

Thesis Title A Semantic Study of "Mangrayasastra" Customary Law

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Abstract

The study focusses on "Mangrayasastra" which may be regarded as the most important written code of customary law of Lan na that has so far come to light. Its origin is ascribed to King Mangrai, the founder of the historical "Kingdom of Million Ricefields" in the second half of the 13th century A.D., and we may assume that it has been used in judiciary practice in what is now Northern Thailand and neighbouring regions throughout pre-modern times.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. In Chapter One the importance of "Mangrayasastra" is discussed, and an outline is given

of the aims and the scope of the study and the present state of relevant research. Chapter Two contains brief descriptions of altogether fifteen witnesses bearing the name "Mangrayasastra" and leads to the identification of five different versions or separate traditions represented by them. Subsequently, a brief review is given of previous attempts at reconstructive editions of works of Thai and Lan Na literary traditions. Finally, the reason is given for the selection of a group of five manuscripts as the main basis for the study.

Chapter Three contains a textcritical investigation into the transmission of "Mangrayasastra" as represented by the main group of the aforementioned fifteen sources. The analysis is based on eight witnesses : five hitherto unpublished and unevaluated manuscripts and three printed editions of different Lan Na manuscripts (in Siamese transliteration.) The analysis of the variant material found in the eight witnesses leads to the reconstruction of a pedigree showing the interrelationship of the manuscripts and their respective status in the family tree.

In the following Chapter Four a critical recension of the text of " Mangrayasastra " is presented in Siamese transliteration, paralleled with a translation into modern Central Thai, important variant readings being recorded in the footnotes. A brief summary

of the results of the study and suggestions for further research are given in Chapter Five. In the Appendix a glossary of special words and expressions is added as well as a reprint of a recent paper in Thai on textual criticism exemplifying the methodology.