

Political Implication in “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*”

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Abstract

This article intends to answer the questions as to why “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” is chosen to reflect political thoughts, and what political thoughts appear in this major literature. Primarily a documentary research, this article employs “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*”, the royal composition in King Phutthaloetla Naphalai, as the main text. The textual analysis and the contextual analysis are done, and it is found that within the historical contexts of the time when this literature was composed and then reworked, the core messages of this literature are consistent with at least two conditions, including (1) the state’s political ideology and (2) the society’s consumption of literatures. Not only is “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” considered a “good book” for a script of dancing play and a “textbook” for studying Thai traditions, but it is also a “political teaching” for governors. Illustrated in the literature are examples of what governors shall not do or the seven Raja-adharma, which include (1) lust in women, (2) selfishness, (3) speaking or acting without thinking, (4) lying or telling untruths, (5) being rash and quick-tempered, (6) using brute force to solve problems, and (7) failing to uphold traditions.

Keywords: “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*”, Political Teaching, Seven Raja-adharma

Introduction

A review of the current stage of knowledge on “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*”, a royal composition in King Rama II (which, from here on, would be called “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*”) demonstrates that this literature is very important for the Thai society. It is important first because it has been named a “good book” in Thai drama in verse by the Royal Society of Literature in 1916. It is also important as a “textbook” for studying the classical Thai traditions, the mention of which was made by Prince Damrong Rajanubhab in the “*Explanations of Bot Lakhon Reung Inao, the Vachirayan National Library edition*”. Moreover, the texts may, as suggested by Sombat Chanthrawong, have been infused with the political awareness, the topic of which has never been studied by anyone before. The first stage of research, which has turned into a research article on “*The Present Stage of Knowledge on “Bot Lakhon Reung Inao”*”, therefore, indicate that “political thoughts” are the gap of knowledge with regards to this piece of literature, and suggest that further analysis on political thoughts should be done so as to point to the messages these political thoughts convey (Jermsittiparsert & Wongsurawat, 2017).

In this connection, this research article aims to find answers to at least two questions, which are, first, why “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” was selected to mirror the political thoughts at the time, and what political thoughts appear in this major Thai literature. These answers shall fill in the existing knowledge gap, make the stage of knowledge more complete, and shall trigger further discussions on related issues among those who are interested.

Research Methodology

Similar to the study of political implication in “*Sae Pha Khun Chang-Khun Phaen*” (Jermisittiparsert, 2013), the study of political implication in “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” remains largely a documentary research by using “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” as the main text and other documents to support the textual and the contextual analysis, from which the results would be presented in the format of analytical description.

Main Plot of “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*”

In short, “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” is a love and adventure tale of a crown prince of Kurepan, one of the four cities built and governed by brothers of divine race. The other three cities were Daha, Galang, and Singhatsari. Together, the four brothers were called “Wongse-deva”. Before these four cities were built, however, Manya had been the most powerful city, and since the foundation of the four “Wongse-Deva” cities, Manya had established a close relationship with them as each of the four brothers took a princess of Manya, all of whom were daughters of the King of Manya, as “Pramaisuri”, or their respective queen.

As times and generations went by, it was left to only the Kings of Kurepan and Daha who remained married to the eldest and the second eldest princesses of Manya. The King of Kurepan had in total three children, the oldest of which was a son born to the fourth wife and named “Karattapati”, whereas the second oldest was a son named Inao and the youngest was a daughter named Wiyada, both of whom were born to the queen. The King of Daha, on the other hand, had two children, whose names are Bussaba and Sriyatra, born to the queen. The King of Galang had a daughter named Bussabaraga born to the fourth wife, and another daughter named Sagara-neungrad, born to the queen. The King of Singhatsari had two children, a son and a daughter, born to the queen. Their names are Suranagong and Jindasari. To keep on with the tradition of marriages of Wongse-deva and to preserve the purity of their blood line (?)¹, the four kings of Wongse-deva chose to arrange engagements among the younger generation since their birth. These arranged engagements included Karattapati and Bussabaraga, Inao and Bussaba, Sriyatra and Wiyada, and Suranagong and Sagara-neungrad.

The chaos primarily started when Inao travelled to Manya to participate in the funeral of his grandmother, and fell in love with Jintara, a daughter to the King of Manya, to the extent that he broke up with his fiancé, Bussaba. The King of Daha, Bussaba’s father, was so angry that he made an announcement to give Bussaba to anyone who asked to marry her. It was then that the King of Jaraga, who was also a brother of the King of Lasam, was looking for a wife, so he had a painter travel and secretly make portraits of Bussaba. However, on the painter’s way back to Jaraga, Pataragara, a god who was the ancestor of all the Wongse-deva kings, was displeased by Inao’s falling in love with the daughter of a king who is outside of the Wongse-deva clan in a belief that it was a king of a lower-ranked city. Therefore, to punish Inao, Pataragara turned up to steal a portrait of Bussaba, and then gave it to Prince Wiyasagam, who was the son to the King of Kamangkuning. This series of incidents became the source of many following events.

When the King of Jaraga and Prince Wiyasagam saw the portrait of Bussaba, they fell in love with her. The King of Jaraga subsequently asked his brother to ask the King of Daha for Bussaba’s hand in marriage. With anger towards Inao, the King of Daha allowed Bussaba to

¹ Since the founding kings of the four cities, the marriages with the princesses of Manya were arranged (Naphalai, 2000: 133). To say the least, the Wongse-deva blood line has been mixed with the city of Manya from the beginning.

marry the King of Jaraga. Seeing such agreement between the King of Daha and the King of Jaraga, the King of Kamangkuning, for the love he had for his son, sent an army to Daha to get Bussaba. Knowing of such movement, the King of Kurepan sent out Karattapati and ordered Inao to return from Manya, in order for the brothers to join the armies of Galang and Suranagong and fight the King of Kamangkuning. With his fighting skill and the power of the kris given to him by Pataragara, Inao was able to kill the King of Kamangkuning.

When Inao met Bussaba, he fell in love with her and regret losing her. Inao's father negotiated with the King of Daha, but it was unsuccessful. Inao, therefore, decided to play tricks and set fire to Daha. He then abducted Bussaba and put her in a cave outside the city. Becoming even more angered by this action, Pataragara magically created winds to carry Bussaba to the city of Pramortan, and transformed Bussaba into a man named Unagan. When the King of Pramortan met Unagan, he was very kind to Unagan and eventually adopted him as his son. On part of Inao, when he learned of Bussaba's disappearance, he and Wiyada disguised themselves as bandits named Panji and Genlong, and went around in search of Bussaba. When Panji took his crews to cities in Java and Malaga, the kings and the governors, for fear of Panji, asked to remain under Panji's protection, paid tributes to Panji, and sent their sons and daughters as captives. After many years, Inao hadn't been able to find Bussaba, so he decided to be ordained as a hermit named Gasamara.

Meanwhile, Unagan was also looking for Inao. When he arrived at the city of Pataram, the patrols mistook him and his crews for bandits. Fighting ensued, and eventually the King of Pataram and nearby cities came under the protection of Unagan, paid him tributes, and sent sons and daughters as captives. When Unagan passed by Galang, the King of Galang adopted him as a son as he did not have a son himself. After Gasamara met Unagan, he suspected that Unagan may, in fact, have been Bussaba. He then decided to leave the hermitage and followed Unagan to Galang, where the King of Galang took in Panji as an adopted son. One day, the queen of Jamara, the wife to the King of Jamara who is a brother to the King of Gapalan, fell ill and passed away. The King of Jamara asked to marry Sagara-neungrad, who was already engaged to Suranagong. The King of Galang did not allow the King of Jamara to marry Sagara-neungrad, so the King of Jamara brought an army to take Sagara-neungrad away. Panji and Unagan subsequently volunteered to fight. They were victorious, and were able to kill the King of Jamara and the King of Gapalan. However, fearing that Panji would be able to find out that Unaga was actually a woman, Unagan decided to depart Galang and become a nun.

As Sriyatra grew up, he missed Inao and Bussaba, so he disguised himself as a bandit named Yaran to look for the disappearing Inao, Bussaba, and Wiyada. This story reached Pataragara, who wanted to help them to find one another, so he turned himself into a peacock to lead Yaran to Galang, where Yaran would meet Panji and Genlong. For his love for Genlong, however, Yaran abducted Genlong from the residence of Panji. An investigation led Panji to know that, in fact, Yaran was Sriyatra. One day, as the King of Mangada wanted to find a wife for his brother, he brought an army to Galang in hopes of taking a princess. Nonetheless, fearing for the ability of Panji, the King of Mangada ordered some prisoners to capture Panji out of town first. Mistaken as Panji, Yaran was captured instead. When Panji knew that Yaran disappeared, he sent people out to look for him.

While looking for Yaran, at the Talagan Mountain, Prasanta met a nun, whom he found beautiful. He returned to tell the news to Panji, who then masqueraded himself as a deva, deceived the nun, and lured her back to Galang. When it was learned that the nun was actually Bussaba, and Yaran was able to escape and return to Galang, the four relatives (Inao, Bussaba,

Sriyatra, and Wiyada) were together again. Missing their father and mother, Sriyatra and Wiyada secretly sent letters to the King of Kurepan and the King of Daha that they and their respective siblings were at Galang. Upon receiving the letter, the King of Kurepan and the King of Daha hurried to Galang. They then invited the Kings of Singhatsari, the King of Manya, the King of Pramortan, and the kings of another 21 cities who had come under the protection of Inao and Bussaba, to join the royal marriages in the city of Galang between the princes and the princesses of the four Wongse-deva cities.

“Bot Lakhon Reung Inao” ended happily, with Inao taking the reign of the city of Kurepan, Sriyatra of Daha, Karattapati of Galang, Suranagong of Singhatsari, Sangkamarata of Pakmangan, and the seven captive princes of their respective cities all over Java in place of their fathers.

Why *“Bot Lakhon Reung Inao”* was Chosen to Reflect Political Thoughts?

Before the question of why *“Bot Lakhon Reung Inao”* was chosen as a mirror of political thoughts may be answered, it is necessary to reflect upon the historical context of *“Bot Lakhon Reung Inao”* during the time of original composition in the reign of King Phutthaloetla Naphalai (Rama II) and the time of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab’s edition, also known as the Vajirayan National Library edition, which eventually resulted in *“Bot Lakhon Reung Inao”*, the royal composition of King Rama II, in the reign of King Vajiravudh (Rama VI).

The founding of Rattanakosin in 1782 was not merely a regular move of the capital city, but it was a step into power by a new group of elites who were then governing Bangkok. The riots in the city of Thonburi had been suppressed, and the old power had been put down, while the King was previously a commoner who took the power with might. There was, therefore, a need early in the Chakri dynasty to justify the newly-founded state and the enthronement of a new leader (Tangkaewfa, 2006: 605-606). Symbolically, to build a political justification, King Phutthayotfa Chulalok (Rama I) had to build clouds and a holy status around himself (Phakitnonthakan, 2015: 89). With the hypothesis that literature may be an effective tool to channel thoughts to the public (Sotanasathien, 1983: 15), *“Ramkien”*, a royal composition in King Rama I, was infused with political thoughts and used as political justifications of King Rama I himself (Sotanasathien, 1983: 382/1). *“Srithanonchai”* (Vorawan, 1999) and some of the other literatures were similarly employed to ensure stability in the Kingdom throughout the reign (Suwannarat, 1977).

As for the reign of King Rama II, David Wyatt (2013: 263) feels that it was like a quiet interlude between historical scenes of Thailand. It was the time when there were neither serious crises nor large-scale wars. It was even remembered by most people as “the golden age of arts”. Prince Chula Chakrabongse (2012: 113) describes this era in *“Lords of Life: A History of the Kings of Thailand”* that since the succession of throne in Thailand had not been peaceful for 76 years, during which kings, such as King Taksin and King Rama I, were enthroned through fighting, the fact that Prince Itsarasunthon inherited the throne without chaos or hardship may be considered strange and admirable. Wyatt (2013: 263) also concludes that such peaceful succession of power signaled the beginning of a dynasty. Nevertheless, a fact cannot be neglected that this succession was not unanimously supported (Terwiel, 2005: 85). Only three days following the succession arose an incident, where Prince Kasatranuchit, the son of King Taksin and King Rama I’s daughter, together with Chaophraya Phonlathep, the minister of the Krom Na, as well as more than 40 other accomplices prepared a rebellion (Rajanubhab, 2003: 7-8). A question may be brought up whether the birth of Rattanakosin and the Chakri dynasty has been definite and the belief as such has taken roots, or whether it was simply a change of government, from King

Taksin to King Rama I and from the city of Thonburi to Bangkok with the old power still in place. Questions may also be raised whether the loyalty paid to King Rama I for the entire 28-year reign was simply the loyalty to an individual, who was a former boss and whose status was a former commissioner, or whether it was a loyalty presented to the monarchy and the whole royal family. It may be concluded that the answers to these questions were the reasons behind the aforementioned attempted rebellion (Khruathong, 2012: 122-123).

Under the political conditions stated, the context of the era during which this literature took shape was no less interesting than other reigns. However, since “*Inao*” was, at the time, a foreign story having only entered the Thai society only for a short period of time, and it came to the royal elites directly via the foreigners, it was not well-known amongst others outside the circle of royal elites (Eoseewong, 2012: 50). While other plays left from the Ayuddhaya era were performed both in the circle of royal elites and in the commoners’ theater groups, “*Inao*” was not popularly performed (Eoseewong, 2012: 53) because the performance of “*Inao*” was usually done in parts, not in whole, without the tradition of summarizing the plot to the audience in advance, which means it could only be performed to the audience who had known the story before and it was difficult to perform only part of the literature to the public who may not have already known the story (Eoseewong, 2012: 54). It can then be said that “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” during the reign of King Rama II is truly the play of the royal elites (Eoseewong, 2012: 55). Coupled with the fact that King Rama II choreographed the dancing to suit the script so much so that he set up a large mirror for himself and Prince Jui to see the characters dancing, this means that the play of “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” had to follow its own intricate, complicated pattern, which clearly differed from the plays of the general public (Eoseewong, 2012: 58). When it came to the reign of King Rama III, the King, however, had no desire to keep the royal plays only within the royal palace, so it was then that the originally royal plays could blossom at the residences of the royal elites and the nobles (Eoseewong, 2012: 59).

In reference to the explanations of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab regarding “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*”’s publication for sale in 1874 by Doctor Smith, based on the Somdet Chaophraya Sri Suriwongse edition, and other following publications, based on the Doctor Smith edition (Naphalai, 2000: c), the role of technology has been demonstrated as another changing point that made “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*”, which had once been transformed from a play within the royal palace to one in residences of elites and nobles, transform again to the public sphere and the commercial cycle. This latter transformation allowed the public to access the materials that were once a “royal consumption” and limited to only the royal elite circle (Limapichart & Kittikhunseree, 2008: 47).

Not only did the publishing technology as well as the rise of newspapers change the ways the Thai society produced and consumed knowledge and entertainment, but they also created a new public space, which could not be easily controlled by such old methods as imposing punishments or forbidding the publication. Instead, the governing elites had to join this new public space in order to challenge and compete with the opposing side, which included at least foreigners, intellectuals, and book merchants (Limapichart & Kittikhunseree, 2008: 48).

In another dimension, the elites started to be critical of the literatures in different ways from before, from in the past being critical to spur an improvement in the literatures to now being critical to point of destroying or denying the literature’s credibility, or the so-called “delegitimizing critique”, which means that the critiques refused the legitimacy of the messages, the texts, or the authors by reducing these features down to mistakes, lacks of reasons, insanity, foolishness, or vulgarity (Limapichart & Kittikhunseree, 2008: 50). Literatures popular among

the public were criticized that they were not “good books” that contained rational knowledge. They were branded as stories of no use and without substance, because the stories were all made-up and supernatural. Some critiques called the literatures “almost crazy”, and because the literatures did not contain accurate knowledge on the royal traditions, they were harmful to the readers. For the elites, readers needed to learn to separate what the good books were or what should be read, since those who read good books would turn out to be good people, and those who did not read good books would become bad (Limapichart & Kittikhunseree, 2008: 50-53).

Aiming to “promote and improve the subject of Thai composition and correct the misunderstandings for both the composers and the readers”, an objective raised in the Royal Decree on the Establishment of the Royal Society of Literature (Sajjapan, 2015: 33), reflected the anxiety among the Thai elites with regards to the various ongoing changes at the time, which threatened their status of being the thought and cultural leaders. The founding of the Royal Society of Literature was a concrete result from the efforts to strengthen the cultural and intellectual leadership using a new method by setting up standards to evaluate each piece of literature so as to define what are “good books” that should be read and upheld as a good example of writing, and on the other hand, what are not. In this respect, King Rama VI gave two broad criteria, which were (1) being a good book, a good story that the public should get to read without harms, while not being a story of bad intents or one that draws the thoughts of the readers towards nonsensical thoughts and chaotic thoughts on politics, which may irritate the administration of His Majesty the King, and (2) being well-composed and well-edited, with a good and correct use of the Thai language in accordance with the old or the new traditions, and not imitating the use of foreign languages (Limapichart & Kittikhunseree, 2008: 55).

As for the Committee of the Royal Society of Literature, their selection and decision on good books were only the first steps of crowning good books. In fact, many selections of “good books” had been published and distributed before by publishing houses of missionaries and other common people since the time of King Rama V, but Prince Damrong Rajanubhab felt that these publications, such as “*Sae Pha Khun Chang-Khun Phaen*”, deviated too much from facts (Limapichart & Kittikhunseree, 2008: 57). In case of “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*”, he felt that there were many deviations, and the deviations were so severe that it has been said since the reign of King Rama V that if it was left without any preventive or corrective actions, then the literature may be lost (Naphalai, 2000: c). In this connection, it was felt that the literature should be reworked upon, edited, published, and preserved for the country (Naphalai, 2000: d). Interestingly, Thanapol Limapichart and Warisa Kittikhunseree (2008: 57) indicate that after the literatures of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab’s editions were published, other books, as had been printed before by Doctor Smith, have never been published ever again, and have entirely been replaced with the editions of the royal library.

Within the historical context as summarized earlier, it can be concluded that “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” are consistent with at least two social conditions at the time, including (1) the state’s political ideology and (2) the pattern of literary consumption.

Admittedly, it was impossible for King Rama I to refer to the succession rule adopted by the Ayuddhaya monarchs (Tangkaewfa, 2006: 610), because he did not possess any status per his birthright but he was merely a commoner who had become a government officer in a not-so-high rank during the Ayuddhaya era. In setting the state’s ideology during his reign, therefore, priorities given to the holy status of the succession rule by blood line had to be necessarily reduced, and priorities was instead given to the explanation to the possibility of a commoner becoming a monarch. This form of succession had happened before during the Ayuddhaya era, a

reference point which also helped justify the enthronement of King Rama I (Phakitnonthakan, 2015: 89-90). It was understandable that the changing conditions following the passing of King Rama I in 1809 served as an impetus for King Rama II to alter the state's ideology during his reign at least to accommodate and to keep in continuation the holy status of the God of Indra, the precept upheld during the reign of his father (Phakitnonthakan, 2015: 89), so as to justify the birth of the dynasty and the royal family, and to justify the succession to the throne of King Rama II himself as well as his descendants.

Similarly, it is clear that "*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*" is a literature based on the "divinity" school of thoughts, or ideas that associates the monarch with the being of God, where the monarch may claim his descending from a god or a divine-being. (Chanthrawong & Samudavanija, 1980: 12-13). Along the same line, the founding monarch of the cities of Kurepan, Daha, Galang, and Singhatsari were all deva (Naphalai, 2000: 133) from the family lineage called "Wongse-deva" (Naphalai, 2000: 1) and shared the same ancestors in Pataragara, who resides in heaven (Naphalai, 2000: 17).

To emphasize on this specialty, such terms as "Wongse-devan" (descendants of deva), "Wongse-devagrayangan" (descendants of deva in heaven), and "Wongse-arsan-daeva" (descendants of deva, who founded the family) were repeated as many as 56 times throughout the literature, in order to distinguish the blood line of the monarch of the four cities from that of other cities in Java. Also, to stress the holy status of the monarch even further, the terms "Phra Chome Yong Wongse Arsan Daeva" (man with elegant appearance who descends from deva), "Phra Pu Pongse Deva Graya Ngan" (man who descends from deva in heaven), and "Phra Pu Pongse Devan Arsanya" (man who descends from deva ancestors) were, in place of the characters' names, employed to identify the characters throughout the literature. In total, this type of terms was employed as many as 121 times, and when combined with the 12 times that association was made between the character's appearance and the deva's aesthetics, this resulted in 189 times that Inao and his relatives were linked to gods and goddesses one way or another. Approximately, Inao and his relatives were associated with gods or goddesses, both in terms of their family lineage and their equivalent aesthetics, at least once in every six pages of the 14th edition of "*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*" published in 2000.

It is an understanding that the ancestor of the Wongse-deva monarch is "Indra"², a god who resided on the Bandhukampol throne and watched over all the human-beings. The justification of the royal family of the four cities was also founded upon the belief that all of them have descended from the founding monarch who was also a god. Even servicing the members of the royal family was praised as being "a merit to serve Phra Pu Wongse Deva Graya Ngan" (Naphalai, 2000: 134). This principal literature in King Rama II can then be said to be evidently consistent with the state's ideology at the time, as it was able to maintain the justification for the enthronement as in the precept of Indra that had been present in the earlier reign and extend such precept to justify the succession of the descendants, including King Rama II himself as well as the royal family members.

Aside from the relationship between the text of "*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*" and the state's ideology as aforementioned, it was also found that King Rama II, since he was Prince Itsarasunthon, has said to Prince Jui that "our country these days are like Wongse Arsan Daeva" and answered to Prince Jui's question of "Where is Kurepan?" with a question that "In whose

² This may be taken from a text "as I shall say to my grandfather ("Ong ayaka graya-ngan"), and as the deva shall see, the throne is as hot as fire". (Naphalai, 2000: 219)

city Prince Jui is sitting?”, implicitly referring to King Rama II’s country. He also mentioned that “if relatives marry each other just as in Inao, if they do not mind the rankings of being cousins or being children of whom, then I will be very pleased, as the inheritance would remain together” (Khruathong, 2004: 80).

However, the godlike status in Inao greatly differed from other contemporary literatures, especially from the literatures in the earlier period, in that Inao did not describe the manners of the monarch as being as high as that of a deva and did not portray the monarch as the incarnation of deva into the world of human with an intention to cure the hardship (Jirakraisiri, 1979: 168-169). Even though Inao may be considered a story of incarnation (Eoseewong, 2012: 56), the characters from Pataragara, Inao’s grandfather, to Inao himself all showed without hiding their human natures, including love, greed, anger, and lust.

Examples are many. For instance, “in knowing that Inao fell in love with lower-ranked Jintara and that Bussaba may marry Ratu, a king of another city outside the Wongse-deva clan, [Pataragara] believes they do not fear [him], so [he] would make them grieve by creating chaos” (Naphalai, 2000: 219). He then stole a portrait of Bussaba from the King of Jaraga and gave it to Wiyasagam, an incident that sparked the Kamangkuning war (Naphalai, 2000: 235). At another time, Pataragara expressed “a vengeful feeling towards grandson Inao, who had first arrogantly created a chaos by disobeying the family’s order for him to marry Bussaba, a woman intended for Inao, and by instead following his own heart without giving much thought to love a low-ranked woman, but had then again changed his heart to form a relationship with Bussaba; the vengeful feeling was to the extent that [Pataragara] would disallow such relationship, take away Bussaba, and would torture Inao until his eyes bleed before he can see Bussaba again” (Naphalai, 2000: 533).

Inao, the grandson of Pataragara, was also shown to be crazy in love since he participated in his grandmother’s royal funeral at Manya. Despite his Wongse-deva status, Inao was not at all composed but rather attempted to make advances on Jintara even during the parade around the royal funeral pyre (Naphalai, 2000: 58-59). After the King of Daha gave Bussaba to the King of Jaraga, Inao, filled with envy (Naphalai, 2000: 343, 409), used his kris in an attempt to kill the King of Jaraga not once but twice (Naphalai, 2000: 344, 409). Inao then decided to put fire on the city of Daha in order to abduct Bussaba and force her to have sex with him in a cave outside of town (Naphalai, 2000: 501). Acting upon the human nature, Inao and Sagara-neungrad, a daughter of Inao’s uncle who had been engaged to a son of Inao’s other uncle, also stealthily sent love letters to each other to the extent that Inao decided to enter her room in secret (Naphalai, 2000: 799). He, however, had to hurry out, because, at the same time, Siyatra, another descendant of Pataragara, was also trying to abduct Wiyada, Inao’s sister (Naphalai, 2000: 803). In addition, Inao also disguised himself as a deva to fool a nun to come down from a mountain in hopes of taking her as his own (Naphalai, 2000: 858).

The humanist pattern was much clearer in “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” in comparison to “*Dalang*”, where success of the characters could sometimes be attributed to the assistance from deva, and where the characters themselves may possess the same power as deva. For example, in “*Dalang*”, the characters may claim that, with the power bestowed on them, death would never be possible. The clearer humanist pattern in Inao makes the line between the good and the bad more complicated, and the relationship with god is no longer a standard to determine what is good or bad, because being god or descendants from god no longer guarantees that the individual must be a good person (Eoseewong, 2012: 188-189). This is what makes the materials in “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” consistent with the world view of the people at the time.

Additionally, the literary consumption of the bourgeois during the early Rattanakosin era was focused on the materials that were far from the real life or from the repetitive routines in the urban area but still based on reasons and reality more than the adventures of the Himmaphan Forest or the wars between creatures like giants and monkeys (Eoseewong, 2012: 174-175). “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” was recognized for having been infused with the reality of the Thai society while being deeply imbued with the outside influences, that is the the Javanese flavors. The mixture of the Javanese language with the Thai language was intended to build an atmosphere of a foreign land (Puaksom, 2017: 173) and of the lively (Eoseewong, 2012: 165) “Javanese” world (Puaksom, 2017: 178). These factors have made “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” highly popular.

Even more interesting was the Javanese world in which sexual desires were so prevalent. So prevalent were sexual desires between males and females, which throughout the literature resulted in eleven sections involving sexual acts between males and females³, and in addition to these sections were sections involving the male-male sexual preference between Inao and Siyatra (Puaksom, 2017: 178-179), where Inao “took Siyatra to sleep, embraced him, and touched him as if he was appreciating Bussaba, and when Siyatra was deep in his sleep, Inao hugged, kissed, and caressed Siyatra, thinking Siyatra was Bussaba” (Naphalai, 2000: 353). Between Inao and Sangamarata, Inao “touched Sangamarata’s cheeks and kissed him, where Inao was deep in wonder of touches, while thinking about Mayarassami” (Naphalai, 2000: 152). Once again, Inao was “missing Siyatra, whom he used to lust after just as he was lusting after Bussaba, but in his absence, Inao invited Sangaramata into his bedroom... in the middle of the night, Inao grabbed and embraced Sangaramata. They held hands, hugged, kissed without opening their eyes” (Naphalai, 2000: 370).

Down to the reign of King Rama VI, with the preferences in literary consumption having moved away from the plot of holy status (Eoseewong, 2012: 57), the plot of “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*”, as a story of incarnation, was most realistic and human-like in the Thai society at the time, and was consistent with the state’s ideology, even during the time where a belief of the monarch being godlike had receded (Changrean, 1974: 11 cited in Vatanakul, 1976: 114). To benefit from the existing popularity of “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” in the new public sphere, the Royal Society of Literature took this literature to edit and praise as one of the eleven good books, which helped solve the problem of folk tales adopting the theme of royal families but lacking the accurate knowledge of the royal court to the extent that it was “almost crazy”, a problem that had existed since the reign of King Rama V. The emphasis made by Prince Damrong Rajanubhab that this literature stood out as an educational tool in the study of a variety of traditions in the country means that this literature has formed a basis for thoughts and imaginations as to what should be the appropriate status and roles of the monarchy, the nobles, and the people and how these institutions should interact, given that all are also simply human-beings. It may also mean that the status and roles should be just as this reworked edition of “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” “invented and serenaded the people” (Naphalai, 2000: 1,149).

To the readers, “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” also emphasized the awareness of classes or the inequality between the monarch of different cities. For instance, the King of Payang, and the King of Praman warned the King of Kamangkuning that the Wongse-deva kings were all so

³ Inao with Jintara (Naphalai, 2000: 174), with Mayarassami (Naphalai, 2000: 188), with Sagarawati (Naphalai, 2000: 193), with Bussaba (Naphalai, 2000: 501), with Ganjana (Naphalai, 2000: 560), with Bussaba, for the second time (Naphalai, 2000: 898) and with Jintara, for the second time (Naphalai, 2000: 1,100); Sangamarata with Wanyiwa (Naphalai, 2000: 576) and with Kusuma (Naphalai, 2000: 961); Siyatra with Wiyada (Naphalai, 2000: 872) and with Darawan (Naphalai, 2000: 841)

highly skilled at war and weaponry that they were feared by the entire Java and that hundreds of other cities had submitted to be under Wongse-deva's protection", while the kings of Payang, Praman, and Kamangkuning were just kings of "small cities, the analogy of which would be a comparison of fireflies trying to compete against the sun" (Naphalai, 2000: 251). Moreover, in a letter from the King of Lasam to the King of Daha, it was indicated that "the kings of other cities than those of Wongse-deva kings, or the so-called Wongse-ratu, would never match the merit of Wongse-deva and the presence of Wongse-ratu may just irritate the kings of Wongse-deva", or in comparison, "Wongse-ratu may be just an anthill to Wongse-deva's golden mountain, a deer to Wongse-deva's lion, earth to Wongse-deva's sky, as the two are so far from each other and cannot be compared" (Naphalai, 2000: 227). Unagan has also mentioned to the King of Mara that princesses of Wongse-deva "do not suit to be matched with Wongse-ratu, as a match of Wongse-ratu to Wongse-deva would be like matching a crow with a golden swan or a bead to a glittery diamond, which would only make the jewels lose their glitters, and Wongse-ratu only deserves to be a servant of Wongse-deva" (Naphalai, 2000: 688) because the Wongse-deva kings had descended from deva. For this reason, the wives to the King of Panjaragan and Pakmangan respectively told their daughters that it is "such a merit to get to serve Wongse-deva" and reminded them that they should "be obedient in order to preserve themselves, be humble keeping in mind that they are only servants, and not be too proud for having Inao as husband such that the more love there is, the more fear there should be, and that regularly they should indulge Inao" (Naphalai, 2000: 134).

In this sense, the Wongse-deva monarch held the status as the King of Kings, which, according to the original implication, means that they had the status of the God of Indra, the god who resides above other gods and goddesses (Laomanachareon, 2016), the god that was a reference in the justification of the enthronement of the monarch in the Chakri dynasty since the very first king, and essentially, Pataragara, the god who is Wongse-deva's ancestors. Instead of providing a mythological Buddhist explanation that the King of Kings is the one who has gathered so many merits that he reaches the state of nirvana, has the same dharma as held by the Buddha himself, or owns the seven holy objects which would make him victorious over any other territories (Laomanachareon, 2016), a story that might not effectively communicate the image of the King of Kings at the time, "*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*" represents the King of Kings in a humanist way. The King of Kings in this literature is human who descends from an ancestor, who is, in turn, a god in human form and the power to govern is here justified by the succession along the blood lineage. Even though these human-beings may lust for love, whether it is love in a woman or sometimes in a man, their descending from a deva justifies the needs for people to uphold to such inequality between the king, a descendant of deva, and the rest, to be fearful of and loyal to the monarch and his family, as well as to show such fear and loyalty at all times.

Political Teachings in "*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*"

It has been said that King Rama II tried to compose "*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*" with an intention to show the readers that the monarch is also human and there is no need to specify what a monarch should be like (Debyasuvarn, 1996: 189). Rather, he gradually demonstrated what characteristics a monarch should possess (Debyasuvarn, 1996: 192). Not only has "*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*" been considered a "good book" for a script of dancing play and a "textbook" for studying Thai traditions, but it also possessed another dimension in being a "political teaching", especially for governors. For at least seven characteristics, the literature demonstrated, through the role of its main character, Inao, what a governor should not do.

1. Lust in women: It is rather clear that Inao's lust in women was the plot line of this literature. Ever since before his birth, royal astrologers predicted that Inao "would face hardships because of women", and for that, he would be away from the city of Kurepan for as many as 13 years (Naphalai, 2000: 12). His lust in Jintara to the extent that he broke up with Bussaba very much angered the King of Kurepan, the King of Daha, and particularly Pataragara, and sparked the War of Kamangkuning. His lust in Bussaba was an impetus for his setting fire to the city of Daha and abducting Bussaba, which made Pataragara even angrier. He would end up sending Inao and Bussaba apart, and they had to travel in search of each other for as long as seven years and four months (Naphalai, 2000: 1010).

2. Selfishness: Aside from lust in women, the main character of this literature has shown much selfishness. When Inao wanted Jintara, he did everything he could to get her. He lied to the King of Kurepan that he was just travelling through forests, while he was actually escaping to Manya. When he got to Manya, he had four senior government officers of Manya ask the King of Manya for Jintara at three different times until the King of Manya did not know what else to do. Eventually, Inao sneaked in to see Jintara and insisted that "even when his desires were not met, he would not leave her room" (Naphalai, 2000: 174). With this selfishness, when his father sent someone to get Inao to marry Bussaba, Inao refused and announced a cancellation of wedding without being concerned of any consequential damages. This was just as the King of Kurepan mentioned to his wife that "Inao was so wrong for lusting after Jintara and for not caring about his family. He desired only the low life, refusing his family without fear at all" (Naphalai, 2000: 201-202). When Inao desired Bussaba, whom the King of Daha had already given to the King of Jaraga, Inao still asked the second wife of the King of Daha for assistance. He then decided to set fire on the city of Daha in order to abduct Bussaba, "creating chaos for the whole population of Daha" (Naphalai, 2000: 481). When he disguised himself as Panji in the city of Garang, he still desired another woman in Saga-neungrad, and when "his desires were not yet met" (Naphalai, 2000: 798), he decided to sneak in to get her. Fortunately, there was an interruption, which prevented an undesirable consequence. For his selfishness this time was unsuccessful, the outcome, therefore, differed than before.

3. Speaking or acting without thinking: The behaviors of saying or acting without thinking shown by Inao, the main character of this literature, were widely recognized and remembered, such that they have turned into a proverb "Tell off other people but Inao is just the same". It began with Inao thinking that "Bussaba of Daha may not be as beautiful as Jintara", so he sent a message to his father that "the wedding (arranged with Bussaba) would not tie him down, and if anyone asks for Bussaba, she should be given away" (Naphalai, 2000: 201). However, when the King of Kamangkuning brought his army to take Bussaba back, Inao suddenly thought about "how beautiful Bussaba must be for she can capture the hearts of people of all cities. Being in love with her portrait may cause men to die, and if she is only as beautiful as Jintara, then it is worth losing a life" (Naphalai, 2000: 284). When Inao finally met Bussaba in person, he "could not stop looking at her as she was so beautiful as if she were created by God, and so badly regretful, he sweated all over and constantly flipped his hair" (Naphalai, 2000: 341). From earlier looking down on the King of Jaraga and the King of Wiyasagam that they fell in love with Bussaba from only seeing her portrait to the point that they had to bring their respective army to fight with one another, Inao later similarly fell in love with Bussaba himself. Without thinking before speaking or acting, he created a problem that he would face later on.

4. Lying/Telling untruths: It can be said that lying or telling untruths to one another is another main theme in this literature. Faced with the situations of which Inao did not know "how to think

or make better” (Naphalai, 2000: 102), he often chose to lie or tell untruths to others. The first was when he knew that his father sent someone to arrange a marriage between himself and Bussaba. It was then that he decided to “bid farewell just to travel through the woods, but once he departed the city, he went to Manya as his heart wished” (Naphalai, 2000: 103). He has also disguised himself many times for various purposes. He disguised himself first as Panji on his way to the city of Manya and as a statue of Buddha in a cave on the Wilisamara Mountain. He played trick to set fire on the city of Daha to abduct Bussaba by lying that he “would like to depart the city for camping in the woods in order to hunt and send back deer and birds and would not return to the city until he is finished with the wedding” (Naphalai, 2000: 464). He also disguised himself as the King of Jaraga to abduct Bussaba, and then returned to tell the King of Lasam, the King of Jaraga, and the King of Daha that he had nothing to do with it. He asked Wiyada to cry in order to deceive their mother that they would like to go into the woods, so that they can go finding Bussaba together. Inao also disguised himself for the second time to find Bussaba, and disguised himself as a deva to fool a nun. Finally, he lied to Jintara that he was “asking for someone to bring Jintara to him in order for her to become his primary wife” (Naphalai, 2000: 1097). He also lied to her that the reason for him having disappeared for so many years was because “the King of Daha had asked him to go into the woods to search for Bussaba until he found her at the city of Galang, where he called on the King of Kurepan, the King of Daha, and the King of Singhats to make further arrangements” (Naphalai, 2000: 1098). Most importantly, he lied to her that he had decided to also marry Bussaba only because he felt pitiful for Bussaba if Bussaba had to become someone else’s wife.

5. Being rash and quick-tempered: Another undesirable behavior of Inao is his quick temper just as the King of Kurepan said to his three brothers about Inao’s misconduct that “Inao of Kurepan was very wrong for getting tied up and falling in love with Jintara, but that is because of his quick, young hearts” (Naphalai, 2000: 994). Not only did Inao quickly break up with Bussaba for having fallen in love with Jintara and later, after falling in love with Bussaba, burn down the city of Daha to abduct her, but Inao, with wrath, also nearly killed Siyatra when Siyatra was disguised as Yaran and about to abduct Long-neungrad, a disguise of Wiyada. In regards to this incident, the King of Galang told the King of Kurepan and the King of Daha that “when Siyatra was abducting Wiyada, Inao was so angry that he was going to kill Siyatra. He was so angry that his kris was on fire, and had I arrived later, people would have died” (Naphalai, 2000: 982-983).

6. Adopting brute force in solving problems: It is clear that “*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*” was filled with the use of force and violence to address the problems. When Prasanta and his crews invaded the King of Bussina’s camp and kill the King’s people, the King of Bussina sent an army to arrest the trespasser. Inao, even though informed that the chaos was started by the fault of Prasanta and his crews, Inao did not punish his people and, instead said that “even if Prasanta were punished by death, the war still would not disappear”. Instead of negotiating or asking the King of Bussina for clemency, Inao decided to make war that may have been unnecessary only because he “had thought about being at war but had just gotten the opportunity” (Naphalai, 2000: 121). Once again, Inao decided to resolve the problem regarding Bussaba by pretending he was a force of the King of Kamangkuning while robbing and setting fire on the city of Daha. This chaos opened an opportunity for Inao to abduct Bussaba out of the city of Daha. This case reflects not only the use of brute force to solve problems in general, but it also demonstrates the gender violence that Inao committed to Bussaba. The literature has reiterated the issue of gender violence so many times, such as when Siyatra imposed the violence on Wiyada, where although

the woman may not welcome the man's advance to take her as his own, she has to admit it because when "raw rice is cooked", she has no other options.

7. Failing to uphold tradition: Internal marriages with the Wongse-deva family was a tradition that has long been upheld, in order to "exclude other families from mixing with Wongse-deva". There have been indications that, "when the purity of Wongse-deva is lost, several dangerous incidents may take place, resulting in turmoil and chaos among the people all over the place" (Naphalai, 2000: 22-23). Inao's lust in Jintara and his selfishness, which turned into a breakup with Bussaba, therefore, became more than a disobedience towards his father or a mere cancellation of engagement among relatives. Instead, it was also a violation of long-held traditions, where he "fell in love and insisted on marrying a lower-ranked woman, thereby pushing Bussaba to marry a ratu" (Naphalai, 2000: 219). This was such an important matter that has made the throne of Pataragara as heated as fire, such that he came down to impose several calamities as punishments. In this sense, it can be said that the chaos was actually originated from a failure to uphold the traditions.

Conclusion and Suggestion

The analysis of the texts of "*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*" and the surrounding historical contexts at least during the time of composition in the reign of King Rama II and the time of reworking in the reign of King Rama VI is intended to unearth answers the questions of why "*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*" was selected as the literature to infuse political thoughts and, in fact, what were those political thoughts. It is found that both during the times when this literature was composed and when it was reworked, its core messages are consistent with at least two conditions. First, the literature presents the state's ideology in justifying the succession of the Chakri Dynasty according to the precept of the Indra God as well as describing the appropriate interaction between the monarchy and the people, where the latter shall be fearful of and loyal to the former. Second, the society's consumption of literature shows changes in preferences towards humanism and realism. Comparatively, it is quite clear that this piece of literature is characterized by humanism and realism more than other incarnation stories and more than other versions of Inao in Thailand.

The literature has been named by the Royal Society of Literature a "good book" for a script of dancing play, and has been a "textbook" for studying Thai traditions as appearing in the "*Explanations of Bot Lakhon Reung Inao, the Vachirayan National Library edition*". It has also served as a "political teaching", particularly for governors, by illustrating examples of behaviors that governors should not act upon, also known as the seven Raja-adharma, as well as the consequences of such behaviors. The seven Raja-adharma are: (1) lust in women, (2) selfishness, (3) speaking or acting without thinking, (4) lying or telling untruths, (5) being rash and quick-tempered, (6) using brute force to solve problems, and (7) failing to uphold traditions.

However, this research is pioneer in studying political thoughts from "*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*", where the authors start from setting out two primary questions: (1) why "*Bot Lakhon Reung Inao*" was chosen as the literature to be infused with political thoughts and (2) what are those political thoughts. The authors attempt to analyze information, including the texts and the contexts of the literature, as comprehensively as possible, in order to answer the above questions and more completely fill the existing knowledge gap. Certainly, there remain many questions that have not even been raised. For example, questions may be asked whether the selection of this particular literature by the writer and/or the editor was based on any political intention, and if it was, what were those intentions, and in using this literature as a communication channel,

whether those intentions were met. It may even be argued that no political thoughts at all have been infused in the literature, which means that the observation and the suggestion made in this analysis is a complete misunderstanding. These questions await those who are interested to pick up the torch that has been lightened on the subject and to carry on the study even further.

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