

1: The births of Khun Chang and Khun Phaen

Now we have honored teachers,¹ let's get on with the story. There are tales from the past, when His Majesty King Phanwasa² ruled the city of Ayutthaya,

a time of happiness and joy like a heavenly city. He was the pinnacle³ of the world. His power extended in all directions. He governed the ordinary people.

Tributary cities, large and small, within his sway, quailed before his might. Every country surrounding the capital submitted and paid homage.

The king observed the Ten Royal Virtues, spreading perfect bliss and contentment throughout the kingdom, for which the people were duly thankful.

This is the story of Khun Phaen, Khun Chang, and the fair Nang Wanthong. In the year 147,⁴ the parents of these three, people of that era,

were loyal subjects of the realm of His Majesty King Phanwasa. The tale will be told according to the legend, so that you listeners may understand.

Khun Krai Pholphai⁵ was a man of property and wealth from Ban Phlap.⁶ Nang Thong Prasi lived at Wat Takrai.⁷ These two had

¹ Damrong explains in the preface that the customary preface honoring teachers has been lost.

² A thousand lives, a generic name for kings. In the preface, based on the *Khamhaikan chao krung kao*, Damrong identifies him with King Ramathibodi II.

³ lit: topknot

⁴ Prince Damrong divines this as a copyist's miswriting of 847 in the Chula Sakkarat calendar, equivalent to AD 1485/6.

⁵ According to KP Khun Krai was a Mon from Kanchanaburi and probably worked in the intelligence concerning Burma because Mon people can speak Burmese (KP:22). The evidence that he was a Mon is that all of his male offspring starts the name with Phlai (eg. Phlai Kaeo, Phlai Ngam) Phlai is a Mon word, meaning youthful male or a strong man. In Thai language it is used to refer to a male elephant (KP:21).

⁶ มะพลับ, *diospyrus embryopteris*, a tall tree used to make a dye. Ban Phlap may be the village which features later in the story (chapter 17), situated 25 kilometers southwest of Suphan on Khlong Song Phinong. Alternatively (and more likely) this could mean Wat Phlap, on the west bank of the river about 4 kilometers north of Suphan town.

⁷ There was a Wat Takrai in Suphanburi, which was abandoned after the city was depopulated in the wars of the late eighteenth century. Some ruins were visible 30 years ago, but not now. The site is now occupied by Wat

become a couple.

They dismantled their house and built it anew in the region of Suphan. He was a skilled and sturdy soldier in command of 700 conscripts.

Courageous and invulnerable, he never retreated. No matter how many enemies he faced, he stood his ground and never fled the field.[2]

Officials of Suphan shook their heads. From experience, they knew never to cross him. The king favored him to be a soldier of Ayutthaya, making him a dignitary in Suphan.

Khun Siwichai was head of the outer division of the elephant corps. A diligent man, his home was in the city of Suphan.

He was a rich man with masses of wealth and many men. Together with his wife, Nang Thepthong, he lived at Ten Cowries Landing⁸ in Suphan.

Phan⁹ Sonyotha had a charming wife by name Siprajan, a rich lady of good lineage.

They lived at Patron's Landing¹⁰ in Suphan. She had a loud-mouthed younger sister called Bua Prajan, married to one Chot Khong.

He hailed from Bang Hia,¹¹ but once married and lost in love, he gave no thought to his family and was interested only in stealing buffaloes.¹²

But these matters must be put aside for now, while we relate the births of our three characters, how the wicked spirit at the top of the tree brought them from the beginning into the womb.

Pradusan and its school. However, this must be Wat Takrai in Ayutthaya, as Thong Prasi returns there in chapter 27 below. This wat is situated to the north of Ayutthaya, across the river from the palace, adjacent to Wat na Phramen.

⁸ *Tha sip bia*, the wharf on the eastern bank of the Suphan river in the north of the old city.

⁹ The position of Phan had a duty of investigating the tax and recording and collecting people who were assigned to different krom and kong. Phan Sonyotha should be carrying out all these duties in Suphanburi. He probably held the position of krommakan mueang also. See KP:25.

¹⁰ *Tha philiang*, the wharf on the east bank of the Suphan river in central Suphan, where the market now stands.

¹¹ This place was renamed, probably after 1932, as Tambon Khlong Dan. Sakchai Bamrungphong, 'Ngao khon-bon wela lae patimakan: kap haeng maenam lamkhlong lae thongna' in *Matichon Sutsapda*, 25, 1293, 27 May-2 June 2005, p.68

¹² These two figures do not appear again in the story. But little details like this which are not important to the main plot, make the characters seem very real to the audience. This may be a unique feature of KCKP, not found in other Thai literature. See KP:25

At night the spirit molds figures, in fits of laughter. He picks them up, squeezes here and there without any pattern, molds and remolds, adding this and that to make them complete, always shaking with mirth.

One night when the molding spirit was at the top of the tree, a being still suffering pitiably and horribly in hell came to the end of its karma and was released from suffering.

It was reborn from the realm of ghosts into the body of an *asura* demon. In turmoil, it rushed to find happiness in heaven, but was too late to escape suffering. The spirit molded it, and it slipped into the womb.

In her sleep, Nang Thepthong tossed and murmured as she dreamed that a male elephant died and rolled down a steep bank where its head became swollen and putrefied.

A bald-headed adjutant stork flew over from the great forest, picked up the elephant in its beak, and set it down in the middle room where she slept.

In her dream she called to the bird, 'Please, bald lord, come over here.' She clutched the hairless bird, and cradled both stork and elephant to sleep in comfort.[3]

She came to her senses, retching at the awful smell of the elephant and bird stuck in her throat, and her body shaking uncontrollably. She quickly woke her husband, and begged him to hit her neck.¹³

Khun Siwichai got a fright. He jumped up with eyes bulging and desperately clutched and kneaded her neck. She recovered and related the dream.

Khun Siwichai interpreted it. 'Well, you'll be pregnant. Nothing to worry about. Our child will be a boy. That's the meaning of the big stork bringing the elephant in its beak.

Our blessings are complete, my love. But this child will be bald from birth. He will bring shame on us, but will be rich with more than five cartloads of money.'

Nang Thepthong did not want this blessing. She clutched her belly, still retching and queasy. 'You lousy wretch, why do you make me sick? Why should I raise a bald baby?'

Nang Thong Prasi was asleep with her husband in the big chamber. She dreamed that the thousand-eyed lord¹⁴ flew in carrying a ring with a big diamond.

¹³ A way to solve queasiness.

¹⁴ *thao sabatsanai*, Indra

He offered her the ring, and she accepted it with delight. The diamond's gleam flashed in her eyes. She woke startled, flailing her arms and rousing her husband.

Khun Krai opened his eyes and asked what was up. She recounted the dream. Both got up, washed their faces, found betel for themselves, and then interpreted the dream.

'A special ring with a beautiful glittering diamond belonging to three-eyed Indra tells us this is something auspicious.

You will be pregnant with a boy. He will be like one of King Narai's soldiers reborn—strong, brave, and daring, with the power to conquer all three lands.

A diamond of such dazzling color means in future he will be a great soldier, ranked a phraya, with many retainers, and a favorite of the good king and his mother.

Thong Prasi joined her hands in wai to receive the blessing from her husband. Both slept the night overflowing with joy.[4]

At midnight, Siprajan was asleep in her house. She dreamed that Lord Vishnu¹⁵ flew across the sky, and slid an ornate ring onto her finger.

He returned to his golden palace, and she slept deep and lovingly until dawn. She awoke and roused her husband with a smile. After washing her face, she blurted out the dream.

'Oh husband, last night I dreamed that Vishnu the great artificer brought an ornate ring of captivating beauty and entrusted it to us.

Then he returned to his heavenly palace. Does this mean I will fall sick, dear? Tell me how bad it will be. The dream is still clear in my mind's eye.'

Phan Sonyotha was a loving husband. He laughed merrily at his wife's account, and told her what it meant: 'You're going to be pregnant!

The ornate ring means the child will be a girl, and because the ring belonged to Vishnu, the peerless craftsman, she will be really beautiful, very special.'

Siprajan laughed merrily at the news. 'May it be as you say, my dear! If I have a child, I won't have to carry other people's children around, causing a lot of gossip.

Thepthong's belly grew so big, she could not get comfortable either sitting or standing. She had a craving for meat, fish, and liquor so bad her body trembled all the time.

¹⁵ *Phra phisanukam.*

She dribbled saliva like a hungry ghost [*phi krasue*]. She cried and complained to her husband. 'I feel some ravenous old monk¹⁶ has taken over my body. The more I eat, the more I want to eat.'

Eels, chickens, frogs, turtles, lizards, insects [*migale*], and paddy frogs were not enough. She shoveled them into her mouth in great handfuls. The liquor jar emptied so fast it could never be refilled in time.

For many months, she was in pain, queasy, uncomfortable, sickly, and trembling. After ten months,¹⁷ the child kicked. Nearing delivery, the pain got worse.

She writhed, called her husband and parents, and screamed uncontrollably. Her husband, parents and all the servants rushed up into the house.

Some cast auspicious spells on rice, and hastily inserted cowrie shells between the wall planks. Some chivvied the midwife to hurry up. She straddled the belly and called out to the child to turn around.[5]

Some sat behind and beside her to give support. Thepthong cried and moaned, rolling her head around. Khun Siwichai trembled. He clutched her hair and blew on her forehead.

The midwife squatted over Thepthong's belly and pressed. Her body shook but nothing came down. The midwife said 'It's time' and pressed again.

Grandma Khong bent over and pressed. At the sound 'plop,' she fell down and subsided against the wall. The baby cried, 'Waa, waa.' The mother opened her eyes. 'A white elephant has arrived today.'

Thepthong turned and grasped the baby boy. Trembling, she turned him over and back. 'For shame! The spirit molded him like this. Bald from the womb like the round moon.

What a waste of effort carrying him around. Hell's bells [hit clan of mother], a mangy puppy. Why raise him to be a laughing stock for the neighbors. Which side of the family does that head come from?'

Having sounded off, she went to lay by the fire. Wet nurses and servants looked after the baby. They washed him, fed him, rocked his cradle, and sang lullabies every day.

Because of the merit brought by this baby, the family's wealth increased from the day of his birth. The number of servants increased, both men and women.

Although the mother despised him, the family became peerlessly wealthy. The grandparents on both sides were pleased, and gave an

¹⁶ Text says only *ta luang* which Red:650 thinks may be *luangta*, title of a senior monk, and may refer to someone with a reputation for greed, though the story is now forgotten.

¹⁷ Time periods are counted inclusively, so this is the same as nine months by western reckoning.

auspicious name to their grandchild.

The mother had dreamed that a stork flew from the forest into the house carrying an elephant in its beak. The child's head was bald and hairless from birth.

At the same time he emerged from the womb, a white elephant was presented to King Phanwasa. Hence the beloved grandchild was named Khun Chang¹⁸ in commemoration of this event.

They had silver and gold made into a necklace for the darling grandchild's neck, lots of bracelets for both hands, beaded wristlets on both arms, and silver anklets so big that he stood with legs apart.

Around his waist he wore a soft chain with an engraved clasp, dangling with chili-shaped charms decorated with coral which swayed when he jumped and laughed with mouth wide open.[6]

Thepthong shouted at him, 'Hey, you beggar, you jump up and down like a clown in the mask-play. You're like a big unruly monkey that can't stand still. What miserable spirit molded you?'

She could not bring herself to cradle him. 'You're like a miserable monkey making faces and causing me shame. You make big eyes like a dumb cat eating fish. Why don't you die of cholera?' She cursed him day in day out.

When Khun Chang was three he went off to play. Other kids took fright at the sight of him. 'Over there, mummy, what's that? It opens its mouth and bares its teeth. Horrible.'

Their mothers told them not to be afraid. 'That's Khun Chang, son of the boss in the house with the big fence. He's a rich man with servants. Don't get in his way. Let him through.'

As Thong Prasi approached her time, she was truly beautiful. Her hair perfectly suited her face. Her skin was radiant as if burnished with gold; her face like the full moon;

her cheeks like golden maprang; her breasts full to bursting; and her complexion fair and attractive. She glowed with health and was a delight for the eye.

She followed the precepts. She prayed regularly and devotedly with hands joined above her head. She made offerings of lotus flowers, and had no fear of danger.

At ten months, her belly was fully swollen. Her merit indicated she would deliver a child to continue the family line. The kammachawat wind blew.¹⁹ The child turned its head down towards the opening.

The pains made her cry aloud. The grandparents created a hubbub

¹⁸ *Chang* means elephant.

¹⁹ *kammachawat*, wind of kamma, meaning exhalation before delivery. Must be English term?

all round the house. Relatives and servants came in a jumble. The midwife got annoyed at them milling around.

At the auspicious house of smooth transition, she gave birth easily. The child was a boy. He cried ‘Waa, waa.’ Brothers, uncles and aunts came to take care of washing him, then gave him to wet nurse.

They rubbed him with turmeric, and rocked him in a winnowing basket. They laid him on a little mattress and covered him with a blanket. All the grandparents happily admired his tuft of hair as cute as a lotus seed pod.

He was lifted up into a cradle and rocked to and fro. His mother slept by the fire to be warmed all through. After one month, she came away from the fire without a blemish. She dressed and powdered him to look lovable.

The parents consulted the two grandmothers on what name to give their grandson.[7] The maternal grandfather was an astrologer and cast a horoscope for him.

‘He was born at three by the shadow²⁰ on Tuesday in the fifth month of the year of the tiger. The Chinese capital sent glittering crystal to present to the king of Ayutthaya

for placement on the pinnacle of the big chedi built since the time of Hongsa²¹ and called Wat Chaophraya Thai²² for a long time. Give him the name Phlai Kaeo, the brilliant.²³

A *baisi* ceremony was promptly arranged with bananas, cucumbers, incense, candles, and many kinds of flowers. Silver, gold and valuable things were tied on his wrists

Engraved wrist-chains with *sema*.²⁴ Beautifully pretty solid golden bracelets. Golden wristlets on both arms. A jewel-inlaid necklace with so much gold it looked fake.²⁵

A soft chain around his waist in a pattern of floating flowers, inlaid with bright emeralds, and dangling with big golden chilies. Bronze²⁶

²⁰ CHECK: *wela sam chan chai*, p. 7/2. Matichon says *chan chai* is time by shadow.

²¹ Reference to the wars against Hongsawadi (Pegu) in the mid sixteenth century.

²² Now Wat Yai Chaimongkhon, but called Wat Chaophraya Thai on the earliest Dutch maps of Ayutthaya from the mid seventeenth century, and mentioned in the chronicles in 1659, see Cushman, 248/37-8. According to KP:40, this wat was built by King Naresuan to commemorate his victory over Burma at Yutthakathi (elephant fights). When Khun Phaen was born it appeared that the Chinese Emperor sent a big crystal (luk kaeo) to the king of Ayutthaya. It must be very big so the king of that time put it up on top of the victory chedi (KP:40).

²³ Phlai means a male elephant, and Kaeo means crystal. The word *waew wai*, like ‘brilliant,’ means both sparkling and talented.

²⁴ *pawalam/pralam*, wristlets of circles engraved with pattern. No idea what *sema* means here.

²⁵ This is a guess.

²⁶ Actually *nak*, a gold-copper alloy.

anklets, strange to the eye.

The guests sat round in a circle. All the clan was present including paternal grandparents. They raised the *baisi*, cheered three times, and passed it round the circle, cheering for victory

‘On this auspicious day, we call on the khwan of Phlai Kaeo to remain happily with his body and not stray off anywhere. Enjoy the elephants, horses, servants, silver, and gold.

Oh khwan, please come along. Do not go off hunting and wandering aimlessly. Come and enjoy the crystal garlands, golden garlands, and so many things to make you comfortable.’

They cheered three more times, extinguished the flame, and wafted the smoke towards the infant. ‘May you live over ten thousand years, have victories and prosperity.’

After the khwan ceremony, all the clan members were in high spirits. By the time he was five years old, Phlai Kaeo could speak fluently and cleverly.

When Sriprajan’s pregnant belly was huge, she was cheerful and merry. The ten months were complete.

The baby stood up and kicked to be born. The pain was unbearable. She tossed and turned, her cries echoing around the house, and then lost consciousness.[8]

The parents, all the grandparents, the midwife, a spirit-shamaness, other relatives, and the servants all came together in haste.

They threw cowries, made wishes, mumbled and whispered all together. The shamaness²⁷ yawned and belched, ‘Heu, heu. Why did you summon me, householder?’²⁸

She swigged liquor, chewed betel, then got up to dance, bobbing up and down, falling down, raising herself up on all fours, and dancing lithely. Ba-di-bong, deng-bong.

Getting very drunk, she swayed to the four directions. ‘Big father,²⁹ protect us against harm. All the grandparents are happy. Please, father, I salute you, I’m just a small fry.’³⁰

Don’t be impatient, listen to me.’ She got up, and took off her clothes. Sriprajan had a contraction, and cried out doubled over. The midwife squatted down and pressed.

²⁷ *oo thao*, perhaps the ‘lord’ summoned up by the shamaness

²⁸ *khun rong*??

²⁹ *pho luang*, presumably means the spirit called up

³⁰ *tin rong*, Matichon has this as petty guy hanging around the courts.

She kneaded busily until the auspicious time came and the mother gave birth. The infant lay on its back, arms and legs wriggling, crying waa, waa. It was a girl, pretty and loveable.

She was bathed, rubbed with turmeric, given milk to drink, and put in a cradle. Wet nurses and servants took care of feeding her and keeping her happy all the time.

The matter was quickly over. She gradually grew bigger. The parents loved her like their own eyes. They raised her and kept her from danger.

The grandparents and elders came to do the khwan ceremony, adorning her with many gold rings. By late in her fifth year, she had become beautiful and graceful.

Her figure was peerlessly lovely, graceful and slender as if sculpted. Her hair was sleek, black, and glossy. She was given the name Phim Philalai.³¹

She was taught to sew and embroider. Among girls of her age, nobody matched her skill. Morning and evening, she usually went to play at gathering flowers beside Wat Khao Yai.³²

Phlai Kaeo and Khun Chang each went out to play along with their servants. When Khun Phaen met Khun Chang, he said amiably, 'Let's go and buy liquor to drink together.'³³

Phlai Kaeo took a swig. Khun Chang gulped until his head trembled. [9] Both got so drunk their eyes bulged. They poured liquor into a bowl to swear comradeship.

Khun Chang took Phlai Kaeo's hand and touched the bowl. 'We will be faithful to one another until death. If either is traitor to his buddy, may the gods put him to death.'

May the sword of the guardians of the four directions not spare his neck. May he be separated from his mother for 500 eras.' They dipped fingers in the bowl of liquor, and drew them across their necks.

Phlai Kaeo took a gulp of liquor. Khun Chang schlurped, rolling his eyes. Phim Philalai was bent over with laughter. 'Serves you right, you low life.'

³¹ Phim perhaps from *phim*, to print or impress. Philalai is perhaps a contraction of *philatphilai*, meaning beautiful. Hence, figure of beauty.

³² Elsewhere called Wat Khao วัดเขา. There remains a ruined chedi, recently restored, near the western bank of the river, in Soi Si Wichai.

³³ Both of them were about 6 years old. In a modern context this is a young age to start drinking. Perhaps they were imitating grown ups? Or people started to grow up quickly and do things early. For example Phlai Kaeo was made to lead the army to fight Chiang Mai at the age of 18. Kim noted that it was Khun Phaen who was skilled in drinking as he initiated the event and drank a big gulp to start (Kim:102).

She played at cooking rice and curry, building a house and fence from sand, making merit and giving alms. She went to invite the abbots along.

‘Khun Chang can be a Mon abbot. No need for him to shave his head before giving a big sermon. Phlai Kaeo can be a Thai abbot. Bring everything for the ceremony.’

After the sermon was over and the monks fed, Phlai Kaeo made a funny suggestion: ‘Let’s play at husband and wife.’ Khun Chang cried, ‘I like that!’

Phim said, ‘You outcast with an ugly scraped head. I won’t play.’ Phlai Kaeo said, ‘Let’s play. It’s nothing. Khun Chang can be the husband.

‘I’ll creep in and steal you from his side.’ The two boys begged her to join in. They gathered leaves to make a bed.

She cleverly swept sand to make a house, with heaps for the mattress and pillow. Phim lay down on the ground. Bald-headed Khun Chang lay down beside her.

Phlai Kaeo jumped in between them, hitting Khun Chang in the middle of his bald skull. Khun Chang pretended to be asleep. Phim lay beside peeping out.

Khun Chang hollered out: ‘A thief has stolen my wife out of my room!’ He stood up, and walked up and down shouting to his gang to give chase.

Kids soon turned up in a noisy crowd. Khun Chang’s gang gave chase fearlessly. When they caught up with Phlai Kaeo, all shouted at one another, and fell to blows.[10]

Noses were smashed. Mouths split. Blood flowed. Some ran off shaking with tears, calling out to their mothers and fathers. The adults came and broke it up.

Phim sounded off, ‘You creep.³⁴ You naked skull. I don’t want to play with you. You baldie, bucket of shit, evil thing.’ She took her gaggle of servants off in a rush.

Khun Chang, his head swollen, ran off in dismay. His servants ran along trembling. He rubbed ground ginger³⁵ on his wounds, eyes rolling, teeth bared, tongue lolling, almost all in.

Dear listeners, please do not misunderstand. This is not something made up. Kids play in funny ways. And sometimes the messenger of the gods foretells the future.

The things kids play are not wrong. The bad thing is to criticize. This story comes down from ancient times. There is a text in Suphan.

³⁴ *ai tai hong*, meaning of someone who dies inauspiciously and will become a terrible.

³⁵ *Phlai*, actually zingiber casumunar, casumunar ginger, used for treating nausea and headaches.

The time came when Khun Siwichai and his beloved wife agreed together that their child Khun Chang was now grown up.

They should take their dear son to the court of King Phanwasa and present him to enter the royal service.³⁶ Failure to do so would have consequences.

They instructed the servants to bathe him, wash his hair, rub him with turmeric and powder, pomade him all over up to the nape of his neck, and put on his clothes.

They put gold bracelets on both arms and a diamond ring on his little finger. He looked like a wildcat's cub with glazed eyes. He ran waddling into the main room with his neck bobbing up and down.

They sent for incense, candles, and flowers, set out on trays in the usual way. Provisions were prepared for the journey. A male elephant was harnessed up ready.

Father and son mounted and sat in the howdah. The mahout drove the elephant out of the house with the big fence. They crossed streams and fields, heading towards the tree line. Servants followed along in a jumble

At Wat Thamma,³⁷ they stopped and dismounted from the elephant by the riverbank. Little Khun Chang and his father crossed the river and waited to enter the city.

When the local people caught sight of Khun Chang, they cried out: 'Oh, what a shame. [11] What kind of child has such a bare head.' They told their friends, 'Looks unreal.'

'Is it some kind of monkey in a rush to be reborn? What outcast spirit molded that.' People were bent over with laughter. They gawped until father and son had entered the palace.

The nobles and people waiting to attend the king burst out laughing as soon as they saw him. Little Khun Chang got flustered and did not know what to do. He crouched hiding behind his father's back.

His sublime majesty ruled the world. Before him the whole earth quailed in submission, and every country around the border bowed down to pay respects in dread.

Every land offered tribute and requested to be subject to Ayutthaya, so they might be eternally protected by his might. All the people were

³⁶ As a royal page. To be presented as a royal page the person must come from good family. Among many other qualifications was that he must be good looking. Khun Chang was ugly but because of the family's wealth, relatively high status, and Khun Siwichai's record of royal service, King Phanwasa agreed to accept Khun Chang as a royal page (mahatlek). See KP:27.

³⁷ Marked on Sumet Jumsai's map, on the northwest side of the city, across the river, almost opposite the old Rear Palace.

joyful,

with no hardship, only happiness. The royal line was unbroken from the past. The kingdom of Ayutthaya was eternal. People were joyful and prosperous.

The king mounted the jeweled throne, attended by a throng of fair maidens, who knelt with heads bowed waiting to perform every duty for the lord of the land.

Each face was fair and alluring. They fulfilled the royal pleasure. Like stars surrounding the full moon in the sky, they prostrated and walked on their knees to attend the king.

Singers and musicians performed continuously to augment the royal delight. Ladies of the court carried out their usual duties.

A little after four o'clock in the afternoon, he emerged into the front courtyard, and proceeded to bathe in the Ganges, water splashing in a stream from a shower-head.

Perfume was applied to enhance his fragrance. His cloth had a prominent kinnari pattern. He held a sword with a lifelike face of a naga. Towards evening, he appeared promptly in the front courtyard.

Trumpets and conches echoed around. Gongs crashed and victory drums boomed. The front guard and officials knelt and raised their clasped hands in salutation

The king sat on his resplendent throne looking like a lordly and valiant lion. Khun Siwichai of loyal heart crawled up with Khun Chang close behind. [12]

He raised the tray of incense, candle, and flowers and placed it in front of him. Khun Chang prostrated close to father, almost shaking to death.

The almighty king saw the offering of incense, candle, and flowers, along with Khun Siwichai and his son. He opened his mouth and spoke.

'What is this, Khun Siwichai? Whose child have you brought here? His head looks pitiful. Whose lineage is he from?

Or is he from your family? So bald it's unbelievable. Are you bringing him to give to me? Is that why you have brought the tray of incense, candles, and flowers?

Khun Siwichai prostrated himself and said: 'Oh lord, your grace, my life is under the royal foot.

Khun Chang is my own son. Please allow me to present him to be a soldier. He has an auspicious fate and much wealth to bring to your majesty, the victorious lord.

Since the birth of this son, Khun Chang, gold, silver, valuables of all

kinds, cattle, buffalo, elephants, horses, and servants have appeared as never before.'

The almighty king listened and laughed merrily. 'Eh, with such a pitiful head and ears but so much wealth, you say. That's curious.

At present, he's still a small child. It's no use presenting him to me now. You raise him first. Don't be impatient. Wait until he grows up and then bring him again.'

He ordered attendants to arrange royal gifts including garments. Father and child prostrated three times and took their leave, happy at the king's grace.

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