

# River Books Spring 2017

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*Publishers of Southeast Asian art, culture & history*

ISBN- 978-6167339849



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River Books was founded 30 years ago to publish books on Southeast Asian art, history and culture. We are committed to recording and preserving unique and vanishing cultures, as well as celebrating the most beautiful art and architecture in mainland Southeast Asia. In Spring 2016, River Books was one of the founders of **Bangkok Edge** - Bangkok's first ideas festival.

Our Thai language books cover aspects of Thai history, while on the dictionary front, our Unabridged English-Thai dictionary continues to be reprinted with many electronic versions licensed throughout the world. A major new project in preparation is the Thai-English dictionary. Electronic versions and an app will also be available.

Working with acknowledged experts, River Books titles combine excellent photography, design and production values. Significant books published in 2016 were **Unseen Siam – Early Photographs 1860-1910** and **Fit for a Queen - Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's Creations by Balmain**. The first title in the **Discover Asian Art** series, **Bencharong – Chinese Porcelain for Siam** is available in early 2017, as is the beautiful **Catching the Light – A Journey through Burma**.

Following the success of **Siamese Coins** (sold out within four months of publication), **The Evolution of Thai Money**, is a companion volume, while a new geographical departure for River Books is the fascinating account of life among an endangered African tribe, **The Barabaig – Life, Love and Death on the Tanzanian Plains** by Charles Lane.

Our fiction list continues to grow, with a new title by Claire Keefe-Fox, **Siamese Tears**, an exciting thriller by G. Svasti, **A Dangerous Recipe**, and an historical novel, **The Stairway Guide's Daughter** by John Burgess.

Follow us on Facebook for all the latest news and information about events, new books and reprints, or email [chris@riverbookslondon.com](mailto:chris@riverbookslondon.com) to receive our regular newsletter.

Full details available in this catalogue and on our website:  
[www.riverbooksbk.com](http://www.riverbooksbk.com)



# CONTENTS

## New Titles

- 4 Unseen Siam – *Early Photography 1860–1910*
- 5 Fit for a Queen – *Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's Creations*
- 6 Tribal Textiles from Southwest China – *Threads from Misty Lands*
- 7 Bencharong – *Chinese Porcelain for Siam*
- 8 U Thong, City of Gold
- 9 Barabaig – *Life, love and death on Tanzania's Hanang Plains*
- 10 Catching the Light – *A Journey across Myanmar*
- 11 A Dangerous Recipe  
The Stairway Guide's Daughter
- 12 Ancient Thai Beads – *from Dvaravati to Sukhothai*  
Katya and the Prince of Siam

## Recent Titles

- 13 The Evolution of Thai money – *From its evolution in Ancient Kingdoms*  
Siamese Tears – *The kingdom's struggle against the colonial superpowers*

## Backlist Titles

### Photography

- 14 Siam – *Through the Lens of John Thomson 1856–66*  
Tea Horse Road – *China's ancient trade road to Tibet*
- 15 China – *Through The Lens of John Thomson 1868–1872*  
The House of the Raja – *Splendour and Desolation in the Deep South of Thailand*  
Thai Magic Tattoos – *Revised Edition*

### Popular Culture and Performance

- 16 Very Thai – *Everyday Popular Culture*  
Thai Taxi Talismans – *Bangkok from the passenger seat*  
Bangkok Found – *Reflections on the City*  
Thai Folk Wisdom – *Contemporary Takes on Traditional Proverbs*
- 17 Silence Speaks – *Masks, Shadows and Puppets from Asia*  
Cambodian Dance – *Celebration of the Gods*



## Khmer Art & Culture

- 18 Bayon – *New perspectives*  
Buddhist Painting in Cambodia  
Preah Bot – *Buddhist painted scrolls in Cambodia*  
Temple in the Clouds – *Faith and Conflict at Preah Vihear*
- 19 Ancient Angkor  
Banteay Chhmar – *Garrison-temple of the Khmer Empire*  
Stories in Stone – *The Sdok Kok Thom Inscription*

## Archaeology of Southeast Asia

- 20 Early Thailand – *From Prehistory to Sukhothai*  
Early Mainland Southeast Asia – *From First Humans to Angkor*  
Early Landscapes of Myanmar
- 21 Before Siam – *Essays in Art and Archaeology*  
Buddhist Art – *An Historical and Cultural Journey*  
Caves of Northern Thailand

## Thai Art & Culture

- 22 In the Shadow of Rama – *Mural Paintings in Mainland Southeast Asia*  
The Roots of Thai Art  
Ayutthaya – *Venice of the East*
- 23 The Grand Palace and Old Bangkok  
Past Lives of The Buddha – *Wat Si Chum: Art, Architecture and Inscriptions*  
Thai Mother-of-Pearl Inlay



## Ceramics

- 24 Ceramics of Seduction – *Glazed Wears from Southeast Asia*  
The Ming Gap and Shipwreck Ceramics in Southeast Asia – *Towards a Chronology of Thai Trade Ware*  
Khmer Ceramics – *Beauty and Meaning*

## VIETNAM & LAOS

- 25 Royal Hue – *Heritage of the Nguyen Dynasty of Vietnam*  
Ancient Vietnam – *History, Art and Archaeology*  
Ancient Luang Prabang and Laos

## Burma

- 26 Yangon Echoes – *Inside Heritage Homes*  
The Trouser People – *Burma in the Shadows of the Empire*
- 27 Tai Magic – *Art of the Supernatural in the Shan States and Lan Na*  
The Moon Princess – *Memories of the Shan States*  
Burma's Spring – *Portraits of a Changing Nation*
- 28 Ancient Pagan – *Buddhist Plain of Merit*  
Backstage Mandalay  
Sacred Sites of Burma – *Myth and Folklore in an Evolving Spiritual Realm*

## Cookery

- 29 The Burma Cookbook – *Recipes from the Land of a Million Pagodas*  
Riverside Recipes – *Thai Cooking at Chakrabongse Villas*
- 30 Rawfully Good – *'Living' Flavours of Southeast Asia*  
Rirkrit Tiravanija – *Cook Book*



## Thai History

- 31 Thailand's Political History – *From the 13th Century to Modern Times*  
Siam and the League of Nations – *Modernisation, Sovereignty and Multilateral Diplomacy, 1920–1940*  
On Track – *Henry Gittins: Railway Pioneer in Siam & Canada*

## Textiles

- 32 Traditional Textiles of Cambodia – *Cultural Threads and Material Heritage*  
Pictorial Cambodian Textiles  
The Shan – *Culture, Art and Crafts*
- 33 Mantles of Merit – *Chin Textiles from Myanmar, India and Bangladesh*  
The Secrets of Southeast Asian Textiles – *Myth, Status and the Supernatural*  
Silken Threads, Lacquer Thrones – *Lan Na Court Textiles*

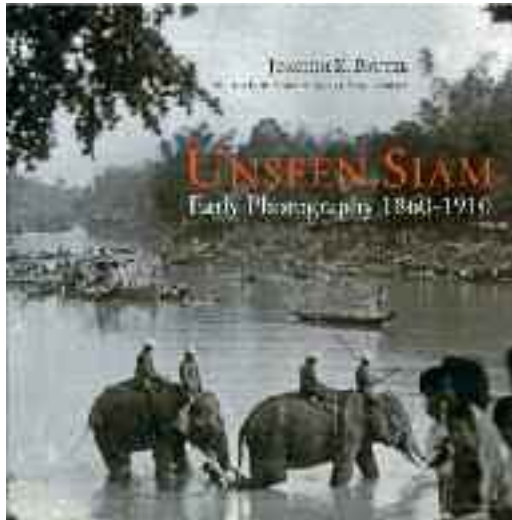
## Fiction

- 34 After the Wave  
Curtain of Rain  
A Woman of Angkor

## Distribution

- 35 UK/Europe
- 36 Eastern Europe/Worldwide





## UNSEEN SIAM

### Early Photography 1860-1910

Joachim K. Bautze

364 pp, 280 x 280 mm  
 Hardback, 704 b/w photographs  
 ISBN 978 616 7339 66 5  
 £40/\$69.95 October 2016 (UK & USA)



*Unseen Siam – Early Photography 1860-1910* reproduces many previously unpublished images and is the first extensive English-language overview of early photography in Siam (Thailand).

The book reveals the careers of 15 early photographers who worked in Siam – Abbé Larnaudie, Fedor Jagor, Pierre Rossier, Carl Bismark, Francis Chit, John Thomson, Henry Schüren, Gustave Richard Lambert, Max Martin, William Kennett Loftus, Fritz Schumann, Joaquim António, Robert Lenz, Emil Groote and Kaishu Isonaga – many of whom became court photographers to the then ruling King of Siam. Their work included

photographic cartes-de-visite, as well as large-sized images from attributable albums and portfolios. Each photograph is fully catalogued, and often attributes the photo-grapher of some well-known images for the first time. This exhaustively researched reference work includes biographies of the photographers and an extensive bibliography.

The book is an invaluable insight into Siam when it was truly opening up to the outside world, with photographs of every aspect of Siamese life,



from inside the royal palace to vernacular architecture and riverine views; from kings and queens to ordinary people and village life.

#### The author

Art historian Dr. Joachim K. Bautze has taught at the universities of Heidelberg, Tokyo and Berlin. He has guest-curated exhibitions of Indian art in Europe and the U.S.A. He has written, contributed to, or edited, a number of books, catalogues and articles on South- as well as Southeast Asian art and photography.

## FIT FOR A QUEEN

### Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's Creations by Balmain

Melissa Leventon



232 pp, 285 x 230 mm  
 Hardback, 313 colour photographs  
 with 90 b/w images  
 ISBN 978 616 7339 63 4  
 £35/\$55 October 2016  
 (UK & USA)



In 1960, King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit of Thailand embarked on an epoch-making state visit to 15 Western nations. The trip, which revitalized the image of Thailand internationally, was a coming-of-age for the young monarchs who thus entered upon the world stage. Presenting an engaging image of their homeland, Their Majesties were received by statesmen, local and international celebrities, and many of the crowned heads of Europe.

Her Majesty Queen Sirikit enchanted Europeans and Americans during the tour with her “fairytale” couture wardrobe. Designed primarily by Pierre Balmain, her regal attire was the result of a professional collaboration that was to last for more than two decades. The interest and acclaim accorded the beautiful Queen contributed greatly to that first tour’s success and established her as an international taste-maker and the era’s epitome of royal style. Moreover, Her Majesty’s Thai dress from the tour evolved into modern Thai national dress, and her subsequent work with Balmain significantly influenced its development as well.

*Fit for a Queen* charts the evolution of Her Majesty’s royal style and her professional relationship with Balmain. The book showcases more than 70 of the ensembles he designed for Queen Sirikit in the 1960s and 1970s in photographs by renowned Thai fashion photographer Nat Prakobsantisuk.



**TRIBAL TEXTILES FROM SOUTHWEST CHINA**

*Threads from Misty Lands*

Catherine Bourzat  
Photography Thierry Arensma  
and Philippe Fatin

254 pp, 300 x 255 mm  
Hardback, 320 colour photographs  
ISBN 978 616 7339 71 9  
£40/\$64.95 October 2016



Philippe Fatin is a traveller, photographer and collector who has established a world-class collection of tribal textiles from southern China.

These exquisitely colourful, hand-woven textiles are highly prized by collectors and here for the first time is the most extensive collection of garments collected from tribes across southern China including the Bazhai, Zhouxi, Xijiang and Gedong amongst others. The distinctive styles, colours and motifs from each are looked at in turn and the remarkable photographs allow the reader to appreciate the intricacy of each piece and the tradition prized by each tribe.

Profusely illustrated with over 320 colour illustrations, the book not only studies the designs themselves but shows the ceremonies the textiles are made for, the traditional weaving methods employed as well other other ornamentations such as headpieces and fastenings. Dyeing techniques and other working methods are also discussed.

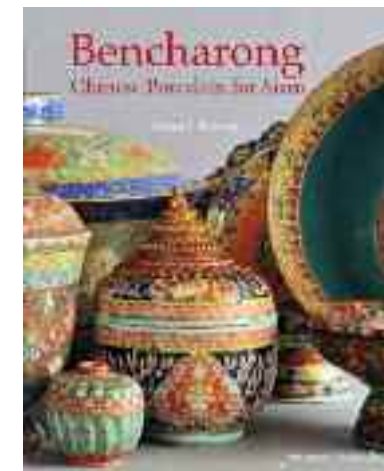
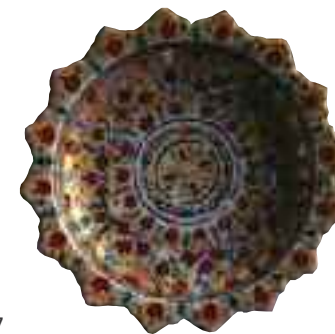


*Discover Asian Art*

**BENCHARONG - CHINESE PORCELAIN FOR SIAM**

Dawn F Rooney

224 pp, 222 x 175 mm  
Hardback, 302 colour photographs  
ISBN 978 616 7339 68 9  
£14.95/\$25 January 2017



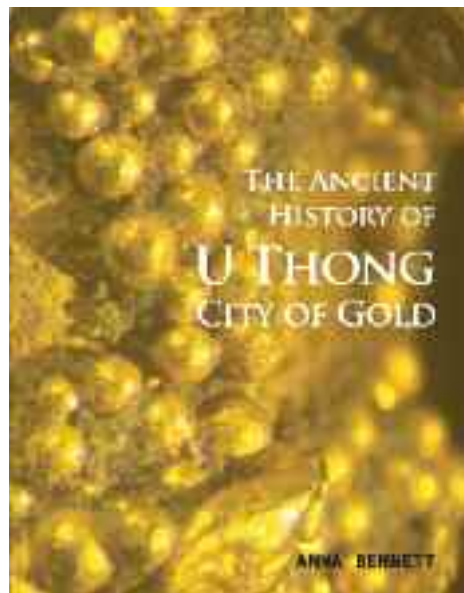
Bencharong, a unique class of Chinese export ware, was made exclusively for Thai royalty and the ruling elite in the late 18th and 19th centuries. Enamelled porcelain containers and dishes for the table and boudoir are resplendent in kaleidoscopic colours inspired by verdant, tropical vegetation. Lai Nam Thong ('gold-washed'), a variant, takes the opulence of this ware to a pinnacle by adding gold as an embellishment. Although Bencharong belongs both in place and time to the broader tradition of Chinese export art for the European and American markets, it is distinctively Thai in

style and aesthetics. A wealth of lavish illustrations, many never before published, are visual revelations of Bencharong's splendour.

The author traces the history of Bencharong from the renowned kilns of Jingdezhen to enamelling centres at coastal ports in southern China and its final destination – Ayutthaya and Bangkok.

Dawn F Rooney, a long-term Thai resident and an art historian specialising in Southeast Asia, is the author of nine books, of which four are on the ceramics of the region.





## U THONG – CITY OF GOLD

Anna Bennett



168 pp, 270 x 210 mm  
Paperback, 400 illustrations with 2 maps  
ISBN 978 616 7339 81 8  
£25/\$40 February 2017 (UK & USA)

U Thong, 100 or so km north of Bangkok, has been an important site for over 2,000 years, as witnessed by the discovery of a 3rd century Roman coin. The moated city was connected to the Chin river, thereby gaining access to international trade routes.

The inhabitants of the early centres of Classic Southeast Asian civilisation were already wealthy enough to own large quantities of ornate jewellery such as imported beads from India and carved stone from Taiwan. They had so much gold that central and western mainland Southeast Asia including the U Thong area was known in Sanskrit as Suvarnabhumi, the Golden Land.



This publication brings a new perspective to the study of ancient gold from U Thong. The author is a trained research metallurgy scientist, and these skills have been brought to bear on the highly significant corpus of early gold artefacts found in and around the moated city, the largest accumulation of such artefacts from any of the ancient *muang* of Thailand.

The goldsmiths were as highly skilled as those anywhere else in the world, but almost all previous studies have been written by people who can only study the outer appearance to draw conclusions regarding its age and place of origin.

Anna Bennett is an archaeological scientist and conservator, as well as a principal of Conservation and Technical Services Limited, a company she founded in 1989, which is affiliated with the Centre for the Scientific Investigation of Works of Art. She was trained as a conservator and gained her PhD in 1988 from University College London. From her doctoral fieldwork in Lopburi province in the years 1984 to 1988, and frequent return visits to investigate new finds, she has been scientifically engaged with this region for some 32 years.

## BARABAIG

LIFE, LOVE AND DEATH ON TANZANIA'S HANANG PLAINS

Charles Lane

246 pp, 280 x 240 mm  
Hardback, 150 illustrations with 2 maps  
ISBN 978 616 7339 85 6  
£35/\$55 March 2017 (UK & USA)

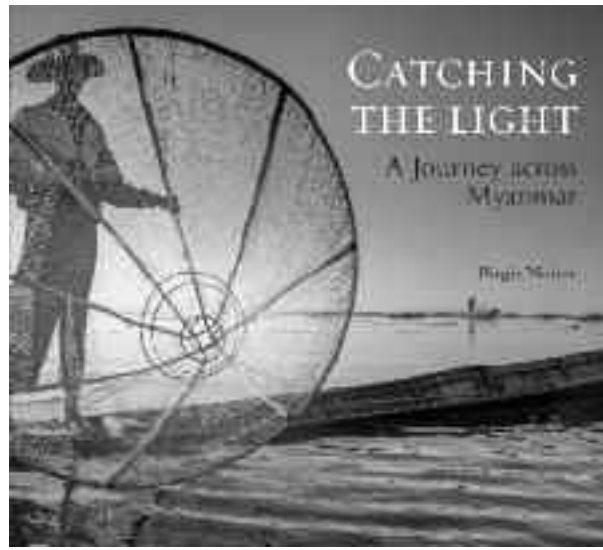
The Barabaig are a group of nomadic cattle herders in north central Tanzania. In the 1980s, Charles Lane had the privilege of living as one of them. Despite being known as killers by their enemies, he found them to be generous and caring companions, giving him his own cattle and sharing all aspects of their lives. However, their reputation for stealing cattle and killing their foes has led them to be widely feared and disliked by administrators and neighbours, thereby contributing to the seizure of much of their lands and abuse of their rights.

This beautifully illustrated book, photographed by Charles Lane, shows the Barabaig's artistry in



many facets of their lives, and provides both a fascinating anthropological record and a visual feast. It also recounts how Charles joined with the Barabaig in an ultimately unsuccessful legal challenge for the loss of their lands. This rich and hitherto sustainable culture is now under threat, ensuring that this book will become an invaluable record.

With a Preface from Survival International Director, Stephen Corry, and Foreword by author and activist, George Monbiot.



## CATCHING THE LIGHT

A Journey across Myanmar

Birgit Neiser

200 pp, 250 x 230 mm  
Hardback, 153 illustrations with 1 map  
ISBN 978 616 7339 83 2  
£22/\$35 April 2017 (UK & USA)

Much has changed in Burma since Birgit Neiser first visited in 1981. The country is now known as Myanmar, and military rule – which lasted nearly half a century – has given way to a tentative democratic process. Returning in 2010, at the cusp of this groundbreaking shift, Neiser began spending two months each year in Myanmar. To document ways of life she knew would soon start to disappear and to reach areas inaccessible to the casual visitor, she travelled across the country – on the back of timber trucks in the mountains of Kachin state, by motorbike in northern Shan State, and onboard an old fishing vessel in the Andaman Sea. The result is *Catching the Light* – a dazzling

collection of photographs that captures a unique moment in Myanmar's social, cultural, and political history.

**Birgit Neiser** is a German photographer who divides her time between Germany and Australia. Her work has been exhibited in London, Munich, Sydney and in the National Museum in Yangon.

“Although Myanmar is a country full of colour, I chose black & white images for this book because they provide a deeper insight into the country's soul than colourful travel images of the main tourist attractions.” – Birgit Neiser



## A DANGEROUS RECIPE

G. Svasti

312 pp, 196 x 128 mm  
Paperback, 1 map  
ISBN 978 616 7339 82 5  
£7.99/\$12 April 2017 (UK & USA)



Celebrity chef Corran Brook scours the globe for the world's best recipes and foods, for his ambitious compendium, 'The Story of Food'. But when travelling through Asia and chancing on a rare and extraordinary meal he cannot decipher, his struggle to unravel its secrets draws him deeper into a mystery of corruption and intrigue, it proves difficult to extricate himself from.

*A Dangerous Recipe* is a salutary story of greed, infatuation and obsession. But more than a hunt for perfection and the sublime, the book is also an insight into western attitudes to world culture;

whether a bug, monument, fossil or dish, there's a compulsive need to control, curate and make it one's own.

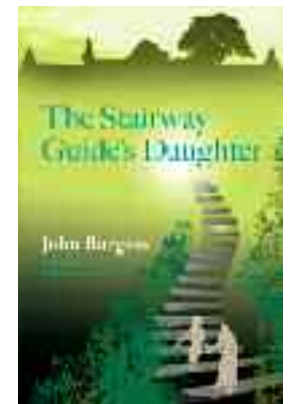
**G. Svasti**, half English and Thai, has known many lives. After a career in television and production design, he started several businesses, was a company director with Pearson PLC, co developed the Soho Theatre and more recently co-founded the international media company, Contagious Ltd. Recently he has returned to writing. *A Dangerous Recipe* is his first novel.

## THE STAIRWAY GUIDE'S DAUGHTER

John Burgess

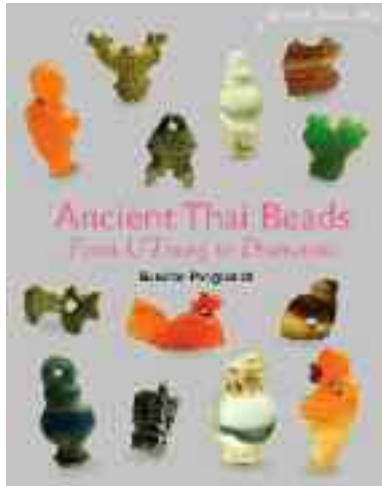
400 pp, 196 x 128 mm  
Paperback, 1 map  
ISBN 978 616 7339 87 0  
£8.99/\$15

April 2017 (UK & USA)



In twelfth century Cambodia, a young woman called Jorani earns her living guiding pilgrims up a two thousand-step stairway to the magnificent cliff-top temple Preah Vihear. One day, she accidentally witnesses the furtive burning of sacred palm-leaf documents, and is drawn into a succession struggle at the temple. She is forced to choose between loyalty to family and to the son of the abbot, with whom she forms an unlikely bond.

Set in the golden age of Cambodia's Angkor civilization, *The Stairway Guide's Daughter* brings to life a temple that is one of humankind's most remarkable creations of faith and architecture, and is today a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



220 pp, 222 x 175 mm  
Hardback,  
200 colour photographs  
ISBN 978 616 7339 88 7  
£35/\$55 March 2017

## ANCIENT THAI BEADS

From U-Thong to Dvaravati

Bunchar Pongpanich

In the pre-historic period in the archaeology of Thailand, beads are among the most exciting finds. Easily transportable, hard and durable, one bead can provide a mass of information. Usually found as part of grave assemblages, the quantity of beads found can give an excellent indication as to the wealth of the buried person, while exotic beads bear witness to ancient trade routes.

Some beads were carved for the beauty of the stone, while others also had religious or ritual significance. Other materials include gold, pottery and glass.

In this important book, long-time collector and expert, examines the history of Thai beads from the period of U-Thong until the Dvaravati era of around the 6th-8th centuries AD.



252 pp, 210 x 142 mm  
Paperback,  
168 b/w photographs  
ISBN 978 616 7339 33 7  
£9.95/\$15.95 March 2017

## KATYA AND THE PRINCE OF SIAM

Eileen Hunter and Narisa Chakrabongse

*Katya & the Prince of Siam* is the story of a daring love affair and marriage between a beautiful young Russian girl from Kiev and a Siamese prince, Prince Chakrabongse - one of King Chulalongkorn's favourite sons. It tells of their meeting in St. Petersburg in 1904 where the prince had an honorary commission in the Hussars as a protégé of the Tsar, of their elopement to marry in Constantinople and their journey and arrival in Siam. At first an outcast in Thai society, Ekaterina Ivanovna Desnitsky, or Mom Katerin as she became known, gradually gained love and respect. In 1908, they had a son, Prince Chula, and for the next 10 years enjoyed a happy life in Bangkok society as well as making various trips abroad and throughout Siam.

Making use of much hitherto unpublished archive material such as letters, diaries and photographs, the book gives a fascinating insight into life in both pre-revolutionary Russia and the Siamese court.

## THE EVOLUTION OF THAI MONEY

FROM ITS ORIGINS IN ANCIENT KINGDOMS



Ronachai Krisadaolarn

270 pp  
280 x 215 mm.  
Hardback with slipcase and  
reproduction coin, 245 colour photographs  
ISBN 978 6167339 73 3  
£50/\$80



This book is the result of over 40 years study of the various forms of Thai money from their origins to the introduction of the decimal system of baht and satang. A companion volume to the award-winning book, *Siamese Coins – From Funan to the Fifth Reign*, it includes 100s of new coins – pressed silver, metallic ingots (*toks*), silver bars ('tiger tongues'), bent ingots (*chiang* money), tokens and *pot duang* (bullet money). The author examined, photographed and weighed thousands of specimens, conducted hundreds of assays, and obtained images from museums, dealers and private collectors.

**Ronachai Krisadaolarn.** Born in Brooklyn, he gained law degrees in the USA before coming to Thailand in 1969 as an American Air Force Judge Advocate, pursuing a legal career, and becoming a Thai citizen in 1998. A leading coin expert, he has authored or consulted on many major coin books and exhibitions.



## SIAMESE TEARS

The kingdom's struggle against  
the colonial superpowers

392 pp, 196 x 128 mm  
Paperback  
ISBN 978 6167339 75 7  
£ 9.95/\$14.95

Claire Keefe-Fox

Siam 1890 and blue-stocking Julie Gallet, an independent-minded Parisian, has made what her English mother describes as an imprudent match. Following her husband to the Far East, she comes to stay with Michael Crawford, her British diplomat cousin and discovers a city of golden spires and colonial intrigue between France and England. Resisting entreaties to return home, Julie settles in Bangkok, teaches French to the ladies of the Royal Court and becomes passionately involved in Siamese life and affairs. Her irreverent journal recounts her growing political awareness along with the awakening of her sensuality. Blending fact and fiction, *Siamese Tears* is a faithful account of the events leading to the Paknam incident through the eyes of those who witnessed them.

**Claire Keefe-Fox** was born in Italy of French and American parents and grew up between Europe and the USA. She always felt a special affinity for Asia. She has written three novels in French about Thailand, and divides her time between France and Bangkok.





## SIAM – Through The Lens of John Thomson 1865-66 including Angkor and Coastal China

Paisarn Piemmettawat  
Translated: Narisa Chakrabongse  
160 pp, 280 x 280 mm  
Hardback, 100 b/w photographs  
ISBN 978 616 7339 51 1  
£19.50/\$40

"John Thomson, brought to 19th century photography a true artist's eye, great technical ability and, above all, a deep humanity and respect for his subjects... A BOOK TO BUY AND TO TREASURE"  
Arts of Asia Review, June 2015

Legendary Scottish photographer and travel writer John Thomson (1837-1921) set off for the East in 1862, and over the next ten years undertook numerous journeys to various countries, including Siam, Cambodia and China, becoming the first person to photograph Angkor Wat, Cambodia. The photographs from these journeys form one of the most extensive records of any region taken in the 19th century.

At that time, cameras were large and heavy. The photographic images were exposed onto a glass negative and this had to be done in complete

darkness, on location, in a portable darkroom tent. Despite the limitations of the process, Thomson was able to make photographs of great beauty and sensitivity, capturing the individuality and humanity of the diverse people of Asia, whether royalty or street vendor.

The photographs of his trip to Siam in 1864-65 have never previously been published as a group. Thomson received unparalleled access to King Rama IV of Thailand, and his images of the king, royal ceremonies, temples and landscapes form a unique archive of images.



## TEA HORSE ROAD China's ancient trade road to Tibet

Michael Freeman  
Selena Ahmed  
264 pp, 228 x 228 mm  
Paperback  
250 photographs  
ISBN 978 616 7339 53 5  
£25.00/\$40

One of the longest and most dramatic trade routes of the ancient world, the Tea Horse Road carried a crucial exchange for 13 centuries between China and Tibet. China needed war horses to protect its northern frontier and Tibet could supply them. When the Tibetans discovered tea in the 7th century, it became a diet staple, but its origins are in southwest China, and they had to trade for it.

The result was a network of trails covering more than 3,000 kilometres through forests, gorges and high passes onto the Himalayan plateaus, traversed by horse, mule and yak caravans, and human porters. It linked cultures, economies and political ambitions, and lasted until the middle of the 20th century.

Re-tracing the many branches of the Road, photographer and writer Michael Freeman spent two years compiling this remarkable visual record, from the tea mountains of southern Yunnan and Sichuan to Tibet and beyond. Collaborating on this fascinating account, ethno-ecologist Selena Ahmed's description of tea and bio-cultural diversity in the region.

## CHINA Through The Lens of John Thomson 1868-1872

Betty Yao  
168 pp, 280 x 280 mm  
Hardback, with 157 b/w photographs  
ISBN 978 616 7339 65 8  
£25/\$40

150 stunning black-and-white photographs from late 19th century China portray Chinese landscapes, architecture and city scenes, intimate portraits of Manchu brides and Mandarin officials. Betty Yao curated the exhibition that inspired this book and works closely with the Wellcome Institute which owns the original negatives. The photographs have been exhibited all over the world.



## THE HOUSE OF THE RAJA Splendour and Desolation in Thailand's Deep South

Xavier Comas  
232 pp, 290 x 290 mm  
Hardback, 86 b/w photographs  
ISBN 978 616 7339 17 7 £40.00

Forgotten in Thailand's troubled Deep South, stood a dilapidated wooden palace once home to a Malay ruler, the last of his dynasty. Known as the "House of the Raja", it is suffused with loss and solitude. Comas' evocative black-and-white photographs take us to a realm of hauntings, mystic powers and fading memories, while his account enthralls with vivid descriptions in which the real and the magical entwine.

## THAI MAGIC TATTOOS (2ND EDITION) The Art and Influence of Sak Yant

Isabel Azevedo Drouyer  
Photography Rene Drouyer  
175 pp, 280 x 215 mm  
67 colour and 68 b/w illustrations  
ISBN 978 616 7339 72 6  
£22/\$35 April 2017

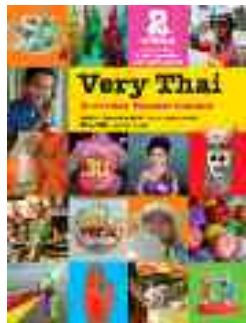
### With 67 new images

For hundreds of years, Thai Buddhist monks, using magical incantations and spells, have been covering people's bodies with indelible ink marks, *sak yant*, in the belief that they will attract luck, wealth, and blessings. With many new magnificent photographs, *Thai Magic Tattoos* is an essential guide to this fascinating subject.



[John Thomson's images] offer an inspiring glimpse into a lost world that continues to intrigue. An important record but also a joy to behold, this book is both history and high art.  
Traveller Magazine (Autumn 2010 issue)





320 pages, 240 x 170 mm  
Hardback, 590 colour  
illustrations  
ISBN 978 616 7339 37 5  
£20.00

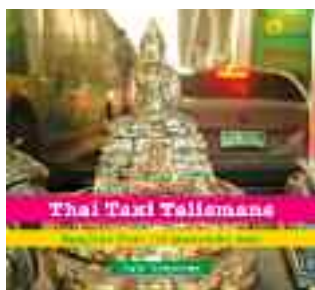
## VERY THAI – Everyday Popular Culture

Philip Cornwel-Smith  
Photography John Goss & Philip Cornwel-Smith

NEW 2nd Edition – expanded & fully updated with  
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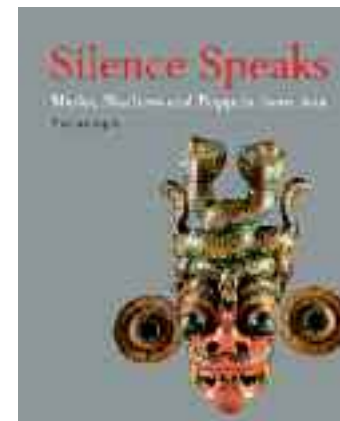


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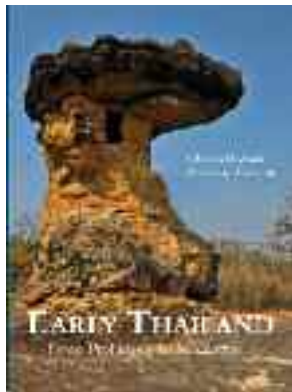
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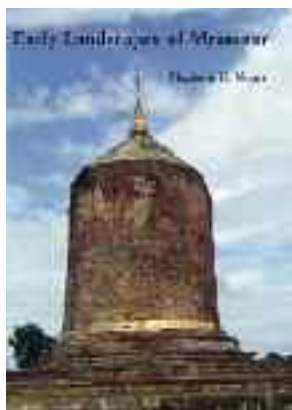


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Newly published discoveries make this essential reading for those interested in the early history of Myanmar and mainland Southeast Asia. Donald Stadtner, *JSS*

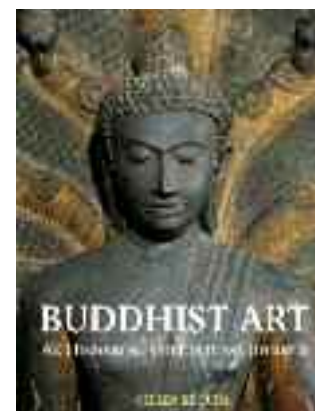
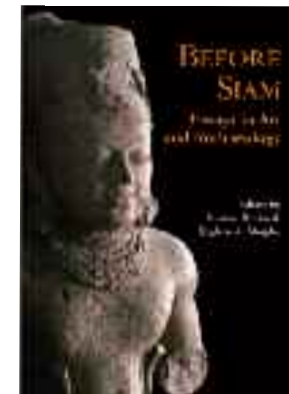
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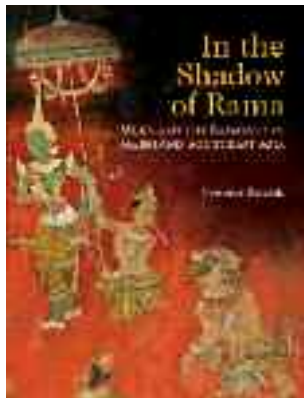
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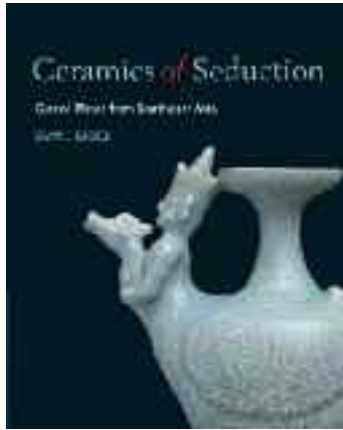
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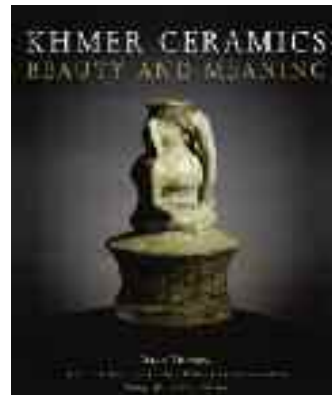
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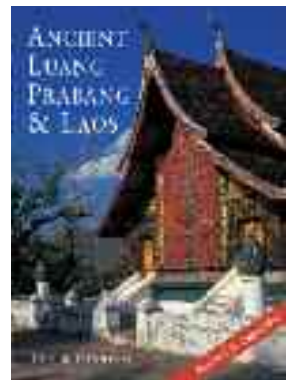
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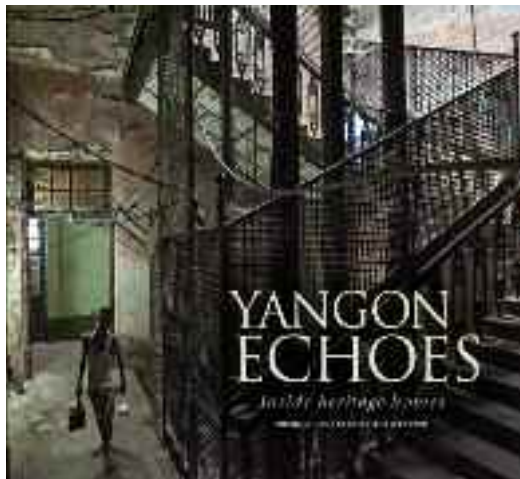
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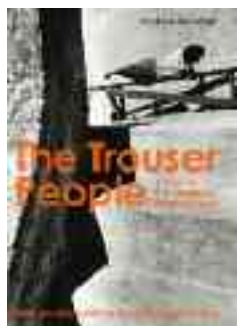
Our storytellers speak of joy and tragedy, simple pleasures and aching issues. They share thoughts and feelings of living through Yangon's emergence from decades of stagnation to engagement with a rapidly spinning world.

Virginia Henderson from New Zealand has been based in Southeast Asia since 1990. An oral historian with a doctorate in heritage management, she writes on culture and art, and organizes exhibitions and festivals. Tim Webster is a documentary photographer specializing in theatre, dance and architectural heritage photography. Tim and Virginia moved to Yangon in January 2013.

Packed with stunning photographs, this beautiful and haunting book provides an evocative insight in to some of Yangon's most atmospheric historic places and interiors.

Philip Davies, English Heritage

The book is a pleasure to look at and read.  
Thant Myint U, Yangon Heritage Trust



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### Burma in the Shadows of the Empire

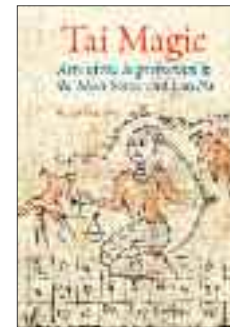
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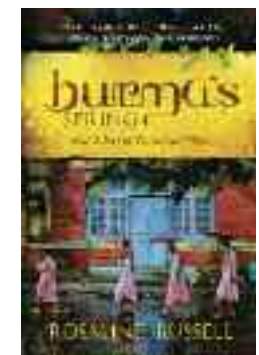
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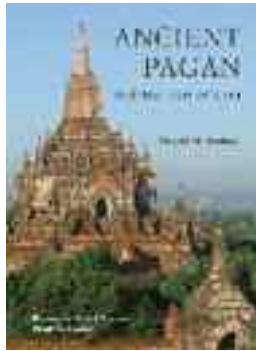
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Robert Carmack is the author of four books and a well-known cookery writer. He and partner Morrison Polkinghorne regularly lead culinary tours to Southeast Asia. Morrison is a well-known textile designer and authority on Southeast Asian weaving.

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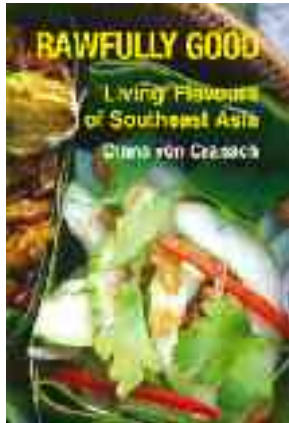
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Henry Gittins, born in 1858, went to Canada as a young adventurer where he started his career as a railway engineer. In 1885, he joined a survey team in Siam aiming to develop a national railway system. He spent thirty-three years there, progressing to the highest position in the Siamese Railway Department.

Amongst his many achievements was the discovery of Hua Hin and his heroic construction of the Southern Railway line. During his time in Siam, Henry Gittins kept a series of diaries which not only give a first hand account of the difficult and dangerous conditions surrounding the construction of railways at that time but also a fascinating picture of the emergence of Siam into the modern world.

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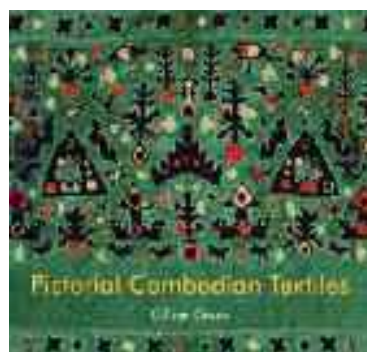
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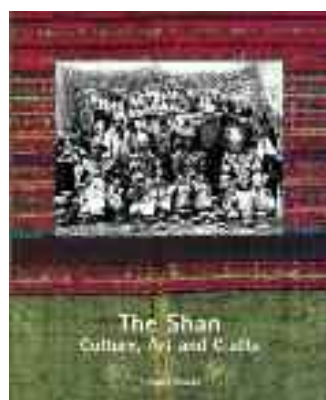
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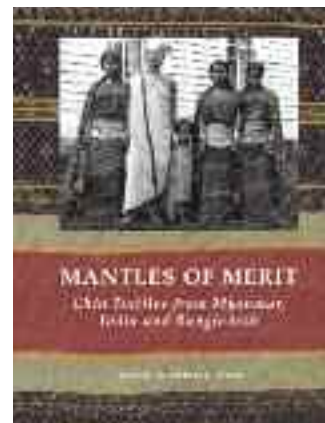
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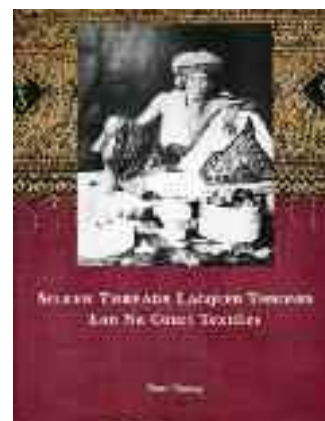
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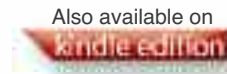
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**Tew Bunnag** was in Bangkok, and studied Chinese and Economics at Cambridge University, before travelling in Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Asia. He is a T'ai Chi and meditation teacher, specialising in bereavement counselling.



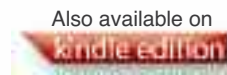
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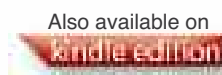
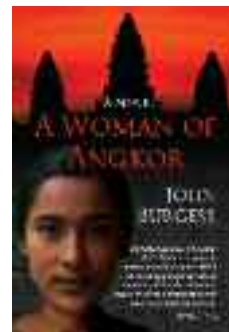
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