

## A POETIC TRANSLATION FROM THE SIAMESE

A Lokaniti Verse

by

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During the Ayuthya period of Siamese history a body of proverbs and ancient sayings from sacred books, such as the Cambhira Lokaniti, the Lokanaya, the Jātaka and the Dharmapada, were rendered into verse by an unknown author or authors. This collection of verses became popularly known as the Lokaniti Poem (โคลง โลกนิตี). During the course of their being handed down from one generation to another the verses accumulated a large number of variations, mistakes and misspellings. When King Rama III, in the year B.E. 2374, had various restoration works undertaken at Wat Phra Jetupon (Wat Bhō), he commanded his brother, Prince Dejadisorn, to gather together all of the old verses and correct them. The Prince performed this task and the corrected verses were inscribed on stone tablets which were set in the columns of Wat Phra Jetupon.

One of these verses in which poetic beauty is enhanced by an intricate rhyme scheme has been translated here into English verse. In this translation an attempt has been made to indicate the rhyme scheme (by the use of word repetition only) without making too great a sacrifice of the poetic quality of the original.

พระสมุทรสุดถกถน  
สายดงทงทอดมา  
เขาสงอจวัดวา  
จิตตมณษยนไซร

คณนา  
หยงใต้  
กำหนด  
ขากแท้ หยงถึง

Fathoms deep though the seas  
Measurable are the seas  
Scaled can mountains be  
Immeasurable is the depth,

may be,  
in depth.  
in height.  
this heart of man.

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