

## NOTES

### NANG TALUNG

*In the Bulletin de la Société des Études indochinoises*, Tome XXXIII, no 3, (1958) M. Henri Marchal contributed a note on the shadow-play at Siemreap, which, even though adding nothing new to what has been known up to now, is interesting. He says at the outset that what he describes is not to be confounded with the *Nang Sbek* with its larger figures. The subject of his note is the Cambodian *Nang Kaloung*, a corresponding type of which, he rightly points out, is the *Nang Talung* in this country.

The *Nang 'Talung* here is of course smaller in size than the *Nang Yai*, which used to be known here as *The Nang*, the word "yai" being added to signify its size to distinguish one from the other. As its name implies, the *Nang 'Talung* is the P'attalung type of a shadow-play; and among illiterate people it has often been called *Nang Kalung*, the letter K being probably a mere assimilation from the guttural nasal carried over from the final of the preceding word *Nang*. The *Nang 'Talung* is thus a mere provincial, adopted from the classical Indonesian *Wayang pūrva* or *Wayang kulit*. The classical *Nang Yai* draws upon the *Rāmakien* as the source of its sole *répertoire*, in the way that the Cambodian *Nang Sbek* does; while the 'Talung type in this country is played to a wide scope of subjects, though, as M. Marchal says, the Cambodian *Nang Kaloung* is limited to the story of Rama. In all probability, therefore, the Cambodian type, borrowing its name from the *Nang 'Talung* here, should have been derived from it. M. Marchal is silent on this point.

The sole object of this note is merely to draw attention to the fact that, while the greater number of cultural features here have been drawn from Cambodia, the more recent types travel *vice versa*. The *liké* is another example.

THE DHARMNIAM RAJATRAKUL NAI KRUNG SAYAM  
(PROTOCOL OF THE ROYAL FAMILY) BY RAMA V<sup>1</sup>

Last year there was published a treatise by King Chulalongkorn on the Siamese system of royal ranks and titles. This work was reviewed in the November 1958 issue of this *Journal*. The King's original manuscript is dated 1878 but it remained undiscovered until 1932 when it was found among the papers transferred from the office of the King's Private Secretary. The manuscript was deposited in the National Library and was published for the first time last year on the occasion of the cremation of the remains of the late Princess Athorn.

In the course of research on the history and structure of royal titles, the present writer has uncovered some interesting facts which indicate that the contents of the King's manuscript must have been available to two European scholars shortly after its composition. Five years after the King had prepared his treatise, there appeared a paper by E. Gilbert, "La Famille Royale de Siam," in the *Bulletin de la Société Académique Indo-Chinoise* (2<sup>e</sup> Serie, t. iii, Oct. 1883). An examination of the phraseology and arrangement of topics in this paper reveals quite clearly that large portions are a translation of King Chulalongkorn's treatise, while other portions are merely a condensation. In many places whole sentences are direct translations. The selection of examples (where a large number of possible examples exist) and the historical conjectures are often identical.

Then again, in 1893, G.E. Gerini wrote *Chūīākantamaṅgala, or The Tonsure Ceremony as Performed in Siam*. (This work was not published until 1895, but it is stated in the author's introduction that the manuscript was ready for publication in 1893.) In the appendix of this book (pp. 170-174) there is an outline of

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1. The study leading to this note was made while the writer was in Siam in 1958-1959, under a grant from the Ford Foundation.

the various royal ranks and their prerequisites. This material is clearly based on either Gilbert's or King Chulalongkorn's manuscript. There are several sentences which are direct translations of either Gilbert's French or the King's original Siamese.

Gilbert makes no reference to the King's manuscript; in fact, regarding his sources he says only that he used "some unpublished Siamese documents." Gerini, who has often been criticized for his lack of documentation, is equally vague: he refers only to "laws past and present, and documents."

It seems clear that Gilbert was following King Chulalongkorn, and that Gerini was following either Gilbert or the King. The intriguing question is how to explain these relationships. It appears unlikely that Gilbert could have had access to a personal manuscript of the King. There is, of course, the possibility of an intermediary. (In this connection it is perhaps significant that Gilbert's knowledge of Siamese appears rather poor, as judged from inconsistencies and errors in transliteration. One gains the impression that he was not well-acquainted with the pronunciation of Siamese and was poorly acquainted with word meanings.) Then again, there is the remote possibility that both the King and Gilbert worked from an unknown third treatise. Such a treatise would have had to have been a rather complete and well-organized work (and not just a collection of source materials) in order to explain the remarkable similarities. But in any case, this possibility seems most unlikely in view of the King's supreme qualifications in the subject matter under consideration.

The purpose of this note is to raise the question rather than suggest an answer. Perhaps an inspection of the dossier in which the King's manuscript was discovered might provide further clues.

*James N. Mosel*

## THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AMERICAN SIAM SOCIETY

After the end of World War II, Thai visitors and students began coming to the United States in large numbers. Academic institutions throughout the United States took an increasing interest in Southeast Asia, and particularly in Siam, which is the crossroads of the area. Comparative studies of this region were pioneered by Cornell University, and other prominent institutions followed its lead. Scholars working in the field of Southeast Asian studies became increasingly aware of the need to maintain contact with each other and to tap the valuable sources of information which could be provided by visiting Thai government officials, scholars, and students.

Because the examples set by the excellent programs of such binational, cultural organizations as the Japan-America Societies and the China Society of America, a group of Americans interested in Siam suggested that a similar organization be established. A proposal to this effect was subsequently forwarded to the Siam Society. After discussing the suggestion with the Council of the Society, its President answered on July 18, 1955, expressing approval of the plan and offering recommendations and assistance in establishing the group. The first meeting, held on April 24, 1956, was attended by thirty persons, both Thai and American. The honored guests of the evening were Governor and Mrs. Udom Boonyaprasob. A final organization meeting was held on September 11, 1956.

In accordance with the recommendation of the Council of the Siam Society, the name, "The American Siam Society," was adopted. It was decided that the Society would be national in scope and that sections would be formed in various parts of the United States. All persons adhering to the Society's objectives, supporting its program, and considered acceptable by its Council would be eligible for membership.

The objectives of the Society include the investigation and encouragement of art, science, and literature in relation to

Thailand and its neighboring countries, the assistance and entertainment of Thai visitors and students resident in or travelling through the United States and the observance of Thai national holidays. The Society is undertaking the establishment of a library and a research center containing books, periodicals, and newspapers, and providing a central catalogue and bibliographical reference service for Thai materials to assist both American and Thai researchers. The publication of such items as will contribute to its program is also planned.

Membership consists of five classes: life, honorary, regular, associate, and corporate. The members of the first two classes are not required to pay dues; annual dues were set at \$5 for regular members, \$1 for associate members (Thai students), and \$100 for corporate members. Thai students were to be encouraged to join the Society but it was agreed that the organization would in no way interfere with the program of the Thai Alliance, or with that of any local association of Thai students. In order to assure the maximum cooperation with Thai student groups, it was provided that an *ex officio* membership in the Council would be held open for the president of the Thai Alliance in America. A designated representative of that organization is invited to attend meetings of the Council when its president is unable to attend.

In order to emphasize the national character of the Society, the officers and members of the Council were elected on a regional basis. Dr. Mason, professor of government at Georgetown University, represents the Washington, D.C., area and the South; Dr. Vella, Associate Director of the Thailand Project at Cornell, represents New York and the New England area.

During 1956, a delegation of three members visited Bangkok on the occasion of the King's birthday and represented the American Siam Society in a meeting with the Siam Society there. The delegation consisted of the late Mr. Eugene G. Rice, his wife, Mrs. Lucile Carrington Rice (granddaughter of the Rev. John Carrington, a founding member of the Siam Society), and the writer, Mrs. Doris Hume Bovee.

Annual meetings are held in conjunction with the annual celebration of the King's birthday. This is considered particularly appropriate in that His Majesty is the only reigning Oriental monarch who was born in the United States. The first such celebration was a happy occasion. A picture of the King, loaned by the Royal Thai Embassy, and a picture of Prince Kanchit graced the panel behind the speaker's table. The hall and the tables were decorated with the Thai national colors. Thai food was prepared by Thai students under the direction of the chef, Mr. Pandit Janekarnkit. Messages of congratulations and greetings were received and read from H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, Kromamun Bidyalabh, Ambassador Pote Sarasin, and the president of the Thai Alliance. Dr. Davi Yanasugondha represented the Thai community in replying to the toast to the King. Thai students sang Thai songs, performed Thai classical dances, and gave an exhibition of the "Ramwong." A telegram, received from His Majesty's Private Secretary, read as follows:

"AM COMMANDED TO CONVEY TO YOU AND AMERICAN SIAM SOCIETY HIS MAJESTY'S SINCERE THANKS FOR CONGRATULATIONS OFFERED ON HIS BIRTHDAY. HIS MAJESTY WARMLY APPRECIATES THE GOOD WISHES AND SENTIMENTS EXPRESSED."

Mr. Robin Penman, who was Honorary Secretary of the Siam Society, was the guest of honor at the meeting of February 7, 1957. He presented the Society with a picture of His Majesty the King, the gift of Lieutenant General Phya Salvidhan Nides, and a Thai national flag as his personal gift. He delivered an interesting lecture on modern Siam and showed colored slides loaned by H.H. Prince Dhani. Three Thai students were presented with annual memberships in recognition of their valuable assistance on the occasion of the King's birthday celebration.

On June 1, the Society enjoyed an afternoon reception at which Mr. Kamol Kedusiri of the Thai Department of Fine Arts who was travelling under a U.S. State Department Specialist grant, played a number of Thai classical musical instruments and explained Thai music to the group. Miss Supannica sang an

accompaniment for some of this music and rendered several other Thai and American selections.

On August 26, I was privileged to address the annual convention of the Thai Alliance held at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. In the talk I outlined the Society's objectives and the means by which it was planned to achieve them. The opportunities open to Thai students compared with students from other countries studying in the United States I also outlined. Methods of insuring the closest cooperation between the two organizations were discussed during two meetings with the national officers. Later, in New York, I conferred with the new ambassador, H.E. Thanat Khoman, and received assurances of his future cooperation. During a visit with our honorary vice-president, the Hon. Edwin F. Stanton, cooperation with the Asia Society was discussed. Ambassador Stanton informed us of the planned organization of a Siam Committee of that group. At a later visit with its Executive Director, Mr. Paul Sherbert, we considered the possibility of finding a place for our repository in the new Asia House, which will be completed soon.

In October, Dr. Kenneth Wells, Director of Christian Education and Literature of the Church of Christ in Siam and an active member of the Siam Society, addressed the Society on "Bangkok, the Convention City." This excellent address contained a review of current programs of the Siam Society in Bangkok.

The American Siam Society was represented at the 6th annual UNESCO Conference held on November 6-9, 1957, in San Francisco. The theme of the convention was Asia and the United States. Our best contribution toward the goals of the organization was felt to be in the realm of personal contacts between nationals of the two countries and I participated in the work panel which dealt with this subject. At the second celebration of His Majesty's birthday, H.H. Prince Dhani, was elected an Honorary Life Member of the Society. In addition to the usual program, a motion picture concerning the life of King Mongkut was shown.

In 1958, quarterly meetings were scheduled and, during my absence in Japan, the first vice-president, Major James D. Deatherage, acted in my place. Dr. Lauriston Sharp joined our Council and Colonel and Mrs. John W. Davis were active in aiding our officers to carry out our program.

The third anniversary of the American Siam Society has passed. Our only regret is that the Society has as yet not produced a worthy publication. But it has, during this period, enjoyed an unusual growth which has been due, in large part, to the broad contacts and untiring efforts of its secretary, Miss Lucy Starling, and its honorary vice-president, Mrs. Lucius Bulkley, as well as the unswerving support of the Siam Society and its president, H.H. Prince Dhani Nivat, Kromannun Bidyalabh.

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