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Between 14 June 2019 and 26 January

2020, the [Chester Beatty Library](#), Dublin, an ASEMUS member, presents the exhibition: "[Thai Buddhist Tales: Stories along the Path to Enlightenment](#)". The Chester Beatty Library preserves an important but little-known collection of Buddhist manuscripts from central Thailand, among the finest of its type in the world. The new exhibition "Thai Buddhist Tales" comprises **sixty manuscripts on palm leaf and paper dating to the 18th and 19th centuries**. Lavishly-illustrated folding books were used by monks as teaching aids and were recited or chanted during religious ceremonies. Often commissioned on the occasion of a relative's funeral for donation to a temple, **the production of such manuscripts was in itself an act of devotion** that earned religious merit. Presented as colourful illustrations alongside sacred texts, some of the most popular Buddhist stories found within Thai folding books are the birth tales of the Buddha and the legend of the monk Phra Malai. Traditional Thai manuscripts were made from unbound palm leaves or folded paper. Treated palm leaves were trimmed into long, thin folios. Incised with a stylus, soot paste was then applied and wiped away to leave visible lines of text. A binding cord was threaded through the leaves, which were then housed between wooden covers. Paper folding books (samut khoi) were usually made from the bark of the khoi or mulberry tree. Echoing the shape of ancient palm leaf manuscripts, rectangular sheets of paper were stitched or glued together and folded like an accordion. Covers made of thickened or doubled paper protected the manuscript from damage and were sometimes decorated with lacquer and gold. From moral tales to noble quests, these pictures from the path to enlightenment offer **an enchanting introduction to Thailand's rich Buddhist heritage and its most cherished stories**. "Thai Buddhist Tales: Stories along the Path to Enlightenment" is supported by the Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation.

Further information

For additional information about the exhibition, please visit <https://chesterbeatty.ie/exhibitions/thai-buddhist-tales/>

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