Inter-mixing Indianness with Thainess in selected Thai Novels

Sophana Srichampa

Centre for Bharat Studies

Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia

Mahidol University, Thailand

Abstract

This article studies the Indian settings and plots of eight Thai novels by seven writers based on the period of the works and the relative experience of the writer. The results are as follows: During the early Ratanakosin period, only one piece of Thai poetry recording the lives of two Hindu Indians fighting over a Melayu woman was written using a Thai setting. In the Middle Ratanakosin period, one renowned book about India recounted the visit of a young King Rama V of Siam to India to experience and learn from the positive and negative experience of colonized countries. His Majesty was inspired by that visit and reformed Siam (former name of Thailand) into a dynastic state with numerous new economic political and social developments. In the current Ratanakosin period of rampant globalization, “Indianness” presented in the settings and protagonists are plotted in many Thai novels mixing with “Thainess” through Thai or Indian-Thai characterisation and aspects of culture and concepts related to Hinduism and Buddhism. “Dharma” and “Karma” are the main key reflections found in Thai works. It can be concluded that, through their art, Thai novelists serve de facto roles as cultural ambassadors linking Thai readers to India.

Keywords: Buddhism, Hinduism, India, novel, Thailand

Cites as: Srichampa, S. (2019). Inter-mixing Indianness with Thainess in selected Thai Novels.

Arab World English Journal for Translation & Literary Studies, 3 (2). 152-164.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awejtls/vol3no2.13>