THAILAND — OLD AND NEW

By Dr. LILY ABEGG

"The future of the Far East depends at present upon Thailand, which has become the powder-keg of Asia," declared the official organ of the Kuomintang in Chungking on August 8. A few years ago this statement would have made no sense whatever to the greater part of the world, for it was not until 1939 that people heard the word "Thailand" for the first time. That was when the National Assembly at Bangkok decided to change their country's name from Siam to Thailand.

Since then — this is hardly an exaggeration — the term Thailand has appeared more frequently in the pages of newspapers and magazines than the old name had done in all the centuries of its existence. Particularly during this spring and summer the little country has been constantly in the news. While Thailand emphasizes the friendliness of its relations with all the world, the two countries most concerned, Japan and Great Britain, are watching each other with grave suspicion. Japan's "New Order" and British Imperialism are now, after the occupation of southern Indo-China by Japan, separated only by the width of Thailand.

What is this country like, that has become such an important pawn in the game of the great powers? It is described in the following pages.

The author, Dr. Lily Abegg, is a writer and journalist of international background. A Swiss citizen, she spent the first twelve years of her life in Japan, went to school in Zurich, Switzerland, and studied at the Universities of Geneva and Hamburg where in 1925 she obtained her doctor's degree in political science. Since then she has been in journalistic work in Europe and in the Orient, traveling extensively, always trying to come as close as possible to the scene of action and to see things for herself. In this way, although a member of the so-called "weaker sex," she covered the campaigns in China by visiting both the Chinese and Japanese fronts, and those of Belgium and France by moving with the troops.

Although a highly qualified journalist, Miss Abegg was never satisfied with mere day-by-day reporting. Her desire to get at the root of things more thoroughly than newspaper writing usually permits found expression in two thoughtful books: one on Japan, "Yamato," the other on China, "China's Rebirth," a review of which will be found in this issue. Dr. Abegg has just returned from a visit to Thailand.—K.M.

PEOPLE OF BUDDHA

On the evening of the birthday of Buddha special ceremonies in honor of the Great Master took place in the temples of Bangkok. We were invited to be present at the ceremony in the Wat Phra Keo, one of the most magnificent of the temples. It stands next to the royal palace and contains a famous statue of Buddha made of jasper.

Our little group was composed of Europeans, Japanese, and Indians, all of whom were in Thailand for the first time, and I think the beauty and strangeness of the Thai temple architecture made an equally strong impression on all of us. The sky was cloudless, and, although late in the afternoon, it was still very hot. The last rays of the sun reflected from the golden eaves of the roofs and from the many stupas, each of a different
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color. The red light of the evening sun lay over the great ceramic figures of the temple guardians, representing ancient seamen of Holland, and over stone statues in Chinese style.

THE RULER AS HIGH PRIEST

There are few trees and plants near the temples of Bangkok and in the temple-courts, so that there is nothing to subdue the shapes and colors of the buildings under the high dome of the sky. The accumulation of tall white columns, pointed iridescent roofs, innumerable green, blue, red, yellow, and white stupas, of galleries filled with images of Buddha, of variegated ceramic panels and statues of stone, bronze, and porcelain, all this at first seems somewhat cold and naked to the foreigner, until he is entirely captivated by the beauty of pure form.

More and more people, with burning incense-sticks in their hands, gather in the courts and galleries. They are dressed lightly in pale colors, as gay and brilliant-hued as the glittering temples and the tropical sunset. A light breeze tinkles the hundreds of little golden bells decorating the galleries and pavilions. Many high officials and officers in white uniforms now appear. This means that the Prince Regent, who is to worship Buddha in this temple today, must soon arrive.

While the last rays of the sun disappear and the moon rises, small candles are lighted everywhere. Which was more beautiful, we wonder: the majestic splendor of the rays of the sun or the tender light of candles and the moon? Although we come from quite different countries, the style of Thai temple architecture impresses all of us with the same surprising force. It is quite different from anything we have seen further east or further west. The Indian try to grasp the uncustomed height of the temples with their slender, aspiring columns and the extravagant use of varied materials and colors. The Indians are impressed above all by the roofs and the numerous small decorations which betray Chinese influence. One of the Indians cannot get over the fact that the Prince Regent himself will conduct the holy ceremony as High Priest. He holds forth at length about how this demonstrates that Thailand is a Buddhist monarchy—the only one in the world—and that all the people of Thailand, with the exception of a few Mohammedan Malays in the south, belong to the same religion, that of Buddha. Coming from the country of many religions, of innumerable sects, and thousands upon thousands of gods, he can only repeat, "That is interesting, extremely interesting."

WHERE INDIA AND CHINA MEET

We foreigners from the Occident, on the other hand, in spite of so much strangeness, feel one step nearer Europe. After Japan and China, lands of massive roofs and horizontal lines, these soaring columns remind us almost of Gothic architecture. When we find ourselves in one of the high temple-halls, with the sacred figure in the background, we are reminded much more of a Catholic church than of a Chinese or Japanese temple. The entrance, too, is at the narrow end of the building and not at the side as elsewhere in the Orient, and the walls are massive and windowed. Strangely enough, in their bizarre forms and glorious colors, the temples of Bangkok offer the European just that which he usually expects to find in the Orient, while in the details of their construction they are more closely related to the buildings of the west than of the Far East.

We are still philosophizing about this "Country where India and China meet," and agree that the Thai race, in spite of influence from the east and the west, has not disintegrated, but rather has developed its own original style. Suddenly we are startled by loud music. The people bow their heads: the Prince Regent is coming! With a friendly smile he walks through the crowd into the temple and bows before the image of Buddha. After a while he appears in the colonnade with a lighted candle in
his hand, and the high officials and officers approach him one by one to light their candles from his. Then the procession, with the Prince Regent at its head, slowly walks three times round the temple. In the meantime the night has become quite dark. The crowd, silent and respectful, watches the candle procession of their highest ruler, the representative of their boy-king. Each time the Regent passes the entrance the music becomes louder, then to die down again.

After the Prince has left with his retinue the whole crowd, with candles and sticks of incense, begins a procession round the temple. Tonight this is happening not only at the Wat Phra Keo, but in all the other temples in Bangkok. Buddhist nation! Buddha is the supreme Lord and Master, and his earthly representative is the King.

DEVOUT THAILANDERS

The Thai are a religious people. Almost every Thai has, as a young man, spent at least two or three months as a monk in a monastery, while many like later on to retire into a monastery for a considerable time. During this period the strict rules of the monastery must of course be observed. Every morning for example, the monks have to go round with their bowls to beg for their daily rice themselves. Moreover, they may eat nothing after twelve noon. Phya Bahol, the leader of the revolution of 1932, now known as an "elder statesman," recently withdrew into a monastery for some time, while the present Prime Minister and energetic leader of the nation, Luang Bipul, is about to do the same thing for several weeks.

There are no sects in Thailand; all adhere equally to the Hinayana (the southern branch of Buddhism, originated in Ceylon). For this reason all the priests and monks are similarly dressed in yellow, and this yellow of the monk's robe forms part of the characteristic and everyday picture of Thailand. There is hardly a town or village which does not contain several temples and in which one does not meet innumerable yellow-robed monks. Every day school, too, begins and ends with prayers during which not even the teacher may dare to enter the classroom.

The Buddhist religion forms the basis of this nation's way of life, regardless of whether it may be the old Thailand or the new.

BANGKOK MODERNIZED

Although the Thai are so deeply influenced by their religion, it does not mean that they have not developed in the course of history. Particularly during the last ten years these people have effected great changes and made the utmost effort to attain universal modernization. Whoever expects to see only fine old temples, bronze statues, and Sawankalok bowls will learn differently the first time he drives through the city.

The city of Bangkok consists of the business quarter, forming more or less the centre of the city, and a large residential district, containing mainly private houses, built in western or Thai style, and Government buildings.

The business quarter reminds one of the large coastal cities of China, from Tientsin to Canton. And not without reason, for this part of the city is built in the Chinese manner and is inhabited mainly by Chinese. Even the western-style buildings, the "New Road" and the foreign business houses, banks, and consulates, fit into the picture, for they too can be found everywhere in China. The economic life of Thailand, especially its commerce and trade, is still largely in the hands of Chinese, who, during the last few decades, have immigrated into Thailand in large numbers. However, the Government is making every effort to change this situation, and today numerous large and purely Thai economic enterprises already exist.

Of course there is no room in the densely populated old business quarter, with its narrow streets and dirty
canals, for new building activities. For this reason the city is extending further and further. Out in the residential district are many new houses: administration buildings, schools, and factories. Right in the country, sometimes in places where the roads have not yet been completed, modern buildings with flat roofs have arisen in the last few years, testifying to the Thais' will to progress and development. One is reminded of Hsinking, the capital of Manchukuo, where a new city also arose quite recently from the fields.

In strange contrast to the modern buildings are the Thai dwellings, standing on piles over six feet high. This way of building resembles that of the Malays and the Filipinos. Only the temples and most of the royal palaces of the Thai are built on firm ground. This can probably be traced to Indian influence, as the Thai religions, Buddhism and Brahmanism—the latter at one time temporarily exercising great influence—came from India.

Looking at the farmers' huts in the surroundings of Bangkok, one can immediately determine whether they are inhabited by a Thai or a Chinese family: one lives on high stilts, the other stays close to the "good earth." The Thais are occupied almost exclusively with the cultivation of rice and fruit, while nearly all vegetables are grown by Chinese.

**TROPICAL TRAFFIC**

In Bangkok one can never forget one is in the tropics. This eternal heat! Even in the coolest months, December and January, the mercury rarely drops below seventy degrees, and in the hottest period, in April, it often hovers for days at over a hundred. The rainy season begins in May and lasts well into the autumn. During this time it does not, it is true, rain incessantly, however there are showers nearly every day, relieving the heat for a few hours. Life in the city is entirely adjusted to the tropical climate. All the houses, even the foreign ones, are without glass windows; during heavy rain one simply closes the shutters. Also the walls of the houses are provided with numerous slits and openings to let the air pass through.

The trams and buses are entirely open, with no doors or windows. There are no special bus-stops: one can get on anywhere—a pleasant arrangement, for in that heat one is glad to save oneself every unnecessary step. In addition to these means of transportation and to the taxis and private cars, there is a special vehicle in all the larger places in Thailand—the "samlo," meaning "three wheels." It is a tricycle with a fairly wide seat behind the driver with room for two people. It is therefore a kind of rickshaw with a man riding instead of running. These samlos are much faster and more popular than the old-style rickshaws, which are rapidly disappearing.

Of course the work of the samlo-driver causes him to sweat almost continuously. Sometimes there are two grown-ups, one or two children, and a lot of baggage in a samlo, but in spite of the load the driver dashes through the streets with incredible speed. Fortunately nearly all the roads of Bangkok, with the exception of the business quarter, are fine avenues with great shady trees. Many of these avenues were laid out by King Chulalongkorn, who reigned at the turn of the century. His motto was, "My people shall walk in the shade."

**KLONGS," A MALODOROUS SUBJECT**

Bangkok has not only streets but also innumerable canals, called "klongs," which carry a large part of the traffic. Many people do not own a house, living instead entirely in their boats, just as in Canton and South China. Every day a large market is held on the water, where mainly fruit and vegetables are for sale. If one wants to buy, one must, of course, go there by boat.

These klongs of Bangkok have been given a rather unfortunate reputation by the authors of many travel-books. The reason for this is their indescrib-
able filthiness; the water is brownish, often even black, and evil-smelling. The foreigner is shocked to see people washing laundry and vegetables in this water, and even bathing in it. Actually the Thai are a cleanly people, a fact that is often not believed by those foreigners who only know Bangkok. I have visited many towns and little villages from the extreme north to the extreme south of the country, and have seen nothing but clean, well-kept houses and huts. I also saw everywhere that the people bathe several times a day in the rivers which, in the country, are clean and limpid, and that they are always cleanly dressed. One gains the impression that the Thai are not yet properly accustomed to life in a city of the size of Bangkok, and that they make the mistake of transplanting rural customs into the city.

Improvements are gradually being effected, and Bangkok has had a water system for many years, so that at least for boiling their rice people can use water from the tap and not from the filthy klongs. But as yet there is not enough opportunity for clean bathing. The heat is so unbearable and the desire for a cooling bath so great that people prefer to go into dirty water rather than give up bathing altogether. The Thai really have a craze for bathing; not only do humans bathe continually, but also animals, especially the water-buffaloes. In the evening one can often see humans and water-buffaloes seeking coolness in the river side by side—a picture of peace. Sometimes tiny children, still unable to walk properly, crawl by themselves to the nearest fountain, where they sit under the jet of water, squeaking with joy.

WHERE DO THE THAI COME FROM?

Among the many tribes that, in the course of time, were forced out of the enormous Chinese territory by the astonishing power of expansion of the "Sons of Han," the Thai are the only ones who have succeeded in retaining their integrity, thanks to their ability in founding and maintaining a state. The Thai are a Mongoloid race, related to the Chinese, which has strongly intermixed with other races. In prehistoric times they inhabited the north as far as the Yellow River and later, about two thousand years ago, the present-day provinces of Szechuan, Yunnan, and Kweichow. In the first and second centuries A.D., Chinese pressure forced one part of the Thai toward the southwest, so that they came to the territories of present-day North Thailand and North Burma. From then till the thirteenth century the influx of Thai gradually pouring into what is now Thailand and French Indo-China never ceased. The first small Thai principalities came into existence, and there began the conflict with the Khmer civilization, the greatest example of which is Angkor.

Nevertheless, a large part of the Thai race remained in China until the thirteenth century, mainly in present-day Yunnan, where the Thai occupied the great Nanchao Empire from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries. From here they undertook wars of conquest, which temporarily took them as far as Szechuan, Tibet, Burma, and a great part of French Indo-China. Often, however, the Chinese had the upper hand, and at the end of the ninth century a Thai king, worn out by many wars, declared himself a vassal of the Emperor of China. This had also happened from time to time in previous centuries. After this until the end of the eighteenth century the Chinese considered the Thai kingdoms as vassal states.

The Nanchao Empire was destroyed in 1253 by the assault of the world-conquering Mongols. The Nanchao-Thai followed their brothers, who had been wandering southwards for a thousand years, into the territory of what is now Thailand. Not until then did the real national history of the Thai in Thailand begin. The pressure they exerted on the neighboring Cambodians forced these to transfer their capital in 1431 from Angkor to Phnom Penh.
"THAILAND" AND "SIAM"

The word "Siam" appeared comparatively late in the history of the Thai. Originally it was only the designation for a small district which later (as often happens in history) became the name of the whole country. The expression Thai is in relation to Siamese more or less what the designation Slav is to Russian. With the decision of the National Assembly in Bangkok of 1939 to change the name of the country from Siam to Thailand, Thailand raises the political claim to embody in one great empire all Thai and not only the Siamese.

Among the people belonging to the Thai race, more than half live in neighboring lands. The Laos, inhabiting large territories in French Indo-China, are now called Northern Thai in Bangkok, and the Shan in Burma are called Western Thai. The Thai maintain that there are now forty million people belonging to the Thai race. This figure, however, seems exaggerated. In Thailand itself there are ten to eleven million Thai, in French Indo-China about two million Laos, and in Burma about the same number of Shan. There are only divergent estimates of the number of Thai left in China, but one can hardly suppose that the total number of more or less pure Thai exceeds twenty to twenty-five million.

THE REVOLT OF 1932

Thailand is one of the countries where old-fashioned and modern organizations and customs continue to exist side-by-side. The last decade seems to have been the period of greatest progress. It began with the revolt of 1932, which turned the absolute into a constitutional monarchy. The change of the constitution at that time took place comparatively smoothly and without bloodshed; it had more the character of a reform than that of a revolution. The prestige and popularity of the royal house, which was then robbed of its absolute prerogatives, were in no way diminished by the reform. This was especially apparent three years ago when the King, who is only fifteen and is being educated in Switzerland, came on a visit to Bangkok. The entire population turned out to greet their young ruler. As the King has not yet reached his majority he is now represented by the Prince Regent.

As a result of the overthrow, younger and more energetic men took over leading positions, men who till then had had scant chance of participating in the government. Under the absolute monarchy all important positions were occupied almost exclusively by princes and members of the royal house, while the educated upper class had but little influence. The reform at the time was instigated mainly by the army, and the present Government is consequently formed preponderantly by officers. The leading personality of the Government is the Prime Minister, Major-General Luang Bipul, who simultaneously occupies other important posts. One can say that new Thailand is led by the military. The main efforts of the Government during the last few years have been directed toward the country's economic advance and the raising of a healthy and capable youth.

ECONOMIC EFFORTS

Thailand economically is in a rather difficult position, being still too dependent on other nations. In former times too little was done for the development of the country, and it cannot be expected that this loss should be made up in a few years. Almost as large as Japan (without Formosa and Korea) and larger than Italy, Thailand has only fourteen million inhabitants. While most countries in Asia are overpopulated, Thailand is the only one that is underpopulated. Doubtless many more millions of people could live there.

The main exports are rice and wood, also tin and rubber which are produced in the south of the country on the Malay Peninsula. The export of rice could no doubt be multiplied by the reclamation of large wastelands. In many districts
where only one crop a year is harvested, two crops could be harvested if the irrigation system were improved, so that the rice could also grow during the dry season. Up till now the people saw no necessity for a more intensive cultivation, as they had always enough to live on. Famines such as devastate China and India are practically unknown.

The country needs larger exports in order to acquire the necessary means for building up industry. In Thailand there is even less industry than, for example, in China. Experience has shown that countries without industry can hardly maintain themselves in the struggle for existence, since industry is the basis of defense. It is impossible to raise a formidable army if every piece of equipment, from leather-straps to cannons, must be imported from abroad.

What Thailand needs, and what the present Government is now trying to launch, is a general boom, as all domains of economic life—industry, commerce, trade, and agriculture—are so closely interwoven that one requires the flourishing of the other to exist healthily.

To the industrial backwardness must be added another weakness: the lack of interest, one can almost say the distaste of the Thai for commerce. The Thai really only have two professions—they are either rice farmers or officials. (We need not mention here the more primitive tribes, living in Thailand yet not belonging to the Thai race, as they form only an uninfluential minority.) There is little left of the traditional crafts such as silver and lacquer work or weaving.

Commerce as well as crafts were until recently exclusively in the hands of Chinese, Indians, and other foreigners, i.e. Europeans, Americans and Japanese. The Chinese, however, had a definite preponderance.

**TWO MILLION CHINESE**

Of a total population of fourteen million, there are two million Chinese. Considering their proverbial diligence and business ability, one can readily imagine the influence the Chinese exercise in Thailand. Since economic power may easily entail political influence, the main effort of the Government is directed towards recapturing economic key-positions for the Thai. Consequently very strict measures have been taken against Chinese immigration, which had assumed extraordinary proportions during the last fifty years.

The attempts of the Government to regain the economic lead for the Thai have encountered many difficulties. First there are inhibitions of a psychological nature, innate in the Thai; secondly, the Chinese and other foreigners do not allow themselves to be easily supplanted. One reason that the Chinese regard the Government’s efforts at independence with suspicion is that lately the Thai have been trying for a closer economic co-operation with Japan. The Chinese, with their rather anti-Japanese feelings, are resisting this tendency, and often find an ally in the British, who have always had a strong financial and economic influence. Up till now most of the exports went to different parts of the British Empire. In fact the important tin production went exclusively to Penang and Singapore, as there is not a single smelting-plant for this ore in Thailand. Also in their imports—of gasoline, for example—the Thai are completely dependent on England and the Netherlands East Indies.

**EXEMPLARY EDUCATION**

Realizing that the economics of a country cannot, after all, be organized only from above, but that they are dependent on the people, the Thai Government has directed its main attention during the last few years toward the education of youth. I believe that the successful reorganization of education is the greatest achievement of the Government since the revolt of 1932. When one sees the numerous new schools and the present-day youth of Thailand, one gathers the impression
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that this people has a promising future, even if, according to our standards, much is still painfully backward.

I have traveled a great deal in China, where, for the last twenty years, new plans for the “final” abolishment of illiteracy have been announced over and over again. Although some improvement can be seen, I have found that a large part of these “final” plans is still on paper. In Thailand this is not the case. Today all children, except those of primitive tribes living in distant jungles, go to elementary school.

One should insert here that the Thai, though originating from the territory of present-day China, and with a language of purely Chinese origin, do not use the difficult Chinese characters; instead they have a phonetic system of writing, similar to the Indian and Malay. Without doubt this fact simplifies the struggle against illiteracy. In fact, the proximity of Indian and Chinese influence is one of the characteristics of Thailand. Even the outward appearance of the Thai race reveals that it must have intermixed considerably with Indians, Cambodians, and Malays. A large proportion of the Thai race is today much darker than their ancestors, who were a purely Mongoloid tribe when they emigrated from China to the territory of present-day Thailand.

Furthermore, new middle schools and especially trade schools were founded by the Government in order to train a new generation of tradesmen and craftsmen. It also aimed at directing the interest of young students towards natural science and technology. For hitherto, Thai students, regardless of whether they were studying abroad or in their native Chulalongkorn University, were interested in little but the Beaux Arts. These efforts were successful, for in the last two years the enrolment at the Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok for the courses in engineering and medicine has risen considerably.

THE SYMBOLS OF NEW THAILAND

If I were asked what I considered to be the symbol of the new Thailand, I would answer: the school-house and the YuvaJon, the great youth-organization of Thailand. Everywhere there are new schools. In every town and village they are the most striking buildings. Sometimes they are at the very edge of the jungle, where snakes crawl and monkeys play screaming in the trees. These schools are beautifully built according to sensible plans. I had the opportunity of visiting many schools in different parts of the country, and everywhere I was delighted by the pleasant manners, the discipline, and the eagerness of the children. The young people are quite different from the older generation, much more nationally-minded and anxious to serve their country. In every school in Thailand, from kindergarten to the University, the national flag with its red, white, and blue stripes is solemnly raised every morning, while pupils and students stand at attention. Of course, also in the realm of education everything cannot be done at once, so that in practice there are still some things lacking. For instance there is a shortage of modern teaching equipment; in the middle schools the equipment for teaching chemistry and physics is still quite insufficient.

All school-children in Thailand wear the same uniform—the girls usually blue skirts and white blouses, the boys greenish-khaki jackets and shorts. Many boys wear a red band around their caps as a sign that they are members of the YuvaJon.

YUVAJON

It is not every boy who can become a member of the YuvaJon. He must first undergo a test and a medical examination. The membership is voluntary, and greatly sought after. Although the training is very strenuous, every boy wants to become a member.

The organization of the YuvaJon is chiefly the work of Colonel Prayoon Montri, Vice-Minister of Education,
who is the leader of the movement. It may be noted in passing that Thai names are often used incorrectly by foreigners. When I was in Tokyo before leaving for Thailand, I often heard of the Vice-Minister of Education, "Colonel Montri," who happened to be in Tokyo at the time. In Bangkok I immediately made enquiries about "Colonel Montri," but no one knew who I was talking about. Finally it turned out that in his country he is called Colonel Prayoon. The real family-name is hardly ever mentioned in Thailand, and even in the case of well-known men one sometimes does not know what their family is really called.

The Yuvajon is an organization similar to the youth movements in Japan and in Germany. The fact that active army officers are in charge of the training, and not, as in Germany, young leaders from the ranks of the movement, is reminiscent of the Japanese system. On the other hand the Yuvajon, as a unified, national organization, exists independently of the schools, much like in Germany.

The supreme aim of the Yuvajon is to strengthen the young people's national consciousness, spirit of sacrifice, and eagerness to serve. Almost purely military methods are used to reach this goal. First place is given to discipline, drill and athletics. These boys with their marching, drilling, and sharp-shooting seem more like young cadets from a military school. Duty is very strict. Every Saturday, for instance, the Yuvajon have to carry out military maneuvers for three to four hours in full uniform and armed with a carbine. I have seen these boys drilling on a large square in Bangkok with the temperature at 107 degrees. Under the tropic sun the cement square radiated a paralyzing heat. The boys sweated so much that there was not a dry shred of clothing left on them, and the soaked uniforms appeared quite dark.

**TANKS AND TEMPLES**

It is sometimes said that the Thai have been weakened through centuries of living in a tropical climate and that they have lost their powers of physical endurance and resistance. I believe that this is at most a half-truth, and that their weakness is more of a psychological nature and can consequently be overcome by will-power. In any case, Thai studying abroad, where sport is more popular than was until recently the case in Thailand, have proved to be quite the equals of other students. Incidentally, it is amusing that these children of the tropics make excellent skiers when the opportunity arises.

On June 24, Thailand's National Day, a large military display of the Yuvajon took place in Bangkok. On one side of the square a sort of Maginot Line had been constructed, with several concrete domes and artificial tank-traps. This was attacked by fourteen to eighteen-year-old members of the Yuvajon in a completely modern manner, with motorized troops, tanks, artillery, and airplanes. The "battle" lasted about forty minutes. The thunder of the artillery duel was ear-splitting, airplane-motors roared overhead, and tanks and flamethrowers spat terrifying fire. Finally a large white flag appeared; the garrison surrendered, the fortifications having collapsed under the artillery-fire and the bombs.

The entire maneuver was carried out by boys; only the airplanes were manned by regular soldiers. At the end a parade under the command of Colonel Prayoon was held before the Prince Regent.

As we drove home, the tanks rattled past the walls of the picturesque palace and the Wat Phra Keo, a symbol of Thailand today: old temples and royal palaces with weird, colorful roofs, towers, and stupas—and modern tanks. Thailand too has entered, for better or for worse, the ranks of nationalistic states and follows the familiar modern pattern. The tropic land of jungles, elephants, and beautiful old Wats, is determined to arm, and to maintain its independent position in the present world of tension and danger.
Yellow robed Buddhist high priest at golden lacquer gate of temple

Water buffalo walking in rice fields among sugar palms. The natives tap the palms for syrup

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Life on the "Klongs," the canals of Bangkok

Girl section of the Yuvajon

Samos in front of modern post office in Bangkok, built by a Thai architect