

A LITERARY ANALYSIS OF T'HAO HUNG OR CHUANG

AN ABSTRACT

BY

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This thesis was aimed to analyze the Isan literature Thao Hung or Chuang in three aspects: compositions, common and different characteristics, and various literary values such as in social science, literature, and language.

Thao Hung or Chuang was written during the period from the mid-14th to the mid-16th centuries by the royal poet of Lan Chang Dynasty by using the happenings to a previous courageous Tai-Lao king whose influences had been upon the Mekhong and Mekok Basins during the period from the mid-11th to the mid-12th centuries. There are such several kinds of writing patterns as khlung 5, khlung 7, and khlung 7 pattana (poems with 5 feet, 7 feet, and 7 feet adapted) which are the writing patterns developed by the society of the Mekhong Basin culture branch. The subject matter of the literature is about the so much greatness of this previous king that several stories about him were written in order to meet the needed goals of the poet and the society. For example, the epic of almost 5,000 poems of Thao Hung or Chuang of Silpakorn version, Maha Sila Wirawong transformation, Pricha Phinthong version; the story of Thao Hung or Chuang in the form of Buddhist chronicle such as Wang Samalini Ba Chuang, and Phraya Chuang's Chronicle; in the form of hero's chronicle or chronical poems such as Thao Yi Ba Chuang. These stories also show common and different characteristics of the literature in various aspects.

At the same time this literature reflects the society in such various aspects as beliefs, traditions, and culture, especially traditional beliefs, beliefs in Buddhism which fixed the way of living in the society. It also reflects the concern of literature with the society.

Due to the important historic subject matter about the people which was written in long and old poems and with very beautiful writing styles and expressions by an anonymous royal poet of Lan Chang Dynasty, this literature has been admired as the epic of Southeast Asia, and as second to none of any other literature in this region.