



Abstract



Lanna Didactic Literature: Outstanding Characteristics, Wisdom and Value

Songsak Prangwatanakun

This study on Lanna Didactic Literature had three objectives as follows: 1) to study the outstanding characteristics of the literature in terms of form and content, 2) to learn about Lanna wisdom and 3) to appreciate its value. The literary works selected for this study comprised 17 titles: 7 poems "*khlong*", 4 titles of Dharma related verse or "*dham-khao*" in Lanna script, 5 titles of general "*khao*" and one Lanna folk chanting or "*kham-ram*".

It was found that Lanna didactic literature had a variety of forms and poetic devices with the purpose of teaching on different occasions. In terms of content, it was clearly categorized or classified. The poet usually stated which class of people he or she intended to teach: the ruling class and the commoners or the general public as classified by the people's social status. Regarding Lanna wisdom, the works reflected wisdom related mainly to human relationships by applying different Buddhist teaching or Dharma to daily life. In addition, some parts about

the relationship between humans and nature could be found in the presentation and didactic devices through metaphor and figure of speech, reflecting the authors' wisdom gained from nature. However, only a small portion was detected in light of human and supernatural relationships. As for values, the written didactic literature obviously played a great role in collecting several moral and ethical teachings as well as some practical lessons, which were mostly grouped according to subject to be used to cultivate the people and to guide the society at large, making them valuable in terms of literary art and means of passing on the teaching and wisdom from generation to generation.