



Kham Khlong Poetic Tales of Lanna : Outstanding Features, Wisdom and Value

Abstract



This research involved the study of 5 written poetic tales of Lanna, namely *Khlong Pathumsangka*, *Khlong Hongphakham*, *Khlong Prommathat*, *Khlong Amara* and *Khlong Utsabarot* with the objective of revealing their outstanding features, wisdom and value.

Outstanding features: Regarding form, the versification referred to as “*khlong*” is used. *Khlong sisuphap* is used in *Khlong Phatumsangka* with a little use of *khlong konlabot*. *Khlong sisuphap*, *khlong sam* and *khlong song* are used in *Khlong Hongphakham* whereas *Khlong phrommathat* and *Khlong Amara* are composed in *khlong sisuphap*. Lastly, *Khlong Utsabarot* is composed in *khlong sisuphap* and *khlong dan*. It can be observed that there are fewer Lanna literary works composed in *khlong* forms than those composed in other kinds of poetic forms. This is so because *khlong* is very difficult to compose and writers were usually poets of the royal court whose numbers were few. However, the *khlong* found in the respective literary works was not very strict or rigid in the forms and prosody. As for the contents, each of the *kham khlong tale* has a different focus. *Khlong Prathumsangka* includes some moral tales and *Khlong Hongphakham*

contains some features of the folk Jataka which is full of fantasy and miracles depicting the great power and merits (*bun parami*) of the revered Bodhisat. On the other hand, *Khlong Phrommathat* mainly presents the wonder of removing one's heart of soul with some additional riddle tales, making it a tale within a tale. *Khlong Amara* is in the fashion of a life tale employing a love motif such as love loss or disappointing love between a young woman and a monk to illustrate the human nature of the characters with an implication that women are enemies of a holy life. In contrast, *Khlong Utsabarot* being derived from Sanskrit literature, contains fighting and war motifs as well as some travelogue. All five tales reflect the authors' wisdom and talent in delivering stories, concepts, emotions and feelings through literary art. Their choices of words and modes of conveying feelings arouse the reader's imagination. The language and expression effectively convey the feelings and emotions along with ideas and symbols. Choosing poetry or *khlong* as a literary vehicle or means allows the poets to play with words and tonal sounds that create subtlety of meaning as well as pleasant sounds. Several studies have pointed out four aspects of the value of poetic narration or *kham khlong* tales as follows: 1) entertainment in the form of tales that are fascinating and amusing; 2) passing on Lanna wisdom in literary art that is rich in expressive and passionate feelings and emotions, whereas the description of characters and natural scenery is wonderful; 3) moral and intellectual value can be found in all stories which stimulate the reader's conscience and awareness or moral obligation including useful or practical ideas and



4) social and cultural values in these tales can be extensively detected, especially in terms of beliefs, rituals, customs and traditions which all in all should be considered and passed on to the next generation in order to make these poetic tales remain a literary legacy of Lanna.

