This book is about the birth of bamboo diplomacy and the politics of Thai détente with Russia and China in the long 1970s. By 1968, Thailand was encountering discursive anxiety amid the disastrous catastrophe of the Vietnam War and the prospect of American retrenchment from the Indo-Pacific region. To cope with such anxiety, it was vital to the Thai state to develop a new narrative in order to make sense of rapidly changing world politics. The discourse of détente was an answer. It transformed Thai foreign policy away from the hegemonic discourse of anticommunism, and by doing so it created a political struggle between the old and new discourses. The book therefore also argues that bamboo diplomacy – previously seen as a classic tradition of Thai-style diplomacy – had its origins in Thai détente. It gradually emerged in the early 1970s and has become the metanarrative of Thai diplomacy since then. That said, the discourse of Thai détente and the birth of bamboo diplomacy are two sides of the same coin.

This book was gradually contrived and developed in the very first international relations department in the world, at Aberystwyth University. I am deeply grateful to Sergey Radchenko, whose intellectual insights on the Cold War’s international history provided the building blocks for my initial project; Matt Phillips, whose historical expertise on Thailand in the Cold War was immensely invaluable and who enthusiastically put my thesis in the right direction as well as encouragingly believed in the main arguments of the thesis; and Charalampios Efstathopoulos (Haris), who professionally supported me as well as conceptually and theoretically strengthened my thoughts. Many thanks to the three of them, who diligently read through various drafts and provided me with very useful and insightful comments. I would also like to express my gratitude to Enze Han and James Vaughan, who critically engaged with my work as well as constructively sharpened and deepened the way in which this book was subsequently developed.
In Aberystwyth, I benefited greatly from my postgraduate fellows and professors, who provided an extremely critical (yet friendly) and stimulating dialogue over those two and a half consecutive years. Andrew Linklater, Mustapha Pasha and Milja Kurki served as my role models and wonderful sources of intellectual encouragement and inspiration. Thanks are also due to Dennis Rach and Thanapat Bekanan, who read the whole manuscript and provided helpful comments.

In Thailand, I am extremely indebted to all of my colleagues at the Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University, most notably Chulacheeb Chinwanno and Kitti Prasirtsuk, for their generous and patient support, strong encouragement and intellectual companionship. Needless to say, without their endless support, this project would not have gotten far.

At my alma mater, Chulalongkorn University, I want to extend my special thanks to my former teachers, including Kullada Kesboonchoo Mead, Chaiwat Khamchoo, Supamit Pitipat and Soravis Jayanama, for their intellectual conversations, moral support and enduring inspiration. It was Kullada, my former supervisor and mentor, who first introduced me to critical international relations and archival research. In the mid-2000s, she and I conducted a research project on Thai–US relations during the Cold War at the National Archive in Maryland, United States. I am deeply grateful to her as well as Richard Mead, who also encouraged my academic pursuit.

Special thanks to Tej Bunnag, Surapong Jayanama, Sarasin Viraphol, Warnwai Phathanothai and Yodboon Lertrit, who kindly shared their firsthand experiences as well as political and diplomatic insights throughout our interviews.

I also owe a great debt to those archivists at Thailand's National Archive and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as the librarians at Thammasat University, without whose help this book would not have been finished. Similarly, the book benefited immensely from those online published materials. I am thankful to Wahn, Kaem and Mohn for their invaluable technical and logistic assistance. Numerous conversations with my former and current students also stimulated a thoughtful commentary.

In the course of writing this book, I was invited to present various chapters as talks at Chulalongkorn University, the Yale-NUS College, National University of Singapore (NUS), Thammasat University, MGIMO (Moscow State Institute of International Relations) University
and Lomonosov Moscow State University. Special thanks to my Russian
colleagues and friends Victor Sumsky and Ekaterina Koldunova, for their
academic comradeship and extraordinary generosity during my public
lectures in Moscow. At Thammasat Institute of Area Studies, I wish to
thank Suphat Supachalasai, for his generous hosting and hospitality for
my inaugural public lecture, commemorating the 120th anniversary of
Thai–Russian relations in 2017. At the NUS, I want to thank Naoko
Shimazu, Tuong Vu and Yuexin Rachel Lin for their insightful and
constructive engagement. At Chulalongkorn, I am grateful to Suthiphand
Chirathivat, Rom Phiramontri and Natthanun Kunnamas for their
invitation and support.

In addition, I would like to thank the editor of Asia-Pacific Security Studies
series at ANU Press, Greg Raymond, for his generous encouragement and
timely support of this book as well as the two anonymous reviewers for
helpful and critical feedback. Many thanks to Beth Battrick for her astute
and attentive copyediting.

Finally, I dedicate this book to my family: my late father for teaching me
how to read; my mother for teaching me how to write; and my beloved aunt
for teaching me how to care for details as well as for other human beings.
Last, but not least, heartfelt thanks to Air for her companionship in life,
unending patience, much-needed encouragement and immeasurable love.
This text is taken from *A Genealogy of Bamboo Diplomacy: The Politics of Thai Détente with Russia and China*, by Jittipat Poonkham, published 2022 by ANU Press, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.