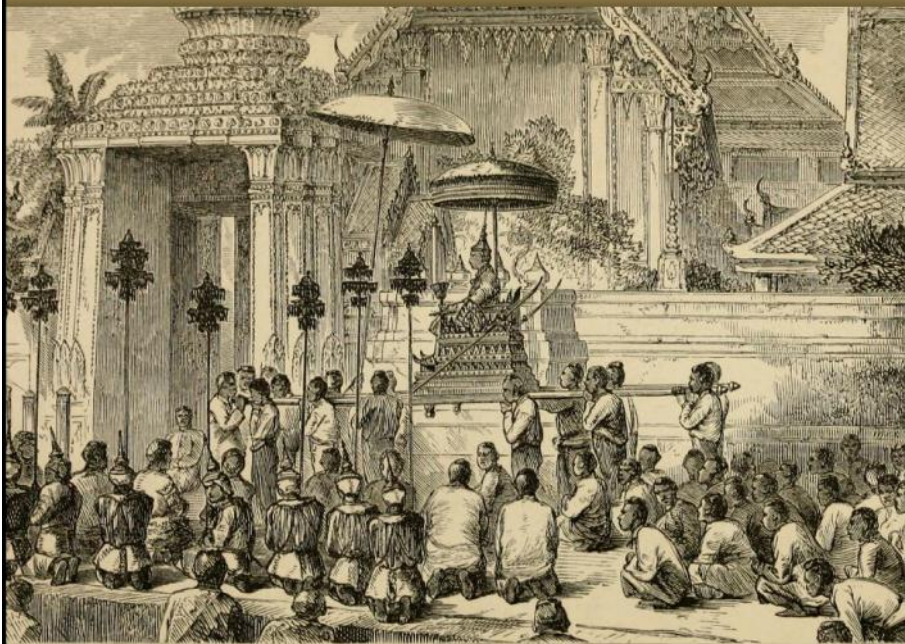


The English Governess at the Siamese Court



Anna Harriette Leonowens

LibriVox

A. H. Leonowens

The English Governess at the Siamese Court

The English Governess at the Siamese Court By Anna Harriette Leonowens (1831-1915)

In 1862, Anna Leonowens accepted an offer made by the Siamese consul in Singapore, Tan Kim Ching, to teach the wives and children of Mongkut, king of Siam. The king wished to give his 39 wives and concubines and 82 children a modern Western education on scientific secular lines, which earlier missionaries' wives had not provided. Leonowens sent her daughter Avis to school in England, and took her son Louis with her to Bangkok. She succeeded Dan Beach Bradley, an American missionary, as teacher to the Siamese court.

Leonowens served at court until 1867, a period of nearly six years, first as a teacher and later as language secretary for the king. Although her position carried great respect and even a degree of political influence, she did not find the terms and conditions of her employment to her satisfaction, and came to be regarded by the king himself as a rather difficult woman.

In 1868 Leonowens was on leave for her health in England and had been negotiating a return to the court on better terms when Mongkut fell ill and died. The king mentioned Leonowens and her son in his will, though they did not receive the legacy. The new monarch, fifteen-year-old Chulalongkorn, who succeeded his father, wrote Leonowens a warm letter of thanks for her services.

Read by Sibella Denton & Kristine Bekere; total running time: 10:34:37.

This recording is in the public domain and may be reproduced, distributed, or modified without permission. For more information or to volunteer, visit librivox.org.

Cover image taken from the edition published by *James R. Osgood and Company (1873)*. Copyright expired in US, Canada, EU, and all countries with author's life +70 yrs laws. Cover design by Janette Brown. This design is in the public domain.

The English Governess at the Siamese Court

A. H. Leonowens