



# Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden

Newsletter Nr. 9 - March 2013

**PHA TAD KE - THE CLIFF TO UNTIE AND RESOLVE**  
Butterflies delicately feed on the nectar of the flowers and thus help with the propagation of the flowers, people are more gluttonous and eat the whole flower thus interrupting the breeding process. But nature is rich and at Pha Tad Ke people and butterfly live together in intelligent harmony. We are happy to bring you this little ecological story in our ninth Newsletter.  
**RIK GADELLA, PHA TAD KE BOTANICAL GARDEN**

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*The Pha Tad Ke Newsletter is distributed 3 times a year via e-mail.*

*Big thanks to our volunteer collaborators, and if anyone is interested to writing articles or help us with occasional translations please let us know.*

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## **Friends of Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden**

In January 2010 the Friends of Pha Tad Ke Association was created in France followed in July 2011 in the Netherlands and September 2011 in Laos. Each of these non-profit associations helps the creation of the Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden with scientific support, fund raising efforts and educational projects. In addition the Luang Prabang Fund for Culture and Conservation that was created in 2011 in the USA accepts donations that are tax-deductible for the benefit of Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden or other cultural and conservation projects in the Lao PDR.

Helping the Friends of Pha Tad Ke will allow you to follow the day-to-day evolution of the garden, look behind the scenes of its operations and participate in the Pha Tad Ke adventure !

**Information: [www.friends-pha-tad-ke.com](http://www.friends-pha-tad-ke.com)**

**When you become a member for the creation phase, your 5-year (2010-2014) membership will entitle you to:**

**Member - € 100:**

- Our newsletter (3 times a year, english/french) contains news about the garden, on-going work and actions, and articles about the flora, arts and culture of Laos.

**Friend Member - € 300:**

- Private visit to PTK, including boat trip and picnic (for 2 pax, booking required)
- A 30% reduction on the garden's publications and products (except Folies)
- Access to our favoured travel agent in Laos, reductions on hotels and restaurants etc. (see list of the partners of the Friends)
- Mention of your name on our website
- An invitation for two people to the official opening.

**Support Member - Institutions & Companies - € 2,000:**

- Mention of your name on our website with your logo
- Discount of 10% on one of our editions « Folies »
- A private reception at the pre-opening for a group from your institution/company.

**Donor Member - € 5,000 €, or more:**

- Discount of 10% on two of our editions « Folies »
- Inclusion of your name on the donor plaque at the entrance to the garden.

**Members can increase their involvement in the creation of Pha Tad Ke by supporting one or more of our individual projects:**

• **Adopt a tree: from € 50 to € 2,000**

Buying and planting a tree is only a beginning. It must then be fed, cared for and pruned. This takes time, money and care. Love your tree and adopt a seedling or a mature tree.

• **Sponsor a Bookparty: € 400**

Guided visits to the gardens for groups of children or students, who will spend a day learning about Pha Tad Ke's work and plants. The package includes transport to the garden and lunch. At the end of the day, every participant will receive a copy of our specially published books.

• **Sponsor a student: € 4,400 for 4 years**

In conjunction with three institutions, PTK has set up a grant for the best first-year student. At the end of the first year of study, the winning student will be offered a scholarship that will allow him or her to continue his or her studies. In exchange, the recipient will be required to do a two-month work placement at the garden during summer recesses and to work at the garden for one year at the end of his/her studies.

• **Sponsor a research post: € 1,800 for one year**

Given the heavy workload at the university and the very low salaries in Laos, there is little time left for building research projects. With this grant PTK will enable a post doc to do a year's research on a topic chosen in consultation with PTK.

• **Sponsor a field trip: € 10,000**

In conjunction with the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, we have set up a three-year partnership to train our horticultural team and to carry out an ambitious program of monthly field trips to gather specimens for a collection of living plants that will be unique in Laos. At the same time we will collect specimens for a herbarium. Each trip will require a substantial investment in time and money but this work is imperative as it will form the very foundations of our garden and its collections.

• **Sponsor a building: from € 15,000**

Several buildings will be required to house our collections and staff, and provide facilities for visitors. These buildings will include: Nurseries (€ 15,000), Orchid House (€ 27,000), Butterfly Farm (€ 32,000), Reception area (€95,000), Restaurant (€ 95,000), offices for research staff (€ 130,000), Traditional Medicines House (€ 135,000) and Library or Herbarium (€ 190,000).



Biba Vilayleck lived and worked for 2 months in PTK to work on the ethno-botanic garden

Visit from H.E. Mr. Joan Boer,  
Dutch Ambassador to Thailand and Laos and  
his wife Wendelmoet, Pha Tad Ke, February 24<sup>th</sup>.



Dagur Eggertson & Sami Rintala, architects  
based in Norway, visit to work on the design for  
our Orchid House and Butterfly Farm

With generous support from Singapore Botanic Garden, David Lim, Manager of their National Orchid Garden and a well regarded Orchid Breeder, gave a training at PTK.

Staff from NAFC, the National Herbarium and Souphanouvong University participated and a lecture was provided for students at NAFC and in Vientiane at the National University of Laos





First training in our School Garden to staff of the NGO Pencils of Promise.

This garden was installed with generous support from the Laos Friends of Pha Tad Ke association and the French Embassy in the framework of their FSD program.





Orna Gilchrist, graduate from RBGE school of horticulture spend 2 months practice in PTK

Dr. George W. Staples (Singapore BG),  
Dr. Paweena Traiperm (Mahidol University) and  
Dr. Pimwadee Pornpongrungrueng (Khon Kaen  
University) visit for fieldwork on Convolvulaceae

Stephen Herrington from Glasgow BG came by  
and joined a field trip with our botanist Done







# ພືດເປັນຢາຢູ່ອ້ອມຕົວເຮົາ

ໂດຍ ສິມສະນິດ ບົວມະນີວິງ

ແຕ້ມໂດຍ ກິງເງິນ ແສງດີ & ຄຳພາດ ທອງຈັນ

**Pha Tad Ke Botanical Garden - Luang Prabang**

*we are very proud to present the latest publication in our series of Laos children books*

## **Medicinal Plants** *Somsanith Bouamanivong*

*this book is published with support of the  
Laos Friends of Pha Tad Ke Association  
and a grant from the French Embassy FSD Program.*



*it can be downloaded at:*

**<http://pha-tad-ke.com/english/publication.html>**

## *The flower - vegetables from Laos*



*“Sexuality is at the heart of the existence of flowers as well as in their role in the lives of human beings”.* Jack Goody

To a botanist, flowers are the reproductive organs of a large number of plants (the Phanerogams or flowering plants). Their colours and fragrance are not simply accessories but the tools for the survival of the species. However human-kind has been able to use the flowers’ sexual attributes to enhance our taste buds with flavours from sweet, to spicy, from sour to bitter.

In Laos, traditionally, flowers are not used ornamentally, but only in religious practice and as vegetables. This country is still mainly an agricultural country, although with some worrying changes like the replacement of subsistence crops with commercial crops (rubber, sugar cane and manioc.) As well, with the resettlement of people by the Lao government, villages have been moved from the mountains to the lowlands to make irrigation more accessible for everyone. All of these factors have, of course, meant that there have been changes in the people’s relationship with nature and in the knowledge required to farm the land. However, all Lao people, except for those who live in the big towns, have a good knowledge of plants from having used them in daily life for generations. In particular, they have a long tradition of gathering wild forest plants for food, to diversify the diet and to enhance the flavour. They are also sold in the markets in the towns where



people who enjoy these flavours can buy them. There is thus a specialised market only a dozen kilometres from Vientiane where one can find all kinds of wild animals and rare plants that are no longer seen by townspeople and among these are many flowers. Often the buds of young flowers and leaves are gathered and cooked together, like Fabaceae and ginger, but flowers like the Bignoniaceae must blossom before being used. The tastes of these flower vegetables are always sour and bitter.

### **The Bignoniaceae**

The deep throats of the Bignoniaceae flowers can be stuffed with meat or fish, the corollas are filled with a mixture of rice and meat and are boiled in broth or steamed. However, the 1 *Oroxylum* - The flower opens at night and only the calice remains in the morning; 2 Flowers of *Oroxylum indicum* on a plate



blossoms are found so high in the trees that they must fall to the ground before they are collected, so sometimes we come after the bats.

***Oroxylum indicum*** raise their delicate silhouettes in open forest, on fallow land and in the gardens of villages and towns in South-east Asia. The slender, flexible trunks can reach 12 metres and are crowned with dark green leaves from which emerge the floral stems which can measure up to 2 metres in height. The flowers which bloom at the top are large and fleshy, violet red on the outside and yellow or pink inside. Unfortunately, it is difficult to see and admire them, because they only open at night and in the morning drop their blossoms to the ground at the bottom of the tree, where they are often nibbled by bats which feed on them, undeterred by their disagreeable smell. The fruit which hangs at the ends of the branches is a long flat capsule shape about 50 to 80 centimetres long which in Lao is called the wooden tongue (*lin may*).

There is not, to my knowledge, a French name for this tree, but in English it is called *Midnight Horror*, because of its appearance “*which makes one think of ghosts*” and if one adds the bats and the smell it makes a pretty dreadful picture. Lao people see it differently, because for them, *Oroxylum indicum* is a vegetable. The flower, which is beautiful and bitter, is usually filled with meat and steamed. The seed pod is also eaten when quite young. Grilled and then peeled, it is eaten

with meat dishes. *Oroxylum indicum* is also used for crafts, with the light wood used for matches and paper pulp and the bark for green or yellow dye for silk or cotton. In traditional medicine, it is mainly the bark which is considered effective. It is roasted and applied to painful areas or used for rheumatism or injuries. As a decoction, it is prescribed for indigestion and diarrhoea. This decoction also has anti-allergenic properties and is used to treat asthma.

***Markhamia stipulata*** and ***Fernandoa adenophylla*** are two very similar species sharing the same name in Lao, *dok kè leuang*, and similar uses.

These trees are not very big (no more than 5 metres), and the young branches, leaves and buds are all covered in thick brown fuzz. The leaves are pinnate and the oval leaflets vary in size within the same leaf. The floral stalks are about 15 centimetres high and often appear above the leaves showing four to ten buds which turn to bell-shaped yellow flowers, soft and fleshy, sometimes with purple veins. The fruit is a long 30 to 70 centimetre capsule which opens into two velvety valves revealing winged seeds. Those of the *Markhamia* are straight, while those of the *Fernandoa* are smaller and twisted. The leaves of the latter are also larger. The flowers, which open at night, are collected early in the morning to be sold or prepared for cooking, usually stuffed with fish, but can also be eaten poached and their slight bitterness goes well with grilled food. The long seed pods are harvested from the tree before they are ripe and are eaten steamed after being



1 *Markhamia stipulata*; 2 *Fernandoa adenophylla*



peeled. The bark of these Bignonias is a medicine. An infusion is used for bathing burns and it is also recommended for the labour pains of young mothers.

***Radermachera ignea*** is found in both evergreen and deciduous forests in tropical Asia. It is a medium-sized tree, deciduous or not, depending on the environment, with brown, finely striped bark. The dark green, shiny leaves are opposing and composite, soft and flexible, either 2 or 3 pinnate, in an attractive fountain shape. The flowers appear directly on the trunk and the older branches and the inflorescence has 4 or 5 parts. They are tubular, like all Bignonias, with a corolla, often raised, which gives off a beautiful fragrance. Its fruit is long and narrow, twisted, full of many flat seeds and winged at either end. In English it is called tree jasmine and the Lao call it *dok pip* or *dok kè dong*, taking the same name as the preceding Bignonias to which they add the word “*dong*” meaning “*of the jungle*”. Even the smallest flowers are eaten filled with stuffing. The wood is used as a traditional medicine by making a decoction of the roots and bark, which is good for the liver and for arthritis.



***Stereospermum fibriatum*** is another Bignonia whose flowers are eaten, but not stuffed, probably because they are so soft, but in soups instead.

- 1 Pealed pods of the *khè luang* (*Markhamia stipulata*)
- 2/3 The tubular flowers of *ton Pip* (*Radermachera ignea*) grow directly on the trunk and its composite leaves cascade down like a fountain
- 4 Flowers of *Stereospermum fibriatum*





### Zingiberaceae

The Zingiberaceae family is very important in Laos but is as yet not completely catalogued botanically. Ginger, galanga and curcuma are the main ones used as condiments, but each of these names covers several species which are less well-studied. All these rhizomes have at the same time culinary, medicinal and sometimes artisanal or magical uses.

### Galanga Flowers, *Alpinia* spp.

Many Lao cooks prefer the sweeter galanga to ginger. The spice has the same structure already seen in the Zingiberaceae, starting with a rhizome which develops into a stem looking a little like a reed, with simple sheathed leaves. From an inflorescence in a spike the flowers emerge, which vary in colour and size, depending on the species. Galanga belongs to the genus *Alpinia*, and, like ginger, there are many species for which there are no specific terms in French or English. In Lao, on the other hand, the generic term is *kha* and people in the villages grow, among others, *kha leuang* (yellow), *kha gnai* (large) and *kha ban* (of the village), while *kha pa* (wild), *kha dèng* (red) or *kha khom* (bitter) are collected in the forest. The buds and flowers of galanga are eaten, particularly in April and May. The shoots, *no kha*, previously blanched, are dipped in a sauce, the young inflorescences, *dok kha*, either blanched or not, go with meats in salad or grilled. French style salads with finely chopped galanga flowers are delicious, slightly sweet and spicy, rather like ginger.

### Curcuma Flower, *Curcuma* sp.

The curcuma originated in India but has been cultivated for a long time in Southeast Asia. It is a herbaceous plant of the ginger family which has very large, smooth leaves and small yellow or white flowers, often touched with red. For the Lao, the curcuma is less a spice than a magic plant and one that is used for dyes. The lovely yellow colour of its rhizome has led

1 Galanga flower; 2 Curcuma flower; 3 Wild Galanga flower





to names like Indian saffron and *khimin* in Lao. Lao people don't use the curcuma directly as a spice, unlike the Thais, but they do so indirectly because the rhizome is dried and powdered and is one of the ingredients, along with ginger, cardamom, cumin, and chilli, in curry. In contrast, they do eat the young flowers of a species of curcuma, *ka tieo*, and, as with galanga flowers, you can add these chopped flowers to salads to give a delicious peppery taste. They are also enjoyed steamed for their bitterness.

### **Wild Ginger Flower, *Zingiber sp.***

Quite recently in the market in Luang Prabang I bought in the market a little packet of ginger flowers, *king pa* (wild ginger) which the vendor suggested grilling and dipping in fermented fish sauce. And of course, one can use the young ginger flowers as a condiment, but I had never before tried this flower which I found quite sweet with no suggestion of ginger.

### **The Musaceae - Banana Flowers**

With bananas, of course, we eat the fruit. But we also eat some parts of the trunk and the flowers or, more precisely, the inflorescence at the base of the flower stems, which come out of the heart of the false trunk consisting of leaves curled tightly inside one another. The buds, which usually turn towards the ground, are made up of purple spathes, which open one after another into rows of flowers, of which the females come first and then become the fruits. After the spathes are open, the buds are cut for preparation. They are called *mak pi* in Lao which means fruit shaped like a tapered spindle.

The so-called flower of the *kouay thani* (gibbon banana) or *kouay nam*, (water banana), raw and finely chopped, are soaked in acidulated water and then added to meat or fish to add bulk or eaten as an accompaniment to *khao phun*, a kind of thick soup of coconut milk and vermicelli. The taste of banana flowers is a bit like that of an artichoke but more sour and with a pleasant aftertaste. French cooking has now taken up this ingredient and suggests banana flowers as a regular part of any salad. However, the entire bud is also cooked in stews and soups, particularly among the Hmong people. The inflorescences are seen as a good way to control diabetes.

1 Wild Ginger flower; 2/3 Flowers of the banana, right: flower eaten raw with *khao phoun*, left: cooked in the *or lam*



## Meliaceae.

*Azadirachta indica*, (Neem tree) is a semi-deciduous tree of about 25 metres in height which grows rapidly in the rain forests and in open forests. Its short and narrow trunk is crowned with dense, rounded foliage. The leaves are large and composed of curved, serrated leaflets. Clusters of small white fragrant flowers are formed near the branch ends in axillary form. The fruit is a drupe rather like a small olive. The Lao call it *phak kadao* (*kadao vegetable*). It comes originally from India and Myanmar and *kadao* (*Melia azedarach*) a very similar species with large purple flowers is planted widely in the Mediterranean region. In Laos, they love the vegetable for its very bitter taste which goes well with many different



meat salads or with stews. They are served at the table with either the flower ends still in bud and steamed, or the open flowers, uncooked, and the delicate fragrance goes well with the bitter taste as a supplementary sensory element. If the taste is too bitter, the buds can be dried or blanched before using. In Lao traditional medicine, this flower is often prescribed, as the flowers are a stimulant, tonic and stomachic while the bark of the roots is an astringent, a tonic and a febrifuge.

## Guttiferae

*Cratogeomys formosum*, like many plants in Laos, is used as food, medicine and also in rituals and as decoration. It's a small tree of about 10 to 15 metres which is found in dry forests and on degraded land. Starting in March, you can see the bright colour of its flowers in the midst of the deep green of the neighbouring vegetation. Closer to, the base of the slender trunk is covered with big thorns. The young leaves which appear at the same time as the flower buds are pinkish. Then they become more oblong and the colour becomes a clear shiny green. The flowers are grouped in small clusters with white petals in a red calyx. The fruit is a capsule of three valves containing of many small winged seeds. The Lao call this tree *tio*, but there are several varieties including red, white, yellow and black and it's difficult to tell them apart; but one of them has leaves covered in a fine down and

1 Flowering branch of *kadao* (*Azadirachta*) prepared for *lap*  
2/3 *Phak tio* (*Cratogeomys*) and its flowers sold in the market



is called ‘red’, *tiou deng* (*Cratoxylum pruniflorum*), while the other, *Cratoxylum formosum*, with shiny leaves, is called *tiou khao*, (white). But you will also hear *phak tiou som*, or ‘sour vegetable tiou’ because the buds and flowers are eaten in fish soups and are used to give a tart taste, but also with *laap* and other grilled meats. In addition, *Cratoxylon* is a good timber, which is its meaning in Latin, and is traditionally used in funeral pyres for cremations and to make charcoal which is exported to Japan. It also secretes an orange resin, which is used as a traditional medicine.

### Leguminosae

Many plants in this family are eaten in Laos in some quite specific forms, such as the famous *khilek* paste made with crushed leaves of *Cassia siamea* and quite often both the leaves and the unopened flowers are used.

*Sesbania grandiflora* is a medium-sized tree (8 to 10 metres) which undoubtedly came from Indonesia. Its large composite leaves are 30 centimetres long with long grey-green leaflets. The flowers, which appear in May in sparse clusters, are white or purple and shaped rather like a claw. The seed is long and narrow and contains many seeds. As this tree reproduces quickly and easily, it is semi-cultivated a bit in central and southern Laos. Its young leaves, flowers and seed pods are harvested as vegetables and sold in the markets. They are usually blanched quickly in boiling water and eaten with a spicy sauce or a fish paste. The flowers in particular are used

to give a sour tang to soups as is done with tamarind, not forgetting to take out the stamens, which are very bitter. One can also stuff them, add them to a sauté of pork or shrimp or even dip them in batter and fry them.

*Caesalpinia mimosoides* is a climbing shrub which is covered in bristles and found in mixed forests and scrubland. Its narrow leaves are composite, alternate and about 15 to 20 cm long with spiky red stems. The flowers form in clumps at the end of the branches with large bright yellow, carinate petal veined with pink and stamens that end in dark red anthers. The seed pods which appear from February onwards, are rather like those of the *sappan tree*, but smaller. It is during their flowering season, in November and December, when the flower-covered stems of this leguminous plant are picked or bought in the markets. Lao people eat the flowers and leaves uncooked as an accompaniment to meat or fish. They are called *nam phou gna* or, more precisely, *phak nam pou gna*. This name can be translated as “the spiny vegetable of the ancestors”. The “spiny” is understandable when you see the stems but we don’t know where the ancestors come into it, unless it is simply to remember the old days when the use of this plant originated in this region. It is eaten not only for its flavour, which is said to be slightly bitter, but also because it has a reputation as a restorative for people who are exhausted.



1 *Sesbania grandiflora*; 2 *Caesalpinia mimosoides*





*Saraca declinata*, which the Lao call “**Burmese Gold**”, originated in the Indo-Malaysian region, while in Thailand and Laos there are at least a dozen wild species. These medium-sized trees prefer to grow in the shade of their neighbours. The smooth leaves are composed of long spear-like leaflets which, when they are young, are purple or white and hang limply, giving the tree its distinctive appearance. The small flowers in corymb form at the ends of the branches form fat bristly powder puffs with very long stamens. They are a yellowish orange and become a beautiful brick colour as they mature. The new buds of the leaves and the flowers are edible. The flowers are eaten raw in salads and are slightly acidic. A decoction of these is used for fever. The wood, quite hard and insect resistant, is useful for support posts for houses and this is undoubtedly the reason why this tree has gradually disappeared in inhabited areas. Happily, temple gardens also serve in the role of conservators of biodiversity and shelter many *Saraca declinata* and *Saraca indica*.

*Clitoria ternatea* is a climbing plant with abundant foliage of pinnate leaves. The solitary flower forms in the axil of the leaves and has a carina and standard, pointing downwards, which is brilliant blue around a heart of yellow with a white edge. The seed pods are fairly long, pubescent and contain a few flat seeds. This vine is perfectly adapted to all tropical climates but grows just as easily in temperate climates. In Laos, the flower is used as an edible food colouring. Put

1 *Saraca declinata*; 2 *Clitoria ternatea*; 3 *Trevesia palmata*.

the flowers, either dried or fresh into water, strain and add to rice cooking water to make blue rice or do the same with vermicelli.

#### **Araliaceae - *Trevesia palmata***

This tree which must have the most spectacular leaves in the world is found in Laos and in a region which extends from Nepal to Malaysia. *Trevesia* is a tufted tree of about three to four metres in height, it grows in the shade of rainforests on lower mountain slopes. The tree itself is nothing special, but the evergreen leaves are quite amazing, with an attrac-



tive bronze colour, they are serrated like Japanese or Chinese paper, with five to nine lobes, some plain and some further serrated, sometimes radiating from a central point. These complex leaves are quite surprising as they can grow to as much as 90cm in diameter. From the month of March, the tree is covered with graceful spherical umbels of tiny, slightly fragrant, white and yellow flowers, which look like white spheres against the darker foliage. They emerge first as small, oval, fleshy drupes, and contain tiny seeds. In the Luang Prabang region, where *Trevesia* is plentiful, the blanched flowers are eaten with *laap* or with grilled foods. The *Akha* people eat both the fruits and the young leaves. In Thailand they are considered as an appetite stimulant and the bark and roots as an aphrodisiac.

### Moraceae

The mulberry is well known in Laos as it is traditionally used in paper and handicrafts for the tourist trade, but there is another mulberry which is less well-known and is used as a vegetable, *Broussonetia Kurzii*. This mulberry is less common than *Broussonetia papyrifera*, and is found in a band which goes from the north-east of India to Vietnam, including in Yunnan, in rain-forested areas. This small tree is sometimes a climber with alternate, oval, smooth, thin leaves, fairly tall at 20 to 27 metres. The flowers appear before the leaves and are dioe-

cious with the males in catkin and the females like glomerule in small green 1 cm balls. It is the little round female flower heads that are eaten. They are collected in January and February and are also sold in the markets as a much-prized vegetable. They can be blanched and served with dried fish or meat or they can be added to a sour soup. Another recipe suggests putting these slightly bitter flowers into a pork soup to which one has added chilli paste, fermented shrimp, fish sauce, tamarind puree and tiny tomatoes.

### Acanthaceae

*Justicia adathoda*, which grows wild on the Indochinese peninsula, came originally from India, and its name there, *adhatoda*, came in turn from Tamil and means “a plant avoided by animals”. It is an attractive bush with long-lasting foliage, clear dark green, with big leaves in the form of a wavy spear. The flowers are grouped in short spears at the ends of the branches, with each double-lipped corolla edged with claws of purple. The fruits are small capsules and are not edible, but one can eat the flowers in a salad after blanching or simply raw, when they are slightly bitter and a bit pungent.

1 *Trevesia palmata*, flowering buds sold in the market; 2 These little balls sold in the market are the flowers of *Broussonetia kurzii*



## Aquatic Plants

Many aquatic plants belonging to different families are considered vegetables.

*Limnocharis flava* is called *phak thiong* in Lao, which means vegetable shaped like a ladle. This common name comes from the fact that its leaves rise up out of the water in a spatula shape, above inflorescences of yellow, three-petalled flowers. The stems are quite characteristic with a triangular section, a milky sap and a spongy composition. Like most aquatic plants, these attach themselves to the bottom of



the pond with a small rhizome and rootlets. In Laos, *phak thiong* is gathered in wetlands and sold in the markets. It makes the base for a delicious sauce with the young stems, flowers and leaves, grilled and then pureed. This plant is eaten throughout the region and in Vietnam, for example, it is made into soup.

*Eichhornia crassipes*, Water hyacinth, *phak top* in Lao, is considered one of the most noxious aquatic plants there is, as it has spread from its place of origin in South America to more than 50 countries in five continents and nearly everywhere is considered an absolute pest. It is a floating tropical plant which spreads at the will of the wind on wide stretches of water. Its flower, a bunch of spears like a hyacinth, is beautiful lavender blue with a spot of yellow on one of the petals. Its long dense roots reach more than 30 centimetres to the bottom and make an ideal place for fish to lay their eggs. Many countries have put strategies in place to get rid of this invasive plant, but in Laos the danger is not so great and people are happy to eat the flowers blanched with other vegetables in a salad.



1 *Justicia adathoda*; 2 *phak thiong* (*Limnocharis flava*) sold in the market  
3 *Eichhornia crassipes*

## SOME RECIPES WE LOVE

To accompany the article from ethnobotanist Biba Vilayleck about the flowers used in Laos cuisine we have asked Diana von Cranach and Yannick Upravan from restaurant *Elephant Vert* in Luang Prabang to share with us one of their delicious recipes.

Diana von Cranach is also the author of *Rawfully Good. 'Living' Flavours of Southeast Asia*.

### RAWFULLY GOOD

*'Living' Flavours of Southeast Asia*

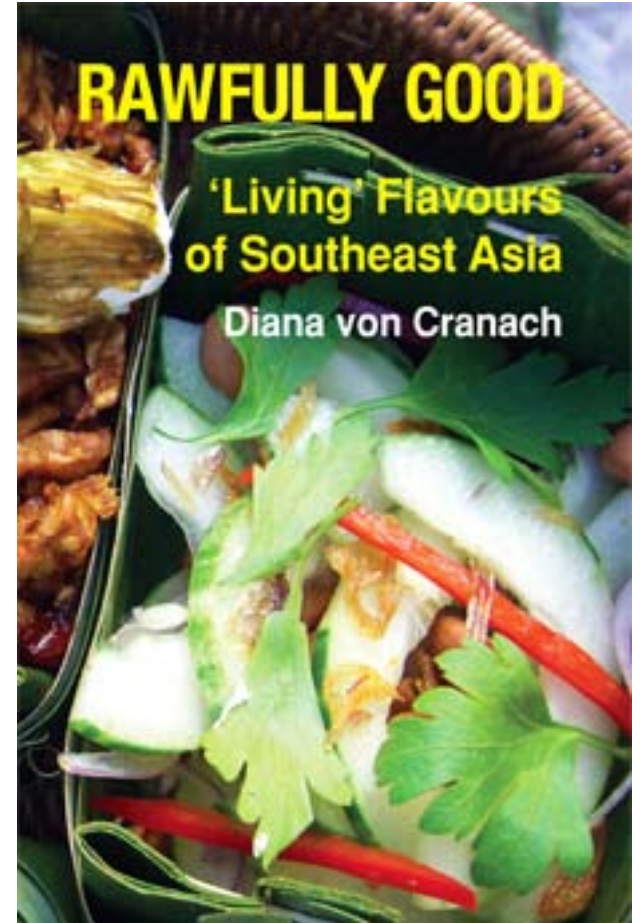
Diana von Cranach

River Books, Bangkok, 2010, 284 pp, 25\$

ISBN 978 190 4562 12 2

Based in Bali, Diana von Cranach has long been a well-known local food explorer and creator of incredible food. A few years ago, she took her dedication to good food a step further by beginning a journey into the world of raw food using only locally sourced ingredients. Her idyllic and very personal resort Puri Ganesha Villas in North Bali, is one of only a few hotels worldwide to offer an alternative, purely 'living' food menu to the surprise and delight of her guests.

The idea for this book comes from the author's desire to work with chefs at famous restaurants and resorts throughout Southeast Asia, and to prepare healthier and lighter vegan food using their own recipes as a basis. At the same time, she aims to revive the use of more unusual traditional herbs and ingredients, used for generations. Covering destinations from Bali in Indonesia, Langkawi in Malaysia, Nha Trang in Vietnam, Siem Reap in Cambodia, Luang Prabang in Laos, Chiang Mai and Loei Provinces in Thailand and the cities of Bangkok, Singapore and Yangon, Rawfully Good reinvents over 99 well-known regional recipes with excitingly different and invigorating 'living' flavours.



## LUANG PRABANG MARKET SOUP

*Serves 2*

### Ingredients

- 1 bunch each Thai holy and sweet basil, leaves chopped
- 1 bunch wild baby rocket, chopped
- 1 bunch coriander, stems & roots chopped, leaves whole
- 1 bunch Vietnamese mint or laksa, leaves only
- 1 bunch spearmint, leaves only
- 100g baby kalia or broccoli
- 100g spinach, chopped
- 20g Lao hog plums or 1-teaspoon fresh orange juice mixed with 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice and 1/2 teaspoon sea salt
- 1 small green chilli, deseeded & finely chopped
- 3 stems water spinach or morning glory, leaves & stems finely chopped
- 50g watercress, roughly chopped
- 20g Lao chrysanthemum leaves, chopped
- 50g snow peas, chopped
- 3-4 tablespoons coconut milk
- 1 teaspoon sea salt or to taste
- 2 tablespoons snow pea tendrils for decoration

Roughly chop all the above ingredients apart from the snow pea tendrils. Blend together with coconut milk and perhaps some coconut water to make a thick soup. Put in the fridge for an hour so that the flavours can develop. Remove from the fridge and adjust the seasoning.



### To serve

Serve at room temperature decorated with snow pea tendrils, slices of baby corn, herbs, garlic chive flowers and grated carrot.



Diana von Cranach of Puri Ganesha Villas, Bali together with the owners of L'ELEPHANT Restaurant in Luang Prabang, Laos opened L'ELEPHANT VERT, the first ethno-botanical 'living' cuisine restaurant in Southeast Asia.

With Lao cuisine focusing on raw vegetable, leaves & herb ingredients as well as meat and fish, it was a logical conclusion to open a restaurant with a menu concentrating solely on the botanical aspect of local food!

L'ELEPHANT VERT will serve Diana's unique kind of '*ranfully good*' vegan food with purely Southeast Asian flavors, offering a very different dining experience. Her dishes are prepared so that important enzymes and nutrients are not destroyed by cooking. Nothing on the menu will be heated above 115 Fahrenheit and contain practically no carbohydrates. The produce will be sourced as Nature intended, from fresh, seasonal, naturally wild or farm-crafted local produce.

Made only from locally grown well-known and more unusual herbs, vegetables, fruit, flowers, leaves, nuts and seeds that have been used in Lao and other Southeast Asian cuisines for generations, the ingredients used in the daily changing set lunch and dinner menus at L'ELEPHANT VERT will reflect seasonal and traditional flavors from all over the region, taking the concept of 'living' food to an excitingly new level of taste and texture.

- L'ELEPHANT VERT knows where all ingredients come from and how they are grown, most of them organically
- L'ELEPHANT VERT is passionate about ingredients and only serves the highest quality, freshest, seasonal, local & most nutritious foods
- L'ELEPHANT VERT supports the community and cares about the environment
- L'ELEPHANT VERT provides only healthy fats from nuts and seeds
- None of the dishes at L'ELEPHANT VERT contain artificial preservatives, coloring, flavorings or chemicals of any kind
- All the food served at L'ELEPHANT VERT is purely vegan and uses no animal products

Elephants in many evolutionary forms have walked the planet for around 60 million years, but were only joined by the first humans around 4 million years ago. Herbivores from the outset, elephants are the best living example to show us that consuming large amounts of green, natural foods everyday really does help the immune system to deal with possible chronic illness, provide more energy and ultimately increase longevity.



**Opening times: 11h30 -14h30; 18h00-22h00**

Ban Vat Nong , Kounxua Street  
Tel : + 856 71 252 482  
[www.elephant-restau.com](http://www.elephant-restau.com)  
[contact@elephantvertlaos.com](mailto:contact@elephantvertlaos.com)

*Dans une chronique précédente nous avons évoqué le bambou dans la peinture chinoise ; un peu dans le prolongement de ce thème nous avons l'occasion de présenter un art plutôt original et peu connu : la gravure sur bambou de l'archipel de Nouvelle Calédonie. Apparemment, il se trouve que les seuls exemples encore visibles sont conservés dans des musées, à Nouméa, en France, en Suisse ou aux Etats Unis. N'en ayant pas trouvé sur place, malgré notre insistance auprès de gens rencontrés sur la côte Est du territoire, (une région majoritairement peuplée de Mélanésiens), nous devons nous contenter de données livresques et muséographiques.*

La gravure sur bambou n'est pas exclusivement pratiquée en Nouvelle Calédonie mais semble partagée par d'autres îles du Pacifique sud, dans l'ensemble mélanésien, en particulier au Vanuatu.

Le bambou, généreusement réparti sur l'ensemble de l'archipel sous diverses variétés, est entré autrefois dans la confection de bien des objets courants : couteaux, peignes, pointes de flèches, instruments de musique, contenants, et sert encore efficacement de nos jours à la construction d'abris de fortune ou de faré et reste omniprésent dans la vie matérielle. Les éclisses sont parfois tressées et entrent alors dans la confection de radeaux, paniers ou pièges.

### KANAKY TERRE DES RACINES

Les Kanak font partie de ces familles linguistiques austronésiennes qui ont migré, à partir du premier millénaire avant J.-C., depuis l'Asie du Sud-Est vers les îles du Pacifique. Lors de leurs fantastiques déplacements ils ont emporté diverses plantes comestibles, comme les ignames et taros, cultivés en terrasses. Ces horticulteurs hors pairs s'étaient plutôt installés dans les vallées insulaires où ils développent, selon le mot de G. Haudricourt, « une civilisation de l'igname ». Le bouturage et le clonage des tubercules exigeant la recherche permanente de variétés différentes, il semblerait que ces pratiques de circulation et d'échanges de plants peuvent être mises en relation avec une caractéristique de ces sociétés, basées sur les transactions de biens ou les confrontations guerrières, les adoptions d'enfants, la circulation de monnaies et de dons et contre-dons. Une grande part de l'organisation sociale répond à ce schéma. D'année en année, la plante bouturée se survit à elle-même, sans fruit ni graine. Le clan est pareil à l'igname, disent certains, il est le corps social qui se survit à lui-même.

*Presentation of a traditional manu with textile*



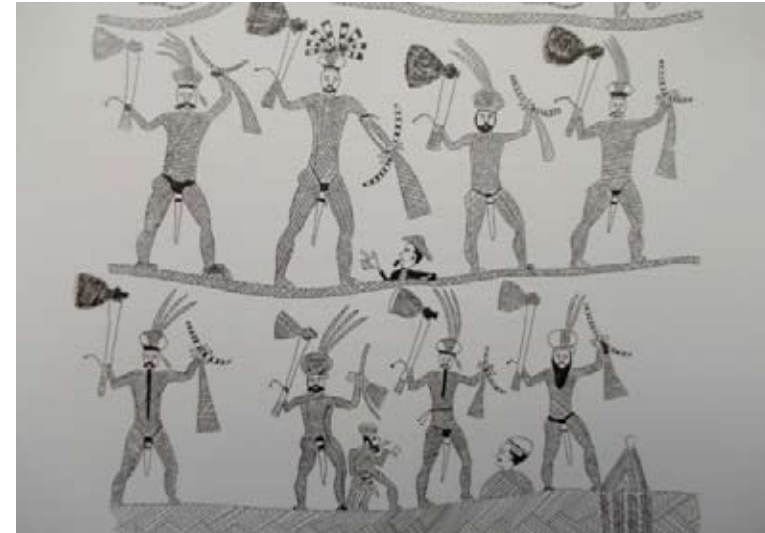


Il a une tête, un corps, et une extrémité et se scinde comme le plant d'igname pour se reconstituer ailleurs. L'adoption est pensée sur le même modèle, elle est une forme de bouturage social permettant le renouvellement des liens établis entre les clans.

Nous verrons que la création des bambous gravés s'inscrit aussi dans ce processus des échanges et de la transmission.

La colonisation, à partir de la deuxième moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, a durablement perturbé ces systèmes sociaux et donc aussi agraires, chassant les autochtones hors de leurs territoires ancestraux vers les terres moins riches, alors que les colons se sont appropriés les zones propices à l'élevage intensif. Cette fracture du pays se retrouve de nos jours dans l'ensemble insulaire où la côte orientale est plutôt mélanésienne alors que Nouméa et la côte ouest sont majoritairement habitées par les descendants d'Européens et d'immigrants d'autres régions du Pacifique, dont des Polynésiens et des Asiatiques, d'Indonésie principalement.

Très peu d'éléments attestent l'existence de bambous gravés avant la période coloniale. Est-ce tellement étonnant ? Les collectes ont été conduites à partir de 1860 par le contact et la rapine... Ce n'est qu'après ces années-là et jusque vers 1920 que les premières pièces ont été collectionnées en Europe. La production a été interrompue un temps pour les mêmes raisons de contact colonial ayant généré la destruction des grandes cases, la quasi disparition de la sculpture monumentale et de toute autre forme artistique locale. Néanmoins, on assistera à une relance de la production de



cet art qui prendra une tournure différente, beaucoup plus narrative et prenant en compte le contact avec les Blancs. On peut dire que ce sont des « objets témoins d'une période charnière » ou encore des objets emmêlés, hybrides, car ils se réfèrent à la rencontre entre une société kanak dominée et une administration coloniale imposant son ordre et un nouveau système de valeurs (Nicolas Thomas, in Colombo-Dougoud, p. 69). Néanmoins, à la différence d'autres objets d'échanges comme les haches, monnaies traditionnelles, les bambous gravés étaient des possessions personnelles sans statut social particulier et dont la transmission se faisait en dehors des échanges coutumiers.

*Left: The taro is cultivated on the mountain side on irrigated terraces; Top: Drawing on engraved bamboo of the Pilou dance. Note the European spectators in the scene*



## LES TECHNIQUES DE GRAVURE SUR BAMBOU

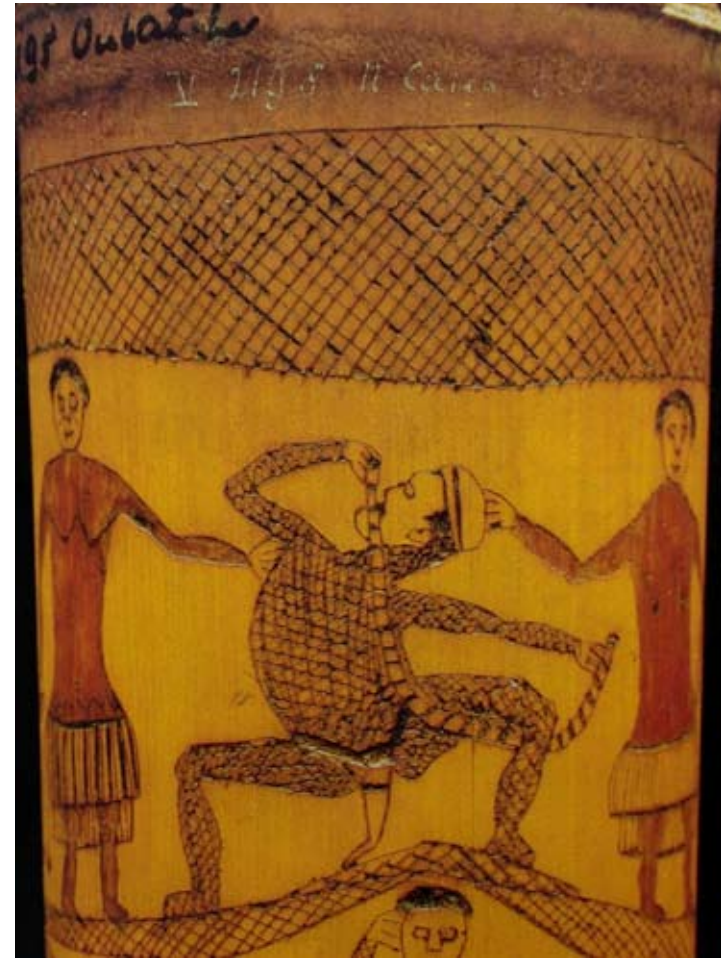
Les plus anciens bambous étaient gravés à l'aide d'outils rudimentaires comme des éclats de quartz ou des pinces de crustacés, propices à inciser une matière glissante, dure mais ligueuse dans une variété autochtone de bambous. Ceux-ci étaient plus minces et plus petits que ceux qui seront importés après 1860, et qui présentent des motifs figuratifs, des narrations et des personnages. Certains bambous présentent parfois une tête du rhizome sculptée sous la forme d'une tête animale, celle du chien, par exemple, introduit dans l'île par James Cook en 1774 (Boulay, p. 29).

Les exemples de bambous gravés, originaires de la région de Canala et de la côte Est en général, ont la taille approximative d'un humain, entre 150 et 180 cm de long et 4 à 8 cm de diamètre. Avec l'apparition d'outils métalliques, les canifs, gouges ou pointes acérées vont se substituer aux anciens outils à graver. On trouve également des motifs pyrogravés ce qui nécessitait une certaine virtuosité. Pour rendre le décor lisible et permanent, l'artiste enduisait les incisions d'une graisse obtenue grâce à la carbonisation de la noix de bancoulier ou de suie bien compacte et, une fois essuyées, les lignes du décor ou les simples tracés géométriques, apparaissaient durablement (Boulay, p.13). A ce propos, on retrouve la technique d'écriture sur végétaux que l'on connaît au Laos sous la forme des *bay lan* gravés qui consignent sur des feuilles de latanier lissées et traitées les anciens textes sacrés et les chroniques des royaumes.

En Nouvelle Calédonie comme au Vanuatu, certains bambous gravés, identifiés comme étant des flûtes, étaient percés de trous. Il existait bien des flûtes traversières nasales mais courbées, d'anciennes gravures en attestent l'existence : *« L'unique instrument calédonien est une sorte de bambou recourbé et dont les deux extrémités sont percées. Notre guide soufflait dans l'un des trous, tantôt de la bouche, tantôt de l'une des narines... »* (Boulay, p.14)

## MEMOIRE GRAVEE - SUPPORT NARRATIF

Tout laisse supposer que les premiers exemples de bambous gravés que l'on désigne par les termes *kârè e tá*, en langue *ajié*, étaient à simples motifs géométriques qui emplissaient toute la surface de lignes, points, chevrons, losanges. Un des plus anciens exemples de ce type, a été recueilli en 1875 à l'île des Pins par un officier de marine qui a pu noter les explications données par l'artiste graveur. Un simple décor géométrique narrerait le débarquement des Européens dans l'île et les luttes qui s'en suivirent. Les losanges par exemple, figureraient les Européens massés qui s'avancent vers les Kanak, conduits par leurs chefs qui eux sont représentés par des lignes verticales très serrées... Si ce témoignage est vraiment fiable (nous l'avons vu mentionné à plusieurs reprises) cela permet de relier cet art de la gravure à motifs exclusivement abstraits et géométriques à l'art des Aborigènes d'Australie qui partagent avec les Mélanésiens du Pacifique une esthétique commune, basée



*Engraved bamboo of flute player collected in 1911, Musée d'Ethnographie de Bâle. Note the skirts of the Kanak women made of woven plant material*

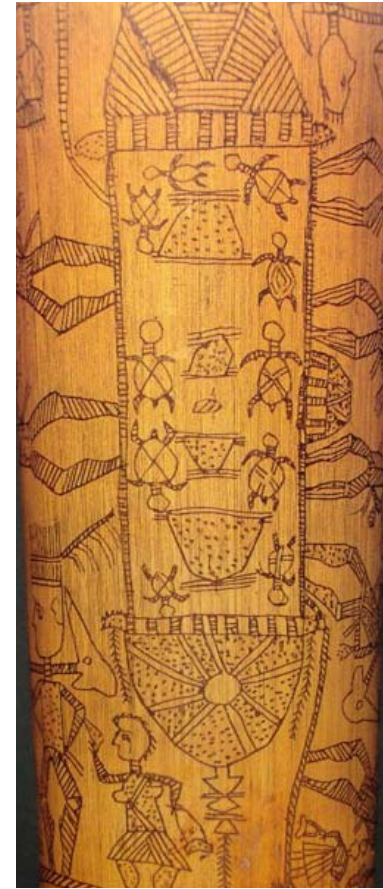


sur une forme d'abstraction géométrique symbolique. Néanmoins, les exemples les plus nombreux et conservés actuellement sont figuratifs et semblent bien inspirés par le contact avec des modèles occidentaux. Ce passage des motifs géométriques aux figurations s'explique en partie par l'influence des visiteurs étrangers qui ne manquaient pas de prendre des croquis, de dessiner les visages et les objets qu'ils découvraient. Mais les figurations souvent très suggestives indiquent surtout, de la part des Kanak, une nouvelle manière de se représenter soi-même et aussi de se placer face à l'autre.

Ces témoignages visuels rassemblent plusieurs fonctions qui toutes renvoient aux pratiques des échanges et des relations interpersonnelles.

Les jeunes gens avaient l'habitude autrefois, nous disent les personnes interrogées, de graver des inscriptions sur les bambous situés sur les chemins qu'ils fréquentaient. Ils fixaient ainsi des rendez-vous, se passaient des messages, à la manière des graffitis que l'on trouve aussi sur les troncs d'arbre. Cela reste encore valable aujourd'hui malgré la pratique généralisée des téléphones mobiles. En tant que support de la mémoire, les bambous gravés narrent des faits, fixent des symboles, traduisent les préoccupations des gens, leurs coutumes, mais rendent compte aussi des vêtements, des coiffures et des activités diverses comme la construction d'un toit ou une cérémonie. Ils servaient ainsi d'aide-mémoire aux conteurs publics qui déclamaient contes et légendes.

*«The Colonel», engraved bamboo evoking the prison and army cantonments that were installed in the Isle of Pines to the south of Grande Terre.*



*Left: Central ally with two round huts. The offerings are presented in the middle, amongst others turtles, food for the heads of lineages. Paris, (MAAO) Musée du Quai Branly; Right: Two big huts with figures separated by a planted ally. Musée de Nouméa*



*An enclosure with three huts, on the right the graphic restitution*

Transportables, ils accompagnent le déplacement des hommes et la diffusion des paroles édifiantes, comme on emporterait un livre pour le feuilleter avec ses amis croisés en chemin ou chez qui on irait en visite.

A la différence d'autres objets plus prestigieux comme les haches et les monnaies de perles, les bambous restaient des possessions personnelles dont la transmission se faisait en dehors des échanges coutumiers (Colombo-Dougoud, page 69).

Mais, chose plus troublante encore, comme l'attestent des récits et contes calédoniens, certains bambous gravés se prêtaient à la fonction de contenants de « feuilles à remèdes » que l'on emportait avec soi en cas de malaise, de danger

ou comme simple protection. Traverser la brousse peut être dangereux, on peut y croiser des âmes errantes et des esprits néfastes, mais contrairement à ce que prétendaient les Blancs, les bambous gravés ne servaient pas de canne ou de « bâton de voyage », ils étaient considérés comme l'insigne du chef de famille et conféraient à l'homme qui le portait le titre de « vieux » lors d'une fête appelée « *Tenir le bâton* » ! (Carole Ohlen, in Colombo-Dougoud, 2008)

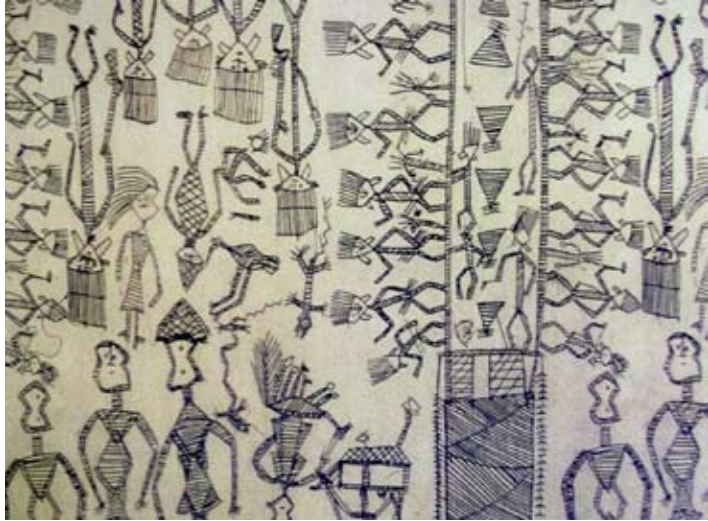
Une des plus belles collections de bambous gravés se trouve aujourd'hui au musée d'Ethnographie de Genève, où une ancienne directrice, Marguerite Lobsiger Dellenbach, a su réunir et étudier minutieusement, à partir des années 1930-40, une série de 29 bambous gravés, rapportés en Suisse par divers voyageurs ou acquis auprès de collectionneurs.

Elle a, en particulier, su développer une technique sommaire mais efficace de reproduction des dessins pour faciliter leur lecture. Sur le pourtour de chaque bambou elle a appliqué une feuille mouillée de papier transparent puis a reproduit minutieusement chaque dessin, avant de décalquer l'ensemble puis de procéder à un tirage héliographique. C'est ce qui nous vaut aujourd'hui ces reproductions en plan d'œuvres gravées sur le pourtour de tiges de bambou.

On retrouve une certaine similitude entre les gravures anciennes sur bambou et certains graffitis que l'on peut observer sur les chemins kanak qui mènent d'un hameau à un autre. Les habitations sont peu visibles, on les devine



*Detail of two engraved bamboos, Paris, (MAAO)  
Musée du Quai Branly*



*Detail of an engrave bamboo. Characters crawling and dancing around the schematic representation of a hut. Musée d'ethnographie de Genève; Bottom: Large huts with roof finials. They are arranged in an orderly, rhythmic manner. Musée d'ethnographie de Genève.*

à travers une végétation luxuriante. Sur un long parcours, on s'aperçoit, qu'à part les quelques panneaux routiers, les seuls écrits visibles se trouvent sur les abribus en béton qui jalonnent les routes. Ils sont souvent couverts de graffitis qui dessinent, à leur façon, les espoirs et les rendez-vous de la jeunesse. Certains sont empreints de ce même trait incisif, très noir et très aigu que l'on trouve sur les bambous. L'écriture gravée ou stylisée sur le béton dit chaque fois l'importance de la nature comme support de toute identification et son rôle omniprésent qui fait que l'humain ne devrait que se lire à travers elle. La simplification formelle et les symboles graphiques abstraits qui prévalaient avant la période coloniale sont peut-être à mettre en relation avec les peintures des Aborigènes d'Australie. Le passage à la figuration et à la narration, probablement d'influence occidentale, est un tournant et aussi le signe de l'acculturation d'un art qui au départ avait bien d'autre chose à dire que de raconter des histoires.

### **Baj Strobel**

*Les illustrations de ce texte proviennent toutes des ouvrages cités en bibliographie, nous remercions les auteurs et éditeurs.*

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*Kanak graffiti, painted on the wall of a shelter on the east coast near Ponérihouen*



## Portfolio by Saysamone Inthavong

Saysamone Inthavong is 23 years old. When he finished his studies at the Northern Agriculture and Forestry College he worked for ten months in Israel after which he came to work at Pha Tad Ke as gardener and especially in charge of our butterfly program. Since he was a young boy he was interested in insect and especially loves butterflies for their beauty as well as their interesting life-cycle.















## SOME BOOKS AND OTHER AFFAIRS WE LOVE

### The Aesthetics of Power

*Architecture, Identity and Modernity from Siam to Thailand*

Noobanjong Koompong

White Lotus, Bangkok, 2013, 504 pp, 36\$

ISBN: 978 974 4801 97 5

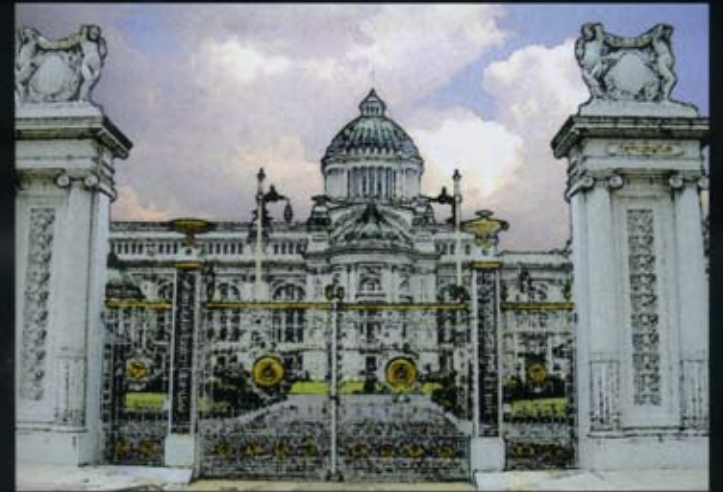
*“Architecture, Identity and Modernity from Siam to Thailand”* comprehensively examines the politics of representation in architecture and urban space from the 1850s to the present time. By utilizing the built environment as a mode of problematization for studying the Thai national and cultural identity - known as *Thainess* or *khwampenthai* - this book offers a broader discourse and generates debate on the political forms of architecture as well as on the architectural forms of politics. Divided into seven chapters with more than 150 illustrations, it investigates a number of buildings and public spaces that signify various types of power and function in terms of media par excellence for the constructions of *khwampenthei*. Encompassing many palatial, government, public, and commercial structures, the inquiries also incorporate the ways in which these built forms have been subversively resemanticized by several contesting social agents to achieve their political objectives. An innovative synthesis of architectural history and critical studies on contemporary Thailand, the book not only brings a fresh understanding of complex Thai society but illustrates how Thais have appropriated modernity together with Western material culture in creating and transforming their modern identity.

Studies in Contemporary Thailand No. 19

Series Editor: Erik Cohen

# The Aesthetics of Power: Architecture, Modernity, and Identity from Siam to Thailand

Koompong Noobanjong



  
White Lotus

## Cultural Revival and the Peoples of Ta Van Commune, Sa Pa, Northern Vietnam

Edited by  
Nong Quoc Binh and Michael C. Howard



Cultural Revival and the Peoples of Ta Van Commune,  
Sa Pa, Northern Vietnam

*Nong Quoc Binh & Michael C. Howard*

White Lotus, Bangkok, 2013, 158 pp, 27\$

ISBN: 978 974 4801 96 8

This book includes 20 chapters mainly by Vietnamese authors associated with the Vietnamese Ethnic Minorities Arts and Literature Association describing the cultural traditions of the *Hmong*, *Dao*, and *Giay* people of *Ta Van* Commune, located near the important tourist centre of *Sa Pa*.

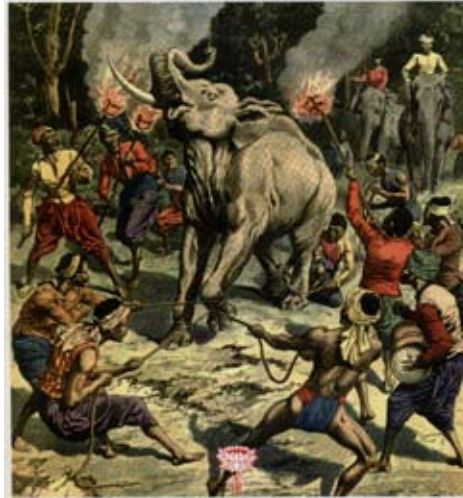
The chapters also discuss efforts to revive and sustain these traditions. Several of the chapters describe local festivals, musical instruments, and songs. Attention is also paid to the history of tourism in the area and to efforts to link cultural revival to economic development through tourism. The text is accompanied by 49 colour photographs.

## Elephants in Thailand

Volume 3

White Elephants in Thailand and  
Neighboring Countries

Joachim Schliesinger



Elephants in Thailand Vol.3

*Joachim Schliesinger*

White Lotus, Bangkok, 2012, 174 pp, 25\$

ISBN: 978 974 4801 89 0

Defines the “white elephant”, recounts the myths about white elephants in ancient Indian lore (the *Jatakas*) and their transmission to Southeast Asia, presents reports of early Western travellers on the white elephants stables in Siam and Burma, and finally gives an account of the royal white elephants in contemporary Thailand. The text is complemented by 110 illustrations.

Studies in the Material Cultures of Southeast Asia No. 18

Series Editor: Michael C. Howard

Dress and Tai Yai Identity  
in Thoed Thai,  
Northern Thailand

Maya McLean



Dress and Tai Yai Identity in Thoed Thai, Northern Thailand

*Maya McLean*

White Lotus, Bangkok, 2012, 162 pp, 39\$

ISBN: 978 974 4801 74 6

“*Dress and Tai Yai Identity in Thoed Thai*”, examines the changing identity of the *Tai Yai* people of *Thoed Thai* who migrated to northern Thailand from Burma as seen through dress as a symbol of their ethnic identity. It examines the influence of drug warlord *Khun Sa*, the subsequent role of the Thai state, and finally the process of cultural revival that began in 2002. The study provides a survey of the different types of textiles produced and worn in the community and of those who make them. Two hundred and twenty-eight colour photographs accompany the text.



## Project Space • Luang Prabang

**Project Space • Luang Prabang** is a multifunction nonprofit space for producing exhibitions and events. The building with three floors, and a rooftop terrace with stunning views, is in the centre of Luang Prabang and will host several exhibitions per year and collaborate with other cultural institutions in Luang Prabang and elsewhere, on joint events and projects.

**Project Space • Luang Prabang** is an initiative of Jean-Pierre Dovat and Rik Gadella.

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**Exhibition: Prolonged till April 2013**  
**PRASERT YODKAEW**

***“SCIENCE-FAITH”***

In an age defined by technology with its foundational core of scientific beliefs, where does one find a place for a dream, a myth, a lyrical fantasy ?

Prasert Yodkaew confronts his audience with design sketches for unfathomable devices, detailed catalogues of otherworldly creatures in motion, three dimensional models of flying implements, decompositions of traditional architecture interspersed with biological specimens. The blend of mostly Western science-and-engineering drawing with mostly Thai fantastic and decorative elements highlights once again the many cultural variables involved in the game.

The artist claims that he has no intention to provide reliable answers, but rather prefers to stimulate the viewer in a Zen-like manner with his paradoxes of style. What realizations shall the viewer find?

