

## 20: Khun Chang accuses Khun Phaen of rebellion

[II/85]

The king, ruler of the world, unmatched in excellence, resided in his golden palace, contemplating the affairs of state.

At sunset, he was bathed and arrayed in magnificent raiment with dazzling crystal and gold. Throngs of inner ladies sat paying their respects.

He came out to sit on the throne. The crowd of senior officials in attendance prostrated. He heard cases concerning the populace and gave judgment of life or death according to the crime.

Then he looked around. 'Who is that prostrate at the back? Is it Khun Chang? Where have you been to get your chest and shoulders striped with welts,

your face and forehead lined with scratches, and your hair chopped about. Your bald head looks evil. Who beat you up?'

For a moment, Khun Chang was nonplussed, and left the royal question hanging without any reply. So the king roared, 'Who did this to you, Khun Chang?'

Khun Chang remained shaking and speechless, until Phramuen Si thumped him in the chest. 'The king has ordered you, so why are you silent?' Still trembling, Khun Chang promptly addressed the king.

'My liege, your humble servant's name is Khun Chang from Bigfence village. My father's name was Khun Siwichai, and my mother Thepthong.

My elder cousin, Phan Son, was born before me, son of my aunt. Next came Son Phraya and Ratthaya, and then myself, your humble servant.

I had a wife called Kaen Kaeo, daughter of Muen Phaeo from Bigfence village. She sickened with piles, became hollow-eyed, and died many years ago...'

The king became very angry. 'Who asked you to recount your household census details?' Khun Chang was shocked to his senses. But in his prostrate position, he was still flustered, [86]

and got everything upside-down and back-to-front. 'Wanthong rode a horse off into the forest... there were lots of forest robbers... weapons scattered everywhere...

Khun Phaen, son of Thong Prasi... much silver, gold and things

of value... he was with Wanthong, the two of them at a banyan tree... the elephants and horses panicked and charged off...

officers and men were lacerated by rattan thorns... a sacred thread around the house... wanted to hang myself to death... Son Phraya jumped off the elephant into the undergrowth...

hundreds died... everything fell off... he charged off on his horse, Mist... set up a shrine near the gate...'

The king said, 'I hear but I don't understand. What's up? Everything's topsy-turvy. Jamuen Si, whisper in Khun Chang's ear not to be alarmed.'

Phramuen Si followed the king's order. 'Tell what happened from the beginning.' Khun Chang calmed down, and wove a story of fact and fiction.

'I was asleep in the house with Wanthong at the third watch. The villain cast a spell. He shaved my head, drawing blood. He drew patterns on my body in soot.

He chopped three beautiful curtains to shreds. Cash and articles have disappeared. He wound a sacred thread around the house and made many offerings to an eye-level shrine.<sup>1</sup>

My wife, Wanthong, disappeared. I followed after them with my people and found Khun Phaen and his horse with my wife Wanthong in the shade of a banyan.

Khun Phaen had several hundred bandits under his command. They ambushed us, and chopped my men down dead all over the place. He caught me, beat me,

and lacerated me with rattan thorns. Then he shouted at me provocatively. He said it was not a good idea to kill me. If he released me, I would go to Ayutthaya and tell everything.

Then, were the king to come out, he would engage him in an elephant duel, win a famous victory, and seize the city as ruler. These were his vile words. [87]

He has built a royal lodge in the forest, and a camp fortified with spikes. Very strangely, he has constructed a toilet.<sup>2</sup> Before long, he

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<sup>1</sup> With these words, Khun Chang is accusing Khun Phaen of using supernatural power with malicious intent, which is an offence under this law: 'Should anyone accuse another of being a *chamob* (a shadowy spirit of a woman who died in the forest), knowing the use of magic, herbal potions, and methods to cause death, if the accusation is examined and found false, the accuser will be fined a multiple of his price according to the severity of the offence, and if the accusation is proved, the person knowing about herbal potions, spirits, *jakla* (a spirit with the form of a cat), and magic will be executed to prevent any future application, and all property seized into the royal treasury.' See *Phra aiyaikan bet set* (Miscellaneous laws), section 157 in *KTSD*, III, p. 174. (Red: 217)

<sup>2</sup> The lodge, fortifications, and toilet are the evidence that Khun Phaen is planning a revolt. The phrase for the lodge, *tamnak phlap-phla*, specifically defines a building which is one of the privileges of the king. At this time,

will become a threat to the city.<sup>3</sup>

King Phanwasa pondered over this story. ‘Mm! That Khun Phaen makes me angry. But are you stirring things up, Khun Chang?’

I can’t make out what is fact and what fiction. There’s something wrong about the way you tell about getting into a fight in the middle part. I think some is true and some false.

Khun Phaen took your wife away. You chased after him, and so he fought back. Khun Phaen has knowledge and courage. Khun Chang is as slow as a crab so he got beaten.

You probably blundered into the rattan in flight, but you accuse him of lacerating you. Listening to one side is misleading.’ He spoke to Jameun Si and Jameun Wai.<sup>4</sup>

‘You will go as military commanders in command of the major and minor regiments. Conscript five thousand select men, and arrange everything for a military expedition.

Put Khun Phet on the right wing and Khun Raminthra on the left.<sup>5</sup> Go and find out where he’s hiding, and whether Khun Chang’s words are true or false.

Ascertain whether he’s living in a royal lodge. Listen to his words. See if he has any fear.

Tell him I sent for him. I will hear the case on any matters in dispute between them. He has no reason to be afraid. If he comes, he will not be killed or beaten.

But if he resists, he will be captured and killed with his head stuck on a stake in the forest. Take the army quickly right now.’

Phra Wai and Phramuen Si received the king’s orders, took leave, and promptly left on all fours. They sent a conscription order to Phan Phut.<sup>6</sup>

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a constructed toilet was also one of the privileges of royalty, and others were expected to make use of natural facilities. The criminal law section of the Three Seals Law specified, ‘Wherever the king travels, overseers are to organize phrai to dig deep holes, and to cover them up after use. If anyone is seen violating them, they are to be bound and delivered to the judicial authorities who will administer five strokes of the rattan.’ (*Phra aiyakan acha luang* (Criminal law code), section 115, *KTSD*, IV, p. 85).

<sup>3</sup> Khun Chang has accused Khun Phaen of five offences: robbery; abducting his wife; using supernatural power with malicious intent; murdering Khun Chang’s men with the help of bandits; appropriating the privileges of royalty and planning revolt. The latter three would be capital offences. Conviction for revolt carried the death penalty for seven generations of the offender’s family.

<sup>4</sup> Jameun Wai Woranat, another of the heads of the royal pages.

<sup>5</sup> Khun Phetintra and Khun Raminthra were two senior officers in the guard, who appeared in chapter 15 swearing an oath of friendship with Khun Phaen. These and the two heads of the royal pages were all officers close to the king, indicating the importance given to this expedition (Kukrit:203).

<sup>6</sup> A Mahatthai official responsible for conscription. See note in chapter 2, and mention in chapter 8.

‘Organize the conscripts and supplies. Send out the recruiters with call-up papers. Drag and dragoon people in by any method. Haul off their wives and children en masse.’ [88]

Soldiers and civilians scurried around in large numbers. Horses and elephants were organized, and silk flags distributed. Swords and lances were to be seen everywhere.

Provisions were laid out on the parade ground along with many helmets and shirts of different sizes. The astrologers found an auspicious time to march on the following day at four in the morning.

The troops were ordered to assemble in units at Wat Chai Chumphon.<sup>7</sup> The officer said, ‘Go home now, and tomorrow make sure you come in time, Khun Chang.’

Khun Phetinthra returned home where provisions, organized by his wife, were laid out everywhere. Khun Ram also went home promptly and summoned his people

to lay out the provisions, and harness the horses and elephants in proper fashion. As evening fell, he and his wife went in to sleep.

Khun Phetinthra’s wife dreamt that he was sliced in two, his chest slit open, and his heart discarded in the forest. She woke trembling with fear,

and aroused her husband to tell him about the dream in consternation. ‘I had a strange dream like never before.’ She recounted the story from start to end. ‘I’m very frightened.’

Khun Phetinthra was shocked by what he heard. He thought it was a bad dream meaning there would be hardship, sorrow, and confusion,

but he would cover it up. ‘In your sleep, your mind is racing and uncertain. Don’t be upset.’ He urged her to go back to sleep.

Khun Raminthra’s wife dreamt a tooth broke into three pieces. In alarm she clutched her husband. ‘I’ve had a bad dream.

You’re going with the army to catch Khun Phaen. I’ll suffer for you. I’m desolate. This unusual sign means danger.’ She lamented,

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<sup>7</sup> The name indicates the function: ‘the monastery for assembling victorious forces’. This would probably be located off the island to the north or west of the city. Below in chapter 27, the troops assemble at Wat *Mai* Chai Chumphon which is probably the same site. This may be the wat labeled as Wat Mai on Phraya Boran’s map of Ayutthaya, and now known as Wat Mai Pak Khlung (the new wat at the mouth of the canal). This is across the river to the north of the island, just east of the palace, and just east of the mouth of Khlung Sa Bua. Now, the remaining ruins are small and not distinguished, but the wat has a large courtyard which could serve the function of assembling an army.

her eyes brimming with tears.

Khun Raminthra listened to her and could not remain silent. He hugged and reassured her, 'Don't be worried and frightened. [89]

Because I'm going far away, you're having dark and fearful thoughts. I'll get Khun Phaen.' With these words, they went back to sleep.

Dawn came up in a bright sky. Khun Phetinthra promptly bathed, changed his clothes, and went out, carrying his trusty sword.

As she raised her hands to wai him, his wife saw him with no head, only shoulders. In alarm, she ran up to him lamenting, 'Listen to your wife. Don't go.

Walking in just now, you had no head. I think this is a big thing. It fits with my terrible dream.' She embraced his feet in the middle of the ruan.

His wife's words turned Khun Phetinthra's face ashen. Such an abnormal thing was a warning. He turned to look at his wife and became even more disturbed.

There was an omen across her chest. He stood, rigid with fear. He had been with the army many, many times but had never experienced anything like this.

'Oh dear! Am I going to come back? Probably I'll die in the forest. But if I don't go, I'll be in danger from the king.' He shoed his wife away and steeled himself to go.

Khun Raminthra got dressed, strapped on his belt with all its gear, and picked up his trusty sword.

His wife walked behind him lovingly. As he descended from the house with a heavy heart, the stairway swayed and cracked. Five steps broke off and fell to the ground.

His heart shuddered in surprise. 'This time, my life will come to its end. I'll die separated from my housemate.' He turned to look at her and felt even more upset.

The troops were already drawn up ready in front and behind. They immediately set off surrounding him, and met up with Khun Chang, followed by his own servants and phrai.

The roads were jam-packed with crowds of people. At the wat, there was a hive of organization. When both army commanders were ready, [90]

the platoons were inspected and organized into a column. The units stood bristling with swords and guns. There were lancers, pikemen, archers. Prudently they waited for the auspicious time to

march.

When the auspicious time came, gongs were beaten, guns fired, and shouts echoed around. Swords and lances glinted in the sunlight. Riders sat tall on their horses and elephants.

Phrameun Si rode an elephant in the middle of the army, while Phrameun Wai led the vanguard, and Khun Phet and Khun Ram came at the rear of the column, all riding tuskers with howdahs.

Khun Chang sat gloomily in the howdah on his old elephant, Kang, with his head bobbing up and down. Son Phraya rode on the neck holding a goad, and Rattaya sat on the elephant's rear.

People catching sight of them broke into laughter. 'Those bald elephants go very well together!' They shouted at others to come and look. Khun Chang hid his face and looked away.

They passed the Don Fak customs post beside Pak Khu.<sup>8</sup> Lots of people come to look at the throng of elephants and horses. They made for the plain towards Talan.<sup>9</sup>

Some seized dried fish, fresh fish, or whatever they could find from every house. They kept up a good pace and by evening reached Sam Ko,<sup>10</sup>

where they stopped, set up the pots, prepared food, ate, and went to sleep. After the morning call, they hastened along to Bo Landing,<sup>11</sup> with the panniers<sup>12</sup> and baskets bouncing on the porters' shoulder-poles.

When they reached Banyan Landing, Khun Chang became nervous and flustered. He quickly said to Phrameun Si, 'Right here is where I charged and slashed him.'

The dead were scattered all over the place. His people were completely finished off. They ran scrambling off into the rattan.' Phrameun Si cackled with laughter.

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<sup>8</sup> *Pak khu*, meaning the mouth of a moat or ditch, is 3 kms northwest of Ayutthaya along the main Chaophraya river. When Nandabayin attacked Ayutthaya in 1563-4, he camped at Kum Dong. Naresuan sent ground troops up to the Pak Khu customs house, and transported the Narai Sanghan cannon by junk, for an attack on this camp which forced the Burmese to withdraw and circle round to attack the city again on the northern side (Red: 221. RCA, 32, 35). In the subsequent attack of 1568-9, the Burmese army besieged the city, with a series of camps. 'The main army set up its stockade at Wat Pho Phüak Township, on the Pakkhu tax station rice-fields.' (RCA 47/23-4).

<sup>9</sup> Just south of Phak Hai.

<sup>10</sup> Three cows, now an amphoe in the west of Ang Thong province.

<sup>11</sup> *Tha pho*, probably modern Ban Pho Phraya, 5 kms north of Suphanburi on the Suphan River. It is shown as Ban Pho Phya in the early Bangkok maps (*Royal Siamese Maps*:98, 104).

<sup>12</sup> ๒๒๒, large panniers hung on shoulder poles (Mat:647, pix).

‘Oh, really? I can see the rattan thicket has been smashed up, but your story doesn’t hang together. Was it your handiwork chopping this up, or did your servants clear it to get you out?’

Khun Phaen is not to be seen. Where is he? Think it out and tell me quick.’ Khun Chang summoned his servants who told him there were tracks of a horse. [91]

They agreed to follow them. The huge army made its noisy way through the forest to Three Thousand Crocodiles, where they waited for everyone to catch up.

Then Phramuen Si called out, ‘Hey, hairy chest! There’s something odd here. Send some people out to spy.’

Khun Chang dismounted from his elephant, called Son Phraya over, and they both climbed a tree to look around.

They saw Color-of-Mist eating grass, Wanthong lying asleep, and Khun Phaen hugging and kissing her, and busily stroking her breasts.

The sight made Khun Chang almost fall out of the tree. Son Phraya grabbed him just in time. He stood back up, shaded his glazed eyes with his hands, and shook with rage.

Khun Phaen’s spirits saw people coming, and rushed over to intimidate them by leaping and wriggling around, lolling their tongues, and bellowing menacingly.

Khun Chang staggered backwards in alarm, slipped out of Son Phraya’s grip, and fell crashing down flat onto the ground. He picked himself up and ran over shouting,

‘I’ve found Khun Phaen! He’s hugging Wanthong tight just over there. My wife’s cheeks are as red as powder. Phrameun Si, please help, have some mercy.’

Jameun Si and Jameun Wai replied to Khun Chang, ‘You’re off your head. You just see your wife and you say her cheeks are red.

If your wife was a piece of land, she wouldn’t dry up even by year-end. It’s like a beetle boring towards the red core of a piece of wood. Right now, about 2 wa<sup>13</sup> in.’

With these words, he ordered the army units to pick up their weapons and get ready. ‘Surround him but stay out of sight. Don’t approach and attack.

Post guards in every direction. Don’t let them escape.’ Then they made a racket with guns and gongs. The spirits told Khun Phaen they were surrounded. [92]

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<sup>13</sup> 4 meters

Seeing so many troops approaching, Wanthong clung to him trembling with fear and crying sadly.

‘How are we going to survive this? What do you think, my love? Their army has us completely surrounded in this forest.

Can you fight them? If each of them rips us a bit, we’ll be dust. There’s no way one of you can defeat a whole army.

You and Color-of-Mist could escape but there would be me left behind to worry about. Would he do me in? Think about it.’

‘Listen to me and don’t be afraid. If ten times this number had come I’d still fight them. They’re like a mosquito that flies into a flame unawares.

Though there’s only one of me, I’m as fierce as a lion, and this lot come to fight me are a tribe of pigs. Don’t be afraid, my darling. Their heads will be pulverized.

First I’ll take you away and hide you in the forest.’ Immediately he placed his hands on his chest and chanted a mantra.

Then he lifted her onto the horse’s back, and rode Color-of-Mist out of the trees. The two of them on the magnificent steed galloped across in front of the troops,

with his spirits swarming around them. Color-of-Mist came out on Khun Ram’s flank. Khun Phaen chanted a formula and blew it to stun the troops and make them fear his powers.

The artillery and lancers, who had been advancing en masse, stopped stock still. Khun Phaen came forward until he was close to the encircling troops. He nudged her to look.

‘Over there’s your husband in the howdah, showing off his fine figure and bald head. Son Phraya’s riding on the neck brandishing a goad. Behind them, there are three million elephants.

You and me are just two people. How to stand up to the power of these valiants? Because I love you, I have to engage them. Whether I live or die will depend on merit. [93]

If you were anyone else, not so close, I’d hand you over without a second thought.’ With that, he kissed and caressed her to mock Khun Chang, and then sped away.

They came to the banyan and sheltered under its dense foliage where the light could not penetrate. He helped Wanthong down from the horse. ‘My precious, stay in the shelter of this banyan.

I’ll go to see what Khun Chang is minded to do. If he’s good, he can live a bit longer, but if he attacks me, I’ll have him dead.

When I’ve finished with the army, I’ll come back to get you. It won’t take long for them to disappear into the forest.’ He chanted a mantra to focus Wanthong’s mind.

He scattered enchanted sand around to form a diamond-hard barrier. He cut grass, tied it into the shapes of dummies, and placed a thousand of them around in a chain.

When he pronounced a threatening incantation, fire flared up as if to burn them. He threw sacred water over the grass dummies, extinguishing the fire and leaving the dummies changed into people, dressed as sturdy soldiers with weapons in hand. They all paid respects to him, and he gave them their orders.

‘Wait until I give you the signal, then attack their troops and annihilate them.’ Then he spurred his horse to gallop out of the trees.

The troops from front to rear had all been equally stunned, and it was some time before they came round. Then they fell to questioning one another.

Phrameun Si said, ‘How come nobody moved a muscle just now? Khun Phaen rode across right in front of your faces. He went out on your flank, Khun Ram.’

Khun Ram said, ‘I wasn’t afraid, but he froze my whole body and rode across on his fine steed without a trace of fear. We’ll chase him down and chop him dead.’

Khun Chang said, ‘I’m furious. He galloped his horse right up close here, kissing my wife however many times, all to mock me.’ With that, he ordered the mass of troops to advance. [94]

The forest echoed with the crackle of gunfire. The spear troops advanced together with flags flying. Khun Chang urged them forward from his tusker. ‘Charge for victory!’

Khun Phaen bellowed the Power-of-Garuda spell, stopping the men frozen in their tracks. The troops became confused and uncertain. Military discipline broke down.

The main army got muddled up with the vanguard. The left and right wings swapped over. The forward strike troops went on the defensive. Khun Chang rode his elephant into the middle of the army,

and belabored the horses and mules. He overtook Jameun Wai, shouting wildly, ‘Capture and kill him!’ Then he hid himself in the howdah and ordered, ‘Take my elephant over to seize Wanthong.’

Meun Si and Meun Wai rode their elephants over and rebuked him loudly. ‘Don’t play around, Khun Chang. We two are in command of the army.’

Then they rode their elephants out front and waved their hands to call Khun Phaen to ride back. ‘We are here on the king’s orders to

bring the army after you.’

Khun Phaen’s reputation for powers of combat was unequalled. He spurred his horse across in a bellicose manner, and asked, ‘Why did you come out here

with all these troops, weapons, and war materials? Where are you going? Has some enemy appeared somewhere? Please explain what’s the matter.’

Khun Phet and Khun Ram advanced. [Khun Phaen said,] ‘This forest is swarming with your troops. There’s some elephant hiding another elephant around here. It’s like following the faint red light of a flickering lamp.

You have to stare for a moment before you know why it’s hiding its face away. This fellow has been beating the horses and mules. Who picked such a shit to lead an army?’

Khun Chang was burnt up with rage. He smacked his knee, gnashed his teeth, and seethed.<sup>14</sup> His skull was drenched in sweat. ‘Enough! I’ll arrest you.

You’ve got a real nerve to show off and make fun of me like this.’ He banged a gong and hollered, ‘Arrest him, all of you!’ [95]

Phrameun Si and Meun Wai rebuked him angrily. ‘You only speak so well and provocatively, as if you were brave and daring, because you have lots of allies and no need to fear.

What a load of bullshit! Because you’re such a fool, he shaved your head.’ With that he turned to reply to Khun Phaen. ‘I’ll answer your questions so that you may understand.

At present the mighty king offers protection to the great and small, all over the world. He ordered us to bring an army in order to investigate the truth –

whether you had kidnapped Khun Chang’s wife, escaped from the city into the forest, associated yourself with bandits, set yourself up as royalty,

built a royal lodge as your residence, fortified it with many spikes, installed a toilet like royalty, deviantly imitated the Lord of Life,

killed over a hundred of Khun Chang’s men, created trouble without fear of the consequences, behaved drunk with power, acted as if you were planning a revolt against the capital,

captured Khun Chang and lacerated him with rattan thorns so he

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<sup>14</sup> *Man dap*, literally ‘oily liver.’

suffered shame before the whole city, and hoped to provoke the king to come and engage you in an elephant duel.

When the king knew of this case, he thought deeply about the charges that you had acted criminally, but remained suspicious, and so sent us

to investigate on the spot first. If we are certain of the truth, we are to arrest you. If there is no case to answer, we are to take you and Wanthong back.

The king will hear the case about your disputes over the lady, and give his judgment. He will not pursue the case about the killing of Khun Chang's men in the forest.

As far as we can see, nothing that Khun Chang told the king has any reliable basis. You don't need to fear. Let's go together. Where is Wanthong? Bring her here.'

Khun Phaen replied to Phrameun Si. 'There's a lot more in the past, but it's no use to tell you. Is she really my wife or Khun Chang's? [96]

Please forgive me. We're all friends here.<sup>15</sup> It's all obvious who is being crooked. This whole big matter arose out of rivalry over one lady – that alone is the cause.

Khun Chang brought his troops into this forest and ordered them to surround me en masse. I spoke to him nicely but he wouldn't back down, and instead came blundering at me on his elephant with blade drawn.

I had either to fight or wait to die, act like a man or run away. I rode my horse full tilt to break through his troops. He stabbed at me with his spear some six or seven times.

Because of my past merit, he missed. Khun Chang's men were gutless cowards. They broke and fled off into the forest in confusion. I didn't chase after to kill them.

Khun Chang scraped his side and scratched his head because he was bent on running away. He went back and told the king I beat him. Really it was two armies fighting tit-for-tat.

I'm telling you the whole truth with no deceit. You say you're on the king's orders to take me and Wanthong back.

It's a tight one. I fear royal authority but I've nobody to help me. Sir, please take the army back and give whatever report you deem fit.

I'll wait for the king's anger to cool a bit, and come later. Please have mercy on me, and report the truth.'

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<sup>15</sup> In chapter 15, Phrameun Si was the teacher to Khun Chang and Khun Phaen in the royal pages, and all three along with Khun Phet and Khun Ram had taken an oath of friendship.

Phrameun Wai and Meun Si listened to Khun Phaen and replied, 'You're a good person with knowledge. But what you just said shows you're thinking wrongly.'

The king will be angry that we found you but let you get away. The old matters will get submerged. The king will side with Khun Chang.

Why not come along with us? Everything will be cleared up. But if you continue to resist, I'll order the elephants and horses to charge and grab you.'

Khun Phaen thought quietly, grinding his teeth and shaking his head. 'When friends threaten you, it's frightening. If I was no good, I'd have been defeated at the time of the Lao army.'<sup>16</sup> [97]

He forced himself to restrain his anger. Knowing that if anything big happened, it would go to the king, he answered evasively. 'I said just now that I fear royal authority.'

I could go, and it'd probably be alright. I'm not going to run away and hide. If you had no mercy, you would've just slashed me dead rather than talking.

You'd charge the elephants, stab me, and take me. Although I'm fearful, why should things be like that? A single person is like a lone fly that flies up, attracted by a light,

only to fall back down dead. If you have no mercy and kindness, I've had it. If you want to take me back under arrest, I won't die quietly.'

Phrameun Si and Meun Wai heard this and angrily gave orders to the troops. 'Men! Take him alive. Don't kill him.' The officers and men swarmed forward with guns and lances.

The gunners fired volleys and hollered. Khun Chang stood up banging a gong and shouting 'Take him!' Swords and lances flashed and glinted. Khun Phaen boldly chanted a mantra,

and bellowed the Power-of-Garuda spell. The troops were stopped in their tracks with their hair standing on end. He spurred Color-of-Mist away from an engagement. 'If I act first, I'll be a traitor.'

Khun Phet and Khun Ram on the left and right wings saw all the artillery stone quiet. 'Mm! Phaen may have crooked ideas to rebel and seize the country.'

They directed the elephant troops to split into a crow's wing formation. Khun Phet wagged his finger and said, 'Hey, Phlai Kaeo, you're insolent as if I don't have a clue. Your lineage is nothing.'

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<sup>16</sup> Meaning the Chiang Thong campaign.

Defying royal orders is a grave matter. You're full of ambition for kingship. You think your powers are good enough to get the territory.

But who's going to pay respects to *you*? Everyone knows your merit isn't enough. I knew your father and mother from way back. Your father's name was Khun Krai.

Your mother's Thong Prasi. That year they went to round up the big buffalo, the king had him killed and his head stuck on a stake in the hills. [98]

Your property was seized, and all your relatives' too. Your mother had to sneak out of the capital with you and go back to the house in Kanburi.<sup>17</sup>

You stayed with your mother at Cockfight Hill, and ordained at Wat Som Yai, you fugitive. You went to fight at Chiang Thong, got a good reputation, and became Khun Phaen.

You did well but within less than a year, you ran off with ideas of rebellion, and kidnapped your lover off into the forest. I can no longer consider you a friend.

The king loves you but you don't love him in return. He does right by you, and in return you do wrong. Don't imagine you'll escape alive.' He drove his elephant up close.

Khun Phaen was as angry as flaming fire. He brandished Skystorm, flashing in the light. 'You barge your way up here and sound off, slandering someone already in their grave for no good reason.

You won't remain standing as long as the sky. Today, I'll give you a bad death, falling from your elephant to roll on the ground. Your wife will be a widow and I'll take her, naked, as my wife.'

He chanted a formula, and summoned his mass of grass-dummy troops who swarmed out of the *rang* forest whooping and shouting chaotically.

Khun Phaen swooped down on his horse and burst upon the vanguard, slashing with his sword. The grass-dummy troops ran as if blown by the wind and encircled their cavalry on both sides in an instant.

Under the power of the mantra, the sky grew overcast, darkness shrouded the scene, and the earth trembled as if it would overturn.

The six volunteer units fought back with their necks straining, their arms at full stretch, and their lungs gasping for breath. But their weapons broke and shattered as if they were slashing stone. The grass-dummy troops were not hurt. They turned and slashed

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<sup>17</sup> In fact, they fled from Suphan, not from the capital. See chapter 2.

back,

their swords and lances flashing. Weapons were broken down to the hilt. Tripod guns were raised and fired but the bullets bounced back,

hitting the ranks of artillerymen. Undeterred, they charged forward in a tumult, until their weapons were finished. Then the volunteers scattered away. [99]

Khun Chang drove his elephant off into the forest. In his panic, his cloth slipped off him. The elephant went straight into a grove of cowitch.<sup>18</sup> Son Phraya scratched himself, yelling 'Ouch!'

The elephant kept charging on. Khun Chang's helmet dropped off, and his head burned like a torch. He fell off, and scurried along bent over double. The panicked elephant ran, shitting floods.

Khun Chang got up on a tree stump. Having lost his cloth, he was as naked as his skull. Khun Phaen slashed masses of people until he suddenly came face-to-face with Khun Ram.

Khun Ram thrust with his long lance, but landed only a glancing blow on the shoulder which spun Khun Phaen around. Khun Phaen lunged forward into the fray, and slashed Khun Ram down from his elephant onto the ground.

Khun Phaen leapt down from his horse, and slashed Khun Ram's shoulder. Khun Ram fell, doubled over. Khun Phaen slashed again, and Khun Ram tumbled forward, convulsed, and died in a pool of blood. 'One down, you reprobate!'

Khun Phetinthra came to help with his lance raised in challenge. He thrust into Khun Phaen's chest, but it was as invulnerable as iron or diamond.

Khun Phaen leapt onto the elephant and swung at Khun Phet's neck which severed like picking a flower. Khun Phaen's sword was as bloody as if had been stained red. He remounted his horse and galloped into the thick of the army.

His grass-dummy troops charged forward hollering like bedlam, scything down the army row by row. Phrameun Si rode into the fray on his elephant with the howdah slipping and slapping.

Khun Chang caught sight of Phrameun Si's elephant and called out, 'Help me, I beg you!' When it brushed past the tree stump, he scrambled up the elephant's rear.

Phrameun Si turned to look. Through his blackened face and blurred eyes, he thought Khun Chang was a striped tiger, and poked him in the side with the handle of his goad. Khun Chang cried out, 'Hey! It's me!'

In alarm, Phrameun Wai thought it was Khun Phaen, and bashed

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<sup>18</sup> *Mamui*, *mucuna gigantea*, cowitch, cowage, horse-eye bean.

him with the handle of his lance, cracking his skull and drawing blood. Khun Chang swung dangling from the elephant, scrambling to climb back up, and almost falling to his death.

Phrameun Wai spurred the elephant which charged off like a rocket with its tail up, straight into a thicket of rattan. The troops broke and scattered, running away in a chaotic mass. [100]

Those who loved themselves and feared death scurried off, flinging away their guns all over the place, ducking to hide crouching in the undergrowth, frantically stuffing back their innards.

Some begged a ride from friends but got abuse in return. 'You lowlife!' 'Get lost!' 'Villain!' Some dropped to the ground and crawled along like a cat, saying, 'That bald lackey conned us.'

Some shouted and screamed, spewing saliva. 'I'm not going to survive!' 'Oh god!' Some collapsed flat out with exhaustion, but saw the others would abandon them and so managed to run on.

Others fled, crashing into one another, moaning and groaning over their bruised heads. Some feared they had met Khun Phaen, and raising their hands to wai and plead, 'Oh sir! Don't do it! Spare me!'

Phrameun Si's elephant disappeared into the thick forest. Rustling sounds made people jump with fear. By dusk, they were almost to Sam Ko.

Horses and elephants were exhausted. Men were filthy, weak with hunger, hollow-eyed with tiredness, and in low spirits. Phrameun Si caught sight of Khun Chang beside a bo tree, and cried, 'My god! How did you get here?'

Khun Chang replied, 'I got up on the rear of your elephant, and you hit me in the side. Don't you remember? People shouted "Tiger!" and scattered away. Khun Phaen came on pretty strong.

Please have mercy. My wife is still in dire straits. She has to put up with lying on the hard ground, and eating *jaeng*<sup>19</sup> roots rather than rice, with moonlight instead of lamps.'

In fury, Phrameun Si came up and elbowed him. 'Are you still thinking of her, you creep?' He kicked Khun Chang down on the ground. 'Hey! You broke my ribs.'

Phrameun Wai said sharply, 'You're vile, Khun Chang. Stop wheedling. We just got thrashed because of you.' Officers and men carped and complained, loudly and wildly. They dug up taro or sweet potato and ate whatever there was.

After the army fled in retreat, Khun Phaen's anger cooled. He galloped away on Color-of-Mist, and merrily went down to bathe.

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<sup>19</sup> แจง, *jaeng*, *maerua siamensis*.

He took off his gear and walked down to a stream with beautiful lotuses in bloom, and a refreshing fragrance. He scrubbed away the dust, [101]

washed his victorious sword, and stuck it in his shoulder sash. He changed clothes and went to find Wanthong. He snuggled up to her and gradually relaxed in weariness.

‘Did you see what a large army your husband brought here, Wanthong? I killed Khun Phetinthra and also Khun Ram, two officers in all.

If they’d been good I wouldn’t have killed them. But they insulted me and so brought disaster on themselves. Several thousand conscripts died.

They were led to their deaths. Others ran away, abandoning lots of stuff. Except those two officers and Khun Chang, I didn’t go after anyone to kill them.

Your husband, Khun Chang, stabbed me in several places, and my innards almost spewed out. I would’ve slashed him dead, but I feared you’d be angry.

I restrained myself because I thought it through. If I hadn’t thought of darling Wanthong, I would’ve had to pulverize him.

Come to the battlefield. You’ll probably find your husband’s clothes. You can gather them up in a bundle and keep for merit. Hugging them while asleep will keep your face warm and comfortable.’

‘Oh dear, when will you stop being resentful? It’s too much, all this cattiness. When did I ever allude to him? I’m really very hurt by your innuendos.

In the five or six days since I came, I haven’t mentioned even his name. Yet you still pick at me without fail. It’s really become a habit.

Do you think I don’t love you, and so you keep on gnashing and grinding<sup>20</sup> your teeth? Only you don’t swallow a thing. Your anger is tending to make you unreasonable.

You’ve got nothing to chew on – no betel, nothing sour, nothing salty, nothing sweet or savory. The fighting went on so long the fresh food and dried food are all finished.’

‘My gorgeous, don’t be so troubled. We’ve been through a lot of hardship already. Some time we can probably be happy and carefree. [102]

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<sup>20</sup> guess: นีคเน้น, not found in any dix, incl Mc, Pal.

There's still fruit in the forest. We can make do in a forest sort of way. Why mention these things, it's of no use. Make an effort not to be sad.'

He cuddled up to her, and touched her breasts, exciting passions, like picking the right celestial medicine to lighten her heart. The breeze blowing through the budding leaves wafted them to sleep.

In the cool of the evening, the soft sunlight dappled the leaves. Animals moved through the forest and hills. A herd of elephants<sup>21</sup> made its way into the dense forest,

moving in groups of both males and females, black and with short tusks,<sup>22</sup> looking magnificent.<sup>23</sup> Khobut, Sangkhathan, Khansong, Amnuaiphong, and Supradit, majestic and beautiful.

Lineages born in the Ton Forest.<sup>24</sup> Ekkathan, Thokthan, Pinai, many of them. Sido plodded along, each on their own.<sup>25</sup> Khom picked its way across fallen trees, and foraged.<sup>26</sup>

A tiger stalked deer,<sup>27</sup> crouching to pounce. It sprang and bounded forward, throwing up the dust. The deer scattered away up the hills in high leaps.

A serow leapt and fell from a cliff, but healed the broken bone

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<sup>21</sup> Khun Wichitmatra argues this passage on elephants suggests the dating of this chapter. While only one white elephant was found in the First Reign, three were found in the Second Reign – in 1812, 1816, and 1817 – provoking a lot of writing about elephants, including *Khlong tamnan chang* (Poem on the history of elephants) by the Front Palace Prince Mahasarak in 1815. If this chapter was written by the future King Rama III, it was in the period between the finding of the white elephants and his ascent of the throne in 1824. (Red:211-4)

<sup>22</sup> *Niam*, technical term for tusks which are large but short and straight (RI:596).

<sup>23</sup> There were manuals of elephantology which described the various lineages of elephants both in the celestial and terrestrial realms. Vishnu (Narayana) ordained that a lotus flower be born from a womb, with eight petals and 133 pistils, and presented it to Siva (Ishwara) who shared it out among Vishnu, Siva, Brahma, and the god of fire, Akhaniphong. They ordained that the petals and pistils be born as elephants in the terrestrial world. From these origins arose the four main lineages of elephants associated with each of these four deities. These lineages are then subdivided into several sublineages (usually eight, for the eight directions), including those named here, each with distinctive characteristics described in the *Tamra chang* (Elephant manual). Khobut is a sub-lineage of the Issuanphong lineage of Siva. It was born from a cow, has a cow-like yellowish hide, tail like a cow, mooing voice like a wild cow, curved tusks, and gentle manner. Sangkhathan is also of Siva's lineage and has two variants. One is black with tusks curved like a conch (*sank*). The other has a golden tinge, small tusks of equal length, and calls like a tiger in the morning and a chicken in the evening. Amnuaiphong is in Brahma's lineage, and Supradit in that of the fire god (Suphon: 204-5, 212-3; Red: 675).

<sup>24</sup> There is a saying: doves of the extensive bamboo, elephants of the Ton Forest, Suphan people. Suphon suspects there was an area known as Ton Forest which was a known haunt of 'special' elephants, and was used for royal elephant hunts. She surmises it was in the vicinity of U Thong where these scenes of the poem are set. (Suphon: 205-8)

<sup>25</sup> This obscure line refers to the fact the Sido sublineage are rather solitary (Suphon 215-6).

<sup>26</sup> Line totally speculative. The Thai is all onomatopoeia, evoking the thudding gait of the elephants, and the meaning is probably immaterial.

<sup>27</sup> ฉมบูน, *cervus schomburgki*, Schomburgk's deer, a deer with spectacular antlers now extinct in Thailand and probably in the world.

with its saliva.<sup>28</sup> Wild buffalo with elegantly curving horns, startled by a smell, pawed at the grass.

Flocks of birds came to nest in a noisy chorus. They milled around some prey, sharing the food, then called out nosily and floated away on the wind.

A little gibbon hung from a tree lamenting in lonesome whoops, then swung away elegantly. Cicadas chirped from the branches of a banyan, and crickets droned in response like singing counterpoint.<sup>29</sup>

The sun set and the moon shone brightly through the golden banyan, highlighting two breasts like heavenly lotus buds.

Dew fell on the banyan leaves, and the breeze blew it to plop gently down. The wind chilled Wanthong's heavenly flesh, inviting them to cuddle and canoodle.

They gazed at the moon and listened to the crickets' drone. He hugged her protectively and caressed her breasts, raising their passions, until they finally fell asleep. [103]

The defeated army remained at Sam Ko in the forest by the big bo tree for two days until all the survivors straggled back.

They numbered in total around five hundred, far fewer than the number who had died. Khun Phet and Khun Raminthra of the left and right wings were among the dead.

'All because of that idiot, Khun Chang.' 'He led us this way and that so we got thrashed.' 'Parents will collapse by the cartload.' 'No need to find candles and swaddling for the corpses.'

'Those who didn't die are sure to get caned this time.' 'One more time and that'll be the end of the clan.' 'Anyone who came back must have a lot of merit.' 'What a scandal because of Khun Chang.'

Those who were stripped of their clothes and weapons became extremely resentful. 'If you loved her why didn't you hang onto her all the time?' 'Up on your elephant, you didn't die, did you.'

Khun Chang said, 'You can't blame me for things people abandoned when they ran away. What am I to do? I'm still upset over my wife. If it were your wife, I bet

you'd run after her roaring out loud. If you don't believe me, try it and see. You'd be leaping around blaming everyone in sight. Let's see who did the fighting and who ran away.

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<sup>28</sup> เขี้ยวผา, *yang pha*, more often *liang pha*, *naemorhedus (capricanus) sumatrensis*, the Southern Serow, a small goat antelope found mainly in steep limestone terrain (Mammal:137). These animals were believed to have bones filled with powerful oil which was what enabled them to climb steep cliffs, and also perform other remarkable feats such as heal themselves with their own saliva (Suphon: 216).

<sup>29</sup> *Khap rong*, counterpoint recitation.

Khun Phet and Khun Ram were on the left and right wings, but I was in the vanguard, wasn't I? When Khun Phaen was slashing around, I stabbed him eight times.

When he chopped Khun Phet and Khun Ram down dead, I turned and saw you, sir, driving your elephant to escape. There was nobody calling to anybody. We'd had it, so I fled too.'

Phramuen Si was furious. Phra Wai said, 'You lowlife with a head shaved by a ghost! You turn everything round so I fled before you. When Khun Phaen charged and slashed those two,

where were you to be stabbing Khun Phaen? You still dare to say this, you hairy face. You? You were at the rear of the troops. Someone running to climb on the rear of my elephant

had a head just like yours. When you climbed up, I hit you with the goad and elbowed you many times, but you wouldn't let go and swung yourself up on my elephant, you mother.' [104]

Ratthaya said, 'My brother Son and I slashed and stabbed him before you, sir. We meant to grab his head and bring him in, but then the elephant carrying us fled so we lost the chance.'

Phra Wai laughed. 'What you say is true. If the elephant hadn't run off, your liver would probably have flowed.' Then when all were ready, the chief commander, Phrameun Si, ordered the army to march.

Khun Chang, Ratthaya, and Son Phraya rode on the elephant with their heads bobbing and glistening in the sunlight. Phrameun Si rode a male elephant.

When they passed the customs post at Pak Khu, many people came to look. They hurried along in shame, cut into the wat, and entered the city quickly.

As they dismounted from their horses and elephants, the two commanders felt apprehensive. The evening sun had almost set behind the forest. There was no further audience on that day,

so they all went home. Friends, wives, and children came to meet them and ask what happened. They told them sorrowfully.

The wives of the fallen sobbed and writhed around in distress. Some fainted and would not get back up. Others milled around massaging, stroking, and hugging them to revive.

The wives of Khun Phet and Khun Ram heard the news from their servants. They cried, their heads swollen in horror, stretched out on their beds in thought.

Khun Phet's wife beat her chest. 'Oh, my lord and master, you shouldn't have died in battle. When you interpreted my dream, the worry made my chest tremble and I've been apprehensive from that

day on.

Didn't I tell you I saw you without a head? Didn't I tell you not to go with the army. You didn't believe in the karma that you'd made. You insisted on going, and you lost your life.

Others came back home, but you went to die unseen in the wilds. The servants and men who went with you have returned, but the light of your wife's life has gone out.

Your corpse will decay in the undergrowth, with no cloth to cover it, prey to the wild animals, left to rot in pustules. Pitiful!<sup>30</sup> [105]

Your flesh will spill on the dust, and roll around the edge of the marsh. Your bones will be scattered in piles. Your relatives won't see you.

Even though your merit may have ended, that's the way things are. But if it were at home, your body could be cremated with railings,<sup>31</sup> tiered umbrellas, all the adornments appropriate to your status,

brightly lit with lamps, incense and candles on display, clusters of golden stars hanging down, layered wreaths with tassels looking meticulous,

a coffin carved in rows of magnificent *krajang*<sup>32</sup> pattern decorated with gold, a canopy with scattered stars in benjarong pattern, monks invited to chant sweetly,

and the sound of twin Malay drums. Late at night all your relatives could gather to sing your praises in harmony.

Oh, my lord and master, why did you go and get killed, almost as if you were running away from me with no consideration, not letting me make your corpse look fine.

No umbrellas, only great trees. No pipe, drum, and gong to mark time, only the sound of animals in the undergrowth. No incense and candles, only the moon and stars.

No canopy, only the sky darkened with clouds and mist. No curtains, only the surrounding hills. Nothing but the flat ground to support the body instead of a pyre.

You'll lie asleep and abandoned in the forest. Who'll cremate your body? Many others are scattered and lost. Many others have died and will not be seen again.'

She beat her head and chest. Her crying echoed sadly around the

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<sup>30</sup> This passage is similar to two other famous laments: in the Mahachat, where Phra Wetsandon grieves over the death of Matsi and recalls Nang Malin's death in the forest; and in the Nang Loi passage of the Ramakian (Suphon 217)

<sup>31</sup> ราวรั้ว, *nachawati*, a fence or railings to demarcate a ritual area for a funeral or other ceremony, usually decorated with tiered umbrellas.

<sup>32</sup> กระฉิ่ง, a pattern, possibly based on a lotus bud, used for friezes (Mat:15 and RI:1411 both have pix).

house. She grieved until her voice tailed away into a still sadness.

In the bright light of dawn, Phrameun Si and Meun Wai set off along with Khun Chang.

Senior officials enquired about the matter, fearing the king's anger. At the right time, they entered the audience hall. [106]

The almighty king, whose reputation made the world quake in all ten directions, was residing in the golden palace of victory, surrounded by throngs of inner ladies.

He rejoiced in the royal pleasure, refreshed by the measured strains of the orchestra and chorus. At midday he emerged from his golden room,

was bathed and dressed in glittering attire, and walked forth elegantly holding his sword to take his seat in the Rojana audience hall. Concubines brought articles, one after another.

At the auspicious time, the curtain was drawn to reveal his presence. Nobles prostrated with their faces down. Those who had returned from the campaign prayed feverishly with fear.

The king looked around and saw Phrameun Si and Phra Wai but not Khun Phet and Khun Ram.

He saw Khun Chang prostrate beside Phrameun Si. He asked, 'On the matter of Khun Phaen Saensongkhram, did you bring him in or not?'

The sharp, clever, and wise Meun Si Saowarak-rat promptly addressed the king. 'My life is beneath the royal foot.

The army marched to Banyan Tree village, which is still distant from Ton Forest. Khun Chang said that was the place

where he had found both Khun Phaen and Wanthong, staying under a holy banyan. We looked and found nothing, including no royal cloister or royal lodge.

If they had been taken down, the elephant grass would be flattened. What we saw was not at all like Khun Chang's description. So we marched further into the forest to Three Thousand Crocodiles,

and had people climb a tree to spy around.<sup>33</sup> They saw a horse released in the forest, and Khun Phaen with Wanthong, just the two of them,

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<sup>33</sup> Suphon (208) says there is a waterfall called น้ำพุม่วง, purple fountain, on a tributary of Jorakae Samphan (3000 crocodiles) stream, where there is evidence of an old elephant enclosure. She suspects that Ton (main) Forest was a place reserved for royalty because it was a good source of elephants.

no forest bandits. We sent men to poke and pry about both in the vicinity and far away in the forest. Nothing. [107]

No royal lodge. So the troops were ordered to surround them. Khun Phaen and Wanthong mounted their horse, and broke through our ranks.

I thus ordered the troops to give chase and catch them. Wanthong and Khun Phaen sped off, but we followed and surrounded them.

Wanthong hid away out of sight, but Khun Phaen was in our encirclement. When the left and right wings were ready, I spoke with Khun Phaen

about the points which are at issue. I told him the king had given orders he be found immediately; and that he would be given a fair judgment on the matters under dispute.

Khun Phaen replied that Wanthong was definitely his wife. He had asked for her hand and built a bridal house. After Khun Phaen went to Chiang Thong,

Khun Chang deceitfully said that Khun Phaen was dead. Her mother gave her to Khun Chang in marriage. Khun Phaen returned and took Wanthong away.

Khun Chang took troops and found them at the big banyan. He ordered his men to charge and kill him. Khun Phaen was angry and fought back.

As for Khun Phet and Khun Ram, they insulted Khun Phaen and spoke inappropriately. They raked up matters and made accusations at length. They said he had done wrong in kidnapping Wanthong.

On top, they accused him of treason, rebellion, and acting high-handedly. They raked up many matters about deceased members of his family. They said, "Your father was called Khun Krai

and your mother is Thong Prasi. You ran off to ordain at Wat Som Yai. Your father died badly long ago. You are too bold and not deferential."

Then they charged forward with men and elephants to close with him and cut off his head. Khun Chang kept on shouting he'd catch him. The troops were intent on chopping him down.

Khun Phaen escaped three times, but the army didn't give up trying to catch him and chop him down. So Khun Phaen rode into the confrontation, slashed Khun Ram dead, [108]

and Khun Phet as well. Many troops were killed, and the others broke and scattered, leaving their weapons behind.

We set out with five thousand. Over four thousand five hundred died. The remaining troops who returned to the city number only 455 persons.'

Having heard the account of the battle from its beginning, the

king raged like a roaring fire. He stamped on the throne hard enough to make it collapse,

like a bolt of lightning lashing Mount Meru. He leaned forward down to the ground, then snapped up straight and said, 'Wai! The army commander has lost the army. The troops have been wiped out.

Elephants, horse and weapons in thousands. Only one person and you can't compete! That cowardly and hopeless! Shameful! You ran off and hid like women.

The forces we raised have been wasted with no result. What a toll on the conscript rolls and the rice supplies. You deserve to be flogged and sent down to prison, yet you still have the nerve to come in here to tell me.

If it were not like this,<sup>34</sup> if you were sent off to fight other enemies farther away, you wouldn't arrive in time to see their footprints, and you'd run off in terror at the sign of a bit of dust.

What a tribe of evil curs! If you saw a bit of tiger shit you'd run off into the elephant grass without looking back. There's only one thing you're good at – strutting around, and swishing your tails to flirt at the Din Gate.<sup>35</sup>

Combing your hair and making up your faces. Sex mad! Fighting bandits or fighting wars doesn't interest you at all. You're only good at cheating your men for corrupt gains, and using fancy words to get blood out of a crab.

You deserve to have your heads cut off and your clan obliterated. Bad people should not live. Why should I support you to bring shame on me? First off, Kalahom and Mahatthai,

send out arrest warrants under seal urgently to the guard posts and customs posts in all the regions and cities, large and small, all the provinces under our control, to cities of the first, second, third and fourth classes.

Wherever Khun Phaen is, he is to be arrested but not killed. Remember this well and deliver him here. In the order under seal, give his name and reputation, [109]

appearance tall or short, dark or fair, how old he is, so he will be recognized.' Having given this order, the king retired to sleep.

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<sup>34</sup> Guess, not sure what this line means.

<sup>35</sup> The Din (earth) Gate was the gate of the palace used by inner ladies, especially to visit the market behind the palace, and was a gathering place for men who wished to flirt with them. These men were known as 'Din Gate lovers.' In Ayutthaya, the gate was on the north side of the palace (shown on the Phraya Boran map). The name was carried over to Bangkok, and indicated the gate leading to the market later known as Tha Thian. 'Swishing your tails' refers to the fashion for men to tie their lower cloth with the end hanging down one side as a long sash (Red:227-8).

The top officials busily assembled all the clerks to write out the warrants for Khun Phaen's arrest and delivery. They summoned guards to send them urgently to all major cities to the north and south,

to cities of the first, second, third and fourth classes, to guardposts and all the lairs of forest gangs, complete with full information and the command to follow the official order in every detail.