"Anucha": The Younger Brother In *Ramakien* And Thai Historical Narratives [1]

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the role of the younger brother in *Ramakien* with three characters examined: Phra Lak, Sukhrip, and Phiphek. This study finds that there is common behavior depicted among these three characters with respect to their relationship with their older brothers in terms of four traits: **loyalty**, **obedience**, **respect** and **deference**. Furthermore, these characters can be classified as 'ideal' because they are depicted never deviating from their younger brother behavior, and consistently demonstrate all four traits in their relationship with their older brothers, even when presented the opportunity to stray. Accordingly, this study concluded that the portrait of an 'ideal' younger brother in *Ramakien* is one of unwavering **loyalty**, unquestioned **obedience**, unshakable **respect** and unflinching **deference** toward their older brother.

A second part of this paper examines the portrayal of three royal younger brothers in Thai historical narratives: Ekathotsarot, brother of Naresuan; Prince Surasih, brother of Rama I; and Pinklao, brother of Rama IV. This study found that these three historical royal younger brothers are portrayed in the historical narratives as **loyal** companions, **obedient** servants, **respectful** attendants and **deferential** followers of their older brothers, the same qualities identified as defining the 'ideal' younger brother in *Ramakien*.

The findings from this study indicate that an important aspect of traditional Thai society has been the desire to project and uphold the 'ideal', as represented by the behavior shown in younger brother characters in *Ramakien* and paralleled in the portrayal of the younger brothers in Thai historical narratives.

Introduction

Ramakien, the Thai rendition of the Indic Rama epic, is an important part of the literary tradition in Thailand, in which one can find time-honored themes of love and devotion, good versus evil, right over wrong, all presented through intricate plots and sub-plots involving a multitude of characters. These characters have fascinated readers and researchers for ages, with many of them classified into 'idealized' role models: the 'perfect' king, the 'ideal' wife, the 'exemplary' hero. However, a role that has received less attention is

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that of the young brother, notwithstanding the fact that one of the main characters central to the action of *Ramakien* is a younger brother.

In addition to the presentation of 'idealized' characters and role models in traditional Thai literature, Thai historical narratives also present many 'idealized' heroic figures. These narratives, particularly the state sponsored royal chronicles, primarily focus on the glorious exploits of royalty, extolling their virtues and often attributing them with 'ideal' behavior. It is this common 'idealization' that invites the question of whether there are parallels between the way characters are depicted in *Ramakien* and the portrayal of royal figures in Thai historical narratives.

The scope of this paper is twofold. The first is to see how King Rama I's *Ramakien* depicts the behavior of younger brothers, particularly in relation to their older brothers, with the idea that, if there is similar behavior among a number of characters in the same role, we can define the role using such behavior and establish the profile of an 'ideal' younger brother.

The second part of this paper examines the manner in which royal younger brothers have been portrayed in Thai historical narratives and draws parallels between these portrayals and the depiction of the younger brother in *Ramakien*.

Background of the Rama Epic and *Ramakien*

While it is clear *Ramakien* has its roots in the Indian epic *Ramayana*, and *Ramakien* can ultimately be traced to the Indian subcontinent, from where it originated and the path it followed is difficult to determine. The title to Paula Richman's book, *Many Ramayanas,* [3] highlights the diversity of the Rama story, with the *Ramayana* being represented in almost every country and culture in Asia. Most would attribute the earliest written version, dated

[3] Paula Richman, ed., *Many Ramayanas, The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1991).

between 200 BCE to 200 CE, and thus often considered the 'original' *Ramayana*, to an Indian poet named Valmiki. Some have tried to demonstrate a direct link between different versions of the *Ramayana* and *Ramakien*, most particularly that of the Tamil rendition from southern India [4] or the version used by the Khmer at Angkor, perhaps having come through the Javanese, as a likely conduit.[5] In any event, the numerous opinions as to the origins of *Ramakien*, with the veracity and soundness of each subject to debate, leads one to surmise that perhaps there are many sources, each having some influence, although some stronger than others.

Today, the only complete version of *Ramakien* is from the late 18th century CE, compiled and composed during the reign of King Rama I. However, there is archeological and other evidence to indicate the prior presence and importance of the Rama epic in earlier periods across the region that comprises present day Thailand. While the renditions of the Rama story best known today are those composed by Kings Rama I and II, there are fragments and verses by other composers, including from the Ayutthaya and Thonburi periods, and by subsequent Chakri rulers, such as Kings Rama IV and VI. Given its completeness, however, the *Ramakien* of Rama I will be used for the analysis in this paper.

Common Behavior of Younger Brothers

Many researchers and academics [6] have variously described patron-client and other hierarchical relationships in traditional Thai society in terms of four behavior traits: **loyalty**, **obedience**, **respect** and **deference**. In Thai society, kinship relationships can be classified

[4] S. Singaravelu, "A Comparative Study of the Sanskrit, Tamil, Thai and Malay Versions of the Story of Rama with Special Reference to the Process of Acculturation in the Southeast Asian Versions," *The Journal of the Siam Society* 56.2 (July 1968): 137-185.

[5] Prince Dhani Nivat, "Review of Books – The Ramakirti," *The Journal of the Siam Society* 33.2 (March 1941): 173.

[6] See Bibliography for specific writings of Lucien Hanks, William Klausner, Hans-Dieter Bechstedt, Niels Mulder, Han ten Brummelhuis, Barend Terwiel, and Jane Bunnag.

within a hierarchical structure and, hence, these behavior traits can easily be applied to the relationship between a younger and older brother. Accordingly, in such a relationship, the younger brother would show **loyalty** by supporting and defending his older brother; he would be **obedient** by following his orders and demands; he would treat him with **respect** by using polite language; and he would show **deference** by yielding to his older brother's wishes and desires. Therefore, these traits of **loyalty**, **obedience**, **respect** and **deference** will be used as the basis for the analysis of younger brothers in *Ramakien* and the portrayal of royal younger brother figures in Thai historical narratives.

In evaluating whether such brotherly behavior might be considered 'ideal', one needs to take into account the characteristics of a familial relationship, with its concomitant elements of companionship and emotional attachment. Accordingly, it would reason that a younger brother would have more latitude to deviate from the normal behavior expected by and imposed on those in a societally imposed hierarchical relationship, such as king and subject, and that this in turn would make the relationships of the characters and historical figures examined herein more complex. In other words, in their role as a younger brother, separate from their role as that of a subject, they would be in a better position to be able to have divided loyalties, exhibit a lack of obedience, have lapses of respect, and show less deference. On the other hand, to the extent they exhibit constant **loyalty**, continual **obedience**, unwavering **respect** and total **deference** to their older brother, particularly when given the chance to deviate, they could then be considered an 'ideal' younger brother.

Analysis of the Role of Younger Brother in *Ramakien*

Three principal younger brother characters from *Ramakien*, Phra Lak, Sukhrip and Phipek, were chosen for in-depth analysis using the original Thai text of Rama I's rendition

of the epic.[7] The analysis focuses primarily on their actions and manners, as well as language and attributed dialogue, to determine whether they are depicted exhibiting common behavior.

Phra Lak: Phra Lak, as the younger brother of the central character and hero of the epic, Phra Ram, has the largest younger brother role in *Ramakien*. Phra Lak appears in many scenes, primarily as the devoted companion of his older brother or as a fierce warrior. In essentially every situation, Phra Lak exhibits consistent **loyalty**, unquestioned **obedience**, total **respect** and unwavering **deference** toward his older brother. In his manner, action and words, he is the ever-devoted companion, following Phra Ram into exile and battle in order to serve and protect him. He is depicted fulfilling Phra Ram's every order and wish; fighting and maiming demons; going to battle on his command; standing in the way of danger; even carrying out irrational decrees on his older brother's behalf. He is shown thinking of his older brother first, showing **loyalty** and **obedience** to him over all others.

To demonstrate his 'ideal' behavior, two scenes representative of Phra Lak's behavior in his role as younger brother are described in greater detail:

1. Bow Lifting Contest: In this scene, Phra Lak accompanies Phra Ram to a bow lifting contest, the winner of which will be wed to Nang Sida. On the way to the contest, Phra Ram meets the eye of Nang Sida and they instantly fall in love. After all the other potential suitors have failed to lift the bow, and it is Phra Lak's turn, he is told by Phra Ram:

> Look here, *phra anucha*, my young brother
> Just try to lift the *Molee* Bow
>
> Then
> Bowed his head in respect and went
>
> Reaching there, he stretched out his hand
> Moving it just a bit, he knew in his heart
>
> …
> Just see how heavy it really is
>
> *Phra Lak*
> Following the royal order
>
> To grab the bow of *Phra Isuan*
> And returned to *Phra Ram, Chakri*

[7] *Ramakien by King Rama I, Volumes 1-4* [*บทละครเรื่องรามเกียรติ์ พระราชนิพนธ์ใน พระบาทสมเด็จพระพุทธยอดฟ้าจุฬาโลกมหาราช, เล่ม ๑ - ๔*] (Bangkok: Fine Arts Dept, 2540 BE (1997 CE)).

[ดูกรองค์พระอนุชา
จงลองยกธนูโมลี
เมื่อนั้น
บังคมก้มเกล้าแล้วออกไป
ครั้นถึงจึ่งยื่นพระกร
แต่เขยื้อนก็แจ้งในวิญญาณ์
...
ดูทีจะหนักสักเพียงใด
พระลักษมณ์ผู้มีอัชฌาสัย
ตามในพระราชบัญชา
จับศรพระศุลีนาถา
กลับมาเฝ้าองค์พระจักรี] [8] *

Thus, Phra Lak clearly shows his **loyalty**, **obedience, respect** and **deference** to his older brother. He knows he is perfectly capable of lifting the bow, but he also knows that it is not his place to do so since he has observed the love between Phra Ram and Nang Sida. Furthermore, since Phra Ram has ordered him merely to test the bow, Phra Lak, as the dutiful younger brother, must follow this order.

2. The Abduction of Sida: After Phra Ram, accompanied by Phra Lak and Nang Sida, has been exiled to the forest, Thotsakan, the demon king, learns of Nang Sida and decides to abduct her. He does this through the well-know episode whereby a demon, transformed into the form of a golden deer, induces Phra Ram to leave Nang Sida in the care of Phra Lak while he leaves to try and catch the deer. When he does, the deer calls out in Phra Ram's voice that he is in trouble, causing Nang Sida to insist that Phra Lak go to help his elder brother. In the ensuing exchange between Nang Sida and Phra Lak, she plays on his **loyalty** and devotion to his older brother, saying: "Oh, alas, *Chao Lak*, Don't you love your older brother? ... Will you desert [*Phra Ram*] to die? [จึ่งว่าอนิจจาเจ้าลักษมณ์ นี่หรือว่ารักพระเชษฐา ... จะละให้พระองค์บรรลัย]."[9] Phra Lak counters that he has been ordered by Phra Ram to stay and protect her, thus, showing his **loyalty** and **obedience** to his older brother. But Nang Sida continues to question his fidelity and intentions:

[8] *Ramakien by King Rama I, Volume 1*, 300.

[*] Please note that all translations of the Thai text taken from *Ramakien* were rendered by the author of this paper, thus any mistranslations or misinterpretations are solely his responsibility. To the extent names and other selected words have been transliterated, the transliteration was rendered using the program made available by the Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University.

[9] *Ramakien by King Rama I, Volume 1*, 531.

Even if [*Phra Ram*] said to stay and protect me
There will be blame and punishment of some kind
Then your mind is twisted
Since there are just two of us here in this *sala*
Hoping I will become a widow
I will end my life

When something occurs, what would you do
If you intend some clever talk to stay near me
You will be betraying your older brother
You pretend and distort all your words
Your intentions will not work
I will die and follow [Phra Ram]

[ถึงพระองค์ให้อยู่รักษาพี่
จะเป็นโทษทัณฑ์ด้วยอันใด
ทั้งนี้เพื่อจิตเจ้าคิดคด
เพราะอยู่แต่สองในศาลา
ถึงมาตรตัวเราจะเป็นม่าย
สู้เสียชีวิตชีวาลัย

เมื่อมีเหตุมาจะทำไฉน
หากแกล้งใส่ไคล้เจรจา
ทรยศต่อองค์พระเชษฐา
แสร้งบิดเบือนว่าทุกสิ่งไป
ที่จะหมายพึ่งเจ้านั้นหาไม่
ตายไปตามองค์พระสี่กร] [10]

This accusation of "betrayal" is too much for Phra Lak and, in a display of **obedience**, **respect** and **deference** to Nang Sida, who can be said to have the place of an older sibling, he decides to follow Phra Ram and leave Nang Sida alone, providing Thotsakan with the chance to abduct her. This scene provides a perfect display of Phra Lak's behavior as the model younger brother. Although Phra Lak appears to understand fully the plot devised by Thotsakan, Nang Sida is able to sway him when his **loyalty** to his older brother is questioned.

In the entire epic, there is hardly a scene or instance where Phra Lak is not seen demonstrating these younger brother qualities, notwithstanding the fact that he is presented with a number of situations where he could deviate. For example, when, after the war with Thotsakan he is offered his own kingdom with untold riches in reward for his meritorious duty, he declines the riches in a show of **loyalty** and **deference** in order to remain by the side of his older brother; and when Phra Ram, in a fit of jealous rage, orders him to execute Nang Sida, he dare not tell Phra Ram how he is wrong, nor openly defy him, but attempts to carry out the terrible order with **obedience**. Given the weight of evidence, it is, thus, easy to conclude that Phra Lak is portrayed with all the characteristics of the 'ideal' younger brother.

[10] *Ramakien by King Rama I, Volume 1*, 532.

Sukhrip: The episodes in which Sukhrip appears with his older brother, although significantly fewer than those for Phra Lak, are sufficient to show him exhibiting the behavior traits defining a younger brother. After he has been unjustly banished from the city by Phali, his older brother, Sukhrip's manner and language indicates he still holds **respect** and **deference** for Phali. This is best illustrated by the sorrow and lament that Sukhrip exhibits after Phali's death, giving him praise and honor with no lingering resentment:

Then	[*Sukhrip*]
His older brother, he saw pass away	Pitifully, sadly, he hugged Phali's feet
Oh, alas [*Phali*]	Your earth-shaking name had spread so far
Loving, giving me nothing to be resentful	You took care, nurtured me
With the kindness of a father	As if the one who gave me my life
We had difficult times	Wandering in the forest
Until coming to rule over *Khit Khin*	Then there were times of joy and happiness
You were the leader of the *wanon* army	Over all the lands, your power spread
After you broke your pledge	About *Dara*, the young lovely one
[*Phra Ram's*] arrow you must then suffer	Because of the solemn vow you made before
Such a waste of your celestial power	From deceit over a woman, this should not have been
He bemoaned, sobbing in great sorrow	Weeping, nearly losing consciousness
[บัดนั้น	สุครีพลูกพระสุริย์ฉาน
เห็นพี่สิ้นชีพวายปราณ	สงสารกอดบาทร่ำไร
โอ้ว่าพระองค์ผู้ทรงภพ	เลื่องชื่อลือลบแผ่นดินไหว
รักน้องมิให้ข้องเคืองใจ	ภูวไนยบำรุงเลี้ยงมา
พระคุณนั้นเหมือนบิตุเรศ	อันบังเกิดเกศเกศา
ได้ยากลำบากเวทนา	เที่ยวอยู่ในป่าพนาดร
จนได้ครองขีดขินธานี	ค่อยมีความสุขสโมสร
เป็นเจ้าแก่หมู่วานร	พระเดชขจรทั้งไตรดาล
ครั้งนี้มาเสียสัตยา	ด้วยดาราเยาวยอดสงสาร
จึ่งต้องศรสมเด็จพระอวตาร	เพราะได้สาบานแต่ก่อนไว้
เสียแรงเป็นวงศ์เทวัญ	มาเสียธรรม์ด้วยหญิงหาควรไม่
ร่ำพลางสะท้อนถอนใจ	สะอื้นไห้เพียงสิ้นสมประดี] [11]

As was noted with respect to Phra Lak, Sukhrip is also presented with many situations where he could deviate from the prescribed behavior of a younger brother. When Phali breaks his promise and takes Sukhrip's wife, Nang Dara, as his own consort, Sukhrip does not fight

[11] *Ramakien by King Rama I, Volume 2*, 30.

back, but continues to serve his brother with **loyalty**, **obedience** and **deference**. Likewise, when Phali dies, and their conflict is resolved, he does not show hatred or resentment toward Phali, instead exhibiting the behavior of an 'ideal' younger brother by expressing regret for his death, bemoaning his passing with genuine remorse, and, thus, showing his continued **loyalty** and **respect** for his older brother.

Phiphek: Phiphek, as with Sukhrip, quarrels with and is banished by his older brother, Thotsakan, after which he goes to assist Phra Ram in the fight, stating he does so because: "I remain on the side of justice and fairness [ตั้งอยู่ในธรรมทศพิธ]." [12] Thus, while it may appear that Phiphek is being disloyal and disobedient in helping Phra Ram fight Thotsakan, in fact his actions are not personally against his older brother. In other words, if Thotsakan acted in a fair and honest manner, Phiphek would have defended him.

Further, Phiphek shows, through his language and actions, that he does not lose **respect** for his older brother even when he has been banished. When Thotsakan dies, Phiphek gives a speech of recrimination, showing **loyalty** to Thotsakan: "I didn't feud as if bearing some grudge, with the intention of killing my older brother; that would be shameful, toward all the three worlds [ไม่ผูกเวรเหมือนผูกเวรา แกล้งฆ่าเชษฐาให้จำตาย เป็นน่าอัปยศอดสู แก่หมู่ไตรโลก ทั้งหลาย]." [13] Thus, in the end, Phiphek is saying, if he had intentionally tried to kill his older brother, that would be worse than the unjust actions of Thotsakan, and, thus, indicating that Phiphek has retained his **respect** and **loyalty** for his older brother.

Finally, as was noted with respect to Phra Lak and Sukhrip, Phiphek has the opportunity to deviate from the model behavior of a younger brother. After Phiphek has been

[12] *Ramakien by King Rama I, Volume 2*, 353.
[13] *Ramakien by King Rama I, Volume 3*, 403.

unjustly banished, he continues to treat his older brother with **respect**, even when Thotsakan tries to kill him. Finally, when Thotsakan dies, Phiphek does not show resentment, instead he exhibits **loyalty** to his older brother. Phiphek, thus, demonstrates that he stays within the definition of the 'ideal' younger brother, showing **respect** and deference toward his older brothers, and also ultimately, **loyalty**, despite being unfairly treated.

As can be seen from this discussion, all three principal younger brother characters are depicted demonstrating **loyalty**, **obedience**, **respect** and **deference** toward their older brothers. Furthermore, all maintain these qualities notwithstanding many opportunities to deviate from that prescribed behavior. Phra Lak displays model younger brother behavior through his unwavering **loyalty**, unquestioned **obedience**, unshakable **respect** and unflinching **deference**. Sukhrip and Phiphek, however, are faced with quite different situations than Phra Lak. Both of these younger brothers have conflicts with their older brothers, experiencing unfair treatment and banishment. Notwithstanding the fact that the younger brother takes action to fight the older, it is done in the name of righteousness, honor and truthfulness, not disrespect, disloyalty, or disobedience. Finally, at the death of the older brother, the younger brother's **loyalty** is evidenced in their sorrow and lament, both honoring the older brother after their death in the manner of an 'ideal' younger brother. Both Sukhrip and Phiphek display continued **loyalty**, show **obedience**, keep deep held **respect** and exhibit **deference** toward their older brothers. They are both able to demonstrate 'ideal' younger brother qualities, despite the contemptible behavior of their older brothers.

Valmiki's *Ramayana* **Compared to** *Ramakien*

An analysis of the portrayal of the younger brother characters in Makhan Sen's translation of Valmiki's *Ramayana*,[14] specifically Lakshmana, Sugriva and Vibhishana, compared to the corresponding characters in *Ramakien*, highlights certain distinct elements of the depiction of the characteristics of the role of younger brother in *Ramakien*.

Similar to Phra Lak in *Ramakien*, Lakshmana is the most prominent character in the role of younger brother in VR. From the beginning, Lakshmana is depicted as the ever devoted companion of his older brother, Rama, and the two are consistently spoken of in the same breath as "Rama and Lakshmana", particularly in the early part of the story. In fact, VR makes Lakshmana appear more a dedicated servant than an exiled prince accompanying and helping his older brother, as seems to be the portrait of Phra Lak in *Ramakien*. On the other hand, in VR Lakshmana is shown displaying intelligence, rather than just his warrior and devotional qualities. At several points he delivers thoughtful and learned dialogue, which is rarely, if ever, evidenced with respect to Phra Lak in *Ramakien*. Thus, while the basic overall character traits of Phra Lak and Lakshmana are quite similar, there are differences in their manner. Lakshmana is shown as a more rounded person, at times even taking a leadership role, unlike Phra Lak who is portrayed merely as a devoted companion or fierce warrior.

While the circumstances of Sugriva's and Sukhrip's origin and background are different, their behavior with respect to their older brothers, Vali and Phali, respectively, is quite similar. In both renditions, there is a quarrel between the two brothers, which results in the death of the older brother and subsequent remorse and reconciliation by the younger.

[14] Makhan Lal Sen, *The Ramayana of Valmiki* (Calcutta: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1976), an English translation directly from the Sanskrit. Note: Valmiki's *Ramayana* will be referred to as "VR" in this paper.

Thus, Sugriva, as with Sukhrip in *Ramakien*, is depicted ultimately retaining his loyalty and respect for his older brother, despite their dissension.

Although the circumstances of Vibhishana are similar to Phiphek in *Ramakien*, in that he joins forces with Rama after a falling out with his older brother, his character as portrayed in VR is quite different from Phiphek. Vibhishana is shown as an active participant in the fight against his older brother, not just in the role of seer and advisor, as Phiphek is depicted in *Ramakien*. In addition, Vibhishana is portrayed as being more intent on getting revenge against his older brother, rather than merely staying on the side of truth and justice, as is repeatedly made clear with Phiphek. In the end, Vibhishana even refuses to show remorse and reconciliation at the death of his older brother, unlike Phiphek in *Ramakien*.

Mural Paintings at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha

When Rama I came to power, he immediately ordered the construction of the Temple of the Emerald Buddha and, subsequently, had murals painted depicting *Ramakien*, the composition of which had been finished in 1797 CE. An examination of the murals shows Phra Lak, Sukhrip and Phiphek consistently exhibiting the traits of 'ideal' younger brothers. While this is particularly true for Phra Lak, it is equally evident in the depiction of the other two characters in these paintings. Phra Lak is consistently shown at the side of Phra Ram, either seated behind or below Phra Ram, generally with his hands raised in respect. Thus, we can see that the depiction of Phra Lak as the 'ideal' younger brother in the text of *Ramakien* holds true in the way he is shown in these mural paintings, perhaps even more so than in the text. Similar depictions can be seen with respect to Sukhrip and Phiphek when they are in the presence of their older brothers. These depictions all reinforce the image of **loyalty**, **obedience**, **respect** and **deference**.

Analysis of Royal Younger Brothers in Thai Historical Narratives

Three historical royal younger brothers were selected for review to see the manner in which they are portrayed in Thai historical narratives: Prince Ekathotsarot, younger brother of King Naresuan; Prince Surasih, younger brother of King Rama I; and King Pinklao, younger brother of King Rama IV. An analysis, similar to that of the younger brother characters in *Ramakien*, was applied using the behavioral traits of **loyalty**, **obedience**, **respect** and **deference**.

The primary emphasis for the analysis of the historical narratives was on royal chronicles written during the reigns of King Rama I to King Rama V, with some latter-day writings covered as well. Accordingly, recognition should be made of the particular style and convention of this type of historical writing, with its emphasis on glorifying the royalty and often minimizing or ignoring any conflicts or negative information. However, given that the intent of this analysis was to examine the portrayal of the relationship between the three sets of historical figures, and not necessarily to uncover historical facts, these narratives were considered the most appropriate to analyze.

Prince Ekathotsarot: Prince Ekathotsarot was the full younger brother of King Naresuan, serving as his Uparat, crown prince, or, sometimes labelled ‘second king’, from 1590 CE until he himself became king in 1605 CE upon the death of Naresuan. The portrayal of Ekathotsarot in *The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya*, which were compiled, revised and re-written over hundreds of years and, for the most part, long after the Ayutthaya period, shows Ekathotsarot as the ‘ideal’ caring younger brother and companion-in-arms. He is portrayed exhibiting constant **loyalty**, **respect**, **obedience** and **deference** for Naresuan.

In the editions of the chronicles compiled in the early Bangkok period, the sections describing Ekathotsarot and Naresuan were greatly expanded over earlier editions. The

constant pairing of the two brothers strongly reinforces the impression of a devoted team and Ekathotsarot as the **loyal** and **obedient** younger brother. This is emphasized with many allusions to them acting in consort: "When the *two Kings* heard their chief ministers answer thus … with smiles *they* said …;" [15] and "Both of the *Kings*, having listened to such, opened *Their* mouths and then said …." [16] This also creates a strikingly consistent parallel with depictions of Phra Lak and Phra Ram as constant companions in *Ramakien*. The following passage relating a message sent by Ekathotsarot to a recalcitrant official further portrays Ekathotsarot's younger brother traits:

> Phraya Tenasserim was *Our* Crown official (before *We* ascended the throne) … news went in to *Us* that Phraya planning a revolt … *the King* ordered *Us* to come out … *We* would that he come forth to see *Us*! *We* will prostrate *Ourselves* and ask *the King* to suspend punishment one time … If he does not come, thinking he will be able to meet *Our* army, he should prepare to defend the municipality. (emphasis added). [17]

As can be seen, Ekathotsarot talks in the royal '*we*' or '*our*', not '*me*' or '*I*', properly speaking not just for himself, but also for his older brother. However, he then refers to Naresuan as 'the King', saying he will 'prostrate' himself to Naresuan, thus showing his **respect** and **deference** for his older brother.

The Royal Autograph version of the Ayutthaya chronicles, written during the reign of King Rama IV, made recensions seemingly with the deliberate intent to emphasize the **loyalty** and **respect** of Ekathotsarot for his older brother. At the death of Naresuan: **"F:** The Holy-Feet-of-the-Supreme Holy-Younger-Brother-of-the-King was grieved and spoke incessantly of His love for the Holy-Paramount-Elder-Brother-of-the-King to the point of

[15] *The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya*, trans. Richard D Cushman, ed. David K. Wyatt (Bangkok: Siam Society, 2000) 125, lines 16-17.
[16] *The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya* 146, lines 13-14.
[17] *The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya* 155-156, lines 42-48, 1-15.

engaging in various hysterical actions;" [18] and "**F:** and in His grief murmured and wailed incessantly and lovingly of this and that concerning His holy paramount older brother." [19] These additions read similar to the scenes in *Ramakien* in which Sukhrip and Phiphek grieve the deaths of their older brothers, and how one would imagine Phra Lak would lament if Phra Ram were to die.

In addition, Prince Damrong Rajanubhab's historical narrative, *The Chronicle of Our Wars With the Burmese: Hostilities between Siamese and Burmese when Ayutthaya was the capital of Siam*,[20] clearly paints the picture of Ekathotsarot as a constant **loyal** and **obedient** companion of his older brother. He makes Ekathotsarot's **loyalty** quite explicit when recounting the first war in which the two brothers participated by stating, "Somdet Phra Ekathotsarot, looking on, thought his brother very bold and was afraid that he would meet with danger. He therefore brought his own boat forward as a shield to his brother's boat." [21] Damrong then carries this theme of **loyalty** and companionship throughout the description of the wars in which Ekathotsarot fights with Naresuan against Burma, for example; "War No 6: Somdet Phra Naresuan and his brother Ekathotsarot left the capital with boats … When Somdet Phra Naresuan knew that the viceroy of Chiang Mai had come down, he went up with his army in company with his brother, Prince Ekathotsarot." [22] This also reinforces the parallel impression, as noted with respect to the Ayutthaya chronicles, of Ekathotsarot and Phra Lak in *Ramakien* as the ever **loyal** and **obedient** younger brother willing to follow and support their older brother into battle.

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[18] *The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya* 194, lines 42-44; the "F" indicating additions in the Royal Autograph edition of King Rama IV.

[19] *The Royal Chronicle of Ayutthaya* 200, lines 26-27.

[20] Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *The Chronicle of Our Wars with the Burmese*, trans. Phra Phraison Salarak Thein Subindu, alias U Aung Thein, ed. Chris Baker (Bangkok: White Lotus, 2001).

[21] Damrong 77.

[22] Damrong 96-97.

The portrayal of Ekathotsarot as the faithful younger brother is taken up in several historical narratives written during more recent periods. In fact, the characterization of Ekathotsarot as the 'ideal younger brother' and portrayal of the close relationship between Ekathotsarot and Naresuan appears to have become the accepted norm. Rong Syamananda's *A History of Thailand* takes up this theme by stating that "He [Naresuan] took the unprecedented step of bestowing the highest honors in the realm upon his brother, Ekatotsarot [*sic*] who had been through thick and thin with him." [23] Manich Jumsai, in his *Popular History of Thailand,* characterizes Ekathotsarot's relationship with his older brother as involving **loyalty** by relating the episode that "His brother Ekatotsarot had to step in between and shield him off from being shot." [24] Finally, Prince Chula Chakrabongse, in *Lords of Life*, makes clear the 'ideal' relationship between the two brothers, showing the **loyalty** and **obedience** of Ekathotsarot: "Naresuan … so loved his brother that he was not content with appointing him Uparaja, and Ekatotsarot [*sic*] was made the Second King … such was the close bond between the two brothers that they were inseparable …." [25]

Thus, we see that the portrayal of Ekathotsarot as the 'ideal' younger brother is well established in these historical narratives. The Ayutthaya chronicles contain constant reminders and references to the **loyalty**, **obedience**, **respect** and **deference** that Ekathotsarot had for his older brother, Naresuan. Prince Damrong carries this theme forward in his narrative of the wars with Burma, which may have played an important part in firmly implanting this representation of Ekathotsarot and Naresuan's relationship into the Thai historical discourse, an impression that is clearly evident by the modern day narratives of Rong, Manich and Chula Chakrabongse.

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[23] Rong Syamananda, *A History of Thailand* (Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 1986) 58.
[24] Manich Jumsai, *Popular History of Thailand* (Bangkok: Chalermnit, 1977) 176.
[25] Prince Chula Chakrabongse, *Lords of Life, A History of the Kings of Thailand* (Bangkok: DD Books, 1982) 46.

We can also see a number of parallels between the portrayal of Ekathotsarot in the historical narratives and the younger brothers in *Ramakien*. As noted, Ekathotsarot is shown exhibiting the traits identified in *Ramakien* as defining the role of younger brother and the two brothers are portrayed as constant and devoted companions, similar to the manner in which Phra Lak and Phra Ram are always depicted in *Ramakien*. Finally, there are several scenes in the narrative that are reminiscent of scenes in *Ramakien*: the constant pairing of the two brothers; a fight scene with each brother engaging the enemy in hierarchical order; the older brother sending the younger to fight on his behalf; and the death scene expression of grief.

Prince Surasih: Prince Surasih, the full younger brother of King Rama I, was born in 1743 CE. He was an active participant in the wars with Burma under King Taksin whereby Taksin was able to reestablish the kingdom centered in Thonburi after the defeat of Ayutthaya in 1767 CE. When Taksin's reign ended and Rama I become king, Surasih became *Uparat*, a position he held until his death in 1803 CE.

There are a number of similarities between the portrayal of Surasih in the Thiphakorawong Dynastic Chronicles of the First Reign[26] and that of Ekathotsarot in the Ayutthaya chronicles. Surasih is shown exhibiting **loyalty**, **obedience**, **respect** and **deference** for his older brother. The chronicle covering the reign of Rama I is very similar to the earlier Ayutthaya chronicles. Although primarily focused on Rama I, Prince Surasih plays a prominent role in the narrative and many of the features noted in connection with the portrayal of the relationship between Ekathotsarot and Naresuan are also present in this narrative. In particular, the similarity between the two in making reference to the brothers

[26] *The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era, The First Reign, Chaophraya Thiphakorawong Edition, Volume One: Text*, trans. and eds. Thadeus Flood and Chadin Flood (Tokyo: Center for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1978).

acting, thinking or speaking as one is noteworthy: "The king and his younger brother, the heir apparent, upon learning of what happened from the message, became angry. They commanded …;" [27] and "The king and his brother, the heir apparent, became greatly angered and sent an order for the Thai troops to return to the capital." [28] In addition, there are many examples in this chronicle that show Surasih acting with the traits of a model younger brother. He is shown exhibiting **loyalty** through the numerous references to him willingly going into battle at the order of this older brother; he is portrayed acting with **obedience** in following commands given by his older brother, notwithstanding the fact that he likely had the power and wherewithal to act on his own; he is shown acting with proper **respect** in taking leave, asking permission and reporting his movements and actions; finally, Surasih is portrayed exhibiting **deference** in changing his intended actions upon the order of his older brother. In this regard, the description of the close relationship between the two brothers is very similar with the manner in which the relationship between Phra Lak and Phra Ram is depicted in *Ramakien*.

Modern day historians have also generally portrayed the relationship between Surasih and Rama I as close and intimate. While the extent of coverage Surasih receives in these historical narratives is not nearly as extensive as in the Thiphakorawong Chronicle, quite a bit of attention is given to his role in the wars with Burma. Chula Chakrabongse shows Surasih's **respect** and **deference** for his older brother when he relates how Surasih extolled Rama I's abilities and promoted his older brother to King Taksin, thus leading to Rama I's ascendancy in the military.[29] The portrayal of Surasih's **loyalty** to his older brother can also be seen in this quote by Prince Dhani: "The most intimate and constant companion who had shared with

[27] *The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era, The First Reign, Volume One: Text* 57, lines 27-29.
[28] *The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era, The First Reign, Volume One: Text* 62, lines 24-26.
[29] Chula Chakrabongse 73.

him from the earliest years his military and administrative careers was his brother Bunma." [30] Furthermore, there are attempts to draw a comparison between Surasih and Ekathotsarot, such as when Chula Chakrabongse states: "The T'ai armies which drove them back were more than once personally commanded by the King [Rama I] accompanied by his brother, like Naresuan and Ekatotsarot [*sic*]." [31]

The narratives do, however, contain reports of dissension between Surasih and his older brother and show how Surasih perhaps deviated at times from the role of 'ideal' younger brother. However, the narratives tend to handle the matter with delicacy, characterizing these situations as temporary aberrations in character, shifting the blame to illness as the cause of his less than model behavior, not necessarily a flaw in his being a younger brother. For example, when Prince Dhani raises the issue of Surasih acting as less than the model younger brother, he then dismisses it by saying: "In the case of Prince Surasih fraternal ties prevented … [serious rivalry] … though their differences of opinion were now and then no doubt taken advantage of by their ambitious followers. Nothing serious, however, developed." [32] Manich and Chula Chakrabongse attribute the dissension to either illness or their retainers, stating "the Second King seemed to be disturbed in his mind just before his death." [33] and "[a]lthough Rama I and the Uparaja were devoted brothers, often there were clashes of temperament which led to their entourages also being unfriendly rivals … fortunately, these public displays of disunity were more rare than frequent." [34]

The attempt to portray Surasih as the 'ideal' younger brother of Rama I is quite evident from these historical narratives. He is shown exhibiting **loyalty**, **obedience**, **respect**

[30] Prince Dhani Nivat, "The Reconstruction of Rama I," *The Journal of the Siam Society* 43.1 (Aug. 1955): 40.
[31] Chula Chakrabongse 97.
[32] Dhani, "The Reconstruction of Rama I" 41-42.
[33] Manich 429.
[34] Chula Chakrabongse 96.

and **deference** for his older brother throughout the narratives, particularly in the Thiphakorawong Chronicle, which has many close parallels with the portrayal of Ekathotsarot in the Ayutthaya chronicles. Even in the face of evidence that Surasih may not have always exhibited model behavior, the narratives try to maintain the portrayal of him as being 'ideal' by attributing his actions to illness or to his followers, not to any fundamental flaw in his role as the 'ideal' younger brother. There also appears to be an attempt to draw a parallel between Ekathotsarot, the earlier model younger brother, and Surasih, thus further enhancing the portrayal of Surasih in the role of 'ideal' younger brother.

King Pinklao: King Pinklao, the full younger brother of King Rama IV, was born in 1808 CE as a prince with full title, being the son of a queen of King Rama II. Pinklao became *Uparat* when his older brother, Rama IV, became king in 1851 CE, and stayed in that position until his death in 1865 CE. Pinklao was awarded higher honors than merely a crown prince and thus has often been given the designation 'king' or 'second king'.

Chaophraya Thiphakorawong also composed a chronicle covering the reign of King Rama IV.[35] While this chronicle reads much the same as the chronicle of the First Reign and the Ayutthaya chronicles, its portrayal of the relationship between Pinklao and Rama IV is quite different. The best one could say about the characterization of the relationship between the two brothers in this chronicle is that it appears to try to portray any 'ideal' nature of the relationship in terms of omission rather than direct evidence. That is, there is no discussion of Pinklao not showing **loyalty** or cooperating; there is no indication of any dis**obedience** or disagreement; there is no allusion to a lack of **respect**; but little mention is made of

[35] *The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era, The Fourth Reign, B.E. 2394-2411 (A.D. 1851-1868), by câwphrajaa thíphaakorawong, Volume One: Text*, trans. Chadin (Kanjanavanit) Flood (Tokyo: Center for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1965); *The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era, The Fourth Reign, B.E. 2394-2411 (A.D. 1851-1868), by câwphrajaa thíphaakorawong, Volume Two: Text*, trans. Chadin (Kanjanavanit) Flood (Tokyo: Center for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1966).

deference on the part of Pinklao. In fact, the Thiphakorawong Chronicle is quite noticeable for the lack of description of the two brothers acting on matters together. This is particularly striking when compared to the portrayal of the togetherness of Ekathotsarot and Naresuan, as well as Surasih and Rama I, in the other royal chronicles.

Pinklao gets relatively spotty coverage in the modern day historical narratives. Manich devotes a relatively long section to describing the reign of Rama IV, but with no mention of Pinklao. Abha Bhamorabutr makes one small reference to Pinklao, labeling him "Second King", and claims that he "became the most important adviser of the government during the reign of King Rama IV." [36] Rong gives him a bit more mention and also makes a connection between that earlier 'ideal' younger brother, Ekathotsarot, and Pinklao, by stating that "Rama IV appointed him as the Maha Uparat with the exalted position of King Pinklao. Thus, his reign resembled that of Naresuan the Great in that the First King was assisted by the Second King in ruling the country." [37] Chula Chakrabongse also draws a parallel between Pinklao and Ekathotsarot, perhaps with an attempt to attribute some 'brotherly idealness' to the relationship between Pinklao and Rama IV.[38]

As we can see, the historical narratives present quite a different portrait of the relationship between Pinklao and Rama IV than that detailed with respect to Ekathotsarot and Naresuan and Surasih and Rama I. In this case, direct evidence showing Pinklao exhibiting those behavior traits of the 'ideal' younger brother is not readily apparent. Alternatively, evidence that he did *not* have those characteristics is also not presented. This could be because the relationship was possibly less than 'ideal'. Chadin Flood makes note of this in the annotations and commentary to the Thiphakorawong Chronicles. When describing the events

[36] Abha Bhamorabutr, *Thai History* (English Version) (Bangkok: Somsak Rangsiyopas, 1988): 90.
[37] Rong 119.
[38] Chula Chakrabongse 184.

that lead Rama IV to call for his brother to be offered the kingship along with himself, Flood explains this was because of an astrological prediction that Pinklao would become king in his own right someday and Rama IV feared that unless he made Pinklao some sort of 'king' now, "…an unfortunate event would happen to make way for the inevitable rise of his brother to the kingship." [39] Flood also relates a letter written by King Rama V to his son which mentions "that during the reign of [Rama IV] relations between the King and the Second King were not always harmonious. He noted that the frictions came about because the King (Rama IV) had harbored a certain rancor because he felt the Second King was very popular … [and] … generally did things in a too spectacular and ostentatious manner." [40] David Wyatt attributes Pinklao's rise to power as a "…stratagem intended to neutralize his powerful brother (and his small army)…," [41] thus implying that it was a calculated move by Rama IV, not so much out of 'love', but perhaps fear of his brother. Needless to say, allusion to these matters did not make it into the official state sponsored chronicles and, when raised in the other historical narratives, are couched in apologetic terms or explained away as mere brotherly competition.

Thus, with respect to the portrayal of Ekathotsarot, Surasih, and, to a lesser extent, Pinklao, we see the creation of a portrait of the 'ideal' younger brother in the Thai historical narratives, principally the Ayutthaya and Thiphakorawong Chronicles. The Ayutthaya chronicles, with the many recensions and additions made during the early Bangkok period, the same period when *Ramakien* was being composed, firmly establishes this 'ideal' portrait

[39] Flood, *The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era, The Fourth Reign, Volume Three: Annotations and Commentary* 20.

[40] Flood, *The Dynastic Chronicles, Bangkok Era, The Fourth Reign, Volume Three: Annotations and Commentary* 44.

[41] David K. Wyatt, *Thailand, A Short History*, 2nd ed. (Chiang Mai: Silkworm, 2003) 167.

with respect to Ekathotsarot.[42] The Thiphakorawong Chronicle of the First Reign portrays Surasih in very much the same light as Ekathotsarot. Notwithstanding some allusions to less that 'ideal' behavior on Surasih's part, the parallel is strong enough that Surasih is compared to Ekathotsarot and, thus, he can be attributed the aura of the 'ideal' younger brother. Pinklao receives much the same treatment in the Thiphakorawong Chronicles of the Fourth Reign and other historical narratives, although mainly by omission. Thus, notwithstanding some indication that Pinklao was less than 'ideal' as a younger brother, he is also compared with Ekathotsarot, and therefore, by association, can be ascribed as acting within the role of 'ideal' younger brother. All three historical royal younger brothers are cast as **loyal** companion, **obedient** servant, **respect**ful attendant and **deferent** follower of their older brothers.

As the discussion above notes, there are a number of parallels in the portrayal of the historical royal younger brothers and the depiction of younger brothers in *Ramakien*:

1. The portrayal of the historical younger brothers exhibiting the traits identified in *Ramakien* as defining the role of younger brother, specifically in showing **loyalty**, **obedience**, **respect** and **deference** for their older brothers;

2. The constant pairing of the two royal brothers, acting and performing as one, reminiscent of Phra Lak and Phra Ram's relationship;

3. The younger recognizing the hierarchy in the relationship, even while maintaining a devoted companionship with his older brother, similar to the way Phra Lak and Phra Ram are depicted in *Ramakien*;

[42] Given that the majority of the recensions of the Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya were made during the reign of King Rama I, an obvious correlation between *Ramakien* and these royal chronicles can be inferred as they were both compiled during the same period. While the focus of this study was not to analyze the influence one had over the other, the common portrayal of 'ideal' central figures is readily apparent.

4. The willingness of the younger to get in harm's way to protect the elder, as Phra Lak would do for Phra Ram;

5. Fight scenes where each brother engages the enemy in hierarchical order;

6. The older brother sending the younger to fight on his behalf, as Phra Ram often did with Phra Lak;

7. The description of a troubled, yet reconciled, relationship between two brothers, similar to the relationship Sukhrip and Phiphek had with their older brothers; they may fight, but ultimately will reconcile; and

8. The death scene expressions of grief and sorrow.

Conclusion

From this analysis, we see that the three younger brother characters in *Ramakien*, Phra Lak, Sukhrip and Phiphek, all demonstrate similar behavior traits of **loyalty**, **obedience**, **respect** and **deference** toward their older brothers. Thus, we can conclude that a clearly distinguishable role of younger brother does exist in *Ramakien* and can be defined using this common behavior profile. Furthermore, from the examination of the three younger brother characters, we see a consistent and uniform pattern of behavior, despite being presented with many situations where the brothers could deviate, and, thus, all three can be classified as 'ideal' younger brothers. Accordingly, the portrait of an 'ideal' younger brother, as represented in *Ramakien*, can be characterized as exhibiting behavior of unwavering **loyalty**, unquestioned **obedience**, unshakable **respect** and unflinching **deference** toward their older brother.

From the study of the selected Thai historical narratives, we see the creation of a portrait and consistent maintenance of the image of the 'ideal' younger brother in Prince

Ekathotsarot, Prince Surasih, and King Pinklao. While this is principally true in the royal chronicles, it is also seen in the later works of Prince Damrong and modern Thai historical narratives. With varying degrees of intensity, these three historical royal younger brothers are portrayed as consistent in their behavior as being a **loyal** companion, an **obedient** servant, a **respectful** attendant and a **deferential** follower of their older brother, the same behavior traits identified as defining the 'ideal' younger brother in *Ramakien.*

The analysis of the Thai historical narratives indicates that the narratives have strong literature-like aspects. The presentation of historical figures is comparable to the depiction of fictional characters in which dialogue is attributed, emotions are displayed and dramatic action is detailed. Instead of merely relating dates and events, with citations to kings, the narratives also include well-developed historical 'character' figures, the portrayal of which has many parallels with *Ramakien*. This is particularly evident in the royal chronicles, but elements can be seen in the latter-day narratives as well. While making the historical narratives perhaps more interesting to read, it also has an impact on historical focus, a focus that clearly trends toward 'idealization' of the historical figures.

This portrayal of 'idealized' figures is not limited to the earlier compositions, as it is carried forward in later historical narratives, first in the Thiphakorawong Chronicles, then in the Prince Damrong's chronicle-like work and finally in modern day historical narratives. This would seem to reflect a common and continuing desire to present the 'ideal', in this case 'ideal' younger brothers, as a concept to be emphasized and upheld.

In addition, the tendency to emphasize and uphold the 'ideal' is highlighted by the comparison made between *Ramakien* and Sen's translation of Valmiki's *Ramayana*. While the comparison of the depiction of the role of younger brother in these two works shows a basic overall similarity, the consistency of the behavior of the younger brother characters is

different, particularly evident when comparing Vibhishana and Phipek. Therefore, we see that the role of younger brother in *Ramakien* is presented as being more ‘idealized’, perhaps even ‘super-idealized’, in comparison to Valmiki’s *Ramayana*. All the younger brother characters in *Ramakien* are depicted as having the constant behavior of an ‘ideal’ younger brother, while in this version of Valmiki’s *Ramayana* they deviate at times from such behavior. This ‘super-idealization’ is also seen in the pictorial depictions of *Ramakien* in the mural paintings at the Temple of the Emerald Buddha.

This leads one to conclude that the attribution of ‘ideal’ behavior to fictional characters and royal figures reflects a conventional Thai way of thinking; a way of thinking where the ‘ideal’ is a value to be upheld and maintained, but which does not necessarily correspond to reality, indicating an accepted divide between the ‘ideal’ and the ‘real’. Thai people want to believe in a concept of ‘ideal’ behavior and have shown a willingness to attribute such ‘idealized’ behavior when possible, be it literary characters or historical figures. In this light, the close parallel between the depiction of the younger brother characters in *Ramakien* and the portrayal of historical younger brother figures in the Thai historical narratives, as well as the tendency to ‘super-idealize’ these characters, is not surprising.

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