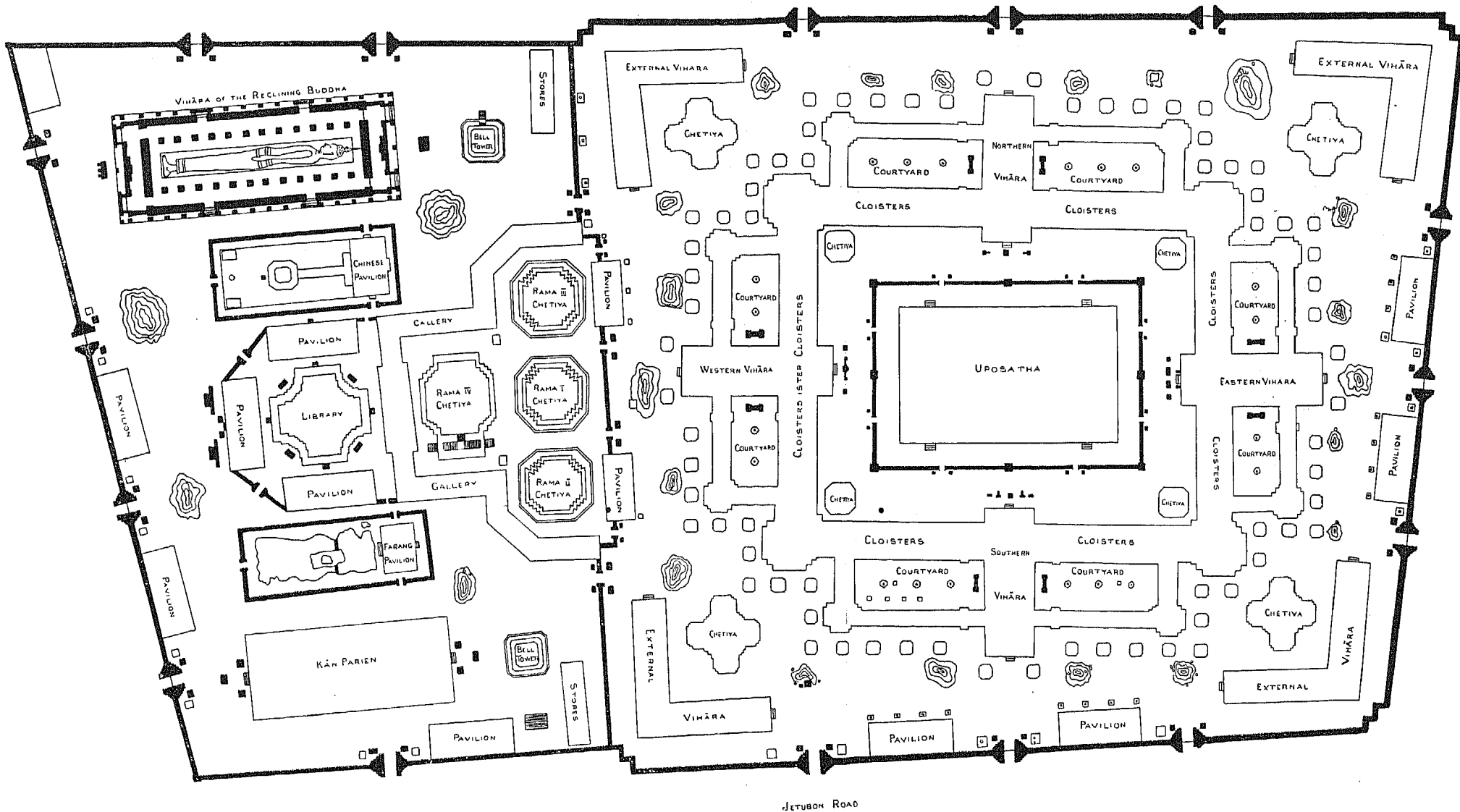


GENERAL PLAN OF WAT JETUBON





THE INSCRIPTIONS OF WAT PHRA JETUBON.

by

H. H. PRINCE DHANI NIVAT.

On the occasion of the cremation a little over two years ago of Phra Vimadathoe, the Royal Institute was enabled by the generosity of the deceased lady's children, the late Prince of Lobpuri and the Princess of Uthong, to publish for the first time the inscriptions of Wat Phra Jetubon in the original language.¹ They filled two volumes and were so varied in character that provided one took into consideration the limitations of scholastic facilities of the time it would not be far wrong to ascribe to these inscriptions the nature of an encyclopaedia. Indeed His Royal Highness Prince Damrong in writing a preface to these two volumes took pains to point out that, in deciding on the restoration of this the greatest of His August Grandfather's monasteries, King Rama III must have also been moved by another desire, that the monastery should be the seat of learning for all classes of people in all walks of life. The Prince went on to explain that in the absence in those days of printing facilities one could only study the professions from individuals, and usually the principles of such were handed down from father to son—a process which naturally tended to limit the scope of the propagation of Science.²

Before going on to deal at length with the general inscriptions it would be well to present here a short history of the monastery, materials for which are to be found either directly or indirectly from the inscriptions themselves.

The original monastery called Bodhārām had been in existence according to general belief since the Ayudhya period. The

1. This paper was written in September 1932. It was not until some time after that the author noticed that the publications referred to had been reviewed in this Journal (Vol. XXV, Pt. 2), a review in which the framework of the publications was clearly defined.

2. Cf. also Prince Damrong's introduction to the *Phlengyao Kolabot and Kolu Aksorn* published in Siamese by the Royal Institute in 1922 (B. E. 2465), pp. 28-30.

first source, an inscription in the east Vihara of the standing Buddha, dated B. E. 2331¹ (1789 of the Christian era), is responsible for the early history of the Wat. It relates that in that year "His righteous Majesty, Ramadhipati, reigning in Krungdeh, perceiving that the old monastery of Bodhārām was in a state of ruin", decided to restore it. After three years occupied in filling in the ground, the actual work of restoration began in earnest and lasted nine years. More than a thousand fine images of the Buddha lying in neglect in the provinces were removed from the North and set up here in various places. It appears from this inscription that the monastery was planned on the whole on the same scale as we find it today.² The monastery was provided with 66 men who were paid certain sums of money as keepers and entrusted with the care of the buildings and grounds. The chief keeper and his assistant received minor ranks in the nobility to ensure their official and social standing. The restoration in reality took the form of constructing new buildings on the old site, as practically nothing of the old monastery remained. In 1801, the work being completed, His Majesty celebrated the event in the customary way but on a grand scale, and renamed the monastery Wat Phra Jetubon after the famous Jetavana pleasance of Anāthāpindika at Srāvasti. The King poured water on the hand of the main image in the presence of an assembly of the incumbent monks as an act of handing over what he had rebuilt for them, presented them with gifts, and customary food which he and his Court personally served, and distributed alms to the people and provided general entertainments and fire-works. The features of the celebrations were very much on the same lines as one finds today in merit-making and dedications, but there were two features of interest, the casting abroad of coupons by which one could claim sums ranging from 2 to 5 catties

1. Doubtless a slip. It should have been 2332. The slip was perhaps due to a confusion with the final figure of the civil era which was C. S. 1151.

2. Detailed description of the plan of the monastery as it existed in 1822 is to be found in Crawford's *Embassy to Siam & Cochin-China*, vol. I, pp. 163-167.

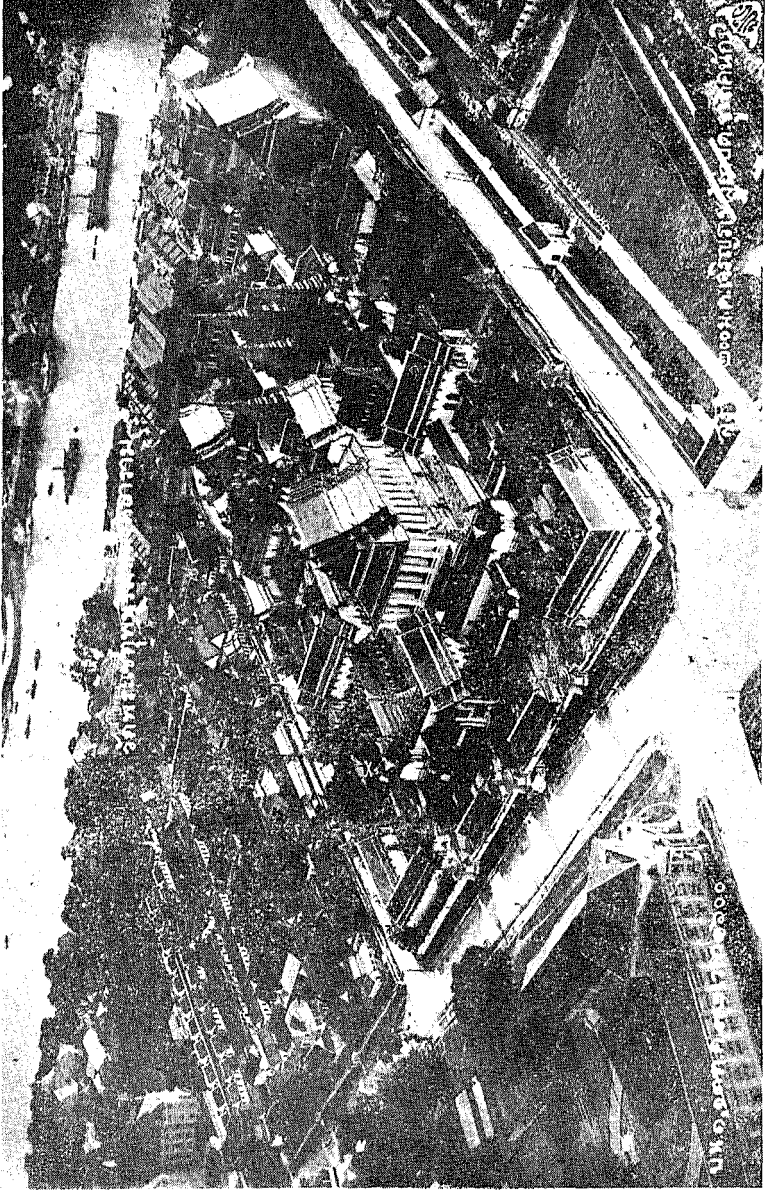
(160 to 400 bahts) from the Privy Purse and also of limes containing small coins. These two items totalled 40,480 bahts and were distributed as alms for the redemption of the King's family and chattels. It may be as well to explain that the motive of this act was the idea that the King dedicated his all to the people in honour of the monastery and then redeemed it by the above process. The concluding passage of the inscription is rather interesting. It states: "In undertaking to restore the monastery and in fitly dedicating it, His Majesty has not been actuated by a wish for reward (in future lives) such as Universal sovereignty or even heavenly joys, but by an aspiration to arrive at full and complete Knowledge whereby human beings will be restored from the wheel of misery.....". In fact the King dedicated his all not in exchange for the realisation of his personal ambition but rather that he might attain the knowledge which would be then used for the good of the people. This historical evidence is comforting to hear. Siamese monarchs after all seemed to have thought of and worked traditionally for the welfare of their subjects before their own!

Our second source of information, dated B. E. 2351 (1808), exists in print and may be found in the *Vajirañāṇ* magazine. It is not stated how the magazine obtained the record. This record being written in a style similar to the inscription referred to above, it has been thought by the Royal Institute that it was the draft, intended for inscription on a parallel tablet to the first in the same Vihara where a stone slab had already been set in the wall as yet without any writing. The date of this record being only some ten months before the demise of King Rama I, it has been suggested that the written record might have been delayed until it was too late to submit the draft to the King for his approval and finally given up. The gist of this draft is the miraculous discovery in Nan of some holy relics which were presented to the King and their due inclusion in places of honour in the monastery.

Our third and most detailed source of information was written in January B. E. 2388 (1845) as a record in verse by a contem-

porary poet and scholar, His Royal Highness Krom Kun Nujit Jinoros who was afterwards promoted Patriarch, and assumed the rank and title of Krom Somdech Phra Paramanujit. It brings us down to the second restoration by Rama III, whence we get the encyclopaedic part and the bulk of our inscriptions. It states that the King, on his annual state visit in 1831 to present the Kathin, went over the whole grounds and noticing that many of the buildings were in ruins, ordered their restoration. The main features of this second restoration were: the enlargement of the main chapel (the Uposatha), the fashioning of the image of the Reclining Buddha on the site of a former palace which was then made over to the Monastery, the erection of two of the three big pagodas directly west of the central enclosure of the Uposatha, the restoration and enlargement of the residential quarters for the priests, a general repair and many minor additions, and finally new mural decorations and paintings with the encyclopaedic inscriptions in explanation of them. The work of building additional cells for the priests as well as rebuilding the old ones began in 1832. In 1835 the restoration proper was commenced. The poetical narrative, which the author finished writing in 1845, does not mention the completion of this restoration. The history however of the third reign by Chao Phya Dibakarawongs, as yet unpublished, tells us that the restoration was not completed till 1848, three years after this narrative. This of course explains the meagre information in this narrative about the last important building of the whole group, the Vihara of the Reclining Buddha. The poet seemed to have been fully aware of the main features of this Vihara and actually mentioned that detailed specifications of the work of restoration were to be found inscribed in that presumably unfinished Vihara as will be seen later. The history, above mentioned, went on to say that the King fitly dedicated the work in the same year, features of which seemed to have been parallel to the dedication of the first restoration.

Let us now take a general survey of the precincts reiterating at the same time the individual features of this restoration in conformity with the poetical narrative. The monastery may be



Wat Phra Jetubon
(from the air)



spoken of as being divided into two sections, the dividing line being identical with the present Jetubon road. North of the road is the main section wherein are situated all our points of interest. The southern section is mainly residential. It contains the comparatively ornate and spacious residence and office of the above mentioned Prince priest, the modern Pali school with a few other minor buildings which contain short inscriptions of a self-explanatory character. The whole area is chiefly made up of priestly cells quite simple in aspect and in strict keeping with their monastic character, and will not therefore be treated of here.

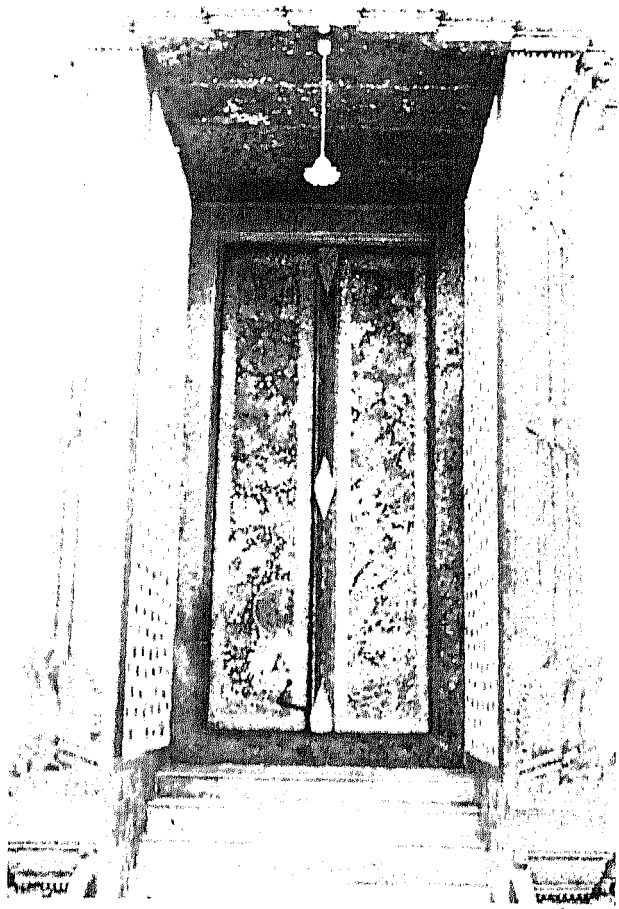
Reverting again to the northern section, the most important building though perhaps not the one best known to the public is the Bot or Uposatha, standing inside a walled enclosure directly facing east. The enclosure itself contained four Viharas or chapels facing the four cardinal points so that any one entering by whichever side will come upon one of these chapels before getting to the main building, the Bot or Uposatha. An Uposatha is the assembly hall of the holy Brotherhood wherein take place all their formal meetings and the more important ceremonies. A part of the remains of Rama I. collected from the crematory pyre was buried in this Bot, and it has been the custom for every monarch entering this building to pay respect to the memory of the Founder of the Dynasty. This main chapel was raised and enlarged in this restoration. On the walls between the windows were painted biographies of 41 eminent disciples of the Buddha with inscriptions in explanation thereof. The biographies were compiled from Buddhaghosha's commentary of the *Āṅguttara Nikāya*. Hereunder is given a specimen of the biographic inscriptions of the Uposatha :

“It is stated in the *Manorathapūraṇī*, commentary of the *Āṅguttara Nikāya*, first chapter, in the section relating to the Venerable Koṇḍañña thus: Formerly Koṇḍañña the Brahman lived at the Brahman village of Donavattu near Kapilavastu. He was well versed in the three Vedas and in the nature of devotions. When the Buddha was born, his royal father assembled 108 Brahmans and

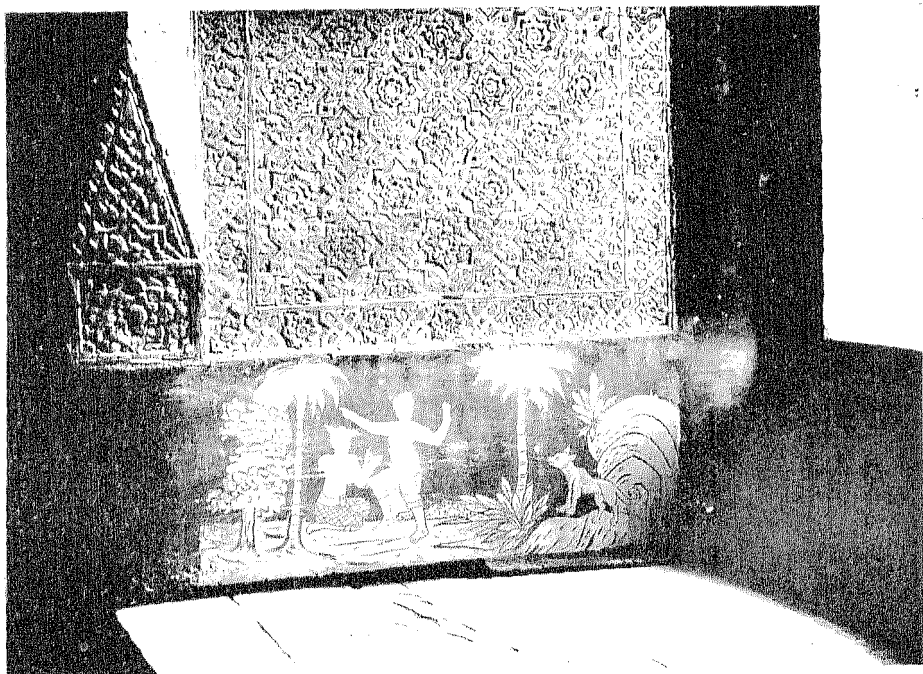
duly feasted them. Eight among them, experts in the understanding of human nature, were asked to try and see what the royal baby would become on attaining to manhood. Seven were of the opinion that he would grow up to be a universal sovereign but, should he decide upon an ascetic life, he would become the discoverer of Salvation, i.e., the Buddha. Koṇḍañña, however, predicted Buddhahood without any alternative. Later on Koṇḍañña lived to be the sole survivor of the eight, and with four sons took up ascetic life when the Prince, the future Buddha, did so, trying to discover the truth. When the Prince became the Buddha, he preached his first sermon laying down the Wheel of the Law to Koṇḍañña who with his four sons attained Arahatsip. He was considered eminent for becoming the first Arahāt."

Above the windows will be found the birth story of Mahosatha, while higher up next to the lofty roof are the usual representations of Hindu cosmology as modified and adopted by later Buddhism. Inlays of mother of pearl on the doors represent episodes from the Ramakirti, while at their backs are printed specimens of all grades of honorific fans presented as tokens of hierarchical rank by the sovereign to the holy Brothers. The backs of the wooden panes of the windows were inscribed with the seals and names of the dignitaries of the Buddhist Church, indicating that in those days it was divided into two jurisdictions. The northern one was placed under an abbot of Somdech rank in Bangkok, including all territories approximately north of Bangkok. All territory bordering on the Gulf of Siam both east and west as well as the Malay Peninsula was under the southern jurisdiction, the head of which was also of a similar rank and resident in Bangkok. The Metropolitan Church was divided among the two jurisdictions. The external panes were carved and gilded with conventional designs, and at their lower extremities are pictorial representations of nursery rhymes many of which, however, are still to be identified.

In taking leave of this central chapel, mention must also be made of the bas-reliefs depicting scenes from the Ramakirti on the



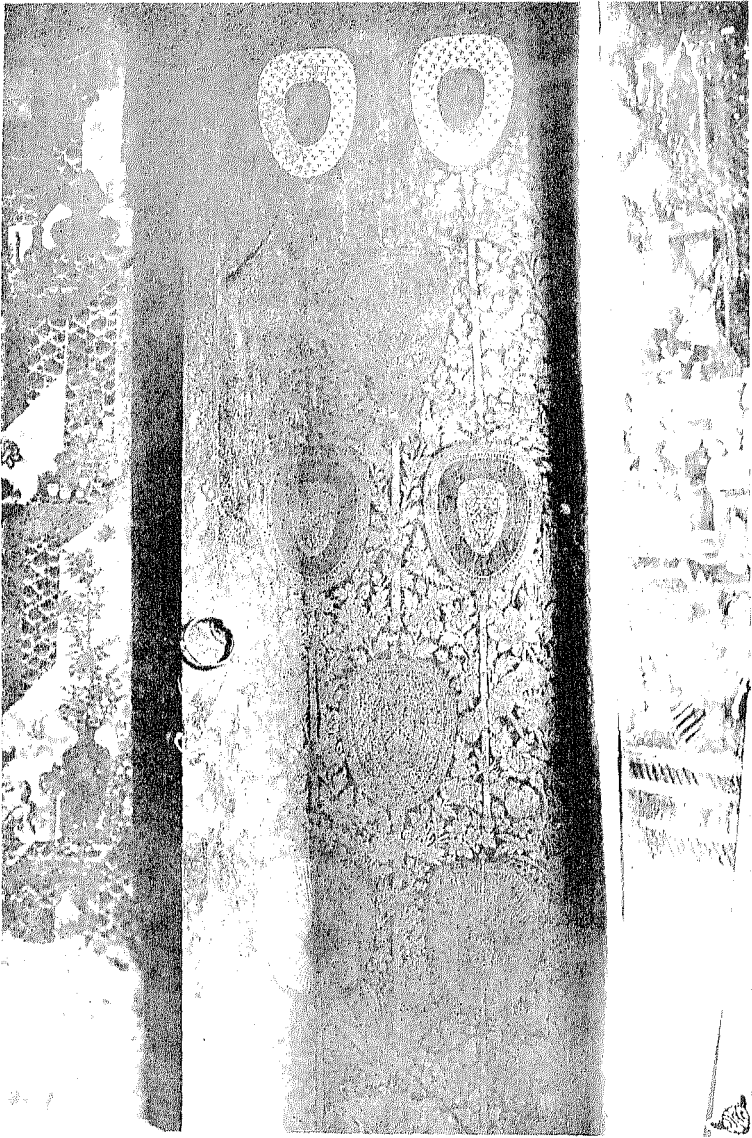
Inlaid doors of the Bot.



Scene thought to represent a nursery rhyme.
(Bot window)



Honorific Fans, on doors of the main Chapel.



Honorific Fans, on doors of the main Chapel.



Bas-relief around the Bot, scenes from the Ramakirti.



balustrades around it, each bearing an explanatory inscription in verse by contemporary poets including Prince Kraisara Vijit and Luangnai Jan Bhubes. The former was then head of the Department of Public Instruction and was in general charge of the work of restoration. His grandson was also Minister of Public Instruction under King Chulalongkorn, and an elder brother of the present Chao Phya Abhai Raja. Luangnai Jan Bhubes was a poet of some merit, his verses representing different metres, mentioned further on, being well known and popular.

We will now turn to the four Viharas forming part of the enclosure of the Uposatha. Of the four, the east one being in front was originally the larger, having besides the main chapel opening outside of the enclosure, an inner one back to back with it. King Rama III, however, provided inner chapels to each of the other three and therefore all four are now identical. In the east Vihara the front chapel facing east contains an image, brought down by Rama I. from Svargalok, of the Buddha sitting under the Bodhi tree. The subject of the mural decoration is the quest of the Prince Siddhartha after truth, the temptation and vanquishment of Mara culminating in his attainment of knowledge under the Bodhi tree in consonance with the incident of the image. According to Crawford (*ibid.* cf. Note 4), however, "The paper-hangings represented the war of the Ramayana." Crawford was probably misled by the figure of Mara, who is often represented in Siamese art by the identical physiognomy of Ravana. There does not seem to exist any explanatory inscription, the subject being of course familiar to all. In the chapel at the back of the eastern Vihara, besides the historical inscription mentioned above, there is an image of the standing Buddha from Ayudhya some ten metres in height. There are inscriptions explaining the mural paintings which depict the ten stages of decay of the dead body, a subject for meditation. The ten Knowledges (*nāṇa*) are also portrayed. Concrete representations of these have been taken from the conventional instances as taught in priestly schools of meditation. The theme of the paintings being the same as in King

Rama I.'s restoration. The following are examples of these two sets of inscriptions:

Stages of decay:—

“1. Uddhumātaka, meaning a dead body in a gaseous condition looking as if pumped up with air, thereby becoming most repulsive to look upon;

“2. Vinīlaka, meaning a dead body over which a state of putrefaction has set in, parts are black, red and white;” etc., etc.

The Knowledges:—

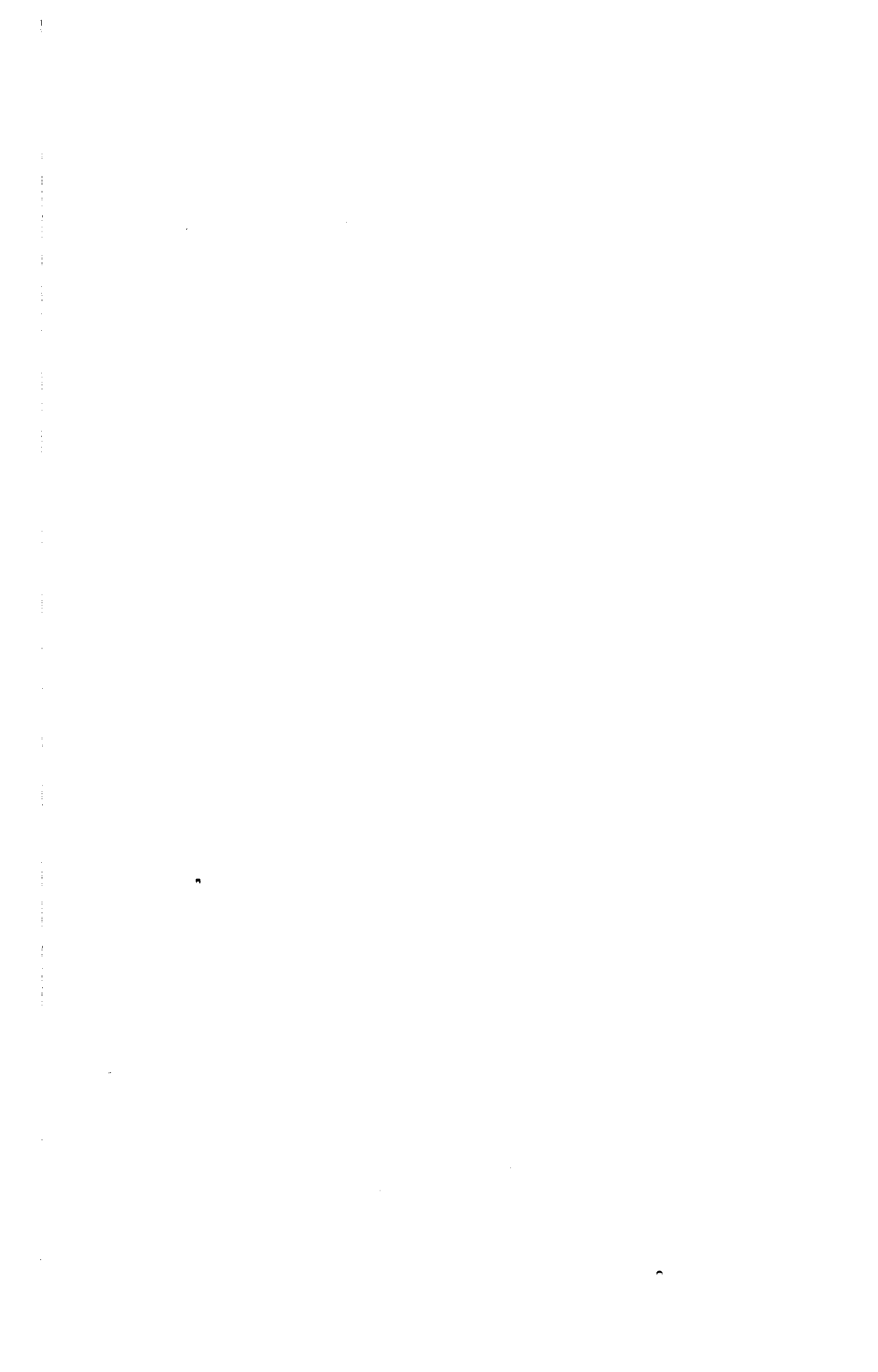
“3. Bhaṅgānupassanāññāna, the knowledge arising out of a contemplation of annihilation. The stock instance is that of a man who contemplating a broken piece of pottery can see nothing but its eventual breaking up from an entity; another instance is that of a man who standing on a river bank and looking at drops of rains falling thereon can see the drops causing ripples as they come into contact with the river and then disappear.”

In the south Vihara King Rama I. originally set up an old image of the Buddha from Ayudhya in the attitude of preaching the first sermon to the five original disciples. Another image, however, known as Phra Jinaraj was brought down from Sukhodaya and set up in its stead some years later, and in it was buried a part of the holy relics from Nan as recorded in our second source of information. The walls of this Vihara were decorated with paintings depicting the same occasion as well as the Buddha's preaching a sermon to his mother in the heavens, a figurative way of expressing the state of spiritual knowledge to which she had attained. Crawford says here: “The paper-hangings represented Gautama preaching to the assembled deities of the Hindoo Pantheon.” Rama III. restored this Vihara in accord with the original plan and added a back chapel which was adorned with mural paintings depicting incidents contained in the Stanzas of Victory, inscriptions in explanation of which were set up; and here is a specimen of them:

“In this section are depicted stories from the commentary



Back Chapel, East Vihara.



of the ' Bāhuñ stanzas ', the first verse of which is :

Bāhuñ sahasamabhinimmitasāvudhañ

referring to that episode of victory from the Pathom Sombodhi (the standard Siamese version of the life of the Buddha) in which the Buddha, seated beneath the Bodhi tree, vanquished Vassavati the Mara King and his army and then attained enlightenment, becoming the Buddha."

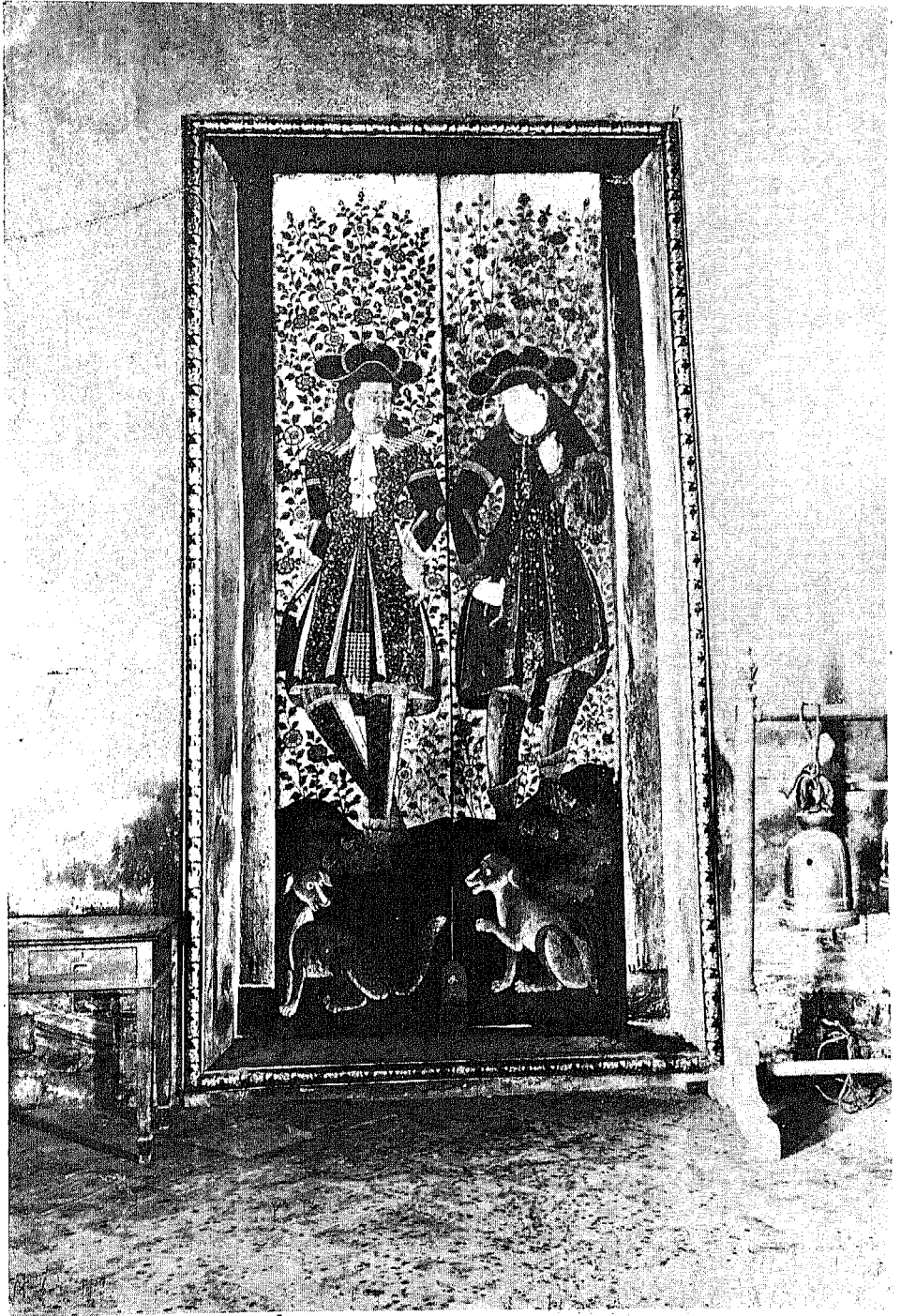
These Stanzas of Victory, believed to have been composed in Ceylon, are rather popular and are always chanted in a morning service of benediction. They consist of eight stanzas of Pali verse, each stanza referring to an incident of the Buddha's victories over evil, invoking in each stanza the Buddha's power to bestow a similar victory, with an additional stanza detailing the good result that would accrue to one repeating them from day to day.

The west Vihara, where King Rama I. set up first a seated image from Lobpuri in the attitude of being protected from rain by the Nāga king (a characteristic attitude of the Khmer art of Lobpuri), and subsequently replaced it by the more famous Phra Jinasih, brought down from Sukhodaya together with the Phra Jinaraj of the southern Vihara. The Jinasih image shared equal honours in every respect with the Jinaraj, including the burial of holy relics. The mural painting represented the story of the hair relics of the Buddha. Crawford, not being able to understand its purport, described what he saw rather graphically thus: "The representations . . . sketched of the modern city of Bangkok. The river is shown, with Chinese junks and European shipping; and among the most prominent figures are several Europeans, in the grotesque costume of the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries." To understand the mistake one need only to go to any chapel where there is painting, such as in Wat Jetubon itself, in order to see historical scenes dressed in comparatively modern garb. In mural decorations it will not have been thought at all incongruous to paint Napoleonic sentinels outside the palace of the Buddha's father! All this was restored by Rama III. with the addition as already mentioned of a back chapel which contained mural decorations depicting the sacred

localities where the Buddha's footprints were supposed to exist. These places are the Saccabandha Mount (now known as Phrabad), the peak of Sumanakūṭa in Ceylon (Adam's Peak), the hill Rang Rung ("the Abode of the Rainbow") near Chiengmai in the country of the Yonakas, on the "Nammadāya" river in Burma "where it is to be found on the golden sands". Needless to say the artists were not in a position to have obtained any idea of the scenery of those places which, excepting possibly Phrabad, might have seemed to them to be legendary. It is indeed a pity that the paintings in the four Viharas have mostly disappeared, and we have to be content with our inscriptions which, however, are more concerned with literary than artistic details. The inscriptions besides are only found in the back chapels and were doubtless due to the initiative of the second restoration.

The north Vihara as built by Rama I. contained a common form of Buddhist iconography representing the Buddha seated on a rock accepting offerings from wild animals (a monkey and an elephant)—while the walls were painted with conventional representations of the Buddhist World as modified from the standard cosmology of the Hindus in olden times. Crawford's description, while confirming the above, added that there were also "full-sized figures of natives of Lao, Pegue, China, Tartary, Hindustan, and Persia". These figures were probably decorations of the folds of doors, for Crawford went on to say that "they were purely ornamental". They were probably renewed and perhaps added to the second restoration for we now have among other figures of gentlemen of the period of Louis XIV (*vide* illustration). He went on to say that "the wall of the same chamber was also decorated with several Chinese copies of French and English prints". In the back-chapel added to the main Vihara by King Rama III. were painted the thirteen modes of asceticism or Dhutanga. A specimen of the inscription here is given thus:

"8. Over this inscription is portrayed the ascetic mode of forest-dwelling. A monk can vow undertaking to dwell for ever in the forest, as the Venerable Nālaka, who was the nephew of the Ascetic Kāladevila. The latter once predicted



Figures of nationalities, North Vihara.



Buddhahood for the Prince Siddhartha and then told his sister about it. That lady persuaded her son to become an ascetic awaiting the Buddha. When the Prince actually became the Buddha, Nālaka visited him and having consulted him as to certain forms of ascetic ordinances took leave and went forth into the forest. He observed his forest-dwelling vow for seven months and became an Arāhat. He was found dead leaning against a rock with his face turned in the direction of the Buddha."

Between the four Viharas just described were cloisters surrounding the central precinct, in which are to be found some interesting inscriptions; namely lists, inside the eaves, of territorial divisions of the Kingdom, inscriptions explanatory of literary works of the period, the Klōng Kolabot and the Phleng Yao Kolabot, and specimens of Prosody. The territorial lists are interesting for students of Siamese history and geography, and were in explanation of pictures of territories, arranged round the Uposatha in accordance with their geographical situation. They contained names of provinces, with, in some of the more important places, the titles of their Governors, and were said (in Prince Paramanujit's record referred to above as the third source of our information) to have consisted of 374 provinces. It is to be noted that while the general rule was that the first class provinces were directly responsible to either of the then administrative departments of the central Government and the minor provinces were dependent upon them, yet not a few of the latter were made directly responsible to either of the central Government's departments, often as we know from history for reasons of local politics. Unfortunately these inscriptions were scattered, being perhaps more in the nature of labels inscribed on stone slabs rather than inscriptions of any length. Many have been consequently lost and the Royal Institute has been able to secure 77 slabs containing names of only 194 out of the 374 provinces. A brief survey of the list may be of some interest.

In the east (front cloister); the two first class provinces were

Nakon Rajaseima (note the *sema* which in modern time has become *sima*) and Phra Tabong (Battambang), the gubernatorial title of the latter being "Abhai Bhubes" which calls to mind the last governor under Siam who bore a similar title with the rank of Chao Phya. Nine out of 21 minor provinces in this section were directly responsible to the Mahadthai, the administrative department of the central Government for this part of the Kingdom. A missing province of some interest is the one we find written behind the Uposatha windows as Bhukhandhapuri (ภูขันธ์บุรี). Now the modern province of Khukhandh (ขุขันธ์) has given rise to a great deal of discussion as to the meaning of its seemingly unintelligible name. It sounds rather like the name of the famous hunter of the Ramakirti but not quite that, as the hunter's name in the play was Kukhan (กุกขัน),¹ and besides he was supposed to have been chief of his province named Buriram. Since we have also Buriram almost next door, there does not seem to be sufficient reason in naming another province after him. Rather would it seem that the sound of the name Buriram has somehow suggested the hunter and thereby given a misrepresentation of some older name which was not so familiar. K'ūkhan (คูขันธ์) has also been suggested² as meaning "surrounded by moats" but คู is a Siamese word and for a Siamese word to be compounded with one from a classical language though permissible at times is not a common process. Bhukhandh is more agreeable in every sense and it would seem that our inscriptions may yet lay down the rule and accidentally fulfil their royal creator's supposed wish of setting the standard of learning.

In the south (right cloister), we find two minor provinces, Prachin and Nakon Nayok, directly responsible to the Mahadthai; and another (Phanasanikom) to the Krom Tha. Jolapuri and Chandapuri, two of the more flourishing provinces on the east coast, are missing; so also is Chachoengsao the seat of the modern administrative circle of Prachin. On the west coast we find Nakon Sri

1. The "Guba" of Valmiki's Ramayana.

2. By the Right Rev. Phra Brahmamuni, the present abbot of Boromanivas Monastery.

Dharmaraj a first class province directly responsible to the Kalahom with Kedah or Thraiburi as a major tributary; whilst two other provinces, Pathalung and Songkhla, though ranking second class, are also directly responsible to the same department. Upon Songkhla depended some 21 minor provinces mostly situated to the south including the seven provinces which constituted the administrative circle of Pattani lately amalgamated with Nakon Sri Dharmaraj. Trengganu and Kelantan are missing.

In the west cloister behind the Uposatha, we find primarily Krungkao (Ayudhya) and the minor provinces of Lobpuri and Sarapuri under the Mahadthai; Rajapuri and three other minor provinces under the Kalahom; and one minor province (Nondapuri) under the Krom Tha. There are no doubt many missing, such for instance as the considerable province of Suphan.

The north cloister provides the most interesting list of all, its territory stretching from the north of Ayudhya right up to Bayab circle. It includes as well the Lao territories of the north-east, extending over the left bank of the Mekong to include what is now French Laos, ceded by Siam some sixty years later. Provinces directly responsible to the Mahadthai were:—

Tributaries: Chiengmai, Lamphun, Lampang, Nan, Phrae, Nakon Phanom, Wieng Chan, Pasak (better known by their Gallic orthography of Vientiane and Bassac) and (presumably) Luang Prabang (though the name of the last is missing, its dependencies were fully listed).

Major provinces: The first class province of Bismulok as well as the province of Svargalok are missing but their dependent provinces are given; the major provinces of Sukhodaya, Bijai, Kambaengbejra, and Tak. The provinces of Nakon Svarga, Bichit, and their neighbours are entirely missing, though fully mentioned behind the Uposatha windows in the Church list.

In dealing with the inscriptions of the somewhat technical illustrations of Siamese poetic art among the cloisters, it would be well to bear in mind that according to the tradition of Siamese Prosody there are four main categories of poetry: The Klōng perhaps the most popular among the intelligentsia; the Klon, more simple and easily adapted to lyrical uses, hence generally employed in drama; the Kābya, a kind of easy metre excelled in by poets of the Ayudhya period, but not represented here; and finally the Chanda, possibly later in adaptation from Pali and Sanskrit and more strictly conforming to its classical prototype. The poverty of short syllables in our monosyllabic language however renders the adaptation of the majority of classical Chanda metres difficult and even Prince Paramanujit could not put enough life into verses illustrating the 58 classical metres in our inscriptions. The Siamese Chanda, like the classical Sanskrit, consists of two groups of metres: those measured by the number of syllables called Varnavṛitti; and those measured by the number of morae they contain, called Mātrāvṛitti. Our inscriptions here consist of the following:—

(a) Fifty slabs of the former group of Chanda, the Varnavṛitti, the subject being maxims of a moral type;

(b) Eight slabs of the latter group of Chanda, the Mātrāvṛitti, which are seemingly more alive than the Varnavṛitti owing no doubt to the lesser necessity of trying to provide short syllables for the metres, importance being more attached to the morae.

In the prologue of these verses it was stated that Prince Paramanujit composed them by royal command in C. S. 1204 (1842). The 58 stanzas were adopted from the Pali treatise named Vrittodaya¹ (more commonly called Vuttodaya) for the first time in Siamese. Again as an epilogue there were verses summing up the contents in this way: "The above 50 stanzas of Varnavṛitti and 8 of the Mātrāvṛitti making up 58 stanzas have been adopted by myself alone. Their contents treated of the seven kinds of wives; the six causes of downfalls; the results each, of drinking, of going out at night, of attending entertainments, of gambling, of associating with

1. Composed in the 12th. century by Saṅgharakkhita of Ceylon.

the six kinds of persons of evil disposition, of the six forms of laziness; of the 4 categories each of good and bad friends; of the 4 evil dispositions (*agati*); of the 5 catastrophes; the paths of action; of the 38 good actions; of the injunctions to an official; of the recommendations for the monarch's behaviour. The knowledge of all these moral verses should be productive of good, should help to ward off all evil and suffering, should enhance one in prosperity, health and honour. They have been inscribed on half the cloister pillars by command of His Majesty, who wishes thereby to lead his people along the path of Knowledge.....”.

We now come to another category of poetry, the *Klon*, in the forms of the *Phleng Yao Kolabot* and *Kola Aksorn*.¹ These have not been translated nor adopted from anywhere. They formed a collection of examples of Siamese *Klon* verses on a variety of subjects composed by a group of poets including the King himself. In the prologue to the collection, it was stated that they had been composed by a number of poets at the instigation of His Majesty who wished that future generations should be able to obtain easy access to that “branch of knowledge which was in olden times considered as the knowledge essential to a gentleman but has now become rare among people who have turned to bad ways”. It was further explained that these verses had been written as examples of rhetoric and consequently contained much of a worldly nature. The King was well aware that erotic poetry was the opposite of the spiritual but with the above excuse he wished that the collection should be tolerated in some such manner as the dedication of music and song. The contents of these verses are mainly erotic, as the name “*Phleng Yao*” suggests; the main interest lying in a kind of verbal extravaganza, in which an intricate play on tonal accents is a feature. It is consequently somewhat difficult to give details in a way which would be sufficient-

1. Published by the Royal Institute, with an introduction by Prince Damrong giving an historical survey of Siamese Poetry, under the title of “เพลงยาวกลบทและกลอักษร สมเด็จพระมอญจนาจักร โปรดให้พิมพ์ในงานเฉลิมพระชันษาครบ ๖๐ ปีบริบูรณ์ พ.ศ. ๒๔๖๕”

ly interesting to any one but a native Siamese, thus:

	อมรแมนแมนแมนเจ้าจาม โฉม
ชดอต่อต่อโลกให้ โศกโทรม	แต่เตเตเตเตโตมฤตต์
ดิงกระต่ายหงอยหงอยหงอยแหงนหงาย	ขม้ายมายมายเมียงจะเคียงแข
รชนน นมอาตยแด	กระต่ายแต่ซบซ่าซ่าซ้าคั่นง.
	กตบถ “ ตรีพระดับดาว ”

หุดวงนายชาญญุเบศว์ แต่ง

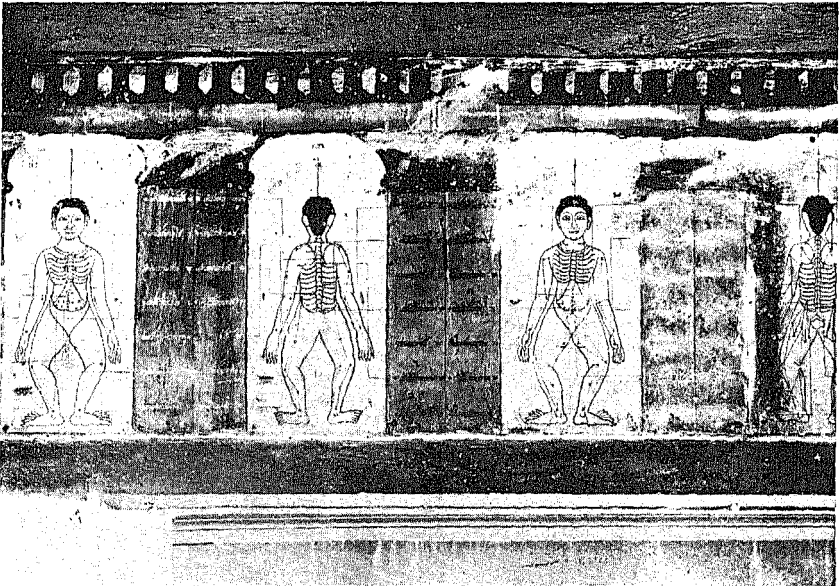
In treating of inscriptions of the cloisters mention should be made of the paintings, now vanished, illustrating an important branch of Siamese fable literature. These were arranged in collections (called Pakaranam). The two collections painted here deserve mention, although no explanatory inscriptions seem ever to have existed. As in most of those classical and modern languages of Asia which have been influenced by Indian Aryan civilisation, these collections form a distinct class in Siamese Literature. Some collections can be traced through Lao Literature to have originated from the Pañcatantra, whilst others are obviously later translations into Siamese from various sources. The collection of the fables of Nonduk (corresponding to Pañcatantra I.) here represented was no doubt the story of Nonduk the bull¹ as related by Tantrai, the daughter of a prime minister, who pacified her sovereign, like Scheherazade, by telling him stories on consecutive nights and thereby saved her family from imminent death. According to M. Finot, (*Recherches sur la littérature laotienne*, BELFEO, XVII, 5), the story of Tantrai is introductory of four separate collections of fables of which the collection of Nonduk is the first. The story of Tantrai and at least the collection of the fables of Nonduk also exist in Javanese literature.² The Siamese version of Tantrai including Nonduk has also been translated

1. นนทุกปกรณัม พิมพ์ในงานศพท่านธีรวัฒนารักษ์ พ. ศ. ๒๔๖๘

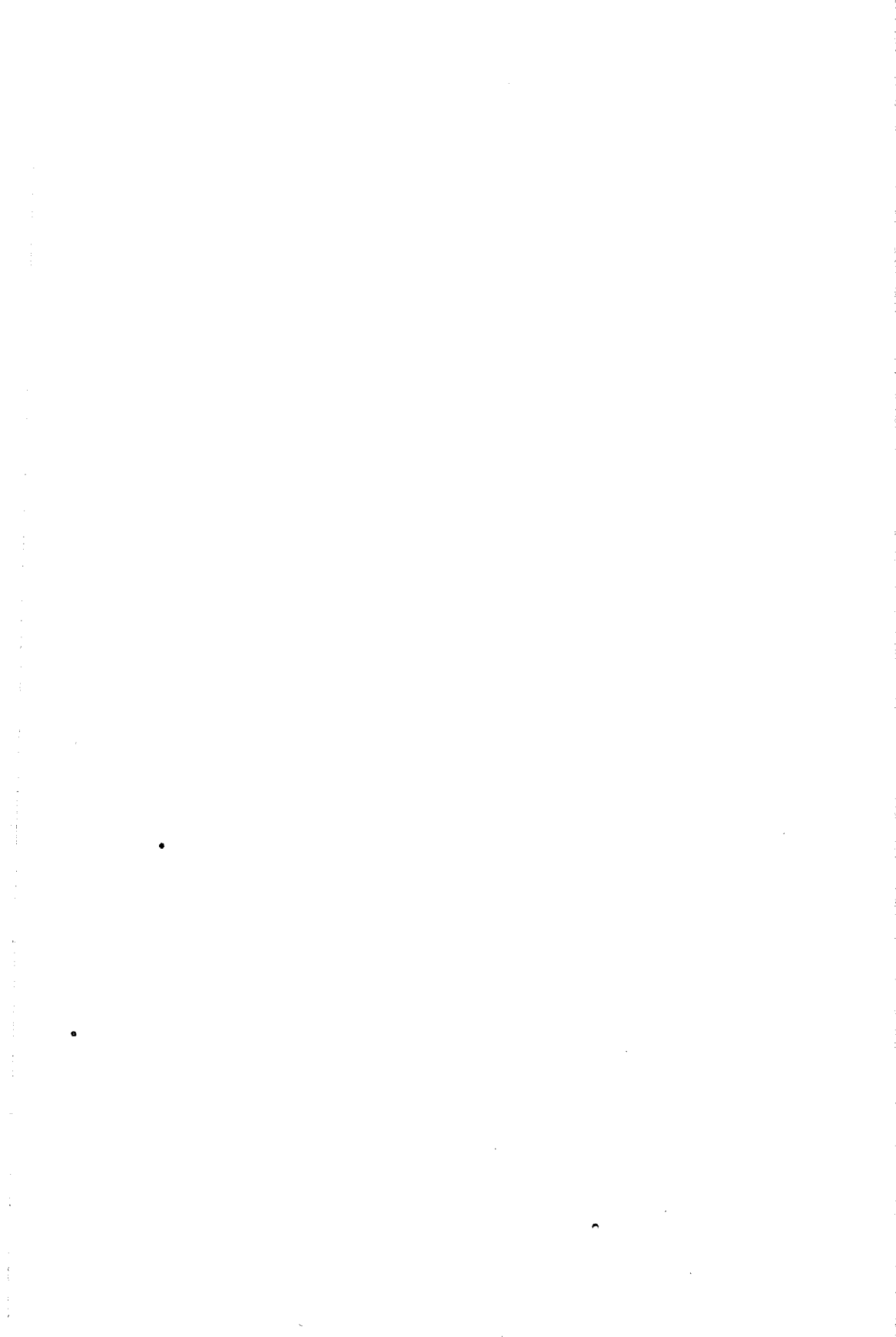
2. E. Cosquin, *Le Prologue-cadre des Mille et une nuits*, Paris 1909,



A personified epidemic with prescriptions for its cure.



• Anatomical Charts.



into French by Professor Lorgeou (*Les Entretiens de Nang Tantrai*, Paris, 1924). The other work, the collection of tales of the Pisāca,¹ was also of Indian origin, although its venue has not yet been traced.

An important section of the precincts on account of its encyclopaedic inscriptions is the enclosure of the four great chetiyas. Rama I. brought down what remained of the famous standing Buddha in the main chapel of Wat Phra Sri Sarbej in the palace of Ayudhya. The statue could probably not be repaired having been burnt and stripped of gold metal by the enemy during the sack of the old capital. It was consequently not restored but buried or rather built over, thus giving rise to a chetiya 41 metres in height behind the main chapel. The chetiya was repaired by Rama III. and decorated in green. The latter monarch built two more on either side of it, a white one dedicated to His royal father King Rama II. and a yellow one for himself. King Mongkut built a blue chetiya behind; and, as if seeing the futility of the custom, released His successors from the obligation by laying down a ruling that in future when no more space would be available let no sovereign feel obliged to build more chetiyas of this nature for himself, because it should be understood that the first four kings knew one another personally and would naturally wish to have their monuments in one and the same place.² Now these chetiyas are surrounded by an enclosure containing several pavilions in which are placed many more encyclopaedic inscriptions. Taking them altogether we have the following:—

(a) Inscriptions explaining paintings depicting 24 of the Birth Stories of the Buddha. The stories are continued and completed in the outer pavilions next to the exterior walls;

(b) Inscriptions describing medical matters, forming the medical library of this "University in stone". Among subjects treated are: treatment of small-pox, massage, pharmacopaeia, pediatrics, child-birth, etc. It was mentioned that this section was written by a court physician by name of Phya Bamroe Rājabaedya;

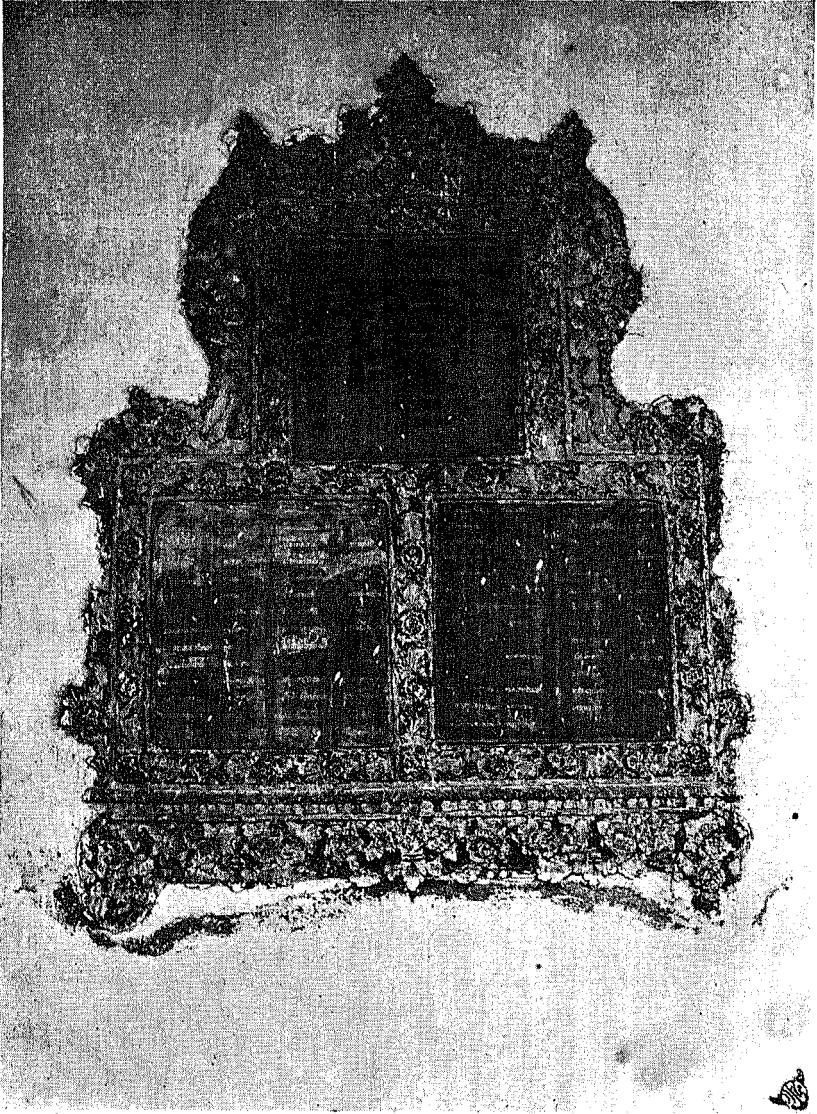
1. ปีศาจปรกรณัม พิมพ์ในงานศพหม่อมเจ้าลิลิตทวงศ พ.ศ. ๒๔๖๗

2. Phra Rajavicharn, (King Chulalongkorn's critical pamphlet on the memoirs of a Princess), p. 242.

(c) Regulation strength of the army in grand reviews, as on the occasion of Kathin presentations, in which the four divisions of an army, handed down from Ancient India, were still adhered to. It is interesting also to find mentioned the regiments of Cham and Japanese mercenaries armed respectively with kris or Malay daggers and axes! The pictures of these two regiments happen to remain in good preservation. Students of Siamese literature will find here identical names of royal "War horses and elephants" as in the epic of Taleng Phai from the pen also of Prince Paramanujit. Among animals drawing war chariots and conveyances of the commissariat are oxen, buffaloes, donkeys and even camels;

(d) Contemporary moralist literature was represented by the well known and now popular *Krishnā Son Nong*, as well as *Ashta Bānor*, *Bāli Son Nong*, and *Subhasit Phra Ruang*. The first mentioned, from the pen again of Prince Paramanujit, is esteemed to be one of the most eloquent pieces of Chanda poetry in Siam and is prescribed for Government schools down to the present day. The subject treated of is the conduct of a good wife, being the advice given to her sister by *Krishnā*, better known as *Draupadī* the bride of the *Pāndavas* of the *Mahābhārata*.¹ The authorship of the other three is not known, but like the first they were in the nature also of moral maxims in verse. In the *Ashta Bānor* a royal personage, who had endeared himself to eight monkeys of the forest by daily feeding them, is given much advice of a moral nature in gratitude for his generosity by those animals who turn out to be celestial beings in disguise. The poem called *Bāli Son Nong* details the dying instructions of the *Monkey-king* to his brother *Sugriva* as to the proper behaviour of one serving a Sovereign in anticipation of the

1. Since writing the above I have come across a note by the late King Chulalongkorn written in 1889, identifying the episode as a part of the *Vanaparva* of the *Mahabharata*, where the very same story is told in almost identical terms. (วินิจฉัยเรื่องกาถุณนาสอนน้อง พิมพ เมื่อ พ. ศ. ๒๔๗๓).



Inscriptions of Moralistic Literature in
precincts of the Chetiya.



Cham Mercenaries of the Army.



Japanese Mercenaries of the Army.

latter's service under Rama. The last poem as its name indicates is supposed to have been a collection of sayings of that figure of romance, the once mythical sovereign of Sukhodaya, but now identified with the historical Sri Indrāditya ;

(e) Two inscriptions bear witness to the consideration given to the once all-important subject of Astrology and omens. One was written in verse without any statement as to authorship, while the other gives Pali formulæ for warding off evils.

Mention has already been made of the pavilions next to the outer walls, where were painted the Birth-Stories of the Buddha continued from the pavilions in the enclosure of the great chetiyas. Besides the Birth-Stories, however, there are mingled figures and inscriptions of interest. Instead of mural decorations in paint, here are set up figures of rishis in what were deemed to be attitudes of physical self-culture with explanatory verses and charts written on the wall behind.¹ Each of the sixteen pavilions had also two stone figures representing various Nationalities, among whom we find the Singhalese, Siamese, Karen, African, Dutch, Italian, French, Japanese, Arab, Turk, Pathan, Russian, Tartar, Shan, Burmese, Hindu, Malay, Cham, Lao, Korean, Annamite, Chinese, Cambodian, Liu Kiu, Notable absentees were the English, American, Portuguese and German. In the latter case of course this was before 1870. The explanatory verses for both the rishis and the nationalities were by different authors of the period. A few specimens of the inscriptions of the latter class of figures, of which only two remain, may be interesting.

The Siamese (by Prince Paramanujt)

“The figure of a Siamese, handsome as if shaped by Heaven dwelling in the prosperous and glorious city of Ayudhya.....”

“He wears a coat of ravishing material, a painted panung.....”

1. It would seem from Crawford's description that instead of the stone figures, these illustrations of physical culture were then painted on the walls. The figures must then be innovations of the second restoration.

The parts left out are nothing more than complimentary epithets.

The Dotchi, i. e. Dutch (by the Rev. Phra Nānapariyati)

“The farang figure here represents a sea-faring nationality, strong and unshakable in their faith of Jesus Christ, who they believed created the World.

“In semblance like the English, wearing trousers, coat and hat, inhabiting a country to the south called Vilanda, they are called Dotchi.”

The information above though rather inaccurate is yet clear, excepting the meaning of the “country to the south called Vilanda”. Perhaps the author meant south of the English whom he had just mentioned, or perhaps he was thinking of the Dutch colonials nearer Siam. Vilanda or Blanda might have been assimilated from “Flanders”. In more modern times Hollanda is also used, but Dotchi has never been met with elsewhere. It is also interesting to note that the English, whose figure is not among the thirty-two set up, was nevertheless well-known as evidenced by this and other similar inscriptions.

The Français (by the Rev. Phra Muminayok)

“The Français in a black tunic with gold epaulettes and gilded buttons on the breeches (?), a watch chain dangling from his pocket;

“His country is on a par with (that of) the English, and possesses high mountains. It is guarded on the borders by Sipāys bearing rifles as protection for the populace”.

Apparently Siam was well acquainted with French officialdom. The term Sipāy is more generally known by its Anglo-Indian orthography of Sepoy, although the word came originally from the Persian “Sipāhi” which would sound nearer to the Siamese pronunciation.

The Japanese (by Prince Dej Adisorn)

“The attractive figure here demands your stop and admiration, being a standing figure of a Japanese. On his head are two tufts of bundled hair, and he wears a multi-coloured gown.

“His habitat is on the island of Nippon among hills; he is skilled in all crafts, his sword is beautifully gleaming, his trade among others is in teapots and pinto”.

The foreigner's mistaken idea of the multi-coloured kimono of a Japanese is evident here also. The origin of the Siamese “pinto” is here indicated and its identification with the “bento” is obvious.

The Rouch Pitasbag (by the Rev. Phra Nānapariyati)

“The Rouch Pitasbag here lives in the West. His country contains a big population, so have I heard. In the wet months there are hailstorms and extremely cold rainstorms.

“The country folk there wear coats made of sheepskin, and sleep by the fire. Some of them kill goats to make coats of their skin which are overbearingly malodorous”.

Another nationality was also given as the “Rouch living near Chinese territory” which has been presumed to refer to the Russian Tartar.

Behind the enclosure of the great chetiyas again, is another enclosure of the Library with similar pavilions containing more inscriptions. Within the Library itself was depicted the story of the nine Buddhist councils for the revision of the Master's teachings, with explanatory inscriptions. No texts of these was published by the Royal Institute, but the history of these councils is well known to students of Siamese Buddhism. It can be found fully reiterated in Prince Damrong's edition of Chao Phya Dibakarawongs' History of the First Reign, treating of the ninth council held under the patronage of King Rama I. of the Chakri dynasty in 1788, sixty years before its inclusion in this encyclopaedia in stone. The story of these councils is an interesting indication of the way by which Buddhism came to this country. The first three councils are well known in every school of Buddhism, having taken place in India. The council of Kanishka, however, is not mentioned, the cleavage of Mahayana doctrine not being taken into account. In its stead we have the council in Ceylon of Mahinda, some 20 years after the third Council of Asoka, and another one, the fifth, some 200 years after, also in Ceylon. Then over 500 years afterwards the work of retranslating into Pali

from Singhalese of the Canons by Buddhaghosha is reckoned as the sixth council. The seventh council in 1044 of the Christian era again took place in Ceylon. The eighth brings us over to Chiengmai and is dated 1477, taking place under the patronage of King Tilaka or Lok, the famous adversary of the Siamese King Phra Parama Trailokanath (1448-1488). The text tells us that Buddhism was brought to Burma from Ceylon by King Anurudh of Pagan and from there spread to neighbouring countries. Other councils in Ceylon and Burma not in this chronological sequence were not treated of.

The pavilions were painted with representations of the earlier episodes of the Ramakirti leading up presumably to the coming of age of Rama, though most of the inscriptions have been lost. Additional spaces were decorated differently in each pavilion and there were the Incarnations of Vishnu, the wiles of women, the story of the Mon woman's divine rice, the story of the Songkrant, and the story called Sibsong Liem (the Duodecagon). Unfortunately one of the pavilions was pulled down to make room for the enlargement of the enclosure of the great chetiyas due to the erection of the blue chetiya by King Mongkut, and thus part of the episodes of the Ramakirti as well as the Incarnations of Vishnu have been lost. Another pavilion fell under the weight of the Library dome which crumbled down, and caused the loss to us of another section of the episodes and also the "wiles of women". What remains is incomplete. It should be noted, however, that so far as we can judge from their fragmentary remains the episodes from the Ramakirti, follow the well known Ramakirti of King Rama I. in all respects. The Sibsong Liem survives in a written form elsewhere and has been published by the Royal Institute.¹ Prince Damrong, in a preface to the latter, was of opinion that the work belonged to the later Ayudhya period while the story being Persian in setting must have been translated from some esteemed piece of Persian Literature brought over by the

1. "นิทานอิเหนาราชธรรม ๑๒ เรื่อง ที่เรียกกันมาว่า เรื่อง ๑๒ เหลี่ยม" พิมพ์ในงานศพท่านผู้หญิงตลับสุวรรณศรีวัฒนศักดิ์ พ. ศ. ๒๔๖๕

diplomatic missions from that country in the time of King Narai. The story relates how Mamun of Baghdad (identified there with Mahmud of the Ghaznavid dynasty reigning about the end of the 10th. century A. D., although it might have also been Mamun the son of Harun Al Raschid, which is in my opinion more likely) went to the tomb at Ctesiphon of the great Nushirwan of the Sassanid dynasty and found the duodecagonal mausoleum, on each of the twelve sides of which were inscribed the tables which form the subject of this work. Some of the painting remains. It is interesting to note that the dress and *mise-en-scène* are Siamese and not Persian.

The inscriptions concerning the Mon woman's divine rice are found on six slabs and are not exactly clear in point of their *raison d'être* in the "encyclopaedia". The story labelled "เมืองรามัญหญิงข้าทิพย์" is about two daughters of a certain Brahman in the mythical era of one of the Buddhas preceding Gautama the present Buddha. These girls accidentally learned and practiced the art of boiling rice for divine sacrifice every Wednesday and thereby acquired untold wealth for their father. The father latterly deserted his daughters at the instigation of a mother-in-law; and the girls though left to themselves in the forest set up their own home and prospered with the help of their sacrificial rice, until the elder became consort to the King of Benares. Neglect of the sacrifices while at court soon reduced her to banishment and poverty, but she was finally re-installed through the aid again of her sacrificial rice. It is not known whether the story should end with the sixth slab as related here or whether there were more which are missing. There seems, however, to be very little said in connection with the nationality of the heroine, and one has to presume that the Mon woman referred to in the title corresponds to the elder daughter of the Brahman although nowhere else have we been told that the Mon race dated back so far. Why the Mon element should come in at all is a mystery altogether. King Chulalongkorn explained in his treatise dealing with Royal Ceremonies¹

1. พระราชนิพนธ์ เรื่องพระราชพิธีสิบสองเดือน พ. ศ. ๒๔๖๓. King Chulalongkorn's "Court Ceremonies", Siamese, published B. E. 2463 (1920). p. 331.

that Rama III. was wont to have regular sermons in the palace, and the subject of the sermons were all included in these inscriptions. When it came to the turn of some minor priests many of whom were Mon, the subject became more trifling until the word "Mon" came almost to be identified with trash. The juxtaposition of this inscription to the next one to be described would perhaps suggest in an indirect way how the Mon element had come in.

The inscriptions about the Songkrant are not complete. The first slab acknowledges its source to have come from Pali writings in the country of the Mons. The narrative again goes back to the mythical ages to explain the origin of the Songkrant or new year festival. In those days the calendar was lunar and the year commenced on the first day of the waxing moon of the fifth month. For purposes of astrological reckoning, however, a solar calendar had to be kept up and according to this the date of the entry of the sun into Aries (April the 13th) was popularly observed under the name of Songkrant (Saṅkranti). Popular tradition had it that on this day a Songkrant angel arose with the dawn in the Eastern seas, and her mount, her attitude, her food were materials for the divination of the people's welfare for the coming year and therefore formed a subject of much speculation. Our inscriptions tell us of the popular story of the Seven Songkrant angels, daughters of Kapila the Brahman, who lost his head in a wager. The head had to be borne aloft: and each new year at the sun's entry into Aries, a daughter took her turn to fly round the World with the father's head. It should be noted that like the last inscription the present one claims a certain connection also with the Mon country and both stories seem to have been in the nature of explaining away the origin of customs. The former perhaps might have been intended to explain the custom of giving rice to ascetics on Wednesdays although nowadays no one seems to practice special charities on that day rather than any other. The latter's purport is of course clearer.

On the outer walls of these pavilions will be found other inscriptions which are not quite complete. They are the well-known Klong Lokaniti, or "Verses of Worldly Wisdom," from the pen of

Prince Dej Adisorn, a younger brother of Rama III., who besides being a poet and a scholar of note, was a statesman of some repute. He was later promoted by King Mongkut to the rank of Krom Somdech, which is reckoned as an equivalent to the modern Somdech Krom Phya. His "Verses of Worldly Wisdom" were in nature similar to the four collections of moral maxims mentioned above. It consisted of 345 stanzas, and was according to its own introduction, taken from old maxims, which seem to indicate a Siamese origin.

Behind the enclosure of the Library were two rockery groups, one containing a small pavilion said to be European in style, and the other a Chinese. Both had mural paintings, but there does not seem to exist any inscription, and therefore, the painting having been lost as in the case of almost everything else in the monastery, we are not in a position to know anything beyond the fact that the European pavilion contained pictures of the thirteen stores (๑๓ ชั้น), and the Chinese one had representations of the famous historical episode of Chinese history, the Three Kingdoms.

Two more buildings in the precincts contained paintings and explanatory inscriptions. One was the Sala Kan Parien, presumably intended to have been a school in older times, though no such purpose has ever been connected with this kind of building in any monastery nowadays. It is true that the Sala Kan Parien up country often serves among others the purpose of a local school, where primary education is given to the children of the village, but this is an entirely new idea and cannot have any connection with the suggestion above. Anyhow when the Sala Kan Parien of this monastery was planned, it could never have been intended to be a school at all. Its mural decoration was on the subject of Hell and the Petas, spirits of the deceased, undergoing their purgatorial period, but unlike the Purgatorio of Dante, the World of Petas seemed to have been much less agreeable. The Peta in Siamese art is usually extremely emaciated, whilst in northern Buddhism he is called the hungry ghost. The inscriptions tell us that in 1838 Prince Kraisaravijit, the superintendent of the whole work of restoration, was commanded by the

King to have this Sala painted with pictures of Hell and the Petas. The subject was taken from the Devadūta Sutta of the Majjhima Nikāya dealing with the fate of those who neglect the messengers of death. It would not seem necessary to translate the contents in this short survey, dealing as it does with a subject common to monastic art and possessing no historical interest.

We now come to the last building of epigraphical interest and importance—the Vihara of the Reclining Buddha. As above stated this was a new addition of Rama III. and not a restoration. We learn from the poetical narrative of Prince Paramanujit already referred to that here was to be found an inscription detailing the work of this second restoration. This particular inscription, however, does not exist and nothing is known of its contents, although an empty slab of stone remains to testify to the statement of its existence by the Patriarch that :

“ ในฝาแผ่น ๆ พูน	พินหาร หดวงเฮย
พระสมม ๆ หน	แห่งด้ว้าง
จากฤกษ์ณัฏฐ์ ๆ วิถาร	ถันถ์ ถัดงนา
ปราชญ์อ่าน ๆ ข่างรุ	เวองรเบียด ”

“ On a stone in the great Vihara
where the Lord's reclining effigy lies,
will be found minute information
the wise, who read, will know of (this restoration) ”.

The mural painting of this Vihara was curiously not specified in the Patriarch's narrative, which was rather strange considering the minute details elsewhere. The only mention of it was that the northern wall of the monastery was enlarged, an image of the Reclining Buddha was built in brick and plaster and a Vihara built over to give it shade. No mention again of the Vihara was made in the verses giving details of the painters and the nature of the painting in the various parts of the monastery. Nevertheless

the Vihara is full of paintings, and inscriptions, although many of the latter have been lost. As in the main chapel, its paintings remain in a tolerable condition, while in most other buildings very little is discernible. The window panes, besides containing decorative gold painting of a stereotyped character, have also towards their lowest parts paintings of certain stories as yet not wholly identified. Prince Damrong thinks they deal with Folk-lore. Between the windows the scheme of the Uposatha is continued. While in that sanctuary were painted the lives of the forty-one eminent disciples, here we have the lives also of the thirteen eminent women disciples of the Holy order as well as twenty eminent members of the laity of both sexes. Above the windows in the spacious sides of the building were pictures depicting Singhalese history according to the "Mahavansa" from the earliest recorded times down to the famous single combat on elephants between Kings Abhayaduttha and Elara, resulting in the former's victory and consequent conquest of Anuradhapura.

In dealing in a general way with the inscriptions of the monastery, mention must also be made of the fact that not by inscriptions and paintings alone was the encyclopaedic nature of the ensemble emphasized, but also by other decorations and embellishments such as architecture and gardening. We have for instance stone from Sukhodaya, Lobpuri and Rajapuri, marble from Nakon Nayok, and sandstone from Jolapuri and Rajapuri; we have specimens of all the then known branches of fine arts and artistic craftsmanship, painting, sculpture in metal, plaster, wood, etc., chiselling, and inlaid works; in supplement of the medical inscriptions it was said that every plant of any medicinal value was to be found there, thus:

“ รอบวัด.....

 ปดุกพรรัตนพฤกษายา เยี่ยวโรค รังบเฮย
 ต่างต่างเหต่าให้ไตไว้ แวดราย ”

(Prince Paramanujit's narrative)

By the restoration of this monastery, King Rama III. indeed deserved to be given the honour of having been a patron of arts and learning. Like many other Oriental patrons in the same field he surrounded himself with artists, poets and literary men whose names are recorded in the inscription, many of which, such as the names of Prince Paramanujit and Prince Dej Adisorn, have become identified with classic works of literature.