

THE GENESIS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF  
THE NOVEL IN THAILAND

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of the University of London

by

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ABSTRACT

In spite of the fact that the novel, which is at the present time one of the dominant forms of prose fiction in Thailand, asserted itself as a new genre in Thai literature nearly half a century ago, no detailed study of its origin and development has been made. This thesis, therefore, is written as an attempt to provide such a study. Its scope has been limited to the early development of this new literary genre. This study was based chiefly on the material available in the library of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and in the National Library in Bangkok, and personal communications with many writers, journalists and men of letters in Thailand. The thesis contains nine chapters, one table and one appendix.

Chapter one presents a brief general history of Thai literature with emphasis on the poetic tradition.

Chapter two deals with the history and nature of prose works before the modern period.

Chapter three is concerned with book production before and after the introduction of printing technology.

Chapter four examines the role of journalism in relation to the development of modern prose fiction.

Chapters five and six deal with the literary climate in which the novel proper was to emerge, with special reference to the development of the short story, imported literature derived from Western and Chinese fiction - appearing in books and films, and the proto-novel. An historical background of the works is included.

Chapter seven discusses the nature of the first published novels of "Sī Būraphā", "Dokmai Sot" and Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng.

Chapter eight provides a general description of the reading public and examines the relationship between readers and writers of modern prose fiction, with special reference to Prince Phichit-prīchākṇ and Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng.

Chapter nine is a conclusion in which the correlation between the developing novel and society is discussed.

The table contains historical events significantly relevant to the development of the novel in Thailand.

The appendix contains biographical sketches of Prince Phichit-prīchākṇ, Prince Bidyalankarana, King Vajiravudh, Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng, "Dokmai Sot" and "Sī Būraphā".

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## NOTE

In this thesis four systems of chronology are used:

- (i) The Buddhist era (B.E.): beginning in 543 B.C.
- (ii) The Christian era (A.D.)
- (iii) Čhulasakkarāt: beginning in 638 A.D.
- (iv) Ratanakosin sakkarāt (r.s.): beginning in 1782 A.D.

In the body of the text, all the dates are converted into the Christian era, whereas the originals are retained in the footnotes and bibliography.

In the bibliography, Thai authors appear according to the alphabetical order of their first names or the names generally known to the public; Western authors appear according to the alphabetical order of their surnames.

The transcription of Thai terms into Roman characters follows the general system of the Royal Institute of Thailand except that in the case of common place names and proper names, especially those of certain authors, general usage and their personal spellings are adopted. A macron is used to distinguish long from short vowel sounds.

TABLE OF HISTORICAL EVENTS RELEVANT TO  
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NOVEL

- 1835 Introduction of printing technology into Thailand by American Missionaries.
- 1857 Circulation of Rāchakitḥānubēksā (the Royal Gazette), the first periodical in Thai.
- 1861 Publication of the Journal of the Siamese Embassy to London in 1857; book trade began.
- 1865 Publication of Sāmkok, prose fiction translated from Chinese literature.
- 1871 Foundation of the first modern school in the Royal Palace.
- 1874 Circulation of Darunōwāt, the first magazine in Thai.
- 1874 Proclamation of an Anti-slavery Act.
- 1875 Circulation of The Court, the first newspaper in Thai.

- 1884 Foundation of the Wachirayān Library and circulation of its periodicals.
- 1886 The first and only instalment of "Sanuk Nūk" was published in Wachirayān Wisēt.
- 1902 Khwām Phayābāt, a translation of Marie Corelli's Vendetta, was serialized in Lak Witthayā.
- 1905 Establishment of the City Library.
- 1906 Chotmāi Čhāngwāng Ram was published in instalments in Thawī Panyā.
- 1914 Proclamation of a Literary Act.
- 1916 Foundation of Chulalongkorn University.
- 1918 Huāchai Čhāi Num (proto-novel) was published in instalments in Dusit Samit.
- 1921 Proclamation of a Compulsory Education Act.
- 1920's Saw the wide spread of publications of imported prose fiction from books and from films.

- 1928      Publication of Lūk Phūchāi.
- 1929      Sattrū Khong Chao Lon was serialized in Thai  
Khasem.
- 1929      Publication of Lakhon Haeng Chīwit.

## CHAPTER I

## Introduction: The Poetic Tradition

The novel, a form of narrative prose fiction, marks a new era in the history of Thai literature. The realistic method of presentation of human experiences, imagination, sentiments, and ideas in terms of prose narrative is a break-away from the Thai literary convention, in which poetic techniques have generally been employed for a period of over six hundred years. However, this new form of literature does not emerge all of a sudden; but, it rather is a kind of mutation in the process of a literary evolution. The Thai term "nawaniyaī", which is an equivalent of the English word "novel" is less than fifty years old.<sup>1</sup> And in 1886 A.D., perhaps the first time when a Thai word was used to stand for what is generally called "the novel", it actually was a transliteration of the English term itself.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the

1. The writer was told by Sanit Charoenrat, a senior journalist, and Sot Kūramarohit, a famous post-war novelist, that the term "นาวินิยาย" (nawaniyai), is likely to have been an invention of the Suphab-Burut Group. More detail of the Group is given in chapter IV, pp. 106-108.

2. The term was employed by King Chulalongkorn in his letter dated Sunday, the eighth month, the ninth day of the waxing moon, chulasakkarāt 1248, to Prince Pawarētawariyālongkōn, the Abbot of Wat Bōwōnniwēt and Prince Vajirañāna Varōrasa. See Chulalongkorn, King of Thailand, and Somdet Phra Mahā Samanaçhao Krom Phrayā Vajirañāna Varōrasa, Phrarāçchahatthalēkhā Phrabātsomdet Phra Çhulaçhomklaōçhao-yuhua Song Mī Pai Mā Kap Somdet Phra Mahā Samanaçhao Krom Phrayā Vajirañāna Varōrasa (Bangkok: Distributed at the remembrance ceremony for the nineteenth anniversary of King Chulalongkorn's death, Sophonphi-phatthanākōn, 2472), p. 4; see chapter VIII, p. 298.

fact that the Thai novel appears in the same period during which the Thais have had a closer contact with the West, cannot be treated simply as a matter of coincidence.

Thai literary tradition, like other aspects of their culture, has obviously changed as time goes on. Features such as language, forms, styles, subject matter, and other factors which constitute a Thai literary work have often borne the marks of foreign influences i.e. of the Khmer, Ceylonese, ancient Indian, Persian, Javanese, Chinese and Western. But, again, like other aspects of their civilization, the literary culture of the Thais is an original synthesis including strong admixtures of cultures with which they have come into contact. Thus, it is important to look into the Thai literary development briefly from the beginning to see how the tradition has evolved before it reaches the era of the novel.

The recorded history of Thai literature might be said to have begun in the last two decades of the thirteenth century. That is after the introduction of a Thai alphabet by King Ramkhamhaeng of Sukhothai in 1283 A.D., and inscriptions were put on a stele in 1292 A.D.<sup>1</sup> These inscriptions tell a brief social history of the Thais under the leadership of King Ramkhamhaeng, the third monarch of the Sukhothai period, as well as showing a style of writing the Thai

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1. G. Coedès (ed.) Inscriptions de Sukhodaya (Bangkok: Sophonphiphatthanākṇ, 2467), Pt. I, pp. 14 and 57.

language with the alphabet newly introduced. The form used in this earliest written record is prose narrative. It is the case that prose writing was introduced early and has been used ever since then, but certainly mostly as a tool for practical communication before the modern period. Poetry, on the other hand, was in evidence in imaginative writing several decades later than the earliest Sukhothai material.

A piece of poetry which is believed to have been composed some time in the middle of the fourteenth century A.D. is regarded as the earliest. It is a short poem written in *rāi dan* and a kind of *khlong hā* verse forms.<sup>1</sup> As the poem is originally in *Khōm*<sup>2</sup> script, it inevitably contains some items of *Khōm* vocabulary. A mystic atmosphere dominates the poem, which however was not primarily to be read for entertainment, but to be recited or read in a royal ceremony called "*thū nam phra phiphat satchā*"<sup>3</sup>, the ceremony in which soldiers and officers would drink cursed-spelled water while taking an oath of fealty to the sovereign.<sup>4</sup> This ceremony is believed to

1. *Plūang Na Nakhon, Prawat Wannakhadi Thai Samrap Naksuksā, A History of Thai Literature for Students* (Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 2498, pp. 52-56.

2. *Khōm* script is a variant of Khmer script used for Pali and Thai textual material.

3. This term sometimes appears as "*sattayā*".

4. *Chulalongkorn, King of Thailand, Phraratchaphithi Sipsong Duan, The Royal Ceremonies of the Twelve Months* (Bangkok: Sinlapabannākhān, 2505), pp. 228-234 and 251-271.

have been performed since the reign of the first king of Ayuthaya, who ruled the kingdom during 1350-1369 A.D., up to the reign of King Rama VII of the Ratanakosin period. This piece of poetry ceased to have its active social function after the revolution of 1932<sup>1</sup>, which brought a constitutional monarchy to the kingdom. As the ceremony was held for officers and soldiers to make an oath of fidelity to the king, the mystical tone of the poem is, to some extent, able to serve its psychological purpose, that is, to make them feel conscious of being faithful and loyal to the king who is the leader of the people, and to bring unity among the officers and soldiers themselves. This piece of poetry, which is generally known as "Prakāt (Ōngkān) Chaeng Nam Khlōng Hā" appears to be the only piece of work in the poetic tradition which had survived through maintaining an active social function for nearly six hundred years.

The first poetic works found in Thai script are believed to have been composed about a hundred years later. Here we have Mahā Chāt Kham Luang, Lilit Yuan Phāi, and Khlōng Thawāthotsamāt.

Mahā Chāt Kham Luang is a religious poem adapted from a jātaka tale. It tells the story of the last of the ten great lives of the Lord Buddha prior to his enlightenment, which Thai Buddhists consider the most important in the cycle of his lives. In this poem, the Lord Buddha is known as Phra Wetsandon. During this

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1. Na Nakōn, op. cit., p. 52.



life time of his, the Lord Buddha is seen, in his renunciation, to have arrived at the highest form of merit, that is, the freedom of the mind from all kinds of sensual wants which leads eventually to a complete detachment.

However, there have been several variations of Mahā Chāt, which literally means "the great life", and which is generally referred to as the story of Phra Wētsandḥn. The next variation is believed to have been written perhaps 120-145 years later, that is between 1602-1627 A.D.<sup>1</sup> The vocabulary in Kāp Mahā Chāt is comparatively new, and much more familiar to modern readers than that which appears in Mahā Chāt Kham Lüang, which was composed presumably in the reign of King Baromatrailōkanāt who ruled the kingdom during 1448-1488 A.D.<sup>2</sup>

Another poetic work in Thai script, which is believed to have been composed in this period is Lilit<sup>3</sup> Yuan Phāi. The poem is written obviously with an historical motive intended to eulogize King Baromatrailōkanāt himself. This panegyric is presented mainly

1. Kāp Mahā Chāt (Bangkok: Khlang Witthayā, 2507), pp. 1-4 and 85-93.

2. National Library, Prachum Phongsāwadān Chabap Hō Samut Haeng Chāt, Collected Historical Records (Bangkok: Kāwnā, 2507), Vol. 1, pp. 121.

3. A "lilit" is a form of poetic composition. A lilit poem normally contains a combination of various forms of rāi and khlōng, see Uppakitsinlapasān, Phrayā, Chanthalak, Versification of Lak Phāsā Thai, Thai Grammar and Versification (Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 2499), pp. 98-102.

in the form of khlōng dan. Lilit Yuan Phāi tells the story of the victory of the Southern Thais (those who lived in and around Ayuthaya) in a war against the Northern Thais (those who lived in and around Chiangmai). The poem could be counted as the first piece of poetic eulogy of a king, which is an aspect of the Thai literary tradition which remains a living one.

The last main work which is also believed to have been composed during this period, presumably by a group of a few court poets, is Thawāthotsamāt. It is a kind of nirāt<sup>1</sup> poem<sup>2</sup>.

Thawāthotsamāt is perhaps the earliest piece of reflective or personal poetry to appear in the history of Thai literature.

This poetic lament is highly regarded as an old master of nirāt poems, whose style has often been imitated by poets of the same sort.

It is probably from the fact that the region now known as Thailand was, before the Chulalongkorn period, mainly a combination of agricultural city-states and provinces, with Ayuthaya as the most prominent, that education in a systematic scholarly sense had hardly become a public service. The Ayuthaya court, thus,

1. The term "nirāt" in Thai literature stands for a form of poetic composition in which a poet describes in a melancholy way his personal feeling resulting from separation from his beloved and his love-longing. See Manas Chitakasem, "The Emergence and Development of Nirāt Genre in Thai Poetry", J.S.S., Vol. 60, Pt. 2 (July 1972), pp. 136-139.

2. Ibid., pp. 143-145

appeared to have been the active centre of progressive civilization as well as of decadence. Little creative work has been recorded while the kingdom was at war, either internal or external. And, during those 417 years of the Ayuthaya period, there were really only a few intervals when she was free from any kinds of war. Two of those wars were really disastrous, one of which brought the capital city of Ayuthaya into an end. The first one was in 1569, when she was defeated by Burmese troops, and fifteen years later her independence was declared and resumed by King Naresuan in 1584 A.D. The last one was in 1767. This war, again with the Burmese, brought complete destruction to the city of Ayuthaya, which had been a centre of Thai civilization for a period of over four hundred years.

Thai poetic work appears to have gained its highest productive point twice in the history of Thai literature. Once was in the Ayuthaya period, during 1656-1688 A.D., when King Narāi became the 27th king; and the other was in the Ratanakōsin, during 1809-1824 A.D., when King Rama II was on the throne. In those high times of poetic creativity, the kings and their courtiers, as well as ladies in the courts, had often had their share in the making of literary history.

Incidentally, however, there is one piece of epic-romance poetry in a lilit style, whose author and time when it was composed cannot yet be identified with certainty. But Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, a Thai scholar, tends to place its date either in the reign of King Baromtrailōkanāt, or some time before the Narāi

period<sup>1</sup>. Unlike Lilit Yuan Phāi, which is a panegyric, this long narrative poem tells the story of Phra Lō, a young king who, in his pursuit of love, comes to a tragic end. Although the story is set in a political atmosphere, Lilit Phra Lō is mainly a story of human passions. The poem expresses itself convincingly as to what love and hatred can do to man; it shows different kinds of love - love between mother and son, husband and wife, master and servant, and men and women in general. In spite of its many old Thai terms and unfamiliar vocabulary, Lilit Phra Lō has won a strong admiration among scholars of Thai literature as well as the general public for centuries. And, when a scholar in the court of King Narāi composed a text-book for students of Thai, a literary device used in telling this love story was taken as a master-model of a poetic form<sup>2</sup>.

As mentioned earlier, in the reign of King Narāi, Thai literature is said to have come to its highest productive point for the first time. Here many new poetic forms had been recorded, for instance, kāp hō khlōng, kāp khap mai, chan etc.<sup>3</sup> But, it could be possible, however, that these forms had been taken up most widely as means of

1. Lilit Phra Lō (Bangkok: Sinlapabannakhān, 2508), intro., pp. ๑ - ๒.

2. Phra Hōrāthipadī et al., Chindā Manī Lem Nūng-Song Kap Banthuk Ruang Nangsa Chindā Manī Lae Chindā Manī Chabap Prachao Baromakōt, Chindā Manī Version I and II, History of Chindā Manī and Chindā Manī Written in the Reign of King Baromakōt (Bangkok: Sinlapabannākhān, 2504), p. 32.

3. Ibid., pp. 29-78.

a literary expression during this period, instead of being suddenly invented then. The major works believed to have been composed here are mainly romance poetry: Sua-khō Kham Chan, Anirut Kham Chan, Samutthakhōt Kham Chan (unfinished). And, the most distinguished among other works are Khlong Nirat Hariphunchai, Khlong Kamsuan Siprat, and Chinda Mani.

Sua-khō Kham Chan, a romance poem composed by Phra Mahā Ratchakhrū, is written entirely in chan forms. The poet took, at least, two tales in Panṇāsa Jātaka<sup>1</sup>, and recreated them in the form of a romance. In spite of its religious origin, Sua-khō Kham Chan contains stronger elements of romance, and, as such, it is quite famous. Like Mahā Chāt Kham Luang, there have been other variations of the story, one of which is illustrated with cartoons by a famous living cartoonist and popular poet, Prayun Chanyāwong. And, this variation was published in a newspaper in instalments some twenty years ago.

Another romance poem composed by the same poet, but left unfinished, is Samutthakhōt Kham Chan. Here again, the poet who was generally known also as a scholar and astrologer in the court of King Narai took the story from a tale in Panṇāsa Jātaka<sup>2</sup>, and again

1. Panṇāsa Jātaka, Vol. 8, No. 29: Phahalākhawī Chādok, trans. Phra Yānawichit (Sitthi Lotchananon) (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of Nang Nonthabanchā (Thanom Chakon), Bamrungnukunkit, 2468), pp. 90-98; and, Vol. 24, No. 8: Suwannawong Chādok, trans. Luang Thamrong Chedirat (Thet Wiriyarat) (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of Char Chom Māndā Talab, a consort of Rama V, Sophonphitphattanakon, 2473), p.16.

2. Ibid., Vol. 1, No. 1: Samutthakhōt Chādok, trans. Sommot Amraphan, prince (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of M.R. Lek Siriwong, Sophonphitphattanakon, 2467), pp. 1-24.

re-created it in chan forms. But, unlike Sūa-khō Kham Chan, this romance was composed primarily for shadow-play. Samutthakhōt Kham Chan is indeed a peculiar work, in that it took a long period of over 160 years and three distinguished poets to make the poem complete. It was begun by Phra Mahā Rāṭchakhrū, continued by King Narāī himself, as the former had passed away before the task was done, and for the same reason the poem was left unfinished until in the reign of Rama III of Ratanakōsin, when Krom Somdet Phra Paramānuchitchinōrot took over and completed it.

Another epic-romance believed to have been composed during this period by a controversial poet, Sīprāt, is Anirut Kham Chan. Here, again in chan forms, the poet presents a romance whose story is derived from an episode in Hindu Purānas<sup>1</sup>. And again there are other variations of this epic legend from Sanskrit origin, but whose hero's name reappears sometimes as Unarut in later variations, such as a dance drama re-composed by Rama I in the Ratanakōsin period.

Looking back at these poems: Lilit Phra Lō, Samutthakhōt Kham Chan, Anirut Kham Chan, and Sūa-Khō Kham Chan, one can see that three of them possess a common feature, that is they are all entitled with the names of the heroes: Phra Lō, Phra Samutthakhōt, and Phra Anirut

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1. D. N. Bose (ed.), Harivamsha, trans. (Bengal: Datta Bose and Co.), Pt. I, Chaps. CLXXV-CLXXXIX, pp. 423-454.

respectively. It may also be interesting to note here that the stories of Samutthakhōt Kham Chan, and Anirut Kham Chan are more or less identical, and that of Lilit Phra Lō, which is believed to have its origin in an old tale told in a Northern Thai state, is also similar to the two, but only in its main outline. The chief difference between Samutthakhōt Kham Chan and Anirut Kham Chan, on the one hand, and Lilit Phra Lō, on the other, lies not only in the literary forms in which they are presented, but more in the point of view of their authors in composing them.

Samutthakhōt and Anirut are obviously dominated by the ancient Indian philosophy, which believes that man is subjected to supreme external forces beyond human control. Phra Lō, on the other hand, emphasizes stronger psychological aspects of human beings, which is a unique characteristic of Thai literature. While Phra Samutthakhōt and Phra Anirut are subjected to the wills and acts of gods and demons, Phra Lō is subjected to his own desire and actions. Here one can see that Hinduism sheds its light on Samutthakhōt and Anirut, on the one hand, and Buddhism on Phra Lō, on the other.

As mentioned earlier, there are three other distinguished works which are believed to have been produced in the reign of King Narāi: Khlong Kamsuan Siprāt, Khlong Nirāt Hariphunchai and Chindā Manī.

Khlong Kamsuan Siprat is a nirat poem in the form of khlong si composed, presumably, by the controversial poet, Siprat.<sup>1</sup> This nirat poem, though it appears in Thai script, contains much vocabulary unfamiliar to modern readers; and a guide to Khlong Kamsuan Siprat is very much needed if one really wishes to appreciate its literary flavour. Surprisingly, however, the sentiment of the poem has really had a great effect on poets of later generations for centuries. One of the admirers of this poetic lament is Nai Narinthit, a person of vague identity, who composed a reminiscence of it which is very well known as Khlong Nirat Narin. The poem has rightly distinguished its composer as a poet in the reign of Rama II of Ratanakosin. In spite of its vocabulary and poetic syntax, Khlong Kamsuan Siprat is generally regarded as a masterpiece of khlong nirat poetry.

The contemporary khlong nirat of Kamsuan Siprat is Nirat Hariphunchai perhaps. The poem is also in the form of khlong si. But, unlike Khlong Kamsuan Siprat, Khlong Nirat Hariphunchai was not written originally in Thai script. It is believed to have been converted from its original northern dialect into central Thai presumably in the reign of King Narai.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Chitakasem, op. cit., pp. 147-149.

2. Ibid., p. 150.



The most remarkable work which is believed to have first appeared also in this period is Chindā Manī. Unlike its contemporary, Chindā Manī is not a book of poetry but a book, mainly, on poetry. Although the content, as it stands, is presented in a rather disorganised way, Chindā Manī is believed to have been the first systematically organized textbook in Thai for Thai people themselves. This textbook, which is believed to have been prepared by Phra Hōrāthibadī is probably the first collection of various forms of the Thai poetic tradition.<sup>1</sup>

It can be noticed here that, in those days, the court was the active centre of Thai intellectual activities; and, it is often noticed that the taste and skill of the king usually signified the direction of the cultural stream. During the reign of King Naraī, the king himself appeared not only as one of the great political leaders Thailand has had, but also as one of the poets. Besides a part in Samutthakhōt Kham Chan, the king is believed to have also composed a number of didactic poems.<sup>2</sup> There is thus strong evidence that the court of King Naraī was really an active centre of Thai literary activities.

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1. Chanthit Krasāesin, "Chindā Manī; Sangkhep Banthāk", Journal of International P.E.N.-Thailand Centre, Vol. 2 (December, 2502) pp. 98-113; see also Phra Hōrāthibadī et al, Chindā Manī, ... , pp. 123-151.

2. Na Nakhon, op. cit., pp. 133-141.

It was in that period when Simon de la Loubère, an envoy from the king of France to the king of Siam, came to Ayuthaya. Then when the French envoy came across the Thais he described them in Du royaume de Siam as "natural poets".<sup>1</sup>

During the 120 year interval between the reign of King Narāi and that of Rama II of Bangkok, there were only a few poetic works in evidence. The most outstanding ones are the personal poems composed by Chaofā Thammāthibēt, a sentimental prince, a great-grandson of King Narāi himself. The prince, whose father was a king of Thailand, seems to have compensated for what he lacked in the actual world with his impetuous feelings and sweet imagination which he expressed, in a charming manner, by means of words. The aesthetic quality of his bot hē rūa (boat-songs), bot hē khruan (love-lament) and nirāt poems has rightly distinguished the prince as a master of reflective poetry in the forms of bot hē and kāp hō khlōng.

It is interesting to find that this prince with literary talents, who is well-known as one of the leading romantic poets, and who composed beautiful reflective poetry on love and nature, is also the author of a serious religious poem, Nanthōpananthasūt Kham Luang. As it were, the poem owes its story to Pali literature.

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1. Simon de la Loubère, A New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam, trans. A. P. Gen. R.S.S. (London: Oxford University Press, 1969) p. 60.

Nanthōpananthasūt Kham Luang depicts the supernatural activities of Phra Mokkhalā, a distinguished disciple of the Lord Buddha, who calms down an angry leader of the naga (serpents) until the state of mind of the latter becomes tranquil, thus able to comprehend the Buddha Dhamma.

There is one more religious poem, which is believed to have been composed by Prince Thammāthibēt, that is Phra Mālai Kham Luang. Here, the poet acknowledged the legend of Maliyadeva Thero, a character in Pali literature, again as his source.<sup>1</sup> The poem tells the story of Phra Mālai, a Ceylonese arahant, whose mind had attained the stage of purification and emancipation which enabled him to possess a miraculous freedom of movement. This freedom allowed him to visit heaven and the underworld, from which places he brought messages to mankind. The plot is well-organised, and the descriptions of the scenes, inhabitants and activities in these imaginary worlds are so vivid with sights, colours and sounds that the poem is able to create a considerably psychological effect on its audience or readers. Unlike other famous works of Prince

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1. Chaofā Thammāthibēt, Phra Mālai Kham Luang, of Thanit Yūphō, Chaofā Thammāthibēt, Phra Prawat Lae Bot Nōi Krōng, Chaofā Thammāthibēt; Biography and Collected Poems (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of Phrayā Lekawanitthamwithak, Siwaphon Ltd., 2505) pp. 241-242 and 291-292.

Thammāthibēt, this poem aims more at giving moral lessons than at creating a literary beauty mainly for its own sake.

Here one may notice that a substantial part of the poetic tradition carried on during the Ayuthaya period which is left in evidence shows a strong religious motif. Bunnōwāt Kham Chan, which is believed to have been composed by a monk, Phra Mahā Nāk, who presumably was Prince Thammāthibēt's contemporary, is another well-known poem among students of Thai literature. It is a poetic elaboration of a legend of a Buddha's footprint in Thailand. In chan forms, the poet not only tells the story, but also describes how the footprint is preserved and celebrated. In this poem, like in Samutthakhōt Kham Chan, the poet referred to a number of theatrical performances, feats, and other forms of out-door entertainment. Here one comes to know that during the Ayuthaya period there was another kind of literature existing in the poetic tradition - that is, the drama. Unfortunately, however, only fragments of some manuscripts of the drama composed in the Ayuthaya period have remained.

As mentioned earlier, the capital city of Ayuthaya fell to complete destruction in 1767 A.D. And, after a political restoration had been made successfully by King Tāksin of Thonburi in the same year, Thailand had to revive many other essential aspects of her culture to bring back her national identity. Not only its physical features were re-built, but its spiritual properties were

also revived. Thus, not only the capital city of Bangkok was built to resemble Ayuthaya, but the literary heritage lost during the war was also recomposed.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when King Rama II came to the throne, Thailand had gained a considerable political stability. And, as the king himself was an artist, people with literary talent were encouraged to make use of their creativeness by means of poetic expression. The motives then were mainly to bring back the "glory in the past" which was almost completely destroyed in 1767 A.D., when Ayuthaya fell in the last and most destructive war against Burma.

Although a great part of the traditional literature was recomposed in the early period of the Ratanakosin, the actual revival task had already begun from the Thonburi period onwards. The poetic works that had been recomposed during this period of cultural restoration were mainly dramatic in form.

Like other forms of traditional literature, Thai drama has often had its origins in foreign lands. And, again, like other forms of traditional literature, in spite of its importation, Thai drama possesses its own essential characteristics. The influence of foreign cultures upon the Thai is normally incorporated in such a way that it emerges as a new entity. Rāmakian and Ināo are the most distinguished examples of such development.

There is no clear evidence to show exactly when the Rāmakian, the Thai dramatic version of the Rāma epic, was first composed, although fragments appear in one form or another since the late Ayuthaya period. In 1770 A.D. King Tāksin composed Rāmakian in the form of dance drama in klōn. And like other major works in the Ayuthaya poetic tradition, there are several variations on the theme of this Indian epic, Rāmāyana.<sup>1</sup> King Rama I and King Rama II each composed one, and both, like the Tāksin's text, are in the form of dance drama in klōn. Rāmakian is indeed the most famous and longest epic dance drama in the history of Thai literature.

Unlike Rāmakian, whose origin is from India, Inao, another famous dance drama in klōn, has its theme from a Javanese legend. Tradition has it that Ināo was a great king of Java, who reigned and ruled the empire of the Indonesian islands during the thirteenth century.<sup>2</sup> The life of this mighty king, it is told, was full of love and war. Thus, Inao is, no doubt, a story of love and war. The drama is said to have been composed first in two

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1. Damrong Rajanubhab, Prince, Tamnān Lakhon Inao, History of Ināo, a Dance Drama (Bangkok: Khlang Witthayā, 2508), pp. 11-16, 126-127 and 131-132.

2. Ibid., pp. 97, 100-102; see also Na nakōn, op. cit., pp. 360-362.

variations at the same time by two princesses, half-sisters of Prince Thammāthibēt.<sup>1</sup> But, unfortunately, as it were, several parts of the Ayuthaya manuscripts were lost, probably during the war in 1767 A.D. The complete work, however, was recomposed by Rama II in the Ratanakosin period.<sup>2</sup> Again, like the previous works, the narrative poem was presented in the form of dance drama in klōn. This variation of Inao is highly regarded as the most beautifully written dance drama a Thai poet has ever produced.

Incidentally, there is another famous dance drama worth taking note of here. The poem was originally written during the Ayuthaya period in a form of popular dance drama, then recomposed again by Rama II. Although the drama derives its theme from a tale in Panñāsa Jātaka<sup>3</sup>, there is hardly any trace of religious messages left to be recognized here. The effect the drama gives generally is emotional - a melodramatic comedy kind, in fact - nevertheless, its philosophical and psychological aspects can also

1. Yupho, op. cit., p. 16; see also Rajanubhab, ibid., pp. 102-104.

2. Rajanubhab, ibid., pp. 140-143.

3. Panñāsa Jātaka, Vol. 14, No. 48: Suwansirasā Chādok, trans. Phra Rachaphirom (Cham Burananon) (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of Nāng Atthawasitsuthi (Sap Yamāphai), Saphonphiphatthanākṇ, 2470) pp. 1-40.

be worth examining. But, at any rate, this popular dance drama, Sang Thong, very well illustrates the synthetic aspect of a Thai literary culture, which nevertheless produces works of an original quality.

The cultural settings of the drama usually resemble a number of aspects of a Thai way of life; the characters often possess psychological reactions and other elements of sentiments that reflect those of the Thais themselves. But the identities of the characters as a whole, however, are rather far from being real. No-one is likely to have had any doubts whether the stories contain any truth; one usually takes the whole drama entirely as fiction. But, on the other hand, when one comes to look at one of their contemporaries, Khun Chang Khun Phaen - a popular epic-romance poem, one can observe the more authentic psychological aspects of the characters whose passions make up the story. In fact, the authenticity of this romance extends beyond the art of characterization. The settings, geographical as well as cultural, described in the text are often identical to factual realities in Thailand. The characterization and description of settings in Khun Chang Khun Phaen help to make the poem appear so real a story that one is more likely to wonder whether or not there were such and such people living in such and such places some time in Thailand.



However, there are assumptions that there really were such people as the main characters living a similar life such as described in the poem, that the poem has its basic story from a ballad sung in the Thai country-side, and that the ballad tells the story of these people, who become the main characters of Khun Chāng Khun Phaēn.<sup>1</sup> The poem is written in klōn sēphā<sup>2</sup>, a poetic form which is meant primarily not to be read but to be sung.

It is interesting to find in Khun Chāng Khun Phaēn some of the essential elements that render the making of a novel. Unlike all other traditional epic-romance poetry, this long narrative poem tells a story of ordinary human beings as the main protagonists instead of that of kings, gods, demons or animals normally found in Phra Lō, Inao, Ramakian, and the like. Its plot is made of plausible problems and convincing sentiments of such kinds of people in such circumstances. While the poets are well aware of the elements of both time and place, those of place are more emphasized

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1. "Anon." Khun Chāng Khun Phaēn (Bangkok: Khlang Witthayā, 2506) pp. 3-12; see also Damrong Rajanubhab, Prince, Tamnān Sēphā Rūang Khun Chāng Khun Phaēn, History of Khun Chāng Khun Phaēn, an Epic-Romance (Bangkok: Distributed at a royal Kathin ceremony at Wat Prōt Kēt, Phra Pradaeng, Sophonphiphatthanākōn, 2470) pp. 8-23 and 26-27.

2. In the Thai literary tradition, the term "sēphā" is used to stand for two things. One, it stands for a method of recitation; the other for a poetic style. See E. H. S. Simmonds, "Thai Narrative Poetry: Palace and Provincial Texts of an Episode from Khun Chāng Khun Phaēn", Asia Major, Vol. X, Pt. 2, 1963, pp. 289-298.

in that the poets describe them more elaborately and vividly. Although the poem is written in a verse form, the language used is remarkably realistic. As *sēphā* is a kind of popular entertainment which aims at giving an authentic atmosphere, the anonymous poets who composed Khun Chāng Khun Phaēn, which is regarded as the best *sēphā*, to some extent, employed a formal realistic method of presentation.<sup>1</sup> Khun Chāng Khun Phaēn represents an indigenous aspect of Thai literature, in that it deals more realistically with characters as well as with settings; and it emphasizes not uncontrollable external forces, as normally is the case in the foreign-influenced aspects, but more the authentic psychology of real human beings. However, while it is true that Khun Chāng Khun Phaēn possesses some elements of the novel, it does not necessarily undermine the conception that the novel in Thailand emerged as a kind of mutation in the process of a literary evolution, because, as a whole, this poem and what is normally called "the novel" are distinguished as different identities. The special characteristics referred to in Khun Chāng Khun Phaēn stand by themselves in that poem and do not produce a whole new and continuing genre or mode of writing.

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1. Khun Chāng Khun Phaēn, intro., pp. 25-26.

As far as the poetic tradition is concerned, however, there are yet more works to be noted. One is Lilit Talēng Phāi, an historical romance in verse; one is Phra Aphai Manī, an epic-romance poem; and the last is reflective poetry, especially nirāt poems in klōn.

Like Lilit Yuan Phāi, a panegyric written presumably some time in the early Ayuthaya period, Lilit Talēng Phāi was written primarily with a similar historical motive, that is, to eulogize heroic acts of a king. Here, though the praise also goes to the Burmese crown prince - the leader of the enemy's troop, who is defeated - the eulogy is basically for King Narēsuan, who successfully liberated Ayuthaya from Burmese political domination in the sixteenth century. But, unlike Lilit Yuan Phāi, in that, in Lilit Talēng Phāi the poet added an element of romantic love to the plot, and made the language correspond to the moods of the characters. Although, the poet, Krom Somdet Phra Paramānuchitchinōrot, meant Lilit Talēng Phāi primarily to be a kind of panegyric poem, like Lilit Yuan Phāi, the poem gives a different effect. It will do more justice to Lilit Talēng Phāi if it is treated not simply either as an historical poem, or a panegyric in verse, like Lilit Yuan Phāi, but more as a kind of an historical romance in verse.

Another contemporary poem of Lilit Talēng Phāi and Khun Chāng Khun Phaēn is Phra Aphai Manī, an epic-romance poem. Compared to both poems, Phra Aphai Manī is a purely imaginative work, in that its main story is originally created by the poet himself. Nevertheless, the poet was not motivated solely by his imagination, for the psychological reactions of actual human beings around him, or of the poet himself, must have interfered with the portrayal of his characters as they often did in his other works.<sup>1</sup> That is why the people in Phra Aphai Manī appear to be more real than they are normally expected to be in an imaginative literary work.

One of the striking features of this lengthy epic-romance poem is that it is not simply a story of love, and war, and mystery, and all kinds of wonders, but it also marks an awareness of a cultural change, whether the poet was conscious about it or not. As Phra Aphai Manī was written in the time when Western culture began to flow eastward, one can see very well how Sunthōn Phū, the poet, made use of this new phenomenon for fresh material to play a part in the plot.<sup>2</sup> Unlike other Thai traditional poetic

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1. Sunthōn Phū, Phra Aphai Manī (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of Prince Atsadāngdechāwut, Rongphim Thai, 2468), Vol. 1, intro. pp. 7-35.

2. Ibid., intro. pp. 28-29, and 33. It is believed that Sunthōn Phū began to work on this romance in the reign of Rama II, and probably finished it in the reign of Rama III.

works, whose basic stories are either from particular foreign literary sources, or from folk-tales and/or ballads, and the like, Phra Aphai Manī is totally an original creation, a unique indigenous masterpiece of Thai epic-romance poetry, in which the poet nevertheless makes use of fragmentary, foreign-inspired ideas and themes as part of the totality of his imagination.

Besides Phra Aphai Manī, the masterpiece that immortalized its creator, Sunthōn Phū not only wrote more works of that sort, but also a number of nirāt poems. Here, turning away from the formal convention, Sunthōn Phū, instead of using khlōng, took up the klōn verse form to compose six out of his seven nirāt poems.<sup>1</sup> Unlike the traditional nirāt poems, for instance, Khlōng Kamsuan Sīprāt, or Khlōng Nirāt Narin, Sunthōn Phū made his more personal. It is very likely that writing nirāt poems was, to some extent, a kind of emotional as well as intellectual outlet for Sunthōn Phū himself. Compared to the contemporary Nirāt Narin, which aims at aesthetic quality, Sunthōn Phū's nirāt poems reflect more realistically the inner world of their composer himself.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Chitakasem, op. cit., pp. 151-157.

2. Ibid.

Although the main purpose of literary activities in the early Bangkok period was to restore what was destroyed at the fall of Ayuthaya, more original works were also created, most of which were made by Sunthōn Phū, a poor, temperamental, alcoholic poet. And, it is Sunthōn Phū who turned the poetic tradition from the classical atmosphere to a popular one. It is Sunthōn Phū who made klōn, the verse form nearest to a spoken language, a popular means of a literary creation.

Like King Rama II, his patron, Sunthōn Phū was a prolific writer. His nirāt poems, like his other poetic works, seem to have been spontaneously written with wit and ease. They appear to be a form of literature that entertains as well as one that instructs. And Sunthōn Phū's unique literary ability has rightly distinguished him as a master of a klōn verse form and as a distinctive popular poet.

The above introduction has dealt only with the major works in the Thai poetic tradition, and shows that Thai poetry contains the major kinds of poetic art - the drama, the epic-romance, and the lyric, the latter in the sense of personal (or reflective) poetry. The purpose is to show the great strength of the Thai poetic tradition. When a culture possesses a literary tradition of this strength, it may well be thought that very great influences

and pressures would be required before a change from a poetical to a prose form for imaginative writing could be achieved. It is the purpose of this thesis to show the nature of this change. First of all, however, it is necessary to discuss the nature of prose writing before the period when prose began to be used widely in imaginative writing.

## CHAPTER II

## Prose: i. The Tradition

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, while poetry has been the characteristic medium for imaginative writing in the Thai literary tradition at least since the middle part of the fourteenth century A.D., prose has been in evidence, mainly as a tool for practical purposes, since the last decade of the thirteenth, when the Ramkhamhaeng inscriptions were put on a stele. The inscription tells not only a brief social history of the Thais under the leadership of the third monarch of the Sukhothai dynasty, but also the origin of the alphabet with which the inscription was recorded. On one side of this four-sided stele appear the following statements:

Formerly, there was no such thing as this Thai script. In 1205<sup>1</sup>, the year of the goat, Phō Khun Rāmkhamhaeng set his mind to initiating this Thai script. This Thai script, therefore, exists because that ruler initiated it.<sup>2</sup>

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1. 1205 Mahā Sakkarāt is equivalent to 1283 A.D.
  2. Coedes, op. cit., p. 57.



The Thai script which appears on this stele is generally referred to as a starting point for the study of Thai literature. As far as history is concerned, historians of Thai history seem to agree on the point that Sukhothai was the first independent capital of the Thai kingdom, which was established some time around the middle part of the thirteenth century A.D., as the Thais successfully liberated themselves from the domination of the Khmer Empire. Thus, it is conceivable that when King Ramkhamhaeng came to the throne, the aspiration to react against the Khmer domination must have been quite strong. The introduction of the Ramkhamhaeng alphabet is evidence of such an attempt to be independent and different from the Khmer.

But, ironically enough, the Thais could not remain apart from Khmer influences completely. After Ayuthaya had become the second capital, whereas Sukhothai ceased to be powerful politically, the Khmer civilization obviously carried its influences into nearly every sphere of the Thai social life, such as, in institutions, arts, language and literature.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, Professor George Coedes, a well-known scholar of Thai history, seems to believe that, fundamentally, the origin of Thai civilization, both political and cultural, has come not directly from

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1. George Coedès The Making of South East Asia, trans. H. M. Wright (California: University of California Press, 1966), p. 164.

the ancient Indian, but indirectly, and via the Khmer.<sup>1</sup>

So far, nothing has been found to show that there were any more literary works written with the alphabet and style designed by the King other than the inscription on the stele. In other inscriptions of Sukhothai, variants lacking the King's characteristic departures from the Indic convention were employed. When Trai Phūm Phra Ruang, which is generally believed to have been first compiled during the Sukhothai period, appears for the first time, it is in Khōm script. The manuscript, which was found to have been re-written in the Thonburi period, was transcribed into Thai, probably in 1913 A.D., the year when its Thai version was first published.<sup>2</sup> Like other major works of a classical nature, however, there is more than one variation of Trai Phūm. One has been recently found written in the later part of the Ayuthaya period.<sup>3</sup> And, in the reign of Rama I, two variations were produced.<sup>4</sup>

Trai Phūm Phra Ruang is a treatise on cosmology. In its preface, the anonymous author(s) referred to its original sources, from Pali literature. In this cosmological treatise, the author(s)

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1. Ibid., pp. 163-164.

2. Phrayā Lithai, King of Thailand Trai Phūm Phra Ruang (Bangkok: Khuru Saphā 2503), intro. pp. 1, and 6-7.

3. The original manuscript is in the archives of the National Library in Bangkok.

4. Phrayā Lithai, op. cit., intro. p. 5.

tried to explain the creation, existence, and destruction of Man and Universe in terms of Buddhist mythology. The imagery used here is rich, and it bears its vital influence on Buddhist laity as well as inspiring artists of various disciplines. The images of heaven, hell, gods, devils and other mystical beings and places described in the text have often been transformed into miniature paintings, and murals, as well as into literary works in general.

Although its authorship is yet doubtful, Trai Phūm Phra Ruang is believed to have been first written some time in the years between 1317-1353 A.D., and King Lithai (a grandson of King Rāmkhamhaeng) who reigned Sukhothai during 1347-1370 A.D., has been given credit for its existence.<sup>1</sup> Trai Phūm Phra Ruang is perhaps the earliest imaginative work the Thais have ever written, and the earliest text found appearing in the form of prose narrative. Nevertheless the motive is religious and the elements of imaginative writing found in Trai Phūm Phra Ruang do not produce a composition that can be classed as fictional.

However, prose had been evidenced more in practical works, written in the early days, for instance, in historical recording, or promulgation of laws, and works of a similar nature. It is not

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1. Ibid., intro. pp. 1-4; see also Coedes, The Making of South East Asia, p. 140; and W. A. R. Wood, A History of Siam (London: T. Fisher Unwin, Ltd., 1926) pp. 59-61.

until the Chulalongkorn period (1868-1910 A.D.) that prose is used increasingly in imaginative writing. As far as the prose tradition goes, one may remember that the inscription which tells the social history of the Thais under the leadership of King Rāmkhamhaeng of Sukhothai in the Middle Ages is apparently in the form of prose narrative.

Genuine prose remnants from the Ayuthaya period, not subject to re-writing, are few. One is a short piece of a Thai chronicle known as Phrarāṭchaphongsāwadān<sup>1</sup> Chabap Luang Prasōet. The style of language used in this phrarāṭchaphongsāwadān, which is believed to have been compiled in the reign of King Narai of Ayuthaya, is remarkably different from that used in the Rāmkhamhaeng's inscription, in that, the recorder used terms more elaborate than those which appear on the stele.

The dates and events recorded in Phrarāṭchaphongsāwadān Chabap Luang Prasōet are believed to be the most reliable of all the Thai historical records of the Ayuthaya period. But, the content is very brief. In some years, only one event appears in one single phrase. The record begins with only one event occurring in 1324 A.D.; that is when a Buddha image was erected.<sup>2</sup> The second event, 26 years

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1. A phrarāṭchaphongsāwadān is a record of social activities of the royal families and national events in which a part of Thai history is found.

2. National Library, Prachum Phongsāwadān Chabap Hō Samut Haeng Chat, p. 115.

later, was the establishment of the capital city of Ayuthaya in 1350 A.D.<sup>1</sup>. Here too, the whole affair was summed up and appeared in one simple sentence. This chronicle ends at 1604 A.D., twelve years after King Naresuan had successfully liberated Ayuthaya from the Burmese political domination.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, Phraratchaphongsawadan Chabap Luang Prasoet is by no means a complete history of the Thais in the early Ayuthaya period. Although its authorship is yet doubtful, its content incomplete, this piece of chronicle has shown the style of prose writing in the period when the events were recorded.

In 1910 another short historical record was published. This piece of writing is believed to have been the decrees issued during the reign of King Thai Sa, the first of the last four kings of the Ayuthaya period. The printed text is in the form of prose narrative. It is believed that the decrees were to be copied by officers in provincial towns subjected to the capital city of Ayuthaya.<sup>3</sup> They were apparently issued to aid the central control of the kingdom.

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., pp. 136-138.

3. Phraratchakamnot Withi Pokkhrong Hua-muang Khrang Phaendin Prachao Thai-sa, The Provincial Administration during the Reign of King Thai-sa of The Administrative Works Etc. (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of Nai Ploi Na Pompot, Sophonphiphatthanakon, 2469) pp. 13-14.

The decrees deal with rules of the political relationship between the provincial administrative bodies and the central government in Ayuthaya, mainly on the problems of registration and welfare of the citizens at large. As in Phrarāṭchaphongsāwadān Chabap Luāng Prasōēt, the prose narrative in which the decrees were recorded is composed of terms more elaborated than those inscribed on the Rām̄khamhaeng's stele.

It is unfortunate that only a few original manuscripts in prose presumably written in the Ayuthaya period have been discovered. And, it is conceivable that there must have been many more produced during the period of over four centuries than what have been found so far. Looking at Thai history for a moment here may help one to form a clearer idea of what might have happened to the old Thai manuscripts.

When the Burmese troops successfully got hold of Ayuthaya in 1767 A.D., and set fire to her to make a complete end to the capital of the kingdom - where a progressive civilization had been centred for over a period of 400 years - the city which had been one of the most prosperous and the busiest cosmopolitan centre in the East remained in unrepairable ruin and ashes. Most of the manuscripts must have been burnt to ashes as well. After the reconstruction of the present capital city of Bangkok, as it was previously stated, several aspects of the Ayuthaya cultural life were revived.

Literature is one of those aspects, and it seems that pieces of the kind of literature that delights were re-composed in much greater numbers than the kind that is practical. And in the Thai literary tradition, literature to delight lay mainly, if not entirely, in poetic forms. By its nature, Thai poetry has a high degree of rhyme, which makes it easier to memorize than prose. The poetically-minded Thais tend to learn it by heart for pleasure. The nature of Thai poetry, to a great extent, facilitates the revival of itself. This seems to be one of the reasons for the recomposition of more literature in verse than in prose. And, because of such a reason, sometimes, practical literature is found in verse forms as well. It can happen that way when a practical scholar of practical knowledge, who has a poetic gift, wants to preserve his knowledge for the sake of its practicality. Therefore, one should not be surprised when one comes across a medical or astrological treatise written in verse forms.

Prose work, on the other hand, by its nature is difficult for one to remember by heart. This naturally makes it difficult for literature in a prose form to be rewritten. Therefore, except the original manuscripts found, only the most indispensable prose works were revived for the sake of their practicality. And, because laws, orders and ceremonies are essential for the social life of a nation, Thai laws and ceremonies were revived.

After King Rama I had come to the throne in 1782 A.D., a group of scholars were commissioned to revise and re-compile the laws and ceremonies usually applied and performed in the kingdom in the early days.<sup>1</sup> During this restoration period, the Thai laws known as Kotmāi Trā Sām Duang were re-compiled. Although the laws were re-organized, they were virtually the revival of those actually applied during the Ayuthaya period.<sup>2</sup>

In Kotmāi Trā Sām Duang, not only does one find the laws per se, but one also is told about their origin. In the introductory part, the creation of Man, the necessity of law and professional ethics of a judge are explained in a mystically exotic tone. This part of Kotmāi Trā Sām Duang contains references to the Thai intellectual resource, that is, Pali literature, and to Buddhist ethics in particular. The text begins with Pali phrases in one short paragraph, then followed by Pali terms preceding their interpretation in Thai, much the same style in which jātika tales are normally retold. Save for its preface, the rest of Kotmāi Trā Sām Duang is entirely in the Thai language, and in the form of prose narrative.

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1. Dhani Nivat, H. H. Prince (Kromamun Bidyalabh Bridhyakorn), Phrabāt Somdet Phra Phutthayotfāchulalōk Song Fānfū Watthanatham; The Cultural Restoration by Rama I (Bangkok: Phakdipradit, 2502) pp. 3-12, and 37-58.

2. Seni Pramoj, M. R. Kotmāi Samai Ayuthaya, Law in the Ayuthaya Period: Pāthakathā Ruang Kotmāi Samai Ayuthaya, A Lecture on Law in the Ayuthaya Period (Bangkok: Siwaphon Ltd., 2510), p. 3.



Unlike literature in the poetic tradition, which was re-composed, at any rate in part for aesthetic reasons, the laws were recompiled primarily to be used as laws and orders of the kingdom. And Kotmāi Trā Sām Duang has been actually used as such in the Ratanakosin period.<sup>1</sup> Kotmāi Trā Sām Duang, whose practical nature was essential for the welfare of the general public, can be regarded not only as a book on laws and orders, but also as an interesting example of literature in the Thai prose tradition.

Another prose work which is believed to have been rewritten in the early Ratanakosin period is a collection of royal ceremonies performed in the festivals of the twelve months of a year in the former days.<sup>2</sup> Here the ceremonies were described in brief, starting from that which was performed in the fifth and eleventh months of the lunar calendar, and ending up at the one performed in the fourth month. The collection of these ceremonies appears in Thai and in the form of prose narrative. This piece of prose

1. Rāphīphatthanasak, Prince (ed.) Kotmāi, Thai Laws (Bangkok: Rōngphim Kōng Lahuthōt, r.s. 120), 2nd ed., intro. p. 8.

2. Phrarāтчaphithī Thawāthotsamāt Khōng Kao, The Ancient Royal Ceremonies of the Twelve Months of The Administrative Works Etc. (Bangkok: Distributed at Phrarāтчaphithī Triyampawāi, 2464) pp. 48-60.

work, which is entitled Phithī Thawāthotsamāt Khong Kao (The Ancient Ceremonies of the Twelve Months), when put side by side with Khlong Thawāthotsamāt - which is a kind of nirāt poem - reveals that they have a common theme, the theme of seasons. But the two works were developed into a completely different identity. Phithī Thawāthotsamāt Khong Kao explained what ceremony was performed in a particular month and how it was done. Khlong Thawāthotsamāt, on the other hand, is a poem about love. These two works illustrate the norm that in the old tradition, prose was employed for practical writing, whereas poetry was for the imaginative.

Like other works in the Thai literary tradition, which the Thais consider important, there is more than one variation in treatises on the subject of ceremonies. In the Chulalongkorn period, during 1888-1889 A.D., appeared a series of essays written in the form of prose narrative in Wachirayān Wisēt<sup>1</sup>. The essays were collected and published posthumously under one single title Phrarāthaphithī Sipsong Duan, which literally means "royal ceremonies of twelve months". Here, unlike its predecessor, not only the ceremonies as such are described in detail, but their origins,

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1. Wachirayān Wisēt is a magazine issued in the Chulalongkorn period. More detail of the magazine will be given in chapter IV.

their developments, their ends, for those that had ceased to have active social functions, are also included.

As the author, who is King Chulalongkorn himself, had done some kind of research before he wrote, it is understood that there must have been sources, written or oral, sufficient for him to write such informative essays.<sup>1</sup> And it is conceivable that the reason to write always exists as long as alphabets are handy, and writing potentiality is cultivated. And the Thais write not only to restore the past, but naturally, when they want to communicate or when they find something worth recording and so on.

Nevertheless, prose works in Thai, which must have been written in a considerable number during the Ayuthaya period, seem to reappear in the early Ratanakosin only in two aspects: one on laws and orders, the other on ceremonies.

It is true that a religious aspect was also revived in an elaborate manner. The major work in Buddhist literature, namely the Scripture - Trai Pitaka, was revised and rewritten not in the Thai language but by transliterating Pali into khom letters.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Phraratchaphithi Thawathotsamat Khong Kao, intro., pp ๓-๖

2. Damrong Rajanubhab, Prince, Tamnan Ho Phra Samut, A History of the Libraries (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of Phra Inthabenyā (Sarakham Watthā), 2512), pp. 4-11.

The writer obtained more detail on this subject from a personal letter from Iam Sangkhawāsī, the Honorary Secretariat of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, 41 Phra Athit Street, Bangkok 2, Thailand, dated 27 September, 1972.

Therefore, it is categorically excluded from the Thai prose tradition. However, a lengthy biography of the Lord Buddha was written in a form of prose narrative almost entirely in the Thai language. It is said that the author, Krom Somdet Phra Paramānuchitchinōrot, wrote two versions of the Lord Buddha's biography: one in Pali, the classical language; the other in Thai, the vernacular. This biographical treatise of the Lord Buddha, which is called Phra Pathom Somphōthi Kathā, nevertheless, was not written until 1844 A.D.<sup>1</sup>, that is, in the reign of Rama III, during which reign Buddhist literature was widely translated from Pali into Thai.<sup>2</sup>

Phra Pathom Somphōthi Kathā is regarded as a masterpiece of prose work among scholars of Thai literature. The work appears to be the first piece of religious literature written originally in the Thai language<sup>3</sup> and in a form of prose narrative. Compared

1. Krom Somdet Phra Paramānuchitchinōrot, Phra Pathom Somphōthi Kathā (Bangkok: Department of Religions, Ministry of Education, 2505) intro., p. 7

2. Damrong Rajanubhab, Prince, Tamnan Nangsi Samsok, History of Samsok (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of Queen Sukhumān-mārasī, Sophonphiphatthanākron, 2471) p. 12.

3. From the fact that there are two versions of Phra Pathom Somphōthi Kathā, both of which are believed to have been written originally by Krom Somdet Phra Paramānuchitchinōrot, the publisher of the Thai version in 2505 B.E. is reluctant to say which was written first: the Pali version, then the Thai, or vice versa.

to Lilit Talēng Phaī, a well-known poem composed by the same author, Phra Pathom Somphōthi Kathā was written primarily to give information more than to give an emotive effect. And for this practical purpose, prose instead of verse is chosen to be used as a medium in which to tell the story. The biography of the Lord Buddha as presented here is inspiring more to scholars of Buddhism than to the general public, however.

Incidentally, a collection of twelve Persian tales is found written in 1782 A.D.<sup>1</sup>, the year when Rama I came to the throne, and the capital city of Bangkok was founded. These tales are told in the form of prose narrative. It is believed that they were probably translated from Persian into Thai in the reign of King Naraī, when ambassadors from Persia came to the court of Ayuthaya.<sup>2</sup> As the subject of the tales deals primarily with ethical rules of conduct of a great king, thus, they are revived apparently not so much for the sake of their entertaining nature as for their moral implication - a kind of counsel for a ruler, who aspires to bring justice and happiness to the ruled. As the tales are all written in gold leaf, they must have been seriously regarded basically not as fiction, but as a kind of advice to a new king, who established

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1. National Library, Nithān Irān Rāṭchatham: Prachum Pakaranam, Persian Tales and Collected Ancient Fables (Bangkok: Khlang Witthaya, 2504) p. 8.

2. Ibid., p. 9.

a new dynasty, and founded a new capital city of an old kingdom. All the same, the revival of these tales is primarily for a social or practical reason.

Looking back to the Rāmkhamhaeng inscription, Trai Phum Phra Ruang, the original manuscripts of historical records written presumably in the Ayuthaya period, Phra Pathom Samphōthi Kathā, and, sooner, one will see that prose has been used throughout the history of Thai literature. However, the Thai prose tradition, as it stands, did not carry as great a strength in imaginative writing as the poetic until the literary stream was turned directly and indirectly by the political pressures from the West in the middle of the nineteenth century. From then on, prose has been utilized increasingly also in imaginative writing. But, before the Thai novel proper emerged in the 1920's, the Thais in some measure had already been familiar with fiction in the form of prose narrative. And, it is necessary to examine the nature of the transitional Thai prose fiction before the emergence of the novel.

## ii. Transitional Prose

The Thais were already familiar with fiction in prose narrative form before the novel proper emerged in the 1920's. During the reign of Rama I, who was the founder of the capital city of Bangkok, and who prompted the restoration of the Ayuthaya civilization on a grand scale, two inspiring works of prose fiction were produced. One is Rāchāthirāt, the story of which is from Mon history; the other is Sāmkok, a translation from a Chinese classic. These two works appear entirely in the Thai language. As the stories of both Rāchāthirāt and Sāmkok are entertaining and unique, the style of prose narrative in which they are presented a novelty, the two works gave Thai writers a new idea of writing fiction. And, a number of younger writers of modern prose fiction owe their style of writing to these two masterpieces. The most prominent follower of such a style as used in Rāchāthirāt and Sāmkok is "Yākhṓp", the author of Phū Chana Sip Thit, a lengthy epic-romance in the form of prose narrative published in 1932 A.D.

Rāchāthirāt tells the story of the establishment of a kingdom of the Mon. The story, however, deals mainly with the wars between Rāchāthirāt, a king of the Mon, and Phrachao Farang Mang Khong, a king of Burma; nevertheless, kings of other countries in Asia also

have their parts in the make-up of the legend. For instance, before Makatho, a son of a well-to-do M̄n merchant, became the founder of the kingdom of the M̄n at M̄tama, fate had led him to Sukhothai, where he was supported by a Thai king. His industry and virtue had rendered himself a high office in the court of Sukhothai where he fell in love with the king's daughter. The two lovers ran away from Sukhothai, settled down in Makatho's homeland, and finally he was crowned king of the M̄n with the consent and blessing of the king of Sukhothai.

As a newly established kingdom, M̄tama could not avoid being involved in wars against the older neighbouring ones. And the authors depict the wars and military arts in an epic-romance manner. The scene of Rāchāthirāt is set in the historical and geographical background of South-East Asia during 1269-1530 A.D., particularly in the area where Burma, Ceylon and Thailand are situated in the present time. Although the characters are composed of different nationalities, the major ones are M̄n and Burmese, unlike Sāmkok in which all the characters are Chinese.

Sāmkok, on the other hand, deals mainly with Chinese politics and arts of war. It tells a story of China at the time when weaknesses of the king, together with corruption in the government, and jealousy among members of the nobility, had caused chaos and



rebellion which broke the kingdom into three separate independent states. The story covers incidents that took place in China in a period of over a hundred years, that is, from 168-280 A.D.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike Rāchāthirāt, Sāmkok was originally an historically-based folk-tale told in China long before it was adapted for a stage performance by Chinese dramatists, probably during 618-906 A.D.<sup>2</sup> And, perhaps during 1368-1643 A.D., the story was put into writing by a Chinese scholar.<sup>3</sup> The translation from Chinese into Thai was done in an elaborate manner indeed. It is found that a team of not less than fourteen Thai and Chinese scholars residing in Thailand were involved in this task. This lengthy translated fiction in the form of prose narrative was not only widely read but also became a challenge for further translation of more Chinese literature. There were, at least, thirty-three more Chinese stories translated and published during 1870-1922 A.D. after the first publication of Sāmkok in 1865.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Rajanubhab, Tamnan Nangst Sāmkok, pp. 44-46.

2. Ibid., p. 7.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., pp. 13-19.

These Chinese stories, however, were by no means the first nor complete evidence of fiction known in Thailand. On the contrary, the Thais were already familiar with fictional stories for centuries. Although they were normally for a listening audience, many people had been acquainted with such a type of story through reading, in both cases, of course, mainly within the poetic tradition.

In Thailand, where Buddhism has been accepted as a national religion ever since the Sukhothai period, there is a tradition, which still remains a living one, that men at twenty years of age would enter monkhood for a period of three months. And, living in a monastery does not only mean seeking a physical or spiritual retreat. In the days when schools for public education in a modern sense of the word were unknown, Buddhist monasteries in Thailand served as institutions where young men acquired their knowledge, ethical as well as practical. And, as a rule, they study Buddhism. Reading and writing, thus, automatically become required subjects. It is conceivable that after King Ramkhamhaeng had introduced the Thai alphabet, the Thais were very likely to have been taught a number of languages at the monasteries. They certainly learned Khmer, and Sanskrit and Pali, the classical languages in which the Buddhist texts and canon are normally written, and they must have been also taught Thai, the newly invented language for the newly established nation. Although the first three languages were highly

regarded as the scholarly languages, Thai has outlived them and has come to dominate modern Thai literature.

Traditionally, in teaching Buddhism, fables and tales, which are collectively called "jātaka", are normally used to illustrate the principles of Buddha Dhamma. Therefore, the men who have stayed in the monkhood, undoubtedly have become familiar with fiction in the form of jātaka in the study of Buddhism. Here, one can rightly assume that only the laity was a listening audience for such a type of fiction, because Buddhist monks followed the traditional method of teaching Buddhism to the public in the vernacular language by means of preaching texts. And, the jātaka inspired Thai poets, as well as becoming sources of material for them, for centuries. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, basic stories in Thai classical literature were often derived from jātaka, the most outstanding of which is Vessantara Jātaka, which is also known as Mahā Chāt, the longest tale in Nipāta Jātaka.

Nipāta Jātaka is a collection of 547 tales.<sup>1</sup> Like manuscripts of Hinayāna Buddhism, all the tales were originally written in Pali.

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1. Nipāta Jātaka is also known as tales of five hundred and fifty lives of the Lord (Buddha). This implies that there are 550 tales in this collection. But, in the Thai version published during 1904-1931 A.D., only 547 tales appear - the normal number.

Although the Thais have known these tales for centuries, they had never seen them written in prose in the Thai language until 1904 A.D., when some were translated and published.<sup>1</sup> And it took the Thais some twenty years to have completed the task of translation and publication of the whole collection. The Thai version of these jāṭaka then appear generally in a form of prose narrative.

Nevertheless, Nipāta Jāṭaka is not the only source of fictional stories known to the Thais for several hundred years. Besides the Persian tales, which are believed to have been translated during the reign of King Narāi of Ayuthaya, as mentioned earlier, there are manuscripts of other collections of tales in the forms of pakaranam and jāṭaka. In 1869 A.D., the royal printing house published a collection of several fables collectively called "pakaranam", for example, Paksī Pakaranam, tales of birds derived from ancient Indian collections of tales such as the panchatantra.<sup>2</sup> Like the Persian tales, which were

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1. Chulalongkorn, King of Thailand, "Phrarāṭchaprārop Mūnhēt Thi Cha Plāe Lae Phim Nibāt Chadok, Reasons for the Translation and Publication of Nipāta Jāṭaka", Nipāta Jāṭaka, trans. Prince Vajirāhāna Varōrasa, et al. (Bangkok: The Royal Institute published to commemorate the 21st year of the death of King Chulalongkorn, Sophonphiphatthanākṇ, 2474) Vol. 23, pp. 7, 9-10, and 55.

2. See National Library, Nithān Irān Rāṭchatham - Prachum Pakaranam, pp. 81-93.

published a year later, these pakaranam appear in the form of prose narrative. But, there is a slight difference in the style of writing. While the Persian tales are told entirely in the Thai language, the pakaranam are interspersed not only with phrases or paragraphs in Pali, much in the same manner which jātaka tales are normally told, but poetic devices are also employed now and then irregularly. These pakaranam contain several episodes whose plots and sub-plots are usually unconnected, but all of which fables aim at conveying moral messages.

Apart from Nipāta Jātaka, the Persian tales which are collectively called Nithān Irān Rāṭchatham, and the collections of pakaranam mentioned above, there is another collection of fifty tales collectively called Pannāsa Jātaka. These tales, which were written, as Prince Damrong says, by Buddhist monks in Chiangmai, were also well-known and inspiring, especially to Thai poets. Thai poets and dramatists often obtained basic stories from Pannāsa Jātaka, for instance, when they wrote Samutthakhōt Kham Chan, Sūa Khō Kham Chan, Sang Thong, etc. However, one should be aware of the fact pointed out by King Chulalongkorn and Prince Damrong that, like Nipāta Jātaka in some respects, the tales in Pannāsa Jātaka were not originally created by the writers themselves, but they had already been told locally long before the Buddhist monks in Chiangmai wrote

them down in the form of jāṭaka, during 1457-1657 A.D.<sup>1</sup>, while elements of the tales in Nipāta Jāṭaka existed in India before Buddhism was founded.<sup>2</sup> The tales were originally written in Pali,<sup>3</sup> and were translated into Thai and published from 1924 A.D. onwards. The Thai version of Paññāsa Jāṭaka is in a form of prose narrative much in the same style as used in the translation of Nipāta Jāṭaka, that is, there are interruptions of phrases or paragraphs in the original language at certain points.

The terms "tales", "fables" and "fictional stories" are used almost interchangeably here, and, as a matter of fact, the Thais themselves rather loosely use the term "nithān" to stand for any stories of a fictional nature. Thus, a story translated from either a jāṭaka or the panchatantra, or the pakaranam, is virtually called by the same word "nithān". Thus, apparently, the term "nithān" is equivalent to "tale" and/or "fable" in the English language. But, surprisingly, when Phrayā Phāchanapriṅchā

1. Paññāsa Jāṭaka, Vol. 1, No. 1 (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of M. R. Lek Siriwong, Sophonphiphatthanākṇ, 2467), intro. pp. 1-2.

2. Chulalongkorn, "Phrarāṭchawiṅchān Wā Duai Nithān Chādok, The King's Comments on Jāṭaka tales", op. cit., pp. 15-19.

3. Paññāsa Jāṭaka, intro. pp. 2-5.

(M. R. Samroeng Itsarasak), the Thai scholar who edited one edition of Sāmkok, wrote an essay on literary criticism in 1895, he applied the term "nithān" even when he referred to such a work of prose fiction as Sāmkok. "Nithān", the author said, "means a story which is made up, not true, or a story which even if it is claimed to be true, yet cannot be true ..."<sup>1</sup>. Then, while referring to a jātaka as a "nithān", he also put Sāmkok in the same category. In 1914, when a literary act was passed and a committee of judges for literature written in Thai was set up, a definition of the term "nithān" was given as "a story which is created and composed in prose"<sup>2</sup>. Sāmkok was then taken by the committee as an example of the best "nithān"<sup>3</sup>. But, in 1874, when a short piece of satire appeared in Darunōwāt, the term "nithān" was also used to apply to it. But, probably because the subject of the satire was about the contemporary society, which had a political overtone, the

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1. Samroeng, M. R. (Mōm Anuwongwōraphat), "Sonthanā Rūang Nithān, A Dialogue on Tales", of Nithān Wachirayān, Tales from Wachirayān (Bangkok: Bannākhān, 2508), p. 60; see also "Sonthanā Rūang Nithān, A Dialogue on Tales", Wachirayān, Vol. I, Pt. 6 (March, 113), pp. 605-606.

2. Thailand, Rātkhakitḥānubēksā, Vol. 31 (August 2, 2457), p. 312.

3. Chulalongkorn, Phrarātkhaphithī Sipsong Duan, p. 21.

satire was called "Nithān Patyuban", which means "A Tale of the Present Time".<sup>1</sup> Therefore, as far as Thai literature is concerned the term "nithān" is equivalent to "prose fiction" in English, that is, it stands for "a story which is created and composed in prose". In this respect, therefore, the Thais had been familiar with fiction in prose for centuries before they had an opportunity to read or to write a novel proper.

Although Sāmkok is not the first fiction in prose the Thais have known, it is one of the works that has had the strongest effect on the development of the novel in Thailand, in some measures, comparable to the ancient tales from jātaka to the development of Thai classical literature in the poetic tradition. Here, compared to the ancient tales which were translated and published a few years later, Sāmkok offers a completely new prose style of telling fictional stories. And, as its story is also unique and very entertaining to the Thai taste, it led, as mentioned before, to more translation and publication of Chinese fictional stories. And, from the period after Sāmkok first appeared in print, the role of prose was switched from being mainly used as a tool for practical communications to being also a means of telling fictional stories in a

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1. "Anon", "Nithān Patyuban", Darunōwāt (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of Col. Mōmchao Manūnsiri Kasēmsan, 2512) p. 81.



much greater measure than what was known before. A cause of this transition in the role of prose apparently comes from the translation of foreign literature, which began in the Restoration period and has been carried on continuously until the present time.

The effect of Samkok on modern literature, especially on the early development of the novel in Thailand, is substantial indeed. Its first publication in 1865 A.D., at any rate, brought about a new movement in the history of Thai literature. Firstly, from then on, the methods and styles in which fictional stories are presented have begun to change considerably. Secondly, there is a change also in the nature of the reading public, and the size of the reading public has gradually increased. Thirdly, during the transitional period of prose literature, more Thais, regardless of their official privileged status or family background, have increasingly established themselves as prominent writers of prose fiction.

These changes, however, were caused by many other factors, the most important of which were the contact with Western cultures, the introduction of printing technology, the birth and growth of journalism and the implementation of modern education for the general public which creates changes in the size and nature of the reading public as well as in the nature of writers themselves. Because these factors work complementarily in relation to the development of the novel, they will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER III

The Consequences of the Introduction  
of Printing Technology

On July 2, 1834, Rev. Dan Beach Bradley sailed from Boston to Bangkok where he longed "to lead his Siamese friends to see and to acknowledge the glory of his Master"<sup>1</sup>. Alas! sixteen years had passed before the young missionary, who then became a middle-aged man, put in his diary on July 9, 1851 the following statements:

My teacher told me yesterday that there were two insuperable obstacles to the Siamese receiving our religion. The one is, that, they cannot be made to understand that there is a maker, proprietor and sustainer of the world. The second is, they cannot see the least evidence that men live, move and have their being in a living God.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Bradley wrote too that his teacher also said:

the fear of masters and lords was no obstacle to the propagation of the Gospel among this people, that all classes are very desirous to find the truth on religion as well as on all subjects and that when they discover the truth they will follow it.<sup>3</sup>

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1. George Haws Feltus, Rev. (ed.) Abstract of the Journal of Rev. Dan Beach Bradley, M. D. Medical Missionary in Siam 1835-1873, The Multigraph Department of Pilgrim Church (Cleveland, Ohio: by Rev. Dan F. Bradley, 1936), pp. iii and 1.

2. Ibid., p. 133.

3. Ibid.

However, the Thais, by and large, never seemed to discover the truth in the Gospel. And the time did not come when they turned their faith from the teaching of Buddha to that of Christ. Thus, the aspiration of the young medical doctor to turn that part of the world into a Christian community was brought to meet a completely different picture in reality. But this, however, does not mean that Dr. Bradley was a failure in all aspects of his pious mission to Thailand. Although the Thais do not accept the religion he and his colleagues were trying to introduce, they enthusiastically do accept the tools and technology they brought to facilitate the teaching of their religion. Credits are gratefully given to the American missionaries, especially to Dr. D. B. Bradley, for the introduction of printing technology into Thailand, and it is Dr. Bradley who began book trading and founded journalism in the country. Thus, instead of turning Thailand into a Christian community and leading his Thai friends to see and to acknowledge the glory of his Master as he had hoped, Dr. Bradley had successfully brought a great change in Thai literary society.

The introduction of printing technology in the first half of the nineteenth century has drastically changed the literary scene in Thailand. It speeded up book production, and enlarged the size of the reading public. Before the printing press was

introduced into the country in 1835, Thai written works had been generally recorded on stone, bai lān<sup>1</sup> and samut thai. Soft stones were used as pencil, while iron, ivory and bamboo styluses as well as quills were normally used with various kinds of ink to write on any one of those materials as the case might be.

Although writing equipment was normally hand-made of natural materials locally found, it was not always convenient to have one book made. Take the common way - writing on bai lān - for example. It is true that palm trees can be found nearly everywhere in Thailand, but only special kinds, which are particularly grown in deep jungles of certain areas, are good for this purpose.<sup>2</sup> And, because means of transportation then were either on foot or by ox-pulled carts, only a small supply could be brought to answer the small amount of demand. Moreover, the right time to cut the leaves depends on the weather. As Thailand is situated in the tropical monsoon type of climate, only in the dry season can this business be made more convenient and safer.

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1. A bai lān is a kind of palm leaf.

2. Kongsakao Wiraprachak, "Khrūang Khian Nangsū Khong Chāo Thai Bōrān, Writing Materials of the Ancient Thais", Archaeology, Vol. II, No. 2 (October-December 2511), p. 116.

To write on bai lān, an iron stylus and soot were used. But, the procedure before and while the actual writing took place was elaborate and required special skills and patience.<sup>1</sup> For instance, first of all, lines had to be made on the leaves, which had to be completely dry and smoked in a special way. To make lines, strings dipped in black liquid - a mixture of soot and water - were used as a ruler and a marker simultaneously. Normally five lines were made on one palm leaf which is about 2" wide and 22" long. Probably because it is comparatively easy to get, bai lān was commonly used.

Religious tracts, medical treatises, as well as tales were usually found recorded on bai lān. Three manuscripts of Trai Phūm Phra Ruang,<sup>2</sup> Paññāsa Jātaka,<sup>3</sup> and even the Trai Pitaka, the Buddhist Scripture revised and rewritten during the reigns of Rama I to Rama V of the Bangkok period, are examples. But, the Trai Pitaka was so highly regarded that the covers and cases of

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1. Ibid., pp. 115-122.

2. One was done in the late Ayuthaya period; one in the Thonburi; and, the other in the Bangkok. All can be found in the Manuscript Department of the National Library Archives in Bangkok.

3. Paññāsa Jātaka, Vol. I, p. (2).

the leaves were often elaborately decorated with gold, ivory and silk in different colours , while the script itself was written with gold leaf.<sup>1</sup>

To write on a samut thai was probably easier and less complicated, but to have a samut thai made was not. A samut thai is a note book of writing paper locally made in Thailand. It was so called to distinguish it from note books made in the West, which were called "samut farang", as "farang" is the term the Thais use for all Westerners. The paper of which a samut thai was made came from khqi, or sã. Both are local trees. The procedure in which a samut thai was made was as complicated and elaborate as getting the palm leaves ready for writing and the writing task itself put together. Although there were factories that produced the paper, as all equipments and the production process were hand-made, it took much too much time and required much labour before one samut thai, which was made one by one - again by hand, could be ready to be used.<sup>2</sup> To make a samut, a piece of paper had to be folded as many times as was

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1. Dhani Nivat, Phrabat Somdet Phraphutthayotfa Chulalok Song Funfũ Watthanatham, p. 15; Rajanubhab, Tamnãn Hq Phra Samut, pp. 5-9.

2. Wiraprachak, op. cit., pp. 105-112.

needed. Normally, one samut consisted of 20-24 folds. There were three sizes of samut normally: the big size was from  $8\frac{1}{2}$ "-12" x  $28\frac{1}{2}$ " onwards; the medium was  $4\frac{1}{2}$ "-8" x  $13\frac{1}{2}$ "-28"; and the smallest was  $2\frac{1}{2}$ "-4" x 8"- $13\frac{1}{2}$ ".<sup>1</sup> There were three qualities of the paper, which came in two different colours: black or white. The best quality was strong and smooth; the poorest was thin and rough. Compared to European-made paper, the Thai-made was very much coarser but tougher.

There were several kinds of samut thai. They were classified by the nature of their functions, and the colour of the ink used to write on. For instance, there were "samut chabap rōng song", the kind that was used personally by a king; "samut dam tua rong", the kind that was made of black paper on which coloured ink was used. The ink came in various colours too: yellow, orange, black, white and red. But, the samut that was made of black paper written with white ink had a different name - "samut dam sen khāo"; that of black paper written with yellow ink was called "samut sen hōradān". Then there was "samut sen thōng", the kind that was written with gold leaf; and "samut sen mūk dam", the kind that was made of white paper and black ink. Samut thai written with any kind of coloured ink were

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1. Na Nakhon, op. cit., p. 477.

collectively called "samut sen rong".<sup>1</sup>

The Thais traditionally used each of these hand-made note books for a particular purpose. For instance, samut thū fao, normally sized 7" x 11" or 8" x 12", was officially used for writing reports, summaries or letters which were to be handed in to the king in person.<sup>2</sup> Historical records, laws and literary works in general were written in other kinds of Samut thai. Phrarāṭchaphongsāwadān Chabap Luang Prasōet, for example, appeared in samut dam tua rong.

In spite of the difficulties in writing and making a book, a single work of Thai classical literature often appears in many volumes of samut thai. For instance, Unarut, a dance drama written in the reign of Rama I, takes 18 volumes; Sāmkok takes 95<sup>3</sup>; Phra Aphai Manī, 104<sup>4</sup>; and one of the longest is Rāmakian, the dance drama recomposed in the reign of Rama I, which takes 116 volumes of samut thai<sup>5</sup>. And when looking back at how one book

1. Wirapraṅhak, op. cit., pp. 113-114.
2. Ibid., p. 113.
3. Rajanubhab, Tamnān Nangstū Sāmkok, p. 10.
4. Sunthōn Phū, Phra Aphai Manī, intro., p. 2.
5. Rajanubhab, Tamnān Lakōn Inao, p. 131.



could be made in the time before printing technology was introduced, one may understand that not very many Thais could afford to possess a copy of any complete work. This technically underdeveloped method of making a book was one of the barriers that limited the size and kinds of the reading public in Thailand in the days before the printing press was brought into the country in 1835 A.D.

Books in Thai, however, had been printed before the printing machine was brought into Thailand. It is found that in 1828 A.D., a book on Thai grammar written by Capt. James Low, an English officer stationed in Penang<sup>1</sup>, was published in Calcutta. But the machine which printed the book is said to have been invented originally by missionaries in Burma in the 1810's<sup>2</sup>. Later, the machine was transferred from Rangoon to Calcutta, then to Singapore<sup>3</sup> where books on Christianity in Thai translation had been published before being brought into Thailand to be distributed. The business had been carried on like that for years until finally the American

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1. Na Nakhon, op. cit.

2. Khachon Sukhabanij, "Kamnoet Thaen Phim Lae Tua Phim Phasa Thai, The Birth of Printing Press and Plates of the Thai language" of Kaw Raek Khong Nangsu Phim Nai Prathet Thai, The First Step of Journalism in Thailand (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of Luang Bunyamānoppānit [Saengthong], Thai Phānitchakān Ltd., 2508), p. 4.

3. Ibid., pp. 5-11.

missionaries in Bangkok purchased the machine and brought it into Thailand. Books, then, could be published in the country from 1836. Although the printing machine was set up in Bangkok, the plates were still imported until 1841, when they could be made in Thailand itself.<sup>1</sup>

The books published in those days were normally on Christianity which were to be used in the propagation of the religion. But, while the Thais did not, and still do not, find truth in the Gospel, they did find that the printing machine had a useful function for them. In 1839 it was recorded that the printing office of the American missionaries in Bangkok had published, for the Thai government, a royal proclamation against importation of opium.<sup>2</sup> Finally, a royal printing press was established in the reign of Rama IV. But, before that, while residing at Wat Bṛḥṇṇiwēt as an abbot during 1837-1851, Prince Mongkut had a printing house set up in the monastery and started publishing Buddhist literature.<sup>3</sup> This heralded a great change in the Thai literary scene.

1. Na Nakhṇ, op. cit., p. 478.

2. Feltus, op. cit., p. vii.

3. Vajiraśhāna Varōrasa, Prince, Tamnān Vat Pavaranivesa Vihāra, A History of Wat Bṛḥṇṇiwēt Wihan (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of the Supreme Patriarch, Sophonphiphatthanākṇ, 2465), pp. 23 and 93.

The book trade, however, hardly began until the 1860's, when the Journal of the Siamese Embassy to London in 1857 written by Mom Rajodai, the interpreter to the embassy, was first published by Dr. Bradley. On Saturday, June 15, 1861, the publisher put in his diary: "Had many callers to purchase the Journal of the Embassy to London".<sup>1</sup> The book became a 'best-seller'. And, six years later, the second edition was published, again, by Dr. Bradley.<sup>2</sup> During 1861-1865, Dr. Bradley published more books. He published Nirāt London,<sup>3</sup> a nirāt poem composed by the author of the Journal of the Siamese Embassy to London in 1857; Čhindā Manī was also first published in 1861; in 1863, Kotmāi Trā Sām Duang, and in 1865, Sāmkok. And, from then on, the business of book trade began booming.

It should be noted here that the purchasing of the copyright of Nirāt London by Dr. Bradley in 1861 is said to have been the first time a copyright was bought and sold in Thailand. When looking back into Thai literary tradition, however, it is found

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1. Feltus, op. cit., p. 221.

2. Mom Rajodai, Čhot Maī Hēt Lae Nirāt London, Records of the Siamese Embassy to London in 1857 during the reign of H. M. Rama IV and Nirāt London (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of Phrayā Montrīsuriwong-Čan Bunnag, Rong Phim Thai, 2461), intro. p. 1.

3. Chitakasem, op. cit., pp. 165-166.

that copyrights had already been bought and sold before that, but in a different manner. Thai poets, and/or possibly the owners of manuscripts as well, would sell the right to copy from their books by long-hand writing.<sup>1</sup> Sunthṓn Phū is said to have been the first poet who at times actually wrote to earn his living. Another one is Khun Phum, a lady poet, Sunthṓn Phū's contemporary, who also wrote poems for sale.<sup>2</sup> A copyright, however, was not made formally legal until 1902 A.D., when a copyright act was passed.<sup>3</sup>

Publication, which was begun in the reign of Rama III, and started to grow from the reign of Rama IV, became more and more popular during the Chulalongkorn period. In the beginning of the fifth reign, there were three major printing houses: the Royal Printing Press; the American Missionary Association, where Dr. Bradley sat as a publisher, editor, translator, and bookseller; and the printing press owned by Dr. Samuel Smith

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1. Sunthṓn Phū, op. cit., intro., p. 13.

2. Ibid.

3. Kotmāi Ratchakān Thī Hā, Laws of Rama V, Vol. 18, p. 286, quoted in Ekkasān Raang Kan Chat Kān Saksā Nai Ratchakān Phra Bāt Somdet Phra Chulachomkhilāochaoyuhua, Government Papers on Educational Administration in the Reign of Rama V (Bangkok: Published to celebrate the centenary anniversary of Rama V's coronation, 2511), pp. 250-254.

at Bāng Khō̄ Laēm.<sup>1</sup> The Royal Printing Press had to give up publishing anything else after it had become engaged in publishing school textbooks and the Royal Gazette. Then, the two business agencies were left to carry on the publication of Thai literature in general. Rivalry became inevitable. But, because both of these two publishers had to depend on the same agent for procuring manuscripts, who was the Regent, The competitive situation was not at any time disastrous. It was to be agreed that Dr. Bradley published only prose works, and Dr. Smith only verse.<sup>2</sup>

Under such conditions, things seemed to go smoothly for years until a controversial issue concerning the ethical effects of fiction was raised. Dr. Smith was charged with publishing morally indecent books. Some parts of Khun Chang Khun Phaen and other poetic romances were translated into English to be used as evidence in the English Consular Court in Bangkok. Dr. Smith was proved guilty, and was forbidden to publish more books of that sort.<sup>3</sup> It was said that Dr. Smith had already made a lot of profit from the publication of the Thai romances in poetry.

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1. Rajanubhab, Tamnān Nangsū Sāmkok, p. 35.

2. Ibid., pp. 35-36.

3. Ibid.

From Phra Aphai Manī alone, the publisher was said to have earned so much as to be able to afford to build a brick house. The publication of Thai fiction in verse by no means ceased, however, because Thai publishers took over the job Dr. Smith was legally forced to leave.

As far as prose works were concerned, the publisher was safe. Besides, Sāmkok, a 'best-seller', which was first published and republished by his printing house three times, Dr. Bradley published most of the Chinese stories in translation. And, it was his printing house which first published Rāchāthirāt in 1880.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Bradley, too, was said to have made a lot of profit from the publication of Thai prose fiction.

Seeing how book production could be made effective in quantity by printing technology, the Thais gladly followed the initiative taken by the missionaries. Following the missionary lead in using books as a tool to promote religious knowledge, in 1888 King Chulalongkorn prompted the publication of a complete set of the Trai Pitaka, which consists of some 3,680 volumes of palm leaves, and each volume normally contains 24 leaves. In this first edition, the Trai Pitaka was printed in the Thai transliteration of the Pali language. It appeared in 39 volumes altogether. That was said to

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1. Chao Phrayā Phra Khlang (Hon) et al., Review of Rāchāthirāt, by Dhani Nivat, H. H. Prince, JSS, XLII, Pt. 2 (January, 1955), p. 56.

have been the first time when the Buddhist Scripture - the Trai Pitaka - was published. And, as 1,000 copies were produced, it was possible for the Thais to answer the call from foreign countries for copies of it too.<sup>1</sup>

The attempt to produce books on a wider variety of subjects was made by the members of the City Library,<sup>2</sup> which was established in 1905, and which later became the present National Library. As the Library possessed a good collection of unpublished manuscripts on various subjects, e.g. religions, history, culture, arts, astrology, medicine, poetry, tales, fables etc., it was agreed that a wider range should be published. One way to solve the financial problem was to take the initiative Prince Sommot Amorphan took during the period 1900-1905, while he was in charge of the special library of Buddhist literature.<sup>3</sup> This was to encourage people to publish books for distribution at anniversaries or funerals instead of giving gifts of other kinds. The Library itself would give advice and help to select manuscripts to be published. The move the City Library made then has created a new

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1. Rajanubhab, Tamnān Hō Phra Samut, pp. 9-10.

2. Ibid., pp. 49-50.

3. Ibid., pp. 39-40.

tradition that books are published to be distributed as gifts on various occasions. In this manner, the publication of many valuable pieces of Thai literature which may not attract a commercial interest can be made possible at no monetary cost to the Library itself.

Incidentally, the old Thai alphabetic styles in print do not look the same as those of Sukhothai, Ayuthaya and early Bangkok, but have been modified by the manufacturing firms for reasons of technical convenience. As the first set of plates is said to have been moulded by the Westerners in Burma in 1817,<sup>1</sup> the feature of the Thai alphabets in print could possibly have been modified first by them. It is found that in 1964, about 130 years after the first printing office had been set up in Thailand, there were 847 registered printing plants in Bangkok. Except in a few big business companies where off-set machines are used, the rest of the printing houses generally use letter press cylinder press type.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Sukhabanij, op. cit., pp. 4 and 11.

2. Maenmas Chavalit, Survey Report on Reading Materials in Thailand Prepared for UNESCO (Bangkok: Department of Educational Techniques, Ministry of Education, 1966), pp. 8-9.



Printing technology has offered a more efficient way to spread knowledge to the general public in greater numbers than before. In Thailand, before the introduction of printing technology, the sources of knowledge were normally confined to the Palace and Buddhist monasteries. To be knowledgeable was indeed a privilege of the exceptional few. Therefore, knowledge of any sort was hardly spread to the general public. Two possible reasons can be given for this. One is that those who possessed some sort of knowledge actually used it as a means of living. Thus, to avoid potential competition it was wiser not to share the knowledge with others outside the family or the clan. Realizing this fact, yet having had a strong aspiration to promote education in the kingdom, Rama III, at the reconstruction of Wat Phra Chetuphon in 1836, promoted a centre for public education to be established in the monastery. In order to make this plan possible and effective, scholars and experts in all branches of knowledge were invited to help. One of their tasks was to see that all kinds of knowledge - general, special, as well as vocational - which could be studied by means of reading, were correct and clearly inscribed onto plates which were to be placed systematically in precincts, on columns of the cloisters, and in other places in the monastery compound. For fear of being given false information, especially about medical treatises and other important subjects, it was said that an expert was

asked to make an oath before giving his expertise.<sup>1</sup>

As a result, Wat Phra Chetuphon became a free university opened to all kinds and all classes of people who could walk in and out at their will and study any subjects at their will. However, there was only one such place, and besides, the "university" remained still in Bangkok. Due partly to the limited means of transportation, it was not convenient for those who lived in provincial towns to come and take this opportunity.

The second reason why knowledge was hardly spread to the general public throughout the kingdom before the introduction of printing technology is that for those who found sharing ideas and knowledge with their fellow men an intellectual pleasure, there were very limited means of communication to do so.

Here one may see that the introduction of printing technology helped to solve the problem which retarded the expansion of knowledge and information, the problem which limited the means

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1. Damrong Rajanubhab, Prince, "A-thibaī Tamnān Phlēng Yao Konlabot, An Essay on a History of Thai Poetry" of Rama III et al., Phlēng Yao Konlabot Lae Konla-akson, A Collection of Reflective Poetry (Bangkok: Distributed at the 60th birthday anniversary of Queen Sawāng-Watthanā, Rongphim Thai, 2465), pp. 29-30.

of communication by means of words.

Dr. Bradley died in Bangkok in 1873 without having seen Thailand changed into a Christian community, but an ancient kingdom transformed into a more sophisticated country, which transformation he helped to create. It was he who made the first move that has created such changes in the literary scene in Thailand.

## CHAPTER IV

## Journalism and the Novel

With the growth of printing presses comes the birth of journalism. The Thai novel too, like modern prose writing in other forms, for instance, essays, travelogues and short stories, was born in the pages of newspapers and magazines. Instead of being scholars conventionally trained in Buddhist monasteries or courtiers trained in the palace, Thai novelists have generally been educated in modern schools, and often involved in journalism. In relation to the novel, journalism in Thailand has played a two-fold role: one is that it has served as a fertile ground for potential writers to try their hands upon, thus, has often produced novelists; the other is that it has become an efficient means for the novelists themselves to present their own works to the general public, thus, has given an opportunity for the younger generation to learn the craftsmanship of a novelist from them. Thai novels were, and still are, normally serialized in magazines and/or newspapers before they are, if ever, published in book form. Without journalism, the Thai novel or other forms of modern prose writing might have developed with greater difficulty. Therefore it is important to examine the role journalism has played in relation to the development of modern prose writing, particularly to the development of the novel.

While books and book production were not completely brand new things to the Thais, newspapers, magazines and periodicals were indeed. Like printing technology, journalism was introduced to the Thais by people from the Western world. And, again, like printing technology, it was Dr. D. B. Bradley who had made the first move to introduce journalism to the Thais, whom he had hoped would grow towards the Christian faith. It had taken the missionary thirty years before he came to feel his own ability and limitations. On June 1, 1865, Dr. D. B. Bradley wrote in his diary:

Issued another number of the "Recorder" in Siamese, ... I have lively hope that I may do good to this people in this way. The paper seems to be gaining ground gradually.<sup>1</sup>

"The 'Recorder' in Siamese" was a fortnightly periodical in Thai, one of the periodicals Dr. Bradley edited and published from 1843 until his death in 1873. The first volume came out on March 1, 1865, as a supplement to the "Recorder" in English. The "Recorder", which was called The Bangkok Recorder, however, was not the first periodical in Thailand. In 1843, after being appointed to be in charge of the printing office of the American missionaries, Dr. Bradley was said to have edited and published an annual almanac in Thai as well as the fortnightly periodical, The Bangkok Recorder.<sup>2</sup> But, the

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1. Feltus, op. cit., p. 245.

2. Ibid., p. vii; see also National Library, Wārasān Lae Nangsū Phim Nai Phra Thet Thai Sūng "Ti Phim Rawāng Phō Sō 2387-2477, Periodicals and Newspapers Printed in Thailand between 1844-1934: a bibliography. (Bangkok: Department of Fine Arts, 1970), p. 3.

publication of the latter had lasted only for one year. Unfortunately, no evidence of either periodical at this period is available to tell what the contents were.

Then came Rāṭchakitḥānubēksā, the Royal Gazette, issued irregularly by King Mongkut during 1857-1859. It was the first periodical in the Thai language for Thai people. Its main objective, stated the king in the preface of the first issues, was to certify the legality of laws, bills and decrees so that courtiers, officers and commoners would not be cheated or threatened by illegal documents claimed to be legal by dishonesty or ignorance of the officers in charge. One of the reasons that underlined the attempt to publish the Royal Gazette was to get rid of falsehood in laws caused by the existing method of communication.

In the early days, an act, a bill, or a decree was written in pencil and severally copied in long-hand writing to be sent to relevant departments of administration both in Bangkok and in provincial towns throughout the kingdom. Every now and then mistakes were made here and there, for example when a copier carelessly dropped or mis-spelled some words; besides, there were rogues who intentionally falsified a bill, an act, or a decree to threaten or to cheat innocent people. "What has been going on is unfair", said the king,

"It frightens people as well as degrading the honour of the king"<sup>1</sup>. And, in order to minimize this kind of corruption, the publication of the government announcements was taken as one measure. Moreover, having felt the need to develop the kingdom to withstand imperialistic waves from the West, the king realized that his subjects had to be better informed of what the king and the administrative bodies were thinking, planning to do, or doing. And, to be better informed means, for one thing, that people had to be provided with more reliable information. In addition, things that should be known to all officers as well as all commoners had to be made known to people in a greater number than before. Thus, came Rāṭchakitḥānubēksā in which one may find a summary or the whole body of an act, a bill, or a decree officially certified by the king. There were only nineteen issues of Rāṭchakitḥānubēksā published in the reign of King Mongkut, which covers a period of seventeen years. The publication was put to an end because the king had become too busy with other state affairs. But, a year after King Chulalongkorn had become a ruler in his own right, the

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1. Thailand, Rāṭchakitḥānubēksā, Vol. I (5th month, the first day of the waxing moon, Chulasakkarat 1219), p. 1.

publication of Rāṭchakitṭhānubēksā was resumed. Here, unlike its first publication which contained information written or dictated only by King Mongkut, there was an editorial staff which consisted of Phrayā Sīsunthṭhōnwōhān (Fak Sālak), Phra Sārasātphōnlakhan (Sombun) and Luang Sārprasōēt (Nṭi Ā-ṭhārayāngkūn), while Prince Aksṭnsātsōphan took care of publishing. This time the periodical came out weekly and was for sale. In this period, its content had been modified. Hence, the Royal Gazette contained not only government announcements, but also court news. Rāṭchakitṭhānubēksā, therefore, resumed its service as a means of communication for the government to the courtiers, officers, as well as the general public. Its publication has been continued until the present time. Although Rāṭchakitṭhānubēksā was not a kind of periodical which published fiction of any sort, for that very reason it brought about the publication of such a periodical. In 1874, a few months after the renewal of the Royal Gazette, appeared a weekly magazine, Darunōwāt, the first magazine in Thai to be edited and published by a Thai.

Having seen that Rāṭchakitṭhānubēksā, the Royal Gazette, within its scope, could not cover other kinds of literature than the official, a group of young princes and noblemen led by Prince Kasēmsansōphak issued Darunōwāt, the name of which means "lessons for young men", which explicitly defines its objective. The magazine



was trying, with considerable success, to contain "political and foreign news, advertisements, proverbs, essays on science and fine arts, poetry, drama (classical as well as modern), fiction (old and new) for example, fables, general news - local and regional", as the editor announced in the preface of the first issue which came out on July 7, 1874.

Under the editorship of Prince Kasēmsansōphāk, then a young man in his late teens, Darunōwāt had become a new means through which progressive ideas were expressed. Here, prose writing had begun to be used more widely. Not only news, but also essays, articles, commentaries and fiction were written in prose narrative. The translation from foreign stories not only widened the Thais' world of words and broadened their concept of international affairs, but also brought the use of new literary devices into Thai prose writing, for instance, the use of inverted commas to distinguish conversations from narration. During this time loan-words from English began to mingle with Sanskrit, Pali and Khmer loan-words in Thai literature. The more important role Darunōwāt played in relation to the development of modern prose fiction is that it brought about a journalistic style - a new style of prose writing which marks a new era in the history of Thai literature.

Besides general knowledge and current news, the readers of Darunōwāt had an opportunity to read both old Thai tales, which used to be told orally, and new ones. It is in this magazine that the Thais had a good chance to disclose their literary talent in new forms. "Nithān Patyuban", whose title means "A Tale of the Present Time" is an example of modern prose fiction.

Breaking away from the conventional plot, normally derived from Buddhist literature and/or folktales, the anonymous author of "Nithān Patyuban" took up a current social problem instead. In this short piece of prose fiction, the author tells a story of two elderly people whose absurd behaviour is amusingly ridiculed by a group of children.<sup>1</sup> Here, to the actual people involved in the social and administrative reforms which took place during 1873-1910, or to a student of Thai history of the Chulalongkorn period, the satirical tone of the "tale" is quite explicit. But for general readers, it is necessary to look at the political atmosphere in which the tale was written in order to be able to feel such a tone.

After King Chulalongkorn, a young and progressive monarch of 21, had his second coronation in 1873, social and administrative

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1. "Anon", "Nithān Patyuban", Darunōwāt, p. 81.

reforms began to take place. The King's Guards, known as Thahān Mahātlek, originally formed of the king's close companions in their teens, became more systematized militarily in 1873. This regiment had served as King Chulalongkorn's private bodyguard, and was outstanding until the king gained full control over the government in the 1880's after the death of the Regent and of Prince Wichaichan of the Front Palace.<sup>1</sup> In 1874, an anti-slavery act was passed to abolish slavery in the kingdom. In the same year, two new administrative bodies, the Council of State and the Privy Council, were formed. The consequences of these social and political upheavals engineered by the younger generation did not favour the old but powerful existing ruling clique that had monopolized the administration of the central government ever since the former reign. The young generation was led by King Chulalongkorn, his brothers and half-brothers. The old one was led by the Regent and Prince Wichaichan of the Front Palace, and conflicts between the two groups became inevitable. The "Court

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1. Chula Chakrabongse, Prince of Thailand, Lords of Life (London: Alvin Redman Ltd., 1960), pp. 224-225. See also Tej Bunnag, "The Provincial Administration of Siam from 1892 to 1915: A Study of the Creation, the Growth, the Achievements, and the Implications for Modern Siam, of the Ministry of the Interior under Prince Damrong Rachanuphap" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Oxford, 1968), pp. 92-94.

Party", a political party led by the young king, attracted the bright young Thais "to whom King Chulalongkorn symbolised all that was enlightened and progressive"<sup>1</sup>. The Regent and Prince Wichaichan, on the other hand, were to represent "all that was backward and reactionary"<sup>2</sup>. The incident in 1875 in which a clash between the young revolutionary king, on the one hand, and Prince Wichaichan and the Regent, on the other, became vitally intense<sup>3</sup>, explains clearly the message hinted in "A Tale of the Present Time".

This short piece of satire was published in Darunōwāt on August 11, 1874, a few days before the Privy Council took their oath of fealty to the king for the first time.<sup>4</sup> Here, one can see very clearly the generation gap between the angry old soldier and his female acquaintance of his own generation, on the one hand, and the group of "thirty or forty children who are playing happily like children normally do"<sup>5</sup>, on the other. The two elderly people

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1. Bunnag, op.cit., p. 93.

2. Ibid.

3. See David K. Wyatt, The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 58-60.

4. Darunōwāt, pp. 89-93.

5. Ibid., p. 81.

are seen as being mad and clumsy; and the most vivid image the tale shows of the two people is that they both are socially and technically out of place. The story is set in Bangkok on the scene where a white elephant is celebrated ceremoniously. The plot, the setting and the atmosphere of the story make the "tale" appear more realistic than any other example of prose fiction ever written in those days.

It is true that the editor of Darunōwat was inspired by Rāchakitḥānubēksā, though his magazine had different objectives from the Royal Gazette. But, Rāchakitḥānubēksā was by no means the only source of inspiration that led the young teenage prince into being one of the first journalists Thailand had. Here, one cannot overlook another fact that, during 1859-1874, there had been twelve other periodicals published in Bangkok both in English and in Thai.<sup>1</sup>

In 1859 The Bangkok Calendar, an almanac which was said to have been edited and published in 1843<sup>2</sup>, appeared; and this time it came out annually from 1859 to 1873, when its editor and compiler,

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1. National Library, Wārasān Lae Nangstū Phim Nai Prathet Thai, pp. 3-4 and 35.

2. Feltus, op. cit., p. vii.

Dr. D. B. Bradley, died. Dr. Bradley, however, edited and published more than one periodical during the course of his life in Bangkok. As mentioned earlier, in 1865 The Bangkok Recorder was reissued after its first publication had stopped in 1844. This time Dr. Bradley put a supplement in the Thai language into this weekly magazine. The Bangkok Recorder came to an end in 1867. In this year, he published another magazine, the Siam Weekly Monitor, which came to an end in 1868. From 1868-1871 Dr. Bradley published the Bangkok Advertiser,<sup>1</sup> while his almanac, the Bangkok Calendar, continued until 1873.

In 1864 there had been two other weekly magazines: the Bangkok Press, and the Siam Times Weekly, the last of which was owned by Dr. Chandler. Both magazines came to an end in that year. In 1868, the Bangkok Summary was published and, again, came to an end in one year. Then from 1869-1884 appeared the Siam Repository and the Siam Weekly Advertiser, which lasted two years longer than the former. Both magazines were edited and published by Dr. Samuel John Smith. Besides these magazines, Dr. Smith owned two more newspapers. In 1868 his Bangkok Daily

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1. Ibid.

Advertiser and Siam Daily Advertiser were issued. The former stopped its circulation in 1868 but the latter survived until 1882. And a year before the publication of the second edition of Rāṭchakitḥānubēksā and of Darunōwāt, Siam Calendar, a weekly magazine, was issued and again ended in 1873, the year when it first appeared.<sup>1</sup> Among these short-lived periodicals that came out in the earliest period of journalism in Thailand, Dr. Bradley's Bangkok Calendar and Dr. Smith's Siam Daily Advertiser, Siam Repository and Siam Weekly Advertiser lasted the longest: they were from 14 to 17 years old when they met their ends. Before Darunōwāt appeared, except for Rāṭchakitḥānubēksā, all the periodicals published in Bangkok were owned and/or edited by foreigners.

There is no doubt that those periodicals had been read by the progressive young Prince Kasēmsansōphāk, the editor of Darunōwāt. And they certainly must have vitally stimulated his interest in journalism. Darunōwāt is often found to echo the ideas of Siam Repository, a quarterly magazine. In April, 1872, one of the articles published in Siam Repository said:

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1. National Library, Wārasān Lae Nangsū Phim Nai Prathet Thai ... op. cit.

... Soon we shall have a different state of things  
 ... Young Siam reads, and though there are yet no  
 Siamese newspapers, for the Siamese people simply,  
 the day is at hand; and when she does really awake  
 to the good of a newspaper, which tells how to get  
 good rice crops, and good government, and good children,  
 and how to be the first among the nations, every family  
 will want a newspaper ...<sup>1</sup>

In the preface of the first issue of Darunōwāt, the editor  
 put the following statements:

... Darunōwāt, as I see it, is to be an intellectual  
 ornament ... to be sources of various kinds of know-  
 ledge from which one can use as a means of living.  
 When knowledge is spread throughout the city, this  
 great city will then be perfect, and that will bring  
 about happiness and prosperity to people at large ...  
 I have tried to initiate the publication of this  
 magazine hoping that it will become an intellectual  
 stimulation for promising young people ...<sup>2</sup>

The hope that Darunōwāt would become an intellectual stimu-  
 lation to the young Thais clearly reflects the editor's own out-  
 look towards the role of journalism in relation to the national  
 development which he, undoubtedly, learned partly from the exist-  
 ing periodicals. In January 1872, an article in the Siam Repository  
 said:

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1. "A Paper Mill for Siam", Siam Repository, Vol. 4,  
 (April, 1872), p. 163.

2. "Chāng Khwām Hai Thān Thang Puang Sāp Thua Kan, Preface",  
Darunōwāt, pp. 2 and 3.



... Here in Scotland, I may have several daily papers come to me every day ... , which discuss all the important matters of the day, and keep ever before me, the great events of the world. It will be a long time before Siam can do like this, but she can make a little approach to it. And she should try and learn to find pleasure in useful things ...<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Smith somehow underestimated the "Young Siam". It did not take a long time at all after this sort of encouragement had been put in his magazine, because Darunōwāt appeared already in 1874. "In civilized countries", its editor said, "... there often are several newspapers ..."<sup>2</sup>. And he himself began to bring one out. While the Siam Repository was trying, with considerable success, to cover such subjects as science, language, history, philosophy, religion, morals, political economy "that will form a new era for Siam"<sup>3</sup>, Darunōwāt was to contain political and foreign news, proverbs, poetry, drama, science and fine arts, etc., as mentioned earlier; the subjects that will increase knowledge and sharpen an intellect. Unfortunately, Prince Kasemsansōphāk's attempt to use journalism as a means to exchange ideas and spread knowledge in order to help developing Siam had been made possible

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1. "Scotland", Siam Repository, Vol. 4, (January, 1872), p. 15.

2. Darunōwāt, p. 138.

3. Siam Repository, Introduction to Vol. 4, 1872.

only for one year. A similar idea, however, had been carried on when The Court came out in 1875.

The Court was the first newspaper to have been edited and published by a Thai. Its editor was Prince Phānurangsī sawāngwong, a half-brother of Prince Kasēmsansōphāk, the former editor of Darunōwāt, and a younger brother of King Chulalongkorn. Again, it is true that the editor of The Court, like Prince Kasēmsan, had been inspired by Rāṭchakitṭhānubēksā. And, again like the editor of Darunōwāt, Prince Phānurangsī saw that the Royal Gazette, as it stood, was not sufficient in so far as news was concerned.

Rāṭchakitṭhānubēksā was a weekly periodical, thus news, especially Rāṭchakitṭhānubēksā the official items, was often out of date by the time it appeared in the paper. Moreover, some information sometimes was not published at all.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, in 1875 Prince Phānurangsī led a group of young princes to produce the new daily newspaper. The princes, one of whom was Prince Kasēmsan, took turn in collecting news, and Prince Phānurangsī was in charge of editing and proof-reading it himself.

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1. Damrong Rajanubhab, Prince, "Tamnān Nangsū-Court Khāo Rāṭchakan, A History of The Court, A Gazette", of The Court-Khāo Rāṭchakān (Bangkok: Distributed at the 65th birthday anniversary of Prince Phānurangsī sawāngwong, 2466), intro., p. 9.

The first issue of The Court appeared on September 26, 1875. There was nothing else in it except the editorial announcement which stated the management and the aim of the newspaper - "to make it beneficial for those who are to be officers". Here, the editor announced that the newspaper was to contain official daily news and information and news that officers should be told about ahead of time. Originally the newspaper was not for sale, but was to be distributed among those who helped to make the issue possible, and, of course, it was also presented to King Chulalongkorn, who supported the idea of issuing it. The primary intentions, however, were altered later on.

The intention to distribute The Court free, for instance, proved to be impractical. The Court changed its name to Khāo Rāchakan, which means "official news", after it had come out for a period of over six months, and came to its end about six months later. One of the reasons was that Prince Phānurangsī had reached an age when he had to leave the Royal Palace, where the headquarters of the editorial staff was situated. Hence, there was no convenient place for the young princes to meet for such a purpose and to carry on the publication.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 12.

In spite of its being short-lived, The Court-Khāo Rāṭchakān, like Darunōwāt, had served as a ground for the Thai potential writers to try their hands upon. By the nature of journalism, a journalistic style had been adopted. It was indeed in The Court-Khāo Rāṭchakān that such writers as Prince Phichitprīchākṇ and Prince Damrong Rajanubhab first made their names known as news reporters. Both princes, however, played a more important role in relation to the development of modern Thai literature. While Prince Damrong distinguished himself as a prominent essayist, Prince Phichit made the first move to write a novel, but, unfortunately, failed. As Prince Phichit's unfinished novel marks the first step toward the development of the novel in Thailand, his work will be discussed in detail in chapter VI.

Another primary intention of the editor of The Court-Khāo Rāṭchakān which was altered at a later date was to make his newspaper a court newspaper, that is to contain court news. There were two periods when several issues of the gazette were full of tales. Some of the tales are from Hitōpathet, some from Paksi Pakaranam, all of which are didactic. These tales were retold in prose narrative.

In addition to the above contributions which The Court-Khāo Rāṭchakān offered to the development of modern literature in Thailand, its editor was the first person who made the necessity for the protection of copyright felt among those involved in the business of writing, editing and publishing.<sup>1</sup> This move led to a decree announced in 1893, which protected the ownership rights of the works published in Wachirayān Wisēt.<sup>2</sup> The decree was later modified, culminating in the law on copyright finally passed in 1902.

Wachirayān Wisēt was a Thai periodical issued by the executive committee of the Wachirayān Library. It first came out bi-weekly in 1884 as a kind of newspaper aiming at reporting official court news. In 1885, it was modified and was produced as a weekly magazine for nearly ten years.<sup>3</sup> During these years, Wachirayān Wisēt had played a very important role indeed, particularly in relation to the development of prose fiction, because within its pages essays and short stories had found a fertile soil in which to flourish for the first time.

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1. "Chang Khwām, Announcement", The Court, Vol. I, pp. 31-33.
  2. Kotmāi Rāṭchakān Thī Hā, Vol. 4, p. 1354, op. cit., pp. 166-167.
  3. Rajanubhab, Tamnan Hō Phra Samut, pp. 22-31.

In 1884, when the Wachirayān Library was finally set up, the executive committee decided to issue a periodical to be given to the members of the library, in addition to other services the library aimed primarily to offer. As the Wachirayān Library was established by King Mongkut's children, led by Prince Phānurangsī, Prince Phichitprīchākṣṇ and Prince Thēwawongwarōpakān, the committee was naturally composed of the king's children.<sup>1</sup> The three princes, the former team of The Court-Khāo Rāṭchakān, were among the first chairmen of the executive committee. Here, like the library, the periodical was called "Wachirayān" after the priestly name of King Mongkut - Vajirañāna - the name given to him at his ordination. Wachirayān appeared first on the opening day of the Wachirayan Library in 1884 as a fortnightly periodical. Its primary aim was to be a means to spread knowledge to the members of the library whose financial support made the establishment of the library possible. It was to publish literature: traditional as well as modern. Six months later, a new committee took the office of administration. Under the chairmanship of Prince Thēwawong, three periodicals had been circulated: Wachirayān Wisēt, Wachirayān Panhā and Wachirayān.

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1. Ibid., pp. 15-22.

Here, Wachirayān, the fortnightly periodical, became a monthly one. It still carried on the primary objective - to be a means to spread knowledge. Wachirayān had come out monthly for a year before its publication came to an end. However, it reappeared in 1895 and resumed its duty from then to 1905, when the Wachirayān Library was developed and became the City Library.

Wachirayān Panhā, on the other hand, contained questions and answers put forward and given by the members of the Library. It came out only occasionally when questions had been put forward, and was combined with Wachirayān Wisēt in 1885, when a new committee, presided for the second time by Prince Phichitprīchākṇ, came to the office.

Wachirayān Wisēt was a bi-weekly newspaper. As mentioned earlier, its objective, like that of The Court-Khāo Rāchakan, was to report court news. In 1885, under the leadership of Prince Phichit, it was modified and came out weekly from then to 1894. Compared to Wachirayān, the monthly periodical, which published mainly traditional literature, or literature of a classical nature, Wachirayān Wisēt, the weekly one, as it stood, had more space for works of contemporary writers. Its modified objectives were to serve as a means by which relationship among learned men could be promoted; to give opportunities to members to express

themselves so that more understanding, acquaintanceship and respect could be made among them; and, to provide chances for those, regardless of their birth, class, or rank, who had knowledge and ideas to share. And, during those years, in some measure, Wachirayān Wisēt had successfully lived up to its ideal. It had indeed served as a means to spread knowledge, and to encourage the search for more; it had become a place where scholars could share their ideas; and, it had been indeed a means of expression for potential writers of imaginative prose.

It was in Wachirayān Wisēt where works of such writers as King Chulalongkorn, Prince Narāthippraphanphong, Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, Prince Bidyalankarana, Phrayā Phāchanaprīchā, Khun Banyatwarawāt, Luang Phakdiadisai (Pān Wimuttakun) could be found. The king and those writers had distinguished themselves as essayists, playwrights, literary critics and short story writers. During this period of nearly ten years, Wachirayān Wisēt had produced more than forty names of writers of short stories, and a number of modern prose writers of other kinds. Prose works which had been published here, appear in various forms. There are essays on various subjects, for instance, Thai culture, language, astrology, social welfare; there are discourses on philosophy, education, morals, religion, arts and so on; there



are historical documentaries, news - local as well as foreign; and there are riddles, tales, fables, parables, and modern short stories. Prose narrative, thus, had been used ever increasingly both for practical purposes and in imaginative writing.

It was in Wachirayān Wisēt, where the series of essays on royal ceremonies of the twelve months - Phrarāṭchaphithī Sipsong Dūan-had appeared for the first time in instalments. Moreover, through this magazine Thai readers had been introduced to translated works from the Western World. Historical happenings in foreign countries, such as the events which culminated in England taking an imperial role in India, the commercial contract between the United States and China in 1846, International Law, etc., had been made known to the Thais in translation. Western philosophers such as Plato began to travel to Bangkok, again, in translation. However, the old Chinese and Indian masters were still inspiring to the Thais. But, the synthetic aspect of Thai literature, which traditionally derived its material from the Eastern masters - Indian, Chinese, Javanese and Pali literature, began to reflect also a new kind of culture. Wachirayān Wisēt first promoted Thai prose fiction in a Western atmosphere. Aspects of foreign literature, especially those of the English, French and Germans began

to co-exist with the Chinese and Indian in Thai literature. And, such a beginning is an aspect of a new era of the Thai literary history. Details of prose fiction published in Wachirayān Wisēt during these years will be discussed separately in chapter V.

Incidentally, Wachirayān Wisēt was the first Thai periodical which paid for the manuscripts it published. A writer of an original work would be paid four bāt<sup>1</sup> for each page, a translated one would receive only two bāt, whereas an editor who knew both Thai and English equally well would be paid eighty bāt a month. This was what happened during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Now in the 1970's, a writer of an original work of non-fiction will be paid forty bāt for each page of a weekly periodical, two hundred bāt will normally be paid for one short story, but the salary of an editor varies; it depends on many factors, nearly all of which are impossible to know.

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1. bāt - standard coin of the realm in Thailand.

The circulation of the periodicals issued by the executive committee of the Wachirayān Library led to the growth of journalism in Thailand. But, one should not overlook the fact that in 1877, Dr. D. B. Bradley had issued one more monthly magazine, the Museum or Ratanakōt, which came to an end in 1878. And, during 1882-1886, Dr. Smith issued Chotmaī Hēt Siam Samai. Although they were all short-lived, they must have been read by the princes and other progressively-minded Thais who later became editors and writers of Wachirayān Wisēt. It should be fair, therefore, to conclude that journalism in Thailand owed its birth to some extent to the initiatives of both Dr. Dan Beach Bradley and Dr. Samuel John Smith, and that Wachirayān Wisēt and Wachirayān paved the way for its growth.

During 1901-1903 appeared Lak Witthayā, a monthly magazine, which was one of the most inspiring periodicals in the early period of the history of modern Thai literature. Its name, meaning "plagiarism", implicitly defines its role, that is, Lak Witthayā intended to publish mainly foreign literature in translation or adaptation - literature which is "stolen" from other languages. Under the leadership of progressive young officers - Prince Bidyalankarana, Phrayā Surinthaṛāchā, Chao Phrayā

Thammasakmontri<sup>1</sup>, three of the first Thai scholars educated in England<sup>2</sup> - the magazine sensationally became an intellectual stimulation for the contemporary writers as well as inspiring the younger generation. In Lak Witthaya Thai readers had a chance to read the novel in the Thai language for the first time. But, the novel, Khwaṁ Phayābāt, is only a translation of an English novel, Marie Corelli's Vendetta.

In spite of its objective - to give an opportunity for scholars, old and new, - to share their ideas and knowledge, works of the three officers dominated the magazine. But, they appeared under various pseudonyms such as "Nō Mō Sō", "Kaeo Klāep", "Khieo Hwān", "Ching Cho" and "Māe Wan". For practical reasons, or sometimes because it seemed in tune with the author's feeling and purpose in writing, a pseudonym was typically used in this magazine. Thus, a reader of Lak Witthaya read stories which appeared to have been written by several writers of various tastes and interests. From there, it has become a tradition for Thai writers to write under pseudonyms, a tradition which still remains a living one.

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1. These are the last titles these officers held.

2. See Bidyalankarana, Prince, Ruang Khong Nakrian Muang Ang-krit, a Story of Students in England (Bangkok: Ruam San, 2514), p. 218.

In this magazine Thai readers were widely exposed to new kinds of literature. Besides Khwām Phayābāt, the novel in translation, which had been serialized for several months from July 1902, Lak Witthayā published short stories written in a new style. A dramatized narrative, instead of a simple narrative, has often been used to tell short, fictional stories. As the short story is a forerunner of the novel in Thailand, more detail about it will be discussed separately in chapter V. But as far as Lak Witthayā is concerned, it is important to note that since the time it was in circulation, a new door had been opened to the Thai world of words, the door that brought in "Sweetness and Light" from a Western culture. And, from Lak Witthayā, the Thai literary stream had been turned into a new direction, the turn that marks the modern period in the history of Thai literature. Lak Witthayā, nevertheless, came to an end still in its glory. The team led by Prince Bidyalankarana, however, found in Thawī Panyā a new ground to play on.

Thawī Panyā was the journal of the Thawī Panyā Samōsōn founded by The Crown Prince Vajiravudh in 1904. Like Lak Witthayā, the name of the journal explicitly defines its main objective, that is, to increase the intellect. The journal contained both literature of knowledge and literature for pleasure. Besides, the Crown Prince himself, the leading writers of Thawī Panyā are unsurprisingly "Nō Mō Sō", "Māe Wan" and "Khieo Hwān", the three inspiring literary

personalities of the time. And besides "Nithān Thong In" (Tales of Thong In), a series of detective stories written by the Crown Prince under a pseudonym "Nāi Kaeo Nāi Khwan", another widely read story published in Thawī Panyā was "Nō Mō Sō" 's 'Chotmāi Čhāngwāng Ram", a series of letters written by a father to his son. Like the periodicals in the early days, Thawī Panyā was short-lived. It was only about three years old when it disappeared. But, about seven years after having been on the throne, King Vajiravudh issued another periodical - Dusit Samit.

Dusit Samit, as it stood, was a periodical issued by citizens of an experimental town - Dusit Thānī.<sup>1</sup> As the king advocated freedom of expression, and liked to encourage his people to see a role for journalism in relation to a democratic system of government, the citizens of Dusit Thānī, therefore, issued two daily newspapers: Dusit Samai and Dusit Recorder. Having seen that the journalists of both teams had strayed from the proper professional ethics of journalism,<sup>2</sup> the king, thus promoted the issuing of

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1. Chamun A-mondarunarak (Chām Sunthōrawēt) (ed.), Dusit Thānī - Muang Prachāthippatai Khōng Phrabātsomdet Phra Mongkut-klaochaoyuhua, Dusit Thānī - King Vajiravudh's Experimental Democratic Town (Bangkok: National Library, 2513).

2. For example, the groups attacked each other with personal diatribes.

Dusit Samit. Its primary aim was to point out where the defects were and how to make them right. Dusit Samit used humorous satire as a means to eliminate the illnesses in journalism in Dusit Thānī. However, literature of other kinds had its place in Dusit Samit too, as most of the stories published here were written by the king, who himself was a playwright, an essayist, a poet, a translator as well as a writer of detective stories. In spite of its wide range of subscription - both outside the town and abroad - Dusit Samit was short-lived. It came out weekly from December 7, 1918 and ended in 1921.<sup>1</sup> At any rate, Dusit Samit was not a popular magazine, compared to its contemporaries, such as, Sēnā Sūksā Lae Phāe Witthayasat, Siam rāt, Sap Thai and Thai Khasēm.

Sēnā Sūksā Lae Phāe Witthayāsāt is a journal issued monthly by the Department of Military Education since 1915. It aims, predictably, at presenting military news and knowledge. But, in its early period it also published fictional stories. And, in this latter aspect, Sēnā Sūksā Lae Phāe Witthayāsāt was widely read. In this journal Luang Sārānupraphan, a famous writer of

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1. The writer obtained detailed information concerning Dusit Samit from M. L. Pin Malakul, who himself was a member of the editorial staff, from his personal letter to the writer dated May 8, 1972, 139 Sukhumvit, Bangkok 11, Thailand.

detective and mysterious stories - Phrāe Dam (The Black Satin) and Nā Phī (A Ghost Face), was born. Both stories had been serialized in this journal one after another from December 1922. Because these two stories were sensational, the journal had been stimulating for non-military readers, the most prominent of whom was Kulāp Saipradit, who later worked and wrote for it for some time. But, because his works make up a large part of the history of the novel in Thailand, the early period of which is the subject of this thesis, they will be discussed separately. Among the periodicals issued in that period, Sēnā Sūksā Lae Phāe Witthayāsāt is one of the most long-lived. It is still in circulation at the present time.

During 1920-1925, while fictional stories adapted and/or translated from Western literature had been flooding nearly every periodical since 1902, Siam Rāt filled its pages with Chinese fiction retold in the Thai language. Siam Rāt was a daily newspaper, but had very little to do with news of any sort. Its main role was to publish Chinese fictional stories in Thai. In relation to the early development of the novel, Siam Rāt too had played a very important role. Like Lak Witthayā, Sēnā Sūksā Lae Phāe Witthayāsāt, and other periodicals such as Sī Krung, Pho



Witthayā, Phadung Witthayā, Niyāi Rāi Dūan,<sup>1</sup> in that Siam Rāt encouraged writers to translate and rewrite foreign literature in Thai. But, instead of following the same line as the above periodicals, all of which concentrated largely on Western literature, Siam Rāt paid all its attention to Chinese. Compared to Lak Witthayā, which started by publishing an English novel in translation, Siam Rāt was more successful in so far as the quantity of the works produced were concerned. While Lak Witthayā attracted a small group of the more sophisticated readers, Siam Rāt attracted the majority and wider range of readers. Female shopkeepers, housewives, male students and noblemen were normally the reading public of Chinese fiction, besides journalists and writers themselves. Chinese fictional stories retold in Thai were so popular that one could find them read even in Buddhist monasteries.<sup>2</sup>

The success of Siam Rāt in publishing Chinese fiction retold in Thai led to a period when nearly all the periodicals used some pages for fictional stories written in the Thai language, but in a Chinese atmosphere. In spite of its many rivals, Siam Rāt still

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1. These periodicals can be found in the archives of the National Library in Bangkok.

2. Sathit Sēmānin, Wisāsa (Bangkok: International P.E.N. - Thailand Centre, 2514), pp. 148-149.

remained at the top. Its team was competent and seriously concerned with the art of translation. But, Siam Rāt met a pathetic end when its founder, Sukrī Wasuwat, died.<sup>1</sup> However, the translation and adaptation of Chinese fictional stories in Thai as well as an original invention of Thai fictional stories in Chinese coating have been carried on until the present day.

Another inspiring periodical issued in this period was Sap Thai. Like Lak Witthayā, this monthly magazine aimed not primarily at satisfying the taste of the general public, but at more sophisticated readers. However, it published not only works of such writers and translators as "Rām-chitti", "Khrū Thēp", "Saengthong",<sup>2</sup> and other scholars, but also works of ambitious high school students such as Kulāp Sāipradit and Prince Ā-kāt Damkōeng, both of whose works later mark the beginning of a phase of the novel in Thailand. Although Sap Thai was one of the leading monthly magazines in the 1920's, it was only about seven years old when it disappeared.

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1. Ibid., pp. 282-289 and 315-316.

2. For actual names of Thai writers see National Library, Nam Fraphan Khong Nakkhian Thai Sung Chai Nai Bat Raikan Khong Ho Samut Chat, Pseudonyms of Thai Writers Used in the Card Catalogues of the National Library (Bangkok: Department of Fine Arts, 2513).

While Sap Thai, supported by King Vajiravudh, was gaining ground well, during 1922-1926 Khun Sētthabutsirisān (Chāē Sett-habut), its editor, issued Nakrian, a fortnightly magazine of his own.<sup>1</sup> This magazine, as its name meaning "student" implies, aimed at students of which the numbers had promisingly increased. The editor approached school-teachers for materials to be published at no cost.<sup>2</sup> Probably being himself well-known and appreciated, he was successful in his attempt. Such writers as Phrayā Anuman Rajadhon, a scholar and essayist, and Luang Sārānupraphan (Nuan Pāchinphayak), the writer of sensational mystery stories, were among those who wrote for this students' magazine. Like Chotmāi Hēt Saeng-Arun, Nakrian was one of the first magazines that helped to turn the interest of young people to journalism and to encourage them to try their hands upon such a profession ever since their school days. But unlike Chotmāi Hēt Saeng-Arun, in that Nakrian was edited and owned not by any schools, but privately.

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1. Salao Rēkharuchi, Nung Sattawat Nangsu Phim Thai, One Century of Newspapers in Thailand (Bangkok: Ruamsān, 2510), pp. 316-317.

2. Ibid., p. 317.

Chotmāi Hēt Saeng-Arun was a journal issued by Watthanā Witthayālai, a convent school. It came out monthly first in 1892. As Watthanā Witthayālai is a school for girls, the journal perhaps has given the girls an inspiration in journalism. Since 1906 women's magazines have intermittently appeared. One of the early magazines, all of which were short-lived, was Satrī Thai.

Satrī Thai, meaning "Thai Ladies", came out weekly in March 1925 and disappeared in the following year. It said that it was the only magazine circulated during that time and that all its staff members were women. These progressively-minded ladies were broad-minded too. They welcomed works written by men but on condition that they had to be polite, and they had to write what was knowledgeable and useful for women. Satrī Thai generally contained columns on news of the world, women's rights, marriage problems, humour, grooming, horoscope and fiction. Although it was short-lived, Satrī Thai was one of the early magazines that had tried to stimulate Thai women's social consciousness. At any rate, it paved the way for a role for women in the new Thai literary society.

Indeed, Thai women have had an equal role with men in the development of the novel. In 1929 Sattrū Khong Chao Lon, one of

the first novels, appeared in Thai Khasēm. The novel, written by a lady in her early twenties, was widely read, and it led to ten more written by the same author during the period 1929-1940.<sup>1</sup> And, Thai Khasēm published her first three novels one after another during 1929-1932; all appeared in instalments.

Thai Khasēm was a monthly magazine. It had been in circulation during 1924-1935, but reappeared at later dates. It published works of sophisticated writers such as "Kanchanākkhaphan", "Sāengthong", "Dokmai Sot", "Sathian Kōsēt", "Nākhapraphīp", Prince Ā-kāt Damkōeng, etc. The works of these writers have all played a significant part in the history of modern Thai literature.

In Thai Khasēm, fictional stories - originally written as well as translated - were equally welcomed. It was in this magazine that original works such as the novels written by "Dokmai Sot", and translated works such as Kāmanit done by "Sathian Kōsēt" and "Nākhapraphīp" had been first published. Like Lak Witthayā, Thai Khasēm had serialized one Western novel in translation which has maintained its popularity ever since it first appeared. The novel was originally written by a Danish Nobel Prize winner - Karl Adolph

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1. See appendix, p. 357.

Gjellerup. Unlike Khwām Phayābāt, however, Kāmanit (Der Pilger Kamanita) is a product of a creative work of translation.

Nevertheless, in spite of the differences in their natures, Kāmanit, like Khwām Phayābāt, Rāchāthirāt and Sāmkok, has inspired writers of modern prose fiction, especially the modern writers of Buddhist literature.

Having produced such a novelist as "Dokmāi Sot", and creative translators such as "Sathian Kōsēt" and "Nākāprathīp", whose works are still greatly admired, Thai Khasēm was distinguished as one of the leading magazines in its day.

In June 1929, appeared Suphāp Burut (The Gentleman), a fortnightly magazine. The magazine was founded by a group of young journalists led by Kulāp Sāipradit, who is better known as a novelist. Unlike the staff of Lak Witthaya or of other leading magazines in the former days, the staff of Suphāp Burut was a new product of the modern Thai society. All members of the team that produced Suphāp Burut were high school-leavers mostly from Thepsirin, one of the early established public boy schools in Bangkok. Although Suphāp Burut was not the first magazine in which these young men, known as the "Suphāp Burut Group", had

ever been involved,<sup>1</sup> it was the magazine that brought them together in a more creative and serious way than any other magazines did previously.<sup>2</sup>

The magazine published not only novels, and short stories, but it also contained columns on various subjects. During 1929-1931, Suphāp Burut had served both as a means for a new type of Thai intellectual to express his views, and for writers of prose fiction to present their literary works. Many prominent journalists, columnists, and novelists such as Sanit Charoēnrat, Sathit Sēmānin, Op Chaiwasu, Mālai Chūphinit, "Yākhōp", etc. were among the "Suphāp Burut Group". Compared to Lak Witthayā, Suphāp Burut had played a similar role in that it again created a new atmosphere in the Thai literary society.

While Lak Witthayā turned the history of Thai literature into a new chapter in which Western cultures were brought in to co-exist with the ancient Eastern literary masters, Suphāp Burut changed its direction once more. Here, a social awareness

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1. The Thepsirin boys had tried their hands on journalism since their school days during 1921-1924.

2. Rō Wutthāthit, "Khana Suphāp Burut, The Group of Gentlemen", quoted by Pō Watcharāphōn, Chomrom Nakkhian, Stories of Thai Writers (Bangkok: Ruamsān, 2509), pp. 409-429.

felt by these young 'gentlemen' stood out clearly. In this magazine ordinary citizens played the leading role, and they increasingly made their voices heard among the general reading public. Suphāp Burut, however popular it seemed to have been during its short-lived life, had more to do with journalism than with literature as such.

As far as the early development of the novel in Thailand is concerned, however, not only newspapers and magazines of the sorts such as those which were mentioned above have parts to play, but magazines which published stories retold from Western films and from plays also have contributed as much. Phāpayon Siam and Nangsū Phim Khāo Lakhon Prāmōt Nakhon are examples.

Unlike the other periodicals already mentioned, Phāpayon Siam (The Siam Cinema), was a magazine which published stories in Thai retold from the Western films to be shown in cinema houses in Bangkok. As the magazine had been issued principally for a commercial reason, it was trying to satisfy the Thai cinema-goers, who could not understand English, by publishing not only film programmes and comments on them, but also summaries of the stories or even the whole stories which were retold or rewritten in the Thai language. Like Chinese fiction in Thai, the stories retold or rewritten from the Western films became a strong stream that



helped to create a new era in the history of Thai literature. The circulation of Phāpayon Siam during 1922-1924 led to the publication of more magazines of that sort. During 1924-1928 appeared Khāo Phāpayon, a bi-weekly magazine issued by Sieo Song Uan, the owner of Phāpayon Siam, and Phāpayon, a magazine owned by Tō Ngekchuan, which came out irregularly during 1926-1927. All of these film magazines not only enlarged the size of the reading public of fiction, but they also accidentally served as an active catalyst to enrich the imagination of potential novelists who were commissioned to translate or rewrite a story. As the effect of the Western films on the early development of the Thai novel is substantial, detail about it will be discussed in chapter VI. Here, let us turn to another kind of magazine which also contributed to the early development of the Thai novel.

During 1926-1928, theatre magazines appeared. Like the cinema magazines, theatre magazines published programmes, comments on the plays, and fiction - translated, adapted, as well as original. Take Nangsū Phim Khāo Lakhon Prāmōt Nakhon (The Pramothaya Nagara Opera Weekly) for example. Here, potential playwrights and imaginative writers often had an opportunity to try a new form of writing which fitted in with the nature of the magazine. Thus, dramatic dialogues were often used, especially when

the original story was from a Western source. In this manner, the theatre magazine played a three-fold role: it gave theatrical information; it provided reading materials which entertained its readers, and, it perforce produced writers of modern prose fiction.

There had been some three hundred periodicals issued in Bangkok before the novel Sattrū Khong Chao Lon appeared in one of them in 1929. The above examples have been brought in only to give an idea of what sort of reading materials had been read before the emergence of the novel in the late 1920's.

Looking back from here to the time when Sāmkok was first published, and Darunōwat was issued, one is able to see that prose fiction had developed in parallel in various modes before the Thai novel proper finally emerged. One may remember also that the introduction of the printing press and the growth of journalism have been the main factors which facilitated such a development.

## CHAPTER V

## The Beginnings of Modern Prose Fiction

Having dealt with the general and more particular settings for the emergence of modern prose writing, for example journalism, it is necessary to return to the reign of King Chulalongkorn in order to describe the nature of the most significant earlier works. Modern fiction<sup>1</sup> in Thailand appears in three distinctive forms of prose narrative - the short story, the spoken drama, and the novel. These new forms of imaginative writing emerged while the Thais had come into closer contact with Western cultures. Although the forms became distinct in the same period of history, their development has proceeded in different manners. Whereas the short story defined in Thai terms came into existence as a product of a literary evolution in the Thai cultural tradition, and the novel had mutated out of such an evolution, the spoken drama was on the other hand, a totally new form suddenly introduced into the literary scene by Thai scholars returning from England. However, the

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1. The writer of this thesis uses the term "modern fiction" to represent Thai fiction that has been developed during and since the modernization of the Thai kingdom in the reign of King Chulalongkorn. The thesis deals only with modern fiction up to 1931 before the absolute monarchy gave the right of way to the constitutional in 1932 A.D.

evolutionary process at the period of time when modern fiction began to emerge was catalyzed by internal as well as external political pressures.

Looking back to 1874, the time when conflicts between the Young Siam and the Conservative Party had become increasingly intense<sup>1</sup>, Darunōwāt published intermittently short pieces of satire written in a form of prose narrative instead of ordinary tales written in the old Thai literary tradition. These short pieces of satire, though they appeared to be fictional, contained a political implication. They reflected quite clearly the attitude of their author(s), whose works were published anonymously, toward the authoritative political figures of the period. About two months after "A Tale of the Present Time" had appeared<sup>2</sup> Darunōwāt published another short piece of fiction in a form of prose narrative - "Khwām Fan", (A Dream).<sup>3</sup>

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1. Wyatt, op. cit., pp. 42-61 and Bunnag, op. cit., pp. 87-91.

2. See chapter IV, pp. 78-81.

3. "Khwām Fan", (A Dream), Darunōwāt, pp. 185-186.

This piece of prose fiction, again like "A Tale of the Present Time" conveys a satirical tone with a clear political implication. There are two characters involved here; one is a young lad who, in his dream, entered into a big, beautiful residence of an old warrior; the other is the warrior himself, whose livelihood is trading. The readers learn of these two characters mainly from their conversation. The old warrior appears to be touchy, conceited and avaricious, while the younger character inquisitive, bold and cynical, whose questions form the frame-work of the story. But, as he woke up in the middle of their conversation, some of the questions, such as whether it was better for the very rich to stop shortening their lives by constantly acquiring more wealth non-stop, and whether it would be better for a very rich old man to reserve the rest of his life-time for other kinds of enjoyment instead, remained unanswered. The writer ended his story by putting forward those questions to his readers for solutions.

It is quite clear here that "A Dream" is a satire on the old, rich, official class of the nobility who had monopolized the ruling power before social reforms began to take place in the 1870's. And, such a clique headed by the Bunnag family is known to have had under their control not only political, but also

financial power. Having come to the throne with a poor and ill-functioning government in his hands, King Chulalongkorn and his young supporters could do little to build up strength for the country in order to withstand the strong waves of the Western imperialism which had grown more and more threatening.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the shift of the ruling power from the Regent and his party to King Chulalongkorn in the 1880's did not bring a restful state of mind to the King because the threats of colonialism had constantly increased their severity. The fall of Annam to France in 1884 left Thailand alone, with her territory being surrounded completely by French and British colonies.<sup>2</sup>

Having felt the technical inadequacy of the country, yet determined to see Thailand maintain her political independence and preserve her cultural integrity, King Chulalongkorn found no alternative but to modernize the old kingdom. Thailand during the Chulalongkorn period, thus, was in the time for "resartus", in order to survive such pressures from the Western civilization. To remain free, as the term "Thai" means, the Siamese needed "new clothes", in Thomas Carlyle's term, to put on. The "clothes" which the Siamese, under the leadership of King Chulalongkorn,

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1. Bunnag, op. cit., pp. 86-91.

2. Ibid., pp. 75-85.

chose then were the Western ones. The last two-thirds of the Chulalongkorn period was indeed the time when the ruling class had acted consciously or unconsciously like a tailor who makes clothes for himself. To make clothes to fit a man, a tailor must first know the size of the man. Thailand during the Chulalongkorn period was in the time when the Thai ruling class began to look into themselves, whether consciously or not, for factors which made Siam what she had been. The essential characteristics which signified their national identity, the Thais seem to have discovered, appeared chiefly to lie in their Buddhism, literature, and ceremonies. The publication of a complete set of the Buddhist scripture - the Trai Pitaka - for the first time in 1893,<sup>1</sup> the composition of a series of essays on traditional royal ceremonies of the twelve months during 1888-1889, which was a response to the request for such a kind of literature, together with the promotion of journalism were parts of what the ruling class had done at the beginning of the period of modernization. The publication of Thai traditional literature, secular as well as religious, and the encouragement made for new development were some of the

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1. See chapter III, pp. 66-67.

evidences which show that the ruling class of the Chulalongkorn period had been consciously or unconsciously searching for their national identity while modernization was simultaneously being carried on.

Although the Thais leaned toward the British in their choice for the "new clothes", they were well aware that by modernizing Siam in the light of the Western civilization simply by means of cultural coating, she would never be able to win any respect from the world community. They realized that, before being further developed, a living civilization must rest fundamentally on the root of its own cultural tradition.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in 1897 while King Chulalongkorn was paying his first state visits to Western countries, he observed their civilization with keen and critical eyes. The hope for Siam to be one among the nations of a civilized world encouraged the King to be cautious in the way of

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1. Kromamtin Bidyalabh Bridhyakorn "Kān Plian Plaēng Lae Praphēnī Khong Thai Nai Ratchasamai Phrabātsomdet Phra Chulachomkhaochaoyuhau (2411-2453 B.E.)". "Changes and the Thai Tradition Raluk Theng Rop Roi Pi Haeng Wan Sawankhot Phrabātsomdet Phra Chomkhaochaoyuhau Lae Wan Sawoeirāt Phrabātsomdet Phra Chulachomkhaochaoyuhau, Collected Works for the Centenary of the Death of King Mongkut and the Coronation of King Chulalongkorn (Bangkok: King Mongkut and the Coronation of King Chulalongkorn (Bangkok: Royal Publication, 2511), p. 203.



making his aspiration practically possible. Thus, after returning from his "study tour" of Europe, the King's plan to promote Thai culture was soon carried out by emphasising the importance of Thai studies in the country. In 1900, a special library for Buddhist literature - Hō Buddha Sātsana Sangkhaha - was established.<sup>1</sup> In 1904, the Siam Society was founded to encourage interest in the Arts and Science in Siam and neighbouring countries; the Society has made itself known among scholars of the world ever since then. In 1905, the City Library was opened to the public and the campaign for old manuscripts was carried out.<sup>2</sup> In 1907, an archaeology club was set up primarily to facilitate the study of history.<sup>3</sup>

During this period of modernization, prose narrative had gradually changed the face of Thai literature. Prose had a greater role to play than poetry, and it often had opportunities to extend this role. It is natural that life in the country became more complicated during the process of national development,

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1. Rajanubhab, Tamnan Hō Phra Samut, pp. 32-42.

2. Ibid., pp. 55-62.

3. Thailand, Rāchakitchānubēksā, Vol. 24 (December 8, r.s. 126), p. 926.

and there were several social gaps to be filled. The ruling class seemed to find that these gaps could be filled successfully when members of the same society were well-informed of and understood what was going on in the country while changes were in progress.

After taking Annam in 1884, the French began to stretch their imperialistic hands out to the Thai territory along the Mae Khong River. And, finally two French battleships were sent up the Chao Phraya River to Bangkok. Thus, a clash between the Thai navy and the French battleships was inevitable.

While the two governments were settling the dispute, on July 23, 1894 Rāṭchakitḥānubēksā published a long announcement of the government explaining the situation to the Thais. This announcement reflects quite vividly the general psychological atmosphere at the time when the incident was taking place. Here, one can see very well how prose was used for a serious purpose such as that. It begins with a brief historical background of the Thai foreign affairs before the dispute started, how it started, and ends up with a consolation for the people. The following is an excerpt in translation from the announcement.

... In the first place, France sent in one battleship to protect their subjects a long time ago. Now, they claimed that more British battleships would come to protect their interests. France, therefore, demanded that two more of their battleships be brought in to protect theirs as well ... But, we see that at this moment it is not a proper time (for us) to allow more than one foreign battleship from each country to anchor in the Chao Phraya River. So, we discussed this matter with the French ambassador, and sent a telegram to the French government in Paris. And, we already received a reply sent by telegram, which agreed to give an order to stop the battleships from invading the River ... But, those two ships stubbornly came up into the mouth of the River ... The naval officers (at the Fort Phra Chulachomklao) then gave warning shots according to the naval tradition. But, the French battleships did not accept them as such. On the other hand, they fired back. So, they started firing at each other ... From what has happened, we believe, there must have been a misunderstanding somehow, because the message in the telegram sent from Paris is clear that the French Minister of Foreign Affairs explained in words that (they) did not mean to do any harm to the sovereignty of Siam. Therefore, you fellow citizens, please do not worry or panic, thinking that there would be any fighting in Bangkok ... But, an important issue to be prevented and solved at this moment is that of the crowds who might become anxious and alarmed because they do not know the degree of the matter. The King, therefore, has given an order to the Ministry of the Capital to make an arrangement to protect properties and citizens from being disturbed by looters. The King has also gone to inspect soldiers at spots all over Bangkok. He is much pleased to have seen that the military force would be sufficient to stop any difficulties which might happen, to bring peace, and to protect the citizens of our country from any danger ... So, please do not feel frightened or worry more than you need over what has actually happened. Please, everyone, keep peace and order in yourself as usual.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Thailand, RāṭchakitChānubēksā, Vol. 10 (July 23, r.s. 112), p. 196.

In the following pages, Rāṭchakitchānubēksā published a correspondence between Prince Thēwawongwarōprakān, the Siamese Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the French ambassador in Bangkok. Like in the announcement, the prose style in this letter shows a very good command in using language as a means of communication. The language used here is simple, but the tone is decisive. The message is clear, and it reflects the dignity and attitude of the Thais responsible for the survival of the nation as a whole. The following is an excerpt from the letter in translation.<sup>1</sup>

... I have to inform you that so far the King's government have not received any information from the British government stating that Great Britain would like to send her battleship to Bangkok, or even at the mouth of the (Chao Phraya) River, or elsewhere in the River other than the Swift, which at the moment is anchored in front of the British Embassy, the same as the "Lū Tang"<sup>2</sup> which is in front of the French. As you have said, ... the reason for this matter is only that you want to do the same as the British, or as other countries will do. I can see from what should be seen in your words that, if other countries will not have more than one battleship in the River, France will not try to send other battleships, except the "Lū Tang" either.

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1. The letter published in Rāṭchakitchānubēksā is in the Thai language.

2. This is a transcription of the Thai name for the French ship, "Lutin".

Let me add to what I have already said, that the first of all battleships which came to Siam was the "Lū Tang". Therefore, it is not quite right (for you) to accuse other countries that they started (to send battleships to Siam) first. There is no need for me to remind you of how threats had been given to us when the "Lū Tang" came to this country on March 14 ... And I can see that there is a general belief all over the country that if the "Lū Tang" leaves Bangkok, there will be no foreign battleships in this place. And the chaos which is now going on here will be brought into order. Then, we will become peaceful.<sup>1</sup>

At 10.30 p.m. the same night after the above letter was finished, Prince Thēwawong received information from the French ambassador saying that the battleships were coming, two days earlier than they were supposed to. Prince Thēwawong then added the following postscript:

I hope that because of all the appropriate reasons I have already explained in the above passage, you will send a telegram to the navy commanders, let them see that there is no reason to use as a pretext to bring the ships in at all. On the other hand, I cannot help feeling disgusted in the translation of the treaty which says that it is agreed to allow any countries to have an absolute power to send their battleships into the oceanic territory belonging to Siam, and into the capital city of this kingdom as many as any countries wish. The implication of this treaty of friendship does not seem to allow Siam to have the usual rights like other countries in order to protect herself. And, the French government should clearly see from what has been going on at the moment that we will not be able to agree to such a translation of this treaty without maintaining our rights to preserve the sovereignty of our kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Thailand, Rāchakitḥānubēksā, Vol. 10, op. cit., p. 198.
  2. Ibid., p. 199.

Although the dispute with France finally ended without more bloodshed, and Thailand maintained her sovereignty as an independent country, the ruling class, especially King Chulalongkorn, was bitterly made to feel the real danger to peace caused by Western imperialism. During this time prose writing was often used not only as a means of communication, but also as a means of literary expression. In 1895, a year after this incident, Wachirayan Wiset published an essay entitled "Pen Bāo Khao Ngāi Pen Nāi Khao Yāk" (Easy to be Slaves, Difficult to be Masters). In this essay, like a prose style generally written in those days, the sentences were often unnecessarily long, and words were used often repetitively. But, at any rate, its tone is quite moving. Here the anonymous writer tried to analyze, in terms of human socio-psychology, as to why man may allow himself to be a dependant of other people. It is easy for one to become a subject under the command of others, the writer wrote, and explained that it is easy because one does not then have to think or to look for ways and means to defend oneself, or to fight for oneself. One simply does what one is told and leaves the thinking part to the master. The same reason is also applicable to the weak and minority groups who allow themselves to be subjects of the bigger power. They do so because they believe that they would be

protected from danger,<sup>1</sup> the writer explained. Then he discussed in detail characteristics of different types of masters. According to him, there were four. A master of some sorts, he wrote, simply looks forward to gaining benefits for himself from time to time, but does not care for the welfare of his subjects. A master who is responsible for the welfare of his fellow men is like one who looks after a child. It is difficult, said the writer, because one has to help the child in such a way that the child would be growing strong and able to help himself later on in life. The writer said that being a slave, though easy, is the most undignified act of a human being. Therefore, he concluded:

most of those people who have fine intellect feel patriotic to their country, the place where they were born (and bred). Their aspiration is to save their nation from being a servant, or prisoner of war, or slave to other nations. That is why they have tried to find various ways and means to protect their nation as efficiently as their ability can allow them. No matter how tremendously difficult it may be, they do not count such troubles as their obstacles in achieving their goal ... One who is not a slave under any other men, or any other nationals, one who is dependent only to oneself, is honourable. This should be an ideal in life of any human beings. To be slaves is to be despised by all men. That is why, although it is easy to be slaves, nobody has a desire to be one of them ... Such a master (who is responsible for the welfare of his fellow men) has a desire only to see his fellow citizens in his country stand dependent only to themselves forever ...<sup>2</sup>

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1. "Pen Bāo Khao Ngāi Pen Nāi Khao Yāk, Easy to be Slaves, Difficult to be Masters", Wachirayān Wiset, Vol. 41. (August 9, r.s. 113), pp. 481-482.

2. Ibid., p. 484.

An act passed in 1874, whereby numbers of slaves were gradually diminished until slavery by and large was brought to an end in the first two decades of the twentieth century,<sup>1</sup> proved that such an ideal master really existed. In a circumstance such as that which Thailand in the Chulalongkorn period faced, the aspiration to save the nation "from being a servant, or prisoner of war, or slave to other nations" could be achieved only when the Thais by and large could cultivate for themselves a new intellectual personality, moreover a new sense of social responsibility had also to be developed among them. The king fully realized that while a new form of administration could be the best political instrument for modernizing the old kingdom, it was good education for the general public which would help to achieve the aspired goal.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, while the social and administrative reforms which began in the 1870's had been carried on more substantially, modern education for the general public had

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1. Phrayā Anuman Ratchathon, Ruang Lōek Thāt nai Ratchakan thī Hā, The Abolition of Slavery in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn (Bangkok: 1956), pp. 27-30, and 64-66, cited by Tej Bunnag, op.cit., pp. 89-90.

2. See letters from King Chulalongkorn to Phrayā Wisutsuriyasak dated January 21, r.s. 117 and February 3, r.s. 117; from King Chulalongkorn to Prince Damrong dated July 8, r.s. 118; from Prince Damrong to Phrayā Wisut dated April 20, r.s. 118; and from Prince Thēwawong to Phrayā Wisut dated August 24, r.s. 118 of Phrarātchahatthalēkhā Lae Nangstū Krāpbangkhomthūn Khong Chao Phrayā Phrasadetsurēnthrāthibadi, Letters to and from King Chulalongkorn and Chao Phrayā Phrasadetsurēnthrāthibadi (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of Than Phūying Sa-ngiam Phrasadetsurēnthrāthibadi, 2504), pp. 292-300, 304-307, 330-331, 358-362, and 363.



been implemented increasingly throughout the reign of King Chulalongkorn. The establishment of the first modern university in 1916, and the promulgation of an act in 1921 whereby free education in an elementary level was to be provided by the government for children of both sexes between 7-14 years of age were some of the evidences which amply proved the seriousness of the aspiration of such an ideal "master".

However, the lack of well-trained personnel qualified to serve in the new jobs required for the new form of administration in the early period of modernization, frustrated the king who saw clearly that the external circumstances did not allow Thailand to go at ease while modernizing herself. The relentless threats caused by the super powers from outside made it necessary that, in order to survive honourably, the internal strength must be sufficient to withstand such pressures. Therefore, to withstand such pressures, unity was to be kept among the Thais, especially, among the members of the ruling class themselves. However, as long as there are men who feel insecure, competition is unavoidable anywhere. And, one can feel very well the competitive atmosphere of the period as it was reflected in literature of the time. For instance, in "Khwām Kaeng Yaeng Kāe Kan" ("The Rivalry"), a fictional work in dialogue, published in the same issue of Wachirayān Wisēt as the one which published the essay "Easy to

be Slaves, Difficult to be Masters", jealousy and rivalry in kinship was taken up as the theme. Characters are represented by five fingers of the same hand, and the heart. The fingers stand for female characters; all are sisters. The heart stands for a male; the Lord of their life. When the story begins, the sisters have been quarrelling about social injustice on domestic grounds. Their arguments are made on the issues over responsibilities each one has had in relation to the well-being of the whole man, and over rewards each has been given for her service. The trouble here is that those who think that they work harder and better than the others find that they are not as well rewarded and recognized as those who do so little. Jealousy, discouragement as well as conceit work themselves out to antagonism among all the sisters. Then, the Lord Heart came in. The conciliation made by the Heart reveals clearly the idea of the need for practical co-operation which is required for the persistence of a healthy society.

The strong political pressures from outside such as those caused by the French in South East Asia had created a great many changes in various aspects of the Thais' way of life. It was during this time that the poetically-minded and easy-going Thais began to learn to look at life more seriously and to take

life more seriously. As a result of this new look at life, the makers of poetry started to write more seriously as well. Thai literature since then has been created chiefly not for the sake of its aesthetic value or for an entertaining purpose any longer. It has been created more with serious social and political motives. The Thai literary tradition, which used to focus mainly on the delightful side of the coin in the early days, changed itself increasingly to focus on the instructive and informative side during the Chulalongkorn period. Whereas the example from Wachirayān Wisēt above derives directly from the political needs of the time, this soon inspired work of a kind which showed that the literary imagination of the writer was brought to bear on subjects of immediate political and social interest.

At the beginnings of modern prose fiction, the earliest form to have been developed was the short story. While the Thais in the Chulalongkorn period were having a much closer contact with the West, they found its literary culture inspiring, perhaps like the Buddhist monks in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, who found Pali literature a great inspiration for their literary creation.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, elements of Western literature have begun

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1. The time from the Chulalongkorn period onwards is a fashionable time for the Thais to come to the West for further education. The time during the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries is said to have been a fashionable time for Thai monks to go to Ceylon for further study of Buddhism. See Paññāsa Jātaka, Vol. I, pp. (1)-(2).

to co-exist with those of the Eastern in Thai literature since the Chulalongkorn period; and, gradually prose fiction reflects more of the Western influence. The most distinctive aspects the Thais learned from the West lie in methods of presentation and in syntactic styles. However, as far as the short story is concerned, one can see that at the early stage, its evolution depended on at least two main streams of development. One is the transformation from jātaka tales, and the like; the other is that of the riddle. And, by examining fiction published in Wachirayān Wisēt, and Wachirayān, which were the earliest and first long-lived magazines in Thai, one can follow such a development very well.

In 1885, ten years after the cessation of Darunōwāt, there appeared in Wachirayān Wisēt a short piece of fiction written in a form of prose narrative called by the editor "nithān suphāsīt"<sup>1</sup> (A Didactic Tale). This "tale", as one sees in its method of presentation, marks the beginning of the first literary stream. Although the tale was presented formally in the old convention, it contained some unconventional elements. For instance, in a jātaka tale or an old fable, one can see clearly a fictional character of a story, whereas this tale gives a more authentic

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1. Nāi Kuad Hum Phrāe, "Nithān", Wachirayān Wisēt, Vol. 3, (the second month, the 8th day of the waning moon, chulasakkarāt 1247), pp. 47-53.

atmosphere. The differences between a traditional parable and this one lie chiefly in the characterization, and the description of settings. Although the story itself was claimed to have been an old one told by "a wise man in the early days", the plot was re-arranged deliberately by the author. The story was set in a Thai cultural and physical environment. This gives a new atmosphere to what the author claimed to be a rewriting of an old story.

Hoping to get moral messages across to the readers, Nāi Kuad Hum Phrāē created ordinary men and women for his characters, and characterized them in quite a realistic manner. The people in this parable look more real than most of the characters in prose fiction in the old tradition, but their personality and the sentiment they express can still be identified as Thai in the traditional feudal society. Unlike a traditional tale, however, the characters here were given monosyllabic Thai names actually used by the Thais themselves. Nevertheless, all the characters here appear to be rather flat. It is clear from the start that they were made up with the purpose of representing different types of men and women. The tale was written, as the author put it, with an attempt to give lessons to men so that they would be cautious about their expenditure, and to give them advice concerning the characteristics of a good and a bad wife.

The author told a story of a millionaire who finds a weird criterion to select among his serfs the fittest for prosperity. There are six characters: the millionaire, whose name is not known, Nāi Sot, Nāi Chun, and Nāi Yai, all of whom work for the millionaire, and the last two characters are Nāi Chùn's and Nāi Yai's wives, both of whose names are not known either.

At the outset, the author described these characters only to such an extent that one can form some opinions about them. Nāi Sot and Nāi Chùn, the handymen, both are "industrious, and neither is lazy". Both are exceptional among the rest of the serfs. But, Nāi Chùn, by chance, impresses his master more deeply for the master finds him "a thinker", and grows fonder of him. The master himself is a good-hearted, rich old man with a touch of dictatorship in his personality. Nāi Yai, his household manager, whom the millionaire trusted second only to himself, is rather foolish because the millionaire finds that he "does not know good from bad, nor gain from loss". Thus, a plan of changing over Nāi Chùn's and Nāi Yai's responsibility occurred to the master, and the plan was carried out immediately.

The millionaire put to Nāi Yai the riddles formerly put to himself by Nāi Chun, and gave him a time limit by which to solve

them. With help from his wife Nāi Yai got the riddles solved in time for the millionaire, who did not believe that with such a mentality as Nāi Yai's the man could solve the riddles himself. Eventually, Nāi Yai, seeing how furiously angry the master looked, confessed that "The answers did not come from my own intellect, sir, It's my wife who helped me out".<sup>1</sup> Therefore, Nāi Yai's wife was brought to the scene. Then the whole truth was revealed. After explaining to the master from the beginning up to the end how she successfully fooled Nāi Chūn's wife for the answers, she begged the millionaire to "please spare any punishment to my husband, sir".<sup>2</sup> The millionaire, on the other hand, ordered a changing over of the marriage partners. He remarried Nāi Yai to Nāi Chūn's wife, and Nāi Yai's to Nāi Chūn, to whom Nāi Yai's former job was also given. The millionaire trusted him absolutely, second only to himself. The readers are told that from that time on Nāi Chūn went on growing prosperous forever.

As a writer of sophisticated prose fiction, the author did not seem to be very successful here, however. Although the plot was quite well organized, his characters appear to be either too

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1. Ibid., p. 53.

2. Ibid.

good or too foolish to make the message convincing. In addition to this weak point, the author, although he never at any time digressed, made the story longer than it should have been by making an avoidable repetition of the riddles and the answers to them. Nevertheless, in spite of its poor literary quality, this parable, being considered as a part of the whole development of modern prose fiction, contains significant historical value. "nithān suphāsīt", a didactic tale, as the editor of Wachirayān Wisēt called it, shows clearly how the old tradition was evolving before a new form emerged distinctively.

All of the tales in the jāṭaka tradition aimed at giving moral lessons. In rewriting the "old tale" it is quite clear that Nai Kuad Hum Phraē followed this old tradition in which prose fiction was created fundamentally as a means to convey or to illustrate moral conduct to the general public. Having examined the development of modern prose fiction, one can see very well that such a tradition has been carried on continuously. The belief that literature is created not simply as an end in itself, but rather as an entertaining means through which other values such as moral, social, intellectual, etc. can be exposed to the general public, is generally held both by the readers and the writers themselves.



The Wachirayān library had taken on as one of its duties that of a literary patron since 1889. During 1894-1900, the committee proposed a list of proverbs and clichés, and encouraged the members of the library to choose a topic and a story to illustrate it. The list contained phrases or sentences such as "Rū māk yāk nān, rū nōi plōi ramkān" (Knowing much causes a long period of troubles; knowing a little causes annoyance), "Mai qn dat ngāi, mai kae dat yāk" (A young tree is easy to bend; an old trunk is difficult), "Tam nam prik lalāi māe nam" (Make a chili sauce and dissolve it into a river (hoping) to change the colour and taste of the water), "lōp māk, lāp hāi" (Greed causes misfortune), "phakchī roi nā" (putting parsley on top), "thalōek thoek thāk,<sup>1</sup> and many others. They were to be taken as the titles of the stories.

Examining the stories written under this condition, it is interesting to note that nearly all of the topics chosen by the members were illustrated in prose, most of them approaching the form of a modern short story. Poetry, on the other hand, was used mainly as a concluding paragraph for the story. As the rules required each writer to write in such a way that he could

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1. This is an adjectival phrase used to describe a manner of an ill sort.

get the implication of each topic selected across to the readers, a story was created, therefore, not as an end in itself, but principally as a means to convey a message. A selective collection of these tales was later published in book form, entitled Nithān Wachirayān (Tales from Wachirayān). Some of those tales were presented in a much more realistic manner than "nithān suphāsīt". Compared to prose fiction in the old tradition, quite a few of the tales selected from Wachirayān Wisēt and Wachirayān were distinguished as a new form of imaginative writing. Looking at "phakchī roi nā", for example, one can see from it that the writer successfully made his characters look more like real human beings than those in "nithān suphāsīt", their sentiments and conduct more plausible, and the message practically convincing.

In order to illustrate a message implicitly given from the adjectival phrase "phakchī roi nā", which is commonly used to describe a kind of hypocrisy, the writer chose a domestic ground in which to develop the story. He told the story of a head wife who tries to keep her husband's admiration for her. But, because she was spoiled by his praising, she lost her common sense. Thus, one day, by doing the same thing which used to please him enormously, but on a wrong occasion, she found that by simply "putting parsley on top", one could get a shattering effect.

Here is the sad-ending story of Māe Nun, the head wife of Nāi Wēn Nqm. In order to please her husband, who wished to have "Hq Mok" for dinner, Māe Nun managed to get a minor wife to cook the dish. Not knowing how to cook anything, all Māe Nun could do in this complicated operation was to put some parsley and other kinds of seasoning on top before the dish was to be steamed. When Nāi Wēn Nqm came to dinner, Māe Nun, who alone had an opportunity to sit with him, started chatting. Nāi Nqm being happy with the Hq Mok felt his appetite better than usual, and remarked that the Hq Mok would never taste so delicious without parsley and that parsley goes nicely with everything. From this comment, Māe Nun took it as a rule to put parsley on top of the food before it was served. For this she won constant admiration and praise from her husband. One day, Nāi Wēn Nqm wished to have some dessert after dinner. Being ashamed to ask for help from the minor wife again, Māe Nun decided to stand on her own feet this time. She set her mind on egg-pudding. Because she did not know how to make it properly, the pudding did not smell right. But Māe Nun remembered her husband's comment that parsley is good with everything, and food tastes more delicious with it, without realizing that previously parsley was put on top of the kind of food it naturally

goes with. She, therefore, hoping to please him, put some parsley on top of the dessert.

Her husband, a polygamist with absolute authority, realizing that his favourite wife actually had no sense of domestic competence, thus disqualified her as a wife. He, therefore, called her names, and sent her back to her former home.<sup>1</sup>

Compared to "nithān suphāsīt", one can see in this short story a progress in the development of modern prose fiction by way of transformation from jāṭaka tales and the like. However, while the form of presentation changed, the character of the Thai literary culture did not change as much. It is true that the Thais began to write more seriously during this period, but they did not lose their sense of humour. A Thai critic once pointed out that in Thai literature a villain often appears as a mixture of a wicked person and a comedian simultaneously.<sup>2</sup> This aspect can be seen clearly in "Phakchī roi nā" too. The wife was apparently created to be sort of a cunning exploiter, but the writer,

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1. Nai Koet, "Phakchī Roi Nā" of Nithān Wachirayān, Tales from Wachirayān (Bangkok: Bannākhan, 2509), Vol. 3, pp. 392-398.

2. Boonlua Debyasuvān, M. L., "Hua Liao Khong Wannakhadi Thai, A Transitional Period of Thai Literature" of Wanwaithayā-kon: Wannakhadi Literature (Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 2514), p. 65.

whether he meant it or not, made her appear to be a likeable villain in spite of what she did. And, as a result of such a way of characterization, this protagonist looks very life-like.

Another factor which helps to bring a realistic touch to this piece of fiction is the manner of conversation, and of the portrayal of a family life in the old society. A story of this sort shows that some elements essential for the development of the novel had been commonly used in the Chulalongkorn period. Thus, prose fiction written in this manner was familiar to the reading public of Wachirayān Wisēt and Wachirayān during 1894-1900. The belief that prose fiction can be written or used as an entertaining means to teach morality and to introduce social ideas to the general public was, and still is, held both by some critics and some writers themselves. This belief was perhaps transferred by the Thais, whether they were conscious about it or not, who were used to reading jātaka tales in their study of Buddhism.

During 1888-1889, Wachirayān Wisēt published a series of riddles. These constitute an important feature of the movement towards modern fiction. The main objective for having this column was to give the readers a kind of entertainment to balance the literature of knowledge which the magazine normally published.

The riddles and their solutions were sent anonymously or pseudonymously from the members of the library, but only one riddle was published at a time. Solutions for each preceding riddle appeared in the following two weeks or so. As they appeared, each riddle involved only one single conflict. And various different ways were proposed to solve it.

The riddles published here concern conflicts of different natures such as social, cultural, moral, domestic, philosophical, etc. As asking riddles had been a favourite children's game, this column must have been very stimulating because it presented more sophisticated and practical problems, some of which one might actually come across in reality, and some might delight the intellect, some increase one's wisdom and some simply entertain. In an anthology of riddles selected from Wachirayān Wisēt, which was published in 1920, only 91 out of the original 105 problems appear. There are nine among those published in the anthology which form a series of sketches of a character. But, the riddles come one after the other irregularly, starting from riddle no. 39 and ending at no. 65.<sup>1</sup> The main idea pointed out in these riddles concerns the practical problems caused by a

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1. Panhā Khatkōng, A Collection of Riddles (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of Prince Chaiyāsisuriyōphāt, Sophonphiphatthanākōn, 2463), pp. 61-67, 69-81, 88-91, 98-101, and 137-142.

snobbish lady of the upper-class. In these nine riddles, as in the rest in this collection, characters which originally appeared in the magazine under names with one single alphabetic letter, such as Mr. A, Miss B, Lady C, etc., were given names such as those adopted by actual men and women. But the original name of the protagonist, Khun Ying Khō , remained unchanged. The incidents which made up the riddles were set in various scenes, such as at home, in a monastery, within the palace walls and in the country-side. Minor characters involved those from members of the Royal family to slaves. Although each incident is briefly described, the description of the setting, the portrayal of characters, and their activities were sufficiently vivid to give an authentic picture of a portion of the Thai way of life in the Chulalongkorn period.

From riddle no. 39, one gets a view of a group of upper class ladies sitting waiting to have an audience with His Majesty the King at the ceremony of fealty in the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. The problem was totally domestic and vain without any concern with political affairs even though they were taking part in a ceremony of a political nature. From riddles no. 40 and no. 43, some aspects of the life of ladies living in the palace compounds can be seen. The incident in no. 44 was set on King

Chulalongkorn's birthday when the Chao Phraya River was decorated with lights in a special arrangement. The atmosphere such as that which was reflected from these riddles could bring a nostalgic feeling to those who felt familiar with the way of life in the old days. The Thai country-side as described in riddle no. 51 reminds one of the time when a rice field was flooded during the later part of the rainy season, when the vast array of green rice stalks which rose above the water were tipped with golden, wild water flowers. The scene where Khun Ying Khō and her friends went out on a boat-picnic hoping to pick up water-lilies has now often been replaced by a scene of a dry and hostile land painted by some of the contemporary writers.

In these riddles, not only were the settings well described, but the portrayal of characters, especially, of Khun Ying Khō was also vivid. From riddle no. 45, the readers are informed of Khun Ying Khō's vanity which disturbed her husband's social image so much that the problem is opened for the readers to advise the husband on how to find a solution. Khun Ying Khō, the writer said, has been so fond of beautifying herself since she was a young girl. Being always very vivacious but spoiled and careless, her aged appearance, which looks comical to the



others, including her husband, fails to reveal its reality to her. Khun Ying Khō takes very special care of her skin. One can see it by observing her bathing procedure which takes about the same length of time and involves as many helping hands as one would need to prepare a big meal. But, because of her careless nature, her well intentioned make-up often turns her appearance to an absurdity. Whenever, Phrayā Ngān-mūang, her husband, got an opportunity, which was very rare, to remind her of her farcical conduct, Khun Ying Khō would be furious, but never accept the fact. Once Phrayā Ngān-mūang received a postcard written to ridicule her personality. Khun Ying Khō declared that it was sent by his mistress with his consent. Therefore, she continued putting on the full scale of cosmetics and jewellery. This situation annoyed Phrayā Ngān-mūang and disturbed his social image.

The only solution proposed here not only suggested a way out to the poor old husband, but also summed up Khun Ying Khō's character and personality as described from the first of the series up to this point. The writer seemed to share Phrayā Ngān-mūang's discomfort. He pointed out to the Phrayā that Khun Ying Khō is fond of flattery, being conceited, luxurious, snobbish, jealous, inclined to misbehaviour, careless, trivial

and the like. Because, the writer said, Khun Ying Khō has lived with her husband for so long that she has, as it were, become the same person as the man himself, therefore it is impossible for him to stay away from her. But, the writer advised Phrayā Ngān-mūang to play a trick on his wife by flattering, and at the same time trying to fascinate her with the spell of Buddhism. The writer believed that being mad about the Buddha Dhamma is better than being a plain snob. He ended his long advice, which is longer than the riddle itself, with a statement of assurance to Phrayā Ngān-mūang that "... A trivial person can be led to anywhere provided that the leader knows where the proper way is".<sup>1</sup>

The series of these riddles and the solutions proposed for them could have become a novelette, a kind of satirical comedy, if only there had been a main plot. However, in later days some of the riddles published in Wachirayān Wisēt were developed to a form of the short story.

For instance, in May 1897<sup>2</sup> Nāi Pān, a Buddhist scholar,

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1. Panhā Khatkhong, p. 81.

2. "Taeng-ngān (Kan) Duai Khwāmsat, Marriage, the Result of Honesty", Wachirayān, Vol. 20 (May, r.s. 115), pp. 2069-2086.

developed from riddles no. 2 and no. 4<sup>1</sup> a short story which he presented in a new form. In riddle no. 2, the writer told the story of a petty nobleman who had a beautiful young daughter. His superior in rank asked for her to marry his son. The man agreed and accepted the engagement gold. After the new house for the bride and bridegroom-to-be had been built, and the wedding day was to come the following day, a servant told the man that his daughter had had a man in her room. He asked his daughter, but she refused to say anything. The man was in trouble, as one can imagine, because his superior, the bridegroom and other relatives were coming. The problem put forward for solution is what the father ought to do.

There are four similar answers given in different ways. But, on the whole everyone suggested that the man ought to search for the truth of the gossip, and face the fact, that he should tell the truth to his superior, no matter what it was, and that the girl should not be forced to get married.

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1. Panha Khatkhong, pp. 3-5 and 8-10. These two riddles appear as no. 3 and no. 5 respectively in Wachirayān Wisēt, Vol. 4, No. 3 (the twelfth month, the eighth day of the waxing moon, 1250), p. 24; Vol. 4, No. 5 (the twelfth month, the eighth day of the waning moon, 1250), pp. 50-51; and Vol. 4, No. 7 (the first month, the eighth day of the waxing moon, 1250), p. 75.

Two weeks later, this story was taken up again, but the problem was different. Here, the previous episode had been summarized, before a new one was presented. Now, the father discovered the truth by means which yet led him to another problem. That is, after being consoled by her father the girl agreed to tell him the truth but on one condition, which he accepted, that her secret must not be exposed to anyone. She confessed that she was in love with a man and had given him her word that she would not marry anyone but him. She also threatened her father that if she should be forced to be married to the superior's son, she would be as good as dead. The poor father was in trouble again, and he needed suggestion for his next move.

There are only two answers for him now, both of which are similar to one another. It was suggested to the man that he should tell the truth to his superior, accept any reaction he might display, but never force his daughter to get married. One of the people who made the above suggestions, advised the poor father not to separate his daughter from her lover.

In Nāi Pān's "Taeng-ngān Kan Duai Khwāmsat" (Marriage, the result of Honesty) one can see how the plot derived from these

two riddles and the solutions given for them were elaborated. Here, the writer told the love story of Nāi Chon, a young man of contradictory personality. He was once a hooligan, but ambitious and idealistic. With a little bit of luck and a great deal of virtue, which he cultivated during his monkhood in later days, Nāi Chon turned up a happy bridegroom.

Instead of narrating the story by a third person as it usually was, the author let the protagonist tell his own story. Nāi Chon, who obviously is the unknown lover in the two riddles, delightedly told the readers that the marriage which he had hopelessly longed for suddenly came true much to his joyful surprise. The marriage, he said, is a result of true love and honesty.

There are nine characters involved here. But four were mentioned only in their absence. They are the mother and the aunt, another suitor, and his uncle. Besides the main characters, Nāi Chon and Māe Lamun, there are Kamnan Māk, the community-chief, Tā Man, Māe Lamun's father, and Yāi Iam, the go-between, who is Nāi Chon's old female slave. Here several missing parts in the riddles were filled in and the story is slightly different from the original. For instance, before the wedding day, Māe

Lamun ran away from home and stayed with her lover at his place until Kamnan Māk came and encouraged Nāi Chon to face Tā Man and confess their affair. Nāi Chon therefore went with the community-chief who gave him his moral support. The conversation of these three men obviously was built up from the idea derived from the solutions proposed for the riddles. The following is its excerpt in translation.

Tā Man: Well, you have taken my daughter away and kept her with you at home, haven't you? Tell me the truth now, I won't condemn you.

Chon: No, sir, Māe Lamun went to me herself. She said, well, she does not want to marry Khun Kēt.

Tā Man: Of course not, because she is in love with you, isn't she? I had been trying to ask her gently, but she only kept crying ... Well, she is now your wife. What shall you say? Must send her back to me in the meantime, or I won't let you go home.

Chon: Sir, well, sir, she is not yet my wife.

Tā Man: Oh, yes. Don't you fool me. A man and a woman, once they are together, in what culture, will not become husband and wife?

Chon: Well, not yet sir. We both made a vow that unless you good father and mother have consented to our marriage, I shall never take her as my wife. We both prefer death (to breaking the oath).

.....

Tā Man: Oh well, it's strange. Where can one find such a man? He is a jolly good fellow. Better give consent. What do you think, Chief?

- Kamnan Māk: I told you ... the children have already been in love. Should not be nasty to them. To force them to get married though they live together, they cannot be happy.
- Tā Man: Yes, I made a bad judgement about him. So, let us marry them soon ...
- Kamnan Māk: Have you already cancelled Khun Kēt's proposal?
- Tā Man: Of course, I have. How could I not, tomorrow would be the wedding day for him? ...<sup>1</sup>

Looking at the method of presentation here, one can see that this "tale" belongs to the modern period of prose fiction. While letting Nāi Chon tell his own story in retrospect, without interfering, the author, in order to make the love affair between Nāi Chon and Māe Lamun confidential, used an epistolary technique in some parts; and a trustworthy go-between is needed for this purpose. Yāi Lam, therefore, was created. She was sent by her love-stricken master to wait on Māe Lamun's aunt. The two lovers could meet only when an arrangement was made by the aunt who, in spite of Nāi Chon's notorious reputation in the past, forgives him and feels sympathetic with the young couple. On the whole, the author was quite successful in trying to prove that it is inadvisable to force a girl to get married, and that, in a love affair, honesty is the best policy.

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1. Pān Wimuttakun (Luang Phakdī-adisai), "Taeng-ngān Kan Duai Khwāmsat, Marriage, the Result of Honesty" of Nithān Wachirayān (Tales from Wachirayān) (Bangkok: Bannakhān, 2508), pp. 371-373.

In fact, a love story of ordinary men and women such as this is not new to the Thais, when looking at Khun Chāng Khun Phāen for instance. But, the marked distinction between that classic and this modern tale lies in the form of presentation. From the last quarter of the nineteenth century onwards, fiction has been increasingly presented in prose, in different lengths, and different manners.

In January 1894 appeared a short story written under the same conditions as "Phakchi Roi Nā". It was entitled with the cliché "thaloek thoek thāk"<sup>1</sup>. This story, of which the main idea was obviously derived from riddle no. 38<sup>2</sup>, published on 21 July, 1890, is a comedy.

Riddle no. 38 involved a problem of cultural misinterpretation. The writer told a story of two old friends: Nāi Sin, and Nāi Lōi, who, in their childhood, were educated at the same monastery. Later, on Nāi Sin went for further studies in the West, whereas Nāi Lōi returned home and got married. Several years later, after

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1. Chaomūn Sīsorarak (Pheng), "Thaloek Thoek Thāk" of Nithan Wachirayān (Tales from Wachirayān), Vol. 3, pp. 225-232. The original title is "I-loek Thoek Thāk", See Wachirayān Wisēt, Vol. 10 (January 4, r.s. 112), pp. 116-118.

2. It appears as no. 33 in Panhā Khatkhong, pp. 51-52.



Nāi Sin had returned, he went to visit Nāi Lqi and Amdāeng Ngoen, his wife, whom he had known before he went away. Having seen Amdāeng Ngoen sitting on the verandah, Nāi Sin, with delight, removed his hat, bowed to her, and stretched his hands out to hold hers. Not knowing what Nāi Sin was holding her hands for, the poor woman was alarmed, she shouted out loudly. Being surprised at his wife crying out, Nāi Lqi came in and, thinking that Nāi Sin was trying to seduce her, he was so furious that he spoke vulgarly against his old friend. Surprised, Nāi Sin asked what was wrong with his coming to pay a respectful visit to dear old friends. Nāi Lqi retorted that how could Nāi Sin describe his way of behaving as "a respectful visit", while apparently he was causing an embarrassment to his wife? He, therefore, chased poor Nāi Sin away. Being so upset, and losing face, Nāi Sin did not know what to do, thus, needed advice.

The solution proposed to Nāi Sin was that it was absolutely necessary for him to make the matter clear to the couple so that they understood his intention. Because, the writer said, if they were still in doubt and anger, his respect for them would be taken as vulgarity. Nāi Sin was advised to ask somebody who knew Western culture and etiquette to please explain to the husband and wife that Nāi Sin did not, in any way, intend to be rude. It

was hoped that once the couple understood Western etiquette, they would no longer be angry, and their friendship could remain henceforth.

In "Thaloek Thoek Thāk", the author told the story of Phō Thong Dī, a young man who, at the age of 11 left Thailand for further studies. The story was set in the period when it began to be fashionable for the Thais to send students to Europe. Phō Thong Dī was sent to school in Aberdeen and stayed there for over ten years. Having had no opportunity to meet any other Thais during those years, Phō Thong Dī nearly forgot the Thai language. The first day he arrived home, with his Scottish cultural make-up, he created a big embarrassing scene out of his good intention. First, having seen a group of young girls sitting together inside the house, his intuition told him that they were no one but his father's minor wives. He, with generosity, regarded them as his step-mothers, and as such they had to be paid respect. Phō Thong Dī went forward, bowed to them, and expected to shake hands with them in a courteous manner. His father, Phrayā Rām-kamhaeng, who escorted him from the outside, was in an awkward position. However, he managed successfully to convince his son to drop his Western cultivated manner there. Father and son then proceeded to meet the mother. While Khun Māe Duang was trying to recognise her boy in European dress, Phō Thong Dī, in his delight,

rushed in to shake her hand, asked after her health, drew her neck close for kissing, and told her how much he had missed her. The poor mother tried to free herself from her son's enthusiasm, while shouting,

There! Boy! What are you up to now? Why did you rush in and kiss me? Or, do you want to show your ingratitude to me? He's no good now. Think of people in the West! They must have taught him not to recognize his parents. Well, he would surely be a bastard sooner or later. Don't, son. Don't do that again. You can't behave like that here, you know. We do mind.<sup>1</sup>

Phrayā Rāmkaṃhaeng supported Khun Māe Duang saying,

He's so spontaneous. I've just taught him a while ago. Seems to be hopeless, this boy. How could he forget all the Thai manners? Coming to meet Mother, instead of sitting down and bowing on the floor, as it were, he came in thaloeḱ thoek thāk ...<sup>2</sup>

To the above comment, Khun Māe Duang agreed, saying,

Truly hopeless! Being so thaloeḱ thoek thāk just like this, how could he enter into officialdom ...<sup>3</sup>

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1. Chaoman Sīsqarak, op. cit., p. 231.

2. Ibid., p. 232.

3. Ibid.

The author is quite successful in trying to illustrate the phrase "thalook thoek thāk". And, as far as the idea about cultural misinterpretation derived from the riddle is concerned, he seems to be as successful there as well. But, the tone of the story, instead of being rather serious like that in the riddle, is hilariously comical.

In this story, one can see that there are a number of English terms written in Thai transliteration which were normally used in Phō Thong Dī's speeches. For instance, when he first met his father, he greeted him with "How are you, Governor"?<sup>1</sup> That put his father, an "ancient-headed" nobleman, who hardly understood a word of English, into an awkward position. Then, when Phō Thong Dī started to answer Phrayā Rāmkamhaeng's curiosity concerning his education abroad, the poor father felt hopelessly unable to communicate, because Phō Thong Dī explained it to him like this.

I studied elementary education for seven years in Scotland, several hundred miles north of London. After that, I joined a Mining School where I studied Mineralogy for four years. After I had passed an examination, and received a certificate, I was called back as you see now.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Terms underlined were written originally in Thai transliteration.

2. Chaoman Sisrarak, op. cit., pp. 226-227.

And, from this period onwards, English terms were increasingly adopted in Thai literature where the domination of Pali, Sanskrit, Khmer was still strong. The theme of an interaction between Western culture and the Thai has become one of the favourites for writers since then.

Although fiction in the Chulalongkorn period showed a marked tendency towards Western influences, the Thai literary culture did not lose its traditional character. Like other imported ideology, for instance, educational, or political systems, a foreign literary culture, be it Indian, Pali, Javanese, or Chinese, was assimilated into the Thai only in the parts that best suited the taste of the Thai. It would be too pessimistic to disagree on the fact that, in some measure, Thai literature since the Chulalongkorn period had been growing richer. Here, a greater number of writers were exposed to more varieties of knowledge, ideas, techniques, etc., and their imagination was widened to conceive of a greater world of possibility than those in the past centuries.

Because the magazines of the Wachirayān Library had been issued continuously for a period of over twenty years from 1884-1905, it had provided a sufficient ground for potential writers, who were encouraged by King Chulalongkorn himself, to practice

their literary talent in new forms in printed words. About a hundred short stories such as those mentioned above were published, often in serial form, during those years. And, the short story, as it appears in the history of Thai literature, is a forerunner of the novel, whose development is discussed in chapter VII.

## CHAPTER VI

## Towards the Novel

In 1886 A.D., Wachirayān Wisēt published the first instalment of "Sanuk Nāk", an experimental novel written, wrote Prince Phichitprīchākṇ, its author, in an attempt to imitate an English form.<sup>1</sup> But, the reading public was not ready to appreciate its formal realism, the method whereby a fictional story of an unconventional plot was presented. Consequently, "Sanuk Nāk" met its end at its very beginning. It was not continued beyond the first part in which the readers were introduced to four young Buddhist monks: Phra Khem, Phra Sap, Phra Leng, and Phra Sombun, who were about to leave their monkhood. At the outset, the monks were seen discussing the prospects of their future careers. Before ordination, Phra Khem was a clerk at a law court; Phra Sap, an officer in the Royal Police Department; Phra Leng, a son of a Chinese merchant; and Phra Sombun, a jobless nobody. Although his mother had noble blood, she had

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1. The Chairman (Prince Phichitprīchākṇ), "Saphā Nāyok Thalāeng, Announcement from the Chairman", Wachirayān Wisēt, Vol. I, No. 28 (the eighth month, the fifteenth day of the waning moon, Chulasakkarāt 1248), p. 318.

to leave her family and died when Phra Sombun was only a novice at Wat Bḡwḡnniwēt. Either he did not know anyone from his father's family, or that they did not care to know him is equally possible. On becoming a monk, Phra Sombun had been supported financially by Mae In, a very rich widow, who was an ubasika<sup>1</sup> at the monastery. Because she wanted Mae Čhan, her sixteen year old daughter to marry Phra Sombun, the author explained, the widow tried to get him out of the monkhood behind his back.

While his fellow monks were enjoying themselves talking about their future lives, Phra Sombun felt himself to be in a dilemma. Unlike them, he had no definite plan. Although, he realized that there were various possible ways to make a living, he had a desire for the particular way that was better than the rest. He wanted to be good and superior. He knew also that he wanted honour, rank, wealth and fame. But, he hesitated to give up his monkhood because he knew too that the yellow robe was "something a poor man can depend upon. Although it does not do you good, it does not ruin you either".<sup>2</sup> He can see that if one was not too ambitious, one

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1. A female devotee who has not been taken into holy orders.

2. Phichitprīchākon, Prince, "Sanuk Nāk", op. cit., p. 325.



would never be unhappy under it. "It is a rest area where a beginner can begin his life"<sup>1</sup>, Phra Sombun told himself.

The story came to an end, unfortunately, where the monks were still discussing their future plans after coming back from their evening devotions. In these few pages, the writer not only told the story but also specified time and place. The story begins in Wat Bḡwḡnniwēt shortly before an evening meeting of the sangha. The monks are seen sitting on the steps of a front staircase of the assembly hall in the monastery, waiting for their evening devotions. In the meantime, they were discussing their leaving the order, which was about to come. After returning to their living quarters, the monks resumed the discussion. The description of the time and place looked so familiar to Buddhist readers of Wachirayān Wisēt in Bangkok that some could hardly differentiate the factual setting from the fictional characters and their stories. The work, which was intended to be a long one, was cut short only at its start because of misunderstanding.<sup>2</sup> However, "Sanuk Nāk", as it appears, is not yet making a complete break-away from tradition in terms of a style of presentation. But, it contains an

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1. Ibid.

2. The reasons are dealt with in detail in chapter VIII.

element of originality in the basic conception of using an actual existing monastery as its setting and the real psychological problems of monks as its theme.

It was not until sixteen years later that the Thai readers eventually had an opportunity to read a complete novel in the Thai language for the first time. However, the novel was not an original work, but a translation from the English novel, Marie Corelli's Vendetta. The novel, being entitled Khwām Phayābāt in the Thai language, was published in 1902 in Lak Witthayā in instalments. Because the story of Vendetta was unique, and its style a novelty to the Thais, both readers and writers, the work became a new inspiration. The publication of Khwām Phayābāt in Lak Witthayā led to a further translation of more Western prose fiction. And, from this point, the Thai literary tradition has continued its advance into a new era which is generally called the modern period of Thai literature. Nevertheless, it took a quarter of a century, after the publication of Khwām Phayābāt, before a Thai novel proper began finally to emerge.

During this 25 year interval, prose fiction appeared largely in the forms of short and long stories: some were works of

originality; some were imported. The most popular foreign origins were from Chinese and European fiction, and Western films. It is true that after the group of Thai students had returned from abroad at the turn of the century, Thai literature changed its face perceptibly. In 1902, Lak Witthaya published, in the same volume as Khwām Phayābāt, a short story which was written in a fully developed manner of the literary kind. It is a story of a herbal physician and a country woman. Its theme is an unsolvable conflict arising from people being conditioned by different kinds of milieu. Here, the author told a story of Phō Mō Suk, a herbal physician, and Khun Yā Phoeng, the widow of Phō Mō Am, who is Phō Mō Suk's late good old friend. Following her husband's last wish, Khun Yā Phoeng left Buriram, a provincial town in the north-eastern part of the country, for Bangkok to stay with his cousins. Phō Mō Am, at his death-bed, suggested to her to come to Phō Mō Suk in case she had any troubles while living in Bangkok. Indeed Khun Yā Phoeng had a problem which made her turn to Phō Mō Suk for help. She had a sum of money, but no livelihood. The question about which she consulted the doctor was how to make a profit from that amount of money.

Phō Mō Suk, having had no trust in the banks, all of which

were owned by foreigners,<sup>1</sup> suggested to Khun Yā Phoeng to buy gold for sale. In favour of this suggestion, the doctor explained the value of gold in terms of an economic investment. Having little understanding about the economic system, but much trust in Phō Mō Suk, the lady agreed to buy gold on condition that the doctor would buy it for her. To this request, Phō Mō Suk reacted in a friendly way.

Thus, the gold was bought and given to Khun Yā Phoeng all right. But, from the following day onwards, Khun Yā Phoeng kept coming to Phō Mō Suk. First she came to assure herself about the security of investment of the gold. Then, when the price of gold came down, the lady arrived with great worries. Finally, to make Khun Yā Phoeng happy and to keep his work free from this kind of interruption, Phō Mō Suk had to buy back the gold, but at the rate at which he bought previously. The lady received the same amount of money back without realizing that Phō Mō Suk paid more money for the gold bought from her than

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1. Siam Commercial Bank Ltd., which was semi-official, did not come into existence until 1906. Before that there were three banks owned by the British and the French. The first was founded in 1888. See Paul Sithi-Amnuai, Finance and Banking in Thailand: A study of the commercial system, 1888-1963 (Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 1964), p. 33.

from the market. When, later, the price of gold went up, Khun Yā Phoeng came again. This time she asked the doctor to sell her back the gold, and at the market rate at the time he bought from her. Phō Mō Suk agreed to sell but only on the condition that Khun Yā Phoeng gave him the same amount of money he paid her for the gold. Khun Yā Phoeng, thinking that she was clever enough to see that Phō Mō Suk was fooling her, accused him of cheating, and threatened to find a solicitor to deal with him. Because of this kind of trouble, Phō Mō Suk could not help the widow of his late good friend in any better way. In anger, he told Khun Yā Phoeng sternly to step no more into his house, and to do anything she liked with a solicitor all to her heart's content. In anger too, Khun Yā Phoeng left, but never returned. Phō Mō Suk, therefore, sold the gold which gave him a good profit. The end of the gold meant also the end of Grandma Phoeng's visit.<sup>1</sup>

However, the story by no means gives out a serious tone. The sense of humour used in the characterization makes one feel sympathetic with both unfortunate people, since one can see very

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1. Khīeo Hwān (Chao Phrayā Thammasakmontri, Sanan Thephatsadin Na Ayuthaya), "Khun Yā Phoeng, Grandma Phoeng", Lak Witthayā, Vol. II., Pt. 1 (July, r.s. 120 ), pp. 45-62.

clearly the intellectual gap that bars them from understanding each other. One is living in the modernized City of Bangkok, where technical progress and modern social welfare have become a familiar way of living, whereas the other is of the country-folk, completely out of touch with such kinds of modernization. They both lose their friendly relationship simply because of the failure in intellectual communication.

Compared to its predecessors, this short story looked distinguished. While its plot was fresh and unique, and its style of presentation new, the story was obviously created on the old principle that literature is a means to an end. It can be felt quite clearly here that in order to build a modern and healthy nation, intellectual gaps among people, which are caused by an inadequacy of education for the public, had to be eliminated as soon as possible. Whether the story of Khun Yā Phoeng was created to draw attention to a wider and more sufficient spread of public education or not is difficult to tell. But, after the appointment of its author, who was the director of the Department of the Royal Academy at the time when this short story was published, to the post of Minister of Public Instruction in 1915<sup>1</sup>, two important

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1. See Wyatt, op. cit., pp. 303 - 305 and 363.

events in the history of education were recorded. One was the establishment of Chulalongkorn University in 1916, which was the first modern university in the country; and the other was the proclamation of the elementary education act in 1921 whereby education for children of both sexes was to be provided, free of charge, throughout the kingdom by the government, an ideal which could not be achieved satisfactorily in the reign of King Chulalongkorn.

Prose fiction created with motives other than for entertaining, such as "Khun Ya Phoeng", was and still is in existence in spite of the influx of Western literature in translation or adaptation. The Western literature which was introduced to the Thais in the early period was mainly the kind that provided immediate, perhaps superficial, entertainment and stimulation to the readers. Detective and mystery stories, therefore, dominated the literary scene in Thailand for some time, especially during the first three decades of the twentieth century. However, Western fiction first appeared in Thai literature in forms of fables, tales simplified and retold from the English classics, and short stories. This gave Thai readers an opportunity to know Aesop's fables, the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet, the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, etc. Stories of this nature were normally

translated and published in Wachirayān Wisēt and Wachirayān, whereas short stories were generally adapted or rewritten at the writers' liberty. Although short detective stories also appeared now and then in the periodicals of the Wachirayān library, a series of those which was published in Thawī Panyā was more well-known. This series, containing eleven episodes, was entitled "Nithān Thong In" (Tales of Thong In). It was written by the Crown Prince Vajiravudh, under the pseudonym "Nāi Kaeo, Nāi Khwan". There are two main characters in this series: Nāi Thong In, the detective, and Nāi Wat, his friend and assistant, who also is the narrator of these tales. The stories were set in the Thai cultural and physical environment. However, "Nithān Thong In" were created obviously in the shadow of Sherlock Holmes. From the serialization of "Nithān Thong In" in Thawī Panyā during 1904-1907, it had become a fashion for Thai periodicals to publish fictional stories of an exciting nature similar to those written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. However, love and adventure stories were also in fashion. Some stories appeared in translation; some were an adaptation; and some were recreated by the Thai themselves. During December 1922-July 1923, Sēnā Saksā Lae Phāe Witthayāsāt serialized "Phrāe Dam" (The Black Satin), a mystery story. The work immediately became



a big sensation. Perhaps having been encouraged by the reading public, Luang Sārānupraphan (Nuan Pačhinphayak), its author, wrote "Nā Phī" (The Ghost Face), another story of a similar nature to "Phrāē Dam". But, "Nā Phī" appeared in Sēnā Saksā Lae Phāē Witthayāsāt only during February 1923-September 1924.

Although "Phrāē Dam" and "Nā Phī" were claimed to have been works of originality created by the author himself,<sup>1</sup> both, in some measures like Nithān Thong In, contained a reminiscence of an early Western detective story. During this period, other Western writers well-known to the Thais, besides Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, were Sax Rohmer, Williams Laqueux, Alexandre Dumas, Sir H. Rider Haggard, Sir Walter Scott, Marie Corelli, Guy de Maupassant, F. W. Bain and Charles Garvice. Apart from Vendetta, some other equally well-known stories in translation were those of Sherlock Holmes, and La Tulipe Noire, The Three Musketeers, The Count of Monte Cristo,

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1. Senā Saksā Lae Phāē Witthayāsāt, December, 2465, p. 1494; and, February, 2466, p. 235.

She, Thelma, Bubbles of the Foam, Arsene Lupin, The Necklace,<sup>1</sup>  
 etc. During this time many Thais, men and women, made them-  
 selves known, but more under their pseudonyms, as translators  
 of Western fiction. Therefore, such names as "Maē Wan", "Rām  
 Chitti", "Khon Dong", "Kumān Mai", Sī Suwan", "Sa Ra", "Sārathī",  
 "Jupiter", "Saengthong", "Nok Nōri"<sup>2</sup> were perhaps as familiar  
 to the Thai readers as Prince Narāthippraphanphong or Phrayā  
 Pathiwētwisit (Sāi Lēkhayānon), etc.

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1. Some of these works in an English or Thai version were, and some still are, put in school reading lists, for instance, an English version of La Tulipe Noire (The Black Tulip), and the story of The Count of Monte Cristo; and a Thai version of Bubbles of the Foam, The Necklace and Der Pilger Kamanita, the last of which was published first in 1930.

But, literature for the general public looked different from that in school. On a list of fiction translated from English which was advertised in a magazine in 1930, Vendetta came first, then Thelma, The Treasure of Heaven (unfinished), Wormwood (translated by two different authors where it re-appeared under different titles), and Temporal Power, respectively. In the following year, there was another list which began with She, Allan Quatermain, Jess, Montezuma's Daughter, The Ghost King, Allan's Wife, Mr. Meeson's Will, The Yellow God, and She and Allan, respectively. See Thaimai, March 15, 2473, and April 5, 2474.

2. For the real names of these pseudonyms see Nām Praphan Khong Nakkhian Thai ...

Western fiction was introduced to the Thais not only by the means mentioned above. It is found that the presentation of Western films had also led to the translation, adaptation, and publication of a new form of prose fiction in Thai. Although moving pictures, Japanese-made, had been shown in Thailand for the first time round about 1904<sup>1</sup>, they left an unknown effect on the development of modern prose fiction. In 1916 and 1919, two agents were established in Bangkok to import films. And during the 1920's cinema houses were already spread to provincial towns; in 1927 the number of those in Bangkok came to more than ten.<sup>2</sup> Except music from drums and horns provided locally, the films were shown without sound; only the narration and dialogues, generally in English, appeared on the screen now and then when it was necessary. Thus those who could read English would perhaps have a better chance to appreciate the story.

In 1922, one of the most sensational of all the films shown at that period was "The Three Musketeers", which was a very long one. It took the audience several weeks in order to see its complete story because in those days a film was normally shown only once a week, episode by episode in serial form. "The Three

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1. Chamnong Rangsikun, "Sonthanā Phāthī", Satri Sarn, Vol. 25, No. 25 (October 1, 2515), p. 21, quoting The Report on the production of Thai films and the importation of films from abroad to be shown in Thailand (Bangkok: Ministry of Economics, March 2515).

2. Ibid.

Musketeers" took 48 reels of films. When normally 5-6 reels could be shown at a time, Phāphayon Siam, a film magazine, hoping to attract and encourage the cinema-goers, decided to publish a Thai version of the story in instalments for distribution. The publication was said to be done in a form of booklet, a kind of book of fiction, wrote the editor.<sup>1</sup> Phāphayon Siam probably found its initiative encouraging. It, therefore, devoted a number of its pages for fiction retold from films. The story of "The Count of Monte Cristo", "Phanthomas", "The Man Who Saw Tomorrow", "The Enchantment", etc., all appeared in this manner during 1922-1924. Some cinema-houses, perhaps seeing that the publication of stories from films in translation pleased the general audience, thus found a way to increase the number of cinema-goers by commissioning writers whose works were already recognized to translate film-scripts for publication to be sold before the show. However, the jobs were also available for competent high-school leavers too. Therefore, young men such as Kulāp Sāipradit, Op Chaiwasu and their contemporaries were also exposed to Western fiction through this medium at the early stage of their literary profession. And, sometimes not

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1. Phāphayon Siam, May 13, 2465, p. 1.

only the dialogues and the narration in translation were published, but the story itself was either summarized or retold and published as well. By chance, or with intent, these young men, whose works in later days made up a great part of the history of modern literature, learned a new way of developing fictional stories while they were translating the scripts.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the effects of the Western films shown during that time were that it widened the imagination of writers, and stimulated the literary potentiality, especially of those who were involved in the translation. Then, came a tradition when stories retold from films were published in booklets. The Thais, thus, were led one step further into a new world of fiction, a world from which they finally developed one of their own. Thailand, in the 1920's consequently came to an era of prose fiction in paper-back books. But the most popular theme was not detection, or mystery, or adventure, but love, of a melodramatic kind. Then, not only those who were to see a film read, but people who had nothing to do with a film did. The films, instead of taking

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1. The writer obtained information about the translation and publication of film-scripts from Op Chaiwasu, a senior columnist, and well-known humorist, who himself was one of the translators.

away, or reducing the size of the reading public in the 1920's, increased the number of readers as well as cinema-goers.

In 1922 during the period when prose fiction written in the shadow of Western styles was very popular, prose fiction presented in a Chinese coating began to appear in newspapers' pages, and immediately gained for itself a rising popularity. In fact, after the first publication of Sāmkok in 1865, Chinese fictional stories were translated and published continuously, but in book form. In the reign of King Chulalongkorn, twenty-nine stories were published, sixteen of which numbers were translated during the reigns of Rama I and Rama IV.<sup>1</sup> Besides Sāmkok, which was, and still is, highly praised and considered a masterpiece of prose fiction in Thai, another highly recognized story translated from Chinese literature was Khai Phek. This work deals with the genesis of Chinese civilization. It starts from the primeval creation of the earth and the sky, and the development of human societies. Khai Phek was translated by Luang Phiphitphanwichān in 1877 under the patronage of Chao Phrayā Phānuwongmahākōsāthibadī (Tuam Bunnag).<sup>2</sup> It is a much shorter

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1. Rajanubhab, Tamnān Nangsu Sāmkok, pp. 13-18.

2. Ministry of Education, Bas Rian Wannakhadi Thai Lem Song, Reader in Thai Literature Book II (Bangkok: Khuru Saphā, 2513), p. 212.

work than Sāmkok. Khai Phek contained only 18 volumes of Samut Thai; it was first published in 1881 by Dr. Bradley's publishing house.

But, it was not until during the 1920's that fictional stories written in a Chinese atmosphere began booming. This new scene began when Siam Rāt started to fill its pages, a little with news, but mostly with fictional stories translated from Chinese literature. It was said that the translation team of Siam Rāt, being led by Kit Sārāphṇ, a Chinese born Thai, was very conscious of the art of translation, and practically competent to get a work done charmingly.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, under the leadership of Sukrī Wasuwat, its owner, Siam Rāt attracted a good number of well-qualified translators and writers such as Luang Phinitwithetphan (Choei Phlṇikaeo), Luang Naiyawichān (Pleng Ditsayabut), Luang Atthaka-sēmphāsā (Phen Bunnag), Luang Sārānuphraphan (Nuan Pāchinphayak), etc.<sup>2</sup> With such a strong team as this, Siam Rāt rose to the top of all the periodicals which published prose fiction of this kind. Then a problem of competition between those who made profit from fictional stories developed. In April 1922 Phāphayon Siam published an article, part of which referred directly and ironically

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1. Sathit Sēmānin, op. cit., p. 286.

2. Ibid., pp. 148-149.

to a comment from Siam Rāt: The following is its excerpt in translation.

... If Siam Rāt thinks that the government should suppress the presentation of films about robbery, murder, petting and necking which was called "obscene" in Siam Rāt's word, why has it not suggested to the government to collect and burn a hundred thousand books of fiction also? And, if so, Srikrung printing house must be guilty too on the ground that it publishes obscene stories for sale ...

However, nothing of the sort that happened to Dr. Samuel J. Smith in the previous century<sup>2</sup> repeated itself here. And, there are reasons to help in the speculation as to why prose fiction, whether it was obscene or not, still flourished in the 1920's. For instance, Siam Rāt certainly did not want to commit suicide because, if the government had agreed to censor the sort of fiction as shown in the films, Srikrung printing house - the owner of Siam Rāt itself - would have been affected because it also owned a magazine that published that sort of fiction.<sup>3</sup>

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1. "Malikā", "Prathet Siam Khwuan Mī Senseo Rā Mai, Should there be censorship in Thailand or not?", Phāphayon Siam, April 8, 2465, p. 4.

2. See chapter III, pp. 65-66.

3. Srikrung, a monthly magazine, was issued during 1913-1927. For fiction, it published both original and imported works generally from Western literature, often without acknowledgement. Original works normally appeared in the form of short stories, many of which were worth studying.



On the other hand, Lui Khirīwat, the manager of Phāphayon Siam, turned to Chinese fiction too. He modified Krungthēp Daily Mail, the newspaper under his directorship, in order to publish fiction of Chinese colour. What is more, Lui Khirīwat approached skilled members of the translation team of Siam Rāt; and finally one of them left Siam Rāt to work for Krungthēp Daily Mail for some time.<sup>1</sup> But, Lui Kirīwat still could not keep up with Siam Rāt in regard to fiction in Chinese styles. The success of Siam Rāt resulted in a time when nearly every periodical spent its space for fictional stories presented in a Chinese coating.<sup>2</sup> While this kind of fiction was more popular among the general public, both the reading and the listening one, fiction presented in a shadow of Western literature was attractive to the more sophisticated readers. Perhaps in order to be commercially practical, a newspaper, which was in circulation during the 1920's, would normally publish, in instalments, two fictional stories in the same issue: one in a Chinese coating, the other in a Western. As each newspaper allowed only one page for one story daily, it contained not enough to satisfy an enthusiastic reader, who had to wait for twenty-four hours to get another page. It was said that a fictional story

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1. Sathit Semānin, op. cit., p. 149.

2. It is called "coating" because during that time there were many fakes; and it is difficult to differentiate one kind of fake from the other.

written in a Chinese coating was so popular that such a kind of reader would come to the publishing house while the paper was still in the printing process, wait and ask only for the very page that published the story of which he was a fan.

Here, it seemed that prose fiction in the 1920's appeared largely in borrowed forms of various sorts. But, one may have a clearer view of literature during that period when one knows some of the reasons behind the scene. In 1922, Luang Sārānu-phraphan (Nuan Pachinphayak) wrote in the editorial of Sēnā Saksā Lae Phāē Witthayāsāt the following comment,

Some readers often complained, after reading Thai fiction, that they felt an uneasy sensation in their lungs (siēo pət)<sup>1</sup>, that the story does not sound as convincing as a Western one, and that a Thai story always gives an impression of being a lie ... Such an attitude of the readers, therefore, made some writers wish to punish the extreme admirers of the Western novel<sup>2</sup> by inventing an original story and borrowing farang names such as Dick, Bob, Phillip, for their characters to make the story sound Western. In the end, his story sells well.<sup>3</sup>

The above reason given by the editor of Sēnā Saksā ... , who later published "Phrāē Dam" and "Nā Phī", which were said

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1. Implying a mixed feeling of embarrassment and apprehension.

2. The term "novel" was originally written in English.

3. "The Editorial," Sēnā Saksā Lae Phāē Witthayāsāt, April 2465, pp. 479-480.

to be his original creations, seemed to carry some truth in it. It is generally agreed by writers and journalists of the 1920's that writers of that period had at least two ways of developing fictional stories. First, one might invent a story by oneself, but adopt foreign names, Western or Chinese as one pleased, for one's characters and settings apparently hoping to make the story sound exotic; secondly, one might simply take a plot or even the story itself from Western films, and rename characters and settings with Chinese terms.

As fiction translated from a Chinese origin was attractive to a greater range of the reading public, some young journalists, especially of Chinese descent had a better chance than the Thais to become authors of prose fiction of this sort. Those who knew too little English to borrow or adapt neither a story nor a plot from Western fiction from books or from films, or those who did not care for Western literature, would have at least four choices to become an author. First, if a man, normally a journalist of some sort, knew Chinese and Thai equally well, he would do a proper translation of Chinese fiction. Secondly, if his Chinese was not as good as Thai, or vice versa, he would collaborate with another of the complementary ability. Thirdly, if the man in the second category could not find a collaborator who could work with him permanently, he would then ask a Chinese who could

read the language to translate the story orally, while he himself would jot down as much as he possibly could. Then he would re-write the whole story at his leisure, trying to imitate the style used in Sāmkok, regardless of the original work<sup>1</sup>. Fourthly, a man of different integrity and talent from the others would create and write a story in a Chinese coating, but certainly in the Thai language. It is said that when some writers came into conflict for any reasons, an author of this kind of fiction would transfigure the names of his opponents into a Chinese-look and use them for the villains<sup>2</sup>. As for the translators proper, when the same work was translated in more than one version, the translators would then change the title, names of characters, and setting<sup>3</sup> to make the same substance look different. It was very likely that few people cared for authenticity in regard to the interpretation of the original work here. The only matter was whether or not the story was entertaining. And, a difference between Chinese stories in translation which were published in the previous time and those in the 1920's should be noted in order

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1. The writer obtained this information from Thanin Laohawilai, an editor, a senior journalist, and who himself was one of the authors of the third category.

2. Sathit Sēmānin, op. cit., pp. 286-287.

3. "The Editorial," Senā Saksā ... , p. 478.

to follow the development of the novel.

Having seen how a story in a Chinese-coat could be developed during the 1920's, one is sure to find it difficult to tell which story came from which origin in Chinese literature; and, it would be equally difficult to tell which was an original synthesis created or recreated by a Thai writer himself. But, in the earlier period, the Chinese stories which were translated came mainly from those which were developed from historical events that could be identified with reference to a period.<sup>1</sup>

Looking back to the editorial in Sēnā Sūksā ... in 1922, it was possible that a question of authenticity like this could be applied to fiction which was claimed to have been translated from Western literature as well. But, a coin has two sides. While some writers might be keen on creating an exotic atmosphere, be it Chinese or Western, some might think and do things differently. It was very likely to be equally true that, some writers, having found fiction from foreign literature too inspiring to ignore, would simply take a story, rename its characters, and transplant

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1. Rajanubhab, Tamnān Nangsū Sāmkok, pp. 19-26. See also Sathit Sēmānin, op. cit., pp. 286-287.

its setting to make the whole work look Thai. It was very likely also that a translator of a film or a book of fiction would substitute his own creation for the original parts he failed to understand; or, a translator might deliberately rewrite some parts, or the whole, of a story simply because he wanted to do so. It was said that some stories retold from films were more entertaining than the originals themselves. Free adaptation, especially from books, with or without proper acknowledgement to the original work, was commonly done both by some of those who prefer Western literary attitudes to those of Chinese and vice versa. However, unless the authors or translators themselves acknowledged it, no one except their colleagues could possibly tell which work was of foreign origin, or what proportion of originality a particular work contained.

Chotmāi Chāngwāng Ram is one example of the stories presented in this sort of mixed manner. Its author, Prince Bidyalankarana, who was educated at Cambridge, explained in the introduction that the first part of Chotmāi Chāngwān Ram was adapted from Western literature; but, later on it was written mainly at his heart's content. This work appeared under his well-known pseudonym "Nō Mō Sō". It was published first in Thawī Panyā in instalments during October 1906-April 1907, and the last instalment appeared

in Sēnā Sūksā Lae Phae Witthayāsāt in January 1923. Chotmai  
Chāngwāng Ram is a series of letters, a one-way correspondence  
 from a father to his son. From these letters, the readers learn  
 a story of Chāngwāng Ram, a self-made man who sent Nāi Son, his  
 son, to be educated abroad. The father is neither an aristocrat  
 nor an officer of any sort, but a mere citizen who worked him-  
 self out of poverty into wealth. Besides his economic security,  
Chāngwāng Ram cultivated for himself a considerable amount of  
 knowledge of local as well as foreign cultures. Among this  
 series of seven letters, the first four were written to the young  
 Nāi Son while he was studying in England; the rest were sent to  
 the young man after he had returned to Thailand, and started to  
 re-settle himself in the Thai society which he had left when  
 he was a young boy. The subject of the letters covers different  
 aspects of life, starting from education, friendship, expenditure,  
 career, human relationship, love, marriage, and ending up with  
 a reference to the method of teaching Buddhism in Thailand. The  
 tone of Chotmai Chāngwāng Ram is unsurprisingly didactic, but  
 full of sharp wit and sense of humour. While it is true that  
 the ideas expressed in these letters were derived primarily from  
 Western literature, the style of presentation shows unmistakably  
 "Nō Mō Sō" 's idiosyncrasy.

To present those imported ideas on those aspects of life to Thai readers "Nō Mō Sō" mainly used a simple narrative, except only for the letter no. 7 in which dialogues were employed for the main part. The shift in the techniques seems to come from two causes: first, the letter no. 7 which was concentrated mainly on the teaching of Buddhism in Thailand was published several years after the publication of the first ones; secondly, the first part of Chotmāi Chāngwāng Ram came out more from adaptation than the latter, which was written mainly, if not entirely, on the author's own account. In this work one can see quite clearly the interaction between a Thai sentiment and a Western out-look, and its outcome. The most striking features of Chotmāi Chāngwāng Ram are to be seen in the imagery, syntactical styles, idioms and vocabulary.

Chotmāi Chāngwāng Ram illustrates quite representatively the literary character in the twenty-five-year interval between the translation of Vendetta and the publication of the novels written by "Sī Būraphā", "Dōkmai Sot" and Prince Ā-kāt Damkoeng in 1928 and 1929. Thai literature in this part of the century was practically in an experimental stage. It is obvious that the raw materials derived from foreign sources, particularly those



from the West and of Chinese origins, had not been synthesized properly to produce new fabric of a smooth and high quality just yet. The literary product of unskilled craftsmen in general probably looked so annoying that, at one period in 1914 an act was passed whereby literary interest was to be based more on an aesthetic value than on mere superficial entertainment.<sup>1</sup>

The main reason which underlined the proclamation of this act came apparently from the worry that while there were more people who wrote and read both poetry and prose,

... those who write hardly care for a proper use of the language, nor try to compose literature of useful kinds. They often imitate others. Those who do translation often translate only trashy stories from foreign languages. Moreover, they are likely to change the Thai grammatical structures in accordance with the foreign ones. (They do this) from their ignorance and misunderstanding that such a style is beautiful and suitable for modernity. They do not realize that by so doing, they destroy their own language ... Some even admire such a style of writing, mistaking it as a change for the betterment of modern Thai literature ...<sup>2</sup>

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1. Rāṭchakitchānubēksā, Vol. 31, op. cit., pp. 309-314.
  2. Ibid., pp. 310-311.

From this worry, which King Vajiravudh shared, some measures were required to be taken in order that good writers would be encouraged, and good writing honoured. Wannakhadi Samoson, a literary club, therefore, was founded to bring into being the stated purposes. Incidentally, in this act Thai literature was classified formally and officially for the first time. There were five categories: poetry, drama in verse, tale, spoken drama, and essay or pamphlet. It is clear from this classification that the last two genres were newly added to the old formal tradition.

As far as literary value is concerned, article 8, item ii defined what "good literature" is:

Good literature can be composed in any forms, provided that the language used is in good Thai (that the language is) proper in accordance with either an old style, or a contemporary one, (that the language) must not be an imitation of foreign languages nor use foreign syntactical styles (such as using "to catch the train" instead of "to get in the train" or "to board the train" ... )  
 In regard to any stories which are translated (the translator) must specify clearly from what language the story is translated; and, the name of the original author must be acknowledged ... <sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 313.

A committee was then set up to judge "good literature". It was agreed that the following works were examples of "good literature" for the five categories. (i) Poetry:- Lilit: Phra Lō; Chan: Samutthakhōt; Kāp: Mahā Chāt Khamthēt; Klōn: Khun Chāng Khun Phāen (ii) Drama in verse:- Inao by Rama II (iii) Spoken drama:- Huachai Nakrop (The Heart of a Warrior) (iv) Tale:- Sāmkok (v) Essay:- Phrarāṭchaphithī Sipsong Duan.<sup>1</sup>

However, in spite of the act, writers went on writing and translating at their liberty. This was probably because the literary situation in the first three decades of this century was too much in an experimental stage to be measured with satisfaction by any standards. For works of originality, many forms were exploited, many themes adopted and elaborated in various manners. While love themes still predominated in the book-market, and detective and mystery stories as well as stories that involved Chinese ethics and magic were also popular, the theme of Thai students returning from abroad and re-adjusting themselves to the Thai social, cultural and intellectual surrounding was gradually catching up with those favourites.

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1. Chulalongkorn, Phrarāṭchaphithī Sipsong Duan, p. 23.

It can be rightly recorded that variations on the theme of Thai students returning from abroad, which was taken up first as a problem for a riddle in 1890, have become increasingly popular since then.

In February and March 1906, twelve years after the publication of "Thaloek Thoek Thāk" in Wachirayan Wisēt, and while Chotmai Chāngwāng Ram was being serialized, Thawī Panyā published in instalments another series of short prose fiction written by "Nō Mō Sō". The author called it "Rūang Khāng Khāng", ((Unfinished Story)). But only one more episode in this series appeared in Thawī Panyā. This second part, which was originally called "Rūang Khāng Khāng Rūang thī Sōng", (Unfinished Story No. II), was published a year after the first. In these two episodes, the author told a comic triangular love story in which two young officers try to win the heart of the same lovely young lady. The story was set in Bangkok in 1906. The two main characters - Luang Rak and Māe Sa-ing - belong to a young generation of modern Thais. They are first cousins who have not met during their life until the story begins. The author depicted the ways which the senior brother, who secretly falls in love with his young cousin, uses in his clandestine, tricky efforts to get rid of the other suitors, both of whom are his equals

and friends. In both episodes, the story ends where the narrator, who is Luang Rak himself, through his cunning tactics, was able to get rid of his rivals successfully. But the question was left open as to how his ungracious triumph would be rewarded.

These two episodes, when seen after they were put together in order and published<sup>1</sup>, formed a part of a potential long story which could have become a novelette or a novel if the main plot had been developed fully. The theme is love, and problems come from a partially Westernized-minded Thai lady of upper class, and her English-educated cousin. Having been educated in a farang school for some eight or nine years, the young Māe Sa-ing has developed a progressive out-look towards marriage. She will not like to marry unless she knows her suitor well enough to feel in love with him first. Then a marriage can be arranged. Her father, and aunt, who brought her up, are not too conservative to make Māe Sa-ing marry anyone against her will, nor to stop her from marrying anyone she loves unless she proves herself to be immature in making a

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1. "Nō Mō Sō" (Prince Bidyalankarana), Nithān khong "Nō Mō Sō", Tales of "Nō Mō Sō", (Bangkok: Khlang Witthayā), pp. 552-646.

judgement concerning the matter. The problem, thus, lay open for a suitor. Phra Wētwisit, a young officer, in the first episode, persuaded his aunt to act as his go-between. But his hope was shattered by an accident with which he had nothing to do. The accident was that of Māe Sa-ing's dog being bitten to death by a bull-dog which originally belonged to Luang Rak. After the accident and before anyone knew what had happened, Luang Rak managed to hand over his dog to Phra Wēt so that he could tell Māe Sa-ing that the dog that killed hers was Phra Wēt's. Having intentionally left the time sequence ambiguous to the angry young cousin, he told her the "truth" but only about the present ownership of the murderer. Māe Sa-ing in tears of anger, declared her wish never to see Phra Wēt in all her life, as a punishment for the crime. This is the end of the "Unfinished Story" no. I.

After returning from his official mission which kept him for about four months in the northern province, Luang Rak learns that he is confronting another rival, who looks more dangerous than the first. This promising suitor is Luang Kritsanarak, his old friend at the Suan Kulāp Palace School. Both went abroad nearly in the same period. In short, a single man like Luang

Kritsana is "a kind of person about whom hardly anyone would object to becoming his parents-in-law".<sup>1</sup> Although being rather liberal in her way of bringing up Māe Sa-ing, the Aunt still lives too much in the old fashion to allow her niece to be alone with men in order that they can get acquainted before marriage. Therefore, in spite of his Western education, Luang Kritsana has no other choices to introduce himself to Māe Sa-ing than to follow the old tradition which Phra Wēt did formerly. Luang Kritsana had his aunt act as the go-between. Again, poor Luang Kritsana failed tragically. This time, his new automobile slid into an empty canal while he, being not quite accustomed to it yet, was trying to keep away from a herd of cattle in a street of Bangkok. And in the car, there also were Māe Sa-ing, her aunt, and Luang Kritsana's own aunt. No one was seriously hurt. But the young lady hardly looked so elegant, in her mud-stained dress, let alone her face and body. She even looked comical when the accident was reported in a newspaper. Māe Sa-ing furiously declared that she never wished to see Luang Kritsanarak again; and consequently the visit from his aunt was put to an end. This harsh measure against the poor suitor,

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1. Ibid., p. 607.

who was trying to please Māe Sa-ing and her aunt by kindly giving them a lift in his newly-arrived motor-car, came from Māe Sa-ing's misunderstanding of him being the one who broke out the story about the accident to others. No one, but the senior brother, knew that it was not Luang Kritsanarak, but he, who first described amusingly the scene at the canal to the fourth party. Another rival was kept out; and the path remained once again clear for Luang Rak. However, his goal cannot yet be achieved, because he cannot find a proper occasion to ensure success if he proposes marriage for himself. The love story of Luang Rak, therefore, remains unfinished. And, this is the end of this series.

It is more likely that the author, somehow like Prince Phichitprīchākon, intended to make this a long story. But, probably because Prince Bidya, being given more and more responsibility in government affairs<sup>1</sup>, had not enough time to write more than a short episode at the time, he presented each episode in such a manner that it could form a part of the whole novel or novelette. In these first two parts, other minor characters were also mentioned, but, they did not yet play any active roles. One of these minor characters is Māe Thak, a distant cousin of

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1. See appendix, pp. 347-349.



Luang Rak and Māe Sa-ing. When they were in their childhood a marriage arrangement was made for Māe Thuk and Luang Rak, and this engagement was recalled in the first episode. However, Luang Rak made up his mind to release himself from the previous marriage arrangement.

This kind of a negative out-look towards a blind marriage, which was generally practised in Thailand, was taken up again and developed more elaborately by King Vajiravudh when he wrote Huāchai Chāi Num. This work was serialized in Dusit Samit during April 23-July 9, 1921 under his pseudonym "Rām Chitti".

Huāchai Chāi Num (The Heart of a Young Man), is composed of a sequence of eighteen letters. Here, the King used the theme of problems of a young Thai, being educated abroad, on his return to his home-land, and his re-orientation to the Thai social, cultural, and intellectual environment. The letters were written by a young man who has just returned from England; they were all addressed to his student friend who is still there. In these letters, the young man complained about several kinds of social absurdities Thailand has held as her tradition. The main point of all the complaints has its roots in the problem of the traditional marriage arrangement, and the exploitation of women. And,

his principal attempt is to revolt against this antique authoritarianism. But, the whole operation ends up with comic irony for him. In the end, the young man, whose heart yearned for women's liberation and a different value system for the Thai society, finds himself happier when his Westernized out-look and the Thai way of life can be practically compromised.

From those letters, the readers learn the story of Nāi Praphan Prayūnsiri, who later became Luang Bōribānbarōmasak, an officer in the department of Court affairs. A few days after returning home, the young man was informed that a wife-to-be had been already chosen for him. With his Westernized out-look, it is natural that Praphan protested strongly against a blind marriage. However, a compromise was made; his father took him to visit Māe Kimnoei, the bride-to-be, a daughter of a well-to-do Chinese merchant. The chosen one, who in spite of other qualifications, "looked as heavily decorated as a Christmas tree", as he described her to his friend Prasōēt, obviously is not his taste. Praphan preferred U-rai, whom he first saw in a cinema-house, and was later introduced to her by his sister. To him U-rai is an ideal Thai lady. Besides her physical beauty and charming manner, he told Prasōēt in one of the letters,<sup>1</sup> U-rai

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1. Rām Čhitti (King Vajiravudh), Huāchāi Chāi Num (The Heart of A Young Man) (Bangkok: A Collection from Dusit Samit), p. 18, letter no. 6.

has "fairly good education". She writes Thai skilfully; she reads and speaks a little English; she dances; and she dresses well. She knows how to use jewellery properly; and above all, she does not look too dressy like a Christmas tree. What is more pleasing to him is that U-rai is free and progressive enough to go out with him alone, and allow him to stay late at her home at night without objection from her parents. After about four months of their courtship, due to her pregnancy a marriage had to be arranged so urgently that the wedding was performed without a royal blessing. And naturally neither families were pleased with the situation. Only during their honeymoon, Praphan began to feel that the honey tasted rather bitter, and the moon looked pale. U-rai seemed to enjoy behaving in a superior manner over her husband, especially when other people were around. Two months after marriage, she suffered a miscarriage. Their incompatibility of temperament grew to the maximum limit when U-rai deliberately showed her infidelity. She began by frequently going out alone. Then bills were sent for him to pay. When an announcement appeared in a newspaper declaring that Praphan would no longer be responsible for U-rai's debt unless there was his written consent, U-rai, accusing him of sending the announcement, sent another one to counter the first. She, thenceforth, left to stay with her father for some time, then finally moved to live,

without her expecting it to be so, with seven wives of Phrayā Trawennakhon, a well-known play-boy. To settle his disquietude, Praphan found a divorce necessary. He enjoyed his bachelor's life once again. While his mind was free from domestic complication, it turned once again into social criticism and analysis. And once again the centre of his interest is in marriage and sex politics. From his own experiences, Praphan learned that his ideal about women's liberation which he yearned to see happen in Thailand turned out ironically for him. Before marriage, he was angry when his father told him that U-rai's family which he himself called admiringly "civilized", is notoriously known as "The School for Flirtation"<sup>1</sup>. His social life after the divorce made him think that fallacy in regard to sex politics has been developed as an outcome of a society in transition which Thailand was then living. He wrote in one of the letters to Prasōet his point of view:

... According to the old tradition, (unmarried) men and women were not allowed to get acquainted (before their marriage) at all ... And the consequence of this prohibition is that it led women to look at men as if they were gods. That is why they gave themselves to men so disgustingly easily. At the present time, parents have given greater freedom to their daughters. But, women themselves have not yet learned to appreciate the real value of liberty, thus, use it in such a wrong way that they lose themselves and their reputations ...<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 25; letter no. 9.

2. Ibid., p. 51; letter no. 16.

For the question of polygamy, Praphan made a conclusion for himself that unless women agree to protest against such a practice, the new idea of monogamy would still remain practically hopeless.<sup>1</sup> Two of the possible measures women could take to rule out polygamy, Praphan wrote to his friend, are first, to resist marrying a polygamist<sup>2</sup>; and second, to make themselves attractive, good house-wives, and dear friends to their husbands.<sup>3</sup> If the wives could do so, Praphan believed, the husbands would no longer need minor wives.

The story of Praphan ends in a doubly ironical way when, in his last letter, he asked Prasōēt to prepare himself to be the best man in his second marriage which was anticipated. At that moment he found himself truly in love with a daughter of his father's good friend.

Because the general tone of the letters is also ironical, it is quite clear that the Huachai Chāi Num was written consciously with a purpose more than to simply entertain the readers. Moreover, in the introduction "Rām Chitti" wrote that he got hold of Praphan's letters for some reason. But, he selected to

1. Ibid., pp. 46-47; letter no. 15.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., p. 52; letter no. 16.

be published only those that were worth reading for the general public. He believed that some readers might feel sympathetic towards Praphan and some might blame the young man.

In these letters, one can see quite clearly that the irony of Praphan's life came primarily from the struggle of his Westernized out-look against the old Thai way of life; and that this struggle came to a happy ending at a compromise.

As the author of Huachai Chai Num was a king, and a king of Thailand too, one can see that this piece of prose fiction was created basically as a means to expose new social ideas and to point out where obstacles to progress lay. Let us look back for a moment now to a day in December 1911, the day when the new King Vajiravudh took his full coronation. To thank a younger brother, Prince Chakrabongse, for his letter of congratulations, the newly-crowned King Vajiravudh wrote a letter to his brother in which he also said,

... We are living in a difficult time, a time when antiquated traditions are struggling against change. But I do not despair. I still hope to live long enough to see the time when Siam shall have truly entered and be honoured in the Family of Nations as an equal in every sense of the word ...<sup>1</sup>

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1. The letter was originally written in English. See Chula Chakrabongse, op. cit., p. 272.

During the course of these ten years the King must have seen a number of ironies in life, and discrepancies between ideal and reality amply enough to perhaps come to a conclusion that his aspiration could possibly be attained only through a compromise. In Huachai Chāi Num,<sup>v</sup> as one can see, the heart of the young man feels delight only when his Westernized measurement can be applied with compromise to the Thai way of life. King Vajiravudh was the only king of Thailand who intentionally and seriously took up writing as a means to lead his people into a new world of intellectual civilization. Apart from international politics, the king wished to see the Thais appear in a new social and intellectual personality. In this work, one can feel a fresh atmosphere in imaginative writing. Here, all main characters especially when they are single women, were introduced with titles and family names such as Nāngsāo<sup>1</sup> U-rai Phannasōphon. Family names and titles which signify a matrimonial status for ordinary women were both made official first in his reign. While the king was following these initiatives in characterization, his campaigns for long hair and long,

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1. "Nāngsāo" is equivalent to "Miss", whereas "Nāng" is to "Mrs."

wrap-around skirts for women, and the virtue of the Wild Tiger Corps, and references to other new social happenings such as spoken drama, cinema, and clubs had their parts in the make-up of the story.

Huachai Chāi Num, in regard to its length and development of characters, can be termed more properly as a proto-novel than the novel per se. However, a variation of this theme was taken up and expanded in Sattrū Khong Chao Lon, the first published novel written by "Dokmai Sot", the first Thai lady novelist. The king's ideas in relation to an inter-marriage between the Westerners and Thais, and his primary principle against polygamy were adopted, whether it was a coincidence or an intention of the author, by Prince Ā-kāt Damkoeng in his novels - Lakhon Haeng Chīwit and Phim Luāng Phim Khāo. These novels are discussed in the following chapter.

As mentioned earlier, King Vajiravudh intentionally took up writing as a means to expose his ideas to the general public. The king not only utilized all the existing literary forms in the Thai tradition, but also introduced new ones. Although it is still in dispute as to the first person who introduced the spoken drama into Thailand, it is generally agreed that, whoever



that person may have been, King Vajiravudh, when Crown Prince, is one possible candidate.<sup>1</sup>

In this twenty-five-year interval too, the spoken drama appeared. It was introduced into Thailand perhaps not mainly as a form of entertainment, but rather as a means, an entertaining one, of public instruction. Compared to the short and long stories published in the first quarter of the twentieth century, spoken drama was much less popular among the general public. Some explanation can possibly be found in the way the genre was introduced. In the beginning, the spoken drama was performed at Thawī Panyā Samōsōn, and at Sāmakkhayačhān Samākhōm (United Teachers' Society)<sup>2</sup>, both of which places opened not to the general public, but to rather special kinds of spectators. One theatre was at the club founded by the Crown Prince Vajiravudh. Sometimes the Prince, who a few years later became King Rama VI, himself would take part as an actor in some of the

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1. Tamsiri Bunyasing, et al., Wichā Nātasin: Kān Lakhon Phra kān Saksā, Dramatic Arts: Theatre Arts for Education (Bangkok: Khuru Sapha, 2514), p. 52; see also Benlue Debyasuwan, "Hualieo khong Wannakhadi Thai", op. cit., p. 73.

2. Tamsiri Bunyasing, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

plays, all of which he composed. It is agreed that King Vajiravudh wrote more plays than anybody else. Some of the plays were translated, some were adapted from Western literature, especially English and French, and some were his original creation. In fact, King Vajiravudh wrote not only spoken drama, but nearly all forms of theatre arts such as dance-drama in verse, Western-derived operas, musical drama, etc.<sup>1</sup> The other theatre, at the United Teachers' Society, was normally presided over by high-ranking officers in the Ministry of Public Instruction, such as Chao Phrayā Phrasadet or Chao Phrayā Thammasak, both of whom became ministers from 1912-1915, and 1915-1926 respectively.

From the fact that both King Vajiravudh and Chao Phrayā Thammasak themselves were playwrights, the situation looked obvious that spoken drama was actually taken more seriously than a form of theatre arts per se. Introducing it to those involved in administration or state affairs of some sorts, and to teachers, implied that the art of spoken drama would help, once learned, in making rhetorical statements, and in class-room operation. King Vajiravudh himself often took up spoken drama

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1. Ibid., pp. 53-54.

as a means for forwarding his political aims. One can see this motive clearly in Huachai Nakrop (The Heart of a Warrior).

In this play King Vajiravudh was trying to build a sense of national responsibility among his fellow citizens. The king set the story in time of war, and created the situation in which one family played the leading role. Here the King showed how, in a crucial period, each member of the family could take part in a national defence. It is obvious that the play spoke for the two new establishments: the Wild Tiger Corps, and the Boy Scouts, which were founded in May and July respectively in 1911. The first, having its name after "the Wild Tigers and the Peeping Cats" - the guerrillas used in former times by King Naresuan of Ayuthaya<sup>1</sup> - was an institution where people of different professions, soldiers, civilians, and businessmen could meet in a different atmosphere, so that they would be able to get acquainted ... when friendship is made (among the people of different disciplines), they can get their work going conveniently ... "2, explained Luang Mani to Phra Phirom, two

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1. Chula Chakrabongse, op. cit., pp. 274-276.

2. Vajiravudh, King of Thailand, Huachai Nakrop, The Heart of a Warrior, p. 36.

main characters in the play. The Wild Tigers would have a training which would enable them to be ready to help defending the country when it was necessary.<sup>1</sup> The Wild Tiger Corps was flourishing during the reign of King Vajiravudh, in spite of some bitterness among those who were excluded in the beginning.<sup>2</sup> However, the institution was brought to an end in the reign of King Prajadhipok, his successor. The second institution the play spoke for was the Boy Scouts, the Tiger Cubs. This junior branch of the Wild Tiger Corps has been carried on as a national institution, under the directorship of the Ministry of Education, an undisputed monument in remembrance of King Vajiravudh.

For this play, the scene was set in an imaginative provincial town in Thailand. Although the heroship here looked collective, a prominent role was played by Phra Phiromwarākṇ, a retired officer in his fifties. Phra Phirom had three sons, one daughter, and, at least two wives. His eldest son, Sawing, became a soldier, the youngest, Sawat, a Tiger Cub; neither did it with his consent. In fact, at the beginning Phra Phirom spoke

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1. Ibid., p. 35.

2. Chula Chakrabongse, op. cit., p. 275.

strongly against both institutions. His anger rose to a higher degree when U-rai, his only daughter, fell in love with an officer in the Wild Tiger Corps. The only friend he was at ease with was Sunbeng, the brother of his minor wife of Chinese descent.

But, the heart of the warrior leapt up when he beheld a military action, part of which took place in his own house. The Wild Tiger regiment moved in and used it as a temporary fort. Seeing how weak the situation looked for the Thais, Phra Phirom took up a gun left by the wounded, and began shooting the enemies. But, later he was caught and brought to a court-martial on the charge of murder because he was neither a soldier nor a member of the Wild Tiger Corps, the people who were entitled to fight in time of war. But he was given a chance to be free if he would disclose some information to the enemy officer who was cross-examining him. In spite of the fatal alternative, Phra Phirom refused to betray his country. Sawāi, his second son, on the other hand, did give the information in exchange for his own freedom, which was bestowed upon him but with his father's curse. Phra Phirom's patriotism won admiration from the enemy officer who gradually treated him as a gentleman instead of an ordinary prisoner of war. Sunbeng, his old friend, declared that he was on the enemy side and proved that it was he who shot Sawing dead

while the latter was on his way to deliver a message to the army asking for re-inforcement. However, instead of getting a medal, Sunbeng, who assured the enemy officer that he was a true subject of the latter's government, was sent to be hanged as a criminal. During the action, Māe Yaem, Phra Phirom's head wife, and U-rai helped to nurse the wounded, who were brought into the house. The enemies were finally driven away soon after the arrival of the re-inforcement army. During this operation, Sawat, Phra Phirom's youngest son, who took over his brother's mission as a messenger, and some other Tiger Cubs were also involved. Having seen the value of the Wild Tiger Corps, in which civilians were trained to be able to give a helping hand to the army in national defence, Phra Phirom thus asked to join its membership, and received full support from Luang Manī, the district-director, who was U-rai's lover.

While the theme of this play was propaganda for the Wild Tiger Corps and its junior branch, the story created a sense of nationalism. It is true that King Chulalongkorn successfully saved the kingdom from being a victim of the Western Colonialism. But, the Thais themselves, having lived a simple life for centuries in an agricultural society, hardly felt such a sophisticated concept as nationalism. However, if Thailand was to enter the

Family of Nations as King Vajiravudh had aspired, her people had to have a concept of nationalism and feel its implication in international politics. Finally, international warfare broke out in Europe in 1914. Thai nationalism had a situation in which its strength could be measured. When the decision was made for Thailand to join the Allies in 1917, the King gained full support from all sides, including, of course, newspapers.<sup>1</sup> In order to build the sense of nationalism in the Thais' mind, King Vajiravudh apparently took up spoken drama as one of his means. In spite of its small popularity, however, the genre offered writers of prose fiction a technique of dramatic dialogue, and a possibility of using actual men and women as characters for fictional stories. It is true that this technique and the use of actual people for characters can be derived, and were actually derived from Western literature directly and indirectly by writers of prose fiction in the period before the emergence of the novel proper. But, at any rate, these two devices appear more realistic and can be followed more absorbingly when they are heard and seen on the stage than in printed pages or on the cinema screens. On the whole, prose fiction in the formative years of the development of the novel appeared largely, as one can see, in a borrowed form of various sorts and in degrees.

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1. Ibid., p. 288; see also Sathit Sēmānin, op. cit., pp. 141-142 and 145-146.

## CHAPTER VII

## The Early Novels

With the emergence of the novel proper in the last two years of the 1920's, a new era of modern prose fiction began. These two years were indeed remarkable because the first published novels of three important novelists appeared for the first time. Turning away from the fashionable Western and Chinese coats, "Sī Būraphā", "Dḡkmai Sot" and Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng created fictional works of marked originality. In October 1928, Kulāp Saīpradit, who is well-known to the reading public under his pseudonym "Sī Būraphā", published Lūk Phūchāi, which was his first novel, in a complete book form. During June 15-September 15, 1929 Sattrū Khong Chao Lon, the first published novel of "Dḡkmai Sot", a well-known pseudonym of M. L. Bupphā (Kunchon) Nimmānhēmin, appeared in instalments. And, while Sattrū Khong Chao Lon was being serialized, Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng's first published novel, Lakhon Haeng Chīwit, appeared in a complete volume. The works of these three authors marked the beginning of this new era.

After leaving Thepsirin in 1925, and joining the editorial staff of Senā Sūksā ... for some time, Kulāp Saīpradit, perhaps,



decided to take writing more seriously. With the co-operation of Op Chaiwasu, his senior student at Thepsirin, Kulāp turned an empty house Op offered into a publishing office which was known as "Samnak Phim Nāi Thēp Prīchā" (Nāi Thēp Prīchā Publishing House). The primary motive was to get greater freedom mainly in so far as writing was concerned. As if trying to catch a tiger with bare hands, Samnak Phim Nāi Thēp Prīchā got by with the cost of production. Kulāp made a successful deal with a printing press on the condition of "print first, pay later". For the raw material, he encouraged his former class-mates and friends to write "stories that give pleasure" for publication; and he was successful there too. Kulāp himself also wrote as well as doing managerial jobs. In spite of its amateurish team, Samnak Phim Nāi Thēp Prīchā got on quite well with the reading public. Kulāp Sāḷpradit, having felt so encouraged, decided to move further into the world of letters. In 1929, the publishing house at Op's place also became an office of a fortnightly magazine, Suphāp Burut, (The Gentleman). Unlike most of its contemporaries, Suphāp Burut turned to no senior and distinguished names of the period for their contribution to be taken as a sort of guarantee for quality. Having much confidence in himself and in his team, Kulāp turned to his old

colleagues instead for the editorial staff. Again the young ambitious Kulāp, who by that time was already known under his pseudonym "Sī Būraphā", was successful there. However, compared to Samnak Phim Nāi Thēp Prīchā, Suphāp Burut played a less important role in imaginative writing than in journalism.

It can be said that from Samnak Phim Nāi Thēp Prīchā, the first generation of Thai novelists was born. This publishing house produced works of such writers as Phat Nētrangsī, Pakṇ Buranapakṇ, Sutchai Phrūtthisārikṇ, Sanit Charoenrat, Sot Kūramarōhit, Mālai Chūphinit and Kulāp Sāipradit. And, among these novelists whose works formed parts of the history of modern Thai literature, Sot, Mālai and Kulāp have made theirs last longer in the public attention. But Sot, having won a government scholarship, left Bangkok in April 1928 for Hong Kong and then Peking where he stayed for higher education from 1930-1936. Although he had kept up with his writing while staying in China, his imaginative work during that period contributed little to the early development of the novel. As for Mālai, like Sot his later works are more important than the earlier ones. From this group of writers, therefore, only Kulāp paid a distinguished contribution to the early development of this new form of imaginative writing.

In October 1928, Samnak Phim Nai Thēp Prīchā published Lūk Phūchāi. As its title implies the quality of being a gentleman and the story illustrates the qualifications of such a kind of man, one can see that the author was more serious in his imaginative writing than most of his contemporaries whose work normally evolved around the themes of melodramatic love, mystery, or detection. Lūk Phūchāi tells a story of a self-made man who, through modern education he received both in Thailand and from abroad, got a good job and became successful in life. His high social status, one can see in the novel, is the result of his working hard and his being virtuous.

#### SYNOPSIS

##### Characters:

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|-----------------------|--|
| Mānōt Raksamākhom:    | son of a carpenter, later becomes Phra Wisutthisatthayān, a judge in the Court of Appeal.                            |
| Ramphan Chanthawirōt: | daughter of Phrayā Bamrōeharūthairāt, a rich nobleman, and high-ranking officer in the Department of the Royal Page. |
| Khīrī Sītakamhāeng:   | son of Phra Prīchāphitthayaprasāt, an officer in the Ministry of Education.  |
| Lamiad Thawīpanyā:    | daughter of Khun Samruatphūmiprathēt, an officer in the Department of Survey.  |
| Thamṇong Mēnasiri:    | son of Phrayā Manūnmēnasiri, later becomes Luang Wichitdulayatham, a judge in the Criminal Court.                    |
| Āphā Mēnasiri:        | Thamṇong's younger sister.   |
| Rakam:                | daughter of Mānōt and Āphā.  |
| Khamron:              | son of Khīrī and Āphā.   |
| Ramphai:              | daughter of Thamṇong and Ramphan,  |

The story:

The story began when Mānōt, Khīrī, Ramphan and Lamiād were in their early teens. They all went to the same school. Mānōt, Ramphan and Lamiad were rather quiet and always on good terms, while Khīrī, being a little terror, behaved annoyingly. Being born of a humble family, Mānōt felt out of place among his school-mates, most of whom came from noble families, and who were usually advised by their parents not to make friends with children of the poor. Ramphan came from a wealthy family of the nobility. Being, in her nature, a quiet and modest girl, she found Mānōt agreeable. Having been jealous of their intimacy, the rest of the students found Mānōt unlikeable. The leader of those students was Khīrī.

Knowing that picking on Mānōt alone could not turn Ramphan's attention to them, the boys agreed that it would be more successful if they annoyed Ramphan herself as well. One day, Mānōt was punished unjustly by a teacher who found the slim, solemn Mānōt guilty in relation to the fight with the strong little terror Khīrī, whose father was an officer of some importance in the Ministry of Education. Mānōt was given ten strokes plus one late hour at school after class for the fight which came primarily from Khīrī's naughty trick against Ramphan. The girl, feeling sympathetic and

grateful to Mānōt, intended to stay with him, but was persuaded by her nurse to return home soon. Lamiad was left to accompany Mānōt until the teacher allowed him to leave. Lamiad and Mānōt were neighbours, whose fathers rented the houses which belonged to Khīrī's father.

A few years later, the four young people left the school for higher education. Mānōt and Khīrī met again in the Law School. Here Mānōt has become acquainted with Thamṅong, a student of law, who helped him to get a part-time job as a clerk in the Department of Public Prosecutions. Thamṅong came from a noble family. He once had a fight with Khīrī in order to defend Mānōt's honour.

After their first examination in law, Khīrī and Thamṅong failed, whereas Mānōt passed with his name second to the top. Thamṅong took him to dinner at home to celebrate the occasion. Thamṅong had a younger sister Āphā, aged eighteen. She gave him a garland made by herself.

Lamiad learned of his success from a newspaper. She wrote him a letter which made him go to visit her at home. Mānōt learned then that Lamiad had set up a private school, that his brotherly love for her had remained alive in spite of their losing

contact for a few years, and that he had not met Ramphan either during all those years.

Shortly afterwards, Mānōt and Ramphan met accidentally at Hūā Hin-on-sea, a popular village town. Mānōt went with the Mēnasiris, Ramphan with her mother and female cousins. Mānōt was delighted to take care of her when she needed a chaperon on excursions. Their intimacy in the past was brought to strengthen this joyful present.

However, after Ramphan had come to exchange a visit with Mānōt at the Mēnasiri's place one evening, Mānōt was put into a predicament because Thamṅong, not knowing the two people's relationship enough, confessed his love for Ramphan and asked Mānōt to help him. Having mistaken Mānōt's intention, Ramphan did not refuse to marry Thamṅong. Mānōt, half broken-hearted, married Āphā nearly a year later, not out of his love for her, but from his gratitude to her family. Lamiad sent him another letter from which he came to a vague conclusion that she might love him. Mānōt did not find his marriage a sweet one. He spent most of his time on his studies hoping to win a scholarship to study law further abroad, and to forget Ramphan and Lamiad. Āphā felt ignored and began to feel dissatisfied with her married life.

Mānōt won a scholarship and went to France leaving his pregnant wife with her father. Khīrī and Lamiad were among those who went to see Mānōt off. It was clear to Mānōt then that Lamiad loved him. After Mānōt had left, Khīrī often came to visit Āphā at home. With a trick Khīrī was keen on using to defeat Mānōt, Āphā was persuaded to run away with him.

Seven years passed, Mānōt returned with a more developed personality plus a doctorate degree in law. He learned of his wife's elopement with Khīrī the next day after he arrived. This second despair in relation to women made the handsome lawyer turn away from woman's love. As he lost contact with Lamiad while he was in France, he found his only joy in the company of Ramphai, the only child of Thamṅong and Ramphan.

One day, by accident, Mānōt came across Ramphan's diary, and one piece of truth was revealed: Ramphan loved him very dearly. Moreover, by accident, Ramphan too found that he had loved her, and still did as dearly. They came to agree that it was too late to revive their long, secret love.

Eight years later, at Nakhṅ Rātchasiṁā, a north-eastern province of Thailand, Khīrī was arrested together with Khamron. Thamṅong, who was given the title of Luang Wichitdulayatham,

was one of the judges. From the crime he committed, Khīrī was sentenced to twenty years in prison, but Khamron, being too young, was to be sent to a reform school for juvenile delinquency.

Āphā called on Mānōt, who then was already promoted to the rank of a judge with a title of Phra Wisutthisatthayān, and asked him to help Khamron. She made him understand that the boy was their son. As Phra Wisut was to be one of the judges at the Court of Appeal, the news Āphā brought put him in another dilemma: to maintain justice and to spoil the future of his son, or to save his son and to ruin justice. After a few days of hard thinking, he decided to uphold justice.

Āphā came again to reveal the truth: Khamron was Khīrī's son; and the child she had with Phra Wisut was a girl, Rakham. She brought the girl to him and left to visit Khīrī and Khamron at the provincial town. A few months later, Phra Wisut received a letter from Khīrī asking him please to take care of Khamron when the boy was released from the school. Phra Wisut learned from the letter too that Āphā had taken to Buddhism as her final refuge.



The following year, Luang Wichitdulayatham and his family returned to Bangkok. At this time, Phra Wisut found Ramphai a very charming young lady very much resembling her mother. And the story ended happily at the marriage of Phra Wisutthisa-tthayān, a successful, self-made man of nearly forty and a young lady of eighteen, the only daughter of his old friend and his old-time sweetheart.

To present this first published novel, "Sī Būraphā" turned away from a traditional plot, and created a fresh one. It is true that to some extent the author's personal experiences helped in the make-up of the story of a poor student who has become somebody at the top mainly through higher education; and yet it is equally true that the novel speaks idealistically about "Sī Būraphā" 's dream. Although the author himself admitted twenty-six years later that he wrote Lūk Phūchāi with no other motives than the desire to write, it is conceivable that his desire to write was guided, at any rate, by some external phenomena undesirable to him. Look at Thamṅong's interior monologue in his hesitation of how to inform Mānōt of his wife's elopement on the day the latter returned from France, for example.

... Is there such a thing that is certain in the world? Is there such a sign of true justice? Hypocrites and rogues lie leisurely on the heap of silver and gold. Vulgarians and traitors are popular in society. Those with no kindness, (who) see that the poor are animals, are respected everywhere. Those who work so hard that they bathe in their sweat and behave straightforwardly are regarded as being conceited. A man of integrity who cherishes honour and reputation has to work days and nights without being happy, yet living his life like a slave. Look, where is justice? ... <sup>1</sup>

Here one can see that Thamṅong's point is nearly entirely irrelevant to his predicament; yet it was pointed out. It is quite clear that "Sī Būraphā", having felt dissatisfied with the social atmosphere in which he was living, proposed, not a new kind of society, but a new kind of hero, an altruistic self-made man. The formal structure of the society itself, as the author took it, whether he meant it or not, rendered promises to a man of integrity to become successful, respected and happy regardless of his former economic or family background. In order to climb the social hierarchy, "Sī Būraphā" proposed education to be taken as a supporter, and government offices as the ladder for such a man. To illustrate this point, he created not only Mānōt, but also Thamṅong.

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1. "Sī Būraphā", Lūk Phūchāi (Bangkok: Phrāe Phitthayā, 2497), pp. 378-379.

"Sī Būraphā", like most of the Thai Buddhists, adopted, intentionally or unconsciously, the belief that virtue is equal to success and happiness, and vice to failure and ruin, instead of virtue to virtuous life and vice to vicious, regardless of any worldly forms of measurement. And, he took a period of nearly three decades for his main characters to prove his equation. He made Mānōt a symbol of all that is virtuous, and Khīrī vicious; but while he paid much attention in characterizing the hero in order to show how he has become what he is, he did that in a lesser degree for the development of the villain. As soon as characters are introduced, one can predict immediately that Mānōt is to become a hero, and Khīrī a villain. In the fighting scene at the outset Mānōt, as a boy of twelve, has already shown some qualities of being a gentleman - he is kind, tolerant, dignified, peace-loving, the last of which quality is often mistaken by his school-mates as cowardice. In short, Mānōt symbolizes all that is noble and good in the author's opinion. Khīrī, on the other hand, shows his potentiality for villainy also from the beginning of the story. He is a trouble-maker who finds enjoyment in annoying anyone who is inferior, physically or socially. He tells lies not so much to protect himself from danger as to do down or even to destroy innocent people. With or without the

author's intention, Khīrī was created, to a great extent, to symbolize the general wickedness of the nobility.

The older he is growing, and the wider world he has come to know, the more kinds of new knowledge Khīrī has accumulated. For instance, he sees that to place himself high, to behave conceitedly and pompously, to look down upon others, also altogether to behave brutally to those who are inferior are the qualifications which a son of the nobility ought to adopt.<sup>1</sup>

But, paradoxically, as it looks, the success of the hero is found nowhere but in a rank and title of nobility. Ramphan's case is different, however. Her character is to be regarded as exceptional among people of her milieu. And her friendship with Mānōt is to be regarded as something remarkable.

Actually, it is very unlikely for Ramphan and Mānōt to become close friends. Speaking about their (social) status, the difference is as great as the sky to earth. Ramphan is a daughter of Chao Khun Bamrōēharathairāt, living under a tender care, surrounded luxuriously with happiness and pleasure; she is a daughter of an honourable nobleman of wealth. Mānōt is the contrary. His father is only an ordinary carpenter; his mother is nowhere. The students at "Phadung Wit" School are mostly children of the nobility; and these students are often advised by their parents not to be so humble as to make friends with children of the poor, for fear that (the latter) would lead them into being hooligans ... Although Ramphan is a child of a noble family, she has a wonderful character. That is, she admires modesty, and nothing of a noisy nature, unlike children in general. Therefore, in the following months (after she had arrived), Ramphan has

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1. Ibid., p. 41.

made a new friend - Mānōt<sup>1</sup> - who has a compatible character with her ...

From the portrayal of the main characters, one can see quite clearly that "Sī Būraphā" had an idealistic out-look towards common people, but an envious feeling in relation to the nobility. To satisfy his latent envy, he could have shown that, everything else being equal, a son of a carpenter and a son of a rich nobleman might climb up the same ladder and reach the top just as well. But, "Sī Būraphā", perhaps being too wrapped up in his aspiration, made the son of a carpenter stand one step higher than the latter in the government office. Thamṅong was created obviously to serve this purpose. Mānōt passed the first examination in the Law School, went abroad on a government scholarship, and later was promoted to the rank of "phra", whereas Thamṅong failed in the first round, never went abroad for higher education, and when the story ended he held only the rank of "luang".

Khīrī and Āphā, on the other hand, being born and bred in a noble family, both end their lives in ruin. The author gives

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1. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

Khīrī twenty years imprisonment . While he seemed to be more sympathetic with Āphā, the sinner who realizes her sin, by finding an intellectual way out for her, he did not make this part effective as such. One tends to see Āphā as a character forgotten, put aside when her sinful role that serves the author's purpose ends. One knows of her last news only from one line in a letter Khīrī writes to Phra Wisut near the end of the story.

Lamiad is completely forgotten. Her role ends long before the story ends. She was created, perhaps, simply as a spare-part in case the author needed another female character to change the tune of the plot. But, as the novel stands, Lamiad contributes very little to it; all she does is to make Mānōt a little more important than he might have been had Lamiad not existed.

Looking at the title, however, one feels it justified for the roles of all "Sī Būraphā"'s supporting characters. The novel was intended to be about its hero, who clearly was "Sī Būraphā" 's ideal gentleman. Mānōt, thus, was depicted very carefully to give a detailed picture of such a man. All other characters are made merely to support or contrast with his personality so that he can stand out more clearly.

Because the novel was warmly welcomed<sup>1</sup>, it meant that somehow the author's dream was shared by the reading public. It can be said then that, at any rate, Lūk Phūchāī represented the dream of modern Thai youth. To ordinary people living their youth in the 1920's, the story of Mānōt's life, problems, and success looked real, plausible and promising. It should be recalled here that Lūk Phūchāī was first published in 1928, about fifty-five years after the foundation of the administrative reforms in the government had been laid. Thailand before and after the reforms was different in various vital aspects. From being an agricultural feudal society where the majority of people lived a simple life, dreamt simple dreams, and suffered mainly from natural causes, Thailand had become a modern nation operated by a civil service where life was more competitive, dreams more complicated and vague, and problems more sophisticated. However, amidst the social competition, complication and sophistication of modernity, the new system of administration and the expansion of public education made life promising for a greater number of people to achieve social success through government office. These people, who finally formed a new class in Thai society, namely the officials and students, have often been taken as a

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1. The novel was republished three times in twenty-six years after the first publication. In 1951, Atsawin Theatre Co. bought the story to be adapted for dramatisation; the script was written by the author himself.

subject for prose fiction. "Sī Būraphā", being himself a product of modern Thailand, created Phra Wisut on the basis of the contemporary social background. Phra Wisut was the first Thai hero who made his way from naught up to the top through chances modern Thailand offered to her citizens.

But, while the achievement of Phra Wisut reflected the dream and ambition of young men in the 1920's, the most vital part of his experiences were rather superficial. One sees only a vague picture of what he had been doing, and how he reached the top so successfully. Somehow he was cut off the scene for some fifteen years during the transitional period. That is, no one knows of his experiences as a student of law in France during the period of seven years, nor does one know of what he had been doing in the eight year interval between his return and the day when he became a judge who was to make the final verdict for Khīrī's case. All one knew about him after he had left Bangkok is from the following information which the author gave.

At last, seven hard years of life spent for education abroad has passed. Mānōt had been waiting for the day on which he would return to his home-land ... At last, the day he had been long waiting for with sweet feeling came. ... Now he is twenty-nine years old. In spite of his being a fully mature man of nearly middle-age, Mānōt looks young and handsome ... France has given a dignified personality to him as a gift. His manner is neither too dynamic nor too inert to look annoying, smoothly rhythmic, rather gentle yet decisive.



The character of his life is truly admirable, a gentleman who is worthy of his birth. Not only in words, he is a true gentleman in every inch - from top to toe, inside as well as outside... He is a Thai barrister with a doctorate in Law from France, and that is something which elevated his honour.<sup>1</sup>

Obviously the image of Mānōt as described here was a dream which many young readers shared with the young author, regardless of the void in the description of what could possibly have happened during those "seven hard years of student's life" in France.

Having considered the author's own words when he explained twenty-six years later how the novel was written, one can see quite well some of the reasons why Mānōt's experiences in his school days were described more in detail, and vividly, whereas those after he had left for France were vague and superficial.

I wrote Lūk Phūchāi only a few years after leaving school. I hardly knew anything except that which was provided in the school curriculum. I knew very little about the world and life, (my knowledge) was limited indeed. While I was writing that story, the life which I could say I knew well was only the life of students; the other aspects of life were vague to its author.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., pp. 375-376.

2. "Sī Būraphā", "Kham Thalaeng Khong Phūtaeng, The Author's Announcement", of Lūk Phūchāi, pp. 3-4.

It would be fair for "Sī Būraphā", therefore, if Lūk Phūchāi was to be considered as a work of a student aspiring to be a writer. And as such one can see equally well that the latter part of Mānōt's life came more from the author's dream or aspiration than from his actual experiences, or ideology. Then no one should wonder at his idealistic, but vague view towards life in the world greater than that limited within school walls, or a public stadium for student athletes. Having had no clear concept of the life which he aspired for his hero to live as a successful self-made man, yet feeling hopeful for a man who wished to live a better and nobler life, "Sī Būraphā" made his first novel speak idealistically about the road that led from naught to being a happy gentleman. And, such a road as the author showed, was paved with the sense of gratitude, humility, justice, social responsibility, and altruistic love. One can see that "Sī Būraphā" was trying hard to make his notion about the ethics of a gentleman sound convincing. Mānōt's last dilemma, in which he had to choose between justice and the future of the boy who he was misled to believe was his own son, could sound touching, although it was rather dramatic, if one was to ignore the author's intervention. For instance,

when Āphā asked Phra Wisut to overturn the verdict given by the provincial court, for the sake of Khamron, the author concluded the description of his frustration by saying "It's a pity. Poor Mānōt, (you) were born really to suffer".<sup>1</sup> But, after the hard decision was finally made, Phra Wisut explained to his ex-wife why he did not spare the boy from the punishment.

I did that for the sake of justice ... Justice is the mother of peace in the world. Selfishness is the mother of evil ... and other hundreds of thousand kinds of wickedness. I must confess that I was born for the world ... not for myself ... I myself am not so mean as to be able to destroy my own son without feeling shaken. I had to fight sufficiently hard against my feeling ... If I am to live in this world void of virtue, I shall not live in vice either. Whenever, there should be anything which would force me to live in vice, I would immediately choose the side of not to live. To make me live an evil life is to make me live an unbearable life.<sup>2</sup>

However, like all the other characters, Phra Wisut, like a puppet, performed his role under the strict and close control of his creator. "Sī Būraphā" told his story, spoke his thoughts for him, and rarely let him feel his sentiments, be it sorrow or joy, alone. One cannot help feeling the company of "Sī Būraphā" all the way through from the beginning up to the end of the story. For instance, at the scene when Mānōt passed his first examination

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1. "Sī Būraphā", Lūk Phūchāi, p. 460.

2. Ibid., pp. 474-475.

at the Law School, which was one of the highlights in his life,

"Sī Būraphā" told the readers that,

... his friends and lecturers congratulated him noisily. Thamṅong took him home for dinner to celebrate his success ...<sup>1</sup>

and that,

... Mānōt was so nervously delighted. After returning home, he could not sleep the whole night, wondering about his life which was changing so incredibly rapidly. A little before today, his life was filled with loneliness ... He felt himself more well-known and thanked his own industry deeply, without which he knew that he would never have had an opportunity to feel so delighted ...<sup>2</sup>

"Sī Būraphā" often thought and spoke for his hero, even at crucial points. After acting as a go-between for Thamṅong and Ramphan, the task which was very much against his own desire, Mānōt - who took his gratitude to Thamṅong as the most precious thing to keep their friendship - was heart-broken. Here, "Sī Būraphā" spoke his despair in some lengthy paragraphs.

1. Ibid., pp. 100-101.

2. Ibid., pp. 102-103.

... The problem concerning Ramphan nearly gives him a brain haemorrhage. How it is that Ramphan behaves so coldly ... Before coming to see his dearest love tonight, Mānōt had been fighting against different kinds of problems for several days. Coming to see Ramphan tonight was simply to listen and see whether she would have any passionate feeling for Thamṅong or not. And it turned out that she was very likely to love Thamṅong. Mānōt felt hurt to find Ramphan behaving in such a repulsive manner with him ... <sup>1</sup>

The style in which "Sī Būraphā" presented his first novel, unfortunately, weakens the sentiment of the story whose plot looked fresh and unique. But one sees a development in his style of presentation in his later works such as Saen Rak Saen Khaen (The Vigour of Love and Hate), Songkrām Chīwit (The War of Life) and Khāng Lang Phāp (Behind the Painted Picture). However, Lūk Phūchāi offered a new theme for prose fiction, and variations on the theme have been taken up now and then by other novelists in later days, for instance, "Raphīphṅ" in Lūk Thāt (The Slave Son), "Sī-fā Ladawan" in King Phai (The Bamboo Branch), etc. Despite its being amateurish in its craftsmanship, Lūk Phūchāi reflected, to some extent, the sentiment and dreams of the ambitious young Thais in the 1920's, the period in which the author himself developed and wrote. As the novel was the talk of the time, it paved a road for the promising "Sī Būraphā" to walk as a novelist. "Sī Būraphā" produced seven novels, as well as

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1. Ibid., pp. 251-254.

short stories, during the period after he had left Thepsirin and become deeply engaged in journalism. But his faith in imaginative writers, his campaign for the profession of novelist, his concern with the social well-being of the economic inferior, and his inclination towards an advanced political ideology led "Sī Būraphā" from being a publisher of prose fiction, and a novelist, to being an editor of magazines, and newspapers, and finally a political exile.

From June 15 - September 15, 1929, while "Sī Būraphā" 's third novel, Prāp Phayot (The Taming of the Shrew) was being serialized in Suphāp Burut, "Dokmai Sot" 's first published novel, Sattrū Khong Chao Lon (Her Enemy) appeared. The novel was published in four instalments in Thai Khasem, the monthly magazine which serialized two more of "Dokmai Sot" 's novels: Nit, from February 15, 1929 - April 15, 1930, and Karma Kao (Karma in the Past), from June 15 - August 15, 1932. On November 8, 1930, Narīnat, a ladies' magazine published the first instalment of Khwām Phit Khrang Raek (The First Mistake) in its first issue. But from the publication of Sām Chāi (The Three Men) in 1933 onwards, all "Dokmai Sot" 's novels appeared no longer in instalments, but in book form published privately by the author herself. Like "Sī Būraphā" 's, "Dokmai Sot" 's novels sell well. However, the works of the two contemporary writers, although they seemed

to win popular admiration to a similar degree, were different in vital aspects of literary art, that is in their styles, their views towards life, their choices of subject, etc. The differences can be seen right from their first published novels, which appeared less than a year apart. While Lūk Phūchāi reflected the dream of the Thai youth in the 1920's, Sattrū Khong Chao Lon reflected the cultural conflict between a Western out-look and the old Thai way of life.

Sattrū Khong Chao Lon is a love story of modern Thais in an upper class society. In presenting the story, "Dokmai Sot" took up the theme of Thai students returning from abroad. The main characters, as she created them, obtain their education, at one stage or another, from the Western countries: from France and the United States in particular. Like King Vajiravudh in Huachai Chai Num, "Dokmai Sot" told with comic irony of an attempt to revolt against the traditional blind marriage arranged at the parents' initiative. However, unlike Huachai Chai Num where the attempt was made by the hero, in Sattrū Khong Chao Lon, the heroine started the protest, and carried her revolution on to a similar end as Praphan did. Here, the Western-minded young Thai lady found that, after all, the traditional arrangement was quite safe and sound. The story ends with the forthcoming marriage which is happily anticipated, but which was originally arranged ten years

previously. Like Lūk Phūchāi, Sattrū Khong Chao Lon was warmly welcomed by the readers; and it brought fame and encouragement to the young author to produce more novels, all of which helped to make her name stay firmly as the first and one of the best lady novelists Thailand has had.

### SYNOPSIS

#### Characters:

- Phrayā Bamrungprachākit: a retired officer of high rank in the Ministry of the Interior, a rich nobleman, owner of a teak company.
- Prasong Wibūnsak: a graduate from France, only child of Phrayā Bamrung, aged 28, manager of the Company.
- Prasom: Prasong's assumed name.
- Phrayā Maitriphithak: an ex-ambassador to the United States, Phrayā Bamrung's cousin and friend, owner of a textile factory.
- Mayuri Wibūnsak: only child of Phrayā Maitri, educated in the United States, aged 22, Prasong's cousin and fiancée.
- La-ḡ: a medical doctor, graduated from the United States, Mayuri's steady boyfriend.
- Phayḡm: La-ḡ's sister, Mayuri's friend.
- Ammāt Trī Luang  
Prasoetsamphan: an officer in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ex-secretary to the embassy in London, Prasong's old friend.
- Praphā: Luang Prasoet's sister, Mayuri's friend.



The story:

Prasong and Mayuri have been engaged to be married since they were in their teens. Then Mayuri went to the United States with her father, and was not reminded of the engagement until shortly after she had returned to Bangkok about ten years later. For fear that Prasong might get entangled with Western women, his father reminded him of the engagement when he was about to leave for France for higher education. And Prasong accepted the condition wholeheartedly. Mayuri, being very progressive in her outlook which was developed in a Western culture, refused to marry her fiancé in protest against the system she did not approve of. Prasong, on the other hand, was still in love with her.

Prasong and Mayuri are great-grand children of the same noble family. After her mother had died and her father left for his ambassadorship in the United States, Mayuri was put in the care of Prasong's mother. The two children shared their childhood for a few years until Mayuri was taken to the United States. The two young cousins were very fond of each other then. That is why the engagement was made.

Upon his return from France, where he stayed for about seven years to study commercial art, Prasong assists his father in the

manager's office of the teak company. Phrayā Bamrung resigned shortly after that, in order to give way to his son. Prasong proves himself the right man for the job.

The refusal from Mayuri and his memory of their intimacy in childhood upset Prasong a great deal. And, being told that Mayuri seemed to be in love with another man, Prasong made up his mind to win her back. With the collaboration of his father, it was agreed by the two families that, as Mayuri herself wanted to break the engagement, Prasong was free to marry anyone at his will from that moment on; but Mayuri could not marry anyone without Prasong's consent for six months thence. And, again with the collaboration of his father, Prasong appeared at Phrayā Maitri's residence in Bangkok incognito. It was made known that he had been sent there to answer Phrayā Maitri's request for a man capable of assisting him in his textile factory. There he was known as Prasom, someone whom Phrayā Bamrung had brought up as his own son. Prasom was treated kindly by Phrayā Maitri who considered him as his nephew. It was arranged for him to stay in a house in the same residential compound, where he once lived with his family and Mayuri when Phrayā Maitri was in the United States. Therefore, the two people met again, but in a completely different atmosphere from what it used to be when they were young. Mayuri

found Prason completely unagreeable and uncompromising; he found her to be charming, domineering and spoiled. Mayuri began to dislike him soon after they had been introduced, in spite of her secret discovery that without the weird moustache Prason would be really good looking. In order to punish his behaving too coldly and too reservedly with her, Mayuri developed a secret desire to try to win his admiration; she would find it very satisfying if he fell in love with her so that she could turn him down to hurt his pride.

Since the day Prasong arrived, he knew that Mayuri's boyfriend was La-q, a medical doctor.

A month after Prasong had come to live and work with Phrayā Maitri, Mayuri's secret plan seemed to be a failure because Prasong was very unlikely to fall into her trap. On the contrary, he remained reserved.

The sour relationship between Mayuri and Prasong soon became known to Phrayā Maitri, who found himself more dependent on Prasong's services. Mayuri was asked to be nice to him. But when she asked him to compromise, he hurt her pride by saying that he never allowed any woman to change the course of his life. At the same day, he told Mayuri and her father about a man who committed

suicide because he was turned down by his fiancée's elopement. His comment that if he were the man he would kill both lovers instead of himself, shocked the father and terrified the daughter so much that she could not sleep well all night.

Mayuri met Prasom unexpectedly the following morning, and felt embarrassed to see that he seemed to know what caused her sleeplessness. He, on the other hand, was pleased to see that Mayuri was completely moved by his plan. Mayuri had developed a mixed feeling inscrutable even to herself. Once she asked him to accompany her to a dance, but he refused. And it pleased Prasong to see that his refusal annoyed her.

At the dance, Mayuri was insulted behind her back. In defending her honour, Prasong had to enter into a fight which ended up with the two men, who insulted Mayuri, falling into a ditch in the garden. Mayuri came across the incident, but Prasong explained nothing. Mayuri, leaving La-ø at the dance, returned home alone. She was puzzled, and began to feel afraid that it looked likely that it would be she who might fall in love with Prasom. She felt lonely and helpless. Realizing that La-ø is too hopeless to help her get rid of the fear that began to creep into her mind, Mayuri wished that her fiance might be able to help.

Suddenly one day Prasom held her and kissed wildly. Mayuri was furious and told him to give her an apology on his knees, but Prasom refused. Moreover, he made a piquant criticism against her behaviour; and she was so furious that she could not utter a word to defend herself. Yet his criticism made her think, but she tried to find good excuses for what she had been doing in her social life. However, she came to the conclusion that Prasom talked ill of her because he is her enemy.

On Mayuri's twenty-second birthday, she was surprised to see that one of her guests, Luang Prasoetsamphan, behaved very intimately with Prasom, but knew no detail of their relationship. Only Praphā, Luang Prasoet's younger sister, knew that Prasom and her brother were good old friends.

After all the guests had gone, Prasong gave Mayuri a present. She refused to take it. But after Prasong had left, she took it away and found an old photograph of herself and Prasong taken when they were very young. The photo reminded her more of her fiancé. Mayuri's mind was now perplexed. She was not at all sure if she really loved La-q; but she could not say definitely that she did not. The quandary caused Mayuri another sleepless night. She did not realize that she was fighting a losing battle for her primary intention to win Prasom's admiration and to turn him down as a punishment for his pride.

In order to draw attention from Prasom, Mayuri went out more often, chaperoned by La-φ on nearly every occasion. Thus she became notorious as a most progressive girl. When her father mentioned her behaviour, Mayuri put the blame onto Prasong, her original fiancé'. She accused him of neglecting her, thus she found it unfair for her to have to care for what Prasong might think concerning her going out with La-φ. While they were discussing this, Prasom came in to report that La-φ had come to see Phrayā Maitri.

After her father had gone in to meet La-φ, Mayuri's mind went back to what happened the previous night. In the evening La-φ had taken her out to a cinema, and asked her to marry him. She got out of the predicament by recommending him to ask for her father's consent. That sounded hopeful for La-φ. But on the way home, after a drink, La-φ by accident drove into a bamboo grove and fell into unconsciousness. Prasom arrived at the scene shortly after the accident and took Mayuri home: but he remained reserved. What happened the previous night made Mayuri sink deeper into her predicament.

To his perplexity, but relief, Phrayā Maitri found Mayuri satisfied to know that La-φ was informed of the condition upon which the two families agreed in regard to Mayuri's marriage.

Although Phrayā Maitri was very unlikely to stop Mayuri from marrying the man she loved, it was clear that he did not appreciate La-ḡ's behaviour.

That evening Mayuri and Prasong went out together for the first time. Both were invited to a dinner at Luang Prasoet's house. There Mayuri felt very unhappy to have seen Prasom glow with happiness, talking and dancing with Praphā. Mayuri did not find Luang Prasoet's attention to her very pleasing. After the dinner, they went out to a cinema. To see Prasom busy talking gaily with Praphā and paying very little attention to her was unbearable; Mayuri therefore walked out to telephone La-ḡ asking him to come and take her out.

La-ḡ came in delighted. Mayuri excused herself from the company and went with him. La-ḡ, being sure that Mayuri was in love with him, started talking love. But to his discontent, not only did Mayuri show her repugnance, but she also told him coldly that she did not love him. La-ḡ was disappointed, embarrassed and angry. A wicked plan suddenly occurred to him. He convinced Mayuri tactfully to drop in at his place and tried to rape her. But Prasong arrived in time to interrupt the incident. Mayuri, thus, was taken home safely. She then realized that she needed

his protection, but was inhibited to reveal her feeling because Prasom did not give her any hope. She longed for her original fiancé to turn up hoping he would be able to protect her from loving the man who does not care for her.

Thus the arrangement was made for Phrayā Bamrung and Prasong to come, and Mayuri is delighted to find in the end that Prasom is Prasong in disguise. The two enemies, then, turned out to be a very happy couple.

Here one can see that, in spite of the uniqueness of the novel as a whole, "Dokmai Sot" adopted the conventional device of the disguised suitor. The device was used once by King Rama II when he composed Sang Thong, a popular dance drama. The same device was used again by Rama VI in the composition of Thāo Saen Pom, which was one of his dramas. "Dokmai Sot" chose a domestic ground and built up the story from the current cultural conflict generally felt by those who saw the results of the inter-action between the Western and Thai cultures. As mentioned earlier, like Rama VI in Huačhai Chāi Num to some extent, "Dokmai Sot" fictionalized the problem of Thai students returning from abroad, finding the traditional marriage arrangement for them unbearable, and ending up with a comic irony. But, instead of making the hero protest against the marriage arrangement, as happens in Huačhai Chāi Num, "Dokmai Sot" made the heroine rebel.



Whether it was intentional or not, the shift of the leading role to that of the woman in "Dokmai Sot" 's novels called for an awareness of women's rights and roles in the society, where men's superiority over women was, and still is, generally accepted.

It may be interesting, however, to note here that after the first university had been founded in the kingdom in 1916, women applicants were also enrolled as full time students. And women's suffrage had been recognized in the constitution of 1932<sup>1</sup>, before the first popular elections were actually held in 1933. However, the rights "Dokmai Sot" 's early novels were concerned with were neither educational nor political, for the first had already been granted since the Chulalongkorn period, and the second probably was not felt strongly enough to become a subject of fiction just yet. It was more of the social rights that "Dokmai Sot" brought into attention whether intentionally, spontaneously or unconsciously. Women with an equal right to men in having an opportunity to be educated being given unequal rights to behave in society sounds theoretically illogical, but is practically possible in the Thai society. And, "Dokmai Sot" 's heroines who try to rebel against this social inequality often end in confusion and frustration.

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1. For information about social status of Thai women, see Virginia Thompsona, Thailand: The New Siam (Paragon Book Reprint Corporation: New York, 1967), pp. 679-684.

Mayuri in Sattrū Khong Chao Lon, to some extent, is an example of this kind of rebellion that fails: the theme being more fully developed in later works.

Although Sattrū Khong Chao Lon brought the name of "Dokmai Sot" as a novelist to the reading public, it is by no means considered one of her best works. It is true that "Dokmai Sot", like "Sī Būraphā" and Prince Ā-kāt, had written short stories before putting her hand to a novel. In fact, her first published novel, as it stands, was nothing more than a preparation for and a prelude to her literary future. Through the course of a little over a decade, that is from 1929-1940, during which period "Dokmai Sot" produced approximately one novel a year, her style of writing developed, but not as much as her perception of life and her way of conveying it to the public.

Like Prince Ā-kāt, whose work will be considered next, "Dokmai Sot" knew her subject matter very well. Her choice of subject, however, was restricted. It lay within the old official class of nobility. However, Thai society before world war II was almost entirely an agricultural society where life was simple, and social gaps were not as complex as those in an industrial society. From the fact that "Dokmai Sot" herself was born and bred in the old official class of nobility, when polygamy was still in fashion<sup>1</sup>,

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1. For the atmosphere of "Dokmai Sot" 's family background, see M. L. Boonlua Debyasuvarn, Khwām Samret Lae Khwām Lomleo, Success and Failure (Bangkok: Published for the sixtieth birthday anniversary of the author, 2514), chapter 1.

circumstances gave her a good opportunity to observe human sentiments and the psychology of varieties of people among whom she lived. This opportunity gave "Dokmai Sot" a clear insight about human nature and behaviour which was advantageous for the characterization in her novels. However, while the author was remarkably successful in the portrayal of her female characters, that of the male was normally weak. That is to say, "Dokmai Sot" 's female characters generally look convincing, whereas the male are often too predictable, or too flat to be interesting at all. Her heroines were so skilfully created that they look very impressive; they behave convincingly as if they actually live a human life. The opposite sex, on the other hand, often appear to look god-like in their souls, and programmed machine-like in their manners; they look too rigidly good to maintain their existence in the actual world.

Having been inspired by French books for young people to which she was introduced at the Catholic convent school she attended<sup>1</sup>, the gifted young "Dokmai Sot" therefore started to write her own fundamentally also for young readers. Obviously for psychological reasons, "Dokmai Sot" made her novels delightful while giving hints about moral rules of conduct. Probably because of the fact

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1. See appendix, pp. 356-358 for "Dokmai Sot" 's biography.

that "Dokmai Sot" found fiction a more effective means than a direct form of class-room instruction for young people to learn moral rules of conduct actually applicable to life, one sees that most of her novels convey moral messages and aphorisms with an ethical overtone derived generally from Buddhism. However, "Dokmai Sot" was artistically capable enough not to preach the moral or religious principles, which she believed to be an attribute of the genteel, directly to the readers.

With regard to the moral aspect of "Dokmai Sot" 's novels, some critics might agree with a comment made by Khun Nilawan Pintong<sup>1</sup>, primarily about Phū Dī (The Genteel) shortly after the novel appeared in 1937.

(Actually) "Dokmai Sot" is none but our preacher outside a pulpit ... All "Dokmai Sot" 's novels often contain religious discourses in disguise. But, the stories which were brought in to illustrate the discourses are not from jātaka tales in palm-leaf books or from (those written on) khōi paper; they, on the other hand, are a modern kind of jātaka. The people in these (modern) jātaka are those of our contemporaries ... The difference between "Dokmai Sot"

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1. Khun Nilawan Pintong was one among the third group of the women graduates from the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University, in the class of 1937. She was one of the pioneers who founded the P.E.N. International Thailand Centre. Khun Nilawan has been engaged in many women's activities of various natures: literary, social, as well as political. At the present time she is, among other roles, the Honorary Assistant Secretary to the Thai Centre of the P.E.N. International, and the editor of Satri Sarn, which is the longest-lived leading ladies' magazine.

and a preacher in a pulpit is that the audience need not sit with their hands joined together (in a respectful manner) nor present her with flowers, incense, and candle-sticks ...<sup>1</sup>

However, it is generally agreed by many of the readers that "Dokmai Sot" 's novels can be taken as a pleasant means of giving moral advice to younger readers. "Dokmai Sot" 's primary motive to write for young people can be seen as early as her first published novel. For instance, soon after Mayuri and Prasom had been introduced, they began their uncompromising relationship with an irony with regard to each other's conduct. Seeing that Prasom does not please her as humbly as she expects him to, Mayuri said:

He who behaves politely is likable to all ...  
But, he who is conceited is often despised.

To this remark, Prasong, who also sees that Mayuri is spoiled and tends to be domineering, said:

A lady who behaves gently is likable  
to all.<sup>2</sup>

But giving hints on moral rules of conduct is not the only one of the clearly marked characteristics of "Dokmai Sot" 's novels. In

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1. "Dokmai Sot", Review of Phū Dī, by Nilawan Pintong, Maha Witthayālai, The University, Vol. 16, No. I, (2481), pp. 232-233, reprinted in Sathian Chanthimāthon (ed.), Khon Khian Nangsu, Writers (Bangkok: Mitnara Kanphim, 2513), p. 32.

2. "Dokmai Sot", Sattru Khong Chao Lon (Bangkok: Phrae Phitthayā, 2512), p. 41.

all her novels, Thai customs and ceremonies always have parts to play. In Sattrū Khong Chao Lon, however, this cultural aspect is not yet emphasized. Although its plot develops not very strongly, compared to its contemporaries, such as Lūk Phūchāi, or Lakhon Haeng Chīwit, Sattrū Khong Chao Lon, as one can see, contains essential elements sufficient for it to be called a novel proper. One of the most outstanding aspects of this work lies in the author's attitude toward the role of fiction in society. It is obvious that, to "Dokmai Sot" a novel could be made an effective means of moral instruction for the youth, especially for girls. Therefore, she herself tried, with considerable success, to make it so. This effort can be seen right from her first published novel. In Sattrū Khong Chao Lon, young ladies with a progressive outlook derived from Western civilization are obviously reminded of the danger that could possibly come as a consequence of their rebellious temper. Sattrū Khong Chao Lon is, in fact, a youth novel written in an obvious light-hearted manner. It will be better to regard it as such. It was, after all, her first work. Despite its simple, sometimes melodramatic plot and light-hearted style, it does contain in embryo the more serious features developed in her later work.

The last two years of the 1920's were indeed a remarkable period in the history of modern Thai literature. It was, as

mentioned earlier, the period when the first published novels of three important novelists appeared. It is interesting to see that while these three authors had shared common popularity since their early novels were published, each produced his or her own work of marked individuality. During the time when Sattrū Khong Chao Lon was being serialized, Lakhon Haeng Chiwit, which was Prince Ā-kāt Damkoeng's first novel appeared, but in complete book form. Lakhon Haeng Chiwit, or The Circus of Life, as the author called it in English, is a story of a young Thai who went to England hoping to study law but turned up as a journalist working for an English newspaper. He fell in love with a European girl who was one of his colleagues. They did not get married, however, because the young man, foreseeing several kinds of trouble which might arise from the cultural differences of West and East, returned to Thailand alone, physically ill and economically broke. The story was written by the ex-journalist in retrospect. His experiences in the Western world, his love, his despair, his view towards life make up the content of the novel.

#### SYNOPSIS

##### Characters:

Wisūt Suphalak Na Ayuthaya:	an ex-journalist, son of Phrayā Wisētsuphalak, aged twenty-eight.
Yāi Phrom:	Wisūt's nurse.

Bunhiang:	Yāi Phrəm's grand-niece, Wisūt's playmate.
Phrayā Wisētsuphalak:	an officer of high rank in the Ministry of the Interior, a distinguished nobleman.
Pradit Bunyārat:	Wisūt's class-mate, son of Phrayā Banlūdetamnuai.
Lamchuan:	Pradit's younger sister.
Lieutenant Kamon Chitprīdī:	An English-trained officer, son of Luang Sathiankamonphan - a merchant.
Mr. William W. Hutchinson:	an American traveller.
The Andrews:	the English family Wisūt stayed with at Bexhill-on-Sea.
Lady Moira Dunn:	a journalist, English.
Maria Grey:	a journalist, half English, half Italian.
Mrs. Frindrich:	an English landlady at Rosslyn Hill, Hampstead.
Catherine Miles:	daughter of Pradit's landlady at Putney.
Arnold Barrington:	a journalist.
Edward Bell Benson:	assistant editor of <u>The Times</u> .
Jack Parker:	a journalist.
Odette Macella:	a Parisian.
Yvonne:	a Parisian.
Countess Brinden-Habrugh:	a rich, flirtatious Hungarian.
Prince Wanwaithayākṇ:	an ambassador to Great Britain.
Sir Percival Humphreys:	an antiquary.



- Churai Suwannawit: a Thai girl student in the United States.
- Murdorf: a murderer.
- Nancy Smith: Murdorf's girl-friend, a Cornish woman living in the East End.

The story:

Lakhon Haeng Chīwit is a recollection of past experiences written by a man in retrospect. The man, Wisūt, a son of a distinguished nobleman, a successful scholar and high-ranking officer in the Ministry of the Interior, was a social failure. In spite of his rich experiences cultivated during his journalist days abroad, but with no academic degree, Wisūt found himself nowhere in his home land. He, then, wrote his own story hoping that his fellowmen would share with him those experiences.

Wisūt began his story with his childhood, which, as far as he could recall, was a bitter one. His father, having had several children, failed to make him feel equally treated. Wisūt never felt at home in his home. The only person who sympathized with his hard luck was his ugly looking nurse. The only friend he had then was his nurse's grand-niece; a half Chinese. In the company of Yāi Phrom, Wisūt adapted to her habit of gambling, and became an expert in all possible kinds of gambling. In such a condition Wisūt grew up; he grew more wild and developed for himself an antagonistic attitude towards life.

At Thepsirin, a famous public school for boys, Wisūt met Pradit, and was very much impressed by Pradit's grace and sportsmanship. To Wisūt, Pradit was the most inspiring human being he had ever come across. He began to think kindly of the world. His friendship with Pradit became more intimate as he, by family mischance, came to live in a house nearby.

Pradit had a younger sister, Lamchuan, a good-looking girl of a little over sixteen, who knew much too much about life. Wisūt saw that Lamchuan led a rather unhappy life amidst wealth in spite of her youth. She, too, had become as dear a friend to Wisūt as her brother. Wisūt found his friendship with the two young people indispensable.

Phrayā Wisētsupphalak, his father, died leaving his mother and himself nothing. He felt disgusted by the marriage system practised in Thailand where women were completely subjected to men's will. He began to develop cynicism in relation to married life. Having realized the situation in which he was living, and having foreseen his unpromising future, Wisūt tried not to fall in love with Lamchuan.

Pradit won a scholarship and went to England to study mechanical engineering. Wisūt clung more to Lamchuan as she was the

only friend he had left. But, unluckily as he thought it was, he was put aside soon after Lieutenant Kamon had returned from England and become a constant guest most welcomed by the whole family, and Lamchuan was no exception. Her marriage with Kamon completely cut Wisūt off from her, but his friendship with Pradit remained undisturbed.

Several different reasons made Wisūt decide to go abroad, and his destination was England. After persuading his eldest brother to give him the money his grand-father left for him, Wisūt took off.

Having left all that made him develop a pessimistic outlook towards life, and feeling the gentle night air on the deck of the ocean-liner in which he was travelling, his mind became more at peace; Wisūt began to feel a new sense of freedom. Now, he had come to realize how much pride a man can possibly feel to be able to stand on his own feet. He began to look back at his past with more understanding, and at his future with much hope and courage. He looked forward to living in a better place, and leading a better life in the West, which, to him, was a paradise on earth. However, Wisūt found his exciting experiences outside Thailand rather disgusting whenever the boat stopped at sea ports on the way across the oceans. The only person he felt at home with was an American traveller. Wisūt spent his first days in

Europe with him. However, he began to feel disillusioned with the reality he saw of Europe as soon as he arrived in Marseilles.

In England it was arranged for him to live with the Andrews, an English family at Bexhill-on-Sea. There he was introduced to music and literature. The informal education he obtained while living with the family helped him to develop a new character, a young man of culture.

At Bexhill, Wisūt was introduced to two ladies, Lady Moira Dunn and Maria Grey, both of whom partly changed the whole course of his life. The ladies were journalists working for The Times. They encouraged him to take up journalism instead of law, which he previously planned to take. He was encouraged to write a novel as well. He wrote two closely related works, the first of which was Lakhon Haeng Chīwit, The Circus of Life.

Maria and Wisūt fell in love during their stay at Bexhill, but Lady Moira Dunn warned Wisūt not to make the affair serious. She told him briefly of a tragic case of an English girl marrying an Indian prince. This tragedy was very penetrating to Wisūt; it left him in despair and hesitation. Maria and Wisūt had come to agree, very much against their will, that they would not make their love affair an obstacle if either of them would like to change their mind.

Not long after the two ladies had left, Wisūt was given a surprise: a cheque was sent to him for an article he wrote, which was to be published in The Times. Now the time when he had to start his formal education in London had also come. The Andrews helped him, as they always did, to find a family in Hampstead where he would stay while studying law. Wisūt came to London hoping to see Pradit again. But, to his great surprise, Pradit had changed so much and become so unfriendly that Wisūt found himself happier alone than in Pradit's company. And, in fact, he was far from being happy then. He could not find Maria at the address she gave him either. London, to Wisūt, was a rather disappointing place. Besides having had no friends there, the condition of the house at Hampstead was as poor as the calibre of the people who lived in it. A week after he had come to London, Wisūt returned to Bexhill. Captain Andrew came with him to London, and found him better lodgings. Eventually, Wisūt was admitted to a London Law School at the Middle Temple.

As Wisūt did not find London an attractive place, nor his tutor inspiring, he spent much of his time writing articles and short stories. With the help of Captain Andrew, his works seemed to be welcomed by all kinds of periodicals. He, thus, could earn a little from his writing while studying law.

One day, to his delightful surprise, Wisūt was invited to join the London Press Club. At the dinner arranged to celebrate Mr. Edward Bell Benson's birthday, Wisūt was introduced to the members of the Club. Here he met Maria again. They both saw that their love remained unchanged. By this time, Wisūt was known as "Bobbie", a nick-name Maria gave him when they met at Bexhill, and which name Wisūt used for his writing.

Having been fascinated by journalism, Wisūt left law completely, and began his career as a full time journalist working with The Times. He left the lodgings in Fulham for a flat at Earl's Court where he shared with his colleague, Arnold Barrington.

The nature of his job as a reporter provided him with opportunities to have first hand experiences of life. One case he learnt about in the East End of London made him think that love is a universal feeling, and virtue a universal property; both independent of all kinds of social rules.

Later, Bobbie was sent with Arnold to Paris on business. It was the time when France was caught up in a severe economic crisis. Here, Wisūt not only found his work exciting, Paris fascinating as a centre of civilization and beauty, but also a city of romance. He learnt, while staying in Paris, that Catherine Miles, Pradit's girl-friend had married his colleague, Jack Parker. Here too, Maria and Lady Moira Dunn found, by

accident, that "Bobbie" had kept Odette, a sweet Parisian, with him at home. But, Wisūt reminded them of the agreement they made at Bexhill.

Wisūt met the two ladies again on his way to Monte Carlo. He realized, with no doubt, that Maria was still very much in love with him, and so was he with her; Odette meant nothing serious. But, business made the two lovers part again; Wisūt had to join Mr. Benson in his business visits to Europe for over a year.

As a secretary to an assistant editor of The Times, "Bobbie" had a good opportunity not only to meet several outstanding people of the time, but also to visit a good many famous places in the southern part of Europe. In Monte Carlo, "Bobbie" became entangled with a flirtatious Hungarian countess. However, the affair did not last very long, because Mr. Benson had to leave for Geneva and other big cities in other parts of Europe on business. Unfortunately, "Bobbie" fell ill as soon as they arrived in Geneva, and thus, he missed one of the most world-watched events, where the three Great Powers met in the Congress of the League of Nations. However, after recovering, he accompanied Mr. Benson to every country in Europe. This long journey helped to widen Wisūt's outlook on life, and his knowledge of the world at large increased.

On his returning to London, "Bobbie" noticed that Maria and Arnold had become perceptibly intimate. His heart sank in despair. He, then, found music his good company. In London he worked as a critic, a first-nighter, and wrote about social events. A few months later, he had a car accident serious enough to have to be in hospital for over a month, during which period he became more convinced that Maria and Arnold were in love. His health became worse physically as well as psychologically. Once again, he began to find life boring, and London an unbearable place to live in. While he was thinking of leaving England for the United States, and trying to stay away from Maria and Arnold, he was called by Prince Wanwaithayākṇ, a new Thai ambassador to Great Britain. He was informed that His Majesty King Prajadhipok would give him a scholarship if he would like to go further with formal studies, and that the prince would think that George Town University in America was a good place for him to study in the field of Foreign Service.

A month later, before Wisūt set off for the United States, he learnt from Maria herself that she loved no-one, but him alone. Wisūt, however, left England with his tormented heart.

In the boat across the Atlantic, Wisūt became acquainted with Sir Percival Humphreys, a famous antiquary, and his family.



Wisut began his new life, first, as an external student at Harvard, where he took up summer courses in literature and American history. At the Thai embassy, he met Churai, a charming young Thai student admired by all who came across her. They became acquainted, but no more than friends.

At George Town University, Wisūt studied so hard that his eye-sight failed badly. After he recovered from a major operation, Sir Percival took him from the hospital to his house in New York City. In spite of the good care the family had taken of him, his eyes were not getting well enough to enable him to resume his studies at the university. Wisūt, therefore, spent the rest of his time in the United States travelling with Sir Percival and helping him in designing for advertisements.

Maria was to be sent to America. The Humphreys agreed to invite her to be their guest on condition that Wisūt must not change his mind back to marry her, as they all agreed that as Wisūt's future looked quite unpromising, their inter-marriage would not only make life difficult for themselves, but also for the children who were to be born. Thus, the two lovers met again, but only to remind themselves that their marriage was impossible in spite of their hearts clinging to one another.

Wisūt decided to return to Thailand. And, as Sir Percival, his daughter Polly and Maria had to go East on business, they all took the same boat. During this last trip Wisūt visited Hawaii, Japan and China, the last of which he went to alone with Maria, leaving Sir Percival and his daughter in Japan. In China, Wisūt met Arnold and Jack, and he joined them once again in their journalistic mission. But his health failed again. Sir Percival and his daughter came, but had to leave for India while Wisūt was still in hospital in Shanghai. After his recovery, Wisūt and Maria were besought to act as the best man and bridesmaid at Arnold's wedding. Their last day finally came when Maria was sent back to New York. Two days after seeing her off at Shanghai, Wisūt took a boat back to Thailand.

After six years in the world outside, among different kinds of people kinder than those in his own family and neighbours, Wisūt had developed a more adaptable personality. He felt more at home in the family and social surrounding alien to him during his childhood and adolescence. However, while leaving Maria nearly broke his lonely heart, since he had no written certificate to prove an academic qualification, his rich experiences meant nothing to the bureaucratic system whereby Thailand was operated. While his brothers and sisters enjoyed their social success, Wisūt found no such thing for himself in the society he had hoped to live for. Wisūt ended

his story at the death of Lieutenant Kamon. Lamchuan became a widow, and he himself a man of no definite future plan but hoping to forget his rich but sad past and to try to begin a better life.

Unlike "Sī Būraphā" or "Dokmai Sot", both of whom set their novels in Thailand, Prince A-kāt set the main part of the story abroad, and made use of an international group of characters. Not least for this reason, the story of Wisūt was, and still is, specially attractive to the reading public; to those in the 1920's who were concerned with literary creation, this novel possessed an unparalleled novelty and uniqueness. Soon after it had appeared, one critic wrote the following comment about Lakhon Haeng Chīwit.

... It is a Thai story written with a unique plot. No other Thais have ever written a story of this kind before. It is the first of its sort which ever appeared in the history of our Thai literature ... It is the most touching love story of a Thai and a foreigner ... <sup>1</sup>

In the following volume of the same magazine, in which at the same time Sattrū Khong Chao Lon was being serialized, the same critic wrote another comment about Lakhon Haeng Chīwit.

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1. Wīnā, "Antawathī", Thai Khasem, Vol. 6, No. 4, (August 15, 2472), pp. 529-530.

... Its style reaches the peak which no one else has ever attained. This novel is to become a masterpiece which will lead the readers into reading stories written by us, and from which novel we can learn to improve our own ... <sup>1</sup>

In fact, the novel virtually proved itself to be a masterpiece as it was followed by other novelists both of Prince Ā-kāt's generation, such as "Sī Būraphā" himself, and of the younger ones. The works written with such ideas and themes are sufficiently substantial to make up a genre of exotic novels in Thailand.

In presenting the story of Wisūt, Prince Ā-kāt used a formal realistic method which was well-known in the West, but still foreign to the general reading public in Thailand. As a result, the writer was accused of making a scandal about his own family.

Wisūt's father, Phrayā Wisētsupphalak, was mistaken as H.R.H. Prince Raphiphatthanasak (Krom Luang Rajburidirekrit), Prince Ā-kāt's father, who was a son of King Chulalongkorn, a brother of King Vajiravudh and King Prajadhipok.<sup>2</sup> In the novel, Phrayā Wisēt appears to be impartial in distributing affection and justice among his several children. Wisūt, too, was, and often is, mistaken as Prince Ā-kāt himself. Hence, the accusations the author faced were that he wrote to blame his own parents, to set himself against the values of respect which were established and cherished, and to

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1. Winā, *ibid.*, Vol. 6, No. 5, (September 15, 2472), p. 700. Despite this comment Prince Ā-kāt did not belong to any group or "school" of writers.

2. Damrong Rajanubhab (ed.), *Rāchchasaḥakunlawong, Royal Family*, (Bangkok: Sophonphatthanakon, 2470), pp. 72, 75, 80 and 94.

destroy the reputation and honour of the dead for whom he should have felt grateful.<sup>1</sup> Paradoxically though, while there were people who, mistaking the novel for a true story, felt angry with the author for writing such a story, there also were people who, mistaking the novel for a true story, felt sympathetic with the author who led such a bitter life as it was depicted in the novel. The former resented his writing, whereas the latter encouraged him to forget his misfortune and to start a better future.<sup>2</sup> The author took these accusations and "consolations, at any rate, seriously enough to write a long preface for his second novel, Phiu Lường Phiu Khào (Yellow Skin, White Skin). This novel actually is a development and extension of a part from the first. In this preface, Prince Ā-kāt explained his craftsmanship in making his work of fiction, and emphasized that Lakhon Haeng Chīwit is not a factual story, but only a fictional one. And fiction, he said, "is merely an entertainment created from the imagination ...".<sup>3</sup> And, in creating Lakhon Haeng Chīwit, the author explained, he made it as near to reality as he possibly could.<sup>4</sup> As this realistic method of

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1. Ā-kātdamkoeng, Prince, Phiu Lường Phiu Khào (Bangkok: Phrāe Phitthayā, 2514), p. ๗.

2. Ibid., pp. ๗ - ๘.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

presentation was not familiar to many Thai readers, his work functioned too effectively for them to be able to differentiate fiction from fact, and vice versa.

In making Lakhon Haeng Chīwit as near to reality as he could, Prince Ā-kāt not only adopted actual place-names for his setting, but also real names of actual people well-known to his readers for some of his characters, such as Prince Wanwaithayākṇ, a Thai ambassador to Great Britain, who was, and still is, a well-known scholar and diplomat. The combination of well-known, living people and fictional characters can very well lead into confusion those readers who look at the novel only superficially.

Of all the literary heroes born during 1928-1929, Wisūt has lived the longest. His aspiration to become a "good novelist" in his own country, his experiences and ideal in relation to journalism were, and still are, inspiring to the Thai youth who would aspire to take up writing or journalism, in order to follow the road Wisūt has taken. Wisūt's failure in love tends to create sympathy among those who agree that love is a feeling limited to no boundary. His misfortune, which he seems to be born to carry, possibly until the end of his life, seems to gain sympathy from those who actually live under similar difficulties. At any rate, Wisūt's experiences

and sentiments have been shared by his readers for one reason or another since he first appeared.

Lakhon Haeng Chīwit has indeed won a great admiration from the reading public since 1929. The novel touches on several psychological aspects of human nature such as love, despair, ambition, etc., and the effect it gives is intense. Prince Ā-kāt not only knew his subject matter well but he also knew how to fictionalize it. Once when the author was a young man of 19, as a translator and literary critic, he wrote the following passage which was published in one of the leading magazines of the time:

... Normally, an entertaining story must be a long one. (This means at some length.) It is mainly because short stories, due to their paucity of content, can hardly satisfy our emotional demands ... <sup>1</sup>

... a really entertaining story must possess all these five elements: melancholy, love, hatred, knowledge and adventure ... <sup>2</sup>

Therefore, while writing his own novel, about five years later, Prince Ā-kāt, after having had first hand experience of life abroad, blended those elements together; one can see that the work functions effectively. Furthermore, the novel depicts

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1. "Nū Āe", "Patchim Likhit", Sap Thai, Vol. 4, Pt. 1, (August, 2467), p. 175.

2. Ibid., p. 176.

Wisūt's experiences in foreign lands, the names of which sounded familiar to the public, but, their inhabitants, their ways of life, thoughts, and sentiments were almost entirely unknown to any Thais, thus, it gave lively answers to those who were curious to know about peoples in the world outside their own country.

About Lakhon Haeng Chiwit, "Sī Būraphā", his classmate and contemporary, wrote that it was the first book of that size he read all the way through from beginning to end, and found the novel remarkable. This remark, of course, was meant to be a compliment. It was one of the most sensational works of a year, he went on. He found that the theme of unattainability of love in Prince Ā-kāt's work was a new aspect in modern prose fiction; and, that it made a fictional story impressively moving.<sup>1</sup> Eight years later, when he presented a new novel, Khāng Lang Phāp, "Sī Būraphā" adopted precisely the same theme, that is the unattainability of love. Like Prince Ā-kāt, he set the novel abroad; in a single foreign country - Japan. Khāng Lang Phāp became one of "Sī Būraphā" 's most famous works. At any rate, Khāng Lang Phāp produced a different effect from Lakhon Haeng Chiwit, in that it was, and still is, often regarded as fiction "carefully composed from

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1. "Sī Būraphā", "Chīwit Mōm Chao Ā-kātdamkoeng Nai Lōk Nangsa, Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng in the World of Letters", Phū Nam (The Leader), May 28, 2475, republished in addition to Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng, Khrōp Chakkrawān (Bangkok: Phraē Phitthayā, 2505), pp. 233-235.



the beautiful imagination of a novelist"<sup>1</sup>. Lakhon Haeng Chīwit, on the other hand, created a classic controversy. Some readers were, and still are, confronting the question of whether the novel is a literary self-portrait of the artist, or a piece of fictional reality created solely from the imagination of the artist himself. To clarify the controversy, Prince Ā-kāt once wrote:

... Please understand that Lakhon Haeng Chīwit is not a factual story. It is not Prince Ā-kāt's biography. But, the reason why I wrote a story of such a man of hard luck and journalism abroad is because those are the only circles of life I have seen and known best ...<sup>2</sup>

In spite of the explanation, the controversy goes on. The novel puzzles its readers not only because the author mixed fact with fiction in the characterization, but also because Wisūt's life resembled Prince Ā-kāt's in the aspects well-known to the general public.

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1. "Sī Būraphā", Review of Khāng Lang Phāp by Somchit Siksamat, Mahā Witthayālai, The University, Vol. 16, No. 5 (2481), p. 1124.

2. Ā-kātdamkoeng, Phiu Lūang Phiu Khāo, p. ๓.

## Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng

## Wisūt Supphalak

a neglected son of a  
big family,

his father is a scholar  
of law,

comes to Thepsirin after  
Assumption School,

goes to England hoping  
to study law,

then, leaves for the  
United States,

being acquainted with  
Maria Vanzini,

returns to Thailand  
unmarried.

a neglected son of a  
big family,

his father is a scholar  
of law,

comes to Thepsirin after  
Assumption School,

goes to England hoping  
to study law,

then, leaves for the  
United States,

being in love with  
Maria Grey,

returns to Thailand  
unmarried.

Whereas the above information is about all the general readers know of the author's personal life, they know that of Wisūt in much more complete detail. Therefore, it is natural that some of those who know of Prince Ā-kāt to a limited extent unconsciously fill in the missing details in his life with Wisūt's experiences, sentiments, and outlook depicted in the novel. But, in fact, there are many differences in the identities of the creator and the created. Prince Ā-kāt was twenty-four when he created Wisūt; Wisūt was twenty-eight when he wrote Lakhon Haeng Chīwit. Prince Raphī was a member of the royal family; Phrayā Wisēt - the nobility; Prince Raphī was Minister of Justice and of Agriculture, Phrayā Wisēt - a high ranking officer in the Ministry

of the Interior. Prince Ā-kāt was straightforward; Wisūt - humble, and so on.

In a tribute to the memory of Prince Ā-kāt, which "Sī Būraphā" wrote shortly after he had learned of his sudden death, in May 1932, he said:

... Several people believe that Lakhon Haeng Chīwit is the author's autobiography. However, both those who believe that it is a true story, and others that it is not are equally wrong ... nearly all good writers imitate the lives of actual people as their model while writing novels ... But, in imitating such lives as exist in the model, such a writer normally will never imitate the whole life of a single individual. He will select parts of the lives of several individuals which he uses to mould his characters ... Maria Vanzini, to whom Prince Ā-kāt dedicated the novel, and Maria Grey are not the same person. But, Maria Vanzini can be an inspiration for the creation of Maria Grey ...

Therefore, concluded "Sī Būraphā", those who are acquainted with an author may see that some of his characters are similar to, or resemble actual people (who they also know). That is a technique which a novelist uses in order to make his characters life-like, wonderful and impressive. And, he regarded Lakhon Haeng Chīwit as a combination of actuality and imagination.<sup>2</sup>

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1. "Sī Būraphā", "Chīwit Məm Chao Ā-kātdamkoeng Nai Lōk Nangsu", pp. 231-232.

2. Ibid.

Here, "Sī Būraphā" sounded more convincing than Prince Ā-kāt himself who emphasized that the novel was not a factual story but simply a work of fiction created from his imagination.<sup>1</sup> However, one would find oneself standing on uncertain ground to take Wisūt either as a self-portrait of the author, or an ideal person existing only in the author's imagination. By the same token, one would stand on equally uncertain ground if one regarded Lakhon Haeng Chīwit either as the reflection in a mirror of Prince Ā-kāt's life, or as a pure imaginative work of fiction. It would be more meaningful, therefore, to look at Lakhon Haeng Chīwit as a piece of a fictional reality created from the author's own experiences, sentiments and points of view, which were rearranged subjectively by the author himself.

Looking at the first published novels of "Sī Būraphā", "Dokmai Sot" and Prince Ā-kāt, in juxtaposition, one can see clearly that each appears with marked individuality. First of all, we have a journalist writing a story of a successful self-made man, who rose from nothing up to a high position in the officialdom of the civil service. Then, we have a lady member of the old official class of the nobility and with royal connections writing about a domestic problem which comes from a cultural conflict between a Western

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1. Ā-kātdamkoeng, Phiu Luang Phiu Khāo, p. ၇၅.

outlook and the old Thai way of life. Lastly, we have a member of the Royal family, an officer in the civil service, writing about the life of a journalist in the world at large. "Sī Būraphā", as one can see, was concerned with internal social problems, "Dokmai Sot" with domestic, whereas Prince Ā-kāt turned to more universal ones. "Sī Būraphā" looked into Thai society as it was, and saw opportunities open for an ambitious, and virtuous but poor student to become someone at the top.

"Dokmai Sot" showed her awareness of the cultural changes which Thailand had been undergoing. Prince Ā-kāt, on the other hand, looked from abroad back to his home-land in relation to the world outside and discovered its reality in aspects which his contemporaries were unaware of.

In Phiu Luang Phiu Khaō Wisut wrote of his worries about what had been going on in Thailand.

... I always aspire to see Siam progress into being an equal to other civilized nations. I always ask myself why our country remains where she is now, and when (the people) will be awake ... awake from the delusion that we all are happy. There is no war in our country. The farangs are unable to annoy us. We care for no other countries. To be poor or to be rich is not a question. Therefore, after leaving school, all we want is to be an officer in the civil service. Another livelihood in Thailand could hardly be conceived of ...<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ā-kātdamkoeng, Phiu Luang Phiu Khaō, pp. 11-12.

... We probably are too comfortable to pay any attention to what is going on in the world outside. Poor Dear Siam, when shall we wake up? ...<sup>1</sup>

Two years before Wisūt complained about the delusion in which he saw Siam was then living, Mānōt Raksamākhom was enjoying happiness and success in his official title of Phra Wisutt-hisatthayān. He held the rank of judge and was a Thai barrister with a Doctorate in Law from France, all of which elements, contributing to his enjoyment, were the results of his working hard and his being virtuous. Phra Wisut indeed represents the new Thai who aspired to his personal success and would be satisfied with life at that. His life-time is spent in the struggle to achieve what he believes to be a mark of success. Once he gets what he believes to be the material symbols of happiness, he will care for nothing or no-one else, but be in peace with the world. "Sī Būraphā" is indeed a good example of such a kind of person. After all the dark clouds created by Khīrī and Ā-phā had been cleared away from Phra Wisut's life, and after his daughter had been brought to him,

Phra Wisut felt that the house of the Raksamākhoms sounded much more cheerful. The sound of songs and of the piano from Rakam's room which could always be heard in the evening took away his tiredness as soon as he returned from the office. Servants in the house,

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1. Ibid., p. 13.

men and women alike, worked more cheerfully and actively than before. Phra Wisut felt that his daughter had brought a sign of grace to the house; she is his pride, and the peak of his happiness.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, Rakam has not reached the supreme height of his happiness just yet because there still is Ramphai who is to be his sweet and delightful bride. To him, Ramphai was born at the Heaven's command to compensate for his first but impossible love. During his honeymoon, where the story ended, "Sī Būraphā" told the readers that Phra Wisut found that his new love

... made him feel wonderfully happy as if being reborn into a new life. He was confident that Heaven is always looking after those who should be rewarded!<sup>2</sup>

Because this is how the story ends, one can see that the young "Sī Būraphā" looked at success and the happiness of an individual human being with the eyes of an idealistic absolutist, who saw life only from the best angles of the society in which he lived. His social ideas as expressed in his first novel are obviously individualistic, whereas those of Prince Ā-kāt's are

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1. "Sī Būraphā", Lūk Phūchāi, pp. 483-484.

2. Ibid., p. 522.

more universal. The following is a translation of one part of the conversation between Lady Moira Dunn and Wisūt at Bexhill-on-Sea.

"... Press and the nation are identical. Journalists who are to be successful and famous must be those who either love or hate their nations very strongly. But, you must understand, Mr. Wisūt, that the so-called unpatriotic might be so only from our point of view, or from personal opinion. They themselves might think that they love their nations, a kind of love which is generally called automatic ...

... A journalist cannot think one thought and write the other. Even if he is able to do so, he will not do it ..." <sup>1</sup>

To Wisūt, the society which turned Mānōt into Phra Wisutt-hisatthayān looked unpromising for him. His decision not to marry the woman he loved was partly determined by his feeling of uncertainty in regard to his future in Thailand where he saw little hope for a poor man with no academic degree to live as a writer of fiction or as a journalist. The conversation between the two lovers at Bexhill tells how Wisūt looked at life in relation to his home-land.

"Bobbie, tell me the truth", asked my dear friend,  
 "Have you got any ambition at all, an ambition to do something big so that the world could see, an ambition to make yourself famous?"

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1. Ā-kātdamkoeng, Lakhon Haeng Chīwit, pp. 178-179.



"Yes, Maria", I answered, holding her hands tight in mine. "I have much ambition. I aspire to become a good novelist for Thailand. My country is poor. I am poor. I wish to earn enough for reasonable living by writing. But, in Thailand, it is very difficult, (because) no-one enjoys reading. One often makes a loss on one's writing because of the lack of buyers."

"Why don't you become a novelist in Europe or America then?"

"Here, there is much competition in writing", I answered, "and I don't think I know the language well enough to write like English or American novelists. I have an ambition to write something so good, such as no-one has ever done before, and be the first to write such a kind of story ... the life of a novelist in Thailand is very risky, Maria. If one will take up writing fiction seriously (for a living), it is very likely that one will have to live dying of hunger more than of anything else."

"Bobbie, haven't you ever realized that to be successful, no matter what we do, there often are a hundred thousand obstacles and dangers to block our way? To keep peace in the country, we have to get rid of thieves; and to get rid of thieves is so very dangerous for detectives, policemen and ourselves. Whatever we do, we have to go through dangers. I want you to become important in the field to which you aspire ... I believe that you are good ... good for me, and good for the world."<sup>1</sup>

In spite of the contrary arguments put forward by Maria, Wisūt still held to his firm belief in the impossibility of marriage between them. He had other reasons.

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1. Ibid., pp. 197-198 and 200-201.

I had been trying to suppress the aberration of my sentiment as I realized that I had no rights. Maria, on the other hand, had been trying to show the world that we were in love as she saw that true love is nothing to be ashamed of ...

"Bobbie, darling, why haven't we got the right?", she asked, putting her arms around me. "Why is it impossible for us to love each other?"

"There are a hundred thousand reasons, Maria", I answered, also putting my arms around her. "The important reason is that you are a European living in a cold climate, and having one system of cultural values. I am a Thai living in a very warm climate, and having another system ... very much different from what you have here. You wouldn't be able to get along with my relatives and friends. And, I am poor, Maria. From where then can you find happiness for yourself?"<sup>1</sup>

Years passed, but their love did not change, Wisūt, by this time, being a sick man, decided to return home.

"Bobbie", she asked, "please take me to Thailand ... to our home, will you? We will die together there."

My eyes fixed upon the bare wall in front of us, with a handkerchief I dried my tears which kept running constantly.

"No, Maria, my dearest", I tried to speak, "I am a poor man ... There is no light at all in my future. I cannot let you share my distress ..!"<sup>2</sup>

Having considered the reasons behind Wisūt's determination not to marry a European, one can see that they echo Praphan's

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1. Ibid.<sup>1</sup>, pp. 202-203.

2. Ā-kātdamkoeng, Phiu Lüang Phiu Khao, pp. 198-199.

attitude towards inter-marriage, in King Vajiravudh's Hua<sup>v</sup>chai

Chai Num. The following is an extract in translation from Praphan's letter to Prasōēt, who is still in England.

As we are good friends, may I give you sincerely one word of advice? If you are thinking of having a farang wife, you'd better forget about the idea. ... Farang ladies, who would leave their home country, relatives and friends for a life with Thai husbands in our country, would surely expect something in return. But, after they have come, they have to live in a very warm climate and poor housing condition. They have to live with people with whom they cannot communicate, and have very different habits. There is not enough money to live on. There are no other entertainments except the cinema ... Having to go through all this, no matter how angelic their temperaments might be, they would not be able to endure for long ...<sup>1</sup>

Here one can see that as far as the problem of inter-marriage was concerned, Praphan and Wisūt were agreed. For similar reasons, it seems, neither of them married their European girl-friends.

Having come into contact with the greater world outside and viewed Thailand from abroad, Prince Ā-kāt, like King Vajiravudh, developed comparative thinking about his home-land. Looking home-ward, Prince Ā-kāt saw, as mentioned earlier, its reality in the aspects of which his contemporaries were unaware, whose outlook towards life was largely limited within the social environment in

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1. "Rām Chitti", Hua<sup>v</sup>chai Chai Num, p. 20; letter no. 7.

which they were born, developed and wrote. An imaginative writer, no matter how broad his imaginative capacity could be, is subject, in a great proportion, to his total environment. And, the differences in their experiences make the works of one individual writer differ from another. From the individual differences among "Sī Būraphā", "Dokmai Sot" and Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng, we have in the early period three different kinds of novels which show three trends of development in fiction. From there, there are novelists who create their work from the belief, whether they are conscious about it or not, in social individualism; there are novelists who are keen on building their fictional stories on domestic problems; and there are novelists who prefer exoticism.

## CHAPTER VIII

## The Reading Public and the Novelists

Unlike traditional Thai poetry, which is composed primarily for a listening audience, or drama for a watching one, the novel is written practically for a reading public. The emergence of the novel, therefore, means that a reading public should exist. However, like any form of artistic creation, the success or failure of a novel is subject to the attitude as well as the taste of its audience.

In 1886, a Thai novel was attempted but had to remain unfinished. Then during the 1920's several Thais emerged as novelists; and, from the 1960's a few Thais have even been able to use the writing of novels as a means of living.

This changing face of reality concerning Thai literature will not be a matter of surprise when one looks back through its past history once again. Then one may agree that there was no such thing which could be termed a "reading public" in Thailand before the 1860's, the period during which the Journal of the Siamese Embassy to London in 1857, Chindā Manī, Sāmkok, etc. were published for the first time by Dr. D. B. Bradley. For the absence of the reading

public prior to the 1860's, two possible explanations can be given. First, books were scarce before printing technology was introduced; secondly, as education was a privilege generally given to the exceptional few, only a small number of the Thai people could read. The latter is also one of the reasons why traditional Thai literature had often been created with a great emphasis on its poetic quality, the quality which would delight its listening audience.

As mentioned earlier, the utilization of printing technology speeded up book production, consequently a reading public was formed, and in due course it enlarged in size. The fact that Dr. D. B. Bradley and Dr. S. J. Smith played a much more important role in publication, journalism and the book trade than in their original religious missions showed that the reading public in Thailand, once formed, soon became encouraging from the commercial point of view. However, the reading public for traditional Thai literature, which was printed first by the two missionaries, was different from that of the modern one, not only in its size but also in its attitude and character.

When Prince Phichitprīchākṇ began to tell a fictional story in a novel form in 1886, the reaction from the readers was so seriously negative that the story was consequently brought to an end only at its outset. But, in 1929, when Sattrū Khong Chao Lon

appeared in a magazine in serial form, it brought fame and encouragement to its author so much so that she produced ten more novels, and she is remembered and admired as one of the best novelists Thailand has had. From the latter part of the 1920's onwards the novel has increasingly become a dominant aspect of modern fiction. The causes of so much change in the reading public during the interval of forty-three years, that is from the time of "Sanuk Nuk," Prince Phichit's unfinished novel, to that of Sattrū Khong Chao Lon, are significant in relation to the emergence of this new form of prose fiction, and they are discussed in chapter IX.

In spite of the average literacy of 71% among the population of ten years of age and over in 1960<sup>1</sup>, the size of the reading public in Thailand looked relatively small even in 1972. For the population of 38.6 million<sup>2</sup>, there are only twelve daily newspapers in Thai issued in the Capital City of Bangkok and Thonburi, and none elsewhere in the country.<sup>3</sup> It is said, with no written

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1. Central Statistical Office, Thailand Population Census: 1960, "Whole Kingdom", Bangkok, Thailand, 1962, Table 10, page 20, quoted in Ralph Thomlinson, Thailand's Population: Facts, Trends, Problems and Policies (Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich Press, 2514), p. 35.

2. The most recent population census was done in Thailand in April 1970. The figures of the report of the National Statistical Office in Bangkok show that the total population in 1970 was 34,152,000. These figures are only preliminary, and there is a possibility that the actual population in 1970 could be nearly two million more. Here, the writer takes the estimated number of 36.2 million in 1970, which is reported by the Population Reference Bureau, Washington, D.C. By using the 3.3% of the annual per cent growth, the estimated population in 1972 comes to 38.6 million. See Thomlinson, op. cit., pp. 22 and 23.

3. As of February 1972. Owing to temporary closures the number is variable.

evidence, however, that the best-selling newspaper sells over 300,000 copies daily, and one which does not sell very well, though the rate of sale has been constant for the past twenty years, sells only 10,000.<sup>1</sup> Since a more accurate figure is difficult to obtain, these figures will be used as an assumption. Assuming that in order to be able to survive, a newspaper must sell approximately 10,000 copies daily, then eleven newspapers will sell 110,000 copies. By adding 300,000 copies of the best-seller sold, the total circulation will come to 410,000. While this result plausibly gives an estimated number of newspapers bought daily, it does not mean that only 410,000 people read daily.

Unlike in England where each copy of a newspaper bought is read normally by one person or two, in Thailand a copy of a newspaper is normally read by more than the whole family. In fact, one copy of a newspaper or other kind of periodical can be read by as many people as the number of customers of a coffee-shop. It has become a general practice in Thailand, in the City of Bangkok and Thonburi as well as in provincial towns, that coffee-shops, restaurants, beauty salons, dress-making parlours and barber-shops keep a copy or two of newspapers and/or magazines for their customers to

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1. The writer obtained this information from Thai journalistic sources in Bangkok.



read while taking their service.<sup>1</sup> It is said, again with no written evidence, that the best-selling magazine in Thailand at the present time sells over 200,000 copies weekly. In 1972 there is a record of fifty-eight weekly magazines, twenty fortnightlies, one hundred and forty monthlies, thirty-seven quarterlies, eight bi-annuals and a miscellany of about fifty-five periodicals which come out once every two, three, four or five days, two months, and four months for circulation. All these periodicals have been issued in Bangkok and Thonburi. But there also is a record of fifteen magazines which come out once every ten days, ten monthly magazines, and six kinds of periodicals which come out once every two or three months, all of which have been issued in provincial towns. This brings the total number of Thai periodicals issued in Thailand to 349 in 1972. The number here, however, does not include periodicals in Chinese and English issued in the country.<sup>2</sup> As far as the Thai periodicals on the whole are concerned, no record of circulation figures is available yet.

Looking back at the estimated number of the Thai newspapers plausibly circulated daily in 1972, one may build an assumption

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1. The writer was told by an editor of one of the leading ladies' magazines that the majority of the popular magazine-buyers are beauty-salons, dress-making parlours, and the like.

2. There are eleven daily newspapers in Chinese and four in English, and thirteen other periodicals in Chinese and eleven in English issued in the City of Bangkok and Thonburi. All these figures appear in the record of February 1972.

that, if one copy of a newspaper bought is read by approximately five persons, 410,000 copies sold can be read by 2,050,000 persons. Thus, it looks as if one in every nineteen Thais read daily. Although these figures are merely hypothetical, they reveal the simple fact that a greater number of the Thais read in the 1970's than did in the 1920's, the period during which the Thai novels first appeared.

Again, no record can be obtained to show how many copies a newspaper sold daily in the 1920's. But, in 1929, Suphāp Burut published 2,500 copies fortnightly, and its circulation number is said to have gone up to 4,000 copies later.<sup>1</sup> While a popular magazine such as this published 4,000 copies fortnightly, and at least 3,000 were sold immediately, in 1931 a journal of a literary society published only 1,000 copies monthly.<sup>2</sup> But, for different reasons, both periodicals disappeared in 1931 and 1932 respectively. However, in 1929, there was a record of twelve newspapers and forty-three periodicals of different kinds in the Thai language issued in Thailand<sup>3</sup> for the population of 11.5 million.<sup>4</sup> This means, therefore,

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1. Rō Wutthathit, op. cit., pp. 427-428.

2. See Samākhom Wannakhadi Rāi Duan, Vol. I, No. I (December 25, 2474).

3. Three of these periodicals were issued in provincial towns. See National Library, Wārasān Lae Nangsū Phim Nai Prathet Thai ..., pp. 4-27 and 37-41.

4. Thomlinson, op. cit., p. 23.

that there was an average of one newspaper for .96 million of the population daily, and one periodical of any sort for 267,441 of the population within a period of one year in 1929. While in 1972, there was an average of one newspaper for 3.2 million of the population daily, but one periodical of any sort for 11,060 people within a period of one year. Here it looks quite clear that the readers in 1929 had more varieties of daily newspapers than those in 1972 in proportion to the size of the population. But, on the other hand, the readers in 1972 had more choices of kinds of periodicals than those in 1929. This seems to produced a confused conclusion unless one remembers one fact; that in the 1920's Thai newspapers also serialized, in a large proportion, fictional stories. As they appeared daily, compared to periodicals of other sorts, it was not too long that enthusiastic readers had to wait for the following parts. This could be one of the reasons why newspapers seemed to be more popular than magazines in the 1920's. Moreover, the role of a Thai newspaper in the 1970's is different from that in the 1920's. Now, it has become more of a daily paper which reports news of all sorts, while magazines have taken over its former job, that is, they serialize fictional stories, and in a large proportion. Although a particular magazine will not appear more often than weekly, there are several that come out in one week to keep the readers busy.

With regard to the size of the reading public in the 1920's, however, it is impossible to estimate it. But, one can assume with

an adequate certainty that it was smaller than that in the 1970's, and yet was greater than the one in the early Chulalongkorn period during which "Sanuk Nūk" first appeared.

When The Court came out in 1875, it published only twenty copies daily, and the number of copies was increased up to fifty in later days. After it had been in circulation for a period of over six months, The Court, having had its name changed to Khāo Rā́tchakā́n, was supposed to have been issued in two hundred copies daily.<sup>1</sup> But, after it had been published in that manner for over three months, the daily paper had to come out fortnightly, and it was decided that it was more practical that only one hundred copies should be printed. Moreover, from that time the paper was not to be for sale any longer, but to be distributed free of charge among its editorial staff. The remaining copies were to be kept in the archives of the Royal printing press to be used as official records. However, only a few volumes of Khāo Rā́tchakā́n had been issued fortnightly before it finally disappeared in December 1876. Besides Prince Phānurangsī, its editor, Prince Phichit and Prince Damrong were among the editorial staff which was composed of five other princes.<sup>2</sup> The reduction of the publication number from two hundred

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1. The Court-Khāo Rā́tchakā́n, Vol. I, pp. 525-528.

2. Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 301-303.

to one hundred copies, and the cessation of sale came partly from the reason that the subscribers did not pay their fees properly. Moreover, they did not seem to read the paper, but, as the editor resentfully put it, "they simply keep it unread".<sup>1</sup>

Here, it is quite clear that the readers of the newspapers then were not very encouraging. It seems that there were not more than fifty persons who, whether they read it or not, had owned a copy of The Court-Khāo Rāṭchakān, and only nine persons, including the King himself, seemed to appreciate the role of journalism. That was the size and substance of the reading public nearly one decade before the periodicals issued by the Wachirayan Library appeared in 1884. Again, these periodicals had been distributed only among members and staff of the Library, who were mainly princes, noblemen and Buddhist scholars. Then there has been Rāṭchakitchānubēksā, and its readers were confined mainly to officers or those who were interested in government affairs. As The Court-Khāo Rāṭchakān was the only Thai daily newspaper issued before 1886, one could infer that the size of the reading public in the 1880's was very tiny, and the readers were limited mainly to those who were rather extraordinary socially, politically and

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1. Ibid., p. 301.

intellectually.

However, while it is statistically vague to assume that the size of the reading public during 1875-1886 was very small in relation to the population of the country as a whole,<sup>1</sup> it is logical to believe that the nature of the reading public in the early Chulalongkorn period was normally confined to the court, palaces, Buddhist monasteries and houses of the nobility. And as it is the attitudes and tastes of the reading public that partly decide the success and failure of a work of literary art, the nature of the reading public that suppressed the emergence of the novel in 1886, and one that encouraged it in the 1920's should be examined.

It is true that the introduction of printing technology has a correlation to the development of the reading public, but it does more to its size than its attitudes and tastes.

After the first publication of Sāmkok in 1865, its publisher, who was not quite sure of the sale in the beginning, began to see that he could do very well for the Thais and for himself by publishing Thai traditional literature.<sup>2</sup> As the story of Sāmkok

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1. The first population census was done in April 1911; the total population was 8,266,408. See Thomlinson, op. cit. The population during 1875-1886 is still difficult to estimate. But, Tej Bunnag calculated the size of the population in 1892 and came up with the number of 4,177,577. See Bunnag, op. cit., pp. 406-407.

2. Feltus, op. cit., pp. 241-245.

had already been popular among the Thais, both as a book which was read mainly in the court, palaces and houses of the nobility, and as a stage performance seen by a great number of people on the streets, its publication was enthusiastically welcomed.<sup>1</sup>

The publication of Sāmkok not only led to a greater size of the reading public, but also to different kinds of literary patrons.

Looking back to the history of Thai literature for a moment again, one may remember that, in 1283 A.D., it was a king who invented a new script to signify the independence of the newly established kingdom of the Thais. During 1317-1353 A.D., another king of Sukhothai was said to have composed a treatise on Buddhist cosmology. In the later part of the fifteenth century, Mahā Chāt Kham Luang was prompted to be composed by a king of Ayuthaya. Phra Hōrāthibadī and Sī Prāt were in the court of another king. Fine pieces of reflective poetry of a classical nature were produced by a prince. Two princesses in the court of Ayuthaya were said to have composed dance drama. Rāmakian, Sāmkok, Rāchāthirāt, Khun Chāng Khun Phāen, Inao, etc. were produced by and/or under the Royal patronage of Kings Rama I and Rama II. But from 1865 onwards

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1. Rajanubhab, Tamnān Nangṣū Sāmkok, pp. 34-35

noblemen such as Somdet Chao Phrayā Baromahāsīsuriyawong, the Regent in the Chulalongkorn period, also became literary patrons. It is said, as mentioned earlier, that the competition in the book trade between Dr. Bradley and Dr. Smith had never come to disaster point because, for one reason, both had to depend on the same agent for manuscripts - that is, Somdet Chao Phrayā, the Regent. After the Wachirayān Library had been established in 1884, its executive committee not only tried to collect old manuscripts but also to encourage people to produce new works to be published in its periodicals. However, most of the writers and readers of Wachirayān and Wachirayān Wisēt were princes, princesses, noblemen and Buddhist scholars still. It was not until after the administrative reforms, and the implementation of modern education had been carried out, that the faces of the makers of literature, literary patrons and the reading public, began to look significantly different.

Outstanding Thai writers during 1900-1925, were no longer Buddhist scholars, who found monasteries their main centre of knowledge, and Pali literature only an inspiring literary resource, but scholars with a touch of Western culture, who generally took high offices in the government. Buddhist scholars who wrote began to look out of date, and their works sounded clumsy and uninspiring if not entirely boring. They, on the other hand, often turned out



to be a subject for modern writers to ridicule. However, from the later half of the 1920's onwards, prominent Thai writers have generally been the product of the new Thai society. High school leavers, college and university students and graduates of both sexes have gradually become writers of prose fiction.

Since 1889, literary patrons can be found not only in the palaces, or houses of the nobility, but also in the Library, and publishers; and finally the reading public themselves have become literary patrons. Here, "the Library" referred to is the Wachirayan Library, and the City Library which had been developed from the former. In 1889, King Chulalongkorn suggested that it was time, then, for the Library to take into account also the duty of a literary patron. But instead of giving a commission for a writer to produce a specific work, like Rama I did when he had Sāmkok, and Rāchāthirāt written, an act was passed in September which stated that the committee of the Library would put forward to the king the books that were worth a literary prize.<sup>1</sup> Medals and certificates, therefore, were to be made as rewards for the best works originally written or translated. A sum of money was also put forth as a part of a reward if it was proper in a particular case. Although many works had been produced and published in Wachirayān Wisēt during

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1. Rajanubhab, Tamnān Hō Phra Samut, pp. 27 and 102-103.

the following years, none was known to have been awarded any kind of prize. It was not until 1916 when the first book was finally awarded a medal, but none of the monetary prizes were given. The book was Phra Non Kham Luang, a narrative poem composed by King Vajiravudh.<sup>1</sup>

In 1914 an act was passed whereby a literary club was to be established to encourage literary creations with an emphasis on the aesthetic quality of literature.<sup>2</sup> In 1916 Wannakhadi Samoson, which was the first literary club, held its first meeting.<sup>3</sup> The committee which administered the Library was given the honour of taking this new office which was presided over by King Vajiravudh himself. The main objective of the club was to execute the plan King Chulalongkorn initiated in 1889. This literary club, though short-lived, led to various kinds of literary clubs in Thailand in later dates.<sup>4</sup>

While the Library, and Wannakhadi Samoson, were concerned with the aesthetic quality of literature, and the proper use of the Thai language, publishers in general paid more attention to

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1. Ibid., pp. 102-104.
  2. See chapter VI, pp. 181-183.
  3. Rajanubhab, Tamnān Hō Phra Samut, p. 104.
  4. See Pō Watcharāphōn, op. cit., pp. 509-589.

its commercial potential. During 1927-1930 Tō Ngekchuan, the publisher who also issued Phāpayon - the film magazine, proposed a reward for the best novel of the year on condition that the copyright of the entries for judgement should belong to the publisher.<sup>1</sup> Although the proposal shows a commercial trick, it sounded challenging for amateurs. The novels that won the prize were predictably of a melo-dramatic type.

It was Kulap Sāipradit, then a young man in his early twenties, who got the idea of how to stay independent from any capitalists. In 1927 he set up a publishing office at the house of one of his friends, and encouraged his old friends, mostly from Thēpsirin and Sūan Kulāp boys' schools, to write for publication.<sup>2</sup> As mentioned earlier, "Sī Būraphā" 's first published novel, Lūk Phūchāi, was a product of this self-sufficient publishing office. The reading public gave him so much encouragement that he began a campaign for authorship as a profession. And, he

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1. Yot Watcharasathian, Khwām Pen Mā Khong Kān Praphan Lae Nak Praphan Khong Thai, A History of Modern Thai Writing and Writers (Bangkok: Phrae Phitthaya, 2506), p. 180.

2. See chapter VII, p. 205-206; see also Phanwit Wirotwong, "Chīwit Lae Ngan Khong Sot Kūramarōhit, Life and Work of Sot Kūramarōhit", interview with Sot Kūramarōhit, December 26, 2513, p. 11 (typescript)

himself had taken up imaginative writing and journalism as his career from that time until he left Thailand as a political exile some time in the 1950's. In spite of his political ideology, which did not sound very attractive to the Thais in general, his attempt to convince his fellow writers to see the possibility of making writing a profession sounds quite convincing.

... It is pleasing to find that a market for books in Thailand at the moment is much progressing. Some of our fellow writers have begun to feel that writing for fun, as it were, could be turned into writing for a living. It is to be expected that authorship will begin to make itself an important profession henceforth ...<sup>1</sup>

Then he took Luang Wichitwāthakān, one of his contemporaries, as an example probably because Luang Wichit was one of the best-selling writers of the time. He discovered that, during August 1928 - August 1929, Luang Wichit had five of his books published in 9,000 copies altogether. The books, all non-fiction however, cost 2 bāt a copy at the most and 1.25 bāt at the least. After having estimated Luang Wichit's profit made from the sale of those books, Kulāp Sāipradit came up with a figure of 900 bāt a month. This amount of money, he said, was more than the salary of a superintendent commissioner (Thēsā). To encourage junior writers,

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1. "Editorial Miscellaneous note", Suphāp Burut, Vol. I (August 15, 2472), p. 882.

Kulāp Sāipradit concluded that young novelists who were trying their best would be successful one day to live and to be admired like those in the United States and Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Fun or Fame or both could equally be the primary motive of writers of prose fiction in the 1920's, but their writing was clearly not for an economic purpose because, except those who wrote for Wachirayān Wisēt, no writer was known to have been paid for his or her writing by any other periodical. In spite of that, the Thais keep writing. However, whether being convinced by Kulāp Sāipradit in his literary campaign, or being encouraged by the general response of the reading public to the novel, several writers appeared to have found that, after all, writing prose fiction could be more than simply a noble hobby, but a possible means of making a profit too, and that the readers themselves can very well become their literary patrons.

"Dokmai Sot" began to have her new novels published in book form for sale in 1933 after four had been serialized in magazines, but, as one can guess, for no fees. Since then, all "Dokmai Sot" 's novels no longer appeared in instalments, but in complete form.

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1. "Editorial Miscellaneous note", op. cit., pp. 883-884.

As mentioned before, in 1929, while Sattrū Khong Chao Lon was being serialized in Thai Khasem, Prince Ā-kāt, who had recently returned from abroad, had his novel Lakhon Haeng Chīwit published in book form. The novel, being the first of its kind, shook the reading public controversially. Several comments were, and still are, being written and made about it. Some are positive, and some are not. In August 1929 the critic in Thai Khasem, who found Lakhon Haeng Chīwit "the most touching love story of a Thai and a foreigner"<sup>1</sup>, assured the readers that the novel would "fit readers of all classes and all age groups". "When you read it through", he wrote, "you will feel entertained and receive moral messages."<sup>2</sup> Nine years later another critic, a university graduate, wrote that

A significant element of beauty which makes Lakhon Haeng Chīwit charming lies not only in the soul of Wisūt or Maria Grey, but more in the setting of the story ... Eighty per cent of the readers of Lakhon Haeng Chīwit in 2472<sup>3</sup> were impressed by the setting of the novel more than understanding thoroughly Wisūt's idealistic life ...<sup>4</sup>

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1. See chapter VII, p. 255.
  2. "Winā", op. cit., August 15, 2472, p. 530.
  3. 2472 B.E. is equivalent to 1929 A.D.
  4. Somchit Siksamat, op. cit., p. 1125.

In 1960, a critic who was once a chairman of the Thai Library Association<sup>1</sup>, wrote about the life and work of Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng in which she said,

In regard to Prince Ā-kāt's literary work, if it is a long story such as Lakhon Haeng Chīwit, it is marvellous from beginning to end. But, if it is a short story, it often does not "reach the 'emotional demand' " of the readers... There seems to be too much of soliloquy. And he often monopolized propaganda for or against his own characters himself. (But I must note that he did so very truly<sup>2</sup> from his integrity and sincerity to his readers) ...<sup>2</sup>

It is a pity indeed that Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng Raphīphat left the world and the Thai literary circle so soon, at the age which he could have produced many novels such as Lakhon Haeng Chīwit to delight and impress Thai readers ... For the Thais, who are known as those who forget things easily ... the case of Prince Ā-kāt seems to be exceptional, because he is not completely forgotten. There is not a small number of Thais, especially those involved in literature, in whose mind the name of Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng Raphīphat has never faded away. This is because Prince Ā-kāt had created a picture to illustrate before us so that we could see more clearly that "The world is indeed but a big stage", and we are but puppets made to dance the roles which we do not know for certain who plans for us ...<sup>3</sup>

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1. The critic, Khun Rančhuan Intharakamhaeng, is an outstanding lady distinguished in many social spheres, especially those of literature, administration and education. Recently, she was appointed to the office of the Director of the Department of Foreign Relations in the Ministry of Education, a post which is rarely held by women.

2. Rančhuan Intharakamhaeng, "Chīwit Lae Ngān Khong Mōm Čhao Ā-kātdamkoeng Raphīphat, Life and Work of Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng Raphīphat", of Ā-kātdamkoeng, Phiu Luang Phiu Khāo, p. 217.

3. Ibid., pp. 224-225.

About a year ago, there was a false delight among his admirers that Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng was still alive. Outstanding newspapers in Bangkok made big news about the return of Prince Ā-kāt; some in their front page. The news was really a sensation and occupied the public attention for a long while. Before it was proved to be false, and the person who was believed to be Prince Ā-kāt proved fake, the journalist who first brought the drama into the scene once expressed in his column his admiration for Lakhon Haeng Chīwit:

I will have to admit that I have been a 'fan' of Wisūt Supphalak Na Ayuthaya and Maria Grey, the protagonists in Lakhon Haeng Chīwit, who are journalists, since my days in secondary school.

I can say that my life as it is now is partly a result of the inspiration from Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng in Lakhon Haeng Chīwit.<sup>1</sup>

However, if the comments and reactions such as those mentioned above signified any success for Lakhon Haeng Chīwit, it was a kind of success which was controversial. For this success of Prince Ā-kāt, who obviously wrote not primarily for fun, "Sī Būraphā" gave him only two cheers. Having seen that Prince Ā-kāt sounded too pleased and seemed to be too confident in the success and fame which his first novel brought him, "Sī Būraphā" reminded his

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1. Narēt Narōpakon, "Rim Thanon Ronkhaem", Siam Rat, June 1, 2515, p. 6.



friend that,

Your novel, Lakhon Haeng Chiwit, is really splendid. And, all those words of admiration might be objective and just. But, you must not forget that you are a prince. If you do things, which are worth one point, they often give you three. But, if you were to become one among ourselves, even if your work was worth three points, they would give you only one. You should be mindful of this kind of trifle.<sup>1</sup>

However, whether Lakhon Haeng Chiwit became a sensation partly because its author was a prince or because of its own nature is certainly arguable. And the question may be more challenging to a social psychologist than to a reader. Nevertheless, looking back to 1886, the year when a prince made an attempt to write a novel, which he called "Sanuk Nak", but was given such a heavy negative response from the readers that the novel had to be left unfinished soon after its first few pages appeared in a magazine, one may doubt whether the point "Sī Būraphā" made was actually relevant.

Compared to Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng, Prince Phichit had a much better status. While Prince Ā-kāt held the lowest royal title<sup>2</sup>,

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1. "Sī Būraphā", "Chīwit Mqm Chao Ā-kātdamkoeng Nai Lōk Nangstū", p. 240.

2. For royal titles, see Robert B. Jones, Thai Titles and Ranks Including a Translation of Traditions of Royal Lineage in Siam by King Chulalongkorn (New York: Cornell University, 1971), pp. 51, 63-65 and 124.

and a rank, unknown to the public, in the civil service<sup>1</sup>, Prince Phichit was a half-brother of King Chulalongkorn, a strong arm of the King in the development of the country, particularly in administrative reforms, a high commissioner and a lawyer of renowned talent and skill<sup>2</sup>, and who was the chairman of the executive committee of the Wachirayan Library and editor of Wachirayān Wisēt in which "Sanuk Nūk" was published. In short, Prince Phichit was not only a prince of a high rank, but also an officer of great importance at the time his writing was suppressed.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, it seems that there is no correlation between literary success or failure, and an aristocratic status for the writer. However, the effect of literature is a result of a two-way communication. It may not be fair for anyone to jump to such a conclusion before the character of the reading public has been taken into consideration.

As mentioned earlier, the reading public of Wachirayān Wisēt was small and confined mainly to the court, palaces, houses of the

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1. See Ranchuan Intharakamhaeng, "Chiwit Lae Ngān Khong Mōm Chao Ā-kātdamkoeng Raphīphat", p. 216; see also "Sī Būraphā", "Chiwit Mōm Chao Ā-kātdamkoeng Nai Lōk Nangsu", p. 225. See appendix, pp. 354-355 for Prince Ā-kāt's biography.

2. Rāṭchabandittayasaphā, Rūang Chaloem Phra Yot Chaonāi, On Promotions of Members of the Royal Family (Bangkok: Distributed at the funeral of H.R.H. Prince Mahidol Adulyadej, Krom Luang Songklanakharin, Sophonphiphatthanakon, 2472), pp. 177-178.

3. See appendix, pp. 345-346 for Prince Phichit's biography.

nobility and Buddhist monasteries. In 1886 the fictional stories with which Thai readers in general were familiar were largely, if not entirely, from traditional literature. Prince Phichit, suddenly breaking away from a literary convention, offended some of his readers inadvertently. The most offended was the Supreme Patriarch, Prince Pawarēt-wariyālongkṃn, who was at that time also the Abbot of Wat Bṃwṃnniwēt. A letter from King Chulalongkorn to the Supreme Prince Patriarch and Prince Vajirañāna Varōrasa<sup>1</sup>, who was also a monk of high rank residing at Wat Bṃwṃnniwēt, explains a part of the effect "Sanuk Nuk" created on its readers.

... When I knew that the story upset your highness a great deal, I was very worried, for your Highness is old and might come to fall ill ... I, therefore, have felt very angry with Krom Luang Phichit ...<sup>2</sup>

Actually, King Chulalongkorn wrote this letter to answer the request Prince Pawarēt made for the King's forgiveness for Prince Phichit. And, Prince Damrong's explanation of the story behind the scene of this drama helps one to understand this matter more clearly.<sup>3</sup> Having seen that Prince Phichit set the "untrue" story

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1. See chapter I, p. 1

2. Chulalongkorn, King of Thailand and Somdet Phra Mahā Samanachao Krom Phrayā Vajirañāna Varōrasā, Phrarātchahatthalēkhā ... p. 4.

3. Ibid., pp. 3-4.

in Wat Bṃṃṃniwēt, Prince Pawarēt, being unfamiliar with such a style of writing, must have felt offended, thinking that the writer intended to create a scandal about the monastery for which he was responsible. The Abbot was so much upset that he contemplated resigning from his post in Wat Bṃṃṃniwēt<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, a rumour reached the King that because of the story which Prince Phichit published in Wachirayān Wisēt, the Supreme Prince Patriarch contemplated giving up a religious service usually held for the general public<sup>2</sup>. However, having known that the King was very angry with Prince Phichit and that he blamed him for what he had written, Prince Pawarēt, the offended Patriarch, who also was an uncle of both the King and Prince Phichit<sup>3</sup>, felt sorry for the latter. He, therefore, asked the King to please forgive Prince Phichit.

From this drama one may be able to form an idea about the general attitude towards the novel of the reading public in the 1880's. And from the King's letter, one also knows that Prince Phichit was asked to explain his intention, for the King put to

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1. Ibid., p. 3.

2. Ibid., p. 6.

3. Rajanubhab, Rāṭchasakunlawong, pp. 7-8, 26, 48, 51, and 105-106.

him several points to be clarified such as whether or not there was any truth in what was written; if not, why he took the name of Wat Bṛwṇniwēt just like that. But, no evidence is found to show what kind of explanation Prince Phichit gave to the King. However, he went to make an apology to the Supreme Prince Patriarch, the Abbot of the monastery in which he set the first scene of his unfinished experimental novel. To this the King made the following comment:

... and for your Highness' request to me not to condemn Krom Luang Phichit, I agree all right. But, I feel sorry still because Krom Luang Phichit is himself none but an ex-mōnk of Wat Bṛwṇniwēt and has been given as high an honour as Chao Tāng Krom Phu Yai<sup>1</sup>. As he has become lacking in discretion and has been unscrupulous, he caused a scandal about the monastery among those who do not know the truth. He really should not have done that. But, now that he has realized his guilt, and his mistake has been seen by a lot of people, it might be sufficient to wash the evil stain away from the (name of the) monastery all right. On the other hand, what he had written, turned to have an ill effect on him, and he deserved all the blame. This is like having obtained an ill effect from his sinful act soon enough ...<sup>2</sup>

The King, nevertheless, was also trying to comfort his uncle, who held the highest rank in the Thai Buddhist religious hierarchy,<sup>3</sup>

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1. "Chao Tāng Krom Phū Yai" is a rank of a senior prince. See Damrong Rajanubhab, H.R.H. Prince, "A-thibāi Wa Duai Yot Chao, An Essay on Royal Titles and Ranks" of Rāṭṭhabandittayasaphā, op. cit. pp. 18-20, and 178; see also Jones, op. cit., pp. 67-81.

2. Chulalongkorn, King of Thailand and Somdet Phra Mahā Samanachao Krom Phrayā Vajirañāna Varōrasa, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

3. See Sommot Amṛaphan, H.R.H. Prince and Damrong Rajanubhab, H.R.H. Prince (comp.), Ruāng Tang Phra Rāchākhana Phū Yai Nai Krung Ratanakosin, On Promotions of High Ranking Monks in Bangkok Period (Bangkok: Sophonphiphatthanākṇ, 2466), pp. 2, 6, 30, 31, 43, 48, 51, 54, 126 and 134.

by making a comment on a novel form in the same letter:

... I know, though, that Krom Luang Phichit made up this story with the intention to imitate farang novels<sup>1</sup> which have been written in hundreds of thousands. It is a story created to be read for pleasure. But actually, one who is composing such a story often has some points which are in some measure related to people in the present time. However, he does not imitate their behaviour in every respect; he sometimes simply collects some outline features, and sometimes distorts them to make (his readers) puzzled. With regard to Krom Luang Phichit's composition of this story, in his reference to the name of Wat Bowṇniwēt I believe that he did not mean to report the truth (about the monastery), either at the present time or in the past. Although I myself did not suspect anything scandalous about Wat Bowṇniwēt when I read the story, many people in general who had never read an English novel might have thought that because the story was published, it must have been a true one told by a writer who himself knew the facts. Or (they might have thought that) the writer wrote it to convince people of the scandal of which he told. Those people might not have been able to understand that the writer was aware (of what he was doing) and that he did not intend to make people think that he had composed the story in order to make them believe that it was a true one. He simply meant them to read it for pleasure ...<sup>2</sup>

With such an intention indeed, Prince Phichit created a story of four young Buddhist monks. He named all his characters as well as giving a short description of each of them, but put more emphasis on one character who could have been the protagonist if the story had been developed further.

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1. The term was originally written in a Thai transliteration of the English term.

2. Chulalongkorn and Somdet Phra Mahā Samanačhao Krom Prayā Vajiraṇāna Varōrasa, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

As described in chapter VI, the story comes to an end only where the monks were still discussing their prospects.<sup>1</sup> The time and place as indicated in the story were so familiar to all Buddhist readers in Bangkok that some could hardly differentiate fact from fiction and vice versa. That is how the drama was developed against the writer, who presented to the readers a story which was written in his attempt to imitate an English form. "It is intended to be a long story", wrote Prince Phichit, "as long as could be published".<sup>2</sup>

Whether the last phrase referred to a factor connected with the time that the prince could afford for writing, or with the response of the readers is a question which can hardly be answered without further information. However, one fact is clear: that the story, which was "intended to be a long one" was cut short for some reasons, parts of which can be explained with the letter King Chulalongkorn wrote to the Supreme Prince Patriarch nine days after "Sanuk Nuk" had appeared, and others can be explained by other evidences. For instance, in the following volume of Wachirayān Wiset appeared a note from a reader, Prince Sōnabandit, saying:

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1. See pp. 155-157.

2. The Chairman, op. cit.

I am sorry to have seen in Wachirayān page 323 on "Sanuk Nāk". It is not proper to bring the name of the respected Wat Bōwōnniwēt into such a story for pleasure composed solely from imagination, without any truth in it. Those who do not know, or are suspicious, would have various ways of speculation which could bring an evil stain to the monastery. It would be better if Your Royal Highness the Chairman<sup>1</sup> would please alter (the story) so that no ill reputation would be left to the monastery, which was caused merely by a pleasurable imagination and which might mislead people to take for granted that the story was a true one.<sup>2</sup>

After this note, no further parts of "Sanuk Nāk" were published.

It seems clear here that the readers played about an equal role to a writer himself in so far as the development of the novel at this early stage was concerned. Contrasting this with the circumstances in which Prince Ā-kāt's novel appeared, one may remember that the writer received not only positive responses such as those from the readers and critics whom "Sī Būraphā" seemed to

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1. At the time when "Sanuk Nāk" was published, Prince Phichit was the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Wachirayān Library, the editor of Wachirayān Wisēt, and also the writer of "Sanuk Nāk".

2. Sōnabandit, H.R.H. Prince, "Kham Kae Nangstū Chabap thi 28, Correction for the magazine No. 28", Wachirayān Wisēt, Vol. I, No. 29 (the eighth month, the eighth day of the waxing moon, chulasakkarāt 1248), p. 333.



regard as aristocratic fanatics. Besides a comment such as that given by "Sī Būraphā", Prince Ā-kāt received other kinds of responses. As mentioned in chapter VII, there also were those who blamed the writer for writing to criticize his own parents, to destroy the reputation and honour of the dead for whom he should have felt grateful and so on.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, the situation there was not completely new. The psychological effect of such a method of presentation used in Lakhon Haeng Chīwit was similar to the effect "Sanuk Nūk" created forty-three years before. As Lakhon Haeng Chīwit came out first in a complete volume, it escaped the possibility of having to remain unfinished. However, Prince Ā-kāt shared one common experience with Prince Phichit in that he, too, was accused of creating a scandal, not to the good name of a monastery, but to the gracious name of his own family.

Like the failure of Prince Phichit, the success of Prince Ā-kāt depended much upon the literary attitudes of the reading public ... Unlike the readers of "Sanuk Nūk", who seemed to conform to one similar attitude towards prose fiction, the reading

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1. See chapter VII, pp. 256-257.

public of Lakhon Haeng Chiwit was composed of comparatively more varieties of tastes and outlooks.

One may infer from the above evidence that from the second decade of the present century the reading public in Thailand has been growing in size as well as in character. From that time on a great proportion of the reading public has been made up from a wider range. The majority of the readers are no longer princes, courtiers, noblemen nor Buddhist scholars, but government officers, students, women of various professions, and those involved in journalism themselves. And normally the people in the latter groups have different tastes and different ways of looking at things from the former. The change in the character of the reading public in Thailand during the 1920's was due largely to the change in the Thai social structure, the change which was a consequence of the political reforms that began to take place from 1873 onwards.

However, one should not be misled so as to make a conclusion that from the 1920's onwards the Thais by and large turned out to be readers of the novel. The reading public, in spite of its growth in size and character, was and still is, limited. It was only the people educated in modern schools and those living in towns who were readers of modern prose fiction.<sup>1</sup> The majority

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1. See Sanit Charoenrat, O Wā Ā-nā-prachārāt: Khwām Lang Khong Naknangstūphim Phū Nūng, Oh! The General Public, A Memoir of a Journalist (Bangkok: Phrāe Phitthayā, 2507), pp. 20-21 and 25-26.

of the population, mainly farmers and gardeners who live in the countryside, remained being a listening audience of traditional literature, and the public for traditional forms of entertainment.<sup>1</sup> It was said that after the harvest, boats over-loaded with books of fiction written in traditional forms would row through canals heading to the rural areas. In a few days they would return to Bangkok empty; they would then be reloaded and leave again for their customers in the countryside.<sup>2</sup> It is true that from 1921, when the compulsory education act was proclaimed, to 1929, the number of schools increased in provincial districts.<sup>3</sup> But, those who went to school were children attending elementary education. Although they were able to read, in general, the development of their reading habit was by no means emphasized;<sup>4</sup> very few acquired a literary taste. The older generation, on the other hand, who had a

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1. For forms of traditional entertainment in Thailand, see E. H. S. Simmonds, "Mahōrasop in a Thai Manōrā manuscript", reprinted from the Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, Vol. XXX, Pt. 2, 1967, pp. 391-392, and 397-403. See also Khomkhai Nilprapassorn, "A Study of the Dramatic Poems of the Panji Cycle in Thailand" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1966), pp. 3-36.

2. Yot Watcharasathian, op. cit., p. 56.

3. Ministry of Education, Prawat Krasuang Sūksāthikān 2435-2507, A History of the Ministry of Education 1892-1964 A.D. (Bangkok: Khuru Saphā, 2507), p. 302; see also chapter IX, p. 321.

4. See Maenmas Chavalit, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

taste for literature were often unable to read.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it was often a case where the literate, usually young members of a family, would read out loud for the grown ups. Traditional literature which was published in paperback and pocket size, was popular among the older generation and the uneducated people. Modern fiction which was translated or adapted from Western literature or from the film attracted the younger and more educated ones,<sup>2</sup> which were, after all, a minority group. When the novel emerged, the majority of the population was by no means in the sphere of its reading public. Moreover, girl students, who appreciated this modern form of prose fiction, were often forbidden to read it on the ground that the novel would corrupt their young and innocent minds.

The reading public in 1929, no matter how limited it was, was more heterogeneous than that in 1886, whereas writers in the 1920's could be found mainly not among those educated in monasteries nor trained in palaces, but among those educated in modern schools. At any rate, like the character of the reading public, the character of writers changed as the nature of the society in which they developed and wrote changed.

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1. For literacy of the Thais see Ibid., p. 3; see also Thomlinson, op. cit., p. 35.

2. Sanit Charoenrat, op. cit.

## CHAPTER IX

## The Novel and Society

The Thai society which produces the novel is different in various respects from that which produced the traditional literature, namely the narrative poetry, dance drama, and reflective poetry. The significant differences are to be found in the social, cultural, intellectual and technological aspects of Thai life. These differences come out more as a result of planned modernization than of a natural momentum of the development of human society.

However, the novel emerged in a rather different manner from that of the society in which it developed. That is, as one can see from the former chapters, the novel emerged more as a spontaneous mutation in the evolution of the Thai literary tradition than as the outcome of a revolution in literary forms. And the Thai literary tradition, as mentioned earlier, like other aspects of Thai cultures, is an original synthesis including strong admixtures of cultures with which the Thais have come into contact. With a similar temperament to literary artists in the old days, for instance, the Buddhist monks in Chiangmai who, having been inspired by Ceylonese literature, developed new jāṭaka tales by imitating the

classical jātaka in Pali literature, or the two princesses in the late Ayuthaya period who were said to have composed dance drama out of the material derived from Java, modern Thais, having come into closer contact with Western cultures from the 1850's onwards, began to depict fictional stories in the form of the novel about half a century ago. As a by-product of the attempt to resist nineteenth century Western imperialism, the Thais have come to know this new form of writing from Western literature. Here, the historical background of the period relevant to the development of the novel in Thailand should be recalled.

As mentioned before, the ancient kingdom of Siam, in order to maintain her sovereignty and to preserve her cultural identity against political pressures from the nineteenth century Western Colonialism, has undergone a period of modernization since the latter half of the century. In spite of the political pressures, her modernization has been developed in the light of Western civilization rather than in reaction from it. The external pressures and the Thais' attempt to counteract them resulted in the necessity of reforms in the internal administrative system, the implementation of modern education for the public, the introduction of modern technology, the promotion of cultural understanding and appreciation, and so on. Consequently, the social and intellectual life of the over six hundred

years old kingdom has been changed perceptibly. The outcome of the administrative reforms which took place in the Chulalongkorn period, and which was carried out through the first five years of the reign of King Vajiravudh, not only formed a new geo-political feature of the kingdom of Siam, but also gave rise to a new class of people in the Thai social structure, namely the officials of the civil service.<sup>1</sup> This new class of people has increasingly become a popular choice of subjects for fiction. Also, a large part of the reading public as well as a good number of the imaginative writers come from this new social class. Within this modern environment, the novel emerged. From the fact that the novel by its nature is an art form which could be made the closest imitation to actual life of human beings through relevant aspects of literary creation, its nature, like that of human life itself, is two-fold: on the one hand, it is affected, to a certain degree, by a society, and on the other it has effects on a society. Therefore, the novel, unlike for example poetry - especially the reflective, which could be made a private act of an individual, as one can see from its nature - is practically a form of social expression. And, a discussion of the correlation between this literary genre and the society

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1. Bunnag, op. cit., pp. 1, 99, 147-149, and 404.

is to be the subject of this chapter.

The discussion is to be concentrated on two aspects: how Thai society affects the development of the novel, and vice versa. As mentioned in chapter VIII, the success or failure of a novel is controlled, to a great extent, by the attitudes and tastes of the reading public. Looking back to the failure of Prince Phichitp̄ri-chāk̄ṇ, as a novelist, in regard to his experimental, but unfinished novel, "Sanuk Nāk" in the 1880's, and the success of "Sī Būraphā", "D̄okmai Sot" and Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng in the 1920's, one may be curious to know what had caused so much change in the reading public during the forty-two year interval, the change which favoured the emergence of the novel. And, after having examined historical events that took place during this interval, one will find that the significant factors which entailed the change came largely as the consequences of the closer contact between the Thai and Western civilizations from the second half of the nineteenth century onwards.

The old kingdom of Thailand was a conglomeration of city-states operated by a feudal-type system for over six centuries. Its population, collectively called "Thais", although composed of several ethno-linguistic groups - such as the M̄ṇ, Laos, Khmer and Thais - lived a simple life by means of agriculture. Their gain or loss in regard to the agricultural product depended mainly on the



benevolence or malevolence of nature, which usually generates more of its benevolence to the people living in that part of the earth. Consequently, the Thais, having been adapted to such a favourable natural environment, appear to be easy-going. They did not have to struggle harder for survival than naturally necessary unless there were wars. The wars in which the Thais living during the past six centuries had been involved were fought by simple weapons, such as swords instead of machine-guns, and on horses and elephants instead of in gun-boats or tanks. Their enemies were their neighbours, the most classic of whom were the Burmese, who also fought with equally simple weapons.

The old Thai civilization was developed fundamentally from Buddhism. A Buddhist monastery, among its other social functions, served as a centre of learning. The scope of monastic education, which was provided principally for men, was rather broad and varied.<sup>1</sup> Besides Buddhist ethics and literature, which, as a rule, every monk had to study, general knowledge could also be obtained. It is found that in the early days, apart from arithmetic, reading and writing, the Thais could often learn from a monastery herbal medicine, carpentry,

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1. Sawat Chongkol, "An Historical Sketch of Thai Education Administration: Evolution of the Administrative Organization" of The Department of Elementary and Adult Education, Education in Thailand: A Century of Experience (Bangkok: Ministry of Education, 1970), pp. 62-65.

construction, astrology, arts and crafts, magic, the art of self-defence and so on. Women, on the other hand, were by no means deprived of opportunities to obtain education. However, education for women was limited, and differed from that for men.<sup>1</sup>

Education for women in the old days was noticed even by foreigners from the West who visited the kingdom of Siam in the seventeenth century. A Dutch director of the East-India Company, Joost Schouten, who had lived in the Capital City of Ayuthaya for eight years when he wrote about Siam in 1636 A.D., found that not only men had a chance to be learned, but women also did. They were given a similar opportunity; he wrote, the difference was mainly in detail.<sup>2</sup> What was found by Schouten was supported by another witness, Simon de la Loubère, a French envoy to King Narāi who visited Ayuthaya during 1687-1688 A.D.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, the literate public was limited to within the palace walls, houses of the nobility, and Buddhist monasteries.

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1. Ibid., pp. 63 and 65; see also Ministry of Education, Prawat Krasuang Suktathikan 2435-2507, p. 11.

2. Joost Schouten, A Description of Siam, trans. Capt. Roger Manley (Bangkok: Chaloemnit Historical Archives Series, 1969), p. 141.

3. De la Loubère, op. cit., p. 113.

While the men would obtain their education from the monasteries, women, normally young girls, would be sent to houses of the nobility or palaces to learn their domestic knowledge. However, professional training and skills were hardly spread to the general public because this kind of special education was traditionally handed from generation to generation only within the family circle. Those who were outside the domestic tie or commoners normally had scarce opportunities to obtain professional knowledge and skills.<sup>1</sup> In the reign of Rama III of the Ratanakosin period, an attempt was made to promote education for the general public further than that which was usually taught in general monasteries. In 1836, an old monastery in Bangkok was renovated and made a learning centre, where people, regardless of their social status or other forms of social barriers, could attend at any time.<sup>2</sup> Committees were set up to carry out the plans. Scholars were prompted to collect and select books of various kinds of knowledge which could be obtained by means of reading. The contents were revised and/or modified. Some were newly written by the contemporary scholars.<sup>3</sup> Instead of being written in a samut-thai, as usually done before the printing press was introduced, the collections of the knowledge were inscribed,

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1. Prachum Chārik Wat Phra Chetuphon, Collected Inscriptions of Wat Phra Chetuphon (Bangkok: Sophonphiphatthanakon, 2472), Vol. I, p. u.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

as mentioned in chapter III, in plates and placed systematically in the monastery compound. From the inscriptions, one could find various branches of knowledge such as

1. the genesis of the Lord Buddha;
2. old treatises on diagnosis and treatment of diseases such as smallpox, pediatrics, child-birth, pharmacopoeia and massage, including anatomy charts;
3. military strategy;
4. literature and arts of versification;
5. astrology and omens;
6. political and social geography of the country;
7. archaeology;
8. descriptions and sketches of inhabitants of different parts of the earth;

and so on.

There were paintings, drawings, and sculptures for illustrations. Those inscriptions, as they stood, were quite encyclopaedic.<sup>1</sup> And, having known with what care and caution this stone-made encyclopaedia was compiled and recorded<sup>2</sup>, one could imagine how Wat Phra Chetuphon,

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1. Dhani Nivat, H. H. Prince, "The Inscriptions of Wat Phra Jetuphon", JSS, XXVI, 1933, pp. 143-170.

2. See chapter III, pp. 69-70.

the temple of the huge reclining Buddha, had served as a kind of open university for the general public for nearly a century before the modern university, Chulalongkorn, was founded in 1916.

However, there has been only one example of such a university which remains still in Bangkok. It is a pity that several plates have been defaced, some are lost, and the rest are hardly well taken care of.

Due to several inter-related factors which hindered the wide spread of education, such as the nature of a feudal society, the lack of enthusiasm or need of the public itself, a vague, if any, concept of social implications of education, and the means of communication, education, as it was, thus generally became a privilege open to and enjoyed only by the minority of the population. It was not until the reign of King Chulalongkorn that education for the general public was modernized on a comparatively larger scale, and made accessible to a greater number of the people. The two significant factors which facilitated the wider spread of education for the public were printing technology and the arrival of modern means of transportation.

Before the Chulalongkorn period, the major means of transportation for the Thais was generally by water-ways. On land, the Thais used animal-pulled carts, went on horse-back, or simply on foot. These

primitive means of transportation were obviously subject to the weather situation. And, the kingdom of Siam is situated in the tropical monsoon region. The inconveniences caused by the primitive means of communication not only obstructed the wider spreading of knowledge but also made things difficult for the administration of internal affairs. However, those inconveniences might not have been felt as vital problems to be solved urgently had Siam not been caught up in the middle of strong external pressures more sophisticated and more threatening than ever.

When Western colonialism spread Eastward during the nineteenth century, the neighbouring countries and her own tributary states fell one by one, and bit by bit into the hands of powerful foreigners who came from the remotest part of the Eurasian continent. In 1825, Lower Burma fell to British power. In 1826, a treaty was signed between Great Britain and Siam in which both were to recognize each other's sphere of influence over the Malay states.<sup>1</sup> From then, Siam began to feel the pressure of British power over her territorial sovereignty, and after the British shelling of the coastal forts of Trengganu, which was a Thai tributary state, in 1862, Siam saw that her territory in the south was in danger from British

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1. Bunnag, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

colonialism. In the 1870's, there was a possibility that her tributary states in the north might get entangled with British intervention over the issue of the teak industry.<sup>1</sup>

The French, on the other hand, went further east. In 1867, Cambodia, which was a Thai tributary state, fell to the French after the latter had taken over Saigon in 1859. Then, as the French still moved further, but northward, along the Mae Khong River, the Thai tributary states in Laos were increasingly jeopardized by French colonialism.<sup>2</sup> These external pressures grew as time went by; and the drama reached its climax in 1894, when two French gunboats shelled their way through the mouth of the Chao Phraya River. Although the dispute was soon settled, and at an expensive cost the sovereignty of Siam remained respected, Siam saw herself in a precarious situation politically. Having realized the sophistication of the Western war equipment and its efficiency, she found no better way than to build up her internal strength to withstand the pressures from outside so that her political independence would be secured.

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1. Ibid., pp. 77-78.

2. Ibid., pp. 83-84.

When King Chulalongkorn came to the throne in 1868, the young monarch of fifteen years of age found himself caught up in the middle of a depressing political situation. Seeing that the weaknesses of the country were the result of the obsolete system of government by which the kingdom had been operated for centuries, the young King Chulalongkorn found modernization necessary for the survival of the Siamese state. Therefore, in 1873 when he mounted the throne in his own right, nation-wide reforms began to take shape. The first target to be reformed was the system of internal administration, both central and provincial.<sup>1</sup> In 1874, four significant events took place: a legal attempt to abolish slavery in the kingdom, an attempt which was made practically successful,<sup>2</sup> the establishment of the State Council, the Privy Council and the Supreme Court.

As far as the reforms in the system of provincial administration were concerned, the inconveniences in the means of transportation and communication, accepted as normal up to that time, turned out to be vital obstacles, because the troubles with the French and British usually began near the frontier where no clear boundary was scientifically

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1. The administrative reforms during the reign of King Chulalongkorn are excellently covered in detail in Dr. Tej Bunnag's thesis; see Bunnag, op. cit.

2. See Anuman Ratchathon, op. cit.



defined. It took too much time and trouble before the news arrived in Bangkok, and then to get Thai troops or government representatives across mountainous terrain to the spots in time was equally difficult. Therefore, from the 1870's, special commissioners<sup>1</sup> with military support were posted to the areas sensitive to the external threats, such as tributary states. In 1883 and 1885, the Department of Posts and Telegraph, and the Royal Survey Department were established respectively. Inter-city railroads were constructed. The first line was opened in 1896 from Bangkok to Ayuthaya, the former capital; then in 1900 this was extended to Nakhon Ratchasima, an important province in the north-east which was formerly cut off from Bangkok by a deep jungle. In 1903, the southern line was opened from Bangkok to Petchaburi, then it was extended to reach the southern frontier in 1918. The eastern line was constructed by 1905, and in 1926 it was extended to the eastern frontier. The northern line, starting from Ayuthaya in 1896, finally joined Bangkok to Chiangmai in 1921.<sup>2</sup>

Although the absolute power to rule was finally placed in the hands of King Chulalongkorn after the Regent and Prince Wichaichan had passed away in 1882, and 1885, circumstances made the absolute

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1. Bunnag, op. cit., p. 100.

2. Sawāt Senānarong, Phūmisāt Prathet Thai, Geography of Thailand (Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, 2512) pp. 183-184, cited from State Railway of Thailand RSR Information Booklet 1965.

monarch a liberal ruler. The attempt to build internal strength for Siam encouraged the King always to look for a better system of administration. In 1887, nearly a year after his brother, Prince Svasti (Sawat) Sobhon, had returned from his education at Oxford, a petition was addressed to the King in which a constitutional monarchy was proposed.<sup>1</sup> A few months later, when Prince Thēwawong went as the King's personal representative to attend the celebration of Queen Victoria's fiftieth anniversary of rule, he, under the King's instruction, was to examine European systems of governmental administration. Then, after the return of Prince Thēwawong, from his travelling through Europe, by way of America and Japan<sup>2</sup>, drastic changes were made in the Thai system of administration.

In 1888, the King proposed a plan in which a new cabinet was to be established. The old offices, for instance Mahātthai and Kalāhōm, which generally resulted in a lack of sufficient functional differentiation in the old government, were to be modified. Six new ministries: Krom Phra Khlang (Ministry of Finance); Krom Yuttitham (Ministry of Justice); Krom Yutthanāthikān (Ministry of Defence); Krom Thammakān (Ministry of Public Instruction); Krom

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1. Wyatt, op. cit., pp. 89-91; see also Chula Chakrabongse, op. cit., pp. 261-263.

2. Wyatt, op. cit.

Yōthāthikān (Ministry of Construction and Communication); and Krom Murathāthikān (Ministry of the Royal Secretariat) were to be added to the former six: Krom Mahāthai (Ministry of the North); Krom Phra Kalāhōm (Ministry of the South); Krom Thā (Ministry of Foreign Affairs); Krom Wang (Ministry of the Royal Palace); Krom Muang (Ministry of the Capital); and Krom Nā (Ministry of Agriculture and Trade).<sup>1</sup> The new government, therefore, was to be formed of twelve instead of six ministries.

Such drastic changes in the administrative systems could not be made effective unless personnel were sufficiently capable of carrying out new tasks, and the public were able to cooperate. Therefore, quick training for the civil service became essential, whereas modern<sup>2</sup> education for the general public was simultaneously, but slowly, expanded. In fact, from 1884 onwards, public education began to grow after it had been implemented since 1871, when a modern school

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1. Chulalongkorn, King of Thailand, Phraratchadamrat Nai Phrabatsomdet Phra Chulachomkloachaoyuhua Song Thalaeng Phra Baromarachāthibāi Kaekhai Kānpokkhrong Phaendin, King Chulalongkorn's Explanation Concerning Reforms in the Governmental Administration (Bangkok: published under the Royal Patronage of King Prajadhipok to commemorate the death of King Chulalongkorn, Sophonphiphatthanākōn, 2470), pp. 1-2, 57-59.

2. The term "modern" used in relation to education marks the difference between the old monastic education and the new system implemented in and from the reign of King Chulalongkorn, although it is true that the seed of modern education was first planted in the reign of King Mongkut in 1862, when Mrs. Anna Leonowens was hired to teach the royal children in the Grand Palace. In regards to the early development of modern education, Dr. David Wyatt's The Politics of Reform in Thailand is very informative; see Wyatt, op. cit.

was first established in the Royal Palace. In 1892, the first teacher training school for boys was established. The training for girl teacher-students had been carried out in an ordinary girls' school since 1907 before the training school proper was finally established in 1913.<sup>1</sup> In the meantime, Siam began to send her ambassadors to foreign countries and bright young students to be educated abroad, mostly to countries in the West. In 1893, Prince Vajiravudh, who a year later was invested as the Crown Prince, left for England where he finally went to Oxford in 1900.

In order to obtain well-qualified personnel in a number sufficient to fill new jobs, the government, under the leadership of Prince Damrong, the Minister of the Interior, looked for young men regardless of their ethnic origin or family background, but who proved themselves to be "polite, quick-witted, and clever", persuaded them to join the administration, and had them trained to be clerks.<sup>2</sup> In 1899, a proper school for civil service training was finally set up<sup>3</sup>, and in 1916 the Civil Service School was developed

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1. Ministry of Education, Prawat Krasuang Suktasāthikān 2435-2507, pp. 101-107.

2. M. 13/6: Rai-ngan prachum Thesaphiban r.s. 124, The meeting of the superintendent commissioners in 1905, typescript, p. 14, quoted by Bunnag, op. cit., p. 355.

3. Wyatt, op. cit., pp. 260-262.

into Chulalongkorn University. In 1921, an act was passed whereby the government was to provide elementary education which was to be made compulsory to all children of both sexes between the ages of seven to fourteen; and by 1926, 3,817 out of 4,982 districts throughout the kingdom, were able to and did apply this act.<sup>1</sup>

The clerks working in provincial districts, like those serving in the central administration, were to be provided with opportunities to establish themselves individually in society in which their parents and ancestors used to serve and were normally regarded not as individuals but as collective labour.<sup>2</sup> Thus, as an outcome of the administrative reforms, a new official class of nobility had consequently been caused to form itself.

From the fact that the reforms brought a new hope and new kind of expectation to a greater number of people than ever before, a greater world of possibility was conceived of by members of the group of "the bright young Thais", who helped King Chulalongkorn to make such reforms possible. This new concept was reflected in contemporary fiction. For instance, after Prince Phichitprīchākṇ

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1. Ministry of Education, Prawat Krasuang Sūkṣāthikān, 2435-2507, pp. 265-269.

2. Bunnag, op. cit., pp. 16-18, 148-149, and 355-357.

had returned from his administrative mission to Chiangmai in 1885, he introduced fresh material for imaginative writing.

Two of the four main characters in "Sanuk Nuk", as one can see, were members of the new official class of nobility, precisely a product of the administrative reforms: one - a law clerk whose prospects, as his colleagues see it, are very wide. This law clerk, whose name is Mr. Khem, himself also sees that he has a number of promising choices for his future career. For instance, besides a law court in Bangkok, he might get a job in a provincial town where he could become a public prosecutor or a deputy governor. The other character, Phra Sap, was an officer in the Royal Police Department before he took the Buddhist Lent. He too has a promising future. These two characters as well as their friends regarded these official jobs actually as a means of livelihood. Such an attitude could never have been brought out into the light, and such kinds of offices would have been something beyond the dreams of ordinary men such as a Mr. Khem or Mr. Sap, had the reforms not been taking place - had life had to follow the same old unpromising pattern.

In the old pattern of life, the system of government allowed only those born in the royal family and the nobility to have roles to play in society at the national level<sup>1</sup>; and, a social reputation

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1. See Bunnag, op. cit., pp. 11-16.

had been an unquestioned privilege given generally to them. While these people were enjoying their social privilege as individuals, commoners, on the other hand, had to render them and the government their service collectively, and so did the slaves, but under different conditions.<sup>1</sup> It seemed that in such a social environment, the aspiration to live a better life than that to which they were born existed only outside the consciousness of the majority of the Thais living before the Chulalongkorn period. Everyone then seemed to have lived easily and harmoniously following the rules laid down for them without any question on any subjects.

It was not until external pressures had been felt by the ruling class, and the reforms had been carried out, when law compelled slavery to be abolished; and, commoners might work their ways into being noblemen. As mentioned earlier, commoners who were found "polite, quick-witted, and clever" would be given chances to enter officialdom, and their social status would be raised in terms of the quality of their service,<sup>2</sup> a service which in the old time had to be given as a kind of tax to the nobility as well as to the government. From the new system of administration a new species of the

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1. Ibid., pp. 16-18.

2. Bunnag, op. cit., pp. 148-149.

nobility emerged; their members were made to feel a new sense of security and new hope while serving the government.

The emphasis on the role of common people who make good through the civil service, is indeed a new subject for imaginative writing. Looking back to the Thai literary tradition, one may remember that Thai fiction in the old convention generally tells a story of extraordinary human beings, or non-human beings. For instance, it tells a story of animals, or a story of people who are already at the top of the social hierarchy, i.e. kings, queens, princes, princesses, scholars, mermaids, demons, ascetics, half men-half demon, etc. These kinds of characters monopolized Thai literature, in different proportions, for centuries. Even Khun Chāng Khun Phāen, which is generally regarded as "a story of ordinary people", also tells a story of extraordinary people, the people who were already at the top. Consider the three main characters for example. Khun Chāng was born and lived on a heap of silver and gold; Khun Phāen, on the other hand, was born in the old official class of the nobility; whereas Nāng Phim was the only daughter of a well-to-do merchant. However, it does not do justice to this work if one is to look at the story only from the point where the main characters stand because actually Khun Chāng Khun Phāen presents a panoramic view of the people in the old Thai society. But, compared to the new



trend of characterization being started in "Sanuk Nūk", a marked difference can be seen. In Khun Chāng Khun Phaēn as well as in other works of traditional literature, an emphasis was normally laid on the art of versification and the story, which was generally made up of all kinds of actions of magic and wonder; and characters were created mainly to carry on the conventional plot derived from various ancient sources; and, as such, the individuality of the characters often gave way to the plot. In "Sanuk Nūk" and in other works of modern prose fiction, more emphasis was put on the characters; and, their sentiments, experiences, dreams, problems and the like, made up the story. In traditional literature, characters thought of no social problems nor did they struggle for their own social successes because they were made to have been born already with wealth and social recognition. They were not made to dream of being anything in the future, but trying to marry the persons they loved or predestined to fall in love in the time of peace; and serving the king in the time of war. Therefore, as one sees, bed-chambers, natural scenery and battle fields normally took up a large part of the setting of Thai literature in the old convention. In modern literature, on the other hand, while love still plays an important role, other aspects of fiction change in kind and in degree. An example of such changes can be seen clearly in Lūk Phūchāi.

Mānōt was born poor, but, through modern education he received both in Thailand and abroad, turned out to be a member of an official class of the nobility. His high social status, being a doctor of law at the age of twenty-nine, and promoted to the rank of Phra, as one can see in the novel, was a result of his industrious scholarly life and his being virtuous. And the Thai society, as "Sī Būraphā" saw it, was a promising one for such a good man as Mānōt to build his island of success and happiness in a noble way. It is quite clear that in 1928, the time when Lūk Phūchāi first appeared, a story of ordinary people - of their hardship, their love, their sorrow, etc. - gave a perceptible, positive effect to the readers. Experiences in school-days of a poor boy, his antagonistic attitude against the nobility, or the moral predicaments of a lover, such as those which were depicted in Lūk Phūchāi might have been unacceptable or even rejected, had they existed beyond the imagination of the reading public. Compared to Prince Phichit as a novelist, "Sī Būraphā" lived in a more advanced society, a society in which a greater number of people were exposed to a greater world of knowledge, ideas, opportunities, and possibilities. As far as literature is concerned, the writers in the 1920's had greater freedom to get their works published than in the 1880's. The 1920's was a time when in Thailand publication and journalism were most flourishing. Compared to the time when "Sanuk Nūk" appeared, there were not only more

varieties of periodicals owned by various sorts of people, but there also were a greater number of printing presses. Moreover, King Vajiravudh, a literary man himself, was a sincere advocate of freedom of expression. Although he was a king in the absolute monarchy, arbitrary censorship was unknown in his reign. Writers as well as readers, therefore, enjoyed unlimited freedom of choice for subjects to write about or to read. "Sī Būraphā" himself grew up and wrote in a much different intellectual climate from Prince Phichit. Perhaps because the latter was too revolutionary when he introduced the new form of imaginative writing, and his creative thinking was too progressive for the imagination of his readers to grasp, his characters all disappeared before they were developed further to fulfil their aspiration, perhaps a similar aspiration to that which "Sī Būraphā" 's hero achieved about four decades later. That was after the reading public had been familiar with prose fiction translated and/or adapted from Western literature for about a quarter of a century.

As for Sattrū Khong Chao Lon, the theme of the conflict between the Western way of looking at things, and the traditional Thai way of life taken up by its author clearly showed an aristocratic sensitivity to the cultural change Thailand was undergoing. And, it is clear too that "Dokmai Sot" was in favour of the old Thai tradition. The consciousness of "Dokmai Sot" in this respect can be seen clearly

in her impulse to resist the influx of Western cultures when she intentionally and elaborately introduced and described various aspects of Thai cultures such as ceremonies, moral thinking, and rules of conduct in her later novels.

The sensitivity in regard to cultural conflicts Thailand was undergoing was so strong as to inspire imaginative writers when the Thais' contact with the Western world grew so much closer as it began to touch on family affairs. This theme as one may remember, was first raised in the form of a riddle in 1890 A.D.; and in 1894, the problem was fictionalized in the form of short story.<sup>1</sup> At that time, the conflict was taken much in a humorous way, and no attempt was made either to promote or to counteract either the Western or the Thai cultures. It was not until Huachai Chāi Num appeared in 1918, when the conflict was taken more seriously and a compromise was proposed. But, about a decade later, "Dokmai Sot" made it clear in Sattrū Khong Chao Lon that in regard to the marriage arrangement, the old Thai way is more safe and sound than the Western one.

Of all the three pioneers, Prince Ā-kāt derived his material from a still greater world than that of his contemporaries. Having had an opportunity to view Thailand from abroad, like King Vajiravudh,

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1. See chapter V, pp. 148-153.

Prince Ā-kāt saw his home-land a country which needed further development if she was to be "honoured in the Family of Nations as an equal in every sense of the word". Unless one is exposed to the world at large and sees how people in other countries live, one can hardly develop the comparative thinking which would enable one to see things more clearly as they are. Although Wisūt is, as one may say, partriotic, his patriotism did not make him so blind as to believe that whatever is Thai is the best for the Thais, and by the same token is an object for perpetuation and promotion. Like King Vajiravudh, Prince Ā-kāt saw that some of the old Thai traditions, such as polygamy, should be abolished. The following is an excerpt from a conversation between Wisūt and Ram<sup>4</sup>chuan taken place after Wisūt's mother separated from his father.

"... Honestly, I am one of those who loathe polygamy. I think it is barbarian.<sup>1</sup> It might be fine twenty or thirty years ago. But, now we should look up to Japan and see what caused her progress. India is a hell. Hindu men made their own country a hell. There is such a practice as forcing young girls of eleven to twelve to get married. They kept a harem at home, a kind of decoration - thinking that it is gay. Then they let their home country become a servant of the British because of their own rot."

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1. This term was originally written in a Thai transliteration.

"Do you believe that if our country passed a law to prohibit a man from having more than one wife it would be good for the life of our children and grandchildren?", she asked.

"I am sure about that. Whoever comes from other countries and sees Thailand as she is in this respect would feel disgusted ... And you know it very well yourself how chaotic a family can be when a man has many minor wives." <sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that the reaction against this old institution was motivated by a Western system of value judgement in regard to polygamy. When looking back to literature in the old convention, Khun Chāng Khun Phaēn, for example, one will find that polygamy was accepted as an aspect of the Thai culture. No other writers, even Prince Ā-kāt's contemporaries, have ever raised this topic as a problem to be treated in imaginative writing, except King Vajiravudh. Although King Vajiravudh, Prince Ā-kāt, and "Dokmai Sot" all had direct experiences of being children of a polygamous family, the first two still shared other common experiences which "Dokmai Sot" did not when she wrote her early novels. That is, the experiences of having lived in direct contact with the Western world. It is understandable that the King and Prince Ā-kāt, excluding "Dokmai Sot", shared a common view in regard to polygamy. This aspect of family

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1. Ā-kātdamkoeng, Lakhon Haeng Chiwit, pp. 68-69.

life, apparently, interested the King and Prince Ā-kāt so much, and it was taken so seriously by both of them, that it was brought into their imaginative works. In reality, the King himself tried to set the example of being a monogamist, but failed. And Prince Ā-kāt was a bachelor when he disappeared in 1932. However, a change in a marriage law was made in 1934, two years after the publication of Lakhon Haeng Chiwit, whereby only one wife is legally recognized, and only death or divorce can be a reason for the registration of a second marriage.<sup>1</sup>

It might be true that no-one would accept that Lakhon Haeng Chiwit, Huachai Chai Num, or any particular work of fiction written by King Vajiravudh, brought the attention of the legislators to the problem of polygamy. But, it would be difficult for one to completely deny that the works played no part whatsoever in casting ideas against polygamy before the readers. No-one would deny either that a novel has effects on its readers, as it is generally agreed that the readers, especially those who are young and naive, often attach themselves to their favourite characters in a novel and thus spontaneously become emotionally involved in the experiences, sentiments, attitudes and value systems of their hero or heroine as the

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1. See Thompson, op. cit., p. 684.

case may be. Yet one would find it equally difficult to point out what kind of effects a novel does have on its readers, and eventually on society at large, because this emotive aspect of the novel involves complicated problems of psychology, both individual human psychology and social psychology. Therefore, what is to be considered in the second correlative aspect of the novel and the society is to be limited only to the contribution the novel might pay to the society; and the discussion is to be based chiefly on the three early novels.

From what has been discussed earlier in this chapter, one will see that "Sī Būraphā", "Dokmai Sot" and Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng were all affected in one way or another by the society in which they were born and grew up, which they saw, and wrote about. But, only the aspects which perhaps interested them most were taken up in their work. "Sī Būraphā", having felt encouraged by the new advancement the Thai society offered to its members, created a new type of hero different in significant characteristics from his predecessors and contemporaries. At the end of the story, he placed his hero on top *of the heap* of happiness and social success in the contemporary social context. When the story of Mānōt, who, with a high academic degree from abroad, rose up from being only a son of a humble carpenter to being also Phra Wisutthisatthayān - a high-ranking officer,



was warmly welcomed by the readers, it meant, as pointed out earlier, that at any rate a certain number of Thais shared "Sī Būraphā" 's dream. Thus Lūk Phūchāi in some degree reflected the social interest, attitudes, and dream of the youth of the rising class in the Thai society in the late 1920's. It is helpful to consider the following statements "Sī Būraphā" wrote about Lūk Phūchāi for its fourth edition in 1954, in forming a clearer picture of the relationship between the novel and its social setting.

The novel or literature in general is subjected to history. That is to say it reflects life as it was when it was written ... A novelist generally believes that he portrays life as it really was at the time when his novel was written as well as he possibly could ...

In this essay, "Sī Būraphā" discredited the work of a novelist whose view of reality is limited by what he called "a wrong view" towards the role of the novel in society, an attitude which regards the novel not more than simply a kind of entertainment, and admitted implicitly that his first novel was also written within this limitation. However, although the problem of what is real and what is not in regard to life as it is reflected in a novel can be argued endlessly, one may agree to the point that a novel, to some degree,

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1. "Sī Būraphā", "Kham Thalaeng Khong Phūtaeng", op. cit., pp. 6-7.

reflects social reality as it is conceived of and felt by the novelist himself. It is true that no-one would take Lūk Phūchāi as a kind of historical document, nor the existence of Phra Wisut as representative of a member of the society in the 1920's. But, one may come up with a different view of "Sī Būraphā" 's first novel, if one is to agree with a French critic who wrote under the name of Alain and who saw that,

What is fictitious in a novel is not so much the story as the method by which thought develops into action, a method which never occurs in daily life ... History, with its emphasis on external causes, is dominated by the notion of fatality, whereas there is no fatality in the novel; there, everything is founded on human nature ...<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, the interpretation of the view of this critic made by E. M. Forster should also be considered here in order that one would be better equipped as a critic.

... each human being has two sides, appropriate to history and fiction. All that is observable in a man - that is to say his actions and such of his spiritual existence as can be deduced from his actions - falls into the domain of history. But, his romanceful or romantic side (sa partie romanesque ou romantique) includes 'the pure passions, that is to say the dreams, joys, sorrows and self-communings which politeness or shame prevent him from mentioning; and to express this side of human nature is one of the chief functions of the novel.'<sup>2</sup>

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1. E. M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel (Penguin Books, 1971), p. 54, paraphrased from Système des beaux arts (Paris, 1920), pp. 314-315.

2. Ibid., pp. 53-54.

If the above view is accepted, one might regard Lūk Phūchāi as a kind of history of a "romantic side" of the Thai youth in the 1920's written by a member of the society, the society in which the writer himself grew up, saw, and wrote about. And as such, the novel provided information which would enable one to form a more complete picture of the society than that formed from information provided in history books alone. This is because from the novel, one may be able to feel the sentiments, dreams, aspirations, and the like of the people living in it, and these elements of human society are normally unobtainable from a book of history per se. However, in order to get a complete picture of reality of life or of the society at the time the novel was written, one has to read more than works of one writer, let alone of one novelist. The contribution one might expect from Lūk Phūchāi might be summed up as being of two kinds. One, at the time when it appeared, the novel might possibly have given moral support to ambitious, virtuous and industrious youth of humble families who were to establish themselves in the society. The other, the novel apparently reflects the dream of the Thai youth in the 1920's.

Sattrū Khong Chao Lon, on the other hand, offered a different kind of contribution. Although "Dokmai Sot" and "Sī Būraphā" lived and wrote in and about the same society and the same period of history,

they had very different experiences and interests sufficiently to make different their conception of the same society. In Sattrū Khong Chao Lṅn, as one may remember, "Dṅkmai Sot" was concerned with the cultural interaction of two different value systems in regard to marriage: the Western and the Thai. It might be true that "Dṅkmai Sot" did not intend to make Prasong and Mayuri enemies to symbolize the two different kinds of value systems, nor their marriage a symbol of the compromise between the two cultures. But, it is quite clear that "Dṅkmai Sot", in her awareness of the cultural change Thailand was undergoing, was sceptical about the Western value system that the Thais brought home. Such an awareness one cannot find in "Sī Būraphā" 's novel. Compared to Lūk Phūchāi, Sattrū Khong Chao Lṅn was written with a more specific purpose, that is to give some advice to young readers, especially girls. Although sophisticated readers would not feel so impressed by the messages the writer was trying to communicate, young and naive readers were likely to identify themselves with the heroine, and possibly underwent the similar sentiments and experiences to those of Mayuri's in their imagination. Because life such as that which was depicted here was quite romantic, and the story had a beautiful ending, the latter kind of readers might well feel attached to Mayuri's thought and behaviour. Thus, they possibly absorbed the writer's morality with or without their being conscious about it. In this respect "Dṅkmai Sot" was

far more successful in her later works, especially in Phū Dī (The Genteel), Nūng Nai Rqi (One in a Hundred), and Nī Lae Lōk (This Is the World).

Coming to the question of reality of life which Sattrū Khong Chao Lqn might represent, the writer's own words about the novel should be helpful. In the preface, "Dqkmai Sot" wrote in 1929 that,

... I wrote this story by basing it on the characteristics of those whom I myself have seen, and heard and whom I learnt about from the people I have met ...<sup>1</sup>

However, while her characters might embody the disposition of actual people, life such as that which was portrayed in Sattrū Khong Chao Lqn as a whole remains a kind of that which should be, rather than that which really was. Where one can find such a loyal, forgiving and protective fiancé as Prasong in real life, did not seem to be a question for young and naive readers, who were likely to make believe that there could possibly be one anyway; at least there was one in Sattrū Khong Chao Lqn. "Dqkmai Sot" sometimes was criticized for her choice of subject on the ground that it did not represent the Thai society and its people as they really were. But, such a criticism is always arguable for no-one could expect to see the total reality of a human society portrayed in one single book of fiction. In Sattrū Khong Chao Lqn, however, what one can see most vividly is the reflection of the awareness of cultural changes which Thailand was undergoing in the 1920's.

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1. "Dqkmai Sot", Sattrū Khong Chao Lqn, p, (2).

The Chulalongkorn period represented the formative years of modernization. Under the leadership of King Chulalongkorn, Thailand not only survived as an independent kingdom throughout the crucial period of relentless pressure from Western colonialism, but also in the reign of his successor, Thailand first emerged as an equal member of the Family of Nations - when she joined the Allies and the United States of America to fight in France. During 1917-1918, the Thai flag was flown in Europe; and, when the war ended, Thailand became a founder member of the League of Nations.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, she saw that her treaties with great powers could be revised in more equal terms than before.<sup>2</sup> In spite of the fact that the international status of Thailand looked better politically, her internal affairs still remained relatively unsatisfactory. King Vajiravudh therefore continued his campaign for a new social personality of the people, as one can often see in his imaginative writing. After the reign of King Vajiravudh had ended, one still heard the echo of his ideas concerning the development of new social and intellectual personality of modern Siam. Among the writers of the younger generation, Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng, who was a grand-son of King Chulalongkorn and a

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1. Chula Chakrabongse, op. cit., pp. 288-289, and 300.

2. Dirēk Chaiyanām, Thai Kap Songkhrāmlōk Khrang thi Song, Thailand and the Second World War, Vol. I (Bangkok: Phrae Phitthayā, 2510), pp. 27-28.

nephew of King Vajiravudh, produced a work which echoed most clearly the King's ideas in this regard.

Prince Ā-kāt, after having been in direct contact with other cultures and seen how peoples in other parts of the world lived, developed a critical mind when he viewed his home-land; and he saw the Thai society in a different perspective from both "Dokmai Sot" and "Sī Būraphā". Like his grandfather and uncle, Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng was rather liberal in his patriotism. He saw imperfection in Thai society as he was aware of the fact that what had been traditionally practised was not always necessarily a sufficient token of its practicality and virtue. Besides the problem of polygamy, about which he completely agreed with King Vajiravudh's critical attitude, Prince Ā-kāt, like King Chulalongkorn - who conceived of modern education as the life of modern Siam,<sup>1</sup> was also concerned with this vital core of modernization. In the preface to Phiu Luang Phiu Khāo, in which he described his art of making fiction, Prince Ā-kāt expressed his view on education in relation to his writing motive.

"Education breeds dissatisfaction." The more one knows the more one wants, and that leads to ambition and misery. But, it is education which makes Great Britain the God of the sea whose power extends in all directions, and America the richest and healthiest as they are now. Ambition and misery make the world go forward ... Fate ... enabled me to travel and see many countries. And, after I had returned home, I wished to see Siam (as healthy) as they are. I wish to have had a part in the glory and growth of Siam which is to come in future time ... I have already written one book. Yet I shall write many more, unless I die. I wish that the books I write shall remain forever to be a guide for our children in the next generation so that they will be able to see what is good and what is bad, and to make a virtuous choice for their way of life by themselves ...<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ā-kātdamkoeng, Phiu Luang Phiu Khāo, pp. ๙-๑๑.

In this second and last novel of his, which, as mentioned earlier, is a development and extension of one part of Lakhon Haeng Chiwit, Wisūt, having wished to see his home country grow healthier, reminded his readers that education in Thailand as it was, was not yet perfect, and he pointed out to them where the imperfection in education, as he saw it, lay.

... There is no evidence that in Siam, there has been anyone who wrote a book which could be taken as a lesson to enable our youth to know and to understand the standard and way of living of their country. There has been no lesson to guide them so that they could lead their life in a virtuous way; no lesson to teach them to know themselves so that they would be able to love their nation, religion, and the King in a right way, a way which would bring about progress for the country. Education is the knot of civilization in the world. Simply teaching the people to be able to read and to write alone is much too far from the meaning of the term "education" ...<sup>1</sup>

With his belief in the capability of Thai youth in relation to national progress, Wisūt proposed a means by which he hoped the social ignorance from lack of proper education for the public could be eliminated. He encouraged his readers to help developing an intellectual growth for Siam, a growth which to him was the core of progress, by assuring them that,

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1. Ibid., p. 14.



Siam is a country which can progress most easily. ... "Thai youth" are ready to understand and obey all good advice for the sake of their nation, religion, and their King. What they need most is a set of good books, (the kind) that would enable them to know themselves, to know what is going on in Siam and in other countries, (the kind of books) that would teach them to think, to have minds of their own ...<sup>1</sup>

Although a didactic element is generally strong even in traditional Thai literature, yet such a demand for the development of the ability "to think and to have minds of their own" for Thai youth as this is indeed a new idea, never before proposed by characters in Thai literature. Although freedom of thought and freedom of expression by means of literature and journalism were encouraged by King Vajiravudh by his own practice, the problem concerning the development of the ability to think was somehow overlooked, or at least not emphasized. In Prince Ā-kāt's novel, Wisūt proposed that a set of good books be provided for the youth of Siam in order that they would cultivate from them an ability "to think and to have minds of their own".

Here one will see that from Prince Ā-kāt's novel, the readers were exposed to a different world of possibility, as well as impossibility, provided by an ex-journalist of The Times. The readers were generally fascinated by its uniqueness in that the

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1. Ibid., pp. 15-16.

main part of the story was set abroad. Therefore, it looked rather exotic. However, the description of the physical setting of the story was generally sketchy. On the other hand, the writer laid more emphasis on the ideas which stemmed from his experiences abroad. Those ideas were indeed fresh and stimulating. Ideas concerning social and intellectual aspects of the Thai life such as those had never been emphasized so seriously and intensely in imaginative work before. So, instead of representing or reflecting the current thoughts, dreams and awareness of the Thais in the 1920's, Lakhon Haeng Chīwit reminded the readers of social weaknesses in Thailand, pointed out where the imperfection lay, and proposed a sort of solution for it. The novel, on the whole, can be better taken not as an history of the "romantic side" of Thai youth, but rather as a set of ideas expressed subjectively by a Thai youth of the 1920's.

The early novels, as one may deduce from the discussion in the foregoing pages, revealed a trend in the social interests and attitudes of the public. From the fact that the three main characters, two male and one female, represent three individuals very different in their points of view, their experiences, their concerns, etc., one can see that the Thais were no longer a people who generally conformed only to the two main sources of the value system: one from the Palace; the other from the Buddhist monastery. The presence of diversity of

tastes and attitudes in the Thai society could be inferred from the fact that these three novels: Lūk Phūchāi, Sattrū Khong Chao Lon and Lakhon Haeng Chīwit, despite their differences in significant respects, were all warmly welcomed by their readers. The reaction from the reading public was, at any rate, so positive that their creators were encouraged to step further along the road that led them to becoming very outstanding novelists in Thailand, as well as successful pioneers in this new form of prose fiction.

Prince Phichitprīchākṇ  
 (Krom Luang Phichitprīchākṇ)  
 (1855 - 1909)

Prince Phichitprīchākṇ (Phra Ong Čhao Khakkhanāngkhayukon), the twentieth child of King Mongkut and the second of Čhao Čḥm Māndā Phūng, was born on October 29, 1855.<sup>1</sup> Being only two years younger than King Chulalongkorn, Prince Phichit, a member of the Court Party, was one of his brother's strong arms in the early period of the nation-wide reforms. In 1884, he was posted as High Commissioner to Chiangmai where he introduced a new system of government for the Thai tributary state; in 1891 he was appointed as High Commissioner of Bassac.<sup>2</sup> Apart from his temporary post in the Thai tributary states of the north, Prince Phichit was a director-general of the Supreme Court (sān rapsang chamra khwām dīkā), and was finally appointed as Minister of Justice.<sup>3</sup> He was promoted from the rank and title of "Krom Mān Phichitprīchākṇ", which he earned in 1876, to that of "Krom Luang Phichitprīchākṇ" in 1885.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Rajanubhab, Rāčhasakunlawong, p. 51.

2. Bunnag, op. cit., pp. 32, 104 (to) 109.

3. Rajanubhab, Rāčhasakunlawong.

4. Rāčhabandittayasaphā, op. cit., pp. 134-135 and 177-178.

Prince Phichitprīchākṇ was not only an administrator and lawyer of distinction, but also an outstanding man of letters. At the early age of twenty, Prince Phichit was already involved in journalism when he joined the editorial staff of The Court-Khāo Rāṭchakān. He was one of the three founders of Wachirayān Library in 1880; and, when the first executive committee was established in 1881, Prince Phichit became its first Vice-chairman, and a Chairman in 1883. After returning from his administrative mission to the Thai tributary states in the north in 1885, he was elected a Chairman for the second round. This time he modified the periodicals of the Library which resulted in the issues of Wachirayān Wisēt weekly, and Wachirayān monthly.<sup>1</sup> Prince Phichitprīchākṇ died on March 11, 1909.

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1. Rajanubhab, Tamnan Hō Phra Samut, pp. 15-19, 21 and 23.

Prince Bidyalankarana  
(Krom Mūn Bidyalankarana)

"N̄ M̄ S̄"

(1876 - 1945)

Prince Bidyalankarana (Phra Ong Chao Ratchanīchāemcharas), the twenty-second child of Prince Wichaichan and the second of Khun Chom Māndā Liam (Lek), was born in the Front Palace, Bangkok, on January 10, 1876.<sup>1</sup>

- 1886-1891 went to Suan Kulāp Palace School;
- 1893 became an officer in Krasuang Thammakān (the Ministry of Public Instruction);
- 1896 an assistant to an English adviser to the Ministry of Finance;
- 1897 followed King Chulalongkorn to Europe in the King's first state visits;
- 1898 went to Cambridge;
- 1899 was called back to Bangkok to take an office in the Ministry of Finance;
- 1901 issued Lak Witthaya;

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1. Rajanubhab, Rāchhasakunlawong, p. 128.

- 1901 was appointed Palat Krom Thanabat (Deputy-Director to the Department of the Royal Mint);
- 1904 became A-thibadī Krom Krasāpsitthikan (Director of the Department of the Royal Mint);
- 1905 editor of Wachirayān;
- 1907 A-thibadī Krom Truat and Krom Sārabanchī (Director of the Department of Inspection and the Department of Records);
- 1911 a member of the Privy Council;
- 1913 promoted to the rank of Chao Tāng Krom entitled Phra Rāṭchawṛawongthoe Krom Mūn Bidyalankarana;
- 1914 established Krom Sathiti Phayākṇ (The Department of Statistics and Prediction);
- 1916 initiated an experiment on a cooperative system;
- 1921 became Vice-minister of Commerce;
- 1926 Vice-chairman of the literary committee in the Royal Academy (Rāṭchabandittayasaphā);

- 1932 Chairman of the Royal Academy;
- 1933 resigned;
- 1945 died of cerebral thrombosis on July 23, at the age of sixty-nine.

His published works included

<u>Songkhram Russia kap Yipun</u> ( <u>The Russian-Japanese War</u> )	1904
<u>Chotmai Chāngwāng Ram</u>	1906 <sup>1</sup>
Unfinished Story No. 1	1906 <sup>2</sup>
Unfinished Story No. 2	1907 <sup>3</sup>
<u>Sūp Rāchasantbat</u> , a quasi-historical fiction	1910
<u>Phra Non Kham Chan</u> , a narrative poem in chan	1916
<u>Talat Ngoen Tra</u> ( <u>Currency Markets</u> )	1916
<u>Nithan Wētān</u> ( <u>Tales of Wētān</u> )	1918

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1. 2. and 3. These were the years when the works first appeared in Thawi Panya. Many works in the above list were published in magazines in instalments before they were published in book forms in the years shown above.



<u>Kanok Nakhon</u> , a narrative poem in klon ( <u>The Golden City</u> )	1922
Collected Lectures Vol. I	1926
Collected Lectures Vol. II	1929
<u>Pramuan Nithan "Nō Mō Sō"</u> ( <u>Collected Tales of "Nō Mō Sō"</u> ), two volumes	1930
<u>Sām Krung</u> ( <u>The Three Capital Cities</u> ), an historical-based poem in khlung, finished in 1944, and published posthumously.	

The following are the titles of periodicals issued or supported  
by Prince Bidyalankarana:

<u>Lak Witthayā</u>	monthly	1901
<u>Nithrānukhrō</u>	monthly	1907
<u>Pramuanmāk</u>	weekly	1934
<u>Pramuan Sān</u>	weekly	1934
<u>Pramuan Wan</u>	daily	1934 (?)

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Note: The above information comes mostly from "Phra Prawat Phra  
Rāṭchawṗrawongthoe Krom Mūn Bidyalankarana", A Biography  
of Prince Bidyalankarana", of Krom Mūn Bidyalankarana,  
Roeng Khong Nakrian Mūang Angrit, pp. 1-131.

## King Vajiravudh

(1880 - 1925)

King Vajiravudh was the twenty-ninth child of King Chulalongkorn and the second of Queen Saowabha, born in the Royal Palace, Bangkok, on January 1, 1880.<sup>1</sup> At the age of 13, Prince Vajiravudh left for England where, in 1894, he was invested the Crown Prince of Siam. In 1897, the Crown Prince Vajiravudh went to the military school at Sandhurst. In 1900, he went to Oxford where he was admitted to Christ Church College. The Crown Prince returned to Thailand in 1902. During King Chulalongkorn's second trip to Europe, the Crown Prince Vajiravudh was appointed the Regent. He succeeded his father three years later, on October 23, 1910.

Apart from being a liberal monarch in the absolute monarchy, King Vajiravudh, who was normally referred to as Rama VI by the Thais, was an artist. The king wrote in both traditions, that is in poetry as well as in prose. His works appeared originally in Thai and in English as well as in translation of both languages.

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1. Rajanubhab, Rāchasakunlawong, p. 80.

His translated works in Thai were normally taken from English, French and Sanskrit literature. His original works in Thai appeared in various forms such as narrative poetry, aphorism, drama - musical as well as spoken, essays, articles, and fiction in prose narrative. In spite of his marked talent as an essayist, King Vajiravudh was more famous in his dramatic works, and was regarded "The Father of Spoken Drama".

Having intended to build a new social personality and develop a new intellectual tradition for the Thais, the subject of his writing touched on various aspects of life such as education, religion, philosophy, politics, history, literature, love, warfare, humour, marriage, etc. His reign was said to have been the time when writers and journalists enjoyed most freedom. He began to show his interest in journalism and writing when he was a student in England. Upon his return to Bangkok, the Crown Prince Vajiravudh founded Thawī Panyā Samosṇ, Thawī Panyā Theatre, and Thawī Panyā, a monthly magazine, all in 1904. And, during 1918-1921, Dusit Samit was issued and circulated weekly. King Vajiravudh died on November 26, 1925, at the age of forty-five. The king left nearly two hundred published works. The following is the list of some of his major works.

Huāchai Chāi Num (The Heart of a Young Man)

Huāchai Nakrop (The Heart of a Warrior)

Madanabādhā, a spoken drama<sup>1</sup>

Malaeng Pong Thong (The Golden Scorpion), translated from Sax Rohmer

Nithān Thahān Rūa (Sailors' Tales)

Nithān Thong In (Tales of Thong In)

Phra Non, a narrative poem

Romeo and Juliet, translated from Shakespeare

Sakun Talā, adapted from Sanskrit literature

Sāwittrī

Songkhram Sūp Rāchasant Poland (The War of the Polish Succession)

Tānchai Thān (As You Like It), translated from Shakespeare

Utara Kuru, an essay

Wēnit Wānit (The Merchant of Venice), translated from Shakespeare

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1. The work is a spoken drama in chan, written both in Thai and in English; but the English version remained unfinished for the King died before it was done. Madanabādhā was one of his most famous and last works.

Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng Raphīphat

(1905 - 1932)

Prince Ā-kātdamkoeng, the sixth child of H.R.H. Prince Raphīphatthanasak, Krom Luang Rajburidirekrit, and Mom Qn, was born on November 19, 1905, in Bangkok.<sup>1</sup> During 1920-1924, after leaving Assumption School, he went to Thepsirin. In 1924, having tried to follow the similar road to his father, who was a Minister of Justice and Minister of Agriculture, an Oxford graduate and a distinguished law scholar, Prince Ā-kāt left for England intending to go for the bar. According to the report of the superintendent of Thai government students of 2467 B.E., in London, Prince Ā-kāt arrived on September 1, 1924. On October 2, he was sent to Captain Fraser at Queen's Cottage, Bexhill-on-Sea for coaching in English, history and French. He returned to London in February 1925 and continued his studies under Mr. Coumbe; he received private tuition in English and Composition from Mr. L. W. T. Cooper at St. John's College, N.16. Prince Ā-kāt took leave from the superintendent's care in March 1925.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Narēt Narōpakon, "Rim Thanon Ron Khaem", Siam Rat, August 11, 2515, p. 6, quoted from Nangsu Ramdap Rāchhasakunlawong.

2. Report of the Superintendent of Siamese Government Students B.E. 2467 (London, 1924) (Typescript).

Prince Ā-kāt, after leaving the United States, returned via Japan to Bangkok in 1928, where he got a job in the Ministry of Public Health<sup>1</sup>. On May 21, 1932, news of his death of Malaria in Hong Kong on May 18 arrived in Bangkok.<sup>2</sup>

Prince Ā-kāt had showed his literary talent and interest in literature and journalism since he was a student at Thepsirin, where he and Kulāp Saīpradit, his classmate, issued a student magazine "Sīthep". He also wrote articles and translated short stories for publication in other magazines, such as Sap Thai, both under pseudonyms - "Worasawēt" and "Nū Āe" - and real name. His major works appeared after he had returned from abroad, where he was said to have been involved in journalism. His publications included Lakhon Haeng Chīwit (The Circus of Life) (1929), Phiu Lūang Phiu Khāo (Yellow Skin White Skin) (1930), Wimān Thalāi (Paradise Crumbled) - a collection of short stories (1931), and Khrop Čhakkrawān - a collection of short stories.

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1. Rančhuan Intharakamhaeng, op. cit., p. 216.

2. "Sī Būraphā", "Chīwit Mōm Čhao Ā-kātdamkoeng Nai Lōk Nangsu", p. 224.

"Dokmai Sot"

(M. L. Bupphā Kunchon Nimmānhēmin)

(1905 - 1963)

"Dokmai Sot" was born in Bangkok on February 17, 1905. Her father, Chao Phrayā Thēwēt-wong-wi-wat (M. R. Lān Kunchon) was a distinguished high ranking officer. The last rank he held was Minister of Agriculture, but he was more well-known to the public in the field of dramatic arts than in his official works. Her mother, Mōm Mālai, was one of the brightest stars in her father's repertory theatre. From the age of five to thirteen, "Dokmai Sot" lived with Mōm Chao Chom, her grand-aunt, in the Royal Palace compound. At the age of thirteen she returned to her father's palace and went to Saint Joseph's Convent, where she was introduced to Western literature, and was most impressed by a French novelist by the name of M. Delly.<sup>1</sup> "Dokmai Sot" finished her high school education majoring in French. After her father had died, when she was eighteen, she was in the care of her eldest half-brother (M. L. Warā Kunchon), who succeeded Chao Phrayā

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1. Somphop Chantharapraphā, Chiwit Dut Thep Niyāi Khong "Dokmai Sot", A Fairy-tale-like Life of "Dokmai Sot" (Bangkok: Phrae Phitthaya, 2509), p. 24.

Thēwēt's title of the nobility. At the age of twenty-two "Dokmai Sot" began to send her imaginative work for publication in magazines. In December 1927 her short play "Dī F̄" was published in Thai Khasem. Then, during June-September 1929, came Sattrū Khong Čhao Løn. From then to 1940 "Dokmai Sot" produced approximately one novel each year. Her works consist mostly of novels and short stories.

<u>Sattrū Khong Čhao Løn</u> ( <u>Her Enemy</u> )	1929
<u>Nit</u>	1929
<u>Khwāmphit Khrang Raek</u> ( <u>The First Mistake</u> )	1930
<u>Karma Kao</u> ( <u>Karma in the Past</u> )	1932
<u>Sām Čhāi</u> ( <u>The Three Men</u> )	1933
<u>Nung Nai Røi</u> ( <u>One in a Hundred</u> )	1934
<u>Ubathēt</u> ( <u>The Accident</u> )	1934
<u>Čhai Čhana Khong Luang Narūbān</u> ( <u>The Triumph of Luang Narūbān</u> )	1935
<u>Phū Dī</u> ( <u>The Genteel</u> )	1937
<u>Nanthawan</u>	?
<u>Nī Lae Løk</u> ( <u>This Is the World</u> )	1940
<u>Phū Klin</u> A collection of short stories	
<u>Busabāban</u> A collection of short stories	
The Unfinished novel	



"Dokmai Sot" wrote the first draft of her new novel in 1949, but due to her poor health the work remained unfinished, although it had been revised and re-written during 1953-1954.

"Dokmai Sot" married Sukit Nimmānhēmin, who later became an outstanding politician, in San Francisco in September 1954. She died a wife of a Thai ambassador to India, in New Delhi, on January 17, 1963, at the age of fifty-eight.

During her life-time, "Dokmai Sot" had a chance to see her works studied in schools, her novel Nī Lae Lōk (This Is the World) won an international award, and one of her short stories - "Phonlamuang Dī" ("The Good Citizen") - was selected to be translated into English by The Canberra Fellowship of Australian Writers; the work was published in SPAN in 1958.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid., p. 62.

"Sī Būraphā"

(Kulāp Saīpradit)

Of all the three pioneers, only "Sī Būraphā" is still living. Perhaps because of this reason, his biography is difficult to obtain yet. What one knows of him is not about his family background but about his education and his work. He went to Thepsirin and was in the same class as Prince Ā-kāt from 1920-1924, when the latter left for England. During his high school days, "Sī Būraphā" and Prince Ā-kāt shared a common interest in writing and journalism. After finishing his education at Thepsirin, "Sī Būraphā" joined the editorial staff of Sēnā Sūksā Lae Phāe Witthayāsāt, in which his short stories were published intermittently during 1926-1928. In 1927, he set up a publishing office, Samnak Phim Nāi Thēp Prīchā. In 1929, "Sī Būraphā" became a founder and the editor of Suphāp Burut (The Gentleman), a fortnightly magazine. From then onwards, "Sī Būraphā" became involved more and more deeply in journalism. He was an editor or manager of a number of magazines and newspapers, such as Prachā Mit (The People's Friend), Thai Mai (The New Thai), Prachā Chāt (The Nation), the last of which was under the patronage of Prince Wanwaithayākṇ. In 1932, when he was the editor of Prachā Chāt, "Sī Būraphā" was successful in encouraging his friend, "Yākhṇp"

(Chot Phraēphan) to write fiction. It was in Prachā Chāt where the first part of Phū Chana Siphit, the longest epic-romance in prose, was serialized for the first time in 1932.

Having been introduced to Dr. Pridi Phanomyong, (Luang Pradit Manūtham), "Sī Būraphā" was deeply impressed by the latter's political ideology. And, Prachā Chāt became the means by which he often expressed his political views. In his novel, Songkhrām Chīwit (The War of Life), "Sī Būraphā" 's unconventional political inclination clearly overshadowed its theme; and aphorism which he often used to introduce a new chapter was also written with a political undertone. But in Khāng Lang Phāp (Behind the Painted Picture), "Sī Būraphā", as a literary artist, could free himself from the command of his newly cultivated political ideology, which took over his hand when he wrote Songkhrām Chīwit. However, during the 1950's he left Bangkok and lived in exile abroad.

"Sī Būraphā" 's literary works include short stories and novels, the most well-known of which are Khāng Lang Phāp and Songkhrām Chīwit.

1928	<u>Lūk Phūchāi</u>	Thēp Prīchā Publishing Office
1928	<u>Mān Manut</u> ( <u>Human's Enemy</u> )	" "
1929	<u>Prāp Phayot</u> ( <u>The Taming of the Shrew</u> )	<u>Suphāp Burut</u>

- 1929 Phachon Bāp (Facing Sin) Suphāp Burut
- 1930 Saen Rak Saen Khaen (The Vigour of Love and Hate) Thai Mai
- 1932 Songkhram Chīwit (The War of Life) ?
- 1937 Khāng Lang Phāp (Behind the Painted Picture) Prachā Chāt
- Lōk Sanniwāt - a collection of short stories
- Huachai Prātthana (The Heart Desires) - a collection of short stories

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