most frequently used laws, such as those on slavery, marriage, theft, inheritance, and commerce, have been found in provincial archives and *wat* libraries (Low 1847; Jakkrit 2547; Pitinai 1996; Sarup 1996). Since the Ayutthaya era, officials appointed to provincial posts had taken along copies of the laws to aid their work as judges. Pallegoix (2000 [orig. 1854]: 189) reported that "All high-ranking judges and provincial governors are obliged to have a copy [of the laws]". In 1807, a fourth set was made of the Three Seals volumes, omitting the seals. Possibly this set was used for copying. An 1816 palace regulation limiting the borrowing of texts to these secondary copies suggests that this was the case.[10] Probably there was a small industry for copying these texts to meet the demand from litigants.

[10] "If the royal copy has no secondary copy, do not on any account allow anyone to borrow it. If an officer disobeys this royal rule and allows someone to borrow it, punish by whipping and seizing their property". See กฎหมายเจ้าพนักงานเครื่องต้นเครื่องทรง [*Law for Officers of Primary and Secondary Manuscripts*], National Library of Thailand, Manuscript Collection, Law Section, Ms 580, p. 63, recto); thanks to Peera Panarut for this reference.

Nai Mot

Yoneo Ishii's description of Nai Mot as "a progressive-minded young Siamese noble" is accurate but too brief to convey how remarkable he was **[Figure 2]**.

He was remarkable first for his family, which was Chinese by origin and deeply embedded in the official nobility. While the history of such families usually begins with the arrival of the founding ancestor in Siam, the Amatyakul family is interestingly different. In the family history compiled by Mot, edited by Tri Amatyakul (1908–1992)[11] and published in 1964 (Tri 2507: 1), the founder of the family (*ton sakun wong*; ต้นสกุลวงศ์) is identified as Phraya Sombatithiban (พระยาสมบัติธิบาล),[12] a noble who entered service during the reign of King Ekkathat (1758–1767), the last king of Ayutthaya, and acquired this title as head of the Inner Treasury of the Right[13] under King Taksin (r. 1767–1782). But he was not the first of the family to be ennobled; his father had the title of Phra Senanon (พระเสนานนท์) in the Borommakot reign (1733–1758).[14] More importantly, Phraya Sombatithiban married Paen (แป้น), a daughter of

Figure 2: "Kun Motte, a Siamese Noble and Savant", portrayed in a lithograph by H. Rousseau based on a photograph. Source: Mouhot 1864: 74

Phraya Ratchasongkhram (พระยาราช-สงคราม), who not only held a senior military post, but appears in the royal chronicles of the Thaisa reign (1709–1733) directing the successful project to move a reclining Buddha image which was threatened by a shift in the course of the Chao Phraya River (Chanthanumat 2553: 351–353; Cushman 2000: 409–414). Moreover, with help from the work of K.S.R. Kulap (ก.ศ.ร. กุหลาบ),[15] a commoner intellectual, bibliophile, publicist, and *ad hoc* genealogist, the family traced Paen's paternal (Thai) ancestry back to Nok Kaeo (นกแก้ว), ennobled in 1655[16]

[11] A great-grandson of Nai Mot, who became head of the history and literature division of the Fine Arts Department and wrote official guides to several provinces.

[12] The family history gives his name as Sombatiya-thiban (สมบัติยาธิบาล). Tri explains that this was the form used in the Bangkok Fourth Reign and found in the family records (Tri 2507: 1 n.1); Sombatithiban (สมบัติธิบาล) is the form found in the old civil list (*Civil List*: 271).

[13] In this case, "inner" means inside the palace. Many departments had divisions of right and left to serve as countervailing power.

[14] Possibly Khun Senanon, head of the Department of Special Regulars of the Right (*asa wiset khwa*; อาษาวิเศศขวา), *Civil List*: 275.

[15] On Kulap, see Reynolds (1973). K.S.R. Kulap later became notorious for faking some documents, but this simple bit of genealogy is probably reliable.

[16] Kulap (see next note) records that Nok Kaeo was among those given titles by King Narai on a date that corresponds to Friday, 19 November 1655. However, Narai did not become king until 1656 and Kulap gives

and elevated to Chaophraya Surasongkhram (เจ้าพระยาสุรสงคราม) holding the office of Kalahom (กลาโหม), minister of war, during the reign of King Phetracha (1688–1688). His son also became Kalahom (Phunphit 2526: 42–49).[17] The Amatyakul family history seems to have identified Phraya Sombatithiban as the family founder because he married into a Thai lineage long prominent on the military side of the nobility.

The family history portrays a bureaucratic and noble clan. There is no mention of the Chinese origin or any involvement in commerce; two kinds of data are given: the titles, honors, and rewards presented by the king; and lists of the children and their marriage connections. This is a story about the males of a clan building a great lineage by securing royal patronage and by siring many offspring who made useful marriage alliances.

The use of surnames in Siam began with legislation in 1913. The surname Amatyakul was given by King Vajiravudh in the first royally granted group. After Phra Intharathep, a sixth-generation descendant of Phraya Sombatithiban, attended on the king and detailed the ancestry, "The king gave his opinion that Phra Intharathep's lineage had been senior royal retainers [*amatyaratchaboriphan*; อำมาตย์ราชบริพาร] for three generations, could be counted as an *amat* lineage, and so made a royal grant of the surname 'Amatyakul'" (Phunphit 2526: 161). The word means "lineage of high nobles", based on the Thai rendering of Sanskrit *amātya* (Pali *amacca*). The grant of such an expressive surname capped the family's integration into the Siamese nobility.

Nai Mot was remarkable also for his knowledge and skills. His father Pom (ป้อม) was an officer in the palace who became a military commander, won royal favor during the war against Chao Anou of Vientiane in 1825–1828, returned from that conflict with many families of Lao war prisoners, and rose to the title of Phraya Maha-Amat (พระยามหาอำมาตย์) in 1837. His mother Yen (เย็น) was a daughter of Luang Udomsombat (หลวงอุดมสมบัติ), an officer of the Royal Warehouse (พระคลังสินค้า), known as Chesua Yiao (เจ๊สัวเหยียว), title for a Chinese merchant (Tri 2507: 5–9; Phunphit 2526: 60–70; Mot 2529: 24). Nai Mot, born in 1819, grew up in the quarter just outside the Bangkok Grand Palace and moved among members of the royal family and high nobility. His first wife Phloi (พลอย) was daughter of Phraya Choduek Thongchin (พระยาโชฎึก ทองจีน), a head of the Chinese community, officer in charge of eastward foreign trade, and a member of the Krairuek (ไกรฤกษ์) clan, another early-settled Chinese family that became prominent in the official nobility. When he entered the monkhood for a short time in 1839, Mot was ordained at Wat Phra Kaeo, the temple of the Emerald Buddha inside the Grand Palace, though he resided subsequently at Wat Anongkharam in Khlong San (Tri 2507: 21; Mot 2529: 26).

Mot took a precocious interest in the new knowledge coming from the West, especially through American missionaries.

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the weekday as a Monday. The Thai date resolves correctly if two years later in CS 1019 or 1657 CE.

[17] Phunphit Amatyakul transcribed Kulap's account from *Sayam praphet* (สยามประเภท), vol. 4, no. 39, pp. 1309–1367, dated 12 September 2444 BE [1901 CE].

In his memoir, he describes making his first connections:

> In the Third Reign, I first got to know Farang because Father Am[18] and Phi Khun Thong [พี่ขุนทอง] took me to meet Clerk Yuking [ยุกิ่ง] and the father of Miss Louise [มิสหลุย], who took me to meet the missionary doctors. And when I was still living at the house beside Wat Kaeo Fa, I was taken to meet Bishop Yong [Pallegoix] at the Farang church at Khok Krabue,[19] and then gradually got to know other doctors and clerics (Mot 2529: 16).

K.S.R. Kulap reported that Nai Mot was the first Thai to master three skills: plating of silver and gold, repair of machinery, and photography (Anake 2548: 70–71). He clearly had an aptitude for engineering and a skill at gleaning technical knowledge from the handful of foreigners who arrived in Siam in the second quarter of the 19th century. He learned English from the American missionary, Jesse Caswell (1809–1848), and some metallurgy from Dan Beach Bradley (1804–1873). His main teacher may have been John Hassett Chandler (1813–1891), an American mechanic, inventor, and printer, who arrived in Siam to work with the Baptist mission in 1843 (Smith 1883: 178). He learned photography from Bishop Jean Pallegoix (1805–1862); from another Catholic missionary, Louis Larnaudie (1819–1899); and later from the professional photographer Pierre Rossier (1829–1886; see Anake 2548: 680, and Bautze 2019: 120–121). The US naval officer, William Maxwell Wood (1809–1880), who visited Siam in the 1850s, reported that Nai Mot:

> had arranged himself quite a laboratory and makes many chemicals—distills alcohol—nitric acid. I happened to complain of the annoyance of my lucifer matches, that in this damp weather scarce one would light. "If they were prepared from the 'chloras potassa' you would not have so much trouble", was his reply.

He also made batteries and possessed an electro-galvanic apparatus "far superior" to Wood's own (Reynolds 1976: 213–214, quoting Wood 1859: 256). According to the *Siamese Repository* published in 1873, Nai Mot had "distinguished himself among his own people as a machinist, engineer and chemist. He was the first native who attempted to multiply Siamese books with the aid of metallic types and the printing press [...]. He has manufactured the useful medicine which is now so popular and known as the Wisamphaya" (Smith 1873: 451).[20]

In 1833, age 14, he became a royal page under King Rama III. Perhaps in

[18] พ่ออ่ำ; probably Mot's father, taking Am (อ่ำ) from his title Maha-amat.

[19] This must be Conception Church, founded in 1674, later the church of Bishop Pallegoix, now in Samsen district.

[20] This article claimed that "The people say it is one of the most effective remedies that has ever been administered" in the treatment of cholera and was also effective in the treatment of vomiting, bowel pain, coughs, snakebite, boils, and fever.

recognition of his technical aptitude, he was assigned to look after the royal craftsmen, the construction of royal procession barges, and repairs at the Buddha Footprint in Saraburi. But over the remaining 17 years of the Third Reign, he did not progress up the noble hierarchy, perhaps because King Rama III was leery of his association with the missionaries and the circle around Prince Mongkut. He spent the time learning skills from foreigners, dabbling with machinery, helping to build houses for his relatives, and raising a large family. Following the pattern of the Amatyakul clan, Nai Mot had a total of 19 children by eight wives (Tri 2507: 25–26).

Nai Mot's Memoir

Nai Mot left a 28-page memoir, published in a volume of family history in 1977 and reprinted in 1986 (Mot 2529).[21] The memoir seems to have been written primarily for the family, as it is mostly about family members and their houses, with almost nothing on his own interesting life and no attempt to explain family nicknames and other private knowledge in the account. Only the final page, giving his account of the printing of the laws in 1849/50, is different in style (Ibid.: 28). This page is here translated in full. Paragraph breaks have been added for readability.

In the year of the dragon,[22] two years before Nai Si [นัยศรี] was born,[23] I made a foreign-type lathe[24] from wood and made a screwpress,[25] both by hand. The wooden lathe could not work metal. The headstock was three-quarters of an English inch [1.9 cm] and the tailstock was three *hun*.[26] [As I had only] such a lathe made with wood, Phra Pinklao[27] took away anything of metal and helped with his metal tools and metalworking equipment.

Then in the year of the horse, fifth waxing day of the first month,[28] I tried to make a metal lathe and in the fourth month of the year of the horse it was successful, so I constructed a building one *sen* and 13 *wa* long,[29] namely, the building where Luang Phinit[30] used to live.

[21] The editors of the family history noted that this memoir appeared in a book titled *Amatyakul Family Day* (*wan sakun amatayakun*; วันสกุลอมาตยกุล) with a green cover, printed and distributed on 19 June 2520 be (1977 ce); and that they received the text from Phraya Patiphanphiset (พระยาปฏิภาณพิเศษ; Alexander Amatyakul, 1885–1962, Tri's father) and made no changes (Mot 2529: 1). There is no other information to date the writing of the memoir.

[22] CS 1206 = 1843/44 CE.

[23] His second son, Choem (เจิม).

[24] *Khrueang klueng yang nok* (เครื่องกลึงอย่างนอก), literally, a turning machine of foreign type.

[25] *Sakrupres khan khuang* (สกรูเปรศขันควง); a transcription of the English word followed by an attempt to describe the device in Thai.

[26] หุน, an old Chinese measure, equivalent to an eighth of an inch (0.32 cm).

[27] พระปิ่นเกล้า (1808–1865), younger brother and close ally of Mongkut; made Front Palace King on the accession of Mongkut in 1851.

[28] Mot printed the laws IN CS 1211, so this must be CS 1208 or 27 March 1846 CE.

[29] A *sen* is 40 meters and a *wa* is 2 meters; thus 40 + (13x2) = 66 meters.

[30] หลวงพินิจ, possibly Mot's third son, Chalaem (แฉล้ม), who was given the title Luang Phinit Chakkaphan (หลวงพินิจจักรภณท์) in 1869 (Tri 2507: 48).

Then there was a case over the inheritance of Uncle Phra Klin.[31] I hired people to write [i.e., copy] the laws at the Scribes Hall [*rong alak*; โรงอาลักษณ์] for 100 baht. After reading them, I thought that people with court cases who did not know the law were in great difficulty. Besides, there was the matter of the capital for acquiring the laws. It would be good to print and sell them to recover the capital. Thus in the year of the goat,[32] I commissioned a missionary doctor to print 200 copies for a cost of 500 baht. In the year of the dog,[33] only the first volume was finished and the second was still waiting. I sold some of the first volume but some remained. Chaokhun Samret Ratchakan of the Port Department, who was still *ratchamat*,[34] bought ten copies and had not yet given the money.

When Sir James Brooke came, whatever was spoken about, Sir James Brooke knew everything.[35] When Sir James Brooke had left, there was a royal order to make enquiries with employees of the foreigners and anyone else who had spoken [with Brooke] and passed matters on. Among those under his suspicion was Prince Chomklao.[36] Chaokhun of the Port Department was afraid the matter would make trouble for Prince Chomklao. So he took the first volume he had bought from me on trust and one printed book about several government matters by Bishop Yong[37] to present to the king. The king ordered Kromluang Wongsa[38] and Phra

[31] คุณน้าพระกลิน, husband of a sister of Mot's mother; this couple had no children and so adopted Mot's father. He is described as a personal aide to Prince Mongkut (*phra phi liang phra chomklao*; พระพี่เลี้ยงพระจอมเกล้า) and as having over 150 servants in his household (Tri 2507: 10; Mot 2529: 19, 21). The bequest was probably very large.

[32] CS 1209 = 1847/48 CE.

[33] CS 1212 = 1850/51 CE.

[34] เจ้าคุณสำเร็จราชการกรมท่า [...] ราชามาตย์; Kham Bunnag (1813–1870); around 1838, King Rama III appointed him as Chamuen Ratchamat, "royal adviser", a position which involved "helping the government service in the Port Department and helping consider all matters regarding the welfare of the country" (Vella 1957: 155). He became Chaophraya Thiphakorawong (เจ้าพระยาทิพากรวงศ์) and Phrakhlang early in the Fourth Reign but continued to oversee the Port Department.

[35] Brooke (1803–1868), who was in Siam from 10 August to 28 September 1850, was sent by the British government to gain better access for British trade, extraterritoriality and freedom of worship for British subjects. King Rama III's court stonewalled him. After he left, he compiled a report detailing infractions of the Burney Treaty and abuses committed against British subjects. He also described the rift between Rama III and the "Princes' party", meaning Mongkut and Pinklao, and advised the British government to support the succession of Mongkut (Vella 1957: 138–139; Tarling 1960). Here Nai Mot seems to be saying that Brooke got information from Mongkut's circle and that the king was aware of this.

[36] พระจอมเกล้า; also known as Prince Mongkut.

[37] สังฆราชยอง, meaning Bishop Jean Baptiste Pallegoix; Yong comes from the Thai pronunciation of Jean.

[38] Also known as Kromluang Wongsathiratsanit (พระเจ้าบรมวงศ์เธอ กรมหลวงวงศาธิราชสนิท; 1808–1871), a son of King Rama II with a consort; in the Third Reign, he looked after the medical department and had dealings with the missionaries; in the Fourth Reign, he became head of Mahatthai, one of the two great territorial ministries which evolved into the Ministry of the Interior.

> Phetphichai Khun Thong[39] when he was still Intharathep[40] to bring me and the employees of the [missionary] doctors for questioning about the events, and then had them bring the laws that I made at the doctor's [printing] works, and said that when the *chedi* was made at Wat Saket[41] to have them buried there.
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> Then on the first waxing day of the fifth month, year of the pig,[42] King Mongkut came to stay at the Monastic Storehouse[43] for around 13–14 days, gave an order to Kromluang Wongsa that Nai Mot's printing of the laws was of benefit to the kingdom, they should not be kept buried in a *chedi*, and the laws must be printed again to be of benefit to the realm. Then Kromluang replied that the laws still existed and had not been installed in the *chedi*, so the king ordered that, if that were so, return them to their owner who can sell them so he does not waste the capital for nothing; and he would purchase some to distribute to every lawcourt. I thus received them back, presented some to the king and some to the Front Palace,[44] and sold all the remainder at 10 baht each.

Nai Mot was an engineer not a writer. The memoir may be a rough, unedited draft, as it has many misspellings, mis-spacings and non-sequiturs. We think the meaning is as follows. Nai Mot had the laws copied by royal scribes for use in a court case over a substantial family inheritance and then saw the social benefit and commercial opportunity to recoup his investment by making a printed edition. After Sir James Brooke visited Siam in August-September 1850 and failed to make any advance towards a new treaty, King Rama III believed that Brooke had got information from the missionaries and their associates. Some in Prince Mongkut's entourage feared that this would create trouble for the prince, so they went to the king with a copy of Nai Mot's first volume. The king ordered that Mot's printed books be seized and buried, but the order was not carried out before the king died on 2 April 1851. After his accession, King Mongkut returned the printed volumes to Nai Mot.

Some delicacy is needed in evaluating Nai Mot's memoir. There is no date

[39] พระเพชรพิไชขุนทอง; perhaps Mot's second son, Choem (เจิม), but there is no record of him holding the title of Intharathep (see note *infra*).

[40] อินทรเทพ, title of the head of the Department of Major Guard of the Left (*tamruat yai sai*; ตำรวจใหญ่ซ้าย) (*Military List*: 287).

[41] This is the monument known as Phu Khao Thong (ภูเขาทอง), the Golden Mount. The construction of the stupa, begun in the Third Reign, proved difficult because of the marshy ground and was not completed until early in the Fifth Reign.

[42] 2 April 1851. This is the date of King Rama III's death and Mongkut's accession.

[43] *Khlang supharat* (คลังศุภรัต), for storing monk's robes and other religious items. Mongkut took up temporary accommodation inside the Grand Palace until his anointment as king on 15 May 1851.

[44] Meaning Phra Pinklao, younger brother of Mongkut, who appears earlier in the memoir lending technical help to Nai Mot.

on the memoir and nothing in the contents to assist dating. The memoir was published a century after the incident with no explanation of how it survived to the present day. The page recounting the incident is rather different from the rest of the memoir. Nai Mot's laconic prose leaves room for interpretation.

Missionary Records

The American Protestant missionary, Dan Beach Bradley, kept a journal from his arrival in Siam in 1835 to shortly before his death in 1873. On 23 August 1850, the day after Brooke arrived in Bangkok, Bradley met with him for half-an-hour (Bradley 1930: 125) but recorded no other meeting. A week later on 3 September, there was a "panic" at the mission because they heard that "our teachers are in danger of being made criminals for having taught any of us the Bali [Pali] language and for having taught us things concerning the manners and customs and history of the country which are regarded as improper". On the same day, Bradley recorded, "I learned that Khun Moate was in danger from having ventured to print the Siamese laws, which work is now on the press at the Baptist Mission" (Ibid.: 125). A month later on 5 October 1850, one Thai associate of the mission was put in jail. Bradley recorded: "It is reported that his Majesty is offended because the laws of this country are being printed for sale at the Baptist Mission Press" (Ibid.: 127). On 7 October, Bradley went to visit Kromluang Wongsathiratsanit, his closest contact in the palace, who is mentioned in Mot's account above.

> He assured us that the King was not displeased with our books but only that he was displeased with the persons who had undertaken to publish the laws of this country and sell them. But as the printing of the laws was not completed and none of them had been sold he thought there had no great offense been committed [*sic*] (Ibid.: 127).

The panic in the mission eased. On 8 February 1851, Bradley recorded that "The King of Siam is very sick and not expected to live long" (Ibid.: 134). Bradley does not mention anything about the seizure of the laws nor of any punishment for Nai Mot.

It is often assumed that Nai Mot printed his edition on Bradley's press (see Ishii and Damrong quotes near the beginning of the article), but that was not so. Bradley was away from Bangkok in the US from February 1847 to May 1850 and his press was dormant in that period. In December 1850 he recorded, "Opened the printing office which has been closed until now for want of funds" and, two weeks later, "Began to print the second edition of the History of Daniel, which is the first printing we have done since my return from America" (Ibid.: 132, 2 and 16 December 1850).

Bradley had imported a press and Thai type from Singapore and begun printing at his American Mission Press

in 1836. The output was biblical extracts and short tracts explaining Christianity, distributed on occasions for preaching. The only other work was 9,000 copies of an edict about opium printed for King Rama III in April 1839 (Ibid.: 60–61). Bradley had a limited supply of Thai fonts, which he expanded by casting his own, but never in great quantity. His entries in the journal suggest that other members of his mission showed no aptitude for running the press, resulting in the work falling on Bradley himself.

The Baptist Press had begun when "Mr. Davenport, a preacher and printer, arrived in Bangkok in July, 1836, to join the mission, bringing with him presses and types in both Siamese and Chinese". A second press was imported in 1837. John Hassett Chandler, "a printer and machinist", joined the operation in 1843 (Smith 1883: 176–178). In 1850 the Baptist Mission reported that "The types, printing and binding, are decided improvements upon all preceding years", largely as a result of Chandler's expertise (*Missionary Magazine 1851*: 102). This Baptist Press was better equipped and better manned than Bradley's shoestring operation. Smith (1873: 450) reported that around 1849 Mot "was on intimate terms with J.H. Chandler, Esq. of the American Baptist Mission of Siam".

The Baptists had an international *Missionary Magazine*, which carried annual reports and occasional letters from its missions. A note dated 29 July 1850 reported that "A Siamese nobleman has had printed at the missionary press an edition of the Siamese Laws" (*Missionary Magazine 1851*: 43). In October, the Siam mission reported:

> The first volume of a neat and convenient edition of the laws of Siam has been issued from the mission press. The second volume is now being printed. This work is printed at the expense of Kh'un Mōte, a young Siamese nobleman of much promise and talent" (*Missionary Magazine 1851*: 102).

The list of printing works at the Baptist press in 1850 included "Laws of Siam, thirty-two royal octavo forms, 125 copies; total number of pages, 32,000" and the list of binding works included "Laws of Siam, vol. 1, 125 copies" (Ibid.: 103).

When Bradley published his edition of the laws in 1863, the typesetting of each volume took almost a year (Bradley 1930: 230, 238, 15 November 1862, and 30 January 1864) and we can assume that Mot's edition was the same. Mot probably began the typesetting of his first volume in mid-1849 and completed the printing by July 1850. The work that was "now on the press" when the "panic" arose in September 1850 was the second volume. Note that the Baptist Mission reports 125 copies as against 200 copies in Mot's memoir, with a total of 32,000 pages which would be enough for less than a hundred of Mot's 330-page volumes. The reports from the Baptist Mission mention the disorder during Brooke's visit, but have no report of the books' seizure and destruction and nothing more on Nai Mot.

On the night of 4 January 1851, the Baptist Mission was:

> burned out entirely about midnight—not a house left, not even the shell of any one of their seven houses, consisting of the chapel, printing office and bindery, paper and book house, machine shop [...]. All the Siamese books and all the paper, a large stock, was destroyed [...]. It appeared quite clear that the fire had been kindled by incendiaries (Bradley 1930: 133, 5 January 1851; see also *Missionary Magazine 1851*: 280–281).

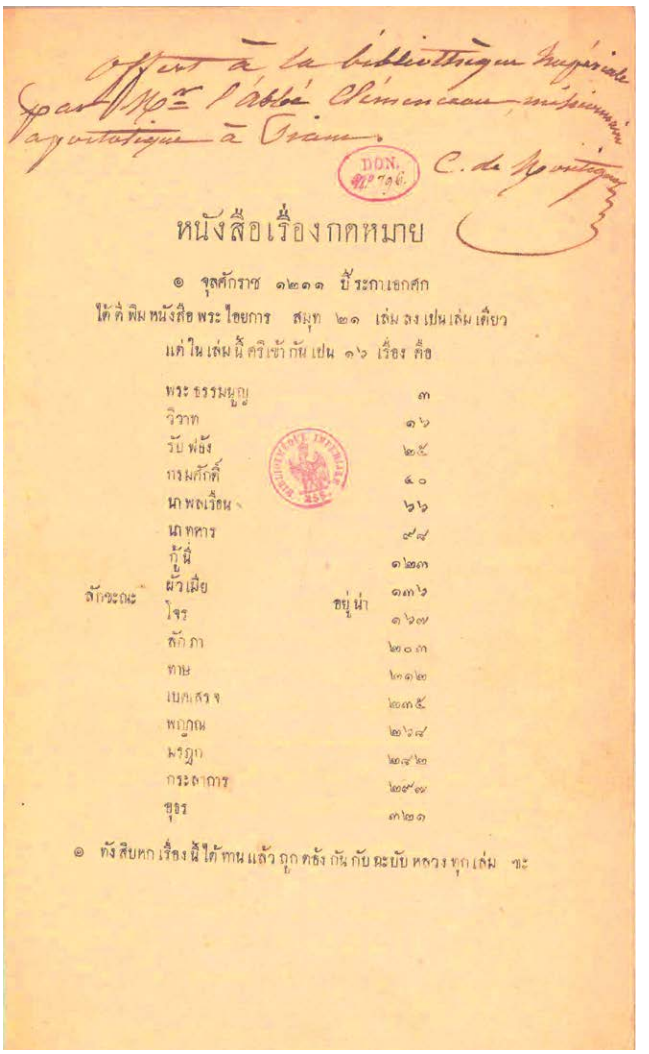
A government officer who had a conflict with a member of the mission was suspected of starting the fire, but there is no further information on the incident from Bradley or the Baptists. This raises two tantalizing possibilities. First, the arson may have been motivated by Mot's printing. Second, the fire may have destroyed some of the books. As Nai Mot's manuscript copies from the Scribes Hall have survived to the present day (see below), it seems likely that these manuscripts and the printed books were seized before this fire.

The copy of Nai Mot's first volume in the National Library is not the only extant copy. There is a copy in the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) in Paris. The book is titled *A Book of Laws*, does not carry Mot's name, does not mention where the book was printed, and does not state that the contents are the laws collected by King Rama I in 1805. Inserted in the Paris copy, there is a handwritten note by Mgr Clémenceau, here translated from the original French.

> In 1849, a young Siamese mandarin had the enterprise to print the Siamese laws in two octavo volumes. As the edition was clandestine, the king of Siam, when informed of the fact, had the young mandarin put in prison at the point when the printing of the second volume was beginning. All was seized and carried away to the palace. But after the king's death, his successor when reigning had the young mandarin released and, at the same time, returned to him everything that he had printed.
>
> This young man promptly sold the first volume for which he had contracted a fair debt. This volume contains 16 titles or sections, almost half of the Siamese code and the most important part.[45]

Pierre Julien Marc Clémenceau (1806–1864) served in Siam from 1833 to 1848 and from 1851 to 1864. He was ranked second to Bishop Pallegoix at the French mission in 1853, succeeded him as head on Pallegoix's death in 1862, and died in Bangkok in January 1864 (IRFA n.d.; Pallegoix 2000 [orig.1854]: 406). At the top of his note, another hand has written: "Ces notes sont de M^{gr} l'abbé Clémenceau, missionnaire apostolique à Siam. C. de Montigny". On the top of the title page and again on the last page of the book is written: "Offert à la

[45] The note continues by listing the 16 laws **[Fig. 3]**. The volume also contains a copy of a lithograph of Sukhothai Inscription 1, which Mongkut presented to Bowring and to de Montigny. This was probably bound together with the laws in Paris.



[Handwritten] *Offered to the Imperial Library by Msgr Abbé Clémenceau, apostolic missionary in Siam. C. de Montigny.*

A Book of Laws

CS 1211, year of the cock, first of the decade, printed 21 law texts (*samut*) as one volume, but in this volume there are 16 items, namely:

Subject	*Page*
Phra thammanun	3
Quarreling	16
Acceptance of Cases	25
Krommasak	40
Civil [List]	66
Military [List]	98
Borrowing and Lending	123
Husband and Wife	136
Thieves	167
Abduction	203
Slaves	212
Miscellaneous	235
Witnesses	268
Inheritance	282
Magistrates	297
Appeal	321

All these 16 items are checked as correct according to the royal version.

Figure 3: Title page of Nai Mot's edition from the BnF, Paris, with translation. Public Domain

bibliothèque impériale par Mgr l'Abbé Clémenceau, missionnaire apostolique à Siam. C. de Montigny" **[Figure 3]**.

Louis Charles de Montigny (1805–1868) was a French diplomat who spent most of his career from 1848 onwards in China. He visited Bangkok from 14 July to September 1856 as a special envoy to negotiate the French variant of the Bowring Treaty (Lacambre 2022; Lockhart 2023). A biographical note on Clémenceau, based on the mission archives, states: "In 1855 [should be 1856], during the visit to Siam by the French plenipotentiary, de Montigny, he handed him a work on Siamese laws, which was sent to Paris to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where it was highly appreciated" (IRFA n.d.: biography tab). Although Clémenceau was possibly absent from Bangkok at the time of the seizure, he was present shortly after and penned his account by 1856 when it was sent to Paris. His account tallies

with Mot's version that the volumes were returned to Mot and sold. His account is the only one to claim that Mot was jailed.

The Aftermath for Nai Mot and His Family

Nai Mot and his family prospered in the Fourth Reign. Shortly after Mongkut's accession in 1851, he was first raised to a senior position in the royal pages, then ennobled as Luang Wisut Yothamat (หลวงวิสูตรโยธามาตย์) and given a position as government engineer (Tri 2507: 23; Anake 2548: 684).

In 1860, King Mongkut had machinery imported from Britain for minting coinage. Three engineers sent along with the equipment died soon after arrival (Bradley 1930: 218, 13 December 1860). Nai Mot was assigned to replace them, won royal favor by successfully establishing the mint inside the palace, and was made its director with the elevated rank of Phra. He was also put in charge of metal casting for the navy, running a gasworks in the palace, and gold mining in Kabinburi and Prachinburi. He passed on his scientific and technical knowledge to three sons (Tri 2507: 21–26).

His sons rose in his wake as assistants and then successors in his official duties. His first son, Sam-ang won royal favor by making a mobile base for a telescope used by Mongkut to view the solar eclipse in 1868. The royal patronage of the family continued into the Fifth Reign. In 1868, King Chulalongkorn elevated Mot as Phraya Krasapkitkoson (พระยากระศาปนกิจโกศล), a newly minted Sanskrit-based title meaning "clever at making coins" (*karṣāpaṇa kṛtya kauśala*), and, in 1874, appointed him as a councilor of state and then as a privy councilor. In 1870, his second son, Choem, accompanied King Chulalongkorn on a visit to Singapore and Java in the role of "Superintendent Engineer". In 1872, Sam-ang accompanied the king to Malaya, Burma, and India in the same role. Sam-ang was elevated as Phra Pricha Kolakan (พระปรีชากลการ) in 1869, was appointed to the Privy Council in 1874, and became governor of the province of Prachinburi in 1876 (Tri 2507: 25–26, 34–39).

On 11 March 1879, Sam-ang married Fanny Knox (1857–1944), daughter of Thomas George Knox (1824–1887), a British professional soldier who arrived in Siam in 1851 to command the troops of Phra Pinklao, and, soon after, married Prang Yen (ปรางเย็น), a daughter of a lady-in-waiting to Phra Pinklao's wife. Knox moved to become interpreter for the British consulate in 1857 and rose to be consul-general in 1868. At the time of the marriage, Sam-ang was 38 years old and already had eight children with five Thai women (Tri 2507: 37–38). Fanny was 23.

The fate of the marriage with Fanny Knox became bound up in the contest between families and factions to gain influence in the court of King Chulalongkorn (r. 1868–1910) and with the tensions of the high colonial era. Chuang Bunnag, Chaophraya Sisuriyawong (ช่วง บุนนาค เจ้าพระยาศรีสุริยวงศ์; 1808–1883), was the dominant noble in the court. Mot's sons were identified with the "Young Siam" faction, which hoped the new king would introduce

modernizing reforms (Kullada 2004: 43–51). Mot, his brother, and one son served as judges in a corruption case which resulted in the imprisonment of a cousin of Chuang Bunnag. Mot and a brother helped draft regulations on opium farms which Chuang controlled. Possibly Chuang hoped that a Bunnag relative would marry Fanny and serve as a personal link to the British diplomat; possibly the marriage simply gave Chuang an opportunity for revenge (Pranee 2528; Walailak 2561; Ithidet 2565).

Just 16 days after his marriage to Fanny,[46] Sam-ang was charged with corruption in his management of the Prachinburi mine, a capital offence, and later charged with maltreating the mine workers, sometimes fatally. In an ill-judged attempt to save his son-in-law, Knox appealed to the king, had a gunboat sent from Singapore, and sought help from the British foreign minister, Lord Salisbury. This allowed Chuang to cast the incident as a matter of national sovereignty and prestige. Sam-ang was sentenced on 22 November 1879 and executed two days later beside the ordination hall that he had built at Wat Luang Prichakun in Prachinburi (Walailak 2561; Ithidet 2565).[47] Nai Mot and his two remaining sons were relieved of their official posts, stripped of their rank and property, and sent to jail (Anake 2548: 688).

As in the case of the seizure of the laws, this incident did not have a lasting impact on Mot's family. King Chulalongkorn consolidated his power through the 1880s, the influence of the Bunnag family waned and the fortunes of Young Siam rose. Nai Mot was released from jail in 1887 and died in 1896 at the age of 77. His second son Choem was restored to his official posts and appointed as a privy councilor in 1900. King Rama VI retained him in this role and raised him to Phraya rank in 1910 (Tri 2507: 38–45). Choem also dabbled in business, setting up an electricity generating plant and an ice factory (Anake 2548: 683). The third son, Chalaem, was employed by King Chulalongkorn to construct and maintain buildings in the palace and also rose to Phraya rank (Tri 2507: 48–49).

Meanwhile, Sam-ang was transformed into a guardian spirit in Prachinburi. A simple memorial shrine was constructed on the site of the execution. When this deteriorated, a larger, more robust shrine was built a few hundred meters away beside one of the town's major roads, and named "Shrine of Lord-Father[48] Sam-ang" **[Figure 4a]**. Later Wat Luang Prichakun built another

[46] The dates of the marriage on 11 March 1879 and arrest on 27 March appear in a dispatch from Knox to Salisbury on 6 April 1879 in the UK archive (FO 69/70); thanks to Simon Landy.

[47] In 1962, R.J. Minney published a novel based on this incident entitled *Fanny and the Regent of Siam* (Minney 1962). Minney (2017) did some research, including talking to descendants of the Amatyakul and Bunnag families and reading some Foreign Office files. Although the style is a cross between a Victorian potboiler and a Mills & Boon romance, the early part of the plot sticks relatively close to the chronology. After Sam-ang's execution, however, the telling hurtles off the rails. To gain revenge on Chuang Bunnag, Fanny first harries the French to seize Siam, then mounts her own elephant-borne invasion from Cambodia, at which point Chuang conveniently dies. Fanny then becomes a defender of the Bangkok poor in the lawcourts, inspiring a democratic movement that results in the 1932 Revolution.

[48] *Chao pho* (เจ้าพ่อ), here meaning a guardian spirit, not a gangster.

Figures 4a–b: Sam-ang shrines in Prachinburi; (a) "Shrine of Lord-Father Sam-ang"; (b) bronze statue of Sam-ang in shrine at Wat Luang Prichakun,

shrine near the execution site **[Figure 4b]**. Both are visited for blessings and good fortune, particularly by ordinands, and have been sites of celebrations on the anniversary of the execution (Walailak 2561).

The Aftermath for the Printing of the *Three Seals Law*

The seizure of Mot's printing is not mentioned in the royal chronicles of the Third Reign compiled by Chaophraya Thiphakorawong (2481). We have made a search in the Manuscript Collection of the National Library of Thailand for King Rama III's order to seize and destroy Nai Mot's printing, but have failed to find any trace.[49] According to the chronicle, the king fell ill in August–September 1850, just at the time of the Brooke visit, the "panic" in the missions, and the Nai Mot affair. From then on, he appeared in audience only occasionally, his condition worsened on 9 January 1851 and did not improve (Thiphakorawong 2481: 366). The chronicle records no order or action by the king after the Brooke visit except one intervention on the succession (Ibid.: 369–371). It seems likely that the order on Mot's printing was given orally, never committed to

[49] The search covered the royal orders (*mai rap sang*; หมายรับสั่ง) and memoranda (*chotmaihet*; จดหมายเหตุ) of the Third Reign. The search was carried out by Parkpume Vanichaka between 20 March and 8 April 2025.

paper, and never stored before the king was incapacitated.[50]

Bradley printed the laws in 1863. After the Baptist Press was completely destroyed by fire in 1851, Bradley expanded the capacity of his own American Mission Press by receiving land from the king, getting new machinery from his mission, and casting more Thai type (Bradley 1930: 207, 3, 4 and 12 May 1858; Thanet et al., 2549: 14–15). With this expanded capacity, he began to print a wider range of materials: the *Bangkok Calendar*, a yearbook, for the first time in January 1858 (Ibid.: 205, 30 January 1858); a textbook on reading Thai in 1860; his own translation of the slavery laws; a history of France; the poem *Nirat London* (นิราศลอนดอน) by Mom Ratchothai (หม่อมราโชทัย; 1819–1867) in 1861; and a chronicle of Ayutthaya in 1863 (Thanet et al., 2549: 15). He also advertised for commercial printing jobs (see, for example, *Bangkok Calendar 1861*: 56). The press became a significant source of income for the mission and attracted a traffic of book-buyers to whom Bradley could hand his Christian tracts. On 10 August 1861, he recorded: "We have many calls for the Siamese laws, etc., which if we have them would sell in good profit" (Bradley 1930: 222). Within six months, he had begun setting the type for this project (Ibid.: 227, 23 February 1862). Both volumes of his edition were printed within 1863. A year later he complained that the second volume was selling "poorly", but this was only a temporary setback. The edition was reprinted ten times by 1896 (Ishii 1986: 152).

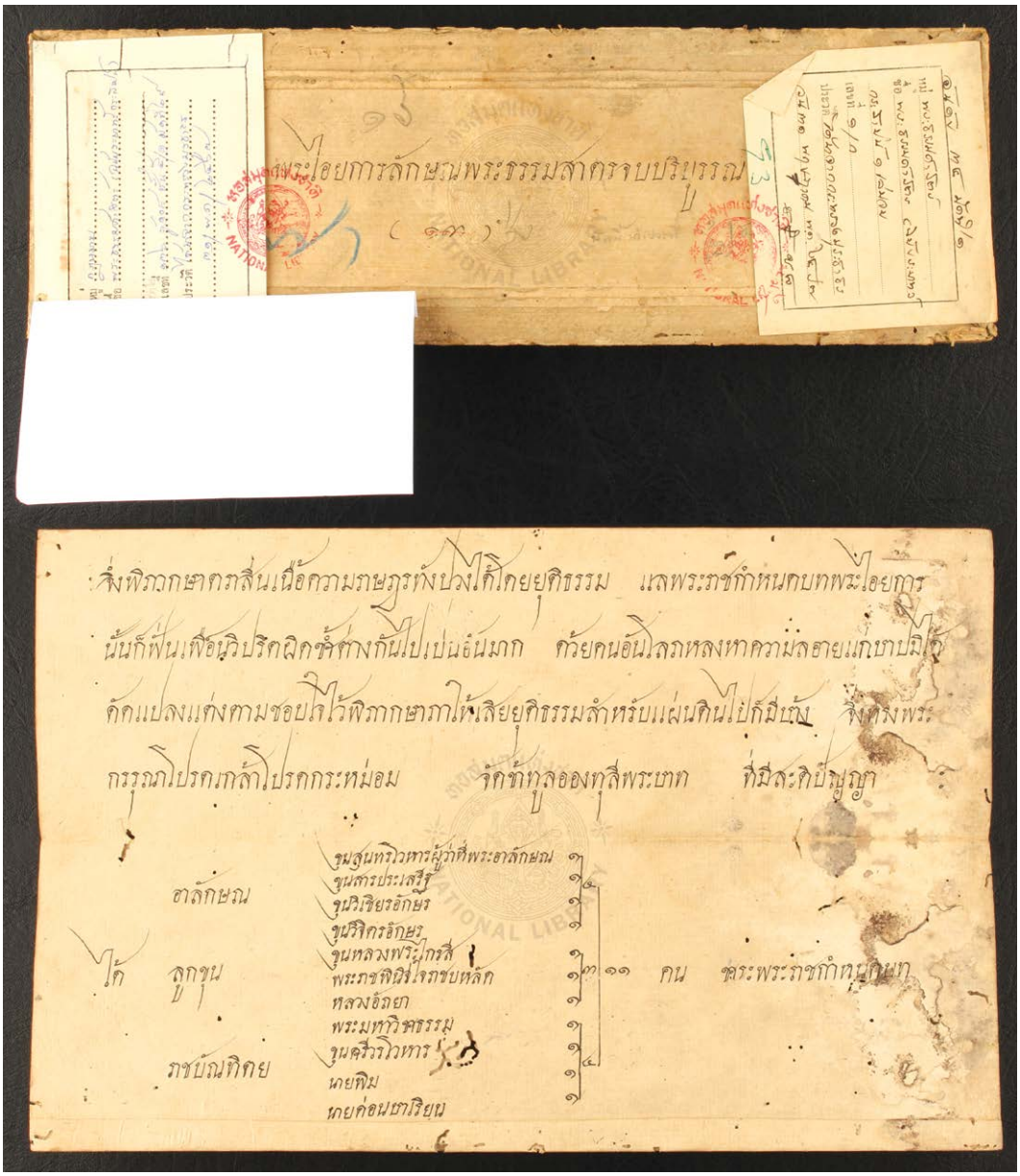
The copies which Nai Mot had transcribed in the Scribes Hall were seized, kept initially in the Department of Scribes, then in the Ministry of the Privy Seal, and now in the National Library, Manuscript Collection, Law Section **[Figures 5a–b]**.[51] Bradley used Mot's transcription. This is shown by a simple continuity error. After the twelfth item, the law on *Abduction*, the text continues to the law on *Division of Persons* without any heading and without any change in the running header. This law had already appeared as the fourth item in the volume. After two pages, it stops abruptly in the middle of a clause, and the law on *Slaves* begins with a heading and with a change in the running header. This slip may have been made when copying from the manuscripts or when typesetting.[52] Exactly the same error appears in the Mot edition (pp. 210–212) and Bradley edition (pp. 326–330).[53]

[50] Of course the order may have been written and stored but subsequently lost, or simply not yet found (by anyone), but the chronology of the king's decline suggests that it may never have been inscribed.

[51] Mss 489 to 510, 512 to 544. On Ms 512 there is a librarian's label that Peera Panarut suspects dates to the early 20th century, reading (in our translation): "These legal documents, known as *rabat krasap* (ระบาทว์กระสาปน์; the Krasap seizure), came from the Ministry of the Privy Seal. There is a history as follows. In the Third Reign in the year of the cock CS 1211 (2392 BE) [1849/50 CE], Nai Mot Amatyakul (who had the position of Phraya Krasapkitkoson in the Fourth Reign) used these manuscripts as the source for Dr Bradley to print for sale. One foreign-style book was printed. On knowing of this, King Rama III was angry. There was a royal order to seize and burn the edition, and to seize the old source manuscripts and keep them in the department of scribes. Since the Third Reign, they passed to the Ministry of the Privy Seal".

[52] Lingat (2526: 28) noticed this error shared by the two editions, but recounted the details wrongly.

[53] There is other evidence that Bradley copied Mot. For example, in the section on seals in *Phra thammanun*



Figures 5a–b: Cover (a) and fold (b) from Nai Mot's copied manuscript of the *Phra thammasat*; Manuscript Division, Law Section, Ms 512 © National Library of Thailand

Bradley also copied or adapted other aspects of Mot's version. He copied the title, adding "Thailand" (*mueang thai*; เมืองไทย), and used the same wording to claim that the contents followed the royal edition. He followed Mot by starting with the *Royal Preface*, titled *Ban phanaek* (บานพะแนก), and omitting this item from the table of contents. He also kept the texts in the same order, except for moving the *Phra thammasat* (พระธรรมสาตร) and *Tenets Spoken by*

(พระธรรมนูน), the clauses are not numbered in the original manuscripts (Royal Society of Thailand 2550, 1: 89–104), but are numbered in Mot (CS 1211: 8–16) and in Bradley (CS 1258, 1: 47–59).

Indra (*lak inthaphat*; หลักอินทภาษ) from the second volume to follow the Preface in the first. The wording in the two editions is the same except for differences in spelling and minor slips made by copyists or typesetters.

Conclusion

The product of Nai Mot's investment of 100 baht[54] at the department of scribes was the basis of all the printed editions of the *Three Seals Law* until the Thammasat University edition in 2481 BE (1938 CE). Jean Burnay and Robert Lingat noted, "All the printed editions stem from a manuscript derived from that of 1805, but changed. After Nai Môt, every new edition has done nothing but recopy the immediately preceding one, adding mistakes to it" (Burnay & Lingat 1930: 1).

It seems that King Rama III's order to seize Nai Mot's printing of the *Three Seals Law* was not written down and preserved and hence survived only in memories which, of course, can waver over time, hence the variation in the several accounts of the incident.

On the fate of the books, this review of the sources has clarified some matters and added some new uncertainties. First, Nai Mot's edition was not printed by Bradley's American Mission Press but at the Baptist Mission Press. Second, the books were not all destroyed except for the single copy in the National Library. Another volume was conveyed to Paris by a French missionary and French diplomat in 1856. Probably, as Nai Mot claimed in his memoir, the books were not destroyed but all sold or given away. The original print run is uncertain as Nai Mot reported 200 copies and the Baptist mission only 125. Kromluang Wongsa told Bradley that no copies had been sold before the "panic", but Mot's memoir and Clémenceau's note contradict this. Identifying the press used as that of the Baptist Mission brings the arson of the mission compound in January 1851 into the story. Was this somehow connected to the printing?

Because the king's order has not been found, there remains uncertainty on the reason for his action. However, there is one suggestive passage in the contemporary documents. Kromluang Wongsa told Bradley that the king was displeased by the plan "to publish the laws of the country and sell them". While there was no obstacle to scribes copying the texts to meet the demand of people engaged in court cases, the technology of printing introduced a change of scale with great social consequences. The king was surely aware of this as he had commissioned Bradley to print 9,000 copies of his 1839 edict on opium. Perhaps, then, the incident can be seen as akin to a conflict over copyright. The king may have felt that the law texts were official documents and had been compiled by his own father, thus his permission was needed for them to be used for commercial purposes. Nai Mot was well aware of the potential of the new technologies of reproduction, as shown by his interest in both printing and photography. According to his own account, he

[54] According to Bowring (2013 [orig. 1857], 1: 257), one baht in 1855 was equivalent to "2s. 6d.", which would be worth around £17.20 today (www.in2013dollars.com). So Mot's investment was equivalent to around £1720 today and a total of £10,320 including the printing cost.

realized the commercial potential of the documents only after he had invested in the copying. He seems to have assumed that the documents were, as it were, in the public domain. As this was the first attempt to print such a document, there were no precedents, no rules to govern this disagreement between the two.

The Amatyakul family histories show that the family mingled intimately with Siamese royalty across a century from the Third to the Sixth Reign. In 1849/50 Nai Mot seems to have underestimated the royal objection to the printing. Similarly, in 1879, his son Sam-ang seems to have underestimated the objection to his marriage. On both occasions, the matter at issue was something new and unprecedented that emerged as a result of Siam's encounter with the West and modernity. Nai Mot recognized that printing technology had opened up new opportunities for capitalist enterprise, but was blind to the copyright-like issue involved. Sam-ang seems to have been blind to the political implications of a liaison that crossed the fault-lines of court politics and provoked the ethnic and diplomatic tensions of the high colonial era. As Siam's feudal-style society came into contact with capitalism and colonial modernity, there were extremes of risk and reward for those brilliant individuals who pioneered the transition.[55]

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Gregory Kourilsky, Jérôme Petit, and the staff of the Reproduction Department for help in acquiring a digitized copy of Mot's edition from the BnF, Paris, and to Gregory for help in reading Clémenceau's handwriting; to Radklao Amatyakul for providing access to the Amatyakul family histories; to Peera Panarut for acquiring photos of Mot's copied manuscripts; to Parkpume Vanichaka for carrying out the archival research; to Lia Genovese for her facility with French mission records; to Matt Reeder for Bradley's journal and the Baptist magazine; to Lara Unger for help on the *Bangkok Calendar*; to Simon Landy for references to British official records; to the Journal's two reviewers for positive and helpful comments; and to Craig Reynolds, Edward Van Roy, Khemthong Tonsakulrungruang, Tamara Loos, and the temple committee of Wat Luang Prichakun for help on other sources.

[55] There are parallels with the travails of Prince Prisdang (1852–1935), as described by Tamara Loos (2016).

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Abbreviations

• *Civil List* = พระไอยการตำแหน่งนาพลเรือน, 219–277 in กฎหมายตราสามดวง เล่ม ๑ [*Three Seals Law*, Vol. 1], 2537 BE (1992 CE). Bangkok: Khurusapha.
• *Military List* = พระไอยการตำแหน่งนายทหารหัวเมือง, 278–328 in Ibid.

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