

## Report to the President of the Siam Society

FROM

The Chairman of the Sub-Committee on anthropological, ethnographical and linguistic research, presented at the annual general meeting of the Society on the 28th January, 1921.

To

W. A. GRAHAM, ESQ., M.R.A.S., F.R.G.S.,  
*President of the Siam Society.*

SIR,

In the month of July last year I had on behalf of the Sub-Committee on anthropological, ethnographical and linguistic research the honour to report to you on the work done by the said Sub-Committee of which I was elected chairman in April 1920. Since then, the Sub-Committee has continued its meetings, discussing the various questions which arose; however, as a whole, the period between this and my former report has been one of waiting, *i.e.* awaiting contributions from the numerous European and Siamese gentlemen to whom questionnaires in English and Siamese, in all 250, were forwarded.

I here wish to thank Dr. Ira Ayer, who acted throughout, and still acts as Honorary Secretary of the Sub-Committee, and Mr. J. G. Raggi for their valued assistance and untiring work.

Our appeal for co-operation in the research work undertaken by this Sub-Committee has met with some response, as will be seen from the following summary:—

1. Received from Luang Srōmvitchapoon, Commissioner of Education in Monthon Puket, a long and interesting paper about the Selung or Sea gypsies living in the Puket Archipelago.

2. From Phra Supakitchlekhakarn, Governor of Nakon Svarga, a short paper concerning the population in this changvad, the existence of Lāo Song or Thai Doi there being of special interest.

3. Phra Udorntani Sri Khomsakornketr, Governor of Changvad Surastra, has returned the questionnaire forwarded to him with translations of all the Siamese words contained in the vocabulary into the peculiar "clipped" tongue called "Phasā chāo chai talé," which is spoken along the Eastern Siamese Malayan coast.

4. From Phra Petchabunburi, Governor of Changvad Petchabun, a long and minute paper replying to most of the questions contained in the questionnaire as well as a translation of all the Siamese words into the Lawā tongue, thus adding considerably to the information already given by me about the Lawā people living in the Northwest and Southwest of Monthon Nakorn Rajasima, which was published in the Journal of the Siam Society during the years of 1919-20.

5. Mr. Halliday, the well known expert on the Mons and author of "The Talaings," has replied to our letter (accompanying the questionnaire) and offered to write a Mon Dictionary. An offer, which I am sure, that the Society will be eager to accept.

6. M. Parmentier, acting Director of the "Ecole Française d' Extrême Orient" in Hanoi, replied to our letter expressing this school's warmest sympathy with our work, giving us several useful hints concerning the method of work and incidentally regretting that we, so far, have not included archaeology in our research work.

7. His Serene Highness Prince Bovaradej, His Majesty's Viceroy of the Monthons of Bhāk Payap, has, through his Deputy-Lord Lieutenant, Phya Petchpisai, in Chieng Mai, most graciously announced his willingness to assist us by all means in our research work, asking for several more copies of the questionnaire, which have been duly forwarded.

8. And finally, the Sub-Committee has received anonymously two very interesting papers in French concerning the Thai and the Tho (in Tonkin) for which the Committee is very thankful, though it regrets by reason of the circumstances, that it will not be able to thank the author personally.

Suitable replies and letters of thanks have been forwarded to all the gentlemen mentioned; in some cases they have been asked kindly to give further information concerning certain details wanted by the Committee.

As the stock of English and Siamese questionnaires was exhausted the Committee had ordered 100 fresh copies more of each kind; these are now available and a proper register of the addresses will be kept in future.

As will be seen from the above not one of the 100—one hundred—Europeans appealed to—with the exception of Mr. Halliday, who has promised to do something—has so far contributed anything to this study, so important for the accurate knowledge of the country. This is a most regrettable sign of indifference and lack of interest on the part of people, most of whom have stayed here for many years and certainly should be able by *their* contributions to assist us enormously in our work.

On the other hand, I think it most encouraging that several Siamese gentlemen should have taken so much interest in the work that they have contributed valuable papers on subjects and tribes hitherto only slightly known; an especially happy sign, which makes us hope for good results, is the interest shown by H. S. H. Prince Bovaradej, who governs a territory extraordinarily interesting from the ethnological point of view.

Though it is perhaps not strictly within the limits of this report, I venture to say that if we can only succeed in awakening the interest of the Siamese "Intelligentia" in these matters, then the battle is half won and most of the objects of our Society attained. The next phase of the work of the Sub-Committee will consist in sifting and co-ordinating the information so far gathered, and then, perhaps, in trying to find people who will take up the study of any special branch about which sufficient information has been obtained and publish monographs upon them.

This last object might be encouraged by the institution of *prize-essais* as is done by the *Burmah Research Society*. The contributions—6 papers—and sundry letters, the minute-book and file of the Sub-Committee are forwarded together with this report.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

ERIK SEIDENFADEN,

Major, Chairman of the Sub-Committee on anthropological, ethnographical and linguistic research.

Bangkok, 26th January, 1921.

