

Suchaya Wathapukkana 2012: A Study of Language and Orthography in “Pla Bu Thong”, a Hymnlike Folktales. Master of Arts (Thai Language), Major Field: Thai Language, Department of Thai Language. Thesis Advisor: Assistant Professor Surasit Thairat, Ph.D. 354 pages.

The three purposes of this research are as follows: 1. to study and to compare the ancient Thai alphabet appearing in the hymn with the standard Thai alphabet. 2. to study and to compare the orthography of the hymn with the orthography of the standard Thai. 3. To compare the content of the hymn with the content of the present prose by studying from the ancient documents of a hymn-like folktale “Pla Bu Thong” (Thai tradition book #231, #232, #233, and #234, poetic books of letters and inscription in a written form) under the supervision of the National Library of Thailand.

The result of the study and the comparison between the ancient Thai alphabet appearing in the hymn and the standard Thai alphabet discovers 42 consonant forms. Most have the same forms as the standard Thai alphabet. The consonant “พ” includes five written forms, which is considered the highest among the consonants. The usage of the consonants still has no certain patterns. 24 vowel forms are discovered and the forms will change when combined with the consonants. The vowels “ใ-” and “ไ-” have four written forms, which are considered the highest among the vowels. The tone marks “’”, “๑”, and “๒” are found; however, their usage is still not certain and regular. The tone “๑” includes three written forms, which is considered the highest among the tones. It is found that five symbols are used in place of vowels. Most of them are not used in the standard Thai alphabet. Four symbols employed in writing are also discovered and they are still used in the standard Thai alphabet.

The result of the study and the comparison between the orthography appearing in the hymn and the orthography of the standard Thai from 87 words discovers 44 words having the same written forms as the orthography of the standard Thai which accounts for 50.57% and 43 words having different written forms from the orthography of the standard Thai which accounts for 49.43%. The word “ทรมวิชัย” has 20 forms, which is considered the highest among the studied words. The orthography still has no certain patterns, which is different from the orthography of the standard Thai. The result of the comparison between the content of the hymn and the present prose shows that the characters have the same names as well as characteristics. Important events at the beginning of the story are similar but different at the end. However, the same lesson or the law of karma which is one of the Buddhist teachings is taught.

---

Student’s signature

Thesis Advisor’s signature