

SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

<http://englishkyoto-seas.org/>

View the table of contents for this issue:

<https://englishkyoto-seas.org/2018/08/vol-7-no-2-of-southeast-asian-studies/>

Subscriptions: <http://englishkyoto-seas.org/mailling-list/>

For permissions, please send an e-mail to: english-editorial@cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp

SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

Vol. 7, No. 2

August 2018

CONTENTS

Articles

- Malee SITTHIKRIENGKRAI Understanding the Importance of “Patient’s Choice”
Nathan PORATH in the Early Environmental Justice Activism of the Karen
of Klity Creek (Thailand) (159)
- Rosalina PALANCA-TAN Art Auctions and the Poorer Rich:
J. Sedfrey S. SANTIAGO The Impact of the 2015 Stock Market Sell-off
on the Emerging Philippine Art Market (183)
- PISITH Nasee Constructing the Charisma of *Khruba* (Venerable Monks)
in Contemporary Thai Society (199)

Book Reviews

- Kelly Meister BRAWN Ian Harris. *Buddhism in a Dark Age: Cambodian Monks
under Pol Pot*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2013. (237)
- Darlene Machell Patrick F. Campos. *The End of National Cinema:
de Leon ESPENA Filipino Film at the Turn of the Century*. Quezon City:
University of the Philippines Press, 2016. (240)
- Mahmood KOORIA Gregory M. Simon. *Caged in on the Outside: Moral Subjectivity,
Selfhood, and Islam in Minangkabau, Indonesia*.
Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2014. (243)
- Ibrahima Amadou DIA Sari K. Ishii, ed. *Marriage Migration in Asia: Emerging Minorities
at the Frontiers of Nation-States*. Singapore: NUS Press
in association with Kyoto University Press, 2016. (246)
- Christian T. YLAGAN Martin F. Manalansan IV and Augusto F. Espiritu, eds.
Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora.
New York: New York University Press, 2016. (250)
- Ofita PURWANI Matthew Isaac Cohen. *Inventing the Performing Arts:
Modernity and Tradition in Colonial Indonesia*.
Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2016. (254)
- Jim PLACZEK Benjamin Zawacki. *Thailand: Shifting Ground between the US
and a Rising China*. London: Zed Books, 2017. (257)
- Anh Sy Huy LE Christina Elizabeth Firpo. *The Uprooted: Race, Children, and
Imperialism in French Indochina, 1890–1980*.
Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2016. (261)
- Mohamed EFFENDY Ooi Keat Gin and Hoàng Anh Tuấn, eds.
Bin Abdul Hamid *Early Modern Southeast Asia, 1350–1800*.
Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2016. (264)

Understanding the Importance of “Patient’s Choice” in the Early Environmental Justice Activism of the Karen of Klity Creek (Thailand)

Malee Sitthikriengkrai* and Nathan Porath**

During the latter half of the twentieth century the small Karen community of Klity Creek (Thailand) suffered from industrial lead pollution. With the help of an NGO, members of the community started a civic campaign demanding environmental justice and raised public awareness about their exposure to lead pollution. The Thai Ministry of Public Health offered them medical treatment, but they rejected it. Instead, the patients/activists requested another form of treatment (chelation therapy). When this was not forthcoming, the patients began a public campaign demanding their treatment of choice and maintaining that it should be provided to all villagers contaminated with lead. Using detailed descriptions of events, this paper explores the Karen community’s civic activism demanding their treatment of choice.

Keywords: environmental illness/justice, lead pollution, indigenous activism, Karen of Thailand

During the last decades of the twentieth century the issue of environmental justice became a global one, particularly when related to environmental illness caused by industrial pollution. Much has been written over the past 30 years on environmental illness and justice concerns in Western societies (Bryant 1995; Kroll-Smith and Floyd 1997; Kroll-Smith *et al.* 2000; Schwarze 2003; Auyero and Swistun 2007; Brown 2007; Schroeder *et al.* 2008; Schlosberg and Carruthers 2010; Brown *et al.* 2012; Balme 2014) as well as indigenous native societies of the northern hemisphere (see Shkilnyk 1985; Roe 2003; Kafarowski 2006; Hoover *et al.* 2012; Tester *et al.* 2012; see also Kirsch 2001). However, rarely have there been any studies on similar issues in Southeast Asia.

Studies on industrial pollution have shown that there is a tendency for industrial sites to be placed in places of least resistance and with no deliberation with members of

* มาลี สิทธิเกรียงไกร, Center for Ethnic Studies and Development, Chiang Mai University, 239, Huay Kaew Road, Muang District, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand
Corresponding author’s email: maleetow2@hotmail.com

** Center for Ethnic Studies and Development, Chiang Mai University, 239, Huay Kaew Road, Muang District, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand

the community (Loh and Sugerman-Brozan 2002, 112; Pederson 2010, 26). Over time the local community gets locked into a structure of what R. Nixon (2011) calls “a slow violence” that not only degrades their environment but also affects their physical well-being as well as social and cultural values. This form of structural violence¹⁾ can also be perpetuated by other social factors. An ongoing dis-acknowledgement or disinterest from the greater society, as well as denials and deceptions about the effects of industry on a population, all prolong suffering as they also hinder the community’s ability to obtain justice.

In response, communities protest the activities of industry and demand justice for the harm it causes to people’s health through its degradation of the environment. Such protests and demands can be made within different political and ideological settings, but it is not necessary for communities to put the “environmental justice” label to their activism (Carruthers 2007; Elvers *et al.* 2008; Schroeder *et al.* 2008, 548). Nevertheless these protests and contestations tend to take on very similar forms around the world. According to P. Brown (2000, 367), environmental illness activism follows eight general procedures:

1. A group of people in a contaminated community first notice the effects of pollutants in their environment.
2. These residents hypothesize something out of the ordinary in relation to health effects and pollutants.
3. Community residents come to share a common interest in the issue.
4. Community residents, now a cohesive group, read about and/or ask around and talk to government officials about the contaminants and their health effects.
5. Residents organize groups to pursue their investigation.
6. Government agencies conduct official studies in response to pressure from community groups.
7. Community groups engage in litigation and confrontation.
8. Community groups seek corroboration of findings by experts.

Tribal and indigenous peoples can—and in many cases have—suffered from this form of structural violence. Indigenous (tribal) communities who suffer environmental degradation wrought by industrial pollution experience this as total community degradation, which not only affects their health and reproductive capabilities but also degrades their

1) Structural violence degrades the community’s total well-being through loss of physical health and intellectual and cultural development, and it prevents the members of a community from achieving their fullest human potential (Galtung 1969; Farmer 2009).

customs, values, and norms which are embedded in the environment and by which they survive as a community (Roe 2003; Schlosberg and Carruthers 2010; Hoover *et al.* 2012). For such communities, whose members have no control over the decisions made by government but nevertheless have to suffer the consequences (Kafarowski 2006), the importance of place as well as the broken relationship in the interdependence of individuals and community is brought to the fore (Groves 2015, 854). Illness, particularly environmental illness, can—and does—also imply socioeconomic and cultural distress that needs to be remedied.

In most cases, particularly in Southeast Asia, the ability of indigenous and marginal communities to mobilize and seek remedies by gaining access to the legal courts against environmental injustices they have experienced is dependent on engaging with civil society and establishing a relationship with NGOs (Bakker and Timmer 2014; Rosser and Curnow 2014). Such groups become dependent on the concerns of civil society, the space existing between the state and the individual or household. This space consists of voluntary associations of people from different social and ideological backgrounds coming together around a social issue of concern (Gellner 1994; Guan 2004). Such issue-focused associations involve one person or more, a sudden aggregation of individuals, or well-established organizations. For civil society to be viable, people have to have a common language of communication to discourse and some shared common goods to frame and mediate it. But in the indigenous people’s civic context, in which people might speak a different language and whose concerns might follow different norms, the civil-societal space is not necessarily between the state and the household but between the state and the community. Civil society may be considered part of the external sources of power that caused the damage and destruction in the first place. Nevertheless, it is through civil society that indigenous and marginal communities can gain access to the courts of justice as well as amass hard scientific and medical evidence for their cause.

Environmental justice activists also try to enroll the support of science (and medicine) in their demand for public recognition that they have been wronged. Gaining scientific (medical) recognition of pollution and its damage to people’s health is fraught with political difficulties (Brown 2000; Boudia and Jas 2014). Whereas medicine claims neutrality, civic activism asks for physicians to take sides, and failure to gain their confirmatory support can force the environmental health activists into a public showdown (Brown and Kirwen-Kelly 2000, 46). Civic activism can challenge scientific claims to neutrality, which can sometimes be shown to be a political action that at best maintains the status quo (*ibid.*; Kroll-Smith *et al.* 2000). Environmental justice protests can reveal how the clinical “glance” of a “knowing medical objectivity,” and the decisions based on this glance, can be unsuspectingly supportive of the structures of power that caused

damage to the activists' health (Foucault 1977). These structures of power and the medical claim to neutrality can prove to be an obstruction to people seeking justice, who need scientific and medical evidence to prove their claims.

One important issue in health studies and practice during the latter half of the twentieth century has been the recognition of a need for a patient-centered and shared decision-making treatment as well as the patient's right to choose the type of treatment they require. These issues have been translated into policy and health acts in many countries (Haynes *et al.* 2002; Padgett 2003; Mol 2008; Coulter 2010). The drafting of the national health act in 2003 and its subsequent implementation in 2007 were based in part on advances in this line of clinical development (Komatra 2008). The right of "patient's choice" to access appropriate specialists and treatment also has its bearings on environmental justice claims and the legal success of seekers of justice (Swoboda 2008, 473). As biomedicine is constituted of myriad specialties within its scientific frame, different medical specialists can provide differing diagnoses and treatments that prove to be more or less suitable to the needs of environmental-justice seeking patients. For patients, seeking a particular medical specialist or choosing a particular treatment is more than simply gaining a cure. It is about gaining a diagnostic recognition of the cause of the illness. And this diagnosis can be used as medically recognized evidence that an injustice has taken place. In such a situation, the patient's choice of treatment becomes something more than a health concern; it is an evidential concern over the type of justice sought.

From the turn of the millennium until 2016 a group of Karen villagers from Klity Creek (Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand) were caught up in an environmental justice protest against a lead-producing company that operated north of their village during the late twentieth century. They were then led into a public contestation with the Thai Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) over the medical interpretation of their illnesses and deaths and the treatment given to them. From 2003 they were embroiled in court litigation against the lead-producing company and subsequently against the Ministry of Pollution Control (MPC). In each of the litigations the Thai courts of justice ruled in favor of the villagers so that not only were the villagers compensated for the toxic contamination of their life-sustaining stream and its effects on their health, but it was also later ruled that their stream should be cleaned up by the MPC. But the road to justice has been a difficult one for the villagers, especially during the initial years when they had to gain confirmation that their illnesses were related to their lead-polluted bodies.

In this paper we would like to present and examine the initial years of protest when the Karen of Klity Creek first demanded and then protested their right to choose and receive their preferred treatment from the MOPH. The treatment they publicly demanded was one that recognized the connection of their illnesses with their lead-

contaminated blood. In so doing they were demanding that the MOPH acknowledged the illnesses and deaths in the community as being related to their environment’s pollution by the lead-mining activities in the area. It was at this point that each individual’s role as a patient converged with their participatory role as civic activists demanding environmental justice.

The Karen Community of Klity Creek

In the past, Tai-speaking peoples (of whom the Thai are one group) viewed the Karen as a *kha* or serf people (Buergin 2003). Upland communities who attached themselves to a local lord were given permission to live in adjacent mountainous areas in return for certain tributary and ritual services (Hinton 1983). In the modern Thai imagination, the Kariang (Karen) are ideologically perceived to be a somewhat quaint community within the Thai geo-body of the nation (Thongchai 2000; Pinkaew 2003). Since the 1960s, Thai governments have taken a paternalistic approach to them and have seen it as the state’s responsibility to help in their development and integrate them into the nation (Chayan 2005). In relation to Thai communities, the development of the Karen communities is uneven. Whereas elders may not be able to speak the national language, younger people are more Thai in their outlook due to state education and migration to towns for work as well as exposure to the Thai public media.

The Karen community of Klity Creek was established in 1897 in part of an area that would in the 1960s be designated as the Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary and later be awarded the title of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There are two Karen villages in Klity Creek, the upstream settlement and the downstream settlement. The upstream settlement, situated 10 kilometers north of the mine, was unaffected by the mine’s activities; the affected community was the downstream settlement. By the turn of the millennium there were 269 residents and 53 households in the lower part of Klity Creek. The village is 200 kilometers northwest of Bangkok.

Until the 1960s the Karen households of Klity Creek were relatively self-sufficient. Their economies were based on dry (rotational) rice and cassava farming. They used the forest and its waterways for food as well as basic necessities of life. From the 1970s Karen villagers became less mobile as their original economy started to change. During the mid-1970s some villagers started building their houses with plain wood instead of bamboo, and this change reflected the effects of state development on them. The new houses were more permanent and hindered the villagers’ mobility, which was necessary for their rotational cultivation. Then they began cultivating rice for their own consump-

tion as well as chilies, potatoes, pumpkins, and beans. The villagers sometimes hunted animals from the forest for food and gathered fish from the stream. They also reared buffalo. Other food commodities such as salt, shrimp paste, and fish were either bought in the village market or obtained through barter with other villagers or miners.

At the beginning of the millennium there was government pressure for households to restrict their rotational farming practices. During this period a concerned merchant introduced corn farming to the villagers. A few families took up the offer and started to grow corn as a cash crop even though they had no prior experience. The turn to cash-crop farming gave them an income that could somewhat compensate for the loss of riverine produce that was now contaminated with lead.

Klity Creek: An Area Rich in Lead Minerals

The area where this Karen group live is rich in lead and other minerals; this was already known in the nineteenth century. Older Karen speak of the presence of gold, silver, and lead ore in the Kala mountain range, which was mined in the more distant past.

It is conceivable that a reason why the ancestors of these Karen families were originally given permission to settle in this location was to help with the extraction of minerals from the hills. It is recorded that during the earlier half of the twentieth century the Karen of the area did send lead minerals as tribute to the royal central government (Fine Arts Department 1972). According to Karen lore, the minerals are owned by a spirit that only good men can see. Legend has it that Mong Ploy took a trip to the Kala mountain range and succeeded in finding those minerals. He offered them to a wealthy Chinese merchant in exchange for 30 buckets of banknotes. The price was too high for the merchant, so Mong Ploy left the minerals in the hills. After Mong Ploy died, local Karen sought the minerals but never found them. The Karen explained that the spirit owner protected the minerals for the good of the common people.

Elderly Karen are familiar with the use of lead ore as a natural item in their environment. They call it “raw betel nut” (*rae sisa*), as the clod of earth mixed with it was usually the size of this nut. Sometimes during the rainy season villagers would collect these “raw betel nuts” that they found in the streams, smelt the lead from the soil, and mix it with bat droppings to make ammunition for their hunting guns. They also used the lead as floats for fishing lines. They occasionally also collected large pieces of lead ore and sold them to Karen from Burma. One villager even made money selling lead to a monk for molding a Buddha image. Thus, not only did the Karen here develop legends relating to their lead-rich environment, but the metal might have had a role in their community’s

economy in earlier days.

In 1912 a government survey was conducted to search for mineral sources in the area. Geological studies reported that Kanchanaburi Province held the most lucrative lead resources in the kingdom. The mineral sources found in the area were either carbonated or sulfite lead ore, and it was estimated that mining here could produce this metal for at least 100 years. It was reported that there were two potential lead-resource areas: Song Thor/Bor Yai/Bor Noi and Bor Ngam/Ongkha. Although zinc could also be found in the same strata deposit, the industrial focus was mainly on lead production. Kanchanaburi Province thus became one of the main provinces for lead production in Thailand.

Shortly after the survey a German explorer founded Bor Yai Mining (Nongpai), but production was put on hold during World War I and resumed only in the 1940s. In 1949 the United Mineral Company of the United States took over the Bor Yai mine and produced minerals at 100 tons per month. The company contracted P . . . K . . . of Pring & Brothers Company Limited to manage the mine for three years. P . . . K . . . surveyed for new mineral sources and established other mines in the area: the Song Thor, Bor Ngam, Bor Noi, and Nan Yang mines. Local Karen were employed as scouts to help inspect other areas with black lead deposits. On finding another large mineral source, P . . . K . . . decided to sublease the concession from the mining organization in April 1951. The company changed its name to Pol & Son Company Limited and was placed under the management of P . . . K . . .’s younger brother.

From 1952 to 1955, the mining operation did not use machinery but employed 100 miners who extracted the lead with only hammers, levers, hoes, and clamshell-shaped baskets. This method could produce lead mineral at 1,000–2,000 tons per year. As world prices for lead fell during the 1950s, the company had to find new and more cost-effective ways of production. A study by the Academic Division of the Mining Department of Thailand determined that the flotation method of production was the most cost-efficient method to produce purified lead (San 1961, 16–23). The company that entered the area of Klity Creek built the first modern floating lead mine in Thailand. This mine was located between the two Karen settlements and utilized the stream for cost-effective production.

The owners of the mine, the K . . . family, were publicly well known. The last director was the subdistrict headman as well as a representative of the Democrat Party in the province. He was also a member of numerous committees of Thailand’s main lead-mining companies. Even local Karen looked up to the head owner, respectfully calling him *kamnan* (headman) or *taokae* (big boss).

The mine brought development to the area, such as a grocery store, medical and health facilities, and improved transport and communication services to and from the

region. Villagers sold forest products to the miners, although they did not work for the mine because it did not fit in with the time management of their own economy. The mining company donated large sums of money to the village health service and the temple in the upstream Karen settlement. It also invited Karen villagers to its New Year parties and other social gatherings. Throughout the period the company maintained good relations with the upstream community, and the latter were not disturbed by its activities. At the same time as the mining company was carrying out its benevolent and meritorious deeds, the floating mine was harming the lives of downstream Karen by mismanaging the discharge of toxic waste into the stream during the rainy season and through its negligence gave the community decades of misery and suffering.

Making Environmental Pollution a Public Issue

Villagers claim that it was in the mid-1970s that they first noticed the bad smell emanating from a stream that now was muddier and murkier in color. Fish and other riverine creatures were also frequently seen floating dead on the water's surface. By the mid-1990s buffalo and ducks were showing strange symptoms and dying.

Villagers from the downstream village also began complaining of health symptoms that they claimed they had never experienced before. Itchy rashes, headaches, fever, dizziness, diarrhea, conjunctivitis, and pain in the limbs were now common.²⁾ A number of women went blind, and children began suffering from stomachache, asthma, and upper respiratory problems. Some children were born with health complications or physical deformities. There were also deaths preceded by physical symptoms that elders claimed they had never seen before. People became depressed and apathetic. Women would sometimes break down and cry. Some individuals claimed to suffer from insomnia and others from memory loss. The Karen had to get the word out, but until the mid-1990s nobody was interested.

In 1995 the director of the Karen Studies and Development Centre, an NGO concerned with Thai-Karen affairs and culture, visited the village of Klity Creek and met

2) Mild symptoms of lead pollution are fatigue, sleeplessness and pallor, loss of appetite, irritability, and malaise. Other symptoms include weakness, abdominal pain, constipation, clumsiness and extreme dizziness, paralysis of limbs, convulsions, and swelling of the brain (lead encephalopathy) (Warren 2000, 14). Prolonged exposure to lead poisoning can lead to significant neurological damage, convulsions, coma, and death (Anthamten and Hazen 2011, 65). Lead exposure in children is associated with reduced verbal competence, lowered attention span, and lowered IQ (Cohen and Amon 2012, 75). High-level childhood lead poisoning can lead to encephalopathy and even death (Berney 2000, 249).

villagers suffering from industrial pollution. He took up their environmental and medical complaints that were falling on deaf ears and raised public awareness about their condition. He started a letter campaign for them, and through the media the NGO disseminated their predicament to intellectuals, students, and other environmental activists. The NGO gave the villagers a Thai public voice to cross over social boundaries and to express their grievances and seek environmental justice. The complaints of the Karen of Klity Creek were suddenly brought into the public spotlight as an example of innocent victims of industrial environmental degradation.

The Karen of Klity Creek came before the public eye during a period when Thailand was developing a more democratically aware and civically engaged society. Many Thais from educated middle-class backgrounds as well as liberals active in Thailand's democracy movement were civically engaging upland-dwelling peoples and Karen groups during this period (Gillooly 2004, 123). Marginal groups were now able to express their grievances through concerned and active NGOs who were finding common causes with them (Forsyth 1999; 2004; Buergin 2003; Gillooly 2004; Jonsson 2005, 129). The new political conditions from the 1990s onward allowed many Thais to be guided by a multi-social model of Thai society and not the conventional monolithic ethno-nation that characterized the national ideology for much of the middle part of the twentieth century. The vibrant activism in Thailand generated a concerned civil society that was extending environmental and health citizenry to non-Thai-speaking upland-dwelling communities within the kingdom. Karen communities particularly benefited from what A. Walker (2001) calls "the Karen consensus." This consensus portrayed the Karen uplanders as an idyllic community and an "environmentally friendly tribe." The "consensus" originally developed by Karen elders themselves has served the Karen in gaining the support of environmental activists against more powerful forces (Yos 2004).

During the 1990s Thailand entered into the community of environmentally concerned nations by signing the Environmental Protection Act of 1992 and incorporating environmental issues in its five-year development plans. Another debate at the time was a civic call for reforms in public health to create a health system that focused on the people's need and their participation in decision making (Komatra 2008). There was a growing demand for greater dialogue and deliberation between health agencies and the public concerning health care and treatment. Health agencies were encouraged to engage in dialogue and consultation with the public so that a consensus could be reached on what was good for the individual as well as for collective health (*ibid.*, 18). This call culminated in the drafting of the national health act in 2003 and its implementation in 2007.

Thailand also entered into another frame of global environmental health concerns that gained force in the United States from the 1960s. At the end of the twentieth century

environmental health activists in the United States challenged the industry's conception of lead as being a "useful metal" and now redefined it as the "mother of all industrial pollution" (Auyero and Swistun 2007, 134). In the United States lead pollution was characterized as a national epidemic and its symptoms "a disease of our creation" (Berney 2000, 240; Warren 2000, 7; Widener 2000, 259). Civic rights activists took it up as a symbol of all that was wrong in US society. Its prevalence came to symbolize the callousness of a health-care system that was ridden with discriminatory class and race relations and that was seen as providing poor community services to lower-income and radicalized neighborhoods. The fight to end lead poisoning became part of a complete reshaping of the definitions of acceptable risk and wellness in society and of how society should view its duties to the poor (Warren 2000, 29). By the late 1980s and early 1990s these environmental health developments reached Thailand, where the effect of lead and other substances on the environment and on human health became an issue of concern for environmentalists and human rights activists following a number of sudden deaths that were allegedly linked to pollutants in factories (Forsyth 1999; 2004). Industrial substance contamination, particularly lead contamination, became a symbol of authoritative power relations and decision making that did not take local people into account. In this vibrant and highly engaging civic model the Klity Creek problem was not just a Karen problem but was redefined as a problem that exemplified general failings within the greater Thai society.

Rejecting the Treatment Offered and Exercising Patient's Choice of Treatment within the Environmental Justice Protest Frame

After public awareness was raised about the pollution at Klity Creek, the area was examined for lead contaminants. Official reports confirmed that the lead level was high around the mine and the stream just south of it. The mine was officially closed down in 1998. Two boulders were placed in the stream to form a dam to prevent the water from bringing more lead contaminants downstream. It was assumed that the stream would recover over time, although no consideration was given to how this period of natural remediation would prolong the villagers' suffering.

In 1999 a health team was sent out to the village to take the first blood samples (Krungthep Turakit, February 10, 1999). The results of the blood tests found that all of the children below the age of six had a blood lead level (BLL) higher than 10 µg/dl (micrograms of lead in a tenth of a liter of blood), and the adults' BLL was between 30 and 50 µg/dl. In March 2000 a second round of blood tests was conducted, and this showed

slightly higher results. The intervention threshold was put at 25 µg/dl for children and 50–60 µg/dl for adults, which would have been cause for alarm and would have invited immediate intervention in the United States, where the lead threshold level around the same time was 10 µg/dl.³⁾ The provincial health service concluded that the symptoms that villagers were suffering from were caused by general diseases and had nothing to do with lead pollution (Matichon, July 6, 1999). The treatment the MOPH was willing to provide at this stage was free blood surveillance and health advice. A health team would be sent annually to the village to test villagers’ blood and advise on how residents could adjust their behavior in terms of water consumption and hygiene.

The MOPH did not consider that the villagers’ ailments were correlated with lead contamination. Neither did it consider that many villagers were suffering from long-term exposure. Accordingly, it provided them with treatment that would be given to people suffering from milder symptoms on an outpatient basis (Warren 2000, 14). The logic behind this intervention was that as the mine was now closed and the villagers had other means of obtaining water, the lead levels in their blood would naturally go down with time.

The supportive NGO (and the villagers) was concerned that this treatment did not take into consideration the various properties of lead as a contaminant in relation to the villagers’ experience. Lead is an accumulative poison and through prolonged exposure can remain in hard tissue such as bone (Widener 2000, 266). This accumulated lead can leach back into the blood at any time and destroy the white blood-cell life expectancy (Warren 2000, 16). The NGO was concerned that the villagers had been exposed to lead for 20 years and many children had been born in the community during this period. It claimed that the MOPH should consider them to be chronic sufferers and therefore chelation therapy was necessary.

The MOPH was reluctant to provide chelating drugs. These drugs, which attract heavy metals and minerals in the blood and excrete them through the urine, are usually administered when the patient has a very high BLL. The threshold level for chelation therapy intervention varies in different countries and has also been a point of contention between the lead-mining industry and environmental health activists. In addition, the drug must be administered under careful supervision because it can cause a temporary rise in BLL before its reduction and the patient can suffer from side effects. This was one of the main reasons the MOPH was reluctant to administer the drug to villagers.

The villagers, who were expecting a cure, noticed that they were still only receiving

3) Since then it has been further reduced in the United States to 5 µg/dl. Different countries vary on this.

analgesic drugs for their ailments. Frustrated, most of those who participated in the first blood test began to lose interest and stopped cooperating with health personnel after they learned that the medical team was not going to dispense the desired medical treatment. The number of villagers presenting themselves to the medical team gradually dwindled from 119 in the first test to less than 50 in later tests. There were also cultural issues involved. The health team did not take into consideration that drawing blood could have certain symbolic overtones for a forest-based “tribal” minority community.

The villagers and the NGO demanded that the Public Health Department provide pharmacological intervention to all the villagers and particularly to the children. The NGO pointed out that the villagers had been exposed for over 20 years and many individuals had been born into the community during this period. Under public pressure the Ministry of Health decided to send a medical team to visit the downstream Klity village on October 6, 2000 to examine the children’s development and nutritional status. The team then designated a group of 41 children below the age of six as being high-risk sufferers and arranged for them to receive treatment at the provincial hospital. In so doing, the MOPH excluded the rest of the village from direct intervention on the grounds that they were not high-risk sufferers.

At first only five children were actually admitted. Later another 15 were admitted. Most were not given chelation therapy but only had their blood levels checked. Part of the funding for the children’s trip was provided by the lead company, which wanted to present a concerned and apologetic image before the public.

In response, the supportive NGO selected eight individuals to visit the Occupational Medicine and Environment Institute of R . . . Hospital in Bangkok, which was the only one of its kind dealing with environmental pollution. Those selected were both adults and children who had high blood lead levels but who were not designated as high-risk sufferers by the medical team.

In Bangkok the eight patients were placed under the care of a US-educated doctor (Forsyth 2004). Using a no-threshold policy, one that conformed to the international health policy of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, this doctor revealed that the eight patients had a high BLL and six of them were suffering from chronic lead pollution. The doctor placed the eight under careful chelation therapy for five days. A few months after their return to the village, the eight claimed to feel better and cured of their ailments. The treatment confirmed the villagers’ own understanding of their exposure experience. The villagers wanted to be cleansed of the poison that was afflicting them and affecting their health and daily existence. At this point, chelating drugs for all villagers became the treatment of choice.

Entering the Environmental Justice Frame

In September 2000, just prior to the medical team’s visit in which they selected a group of children as high risk, the supporting NGO brought a number of villagers to a conference held by another NGO calling itself the Network for Solving the Health and Environmental Problems Caused by Lead Poisoning in the Upper Mekong River. The seminar introduced the Karen villagers to the “environmental justice frame” (Čapek 1993). As Stella Čapek (*ibid.*, 7) stresses, the environmental justice frame is based on the concept of rights and is related to the social justice and civil rights movement. It provides a master frame that validates the struggle for rights of various disenfranchised groups. In this frame of action antitoxin activists who see themselves as having been disenfranchised can claim full rights from the wider community, a respectful public treatment, legal protection, and compensation.

The Karen village representatives who participated in the conference left the seminar with a six-point proposal to the government:

1. The government should urgently treat all of the villagers who were showing abnormal symptoms.
2. The government should reduce the blood lead levels of all the villagers and not just a risk group.
3. The treatment should encompass the whole community and not just individuals.
4. Medical research should be conducted on the villagers’ illnesses.
5. The government should put up billboards warning the villagers about contamination.
6. The government should set up a fund for treatment that could employ medical specialists to provide the villagers with appropriate medical treatment.

In this environmental justice frame the villagers’ diverse symptoms were redefined in terms of “environmental illnesses” caused by industry. The villagers demanded total pharmacological intervention as their right to health. The media disseminated the proposal to the wider society, and the Karen of Klity Creek were soon supported by members of an empathetic Thai public.

After the eight villagers who had been treated in Bangkok returned to the village and claimed to have recovered, the supporting NGO started a letter campaign demanding chelation therapy. They wrote to the MOPH stating that the eight villagers who had visited Bangkok were there because they had been diagnosed as high risk and had been given chelation therapy. The letters stressed that the patients had recovered from their illnesses following the treatment they had received. The letters requested the same

treatment for all the villagers poisoned by lead.

The MOPH continued ignoring the requests. The initial response from the then minister of public health was that there was no budget to support chelating agents for all the villagers and they would have to wait for them to be imported. In turn, the representative of the NGO, who had arranged for the eight villagers to make the trip to the hospital in Bangkok, mockingly challenged the MOPH by suggesting that it should borrow the medicine from the Occupational Medicine and Environment Institute in Bangkok, the very institute that had been established to deal with such health matters (*The Nation*, March 16, 2001).

After four villagers died between December 2000 and March 2001, the MOPH was again placed under public pressure. NGOs with the help of the media were now adopting the moral tactic common in environmental justice protests of suggesting murder by pollution (Freudenberg and Golub 1987, 389). The deaths were being connected to lead poisoning caused by industrial environmental degradation, and the question was publicly raised as to why the MOPH was not doing anything to help the villagers (*Bangkok Post*, December 19, 2000). This compelled the MOPH to respond by organizing a seminar in April. Medical experts reviewed the cause of death of the four individuals and concluded that they had died due to naturally occurring diseases and not due to lead exposure.

The supporting NGO and the villagers rejected the seminar's announcements. In response, they started writing letters addressed to the Thai public about their predicament. The villagers also placed a placard in front of their village denouncing the medical doctors as allegedly having shares in the lead company and therefore blocking appropriate treatment. The protest and demand for the treatment and drug of choice along with the media attention put pressure on the MOPH, which shortly afterward dispensed the drug D-Penicillamine to the villagers via the director of the supporting NGO, but without medical supervision. In so doing, it retained its position that the illnesses the villagers were experiencing were not related to their contaminated bodies. The number of pills given was limited, and there were insufficient courses of medication for all the families. The villagers now had the drug they wanted, but there was no one to supervise their administration. The provincial health service was also forced to reveal the results of the test. It became apparent that there were some irregularities on the result sheets, which for the villagers only confirmed that the health agencies did not take their health predicament seriously.

Taking the Case to Court

The villagers’ participation in the lead pollution seminar also redirected their protest in other ways. During the seminar one notable speaker proposed that the villagers and the Law Society of Thailand should file a legal suit against Lead Concentrates (Thailand). His suggestion was promptly taken up, and between the years 2003 and 2016 the villagers filed lawsuits against the lead company and later against the Ministry of Pollution Control. In every lawsuit the judges ruled in the villagers’ favor.

At first, the plaintiffs who took up legal action in 2003 were eight villagers. The villagers were prosecuting Lead Concentrates as the first defendant and K . . . K . . . as the second defendant for transgressing the terms of the Environmental Protection Act of 1992. The claim sought compensation for the eight villagers and for the company to clean up the polluted stream in the downstream Klity village. Medical evidence was provided to prove that the villagers were chronic sufferers from lead pollution. The success of the first group of villagers gave courage to the rest of the village, and a second group of 151 villagers filed a civil suit against Lead Concentrates for violating the Environmental Protection Act of 1992.

The villagers, however, were dismayed to lose their claim demanding that the lead company clean the stream. For the villagers, the community’s well-being was dependent on the remediation of the environment, which would allow their cultural existence to regain a sense of normalcy. The villagers’ primary aim, then, in seeking justice was the restoration of the creek, which in turn would remedy their relationship with their environment.

In 2005, after the first group had won their court case against the mining company, 22 villagers decided to sue the Ministry of Pollution Control for negligence. In late 2008 the judge ruled against the MPC in the villagers’ favor. The MPC was accused of negligence in failing to protect the right of the villagers to live in a healthy environment (*The Nation*, May 7 2009). This was the first time that a government agency was considered liable under the 1992 Environmental Protection Act (*The Nation*, December 2007). The court also ordered the MPC to rehabilitate the environment and write up a rehabilitation plan and send it in to the judiciary board before a certain date.

The Problem with the MOPH’s Treatment

When the villagers requested that they receive the treatment that had been given to the eight recovered villagers in Bangkok, they were exercising the right of a patient to choose

the treatment they wanted. The Karen villagers' request for chelating drugs was based not just on anxiety over their health but the need for recognition that their health was severely damaged by the lead mine. Further, the damage not only affected their health but their way of life as well. Medical doctors and specialists approached the villagers' lead poisoning and illnesses through epidemiological statistics. This approach limited their understanding of the villagers' health predicament to numbers, and their bodies were treated mechanically. According to A. Barry and C. Yail (2002, 42), medical surveillance places the weight of uncertainty on the patient, and it is expected that each patient will regulate their own behavior to counter the illness. The MOPH health team's medical analyses showed that the villagers had a high BLL, but the health team's conclusion was that they were not high-risk casualties. Because the MOPH put the threshold level for chelation intervention rather high and the villagers' blood lead level had not reached the threshold, the health agencies could justify their treatment and claim that chelation therapy was unnecessary. Instead, they could leave it to the villagers to modify their behavior in order to reduce the lead levels in their blood. But, and as alluded to in the introduction, by denying a certain treatment because of an assumption that the body has a higher threshold level of tolerance is to unintentionally support the claims of the lead industry (Millstone 1997; Wing 2000; Ziem and Castleman 2000). It is to suggest that although the victims' bodies were polluted with lead, the human body has a high tolerance rate for this substance and therefore the illnesses and deaths the victims experienced were not connected to pollution.

The behavioral advice that medical personnel give to patients can also work against the evidence needed for justice. For example, the health team gave the villagers behavioral health advice that could have been construed as suggesting another source for their contamination and which would have further shifted the blame away from the mine and on to them. The health team gave the villagers free flip-flops and advised them to wear shoes and limit their movements in the area. From the villagers' point of view, this advice implied that the high lead level in their blood was due to their living in a naturally lead-rich environment and was not necessarily caused by the activities of the mine. The Karen villagers knew that the soil had not contaminated them, as other villagers in the area were unaffected by the natural preponderance of lead in the region. In the initial court hearing, which started in August 2005, the defendants argued along the lines that the villagers' bodies were polluted due to their living in a lead-rich environment rather than toxic lead in the stream. The defendants also tried to explain away the sudden rise in the stream's lead levels as being caused by the impact of heavy rain, which broke the dike of the tailing pond and allowed waste to leach into the stream. For the villagers, what was important was to show that they did have high lead levels and that the mine

rather than the lead-rich environment was the cause. During the hearing the plaintiffs were able to successfully counter both of the defendant's claims with environmental and medical evidence.

The Social Limitations of When the Patient's and Activist's Roles Converge

For environmental-illness activists who suffer from environmental pollution, the roles of activist and patient converge. First, this means that patients who become activists over the cause of their illness form into a protesting group and present themselves as a "group-patient." Hence, the Karen villagers demanded that all those suffering from lead pollution should be given the same treatment. They presented themselves as a group patient and asked that all the group members be treated equally. The notion of a group patient is alien to biomedicine. Second, the group's choice of treatment was determined by social activism. In the Karen case, the supporting NGOs and the media came to have an important say in the villagers' illnesses, which they connected to lead poisoning without much medical evidence. In their "rhetoric of exposure," the villagers' symptoms and deaths were publicly transformed into evidential signs that a wrong had been done. These signs were rhetorically used to contest the medical establishment's approach to their illness. These signs also served as evidence in legal court proceedings. The contestation led the MOPH to go on the defensive and hold a seminar with the aim of scientifically resolving the issue once and for all. The victims' bodies thus became a contested site within the public domain (Das 1996, 274). Third, the convergence of the roles of patient and activist can cause patients to develop an awkward relationship with the doctor. There is a correlation between health and identity through public labeling. Whereas an illness can redefine the person who is afflicted with it, an awkward relationship with the doctor can also provide that person with an identity in the medical interaction. The Karen community of Klity Creek-cum-activists came to be sensationally labeled "the lead-contaminated community," and this also drew the general public to empathize with them. On the other hand, the MOPH and its representatives viewed the ailing patients through the lens of civic activism. For the medics, the villagers' political and civic action was defined as an intrusion into their professional "ownership" (to take a term from Brown [2000, 369]) of the problem. In turn, the Karen community was also labeled by the establishment as being the "NGO community" that followed the advice of non-specialists rather than the professional advice given to them by the government health agencies. Government agencies simply saw the villagers' demands and protests as being generated by the supportive NGO rather than the Karen themselves. This made them a community

of problematic patients who did not want to accept the treatment offered, and their choice of a cure could be dismissed as being irrelevant and originating in non-medical concerns.

The conflation of “patient” and “activist” also enforces an ethos of moral and social pressure on individuals from the afflicted community to stand in support of each other in the public domain. If people from a contaminated community feel politically compelled to demand a specific type of treatment, group activism can delimit the freedom of any individual’s ability to personally choose or accept a treatment that would suit them during the protest period. For example, a couple of years into the protest the health team felt frustrated in maintaining the treatment as the patients/villagers stopped giving their blood for testing. The public demand for chelating drugs to be dispensed to all, rightly or wrongly, prevented some patients/villagers from giving the MOPH treatment a chance. The ongoing demands and public commotion generated by the NGO and media also raised the villagers’ sense of anxiety and perpetuated an impending feeling of doom. Under these conditions it was impossible for the patients/villagers, within their given circumstances, to see the logic behind the therapeutic nature of the treatment the MOPH dispensed, and neither were they able to fully relate to the problems that sometimes accompany the drug treatment they did choose. But what was important for the villagers as civic activists during the initial years of their campaign was to gain official recognition that they were chronic sufferers from lead pollution caused by the lead mine operations in the area and that their illnesses and deaths were symptoms of this. For this they needed official confirmation from the MOPH. Gaining this confirmation was important for the justice they sought. Hence, challenging the treatment the MOPH gave them was seen as necessary.

Conclusion

The Karen of Klity Creek could not have carried out their protest and sought justice without the help of the supporting NGOs. Their adversaries were powerful Thai giants, and they were rural (semi-tribal) non-Thai marginal uplanders. Their sudden protest took the lead company, the medical establishment, and the MPC by surprise. The supportive NGOs made them aware that there was a concerned civil society as well as a legal system that was there to serve them in Thailand and that it was their right to demand justice. The image of the tribal Karen uplanders who were culturally one with the environment but who had been polluted by industry also worked in their favor. The suffering Karen of Klity Creek became a symbol of an environmentally suffering community of *brachachon Thai* (Thai public) whose misery was caused by earlier authoritarian decision

making and the callous management of powerful industry.

The villagers also tried to make the medical establishment come to their aid. It was not just that the villagers found it important to obtain treatment for their lead contamination. While the MOPH did provide villagers with free treatment, the treatment did not confirm that their ailments were connected to their exposure experience. The treatment also seemed to support the mine’s interests. For the villagers, the MOPH’s approach simply trivialized their exposure, and the health advice also seemed to put part of the blame on their shoulders. For this reason they needed a treatment and a cure, one that could not only cleanse their bodies immediately but one that diagnostically confirmed the ultimate source of their illness and deaths. They sought a treatment that confirmed they were victims of industrial pollution and one that could not in any way exonerate the mine from the harm it had caused. The treatment that eight of their members received at the Occupational Medicine and Environment Institute in Bangkok, the very institute that was set up to specialize in the treatment of such medical cases, became the villagers’ treatment of choice. It not only seemed to clean the body of lead—the patients thus treated allegedly recovered from their illnesses—but it confirmed that the villagers had been severely and unjustly poisoned by lead and there could be only one culprit for the source of this contamination. Despite much public contestation and debate, the MOPH did not provide the remaining villagers with the same treatment. What it did do was publicly dispense the drugs of choice to them without supervision through the director of the supporting NGO. It is interesting that once the MOPH dispensed the chelating drugs to the villagers, and even though the drugs were insufficient to go round and were given without any supervision, the villagers stopped this part of their protest and redirected their activism to the legal arena. The villagers saw this act as a symbolic gesture that the state and its health agencies were granting some confirmatory support. The contestation over the treatment the MOPH delivered was more than an issue over remedies and therefore more than a health issue. It was an issue of a moral and legal nature and one that the medical establishment found difficult to relate to. Thus, the villagers’ choice of treatment emerged as, and was determined by, their civic activism.

It is generally recognized today in Thailand that the Karen villagers of downstream Klity were neglected for years before proper medical treatment and justice were made available to them (Human Rights Watch 2014). Theirs was a tragic story for which, in the end and with much effort, they were able to receive a measure of justice from the Thai judicial system; and legally sanctioned total remediation of their stream should now be taking place.

References

- Anthamttten, Peter; and Hazen, Helen. 2011. *An Introduction to the Geography of Health*. London: Routledge.
- Auyero, Javier; and Swistun, Debora. 2007. Confused Because Exposed: Towards an Ethnography of Environmental Suffering. *Ethnography* 8(2): 123–144.
- Bakker, Laurens; and Timmer, Jaap. 2014. Justice in Indonesia: The Social Life of a Momentous Concept. *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 15(4): 293–301.
- Balme, Richard. 2014. Mobilising for Environmental Justice in China. *Asia Pacific Journal of Public Administration* 36(3): 173–184.
- Barry, Anne-Marie; and Yail, Chris. 2002. *Understanding the Sociology of Health: An Introduction*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Berney, B. 2000. Round and Round It Goes: The Epidemiology of Childhood Lead Poisoning 1950–1990. In *Illness and the Environment: A Reader in Contested Medicine*, edited by Steve Kroll-Smith, Phil Brown, and Valerie J. Gunter, pp. 235–257. New York: New York University Press.
- Boudia, Soraya; and Jas, Nathalie. 2014. *Powerless Science? Science and Politics in a Toxic World*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Brown, Phil. 2007. *Toxic Exposures: Contested Illness and the Environmental Health Movement*. Columbia: Columbia University Press.
- . 2000. Popular Epidemiology and Toxic Waste: Lay and Professional Ways of Knowing. In *Illness and the Environment: A Reader in Contested Medicine*, edited by Steve Kroll-Smith, Phil Brown, and Valerie J. Gunter, pp. 364–383. New York: New York University Press.
- Brown, Phil; and Kirwen-Kelly, Judith. 2000. Physicians' Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice Regarding Environment Health Hazards. In *Illness and the Environment: A Reader in Contested Medicine*, edited by Steve Kroll-Smith, Phil Brown, and Valerie J. Gunter, pp. 46–71. New York: New York University Press.
- Brown, Phil; Morello-Frosch, R.; Zavestoki, Stephan; and Contested Illness Group. 2012. *Contested Illnesses: Citizens, Science and Health Social Movements*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Bryant, Bunyan. 1995. Issues and Potential Policies and Solutions for Environmental Justice: An Overview. In *Environmental Justice: Issues and Solutions*, edited by B. Bryant, pp. 8–34. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Buergin, Reiner. 2003. Trapped in Environmental Discourse and Politics of Exclusion: Karen in the Thung Yai Naresuan Wildlife Sanctuary in the Context of Forest and Hill Tribe Policies in Thailand. In *Living at the Edge of Thai Society: The Karen in the Highlands of Northern Thailand*, edited by Claudio O. Delang, pp. 43–63. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Čapek, Stella M. 1993. The “Environmental Justice” Frame: A Conceptual Discussion and an Application. *Social Problems* 40(1): 5–24.
- Carruthers, David V. 2007. Environmental Justice and the Politics of Energy on the US–Mexico Border. *Environmental Politics* 16(3): 394–413.
- Chayan Vaddhanaphuti. 2005. The Thai State and Ethnic Minorities: From Assimilation to Selective Integration. In *Ethnic Conflicts in Southeast Asia*, edited by Kusuma Snitwengse and Thompson Scott, pp. 151–166. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Cohen, Jane E.; and Amon, Joseph J. 2012. Lead Poisoning in China: A Health and Human Rights Crisis. *Health and Human Rights* 14(2): 74–86.
- Coulter, Angela. 2010. Do Patients Want a Choice and Does It Work? *British Medical Journal* 341(7780): 973–975.
- Das, Veena. 2000. Suffering, Legitimacy and Healing: The Bhopal Case. In *Illness and the Environment*:

- A Reader in Contested Medicine*, edited by Steve Kroll-Smith, Phil Brown, and Valerie J. Gunter, pp. 270–286. New York: New York University Press.
- . 1996. *Critical Events: An Anthropological Perspective on Contemporary India*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Elvers, Horst-Dietrich; Gross, Matthias; and Heinrichs, Harald. 2008. The Diversity of Environmental Justice. *European Societies* 10(5): 835–856.
- Farmer, P. 2009. On Suffering and Structural Violence: A View from Below. *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts* 3(1): 11–28.
- Fine Arts Department กรมศิลปากร. 1972 (2515). *Kham hai karn chao Krung Kao* กำแพงการชาวกรุงเก่า [Historical record from the Ayutthaya era]. Phra Nakorn: Klang Wittaya.
- Forsyth Timothy. 2004. Industrial Pollution and Social Movements in Thailand. In *Liberation Ecologies: Environment, Development, Social Movements*, edited by Richard Peet and Michael Watts. Second Edition, pp. 422–436. London: Routledge.
- . 1999. Environmental Activism and the Construction of Risk: Implications for NGO Alliances. *Journal of International Development* 11: 687–700.
- Foucault Micheal. 1977. *The Birth of the Clinic*. London: Routledge.
- Freudenberg, Nicholas; and Golub, Maxine. 1987. Health Education, Public Policy and Disease Prevention: A Case History of the New York City Coalition to End Lead Poisoning. *Health Education Quarterly* 14(4): 387–401.
- Galtung, Johan. 1969. Violence, Peace, and Peace Research. *Journal of Peace Research* 6(3): 167–191.
- Gellner, Ernest. 1994. *Conditions of Liberty, Civil Society and Its Rivals*. London: Hamish Hamilton.
- Gillogly, Kathleen. 2004. Developing the “Hill Tribes” of Northern Thailand. In *Civilizing the Margins: Southeast Asian Government Policies for the Development of Minorities*, edited by Christopher R. Duncan, pp. 116–149. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Groves, Christopher. 2015. The Bomb in My Backyard, The Serpent in My House: Environmental Justice, Risk, and the Colonisation of Attachment. *Environmental Politics* 24(6): 853–873.
- Guan, Lee Hock. 2004. *Civil Society in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Haynes, P. B.; Devereaux, P. J.; and Guyatt, H. G. 2002. Physicians’ and Patients’ Choices in Evidence Based Practice: Evidence Does Not Make Decisions, People Do. *British Medical Journal* 324(7350): 1350.
- Hinton, Peter. 1983. Do the Karen Really Exist? In *Highlanders of Thailand*, edited by John McKinnon and Wanat Bhruksasri, pp. 155–169. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Hoover, E.; Cook, K.; Plain, R.; Sanchez, K.; Waghiyi, V.; Miller, P.; Dufault, R.; Sislin, C.; and Carpenter, D. O. 2012. Indigenous Peoples of North America: Environmental Exposures and Reproductive Justice. *Environmental Health Perspectives* 120(12): 1645–1649.
- Human Rights Watch. 2014. *Toxic Water, Tainted Justice: Thailand’s Delays in Cleaning Up Klity Creek*. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/12/16/toxic-water-tainted-justice/thailands-delays-cleaning-klity-creek>, accessed January 16, 2018.
- Jonsson, Hjorleifur. 2005. *Mien Relations: Mountain People and State Control in Thailand*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Kafarowski, Joanna. 2006. Gendered Dimensions of Environmental Health Contaminants and Global Change in Nunavik, Canada. *Etudes/Inuit/Studies* 30(1): 33–49.
- Kirsch, Stuart. 2001. Lost Worlds: Environmental Disaster, “Culture Loss,” and the Law. *Current Anthropology* 42(2) (April): 167–198.
- Komatra Chuengsatiansup. 2008. *Deliberative Action: Civil Society and Health Systems Reform in Thailand*. Nonthaburi: National Health Commission Office.
- Kroll-Smith, Steve; Brown, Phil; and Gunter, Valerie J., eds. 2000. *Illness and the Environment: A Reader*

- in *Contested Medicine*. New York: New York University Press.
- Kroll-Smith, Steve; and Floyd, H. Hugh. 1997. *Bodies in Protest: Environment Illness and the Struggle over Medical Knowledge*. New York: New York University Press.
- Loh Penn; and Sugerman-Brozan, Jodi. 2002. Environmental Justice Organizing for Environmental Health: Case Study on Asthma and Diesel Exhaust in Roxbury, Massachusetts. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 584(1) (November): 110–124.
- Malee Sitthikriengkrai. 2007. Suffering, Healing, and the Contestation of Power and Knowledge: A Case of Lead Contamination in Klity Lang Village, Kanchanaburi Province. PhD dissertation, Mahidol University.
- Millstrone, Eric. 1997. *Lead and Public Health*. Washington: Taylor & Francis.
- Mol, Annamarie. 2008. *The Logic of Care: Health and the Problem of Patient Choice*. London: Routledge.
- Nixon, Rob. 2011. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Padgett, A. K. A. 2003. What Factors Influence Patient's Choice of General Practice? Master's thesis, University of Wales College of Medicine.
- Pederson, Ole W. 2010. Environmental Principles and Environmental Justice. *Environmental Law Review* 12: 26–49.
- Pinkaew Laungaramsi. 2003. Constructing Marginality: The “Hill Tribe” Karen and Their Shifting Locations within the Thai State and Public Perspectives. In *Living at the Edge of Thai Society: The Karen in the Highlands of Northern Thailand*, edited by Claudio O. Delang, pp. 21–42. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Roe, Amy. 2003. Fishing for Identity: Mercury Contamination and Fish Consumption among Indigenous Groups in the United States. *Bulletin of Science, Technology & Society* 23(5) (October): 368–375.
- Rosser, A.; and Curnow, J. 2014. Legal Mobilisation and Justice: Insights from the Constitutional Court Case on International Standard Schools in Indonesia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 15(4): 302–318.
- San Ratchadawong สันต์ รัชฎาวงศ์. 1961 (2502). Karn taeng Rae takua pon sangkasi (Gelena) jaak Baan Bor Ngam, Amphur Srisawat, Changwat Kanchanaburi การแต่งแร่ตะกั่วปนสังกะสี (Galena) จากบ้านบ่องาม อำเภอสรีสวัสดิ์จังหวัดกาญจนบุรี [Zinc and lead minerals from Baan Bor Ngam, Khing Amphur Srisawat, Kanchanaburi Province]. In *Research Report No. 2 ในรายงาน ฉบับที่ 2*, edited by Wicha Sesthabut วิชา เศรษฐบุตร บรรณาธิการ. Bangkok: Former Department of Mines.
- Schlosberg, David; and Carruthers, David. 2010. Indigenous Struggles, Environmental Justice, and Community Capabilities. *Global Environmental Politics* 10(4): 12–35.
- Schroeder, Richard; St. Martin, Kevin; Bradley, Wilson; and Sen, Debarati. 2008. Third World Environmental Justice. *Society and Natural Resources* 7: 547–555.
- Schwarze, Steven J. 2003. Juxtaposition in Environmental Health Rhetoric Exposing Asbestos Contamination in Libby, Montana. *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 6(2): 313–333.
- Shkilnyk, Anastasia M. 1985. *A Poison Stronger than Love: The Destruction of an Ojibwa Community*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Swoboda, Debra A. 2008. Negotiating the Diagnostic Uncertainty of Contested Illnesses: Physician Practices and Paradigms. *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine* 12(4): 453–478.
- Tester, Frank James; McNicoll, Paule; and Tran Quyen. 2012. Structural Violence and the 1962–1863 Tuberculosis Epidemic in Eskimo Point, N.W.T. *Etudes/Inuit/Studies* 36(2): 165–185.
- Thongchai Winichakul. 2000. The Quest for “Siwilai”: A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam. *Journal of Asian Studies* 59(3): 588–549.

- Walker, Andrew. 2001. The “Karen Consensus,” Ethnic Politics and Resource-Use Legitimacy in Northern Thailand. *Asian Ethnicity* 2(2): 145–162.
- Warren, Christian. 2000. *Brush with Death: A Social History of Lead Poisoning*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Widener, Patricia. 2000. Lead Contamination in the 1990s and Beyond: A Follow Up. In *Illness and the Environment: A Reader in Contested Medicine*, edited by Steve Kroll-Smith, Phil Brown, and Valerie J. Gunter, pp.258–269. New York: New York University Press.
- Wing, Steve. 2000. Limits of Epidemiology. In *Illness and the Environment: A Reader in Contested Medicine*, edited by Steve Kroll-Smith, Phil Brown, and Valerie J. Gunter, pp.29–45. New York: New York University Press.
- Yos Santasombat. 2004. Karen Cultural Capital and the Political Economy of Symbolic Power. *Asian Ethnicity* 5(1): 105–120.
- Ziem, Grace E.; and Castleman, Barry I. 2000. Threshold Limit Values: Historical Perspectives and Current Practice. In *Illness and the Environment: A Reader in Contested Medicine*, edited by Steve Kroll-Smith, Phil Brown, and Valerie J. Gunter, pp.120–134. New York: New York University Press.

Online Sites and Newspapers

Krungthep Turakit

Matichon

Bangkok Post

The Nation

Art Auctions and the Poorer Rich: The Impact of the 2015 Stock Market Sell-off on the Emerging Philippine Art Market

Rosalina Palanca-Tan* and J. Sedfrey S. Santiago**

This paper looks into the Philippine secondary art market, which has recently emerged with the country's booming economy. Specifically, the paper aims to determine the effect of the August 2015 stock market sell-off on prices and profitability of art auction sales in the Philippines. Works of art may be considered as alternative investment goods for stocks. There may be greater demand for artworks as part of an investment diversification strategy when the equity market is bearish. On the other hand, artworks may also be part of a conspicuous consumption behavioral pattern, such that when income and wealth levels fall, the demand for artworks drops. To determine the net effect of stock market conditions on the Philippine art market, an empirical model is estimated using the ratio of the auctions' hammer price to the starting bid as a measure of art market profitability and vitality. Our regression results reveal that artworks are more of a conspicuous consumption good in the Philippines. Reduced income and wealth after the stock market plunge in August 2015 led to lower willingness to pay for artworks and lower returns in the September 2015 auctions compared to the September 2014 auctions. The "poorer rich" effect appears to prevail over the alternative investment effect in the Philippines.

Keywords: art market, Philippine art auctions, art pricing, stock market, investment, conspicuous consumption

Introduction

Art is priceless. Yet a work of art is an economic good that is traded in a market. The market price of a work of art is determined primarily by demand, by the amount of money collectors are willing to give up for it. Each work of art is a first degree price discrimi-

* Department of Economics, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City 1108, Philippines

Corresponding author's e-mail: rtan@ateneo.edu

** Marketing and Law Department, John Gokongwei School of Management, Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City 1108, Philippines

nating monopolist in itself: it realizes a price that is equivalent to the maximum willingness to pay of the buyer revealed through a succession of price offers as is done in auctions.

Works of art command high values that are well beyond the cost of production. They are luxury goods whose demand is commonly analyzed using the Veblen effect framework (Veblen 1994). Luxury goods are desirable because they are expensive. Purchase of these goods signals wealth, and hence a means to achieve social status and recognition, a phenomenon referred to as conspicuous consumption (Bagwell and Bernheim 1996). To the extent that acclaimed works of art are highly priced, and that their limited if not totally fixed supply can lead to value appreciation, works of art also serve as a form of investment.

Individuals who possess wealth can keep their wealth in different forms of assets such as cash and bank deposits, stocks, bonds, real estate properties, jewelry, and artworks. As a form of investment, artworks are closest to real estate—they are very heterogeneous and extremely illiquid, and may yield substantial positive returns only in the very long run (Candela and Scorcu 1997). Since art is a luxury consumption good and a form of investment, the market for it is affected by developments in other markets and macroeconomic conditions. W. N. Goetzmann, L. Renneboog, and C. Spaenjers (2011) constructed an art price index for the British art market for the period 1765–2007 and found significant correlations between the index and economic fluctuations. They found that art prices dropped during periods of economic turmoil such as during World War I, the Great Depression of the 1930s, and the oil crisis in 1973 and rose during periods of economic prosperity in the 1960s, 1980s, and early 2000s. Further, M. L. Biey and R. Zanola (1999) observed that people buy paintings as a form of “speculative investment” during periods of economic boom. The debate on art as an alternative investment instrument, however, remains unsettled (Teti *et al.* 2014).

Buyers of artworks are those with excess wealth, just like buyers in the stock market. Theoretically, developments in the stock market can affect the art market in two ways. As an alternative form of wealth, works of art can substitute for stocks. In times of bearish stock market conditions, freed funds from unloading of stocks and reduced exposure to the equity market may eventually find their way into the art market. On the other hand, lower returns to stocks and the subsequent devaluation of stock assets diminish income and wealth, resulting in less consumption, the most affected component of which would be expenditures on conspicuous or luxury goods. Thus, the downturn in the equity market can also affect the art market negatively. The asset-substitution effect could be offset partially or fully or even be exceeded by the income-consumption effect. In the long-run analysis of the British art market, Goetzmann *et al.* (2011) found a positive

correlation between the stock market index and the art price index. This finding reveals that the conspicuous consumption function of artworks dominates the alternative form of wealth function in the case of the British art market.

The stock market sell-off in August 2015, triggered by Greece's default on its foreign loan payments (Jolly and Bradsher 2015) and China's stock market crash (Thomson and Riley 2015), caused steep falls in stock market prices worldwide and created chills in the global art market. There were mixed opinions on how this recent stock market sell-off would impact on the art market. Key art market players were somewhat optimistic but wary. West Bund Director, Artist, and Curator Zhou Tiehai projected that "buyers would start to acquire more art because of the slowdown," claiming that there were "signs that companies prefer to buy artwork rather than invest in the stock market" (Adam 2015). Citi Private Group Art Advisory and Finance Group Managing Director and Global Head Suzanne Gyorgy suggested that "the super-rich Chinese art collectors are less affected by gyrations in the economy and the stock market because of their larger wealth cushion" but warned that "art is as much a psychological market as a financial one—if there is one sale that isn't strong, people get spooked" (Frank 2015). The latest available data on global art market turnover show the equity market and art market moving in the same direction. For the first six months of 2015, fine art auction sales contracted by 5 percent to US\$7.6 billion from 2014's first half sales of US\$8 billion, while number of lots sold declined more substantially by 17 percent (ArtMarket.com 2015). In China and Hong Kong, total art sales fell 30 percent in the first half of 2015 to US\$1.5 billion from US\$2.2 billion in the same period in 2014 (Frank 2015).

This paper looks into the emerging art market in the Philippines, a low-income but fast-growing economy in recent years, and one that is persistently beset by a high incidence of income inequality. The paper aims to determine the effect of the August 2015 stock market sell-off on prices and profitability of auction sales in the Philippine art market. The Philippine Stock Exchange index plunged by 6.7 percent on August 24, 16 percent off the highest mark reached in April 2015 (Rappler 2015). This wiped out a substantial US\$16.31 billion of equity wealth in the country. What is the net impact of the lower returns to stocks and wealth contraction on the Philippine art market? Do Filipino art collectors consider works of art as investment goods that can be alternatives to stocks in their portfolio, more of which will be demanded as part of their investment diversification strategy when the equity market is bearish? Or are artworks more part of a conspicuous consumption behavioral pattern, such that when income and wealth levels fall, the demand for them subsequently drops?

This paper is a pioneering work on the art market in the Philippines, at present one of the more rapidly growing and resilient economies in Asia, the new growth center in

the world. The regular operation of art auction houses in the country is a very recent development. This study is the first systematic analysis of the movements in Philippine art auction prices and how they relate to the stock market and the macro-economy.

Value of Art Literature

Art buyers are made up of elite groups of connoisseurs, speculators, corporations, and private and public cultural institutions (Fillitz 2014) with motives that U. Sigg (2013) categorizes into five: (1) affinity with an artwork or “I like this art” motive, (2) investment motive (purchase of artwork “by ear rather than by eye”), (3) status-enhancement (acquiring “must-have” artists), (4) focused purchase (collecting artworks with a particular theme), and (5) web of artworks purchase (collecting artworks that provide the fullest context for a core idea). Although not hinting at a hierarchical order, Sigg says that most common among these five is the “I like this art” motive—a person buying art because of attraction to the piece. According to Sigg, this is the stage many collectors initially go through and remain at. An interesting socio-psychological explanation of why individuals collect artworks is provided by the terror management theory. The theory asserts that people engage in “culturally prescribed behavior to bolster self-esteem. Self-esteem in turn defends the self from the threat of mortality, and allows one to successfully navigate death anxiety” (McIntosh and Schmeichel 2004). E. Atukeren and A. Seçkin (2007) assert that the purchase of art by collectors is basically for “aesthetic appreciation.” It is this “aesthetic return” or “viewing pleasure” that makes the collector unmindful of the high price paid for an artwork (Valsan 2002). Atukeren and Seçkin, however, concede that even those who buy artworks mainly for aesthetic reasons may also be hoping for an eventual appreciation of their purchase’s value. H. Yoon and H. Shin (2014) look at corporate art collectors in particular and discuss three reasons why corporations amass artworks. One, patronage of the arts is considered a “desirable corporate behavior” and hence can be a means by which a corporate entity achieves legitimacy (Lindenberg and Oosterlinck 2011; Dowling and Pfeffer 1975, as cited in Yoon and Shin 2014). Two, the corporation may be able to strengthen relationships with its stakeholders by making its art collection accessible to the public through a corporate museum (Garriga and Melé 2004; Nissley and Casey 2002, as cited in Yoon and Shin 2014). Three, it is a business strategy—the use of the art collection to differentiate the company from others in an industry where services are more or less generic (Lindenberg and Oosterlinck 2011, as cited in Yoon and Shin 2014). A common thread in these three reasons is the projection of a company image. The corporate art collection is an invest-

ment that will not only yield financial returns but, more important, contribute to business longevity.

Because of the confounding motives in the purchase of artwork, ascribing value to it is ticklish (Colbert 2012). An artwork is not an ordinary good whose price is explained by basic supply and demand forces. S. Plattner (1998) insists that the high price of an artwork signifies “high elite value” and not “scarce supply and high demand.” H. W. Ursprung and C. Wiermann’s study (2011), for instance, shows that the artist’s death alone, an indicator of scarcity of supply, does not significantly affect pricing. There are two basic perspectives on art pricing (Candela and Scorcu 1997). One perspective considers artworks as having no fundamental value, and hence their prices are inherently unpredictable. The other perspective maintains that generally accepted social valuations influence the price of an artwork and allow determination of fundamental values. Studies adhering to the second view attempt to identify the factors influencing the value of an artwork. Art price is seen as evolving from an inter-subjective process wherein experts, institutions, and media in the art field assess merits and confer reputation to a piece of art (Bourdieu 1999 and Janssen 2001, as cited in Beckert and Rössel 2013). More weight may be ascribed to the subjective judgments and desires of only a handful of collectors (Kallir 2011). S. Jalbuena (2015) writes that in some instances the valuation of art is reduced to a popularity game that rewards the charisma of the artist, the marketing infrastructure, and the public relations machinery over the quality of work.

Although it may be true that it is not possible to determine the full value of art (Baumol 1986), interest in understanding how the art market relates to other markets such as the stock and bonds markets has led to the construction of art price indices or yardsticks of art value and art market performance. R. Kraeussl and C. Wiehenkamp (2012) constructed a price index for German art using the following factors as determinants: artwork specifications such as type of work and art medium and materials; the artist’s reputation, attribution, living status; and the auction house. Goetzmann *et al.* (2011) created a price index based on changes in auction prices in the British market and found it to be highly elastic to income changes of the wealthiest. H. Higgs and J. Forster (2014) group determinants of art auction price into three general categories: (1) artist-level factors, (2) physical characteristics of the artwork, and (3) factors related to the auction transaction (e.g., auction house and date of auction). E. Teti, P. L. Sacco, and T. C. Galli (2014) point out that art prices are explained not only by “objective variables” but also by “intangible peculiarities” that are not easily incorporated in statistical models. D. Maddison and A. J. Pedersen (2008), for instance, consider the artist’s death and its nostalgia effect on the art market. D. G. de Silva, R. A. J. Pownall, and L. Wolk (2012) go so far as to use variation in local weather to proxy for market mood.

The Philippine Art Market

The Philippine art market, much like art markets of other countries, may be classified into primary and secondary. It is in the primary market where artworks are first sold. The first sale usually takes place in art galleries, art exhibits, and art fairs, or through direct purchase from dealers and artists. Any resale of an artwork, commonly carried out by auction houses as well as art galleries and dealers, is categorized as the secondary market. Art galleries and dealers may simultaneously operate in both primary and secondary markets. The Philippines has a longer tradition in the primary market. Commercial art galleries in the Philippines date back to the 1950s. During that time the leading gallery was the Philippine Art Gallery, which did not only provide exhibition space but also served as a “venue for artists, leading literary men and intellectuals” to discuss art (Yusi 2015; see also Kalaw-Ledesma 1987). Based on a quick survey, albeit mainly virtual, there are at least 157 art galleries, more than half of which (around 101) are situated in Metro Manila (see also Manila Arthrop 2016–17). This confirms G. Fairley’s (2012) observation that Philippine contemporary art remains “almost exclusively sited around a Manila scene.” Among the older art galleries are Finale Art File, Galleria Duemila, and Hiraya; and among the relatively new ones are the artist-centered Galerie Joaquin and multidisciplinary 1335Mabini. Many galleries are clustered in malls (e.g., Renaissance Gallery, Galerie Francesca, Galerie Raphael, Galleria Nicolas); but because of high rents in malls, some dealers sell artworks through pop-up galleries that are temporarily set up in nontraditional venues such as hospitals and building hallways. Art fairs are relatively recent occurrences in the Philippines. Presently, there are three significant art fairs in the country: (1) Art in the Park, the oldest one, was first staged in 2006; (2) ManilArt was first staged in 2009 by the Bona Fide Art Galleries Organization in partnership with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts; and (3) ArtFair Philippines was founded in 2013 and is currently managed by Philippine Art Events, Inc.

Constituting part of the secondary art market in the Philippines are the two leading auction houses, León Gallery Fine Art & Antiques (León Auctions) and Salcedo Auctions (both established only in 2010); and two less-active and lower-profile auction houses, Now Gallery and Harringtons Lifestyle Auction. With the exception of Harringtons Lifestyle Auction, all are based in Makati City, the premier financial district of the Philippines. Previously, if a seller wanted to vend an artwork through auction, the nearest venue would have been the Hong Kong or Singapore auctions of Christie’s and Sotheby’s (the two leading auction houses in the world for nearly two centuries), or Larasati Auctioneers and other auction houses in the Asian region. The recent establishment of the four auction houses in the Philippines has allowed local sellers to participate in auction

sales without going out of the country. Even collectors residing outside the Philippines have disposed of their collections through these Philippine auction houses.¹⁾

Similar to its foreign counterparts, the Philippine art market is highly unregulated and marked by opacity. The exact number of transactions that artists and art dealers enter into with their clients, and the value of the transactions, may be highly uncertain as receipts are not always issued. In the case of the Philippines, as in other art markets around the world, the most transparent sector is the auction houses since they publicize the realized value of their auctions as a marketing strategy (Fillitz 2014). León Auctions posts the results of its auction sales on its website (a total of eight auctions: June, September, and November in 2014; and two auctions in February as well as one each in June, September, and December in 2015). Salcedo Auctions used to post the results of its most recent auctions (up to September 2015), but starting November 2015 it has discontinued the practice and has adopted the policy of providing auction results data only to its clients upon request.

Past literature suggests that the price of art depends on income levels of the richest, the main buyers of art. Goetzmann *et al.* (2011) found that art price variations are very sensitive to income increases among the wealthiest in society, and that art prices rise when income inequality goes up. The observation that the art market benefits from a worsening income inequality may help understand why the Philippine art market is thriving in recent years. The gap between the country's rich and poor is widening, with high-earning individuals enjoying significantly faster growth in incomes compared with people from the middle- and low-income classes, and hence the benefits of the robustly growing Philippine economy are enjoyed more by the rich than the poor (Remo 2013). A. Martinez *et al.* (2014) showed that the income ratio of the top 10 percent to the bottom 40 percent increased from 3.09 in 2003 to 3.27 in 2009 while the Gini coefficient increased from 0.438 in 1991 to 0.506 in 2009. In 2011, people from the high-income class, which accounted for about 15 percent of the country's population, enjoyed a 10.4 percent annual growth in income (Albert and Martinez 2015), compared to overall income growth of just 3.7 percent.

Data on auction sales in the past few years reveal an active and vibrant art market. León Auctions has been recording an almost 100 percent batting average in its auction sales since 2014. Although León Auctions and Salcedo Auctions were put up in 2010, auction activities in León started only in 2013 and Salcedo Auctions in 2010 (Maneker 2010). Presently, León Auctions concentrates mainly on Philippine art while Salcedo

1) In 2016 at least two more auction houses—AVANT Auctions and Casa de Memoria—opened and conducted their first auctions.

Table 1 Art Auction Sales by León Auctions and Salcedo Auctions, 2015

Date of Auction	Title of Auction	Sales Amount (Philippine pesos)
León Auctions		
February 6	The Jim and Reed Pfeufer Collection	86,186,836
February 7	The Asian Cultural Council Philippines Art Auction	157,611,088
June 13	Spectacular Mid-year Auction 2015	266,660,240
September 12	The Magnificent September Auction 2015	304,719,520
December		271,745,047
Total - León		1,086,922,731
Salcedo Auctions		
March 7	Important Philippine Art	189,925,901
June 6	The Collectors' Sale: Fine and Decorative Art	18,402,018
September 19	Important Philippine Art	197,327,760
December		Not available
Total - Salcedo		405,655,679
Total - León and Salcedo		1,492,578,410

Sources: For León sales, <http://leon-gallery.com/v2/gallery/auctions>, accessed, December 23, 2015; for Salcedo sales, <http://salcedoauctions.com/auctions> and <http://www.invaluable.com>, accessed, December 23, 2015.

Notes: A 16.8 percent buyer's premium and VAT on buyer's premium were added to the sales figures for March and June of Salcedo Auctions to make them comparable to those of León Auctions, which included a 16.8 percent buyer's premium and VAT on buyer's premium.

Auctions conducts separate auction sessions for Philippine art, fine jewelry and time-pieces, artifacts, home accessories, rare automobiles, and other items that are grouped as the connoisseur collection. In 2015 the combined sales of the two auction houses for Philippine art totaled about 1.5 billion Philippine pesos (see Table 1 for the breakdown).

The Impact of the August 2015 Global Stock Market Sell-off

Econometric Model

To analyze the relationship between the stock market and the art market in the Philippines, we look at auction results before and after the August 2015 stock market plunge. We limit our sample to auction results in the same period, that is, during the month of September in the two years 2014 and 2015 to eliminate seasonal factors. Salcedo Auctions offers a high variety of articles, including fine china, personal accessories such as branded watches, antique furniture, and carpets. León Auctions, on the other hand, specializes in art pieces. To minimize random noise in the regression that can be brought

about by highly heterogeneous goods, we use the data sets of León Auctions, particularly for auctioned paintings that are *sui generis* regardless of medium (oil, watercolor, acrylic, pastel, pen and ink, pencil, mixed media, and the like as applied on canvas, paper, wood, and other surfaces), style (representational and nonrepresentational), and size. We exclude auction lots offering works that exist or could exist in multiples such as prints, serigraphs, lithographs, as well as sculptures and those that combine paintings and other genres in one lot.

As a measure of the profitability and vitality of the stock market, we use the ratio of the buyer's price to the starting bid. The buyer's price is the sum of the hammer price (amount at which an artwork is sold by the auctioneer when he/she bangs the hammer) and the buyer's premium (the fee collected by the auctioneer from the winning bidder, computed as a certain percentage of the hammer price). The buyer's price is the maximum willingness to pay for any particular work of art, and is therefore reflective of underlying market conditions and the optimism of key players in the Philippine art market at the time of the auction. On the other hand, the starting bid that is decided by the auction house, presumably in consultation with the seller, is a measure of the base value of the artwork that may include production costs and artist-related factors such as reputation. The ratio of buyer's price to starting bid can therefore be a measure or indicator of the profitability of the auction sale. The stock market shock in August 2015 is modeled with a dummy variable assigning the value of 1 for all art pieces or lots auctioned in the September 2015 auction, or 0 for all lots auctioned in the September 2014 auction. Factors that weigh in the valuation of artwork as revealed in past literature (see, for instance, O'Neil 2008; and Kraeussl and Wiehenkamp 2012) are also incorporated in the regression analysis. These include artwork-specific factors such as art medium (oil on canvas versus other media), size of the work, titling of the work, year of creation of the work, and presence of the artist's signature on the work as well as artist-specific factors such as the age of the artist, whether the artist is still living or not, and awards bestowed on the artist (National Artists Award and Thirteen Artists Award).²⁾ The empirical model specified for this study is given by the equation:

$$R = \alpha + \beta S + \mathbf{cZ} + \mathbf{dW} + \varepsilon$$

R is the ratio of total buyer's price to the starting bid, S is the dummy variable for

2) The Order of the National Artists Award is conferred by the president of the Philippines upon the recommendation of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts and the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP), which jointly administer the Order. The Thirteen Artists Awards, on the other hand, are bestowed by the CCP Visual Arts and Museum Division in a triennial event.

the stock market shock (the market plunge in August 2015), \mathbf{Z} is the vector of work-specific variables, \mathbf{W} is the vector of artist-specific variables; α , β , \mathbf{c} , and \mathbf{d} are the regression coefficients; and ε is the error term representing all other factors not included in the model. This regression model is run using the linear regression procedure in the econometrics software STATA.

Results

Summary statistics for the sample of artworks used in the regression are shown in Table 2. The average values of artworks in terms of starting bid and buyer's price are both higher in September 2015. However, the ratio of the buyer's price to the starting bid is lower after the August 2015 stock market plunge. The average values are more a function of the kind and quality of works (such as the art medium, painting material, size of art piece, style, artist, etc.) that are available for auctioning at any period of time, rather than of market conditions. The means and standard deviations of work-specific and artist-specific variables in the 2014 auction do not vary much from those in 2015, indicating comparable baskets of artworks in terms of art media, year of creation, artist signature, and artist-related attributes in the samples before and after the stock market plunge. The majority of paintings auctioned in our samples are oil on canvas. The aver-

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics

Variables Used in the Regression Model ($R = \alpha + \beta S + \mathbf{cZ} + \mathbf{dW} + \varepsilon$)	September 2014 (sample size = 156)		September 2015 (sample size = 141)	
	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Art value				
Starting bid	216,475	224,145	430,897	463,174
Buyer's price	1,369,494	1,658,059	1,858,206	2,220,349
R (Ratio of buyer's price to starting bid)	5.74	2.87	3.83	1.70
Work-specific variables (\mathbf{Z})				
Medium (1 for oil on canvas, 0 for all other media)	0.61	0.48	0.53	0.50
YearWorkCreated	1979	18	1983	21
ArtistSignature (1 if work is signed by the artist, 0 if otherwise)	0.96	0.08	0.94	0.12
Artist-specific variables (\mathbf{W})				
ArtistAge (number of years)	78	18	75	24
ArtistStillLiving (1 if artist is still living, 0 if deceased)	0.54	0.50	0.57	0.49
NationalArtist (1 if artist is a National Artist awardee, 0 if otherwise)	0.22	0.34	0.25	0.38
13ArtistsAward (1 if artist is a Thirteen Artists awardee, 0 if otherwise)	0.26	0.39	0.29	0.42

Source: León Auctions, <http://leon-gallery.com/v2/gallery/auctions>, accessed, December 23, 2015.

Table 3 Regression Results, Dependent Variable = LnRatio

Explanatory Variable	Coefficient
StockMarketShock	-0.4212***
Medium	-0.0580
ArtistSignature	0.0818
LnArtistAge	-0.1578*
NationalArtist	-0.0803
13ArtistsAward	0.0840
LnStartBid	0.1034***
Constant	0.9782**
Number of observations	296
F-stat	6.40
R-squared	0.1345
Adj R-squared	0.1135

Notes: *** 1% significance, ** 5% significance, * 10% significance

age artwork auctioned was created in the late 1970s to early 1980s. With the average age of artists being 75–78 years, the average work was created when the artist was about 40 years old. Almost all (94–96 percent) the artworks auctioned are signed by the creators, and the majority (54–57 percent) of artists are still alive. About a quarter (22–25 percent) are works of National Artists, while slightly more than a quarter (26–29 percent) are works of Thirteen Artists awardees.

Correlation tests reveal some degree of multicollinearity among three explanatory variables, namely, ArtistAge, YearWorkCreated, and ArtistStillLiving; and hence, the latter two variables are removed and only the first, ArtistAge, is retained. Due to skewness, the variables Ratio, StartingBid, and ArtistAge are transformed into their logarithmic forms to satisfy the normal distribution assumption of ordinary least squares estimation. The results of the regression analysis are summarized in Table 3.

The coefficient of the StockMarketShock is significantly negative, implying that the August 2015 stock market plunge reduced the ratio of the buyer's price to the starting bid, indicating waning interest in the Philippine art market as a result of the stock market plunge. The relationship between the ratio and the starting bid is significantly positive, which means that higher-value artworks will result in higher ratios. Table 2 reveals that the mean starting bid in the September 2015 auction was higher than that in the September 2014 auction. Despite the higher starting bid in the 2015 auction that could have raised the profitability ratio (significant positive relationship between the ratio and the starting bid), the negative effect of the stock market plunge lowered it. Among the other factors (art-specific and artist-specific) included in the regression model, only the age of the artist is shown to significantly affect the ratio. The coefficient is negative, implying that the ratio is higher for works of younger artists. The statistical insignificance

of the coefficients of work and artist-related factors may imply that these factors are embodied in the starting bid, the base value of the artwork, rather than in the ratio of the buyer's price to the starting bid.

Conclusion

The secondary art market (auction houses) in the Philippines has emerged as a result of the booming economy in recent years. National income or gross domestic product grew at a remarkable annual rate of 6.3 percent during 2010–15, the fastest streak since 1978. During the first quarter of 2016 it further expanded at a rate of 6.9 percent over the same period in 2015, faster than China's 6.7 percent and Vietnam's 5.7 percent (CNN Philippines 2016). The boom has benefited to a greater extent the high-income groups to which the art market caters. The sensitivity of the emerging Philippine art market to fluctuations in the equity market and macroeconomic conditions is of key interest to players in the market—artists, galleries, dealers, investors, etc. This information will guide key market players in formulating strategies to stabilize and maximize returns.

The regression results reveal that artworks in the Philippine art market are more of a conspicuous consumption good. The reduced income and wealth after the stock market plunge in August 2015 (negative returns to stock holdings and lower value of stock holdings due to the plunge in stock prices) led to lower willingness to pay for artworks and lower returns to the art auction in September 2015 compared to the same period in the preceding year, 2014. It appears that funds have not been moved from equities to art as an alternative form of investment. The “poorer rich” effect appears to prevail over the alternative investment effect.

A recent news article on the main drivers of the art market boom in the Philippines presented a rough sketch of the profile of the clientele in the Philippine art market: “a new breed of art collectors, young, flush with cash and supremely confident in their tastes” (Caruncho 2016). They include “yuppies, young entrepreneurs, young politicians and old rich family heirs with second- and third-generation money” (*ibid.*). Interestingly, this description matches the worsening inequality trend to which the recent dynamism in the Philippine art market is partly attributed.

This paper is a cursory study on the workings of the art market in the Philippines. The results presented in this paper only capture the immediate effect of the stock market crisis, which is still ongoing. It will be interesting to see the impact of a prolonged slump in the stock market on the art market. Equally interesting to determine is the long-term effect. Will there be spillover effects? Will the spillover effects be diminishing or accu-

mulating? Another interesting economic issue that can be further investigated is the link between increasing domestic inequality and increased dynamism of the art market. These are some of the questions that can be addressed in future economic analyses of the Philippine art market when more and long-term data sets become available.

Apart from the economic dimensions, there are aspects of the Philippine art market that warrant further and more intensive research. A closer look at the composition of the art market in the country is one of these. Who are the main players in the market? What is the extent of foreign collectors' participation vis-à-vis local collectors' participation? It will also be interesting to compare the developments in the Philippine art market with those in other developing economies. These types of analyses can shed more light on the economics of the Philippine art market.

Accepted: January 18, 2018

References

- Adam, Georgina. 2015. The Art Market: Impact of Weakening Chinese Economy. *Financial Times Online*. <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/64b32e1a-5c66-11e5-9846-de406ccb37f2.html>, accessed November 13, 2015.
- Albert, Jose Ramon G.; and Martinez, Jr., Arturo. 2015. Are Poverty and Inequality Changing? *Rappler*. http://www.rappler.com/thought-leaders/84833-poverty-inequality-data#_ftnref1, accessed November 21, 2015.
- ArtMarket.com. 2015. Artprice's Overview of the Global Art Market in H1 2015—USA Recovers Top Position from China. <https://artmarketinsight.wordpress.com/2015/08/02/artprices-overview-of-the-global-fine-art-auction-market-in-the-first-semester-of-2015/>, accessed November 23, 2015.
- Atukeren, Erdal; and Seçkin, Aylin. 2007. On the Valuation of Psychic Returns to Art Market Investments. *Economics Bulletin* 26(5): 1–12.
- Bagwell, Laurie S.; and Bernheim, B. Douglas. 1996. Veblen Effects in a Theory of Conspicuous Consumption. *American Economic Review* 86(3): 349–373.
- Baumol, William J. 1986. Unnatural Value: Or Art Investment as Floating Crap Game. *American Economic Review* 76(2): 10–14.
- Beckert, Jens; and Rössel, Jörg. 2013. The Price of Art: Uncertainty and Reputation in the Art Field. *European Societies* 15(2): 178–195.
- Biey, Marilena L.; and Zanola, Roberto. 1999. Investment in Paintings: A Short-Run Price Index. *Journal of Cultural Economics* 23: 211–222.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1999. *Die Regeln der Kunst: Genese und Struktur des literarischen Feldes* [The rules of art: Genesis and structure of the literary field]. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp.
- Candela, Guido; and Scorcu, Antonello Eugenio. 1997. A Price Index for Art Market Auctions: An Application to the Italian Market of Modern and Contemporary Oil Paintings. *Journal of Cultural Economics* 21: 175–196.
- Caruncho, Eric S. 2016. Millennials Are Driving the Current Boom in Philippine Art. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. March 20, pp. F1, F2.

- CNN Philippines. 2016. PH Is Fastest Growing Economy in Asia, Expands by 6.9% in Q1. *CNN Philippines*. May 20. <http://cnnphilippines.com/news/2016/05/19/philippines-fastest-growing-economy-asia-gdp-q1.html>, accessed April 18, 2017.
- Colbert, François. 2012. Financing the Arts: Some Issues for a Mature Market. *Megatrend Review* 9(1): 83–96.
- De Silva, Dakshina G.; Pownall, Rachel A.J.; and Wolk, Leonard. 2012. Does the Sun ‘Shine’ on Art Prices? *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 82(1): 167–178.
- Dowling, John; and Pfeffer, Jeffrey. 1975. Organizational Legitimacy: Social Values and Organizational Behavior. *Pacific Sociological Review* 18(1): 122–136.
- Fairley, Gina. 2012. Outside In/Inside Out Contemporary Philippine Art: Observing Artists, Artworks, Scenes and Markets. *Thesis Eleven* 112(1): 63–86.
- Fillitz, Thomas. 2014. The Booming Global Market of Contemporary Art. *Focaal: Journal of Global and Historical Anthropology* 69: 84–96.
- Frank, Robert. 2015. Here’s How China Could Crash the Art Market. *CNBC News Online*. <http://www.cnbc.com/2015/07/30/heres-how-china-could-crash-the-art-market.html>, accessed November 13, 2015.
- Garriga, Elisabet; and Melé, Domènec. 2004. Corporate Social Responsibility Theories: Mapping the Territory. *Journal of Business Ethics* 53: 51–71.
- Goetzmann, William N.; Renneboog, Luc; and Spaenjers, Christophe. 2011. Art and Money. *American Economic Review* 101(3): 222–226.
- Higgs, Helen; and Forster, John. 2014. The Auction Market for Artworks and Their Physical Dimensions: Australia—1986 to 2009. *Journal of Cultural Economics* 38(1): 85–104.
- Jalbuena, Samito. 2015. What Makes Art Valuable? *BusinessMirror*. July 29, p. D4.
- Janssen, Susanne. 2001. The Empirical Study of Careers in Literature and Arts. In *The Psychology and Sociology of Literature*, edited by Dick Schram and Gerard Steen, pp. 323–357. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Jolly, David; and Bradsher, Keith. 2015. Greece’s Debt Crisis Sends Stocks Falling around the Globe. *New York Times International Business*. http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/30/business/international/daily-stock-market-activity.html?_r=0, accessed November 23, 2015.
- Kalaw-Ledesma, Purita. 1987. *The Biggest Little Room*. Manila: Kalaw-Ledesma Art Foundation.
- Kallir, Jane. 2011. Speculating on the Art Market. *The New Criterion*. December, p. 34.
- Kraeussl, Roman; and Wiehenkamp, Christian. 2012. A Call on Art Investments. *Review of Derivative Research* 15(1): 1–23.
- Lindenberg, Morgane; and Oosterlinck, Kim. 2011. Art Collections as a Strategy Tool: A Typology Based on the Belgian Financial Sector. *International Journal of Arts Management* 13(3): 4–19.
- Maddison, David; and Pedersen, Anders Jul. 2008. The Death Effect in Art Prices: Evidence from Denmark. *Applied Economics* 40(14): 1789–1793.
- Maneker, Marlon. 2010. Manila Gets an Auction House. *Art Market Monitor*. <http://www.artmarketmonitor.com/2010/07/21/manila-gets-an-auction-house/>, accessed March 10, 2016.
- Manila Arthrop. 2016–17. Copyright 2016 Planting Rice, Electrolychee and Lena Cobangbang.
- Martinez, Arturo; Western, Mark; Haynes, Michele Ann; and Tomaszewski, Wojtek. 2014. Is There Income Mobility in the Philippines? *Asian-Pacific Economic Literature* 28(1): 96–115.
- McIntosh, William D.; and Schmeichel, Brandon. 2004. Collectors and Collecting: A Social Psychological Perspective. *Leisure Sciences: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 26(1): 85–97.
- Nissley, Nick; and Casey, Andrea. 2002. The Politics of Exhibition: Viewing Corporate Museums through the Paradigmatic Lens of Organizational Memory. *British Journal of Management* 13: 35–45.
- O’Neil, Kathleen M. 2008. Bringing Art to the Market: The Diversity of Pricing Styles in a Local Art

- Market. *Poetics* 36: 94–113.
- Plattner, Stuart. 1998. A Most Ingenious Paradox: The Market for Contemporary Fine Art. *American Anthropologist* 100(2): 482–493.
- Rappler. 2015. Philippine Stocks Plunge 6.7% amid Global Equities Rout. <http://www.rappler.com/business/industries/210-capital-markets/103565-philippine-stocks-plunge>, accessed December 2, 2015.
- Remo, Michelle V. 2013. Rich-Poor Divide in PH Widening. *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/441817/rich-poor-divide-in-ph-widening#ixzz3s6j5I3yp>, accessed November 21, 2015.
- Sigg, Uli. 2013. How People Collect: My Typology of Collecting Styles. *Artasiapacific* 85 (September/October): 59–60.
- Teti, Emanuele; Sacco, Pier Luigi; and Galli, Tecla Carlotta. 2014. Ephemeral Estimation of the Value of Art. *Empirical Studies of the Arts* 32(1): 75–92.
- Thomson, Mark; and Riley, Charles. 2015. World Markets Plunge as China's Stocks Crash. *CNN Money Online*. August 23. <http://money.cnn.com/2015/08/23/investing/world-stock-markets/>, accessed November 23, 2015.
- Ursprung, Heinrich W.; and Wiermann, Christian. 2011. Reputation, Price, and Death: An Empirical Analysis of Art Price Formation. *Economic Inquiry* 49: 697–713.
- Valsan, Calin. 2002. Canadian versus American Art: What Pays Off and Why. *Journal of Cultural Economics* 26(3): 203–216.
- Veblen, Thorstein. 1994. *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*. Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics. Introduction by Robert Lekachman. New York: Penguin Books.
- Yoon, Hyejung; and Shin, Hyung-Deok. 2014. Determinants of the Number of Artworks in Corporate Art Collections. *International Journal of Arts Management* 16(2): 19–28.
- Yusi, Lyn. 2015. The Development of Art Galleries in the Philippines. <http://ncca.gov.ph/subcommissions/subcommission-on-cultural-heritagesch/art-galleries/the-development-of-art-galleries-in-the-philippines/>, posted April 16, 2015, accessed October 10, 2015.

Constructing the Charisma of *Khruba* (Venerable Monks) in Contemporary Thai Society

Pisith Nasee*

Khruba (venerable monks) have consistently played a meaningful role in local Buddhist communities of Northern Thai culture for generations. While today's *khruba* continue to represent themselves as followers of Khruba Siwichai and Lan Na Buddhism, in fact over the past three decades they have flourished by adopting heterogeneous beliefs and practices in the context of declining influence of the *sangha* and popular Buddhism. In order to respond to social and cultural transformations and to fit in with different expectations of people, modern *khruba* construct charisma through different practices besides the obvious strictness in *dhamma* used to explain the source of *khruba*'s charisma in Lan Na Buddhist history. The ability to integrate local Buddhist traditions with the spirit of capitalism-consumerism and gain a large number of followers demonstrates that *khruba* is still a meaningful concept that plays a crucial role in modern Buddhist society, particularly in Thailand. By employing concepts of charisma, production of translocalities, and popular Buddhism and prosperity religion, it can be argued that *khruba* is steeped in local knowledge, yet the concept has never been linear and static. Modern *khruba* can be interpreted and consumed in many ways by diverse groups of people. This is also considered a key success of modern *khruba* and their proliferation during the past three decades in Thailand. Data were collected in 2015–16 through in-depth interviews and participatory observation as part of the author's PhD dissertation at Chiang Mai University, Thailand.

Keywords: *khruba*, constructing charisma, production of translocalities, popular Buddhism and prosperity religion, Lan Na Buddhism

Introduction

Khruba (venerable monks) have played a meaningful role in local Buddhist communities of northern Thai culture for generations. The proliferation of *khruba* during the past three decades does not only reflect the dynamics of Buddhist society within the northern

* พิสิษฐ์ นาสี, Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University; Lan Na Research Center, Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University, 239 Huay Kaew Road, Mueang District, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand
e-mail: pisith_nasee@hotmail.com

region, it also has significant implications at the national and global levels. Nonetheless, if we assume that it is a continuation of pre-modern practice, then the rise of *khrua* signifies the production of translocalities stemming from the practices of local subjects in a specific context (Appadurai 1996). It is noteworthy that the concept of *khrua* is not fixed. On the contrary, it has been revised, reevaluated, and reinterpreted in the context of the declining influence of Thai Buddhist *sangha*, the growth of a capitalist economy, the proliferation of mass media, the rise of the middle class, and the growth of prosperity religion in Thailand and throughout Asia (see Apinya 1993; 1998; Jackson 1999a; 1999b; Pattana 2008; 2012; Stengs 2009; McDaniel 2011).

In 2002 Kwanchewan Buadaeng categorized *khrua* into two groups: (1) senior monks who had remained in monkhood for a long time and were seen as meritorious, with knowledge and practices in the traditional northern Thai style; and (2) those related to Khruba Siwichai,¹⁾ Khruba Khao Pi,²⁾ and other *khrua* from the past. Unlike those in the first group, the latter were perceived as *ton bun*³⁾ (meritorious persons) who carried out monastery construction and renovation works. They could be very young and were widely known across many communities. In addition, Kwanchewan (2002) points out that there were recently a few monks who were popularly known as *khrua*. As a matter of fact, a number of *khrua* have emerged over the past three decades. Most of them are very young. Their charisma relies on various sources and practices. Some of them are famous for *ton bun* attributes, while others are praised as “magic monks” (Jackson’s term)⁴⁾ (Thai: *phra saksit*, *kechi achan*) with a focus on prosperity religion (Jackson 1999b). By integrating the local Buddhist tradition of Lan Na with prosperity-oriented practices,

1) In English literature, his name is also spelled *Sivichai*.

2) The closest disciple of Khruba Siwichai.

3) *Ton bun* is a form of holy men whose quality rests on great merit compiled in past lives, meditative practice, and campaigns to revive Buddhism through the construction and renovation of religious buildings, such as Khruba Siwichai and Khruba Khao Pi in the past. As a result, they were believed to possess supernatural powers (Tambiah 1987, cited in Bowie 2014b, 687; Kwanchewan 2010, 2).

4) The traditional *khrua* concept is characterized by a belief in *ton bun* (Northern Thai, meritorious person) combined with a concept of Ariya Metteyya (Thai: *Phra Si Ariya Mettrai*), a legend of the fifth Buddha to come (see Cohen 2000a; 2000b; 2001; 2002), while the concept of a magic monk is characterized by a belief in possession of supernatural powers that emphasize the acquisition of wealth and power, such as the cult of Luang Pho Khun (Thai, revered father *Khun*) in the context of popular Buddhism (Jackson 1999a; 1999b; Pattana 2012). Luang Pho Khun (d. 2015) was one of the most famous magic monks in Thailand during the last three decades. These two concepts are different, but they overlap since they share a belief in possession of supernatural powers. As elaborated in the following sections, *khrua* has been recently reconstructed and redefined by different groups of followers. Modern *khrua* can be consumed by nontraditional followers as magic monks whose charismatic power is reserved more for popular religiosity (see also Amporn 2016).

modern *khruba* attract a large number of followers as well as significant monetary donations, not only from the northerners but also from worldwide devotees. Their monasteries are huge and attractively decorated. Their rites are exotic, their amulets are best-sellers, and the length of time they spend in the monkhood—which was a source of *khruba*'s charisma in the former days—is no longer relevant. This indicates that there are many types of *khruba* nowadays who do not fit into either of the two categories described above. It also implies that *khruba* have undergone periods of reevaluation over the course of time. The rise of *khruba* portrays heterogeneity or disjuncture (Appadurai 1996) of religious practices even though they continue to represent themselves as followers of the charismatic leader Khruba Siwichai and Lan Na Buddhism. Broadly speaking, the two major characteristics of modern *khruba* are: (1) the reproduction of external elements thought to be authentic in Khruba Siwichai's monastic style; and (2) reinterpretations of what it means to be a *khruba* that can be diverse yet overlapping at times. Hence, in order to understand the phenomenon of *khruba* today, it is necessary to understand modern Thai Buddhism and the construction of charisma in today's globalized world.

This paper consists of two parts. The first is an introduction to the study of *khruba*, including the historical context of *khruba*, dominant approaches to *khruba* studies, and the Weberian concept of charisma. The second part of this paper seeks to analyze the proliferation of *khruba* in contemporary Thai society. In particular, it seeks to show how *khruba* have constructed and redefined *khruba* charisma in various aspects pertaining to sources of legitimation, *khruba* in a contested space, heterogeneous practices, and biographies of three modern *khruba*. This paper is based on ethnographic data that the author collected during 2015–16 in Chiang Rai, Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Lampang, Tak, Mae Hong Son, and Sukhothai Provinces of Thailand, as well as Tachileik (Thai: *Tha Khilek*), Keng Tung (Thai: *Chiang Tung*), and Mong Yawng (Thai: *Mueang Yong*) in Shan State of Myanmar as part of his doctoral research.

***Khruba* in Their Historical Context**

The term *khruba* is well known among the northern Thais. In the Lan Na Buddhist world, *khruba* literally means “great teacher,” “teacher of teachers,” and one who has advanced knowledge and has attained spiritual perfection. In practice, this term is used as an honorary title either conferred or awarded to certain Buddhist monks in the Tai Buddhist communities of the upper Mekong region covering the area of today's Northern Thailand, eastern Shan State of Myanmar, northern Laos, and Xishuangbanna (Thai: *Sipsong Panna*)

in the Yunnan region (PRC),⁵⁾ known as the Lan Na cultural area (Wasan 2013). In the northern *sangha* (former Lan Na kingdom) centuries ago, *khrua* was believed to be an official title conferred by the king (Kwanchewan 2002; Wilak 2010; Tanabe 2012). Up to the present time, in the *sangha* of Keng Tung (of the Tai Khuen and Tai Yai [Shan] ethnic groups), Mong Yawng (of the Tai Lue ethnic group) in eastern Shan State, and Xishuangbanna (of Tai Lue), *khrua* is still an official title conferred by the *sangha* (see Wat Tha Kradat 2005). In these areas, the *sangha* sets specific criteria while requiring a ceremony for conferring the title (Thai: *phithi thera phisek*). For instance, in the case of Keng Tung *sangha*,⁶⁾ *khrua* should be at least 40 years old; should have served at least 20 years in monkhood; and should have been approved by the *sangha*, lay committee, community, and lay sponsors (Phra Swami Maha Chatchawan, Khrua Sam Nuan, and Phrakhrui Adunsilakit in Nakhon 2010; Wilak 2010, 15). In today's Xishuangbanna *sangha* system, *khrua* is the second-highest rank after *phra somdet sangkharat* (the supreme patriarch). In Thailand, the local Lan Na *sangha* was dissolved as a result of the centralization of the *sangha* by Bangkok's authority (the Sangha Act 1902). However, after that the term *khrua* has still been used unofficially by northerners in addressing their venerable monks.

The most renowned *khrua* in Thai Buddhist history is Siwichai (1878–1938), with his religious movement at the turn of the twentieth century in the north of Thailand (see a picture of Khrua Siwichai in Appendix).⁷⁾ Statues of Khrua Siwichai have been built all over the northern region, especially in Chiang Mai and Lamphun Provinces. The most popular one is located at the foot of Mt. Doi Suthep in Chiang Mai City. In the academic world, scholars, both Thai and non-Thai, are attracted by his life and works. They have produced a steady stream of literature about him, including abundant biographical publications. Khrua Siwichai is the main figure in the study of charismatic monks and religious movements in the north of Thailand. Other charismatic monks related to him have also been studied, such as Khrua Khao Pi and Khrua Wong. Approaches employed by previous scholars in the studies of Khrua Siwichai have influenced studies of *khrua* movements in recent times (e.g., Keyes 1981; Tambiah 1984; Sopha 1991; Sommai 1994; 2000; Charnnarong 1997; Cohen 2001; 2002; Isara 2011; Tanabe 2004; 2012; Easum 2013; Bowie 2014a; 2014b; Sirisak 2016). Paul Cohen (2000a; 2000b; 2001; 2002) notes that

5) *Khrua* in the northeast of Thailand can be just ordinary monks.

6) Ranked from high to low (pronounced in Thai, Wat Tha Kradat 2005, 113): (1) *somdet atyatham* (the supreme *dhamma*), (2) *sangkhanayok*, (3) *khrua*, (4) *swami* or *sami*, (5) *swathi* or *sitthi*, (6) *maha*, (7) *phikkhu*, (8) *sammanen*.

7) His most famous achievement was mobilizing thousands of people to fund and construct a 12-kilometer road to the most famous pilgrim monastery of the North, Wat Phrathat Doi Suthep in Chiang Mai.

khruba as well as local Buddhist tradition are unique practices in the Theravada Buddhism of this area, Lan Na Buddhism. This tradition is characterized by a belief in *ton bun* (as mentioned earlier). This tradition also relates to the concept of “Buddhist Millenarianism,” which can be seen by the terms used for Khruba Siwichai and Khruba Khao Pi (as pronounced in Thai): *no phra phutthachao* (a scion of the Buddha) and *phrachao* (the Buddha). The two *khruba* were also called *phayatham* or *bodhisatta* (Thai: *phra phothisat*); it was believed that they were born to disseminate *dhamma* to laypeople while giving them opportunities to make merit in order to build up the moral community and prepare for the coming of the future and the fifth Buddha (Kwanchewan 2002, 262–293). Generally, it is believed that Khruba Siwichai’s practices were carried on by his disciples, such as Khruba Khao Pi (1889–1977) and Khruba Wong (1913–2000). The last living *khruba* to be known as a successor of Khruba Siwichai’s lineage is Khruba Phan of Wat Phraphutthabat Huai Tom, in Li District, Lamphun Province. Nevertheless, the following section will discuss a number of *khruba* who have recently claimed to be disciples/followers of Khruba Siwichai directly or indirectly.

Three Dominant Approaches to *Khruba* Studies

Regarding the study of *khruba*, social science scholars have employed different approaches to examine charismatic attributes and their religious movements. Three dominant approaches are millenarianism (e.g., Keyes 1977; 1981; Tambiah 1984; Kwanchewan 1988; 2002; Sopha 1991; Bowie 2014a; 2014b), religious revivalism (e.g., Cohen 2000b; 2001; Tanabe 2004; 2012), and social memory (e.g., Turton 2006; Wasan 2013). Studies have shown that the charismatic power of Khruba Siwichai and his disciples relied greatly on meditative practices, building projects, and resistance movements against Bangkok’s authority. Nevertheless, studies of contemporary Thai Buddhism have revealed that the religiosity and expectations of lay Buddhists have changed through the course of modernization (see Pattana 1999; 2012; Stengs 2009; McDaniel 2011). Modern mass media, transportation, as well as the capital market have a considerable impact in shaping the modern-day religiosity of Thai Buddhists as well as in shaping modern *khruba*. Collectively, these reflect the fluid and irregular shapes of the nation’s religious landscape (e.g., Jackson 1999a; 1999b; Pattana 1999; 2008; 2012; Tanabe and Keyes 2002; Stengs 2009; McDaniel 2011). Furthermore, modernity produces crises that have made people insecure about the present and anxious about the future. The term “crises of modernity” is applied in the sense that modernity gives rise to fragmentation (Simmel 1978, cited in Tanabe and Keyes 2002, 6–7). The positive and negative consequences simultaneously

become embedded in people's minds and bodies. Interestingly, this term has also been used in reference to a variety of Buddhist monks who have established themselves through new forms of religious practices and are venerated by laypersons from various backgrounds who have created their own pieties to meet their everyday spiritual and psychological needs.

The main focus of *khru*ba studies from the past to the present still revolves around three dominant approaches: millenarianism, Buddhist revivalism, and social memory, which are concerned with issues of ethnic identity, cultural politics, ethnic minorities, and social memory. This paper points out that these three approaches are inadequate to explain the current phenomenon of *khru*ba and its proliferation during the past three decades. We need to look at the proliferation of *khru*ba from a new direction. In the context of modern Thai society, *khru*ba cannot be viewed as homogenous even though they are all called by the same name. In order to understand the dynamics of Thai Buddhist society and new forms of religious practices represented by modern *khru*ba, this paper adopts a characterization of *khru*ba's adaptability as local subjects who have represented yet kept reinterpreting Lan Na Buddhism. *Khru*ba in the present time is reinterpreted to serve different expectations of people in the context of prosperity religion. Moreover, in today's globalized and digitalized world, the *khru*ba concept is no longer confined to specific areas or specific groups of devotees; *khru*ba have crossed boundaries to become translocal *khru*ba for devotees around the world.

***Barami* and the Concept of Charisma in *Khru*ba Studies**

In social science literature, scholars have applied Max Weber's concept of charisma (Weber 1988) to explain various social movements led by charismatic figures. Similarly, in studies of Buddhist movements led by monks or charismatic figures, charisma is often referred to by the term *barami* (Pali: *parami*), although in fact there is no Pali or Buddhist term that exactly translates the Greek term "charisma" as used by Christians or in modern sociology. In Buddhism, *barami* means the perfection or completeness of certain virtues, which cultivates a way of purification while reaching a goal of enlightenment (Wisdom Library 2014). For Weber (1988), the legitimacy of charismatic authority rests on devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism, or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him. He defines charisma itself as "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities" (Taylor 2012, 196–197).

The charisma of former *khruba*, particularly in the light of millenarianism, was characterized as a combination of the two above-mentioned concepts, as we have seen in the case of Khruba Siwichai, who reached *barami* as a result of great merit, meditative practice, and an ascetic mode of life. Subsequently, this *barami* was used as a fundamental source for the success of his movement because his followers believed that he possessed supernatural powers or an ability to lead them to certain goals. Vested with this influence, he could mobilize a large number of followers to carry out construction/renovation works (for religious and public services) throughout the northern region as well as to form a resistance movement against Bangkok's authority (see, e.g., Keyes 1981; Tambiah 1984; Sopha 1991; Isara 2011; Easum 2013; Bowie 2014a; 2014b). In particular, this paper adopts the Weberian concept of charisma to explain the construction of charisma of modern *khruba* while employing *barami* or charisma in the Buddhist context of supernatural, superhuman, or exceptional power.

Modern *Khruba* in Contemporary Thai Society

In this study, the term “modern *khruba*” is used to refer neither to *khruba* who stood in opposition to traditional order in the pre-modern era nor to *khruba* who are characterized as less mysterious and more rational (by scientific and technological standards) as suggested by modernization theorists (e.g., Giddens 1990). Rather, “modern *khruba*” refers to the difference, disjuncture, and heterogenization that have led to the emergence, reevaluation, and re-intervention of cultural identities as suggested by Arjun Appadurai (1996). Additionally, “modern *khruba*” represents the re-enchantment of the world in which diverse arrays of opposition are engaged to subvert and undermine the imperialism of formal-rational logics and processes (see Jenkins 2000).

The emergence and rise of modern *khruba* are situated in the hybridized context of the declining influence of the Thai *sangha* and popular Buddhism and prosperity religion. The former is a result of the centralization of the *sangha* in the reign of King Rama V as well as the modernizing projects initiated by him. The Sangha Act in 1902 created the *sangha* bureaucracy, the modern ecclesiastical system with a hierarchy, royal titles, and monk-ranking system. Consequently, the balance between *lokiya* and *lokuttara*, or profane and sacred domains, of monks was disrupted (see Apinya 1993; 1998). Furthermore, the modernizing projects did not lead to the total disappearance of pre-modern beliefs and practices or other local Buddhist traditions. While different varieties of Buddhist tradition have remained meaningful, popular beliefs and practices have emerged or been revived. These include spirit medium cults (see Morris 1994; Pattana 1999), King

Chulalongkorn cults (see Stengs 2009), and new Buddhist schools like Thammakai and Santi Asoke (see Apinya 1993). With respect to the latter form of popular Buddhism, Jirachat Santayos (2010) notes that during the last three decades new *khru*ba have tried to draw a connection with Khruba Siwichai even though their religious practices are so diverse. Similarly, Wilak Sripasang, a university scholar⁸⁾ (n.d.; interview, June 1, 2016), and Phrakhu Adunsilakit, abbot of Wat That Kham in Chiang Mai city⁹⁾ (interview, March 9, 2016), have criticized practices of modern *khru*ba that deviate from *vinaya* (Thai: *phrawinai*; “leading out” or “learning”) and the *khru*ba tradition of Lan Na. In their view, modern *khru*ba’s practices have been changed considerably to serve intensified capitalist desires.

As in other Asian countries (see Pattana 2008; Rozenberg 2010), Pattana Kitiarsa (2012) coined the term “popular Buddhism” to describe various forms of everyday beliefs and practices carried out by specialists and ordinary people who identified themselves as members of the Thai Buddhist community. Popular Buddhism in Thailand incorporates the supernatural powers of spirits, deities, and magic that have emerged from the interplay between animism, supernaturalism, folk Brahmanism, the worship of Chinese deities, and state-sponsored Theravada Buddhism. Peter Jackson (1999a; 1999b) has discussed popular Buddhism as a form of prosperity religion, where wealth is more important than salvation. Significantly, popular Buddhism and prosperity religion constitute the largest, liveliest, and most dynamic religious space in contemporary Thai Buddhist society (Pattana 2012, 1–2). In this regard, popular Buddhism and prosperity religion are flourishing within an individualistic culture since modernity produces crises and gives rise to fragmentation (Tanabe and Keyes 2002). It also breaks down the village-based sense of community, including more collective religious forms and rituals in Buddhism (Jackson 1989, cited in Pattana 2012, 55). Therefore, modern *khru*ba cannot be considered the same even though they bear the same title. Significantly, the modern concept of *khru*ba is not fixed and static; it has been reinterpreted and consumed in different ways by different groups of followers, unlike *khru*ba in the former days.

***Khru*ba in a Contested Space**

The proliferation of *khru*ba during the past three decades has not only evoked social sentiment but caused a social tension that draws modern *khru*ba into a contested space.

8) An expert in Lan Na culture and literature, he is also the originator of the expression “*khru*ba *uk kaet*,” as the author discusses in the following section.

9) He is also an ecclesiastical chief of Tambon (Thai: *chaokhana tambon*), Haiya.

Owing to their ability to integrate the values of local Buddhist tradition with the values of capitalism-consumerism as well as their ability to attract a large crowd of followers and monetary donations, modern *khruba* are viewed by society in both positive and negative ways. In this paper, *khruba* is considered a political arena in which certain groups compete for the construction of the meaning of being *khruba*. In order to understand this, two major strands must be discussed: the essentialist view and the modern view.

1. *Essentialist View of Khruba*

The essentialist view of *khruba* is found mainly among senior monks and scholar monks (mostly with titles or administrative ranks) in the northern region with groups of lay devotees and lay scholars. This group can be characterized by their ideas of essentialism and Buddhist reformism. From this point of view, *khruba* has an essence that can be traced back to the origin. Khruba Siwichai is established as the original version of *khruba*;¹⁰ he represents the essence of the *khruba* concept in Lan Na Buddhism (this paper coins the term “a *khruba* role model”). From his practices to his activities and monastic style, they are used as a benchmark against which to measure modern *khruba*. Apparently, if even one thing deviates from the paradigm there can be no talk of a real *khruba*. This group condemns modern *khruba* and their proliferation in the North for their practices and activities, which are viewed as being contaminated by interaction with modernity and consumerism.

Monks in contemporary Thai Buddhism are criticized by certain scholars for their prosperity-oriented practices and commercialization of religion, which have removed them from *vinaya* and Buddhist doctrines. Commercialized forms of Buddhism (Thai: *phuttha phanit*), such as magic monks and Wat Phra Thammakai, are the main feature of today's Buddhist monks in modern Thai society that have led to the decline of faith and belief among Thai Buddhists (see, for example, Paisan 2003). Modern *khruba* in the North are condemned for the same reason, namely, that they deviate from the former *khruba*'s practices, specifically from those of Khruba Siwichai. In other words, rather than focusing on local practices they use *khruba* as a trademark to make a profit. This destroys the value and image of a “cultural treasure.” This kind of criticism can be found widely in general discussions, books, and academic seminars. Discussions with local people in the North have on many occasions also revealed criticisms of modern *khruba*'s practices. They believe that some modern *khruba* tend to please wealthy devotees from

10) As Isara Treesahakiat (2011, 107–126) suggests, in the contemporary cult of Khruba Siwichai, shrines, museums, and amulets are all significant indicators of the recognition of Khruba Siwichai's spiritual attainment and his status as a Lan Na *ton bun*.

afar more than local people. They also link modern *khrua* with a recent series of corruption and sex scandals involving famous monks in the country, emphasizing the moral decay in Buddhist society. Phra Rat Pariyatmethi¹¹⁾ commented on modern *khrua* (in Nakhon 2010, 16) in an academic seminar organized by Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University,¹²⁾ saying that in Chiang Mai today people praised *khrua* not because of their good practices but because of something superficial, such as their outward appearance and external elements of monastic style. The most concrete and powerful discourse to attack the flourishing of *khrua* today is *khrua uk kaet*. *Uk kaet* is a northern Thai expression literally meaning “artificially rapid ripening.” The term is used to evoke an image of modern monks who have become *khrua* by artificial acceleration (Wilak n.d.). Monks who have become *khrua* by acceleration are not as good as real *khrua*: they have not put enough effort into *dhamma* practice and have not acquired adequate knowledge or experience in either *dhamma* or *vinaya*. Hence, they are not real compared to former *khrua* or even to senior monks who become *khrua* in their old age. Recently, this negative expression has widely been used to generalize modern *khrua* and is often found in academic writing.

Additionally, the sentiments of this group are very clear in their attempt to bring back the “good old days” to counter the present dark age. On the surface, *khrua* has the affirmation of possessing the essence continuing from the past, which protects Buddhism from the negative influence of capitalism-consumerism as well as deviant *khrua*. Yet, at a deeper level, “real-good *khrua*” refers to the establishment of a *khrua* role model with firm and fixed codes of conduct. For instance, Phrakhrū Adunsilakit (interview, March 9, 2016) claimed that a “real-good *khrua*” should perform the following spiritual exercises: (1) wear three pieces of rope; (2) wake up very early (at 4 a.m.); (3) eat one meal a day; (4) practice walking meditation; (5) wander in the forest or *thudong* (Pali: *dhutanga*); (6) adhere to *chatuparisutthisin*, or morality of pure conduct; (7) concentrate on mind purification; (8) pray alone; and (9) spread loving-kindness to all beings.¹³⁾

The essentialist view of *khrua* is considered both an opponent of the proliferation of *khrua* and an inspector for the religion since the *sangha*’s influence has been declining and its system has become dysfunctional. At the same time, this group instigates

11) Now known as Phra Thep Mangkhlaḥan, the abbot of Wat Thaton in Mae Ai District, Chiang Mai, and the deputy ecclesiastical provincial governor of Chiang Mai.

12) Chiang Mai campus, one of the two Buddhist universities in Thailand; the other is Mahamakut Buddhist University.

13) He claimed that the nine codes were summarized from the practices of former *khrua* he observed. He also showed me a booklet about *khrua*’s code of conduct he was writing and planned to publish soon.

members of society, especially Buddhists, to care more about the religion and monks in terms of practices, teachings, and activities that are being ruined by modernity and consumerism. However, the problem is that such a romantic, linear, and fixed perspective in treating the concept of *khruba* has overlooked the dynamism of the *khruba* concept as well as *khruba* themselves. Kwanchewan (1988; 2002), Sopha Chanamun (1991), and Isara Treesahakiat (2011) suggest that the *khruba* concept has always been reinterpreted, redefined, and reevaluated by *khruba* themselves and their followers in order to fit in with specific socio-political contexts. From Khruba Siwichai to Khruba Khao Pi and Khruba Wong, *khruba* has never been linear or static. Moreover, the codes of conduct or criteria of being a “real-good *khruba*” suggested by this group are simply self-interpretation without any supporting sources. Even though they have accused modern *khruba* of deviation from “true” practices of the Lan Na Buddhism delineated by Khruba Siwichai, they have not yet ascertained the *dhamma* practices of Khruba Siwichai from primary sources.

2. Modern View of Khruba

The modern point of view is found among modern *khruba*, regardless of their age and *vassa* (Thai: *phansa*; annual retreat marking progress in monkhood), as well as their believers and followers. Even though some of them are over 60 years old, such as Khruba Noi of Wat Si Don Mun, they are grouped with this strand due to their flexible religious views. This group argues that even though *khruba* is a continuation of the past, the concept should be revised to fit in with the current context. They believe that *khruba* and local traditions can survive in the modern period by adapting. Undoubtedly, the elements of the monastic style and practices that are thought to be authentic Lan Na are referred directly to the charismatic leader, Khruba Siwichai. This paper’s research has shown that all modern *khruba* claim to be successors of Khruba Siwichai. According to this group, on the one hand Khruba Siwichai is the *khruba* prototype to follow, while on the other he is the point of departure for new interpretations. This point of view is not new: as this paper mentioned earlier, the concept of *khruba* has been reevaluated and reinterpreted from time to time since Khruba Siwichai’s period. Khruba Wong, the third generation in Khruba Siwichai’s lineage, believed that the world had changed so much that we could not do the same as the former *khruba*, that “everything is *anitcha*” (Pali: *anicca*, changeable, impermanent) (interview with Dok Kaeomi, August 22, 2015). This represents the group’s standpoint that adapting to the current situation is the solution to sustain the concept of *khruba*. Significantly, in Thailand the *khruba* title is not official—it is an award for “venerated monks” conferred by the people. This implies that they are *khruba* because people think they deserve the title. It comes to them by con-

sensus, not by force or money, and there is no reason to refuse it. Moreover, as we have seen, the modern *khru*ba's reputation has gone far beyond the regional and national levels. Due to modern technology and the relentless pursuit of luck, wealth, and ritual products, followers of modern *khru*ba come from many countries, especially China. Hence, modern *khru*ba is interpreted as being adaptable and flexible in meaning and form so as to appeal to global devotees.

After all, the two strands are considered two sides of the same coin as they share at least two things in common despite their different standpoints. First, they both engage in the process of establishing Khruba Siwichai as a *khru*ba role model. The essentialist view of *khru*ba argues that Khruba Siwichai's practices are authentic Lan Na tradition, which should be preserved and protected. But the modern view, despite *khru*ba's claim to be successors of Khruba Siwichai, believes that parts of Khruba Siwichai's practices, as well as Lan Na tradition, should be revised to better suit the needs of people in modern society. Therefore, for the former *khru*ba can survive through preservation and protection from modernity, whereas for the latter *khru*ba can survive by adaptation and interaction with modernity. Second, monks in both groups claim to be compliant under the *sangha* system. As mentioned earlier, most of the monks in the first group have royal titles or administrative positions that are similar to the titles attained by modern *khru*ba (*phrakhru*¹⁴) or monastery abbots). Due to past conflicts between the authorities and Khruba Siwichai and the recent political conflict between the Red and Yellow Shirts, modern *khru*ba are careful not to make stark distinctions between local and standard traditions. The political conflict today can be viewed as region-based (the North and Northeast versus the central region and the South). The northern region in general is viewed as the home of the Red Shirts as it is the stronghold of Thaksin Shinawatra, the ousted prime minister, and his political faction. Therefore, if they are not careful, *khru*ba from this region might be considered Red Shirt monks by opponents as well as the state. These two points illustrate that both groups follow the ideology of localism yet are under the influence of mainstream nationalism. Unlike Khruba Siwichai, they emphasize the ethno-cultural identity of Lan Na in certain aspects—e.g., language, music, way of life, and *khru*ba tradition—while identifying themselves as members of the Thai nation-state and the national *sangha*.

One thing that differentiates the modernizers from the essentialist *khru*ba group is their criticism of the weaknesses of the *sangha*. Modern *khru*ba seem discreet in not giving any comments on the *sangha*, whereas critical opinions are often voiced by monks from the other side. Phrakhru Adunsilakit (interview, March 9, 2016) explicitly remarked

14) The first rank in the royal titles conferred by the King.

that the proliferation of *khruba* in the North reflects the weakness of the national *sangha* because it lacks any measure of clamping down or monitoring them. Moreover, some monks in ecclesiastical offices have good and mutually beneficial relationships with modern *khruba*.¹⁵⁾

The contestation between the two strands represents the social tension that has existed for decades. Significantly, it is noteworthy that *khruba* is a contested space: no group can claim the absolute right to assert the definitive and valid meaning of *khruba* for society. The concept has become open to new interpretations.

Various Sources of Charisma

This section seeks to explore the construction of charisma by modern *khruba*. In particular, it investigates how they have drawn upon various sources and practices, including the values, beliefs, and traditions of Lan Na, in order to fit in with the heterogeneous expectations of people in popular Buddhism and prosperity religion.

1. *Legitimizing Khruba Status in Thai Society*

In recent times, Thailand has witnessed two separate yet overlapping groups of *khruba*. The first group constitutes those who have been officially conferred by the local Buddhist *sangha* of Keng Tung, Mong Yawng, and Tachileik in the eastern Shan State of Myanmar¹⁶⁾ (see Wat Tha Kradat 2005), while the second group refers to those who have been unofficially recognized by lay devotees due to their charismatic-magical attributes. Most modern *khruba* in Thailand belong to the second group. As mentioned above, the conferring ceremony of monastic titles (Thai: *phithi thera phisek*), including the *khruba* title, has recently been found in the Tai Yai (Shan), Tai Khuen, and Tai Lue Buddhist communities of Keng Tung, Mong Yawng, Tachileik, and Xishuangbanna (they are independent of each other).¹⁷⁾ Tai Buddhist *sangha* outside Thailand have been holding conferring ceremonies from time to time, and, significantly, it has been found that Thai monks have been promoted with different titles (e.g., *sitthi*, *sami*, *khruba*). In the con-

15) Similarly, Paisan Visalo (2000) commented that the *sangha* system had recently become ruined because of its centralized system and the patron-client relationship. He called it “anarchy in the *sangha*.”

16) Xishuangbanna’s *sangha* system also has a *khruba* title, but I have no evidence of whether any Thai monk has ever been promoted by the council of Xishuangbanna *sangha*.

17) This tradition is believed to be an old practice of the former Lan Na *sangha* as it shared its Buddhist ideology with other Tai communities in this region. However, until now there are no primary sources to support this claim.

ferring ceremony of Keng Tung *sangha* in 1998,¹⁸⁾ eight monks from Thailand (mostly from the North) were conferred—six were given the title of *khrua* and two the title of *sitthi*. Among the six *khrua*, some are well known among Thai people, such as Khrua Bunchum (based in Tachileik, see Cohen 2000a; 2000b; 2001; Amporn 2016) and Khrua Montri of Wat Suthon Mongkhon Khiri in Phrae Province (Wat Tha Kradat 2005, 34–37). Another Thai monk who was conferred in this ceremony was Khrua Sam Nuan (Phrakhru Palat Anon Athittathammo) from Wat Tha Kradat in Chiang Mai Province. He is now 48 years old and occupies the abbot position. He is half-Shan, half-Tai Khuen and was born in the border area of Chiang Rai Province (near Myanmar). He was conferred as *sitthi* by Keng Tung *sangha* in 1998 and later as *khrua* in 2008 (interview with Khrua Sam Nuan, February 18, 2016). At the same time, he is serving as *phrakhru palat*, one of the personal staff of Phra Rat Wachiraphon¹⁹⁾ of Wat Mahaputaram in Bangkok.

During the conferring ceremony, it was observed that a monk from Bangkok was also promoted to *khrua*. This evidently demonstrated that in Keng Tung *sangha* the criteria for being conferred are flexible. As Khrua Sam Nuan explained, Buddhist monks from Thailand and other countries are welcome, for they are all *dhamma* heirs of the Buddha. Therefore, regardless of nationality and ethnicity, any monk who has established a good practice and has contributed to Keng Tung is eligible for conferral by the *sangha*. Moreover, the conferment of monastic titles in Keng Tung and Mong Yawng has revealed its dependence on lay sponsors who have given financial support for the ceremony beyond the *sangha* and lay committees (interviews with Khrua Sam Nuan, February 18, 2016; and Somdet Atyatham of Mong Yawng *sangha*, February 23, 2016). Nonetheless, it should be noted that all of the titles conferred on Thai monks are honorary awards; they have nothing to do with any *sangha*'s authority. In 2016 conferring ceremonies were held in Xishuangbanna,²⁰⁾ Mong Yawng,²¹⁾ and Tachileik.²²⁾

Although official *khrua* seem to have legitimacy due to official conferment, the title does not have much effect on their popularity and charisma when compared to the other group of *khrua*. Therefore, even though it is an open gate for *khrua* in Thailand to be

18) The ceremony, the greatest event in 30 years, was held to celebrate the conferment of the 14th *Somdet Atyatham* (the supreme *dhamma*) of Keng Tung *sangha*, including seven monks in *khrua*, one in *sami*, and 11 in *sitthi* (Wat Tha Kradat 2005).

19) A monk with the royal title of *rat*, or *phra rachakhana*, has the authority to designate a group of monks to serve as his personal staff with the titles of *phrakhru palat*, *phrakhru samu*, and *phrakhru baidika* (Nirut 2007, 10–13, 158–186).

20) On February 19, 2016 at Wat Pacie Maharatchathan, no Thai monk was promoted.

21) On February 22–24, 2016 at Wat Ratchathanluang Hua Khuang, two monks from Chiang Rai Province were promoted to *swami*.

22) On December 23–25, 2016 at Wat Phrathat Sai Mueang, only Khrua Chao Thueang of Wat Ban Den in Chiang Mai Province was promoted to *khrua*.

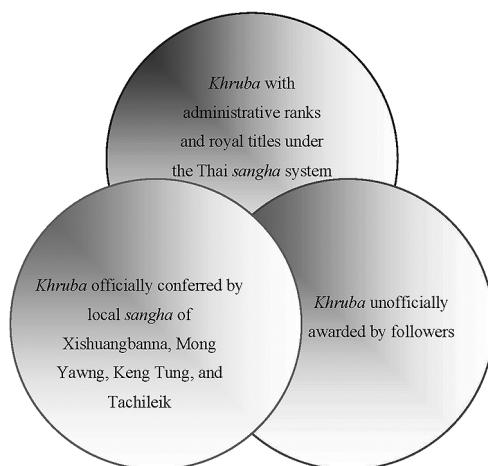


Fig. 1 Modern *Khruba* in Multidimensional Sources of Legitimation

legitimated officially, there are still not many *khruba* from Thailand who have been promoted by the *sangha*. This might be due to the inferior status of local *sangha* in relation to the Thai national *sangha*, as well as monastic titles given by them. Hence, modern *khruba* value recognition by the national *sangha* because of its superiority and the power given by the *sangha* system, e.g., the titles of monastery abbot, *phrakhru*, or higher.²³⁾ Most important, the charismatic status of modern *khruba* can be transferred symbolically through claims of being members of Khruba Siwichai's monastic lineage. Moreover, a modern *khruba* is able to draw upon various sources of legitimacy. He may start his vocation as a *khruba* who is unofficially awarded the designation by devotees. Thereafter, he could get promoted in the Thai *sangha* system while searching for a connection to get officially appointed as a *khruba* in other Tai Buddhist *sangha*, such as Khruba Sam Nuan, Khruba Chao Thueang, and Khruba Montri (see Fig. 1).

2. In the Name of Successors

A discourse of succession has two implications: first, it is a means to claim to be disciples of Khruba Siwichai's monastic lineage; and, second, it is a means to be recognized as authentic *khruba*. Through a discourse of succession, modern *khruba* have relied on various practices to achieve these goals. Some modern *khruba* claim to be direct descendants of Khruba Siwichai. A history of monastic lineage is heavily emphasized in the

23) Such as Khruba Ariyachat of Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan in Chiang Rai Province, who was promoted to (a rank) *phra rachakhana chan saman (vipassana thura)* as (the royal title) Phra Phawanarat-tanayan in 2016. He is now a *khruba* of the highest rank in the Thai *sangha* system.

biography of each modern *khru*ba. This is a way to show that his practices and teachings are authentic, passed down from generation to generation (especially from Khruba Siwichai). Succession in monastic lineage also means the transference of charisma from the master to the next in line. We have found that modern *khru*ba claim to be the second or third generation of Khruba Siwichai's lineage. Some of these examples are Khruba Ariyachat of Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan in Chiang Rai Province (see Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan 2010; So Sutthiphan 2011; 2013; 2015), Khruba Noi of Wat Si Don Mun in Chiang Mai Province (see amulet.in.th 2008; Wat Si Don Mun 2012), and Khruba Don of Wat Phraphutthabat Pha Nam in Lamphun Province (next in line to Khruba Khao Pi and Khruba Wong). Even though modern *khru*ba have many other masters, Khruba Siwichai has always been treated as the greatest master of all. Moreover, for those *khru*ba who could not link themselves with Khruba Siwichai directly, they would declare themselves to be successors of the Lan Na Buddhist tradition or the so-called *khru*ba tradition of Khruba Siwichai. The concept of successor in *khru*ba tradition has been widely used and expressed by a number of young *khru*ba through various practices, such as the reproduction of external elements of monastic style and participation in ceremonies and activities for late *khru*ba, including drawing connections with living *khru*ba—especially those who belong to Khruba Siwichai's lineage.

In order to claim a connection with Khruba Siwichai besides the discourse of succession through monastic lineage, some *khru*ba are rumored to be reincarnations of Siwichai. This is considered another way to affirm the status of the successors. Even though a number of disciples have insisted that Khruba Siwichai has reached *nibbana* (Thai: *nipp*han) and will no longer be reborn in this world, stories of his reincarnation are found in many places across the North. The stories have roots in the common belief that after the death of Khruba Siwichai, his *khwan* (literally life essence or soul) split into 32 pieces and fell in diverse directions. The concept of *khwan* is related to life after death and reincarnation. Khruba Siwichai's *khwan* is believed to have had 32 reincarnations, including some modern *khru*ba: Khruba Bunchum (Cohen 2001, 238), Khruba Chao Thueang (Ashley 2011), Khruba Ariyachat (So Sutthiphan 2011, 147–150), and Khruba Chao Nokaeofa (larndhamkruba.net 2010). Although they have different stories of reincarnation, it has been affirmed that the discourse of succession as well as the establishment of Khruba Siwichai as a *khru*ba role model are very important (see Fig. 2).

3. *Exotic Rituals and Practices*

Rituals (Thai: *phithikam*) and practices (Thai: *kanpatibat*) of modern *khru*ba can be considered a form of cultural creativity (Comaroff 1994, cited in Jackson 1999b) since they

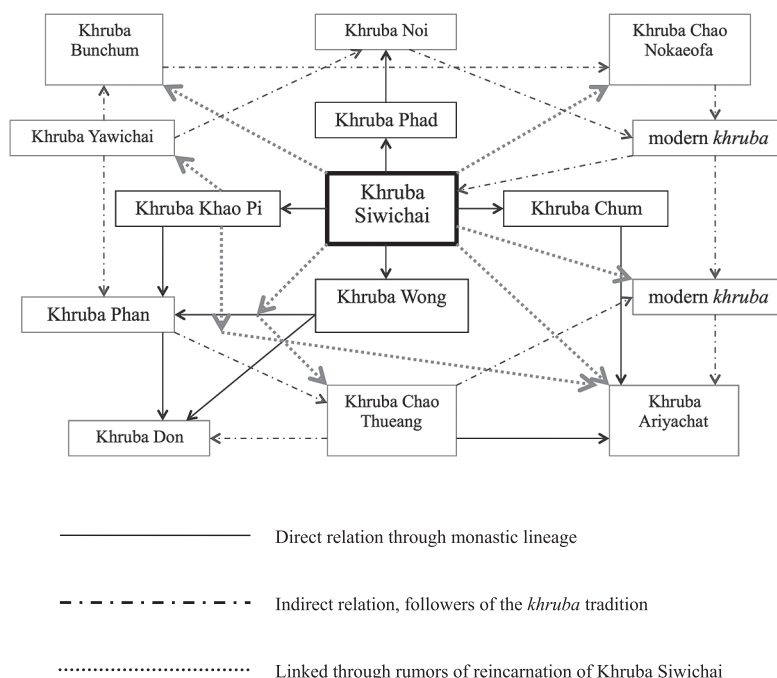


Fig. 2 Connections Drawn by Modern *Khruba* with Khruba Siwichai

are a combination of traditional values of Lan Na and luck-enhancing protective ritualism of prosperity religion. These include sacred and magical objects (amulets and memorabilia) associated with and/or sacralized by them. On the one hand, in rituals and practices the cultural value of *khruba* in Lan Na Buddhism has been highlighted as part of historical and ethno-cultural identity. On the other hand, it has been redirected to serve diverse expectations of people in the milieu of popular Buddhism and prosperity religion. Additionally, this process is driven by translocal, transreligio-cultural, and transnational forces in the globalization era. Below is an example of modern *khruba*'s ritual and practice known as *nirothakam*, or retreat.

Nirothakam (Pali: *nirodhakamma*; Thai: *kankhaokam*) is said to be one among the three kinds of retreat in the Lan Na Buddhist tradition.²⁴ In general, it is a way to purify one's mind and a way of mental practice of strict practitioners. *Nirothakam* is described as an old practice of Khruba Siwichai (Weerasathsophon 2010, 10–12). Usually this practice is carried out over three, five, seven, or nine days depending on the individual practitioner. Each range of days has its own meaning related to Buddhist principles.

24) Pali: *parivaskamma-nirodhakamma-dhutanga*.

Three days represent the triple gems (Buddha-Dhamma-Sangha), five represent the five Buddhas, seven represent the seven books of *phra aphitham* (Pali: *abhidhamma*), and nine represent *lokuttara* or the nine supramundane states²⁵ (*ibid.*, 41–42). The practitioner, generally a Buddhist monk, is restrained from eating, urinating, and defecating. He is not allowed to sleep or move away from his seat. His mouth must be closed at all times. He is allowed to drink only one alms bowl of water. He has to stay alone and away from the village, in a 20-square-meter dwelling or hut.

Khruba Noi and Khruba Ariyachat are famous for their practice of *nirothakam* in recent times. In their accounts, a manuscript in the form of a mulberry paper booklet (northern Thai: *papsa*) believed to be written by Khruba Siwichai is referred to as a primary source for the practice. In the case of Khruba Noi, his first *nirothakam* was held in 1994 during the severe illness of Khruba Phad, his master. The first *nirothakam* was thus aimed to show his determination in Buddhism as well as to exchange his life for Khruba Phad's. Incredibly, a miracle seemed to occur within two days as Khruba Phad's health improved significantly. Since then, Khruba Noi believed firmly in *nirothakam* and made a vow to practice it once a year (in February; Wat Si Don Mun 2012, 23–24). He recently declared his intention to continue the practice until the age of 70. Khruba Noi also noted that *nirothakam* should not be confused with *nirotsamabat* (Pali: *nirodha samapatti*) because the latter is a higher practice for the extinction of feeling and perception in order to reach the fruition of *arahantship* (*nibbana*; Sanskrit: *nirvana*) (interview with Khruba Noi, March 4, 2016). Details of *nirothakam*, in accordance with the manuscript of Khruba Siwichai, are clearly explained in his biography (see *amulet.in.th* 2008). During the first day of the 23rd *nirothakam* (February 18, 2016), the author personally witnessed the practice as a researcher at Wat Si Don Mun. During the three days of retreat, Khruba Noi conducted insight meditation and walking meditation alternately and drank only the water in an alms bowl. The water was prepared in accordance with special instructions in order to underline the exotic, sacred, and auspicious aspect of the ritual. It was obtained from holy wells with auspicious names in various places. The water from those different sources was then combined, filtered through seven layers of white cloth, and poured into a big silver alms bowl. Each layer of cloth was inscribed with *yantra* (Sanskrit term for symbolic diagrams; Thai: *yan*) in order to sacralize the water with protective and magical power. The site was sealed with nine layers of bamboo reeds (Thai: *ratchawat*) tied with a holy thread (Thai: *saisin*) at around 7:20 a.m. Once the site was sealed, no one was allowed to enter or even get within a 100-meter radius until the

25) Four noble paths (Thai: *mak*; Pali: *magga*), four corresponding fruits (Thai: *phon*; Pali: *phala*), and ultimate enlightenment (Thai: *nipphan*; Pali: *nibbana*).

last day (at 6:09 a.m. on February 21, 2016).

In the case of Khruba Ariyachat, *nirothakam* was promoted by the monastery through various channels to attract the public (Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan 2010; So Sutthiphan 2011, 53–62). It was also associated with miraculous stories in order to affirm Khruba Ariyachat's charismatic status and the sacredness of the practice (see So Sutthiphan 2011, 57–62, 165–169). Despite claims of having the same origin, the two *khruba* differed in their practices. Khruba Ariyachat interpreted *nirothakam* as the practice of *nirotsamabat*, focusing on the 13 ascetic practices of *thudong* (*ibid.*, 62). The site was a small makeshift shelter made of bamboo and hay. Inside the shelter there was a big hole, 1 cubit deep and 2 cubits wide. Khruba Ariyachat sat in the hole in the meditation posture. He was not allowed to stand, eat, urinate, or defecate. He was only allowed to drink the water in an alms bowl. Four pieces of white cloth were used as cushions symbolizing the four noble truths, and the makeshift shelter was made from eight poles to symbolize the noble eightfold path. The Buddhist flag was put on the top of the shelter to symbolize wisdom; nine layers of *ratchawat* enclosing the makeshift shelter symbolized *lokuttara*, or the nine supramundane states. Khruba Ariyachat made a vow to perform *nirothakam* only nine times in his life. He kept changing the site every time and did not perform it annually. The first *nirothakam* was held in 1999 in a cave in Nan Province when he was a novice, while the fourth to eighth ones were held in different locations near Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan. The last *nirothakam* was held between January 4 and 12, 2013 at Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan.

The accounts of the two *khruba* clearly demonstrate their austerity in Buddhism and their paths to purify the mind, including a desire to follow traditional practice. They also aim to underline the *khruba*'s charismatic status as proven by the intense practice, the same as Khruba Siwichai did, which cannot be carried out by ordinary monks. This practice is also reminiscent of the self-mortification of the Gotama Buddha. Simultaneously, *nirothakam* of modern *khruba* these days has been redefined to serve expectations in popular Buddhism and prosperity religion, which focus on luck and wealth. The author also observed that *nirothakam* has become a big event advertised vastly by modern *khruba* in order to draw the attention of the public, especially on the last day of the practice. They combine a belief in the value of local Buddhist tradition (*ton bun*) with magical and supernatural powers in order to satisfy the desires of modern society (material wealth and earthly success). As Weerasathsophon (2010, 41) suggests, in general those who have made merit with a monk who has just finished *nirothakam* will gain great merit immediately. They will find heaven and *nibbana* and relief from sorrow and suffering, and they will stay happy, healthy, wealthy, and safe. Additionally, if someone wants to make a wish for good things, that will come true within a short time. Therefore, hundreds

of attendees gather on the last day of *nirothakam* each year. For example, during the last day of the *nirothakam* of Khruba Noi in 2016 (February 21), it was reported that up to 5,000 people attended, among them representatives from government offices and local administrative organizations (TLC News 2016). The attendees included a number of lottery enthusiasts who believed that it was a good opportunity to seek winning lottery numbers. Those numbers were related to Khruba Noi and *nirothakam* events, such as the date and time he came out from the site or his age and year of birth. Enthusiasts also bought several lottery tickets on that day in the hope of winning big prizes (*ibid.*). Not only did they make merit with *khruaba* on the last day of *nirothakam*, they also sought after *khruaba* who would perform rituals to enhance luck and wealth for all guests. After the alms-giving session in the morning was over, Khruba Noi performed a ritual for life prolongation (Thai: *phithi suepchata luang*) in accordance with Lan Na tradition. Khruba Ariyachat, in his eighth *nirothakam* in 2011, performed a ritual to commence the casting of the world's largest bronze statue of Khruba Siwichai. The project cost around 50 million baht, and the opening ceremony attracted 10,000 guests wishing to gain merit and luck (Wat Saengkao Phothiyan 2010).

Significantly, young *khruaba* these days consider *nirothakam* to be a rite of passage for becoming "real *khruaba*." Apart from the above-mentioned *khruaba*, there are a number of others who have claimed to be practitioners of *nirothakam*. These include Khruba Chaiya Patthaphi in Chiang Rai Province, Khruba Chao Nokaeofa in Nakhon Ratchasima Province, Khruba Withun in Nakhon Sawan Province, and Khruba Kaeo and Khruba Sorayut in Lampang Province. For these less-popular *khruaba*, *nirothakam* has become a significant way to promote *khruaba* charisma as well as attract more believers and devotees.

4. Sacred-Magical Objects

Various kinds of sacred-magical objects are produced either for sale or as gifts: tablets, medallions, Buddha images, coins, *takrut*,²⁶⁾ *yantra*, rosaries, etc. Amulets in the Thai context, as Stanley Tambiah (1984, 196) explains, are *khruelang rang khong khlang*, where *khong khlang* refers to an object having sacred or supernormal powers and *khruelang rang* refers to an amulet. Amulets are used to testify to *khruaba*'s magical and supernatural powers while simultaneously satisfying the desires of devotees and followers of prosperity religion. Amulets have also been used extensively for merit-making-cum-fund-raising schemes and have contributed to the expansion of *khruaba*'s worldwide networks. Therefore, they have played a vital role in the construction of charisma by modern *khruaba* while

26) A tiny rolled metal amulet inscribed with magic words.

demonstrating the shift in practices of *khruba* in their efforts to interact fluidly within the current context.

Official biographies as well as academic works on Khruba Siwichai and Khruba Khao Pi have largely portrayed the two *khruba* as *ton bun* or *bodhisatta* (Kwanchewan 2010, 2). With respect to sacred-magical objects, Khruba Siwichai never produced them for sale or rent (Thai: *chao*). It is believed that during his entire lifetime Khruba Siwichai made only one type of miniature Buddha figure: he used sun-dried sticky rice blended with other materials in accordance with local tradition to produce *phrachao khao khu chiwit* (miniature Buddha figures made of rice, the life partner). Other kinds of amulets were quietly made by his disciples and lay devotees without his knowledge. Miniature statues and clay tablets were made out of Khruba Siwichai's hair. The amulets were intended to be circulated among devotees and believers of Khruba Siwichai rather than sold, as these items had not undergone chanting or consecrating (Thai: *pluksek*) by Khruba Siwichai or others (Sirisak 2016, 343–362). All of the amulets that are now for sale were mass produced later, after his death (see Sommai 2000, 54; Sirisak 2016, 345–364). In the case of Khruba Khao Pi, pieces of white cloth with prints of his hands and feet were distributed for free, while his first batch of amulets was produced officially for sale in 1952 (when he was 64). These were in the form of a medallion (Thai: *rian*) and had the batch name *run raek Khruba Khao Pi sali ha king* (first batch of Khruba Khao Pi, the five-branched Bodhi tree). Three batches followed in 1957, 1975, and 1976²⁷ (interview with Inpun and Sukchai, senior devotees of Khruba Khao Pi, July 25–26, 2015; see also Maitri n.d., 80–81). The purpose of producing these amulets was to raise money for his construction works.

Both *khruba* above represented the idea of sacred-magical objects testifying to their high degree of holiness, as a result of austerity in *dhamma* and meditation for a very long time. Tambiah (1984, 335) has suggested that the charisma of Buddhist saints is concretized and sedimented in objects as the repositories of power. These objects eventually become purchasable and are used by laymen to influence, control, seduce, and exploit fellow laymen for worldly purposes. The cult of amulets in Thailand has roots in traditional beliefs and practices concerning magic and supernaturalism, but Pattana (2012, 112) notes that from the tenth or eleventh century to the fifteenth, the religious situation in mainland Southeast Asia changed. Buddhist communities in mainland Southeast Asia have come to be characterized by a fascination with miraculous relics and charismatic, magic monks as they interact more with modernity and capitalism-

27) These were named *Khruba Khao Pi sali ha king* (Khruba Khao Pi, the five-branched Bodhi tree, the second edition), *rian maha lap* (medal of super luck), and *rian run 102* (medal batch 102) respectively.

materialism. So, amulets are perceived and consumed differently from the way they were in the past.

Buddhism was characterized more by miraculous relics and charismatic, magic monks than by organized sectarian tradition. In the 1980s and 1990s, rapid economic growth stimulated the proliferation of prosperity religion, such as the cults of King Chulalongkorn (see Stengs 2009), Guanyin (Thai: *Chao Mae Kuanim*), and some royal spirits (see also Jackson 1999a; 1999b; McDaniel 2011). The craze for prosperity religion continued to mushroom after the economic crisis in the mid-1990s and early 2000s (see Tanabe and Keyes 2002; Pattana 2012).

Jackson (1999a; 1999b) and Pattana (2012) have also discussed the marketing strategy in the naming of batches of amulets. This practice reflects a shift in the significance of amulets in contemporary Thai society, where people believe that wealth is the answer to most problems. Pattana (2012, 96–100) points out that amulets become sacred signifiers that spiritually and psychologically assure their holders that they will achieve their goal of gaining material wealth rather than providing their holders with protective power and moral strength as was the case in the past. Amulet entrepreneurs and monks have made linguistic and symbolic connections between monks' supernatural power and charisma, and people's desire for material wealth, as in the case of Luang Pho Khun's amulet batches. Modern *khru*ba's amulet batches are also named in the same way, such as *phra arahan trai phakhi maha lap* (images of the three *arahants*, great luck) and *takrut setthi ngoen lan* (*takrut*, the millionaire) of Khruba Noi, *nang kwak sap saen lan* (*nang kwak*, a beckoning woman, 100 billion baht of wealth) and *rian rahu ruai sap* (*rahu*,²⁸ wealth) of Khruba Ariyachat, *phra kring siwali phokkhasap phu mi chaichana haeng phaendin* (miniature image of Phra Siwali,²⁹ who has material wealth and gains victory over the land) of Khruba Chaiya Patthaphi in 2013, and *salika riak sap* (medallion of Salika bird, which brings wealth) of Khruba Chao Nokaeofa in 2013. Amulet-making projects are named in order to create excitement among the public. Some examples include *sutyot watthu mongkhon haeng tamnan prawattisat* (the greatest auspicious objects in history) of Khruba Ariyachat in 2014 and *khurang raek khurang diao nai rop kao pi haeng kan phian wiriya thana barami* (the first time and one time only after nine years of perseverance, giving, perfection) of Khruba Yawichai in 2016 (in Chiang Mai Province).

*Khru*ba and amulet entrepreneurs, including their business connections, have employed many business strategies to attract the public as well as to create a unique

28) A god in nine celestial bodies in Hindu and Buddhist beliefs.

29) Pali: *Sivali*.

selling point. Two particularly important strategies can be seen in various channels, including TV, printed materials, Internet websites and social media, and word of mouth via translators. These strategies involve providing information about the production of amulets and their efficacy, as well as sharing magical-supernatural stories from amulet holders. With regard to the first strategy, among a wide range of amulets, one particular batch of miniature images of Khruba Noi with the batch name *rup muean Khruba Noi run 1*³⁰ (image of Khruba Noi, the first batch) in 2013–14 was claimed to have protective and magical powers to bring luck and success in everything upon request (a vinyl poster in Wat Si Don Mun; Khaosod 2016). The sacralizing of the images was special, as they had undergone chanting and blessing (Thai: *athitthan chit lae pluksek*) by Khruba Noi for over three months during the retreat of the rains (Thai: *khao phansa*) and during *nirothakam* in 2013. Moreover, during this period these amulets were submerged in a full alms bowl of a special herbal oil called *wan kai daeng*³¹ (red rooster herbal oil) together with 108³² other sacred herbs (Thai: *wan saksit*). Before being packaged, they were blessed again by Khruba Noi. The advertisement stirred the enthusiasm of the public by claiming that this batch of amulets was a limited edition and no rain checks could be given, because the concrete molds of the amulets would be destroyed on February 23, 2014. For Khruba Ariyachat, *Mae Nang Kwak* has the specific name of *Mae Thong Phan Chang* (the woman of a thousand scales of gold). It is a miniature statue of a kneeling woman beckoning with one hand, which is said to represent her calling clients and buyers to shops. Generally, in other places, the *mae nang kwak* image has a slender shape and a beautiful face; but in Khruba Ariyachat's version it has a round shape and is the so-called *nang kwak uan* (fat *nang kwak*). This is Khruba Ariyachat's own creation in order to represent fertility and eternal wealth. Recently Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan claimed to be the originator of *nang kwak uan* in Thailand, and it has come to be regarded as a symbol of Khruba Ariyachat (So Sutthiphan 2013, 126). Verses for invocations (Thai: *khatha buchha*) and procedures to worship the amulets are included in order to get immediate and great results. For example, *mae nang kwak-mae thong phan chang* needs to be placed facing outward from the shop and should be worshipped with either a glass or a bottle of water every day. Fruits should be presented either every day or once a week. A wish can be made by lighting either 9 or 16 incense sticks and asking for help in commerce, luck, or wealth. Afterward, the verses for the request (Thai: *khatha aratthana*) should be recited.

30) In varying materials and price ranges, e.g., gold (100,000 baht) and brass (500–700 baht).

31) This herb is believed to have a high magical potency to increase personal charm, luck, and protection. It is very rare and most sought after because it grows deep in the forest in Myanmar, not in Thailand (baanjompra.com 2015).

32) The number 108 is auspicious in Buddhism and is often highlighted by modern *khruba*.

Below is the author's translation of verses for *khatha aratthana* upon *mae nang kwak-mae thong phan chang* (*ibid.*, 127–128).

*ohm the revered grandfather green mountain who has only one daughter
named Nang Kwak
she was loved by women and men who saw her
they, merchants keep me and go to trade till up to the city of deities
I shall sell rings, and get a hundred thousand tanan³³⁾ each day
I shall do all kinds of trade with the flow
I shall sell gold, and get a full basket of gold in return
take 103 baskets home, be a millionaire within three months
within three years, own a ship for trade
the hermit is the Lord who brings success only to me
(Pali verse) e hi chit tang pi yang ma ma ma maha la pha pha wan tu me luck, money from all
directions shall flood in to me
(Pali) samathi ma e hi ma ma sap phe cha na pha hu cha na
A short version: (Pali) e hi chit tang maha la pha pi yang ma ma ma ma*

Frequently modern *khruaba*, in collaboration with amulet entrepreneurs, broadcast video clips on TV and YouTube to promote their amulets, such as “Khui fueang rueang Phra Khruba Ariyachat” (a talk about amulets with Khruba Ariyachat) (YouTube, Wanchai Suphan 2014).³⁴⁾ Another interesting technique in the amulet business is shared by Khong (pseudonym), the owner of a foundry and minting factory in Chiang Mai Province³⁵⁾ (interview, September 7, 2016). According to Khong, a famous *khruaba* in Lamphun Province makes use of modern communication technology and a highly commercialized strategy to draw the crowds and channel the amulets to potential customers by taking reservations for his new batch of amulets only on Facebook. Reservations commence at 9 a.m. because 9 is an auspicious number in Thai Buddhist culture, representing growth, progress, and advancement. On one day in 2015, in less than a minute, approximately 5,000 reservations had been made by worldwide customers (mainly from China and Singapore), with a few hundred remaining.

Regarding the second point, stories of sacredness are emphasized and conveyed through individual experiences of the holders in order to affirm the efficacy of the *khruaba*'s amulets. This is another example showing the connection between the charismatic,

33) Name of an ancient measurement, a vessel made of coconut shell for ladling rice.

34) There are more video clips in the series “Khui fueang rueang phra” with other modern *khruaba*, such as Khruba Kritsana (in Nakhon Ratchasima Province in 2013) and Khruba Nuea Chai (in Kanchanaburi Province in 2012).

35) He is also a vice chairman of the Northern Thai Amulet Association (Thai: *Samakhom Phrakhrueang Phra Bucha Thai Phaknuea*) sub-region, Lamphun, Lampang, Chiang Mai, and Mae Hong Son Provinces.

supernatural powers of Buddhist monks and secular affairs. Below is an example of the stories.

Praphasi (pseudonym) is a local politician serving as a representative of the sub-district municipality (Thai: *samachik sapha thetsaban tambon*) in Tha Song Yang District, Tak Province. Her experience with amulets of Khruba Noi began in 2012 after a decision to run for election in the subdistrict municipality. She was worried because she was an independent candidate without backing from any political party. At first she did not know Khruba Noi, but her son (in his early 20s), who was a spirit medium and close devotee of Khruba Noi, took her to him to ease the worry. Khruba Noi gave her magic candles called *thian siwali doen dong* (Phra Siwali wandering in the forest). These candles were believed to have the power to increase personal charm and enable one to persuade others. Khruba Noi instructed Praphasi to light the candles and pray to them three days before the election. Even though he did not give her any mantra (Thai: *mon, khatha*), Praphasi said, “Believe it or not, elderly people in the villages could remember my number [number 7] while forgetting the numbers of other candidates.” Eventually, among 30 candidates, she was elected by the second-highest number of votes (interview, November 4, 2015). Since then, she and her family have become devotees of Khruba Noi. She also wore around her neck a locket of Khruba Noi, surrounded by diamonds, in order to protect her from harm while invoking luck and success for her business.

Three Modern *Khruba* in Multidimensional Charisma

This section provides short biographies of three modern *khruba* in order to provide a clearer picture regarding the dynamism of the *khruba* concept and the flexibility of modern *khruba* in contemporary Thai society whose charisma has been perceived and consumed in multidimensional ways.

1. *Khruba Phan of Wat Phraphutthabat Huai Tom, Lamphun Province*

An 88-year-old abbot, known to be of Khruba Siwichai’s lineage, succeeded to the abbot position from his master and his older cousin, Khruba Wong (d. 2000). Khruba Wong was generally perceived as one of the three greatest *khruba* of Lan Na after Khruba Siwichai and Khruba Khao Pi. Khruba Phan has been promoted in the Thai *sangha* system to Phrakhru Phinitasatham (see Kwanchewan 2010). His monastery is surrounded by 10 villages established by Khruba Wong. A majority of the population are Karen who have relocated from other northern provinces since 1946. Khruba Phan is still a beloved master of the villagers in the community as well as of the Karen in other communities

who have followed the three greatest *khru*ba.³⁶⁾

During Khruba Phan's period, he has tried to maintain the teachings and practices of Khruba Wong in order to maintain the religious community of Huai Tom. For example, villagers are asked to strictly observe the five moral precepts (Thai: *sin*, Pali: *sila*).³⁷⁾ They are not allowed to raise livestock and have to abstain from eating all types of meat inside the community. They are required to regularly pray to the Buddha(s) while counting the rosary, either in front of their household altars or in the monastery's hall. Only vegetables can be offered as alms to monks in the morning. Drugs and alcohol are prohibited. On Buddhist holy days, villagers have to go to the monastery to make merit, listen to sermons, and pray.³⁸⁾ Every time they visit the monastery they are required to wear Karen traditional dress. All of these regulations were issued by Khruba Wong, and villagers are required to observe them very strictly otherwise they are expelled from the community.

However, as Kwanchewan (2010, 4) has pointed out, Khruba Phan's reputation as *ton bun* is lesser than that of former *khru*ba. Moreover, his picture is rarely included in posters or books of Thai saints. Even though Khruba Phan is not very popular, Huai Tom's religious network has been maintained and expanded through various activities. For example, the mummified body of Khruba Wong has been preserved in the monastery to attract visitors and pilgrims. The Robe Changing Ceremony for Khruba Wong is organized on May 17 each year. This ceremony is the monastery's most important event and is used to maintain and expand its network as well as gain a huge amount of donations.

36) Mikael Gravers (2012) suggests that Karen imaginary and notions of royalty are preconditions for a new era governed by Buddhist ethics that will bring peace and prosperity. Royalty appear in Karen myths, legends, and prophecies since Karen believe they are like orphans without a king and leader. Buddhist Karen await the next Buddha, Ariya Metteyya, preceded by a righteous Karen leader. Thus, *khru*ba and other charismatic monks are perceived as lords, such as Khruba Djau La (a Karen monk during 1960–70) who was called by disciples (in Karen) *Bhagava* (the noble lord, an epithet of the Buddha), *Phu Ga Cha* (Lord Father), *Ga Cha Yuah* (God), and *Djau Pha* (King). Similarly, Khruba Siwichai, Khruba Khao Pi, and Khruba Wong were also called by Karen devotees Ka Cha Bang, Ka Cha Wa, and Ka Cha Pho, the “Yellow-Robed Lord,” the “White-Robed Lord,” and the “Little Lord,” respectively. Moreover, these lords were certainly more powerful than traditional lords because they owned sacred places represented by pagodas, reliquaries, and monasteries scattered throughout the land (Kwanchewan 2002, 275–276). According to the Karen in Huai Tom, Khruba Wong gave them knowledge and development, and thus “we are no longer orphans” (Gravers 2012, 357–359).

37) The five precepts constitute the basic code of ethics undertaken by lay followers of Buddhism. The precepts are commitments to abstain from harming living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxication (Getz 2004, 673).

38) In April 2015 the Huai Tom community was awarded by the government with the office of Buddhism, as 100 percent of the villagers were able to follow the five moral precepts. This was the first community in the country that received this award.

Recently, the event has become bigger and more popular, with more than 10,000 people attending between 2015 and 2016 (see a picture of the ceremony in Appendix). In addition, as observed in this research, the event has been supported by government agencies, both provincial and national.³⁹⁾ During the last decade Khruba Phan has gained a reputation as a magic monk among amulet seekers and traders since he produced amulets of a legendary creature with four ears and five eyes (Thai: *maeng si hu ha ta*). According to legend, the creature brings material wealth to its owners. Advertisements on websites as well as on banners in the monastery announce that Khruba Phan has inherited the *maeng si hu ha ta* mystical mantra from Khruba Wong.

2. *Khruba Noi of Wat Si Don Mun, Chiang Mai Province*

Khruba Noi is 64 years old and has been promoted in the Thai *sangha* system as Phrakhrusirisilasangwon. He succeeded his late master, Khruba Phad, to the abbot position. Khruba Phad, who was known as one of the disciples of Khruba Siwichai, was renowned for his magical powers, amulets, and traditional healing. Khruba Noi is the closest disciple of Khruba Phad and considered to be the only one who has inherited the secret knowledge of magical practices. Significantly, the reputation based on the magical practices of Khruba Phad's school is nationally recognized: members of the royal family have paid numerous visits to the monastery since Khruba Phad's time. Therefore, Khruba Noi does not only represent the Lan Na Buddhism of the North idealized by Khruba Siwichai, he also represents the mystical-magical art of Khruba Phad's school.

His external elements of monastic style are similar to Khruba Siwichai's, which are quite different from the norm:⁴⁰⁾ dark brown robes with a chest band, shawl, rosary, walking stick, hat, and peacock or palm leaf fan. He states that his *dhamma* practice is as strict as the practice of the former-day *khruba*. For instance, he subsists on minimum sustenance, practices insight meditation and walking meditation every morning and night, and owns neither a TV nor a cell phone. Moreover, he strictly adheres to the *dhamma* teaching for his disciples in the monastery. Due to this, he has few fellows: only four monks (including him) have been living in the monastery recently (interview with Khruba Noi, March 4, 2016). Furthermore, he conducts *nirothakam* (retreat) every year, as mentioned earlier (February 18–21 in 2016). However, what make him popular at the international level are not his authentic practice of Lan Na Buddhist tradition but rather

39) The deputy supreme commander of the Royal Thai Armed Forces presided over the ceremony (as a chief layman) in 2016.

40) Isara calls it “non-reformed Mahanikai style”: non-reformed Mahanikai refers to monks who wear the traditional style of monastic robes, whereas reformed Mahanikai refers to monks who wear Thammayut nikai's style of robes (see Isara 2011, 85–88).

his magical practices and sacred-magical objects. In recent times, with his image of a magic monk, he is popular among Chinese businesspersons from China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia (interview with a female Chinese amulet trader from Beijing, August 14, 2015). Every day, hundreds of people come to be blessed by him as well as to buy his amulets. His amulets are some of the most sought after among amulet traders and collectors. Two of Khruba Noi's amulets were awarded the best amulet of the year in 2013 in a competition organized by amulet traders and collectors in Bangkok.⁴¹⁾ All of the amulets are believed to bring prosperity, success, charm, happiness, and fortune to their owners. Khruba Noi also sends amulets and protective objects to the military camp in Chiang Mai. As a result, he gains great support from the military camp for his activities every year (interview with a male devotee, November 1, 2015).

He also performs rituals to increase good fortune for those who need it. His mantra is a combination of several languages: northern Thai, Shan, Chinese, Burmese, and Pali. It is exotic, mystical, and sacred. He created this unique mantra by himself to bestow all with prosperity, wealth, health, and fortune. The monastery is fronted with an amulet shop with full-time staff members ready to service customers, like a convenient shop of fortune. As promoted by the monastery, a portion of the proceeds go toward charitable activities, for instance, the construction of a small hospital where Khruba Noi donated 45 million baht for the land and buildings⁴²⁾ (opened in March 2015). The hospital was then given to the government under the tutelage of the Ministry of Public Health. This enhances Khruba Noi's charisma as a development monk (Thai: *phra nakphatthana*). His main sponsor during the last decade has been the owner of a big petrochemical company in Bangkok along with his family. Every year they donate more than one million baht to the monastery. They also provide financial support and construction materials required by the monastery. Inside the monastery are signboards advertising that the monastery uses the company's products for religious benefit (see a picture of Khruba Noi in the 2016 *thot kathin* ceremony in Appendix).

3. *Khruba Ariyachat of Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan, Chiang Rai Province*

Khruba Ariyachat is very young (35 years old), and his 10-year-old monastery is gigantic and beautifully decorated. In it is the world's largest bronze statue of Khruba Siwichai, built in 2009 (9 meters long and 12 meters tall) and soon joined by the large statues of Khruba Khao Pi and Khruba Wong; together they are called the three greatest *khruba* of Lan Na (see a picture of the statues in Appendix). Khruba Ariyachat is originally from

41) Pramai Dot Com Company and Association of Countrywide Collectors of New Amulets.

42) He is continuously raising funds for the hospital.

Lamphun Province and a disciple from Khruba Siwichai's lineage (from Khruba Chum of Wat Wang Mui-Chai Mongkhon). He started his vocation under the patronage of Khruba Chao Thueang of Wat Ban Den in Chiang Mai (see Ashley 2011), one of the most popular *khruba* in recent times.⁴³⁾ After an acrimonious conflict with Khruba Chao Thueang, he left and built his own monastery named Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan (interview with a senior devotee of Khruba Chao Thueang, November 9, 2015). Apart from the link with the former *khruba* through monastic lineage, a story of reincarnation also enhances his saintly status. During this research, it was discovered that when he was young, he claimed that he was the reincarnation of Khruba Khao Pi (interview with a female devotee from Bangkok, December 19, 2015). Later, after the establishment of Wat Saengkaeo, he was rumored to be the reincarnation of Khruba Siwichai instead (YouTube, WoodyTalk 2016). As described in his biography, his face looks like that of Khruba Siwichai's statue (So Sutthiphan 2011). Even though he himself never claimed to be a reincarnation of Khruba Siwichai, he has a habit of walking slowly with the slightly hunched posture of an elderly person.

His external elements of monastic style are similar to Khruba Siwichai's and Khruba Noi's in representing Lan Na Buddhism. Moreover, people are often impressed by his good looks, charm, and soft and gentle style of speaking and acting. He likes to bond with his followers and visitors, especially men, through physical contact such as holding hands, hugging, gently touching their shoulders and backs, which is thought to be a means of transferring his magical and spiritual powers. Regarding the practice of Lan Na Buddhism idealized by Khruba Siwichai, he conducted *nirothakam* just like Khruba Noi, as mentioned previously. Khruba Ariyachat's supporters are mostly well-to-do middle-class people from the central region, especially business owners. The grand hall was sponsored mainly by one of the biggest television companies in Thailand. Khruba Ariyachat invites TV stars to join him on numerous occasions, including shows and concerts organized in order to attract local people. He frequently appears in newspapers, amulet magazines, and TV programs. This confirms his reputation as a holy monk at the national level. At the *thot kathin* festival⁴⁴⁾ in 2015 he collected around eight million baht in donations, while in 2016 he collected around 16 million baht (see a picture of Khruba Ariyachat in 2016 *thot kathin* ceremony in Appendix). For his birthday celebration (in January 2016),⁴⁵⁾ he held a big festival and invited one of King Bhumibol's granddaughters to

43) Khruba Chao Thueang was rumored to be the reincarnation of Khruba Siwichai, too (Ashley 2011, 182).

44) *Thot kathin* is celebrated annually during October and November. The practice consists, in essence, of giving new robes to the monks who come out of retreat at the end of the rainy season.

45) It was also the celebration of the ninth year, ninth month, and ninth day of the establishment of Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan.

preside over the ceremony. Popular TV stars and hosts were also present with the idea of producing a special episode on TV (see YouTube, WoodyTalk 2016). On that day, Khruba Ariyachat donated large sums of money to a hospital, schools, students, and communities as an act of great merit making (Thai: *than*) of a great man. Interestingly, his two extracted teeth were auctioned for more than three million baht and sold to wealthy female devotees from Bangkok.

He has also produced a wide range of amulets. His monastery is often used as a site for consecration ceremonies (Thai: *phithi phuttha phisek*) for amulets and medallions. Three biographies of Khruba Ariyachat have been produced by a well-known publisher in Bangkok, and half of them are devoted to stories about his sacred-magical objects as well as his supernatural powers (see So Sutthiphan 2011; 2013; 2015).

Conclusion

Khruba have consistently played a meaningful role in local Buddhist communities of Northern Thailand for generations. Modern *khruba* continue to represent themselves as followers of the charismatic Khruba Siwichai and Lan Na Buddhism. However, during the past three decades they have undergone a period of flourishing that involves heterogeneous beliefs and practices in the context of the declining influence of the *sangha* and popular Buddhism. They have constructed *khruba* charisma through various practices that can be analyzed using two major approaches. First, their legitimization occurs through the discourse of succession in Khruba Siwichai's monastic lineage and the *khruba* tradition in which Khruba Siwichai was established as a role model. All of the modern *khruba* claim to succeed Khruba Siwichai through, for example, external elements of monastic style, *nirothakam* (retreat), or a campaign for the construction and renovation of religious buildings. These practices are meant to signify the transference of charisma symbolically to the next in line based on a claim by Khruba Siwichai. In this sense, this process signifies a continuation of the past. However, in the second approach, the reproduction of *khruba* has allowed us to see the disjuncture of the past. We have seen that the concept of *khruba* is malleable enough to allow for different interpretations, even to the point of allowing modern *khruba* to combine the values of materialism and consumerism in their practices. This paper has argued that these are the key factors in the success of the construction of charisma as well as in the proliferation of modern *khruba* at the present time. *Khruba* as local subjects are in the process of creating translocal *khruba* as they interact with the global culture. This paper has presented many cases of modern *khruba* who are more involved in religious commercialization and prosperity religion,

while highlighting the value of Lan Na through a discourse of sacred-mystical power acquired from a local and special set of knowledge. Nonetheless, this process is carried out carefully under strategic loyalty to the Thai state, the monarchy, and the *sangha* as illustrated through examples of how *khruba* maintain good relationships with the monarchy, influential politicians, high-ranking officials, and others in the *sangha* system. These processes serve to enhance our understanding of the construction of charisma by modern *khruba* while explaining why the concept of *khruba* is still meaningful in the modern Buddhist society of Thailand.

Accepted: January 18, 2018

Acknowledgments

Supported by the CMU 50th Anniversary PhD Grant, Chiang Mai University. I would like to thank Professor Bruce Lockhart, Professor Yoko Hayami, and anonymous reviewers for their valuable comments on earlier versions of this paper. I would also like to thank the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University, for having me as a special research student between October 2016 and March 2017, during which time this paper was written. While there, I received great support, especially from Professor Tatsuki Kataoka.

References

- Amporn Jirattikorn. 2016. Buddhist Holy Man Khruba Bunchum: The Shift in a Millenarian Movement at the Thailand-Myanmar Border. *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 31(2): 377–412.
- amulet.in.th. 2008. Khruba Noi Wat Si Don Mun Chiang Mai คุรุบาโน่ วัดศรีดอนมูล เชียงใหม่ [Khruba Noi Wat Si Don Mun, Chiang Mai]. http://www.amulet.in.th/forums/view_topic.php?t=666, accessed June 16, 2015.
- Apinya Feungfusakul อภิญญา เฟื่องฟูสกุล. 1998. *Satsanathat khong chumchon mueang samai mai: Sueksa korani Wat Phra Thammakai* ศาสนทัศน์ของชุมชนเมืองสมัยใหม่: ศึกษากรณีวัดพระธรรมกาย [Religious view of modern urban society: A case study of Wat Phra Thammakai]. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Center for Buddhist Studies.
- . 1993. Buddhist Reform Movements in Contemporary Urban Thai Context: Dhammakaya and Santi Asoka. PhD dissertation, Bielefeld University.
- Appadurai, Arjun. 1996. *Modernity at Large*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ashley, Sean M. 2011. Late for Buddha: The Construction of Dara'ang (Silver Palaung) Religious and Ethnic Identity. PhD dissertation, Simon Fraser University.
- baanjompra.com. 2015. Nam man wan kai daeng [Red rooster herbal oil]. July 14. <http://www.baanjompra.com/webboard/thread-8214-1-1.html>, accessed November 5, 2015.
- Bowie, Katherine A. 2014a. Of Buddhism and Militarism in Northern Thailand: Solving the Puzzle of the Saint Khrubaa Srivichai. *Journal of Asian Studies* 73(3): 711–732.
- . 2014b. The Saint with Indra's Sword: Khrubaa Srivichai and Buddhist Millenarianism in

- Northern Thailand. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56(3): 681–713.
- Charnnarong Srisuwan ชาญณรงค์ ศรีสุวรรณ. 1997. Kansueksa wihan thi sang nai krabuankan Khruba Siwichai BE 2447–2481 การศึกษาวิหารที่สร้างในกระบวนการครุบาทวิชัย พ.ศ. 2447–2481 [The study of Vihara built by Kruba Srivichai Movement AD 1904–39]. Master's thesis, Silpakorn University.
- Cohen, Paul. 2002. Buddhist Revivalism in the Tai World. In *Cultural Diversity and Conservation in the Making of Mainland Southeast Asia and Southwestern China: Regional Dynamics in the Past and Present*, edited by Yukio Hayashi and Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, pp. 243–321. Kyoto: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University.
- . 2001. Buddhism Unshackled: The Yuan “Holy Man” Tradition and the Nation-State in the Tai World. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 32(2): 227–247.
- . 2000a. Lue across Borders: Pilgrimage and the Muang Sing Reliquary in Northern Laos. In *Where China Meets Southeast Asia*, edited by G. Evans, C. Hutton, and Kuah Khun Eng, pp. 145–161. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- . 2000b. A Buddha Kingdom in the Golden Triangle: Buddhist Revivalism and the Charismatic Monk Khruba Bunchum. *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 11(2): 141–154.
- Easum, Taylor M. 2013. A Thorn in Bangkok's Side: Khruba Sriwichai, Sacred Space and the Last Stand of the Pre-modern Chiang Mai State. *South East Asia Research* 21(2): 211–236.
- Getz, Daniel A. 2004. Precepts. In *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert E. Buswell, Jr., pp. 673–675. New York: Thomson Gale.
- Giddens, Anthony. 1990. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Gravers, Mikael. 2012. Waiting for the Righteous Ruler: The Karen Royal Imaginary in Thailand and Burma. *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 43(2): 340–363.
- Isara Treesahakiat. 2011. The Significance of Khruba Sriwichai's Role in Northern Thai Buddhism: His Sacred Biography, Meditation Practice and Influence. Master's thesis, University of Otago.
- Jackson, Peter A. 1999a. The Enchanting Spirit of Thai Capitalism: The Cults of Luang Phor Khoon and the Post-modernization of Thai Buddhism. *South East Asia Research* 7(1): 5–50.
- . 1999b. Royal Spirits, Chinese Gods, and Magic Monks: Thailand's Boom-time of Prosperity. *South East Asia Research* 7(3): 245–320.
- Jenkins, Richard. 2000. Disenchantment, Enchantment and Re-Enchantment: Max Weber at the Millennium. *Max Weber Studies* 1(1) (November): 11–32. <http://maxweberstudies.org/kcfinder/upload/files/MWSJournal/1.1pdfs/1.1%2011-32.pdf>, accessed September 3, 2016.
- Jirachat Santayos จิระชาติ สันติะยศ. 2010. “Khruba Siwichai” kap khati niyom baep khruba (mai) chuang thotsawat 2530–2550 “ครุบาทวิชัยกับคตินิยมแบบ “ครุบาท” (ใหม่) ช่วงทศวรรษ 2530–2550 [Khruba Siwichai and a new khruba ideology during BE 2530–2550]. In *Thera phisek phithi yokyo samanasak phrasong nai Lan Na* เถรากิเยก พิธิยกขอสมณศักดิ์พระสงฆ์ในล้านนา [Thera phisek: The conferring ceremony of Buddhist monks in Lan Na], edited by Phra Nakhon Prangrit (Panyawachiro) พระนคร ปริงฤทธิ์ (ปัญญา วัชรโร), pp. 207–229. Chiang Mai: Center for Buddhist Studies in Neighboring Countries Project, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai Campus.
- Keyes, Charles, F. 1981. The Death of Two Buddhist Saints. In *Charisma and Sacred Biography*, edited by Michael Williams, pp. 149–180. Chico: Scholar Press (Journal of the American Academy of Religion, Thematic Series 48/3–4).
- . 1977. Millennialism, Theravada Buddhism, and Thai Society. *Journal of Asian Studies* 36(2): 283–302.
- Khaosod. 2016. Rup muean loi ong Khruba Noi รูปเหมือนลอยองค์ครุบาน้อย [Image of Khruba Noi]. January 23. http://daily.khaosod.co.th/view_news.php?newsid=TUROaWRXUXdOakl6TURFMU9RPT0=, accessed June 3, 2017.
- Kwanchewan Buadaeng. 2010. Becoming Khruba Followers: Migrated Karen Peoples in a Religious

- Community in Li District, Lamphun Province. Paper presented at the workshop on “Communities of Becoming in Mainland South East Asia,” February 6–7, Chiang Mai University.
- . 2002. Kruba Movements and the Karen in Northern Thailand: Negotiating Sacred Space and Identity. In *Cultural Diversity and Conservation in the Making of Mainland Southeast Asia and Southwestern China: Regional Dynamics in the Past and Present*, edited by Yukio Hayashi and Thongsa Sayavongkhamdy, pp. 262–293. Kyoto: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University.
- . ขวัญจิวัน บัวแดง. 1999. Apichai (Khao Pi), Khruba (BE 2432–2520) อภิชัย (ขาวปี), คุรบา (พ.ศ. 2432–2520) [Apichai (Khao Pi), Khruba (BE 2432–2520)]. In *Saranukrom Thai phaknuea lem 15* สารานุกรมไทยภาคเหนือ เล่ม 15 [Encyclopedia of northern Thai region, Volume 15]. Bangkok: Thai Cultural Encyclopedia Foundation, Siam Commercial Bank.
- . 1988. The Karen and the Khruba Khao Pi Movement: A Historical Study of the Response to the Transformation in Northern Thailand. Master’s thesis, Ateneo de Manila University.
- larndhamkruba.net. 2010. Prawat Khruba Chao Nokaeofa (Phra Chetsada Chotpanyo) ประวัติคุรบาเจ้าหน่อแก้วฟ้า (พระเจษฎา โชคปิโย) [A biography of Khruba Chao Nokaeofa (Phra Chetsada Chotpanyo)]. <http://www.larndhamkruba.net/index.php?mo=3&art=480379>, accessed June 5, 2015.
- Maitri Phawang ไมตรี ภาวัง. n.d. *Lao khan tamnan tham chabap Khruba Apichai Khao Pi* เล่าขานตำนานธรรมฉบับคุรบาอภิชัยขาวปี [Telling a story of *dhmma* legend, a version of Khruba Khao Pi]. n.p.
- McDaniel, Justin. 2011. *The Lovelorn Ghost and the Magical Monk: Practicing Buddhism in Modern Thailand*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Morris, Rosalind. 1994. Consuming the Margins: Northern Thai Spirit Mediumship and the Theatrics of Consumption in the Age of Late Capitalism. PhD dissertation, University of Chicago.
- Nakhon Prangrit (Panyawachiro), Phra นคร ปรงฤทธิ์ (ปัญญาจิโร), พระ, ed. 2010. *Thera phisek: Phithi yokyo samanasak phrasong nai Lan Na* เถรากิเยก: พิธิยกยอสมณศักดิ์พระสงฆ์ในล้านนา [Thera phisek: The conferring ceremony for Buddhist monks in Lan Na]. Chiang Mai: Center for Buddhist Studies in Neighboring Countries Project, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Chiang Mai Campus.
- Nirut Thitasangwaro, Phra มหา นิรุตต์ ฐิตสังวโร, พระมหา. 2007. *Khumue samanasak phatyt chabap sombun* คู่มือสมณศักดิ์ พดศ ฉบับสมบูรณ์ [A full version of the handbook on ecclesiastical titles and fans of ranks]. Bangkok: Thongtham.
- Paisan Visalo, Phra ไพศาล วิสาโล, พระ. 2003. *Kanpatirup lae fuenfu phutthasatsana nai yuk lokaphiwat* การปฏิรูปและฟื้นฟูพุทธศาสนาในยุคโลกาภิวัตน์ [Reformation and restoration of Buddhism in globalization era]. <http://www.visalo.org/article/budKarnpatiroob.htm>, accessed December 28, 2016.
- . 2000. *Mueang Thai nai anakhot: Anathipat nai wongkan song* เมืองไทยในอนาคต: อนาธิปไตยในวงการสงฆ์ [Thailand in the future: Anarchy in the *sangha*]. <http://www.visalo.org/article/maticchon254311.htm>, accessed December 30, 2016.
- Pattana Kitiarsa. 2012. *Mediums, Monks, and Amulets: Thai Popular Buddhism Today*. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books in association with University of Washington Press.
- . 2008. Buddha Phanit: Thailand’s Prosperity Religion and Its Commodifying Tactics. In *Religious Commodification in Asia*, edited by Pattana Kitiarsa, pp. 120–144. London and New York: Routledge.
- . 1999. You May Not Believe, But Never Offend the Spirits: Spirit-Medium Cult Discourses and the Postmodernization of Thai Religion. PhD dissertation, University of Washington.
- Phongsak Khamphirathammo, Phra พงษ์ศักดิ์ คัมภีร์ธัมโม, พระ, ed. 1997. *Prawat chiwit Khruba Chao Apichai (Khao Pi) Wat Phraphutthabat Pha Nam, Li, Lamphun* ประวัติชีวิตคุรบาเจ้าอภิชัย (ขาวปี) วัดพระพุทธรบาทผาพนาม อ.ลี จ.ลำพูน [A biography of Khruba Chao Apichai (Khao Pi) Wat Phraphutthabat Pha Nam, Li, Lamphun]. Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai Sahanawakit.
- Rozenberg, Guillaume. 2010. *Renunciation and Power: The Quest for Sainthood in Contemporary Burma*.

- Translated by Jessica Hackett. Monograph Series, No. 59. New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies.
- Sirisak Apisakmontri ศิริศักดิ์ อภิศักดิ์มนตรี. 2016. *Khowinitichai prawat Khruba Chao Siwichai* ขั้ววินิจัยประวัติครูบาเจ้าศรีวิชัย [Clarification on the biography of Khruba Chao Siwichai]. Chiang Mai: Putthamalai Group.
- Sommai Premchit สมหมาย เปรมจิตต์. 2000. *Prawat Khruba Siwichai nak bun haeng Lan Na* ประวัติครูบาศรีวิชัย นักบุญแห่งล้านนา [A biography of Khruba Siwichai, the Buddhist saint of Lan Na]. Chiang Mai: Ming Mueang.
- , ed. 1994. *Tamnan Khruba Siwichai baep phitsadan lae tamnan Wat Suan Dok* ตำนานครูบาศรีวิชัยแบบพิศดารและตำนานวัดสวนดอก [A history chronicle of Khruba Siwichai (a detailed version) and a history chronicle of Wat Suan Dok]. Chiang Mai: Social Research Institute, Chiang Mai University.
- Sopha Chanamun โสกา ชานะมูล. 1991. Khruba Siwichai “ton bun” haeng Lan Na (BE 2421–2481) ครูบาศรีวิชัย “ตนบุญ” แห่งล้านนา (พ.ศ. 2421–2481) [Khruba Siwichai “ton bun” of Lan Na (BE 2421–2481)]. Master’s thesis, Thammasat University.
- So Sutthiphan ส. สุทธิพันธ์. 2015. *Sam khruba saksit haeng Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan* สามครูบาศักดิ์สิทธิ์แห่งวัดแสงแก้วโพธิญาณ [Three holy khruba of Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan]. Bangkok: Satapornbooks.
- . 2013. *Thong daen phutthatham kap Khruba Ariyachat Ariyachitto* ท่องแดนพุทธธรรมกับครูบาอริยชาติ อริยจิตโต [Travel through the Buddha land with Khruba Ariyachat Ariyachitto]. 2nd ed. Bangkok: Thamsathaporn.
- . 2011. *Khruba Ariyachat Ariyachitto thip nai tham* ครูบาอริยชาติ อริยจิตโต ทิพย์ในธรรม [Khruba Ariyachat Ariyachitto, divinity in dhamma]. Bangkok: Thamsathaporn.
- Stengs, Irene. 2009. *Worshipping the Great Moderniser King Chulalongkorn, Patron Saint of the Thai Middle Class*. Singapore: NUS Press in association with University of Washington Press.
- Tambiah, Stanley J. 1984. *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets: A Study in Charisma, Hagiography, Sectarianism, and Millennial Buddhism*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Tanabe, Shigeharu. 2012. Notes on Tonbun, Millennialism and Revivalism in Lanna. In *Phithikam lae patibatkan nai sangkhom chaona phaknuea khong Prathet Thai* พิธีกรรมและปฏิบัติการในสังคมชาวนาภาคเหนือของประเทศไทย [Rituals and practices of peasant society in Northern Thailand], translated by Kwanchewan Buadaeng and Apinya Feungfusakul, pp. 101–111. Chiang Mai: CESD Chiang Mai University.
- . 2004 [1986]. *Nung lueang nung dam tamnan khong phunam chaona haeng Lan Na Thai* นุ่งเหลือง นุ่งดำ ตำนานของผู้นำชาวนาแห่งล้านนาไทย [Wearing yellow robes, wearing black garbs: A story of a peasant leader in Northern Thailand]. Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press.
- Tanabe, Shigeharu; and Keyes, Charles F. 2002. Introduction. In *Cultural Crisis and Social Memory, Modernity and Identity in Thailand and Laos*, edited by Shigeharu Tanabe and Charles F. Keyes, pp. 1–39. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Taylor, Justin. 2012. Max Weber Revisited: Charisma and Institution at the Origins of Christianity. *Australian eJournal of Theology* 19(3): 195–208. http://aejt.com.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/486593/AEJT11.16_Max_Weber_Revisited_Taylor.pdf, accessed September 22, 2015.
- TLC News. 2016. Luksit ruam thambun ok nirothakam khruba sian huai hae sue lek det! ลูกศิษย์ร่วมทำบุญออกเฝ้าโรธกรรมครูบาเซียนหวายแห่ซื้อเลขเด็ด! [Devotees attending to make merit with khruba on the last day of nirothakam, lottery gurus flocking to buy the winning number!]. February 21. <http://news.tlcthai.com/news/682873.html>, accessed February 25, 2016.
- Turton, Andrew. 2006. Remembering Local History: Kuba Wajiraphanya (c.1853–1928), Phra Thongthip and the Müang Way of Life. *Journal of Siam Society* 94: 146–176.
- Wasan Panyagaew. 2013. Remembering with Respect: History, Social Memory and the Cross-Border

- Journeys of a Charismatic Lue Monk. *Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 14(1): 23–40.
- Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan วัดแสงแก้วโพธิญาณ. 2010. Prawat Khruba Ariyachat Ariyachitto doi yo ประวัติครูบาอริยชาติ อริยจิตโต โดยย่อ [A brief biography of Khruba Ariyachat Ariyachitto]. <http://www.watsangkaew.com/webboard/index.php?PHPSESSID=6660d3ae6a2b4eb0a7d979be3df724d9&topic=33.0>, accessed June 16, 2015.
- Wat Si Don Mun วัดศรีดอนมูล. 2012. *Khruba Noi Techapanyo* ครูบาน้อยเดชะปัญญา [Khruba Noi Techapanyo]. Chiang Mai: Ming Mueang.
- Wat Tha Kradat วัดท่ากระดาด. 2005. *Khemarat Nakhon Chiang Tung* เขมรรัฐนครเชียงใหม่ [Chiang Tung: Its way of life]. 2nd ed. Chiang Mai: Dao Compugraphic.
- Weber, Max. 1988. *The Sociology of Religion*. 2nd ed. Translated by Ephraim Fischhoff. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Weerasathosphon (Surin Visuddhacitto), Phrakhru วีรศาสน์โสภณ (สุรินทร์ วิสุทธจิตโต), พระครู. 2010. Sueksa kankhaokam nai Lan Na ศึกษาการเข้ากรรมในล้านนา [A study of retreat (Kankhaokam) in Lan Na]. Master's thesis, Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University.
- Wilak Sripasang วิลักชัย ศรีป่าซาง. 2010. *Ton bun Lan Na, prawat khruba chabap an muan 2* ดนบุญล้านนา ประวัติครูบาฉบับอ่านม่วน 2 [Ton bun Lan Na, a biography of *khruba*, an amusing version 2]. Chiang Mai: Punmai.
- . n.d. Khruba uk kaet ครูบาอุกแก๊ต [Khruba by artificially rapid ripening]. <http://rmutluculture.rmutl.ac.th/webboard/index.php?topic=3141.0%3Bwap2>, accessed May 30, 2016.
- Wisdom Library. 2014. Pāramī. <http://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/paramita/index.html>, accessed June 9, 2016.
- YouTube. 2016. *Woody poet thip haeng tham Phra Khruba Ariyachat* (Parts 1–4) ู๊ดดีเปิดทิพย์แห่งธรรม พระครูบาอริยชาติ (ตอน 1–4) [Woody: Open divinity in *dhamma*: Khruba Ariyachat (parts 1–4)]. YouTube video, 41.76, posted by WoodyTalk, January 24. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOmJYP-BcDI>, accessed January 26, 2016.
- . 2014. *Khui fueang rueang Phra Khruba Ariyachat* (Parts 1–4) ขุ่ยเฟื่องเรืองพระครูบาอริยชาติ (ตอน 1–4) [A talk about amulets with Khruba Ariyachat (Parts 1–4)]. YouTube video, 46.77, posted by Wanchai Suphan, April 28. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7vQtLE1FaI>, accessed May 10, 2015.

Interviews

- Khong (pseudonym), September 7, 2016.
- Wilak Sripasang, June 1, 2016.
- Phrakhru Adunsilakit, March 9, 2016.
- Somdet Atyatham of Mong Yawng *sangha*, February 23, 2016.
- Khruba Sam Nuan, February 18, 2016.
- Khruba Noi, February 18, 2016; March 4, 2016.
- A female devotee of Khruba Noi, February 18, 2016.
- A female devotee of Khruba Ariyachat from Bangkok, December 19, 2015.
- A female senior devotee of Khruba Chao Thueang, November 9, 2015.
- Praphasi (pseudonym), November 4, 2015.
- A male devotee of Khruba Noi, November 1, 2015.
- Dok Kaeomi, a former devotee of Khruba Khao Pi and Khruba Wong, August 22, 2015.
- A female Chinese amulet trader from Beijing, August 14, 2015.
- Inpun and Sukchai, senior devotees of Khruba Khao Pi, July 25–26, 2015.



Appendix Photo 1 Khruba Siwichai, an Exhibition of Wat Si Soda 2015, Mueang, Chiang Mai, Thailand; Author's Image



Appendix Photo 2 Khruba Phan at the Robe Changing Ceremony of Khruba Wong 2016, Li, Lamphun; Author's Image



Appendix Photo 3 Khruba Noi in the 2016 *Thot Kathin* Ceremony at Wat Si Don Mun, Saraphi, Chiang Mai; Author's Image



Appendix Photo 4 Statues of the Three Greatest *Khruba* of Lan Na: Siwichai, Khao Pi, and Wong at Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan, Mae Suai, Chiang Rai, Thailand; Author's Image



Appendix Photo 5 Khruba Ariyachat in the 2016 *Thot Kathin* Ceremony at Wat Saengkaeo Phothiyan, Mae Suai, Chiang Rai, Thailand; Author's Image



Buddhism in a Dark Age: Cambodian Monks under Pol Pot

IAN HARRIS

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2013.

Buddhism in a Dark Age: Cambodian Monks under Pol Pot is an impressively well-researched examination of Buddhists and institutionalized Buddhism during the rise, reign, and fall of the Khmer Rouge. Between 2003 and 2007, Ian Harris was a senior scholar at the Documentation Center of Cambodia. This provided him with the opportunity to compile and examine an archive that includes unpublished materials held there, confession documents, reports from Lon Nol's government and those of foreign governments, biographical accounts of Party members and prisoners, soldiers' notebooks, memoirs, information presented at the 1979 trial of Pol Pot, and publications of the Party, including magazines, films, and instructional videos. Additionally, Harris utilizes 87 interviews he conducted or participated in and 34 conducted by others.¹⁾ From this, Harris discusses widespread horrors perpetrated against Buddhists and members of the *sangha* but argues that the Khmer Rouge themselves used Buddhist concepts, through both adaptation and inversion, to bolster their own ideology. Furthermore, Harris demonstrates that "although Buddhism was in mortal danger during Democratic Kampuchea, it was never totally extinguished, despite the claims of Angkar to the contrary" (p. 139), as individual actors preserved aspects of the tradition and material traces of Buddhism survived.

Harris organizes *Buddhism in a Dark Age* thematically rather than chronologically as he analyzes the decline of the Buddhist state headed by Sihanouk, the development of the communism that would take hold over Cambodia, as well as the treatment of monastics and official Buddhist sites (e.g., pagodas and monasteries) and objects (e.g., monks' robes, Buddha images, and murals) during the time period covered. While focusing primarily on events between 1970 and 1979, Harris references Communist activity as early as the 1930s, and the final chapter is devoted to an examination of post-1979 Cambodia and the installation of the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK), which would govern under Vietnamese control until 1989.

1) Sixty-seven of these interviews were conducted by Harris with assistance between 2003 and 2005; 20 were conducted by him alone between 1997 and 2006; and 34 were conducted by others in 1986.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, leading up to the end of French colonialism in 1953, many monks with a left-wing, anticolonial, revolutionary, and nationalist spirit were inspired by the perceived ideals of communism and its compatibility with Buddhism. However, even in the 1950s it was hard for monks to become full members of the Party, and by the 1960s the Communist Party of Kampuchea (CPK) was distancing itself from Buddhism (p. 35). Nonetheless, the National United Front of Kampuchea (FUNK), bolstered by support from Sihanouk, who was regarded by most of the country as a righteous Buddhist ruler, persisted into the 1970s with monastic and lay support from those who thought the CPK would defend Buddhism against foreign aggressors. On the other side, some Buddhists championed the Khmer Republic headed by Lon Nol. Backed by its Vietnamese and Chinese counterparts, the CPK—an early precursor to the Khmer Rouge and of which Pol Pot was a member—led a coup, which would initiate the civil war that engulfed the country for five years leading up to the formal installation of the Khmer Rouge. Eventually, Democratic Kampuchea was founded at the Special National Congress in Phnom Penh held on April 25–27, 1975, after the “liberation” of cities on April 17. Twenty monks joined that delegation, but from that point forward neither monks nor Buddhism would be referenced in radio or other communications: “From the official perspective, they had ceased to exist” (p. 67). Buddhism was listed alongside imperialism and “reactionary capitalism” as one of the “three mountains” in need of complete eradication. However, the means to accomplish this monumental task had yet to be determined, and Buddhism continued in varying degrees throughout the country.

Buddhism in a Dark Age acutely highlights the debates, processes, and inconsistencies that arose as Buddhist practices came to be banned and institutionalized Buddhism abolished. For example, the 1976 revolt of White Khmer or White Scarf Buddhists, members of the Khmer Rouge who wished to keep Buddhist and Khmer customs in place, highlights the tensions within the Party; the leaders of the revolt were subsequently executed and their position overridden by those who sought to model Democratic Kampuchea on the Cultural Revolution in China (p. 42). The Party lost members also with its decision to abolish the monkhood. On the other hand, as communism was rising to prominence, there were “revolutionary monks” who actively recruited, propagandized, and spied for the Party.²⁾ In fact, in 1973 they formed an alternative *sangha* administration, the Patriotic Monks Association, on behalf of the Communists and in opposition to the traditional, ecclesiastical order centered in the capital (pp. 69–72).

What is poignantly revealed throughout *Buddhism in a Dark Age* is that in the face of unimaginable hardship, some Buddhists, usually in secret and always at great personal risk, were able to demonstrate unwavering perseverance and maintain a small semblance of their previous monastic vocation, cherished religious beliefs, or treasured objects. To this end, the reader is privileged to a variety of short glimpses into the lives of those who lived, and often died, during the period.

2) There were common reports of “monks” with guns, and one who purportedly preached rebirth in heaven for anyone who caught members of the Lon Nol regime (p. 71).

Harris writes:

At the local level, policies were implemented in one of two ways, either dogmatically and with ill-considered fervor or in ways that still left scope for determined individuals, sometimes with the connivance of sympathetic officials, to maintain a minimal level of religiosity. (p. 117)

Thus, where there was room, brave and creative actors exploited the “chaotic nature of the regime” and lack of organized directives, and found ways to preserve their tradition (p. 117). For example, after being forced to disrobe,³⁾ some men maintained their connection to Buddhism and the monkhood through the materiality of their robes—both symbols of Buddhism and physical harbingers of “magical properties”—by hiding them or even wearing pieces that they had dyed black. Interestingly, while the Khmer Rouge was intent on destroying the institution of Buddhism, healing and protection rituals were common (p. 98). Reports also indicate that some monks performed rituals or led groups in chanting, and if the local official allowed it, elderly monks were able to remain in white robes. Other Buddhists are said to have practiced “in their minds” only, recited nightly prayers, or managed to keep small images of the Buddha hidden. In an ingenious act, Buddhist murals were sometimes covered and protected with charcoal combined with rice porridge, a mixture that hid the images but which could be easily removed later (p. 115). There is no doubt, however, that the majority of previously devout Buddhists completely abandoned their religious lives—“A decision born of rationality and fear in equal measure, it certainly increased one’s chances of survival” (p. 117).

By the early 1960s Khmer communism was becoming more opposed to Buddhism, and by 1975 “hard-line antireligious zealots reigned virtually unopposed.” However, Harris argues, “a bricolage of protestantized and rationalistic Buddhist categories, concepts, and practices retained a place in the movement’s ideology and continued to inform its actions” (p. 42). Thus, while the Communists eagerly pointed out that monks failing to contribute to production were a drain on the economy, they were simultaneously unable to rid themselves of all the Buddhist categories and concepts integral to their worldview. Further, in co-opting certain Buddhist ideas and ideals, the Khmer Rouge sought to undermine the authority of monks and instill fear in those who wished to remain committed to their Buddhist principles (p. 4). For example, to show they were due more respect than monks, revolutionaries were to abide by a list of rules (*vinay ankār*) longer than that prescribed by the Buddhist *Vinaya*. Additionally, among their propaganda techniques was the inclusion of extensive lists and repetition, a common trope of Buddhist preaching.

In some ways, the Khmer Rouge enacted a type of barbarous, forced asceticism on the people

3) Most men disrobed rather than resist, but it “appears that by far the most common cause of violent death in the *sangha* was a refusal to disrobe” (p. 123). Harris also found evidence of “some reluctance [on the part of the executioners] to desecrate the orange robe, an object that had traditionally been the locus of both respect and occult power” (p. 124).

of Cambodia. Taking from the Buddhist tradition, Harris suggests, all were expected to live an extreme version of various monastic ideals regarding the renunciation of worldly goods, family ties, and emotions, especially useful in getting ordinary folks to turn in “enemies.” Moreover, the consumption of alcohol was demonized, perfumes and jewelry banned, short hair for both sexes mandated, and severe restrictions on inappropriate interactions with the opposite sex put in place. In accordance with the latter rule, forced marriage was a common practice to authorize reproduction, although overwork, malnutrition, and trauma severely hampered fertility. Monasteries that survived the heavy artillery bombing of the region were no longer places of devotion or monastic quarters and instead were turned into military bases, arms depots, officer training schools, storage and medical facilities, bureaucratic offices, or vehicle repair shops. Monastic grounds were used also to raise crops and animals. Others were simply dismantled for their composite materials. Monasteries served as “good barracks and good prisons,” as Harris writes, their “widespread use as workshops of torture and execution chillingly reinforcing the traditional association of Buddhism and death” (pp. 108–109).

The historical and political complexities involved in the periods covered by the book—pre-1970 through the Cambodian Civil War into the reign of the Khmer Rouge, and then through the eventual fall of the PRK in the late 1980s—may make portions of the book hard to follow for those unfamiliar with the region and time. Moreover, since the book focuses on novices and monks, as the title aptly suggests, the reader is privy only to the opinions on and impact of communism from a male perspective. Nonetheless, *Buddhism in a Dark Age* is a welcome supplement to other studies on the Khmer Rouge and the rise of communism in Southeast Asia, as Harris adds nuance to our historical understanding of the role of Buddhism and Buddhists during these times. He also demonstrates that disentangling the Buddhist worldview from the ruinous ideology that devastated Cambodia is, perhaps, more difficult than many would like to assume.

Kelly Meister Brawn

History of Religions, The University of Chicago Divinity School

The End of National Cinema: Filipino Film at the Turn of the Century

PATRICK F. CAMPOS

Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2016.

Patrick Campos's groundbreaking book *The End of National Cinema: Filipino Film at the Turn of the Century* tries to make sense of the complexities and intricacies of the metamorphosing Philippine cinema on the brink of the twenty-first century, interrogating the positionality of national cinema and the concept of independence within the interlocking global, transnational, and regional

cinemas and trends. Grounded on the premise that

the dynamics of nation formation have been refocused and recast as the conflicted relationship between state and society, government and nongovernment organizations, and classes, races, ethnicities, and genders with forces beyond the nation encroaching at every step on the terms of the conflicts (p. 17)

the book probes into the case of cinema in the Philippines, challenging assumptions about definitive national cinematic boundaries. Campos offers a way to understand the liminality of national cinema in a way that emphasizes the nuances and subjectivities of cultural imaginaries, which are simultaneously challenged and reinforced in cinema. While we see aspects of what appear to be coherent homogeneity, border crossing, transnational circulation, and multilingualism, Campos renders specificities and contradictions embedded in historical memory and narrative vividly intelligible. Throughout the book one gets a sense of uncertainty and ambiguity, at times upholding the nationhood and at times resisting it, continually occurring within and beyond the national cinematic narrative. The outcome is a thought-provoking critical evaluation of Philippine cinema and its connections and parallelisms with Southeast Asian cinemas, highlighting how limits and boundaries tend to break down and how the notion of national itself transcends cultural and linguistic borders.

Campos's personal dialogue with the cinematic world began long before the writing of this particular book. He laid the groundwork in the 1990s, when he was still a film student nostalgic about and navigating through the Golden Ages of Philippine cinema while at the same time lamenting on the box-office hit *bomba* films. As a production assistant in the next decade, Campos immersed himself in the world of films through multiple approaches. He engaged in filmmaking himself and was an avid spectator of independent films produced by Filipino filmmakers. He also found himself observing the advent of digital technology in the country and how the film industry tried to make sense of the unprecedented influence of globalization and breaking down of borders in the age of the Internet. As he admits, the developments in those two decades drove him into film criticism without his noticing it.

While the book does not follow any clear-cut divisions, the nine chapters can be read as distinct and coherent stand-alone pieces. The first chapter examines Ishmael Bernal's critically acclaimed film *Manila by Night* as a "third space," a site for imagining the nation and critiquing the modernist aspirations of the Marcos regime. The second chapter considers the role of filmmaker Mike de Leon in the shaping of Philippine cinema, emphasizing the perceptible intertwining of his films and the broader discourse of nationhood. In the next chapter Campos investigates yet another Filipino filmmaker, Kidlat Tahimik, and the emergence of independent cinema, specifically how a native filmmaker struggles to salvage his creativity, agency, and cultural traditions while confronting Western cultural hegemonic propensities. These three chapters probe into the complex role and

positioning of filmmakers in the development of, resistance against, and promotion of the national in both film and politics.

The next chapters interrogate the state of Philippine cinema at the turn of the twenty-first century with the advent of digital cinema and how it operates as a platform for confronting debates about cinema and independence as well as the country's anxieties harking back to the Marcos era. In the fourth chapter, for example, Campos explores *Cinemalaya* as an assemblage site for a spectrum of filmic discourses ranging from mainstream and commercial to statist and nationalist, among others. The next chapter advances this critical reading in the context of realism in Philippine cinema and looks into the dynamic space where national and transnational intersect. In the following chapter, Campos continues to problematize the construction of national cinema through the depictions of rural landscapes.

In the last three chapters of the book Campos confronts the central question: What constitutes a "Filipino" film? Resisting simplistic and narrow categories, Campos manages to identify the historical continuities in various film genres in the Philippines, often explicating the socioeconomic milieus that produce them. Chapter 7 scrutinizes the medley of factors that catapulted comedic fantasy-adventure films into popularity, such as their obvious commercial agenda and their links to Philippine traditional epic narratives. In the following chapter, Campos brings forth a critical analysis of experimental films that explore the memories of the Philippine-American War and argues that these films embody rigorous attempts to recover certain esoteric memories crucial to understanding the Philippine nation. In the final chapter the author probes into two Asian horror films: Yam Laranas's *The Echo* (2008) and Kelvin Tong's *The Maid* (2005). While he traces the aspects of the nation in both films, he also questions the necessity of perpetuating the notion of nation, no matter how ambiguous, vis-à-vis the global.

What makes this book stand out is its irreverent outlook toward the articulations of national in cinema and its assertion (perhaps illusion) of an "end" of national cinema itself. The book consistently makes readers and scholars aware of the uncertainties, contradictions, and ambivalent manifestations of the nation in films. Campos is able to point out the processes that draw out the connection between cinema and nation, albeit unfinished and uncertain. In every chapter he prompts readers to situate the cinema and nation within the realm of liminality. Campos attempts to unravel the transformations and future of national cinema, boldly anticipating its end. While this end, in terms of both temporal and spatial, may not come anytime soon, this book proves to be an outstanding contribution to our efforts to break down simplistic and rigid connotations on racial and ethnolinguistic lines and hardline conservative nationalisms.

Despite not having a concluding chapter that could have strengthened the connections and transitions among the nine chapters, this book remains a mine of knowledge and cogent assertions. *The End of National Cinema* compels us to take a step back and recognize where the nation lies amidst global forces and the nascent tendency to deconstruct boundaries and spaces. It also encour-

ages us to look at the persistent influence of transnational mobilities that have permeated cinema, rendering complex the manifestations of the national and global and the hybrid images in between. Despite the title of the book, Campos does not seem to advocate for the obsolescence of the nation. In fact, the discussions remain to play around with the perception of the nation, no matter how obscure and malleable the idea is.

Darlene Machell de Leon Espena

School of Social Sciences, Singapore Management University

Caged in on the Outside: Moral Subjectivity, Selfhood, and Islam in Minangkabau, Indonesia

GREGORY M. SIMON

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2014.

Entangled in the existing literature between the notions of customary laws (*adat*) and Islam, the moral integrities and religious lives of the Minangkabau community in West Sumatra, Indonesia, have been a point of constant scholarly and polemical debate. The debate emerged partly from the “reformist” movement-turned-civil war of the Padri War since the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and escalated through the Kaum Muda movement in the early twentieth century. Ever since, the questions of religious and ethnic identities vis-à-vis collective morality and personal piety have remained in the atmosphere of this mainland community. Often concentrated on questions of matrilineal culture, one peculiar phenomenon in which the Islamic and *adat* elements face each other, existing studies have analyzed questions of religiosity, customs, culture, and ethnicity in varying levels, depending themselves on varying arenas of society, such as government policies, land and property relations, religious discourses, etc. In *Caged in on the Outside: Moral Subjectivity, Selfhood, and Islam in Minangkabau, Indonesia*, Gregory M. Simon moves away from these debates and explores the ways in which the Minangkabau people make sense of their subjectivities in terms of morality, whether or not based on religion, customs, and ethnic characters.

The study is a refreshing read for it presents a number of different voices on the foundational questions of morality and subjectivity from outside the usually sought-out venues such as religious texts, legal codes, mosques, and pesantrens. An equal presence and voices of both female and male interlocutors make it further interesting in comparison with most of the existing studies, which present an imbalanced male voice when it comes to issues such as morality even if the location of the research is a matriarchal or matrilineal one as is this Minangkabau community. Through open-ended and person-centered interviews, the author explores what participants told him about their experiences, and he “treat[s their voices] as legitimate windows into their lives and subjec-

tivities" (p. 12).

From the perspective of subjectivity in anthropology, a subdiscipline that focuses mostly on the loci of violence, sorrow, and other disruptions in the normativity of human behavior, Simon's book presents an interesting case on how and why subjectivity can be unraveled in the everyday lives of people even when they are not suffering any psychological or physical pressure or distress, and subjectivity "also must be seen as intrinsic to more settled forms of social and cultural order" (p. 210). Simon debunks such existing anthropological notions surrounding the "suffering subjects" and presents compelling reflections and arguments on selfhood and subjectivity through his communications on moral predicaments. The normalcy of subjectivity and the attempts of participants (as well as of the author himself) to understand them coherently and logically, though at times futile, are intriguing for everyone who is interested not only in the questions of morality and ethics in human experiences, but also in the ways in which religion (or more precisely Islam) presents contradictory and confusing moral dilemmatic moments for its followers.

Simon conducted his fieldwork over two years in Bukittinggi, West Sumatra. Thirty-five people participated in his recorded interviews, while 13 engaged in what he considers to be "a full series of interviews following the person-centered approach" (p. 12). All these interviews and many more notes of 2,000 pages form the central ethnographic material of the book. The author divides it into six chapters, along with an introduction and a brief coda.

In the first chapter, the author deals mainly with the geographical-social division of village (*kampung*) and marketplace (*pasa*) in Bukittinggi with a few insights into the region's past and present entangled in the nodal points of commerce, colonialism, and Islam. The divisions between the village and marketplace are not cut and dried; rather, the author argues, they are fluid and can—and do—coexist with remarkable implications on the everyday life of the area in the realms of household, family, property, authority, and gender.

The second chapter deals with the issues of *adat* (traditional culture), Islam, and ethnic character. As *adat* and Islam are often pitched against each other, Simon explores the ways in which Minangkabau people try to make meaning of both these traditions vis-à-vis their ethnic character as the "people present to others, and to themselves, as describing the Minang society, at least in its ideal form" (p. 39). Despite the ambiguity on or obsession with its position in contemporary life, *adat* stands as an important framework for the Minang people for their "moral discourses," often with tangible consequences. Instead of taking the *adat* as a problematic framework against the one suggested by Islam, "the conceptual fusion of *adat* and Islam has been an important project" in the community (p. 47) even though "there remains a consequential consciousness of tensions" between the two (p. 51). In between these two compromising and conflicting situations, the cleverness constitutes a central characteristic of the Minang ethnicity and helps the Minangkabau to find their own ways to assert themselves or evade hindrances.

In the following chapter, the author unravels notions of social unity among the community.

He identifies the Minangkabau people as “the *Awak* People,” *awak* being a Minang term to denote “me,” “you,” “him/her,” sometimes “us” exclusive of the listener, “Minangkabau,” “one of us,” and all in all it implies that “we are all one body, one self” (p. 63). Through various forms of expected manners, etiquette, norms, and social interactions the Minang people endeavor to maintain their social unity. The discussions in this chapter seem to state the obvious.

The fourth chapter engages with the boundaries and responsibilities of the self. By looking at the divisions between the seen and unseen, the pure and devil worlds in the imaginations and daily lives of the people, the chapter analyzes how morality moves into and out of selves through the Minangkabau, who often conceptualize them through hierarchical moral capacities of selves. The chapter concludes that “the various ideas about human capacities and their value that are commonly employed by Minangkabau people do not come together to form a single, coherent hierarchy” (p. 121).

The fifth chapter focuses on the personal spaces and indirection in communications. Indirection acts as a unique Minang way of daily speech, and it stands as a strategy to balance social interactions with the maintenance of personal and social boundaries of selves and others. This chapter stands close to the previous chapter on the divisions between seen and unseen worlds for the fact that the personal spaces and autonomy that the Minang value so much in their communications and interactions are often threatened by unseen supernatural attacks through spiritual and mystical powers.

The sixth chapter zooms into the spiritual realm with attention to one practice that brings together various modes of moral subjectivity at play. Focusing on the microsite of prayers (*shalat*), the chapter investigates how its practice (or the absence thereof) motivates people to contemplate on their rationality and relationality with Islam and its moral subjectivities. Although unified in the conviction that the *shalat* plays a significant role in the making of moral subjectivity, the participants take multidimensional and fluid stands once it comes to the actual practice on an everyday basis. The chapter concludes with a remark that captures the core argument of the book: “The challenges of Islamic subjectivity take on particular shape in West Sumatra, but ultimately the struggle is a human one in which the pursuit of moral coherence is ongoing, constantly challenged by the competing demands and conflicting experiences of life” (p. 207).

The book moves away from the “piety turn” that predominates recent anthropological studies of Islam and Muslims with its discussions on selfhood and subjectivity in the first five chapters, yet it comes back to the same concerns around piety in the last chapter, in which it takes up the prayer as a cornerstone of moral subjectivity. Even so, it does not “project Islam as a perfectionist ethical project of self-discipline” (to quote Samuli Schielke). Instead, it presents the fluid and multiple conflicts of Muslim subjects who themselves struggle to make sense of their beliefs, convictions, piety, and religion. Taken as a whole, the book raises the crucial question of whether it is impossible to explore Muslims’ selfhood and moral subjectivities without Islam.

There are a few issues that I found problematic. In some places the author discredits the importance of *adat*, while in others he overemphasizes it vis-à-vis Islam when it is criticized by someone sitting in the market (for example, compare the discussions on p. 33 and p. 55). On another occasion, he provides an image of a wall painting in which Osama bin Laden appears close to Bob Marley. In its visuality there seems to be a change in the focus/gaze/orientation (the very text written at the top of the painting is “what are you looking at” [p. 170]). Even so, he chooses to discuss only Bin Laden at length while glossing over Marley. Why does Marley appear with/ before Bin Laden, and why does he disappear in the discussion? Does Bin Laden ring relevant only because the community in focus is Muslims, who not only produced an image of Bin Laden through ambiguous and changing connotations but also kept it undamaged along with a painting of Marley? Does this imply that the moral subjectivity of a Muslim community is thus rooted only in particular sets of images and Islamic practices (such as prayer) but not in other forms of piety and subjectivities such as music and songs?

Notwithstanding these issues, the book impressively explores the Minangkabau community’s social life beyond its matrilineal identity and tells us about people’s everyday concerns and lives while grappling with existential questions on their place and time in society, religion, and nation. The questions and the predicaments they find themselves in are not exceptional and unique to the community; rather, they are often universal even though the solutions might be peculiar to the individuals or micro-communities. Conflated with the notions of Islam, the book argues how people problematize their ideas of selfhood in their everyday interactions, practices, and religious existence through different realms. The book will be an interesting read for all those who are interested in the notions of morality and religion in Islamic and/or Asian communities in general and Indonesia in particular.

Mahmood Kooria
Leiden University

Marriage Migration in Asia: Emerging Minorities at the Frontiers of Nation-States

SARI K. ISHII, ed.

Singapore: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press, 2016.

Marriage Migration in Asia: Emerging Minorities at the Frontiers of Nation-States, edited by Sari K. Ishii, strives to deepen understanding of the complex trajectories of marriage migration in Asia. Going beyond the narrow vision of marriage migration as solely a South-to-North axis, this book underlines the complexity of the patterns of international marriage migration and its various axes.

Drawing on sociological, cultural anthropology, sociolinguistics, social anthropology, area and cultural studies, and legal perspectives, this book considers marriage migrants as an integral part of the global diaspora or “transnational diaspora” (p. 2).

The book is organized into three parts. Part 1, titled “Migration Flows beyond the Marriage-Scapes,” delves into the complexity of the migratory trajectories of marriage migrants. In Chapter 1 Masako Kudo shows the complexity of the migratory trajectories of Pakistani husbands and Japanese wives involved in transnational households. Their migratory trajectories relate to different motives, including the search for a favorable space for the socialization of their children according to Islamic principles. Some of the Japanese women who face difficulties adjusting to living conditions in Pakistan opt to return to Japan or re-emigrate to other countries such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand, and the United Arab Emirates. Kudo analyzes the duplicated or circular migrations of these Japanese women and the formation of transnational households to meet the needs of their families and adjust to “shifting socio-economic conditions” (p. 39). Another significant aspect analyzed in this chapter is how the “concept of what it meant to be Muslim was negotiated between husbands and wives” (p. 40).

Chapter 2 by Chie Sakai investigates the case of marriage migrants from Japan to Shanghai. Most of the Japanese women interviewed moved to Shanghai for study or work reasons or “complied with their Chinese husbands’ decisions.” Some of them are willing to settle permanently in China, while others are considering returning to Japan. Their move to China has several implications on their lives, employment status, and career prospects as well as the status of their children. Constraints related to obtaining a work permit along with difficulties in adjusting to the host country’s language and culture have impeded the career of these women. While some interviewees opt to prioritize family life over professional career, others are frustrated over their situation. The chapter highlights the many sacrifices made by Japanese women to ease tensions that may arise in the context of transnational marriage migration or to circumvent challenges such as downward professional mobility.

In Chapter 3 Linda A. Lumayag examines the situation of highly qualified Filipino women facing difficulty in pursuing their professional career in Malaysia due to their precarious status as marriage migrants. Constraints related to illegal stays accentuate their social and economic marginalization, especially in the case of those who move to Malaysia as domestic workers and later turn into undocumented domestic workers. However, some of these Filipino women hold a social pass that confers them social prestige among their friends and social networks, as it signals the possibility of obtaining Malaysian citizenship. Lumayag shows how restrictive migration policies constrain the access of highly educated Filipinas to “employment, the division of property, and the rights to children in cases of separation or divorce” (p. 98), visas, and permanent residence status, resulting in continuing precarity and downward professional mobility.

Part 2, “Reversed Geographies of Power,” shows that despite possessing citizenship of a

developed country, marriage migrants may feel a sense of marginalization and vulnerability if their status in the host country does not allow them to improve their living conditions and achieve their aspirations. Ikuya Tokoro in Chapter 4 analyzes cross-border marriages between Filipino women and Japanese men in the context of the global anti-trafficking campaign and the rise of *konkyu houjin* (impoverished Japanese marriage-migration men; pp. 106, 112–115). This chapter explores the transnational marriage of Filipino women with Japanese men as a strategy to access employment to support the livelihoods of families left behind. Tokoro argues that due to the constraints in obtaining an entertainer's visa, many Filipinas resort to illegal coping mechanisms such as fake marriages to move to Japan, which often makes them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation by illegal brokers. The rise of fake marriages makes it challenging to obtain marriage visas and Certificates of Eligibility to legally remain in Japan even for "Filipinas who marry Japanese men whom they truly love" (p. 116).

Another critical issue analyzed by Tokoro is the case of *konkyu houjin*, or reverse marriage migration from Japan to the Philippines: "rich" Japanese men moving to the Philippines to follow their Filipino wives or girlfriends. According to Tokoro, these "reverse migrant flows" underline a paradigm shift regarding the "economic geographies of power." Because these Japanese migrants have severed ties with their families and friends back in Japan, they lack the social support to escape poor living conditions and social isolation if they are rejected by their wives or girlfriends in the Philippines. Most face difficulties returning to Japan.

In Chapter 5 Sari K. Ishii investigates the situation of Japanese-Thai children who migrate to the rural communities where their Thai mothers settle after divorcing their Japanese partners. Any improvement in the financial situation of these children, as well as their mothers, depends mainly on the remittances sent by their foreign fathers. However, in "numerous cases, the expectation of receiving remittances became an illusion when the intimacy ended, which tended to occur even before marriage migrants' return home to Thailand." Most of these children face stigmas in their rural communities in Thailand as they ". . . could not enjoy economic advantages as 'rich Japanese children'" (p. 131). These children often face administrative bottlenecks from the Thai immigration office owing to their Japanese citizenship. Ishii's chapter illustrates the reversal in geographies of power underlying marriage migration.

Caesar Dealwis in Chapter 6 analyzes the assimilation of Eurasian Muslims into the larger Malay group identity in order to gain from the political, economic, and social benefits of Malaysian citizenship. According to Dealwis, Eurasian Muslims increasingly refer to their Malaysian rather than Eurasian identity because being a Malaysian citizen carries more benefits for them politically, economically, and socially. Thus, there is an assimilation of the descendants of Caucasian Muslims into the mainstream Malaysian culture, similar to other minority communities in Sarawak. Dealwis examines how Eurasian Muslims in Sarawak are departing from their Eurasian identity, which is regarded as "unstable, multiple, fluctuating and fragmented, whereas being Malay is much more

stable as national discourses heavily influence their daily experiences" (p. 147).

Part 3, "Marriage Migrants as Multi-Marginalized Diaspora," dwells on the multiple forms of marginalization confronting marriage migrants and migrant children. In Chapter 7 Caroline Grillot analyzes the situation of Vietnamese women involved in transnational marriage migration and the ensuing vulnerability, marginalization, and precarity due to their illegal stay in China. Due to the inability to register their marriages, they become "partners, mistresses, mothers or domestic workers" (p. 170). They are often subject to violation of their human rights and have limited or no access to legal and social protection. According to Grillot, while cross-border marriages represent a coping mechanism to reduce vulnerability, they can also lead to "uneven and exposed pathways that cause individuals to sink further into non-existent positions on the fringes of society" (p. 171).

Hien Anh Le in Chapter 8 explores the precarious present and uncertain future of returning migrant children in the borderlands of Vietnam and Korea. The fact that their mothers are reluctant to abandon their children's Korean nationality means that they are barred from access to the civil rights granted to Vietnamese nationals. These returning migrant children "... suffer from de facto statelessness, caught between the advanced country that they reach only in their imagination and the real country where they reside" (p. 185).

In Chapter 9 Lara Chen Tien-shi examines the way stateless individuals in transnational marriages and their children are legally barred from access to the social security and welfare given to individuals possessing the required citizenship. Using cases, Chen shows the difficulties that stateless adults face "to gain citizenship in their spouse's country based on the spouse's citizenship" (p. 199).

Chapter 10 by Chatchai Chetsumon analyzes the legal obstacles arising from marriages between irregular workers from Myanmar and Thai nationals in Thailand. Thai state laws determine whether irregular workers can "normalize their situations through legal means" (p. 209). These irregular migrant workers do not have their births officially registered in Myanmar, owing to their minority situation, which results in rejection or cancellation of most official marriage registrations. Most irregular migrant workers from Myanmar do not officially register their marriage for fear of being expelled from Thailand because of their illegal stay or the fear of having their application rejected. Chetsumon stresses the need to protect the dignity and rights of these irregular migrant workers, including their rights to marry and set up a family "under natural laws" (p. 209).

This book provides a solid understanding of marriage migration in Asia drawing on a transnational diasporic standpoint and rich empirical evidence based mainly on qualitative research. The focus of the book is on the causes and consequences of transnational Asian marriage migration; the challenges confronting Asian marriage migrants and their dependents, and their coping mechanisms, identity negotiations, and shifts; criticism of the dominant vision of marriage migration as

South-to-North migration; and case studies of reversed geographies of power in the Asian context. Further studies are needed to explore the similarities and differences between transnational marriage migration in Asia and other regions. There is also a need to enhance understanding of the societal implications of remittances in the context of transnational marriage migration. In all, *Marriage Migration in Asia* is an excellent contribution to understanding the complex patterns and dynamics of transnational marriage migration in Asia in the twenty-first century.

Ibrahima Amadou Dia
International Development Consultant

Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora

MARTIN F. MANALANSAN IV and AUGUSTO F. ESPIRITU, eds.
 New York: New York University Press, 2016.

In *Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora*, Martin F. Manalansan IV and Augusto F. Espiritu shepherd new forays by Filipino and Filipino-American scholars into the tempestuous seas of Philippine studies. Influenced by works from preeminent scholars such as Vicente Rafael (1995); Antonio T. Tiongson, Jr., Edgardo V. Gutierrez, and Ricardo V. Gutierrez (2006); Rolando Tolentino (2011); Priscelina Patajo-Legasto (2008); Coloma *et al.* (2012); and Reynaldo Iletto (2014) that reflect the preoccupations of contemporary Philippine studies with representations of Filipino identity and experiences as imbricated in diasporic and globalized contexts, *Filipino Studies* issues upon itself both a warning and a challenge against radicalizing views of Philippine postcoloniality as either purely victimized by or purely antagonistic toward its colonizers. Taking the image of “palimpsest” as its semantic inspiration, the essays in the volume problematize the “‘layerings’ or shifting stratigraphy of power that obscure or erase and at the same time resurrect specific historical, cultural, and political experiences” (p. 2). At the core of this volume is its focus on the continual reinscriptions of previously held ideas, assumptions, and frameworks about “Filipinoness”: a process that did not end with the formal liberation of the Philippines from its colonizers, but which is instead resemanticized alongside paradigmatic power shifts brought on by waves of diaspora, transnationalism, and globalization. This Filipinoness, insofar as it implies not just *what* a Filipino is but also *where* to locate such an identity, has been a spectral question in Philippine studies scholarship. Manalansan and Espiritu’s volume recuperates Filipinoness from the aporias between contestatory modes of power and gives Filipino subjectivity a voice by ascribing it with a palimpsestic quality, that is, as deriving its valence simultaneously from existing narratives that seek to define it and from the ongoing emendations of those narratives. What makes Manalansan and Espiritu’s volume excitingly productive is that it opens up Philippine studies to the anxiogenic possibilities that arise

from refracting the critical lens of viewing Filipino subjectivity toward instances of mercurial agency that transgress its convenient yet disingenuous historiographical framing as a passive precipitation of neo-imperial trauma. In short, the essays in Manalansan and Espiritu's volume, which are in themselves performative attempts to recode the palimpsest, make legible the complicity of Filipinos in the writing of their own complex narratives.

The first section of *Filipino Studies*, "Where From? Where To? Filipino Studies: Fields and Agendas," includes historicizing meditations by Neferti Tadiar, Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, and John D. Blanco on how cultural and economic capital have been deployed—initially through institutionalized methods of racializing orientalism and later through globalized structures of exploitative labor brokerage—to effect new modes of domination. These essays emphasize the participatory ways that Filipinos themselves have buttressed modes of domination, for example in the consumption and reproduction of "reified versions of 'Filipino culture'" (p. 22) or in the facilitation of emigration toward state- and corporate-sponsored exploitation of racialized labor (p. 39). Of particular interest among the essays is Blanco's genealogy of Oriental Enlightenment, a text that could perhaps serve as a hermeneutical key in understanding the volume's larger framework of reimagining Filipinoness as palimpsestic.

In his incisive work, Blanco considers the seemingly oppositional ways that *ilustrados* (foreign-educated middle class) José Rizal and Trinidad Pardo de Tavera have appropriated the historical experience of Filipinos being orientalized by their foreign colonizers. Noting the ideological divide between Rizal's affirmation of the irreducible Otherness of the colonial subject from the colonizer, and Pardo de Tavera's contention that colonialism is the generative seed without which Filipino subjectivity could not exist, Blanco scrutinizes how Rizal and Pardo de Tavera provide the philosophical impetus for the weaponization of cultural difference toward a Filipino-led revolution on one hand, and for the justification of a benevolent process of colonially directed self-actualization on the other. While Pardo de Tavera has largely been polemicized in contemporary historiography for espousing an assimilationist social philosophy, Blanco is quick to point out the need to also temper the approbation generally accorded to Rizal's "liberatory" schematic. For while Rizal did imagine an independent Philippines, he did so through an arguably self-orientalizing appeal to racial antagonism premised on the strategic essentialism of an imagined pan-Asian heritage, of which only the educated *ilustrado* class could be the logical gatekeepers. Implicit in this schematic is the paradox that the "Orientalist premise of [Western] superiority . . . could also be employed to argue against revolution . . . , in favour of the inevitable and universal spread of technological, industrial, and secular 'progress' . . . as Rizal *also* argued" (p. 62). Meanwhile, Blanco notes that in advocating for an alignment of this self-orientalizing "difference" toward more fully developed cultures as a path toward national self-actualization, Pardo de Tavera

insisted instead on the indefinite suspension of political reflection by any except the educated class

in order to create a system of education free from the unnatural pressure which represses the reason of man and subjects it to the reason of another by means of religious, political, or social dogmas. (p. 69)

In highlighting the imbricated ways that Rizal and Pardo de Tavera's "critical Enlightenment stance to a discourse of racial(ized) and/or spiritualized civilizational difference was fated to repeat itself in succeeding generations of Philippine nationalism" (p. 71), Blanco genealogizes two polar views that have oriented a lot of the scholarship in Philippine studies and serve as the dominant narratives that the rest of the essays in this volume, whether explicitly or implicitly, seek to revise. The first view deploys Philippine studies toward recuperations of a radical yet phantasmatic sense of pre-colonial or pan-Southeast Asian belonging; the second mobilizes it toward militant indictments of colonial models of coercion and subjugation. In surfacing the possibilities that such ideologies are not strictly oppositional but could in fact be perfectly consistent with each other, Blanco instantiates Manalansan and Espiritu's proposal not just to read but also to *write* the narratives of Philippine studies—and, by extension, Filipinoness—as a palimpsest.

The remaining chapters of the volume serve as critical explorations of the discursive nature of the palimpsest as applied to specific frameworks and research fields. In the section titled "Colonial Layerings, Imperial Crossings," Victor Bascara, Kimberly Alidio, Julian Go, and Dylan Rodriguez reconceptualize colonialism and empire by reading against the historiographical grain to address such things as the insolvency of colonial loyalty, the educational biopolitics of sociolinguistic acculturation, the fraught alliances and antagonisms of Filipino *ilustrados* and their counterparts from other former Spanish colonies, and the vexed relationality of an insurgent Filipino racial ontology with colonial violence.

The chapters by Richard T. Chu, Robert Diaz, and Kale Bantigue Fajardo, which appear in the section titled "Nationalist Inscriptions: Blurrings and Erasures," investigate the ways that "nation" can function simultaneously as an organizing principle for communities seeking social capital while being a conceptual target of institutional mechanisms of disciplinary exclusion. Focusing specifically on the subjectivity of Chinese individuals, female and queer male sex workers, and displaced Filipinos, these chapters deconstruct participatory modes of racial, heteronormative, and transnational power that divest these groups of their agency in conventional ethnographic accounts that ventriloquize minoritarian experience as mere articulations of woundedness or pain.

In the section "The Filipino Body in Time and Space," Martin Joseph Ponce, Denise Cruz, Sarita Echavez See, and Lucy Burns interrogate notions of womanhood, queerness, and desire as they relate to how Filipinos encode themselves as persons enmeshed in intersectional contexts. Situating these embodiments within—and as irrupting into—the discourses of modern sexuality, the essays in this section examine cultural artifacts and modes of cultural production to expose how both performing and challenging racialization, gendering, and sexuality were integral components of (post)colonial projects.

Finally, the section “Philippine Cultures at Large: Homing in on Global Filipinos and Their Discontents” interrogates the territorialization of culture/culturalization of territory amid transnational and diasporic dynamics that continue to destabilize notions of home and belonging. The chapters by Francisco Benitez, Anna Romina Guevarra, Emily Noelle Ignacio, and Rick Bonus surface the future problematics of Philippine studies as they relate not just to the effect of (im) mobilities in shaping ever more hybrid Filipino ontologies, but also to how Filipino presence becomes constitutive in shaping the habitus of previously alienating racial and cultural spaces. In particular, Benitez’s invocation of Judith Butler’s engagement with Levinasian ethics becomes an important teleological counterpoint to Blanco’s hermeneutics of reading and writing the palimpsest of Philippine studies. Butler argues that the structure of address between the “I” and the Other is an interruption of narratives that behooves the I’s need to be recognized as a subject by an interlocutor. From this argument, Benitez extrapolates the problem that confronts displaced or hybrid subjects: how the multiplicity of addresses they are mired in satisfies the ontological and communitarian desire to be recognized but at once also precludes the possibility of stable positionality, rendering their attempts to be fully recognized as always necessarily provisional (p. 335).

This constant interpellation of hybrid subjectivity foregrounds Filipinoness as an irresolvable conundrum and perhaps limns the Sisyphean anxiety that haunts Philippine studies. Yet paradoxically—and as Manalansan and Espiritu intimate in their palimpsestic reframing—the provisionality of Filipinoness is precisely what allows for its endless reinscriptions. But *whose* reinscriptions? At the heart of the palimpsest metaphor are assumptions of access to the narrative, knowledge of its language of writing, and willingness to have one’s own textualizations be edited, overwritten, obfuscated, or erased. While the volume acknowledges the discontinuities that could arise from the recalibration of the narratives of Philippine studies, implicit in Manalansan and Espiritu’s own avowal of their volume as the labor product of privileged Filipino and Filipino-American scholars from the Global North—our modern-day *ilustrados*—is the necessity for even more interlocutors to engage Filipinoness in discursive address. Where *Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora* succeeds the most is that in laying bare the complex textuality of Filipino (self-)narration, it becomes an open invitation to these interlocutors, whose complementary or competing perspectives are informed by their own positionalities, to engage and mediate Filipinoness: a translocal script that unfolds in real time.

Christian T. Ylagan

Comparative Literature Program, Western University, Canada

References

- Coloma, Roland Sintos; McElhinny, Bonnie; Tungohan, Ethel; Catungal, John Paul; and Davidson, Lisa, eds. 2012. *Filipinos in Canada: Disturbing Invisibility*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

- Ileto, Reynaldo C. 2014. Nation and Empire in the Intellectual Biographies of Southeast Asian Scholars. *Asian Studies* 59(4): 9–17.
- Patajo-Legasto, Priscelina, ed. 2008. *Philippine Studies: Have We Gone Beyond St. Louis?* Diliman: University of the Philippines Press.
- Rafael, Vicente, ed. 1995. *Discrepant Histories: Translocal Essays on Filipino Cultures*. Manila: Anvil Publications.
- Tiongson, Jr., Antonio T.; Gutierrez, Edgardo V.; and Gutierrez, Ricardo V., eds. 2006. *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Tolentino, Rolando B., ed. 2011. Vaginal Economy: Cinema and Sexuality in the Post-Marcos Post-Brocka Philippines. *positions: east asia cultures critique* 19(2) (fall): 229–256.

Inventing the Performing Arts: Modernity and Tradition in Colonial Indonesia

MATTHEW ISAAC COHEN

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016.

In *Inventing the Performing Arts: Modernity and Tradition in Colonial Indonesia*, Matthew Isaac Cohen focuses on how “modernity” and “tradition” are woven together in shaping the practice of performing arts in Indonesia. Using E.J. Hobsbawm’s term “invented tradition,” this book uses a similar approach to Hobsbawm’s by questioning the difference between tradition and modernity and showing how both are interwoven and unavoidably connected rather than opposites. This book discusses the century-old process of invention of performing arts in Indonesia, in chronological order from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, depicting the many agencies and dynamics involved in the process.

Starting with an advertisement of a family circus from Batavia, as well as postcards and images from museum collections of the nineteenth century, the author beautifully demonstrates the many agencies involved in the process of invention, including those from Europe, China, and Java, to show the complexity of the invention of performing arts in Indonesia. Through the rest of the book the author illustrates how the development of performing arts in Indonesia has been subjected to influences from many agencies, not only local but also international, and how the development is connected to the trends of performing arts at the international level. It is reasonable to suggest that the performing arts in Indonesia are not only the result of tradition, which is isolated from the outside, but are also influenced by, and adaptations of, trends in other countries as well.

This book consists of three parts arranged in chronological order. The first part focuses on the “common ground for arts and popular entertainments” in the setting of the nineteenth century; the second focuses on the “maelstrom of modernity” of the twentieth century; and the third focuses on “occupation and ‘Greater Asian’ modernity,” informed by the 1942–45 period of Japanese occupation.

The first part introduces the topic of performing arts and their significance in and for Indone-

sia; the multiple agencies involved in the development of performing arts in Indonesia in the nineteenth century; and how early modernity was absorbed in the nineteenth-century performing arts of the country. The development of performing arts during this period is very important for Indonesia as the seed for what happened next, in the twentieth century. Several basic types of performing arts are mentioned in this part of the text, including the European theater, military and missionary music, Chinese opera, Javanese royal court performances such as court dances, and *wayang kulit* or shadow puppet theater. All of those basic types underwent changes as a result of social changes, technological advancement, and education. There was also growing commercialization during this period, as previously noncommercial performances were turned into popular entertainment by various entrepreneurs. The change to commercialization brought new cultural forms into performing arts such as circuses, puppet theater, and commercial *wayang wong* (Javanese dance drama). New rules were set for the new cultural forms, as by then they were considered public performances.

The second part of the book focuses on the peak of modernity in Indonesia, after the nineteenth century. This is the period when modern drama and modern music from international, including Western, sources influenced the practices of the performing arts in Indonesia. The remarkable influences on drama discussed in this book are from *Komedi Stambul*, *Indische Toneel*, and Malay and Sino-Malay drama, which underwent changes resulting from interactions with local conditions. The music performed during this period was varied: the music of the *pasar malam* (night market), classical music, jazz, and the unique Hawaiian-style music. The invention and development of the phonograph brought new ways to express music as well as spread various styles. It should be noted that all of these music sources are from countries outside of Indonesia. They created richer cultural forms of hybridity, which gave rise to some resistance, particularly from those in favor of traditions. This resistance led to established traditional cultural practices becoming more modern by adopting modern organizations as well as modern school and education systems, despite efforts to use tradition to oppose modernity. This resistance unexpectedly gave rise to a more popular culture by making the arts more available to common people rather than being exclusive as they were in the past. Some of the organizations and schools founded during this period had a role in the next period, for example the Java Institute, Boedi Oetomo, Kridha Beksa Wirama, and Taman Siswa. In the last stage of this period there was growing nationalism as a result of education, which in turn initiated a debate on Indonesian cultural identity driven by prominent agencies including Sukarno, Muhammad Yamin, and Sanoesi Pane.

The third part of the book focuses on the Japanese occupation of 1942–45 and its influence on cultural and performing arts. Japanese fascism and propaganda, along with Japanese policy on censorship and obligatory registration, brought something new to the cultural life of Indonesia. All forms of Western culture were banned, and the performing arts and entertainment were made for—and dictated by the needs of—Japanese propaganda. This climate of thought made way for

some traditional art forms previously banned by the Dutch to be reborn, while Western-influenced arts were banned and the adoption of Japanese arts was facilitated. This also made way for the making of *sandiwara* (spoken drama) as a new art form. The last year of the Japanese occupation was the time when resistance started to flourish in cultural practices. This resistance was a result of all the hardships Indonesian people had to face during the occupation, when they were forced to work as laborers for the Japanese military and give most of their harvest to the Japanese—an obligation that inevitably resulted in the Indonesian population experiencing famine and suffering. As the Japanese military government was close to being defeated by the Allies, it introduced the idea of independence to the Indonesian people as part of the “Greater East Asia” concept, through propaganda. The propaganda was spread through art forms that were centrally organized by the Japanese colonial government. This initiative created new art forms and a new generation of art performers who used art performance as a propaganda tool. The propaganda was successful in that it increased the nationalism of the Indonesian people, but the people refused to be part of “Greater East Asia” under Japan. This part of the book closes with a short discussion on the dynamics of performing arts in the following period—from the end of Japanese colonialism up to the 2000s.

The elaborate discussion in this book will be particularly helpful for scholars interested in the development of Indonesia’s performing arts. While the nature of this historical book needs it to be elaborative in order to thoroughly explore information relating to the life of Cornel Simandjoentak and the details of Dardanella (pp. 141–147), some of the information might not be necessary to support the author’s main arguments. The information about the life of Simandjoentak, who suffered from tuberculosis, is an example of unnecessary detail. However, the details in this book are remarkable, making it an important source of information on the cultural dynamics of Indonesia in the nineteenth to twentieth century, with particular relevance to the development of Indonesia’s performing arts. The book’s detailed and complex information, involving many agencies and events over a long period of time, has the potential to render the narrative somewhat confusing at times. However, the author makes it simple enough for the reader to understand the big picture, thanks to the book’s structure and narrative flow.

This book will best suit Indonesia- or Southeast Asia-focused researchers, scholars, and academics specializing in cultural issues. Its abundant details are invaluable for such specialists, as they serve as data sources and can be used as background to inform and facilitate other research. However, this book would be challenging for a more general audience in that its meticulous details, including specific names and terminology, can be confusing and therefore distract readers from the bigger picture. The glossary is seven pages long and consists of Indonesian and local words, which shows the abundance of foreign words the reader has to absorb in order to understand the text. In addition, specific names of people, organizations, and groups appear frequently throughout. The combination of both can be overwhelming for a reader who does not have preliminary knowledge about Indonesian history or culture. At the same time, the specific names and terminology show

how much information offered by this book could be of benefit to readers whose interests are in related fields and who have a sufficient basic knowledge of Indonesia, its people, and its culture.

Overall, the book is a valuable contribution to the literature of Indonesian studies, Southeast Asian studies, and studies on performing arts in general. Its extensive examination of the concepts of modernity and tradition in the performing arts of Indonesia, and how both concepts are intertwined and inseparable, will be of great benefit to specialists in the field of Asian cultural studies.

Ofita Purwani

Department of Architecture, Universitas Sebelas Maret

Thailand: Shifting Ground between the US and a Rising China

BENJAMIN ZAWACKI

London: Zed Books, 2017.

Thailand: Shifting Ground between the US and a Rising China is an indispensable handbook for those who study Thailand or whose work involves the kingdom. A detailed review of the past several decades, it itemizes the steps with which the various governments of Thailand have dealt with the rise of China and its intensive expansion into Southeast Asia, which has been matched by progressive American withdrawal and occasionally the United States completely ignoring the region and its longstanding ally Thailand.

The book is backed up by Benjamin Zawacki's 15 years as a resident of Thailand, and his extensive and thorough interviews with major players in the United States and Thailand, including former US secretaries of state and ambassadors, and former Thai premiers, ministers of foreign affairs, as well as Thai military, political, and social leaders.

In fact, the intensity of the details and the argument contribute to the one negative of the book: the unusually complex and oblique sentence structures, which make it a challenging read even for someone familiar with modern Thailand. It can be a challenge for the casual reader or the undergraduate student. If anything, Zawacki is too absorbed in the historical events he reviews and the people he interviews.

The people Zawacki thanks and those who are quoted by the publisher with very positive comments on this book are a who's who of Thai political leaders, respected commentators, activists, and scholars. The list also includes a large number of leading foreign scholars and news analysts. Underlying all this is the significance of Zawacki's main point: the historic turn of Thai foreign policy and internal values toward those of China, as the United States willingly fades into the historical distance from modern-day Southeast Asia. This is described in several dust-jacket quotes as a "wake-up call." It turns out that Zawacki has a few more timely and profound insights to share

as well.

Zawacki has been a regular contributor to the media in Southeast Asia but also has considerable involvement with international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and the Harvard Law School Human Rights Program. He also served as a policy adviser to US President Jimmy Carter. Though he has lived for the past 15 years in Thailand, in his Introduction he affirms that he is an American and a patriot, and therefore states, "I forfeit any claim to neutrality in this book" (p. ix). This is shown in his clear distaste of Obama's policies toward Asia (e.g., p. 9) and occasional revelations of his very American point of view.

The historic change in Thai foreign relations and related political values is described by Zawacki as an "institutional, cultural, and *national* consensus" (his emphasis, p. 4). Until recent times Thailand was a US ally, strongly reinforced by the long and historic rule of the US-born King Rama IX. Now that the beloved Rama IX has been ritually cremated, Thailand's connection and identification with the United States has come to an end: "More than simply afford the [US] alliance royal cache, Thailand's king and queen were an indispensable and—as proven five decades later—irreplaceable piece of it" (p. 41). Zawacki charts in great detail the many steps along this path in modern Thai history.

The rise of Chinese influence is also felt more generally in Southeast Asia, where US naval dominance of the Straits of Malacca potentially constricts China's oil supply, and China's charm offensive is felt not only in Thailand but also in Myanmar, Cambodia, across Asia and Africa, and into Latin America. China has created over 3,000 acres of artificial islands in the South China Sea (p. 9) over which it claims sovereignty, but it is currently downplaying this extremely controversial claim, allowing local nations to get used to the reality of a Chinese presence in the middle of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

In Part 1 Zawacki reviews the complex history of Thailand ("Siam") since before World War II, including the central role of the partly assimilated ethnic Chinese immigrants to Bangkok and the urban centers. One way of understanding Thai politics is to see the Sino-Thais as an unclearly defined elite among the Thai upper classes. During World War II Sino-Thais made up as much as 16 percent of the population of Siam (p. 33) and half the population of Bangkok. They were the largest ethnic Chinese population in Southeast Asia by 1965 (p. 39); and by 1994, 86 percent of Southeast Asia's billionaires were of Chinese descent (pp. 80–81). The Thai parliament in 2001 was as much as 90 percent Sino-Thai (p. 111). Sino-Thais were gradually becoming a crucial element in the political life of the nation, and eventually the money politics of the Sino-Thai international corporations became a major support for the Network Monarchy, which is resurrecting itself in the current era of King Rama X (pp. 70–71). This gradual dominance of Thai governing bodies has relaxed the former restrictions and limitations on Chinese people, language, and culture. But of course by now Sino-Thais are fully assimilated Thais and share a long-term awareness of Chinese influence on the ultimate value of Thai politics: independence.

Meanwhile, the number of Thai-Chinese visiting China rose by over 60 percent between 1997 and 2003 (p. 113) and Thailand began to welcome increasing numbers of Chinese tourists.

The other point verified relentlessly by Zawacki's research is that, in the words of former Thai Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun, "... we did not leave America, but you left us" (p. 45).

Part 2 covers the rise of Thaksin Shinawatra to electoral dominance in Thailand, and his overt exaltation of business above all other beliefs and strategies. Under Thaksin, "following four decades of upward mobility within and across all sectors of Thai society, the start of a new century saw the Sino-Thai ready to lead the nation" (p. 111). Thaksin was not fully representative of the Sino-Thai center, as he was from the police rather than the army and was a northerner who gained his electoral support from the North and the Northeast. The country is currently in the final stages of the process of replacing Thaksin with today's Sino-Thai political-military elite, the new Network Monarchy: "In the intra-elite political conflict just underway, the Chinese of Thailand would constitute both sides" (p. 114).

Zawacki also scathingly summarizes the rise and fall of "Thai-style" democracy (especially pp. 129–139). He argues forcefully that "When for six months prior to a coup in 2014 millions of Thais called for replacing electoral democracy with selected leadership, one was to properly understand them as anti-democratic" (p. ix).

These are some of the reasons why Zawacki's book is even more insightful and more valuable than the title implies.

Part 2 records the deepening role of Thailand as the "gateway to ASEAN," including its role as the first ASEAN country to sign a Free Trade Agreement with China (p. 117) and the first ASEAN country to conduct joint military drills with China (p. 123). Zawacki accurately positions this change in Thai international orientation as one aspect of the current global reorganization driven by the Internet and related media, a process labeled "globalization" in general.

The only issue I have with this work is the subtly ironic and very complexly structured sentences, which require a rereading or two to realize that the grammar may be technically correct but the references, pronominal and otherwise, are far too complex for most readers, even those familiar with modern Thai history and regional politics. A serious improvement would be an appendix or glossary. Some examples of this very common and unnecessary complexity are the following:

But it was Chuan who had laid the visit's political groundwork and it was Chuan whom Clinton would host two years later. On account of what transpired between his two terms, Chuan's policies would also inadvertently contribute to Thailand's realignment in the 21st century at the hands of his second successor. (p. 76)

China's repeated claims to the contrary notwithstanding, its silence on Thailand's coups and rights violations is the opposite of "non-interference in domestic affairs". (p. 12)

The State Department's backing of Phibun would relegate it to the US foreign policy wilderness in Thailand. (p. 21)

Rather than see the alliance [with the United States] as having championed their democratic rights and defended them from communist aggression, they saw it as precluding the former and substituting the latter for joint military domination. (p. 46)

While its approach concerned a more conciliatory ASEAN—which began to see Thailand as a part of a larger Chinese design to utilize or neutralize it—China agreed the following year to support a possible Indochina federation. (p. 74)

Zawacki also has a penchant for subtle, implied criticism, a love for abstract literary contrasts, and a deep underlying sense of irony.

Examples of the author's abstract contrasts are "rule of law or by law" (p. 1), "fluent in fallacy" (p. 4), and "nothing succeeds like failure" (p. 6).

An example of underlying irony (and complexity) is: "Indeed, accounting for both the undisputable legitimacy of the Thaksin government and a cognitive dissonance that attends any analysis of his actual governance, was the huge majority of Thais who consistently voted for him" (p. 129).

Despite the stylistic complexities, Zawacki's scholarship deserves the reviewers' high praise. For its main point, its detailed examples and arguments, the book is an absolute necessity for advanced classes or research focused on Thailand and even on ASEAN and its relations with China and the United States. The author is an especially astute observer of the internal issues, personnel, and attitudes of US governmental agencies that interacted with Thailand during the last several decades.

As for Zawacki's writing style, perhaps it is not actually a complaint if a book makes you stop and think, even if it does so fairly often.

A new era has begun in which the rise of China in Asia is as nearly complete as the decline of the United States. Zawacki's book chronicles in detail this change in Thailand and in ASEAN and is as prophetic as the promotional quotes claim.

Jim Placzek

*ASEAN Studies, Pridi Banomyong International College, Thammasat University/
Centre for Southeast Asia Research, Institute of Asian Research, University of British Columbia*

The Uprooted: Race, Children, and Imperialism in French Indochina, 1890–1980

CHRISTINA ELIZABETH FIRPO

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2016.

Christina Firpo's *The Uprooted: Race, Children, and Imperialism in French Indochina* tackles an intriguing topic that has long fascinated historians of colonialism: the *métis* (mixed race) children born out of liaisons between European men and Indochinese women. This monograph is a much-welcome contribution to a body of rich and constantly growing literature on colonial youth and childhood that has drawn scholarly attention to the enduring consequences of global imperial encounters and their legacies for colonial societies in Africa, Southeast Asia, the Americas, and elsewhere. In the historiographical context of French Indochina, Firpo's work is fresh and pioneering: it is the first systematic and comprehensive study of fatherless *métis* children and their removals by the French colonial regime from the children's native cultural milieus in Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam. An ambitious and empirically rigorous research, it traces the dramatic shifts in colonial initiatives, institutional transformations, and attitudes from 1890 to 1980 as the French sought to educate *métis* children into Frenchmen and to subsequently tighten the grip of colonial rule by eliminating the threat of native resentment. Creating a database that tracks more than 4,000 *métis* protection society wards over multiple decades, Firpo effectively and brilliantly demonstrates the magnitude of colonial concerns over the question of racial purity and its importance to the upholding of the *mission civilisatrice*, and the centrality of these *métis* removals to nineteenth- and twentieth-century French imperial statecraft. More than just studying the colonial impetus to reproduce the French race, Firpo also attends to the situations of indigenous women and "explores the effects, both insidious and blatant, of colonialism on colonized societies and, in particular, on mothers and children" (p. 14).

The first two chapters set up the historical background informing the French decision to establish specialized agricultural schools that exclusively admitted *métis* children and provide the context for the shifting French attitude toward this population in the face of massive casualties during the Great War. Chapter 1 discusses a series of colonial projects implemented in reaction to two sets of prevalent anxieties among the French colonial bureaucracy. One was the fear of an increasing number of *métis* children whose fathers had abandoned them and whose denials of French citizenship would produce a future generation of rebellious anticolonial individuals threatening the stability of French colonial rule. And second was the colonial apprehension, often rooted in debates on race and Franco-indigenous liaisons in the metropole, about the contamination of a pure French race. Perceiving these issues as dangerous, the French, in the name of protecting an at-risk European class and preventing the colony from being infiltrated with *métis* rebels, founded *métis* protection societies across Indochina to remove Eurasian children from maternal care and

put them in French schools that taught the French language and agricultural training. But, as Firpo convincingly argues through the case of the Collège Agricole De Hung Hoá, these educational initiatives often failed to achieve their intended goals. Plagued by financial issues and refusals from some colonial administrators to treat *métis* children as Frenchmen, the college fostered, in contrast, “colonial racist attitudes” (p. 34), bringing the children into violent conflict with the local Vietnamese population and thus creating a sense of self-entitlement that undermined French efforts to neutralize *métis* indignation against the regime. French attitudes toward *métis* children quickly shifted from abject rejection to embracement in the wake of wartime population decimation.

Chapter 2 delves into the colonial effort to regenerate the French race by incorporating *métis* children into French Republican citizenship. In this chapter, Firpo does an excellent job of illuminating the reinterpretation of metropolitan laws and the discursive strategies the French employed to justify protection societies’ initiative to send fatherless *métis* children to the metropole and to establish Eurasian agricultural institutions in Annam. These programs, as the author points out, aimed to provide a road map for *métis* children to become fully French through practical training as they “learn to be productive citizens and contribute to metropolitan as well as colonial society” (p. 60).

The next two chapters highlight the impacts of socioeconomic ruptures at the height of the Great Depression and Indochinese Wars on the *métis* protection system. Chapter 3 explores what Firpo characterizes as the centralization of institutionalized social welfare and childcare that purported to alleviate the poverty wrecking Indochina during its period of economic depression. This period saw a boom not only in maternal trust to send *métis* children to orphanages cropping up all over the colony but also anxieties over what the French metropolitan government diagnosed as a lack of centralized governmental institutions to oversee the *métis* children’s affairs. Due to lobbying efforts from the Les Français d’Indochine, a group of wealthy *métis* adults in Cochinchina, the metropolitan government established the Jules Brévié Foundation to direct a more centralized *métis* protection system and the École des Enfants de Troupe—a military school for *métis* children of French soldiers. While explicating the metropolitan dynamics central to the transformation of *métis* children policies, Firpo, by utilizing a diverse source base, also skillfully weaves in non-French perspectives such as those from the aforementioned *métis* groups and emerging Vietnamese discourses on sex, marriage, and consent that enlivened the colonial public sphere.

Chapter 4 continues against this backdrop and provides a little-known narrative of the colonial regime’s desire to “repopulate” the French race in the overwhelming presence of the Japanese occupation of Vietnam in the 1940s. Once alienated as impure and detrimental to French civilization, the *métis* children now figured prominently in a new French racial taxonomy: they were to be the future of a robust French community in the colony that contributed to the makeup of a new class of French colonial elites. The colonial government attempted to achieve this by aggressively pushing for intensive searches of fatherless *métis* and settling them in strategic agricultural areas

in Tonkin and Dalat-Langbiang.

The final two chapters turn to the last years of French rule in Indochina. They both illuminate the strategic nature of *métis* children policies and the operations of the *métis* protection societies in relation to the preservation of colonial control. Chapter 5 analyzes the momentous formation of the Fédération des Oeuvres de l'Enfance Française Indochine (FOEFI) and its critical role in legitimizing French colonial rule at the height of Japan's deposing of the colonial government and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam's (DRV) declaration of independence in 1945. It articulates a complex web of power struggles among the DRV, the French government, and *métis* leaders as these historical actors competed over the symbolic functions of the *métis* population in their claims to political legitimacy. While the DRV had gradually embraced *métis* children and granted those who aligned with revolutionary causes Vietnamese citizenship, it used the children as potential wartime propaganda (p. 131). The French, struggling to maintain their rule in Indochina, cast *métis* children as the symbol of colonial paternalism, hence justifying their connections to the empire and the necessity to save these children through education and social welfare apparatuses. Meanwhile, the FOEFI and prominent *métis* leaders stressed the failure of French governance and demonstrated concern over the dire situation of Indochina and the fate of *métis* children in the colony. Together, they continued to support *métis* protection societies and intensified the effort to remove fatherless *métis* children.

Chapter 6 brings readers to a series of tensions and contestations between the FOEFI administrators, headed by William Bazé, and the postcolonial French government. After the 1954 Geneva Accords spelled an end to French Indochina, the FOEFI continued to hold onto the *métis* removal system as a means to sustain French imperial greatness even when the colonial government could no longer exert any jurisdictional power. It "pursued a multifaceted program to assimilate wards into French society" and "made every effort to cultivate in its charges a *métis* identity that was sufficiently French to pass as metropolitan" (p. 145). The French government, however, no longer held a favorable view of the FOEFI's activities. Over the course of 30 years, it attempted to stall applications for Eurasian and Afro-Asian re-immigration to France and to end the FOEFI's operations for good.

Firpo's comprehensive study is an admirable product of years-long rigorous research in multiple archives across France, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Its greatest strength, as also partially revealed in the chapter outline, lies in the author's mastery of both colonial and Vietnamese sources, which brings to the fore the complexity of colonial modernity rooted in French concerns over racial demography, social engineering, and the viability of imperial rule. Her monograph successfully captures the inherent contradictions and discursive nature of French civilizational discourses, providing an essential critique of colonial benevolence in its justification of the forceful, at times violent, removal of *métis* children from indigenous mothers. Firpo's effort to bring out social history perspectives from the victims and parties involved in this enterprise and to let the

subalterns speak from the heaps of colonial administrative archives is also commendable.

While an excellent monograph, *The Uprooted* leaves a few questions unanswered that future comparative studies could undertake: How was the on-the-ground experience of *métis* children in Laos and Cambodia different from that in Vietnam? How differently were public debates on sex, marriage, childcare, and social welfare configured in the distinctive Laotian, Cambodian, and Vietnamese cultural milieus? And, lastly, how did the migratory experiences of *métis* youths and adults from colonies to the metropole inform the protection societies' policies?

Firpo's *The Uprooted* makes a critical scholarly contribution at the nexuses of race and colonial studies, French colonial history, history of family and childhood, youth studies, and Vietnamese studies. A compelling work of scholarship, it will serve as a methodological road map for subsequent studies on the topic and remain useful for a general readership with broad interest in the history of empire and colonialism.

Anh Sy Huy Le

Department of History, Michigan State University

Early Modern Southeast Asia, 1350–1800

OI KEAT GIN and HOÀNG ANH TUÂN, eds.

Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2016.

Early Modern Southeast Asia, 1350–1800 is an important book for any student, researcher, or educator of precolonial Southeast Asia. The contributors present the latest findings and establish new inroads into research about the region's pre-modern past. The book's agenda is stated clearly on the first page: to show "how well-developed Southeast Asia was before the onset of European involvement" and that it had a parity with "Europe in terms of socio-economic progress and attainments." The book is organized in four parts: Part 1, "Diplomatic and Inter-state Relations," reveals the complexities involved in trying to understand the development and nature of Southeast Asian state systems. Through case studies such as Ayutthaya, this section elucidates the importance of the agency and sophistication of Southeast Asian pre-modern states and political actors. This is not a new perspective, of course, but the nature of the information that attests to the reality of agency is new. This is why Bhawan Ruangsilp's analysis of the Phraklang Ministry of Ayutthaya is crucial. It shows evidence of a Southeast Asian pre-modern entity that attempted to "keep pace" with rapidly changing commercial and political environs with "bureaucratic innovations."

This part of the book would have benefited from a chapter on the newest archeological findings on the Angkor empire. This would have tied in well with Part 1's other contributors, as new evidence based on LIDAR scans has revealed a more extensive Angkor empire than previously

thought. It would have provided another perspective: that another model of progress and development adopted by pre-modern Southeast Asian kingdoms could have been simply expansion of territory and population rather than adopting bureaucratic innovations. But this model of progress is not sustainable as it leads to collapse when resources are not available to sustain it.

Part 2, "Interactions and Transactions," offers six case studies that attest to the flourishing trade and commerce of early Southeast Asia. It begins rather fittingly with Leonard Y. Andaya's chapter on the importance of the interconnectedness of the seas as a backdrop to understanding the rise and development of the maritime-based entities of Van Don, Batu Sawar, and Penang. More important, it provides further evidence of Southeast Asian agency in determining the success of these early port polities but only if they had unrestricted access to the sea. However, what is curious in this chapter is the omission of the role and centrality of the Orang Laut, or sea peoples. The sea is an important arena for interactions and transactions, but the intermediaries of the sea—i.e., the sea peoples—are important to the history of trade, politics, and commerce in precolonial Southeast Asia. A chapter on the Bugis traders of nineteenth-century Singapore would have been highly complementary to the rest of Part 2. It would have shown the continued dependence on regional seafaring peoples by even the British, during the rise of Singapore in the early nineteenth century—especially in providing the early port of Singapore with foodstuffs and trade items. This would have given Part 2 a more nuanced perspective on the success of maritime-based entities during this period and highlighted that success was contingent also on the support given by intermediaries of the sea such as the sea peoples and seafaring communities.

Part 3, "Kingship and State Systems," and Part 4, "Indigenizing Christianity," offer case studies that shed new light on the complex relationship between religion, power, and trade in pre-modern Southeast Asia. Sher Banu's analysis of the rise of Acehnese queens offers an alternative perspective to the male-dominated historical perspective of power in Southeast Asia, ". . . an alternative model to the charismatic men of prowess model of kingship" (p. 187). The analysis illustrates the usefulness of new research on local, indigenous sources. Also demonstrative of the new perspectives that can be derived from work on difficult Southeast Asian sources is Danny Wong's analysis of Cham-Viet relations in the late seventeenth to eighteenth centuries. Wong's chapter shows that it is possible to have a more nuanced perspective on the highly complex nature of the Cham-Viet relationship; the Cham had a great degree of agency even when the locus of political and economic power shifted to the Vietnamese during the centuries mentioned.

In all, the book is useful in highlighting the latest research findings and directions related to pre-modern Southeast Asia. Of great importance is the reminder of the importance and usefulness of using local, indigenous sources in throwing new light on Southeast Asia's pre-modern past. However, more could have been done to integrate archeological perspectives on pre-modern Southeast Asia. This could have complemented the various chapters on Southeast Asia's past. A survey of John Miksic's extensive archeological work on the region could have been included. If this had

been done, the material evidence from early modern Southeast Asia—especially on the wealth, prowess, and cultural sophistication of early modern communities and rulers—would have greatly complemented many of the contributors’ assertions.

The problems involved in using local indigenous Southeast Asian sources remain under-discussed. Several contributors have demonstrated the usefulness and importance of using such sources, but these are exceptions. If this work was truly a “showcase for a passing of the baton to a younger generation of historians of Southeast Asia” (Foreword), perhaps it could have included a comprehensive concluding chapter on alerting future young researchers about the problems involved in studying precolonial Southeast Asian written sources. For example, it is difficult to read Cham manuscript sources as there are several types of highly complex writing styles. Furthermore, these sources need to be contextualized with other types of sources (Vietnamese, Malay, Chinese primary written sources) to make the Cham manuscript information comprehensible, and this requires a mastery of several languages. Many of the Cham manuscripts are in poor condition, which makes studying them even more difficult.

Perhaps the book could have included a chapter on how studies of Southeast Asia’s pre-modern past have become more important in the last few years. An issue that could have been discussed is how the pre-modern past has been perceived and used when territorial issues come into play. For example, the Spratly Islands dispute among several countries in the region led to countries such as Vietnam and China looking into “historical records” in order to find evidence to justify their claims. Singapore’s disputes with Johor over Pulau Batu Putih and Horsburgh Light-house could also have been discussed.

This is a useful book for understanding the history of precolonial Southeast Asia and being informed on the latest research findings. But more could be done to encourage the young generation of researchers to continue studying Southeast Asia’s pre-modern past as well as making it more relevant to understanding present-day issues.

Mohamed Effendy Bin Abdul Hamid

Department of Southeast Asian Studies, National University of Singapore