Another landmark in the ‘nationalisation’ of scripts in use in the Thai kingdom was the first printed Tripitaka published in 1893, which also happened to be the first complete Tripitaka ever written using the Thai script.

Besides khorm there were several other scripts in use throughout the kingdom, which were unintelligible for readers from the central part of the kingdom. The north had two major scripts; one used for Pali and other religious works, and one used for secular works. The northeastern or ‘Lao’ part of the kingdom similarly used two scripts; again, one for religious works, and one for non-religious works. Also, the non-Pali works in both these regions were written in different (but related) dialects to the Thai language used in the central region. Publishing these works therefore presented problems for the library editors. There was a need for standardisation of script, and especially of language, so that the printed work could be understood by the predominantly Thai readers of the aristocracy and the nobility. The appearance of these works, originally of diverse scripts and language, published in standard Thai script and language, reinforced the perception of the existence of a single body of literature, which belonged to the Thai.

These books became known as ‘Wachirayan Library Editions’. If one can believe Damrong this title seems to have given these published works some authority: people liked these editions, Damrong wrote, because they ‘gained more knowledge’ from these than they did from other editions. In any case the influence of these editions has long outlived their original publication. They have been (and continue to be) reprinted, usually with no change to the original edited text, for the use of schools, universities and other book consumers. The Wachirayan Library Editions effectively created a kind of ‘canon’ of Thai literary works. That is, the Thai literary heritage, as it is recognised in schools and universities today, is overwhelmingly based on that which has been published under the auspices of the Wachirayan Library.

The works in each particular genre chosen for publication by the library were in most cases those composed by authors within or close to the Thai court. Thus what was published in the Wachirayan Library Editions as ‘Thai literature’ - the literature of the Thai nation - was almost always derived from the literature of the Thai court. One such example comes from the activities of the Literature Society (wannakhadi samosorn) set up by King Vajiravudh in 1914 to promote Thai literature. Requested by the king to choose works in various literary categories to stand as examples of excellence in literary composition, the Society’s committee chose works which had been written either by

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84 Tamman hor phra samut, p. 88; or simply ‘Library Editions’ - ‘Nangsu chabap hor phra samut’; Nithan boranakhadi, p. 135.

85 ‘...dai khwam ru di kwa chabap un’; Nithan boranakhadi, p. 135.
Thai kings, by members of the aristocracy or nobility close to the Thai court, or anonymous works popular at the Thai court.  

The Wachirayan Library’s role in creating a standardised canon of Thai literary works certainly does not imply that Thai letters were in any sense becoming petrified. The library itself and the spread of the technology of printing enabled figures from outside court circles to research, publish, and gain a readership for their own views on Thai literary matters. Maverick figures such as Thianwan and K.S.R. Kulap, both of whom had a strong interest in Thai history, published ideas which were at considerable variance to those of the court - and subsequently incurred the court’s displeasure and punishment. Printing and the increased public accessibility to the kingdom’s literary materials which the library made possible, were giving rise to alternative views of the past and indeed the present.

Conclusion

It was not until shortly after the overthrow of the absolute monarchy in 1932 that the ‘Wachirayan Library of the Capital’ was officially renamed in Thai the ‘National Library’. Yet implicit in the concept of the library as understood by the Thai court of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and increasingly explicit in the activities of the library, was the idea of a Thai nation. The concept of the ‘national library’ symbolised the formation of a knowledge about the Thai nation. This knowledge, in the form of books, was being collected from all corners of the Thai kingdom and gathered together into one place; it was classified as ‘Thai’ according to the new categorization of knowledge devised by library officials; and it was disseminated to the public in standardised printed form in Wachirayan Library Editions. It was this knowledge which was replacing Buddhism as the dominant form of knowledge for the kingdom’s rulers.

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86 The categories and the chosen works were as follows:

- **Klorn Lilit** - Phra Lor
- **Klorn Chan** - Samutthakhot
- **Klorn Kap** - Maha Chat Kham Thet
- **Klorn Surnph** - Sepha Ruang Khun Chang Khun Phaen
- **Bot Lakhorn Rong** - Inao
- **Bot Lakhorn Phut** - Hua Chai Nak Rop
- **Khwam Riang Nithan** - Sam Kok
- **Khwam Riang Abhithai** - Phra Ratcha Phithi 12 Duan

*Phra ratcha phithi sin sorng duan*, pp. ‘khor’-‘ngor’.


88 *Hor samut haeng chat chak adit thung patchuban*, p. 67.
Amidst these changes in the organisation of knowledge in the Thai kingdom the court's redefinition of the Jatakas was taking place. How did this shift affect the place of the Jatakas? The following chapter will examine how the Jatakas related to the new configuration of Thai knowledge.
CHAPTER 7
FROM JATAKAS TO THAI FOLKTALES

It is the argument of this thesis that for the Thai court until the mid- to late-nineteenth century, and for peasant communities until very recently, the Jatakas were understood as factual narrative, as opposed to the category of fiction, or folktale. The basis for this faith in the reliability of the Jataka narrative was the belief that each Jataka story had originally been related by the Buddha himself about his own previous incarnations; it had subsequently been memorised and later recorded in manuscript form by monks; and had been repeatedly copied and faithfully handed down unchanged over many generations until the present day. The contemporary narrator of the Jataka, in his capacity as heir to this tradition, was actually repeating the words of the Buddha, which gave the story great authority.

One of the most important symbols of the Jatakas’ status as true stories was the medium through which the Jataka was always told - the palm leaf manuscript. The palm leaf manuscript contained the text of the Jataka, thereby embodying the Buddha’s words in writing. The palm leaf manuscript, therefore, was a highly sacred object, for it was recognised as a vehicle of the Buddha’s words. As such it was always present at recitations of the Jatakas. Even today at recitations of the Vessantara Jataka, the reciting monk will always hold in his hands the palm leaf manuscript on which the Vessantara Jataka has been inscribed, to symbolise that the words he is reciting are those first uttered by the Buddha.¹

The role of the Buddha’s utterances in guaranteeing the authority of the Jataka narrative is also evident in the ritual that surrounds the Jatakas’ recitation. For example, monks performed recitations of the Vessantara Jataka for the most part in the vernacular, while the Buddha’s words were supposed originally to have been uttered in Pali. There was a danger, therefore, that the Jataka narrative rendered in the vernacular might misrepresent the Buddha’s original words. This was an ever-present danger for a religion like Buddhism based on non-vernacular scripture, which required the vernacular to communicate its teachings. The issue was addressed in the following way. Either immediately before or after the vernacular recitation of the Vessantara Jataka took place there was an additional recitation of the Pali canonical verses to the Vessantara Jataka

¹ As a medium of the Buddha’s teachings the palm leaf manuscript in some places still commands great respect. Today in Laos, before a monk begins reading from a palm leaf manuscript he will raise it above his head as a gesture of respect; Samana bai lan thu pathet khang thi 1 (First National Conference on Palm Leaf Manuscripts), Vientiane, 1988, p. 2.
known as the *khatha phan*, the ‘thousand verses’. The *khatha phan* were held to be the actual words used by the Buddha to relate the Vessantara Jataka. The great merit that the faithful gained from listening to the Vessantara Jataka, was, according to the popular Phra Malai story, and restated by the Sangha Laws promulgated in the reign of Rama I, derived from listening and paying homage to the *khatha phan*; it was not enough merely to listen to the vernacular rendition. The great respect paid to the ‘thousand verses’ of the Vessantara Jataka, based on the belief that they were the Buddha’s actual words, is reflected in the ceremony surrounding the recital of the Vessantara Jataka. The faithful would make offerings of fruit and other foodstuffs, lotus flowers, candles, incense sticks and other items of worship, in amounts of one thousand of each item - representing each of the thousand verses uttered by the Buddha.

We have seen, however, that from the mid-nineteenth century the Jatakas were coming under attack from sections of the Thai court led by the king, for reasons examined in earlier chapters. This attack culminated in 1904 with King Chulalongkorn’s essay on the Jatakas, in which he argued that the stories were not based on the words of the Buddha but were pre-Buddhist ‘folktales’. That is, they were not to be understood as factual accounts of the Buddha’s former incarnations, but rather as fictional tales illustrating a particular moral. While the former understanding of the Jatakas, widespread amongst Thailand’s rural communities, persisted for many decades, the expansion of the state education system and the gradual centralization of the Sangha administration has ensured that King Chulalongkorn’s redefinition of the Jatakas has become the orthodox understanding of the Jataka’s place in Thai culture. For all intents and purposes the Jatakas have been excised from orthodox Thai Buddhism. The authority of the Jatakas, texts which had for so long had been associated with the formation of Thai states, and which encoded the cultural notions of power and hierarchy taken up and used by the Tai peoples, was being eroded.

Yet what was this category of folktale into which the Thai court had placed the Jatakas? Where did the category come from? And how was it related to the new categories of knowledge into which Thai court officials and the Wachirayan Library

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2 During my fieldwork in 1992 I was told that it was less and less common for recitations of the *khatha phan* to be held at *phet maha chat*, for the major reason that most people nowadays had no time to listen, particularly to something they could not understand. My informants told me that ‘in the past’, however, recitations of the *khatha phan* were invariably held.

3 Chaofa thammathibet: phra prawat lae phرانิพนห bot roi krong (Prince Thammathibet, His Life and Poetry). Bangkok, Krom Sinlapakorn, 1970, ‘phra malai kham luang’, p. 272; also mentioned in Komai tra sam duang (The Three Seals Law), Bangkok, Khurushapha, 1962, lem 4, ‘kot phra song 1’ (First Sangha Law), p. 167. The *Maha chat kham luang*, a ‘vernacular’ version of the Vessatara Jataka which was supposedly composed in the reign of the fifteenth century King Borommatrailokanat, solves the problem in a different way. The entire original Pali text of the Vessantara Jataka is included in the same text with the Thai translation, with words or a phrase in the Pali followed directly by the Thai translation.
were busy organising the Thai kingdom’s literary tradition? This chapter will examine the category of ‘folktale’ as it evolved in the Thai kingdom in the late nineteenth century. It will look at the final stage in the process by which the Jatakas were recategorised by court scholars as Thai folktales, a subset of the new category of Thai literature. It was through the categorization of the Jatakas as fiction that the court attempted to deny the stories the authority they had previously enjoyed.

Nithan

The common term for folktale in Thai today is nithan. The term has an interesting history in the Thai world. It would appear that this understanding of the word nithan, and indeed the actual concept of fictional narrative, is in fact of recent origin. The Thai word nithan was a translation of the Pali nidana. One of the uses of the Pali word nidana was to signify a genre of Pali scripture which was considered to be true in the context of the Theravada Buddhist scriptural tradition. One example, the Nidanakatha, was the well-known Pali introduction to the Jataka Commentary, which narrates the progress of the bodhisatta (i.e. the origins of the Buddha). The Jinamahanidana, another Pali work of which extant versions date from the early Bangkok period, is another Buddhist religious-historical narrative largely based on the Nidanakatha. Pallegoix’s Thai dictionary published in 1854 translates the Thai word nithan into English as ‘history’, ‘narration’. In his Pali dictionary published in 1875 the British Pali scholar Robert Childers translated the Pali root word nidanam as ‘primary source’, ‘origin’, ‘cause’ - concepts which would appear to be related to historical discourse. The three divisions of the Nidanakatha, durenidanam, avidurenidanam, and santikenidanam (translated by Childers as ‘the distant Epoch’, ‘the middle Epoch’ and ‘the near Epoch’) suggest that nidana could also be used to mean an historical period. Another British Pali scholar C.A.F. Rhys Davids republished her late husband’s translation of the Nidanakatha, the

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4 There is a reference to the Jatakas as nithan in a text from the First Reign, in which the meaning of the term nithan is a story from the dhamma, rather than ‘fiction’; see Prachum phraratchaputcha (Collected Royal Inquiries), Bangkok, 1973, pp. 148-9: ‘chung trat phra thamma thetsana chadok nithan’ (...followed by a recitation of the dhamma in the form of a Jataka nithan).


6 A Dictionary of the Pali Language by Robert Caesar Childers, Kyoto Book Company, Kyoto, 1976, p. 278.
title of which he had left untranslated, as ‘the Story [katha] of the Lineage [nidana]’.  
The lineage referred to in this case is that of Gautama Buddha. Thus it would appear that
nowhere in the roots of the term is there the sense that nihan was associated with
anything else but ‘factual’ narrative, which in today’s terminology we might refer to as
‘historical’.

Yet by the second half of the nineteenth century the word nihan was being used
in a new way. It began to be taken up by scholars and officials of the Thai court as an
oppositional term to that of the new category of ‘history’. That is, where ‘history’
(referred to by various terms, including phongsawadan, tamnan, ruang rao, and others)
meant a factual narrative concerning past events, nihan came to be used by court
officials to signify a narrative not based on a factual account of past events, that is, a
‘tale’. It was in this latter sense that court scholars began increasingly to refer to the
Jatakas as nihan. The term ‘jataka’ itself was already a generic name found in the
corpus of Pali canonical scriptures, the Tripitaka, which referred to a genre of narrative:
stories told by the Buddha about his former lives. So the addition of the epithet nihan
by court officials when referring to the Jatakas would appear to indicate that the term
jataka was no longer sufficient to carry the meaning its users required. In other words
the use of the term nihan in association with jataka served to emphasize the fictional
status of the Jatakas.

What failed the criteria of historical fact was increasingly referred to by court
scholars as nihan. King Chulalongkorn’s address to the Historical Society which he
had founded in 1907 to promote historical studies expresses this clearly: ‘Countries have
evidence for only six thousand years of history, but this evidence is mixed together with
unbelievable stories - nihan...’ Calling for a history of more than simply the kings of
Thailand Chulalongkorn stated in the same address that ‘...we do not really have any
reliable accounts (ruang rao...pen kan mankhong) of towns such as Nakhorn Chaisi or
Lopburi. We only have various references in other books, or else nihan’. Nihan,
then, was defined in opposition to historical discourse.

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7 Rhys Davids, T.W., Buddhist Birth Stories (Jataka Tales), London, Routledge, 1925, p. xi;
C.A.F. Rhys Davids writes “The word nidana suggests something serial, or connected in line. Da is ‘to bind’; ni means ‘along’. And so we get the notion of chain or series of antecedents. And that, in the
matter of living ascent or descent, is lineage”.

8 ‘Samakhom sup suan khong boran nai prathet sayam, phra ratchadamrat khong phrabit
somdet phra chula chorn kiao chao yu hua’ (Society for Research into Antiquities in Siam: Address by
King Chulalongkorn), Sinlapakorn, 12, 2, July 1966, p. 42. In what is a late example but in the same
spirit, Prince Narit wrote to Damrong in a letter of 1943 that the Phongsawadan_nua (‘Northern
Chronicle’) was wrongly named, and would be better named ‘nihan_nua’ (‘Northern Tale’) on account of
its lack of credibility; San somdet (Royal Letters - Correspondence between Prince Naritsaranuwatiwong

9 ‘Samakhom sup suan khong boran nai prathet sayam’, p. 44.
In the religious life of the kingdom’s rural population in the nineteenth century it was recognised by the Thai court that *nīthan* was the dominant mode through which religious teachings were communicated. When in 1886 on a trip to Chanthaburi, one of the kingdom’s southeastern provinces, the king had the opportunity to listen to a sermon (*thetsana*), he appears to have been disturbed to find that the sermon was mostly made up of *nīthan*, meaning (from the King’s point of view) ‘tales’ or ‘fables’. The full extent of the situation was revealed in the last years of the nineteenth century, when the results of a wide-ranging survey ordered by the king into the state of religious affairs in every province of the kingdom indicated that it was the Jatakas and other works described (along with the Jatakas) as *nīthan* which formed the basis of religious instruction for most of the kingdom.

The change in the meaning of the word *nīthan* for the Thai court, from a certain genre of religious narrative to fictional account, is indicative of a whole genre of narrative which had lost its ‘historicity’ or status in historical fact in the eyes of the elite of the Thai kingdom. The term *nīthan* was acquiring a new meaning in addition to that of a now discredited mode of religious-historical discourse. *Nīthan* increasingly came to be used to signify new stories consciously written as fictional narrative which were appearing in new court literary magazines modelled on European literary journals. As the popularity of these new stories intentionally written as fiction grew, the association of the word *nīthan* with fictional narrative became stronger amongst the Thai elite until it eventually eliminated all vestiges of the older meaning of *nīthan*.

The late nineteenth century is the birth period of ‘imaginative fiction’ in the Thai kingdom, as it is in most countries of Southeast Asia. The pages of *Wachirayan Wiset* and its successor *Wachirayan*, the ‘literary magazines’ of the Wachirayan Library read by members of the Thai court and the literate elite in the Thai capital, are full of works entitled *nīthan*, which often appeared alongside Jataka stories. Many of the new works of fiction were written by court literati, attesting to the popularity of this genre of

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10 ‘Ruang Bamrung Satsana Nai Huá Muang’ (On Improving Religion in the Provinces), *Pramuan Phra Niphon Somdet Phra Maha Samana Chao Krom Phra Ya Wachirayan Warorot: Phra Ratcha Hathalekha—Lai Phra Hat (Prince-Patriarch Wachirayan’s Collected Writings: Correspondence Between the Prince and the King)*. Bangkok, Mahamakut, 1971, pp. 54-5.

11 “Religious sermons are based on Jatakas as in other *monthon* (administrative regions)*, p. 70; and “The religious sermons are merely illustrations of the virtue of giving and moral conduct, and especially the Vessantara Jataka”, p. 95; ‘Sarup Thikgrat Chat Kan Khana Kan Phra Satsana Lae Kan Suksa Hua Muang, Sok 120’ (Conclusions to the Report into the Administration of Religion and Education in the Provinces, 1901), in *Pramuan Phra Niphon Somdet Phra Maha Samana Chao Krom Phraya Wachirayan Warorot: Lai Phra Hat Kiao Kap Kan Suksa (Prince-Patriarch Wachirayan’s Collected Writings: Letters on Education)*. Bangkok, Mahamakut, 1971.

literature among members of the court. Another particularly popular genre among readers of the Thai elite was Chinese ‘historical romance’ translated into Thai, which also came under the category of nithan. Indeed, in 1914 the ‘Romance of the Three Kingdoms’ (in Thai, Sam kkok) was awarded a prize by the newly founded Literary Society in the category of nithan. In 1895 an anonymous article (as most articles were) appeared in Wachirayan specifically on the subject of nithan. The article opened with the question ‘should nithan be kept in the library?’ Answering its own question by stating that every kind of book should be held by the library, the article went on to give a definition of nithan:

The word “nithan” is understood to mean a story that has been made up. It is not a true story (ruang ching), nor a [false] story that claims to be true. Those stories that are impossible to believe are true can be considered nithan.

Nithan, the article stated, were useful to help people to relax, but if read to excess they could lead people to ‘lose their senses’. Besides the new meaning of nithan, here we can also see the new function of nithan, that of giving pleasure to the reader. The meaning of nithan had changed from that of conveying religious knowledge of the highest order to fictional content purely for the purpose of entertainment. Thus by the late nineteenth century the category of literary knowledge in the Thai kingdom into which the king and court scholars in the Wachirayan Library were placing the Jatakas was one which for the Thai elite had come to signify fictional narrative. Nithan stood in opposition to history. Let us now examine how the Wachirayan Library reinforced and disseminated this notion of the fictionality of the Jatakas.

The Printed Translation of the Nipata Jatakas, 1904-1931

The Thai court’s translation and publication of the Jatakas between 1904-1931 provided a completely new medium - the printed book, and a new context - private reading, through which the Jatakas were to be communicated to an audience. As this change in

13 Wachirayan, October 1894, pp. 101-3.

14 cf. Phra ratchaphithi sip sorn duan - phra ratchaniphon nai phra bat somdet phra chula chorm khaoh chao yu hua (The Royal Ceremonies of the Twelve Months, by King Chulalongkorn), Bangkok, Sinlapa Bannakan, 1973, p. ‘ngor’.

15 ‘Kham wa "nithan" ni tam thi khao chai kan torng pen ruang thi taeng, mai chai ruang ching ru thi aep ang wa pen ruang ching. Tae hen wa cha pen ching pai mai dai nan, ruang lao ni nap wa pen nithan...’; ‘Sonthona ruang nithan’. Wachirayan, March 1895, p. 606.

16 ‘...Phu thi long nithan chon sati khloem’, ibid., p. 611.
the mode of communicating the Jatakas was a critical factor in the reinterpretation of the Jatakas as fiction the whole process will now be examined in detail.

In 1904 the king decided to publish the collection of Jatakas contained in the original fifth century Pali Commentary, the Jatakathavannana. This collection became known as the Nibat chadok (Pali, nipata jataka). That the decision was made by the king is an indication of the importance of the matter for the Thai court. The decision would seem to have been prompted by the king’s reading of Rhys Davids’ Buddhist India, published a year earlier, which contained a chapter on the Jatakas. At the time it was the largest project of translation from Pali to Thai ever to have been undertaken by the court, which is another indication of the significance it was perceived to have had for the Thai kingdom. Because of the great size of the project, which involved the editing and translation of five hundred and fifty separate stories, it was not completed until 1931, twenty-seven years after the project had begun. Monastic and lay officials associated with the Wachirayan Library were in charge of finding the Pali Jataka manuscripts for the translators, and organising the publication of the completed translations. The printed translations were published in successive cremation volumes in honour of the king (bampben kuson sanorn phrakhet phrangkun), which ensured both a wide readership and gave them an additional stamp of authority.

Chulalongkorn’s essay on the Jatakas, in which the king defined the Jatakas as allegorical ‘tales’ (nithan) first appeared in the initial group of Jataka translations published in 1904. The essay was reproduced many times over the twenty-seven years it took to complete the Jataka book translation. As with the prefaces of other works published by the Wachirayan Library, the inclusion of the essay with successive new issues of the Jataka translations strongly influenced how the actual published work was perceived by the reader, not least because of the fact that the explanation contained in the essay was the word of the king. In an absolute monarchy the word of the king carried the weight of truth.

Besides the Nibat chadok translation another major translation project was undertaken by library between 1924 and 1931. This was the translation of the category of Jatakas known in Thai as the Panyat chadok (from the Pali: pannasa jataka, meaning literally the ‘Fifty Jatakas’). This collection of Jatakas was also written in Pali but believed to have been composed by monks in Chiang Mai several hundred years ago, as opposed to the semi-canonical status of the Nibat chadok. Many Jatakas from this collection were extremely popular throughout the Thai kingdom, as well as among the Lao and Khmer peoples, rivalling Jatakas from the Nibat chadok collection. However, it

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17 Letter from Wachirayan to Chulalongkorn, 30 October 1904, "Ruam pla ni pat chadok" (On the Translation of the Nipata Jatakas), Pramuon phra niphon somdet phra maha samana chao krom phra ya wachirayan wororot: phra ratcha hatthalekha - tai phra hat (Prince-Patriarch Wachirayan’s Collected Writings: Correspondence between the Prince and the King), Bangkok, Mahamakut, 1971, p. 80.
is unlikely that in all but the most learned circles a distinction would have been made between the two categories of Jatakas. Like those from the Nibat chadok, Jatakas from the Panyat chadok also appear in mural form in temples, particularly in the northeast and northern regions. The Panyat chadok collection of Jatakas had, like the Nibat chadok, never been translated as a whole. As with the publications of the Nibat chadok, a preface was included in the introductions to the successive publications of the translations, explaining to the reader about the work and saying how it should be read. And this preface, like Chulalongkorn’s essay on the Nibat chadok, emphasized the literary status of the Jatakas as ‘tales’. Prince Damrong, the author of the preface, wrote that

the Panyat chadok is a collection of old tales (nithan) which have been told in Thailand (muang thai) since ancient times. They were collected by monks in Chiang Mai and then written in Pali in the style of Jatakas between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries...the Panyat chadok was written after the pattern of the Nibat chadok... a Burmese king had once claimed that the book falsely pretended to be the Buddha’s words and ordered it to be burnt...

But in fact the king’s criticism of the book as falsely pretending to be the Buddha’s words was based on his mistaken belief that the Nibat chadok (or as we call it in Thai, ‘the Five Hundred and Fifty Incarnations of the Buddha’) was the words of the Buddha, which is not the case. Actually it is as King Chulalongkorn explained in his introduction to the first volume of the Nibat chadok, published in the Fifth Reign: the stories in the Nibat chadok were probably folktales (nithan) originating long before Buddhist times. When the Buddha was teaching his followers he would often use a tale (nithan) in his sermons as an allegory (pen upama)...

After the time of the Buddha the belief arose that the ‘Great Being’ in these Jataka stories was one of the previous incarnations of the Buddha...when the Tripitaka was being compiled the compilers themselves...added the prachum chadok [concluding section to the Jataka] so that it appeared as if the Buddha himself had preached that the ‘Great Being’ was reborn as the Buddha, and other characters in the story were reborn in the present as such and such persons. This is the origin of the Jataka genre as it appears in the Nibat chadok...This explains why the monks in Chiang Mai got hold of folktales and wrote them up as Jatakas, in imitation of the ancient commentary...

As in the case of the publication of the Nibat chadok it was to a great extent through the agency of the preface, and indeed through the repeated attachment of the preface to subsequent publications of Jatakas (editions of the Panyat chadok published in the 1960s still contained Damrong’s preface), that the Jatakas of the Panyat chadok collection were also classified as Thai folktales. Like Chulalongkorn’s essay on the

Nibat chadok Jatakas, Damrong’s definition of the Panyat chadok Jatakas has had enormous influence upon subsequent scholarly studies of the Jatakas. Even as late as the 1970s and 1980s most academic works on the subject of the Panyat chadok Jatakas written by Thai scholars and used in Thai schools and universities uncritically accept Damrong’s explanation written over half a century earlier.\(^\text{19}\)

Since many Jatakas from both collections already existed in translation, what was the significance of the Wachirayan Library translation? Perhaps the principal reason was that mentioned in Chulalongkorn’s introduction to the first selection of Nibat chadok Jatakas to be published in 1904, and which was paraphrased in prefaces to subsequent publications of the Nibat chadok by Prince Damrong, who was instrumental in continuing the project after the king’s death in 1910:

...No-one has ever attempted to translate [the Jatakas] into our language in their proper categories according to the form of the original book. Until now only certain particular [Jataka] stories have been translated, either for ‘preaching’, or to quote from in other works.\(^\text{20}\)

The significance of translating the Nibat chadok in its entirety (as opposed to the translation of selected Jatakas) was that it effectively broadcast to the general public (or at least to the Thai literate public) that Jatakas, countless versions of which existed in virtually every region of the kingdom, owed their origin to a particular book, in this case the Pali Nibat chadok. The translation of the Panyat chadok in its entirety under Damrong did the same thing for the Panyat chadok Jatakas. It was the textual analysis of the stories in their original Pali form which enabled the scholars of the Thai court to declare that their contents - the Jatakas - were in fact tales, and not true stories. Once the original

\(^{19}\) See for example Chua Satawethin, Wannakham Phuthasatsana (Buddhist Literature), lem 1, Khurusapha, Bangkok, 1971, pp. 129-130, 219-20; Mani Phayormyong, Prawat lae wannakham janna (Lanna History and Literature), Chiang Mai, 1973, p. 14; Thawisak Yanapraphip, Wannakham satsana (Religious Literature), Ramkhamhaeng University, Bangkok, 1975, p. 95; Udom Nuthong, Wannakham thornthithin phak tai phraphet nithan pralom lok (Local Southern Thai Literature: Folktales), Srinakharinwirot University, Songkhla, [no date, but most recent reference work cited is 1978], p. 188; Sap Prakorpsuk, Wannakham chadok (Jataka Literature), Srinakharinwirot University, Pathumwan Campus, Bangkok, 1984, p. 33; Sanit Tangthawi, Wannakham lae wannakham satsana (Literature and Religious Writings), Srinakharinwirot University, Mahasarakham Campus, 1984, p. 161.

\(^{20}\) My emphasis; Damrong Rajanubhab ‘Kham nam’ (Introduction), Nibat chadok: eknibat, sam wak, phak thi 3 (The Nipata Jatakas: First Nipata, Three Phrases, Part Three), Cremation Volume, Sombun lae Luang Wariyoutharak (Thong Kham), Bamrungmunlakit, Bangkok, 1918, p. 2. For Chulalongkorn’s words see Thukkanibat chadok sam wak, phak ton (Second Book of the Nipata Jatakas, Three Phrases, Part One), ed. Phra Phimonlatham, Royal Cremation Volume, King Chulalongkorn, Bangkok, 1910 (r.s. 129), p. sor, “Samnao krasae phra ratchadamri” (Copy of the King’s Considerations).

The phrase ‘in their proper categories’ (pen muat mu) alludes to the fact that in the original Jataka Commentary the five hundred and fifty Jatakas were arranged in the book according to the number of Canonical verses each Jataka contained, starting from the category of Jatakas with one verse to that with hundreds of verses for the final Jatakas.

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texts had been thus characterised it followed that the almost countless Jataka translations in existence throughout the kingdom which had been based on those original Pali texts must also be characterised as mere tales, because of the very fact that they owed their origin to these texts. It is the written basis of the former lives of the Buddha that is being underlined in the Jataka publications, since it is on textual grounds that the stories had been declared untrue: ‘tales’.

A further vital function of the translation and publication of the Jatakas was that associated with the construction of ‘Thai literature’. It was becoming apparent to the Thai court that one of the attributes of a nation, the political and cultural entity which the kingdom’s rulers were gradually conceptualising as the desired political form, was a national literature. As with other nation-building programs of other countries, language and literature were an important element in the ‘imagining’ of the national community. It was shown in the previous chapter that in the era of European colonialism in Southeast Asia, books, and a historical and literary tradition were perceived as being attributes of a ‘civilized’ people. The Wachiraylan Library had been set up partly to demonstrate to the European colonial powers the ‘civilization’ of the Thai people in terms of their literary culture. The establishment by King Wachirawut, one of the Thai kingdom’s most literary kings, of the Literary Society (wannakham samosorn) in 1914 was also partly directed to this end.

But what is meant by ‘Thai literature’? Initially the word most commonly used was nengsu thai, meaning literally the Thai script (letters), or material written in the Thai script. It will be remembered that within the kingdom there existed a large number of different scripts among which the Thai script was far from dominant. Even works in the Thai language were not necessarily composed using the Thai script. Up until the Fifth Reign the Thai script appears to have been used only in the central and southern regions, and only for administrative matters and for a limited category of non-sacred texts such as, for example, the phratratvaphongswadhan (royal chronicles). All other works - and they appear to have been in the majority21 - were transcribed using the Khmer script (khorn). Both the north and northeastern regions of the kingdom similarly each had two different scripts, one for ‘sacred’ and one for ‘non-sacred’ works. Moreover, by the late nineteenth century there were increasing numbers of books in foreign scripts flowing into the kingdom, including both the roman script of the European languages as well as books in Chinese characters.

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21 One has only to look through the catalogues of manuscript collections at the National Library and other manuscript collections at institutions around the country to see the predominance of works of a religious nature transcribed in the sacred scripts particular to that region.
The reclassification of works like the Jatakas as ‘Thai literature’ meant in part, literally the production of literary materials in the Thai script. Jataka translations in Thai were written in the khorm script, at least in the central and southern regions of the kingdom, while in the northern and northeastern regions of the kingdom they were transcribed in the sacred scripts of these regions (sometimes referred to as aksorn tham, ‘dhamma characters’). The very act of transcribing the Jatakas into Thai script and language out of the khorm and Pali was crucial to the new categorization of the Jatakas as nangsu thai. It removed the Jatakas from the realm of the sacred knowledge signified by khorm and aksorn tham characters and subsumed them into the new category of Thai literature. Without the Thai script there is nothing in the Jataka texts themselves to identify them as ‘Thai’.

That the publication of the Jatakas was related to the project of constructing a literature for the nation is clear from the preface to the first of the published Nibat chadok translations in 1904 written by King Chulalongkorn. In this preface the king had written:

If this book [the Nibat chadok] in its entirety were in Thai it would be an important contribution to our script and language (nangsu lae phasa). In the future, when the need for books as embellishments (khruang pradap) for our language is greater, I or maybe someone else may have the opportunity to continue the project. It would be a treasure (sap) for the library of our language in the future...22

It is important to note the emphasis on the value of the Thai script and language, the very literal meaning of the word ‘literature’ (for which the Thai language had yet to coin a word).23 Note also the corresponding lack of emphasis in regard to the value of the stories themselves. The translations were important because they increased the existing corpus of Thai script and language. In a preface to later editions Damrong had also written that one of the three reasons those who agreed to sponsor the Jataka translations had done so was to add to the corpus of Thai literature (wicha nangsu khorn)

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22 Thukkanibat chadok sam wak, p. sor, "Samnao krasae phraratcadamri"; see also Nibat chadok: eknibat, sam wak, phak thi 3 p. 2, for Damrong’s paraphrasing of the king’s words in later publications. Chulalongkorn’s use of the word nangsu seems sometimes to have been used to mean ‘book’, and on other occasions ‘script’. In Thai literary culture the script’s function as vehicle of the message meant that the script assumed great importance, certainly greater than that we attribute to the roman script today.

23 The modern term for literature in Thailand, wannakhadi, appears to have been coined by King Wachirawut in 1914 with the setting up of the wannakhadi samosorn or Literary/Literature Society; see San somdet, Vol. 25, pp. 20, 44.
Thus it was primarily the Jatakas' status as 'Thai literature' that gave the publication value, rather than their worth as true accounts of the Buddha's former lives.

The presentation of the Jatakas as literature underlines another major difference in which the Jatakas in this form differed from previous 'presentations' of the Jatakas. This difference, based on the Jatakas' new 'literary' status, is so obvious as to almost be overlooked. The published Jatakas were meant to be read as literature, whereas virtually all previous presentations were meant to be listened to as factual accounts, originally narrated by the Buddha, of his own former incarnations. When the translation of the Nibat chadok was being planned Chulalongkorn had written to Wachirayan saying that he favoured a "free translation" of the Jatakas, one which readers would be able to understand easily, rather than one which stuck too closely to the Pali original, and which thereby made the translated text difficult to read and understand for all but Pali scholars. Thus the principle requirement of the translations was to make the story 'readable'. This aim differs markedly from the traditional form in which the Jatakas were most commonly presented, the thetsana or 'sermon'. While the text of the translated Jataka presented as thetsana had to be written in such a way as to be easily understood when recited to the audience, utmost care had to be taken to ensure that the factual content of the Jataka be transmitted - since the narrative was held to be the Buddha's words. This meant deference to the original Pali text, often to the extent of including a certain amount of the Pali in with the vernacular translation. Also, as mentioned above, in the ceremony of the thet maha chat the Pali verses of the Vessantara Jataka would in fact be recited in their entirety, in addition to the recitation of the vernacular translation. There were, furthermore, ritual and textual elements associated with the Vessantara Jataka recitation which served to reinforce the authority of the Pali verses. All this is to say that, in the traditional mode of presentation of the Jatakas, their status as factual accounts was emphasized, while in the published translations of the Nibat chadok it was comprehension and enjoyment of the story - as a story - which was the paramount aim of the publishers. By the Fifth Reign the value of fictional narrative

24 The other two reasons were 'to fulfill the king's wish to have the Jatakas translated; and to ensure the long life of the Buddhist religion'; cf. 'Kham nam', krom phraya Damrong Rajanubhab, in Nibat chadok, ek nibat sam wak, phak thi 3 (The Nipata Jatakas: First Nipata, Three Phrases, Part Three). Cremation Volume, Sombun lae Luang Wariyotharak (Thong Kham), Bamrungnukunlakit, Bangkok, 1918, pp. 1-5. On the Nibat chadok translation see also 'The Jataka: A Complete Translation into Siamese', by 'D' (sic), Journal of the Siam Society, Vol. 27, Pt. 1, 1935, pp. 130-3.


26 Sometimes referred to as chunniyabot.
was measured in the aesthetics of its reading, in its worth as entertainment, rather than in its factual accuracy, which was considered the realm of historical discourse.

The following is a specific example of the disregard with which the traditional presentation of the Jatakas, which was essential to the story's status as a factual account, was treated. In his long work on traditional royal ceremony written in 1888 King Chulalongkorn gave an account of the chanting (suat) of the Maha chat kham luang. This was the version of the Vessantara Jataka supposedly composed in the reign of the fifteenth century Ayuthayan king Boromatrailokanat, and still chanted every year during the rains retreat in the temple of the Emerald Buddha within the Grand Palace.27 His account gives a generally negative impression of the ceremony’s popularity at that time. The king noted that nowadays few people enjoyed going to listen to the recital because they could not understand it.28 The Maha chat kham luang is unique in its composition. The text is structured by interchanging phrases of the Pali original with their Thai translation.29 Thus the very structure designed to demonstrate the Maha chat kham luang's faithful rendering of the original story, and therefore the authority of the story, is precisely the source of the king's (and others') dissatisfaction.

The publication of the court's translated edition of the Nibat chadok served to reinforce the Thai court's interpretation of the status of the Jatakas. This interpretation was that the Jatakas were nothing more than folktales, having no basis in historical truth, and were of value only in their contribution to the notion of Thai literature. The power of print was such that thousands of copies of the court's edition of the Nibat chadok, and of the essays by the king and Damrong defining the Jatakas as folktales, could be rapidly produced and circulated throughout the Thai kingdom. It gave the printed versions a great advantage in numbers over the Jatakas in manuscript form.

‘Folktale Editions’ of Jatakas

The publication of the Nibat chadok is the final chapter in the story of the Thai court's redefinition of the Jatakas as folktales. This is not to say, of course, that the new understanding of the Jatakas was accepted throughout the Thai kingdom. In villages throughout the Thai kingdom until recently, the former understanding of the Jatakas

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27 The Maha chat kham luang is still chanted until this day in the temple of the Emerald Buddha in the Grand Palace compound during the Rains Retreat.

28 Phra ratchaphithi sip sorn duan - phra ratchaniphon nai phra bat somdet phra chula chorm klao chao vu hua (The Royal Ceremonies of the Twelve Months, by King Chulalongkorn). Bangkok, Sinlapa Bannakan, 1973, p. 527.

remained intact. Only with the expansion of the state education system, together with the reformation of monastic education and the centralisation of the Sangha, has the court’s orthodoxy about the status of the Jatakas in Thai literature gradually become more widespread.

One place in which we can see the influence of the court’s conceptualization of the Jatakas as tales is in subsequent translations and retellings of the Jatakas published by private printing houses from the 1950s. These new ‘folktale editions’ were published for a popular readership in easily readable and abbreviated form. Examples of such translations include Wannakhadi chadok (‘Jataka Literature’), published in 1950 and reprinted in 1956 by the former statesman, prolific writer and historian, Luang Wichit Wathakan. Other well-known translations and retellings include Plaek Sonthirak’s Lao ruang phra sip chat (‘Stories of the Ten Lives’); as well as his several volumes of Nithan thai (‘Thai Tales’); and countless other editions of Jatakas, individual and collected, published since then for children.

In these popular translations of the Jatakas there are a significant changes to the form in which the stories are presented to the reader, which reveals the extent to which Jatakas were becoming more solidly part of the folktale genre. The new folktale editions omitted crucial parts of the original Jataka text which had given the stories their former authority. The omissions included the introductory section (in Thai, ‘prarop’) which set the scene for the Buddha’s telling of the story, usually to a gathering of monks; the regular references throughout the story to the Buddha as narrator; reference to the main protagonist of the story as the bodhisatta (ie. a former incarnation of the Buddha); and finally the concluding section to the Jataka (in Thai ‘prachum chadok’) in which the Buddha, concluding the story, identified people in the present with their past incarnations in the story, and identified himself, of course, with the bodhisatta.

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1. Prarop (Jataka Introduction)
Describes the circumstances of the Buddha's narration of the Jataka.

2. Main Text
The narrative, consisting of (i) canonical verses and (ii) prose commentary. Frequent reference to the Buddha as narrator of the story.

3. Prachum chadok (Jataka Conclusion)
The Buddha describes who the characters in the story are reincarnated as in the present, with the bodhisatta, usually the hero of the story, being identified with the Buddha himself.

Thus what remained in the folktale editions of the Jatakas was the story, without a narrator. The stories, as it were, told themselves, or rather were told by the author of the translations. The Buddha’s role as narrator has been completely removed.

Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with the redefinition of the Jatakas in the Thai kingdom in the early twentieth century. I have argued that the Thai court attempted to control the meaning of the Jatakas through direct pronouncements on their status as well as the dissemination of these pronouncements through the new and powerful technology of print. It is quite remarkable how successful the court’s reformulation of the Jatakas has been. Today the interpretation first devised by Chulalongkorn and the scholars of the Thai court is the dominant understanding of the Jatakas in both the Thai language scholarship and in mainstream Thai Buddhist thinking. The fact that this understanding of the Jatakas as folktales is a relatively recent one, and one that was deliberately created by the Thai court, has been overlooked.

Yet the interpretation of the Jatakas as folktales according to the court’s definition in the Fifth Reign raises the question of why kings, senior officials, and scholars of the Thai court were so concerned with the place of the Jatakas in Thai literary and popular culture. Why did the King of Thailand, during the height of the threat of
colonialism, bother himself to compose an essay on a matter as trivial as folktales? Why did the Thai court from the early 1900s until the 1930s expend so much time, effort, and money on the translation and publication of the entire collection of five hundred and fifty Jatakas, which we are to believe are merely quaint, moral fables? Moreover, if we are to interpret the Jatakas as tales (nithan) for the reader’s entertainment it is difficult to imagine why they could have had such a close association with Tai Buddhist rulers since the foundation of the first Tai states in the thirteenth century. In short, it is simply not possible to understand the contribution of the Jatakas to premodern Thai political culture if one interprets them in this way.

The recent definition of the Jatakas as folktales has blinded scholars from understanding their real place and meaning in premodern Thai political culture. This thesis has argued that the Jatakas, and the Vessantara Jataka in particular, articulated to a mass audience in narrative form certain notions about power and hierarchy which for at least seven centuries were central to the socio-political organization of Tai Buddhist peoples. The particular form of power expressed in the Jatakas is quite different from modern notions of power. The conceptual lexicon of Western political science is insufficient to describe it.34 In the Jatakas the fundamental concept is barami, a form of moral and supernatural authority - a type of ‘charisma’ - that was believed to be acquired as a result of the ascetic practice of self-perfection. Barami was the key attribute of the exemplary figure of the bodhisatta-ruler. The concepts of barami and the bodhisatta were at the heart of the discourses of authority popularised by the Jatakas in the premodern Tai Buddhist world.

From the mid-nineteenth century, however, the world in which the ideas articulated by the Jatakas made sense for the Thai elite began to break down. Among the factors that caused this breakdown were developments in the Thai economy from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and the new geopolitical realities created by the encroachment of the colonial powers. The popularity of the Jatakas and their associated beliefs in the rural areas of the Thai kingdom appeared to the Thai elite not only to be a sign of backwardness but also increasingly dangerous to the existing political order. Indeed, the ‘Holy Men’ revolts of the turn of the century, which had the real potential to trigger European military intervention in the Thai kingdom, were informed by the sorts of ideas concerning authority and leadership contained in and propagated by the Jatakas. It is no coincidence that the court’s pronouncements on the status of the Jatakas occurred in the years immediately following its violent suppression of the revolts.

The court's categorization of the Jatakas as folktales, indeed, the very invention of the folktale as a category of literature was not simply a dry, scholarly exercise, marginal to the 'real' concerns of the Thai state. It was part of a much wider cultural and political strategy that was carried out by the Thai elite involving the reassessment of 'tradition' and resolving the contradictions of a premodern cultural inheritance. While this cultural inheritance was the source of both the roots and identity of the Thai state, at the same time it appeared out of step with the late nineteenth century, and potentially even dangerous to the kingdom's existing political order.

The Fifth Reign was a period of intense cultural activity which preoccupied virtually all of the senior figures of the Thai court. Such activity included the setting up of a centralised library organization; the delineation of new knowledge categories and the organization of the kingdom's literary corpus into these categories; the researches carried out by the king and princes into all manner of historical, cultural, literary, religious, ceremonial, and ethnographical subjects; the establishment of scholarly societies and interaction with foreign scholars; the reformation of religious knowledge; and, very importantly, the expansion of mass publishing, which gave the court's otherwise isolated ruminations the potential to transform the kingdom's existing cultural landscape. Such activity in the cultural sphere seems to have been pursued with no less zeal and effort than those activities in the political sphere which we might consider to have been more central to the immediate concerns of the government of the kingdom. These included the far-reaching *thettsaphiban* reforms, which replaced the local political elite in the provinces with a centralised system of bureaucratic control; the setting up of a cabinet-style royal government; and the centralisation of the Sangha, which gave the Thai court unprecedented authority over the principal apparatus of ideological control in the kingdom.

Thus, as it appears to have been the case throughout the history of the Thai, what modern academic discourse would refer to as issues of 'culture' and 'politics' seem to have gone together in the Fifth Reign. But what is this differentiation we make between these notions of culture and politics? It is, of course, an arbitrary one imposed by modern scholarship. Not only does this differentiation seem to be altogether absent in the literature of the Thai world, the two terms themselves refer to very modern concepts. They would have made little sense in the premodern world of the Thai.
CONCLUSION

yachok kor naen nuang khao ma rap phraratchathan
bang kor sorn satthukan mothana bang kor soka pruksa kan wa
chao rao oei rap wan cha ot yak
thun kramom cha plat prak pai chak laew
dang duang duan prathip kaew an luang lap
rao phu khon chor ap sap saen kandan
cha dai rap phra ratchathan kor tae nai wan ni
bang kor rong hai yu ung mi na wethana

Crowds of beggars approached to receive the royal gifts
Some cheered in jubilation, while others wept, saying
‘Soon we will be in poverty
He is about to leave us.
Like a crystal lantern that has gone out
We, the poor, will be without money and in great hardship
Today is the last day we will receive royal alms’.
Some began to loudly wail. How sad!

This study has argued that the reason for the thet maha chat’s great popularity among premodern Tai peoples is because the Vessantara Jataka expressed certain notions of authority. These notions were adopted by the Tai peoples and became part of a distinctive political culture. The thesis began with an examination of the thet maha chat and emphasised the importance given both in the recitation and in the ceremony to showing fidelity to the Buddha’s words, which gave the story its high status. The thesis ended with the attempts by the Thai court of the Fifth Reign to deny the authenticity of the Jatakas based on belief that they had been related by the Buddha. This, and the court’s subsequent redefinition of the Jataka genre as folktales, undermined the high status the stories had previously held. At the Thai court and among the elite the thet maha chat was eventually abandoned. The period of the Fifth Reign is therefore a natural end to this study.

It is fitting, however, to ask what has become of the Maha chat and the culture it inspired in present-day Thailand.

To the majority of educated, urbanised Thai people of recent generations, and certainly to Western observers, the thet maha chat, occurring each year at a declining number of temples throughout the kingdom, is something of an oddity. It has been largely forgotten that the Vessantara Jataka was until recently the best known of all stories in those areas under the influence of the Thai kingdom - better known than the story of the Buddha himself. Few would be aware that it was the only story to be recited every year in virtually every region of the kingdom; that it was the only story to have an

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1 From than kan, Maha wetsandom chadok chhabap sip sam kan (Thirteen Chapter Version of the Great Vessantara Jataka), Bangkok, Khurusapha, 1988, pp. 55-6.
elaborate ritual associated with its recitation; that this ritual was part of one of the most important festivals of each year lasting up to seven days; that it was the only story to have been recited by the children of the aristocracy and nobility as an essential part of their education; and that it was once worshipped by both royalty and the peasantry alike. In orthodox Thai Buddhism, few traces of the story’s former status remain. The Vessantara Jataka is not mentioned in textbooks for Buddhist classes at government school, and even in monastic education little regard is paid to the story. A modern, progressive-minded monk from a northeastern temple told me during my fieldwork that the Maha chat was not really Buddhist, but a Brahmanical story. From their former position at the core of Buddhist thinking in the Thai kingdom the Jatakas are now at best regarded as an ‘outer shell’, irrelevant to understanding the real Buddhist truths.

For ‘modern’ people it is difficult to understand how the Vessantara Jataka once enjoyed such enormous popularity. A story of a man who gives away his fortune, his kingdom, his children and his wife, is, in an age when material accumulation is the economic logic upon which modern states function, at best archaic, and at worst immoral.\(^2\) The aspect of the Maha chat which has come under the greatest scrutiny has been its morality. The journalist, novelist and former Prime Minister M.R. Kukrit Pramot probably spoke for many in the educated middle class when in a newspaper article published in 1968 he criticised the Vessantara Jataka on this and other grounds:

The Vessantara Jataka is not in the Tripitaka. It is a Jataka tale (nıyai Chadok) written after the time of the Buddha. I believe in (luam sai) the Buddha but I don’t believe in Vessantara... his donation of the elephant... was against royal morals (sin kasat)... the citizens were right to expel him from the city... he violated the husband’s moral duty by not protecting Matsu... he violated the father’s moral duty by not protecting his children... Vessantara’s practice of charity was a burden to society... If one practices charity one must stay within the bounds of morality (sin).\(^3\)

The influence of the Fifth Reign’s redefinition of the Jatakas as non-canonical folktales is clearly evident in Kukrit’s remarks denying that the story was in the Tripitaka, the ‘canon’ of Buddhist teachings.\(^4\) But more importantly, the Vessantara Jataka conflicts

\(^2\) Criticisms of Vessantara’s acts of giving, and responses to such criticisms can be found in Phra Phimonlatham (Chorp Anucharimahaathera), Parithat wetsandorn Chadok, Bangkok, 1990, ‘kham nam’, p. 35; Chamlæe phra wetsandorn Boep Putcha wisatchana (Critique of Vessantara: Questions and Answers), Bangkok, 1987; Banyen Limswat, Maha chat kham khorn Klorn Version of the Great Life), Bangkok, 1970, ‘Aramphawatchani’ (Introduction).

\(^3\) Colonel Pin Muthukan, ‘Khwam ching ruang phra wetsandorn’ (The Truth About Vessantara), Duang prathip (Flame), 6, 6, March 1969, p. 4 - 5.

\(^4\) On this point Khukrit is in fact mistaken. Although the Jataka book was left out of the 1893 Thai edition of the Tripitaka, it was reinstated in the 1928 version.
Vessantara and the Royal Family return to the city of Siwi; from Phra Phimonlatham Ratchabandit (Chorp Anucharimahathera), Parithat wetsandon chadok (Critical Review of the Vessantara Jataka), Bangkok, Khrongkan munlanithi hor trai, 1990.