THE SIAM SOCIETY.

Bangkok, May 16th, 1904.

An Oriental Society, called the *Siam Society*, has been recently founded in Bāṅgkōk, with objects similar to analogous societies in the Far East, in so far as Siām and neighbouring countries are concerned. Although founded as lately as the 26th February of this year by a general meeting of foreign residents, including also a few Siāinese, the Society has already held two ordinary general meetings at which papers have been read and discussed. The Society already counts upwards of 120 members, including most of the chief foreign residents, besides several prominent Siāinese. H.R.H. the Crown Prince of Siām has accepted the honorary office of Patron of the Society, and Prince Damrong, the Minister for the Interior, that of Vice-Patron. A Journal will be issued twice yearly. The Council elected for this year includes Mr. Beckett, British Consul, as President; Colonel Gerini, one of the Vice-Presidents; Dr. Frankfurter as Hon. Secretary.

PĀRAMITĀ IN PALI AND SANSKRIT BOOKS.

May I call attention to what seems to me the correct grammatical explanation of the word *pāramitā*, which plays so great a part in the Buddhist writings? This explanation has really been given long ago by Childers in his Pali Dictionary. In spite of that you will not require me to prove by citation that a quite different interpretation is almost exclusively current. This latter interpretation (which prevailed when Buddhist writings were translated into Tibet) regards the word as a compound of *pāram* and *itā* in the sense of 'gone to the further shore' (Tib. *pha . rol . tu . phyin*), and regards it either as originally an adjective agreeing with *prayñā*, etc., or as derived by haplogy from **pāramitatā* (see Böhtlingk and Roth's

Lexicon *sub voc.* and reff.). But it is well known that the Buddhist Sanskrit has the word *pāramī* in the same sense (see the indexes to Cowell and Neil's *Divyāvadāna* and M. Senart's *Mahāvastu*), and the same word is frequent in the Pali books. Instances from the former are—

Mahāv., i, 215, l. 4: rūpapāramigatasya.

ii, 29. 8: lakṣaṇapāramiprāpta.

Divyāv., p. 637, l. 5: mantrāṇām pāramiṃ gata.

Childers' statement (*sub voc.*) is as follows:—"Of these nouns the first is a feminine derivative of *parama*, and the second is *pāramī + tā*; they both have the same meaning, but the form *pāramitā* is generally used at the end of a compound."

This seems to me to put the matter in exactly the right light. *Pāramī* is an old noun (which may have had a by-form *paramī*) denoting 'the highest point.' From this we get such compounds as *dānapāramī*, 'the highest point of liberality.' The possession of this as a quality (perhaps *viā* a *Bahuvrīhi*) is *dānapāramitā*. Referring to this in comparison with *śīlapāramitā*, etc., we get the 'six *pāramitās*,' and the uncompounded word is started on an independent career.

I may suggest also that what Childers says under the head of *tathāgata* seems well worthy of attention. Do both this word and *sugata* originally mean merely the 'blest,' i.e. 'departed'?

F. W. THOMAS.

June, 1904.

NOTE ON THE INVENTION OF RAG-PAPER.

With reference to my paper on this subject published in the *Journal* for 1903, p. 663, it may be of interest to mention that Professor Wiesner's Report on Dr. Stein's paper-fragments, referred to in my note 2 on p. 672, has now been published in the *Sitzungsberichte der Kais. Akademie der*