

NOTE

PROTOCOL OF THE ROYAL FAMILY

In a note entitled *The Dharmniam Rajatrakul nai Krung Sayam, Protocol of the Royal Family by Rama V* (JSS XLVII, 2, Nov. 1959), James N. Mosel wrote that he had "uncovered" some interesting facts which indicated that the contents of the King's mss. above-named must have been available to two English scholars shortly after its composition, namely: E. Gilbert, author of *La Famille royale de Siam* in the *Bulletin de la société académique indochinoise* (2^e sér., t. iii, Oct. 1883) and G.E. Gerini, author of *Chulakantamangala, or the Tonsure Ceremony as performed in Siam*.

It seemed clear to Mosel that Gilbert was following King Chulalongkorn, and that Gerini was following either Gilbert or the King. The question of relationship between either author and his source of information arises. Mosel thinks that between Gilbert and the King there might have been an intermediary; and there is also the possibility that both might have worked from an unknown third treatise. Both authors were vague about their sources. Mosel says that his note is intended merely to raise the question rather than suggest an answer. I wonder, therefore, whether this additional note of mine may not supply something of a clue.

Not very long ago, perhaps in 1957, when applying for some material for publication as a dedication, I was offered the mss. of the above-named title. This consisted of 47 typewritten folio pages. I was informed that they formed part of a voluminous collection of papers from the private library of the late Prince Kromprayā Devawongs with whom King Chulalongkorn was in the habit of sharing his writings. From what I know of His late Royal Highness, he would not have been likely to let private papers of the King be utilized for writing by others, especially when they had not been published. I would rule out therefore the possibility of Gilbert obtaining such firsthand right

to make use of these notes, for Gilbert seems to have been an unknown Frenchman. Gerini on the other hand, being an acknowledged savant and an acquaintance of the Royal Family, might have been permitted to quote the notes of the King.

Judging from its style and the knowledge it contains of the protocol of the Royal Family with its successive changes and development up to the time of King Chulalongkorn, the treatise could not have had any other author but King Chulalongkorn. The problem is his purpose in writing. He might of course want to commit to memory what there was of the protocol; he might also have intended to write for publication. It is a well-known fact that the King wrote several articles for the *Vajirañān Magazine* on traditions and usages. The Magazine did not however make an appearance till 1884, six years after this treatise was written in 1878. In any case on examining back numbers of the Magazine one finds that this article never found its way into it. As for the "third treatise" suggested by Mosel, I am not inclined to believe its existence. Mosel himself seems inclined to believe that the King was the source of information for either of these authors.

Not having seen what was written by Gilbert although Mosel thinks it was similar to the King's treatise, I would not care to decide what the source of his information on this subject might have been. For Gerini, on the other hand there is every likelihood that he relied on the King's treatise.

In any case Mosel's note is a proof of the growing interest in things Siamese among our foreign public and is to be welcomed on that account.

Bangkok, 15 November 1960

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