

เมื่อคณะทูตสยามเข้าเฝ้าพระนางเจ้าวิคตอเรียแห่งกรุงอังกฤษ

น.พ. วิบูล วิจิตรวาทการ

ตอนที่ 8

คณะทูตสยามไม่ได้มาถึงเมืองปอร์ทสมัทจนกระทั่งวันอังคารที่ 27 เดือนตุลาคม เมื่อเรือการาดอกแล่นมาทอดสมอเทียบท่าหนังสือพิมพ์เขาก็เล่าถึงวิธีการต้อนรับอย่างละเอียด ขาวนี้ยาวหน่อย และมีจุดที่น่าสนใจอยู่ 2 ตอน

ในตอนหนึ่งเขาเริ่มปากจืด เขียนว่าหากคณะทูตสยามสามารถได้ยินและเข้าใจว่าคนฝรั่งชั้นต่ำกล่าวถึงพวกทูตว่าอย่างไร เมื่อได้ประสบพบเห็นก็คงจะไม่ชอบใจเป็นแน่ ทั้งนี้เพราะชุดแต่งกายของคนไทยเรานั้นเหมือนเสื้อผ้าที่ใช้ผ้าที่ใช้ในละครตลกชั้นต่ำแบบเบอเลสค์

และในอีกตอนหนึ่งเขาก็ลงว่าท่านราชทูตของเรานั้นมีภรรยาถึง 58 คน และเมื่อเดินทางอยู่ที่ท่าเรือก็เหลือบตาไปเห็นผู้หญิงฝรั่งสาวสวยคนหนึ่ง จึงขอซื้อด้วยเงิน 3,000 ปอนด์ เพื่อจะเอามาเป็นเมียคนที่ 59 แต่อีก 2 วันต่อมา หนังสือพิมพ์อีกฉบับหนึ่งชื่อ เดอ สแตนดาร์ด ลงข่าวแก้ที่ว่าที่หนังสือพิมพ์โทมส์บอกเรื่องท่านราชทูตต้องการซื้อหญิงสาวฝรั่งชาวอังกฤษเป็นเมียน้อยคนที่ 59 ของท่านด้วยเงิน 3,000 ปอนด์นั้นเป็นเรื่องโกหกมดเท็จทั้งเพ เราเลยไม่ทราบข่าวไหนถูกข่าวไหนผิดกันแน่ ได้แต่หวังว่าพระยามนตรีสุริยวงศ์ท่านจะมีได้กระทำอะไรระละเอียดละออเช่นนั้น

The Times,

Thursday,

29 October.

The Siamese Embassy.

Portsmouth, Wednesday,

These interesting personages, consisting of Praya Muntri Suroywangse, Principal Ambassador from the first King of Siam; Chau Mun Sakbedh Braety, Second Ambassador from the first King; Charmun Mandir Bidaeks, First Ambassador, and Nai Biehar Sarbkiek, Second Ambassador from the Second King of Siam, with 12 principal officers of state and retinue of

servants, in all 27 persons, whose arrival on Tuesday night in Her Majesty's steam dispatch yacht Caradoc we reported briefly yesterday, have landed at this port, and await advices from the Government before proceeding to London.

This morning, as early as seven o'clock, Captain H. Seymour, C.B., son of the Commander-in-Chief, and flag captain of the port, went out to Spithead in the steam yacht Fire Queen, Mr. W.F. Paul, master, R.N., commanding, and made arrangements for the disembarkation of the distinguished corps. At 9.30 a.m. the Caradoc steamed into this harbour with the Siamese standards of the First and the Second King flying from her main and fore masts, and which were saluted by the Governor's battery en passant. On coming to moorings in the harbour, abreast of the dockyard, Admiral Sir George Seymour, K.C.B., the Commander-in-Chief, went off in his barge to pay his respects and offer the hospitalities of the Admiralty-house to the long delayed voyagers, who received him with every demonstration of high reverence as the representative of the Queen, of whom they have come so far to seek an audience. Meanwhile the dockyard wharves, the ships in docks adjacent, and the ground abutting on the reception jetty became thronged with the officers of the dockyard and their friends, a large number of ladies among them, to witness the disembarkation of the illustrious strangers.

At 11 o'clock the Caradoc ranged up alongside the jetty, her progress to which point was cheered by the enlivening strains of the band on board the Diadem. Rear-Admiral-superintendent Martin had had made the best preparations that could be managed on so sudden an occasion for the handing of their Highnesses, and General Scarlett, commanding the district, had posted a detachment of the third battalion of the Scots, Fusileer Guards on the spot to keep the ground. The guard of honour was furnished by the 68th Regiment, and commanded by Major Grier. On the chief Ambassador landing on the jetty he cordially shook hands with Admiral Martin, General Scarlett, Colonel Wright, deputy-assistant quarter master-general: Captain Gordon, aid de-camp; and Town-Major Breton, which courtesy was followed by the other Ambassadors, and the flagship Blenheim fired the usual salute. The Port

Admiral's carriage was in waiting, into which the chief personages were ushered by Admiral Martin and General Scarlett, and the other members of the Siamese Commission having entered other equipages the whole were escorted to the Admiralty-house, where a superb breakfast was in waiting, to which all the captains and commanders of all the fleet at Portsmouth, Admiral Martin staff, General Scarlett staff, and Lieutenant Clavering, commanding the Caradoc, were invited.

After the dājeuner the “distinguished foreigners” were conducted over the dockyard by

Admiral Martin staff, and shown every object of interest, with most of which they exhibited and expressed unfeigned surprise. This occupied until nearly three o' clock, when the entire cortege were driven, under the conduct of Flag- Lieutenant Malcolm and other officers, to the quarters prepared for them by Her Majesty's Government at the George Hotel, within the garrison of the Portsmouth.

นักข่าวฝรั่งเขาเขียนกันดีตลอดมาจนถึงตอนนี้ เขาก็เริ่มเขียนแบบเยาะ ๆ ดุ๊กหน้อย ๆ ว่าคณะทูตเราแต่งตัวตลกเหมือนตัวละคร Burlesque และฝรั่งชาวเมืองธรรมดาทั้งหลายก็วิพากษ์วิจารณ์ไปในทางที่หากคณะทูตได้ยิน ก็จะไม่รู้สึกว่ารันทุเลย ขอเชิญท่านอ่านต่อไป

“Here their appearance was greeted by a large concourse of spectators of all classes, and certainly their Excellencies would not have felt in any way flattered could they have understood the remarks made by divers of the lower class of the auditory as they alighted from their equipages. Their State costume certainly borders closely upon the theatrical pantomimic, only that it is of a richer quality in material than the usual “property” of the supernumeraries in a stage burlesque of the Christmas or Easter family; but they appear to enjoy themselves and their position, and exhibit the utmost cordiality and affability to all who tender them the like courtesies.

This evening they will amuse themselves by visiting the Portsmouth Theatre Royal witness the spectacles of The Jewess, which is as well put upon the stage by Mr. Rutley, the lessee, as it could be at any theatre of the like dimension. The house will no doubt be

crowded by anxious sight-seers, and it is questionable whether the objects before the curtain will not eclipse in attraction the efforts of those behind it.

Tomorrow the Embassy will move to London by special train Mr. Fowle, an attach from the Foreign Office, has been at Portsmouth for some days past awaiting the arrival of the Caradoc, and has the charge of the mission. The treasures brought by their Excellencies as presents from the Kings of Siam for Her Majesty have been landed carefully to-day, under the superintendence of Lieutenant H.W. Hall, director of dockyard police, and stowed away in safe custody.”

มาถึงตอนนี้ เขาก็ประกาศว่าคณะทูตของเราอีก ว่านั่งสูบบุหรี่กันตรงหน้าต่างโรงแรมด้วยหน้าตา และกริยาท่าทางไร้ความอาย เช่นคนในครอบครัว John Bull ซึ่งคนอังกฤษเขาถือว่าเป็นครอบครัวคนชั้นต่ำ

“No foreigner have ever landed at Portsmouth who have created the interest and curiosity of the Siamese, and their hotel is attended by large assemblages of gazers, who look at them as they sit smoking at the open windows with eyes and impudence such as only the lower members of John Bull’s family indulge in.

The chief Ambassador acknowledges to the luxury of 58 wives, and it is related of him that in going round the dockyard to-day his eye lighted on young lady whom he would have liked to make the 59th at the purchase-money of 3000/. This was related to us by a lady to whom the eastern Mormon confessed the weakness, with whose charms he also acknowledged himself smitten.

After their siesta the whole of the illustrious chiefs walked about the town, and visited the jewelry establishment of Messrs. E. and Emanuel, of High-street and were engaged in inspecting their numerous objects of virtue and value. With which they expressed themselves much pleased, and on retiring presented cigars to Mr.Emanuel and his friends in the establishment.”

หนังสือพิมพ์เดอ สแตนดาร์ด เขาหลงขาว่าเรื่องราวทูตสยามต้องการช่วยหญิงสาวชาวอังกฤษ มาเป็นเมียด้วยเงิน 3000 ปอนด์นี้ ไม่เป็นความจริง เป็นการกล่าวหาว่าหนังสือพิมพ์เดอ ไทมส์ ลงข่าวเท็จ

The Standard,

Saturday

31 October.

The Siamese Ambassadors.

Their Excellencies the Ambassadors from the Court of Siam, who, with their suits, are at present residing at Claridge's Hotel, were yesterday, among others, visited by the Right Hon. The Lord Mayor and other distinguished visitors. Among the carriages which met them on the previous day at the Waterloo Station of the South-Western Railway, was an elegant state chariot, manufactured by F. Aldebert and Co., Long Acre. It is a very elegant vehicle, constructed with great taste, and has a graceful outline. The body is painted of a bright lake, the panels displaying a rich emblazonment of the arms of Siam, comprising the Imperial Crowns and Banner, exhibiting the white elephant, the whole decorated with handsomely arranged drapery. We are given to understand that report which appeared in a morning contemporary, in reference to the chief Siamese ambassador having 58 wives, and desiring to purchase for £3000 the 59th in Portsmouth, is altogether a fabrication.

นอกจากนี้ หนังสือพิมพ์เดอแฮมพ์ไชร์ เทเลกราฟ เขาลงข่าวน่าสนใจอีกอันหนึ่ง เล่าว่าคณะทูตไทยได้รับเชิญเข้าไปชมบ้านของพ่อค้าอังกฤษ มีสเตอร์กัลท์ ไปพบลูก ๆ ของท่านพ่อค้านี้เล่นอยู่กับพระพุทธรูปพม่าบนพรม ก็ตกอกตกใจกันใหญ่ ให้นำพระพุทธรูปไปตั้งบูชาไว้ที่มุมห้อง

The Hampshire

Telegraph,

Saturday,

31 October.

A guard of honour, consisting of a detachment of the Royal Marine Artillery, was here (at the George Hotel) posted, and sentries were placed at the main entrance during the sojourn of the distinguished party. Immediately upon their arrival several of them sat at the

open windows of their apartments, and seemed in no wise abashed at the curious of the people who crowded about the façade of the building... Several of the subordinate members of the suite were strolling about the streets in the evening, and endeavoured to conform to the English mode of dress by substituting for their pointed scull caps hats of the most approved modern fashion, which contrasted strangely, if not ridiculously, with their variegated Oriental costume. Their baggage, containing the magnificent presents intended for her Majesty, and valued at some hundreds of thousands of pounds, and their own rich and splendid wardrobes and other property, were carefully landed and deposited safely under the superintendence of Lieut.H.W. Hall, director of the dockyard of the police. They were afterwards removed in omnibuses and other vehicles to the George Hotel... Amongst other places, the distinguished party visited Galt's Outfitting Establishment. Mr.Galt invited them to see the interior of an English house, which offer was readily accepted, and before leaving the drawing room handed Mr.Galt cigarettes, receiving in return good Havannahs, which they appeared to enjoy. A rather singular incident occurred during their stay here. It appears that the children were playing upon the hearthrug with an old Burmese Joss, or idol, which Mr.Galt had in his possession. Unexpectedly seeing this deity transformed into a child's bauble, they started back with a facial expression of abject astonishment, and, reverentially raising the idol, placed it in an upright position in a corner of the room. According to the statement of the interpreter, on being introduced to Mr.Galt, it appears that the notabilities have 50 wives each, although he (the interpreter) begged pardon and expressed a hope that no offence would be given by his making such a confession. They visited several other shops in the High Street, but the only purchase we have heard of was a gold snuff box at the shop of Mr.Dudley

(อ่านต่อฉบับหน้า)
