

TO SEE THE PLEASURE OF BETTER FRUIT

It was just a quarter century ago, 1966, when I put my Buddhist crosier off and found peaceful religious life in Wat Paknam, Thailand, after I had trained myself at the two Honzans (head temples) in Japan and through subsequent pilgrimages to historic Buddhist places in India, in an attempt to "return to Buddha through the founder of the Buddhist Sect".

Wat Paknam is my spiritual home, the origin where I grew up to a Buddhist with eyes open to the world. It was also the original place to receive scholarship priests from Japan. 6 years ago, the Zenkoji Scholarship Society for Priestly Study Abroad took its first step by sending here two Japanese priests for study in this place of the country.

To this important place, therefore, I have visited several times to worship it out of gratitude. The last visit there, last year, was particularly significant. In November last year, I joined the "Religion and Culture Tour in Thailand" sponsored by Toho Gakuin which is directed by Dr. Hajime Nakamura. Naturally, the tour schedule included sightseeing famous temples in Bangkok. But preferring to superficial sightseeing, I proposed visiting Wat Paknam, holding

a food service and taking lunch there. The proposition met general consent of the touring party and was put into effect, to be thanked by both parties. I believe that the deeds might have had some contribution to the understanding of and the promotion of friendship with the southern Buddhism, as well as to the apprehension of the significance of the Society dispatching priests for study abroad.

In Wat Paknam are Phra Bhanawa Kosol Thera, a Japanese assistant chief priest of Thai citizenship, and Mr. Kametaro Kotani, Chairman of the Thai-Japanese Buddhism Promotion Association, whom I am familiar with. As they would offer good opportunities to build up friendship between Japan and Thailand, I shall be happy to be of some service to the promotion of the friendship. At present, the Japanese Association in Thailand and the Japan-Thailand Friendship Association have been carrying out the project of constructing a memorial hall in Ayutthaya to commemorate the acts and achievements of Yamada Nagamasa and other Japanese who lived there in those days. I hope to be of some help to build a tomb of Yamada Nagamasa there.

There is a proverb, saying "Invoke, and flowers will

open". My earnest prayers 25 years ago are now beginning to blossom. To make more flowers open and to see the pleasure of having better fruit out of them, I am determined to exert myself harder. Your encouragement and support will be much appreciated.