

Thesis Title A Comparative Study of Different Versions of
 Nang Uddhara
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M.A. Lanna Language and Literature

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is a comparative study of different versions of Nang Uddhara as found in Thailand and neighbouring countries with the focus on theme, plots, motifs, characters, setting, and philosophical thinking of the various authors including cultural aspects and local belief systems as reflected in the narrative.

For this study, the author made a survey and collected 47 versions of Nang Uddhara from Thai as well as neighbouring countries. There were found altogether 30 written and 17 orally transmitted versions. From those versions collected, the Lanna Jataka serves as the basis of the analysis, while the other written

versions, that is the Khao So of Lan Na, the Pla Bu Thong Klon Suad of the Central region, Pla Bu Thong Klon Sarn of the Northeast, Pla Bu Thong Kham Karp of the South as well as the Lao, Burmese and Mon versions, (are thoroughly studied and compared. As for the orally transmitted versions and the variant stories from other countries, these are studied in order to demonstrate the widespread existence of the Nang Uddhara theme. The popularity of the story is apparent from the numerous copies of the Jataka as well as the Khao So adaptation and the multitude of orally transmitted versions which can be found in Lan Na region and neighbouring areas.

The author found that the story of Nang Uddhara in Lan Na in the form of Jataka, Khao So, and oral versions as well as the versions in the neighbouring areas have the same plot, while differing with respect to motifs, characters, setting, philosophical thinking and cultural reflections. As for the Lao version, it is identical with the Lan Na one.

The thesis is divided into 5 Chapters. Chapter 1 contains the information about the importance and the purpose of the study, the state of research and relevant works of other scholars, as well as aims and scope of the study, and the methodological approach used by the author. Chapter 2 is about the distribution of Nang Uddhara versions in Thailand and neighbouring countries. Chapter 3 contains a comparative analysis of Nang Uddhara Jataka version as found in Lan Na together with various other versions

with respect to theme, plot, motifs, characters, setting, and philosophical thinking. Chapter 4 tells about cultural aspects, customs, belief systems, and values of local societies as found in the various versions of Nang Uddhara. In chapter 5 conclusions are drawn and suggestions made for further study. In the appendix there are added various versions of Nang Uddhara and related literary works including orally transmitted versions collected by the author.