

NOTES AND QUERIES

The Word Jetawan Again.

In *JSS XXXI*, 1 (pp. 49-56), I ventured to present some material to determine the meaning of the word *jetawan* (or *jetavan*) as a generic name in ecclesiastical architecture and was able to indicate a Mon venue dating possibly as far back as the XIIth century of the Christian era. To sum up the evidence then presented of its use: firstly, in this country, the old Law of Inheritance which I dated 1635 mentioned a *jetawan* having been built and dedicated by King Prasat Thong in the same year; secondly, the standard histories of Ayuthya seemed to have used the word *Ubosoth* for what could have been called a *jetawan*, and I ventured the opinion that an identification of one with the other was more than probable; thirdly, the discovery at a Mon monastery in Pathum of a model of a *jetawan* confirmed my suspicion of the generic nature of the use of that name; and finally that suspicion was further strengthened by a statement from a Mon scholar in Rangoon and also by the *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States* that *jetawan* in Burmese architectural parlance referred to an edifice of three-tiered roof which housed sacred effigies.

Now, although the evidences seemed to point out with almost definite certainty that the *jetawan* of Wat Chai (Jayavardhanārām) of Ayuthya—the one mentioned in the Law of Inheritance 1635—corresponded with the building referred to in the standard history as the *Ubosoth*, i.e. the main assembly hall, leading therefore to the conclusion that a *jetawan* was identical with an edifice of some kind, it still needed the architectural confirmation of a three-tiered roof in order to fit in with Mon tradition. No edifice retained its roof in Wat Chai at Ayuthya when I went up again and my recollection of that model at Pathum failed me on this point.

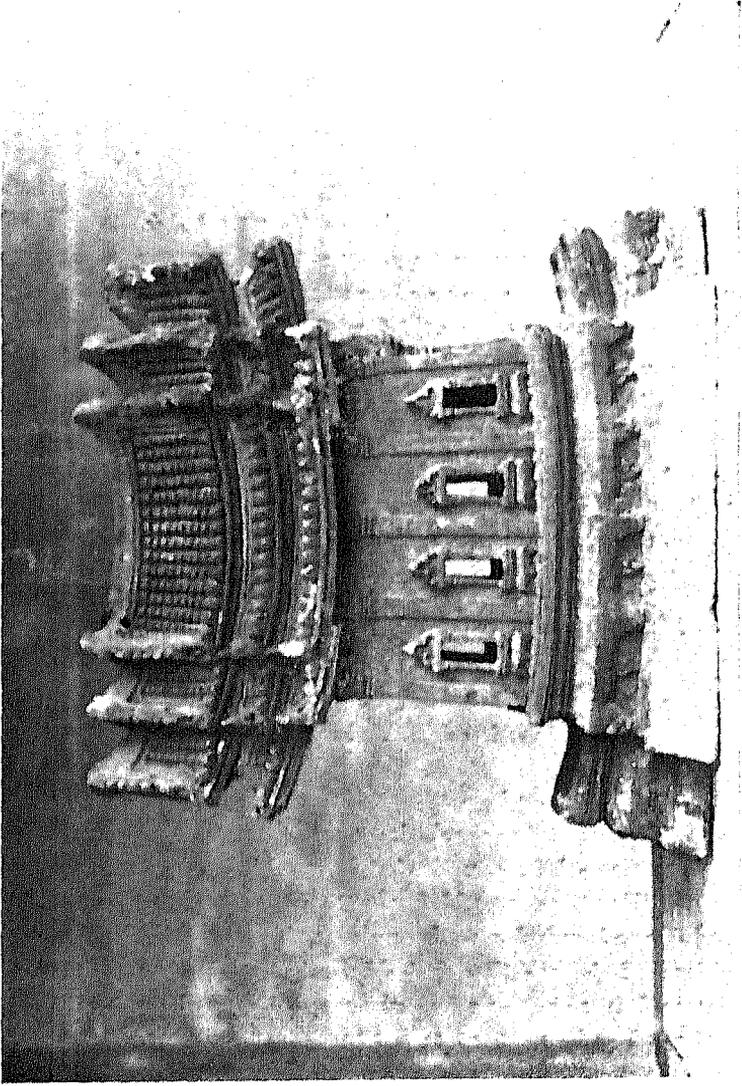
In May of this year, however, I went up to Pathum on a visit and while there wondered whether I could yet re-discover that model. The name of the monastery where I found it had slipped my memory. I nevertheless took my chance and crossed the river from the town in a

north-easterly direction where there was a Mon monastery called Wat Bot, venerated by the people there as a very old relic. To my delight I was rewarded with an easy find. The former incumbent of the wat was still there and recollected my former visit. The *jetawan* was no longer lying about in the courtyard of the main building as before but had been taken away to adorn a miniature fish-pond in the private cell of a young monk. Its measurements were m. 0.40 x 0.1 x 0.39, the last being the height at the point of its gable. The material of which it was made was *terracotta* and I found that it had a *three-tiered roof*. This last fact was to me highly important for it supplied a much-needed confirmation of the identity of the *jetawan* as a generic name in ecclesiastical architecture. In the Palace at Mandalay the Zedawan housed Buddha-effigies identified with deceased monarchs such no doubt as the effigies known in this country as the พระมหากษัตริย์ of Thai monarchs and high personages. In the edifice at Wat Chai of Ayuthya—the one mentioned by the Law of 1635—it doubtless housed the Buddha-effigy of the main assembly-hall, which might have been identified with the deceased mother of King Prasat Thong, to whom the monastery was dedicated by that monarch.

The word must have dropped out of use in Ayuthya by the time of King Boromakot in the early XVIIIth century, for had it still remained it would probably have been retained as the name for such edifices and transmitted to Bangkok when the city was built as the capital. Bangkok at that time tried to copy the Ayuthya of the time of that King in all possible details. It had its Pukhaothong, its Wat Mahathat and Wat Rajaburua, and many other namesakes of old familiar places and landmarks left behind in the old capital. The *jetawan* in such a case could have been applied to such places as what was called, in the Law of Phra Rajakamod Mai 1785, the Sanctuary of the Great Ancestor (พระบรมบรรพต) or the modern "Sanctuary of the Lord" (พระบรมธาตุพนม) on the east wing of the Hall of Paisal in the Grand Palace.

It might be added that the incumbent of Wat Bot has kindly given me the model and it has been presented to the society where it can be seen in the library.

Wat Bot itself is of some interest and well worth a visit by the tourist with a taste for the past. It covers a large area on the east bank of the river almost opposite the present town of Pathum. One does not know what its age might have been. The incumbent says that it might have been there for at least a century and a half, for tradition says that it



The Jetawan (0.40 x 0.1 x 0.30)



was already existing when Ayuthya fell to the Burmese. The Bot itself is a fairly tall building with a curious gallery inside just below the ceiling where Buddha-efigies and cinerary urns are kept. The gilt and green decorations of the doorways are in good taste and still in a fairly good condition. Another building, a *vihara* no doubt, is almost tumbling down. It is however worth looking at, especially its façade, profusely decorated, the like of which is not to be seen in Bangkok. It houses numerous statues of all sizes, the principle one being especially noticeable. It is a seated figure in regal robes, but the royal robes do not look like the usual ones in central Thailand. They resemble more the regal figures which decorate the *stupa* of Wat Chedi Chetyod of Chiangmai and might have come from Burma. I was told that it was a figure representing the story of the King of Jambu. As it was in a place of honour among statues of the Buddha and not knowing the story of that King I took it to be an effigy of the Buddha in connection with that story, in which he took up the rôle of the King of Kings to tame the King of Jambu who was a tough character. A third building lies alongside the *vihara* and is known as a *kān parien*. It is a low wooden building open on all sides, in which are to be found some old paintings in water colour dating probably from the third reign of Bangkok.

D.

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