



***THE GOLDEN CHAPEL
OF
SIN-TOWN***

Written by

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Translated by

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THE GOLDEN CHAPEL OF SIN-TOWN COLLECTS TOGETHER 12 SHORT STORIES WHICH HAVE BEEN PRAISED BY THAI READERS AND CRITICS ALIKE AS HAVING REAL VALUE AND LASTING MERIT, SEEKING AS THEY DO TO ILLUMINATE THE WIDER PERSPECTIVES OF CONTEMPORARY THAI LITERATURE. MOST OF THE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SCENES IN THE COLLECTION REFLECT THE WRITER'S CONCERNS ABOUT HIS COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE, HIS INDIGNANT RESISTANCE TO SOCIAL EVILS AND HIS PURSUIT OF THE IDEAL. THE SCARS THAT HAVE BEEN LEFT ON THAI SOCIETY BY THE MOVEMENT FROM AN AGRICULTURAL TO AN INDUSTRIAL ECONOMY, THE NEW PURSUIT OF MATERIAL GRATIFICATION, THE GROWING DISSATISFACTION WITH SOCIAL CONDITIONS - - ALL THESE ARE PORTRAYED IN THE STORIES OF, AMONG OTHERS, A DESPERATE PEASANT, A DISILLUSIONED TEACHER, A SPIRITUALLY-CRUSHED PROSTITUTE, A GREEDY JOURNALIST, A NOSTALGIC FATHER, A PREJUDICED MOTHER-IN-LAW, A DISPLACED AND MISPLACED FARMER, A HOPELESS DAY LABOURER, AND A SINISTER POLITICIAN. THE PLIGHT OF HIS FELLOW THAIS HAS TRULY BEEN CAPTURED BY USSIRI DHARMMACHOTI'S SENSITIVITY. I AM FULLY CONFIDENT THAT THIS SELECTION REPRESENTS AN AUTHENTIC CONTEMPORARY THAI VOICE THAT SHOULD BE HEARD OUTSIDE HIS OWN CULTURE.

SUPANNEE PINMANEE
TRANSLATOR

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Introduction

The short story collection entitled *The Golden Chapel of Sin-Town* (โบสถ์สีทองของเมืองบาป) was written by Ussiri Dharmmachoti who was the “SEA Write” Award winner for the year 1981 and who has become a writer of international reputation.

The Golden Chapel of Sin-Town collects together 12 short stories which have been praised by Thai readers and critics alike as having real value and lasting merit, seeking as they do to illuminate the wider perspectives of Contemporary Thai Literature. Most of the social and cultural scenes in the collection reflect the writer’s concerns about his country and its people, his indignant resistance to social evils and his pursuit of the ideal. The scars that have been left on Thai society by the movement from an agricultural to an industrial economy, the new pursuit of material gratification, the growing dissatisfaction with social conditions - - all these are portrayed in the stories of, among others, a desperate peasant, a disillusioned teacher, a spiritually-crushed prostitute, a greedy journalist, a nostalgic father, a prejudiced mother-in-law, a displaced and misplaced farmer, a hopeless day labourer, and a sinister politician. The plight of his fellow Thais has truly been captured by Ussiri Dharmmachoti’s sensitivity. I am fully confident that this selection represents an authentic contemporary Thai voice that should be heard outside his own culture.

For my part as a translator, I hope this short story collection will give people of English speaking countries the opportunity to gain further insight into Thai culture, values and lifestyle; to give Thai writers a wider

audience and greater recognition in foreign countries; to assist in building a deeper understanding between the foreign reader and his Thai counterpart; to promote Thai studies in foreign countries, as well as to provide a place for Contemporary Thai Literature in the curriculum of other countries.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Prof. Christopher Woodman who read and commented on earlier draft of some stories in the translated version and whose guidance and suggestions have pointed me in certain new directions towards improving it.

My warmest thanks go to Mr. John Cadet, my editor. His ‘inside’ understanding of Thai scenes and Thai literature as well as his great editing skills including his patience have contributed to whatever success the work may have.

Also, to Mr. Ussiri Dharmmachoti, the writer of these short stories who allowed me to translate them, I wish to express my deepest appreciation.

Supanee Pinmanee

Translator

Contents

	Page
1. The Golden Chapel of Sin-Town	1
2. An Exile From the Fields	8
3. The Haunted Garland	15
4. A Crown-of-Thorns	21
5. Like Someone Owns the Sea	27
6. The Ex-Whore Daughter-in-Law	38
7. The World Gets Worse	44
8. The Dancer	51
9. The First Bus of the Day	60
10. War	67
11. When Will that Day Arrive?	72
12. Your Home is Your Paradise	78