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COVER

"NANG-YAI BANGKOK SERIES 2" (MIXED MEDIA AND ACRYLIC ON PLYWOOD)
1990. BY KAMOL TASSANANCHALEE.

Prasat Kamphaeng Yai in Northeastern Thailand

BY PROFESSOR M.C. SUBHADRADIS DISKUL

P_{rasat}

Kamphaeng Yai is situated in Amphoe Utumphorn Phisai in the province of Sisaket, northeastern Thailand. It is a Khmer monument. According to one inscription on a door-jamb of an eastern *gopara* (gate) of the eastern gallery surrounding the monument, it was founded in Hinduism. The inscription is composed of about 35 lines in Khmer language which reports the purchase of pieces of land in 1042 A.D. by Vra Kamraten An Sivadasa and three other dignitaries. These pieces of land were marked and dedicated to the sanctuary of Vrddhesvara (Siva). After listing the names of the slaves dedicated to the sanctuary, the text enumerates the animals and objects given to the former owners, by those who bought the land. (G. Coedes: *Inscriptions du Cambodge* Vol. VI, pp. 251-253, 1954).

Prasat Kamphaeng Yai is built on a strange plan (fig. 1). In the front stand three towers facing east and built on the same laterite base (fig. 2). The walls of the central *prasat* are composed of stone and brick which are characteristic of Khmer temples in northeastern Thailand (fig. 3). In the back stands one isolated tower of brick instead of two, in the south. The north tower might not have yet been built or perhaps has already collapsed. On the east of the plan exist two so-called libraries facing west towards the main *prang*. All the towers are surrounded by rectangular laterite galleries 54x62 meters, provided with four gates, each in one direction of the compass (fig. 4).

Though the restoration of this Prasat Kamphaeng Yai by the Thai Fine Arts Department has created much controversy, during the excavation many sculptures on stone pediments and lintels were discovered, which I will describe here.

As has been said the walls of the central *prang* are composed of brick and sandstone (fig. 3). The lintel on the east side had not yet been carved but on the pediment exist some figures which are difficult to identify. The central figure might represent a dancing Siva, to whom the monument is dedicated. The

door-columns, the pilasters on both sides of the main doorway and the base of the building are well-carved. The inner lintel of this main shrine is a superb piece of work, perhaps one of the best in Thailand, featuring Indra, the god of the east, riding a one-headed elephant towards the south (fig. 5). Beneath Indra is depicted the Kala (a monster face without the lower jaw) head flanked by two standing lions

remains a reminiscence of a vertical floral pendant this lintel should be attributed to the early 11th century as denoted in the stone inscription.

The pediment on the south side of the main *prang* depicts Siva riding on the bull Nandin and flanked by attendants. There is a most extraordinary lintel underneath. This lintel depicts in a garden at Langka, Hanuman, the white chief monkey in the Ramayana epic, presenting a ring to Sita, the heroine, who is accompanied by Trijata, depicted here with three heads and a female attendant (fig. 6). This scene has been carved on pediments in Cambodia but this is the first time it has been discovered in Thailand. Below the scene exists a face of Kala who spews a garland towards each side of the lintel. This design can be again dated to the Khmer Baphuon style (11th century).

The western lintel is difficult to interpret. The central motif over the face of Kala might represent the fighting scene of Krishna. The pediment on the northern side depicts Krishna holding Mount Govardhana with his right hand, in order to protect the cows and the cowherds from the rain caused by Indra (fig. 7). The uplifted right hand might again be regarded as unusual because Krishna would normally be depicted holding the mountain with his left

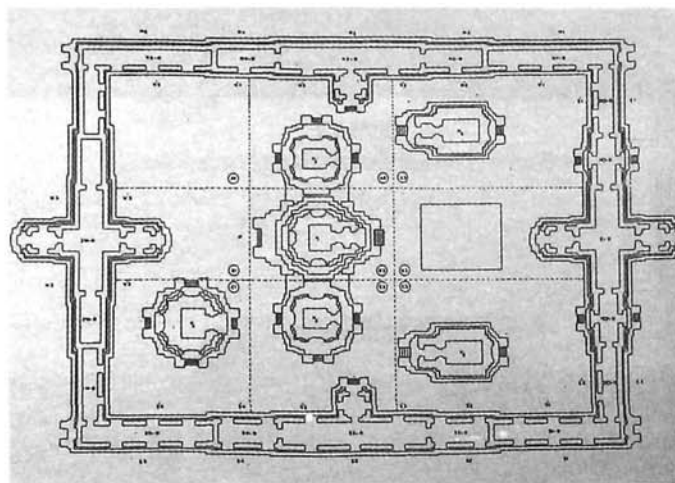


FIGURE 1
PLAN OF PRASAT KAMPHAENG YAI

spewing a garland each. These two garlands terminate into the mouth of a standing lion at each end of the lintel. Indra is flanked by three personages holding regalia. A *garuda* stands inside a frame on each side of Indra. The whole lintel is decorated with scrolls and foliage motifs. Judging from the designs this lintel should belong to the Khmer Baphuon style (11th century A.D.). And since at its quarter there



FIGURE 2
FRONT PART OF PRASAT KAMPHAENG YAI



FIGURE 3
WALL OF THE MAIN SHRINE OF PRASAT
KAMPHAENG YAI



FIGURE 4
LATERITE GALLERIES AROUND PRASAT KAMPHAENG
YAI



FIGURE 5
INNER LINTEL OF THE MAIN PRANG REPRESENTING
INDRA.



FIGURE 6
 LINTEL ON THE SOUTH OF THE MAIN PRANG DEPICTING HANUMAN
 PRESENTING A RING TO SITA.



FIGURE 7
 NORTHERN PEDIMENT OF THE MAIN PRANG REPRESENTING KRISHNA
 UPHOLDING MOUNT GOVARDHANA.



FIGURE 8
WESTERN LINTEL OF THE NORTHERN LIBRARY
DEPICTING THE STORY OF KRISHNA.



FIGURE 9
INNER LINTEL OF THE NORTHERN LIBRARY
DEPICTING RECLINING VISHNU.



FIGURE 10
WESTERN LINTEL OF THE SOUTHERN LIBRARY
DEPICTING THE SCENE OF GAJALAKSHMI.



FIGURE 11
INNER LINTEL OF THE SOUTHERN LIBRARY DEPICTING SIVA AND UMA
RIDING ON THE BULL NANDIN.



FIGURE 12
STONE SEATED BUDDHA IMAGE
PROTECTED BY THE NAGA UNEARTHED IN
FRONT OF THE CENTRAL MAIN SHRINE OF
PRASAT KAMPHAENG YAI. NOW
INSTALLED IN THE NEW UBOSOTH.

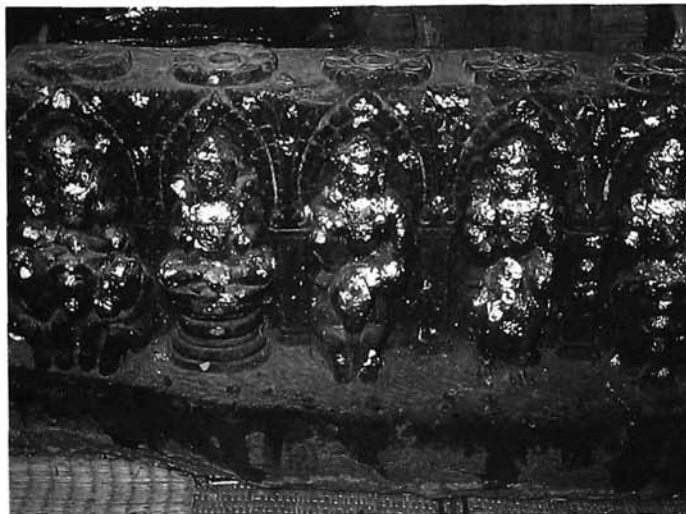


FIGURE 13
STONE SCULPTURE REPRESENTING NINE DIVINITIES (HERE ONLY FIVE FROM
THE RIGHT CAN BE SEEN). PRESERVED IN THE NEW UBOSOTH.

hand. The scene on the lintel below in the upper register above the Kala face and floral motifs, is quite difficult to identify. It probably represents a scene from Krishna's life.

The northern *prang* of this group is built of brick and is smaller than the central one. The single lintel on its east side is quite difficult to identify because of its dilapidated state. One can however say that it belongs to the 11th century. As for the eastern lintel of the southern *prang* one can describe the same condition.

The isolated southern *prang* at the back of the three above-mentioned is also smaller than the main central *prang* in front and its only eastern lintel is not yet carved.

Now we come to the northern rectangular library which is built of brick and has a porch on its west side. The stone lintel of the porch represents in the centre Krishna fighting with the king of the Hayas (horses) upon the face of Kala, who spews two garlands, one on each side of the lintel (fig. 8). A deity in a flying position appears on each upper side. This lintel again dates back to the 11th century. The most interesting lintel is located in the inner room and depicts Vishnu reclining upon the five-headed Naga. He is being tended by three wives and two male attendants on his right. Brahma is seated upon a lotus which comes out from the navel of Vishnu. One interesting characteristic is that Vishnu is using his feet to push up the breasts of his second wife, which might be Bhumi

Devi. This scene might be called erotic. This aspect never figures in Khmer art in Cambodia (fig. 9).

The front lintel of the porch of the library on the southern side represents the scene of Gajalakshmi. Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu, is seated on a throne and being sprinkled with lustral water by two elephants (fig. 10). This scene surmounts the face of Kala who as usual spews two garlands. There is a dancing figure at each of the upper quarters of the lintel. Two seated figures are also depicted, each at the upper corner of the scene. This Gajalakshmi representation on a lintel can be reckoned as the first one ever found in Thailand. The inner lintel represents Siva and Uma riding on the bull Nandin. They are flanked by five seated attendants both on the right and the left. These attendants are holding *religia* for the god (fig. 11).

As has been mentioned, this temple was originally founded in Hinduism but during the reign of King Jayavarman VII (late 12th - early 13th centuries) who practised Mahayana Buddhism, this Hindu sanctuary was probably converted into a Buddhist shrine. At one time the Buddhist monastery that moved into the Prasat Kamphaeng Yai site at a later date built a *vihara* in front of the main central *prang* inside the surrounding galleries. A seated stone Buddha image protected by the Naga 1.33 m. high was unearthed (fig. 12). The effigy belongs to the Khmer Bayon style of King Jayavarman VII so it can be surmised that the Prasat Kamphaeng Yai Hindu shrine was converted into

a Buddhist monastery during that period. The statue is now preserved in the new *ubosoth* built outside the laterite galleries on the east side. Unfortunately it is all covered with gold leaves.

There is another interesting stone sculpture kept in the new *ubosoth*. This piece depicts nine divinities riding on their mounts, in a row. Unfortunately they are again covered with gold leaves. One can however perceive that there are four planets, two at each end. The right side represents the gods of the sun and the moon and the left side Rahu and Ketu. The five gods of the directions are in the centre led by Indra, the god of the east, riding on the elephant in the middle (fig. 13). This rectangular piece shows clearly that it is not a lintel. Apart from a projecting part at the bottom it also has a lotus carved above each head of the divinity. It is probably a votive offering of the same kind of sculpture with an inscription on it discovered at Prasat Ak Yum in Cambodia. (J. Boisselier: *Manuel d'Archeologie*, Tome 1, Le Cambodge, pp. 292-293, 1966).

At Prasat Kamphaeng Yai was also recently discovered an important bronze image of a *dvarapala* (door-guardian) 1.84 m. high near the southern gate of the gallery. Those who are interested in this statue should read the article of the same writer entitled "Thailand: Recent Finds at the Sanctuary of Kamphaeng Yai" in *SPAFA DIGEST*, Vol. XI No. 2, 1990, pp. 2-6. The statue also dates back to the 11th century.

Ancient Textiles in Thailand

BY CHIRAPORN ARANYANAK

The date in which spinning and weaving were invented lines too far into prehistory for any early remains to have survived. The materials being organic, all early clothing would have perished within a very short period of their manufacture. The climate in Thailand is too moist and warm to suit their preservation. Only some small hardy fragments of textiles have survived this difficult passage.

It is generally believed that people in the earliest Palaeolithic Age in Thailand did not know how to weave. They might have covered their bodies with animal skins, grasses, leaves and the barks of certain trees. Several rock paintings dated 3000 - 4000 B.C. show that these people did not go naked. They covered their bodies from waist down with small pieces of unknown fabric.

Archaeological excavations in Thailand yield some interesting finds indicating the existence of textile related cord technology evolving in the Stone Age. It is widely assumed that ropes, mats and baskets preceded textiles. The local Stone Age people knew how to make rope from strands of animal or plant fiber. They knew that by twisting them together, their strength and flexibility increased. At the earliest age they might have utilized grasses, reeds, twigs and coarse fibers from local plants. And at a later date they must have discovered softer fibers more suitable for fabric weaving.

Various excavation sites in Thailand have yielded an abundance of cord-marked pottery. A number of prehistoric earthenware and potsherd pieces were carefully examined to study the cord-impressions intentionally produced on them as a

form of pottery decoration. By twisting the cords, spirals were created. The raw material was rolled between the fingers, between the palms of the hands, or between the fingers and the thigh or the cheek. The spiral added strength and elasticity to the cords. The cord could have been wound around a type of beater, or was pressed directly on to the surface of the pot.



STONE BARK BEATER FROM SOUTHERN THAILAND

These cord-marked impressions on pottery have given us valuable information concerning the direction of twisting, dimension, and type of raw material. The latter is actually difficult to identify but occasionally the exact species of reeds and grasses have been identified.

The earliest cord-marked pottery were those found in "Spirit Cave" in Maehongson Province, dated around the 6th millennium. The earliest

evidence of basketry to date comes from Ban Chiang. A basket-impressed pot which dates back to 3000 - 2300 years was found. Significantly the form of interlacing in two directional plaits is closely related to the weaving technique.

We do know that bark cloth was widely used since the Neolithic Age. Archaeological excavations throughout the country have yielded finds attesting to the existence of this type of fabric making. Stone bark beaters appear at this time. Eight stone bark beaters were discovered in central, northeastern, and southern Thailand. Most of these were undatable surface finds. Two were excavated from a cave site in Surat Thani Province dating back to 3,500 - 4,000 years.

Bark cloth was made by soaking the inner bark of suitable trees in water and beating the strips with a special wooden or a stone mallet-like implement. Bark cloth continues to be produced by traditional methods in several islands in the Pacific. The ancient Chinese also used bark cloth prepared from paper-mulberry. It is probable that the paper-making process originated from the bark cloth beating process.

All stone bark beaters discovered in Thailand are physically similar to those found in Malaysia, Indonesia

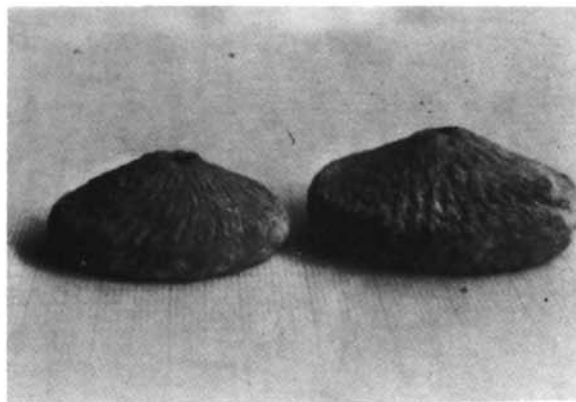
and in the Pacific regions. It is possible that wooden bark beaters were also used, although none have been discovered.

Pottery spindle-whorls appear in Neolithic settlements by at least 2000 BC. These finds indicate a developed textile technology by this time. The spindle-whorl is the oldest and one of the most efficient devices for the production of yarns. The Neolithic people invented it to spin yarn. In order to strengthen the yarn it has to be twisted, that is, spun, and the harder the twist, the stronger the thread.

The hand-spindle, which consists of a rod and a whorl, is a simple instrument for spinning and twisting yarn. The whorl can be made of stone, ceramic, wood, shell or other materials which are heavier than the rod. It serves as a fly-wheel to keep the rod rotating so as to twist the thread material already shaped by the hands of the spinner. To work well the hand-spindle needs a symmetrical whorl and vertical perforations at the exact centre. The size, shape and weight of a spindle-whorl and length of the spindle-rod affect the fineness and strength of the fibers being spun into yarn. There is also a relationship between the weight of the whorl, frequency of rotation and working efficiency. These primitive people knew that small whorls are used for

very fine yarns, while heavier whorls are used for doubling yarns into thread.

The pottery spindle-whorls found in Thailand vary in shape and size. They comprise bead type, truncated cone type, round cone-shaped type, double trapezium type, trapezium type, disc type, lozenge type, as well as one with a bow-shaped rim.



POTTERY SPINDLE WHORLS

Some are decorated on the surface with simple incised patterns made of pottery clay. Their sizes and shapes are similar, especially spindle-whorls from the Neolithic sites, to those found in ancient China.

We have been fortunate enough to find textile fragments from pre-historic and historic sites although the climate has been very severe on their survival. Most were found on bronze tools and ornaments. Only a

few specimens were found on iron tools or in the soil.

It is believed that after burial, textiles were placed in direct contact with metals in such manner as covering, or wrapping. Certain traces of fabric may survive when placed beside copper, silver or iron, which deposit corrosion by-products on the fabric. The corrosion by-products would have been absorbed by threads and then hardened. The surface structure of the fabric is preserved, although the actual fiber material is destroyed. For example copper salts from oxidized bronze objects have acted as disinfectants thus preserving a piece of fabric with which the object was originally associated.

In earlier excavations any such fragments had passed unnoticed. More recently it has been found that fragments neglected and near destruction can in fact be sufficiently salvaged to benefit research.

Approximately 1,500 bronze and iron artifacts from archaeological sites belonging to the Division of National Museums and from several private collectors were carefully examined. Magnifying lenses and a stereo-microscope were used to search for traces of textile fragments or fibers in a preliminary sweep.

Many prehistoric sites in the northeast of Thailand yielded an impressive number of textile finds. Unfortunately, most of these fabrics were found on illegally excavated objects which give no valuable information about their prehistoric context and dates. We can only surmise that those objects were produced during the Metal Age.

Major finds of textiles were located mostly in the northeast; the rest located in central Thailand. These sites include: Ban Chiang, Bang Phak Top, Ban Kut Kwang Soi, Ban Na Di, in Udon Thani Province; Ban Don Tan in Nakhon Panom Province; Ban Than Prasat in Nakhon Ratchasima Province; Ban Don Ta Phet in Kanchanaburi Province; the Khae and Tha Luang in Lopburi Province; Chom Bung in Ratchaburi Province; Khok Phanom Di in Chonburi Province; the "ceramic site" at Tak Province; and monumental sites at Sukhothai.

The remains of fabric impressions on most bronze objects show coarse and open weaving. Some objects exhibit signs of wrapping. Other objects, particularly weapons, appear to have been placed on or under fabric, as often only one face would have fabric impressions. Certain fabrics have also been found on the upper parts of vessels implying some sort

of covering.

One hundred and forty-two remnants of textiles were retrieved from the search. These textile fibers were cataloged and extensively investigated further by physical and chemical methods. Investigations of textile fibers were made by using stereo microscope, biological microscope, polarizing microscope



TEXTILE FRAGMENTS FROM PREHISTORIC SITES IN NORTHEASTERN THAILAND

and electron microscope. Longitudinal sections as well as cross sections of the fibers were carefully prepared and examined. A series of microphotographs were taken of these specimens to compare with modern examples of textile fibers. Chemical tests with reagents and reference samples were used to identify the fibers. Detailed instrumental analyses using x-ray differential, differential thermal analyzer, and x-ray microanalyzer,

were also employed.

Studies showed that there was no evidence of dyeing material on most specimens with the exception of a few specimens from historic sites. Most prehistoric fabrics had coarse plain weaves with count vary from 10 x 6 to 14 x 12 threads per square centimetre. Historic fabrics mostly comprise a finer plain weave with count vary from 20 x 14 to 28 x 18 threads per square centimetre. Most are fine, evenly spun and openly woven. The textile fragments showed no characteristic or consistent use of warp and weft.

Of the 142 remnants of textiles, 96 could be identified. The rest were unidentifiable because the whole thread had been destroyed and replaced by corrosion products. Textile fibers unearthed from prehistoric sites in Thailand were identified as hemp,

cotton, banana fiber and asbestos. The majority comprise hemp and cotton. Most textile fibers from historic sites comprise cotton. Only one specimen from the Portuguese cemetery (Ayutthaya period) was identified as silk.

Hemp comes from the plant called *Cannabis sativa*, which is a member of the *Moraceae* family. Sometimes it is called true hemp. Records indicate that hemp fiber was used

for rope and fabric making in China, Korea, Japan, Persia and other parts of the Near East since prehistoric times. It is still used by certain ethnic groups in southern China and northern Southeast Asia.

We can say that cotton also has been used for clothing in Thailand since prehistoric times. Several textile fragments from Ban Chiang and other prehistoric sites were identified as cotton. The cultivation of cotton plants might have come from India. Their use might have occurred later than hemp. As a spinning fiber, cotton is softer and finer than hemp and also easier to prepare and to dye. It is possible that hemp was superseded by cotton. Eventually, cotton became widely grown throughout Thailand for use in home-spinning. The traditional technology is still practised by some Thais and certain ethnic groups today. Most are woven at home for personal consumption.

There is no evidence to indicate that Thai cotton cloth was exported among other goods from Thailand. The quality of Thai cotton cloth was not as refined as the more colorful Indian cotton. Indian cottons were highly admired and desired.

The development of silk and sericulture in Thailand is difficult to

reconstruct since there is neither textual evidence nor archaeological evidence to be found. We only know that sericulture has long been practiced in northern and northeastern Thailand.

If we compare silkworm strains we see a wide variation from region to region. Thai silkworms are similar to those raised in Laos, Cambodia,



TEXTILE FRAGMENTS FROM PREHISTORIC
SITES IN NORTHEASTERN THAILAND

Vietnam and South China. They are quite distinct from the original Chinese strains which have white elongated cocoons. The Chinese silkworms produce two generations in one year; they are bivoltine. The silk produced is white and fine in texture. The silkworms raised in Thailand comprise various strains of mulberry silkworms or *Bombyx mori*. They come from the four sleep varieties and are polyvoltine, which reproduce several times

annually. The cocoons are small and yellow. Their silk is soft and shiny, but coarser than the Chinese and Japanese varieties.

The most common Indian strains have green cocoons. They are also polyvoltine. In Europe the commonly reared silkworms produce only one generation during the year; these are monovoltine. These regional variations are affected by climatic conditions. In tropical and sub-tropical climates where mulberry leaves are available all year round, bivoltine or polyvoltine silkworms are usual. In temperate or cold climates only two generations, spring and autumn silkworms, are raised since mulberry leaves do not grow in the cold.

Chinese records document that the silk technology of south China was also quite distinct from that of

the north which was more advanced in quality and decoration. Imported Chinese silk and yarns came from the north. Fabrics produced from wild silkworms have also been used in northern China and India. These wild silkworms live on different kinds of oak trees. The fabric produced from these silkworm is generally termed "tussal". In Thailand wild silkworms are extremely rare.



TEXTILE FRAGMENTS FROM PREHISTORIC
SITES IN NORTHEASTERN THAILAND



TEXTILE FRAGMENTS FROM PREHISTORIC
SITES IN NORTHEASTERN THAILAND

Many of the traditional tools and containers used for sericulture and weaving by the local people, such as silkworm trays and baskets, hand driven silk reels and looms, are similar to those used in Laos and South China.

Silk fabrics woven by northeastern Thais have plain or figured weaving or resist dyeing. The dyed and woven textiles have common motifs. Mythical and real animals, birds, abstract floral and geometric forms are the most familiar designs. Metallic threads of gold and silver have also been used. These Thai silks are similar to Lao textiles. It is possible that the Thais learned some techniques from the Lao or Tai people. Still, the origin of their technique is still unclear.

The influx of highly-prized fabrics from China and India via the maritime trade route cut the production of local textiles, especially silk. The Thais particularly welcomed this change however since their Buddhist faith taught against the killing of all life; the silkworms having to be killed during the reeling process.

Cities increasingly favored cloth imported from China and India. These were admired by members of the royal family, court officials, the well-to-do, not least the traders. Ayutthaya and other cities along the Gulf of Thailand developed local markets for silk from China and varieties of cloth from India. Some local weavers in the south reveal that their elaborate weaving

techniques today originated from the Chinese and Indian immigrants of the maritime trade route.

World War II further disrupted traditional practices. Fewer silk weavers held on to their age-old skills when the Thai government after the war, proclaimed a westernized dress code. Gradually traditionally worn silks lost their relevance.

Today, these once humble textile crafts have won newfound esteem. Revived and readily accepted by modern tastes and fashions Thai silk is successfully promoted worldwide. And the traditional weavers who have survived to this day still come from the same ethnic groups in the north and northeast of Thailand.

Traditional Values in Contemporary Thai Art

BY ANUVIT CHARERNSUPKUL
TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH BY
DEN WASIKSIRI

"To appease the layman's anxiety,

it is important to understand that if a Thai (or any artist belonging to a distinct ethnic group) does not purposely imitate works of foreign artists, he will always express, under any new style, the individuality of his race which is formed by peculiar nature, temperament, climate, religion, atavistic feelings and thoughts, and other factors.

...At the same time, we have not overlooked the fact that western art embodies both the spirit of the modern age as well as peculiarities of Asian, African

and old American art. Under the enquiring mind of the westerner, the spatial understanding of the Chinese and Japanese painting, the warmth and vitality of Indian art and the expressive works of Africa and America have been fused in a universal conception reflecting the universal human soul.

...If sincerely expressed, a work done by a Thai or, by any other artist must be different from one made by a European. The difference will correspond to the individuality of the race."¹

The above extracts were taken from "Contemporary Art in Thailand" written in 1959 by Prof. Silpa Bhirasri (C. Feroci), who is considered to be the father of modern art in Thailand. It was perhaps due to such thoughts, that when the Academy of Fine Arts, which later became Silpakorn University, was founded in 1932 (led by Prof. Silpa himself), it was prescribed into the syllabus that students were required to study Thai architecture, arts, and crafts, in each week.

In 1949, sixteen years after the introduction of western style art education, the first national exhibition was held. It was then, that works of art produced along the lines of Prof. Silpa's teachings were displayed to the public. Although the second exhibition held the following year was described by reviewer M.R. Kukrit Pramoj (an intellectual and a politician) as consisting mostly of works which imitated the style of western artists, lacked originality and any individual technique, Prof. Silpa defended the works by citing the universality of certain influences.³

Along with the exploration of paintings in the styles of impressionism and cubism (1959-64)⁴, artists of the first generation were also developing a modern Thai style.

Painters of this pioneering period chose subjects familiar to them. Festivals and daily activities reflecting the spirit of simple folk communities such as "Songkran" (1956) by Chalood Nimsamer (fig. 1),

or "Gathering the Sugar-palm Juice" (1957)⁵, contrasted to the formal mural paintings of the past.

Angkarn Kalyanpongse, on the other hand, chose to hold firmly onto traditional subject matter. His works were inspired by the "Tri-Phum-Thai Buddhist Cosmology Text"⁶ in the spirit of the Ayuthaya school (14-18th centuries)⁷.

Near the end of this first generation, Damrong Wonguparaj presented a series of paintings in tempera which depicted scenes of the peace and tranquility of northern village life (1959), (fig. 2). The series was to become his archetypal style so personal to him because it captured the heart of the culture of his hometown⁸.

From the first to the 14th National Exhibition of Art (1949-63), sculptor Khien Yimsiri participated without fail. His acclaimed works earned him recognition. He was influenced by the classical Buddha images of the Sukhothai school (13-14th centuries), expressing subtle gestures through stable forms. Khien did not confine himself strictly to the traditional style, but used it as a source of inspiration for producing international style contemporary works. This can be seen for example, from the entry under the title of "The Unknown Political Prisoner" he submitted to the Tate Gallery of London in a competition in 1955. From entries submitted by up to 5,000 artists from all over the world⁹, Khien's passed into the final round of judging, and was selected to go on exhibit along with 146 other works. (The English

sculptor Reg Butler took the top award¹⁰).

His integration of international style and traditional Sukhothai style is an example of sculptures in the modern Thai mannerism that developed around 1956-57, which can be seen in his works "The Family" (1956) and "Two Sisters" (1957), (fig. 3).

Further possible developments in modern Thai sculpture came to a halt with Khien's death in 1971. His works covering the span of 14 years belong to the first generation of modern Thai artists.

In contrast to Khien's style, another artist, Swaeng Songmangmee, in the 2nd and 3rd Exhibitions (1950-51) created much controversy. His sculptures of nudes in the western style provoked strong criticism¹¹.

Two other sculptors who adopted the modern Thai style, were Chitt Rienpracha and Sittidej Saenghiran. Chitt produced works mainly in the decorative arts or crafts tradition.¹² Sittidej produced portraits of traditional Thai lifestyles, pieces of work widely recognised.

Around 1964, many of the artists in the later group of the first generation travelled to Europe for further education. Between 1964-74, artists who graduated from Silpakorn University did little to deviate from the norm that had evolved for modern Thai paintings. However, one outstanding artist of this period was Pratuang Emcharoen. His works were not based on academic concerns or folk culture, but was

independent of all conventional norms. He used his skills in illustrations to give new meaning to virtually all themes relating to Thai traditions, ranging from the life history of Buddha, to the plough, lotus leaves¹³, water, as well as the more popular romantic land and sea scapes. His works were successful in their own way¹⁴ (fig. 4).

Further developments in modern Thai painting from 1974 have continued up to the present day (under various encouraging factors such as the state of economy, the wide publicity through competitions and exhibitions, and educational support). However, over the 16-year period of development (1974-90), works produced by the new generation of artists, or the third generation, appear to be lacking in imagination or essence. Broadly speaking, the works can be classified into 6 groups:

1. Paintings that focus on Thai architecture or its details, as the main subject matter, or depict activities emphasising space in Thai architecture.
2. Paintings that depict mountains, forests, or oceans, based on scenes from Theravada Buddhist literature with the application of Thai motifs and traditional figures in the compositions.
3. Paintings that portray significant events inspired by or based directly on themes from Theravada Buddhist literature.
4. Paintings that depict religious rites

or ceremonies taking place in the natural landscape with a Thai architectural structure as the central focus of the compositions.

5. Paintings that are based on the patterns derived from traditional Thai mural paintings.
6. Paintings that are based on the Mandala theme in Buddhism.

There are also however, other works which do not fall under any of the above classifications. The first artist to stand out in this third generation is Preecha Thaotong whose paintings from 1974 brought forward the spatial dimensions of classical Thai architecture through the interplay of light and shade which fall upon walls and other building components. In 1979, he changed his subject matter and focussed on patterns derived from Thai mural paintings.

At the same time, between 1974-82, two young artists Surasit Souakong and Praiwan Dakliang, studied classical central Thai and northern (Lanna) Thai architecture or building parts, in oil and acrylic¹⁵. Surasit painted to capture the atmosphere of the northern temples¹⁶ whilst Praiwan's paintings are representations of traditional objects. The works of these two artists sometimes claim to be in the modern Thai tradition, and sometimes as contemporary works.

From 1974-77 Phong Senging depicted the serenity and intrigue of scenes from the life of river boat-house dwellers. Chalernchai Kositpipat painted in the traditional

Thai style under a new framework to express the metaphysical dimensions of Buddhism. Panya Vijintanasarn on the other hand incorporated surrealism into his Thai paintings¹⁷ which appear to have received influences from artist Thawan Datchanee. Thawan Datchanee was a second generation artist who attained highest achievement in 1978 during an exhibition of his works in Germany which drew references from the "Tri-Phum Text", Jataka Tales, and Buddhist philosophy. His drawings are full of force and energy. Using the human form, unimaginable creatures and beasts intertwine into a single body of greed and lust in the unending cycle of birth life and death¹⁸ (fig. 5).

Prasong Luemuang gained recognition in 1987. His works portray festivals, rites and living patterns that reflect the cultural identity of a specific ethnic community as the major theme. Prasong rejects neither the Lanna culture nor the modern day culture in which he lives¹⁹ (fig. 6) and thus became the first artist to succeed in executing works along this concept, which can be seen from the "With Earth and Water" series which was exhibited at the River City Complex in 1989²⁰.

Thongchai Srisukprasert whose works have only recently appeared around 1989-90 and developed from his art thesis, studies the dynamism of energy existing in the universe spinning itself about its centre, through a scheme of black, white and gold (fig. 7). This type of work has certain appeal, but has

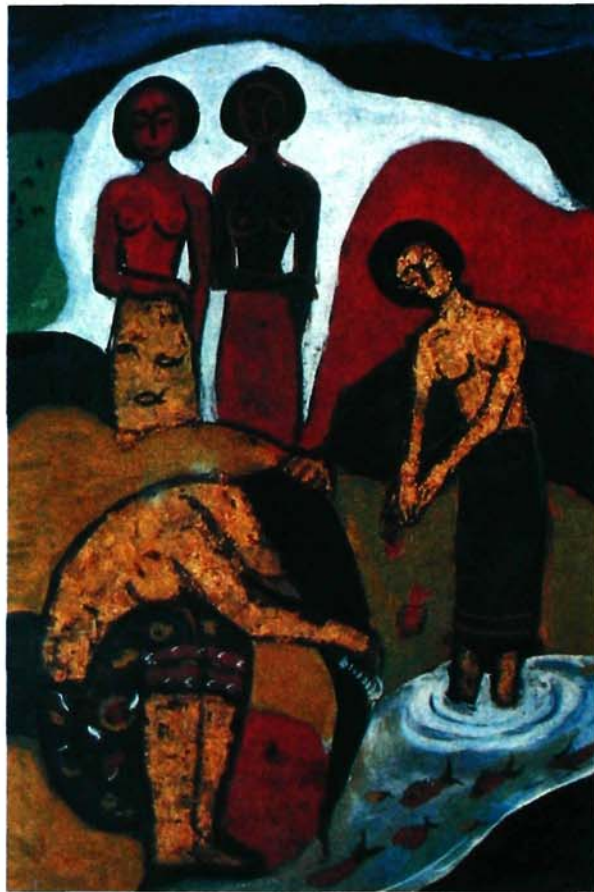


FIGURE 1 CHALOOD NIMSAMER, SONGKRAN (OIL) 1956.



FIGURE 2 DAMRONG WONG-UPRARAJ, NORTHERN VILLAGE (TEMPERA) 1959.



FIGURE 3 KHIEH YIMSIRI, *TWO SISTERS* (BRONZE)
1957.



FIGURE 4 PRATUANG EMCHAROEN, *DIVINE way* 1980-1990.



FIGURE 5 THAWAN DATCHANEE, *The VIDHURAPANDITA JATAKA* (DRAWING) 1978.

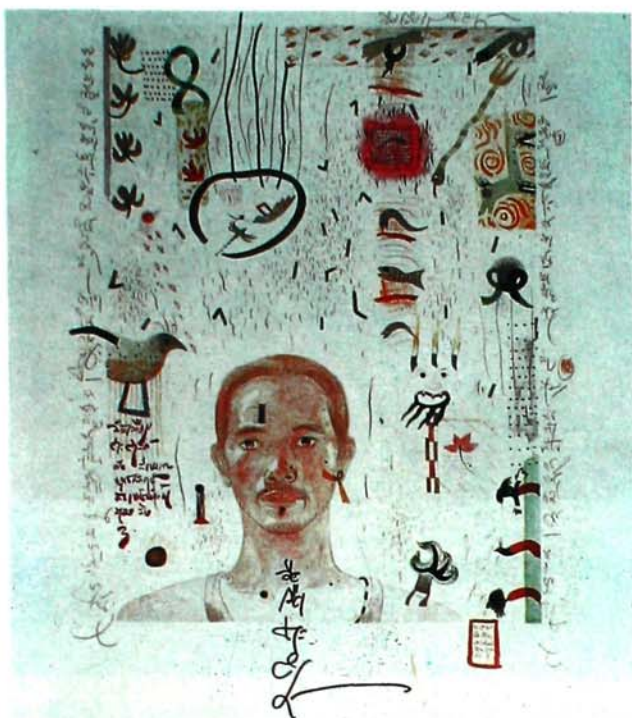


FIGURE 6 PRASONG LUEMUENG, FRONT PAGE OF WATER-MOON, EXHIBITION PAMPHLET 1990.



FIGURE 7 THONGCHAI SRISUKPRASERT, THE POWER OF CHANGE IN NATURE 3 (ACRYLIC) 1990.



FIGURE 8 KANYA CHAREONSUPKUL, *SEASON NO. 22*
(TEMPERA ON CANVAS) 1990.



FIGURE 9 MANIT PUAREE, *TAKRAW-GAME* (WOOD CUT)
1958.



FIGURE 10 SAN SARAKORNBORIRAK, *REALM OF MATTER* (WOOD CUT) 1965



FIGURE 11 WIJIT APICHATKRIENKRAI, *THE SAME OLD IN SOMETHINGS* (INTAGLIO, SILK SCREEN AND HANG COLOURING ON PAPER) 1987.

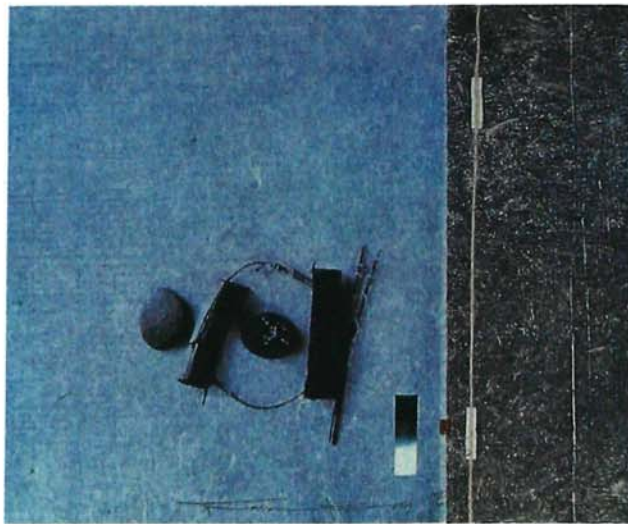


FIGURE 12 THAVORN KO-UDOMVIT, *SYMBOL IN RITUAL 25*
(WOOD CUT & SILK SCREEN) 1990.



FIGURE 13 KAMOL TASSANANCHALEE, *NANG-YAI BANGKOK*
SERIES 2 (MIXED MEDIA ON PLYWOOD OIL AND ACRYLIC) 1990.



FIGURE 14 MONTHIEN BOONMA, *A PAIR OF WATER-BUFFALOES*
(MIXED MEDIA: UNHUSKED RICE, SACK, STRAW, HORN, STOOLS)
1988.



FIGURE 15 VASAN SITTHIKET, *ONE IN SIXTY OF THE INFERNO*
SERIES (ACRYLIC PAINT ON CANVAS) 1991.

limitations that by 1991, it seems as if the artist has entered into the inert pace of the microcosmic world²¹.

The Chinese were active in the economics, politics, and culture of Thai society since 1350. Their culture influenced the mural paintings of the Ayuthaya school, and architecture of the Bangkok period from 1824-51. The Chinese influence appears in the contemporary arts through the works of Chang Tang from 1960 until his recent death. He produced both abstract works and self portraits²² which were essentially conscious allusions to Chinese culture.

Kanya Chareonsupkul seriously returned to producing her works once more around 1985. Picking up where she left off in 1972²³, she continued with abstract work in brush and black ink on Sa paper, or otherwise lithographic techniques, to create spatial structures of Chinese and Japanese impressionistic style. "Statement in Space" (1987) is an example. She plays with the interactions between brushstroke and negative space²⁴. In 1989 she still produced such works²⁵ but in 1990 she turned to using colours. Gradually, works in tempera and water colour emerged and eventually developed into a series of works in tempera on canvas. This new development followed a Southeast Asian sensibility (fig. 8).

Graphic arts played a minor role in the first and second generations. By the third generation, graphic arts incorporating Thai traditional values may be considered to rank amongst the international avant-gardes.

The majority of the artists of the third generation concentrated on subjects from their culture. Manit Phuaree depicted traditional activities, such as playing takraw (fig. 9) or cock-fighting. He began in 1958; however he has not been seriously active since 1963. Inson Wongsam depicted for a brief period in 1960, his mystical visions of northern Thai architecture. San Sarakornborirak presented the life of the elderly, such as in "Old Friends" (1963) and the heart rending "Realm of Matter" (1965)²⁶ (fig. 10). In 1962, Prayat Pongdam introduced metaphysics into his works. Animals such as cats, buffaloes, geckos and other reptiles²⁷, represented a variety of thoughts and meanings. In 1965 Pote Sangawong made woodcut prints to express the pains and torments of hungry ghosts (Preta) in Lokantara Hell of the Tri-Phum text. He depicted the Preta rising from the depths of the oceans through infinite curls of wave motion.²⁸

17 years later, artists began to look for other means of representing their impressions of Thai life rather than through the depiction of human beings. Pongdej Chaikakut used etching techniques to produce "Still Life No. 28" in which the subject being a set of antique silverware in an old cupboard evokes a nostalgia for the old lifestyles of the upper class Thai. And in 1987, Wijit Apichatkriangkrai encapsulated the spirit of northeastern culture. He depicted a village-like structure sitting on a mound as if it were an island in space, and included objects or items used in daily activities. The mood created gives a sense of

both hope and sadness²⁹ typical of the people of the northeast in the past and even of those today (fig. 11).

By 1989, Ittiphol Tangchaloek a well-known graphic print artist, had further developed his style, which he established in 1968, to include wave patterns as in the works of Pote and Thongchai.³⁰ He derived his waves from those represented in Thai paintings or replicas of Buddha's footprint and combined them with geometric forms in his subsequent mixed media series.³¹

Thavorn Ko-Udomvit has worked with mixed media since 1981. In 1983, he worked on the "Ritual" series using hand-made Sa paper, the surface and texture of which constituted the essence of his works since 1985³². Thavorn ingeniously integrated blank planes of space, stones, twigs and strings on Sa-paper. All elements are part of the spatial structure rather than using space merely as the background on which the objects are featured as was generally practised in the past (fig. 12).

Nipan Oranives uses materials and objects in a similar way. He developed his style in 1986 by using bands of subject matter in a collective pattern of stones and twigs and blank spaces on Sa-paper to give dimensions to the objects, suggesting metaphysical significance³⁴.

In 1982, a number of Thai artists who had studied in England and the U.S. came back and took up conceptual art. In 1985 they held an

exhibition of "Thai Reflections of American Experiences". Installation works created by the participating artists were mainly based on Joseph Cornell's 1943 works, and Andy Warhol's in 1965³⁵. Art by Kamol Tassananchalee who had studied and resided in the U.S. for 10 years, proved to be highly original and most avant garde when they were brought back to Thailand for public exhibition in 1980.³⁶ In 1990, he returned with the "Nang-Yai (Shadow Play Figures)" series which drew aspects from traditional Thai fine arts both in concepts and structure, and applied them in a contemporary manner that brought out its oriental essence, which placed him in the international art scene³⁷ (fig. 13).

Conceptual art which embodies Thai values also appears in Monthien Boonma's "Story from the Farm" series (1989). His installations examined ways to express the identity of Thai farmers³⁸, the significance of which may intriguingly be extended to

encompass all those in Asia as a whole. (fig. 14). In an exhibition in 1990 his works reflected upon life, religion and beliefs of indigenous communities in the context of urban environment. His works contained elements of intrigue³⁹, and at times satirized the affluent society, such as in "Venus of Bangkok" (1990) which utilized urban effluents (construction) in depicting the rosy romanticism of the metropolis.

Around mid 1991, a new wave emerged. Vasan Sithiket held two major exhibitions. In the "Inferno" series, 60 pieces of work went on exhibit at the National Art Gallery⁴⁰. Each piece represented condemnations, making references to the Tri-phum text, of sins of Man in modern Thai society. Vasan is considered to be the first Thai artist to use traditional ethical values in making social commentary on contemporary society (fig. 15). His second exhibition was held jointly with six other artists in "Print

Installations". His "Cobra and the Farmer" series which was exhibited, illustrates a farmer who produces rice to feed the nation being betrayed by the mouths which he feeds. The installations in this series were designed to surround and physically overwhelm the observer⁴¹.

Contemporary Thai art has been struggling for over the past 20 years. Over the past 10 years, many institutions of higher learning have opened courses in fine arts, such as at Chiang Mai University, Chulalongkorn University, and at private universities. It is therefore consequential that in the next generation, Thailand will have artists producing works in greater variety of creations compared to the past when artists were moulded out from Silpakorn University. The mass media also play important roles in encouraging and promoting art. The state of art in the future will therefore be up to the artists themselves, their creative abilities, and their sense of responsibility.

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What is Art Education?

BY DR. ABDUL SHUKOR HASHIM

Art is one of the oldest subjects in the curriculum of the Malaysian public school system. Art in public schools was introduced as early as 1816 by the British colonial government. It was Winsted, an assistant director of education at that time, who believed that Malaysian children should be introduced to useful and practical arts such as carpentry, metal work, tailoring, bookbinding and drawing (Wong, 1975).

Today, art classes still exists in the schedules of elementary schools and high schools, but its aims and concepts have changed. Unfortunately, art education, as it is now called, falls into the lowest priority of school subjects. One of the reasons for art education's current status is that most universities do not consider the study of art as a requirement for

entry to the university. However, art education should be viewed as important, because it plays an important role in general education and society at large.

John Dewey, a western philosopher and scholar, believes education should be a means to expand one's intelligence, thereby increasing one's capacity to experience (Eisner, 1966). To Dewey an educational institution should encourage the growth of a child's physical, emotional and intellectual freedom.

Feldman, an art historian and educator believes that education is concerned with "the molding of character, the transmission of information and the development of

skills" (1976). The development of skills should be the major concern of educators. And if this is carried out with full commitment and responsibility, it will result in fruitful production of morally and intellectually educated children.

Education is truly concerned with the growth and development of children, mentally and physically. This growth and development of the younger generations is important, because children are the generation who will inherit the legacy of their elders. Such transfer of knowledge to them should be meaningful and valuable.

Herbert Read, another prominent figure in art and education believes

that the purpose of education is to foster an individual's growth. He elaborates further that growth in children is a complicated process. It involves "the process of adjustment of subjective feelings and emotions to the objective world and this has immense influence upon the quality of an individual's thought and understanding" (Field, 1978). Read's central concern in education is the development and growth of aesthetic sensitivity through the education of the senses, which will lead to the intellectual growth of children. By growth, Read also means that children will develop a sense of expression, which translates through sound, symbols, images, movements and the ability to exploit tools and materials (Field, 1978).

As summarized by Perry, the aim of education is to assist children in their learning where knowledge, ways of reasoning, thinking, behaving, and perceiving are properly and sincerely taught by dedicated educators (Perry, 1973).

Kern, an American art educator notes that two distinguishable patterns occur in art education. Firstly, art is concerned with educational programs, whereby students are encouraged to produce works of art for aesthetic and expressive purposes. Secondly, art is looked upon as a "means to non-art ends." This latter role involves dealing with art for therapeutic outlet, promoting of social skills, and providing opportunities to learn about history, culture and customs (Kern, 1970).

The aim of art education should be

the development and enrichment of an individual's life. The growth of mental, spiritual, moral and social attitudes develop in education, through art. It also means the enrichment of their experiences because the experience which derives from artistic expression and the understanding of art works help to develop their behavior (Efland, 1979) (Gardner, 1975) (Korzenick, 1979).

To elaborate further, art education helps children to be visually aware of their own environment. They will understand their art and culture as well as the cultures of others. They will develop good moral behavior and will understand self-discipline as well as the discipline in their society (McFee, 1966). As Lanier notes, "the teaching of art need not be to avoid or dilate a vigorous concern for purely aesthetic analysis, but can additionally involve ideals about the world and ideas of a moral character" (Lanier, 1976).

Art education is multi-faceted. It touches on several aspects that help to educate a person. An educated person in art always has feelings for learning and loves knowledge, because art is a unique and pleasurable activity. The discipline in art itself provides motivation and the interest to continually learn.

Art education helps to develop self-realization, human relationships, economic efficiency and civic responsibility (Lansing, 1969). According to Lansing, in terms of self-realization, a person who has studied art will have strong perceptive power and be aware of his environment. One can also see

things with more consciousness and attention. Bullough describes this consciousness of experience as 'physical distance' which explains the feelings such as anxiety, pleasantness, unpleasantness, nervousness, etc. towards the objects or the phenomenon (Bullough, 1912).

A person who has studied art will know better how to value his free time. He is able to create art objects and this will help to sharpen his talent and heighten his appreciation in art. Lansing adds that art activities will nurture his intellectual development through the experience of using 'discursive' and 'non discursive' modes of expression, which is not obtainable from any other sources (Lansing, 1969).

An educated person in art will find no problem in dealing with other human beings. He will develop love for humanity because art is a humanistic activity. A person's training in art helps to make him realize that every individual has his or her own limitations and strengths. By realizing this, the person begins to respect other individuals whether in the same culture or from other cultures.

Finally, art education helps to make a person's experience more meaningful. Aesthetic experience derived from art activities will make a person more sensitive of his own environment and thus will preserve and maintain the originality and freshness of the person's natural and built environment. Dickie states that aesthetic experience is "an experience of rapt attention which involves the transitive apprehension of an object's

imminent meanings and values in their full presentational immediacy" (Dickie, 1974).

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TRANSMISSION OF CULTURE THROUGH TRADITIONAL THEATRE: THAU YONG'S SIX DECADES OF DEVOTION (1931-1991)

BY ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR DR. CHUA SOO PONG



Similar to other dialect Teochew, the second largest Chinese in Singapore,

maintained their traditional theatre through a network of devoted amateur theatre groups. Teochew, or Chaozhou, is a town situated in eastern Guangdong Province. Teochew opera, like other cultural products of the Teochew speaking peoples, such as embroidery, handicrafts and food, is highly valued. Teochew opera is popular in the entire area of Teochew cultural influence. In China these include Chenghai, Chaoan, Chaoyang, Nanao, Jieyang, Puning, Jiexi, Huilai, Lufen, Haifeng and Yaoping, as well as all Teochew communities abroad.

groups of the Chinese, the dialect group of the through the decades have

The theatre groups in Singapore are amateur in the sense that the participants do not receive any salary. Nevertheless, these groups are significant contributors to cultural life in Singapore. They are especially important in our time, when the lifestyle is so dominated by modern technology. Many professional theatre groups have gradually disappeared as they can no longer find the infrastructure and audience which supported them in the past.

Can Thau Yong continue its music and drama activities in the years to come and compete with modern media which feature western plots, characters and settings that urbanites are familiar with? Tracing past experiences will provide the clues for an answer about the future.

THE HUMBLE BEGINNING IN THE 1930s.

Thau Yong was formed by Tan Kee Chor (陳基昌) and friends, in August 1931. To rent the third floor of a shophouse on Carpenter Street, the 20 founding members paid three dollars a month. Unlike other amateur opera groups of the same period, Thau Yong was not formed by wealthy merchants. Its members were relatively poor. Lack of adequate facilities however, did not diminish their enthusiasm of getting together for practices. News of their regular singing sessions spread fast and in less than a year's time, its membership increased to over 50.

By the time Thau Yong later moved to another house on the same street it had more than 80 active members. The new Chairman elected was Mr Ng Buan Song (黃萬松). This new leadership was keen to stage a performance at the Great World Amusement Park. Many leading members donated their salaries for the production cost. In November 1935, Thau Yong made its debut, featuring over 10 excerpts of Han opera in three nights for enthusiastic audiences.

Their great success gave them the incentive to hurriedly prepare their second show to be staged in the following year. In July 1936, three performances of a dozen opera excerpts were presented at the Third Stage of the Great World Amusement Park. Two months later, they staged three nights of opera to raise funds for China. Thau Yong's continuous success in performing opera excerpts of high standard and in drawing huge

crowds made it possible for the group to attract the wealthier businessmen to join. By 1937 it had moved again, to bigger premises on Hong Kong Street. When news of the Japanese invasion of China, on the 7th of July reached Singapore, the Chinese community, which identified themselves with China more than the place they resided then, responded with great anger. Showing their support against the Japanese invasion, numerous charity shows by schools and cultural organizations were presented to raise funds for the resistance movement in China.

RAISING FUNDS FOR THE JAPANESE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT.

Thau Yong organized a highly successful fund raising show in mid-September, 1937, merely two months after the invasion.¹ Shortly after, two reputable professional actors, Mr. Lee Kwang Kwa (李光華) and Mr. Tay Song Nee (鄭順年) from China joined Thau Yong. With the devoted members, through frequent regular practices, the ensemble at Thau Yong was considered among the best in the local theatre scene and all their fund raising performances in the following years drew large crowds. Especially the one held in October 1941 at the Gay World Amusement Park, for the local invasion resistance fund. However, when the Japanese soldiers set foot on Singapore in 1942 all cultural activities ceased for three miserable years.

A year after the Japanese were defeated, Thau Yong managed to

gather enough money from some members to re-start the group. In 1946, Thau Yong rented a house in River Valley Road, with Mr. Sng Siak Hui (孫錫輝) as the chairman. A professional artist from China, Mr. Tan Kay Cheo (陳嘉石) was appointed as instructor. Although Mr. Chen was with Thau Yong for barely a year, he launched four highly acclaimed productions in February, July, September and October.² The growing reputation of Thau Yong attracted more members and soon it found that the small premises rented was not enough to cope with the increased activities.

It was therefore decided that a bigger place was needed and in 1947, with donations amounting to more than \$10,000 Thau Yong moved to North Bridge Road. The membership increased to 200.

THE YANG DECADE

A rising star of the Teochew business circle, Mr. Yeo Seow Hwa (楊紹和) was elected as Thau Yong's chairman the following year. Mr. Yeo's benevolent personality and generous financial support made him a popular leader. He served as chairman for the next decade. His leadership helped Thau Yong firmly establish itself as the most dynamic Chinese theatre group, involved in numerous fund raising projects with very impressive performances.³ In the 50s, the musicians of Thau Yong were often invited by the then Radio Malaya to record Han opera music and gramophone companies to make records.⁴ All the performances

during the Yang Seow Hwa decade, attracted huge crowds. Almost on every occasion, audiences who had to be turned away, quarrelled angrily because of their great disappointment in not being able to see the shows. Especially successful was the charity show for Nanyang University staged at the Chinese Assembly Hall in Kuala Lumpur in 1954. The Chinese community in Kuala Lumpur was mainly Cantonese speaking, but turned up in full force to display their support of the establishment of the only Chinese language university in Southeast Asia to be established in Singapore in 1956.

When Thau Yong celebrated its 25th anniversary, a four-night programme was presented at the Broadway Theatre of the New Amusement Park. It even invited members who resided in Kuala Lumpur to join its performances.

Thau Yong's great success in the 50's was often attributed to its members' dedication in their practice, teamwork, outstanding guest teachers, helpful senior members, and resourcefulness of the leadership in raising funds for activities. By the end of the 50s, Thau Yong, apart from gaining a reputation as the foremost Han opera presenter, had also become famous for its Chinese orchestra.

In 1960, Singapore celebrated its newly acquired self-government status with numerous multi-ethnic concerts in which Thau Yong's Chinese orchestra was invited to participate. It also staged a fund raising performance for the proposed National Theatre, a symbol of

cultural independence for the post colonial era. In October when Thau Yong staged its anniversary show at the newly renovated Victoria Theatre, audiences came in flocks from Malaya to see a popular young folk singer, Zhang Zhao Ying (張昭英) who performed in the Han opera.

When Mr. Yeo Seow Hwa insisted on relinquishing his chairmanship in 1960, Mr. Teo Chia Lin served as his successor for a year. In 1961, Mr. Huang Shi Tong was elected as chairman, a post he retained for the next ten years.

RISING POPULARITY OF TEOCHEW OPERA

The 60s was an interesting period for the Chinese traditional theatre scene in Singapore. Unlike the modern theatre, dance and music activities, which were often involved in the intense political rivalry of the Peoples Action Party's Government and the leftist opposition parties, traditional theatre remained detached from politics.⁵ Before China launched its disastrous Cultural Revolution in 1966, theatre lovers in Singapore were able to see numerous well-made films of diverse regional operas. These films to a great extent provided the devoted amateur practitioners as well as professionals with valuable sources for learning. To the Teochew opera enthusiasts, the screening of four films in succession was like a treat from Heaven. These were 'Su Liu Niang', 'The Fire at the Riverside Pavilion', 'Prosecuting the Husband' and 'Liu Ming Zhu.' All of a

sudden, all groups imitated the films and at one time everybody was doing the Su Liu Niang. It became an informal competition among the groups and as a result all groups upgraded their skills in all aspects of theatre. It was in this context that Thau Yong staged Su Liu Niang, the Teochew opera rather than its usual Han opera, in 1962 for its 31st anniversary celebration at the Victoria Theatre.

Thau Yong's debut of Teochew opera was a great success. It was also the beginning of its gradual shift from Han opera to Teochew opera. The overwhelming response to their performances of three to four nights at the 900 seat Victoria Theatre often meant that many were unable to gate crash and were greatly disappointed. Thus in 1965, Thau Yong decided to move to the 3000 seat National Theatre for its double bill: Han opera 'Marching to Southern Tang' and Teochew opera 'Liu Ming Zhu.' To their delighted surprise, the house was packed for both nights. By 1968, Thau Yong had to stage three performances at the National Theatre to cater for the growing size of the supportive audience. In that year, their show 'The Eight Immortals' was also documented by local television.

Like the previous occasions, Thau Yong once again suffered from the decline in membership and activities when it moved premises to a new venue in Bukit Pasoh in 1969. There were informal dialect group boundaries in those days and the Teochew did not go to a Cantonese area. Their frequent absence at practice sessions made it impossible for

Thau Yong to stage any show at all that year. It took more than a year for the senior members to persuade enough actors to stage a show to commemorate its 39th anniversary. The choice was two Han operas at the Victoria Theatre in September, 1970.

Unfortunately, it proved to be a disaster. Han opera, without a big dialect group base, attracted mainly a smaller group of theatre lovers who appreciated its exciting, indignant, high pitched music and repertoire of historical plays. Its dialogue, delivered in stylized Mandarin, is difficult for the majority of the dialect speaking audience. The first night, it attracted less than 300 people. The following night, only over a hundred turned up. Worse still was that there was a black out because of power failure and by the time the lights came back a hour later, all the audience had gone home. The cast was devastated and Thau Yong stopped performing Han opera for a very long time.

The following year, 1971, Mr. Chng Ngee Han (庄义汉) replaced Huang Shi Tong as the new chairman and he led Thau Yong through the 80s. The new committee identified three areas of concern and reacted with practical solutions. The first was to move to a more accessible venue. By June, Thau Yong found a new place at Ord Road. The second was to persuade the inactive members to return to the practice sessions, which they managed successfully within months. Finally it was decided to launch a recruitment exercise to cultivate new talents. The vigorous effort paid off.

By the end of the year, Thau Yong succeeded in presenting a grand scale Teochew opera 'The Women Generals of the Yang Family' guided by guest teachers. It was also during Chng's first year that Thau Yong amended its constitution to call for a general meeting once in every two years instead of annually.

SYSTEMATIC TRAINING AND INVITATION TO NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION

With the large number of newcomers, Thau Yong appointed three of its senior members to train younger members. Yeo How Jiang (楊浩江) was in charge of instrumental music, Mr Koh Joo Chuan (郭祖全) was the vocal music teacher and Mdm Ng Soi Soi was the movement instructor. At the end of the year, in December 1972, Thau Yong impressed the audience once again with another moving performance: 'Qing Yuan Chuan Dao.' Not only was it invited by television to get the show documented, the then Ministry of Culture also invited Thau Yong to repeat the show the following August as part of the National Day's Celebration to be staged at the Victoria Theatre.⁶

On National Day 1973, when Thau Yong offered a repeat performance of 'Qing Yuan Chuan Dao' at a temporary stage built in front of its premises on Ord Road, it attracted hundreds of spectators. Such overwhelming response prompted the Ministry of Culture to extend its invitation to Thau Yong again the following year for its National Day's Celebration. Thau Yong's choice of a

dramatic piece, 'Tragedy in the Peach Garden' proved to be a great success. A dramatically complex presentation of the 'Three High Officials from a Family' in 1975 at the National Theatre also won acclaim because of the vitality of the performers and the skillful musicians. Thau Yong's long-standing quest for well rehearsed productions and memorable stories had won the audiences' trust.

In 1976, Thau Yong once again had trouble with the premises. The Urban Redevelopment Authority required Thau Yong to move out of its Ord Road venue. To get rid of this headache permanently, Thau Yong decided to buy a three-storey building at Kim Yam Road. Unfortunately, some of the tenants refused to move out and Thau Yong was forced to adopt a wait-and-see policy with these people who stayed in that house for years. At last they agreed to move out in 1992 and hopefully Thau Yong would find a permanent place after its 60 years of existence! But in 1976, because of this dilemma, they presented no public performance.⁷

Fortunately by March 1977, a new place was found at North Canal Road. A recruitment exercise was conducted in order to stage the performance of the Teochew opera 'The Two Scholars' to commemorate the 46th anniversary celebration, scheduled for January 1978 at Victoria Theatre.

When the Ministry of Culture organized its First Drama Festival in 1978, Thau Yong had the honour of being the only Teochew opera group invited to participate. In that same

year, the landlord decided to take back the premises and Thau Yong had to move once again. This time, it did not move too far away, just down the road: No. 47 of the same street. This venue became the home of Thau Yong for the next decade. In November 1979 a comedy 'The Real and the Fake Couple' was staged at the Vitoria Theatre with great success.

The leading Teochew Clan Association, the Teochew Po Yi Hui Guan invited a Cantonese opera veteran Shu Jun Han in 1980, to conduct movement classes for all amateur opera groups in Singapore. It was indeed a very timely arrangement as the enthusiasts longed for an opportunity to upgrade their stagecraft. The Thau Yong members who joined the three-month training programme benefitted as their skills evidently improved in their 50th anniversary performances in 1981: a full length Teochew opera 'The Witty Maid' and a Han opera 'The Blooded Palm'. In the same year, Thau Yong was invited by the Ministry of Culture to participate in the 1st Chinese Music Festival.

The following year, Thau Yong kept its tradition of staging both Teochew and Han opera. Apart from the veteran Zhang Zhao Ying, young actor Tan Ooh Chye and Doris Chua also made an impressive debut in the Han opera, while a group of well-trained young actresses gave a convincing interpretation of a classical comedy 'The Dragon Well Jetty'. A year later, Thau Yong was once again invited by the Ministry of Culture to participate in the

Chinese Music Festival.

THE ACTIVE YEARS OF THE 80s

Mr. Lee Ngiam Poh succeeded Chng Ngee Han as the new chairman of Thau Yong in 1984. With a group of dedicated members led by Lim Soo Hiang and Tan Ooh Chye and excellent music teachers, Thau Yong throughout the second half of the 80s continued to present performances of high quality annually. In 1984, it was the triple bill of Teochew opera: excerpts of 'Chen San Wu Niang', 'The Encounter Beside the Well' and 'A Predestined Marriage'. A quartro bill: 'Snow at the Plum Pavilion', 'The Uprising Declaration', 'The Reunion' and 'Meeting by the Broken Bridge' was presented in 1985. It was in 1986, that Thau Yong's new talent, Lim Kim Seng, who specialized in the comic role, Chou, appeared. His enormous success in 'The Hairpin Farce', a masterpiece of traditional Teochew opera gave Thau Yong the confidence to stage a more complex full length comedy 'The Promotion of Xu Jiu Jing'. In 1988, a Yuan dynasty masterpiece which was adapted as a Teochew opera 'Saving the Fragile Lady' was performed while the following year a triple bill was presented: 'Reunion at the Nunnery', 'Execution of the Unfaithful Husband' and 'Wedding of the Dragon Princess'.

In 1990, Thau Yong for the first time, used the big auditorium of the Kallang Theatre for its performance of 'The Case the Missing Old Zither'. Like most of Thau Yong's productions in the 80s, 'The Case of

the Missing Old Zither' was collectively directed and coordinated by Lim Soo Hiang. This opera, was in fact presented to the Singapore audience by the Canton Teochew Opera Academy's Second Troupe at the same venue in 1989. Although a credible performance, the local audience tended to favour the China show. This prompted Thau Yong to consider a specially commissioned new opera for its 60th anniversary in 1991.

The 60th year of Thau Yong turned out to be a rewarding and eventful year. At the beginning of the year, Thau Yong was invited to stage 'The Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea' at the Marina Park. In April, Thau Yong accepted the invitation from Mr. Gustav Adolf Frank in Stuttgart to participate in the International Youth Theatre Festival in three cities in Germany, to premiere a new opera written by the newly appointed Artistic Advisor, Chua Soo Pong. The opera, entitled 'Calamity During the Exile' is adapted from the Indian epic 'Ramayana'.⁸ Composed by Tan Ooh Chye, Thau Yong's lead musician, and directed by Lim Soo Hiang, its premiere at Goethe Institute was well received. In September, 1991, 'Calamity During the Exile', was presented in Germany as scheduled. This was the first time a locally written Teochew opera was ever sent to represent Singapore in Europe. In November, Thau Yong premiered another full length opera specially commissioned for the 60th anniversary, 'Challenges of a Righteous Officer,' with Lin Jin Shen playing the lead role. Directed by a highly respected director from the

canton Teowchew Opera Troupe, China, the resonant opera's plot was about how a wicked couple and corrupt officials deceive people for so long a time. A play written clearly for featuring the talents of an ensemble rather than showcasing one or two lead actors, 'Challenges of a Righteous Officer' packed the house with great success.

ETHNIC CULTURAL CONTINUITY IN A WESTERNIZED URBAN ENVIRONMENT

However, Thau Yong's present leadership is aware of the uphill task of cultivating a strong interest among young peoples in Singapore's highly westernized urban environment. Not only does it need to vigorously look for ways of attracting young people to join in its training programmes for singing, acting and music, it has to launch productions strategically to lure young audiences as well.

The good thing is that in the last decades, visiting professional opera troupes and visiting directors, musicians and teachers from China have upgraded the standard of productions and therefore in a way helped to recruit new audiences who may not have necessarily understood the Teochew dialect. The surge of interest in Chinese opera could be interpreted as a display of ethnic awareness. The current government policies seem geared to ensure that each ethnic group retains and perpetuates its cultural distinctiveness within a general framework of national interest. Teochew opera, as an attractive form of Chinese traditional theatre would be used as an instrument which

helps to ensure ethnic cultural continuity.

NOTES

1. It is worth noting that during this charity show staged from the 18th to 20th of September 1937 at the third Stage of the Great World Amusement Park the musicians were moved from the back of the stage, the traditional arrangement for musicians, to the side of the stage, thus expanding the performing area for the actors.

2. The October production was performed on the 10th, which was the National Day of the Republic of China. Such a display of loyalty towards China was not uncommon among cultural groups in Singapore in the 40s as the majority of the Chinese population identified themselves more strongly with China than Singapore.

3. Apart from staging its annual anniversary performance Thau Yong was actively involved in many charity shows raising funds for educational fees for the children of the poor (1949), Nanyang University (1954), and victims of flood or fire (1956).

4. In 1940, Thau Yong was invited by a gramophone company to record music and a number of Han operas, a total of 42 records were made. Unfortunately, a dozen active members withdrew their membership at the end of assignment due to personality clash and a dispute over the honorarium. Ten years later, Thau Yong was once again invited to make a few more records. Such repeated

invitations clearly indicated the high standard of the Thau Yong performers.

5. 1963 was a year of great political turmoil. Many activists of the cultural groups which associated closely with the opposition parties were arrested. The government asserted that they were being used by the underground Communist Party. Apparently some of the musicians of the Thau Yong Chinese orchestra were motivated politically and this was soon discovered by its management committee. Thau Yong made a decision to dissolve the orchestra immediately.

6. In the early 70s, the leftist cultural groups were once again gaining momentum. To counter their presentation of theatre productions, the Ministry of Culture solicited the support of traditional theatre groups to stage a series of performances during the National Day celebrations.

7. Some would argue that, like in 1957 and 1963, when Thau Yong ceased to present its annual show, it was more because of the prevailing political climate rather than internal domestic problems. Some radical theatre groups' practitioners were arrested and subsequently confessed that they were using theatre activities as a cover for unlawful propagation of Communism. That was before the victory of North Vietnam and the take-over by the Communists in Cambodia and Laos encouraged a new surge of pro-Communist activities in Singapore in the mid-70s.

The interconnectedness of all art forms is an ancient Indian concept. In this tradition the totality of an art form is the combination of its parts, which are derived from other arts.

This interconnectedness of the arts is illustrated in the story of the "Vishnu dharmottara purana."

In this story, King Vaira, wishing to worship the deities in their proper forms, decides that to do so he must be able to construct the proper icons of worship himself.

King Vaira asks the sage Markandeya to make him his disciple and to teach him the art of icon making.

Markandeya tells the king that before he can understand the principles of icon making he must first have a knowledge of painting. The king agrees. He asks the sage to teach him the art of painting. But, the sage tells the king that before he can understand the art of painting, he must first have a knowledge of dance. Again, the king agrees. He asks Markandeya to teach him the art of dance. The sage tells the king that without a good sense of rhythm or without a knowledge of instrumental music, proficiency in dance is impossible. The king asks the sage to teach him these subjects. Markandeya replies that a mastery

of vocal music is necessary before one can be proficient in instrumental music...Eventually Markandeya teaches the king all of these arts before he is taught the art of iconography.

An inter-relationship of art forms also exists in Indian dance: between music and dance, sculpture and dance, and literature and dance.

Indian Dance and Its Relation to Other Indian Art Forms

BY SANTHA BHASKAR

These inter-relationships can be described in different ways. Dance and music can be described as two limbs of the same body. Dance and sculpture as two sisters. Dance and literature as the foreground and background of the same picture.

Music and dance are so close, they are like two limbs of the same human form. If one limb is music and the other limb is dance, they will move together because they

express the same state and mood. Similar to the musician who uses particular sounds, the dancer uses abstract movement to evoke particular emotions.

The concept of rhythm (tala) is fundamental to all Indian arts. In Indian music and dance, this is manifested in the use of the same metrical cycle. To the abstract melodic patterns in a given metrical cycle, the dancer weaves abstract geometrical patterns in space. To the words of the poem set to a specific melody (raga), the dancer interprets through stylized gestures (mudras), the content of that poetry.

The musical composition decides the dance choreography. The pattern set by the musical compositions decides the dance sequence. The composition of the literary piece determines the basic mood (sthayi bhava) and transitory states (sanchari bhava). The dancer is one who interprets through stylized pantomime the poem that is set to music.

Sculpture and dance can be described as two sisters. Every figure of Indian sculpture is, like every pose and gesture in Indian dance, its kin, highly symbolic. In both sculpture and dance all figures or poses have a particular evocative quality.

In both sculpture and dancing the human form is the instrument of expression. Everything in the figure:

the face, the hands, the postures of the limbs, the pose and the turn of the body, each accessory is imbued with an inner meaning. In both cases the human form is the vehicle of communication of a soul state.

The figures of Indian sculpture (and painting) depict the gods of Indian literature and dancing. They embody the Cosmic Being, the embodiment of an abstract idea.

From earliest time to the sixteenth century, the Indian sculptor has been fascinated by the dynamic energy of the Indian dance. It is in stone that the sculptor has tried to arrest this vital and significant movement, time and again. The prolificness of the dancing figure in Indian sculpture has given Indian sculpture a unique quality of rhythmic expression.

Dance and literature are the foreground and background of the same picture. Indian dance would be a dead technique without the rich Sahitya (verse) that forms the basis of dance. As a dancer performs, a distinct religious, literary tradition comes alive in the background. He or she portrays through movements what the writer has sought to express through words or poetry.

Bharata, who wrote 'Natyasastra,' the theory of dance and the theatre arts, accorded to dance a divine origin, and a literary and religious heritage both in thought and

technique.

The story of the handing over of the art of dance by Lord Shiva to Tandu and then to Bharata, reflects the religious, literary and secular aspects of dance. The epic narrative method of a Kathakali performance, the lyrical manner of a Bharatanatyam



recital, the subtle renderings of the Ashtapadis of Jayadeva in Odissi and Manipuri and the 'Gata bhaves' of Kathak, the Narayana theerthar's poetry in Kuchupudi are results of this contribution of literature.

We can see this rich religious background and vast literary heritage as we practise such classical dance forms as Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Kuchupudi, Manipuri,

Odissi and Kathak. The artistes of these dances never seek to express personal human emotions. He or she is constantly representing themes relating to gods and goddesses, (Siva-Parvathi, Krishna-Radha), and the pangs and yearnings of these supernatural beings, who pine more than the devotees do, for the love of the Almighty. The separation of mortal lover from the beloved is not a topic of dance. The themes of dance are always the lives of divine beings and their battle to win over evil forces. Sociological problems of the day are not addressed.

Lord Brahma (the creator), when he went into a deep yogic trance and meditated on the essence of the four Vedas (oldest sacred writings of Hinduism), created the fifth Veda. This Veda took words from the Rigveda, gestures from the Yajus, music and chanting from the Sama and sentiments and emotions from the Atharvada. Unlike the other Vedas, this Veda was not taboo to the lower caste of people. Its main purpose was to provide pleasure and delight, both to the ear and the eye, irrespective of caste.

From these fragments we can understand the totality of an ancient tradition which conceived of all arts as interconnected, and which uses the technique of one art in the other. The aesthetic experience of the artistes and the audience is Brahmanada (Supreme bliss in full state.)

Chemical Resistance of Cured Lacquer Film

BY DR. SIRICHA WANGCHAREONTRAKUL

An introduction to oriental lacquer was published in a previous article of this journal.¹

Oriental lacquer is a readily available natural product derived from the sap of the lacquer tree (*Melanorrhoea usitata*).

Lacquer has been used on such materials as wood, bamboo, metal, ceramics and stone.

Many ancient treasures coated with lacquer can be found in famous museums around the world. Most of these objects are still in good condition. Some have been subject to conservation.

Before the appropriate conservation measures are carried out, the conservators need to know not only the causes of deterioration but also the physical and chemical properties of the hardened or cured lacquer.

Although it is claimed that cured lacquer has many advantageous properties, such as being weather proof and chemical resistant,²⁻³ this claim has not been supported by any scientific evidence. The objective of the present work is to investigate the chemical resistance of cured lacquer film. The results of this study will provide a guideline of useful information for conservators and restorers to use in the future.

Two commercial lacquers were obtained from a local lacquer manufacturer in Chiangmai, Thailand. A pure Burmese lacquer from the Burmese lacquer tree was collected from Mae Cham District in Chiangmai, Thailand.

A set of 18 samples of lacquer film from each lacquer type was prepared by applying approximately 0.6 gram of each lacquer sample onto a glass slide (2.54 x 7.62 cm). The thin lacquer film was allowed to dry slowly at room temperature for 35 days. After hardening, a

FIGURE 1. CURED LACQUER FILMS WERE SOAKED INTO ACIDS FOR 6 MONTHS.



FIGURE 2. CURED LACQUER FILMS WERE SOAKED INTO BASES FOR 6 MONTHS.

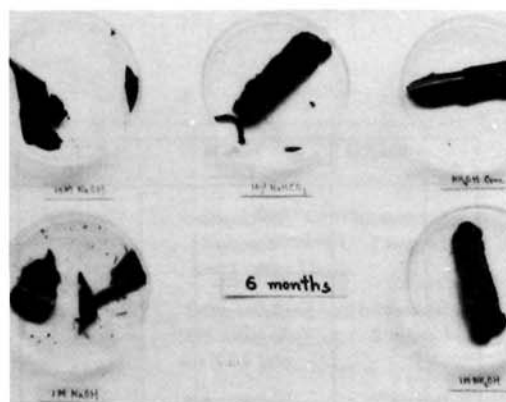


FIGURE 3. CURED LACQUER FILMS WERE SOAKED INTO NON-POLAR SOLVENTS FOR 6 MONTHS.



FIGURE 4. CURED LACQUER FILMS WERE SOAKED INTO POLAR SOLVENTS FOR 6 MONTHS.

TABLE 1

CURED LACQUER FILM IN ACIDS

Reagent Sample	H ₂ SO ₄ Conc.	H ₂ SO ₄ 1M	HCl Conc.	HCl 1M	Acetic acid glacial	Acetic acid 1M
Commercial Lacquer 1	disintegrated completely after 1 hour	resistant	resistant	resistant	disintegrated by about 80% after 4 days	resistant
commercial Lacquer 2	disintegrated by about 70% after 4.5 hours	resistant	resistant	resistant	disintegrated by about 80% after 4 days	resistant
Burmese Lacquer	disintegrated by about 50% after 2 days	resistant	resistant	resistant	disintegrated by about 40% after 6 months	resistant

Reagent Sample	NaOH 10M	NaOH 1M	NaH CO 10%	NH ₄ OH Conc.	NH ₄ OH 1M
Commercial Lacquer 1	brittle and disintegrated by about 60% after 25 days	brittle and disintegrated by about 50% after 25 days	resistant	resistant	resistant
Commercial Lacquer 2	brittle and disintegrated by about 30% after 25 days	brittle and disintegrated by about 30% after 25 days	resistant	resistant	resistant
Burmese Lacquer	brittle and disintegrated by about 15% after 25 days	brittle and disintegrated by about 15% after 25 days	resistant	resistant	resistant

TABLE 2

CURED LACQUER FILM IN BASES

TABLE 3

CURED LACQUER FILM IN
NON-POLAR SOLVENTS

Reagent Sample	Hexane	Benzene	Carbon tetrachloride
Commercial Lacquer 1	resistant	disintegrated completely after 2 hours	disintegrated completely after 2 hours
Commercial Lacquer 2	disintegrated by about 30% after 4 days	disintegrated completely after 2 hours	disintegrated completely after 2 hours
Burmese Lacquer	resistant	disintegrated completely after 2 hours	disintegrated completely after 2 hours

Reagent Sample	Ethyl alcohol	Ethyl acetate	Methyl iso-butyl ketone	Trichloroethane
Commercial Lacquer 1	disintegrated by about 50% after 2 hours	disintegrated completely after 30 minutes	disintegrated completely after 30 minutes	disintegrated completely after 2 hours
Commercial Lacquer 2	disintegrated by about 30% after 2 hours	disintegrated completely after 30 minutes	disintegrated completely after 2 hours	disintegrated completely after 2 hours
Burmese Lacquer	disintegrated by about 15% after 2 hours	disintegrated completely after 30 minutes	disintegrated completely after 2 hours	disintegrated completely after 2 hours

TABLE 4

CURED LACQUER FILM
IN POLAR SOLVENTS

thin cured lacquer film was produced. Each of these lacquer films, unless otherwise stated, was then soaked in a chemical reagent for 6 months. The results of the experiment are summarized in Tables 1-4.

Comparisons of the chemical resistance of the cured lacquer films from the two commercial lacquers and the Burmese lacquer were made. In the study four systems of various chemical reagents were used. These were a series of acids, bases, non-polar and polar solvents.

Table 1 summarizes the results of cured lacquer films in acidic solutions. None of the cured lacquer films survived the concentrated sulfuric acid (H_2SO_4 Conc.) as expected. However, the cured Burmese lacquer film showed a slight resistance to the concentrated sulphuric acid for a short period of time. Glacial acetic acid also attacked cured lacquer films but not as severely as concentrated sulphuric acid. On the other hand all three types of cured lacquer films were resistant to diluted sulphuric acid

(1M H_2SO_4), concentrated hydrochloric acid (HCl Conc.), diluted hydrochloric acid (1M HCl), and diluted acetic acid (1M acetic acid).

The results of cured lacquer films in basic solutions are shown in Table 2. When the cured lacquer films were soaked in concentrated sodium hydroxide (10M NaOH) and diluted sodium hydroxide (1M NaOH), in both cases the cured lacquer films became brittle and disintegrated. On the other hand the cured lacquer films are resistant to 10% sodium bicarbonate (NaHCO_3), concentrated ammonium hydroxide (NH_4OH Conc.) and diluted ammonium hydroxide (1M NH_4OH).

Surprisingly, the cured lacquer films deteriorated in most of the non-polar and polar solvents used in this study as shown in Tables 3-4. The solvents included benzene, carbon tetrachloride, ethyl alcohol, ethyl acetate, methyl iso-butyl ketone and trichloromethane. It was found that only hexane did not have any serious effect on cured lacquer films. This suggests that during the

polymerization of lacquer under the conditions of this experiment, low molecular weight and less crosslinked polymers were formed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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OCTOBER

6th SPAFA Governing Board Members Meeting

In October, 1991 SPAFA held its 6th Governing Board Members Meeting at Nakhon Nayok, Thailand.

Board members were introduced to the new SEAMES Director Dr. Ruben C. Umaly.

This meeting marks a period of transition for the Regional Centre.

At this meeting Board Members approved the SPAFA Second Five-Year Plan which the Centre will implement in 1992. The Second Five-Year Plan marks a new phase of SPAFA activities to be implemented along strategic planning policies developed in conjunction with SEAMEO. Due to the changing world social economic environment organizations such as SPAFA will have to review its mission and long-term objectives to meet these new financial projections. The SEAMES Director suggested that SPAFA might prioritize its programmes, manage the Centre, and broaden its financial base along these strategic planning lines. For example, cultural tourism, development of consultancies, and textbooks on visual art are possible new sources of income for SPAFA.

SPAFA reported to its Board Members the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement between SPAFA and College Edouard-Monpetit to officially

SPAFA Affairs

establish co-operation between the two institutions. In this arrangement CEM will provide Canadian specialists to assist SPAFA activities and personnel from SPAFA member countries will undergo training in Canada.

Next year will see the appointment of a Senior Specialist in Visual Arts. There will also be tentative staff modifications for this period of transition.

Another change was the renaming of the Centre's publication, SPAFA Digest, to SPAFA Journal. Board Members were introduced to and commended the new look of the publication. Also introduced was the SPAFA Newsletter, to be published twice a year.

On the last day of the meeting Board Members inspected the construction of the new Centre building in Bangkok. 1992 will mark the opening of the Centre's five storey structure next to the National Library of Thailand. In addition to the new headquarters, SPAFA will study the possibility of establishing a SPAFA International House to facilitate the

accommodation of programme participants, guests, and experts.

Museology and Museum Contributions to the Community A SPAFA Training Programme (S-T171b)

One of the fundamental needs of an individual is the need to be aware of the identity of one's self and one's society. We should appreciate and be proud of our cultural heritage, be it in the material form of artistic, religious, and architectural objects, or the spiritual values and intellectual forces which inspire the creation of these cultural constructions. To fulfil such needs, among other institutions museums of different kinds have been created to transmit and advance knowledge required for the promotion of national identity and appreciation of cultural heritage, not only of one's own country, but also of mankind at large.

To advance the roles of museology and museums in contributions to the community's knowledge and appreciation of cultural heritage, SPAFA has designed three different two-month training programmes to be implemented every two years for middle level museum personnel involved with education and information. The first course was successfully implemented in 1988 in Thailand with the cooperation of the National Museum Division, the Department of Fine Arts, Ministry

of Education, Thailand.

The second course was organized in Malaysia, with the cooperation of the Universiti Sains Malaysia, from 20 October to 15 December 1991. There were 11 trainees, two each from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and one from Brunei Darussalam. Course lecturers were museum specialists and faculty members from universities in Malaysia, as well as from other countries such as Mr. Amir Sutaarga from Indonesia, Mrs. Somlak Charoenpol from Thailand, Mr. Geoffre Lewis from the United Kingdom, and Mr. Barrie Reynolds from Australia.

Courses covered both theory and practical assignments in such subjects as basic principles of museum organization, administration and resource management in contemporary and developing societies. However, emphasis was placed on the practical application of administrative and management principles relevant to the roles of the museum as an institution created for the promotion of knowledge on cultural identity and for the enrichment of the community.

The training methods included lectures, discussions, readings and observation visits to different kinds of museum in various places such as Penang State Museum and Art Gallery, Forestry Museum and Telak Bahang Recreational Park, Kedah State Museum, Kedah Royal Museum and Kedah State Art Gallery, and Archaeological

SPAFA Affairs

Museum and Sites at Bujang Valley. The practical exercises focussed on the study of objects, the documentation of collected materials, collection preventive conservation techniques and the organization of exhibitions as a means of communication to the public.

On evaluation of the course the trainees expressed satisfaction. Some indicated that very useful and relevant topics were collection management, material culture, museology, and museum management.

Promotion and Development of Handicrafts and Folkcrafts for Social Development (S-T181c)

The SEAMEO SPAFA training course on the Promotion and Development of Handicrafts for Social Development (S-T181c) was held in Manila, the Philippines from October 20-December 19, 1991. It was organized by the National Museum which is the

national coordinating unit of SPAFA in the Philippines. Upon the recommendation of Ms. Wilma Cruz, who was one of the Philippine participants to the first handicrafts and folkcrafts training programme in Malaysia in 1988, the National Museum invited the Technological University of the Philippines (TUP) for technical assistance.

Handicrafts and folkcrafts were once significant living traditions of Southeast Asian societies. Basketry, mats, hats, woodcarving, weaving, decorative bamboo containers and utensils, ceramic objects, and a great variety of other forms have been a heritage of the peoples of this region. Over the years these craftsmen have accumulated an enormous wealth of experience in materials, tools, techniques and motifs. However, rapid urbanization and westernization has changed the lifestyles of the peoples throughout the region. There is no longer a need to produce these former necessities of life within the family unit. Commercially produced consumer goods flood the market and compete with traditional arts and crafts activities. It is in this context that SEAMEO SPAFA and the Technological University of the Philippines have devised this training course to strengthen and expand existing handicraft activities.

There were a total of ten participants to S-T181c: Mr. Andono and Mr. Berata from Indonesia, Mr. Alias Yusof and Mr. Kamural Kassim from Malaysia,

Mr. Caparao, Miss Lim and Mr. Vargas from the Philippines, Mr. Montaliang, Mrs. Maprajong and Mr. Juckisrapong from Thailand.

The two-month course covered both the theoretical and practical aspects of handicraft production. Altogether 27 lecturers from the TUP and from the following institutions were invited to teach: Product Development and Design Center of the Philippines, Philippine Textile Research Institute (PTRI), Cottage Industry and Technology Center (CITC), Center for International Trade, Exposition and Mission (CITEM) and the Philippine Chamber of Handicraft Industries (PCHI).

The lectures were arranged systematically from theoretical aspects of handicrafts to collection of raw materials and production. Marketing and promotion of handicrafts and folkcrafts were also discussed. Participants were invited to discuss the status of handicraft production in their own countries.

Study tours were arranged in order to enable the participants to observe the handicrafts industry of the Philippines. They visited the Bicol Handicraft Center, Lumban Embroidery Center, a marble factory, shellcraft factory and several museums in the country.

At the end of the course, an exhibition of all the arts and crafts projects completed by the participants was showcased at the National Museum. The exhibition was opened by Dr. Chua Soo Pong, representing SPAFA's Center Director, and Mrs. Aurora Mabalay,

SPAFA Affairs

Chief of the Ceramics Division of the Cottage Industry and Technology Center (CITC). The guests were impressed with the high standard of their creative products.

Undoubtedly, the participants gained new insight and appreciation of the great variety of traditional handicrafts and folkcrafts of Southeast Asia. They also learned the fabrication techniques as well as the creative processes of handicrafts. The field trips provided them excellent opportunities to see how production is organized and how artists and craftsmen find new meanings in old models. In the discussion sessions they also examined the new demands of local and foreign markets. Hopefully they will be able to find a model that is suitable and applicable to their own economic environment.

DECEMBER

SPAFA-ASEAN Cooperation

In December 1991, the Centre Director, Senior Specialist in Archaeology and the Library and

Documentation Officer were officially invited by the Thai organizers of the Intra-ASEAN Project on Exploration of Historical and Cultural Sites of ASEAN to provide technical and professional cooperation in the implementation of the project in Ubon Ratchatani, Thailand during 2-15 December 1991.

Prof. M.C. Subhadradis Diskul gave a lecture and slide shows on ancient Khmer monuments between Bangkok and Ubon Ratchatani. Mr. Pisit Charoenwongsa, Senior Specialist in Archaeology designed the academic programme, gave lectures on rock art in Thailand and supervised and evaluated the participants' reports. Khunying Maenmas Chavalit, Library and Documentation Officer was Chairperson for the implementation of the project.

This pilot activity for SPAFA-ASEAN technical cooperation proved to be very promising since the programme activities of SPAFA and those of the ASEAN Committee for Culture and Information, in particular on archaeology and fine arts, are similar. While SPAFA emphasizes education and training, ASEAN focuses on other areas of these subjects. Official linkages at an organizational level between SEAMES, SPAFA and ASEAN is underway.

The Treasure of Thailand
By Sanur Niladej
Muang Boran
Publishing House, 1991
Hardcover 167 pages

BOOK REVIEW

*The orderly presentation, clean
concise layouts and heavy
stock paper border on elegance.*

*The concise descriptions relate to the
objects themselves.
The bilingual text
juxtaposing English
and Thai is a simple
but productive
concept for students
of either language.*

*The Treasure of
Thailand is a
compilation of photographs and brief
descriptions of different
artifacts of Thai fine arts.
But the promising ground-*

work delivers with a slight
disappointment. You wish there
were elaborations on the processes



of construction or of the
social context of such beautiful
objects.

Though The Treasure of Thailand
doesn't construct or aim to
construct an overall picture of
the artistic world in Thailand it
does fill in details. This book

serves as a good introduction to
Thai fine arts. Each subject is a
fine example of the type of craft it
represents.

Twelve crafts are represented.
These include familiar objects as
mother-of-pearl inlays, Thai
puppets and Nang Yai. There are
chapters on Buddhist icons and an
interesting but short chapter on
some masterpieces of the early
Chakri Dynasty. However, one
chapter, even in relation
to all the other esoteric
chapters, stands out. The
Thammat is a chair on
which a monk sits while
preaching. And the
chapter on this rarely
documented subject is a
treat.

The Treasure of Thailand
is not a seamless
presentation. The book
almost, but cannot
transcend its catalog-like
quality. Whether
intentional or not, the
effect is neither warm
and friendly nor cold
and distant. However,
there are no stylistic
visual distractions. Text
and photography neither
distract from nor
elaborate on the beauty of
each artifact. Though this method
might convey a lack of emotional
conviction, the book will leave you
with a yearning to see more. The
reader can take advantage of the
opportunity and judge for him or
herself.

S. Jotisalikhorn

Wat Bangkae Yai
By the producers of the Mural
Paintings of Thailand Series
Muang Boran
Publishing House, 1991
Hardcover 68 pages

BOOK REVIEW

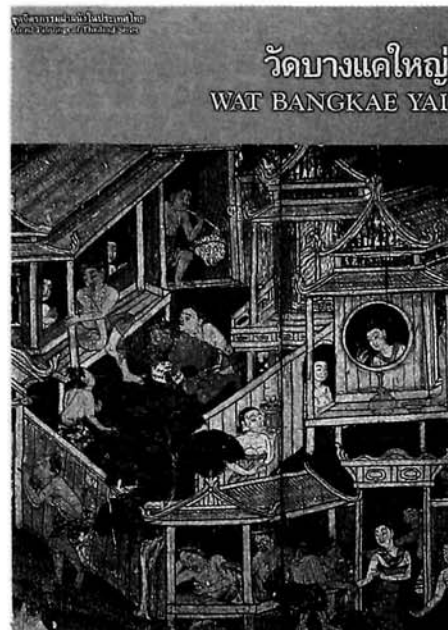
This book examines the mural painting in the abbot's quarters of Wat Bangkae Yai, Samut Songkram Province, Thailand. The temple was completed in 2357 BE (1814 AD) in the Second Reign of the Chakri Dynasty.

Construction of the temple is accredited to Chao Phraya Wong-sasurasak, a statesman who commanded the Siamese army in the war against Burma at that time.

The mural painting is valued for three reasons. Firstly for its style and execution. Secondly for the fact that it was painted on wood rather than the more prevalent cement. And thirdly for its content: the depiction of fighting scenes between the Siamese and Burmese during the early Ratanakosin Period and the depiction of ethnic groups along the western border.

The mural is painted on a prachan panel, which is a wall used to divide a room. The photographs systematically cover the mural in sections. These photographs show the effects of age on the painting.

Though it is usually difficult to capture such subject matter with fidelity, I believe the photographic



reproductions could have been better. A book so dependent on its visual nature would be rewarding if the quality of its photographs matched the enthusiasm of its conception. Also missing and which could have helped would have been the inclusion of photographs of the temple itself as well as its physical

context. If not to their readers, then the publishers owe it to themselves to maintain a higher level of work.

The mural is executed in a monochrome palette. The paintings within the mural are predominantly ash carbons with red and yellow earth pigments which darken towards the blacks and purples. The authors show early First Reign influences as well as later post-Second Reign renovations on the paintings. Doing so gives the reader a perspective of the evolution of mural painting techniques used in this period.

The contents of the mural are important for their depiction of the Siam-Burma war and the lives of the Mon and Karen minorities along the western border.

Material is accessible to both the interested general reader and the scholar. A profusion of captions follow the main text, so that the reader can easily navigate between text and photograph with relative comfort. The publishers should be commended

for their dedication and effort. This series is truly beneficial to art and historical scholarship.

At 68 pages the book is slim, but this is compensated for by its numerous relatives in the series.

S. Jotisalikorn

Journey Through Burma in 1936

By H.R.H. Prince Damrong

Rajanubhab of Thailand

River Books 1991

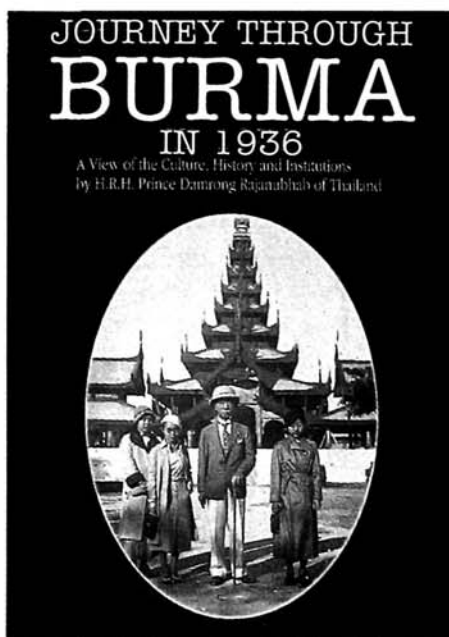
Softcover 247 pages

This book recounts a remarkable journey undertaken by the author who was at that time seventy-four years old. It is remarkable in the amount of observations made and the details of the observations which points to the author as a well informed and very observant traveller. The diary style of the book allows the reader to be part of this four-odd weeks' journey and allows for a leisurely and enjoyable read. The laid-back style of description allows the reader to savour every paragraph and page.

Going through the book has been a rewarding treasure hunt as HRH Prince Damrong had taken pains to record just about every aspect of Burmese life: from the more academically taxing observations of the political scene to fascinating folk beliefs. Many gems of information have thus been gathered.

As the Prince travels from Penang where he was residing, to Rangoon, Pegu, Mandalay, Pagan, Prome and back to Rangoon and Penang with his three daughters and a niece, he

stresses the different aspects of Burmese life particular to each destination. There are however



common themes which he uses in describing these places. These include the history of the town, prominent figures in the history and major monuments with particular attention to religious monuments. The author makes it a point to always link these aspects of Burmese life to the Thai's. Such

comparaions are often enlightening.

In Rangoon, the Prince included observations of Thai theatre in Burma. In Pegu he recorded his meeting with the Deputy Division Commissioner, a Burmese called U Than Tin, whilst in Mandalay he made observations about Burmese Railways, gave an interesting account of the history King Min-don's monarchy and a vivid description of Mandalay Palace. The plan of the Palace and 27 captivating photos of grand buildings within it help readers to imagine the grandeur of King Min-don's days. HRH Prince Damrong also visited the famous Kyauktawgyi Monastery, which was intended by King Min-don to be Mandalay's primary foundation, the counterpart to the Monastery of Great Relic (Wat Maha That) in Bangkok. What surprised him was that King Min-don's daughter's monastery, called Salin Monastery, at the time of his visit was already left to fall into ruin. The rival of

Salin Monastery, the Queen's Monastery was built by Queen Su-hpaya-lat in the south of Mandalay. It was supposedly far larger and more beautiful than Salin Monastery. Unfortunately, it too had deteriorated, though not as badly as Salin Monastery. Such description in 1936 make readers

wonder whether or not ancient buildings such as these exquisite monasteries and the Arakan Temple have ever been restored. In this chapter, the writer also recorded his brief dialogue with Professor Charles Duroiselle and the interesting encounter with Prince Pyin-mana and Princess Htayanga.

In chapter seven, HRH Prince Damrong provided a personal analysis of a sequence of historical events that brought misfortune on Burma while in the subsequent chapter, he narrated his leisurely sail to the South and the characteristics of the Irrawaddy River. Pagan's lacquer-ware is described in chapter nine and finally the author makes mention of the Pyu language in his chapter on Prome.

For those who are interested in performing arts, the brief but insightful account of Burmese theatre makes pleasant reading. When the Burmese attacked and captured the old Thai capital at Ayutthaya in 1767, they carried off a theatrical troupe and had them perform for the King and his trained artists. As the Burmese call the Thais Yodayans, theatrical performances in 'Siamese' style is called Yo-dayan style in Burma. The writer's description of classical Yo-dayan dance shows how Thai dance was acculturated over the years. Only the rhythm was Thai-like, but the dances were indigenized, although traces of Khon, the masqued drama, and lokhon nai, the inner palace dance drama, could still be seen.

BOOK REVIEW

By chance, the Prince witnessed a performance of Maung Po Sin, top Burmese performing artist in the early days of this century. The two hours he spent in a temporary theatre fenced by bamboo give us a glimpse of the repertoire and performing style of the Burmese travelling theatre groups of that era.

The diversity of his observations allows the book to cater to anyone who has any interest in Burma. This book becomes especially valuable in view of the political situation in Burma now. Many of the monuments and practices of Burma would have been lost forever had it not been recorded in this book especially the part pertaining to Mandalay Palace.

The book also visually aids readers especially those unfamiliar with the region by including maps of India, Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand. As the Burmese Stupa is a focal point of interest throughout the book, an illustration of its design is included on page thirteen. The preface by Dr. Kennon Breazeale, the translator of the book, is very well written and informative; pointing out to the reader the distinctive qualifications of Prince Damrong, the authenticity

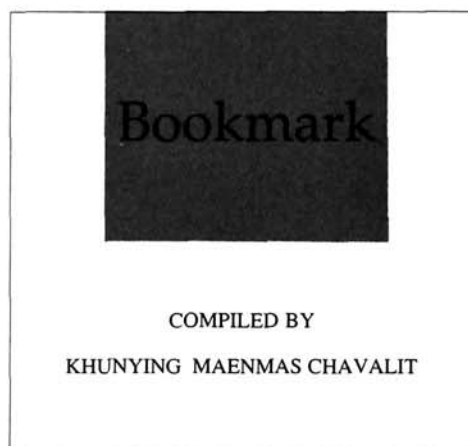
and relevance of his observations as well as a brief account of the Prince's previous journeys and expedition. Dr. Breazeale also gives an informative account of the author's chequered life and career which makes for very interesting reading on its own.

The text is well interspersed with good photographs that are suitably captioned, invariably making the documentation more valuable. The back of the book includes a very comprehensive list of notes on the different chapters in the book, a total of eleven pages. The reference list which follows would help a reader gather further information about any particular aspect of Burma that may especially appeal to him or her.

So much information of such diverse nature is included in this book that some readers may appreciate the book being sorted into a few smaller books, each concentrating on a particular aspect of Burma. As such, a person interested in its architecture could easily find this from the booklet. Certainly the book is rich in detail that it requires time and energy to thoroughly enjoy reading it. It is essential reading for anyone wishing to know the cultural history of Burma.

I myself would most certainly recommend the book for anyone looking for leisurely and yet enriching reading materials of a country awaiting for a chance to end its isolation and obscurity.

Chua Soo Pong



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