Newest and Strangest Of the Ambassadors

Phya Charoon Raja Maitri, Siam's First Diplomatic Representative for This Nation, Expected Soon in Washington—His Career One of the Most Remarkable in Oriental History—Capital Society Likely to Be Dazzled by the Magnificence of His Jeweled Costumes—Personal Reminiscences by an American Who in His Boyhood Was a Playmate of King Chulalongkorn.

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With the coming of the Siamese ambassador to this country, soon expected in Washington, diplomatic society will be enriched by a singularly interesting personality. Phya Charoon Raja Maitri, first envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary from Siam to the United States, has had a career, probably more remarkable than any of the associates whom he will meet in diplomatic circles. Cousin of his king as he is, he has been

PRINCE PHYRA CHAROON RAJA MAITRI.

prince, priest, beggar and finally not only prince again, but one of the most trusted advisers of the throne. That he is accredited to the United States is proof of this latter, for King Chulalongkorn is himself an admirer and a student of the institutions of this country, and is so deeply interested in strengthening the ties between it and his own land that he has recently been considering a trip hither. Up to the present, however, Siam has been content with a consular representative to this nation, Isaac Townsend Smith, formerly United States consul to

THE PRINCE'S BUDDHIST TEACHER.

Siam. The new ambassador is the sixth sent from his country, the others being accredited to Berlin, Paris, London, St. Petersburg and Yeddo.

Personal Description.

Phya Charoon Raja Maitri, is about 31 years old. Like most Siamese he is below medium size, according to our standards, but is of fine physique, deep-chested, muscular and straight. Man to man he could probably make easy work of the average American thirty pounds heavier than himself, for he has been a fine athlete, proficient in the severe exercises of wrestling and sword play, and he still keeps his youthful suppleness and strength, which is unusual for an oriental of his age. Despite his dark skin he is a fine-looking man. His eyes are calm, steady and well set; his forehead broad and unwrinkled; his mouth firm and well controlled; the general contour of his face regular and pleasing, and his expression informed with the dignity of a man who respects himself and is accustomed to respect from others. Behind this dignity there lurks a jovial spirit of which no indication shows in the face. His excellency is fond of a good joke and of a good story, whether as relator or listener. He is also fond of a good dinner, and is an epicure without being in any degree a glutton. His ceremonial dinners are famous in Bangkok, the capital of Siam.

A Trained Diplomat.

No minister accredited from a foreign court to this country will find himself in more radically changed surroundings than the Siamese ambassador. Bangkok is perhaps more given to magnificent ceremoniousness, both socially and officially, than any other capital in the world. To him Washington will seem strangely informal—perhaps strangely dull. Also, he will have difficulty in adjusting himself to the new conditions of rank, or, rather, lack of rank. He comes to a country where all men are equal, from a country where no two men are equal. At the Siamese court no two officials or dignitaries can walk or stand abreast, because every man is on a different social plane from his fellow. Much as the new ambassador will find to surprise him in the American theory of equality, nobody will see evidences of his surprise, for he is a trained diplomat in the highest sense of the word; tasteful, courteous, suave; and with that quality of acquisitiveness and adaptability which much mingling with all classes of men imparts.

His Dazzling Costumes.

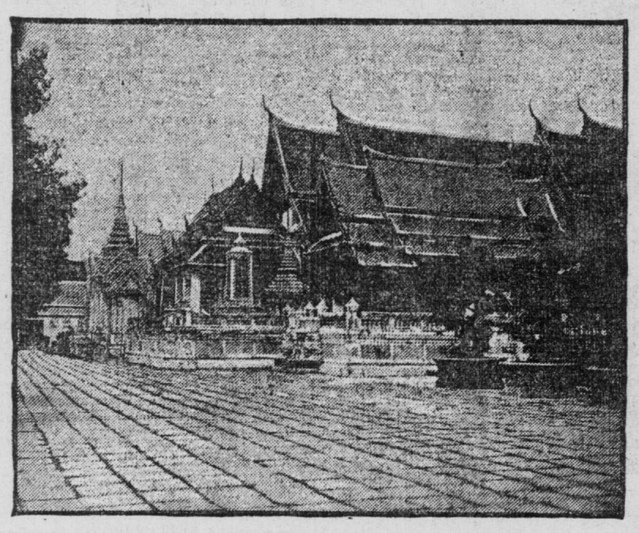
But though the inner man may accept our standards, it is probable that the outer man will abide by those of his country. In that event Washington will see some dazzling costumes when Phya Charoon arrays himself for affairs of state. It may even be necessary to detail a special police guard for him as he drives through the streets, for his jewels are valuable enough to tempt a professional

WAT CHONG BUDDHIST TOWER.

crook to almost any risk. In Siam his collection of jewelry is no finer than that of many other men of high rank, but Siam has been amassing gems for many generations. The ambassador has emeralds, rubies, pearls and sapphires sewed into some of his ceremonial costumes, beside which the richest display of an American ballroom would pale its ineffectual fires to nothingness. Besides these he has his more personal jewelry; priceless diamonds, opals, beryls and pearls, in rings, pins, belts and pendants. With all his decorations on, chief among them blazing the blue-white diamonds of the Order of the White Elephant, and the prismatic gorgeousness of the "Chinese Crown," he is literally a dazzling center of radiance. His favorite costume and that which best becomes him, is the native Siamese "panung" and embroidered jacket. This "panung" is the universal garment of Siam for both sexes, and is a long piece of cloth so arranged and wound about as to form a pair of baggy trousers. The ambassador's outfits are of silks that cannot be matched in this country, unless in the wardrobe of his excellency, Wu-Ting-Fang, and many of them are magnificently embroidered and jeweled. On his feet the ambassador wears sandals. He wears no hat; doesn't own one, in fact. In his own country his head is sheltered by a parasol carried by a slave. It is to be hoped, in the interests of picturesqueness that he will adhere to this custom and bring the parasol bearer with him.

His Home in Bangkok.

is worthy in its appointments of so magnificent a person. It is a spacious palace by the river side, filled with retainers and slaves, who serve him, his several wives, and the numerous children with the silent and perfect exactitude of Oriental service. The carvings and bronzes and other works of art in this palace would furnished a



SCENE IN PHYRA CHAROON'S COURTYARD.

whole museum. When he goes forth from this house, whether to court, to worship, or the play, it is in a superb boat, manned by twenty rowers, for in Bangkok, the Venice of the east, local travel is all by water. He has a separate slave for each detail of service, especially trained, and the bearer of the betel-nut box would never be expected to carry the parasol, or the steersman of the ceremonial boat to tend a door in the palace.

His Varied Career.

Not always has Phya Charaan lived thus. Siam is the home of the most rigid Buddhism, and the ambassador is a pious Buddhist. By the precepts of that religion as practiced in Siam, every nobleman must serve in the priesthood a certain time. The king himself has been a priest. Phya Caroon spent his allotted time as a novitiate in one of the monasteries, where he became so imbued with the religion that he donned the yellow robe of the mendicant, renounced his riches and begged his food from door to door. In this guise he once accepted with becoming gratitude a small coin from an Englishman who was afterward flattered to be his guest. Nor could the Briton, being challenged at Phya Charoon's table to recall where he had met his host previously, remember the circumstance until the prince repeated the pious proverb with which he, as a beggar, had acknowledged his benefactor's gift. In the intervals of his begging the princely priest made so profound a study of the Buddhist creed that he is now regarded as the highest authority on certain intricacies of dogma.

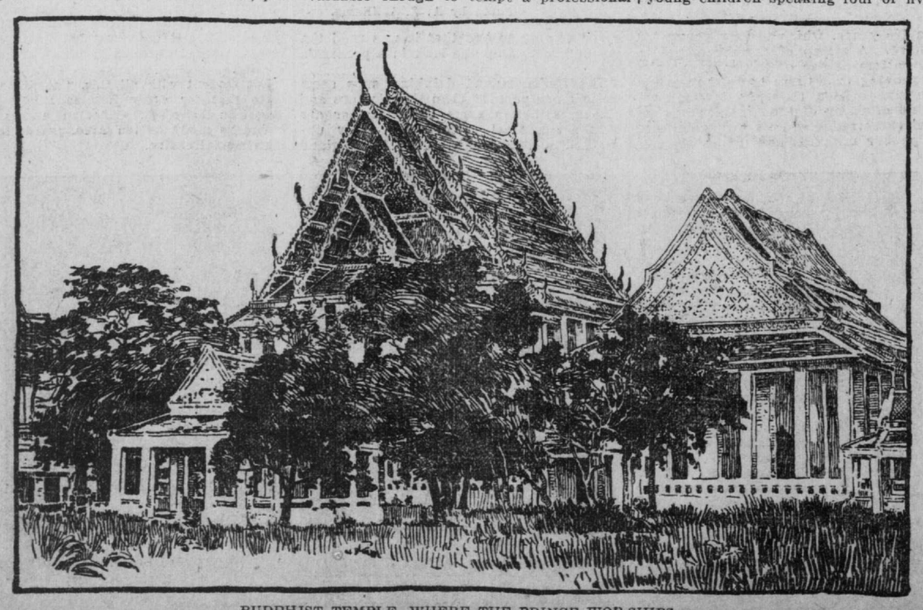
His Proficiency in English.

After completing his priesthood he studied diplomacy, and then traveled. He was already a fair linguist, Bangkok being a very cosmopolitan city, and many of the young children speaking four or five languages. In English he was particularly proficient, the present king, his cousin, having a liking for the English language, which he had imbibed from a british governess, and which he imparted to many of his associates. So the new embassador is not likely to need the services of an interpreter in Washington. Travel gave polish to a naturally fine mind, and Chulalongkorn, when he came to the throne, recognized in Phya Charioon a man of good counsel, keen judgment, slow to form an opinion, and slow to express it; quick of apprehension, and with unusual powers of concentration and assimilation. The king associated Charoon with himself intimately and together they worked out many problems of statecraft. "That Bismarck of the east," Prince Denawangse, the king's brother, has also been the ambassador's preceptor in diplomacy.

A Social Acquisition.

Washington will find Phya Charoon a distinct acquisition, not only because of his picturesque personality, but on the side of his social aptitude. He is a ready, brilliant and, at times, a witty conversationalist. In disposition he is kindly and considerate, and he has had self-control instilled by his years under the severe restrictions of his Buddhist priesthood. This has not impaired the natural gayety of his disposition. He is possessed of a healthy curiosity; not the kind which finds expression in the innocent but often embarrassing questions which flow from the Chinese minister's placid lips, but the sort which impels its owner to the liveliest interest in all strange and foreign matters. Although he is not a "ladies' man," he is profoundly courteous to women, and much given to paying compliments so orientally complicated and abstruse as to be difficult to turn off. His household in Washington will probably be purely official. It is not likely that he will bring any of his wives with him.

—Frederick Dean.



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ALMOST A MIRACLE

THE WORK OF A STROKE OF LIGHTNING.

D. C. Peak, of Milwaukee, Wis., Knocked Down While at the Telephone Receiver---A Subsequent Experience Such as Falls to the Lot of Few.

Strange happenings are constantly being recored, but it is safe to say, few people can tell of a personal experience as wonderful as that which fell to the lot of Mr. D. C. Peak of No. 814 Wells street, Milwaukee, Wis. His miraculous recovery from locomotor ataxia is attracting widespread attention throughout the country and has excited much comment from the press and among physicians.

Mr. Peak is well known in railroad circles throughout the entire state and held an important position with the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul R. R. Co. for a number of years up to the time he was taken with his terrible affliction. He is now well and expects within a short time to resume his position with the company. In view of the importance of Mr. Peak's

D. C. PEAK.

case and the talk his cure has caused, a reporter was assigned to look up the matter. He went to Mr. Peak's residence to see him if possible, and was about to ring the bell when a middle-aged man came out of the door.

"Does Mr. Peak live here?" asked the newspaper man.

"Yes, what can I do for you?" answered that man, for it was Mr. Peak himself, starting out for his morning walk.

The reporter was greatly surprised. He knew that only a short time ago the man was unable to move about at all. In response to Mr. Peak's invitation they went inside.

"Well, I rather thought a newspaper man would be around before long," said he, "for my cure has caused a lot of talk. Almost everybody seems to know of it. Yes, it is wonderful. It is more than I even hoped for. Why, it is only a little time ago that I couldn't walk and couldn't even hold a pen in my fingers. Now look at that." He picked up a pen and wrote rapidly a few lines in perfectly legible handwriting. "And I am out on the street every day with only a cane. One wouldn't think it possible."

In answer to further inquiries, Mr. Peak said: "To go back to what I suppose was the first cause of my disease. One day in 1888 during a heavy thunder storm I was talking over the telephone when lightning struck the wires and the shock knocked me down. How badly my system was affected at that time I am unable to say, but for about a year afterward whenever it rained or the weather was damp I would feel a prickly sensation all over me, just as if I was taking an electric shock from a battery. But this finally stopped and I thought no more about it.

"However, in 1896, when I was 41 years old, my fingers in both hands as well as my limbs began to get numb and there were severe pains in all my joints. I went to the doctor and he treated me for some time for rheumatism. But in spite of the medicine he gave me, my affliction grew worse. My limbs got so numb that I could stick pins into them and scarcely notice it. If I shut my eyes I would fall down. Well, not getting much benefit from the doctor, I went and consulted a specialist on nervous diseases and he pronounced my case locomotor ataxia. He began treating me for that disease, but while under his care I contracted blood-poisoning and was confined to my bed for some time. When I was able to get up I had lost the use of my limbs.

"Then I was discouraged and thought there was no help for me. But my wife saw an advertisement in the Evening Wisconsin. In it was a statement signed by Mr. Joel Shoemaker, of North Yakima, Wash., telling how he had been cured of locomotor ataxia by Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People. I was at that time unable to write, as I could not hold a pen in my fingers, so my wife clipped out the advertisement and sent it to Mr. Shoemaker to see if it was true and all right. He wrote back that this medicine had cured him and advised me to try it.

"I didn't think it would be much use, but I got some of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills right away and began taking them. You can see yourself what they have done. I expect to take up my position again with the railroad in a short time.

"Certainly, you can publish what I have told you," he added, "and you can say that if any one wishes to refer to me I will take pleasure in assuring them of the facts."

Locomotor ataxia is a disease of the spinal cord, characterized by peculiar disturbances of gait and difficulty in governing the motions of the legs. One of the commonest and early signs is a tired feeling, particularly noted in the knees and ankles. This sensation is provoked by slight exertion, and is not remedied by rest. Often a numb feeling is associated with it, and these two symptoms are always present in the early stages. Later developments are the increase in duration and extent of the numb feelings, covering at times the foot alone, then extending up the leg. As the disease is of slow growth, some cases covering a period of ten years, the increase and intensity of the symptoms is not noticed, but its progress is constant and gradually approaches a total lack of feeling in the legs, causing a wobling in the gait and the entire inability to govern the steps. As it grows the patient loses all control over the bowels and water. A further symptom is the sensation of a pressure at the waist, as the upper part of the spinal cord becomes affected.

Locomotor ataxia is stubborn in yielding to treatment and was for many years considered incurable. It has been fully demonstrated, however, that this disease can be cured by the use of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills for Pale People.

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