

## RECENT SIAMESE PUBLICATIONS

289. *The Patriarch's Trips to America, Europe and India* บันทึกการเสด็จเยือนสหรัฐอเมริกา-ยุโรป-อินเดีย Ecclesiastical Press, Bangkok, 2505, pp. 405.

This first formal trip of the Head of our Buddhist Church to America, and Europe was sponsored by the Asia Foundation. Though the narration is anonymous a closer examination reveals the author's identity in the Rev. Dr. Javindra, one of the younger members of Wat Beñcamabôpit. The documentary material is well told without the usual monastic etiquette of modesty and yet within proper limits of dignity. It contains much intellectual material in describing the places and institutions visited; and, allowing for the author's unavoidable lack of acquaintance with almost all of the American and European hosts at each of these places, we are still able to follow with pride and satisfaction the able tone of the Siamese party's conduct of social connection and their exchange of views and opinions with the world's leaders in culture. The Patriarch gave able interviews even to the journalists of America known as they are the world over as the most searching of interviewers.

The trip commenced over the Pacific; then across to San Francisco to Washington, New York and Boston; then England, Germany, Italy and back home. The whole length covered was by air.

The later trip to India was the Patriarch's third visit there. He was honourably received by the President of the Republic, himself a well-known philosopher. He was also received by the Prime Minister and the leading figures in the Indian cultural world. The main objects of the visit were Buddhist pilgrimage places—Gayā, Rājagaha, Delhi, Agra, Sāñcī, Ajanta, Ellora, Bombay and Calcutta. The benefit of such a trip is obvious. Though it originated in India, Buddhism only exists there in writings for the most part. The popular conception of Buddhism as consisting of living monks

of austerity and yet highly intelligent even if judged by modern standards is not applicable to India. The account is brought up at the end by a monograph entitled *Buddhism in India*, a chronological summary of the history of the Master's philosophy which developed into a religion professed by a big section of the world's population with the problems facing it at the present time. The monograph is very readable but, one would like to know, who is the author of this ably written article?

The volume is prefaced by a full biography which is well illustrated. A remarkably clever boy of studious inclinations, the deceased became a novice at the early age of 8; sat for the Examination of the Holy Scripture and was noticed by King Chulalongkorn who attended the oral examinations as was often his wont; was adopted by the King and invited to reside at His Majesty's newly built monastery of Wat Beñcamabópit near Dusit Palace in north Bangkok. In subsequent years he sat again for these Examinations and passed each time till he reached the ninth standard, the highest in the curriculum before he came of age to be ordained as a monk. In later years he participated in the life of the monastic community till he was entrusted with academical and administration posts in the Church, culminating in the attainment of the highest position in the Hierarchy as the Patriarch of the Kingdom.

290. Patriarch, H. Holiness the: His Writings พระนิพนธ์สมเด็จพระสังฆราช Ecclesiastical Press, Bangkok, 2505, pp. 753/54.

A second volume in memory of the Patriarch was a voluminous collection of his writings. This was sponsored by the Buddhist Church of Siam. The contents consist of sermons and speeches on various occasions during the late Patriarch's ministry. Besides these sermons and speeches, in fact, he was responsible for a great deal more scholastic work in editing and translating the Canon of the Tipitaka and its commentaries which has been impossible to be included for the obvious reason of their bulk.

The volume is also inclusive of the detailed biography which is printed in the record of his travels abroad.

291. On the occasion again of the cremation of the remains of His Excellency Luang Vichit Vadakarn in August 2505 (1962) there were published a large number of books in dedication to the deceased who was well-known as an author and playwright besides his professional state service. Though many of them need nothing more than short notices some should be reviewed. Both categories are given below :

a. *Luang Vichit's Biography* (Rujrūāṅdharm Press, Bangkok, pp. 170) is a readable account of his long and variable life. It commences with the deceased's childhood and novitiacy in a Buddhist monastery, fascinating for its incidents of monastic life in the Mahānikāya School at Wat Mahādhātu, where inspite of the reputed strictness of discipline boys even though wearing the yellow robes were able to loosen the strings just a little bit though still keeping within bounds of the celibate life. Then we have his service in the Foreign Office under the senior Prince Devavongs who worked at night invariably because he did most of his work by himself in the peace and quiet of the evenings. We are then told of Vichit's love of cultural pursuits and his appointment as Director-General of the Fine Arts Department, thus fulfilling as it were his youthful dream of a congenial profession in which we are told of his applying himself to the work with zest and enthusiasm. His artistic nature helped to inspire many an artistic work in this capacity. Then he changed to politics with the result of a short term of life in prison. His eventual release and reappointment to the diplomatic service followed, only to be terminated by the comparatively recent appointment to be the Prime Minister's Assistant, in which capacity he remained till death.

The biography has been written with the help of the deceased's own notes. The volume is very readable.

b. *Mementoes of Vichit Vadakarn* วิจิตรวาทการอนุสรณ์ Mongkol Press, Bangkok, 2505, pp. 189.

The volume is made up mostly of messages of condolence and of the deceased's messages of love to his children with various short essays and articles.

c. *Mementoes of Vichit* วิจิตรอนุสรณ์ Prime Minister's Office Press, Bangkok, 2505, pp. 297.

This forms the dedication of the Council of Ministers, containing an *Economic History of the Thai* (pp. 1-136), dealing with problems of land, labour, currency, taxation, trade and communications; and lectures on a variety of subjects. It is a mine of valuable information on present-day administration. Among material most deserving of mention are the lectures on *economy* delivered to an audience of members of officials of the municipality (pp. 187-202), on *Ideologies* to an audience of members of the mixed general staffs (pp. 163-186), on *Nationalism* given to a meeting of the provincial governors etc (pp. 203-225).

d. *Some of the Writings of Major-General Luay Vichit* นิพนธ์บางเรื่องของ พลตรี หลวงวิจิตรวาทการ Pračand Press, Bangkok, 2505, pp. 262.

The volume is the contribution of the Fine Arts Department over which the deceased presided with distinction. It contains among others a lecture on the work of the Fine Arts Department (pp 37-51), a most interesting treatise on dramatic art (pp. 81-126), a lecture on the culture of Sukhodaya, a lecture on good things in the north east, and a lecture on monastic training etc. All are of course from the pen of the deceased.

e. *Sufan Blood*, a play เลือดสุพรรณ Rajadārom Press, Bangkok, 2505, pp. 41.

The volume which is sponsored by Strividyā School and its Old Students' Club with the Parents and Teachers Club of the same institution contains the famous play which established Luay Vichit on the conspicuous platform of playwrights when some of its tunes were on the lips of all teenagers of the country.

To this has been added a descriptive note by Madame Vichit, a former member of the School, entitled "Vienna—city of the Past", in which Empress Maria Theresa is prominently featured.

f. *Gunānusorn*, อนุสรณ์ Strisār Press, Bangkok, 2505, pp. 57.

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and essays in eulogy of the deceased, some of whose plays are included in the book.

292. Damrong, H.R.H. Prince: History (of the Dance Drama) of Inao ตำนานเรื่องอิเหนา Pračand Press, Bangkok, 2506, pp. 148.

The History was published for the first time in 1921. The present edition is dedicated to Yai Čārudilok by his son Toeb Čārudilok who chose the subject. The publication deals with the various types of the dance-drama, 'lakon', in general; going on then to the history of the romance of Inao and how it came to be played as a dance-drama in this country. It concludes with a description of the successive stagings of the lakon in this country.

The presentation of the subject is very detailed; but, as usual with the famous historian, is accurately written from facts and records within the memory of the intellectuals of the Bangkok regime of the last generation, foremost among whom was the author himself.

293. Khandavidya, B. & the Rev Dr. Kovido: *Women in Buddhism* ผู้หญิงกับพุทธศาสนา forming part of a publication dedicated to Nārī, Mme Parivarta, local Press, Bangkok, 2506, pp. 128.

The article under the above name occupying 14 of the 128 pages of the book is picked out for review here on account of its apparent initiative of treatment of a topic which is not too often found in works on Buddhism. Commencing with evidences of national custom, the authors maintain that here women are given a more important role than men. Instances are given to support this from the Buddhist classics, such as the story of the mother of Sona and Nanda in the Jātaka of the same name and also the instance of Madri in the Vessantara-Jātaka who wins easily the sympathy of the reading public from time immemorial.

294. Ratanābhijāti, Dh.: *Müaṅ Tai in the Farang's Eyes*, เมืองไทยในทัศนะของฝรั่ง Pračand Press, Bangkok, 2506, pp. 101.

These lectures were originally given in the Television service; and, as it is said in the preface to the present volume were highly,

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appreciated by his brother-in-law S. Riensuwan and his sister and the mother, that they chose them for a dedication book to be given away at the cremation of the remains of the deceased, Momchao Damkêṅriddhi Ābhākor. The deceased was educated in England for 15 years from the age of 15 to 30, passing through the stages of public school, university (Cambridge) and St. Thomas' Hospital where he secured a membership of the Royal College of Surgeons and a licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians as well as a B.A. at Cambridge. Returning home, he entered the army medical service and after 20 years rose to be a colonel.

The lectures of Ratanabhijāti consist of material collected from western books and presented in Siamese to Television. They originate from three sources. The first lecture deals with the mission of John Crawford, whose "*Journal of an Embassy from the Governor-General of India to the Courts of Siam and Cochin China* contained interesting observations on the customs and habits of our people, their dress, their ornaments and their idea of beauty, going on to a detailed description of the cremation of King Rama II with its exhibition of the arts, craft and culture.

The second lecture deals with the time of M. de la Loubère, whose book paid attention to cultural matters. It would not be necessary to quote or discuss the remarks on this author whose works are already well-known.

The third lecture has been culled from the *Memoirs of the Abbé de Choisy*, also of the end of the XVII century. Choisy was not altogether reliable for his loquacity was extensive.

295. Brahmanuni, the Ven. Pra: *Religions of the World* สากลศาสนา parts 1-2, King Mongkut University Press, Bangkok, 2502, pp. 465 + 499.

We learn from the preface that this work was undertaken as long ago as B.E. 2465; but was not completed till 25 years later. Due acknowledgments for help are readily given. The bulky volume is divided into two books; the material is not arranged chronologically but in accordance with the nature of the topic dealt with.



There is an interesting preface in which the author points out that since religions are after all man-made he proposes to deal first with man—his origin and development into organised communities which gave rise to the need of disciplined conduct leading to religions.

Then follows an introduction giving a survey of beliefs in connection with the origin of man according to traditions and finally to scientific conclusions. Following up then his dictum that man made religion he goes on to deal with a survey of the modern division of mankind—racially, philologically and physically.

Religion of course was bound up at first with nature-worship which developed into a polytheism, which among the Aryans resulted in a sort of monotheism. Dealing separately with each faith by grouping them into the deistic and atheistic types, the author takes up the former group which included Christianity, Islam and Brahmanism. The latter, from its close relationship with Thai culture though no part of our religion, is dealt with at length occupying some hundred pages. Buddhism is well and proportionately summarised, leaving out nothing of importance in the rational philosophy of the Buddha. A chapter follows on Lamaism, then Jainism, Shintoism, Taoism and Confucianism.

As may be expected in such an ambitious scope, nothing but the more important characteristics of a religion finds due place. And yet the two volumes are encyclopaedic. They form part of the curriculum of the King Mongkut University.

The author, a native of the north-east who has successively risen in the Buddhist hierarchy of the Kingdom till he now holds the distinguished rank of a Deputy Somdech Pra Rajāgana, is a scholar who has shielded himself behind an inborn modesty to such an extent as to cause surprise to the public with his production of this worthy classic which is really deserving of the merit of scholarship.

*24 April 1963.*

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