



The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen: Companion Volume

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The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen: Companion Volume From *Silkworm Books*

Siam's folk epic of love, war, and tragedy

Khun Chang Khun Phaen is one of the most famous works of old Thai literature. The plot is a love story, set against a background of war, and ending in high tragedy. This folk epic was first developed in oral form for popular performance with lashings of romance, adventure, violence, farce, and magic. 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, completely annotated, with over four hundred original line drawings and an afterword explaining the work's historical background, social context, and poetic style. The main volume presents the entire poem in translation. The companion volume contains alternative chapters and extensions, Prince Damrong's prefaces, and reference lists of Thai terms. 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 marvelous text."

Read a blog by the translators: <http://www.silkwormbooks.com/blogs/kckp/>

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The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen: Companion Volume From Silkworm Books Bibliography

- Rank: #6026055 in Books
- Published on: 2010-12-15
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.30" h x 1.30" w x 6.20" l, 1.84 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 432 pages



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Editorial Review

Review

"Thailand's only wholly homegrown literary classic is, in Western terms, a dozen Shakespeare plays rolled into one, with a rich vein of Arthurian romance to boot. *Khun Chang Khun Phaen* entails comedy, tragedy, love, sex, war, magic, honour, infamy, gallantry, and treachery. And that, as untold millions of Thais have seen in the course of nearly four centuries, is entertainment." The Nation "Baker and Pasuk have combed through every possible existing version of the classic tale in Thai and provided an impressive array of alternative versions to the standard text edited by Prince Damrong in 1917-18. Their afterword offers a critical comprehensive look at the unique history of KCKP, how it evolved from the oral tradition circulated among commoners to become one of the greatest works espoused by the Siamese court, and also at the context of Thai literature and the social and geopolitical landscapes key to understanding the saga." Bangkok Post

From the Inside Flap

This companion volume to the translation of *The Tale of Khun Chang Khun Phaen* includes alternative chapters and extensions, Prince Damrong's prefaces, and reference lists of Thai terms.

About the Author

Chris Baker formerly taught Asian history at 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 several books including *Thailand: Economy and Politics, A History of Thailand*, and *Thaksin*. The illustrator, **Muangsing Janchai**, is trained in Thai painting and has executed mural paintings in several temples. He is a native of Suphanburi, Thailand.

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Luis Martin:

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