



Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon: Contributions to the Study of Folklore and Folk Life

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Abstract

Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon was a Thai scholar declared by UNESCO as a world-renowned person with distinguished works in the field of culture for the year 1988. He had produced academic works in various fields: philology, literature, folklore, anthropology, and history. Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon was interested in studying the way of life of ordinary people in Thai society. He frequently emphasised in his writing that studying the various types of folklore such as folktales, proverbs, folk plays and games, folk songs, and folk traditions, helps us learn about the lives, thoughts and beliefs of Thai people from past to present. He had never been a farmer nor indeed ordained as a monk, yet he studied and wrote about the lives of farmers and monastic life in details. He introduced the word “*khati chaobaan*” to be a coinage for the word *folklore*. The word had been used in academic circles until it was later replaced by *khaticon* and *khaticon wittaya* as proposed by Dr. Kingkeo Attagara. Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon translated some noteworthy foreign folktales into Thai and also analyzed certain aspects of some Thai folktales. His works include the studies of folk traditions and folk beliefs of Thai people in different regions. It may be said that Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon made a very significant contribution to the study of folklore in Thailand. He was the one who showed the importance of folk culture. He did research himself and also encouraged other academics to conduct research in this area. His voluminous writings are valuable resource in the understanding of Thai culture and society both past and present.

Key words: Phraya Anuman Rajadhon, Folklore in Thailand

Introduction

To honour the centenary of the birth of Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon in 1988, and in recognition of his achievements in the field of culture, UNESCO officially proclaimed him to be among the personalities to be commemorated internationally.



He was the sixth Thai scholar to receive such an honour. Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon had produced academic works in various fields. He would have been 120 years old on 14 December 2009. As his former student who received a great deal of his kindness, the author re-examines his works on folklore and folk life. The results of this undertaking are presented in this article as a token of respect and appreciation.

A Brief Biography of Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon



Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon was born on 14 December 1888 in Bangkok. His parents, Nai Li and Nang Hia, were Thais of Chinese descent. His Chinese name was Li Kuang Yong but he also used Yong as his Thai first name. His family name Sathirakoses was given by His Majesty King Rama VI. He received a private education from his father from the age of five until the age of nine when he was transferred to Baan Phraya Nana School and later to Assumption College where he graduated with Standard IV in 1905. While working as a clerk and general service man at the Oriental Hotel, he had more chances to practise his spoken English. He entered the government service in the Department of Customs and rose to the rank of Deputy Director General of the Department in 1922. After the 1932 coup d'état, he left public service on grounds of long service in May 1932. He returned to government service in 1935 in the Department of Fine Arts, Ministry of Education. He was appointed as Director General of the Department of Fine Arts in 1942 and retired in 1948. (Office of the National Culture Commission 1988: 61-62). After his retirement he became a part-time lecturer on philology and comparative literature at the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University. He also gave lectures on Thai culture at the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Political Science in the same University. He also gave lectures on comparative religions at Thammasart University and on Thai culture at Patumwan College of Education. He was one of the founders of Silapakorn University and notably taught King Rama VIII (Ibid: 62). He was appointed a member of parliament in 1932 and became a senator in 1947. Owing to his contributions to various fields such as philology, literature, folklore, anthropology and history, an honorary doctoral degree in arts from Chulalongkorn University



and an honorary doctoral degree in Archaeology from Silpakorn University were conferred upon him. He wrote many books and articles for the Royal Institute where he served as acting president until his death. Throughout his life time he wrote more than two hundred books and articles, in English and Thai, often under his most well-known pen name of “*Sathirakoses*” (Ibid: 63).

Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon’s Contributions to the Study of Folklore and Folk life

Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon was most closely associated with the study of folklore. He described the importance of studying folklore, collected and disseminated knowledge on folk beliefs and traditions, translated foreign tales into Thai for Thai audience and also undertook an analytical and critical study of some genres of folklore. He was a pioneer in studying and writing about the way of life of ordinary people. He also gave immense support for the study of folklore. His roles in the study of folklore can be concluded as follows:

1. Finding Thai words for “folklore” and pointing out the significance of folklore

Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon sought out many Thai words to render the English word *folklore*. They are shown as follows:

khwamroo chaobaan (ความรู้ชาวบ้าน),
khati khwamroo chaobaan (คติความรู้ชาวบ้าน),
khatichon chaobaan (คติชนชาวบ้าน), and
khati chaobaan (คติชาวบ้าน).

The word *khati chaobaan* was the most often used by him and was adopted by the Royal Institute to stand for the word *folklore*. Later on, when there were coinages needed for related words the word *chaobaan* was also used, e.g. *rabam chaobaan* (ระบำชาวบ้าน) for *folk dance* and *phleng chaobaan* (เพลงชาวบ้าน) for *folk song*.

Elaborating on the significance of folklore, Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon attributed the study of folklore, whether folktales, proverbs, performances or songs, as a key to understanding the way of life, thoughts or beliefs of Thai people across the ages. He also mentioned:

“Learning the way of life and the way of living of the various ethnic groups who united to form the Thai nation, as well as about their races and cultures and how they have unfolded and mixed as they are at present, can only be partly obtained from



the study of history and anthropology. Accounts of folklore, however, help us to unravel the mysteries hidden in folktales, old sayings, folk knowledge, folk beliefs and traditions, known collectively as folklore. Such knowledge cannot be found from elsewhere.” (Sathirakoses 1978: 343)

“The account of the folk or folklore tells later generations about thoughts, beliefs of preceding generations and also historical events. This knowledge may not survive times but still lies hidden in folklore. If only we can be critical, selective and choose from what is considered to be outdated, some truths which have fallen by the wayside can be delivered to modern men.” (Sathirakoses 1970:78)

The word *khati chaobaan* continued to be used in academic circles, and even featured as a discipline at some academic institutions. Then came Dr. Kingkeo Attagara, a graduate in folklore from Indiana University, who suggested that the word *khati chaobaan* is too narrow to represent the whole meaning. She asked Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon to look for another Thai word that would correspond more closely with folklore. Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon proposed the word *praphenisart* (ประเพณีศาสตร์), but the word was still inappropriate. He died before he could come up with a more suitable word. Dr. Kingkeo Attagara later used the word *khatichon* (คติชน) to mean information in the form of the ‘product’ of culture and *khatichon withaya* (คติชนวิทยา) as a discipline.



Wearing traditiond Thai costume



When he was acting president of the Royal
Institute

Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon:
Contributions to the Study of Folklore and Folk Life



2. Written works on folklore and folk life

Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon's books and articles on folklore and folk life can be divided into five categories: folktales, folk games, beliefs, rites and rituals, and folk life.

2.1 Works on folktales

Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon had been familiar with Thai and foreign folktales since his childhood. He mentioned in his autobiography that he was at one time commissioned to read fairy tales to adults. (Sathirakoses 1970 vol. IV: 2-3) Later on when he was enrolled at Assumption College, he had many opportunities to read



On his wedding day.

fairy tales and mythology especially Greek mythology in English. While he was in the fourth grade, one of his friends who had earlier been transferred to Suan Kularb College lent him books on fairy tales written by Andrew Lang, Grimms and Hans Christian Andersen for him to read. He had since then cultivated a love for this type of book and he realized that reading Greek mythology helped him immensely to appreciate English literature. (Ibid: 61). When he wrote a book called **The Early Ancient World**, (โลกดึกดำบรรพ์) he used mythologies of various countries i.e. Greek, Scandinavian countries, and China as the material for his writing. These references helped the reader to understand the early thoughts of various peo-

ples on the creation of the earth in a very interesting manner.

Writings on folktales by Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon, both as a single author and a co-author with Nagapradipa, can be divided into two main groups as follows:

2.1.1 Written works on foreign tales

Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon wrote some tales and translated others from English sources. He mentioned that some Indian tales were translated by comparing



His house at Soi Phraya Anuman Rajadhon, Decho Road



Some of his works

them with the original Sanskrit texts. Tales from China and Japan are retold using his own words. Glossaries, appendices or footnotes accompany works translated by Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon and Nagapradipa. There are translations of tales from India, Arabia and Persia, such as:



Hitopadesha (หิโตปเทศ) is a modification of **Panchatantra**, a book aiming at teaching morality to the ruling class but nevertheless benefitting the general public.

Dashamantri (ทศมนตรี) is translated from some part of an English version of an Arabian tale entitled, “One Thousand and One Nights” by Sir Richard Burton.

Niyai Bengali (นิยายเบงกาลี) is translated from Bengali Household Tales. The authors’ rationale, in their own words, for translating this work was to stop translating difficult work and rest their brains! However, there are plenty of footnotes and appendices in the same way as they appear in the first two works. Again the authors gave reasons for writing the appendices in the following way:

“One who has read the three works will observe the ample appendices annexing all of them. We have come to enjoy working harder to get additional knowledge and write it down. In so doing, we unexpectedly obtain a treasury of information of other fields. Niyai Bengali is not an ordinary book of tales but a book with extensive footnotes. This is a period when we “flourish” with knowledge. Therefore, here comes a book on appendices.” (Sathirakoses 1970 vol. I:127).

Niyai Bengali received accolades from the Literature Club as a distinguished and well-written book. Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon, however, responded with much modesty in the following words:

“Niyai Bengali is simply an ordinary book of tales. Only Prince Damrong, who at that time was Vice President of the Literature Club, wants to support young people to get interested in Thai literature and write books in good Thai.” (Ibid)

Kathasaritsagara (กถาสริตสาศกร) is translated from an English version. In the preface to this book, the translators offer the opinion that long tales or novels evolve from short tales. Tales are didactic literature which are composed to teach humans. Words of the animals who are key players in the tales, are indeed human words. The translators observed that some tales in **Kathasaritsagara** were similar to Thai tales while others were comparable to Arabian, Iranian, and European ones. It was difficult to say who borrowed the plots from whom. In any case, it went on to indicate that there must have been some kinds of interaction in the distant past between these countries. (Sathirakoses 1956)

2.1.2 Analytic study of some Thai tales

Thai tales were critically analyzed and scrutinized from special angles, such as similarity of motifs between Thai and foreign tales or even between Thai tales,



hypotheses on the origins of tales and motifs. Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon offered opinions on the mutation of tales that underwent transmission. He translated into English a Thai tale of *Phra Thong* (พระทอง) or *Then Thong* (เถนทอง), which is a comic tale well-known among Thai people. The hero *Phra Thong* is a smart person who happens to be lucky with the help of circumstances. Hence the title of the translated version “A Siamese Dr. Knowitall”. The tale of *Phra Thong* belongs to the same tale type as the English tale of Dr. Knowitall, which is a type of folktale well-known in many parts of Europe and Asia (Phraya Anuman Rajadhon 1987: 167-171).

In the article “A Study of Thai Folktale”, Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon talked about the tale of *Thao U-Tong* which tells the legend of King Ramadhibodi I of Ayutthaya. According to the story, there is a poor man named “*Saen Pom*” living in the city of *Traitruengs*. The unusual physical feature of this man is the numerous fleshy knobs all over his body, hence his name which means “hundreds of thousands of knobs.” Among many vegetables he grows is the eggplant. He waters the plant with his own urine until it gives unusually large fruits. The daughter of the king of *Traitruengs* dreams that she has eaten a very delicious large eggplant and thus commands her maid to look for this unusual vegetable. On learning about the news, *Saen Pom* presents his eggplant to the court. Later the princess becomes pregnant and gives birth to a prince. Wishing to find a consort for his daughter, the king summons all the young men to gather and present sweets to the prince. The princess will marry the man from whom the baby prince accepts the sweet. The prince shows no interest for all the fanciful sweets brought by noble young men, but goes for a lump of cold cooked rice presented by *Saen Pom*. Enraged, the king orders the couple to leave the city and to go into the wilderness. In the wood, God Indra transforms himself into a monkey and presents a magic drum to *Saen Pom*. The drum can be beaten only three times; each time a wish will be granted. *Saen Pom* sounds the drum. At the first beating he wishes for all the knobs on his body to disappear and he becomes a handsome man; the second, he wishes to rule a city which he names *Thep Nakhorn*; and the third, for gold. All his wishes are granted. *Saen Pom* under the name of *Phra Chao Siri Chai Chiang Saen* is the first king of *Thep Nakhorn*. A cradle is also made of gold for the prince, hence the name of the succeeding king, *Phra Chao U-thong* (meaning the golden cradle).

From this folktale, Phraya Anuman Rajadhon gave two opinions on the two motifs:

- Man with numerous knobs on the body
- Three wishes



On the first motif, he mentioned a Mon tale as told by a Mon Buddhist monk many years ago. The tale gave an account of a man who was covered with warts all over his body but he later became a Mon king. As there was a large concentration of Mons in the central part of Thailand, it is possible that the Thais inherited this motif from the Mon tale and the idea of a man covered with warts might be taken from the story in which God Indra assumes the name of *Sahassanayana* in Indian mythology. Phraya Anuman Rajadhon gave an opinion that the word “*Saen*” (hundred thousand) did not indicate the exact number but simply meant “so many.” The Mons in turn could have borrowed this tale from the Indians as this motif is of Indian origin. When this tale became *Thao Saen Pom*, it had undergone many changes such as names, surroundings and events, some of which might have been added or removed in order to meet the requirements and traditions of the locality.

Regarding the second motif, the “three wishes”, this idea has been found in another Thai folktale, and also in many tales from other countries such as in the tale in the *Book of Sindbad* and the tale of the “*Three Wishes*” by La Fontaine. (Phraya Anuman Rajadhon 1969 : 131-136)

Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon devoted a lot of time and attention to studying the transmission of tales. He focused his efforts on collecting the **Ramayana** versions both in the written and in the oral forms from various sources, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Bengal, Vietnam, Tamil and Kashmir. From his comparative study endeavours he arrived at the following conclusions:

Firstly, Thai versions of the **Ramayana**, whether adopted directly or indirectly, are likely to originate from Tamil literature.

Secondly, the **Ramayana** found in any culture is bound to undergo vast changes.

The book **Upakorn Ramakian** (อุปกณ์รามเกียรติ์) illustrates the devotion of time and effort Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon gave to his research.

Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon gave an opinion on the origin of *Pannasa Jataka* tales and other tales in general. Some tales might have come from a single source and others from multiple ones. He commented:

“My understanding is that most Thai tales in Pannasa Jataka could have originally come from India, for example, from Kathasaritsagara and Divyavadana. Those local Indian tales might have begun in India or India might have borrowed from other outside sources or from a chain of outside sources. The original thinking is that all tales originate from a single source; the later thinking is that tales of some countries



could have their own unique sources. The similarities of tales of one country to those from other countries may be inconsequential." (Sathirakoses 1970 vol. IV : 32-33)

Besides the **Ramayana**, Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon also studied the transmission of tales such as *Phra Roth Meri*, *Phra Sudhon and Nang Manohra*, and *Sang Thong*. He compared the story of *Phra Roth Meri* with *Rathasena Jataka* in *Pannasa Jataka*, with the text for *Lakhorn Chatri*, and the tale of *Nang Sip Song* of Muang Nai, which Dr. Banchob Bandhmedha had collected, and with the tale from Kashmir. On *Phra Sudhon and Manohra*, he compared versions from Chinese, Tai in Myanmar, Tibetan and Arab. He also made a comparative study of *Sang Thong* from the text for Lakhorn Nok; with *Suvanna Sangkha* in *Pannasa Jataka*; with *Sang Thong* of Palaung, the ethnic tribe in Burma; with *Along Hoy Sang* of Tai Pakae, the ethnic Tai in Assam State of India as collected by Dr. Banchob Bandhmedha. He suggested :

"If the tale of Sang Thong is separated into sections and then compared to Sang Thong of different versions, we will find some similarities that should add to the historical knowledge and culture of our country. My own idea is there are parts that can be compared, though much effort is needed. At this juncture of time it seems too demanding." (Sathirakokses 1970 vol. IV : 56-57)

Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon observed that kings in many folktales, especially in folk Jatakas, such as *Thao Yosavimol*, *Thao Samol* appear to be simple-minded, thoughtless, and gullible. He reasoned that since all heroes in these tales are *Bodhisattva* or Buddha-to-be, the kings must be portrayed in a less intellectual way in order to project the wisdom of the *Bodhisattva*.

Besides pointing out the significance of folklore study in general and folktales in particular, Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon proposed they should be disseminated or made available to succeeding generations for studying. Here are his words.

"We could study from these tales the emotive feelings that are the foundation of the people's psyches as one angle, and also from these tales investigate history, archaeology, including the original traditions hidden in the depth of the Thai minds, as another angle. Some developed countries have published their revised folktales with added drawings and distribute them for children to read. In this way they could appreciate their culture as their heritage, to be passed on without any interruption, which might have otherwise taken place without their awareness of its occurring." (Sathirakoses 1970 vol. IV : 20).



Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon also observed that some motifs are favoured by many legends, and theorized that they might have originated from Jataka tales. A case in point is the motif that man is the offspring of a deer, as in **Jinakalamali**, in **Tataengwahn the Khmer King**, in the **Legend of Singhanawatti**, and in **Camadevivamsa**. This motif also appears in *Alambusa Jataka* numbered 523, and *Nalinika Jataka* numbered 526 in the Mahayana Text of **Mahavastu**. Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon discovered the motif that described a man who eats a chicken and becomes a king, as in the *Legend of Sri Kshetra*, *Legend of Khun Lu Khun Lai* of the Tais in Myanmar and in the *Khmer Legend of Nai Tia, the Mahout*. He theorized that this motif might have come from *Siricorabrahmna Jataka* which described the mahout and his wife who after eating a chicken packed in a container which had floated down the Ganges River, later became king and queen.

2.2 Written works on children's toys and games

On the subject of children's games Phraya Anuman Rajadhon tried to investigate into the history of some such games that have survived up until the present day. He mentioned the custom of birth and the tradition of child rearing, There was a toy for girls made of baked clay, and painted to create a courtly lady wearing a diagonal shawl and seated with one arm supporting her body. A hollow, painted tumbling toy made from straw paper in the shape of a boy, with a hair knot on each side of the head, was given to boys. Plenty of clay was placed inside the toy at the flat base so that the toy returned to its upright position after being tossed around. Among other toys were little drums and small cymbals, both of which had Chinese origin. Covering an earthenware jar with rag was the beginning of making a homemade toy drum. Clay was pasted around the rim of the jar and then beaten to increase the tension of the drum surface. A solution of clay was applied to the rag to complete the process. Children also made sculptured clay cows and buffaloes as toys. Sometimes clay was shaped into a cup that was thrown to the ground to make a loud noise. Toys made from clay were likely to predate all toys. Imported modern toys eventually replaced all the traditional ones.

A children's game, which was of special interest to Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon, was the counting out game with rhyme chanting. On this subject he made two observations:

2.2.1 Rhymes collected from various sources varied in length. Some were gibberish, others understandable. If rhymes were in a clear and consistent language, we could



assume that they were newly composed and definitely not so old.

2.2.2 The counting out game may have originated from the rite of sacrifice, when children tried to imitate the action of adults. Phraya Anuman Rajadhon commented.

“The counting out game with rhyme chanting of children could formerly be a serious business of adults. When the sacrifice of captured enemies was to be made and the conquerors could not make up their minds who would be the first victim to please the god. A method of deciding their fate in the form of a counting out game was thus made. Children set out to imitate the action of adults and modified the rite into a child’s game.”

2.3 Written works on folk beliefs

Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon wrote articles both in English and Thai on folk beliefs. He also mentioned the beliefs and practices of some groups of people recorded by anthropologists. In some of his works he analyzed social and spiritual roles of certain beliefs. Some of his compiled works are:

2.3.1 *Peesang Devata* (ผีสงเทวดา) covers benevolent and malevolent spirits such as *pee banpaburus* ผีบรรพบุรุษ (ancestral spirit), *pee baan pee muang* ผีบ้านผีเมือง (city spirit), *pee pop* ผีปอบ, *pee ka* ผีกะ, *pee pong* ผีพง, *pee krasue* ผีกระสือ, *pee khamode* ผีโขมด (forest spirit). Additionally he lists spirits residing in the forest such as *pee kong koy* ผีกองกอย and *pee pong kang* ผีโป่งค่าง, *rukha devata* รุกขเทวดา, *nang mai* นางไม้, *nang takian* นางตะเคียน, and *nang tani* นางตานี. Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon also describes various types of spirits, the worshipping of spirits and the shamans “*maemod or khonsong*” แม่มดคนทรง who function as mediums, as well as carrying out the promised offerings after a specific request from the spirits has been answered.

2.3.2 The Khwan (ขวัญ) and Its Ceremonies

One of his outstanding works is on the subject of “*Khwan*”. From his research it became evident that the *khwan* is not confined to the Thais of Thailand and that the belief in *khwan* is indigenous to the ethnic *Tai*, both within and outside the country. He found that some groups of people in Asia believe in something very similar to *khwan*. He also described and analyzed the customs and rites of recalling *khwan* and the role of the rite. (Phya Anuman Rajadhon 1969:202-247)

2.3.3 *Mae Posop* (แม่โพสพ) the Goddess of rice

2.3.4 Charms and amulets (เครื่องรางของขลัง)



2.3.5 Some superstitions about trees and plants

2.3.7 Data on Conditioned Poison (ยาสั่ง)

2.4 Works on rites and rituals

There is a vast amount of writing on examining rites and rituals by Phraya Anuman Rajadhon, most of which are on the practices of people in the central plain of Thailand. However, references have also been made about local customs as well as similar customs in other ethnic groups. Some are from his own collection, and others from interviews of people he came across. His works on rites and rituals can be divided into three categories according to their content and function.

2.4.1 The life-cycle ceremonies or rites of passage, e.g. ceremonies connected with the early stage of life, the wedding ceremony, the Tham Khwan ceremonies (ประเพณีทำขวัญ) and death rituals.

2.4.2 The fertility rites practised among farmers.

2.4.3 The seasonal festivities, such as the *songkran* festival, the beginning of Buddhist Lent, the *loy krathong* festival, the organization of *Vessantara Jataka* sermons, and the offering of food to Buddhist monks

Phraya Anuman Rajadhon presented an account of various rites, beliefs and practice of those rites including analyses of the social and spiritual significance of the rites to individuals.

2.5 Written works on the Thai way of life

The Thai way of life can indeed be found in most of his works including **Fuen Khwam Lang** (ฟื้นความหลัง) or “recollections from the past”, partly his autobiography and partly a historical background of Bangkok. The present article discusses his three important articles namely the life of the Thai in the old days, life of the rice farmers and life in the temple.

2.5.1 **Life of the Thais in the old days.** (ชีวิตชาวไทยสมัยก่อน) Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon wrote about the way the Thais built their own cities based on legends, the roles of masters and servants, village and town, the family system, livelihood, tools, pastimes and leisure, religion and temple construction, the relationship between the temple and the household and also the education of the townsfolk. He talked about the way of life of Thai people in various parts of the country and presented information



about the Tai-speaking people outside the country. He mentioned that the naming of the children to indicate seniority could also be found among the Tais outside Thailand, thus showing that it was a very ancient culture.

His studies also showed that the communal living of the Thais in these early times had laid down customs, rather like a primitive legal system, which made them disciplined, following a social code of conduct. (Sathirakoses 1978)

2.5.2 Life of the rice farmers. (ชีวิตชาวนา) The writing provides interesting reading. It gives accounts of the way of life of rice farmers and the production of rice in detail. He described various steps of rice farming beginning from worshipping the spirit of the land (พระภูมิเจ้าที่) to request the right to use the field. He described the ploughing rite, ploughing, the sowing of rice seeds, growing rice stalks, and the harvesting which lasts until the rice grains are transported to the barn. He wrote about the significance of the rite of recalling “rice spirit” (ประเพณีทำขวัญข้าว) for farmers. He also examined the profit and loss due to the difficulties of farmers in trying to prevent rice crops from being spoiled by pests such as rats and birds. He wrote about rice farming in such a detailed way that it seemed as though his accounts came from his own experiences. (Phraya Anuman Rajadhon 1969: 315-379)

2.5.3 Temple life. (ชีวิตชาววัด) The writing on this topic emphasized the importance of the education offered to the temple boys and the monks of these early periods. Thai society of old relied on the temple as the main source of knowledge. Most Thai males received an education from the temple. They started as temple boys when they were young and later became ordained, first as novices and then as monks. The author wrote about the life of the temple boys and monks in detail, beginning from their preparation before ordination and the daily life of the monks. (Sathirakoses 1978:401-478).

Nobody had ever written about rice farming and temple life in as much detail as Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon. Although he was neither a rice farmer nor a former monk, he wrote about the life of rice farmers, the various steps of rice farming, and its associated problems in the same way as he wrote about the life of monks as though from his own experience. This ability to write in such detail can be attributed to his diligence and effort to gain a deeper understanding of the subjects, a salient trademark of his character.



3. Supports for research on folklore

Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon lent wide support to the systematic study of folklore by serving as an advisor to researchers on folklore and folk literature. He also gave moral support to other researchers on folklore and folk life.

Conclusion

Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon played a great role in the study of folklore. He pointed out the significance of Thai traditional culture, folklore and local customs as the culture of common people who form the majority of the population. He was a pioneer who deeply immersed himself in research and promoted the study of folklore. Professor Phraya Anuman Rajadhon had an enquiring mind. He always strived for knowledge from many sources ranging from books to interviews with people at various levels including knowledgeable noblemen, scholars and ordinary men. With his strong power of observation, keen memory, and analytical mind, he always based his judgments on logical thoughts and applied a Western approach in his analysis of data while always keeping Thai social context as a reference point. He gave encouragement and moral support to his students as well as those interested in folklore and folk life. His numerous writings are an important source for the study of Thai society and culture. Those who go through his works will understand better exactly what being Thai both past and present means.

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