

The Indians, full of the idea of metamorphoses, still believe that so majestic an animal as the elephant, by the very spirit of a god or of an emperor, the very spirit of a god possesses its palace, a vessel of gold, and harness resplendent with jewels. Several mandarins are attached to its service, and feed it with cakes and sugar cane. The king of Siam is the only personage before whom its bows, the knee, and a similar salutation are made. The late monarch, the deceased idol was accorded a magnificent funeral. A hundred Buddhist priests officiated at the ceremony. The three surviving white elephants, preceded by trumpets, and followed by an immense concourse of people, accompanied the funeral car to the bank of the Menam, where the king and his noble lords received the elephant with the men transported to the opposite bank for burial. A procession of thirty vessels figured in the curious ceremony. All the floating houses, arranged in double file on the Menam to the number of 60,000, were adorned with flags and symbolical attributes.