

Siam's Great Folk Epic of Love and War

The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen

Translated and edited by Chris Baker and Pasuk Phongpaichit

Illustrated by Muangsing Janchai

The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen is the most outstanding classic in the Thai language. The plot is a love story, set against a background of war, ending in high tragedy. This folk epic was first developed in oral form for popular performance with a fast-paced blend of romance, tragedy, and farce spiced with sex, warring, adventure, and the supernatural. It was later adopted by the Siamese court and written down, with two kings contributing. This first-ever translation is based on Prince Damrong's standard edition of 1917–18, with over a hundred passages recovered from earlier versions.

This English translation is written in lively prose, fully annotated, with over four hundred original line drawings and an essay on the history and background of the tale. The main volume presents the entire tale in translation. The companion volume contains alternative chapters and extensions, Prince Damrong's prefaces, and reference lists of flora, fauna, costume, arms, and food. The volumes are available separately or as a slipcased set.

According to the leading Thai linguist William Gedney, "if all other information on traditional Thai culture were to be lost, the whole complex could be reconstructed from this marvellous text."

About the translators

CHRIS BAKER formerly taught Asian history in Cambridge University and has lived in Thailand for over thirty years. PASUK PHONGPAICHIT is professor of economics at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. Together they have written *A History of Thailand*, *Thailand: Economy and Politics*, *Thaksin*, and published several translations.

About the illustrator

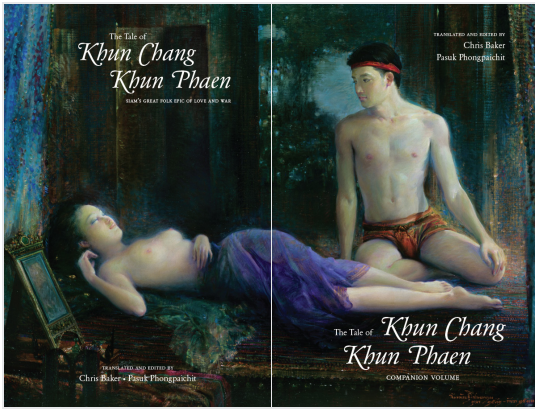
MUANGSING JANCHAI, a native of Suphanburi, the cradle of this tale, was trained in Thai painting, and studied further in Tibet, India, Nepal, Burma, Laos, and China. He has executed several temple murals, including a series on the tale at Wat Palelai, Suphanburi.

What others are saying

The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen is imaginatively designed and illustrated, superbly translated, and beautifully produced. A work of art!—Peter Skilling
École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Bangkok, and Honorary Associate, Department of Indian Sub-Continental Studies, University of Sydney

ORDERS AND ENQUIRIES TO:

Silkworm Books
6 Sukkasem Road, Suthep
Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand
Tel: +66 53 22-6161
Fax: +66 53 22-6643
Email: orders@silkwormbooks.com



December 2010
150 x 230 mm

MAIN VOLUME

984 (xiv + 970) pp
394 drawings, 11 diagrams, 12 maps, glossary
ISBN 978-974-9511-95-4
Cloth
USD 60.00, THB 1,500

COMPANION VOLUME

472 (x + 462) pp
33 drawings, 1 diagram, tables
ISBN 978-974-9511-96-1
Cloth
USD 60.00, THB 1,500

TWO-VOLUME SLIPCASSED SET

ISBN 978-974-9511-98-5
USD 100.00, THB 2,700

Keywords

Siam
Thai literature
folk epic
translation
love triangle
execution

Main Volume Highlights

- Vivid and lively translation
- Four hundred line drawings illustrating historical, cultural, and other terms
- Fully annotated with cultural, historical, and textual notes
- Afterword explaining the development of the tale and its literary milieu

Companion Volume Highlights

- Alternative texts and episodes not included in main volume
- Prince Damrong's original prefaces in translation
- Comprehensive lists of the flora, fauna, clothing, arms, and food mentioned in the text

SILKWORM BOOKS

Silkworm Books
www.silkwormbooks.com