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Introduction: De-institutionalizing Religion in Southeast Asia

Tatsuki Kataoka*

"Religion" is a controversial term in the contemporary academic world. In non-Western societies especially, the use of this translated term has been widely problematized because of its Western origin and modern Christian bias (cf. Asad 1993). Southeast Asia is no exception. These questions have paved the way for critical approaches to both the Asian appropriation of the Western concept of religion and the transformation of Asian religions under Western pressure. In contrast with the spontaneous rationalization and subsequent secularization in the history of Christianity, as repeatedly discussed by sociologists of religion (Weber 1985; Berger 1969), Asian societies are unique in that it has been the colonial regime or post-colonial modernizing state power that has enforced rationalization, standardization, and institutionalization (cf. Keyes *et al.* 1994).

In Southeast Asia, as Geertz (1973) clearly illustrates, the making of "religion" requires an "internal conversion" initiated (ironically enough) by the state. Indeed, Southeast Asian religions have had to be re-invented in the course of modernization and state-building. In other words, existing religious traditions, in accordance with state regulation based on Western standards of religion, have faced growing pressure to fashion themselves so as to fulfill the definition as "one of many religions" in the sense demanded by the field of comparative religion. So far, institutionalized religions as objects of study are the effects of such a transformation. An assumption that one religion stands for one society (state or ethnic group) on equal terms has enabled comparative studies of Southeast Asian religions. However, little attention has been paid to this assumption.

In this special issue, we try to question this assumption of institutionalized religions in Southeast Asia by focusing on their margins. Margins can mean those of state administrative frameworks, geographical peripheries, or ethnic minorities. All the contributors to this issue work with ethnic minorities, although other dimensions of marginality are, of course, taken into consideration. "Centering the margin" from a minority perspective is a challenge to rediscover what has been hidden or forgotten in national histories (Horstmann

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and Wadley 2006). In this sense, our objective is to recenter the margins of institutionalized religions by referring to ethnic minorities at the margins of the state.

A minority perspective is also useful when reconsidering conventional understandings of Southeast Asian religions as it also implicates the relationship between religion and ethnicity. Since "becoming Shan" and "entering Malay" have meant conversion to Buddhism and Islam respectively (Leach 1954; Kipp and Rodgers 1987), religious affiliation has often been a synonym for ethnic identification in traditional Southeast Asia. More important, however, is how these customs have acted as the field of negotiation on the definition of religion ("the politics of *agama*") in modern state-building (Kipp and Rodgers 1987). In short, taking a minority perspective enables us to reconsider the concepts of both religion and ethnicity in Southeast Asia.

This special issue consists of five separate ethnographic accounts of different areas, religions, and ethnic groups in Southeast Asia. Murakami and Kojima discuss the cross-border migration of lay Shan Buddhist specialists and how they have been targeted by the state. Based on fieldwork in Thailand (Murakami) and China (Kojima), the authors present an alternative view to the existing Sangha-centered understanding of Theravada Buddhist studies of Southeast Asia. Ikeda's paper discusses the history of growing ethnic consciousness among the Buddhist Karen in twentieth-century Burma. This consciousness came into existence in the course of a redefinition of religion and Buddhism. The Buddhist narrative of an emerging "Karen-ness" revises the widespread stereotype of the Karen as Christian separatists. Kataoka's paper on Chinese temples in Thailand describes the margin of state regulation on religion. What is puzzling is that the followers of the Chinese temples claim to be Buddhists in official statistics, yet the official status of their temples, with their very syncretic pantheons, is "non-religious." Chinese temples, which have been ignored by the state's administrators of religion, demonstrate the gap between the official definition of Buddhism and the religion itself. Yoshimoto's study of religious practices among the Cham in Vietnam also reveals a complex relationship between religion and ethnicity. Cham society is divided into polarized religious categories with "orthodox" Muslims on one side and the more traditional Cham Bani (they never regard themselves as Muslims) on the other, even though both are recognized by the government as Muslims. Here, there is a discrepancy between an officially defined religion and locally claimed religious identity. Ethno-religious relations are much more complex than we might expect, even when one ethnic group professes one faith, especially in the process of the redefinition of religion and modern state-building.

There is still much room for reconsidering and questioning Southeast Asian religions from minority and marginal perspectives. We hope this special issue opens the door to further inquiry on these relatively unquestioned but rich fields of study.

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Buddhism on the Border: Shan Buddhism and Transborder Migration in Northern Thailand

Tadayoshi Murakami*

This paper examines the transformation of Shan Buddhism in the border area of Northern Thailand. Shan and other ethnic groups have a long history of migration between Northern Thailand and the Shan State of Myanmar; the migration continued even after the border was demarcated at the end of the nineteenth century. Recently, the migration has become unidirectional—from Myanmar to Thailand—and the number of migrants is growing steadily. An anomalous situation exists in this area: a fluid border crossing of people, goods, and information in spite of rigid border control by the Thai government. In the religious sphere, the Thai government has been institutionalizing and standardizing "Thai Buddhism" since the early twentieth century. The government's efforts seem to have succeeded, resulting in the unified organization of "State Sangha" and a systematized curriculum for monastic education. In the process, local Sanghas (Buddhist monastic communities) in the kingdom have been integrated into the State Sangha of Thailand. However, Shan Buddhism in the border area has not been totally assimilated into Thai Buddhism and maintains its unique seasonal festivals, religious rites of passage, practices using Shan manuscripts, and temple architecture. By focusing on the movement of people in the border area, where strong state control and a porous border coexist, this paper analyzes the important role of border migration in the continuation and development of Shan Buddhist practices in Northern Thailand.

Keywords: Buddhism, Thai-Myanmar border, Shan, transborder migration, Sangha, lay Buddhists

I Buddhism and the State Border in Thailand

Historically, as was the case in most traditional states of mainland Southeast Asia, the kings and lords of Siam[1] made efforts to promote Buddhism in and around the capital by

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1) The name "Siam" is used here to refer to the kingdom before World War II. Strictly speaking, it was in 1939 that Prime Minister Phibun Songkhram replaced "Siam" with "Thailand."

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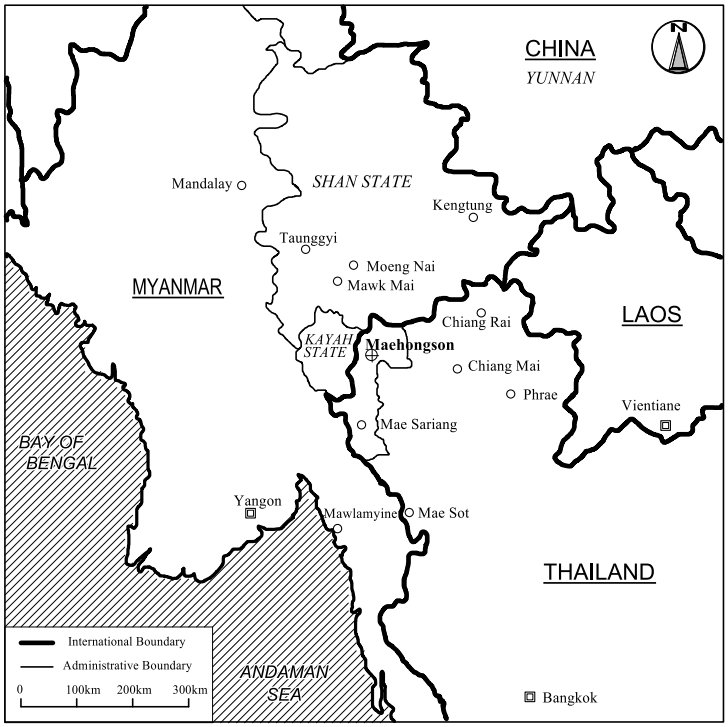
donating lands, constructing monasteries, and providing supplies and remuneration to the Buddhist Sangha. The Kingdom of Siam in the Ayutthaya and early Ratanakosin periods consisted of a central region directly ruled by the king, and peripheral regions, each ruled by a chief under the overlordship of the king. In distant regions, there were semiautonomous principalities with a tributary relationship, such as Chiang Mai, Lampang, and Lamphun in the north; and Nakhon Si Thammarat and Patani in the south. The peripheral regions and semiautonomous principalities had their own Buddhist traditions, and even different religions from the center of the kingdom; in fact, even in the central region, various traditions of Buddhism and lineages of Sangha coexisted. Therefore, although the king's authority and control over religious affairs did not extend past the central region, religious differences did not pose problems as long as the chiefs and their subjects accepted the political authority of the king. Because the Siamese state at that time was not based on the concept of territorial sovereignty demarcated by national borders, it was not necessary to unify all Buddhist traditions and Sangha organizations within its territory.

A change in the relationship between religion and territory came about in the late nineteenth century. Confronted by European colonial powers, Siamese leaders strove to transform the traditional kingdom into a modern nation-state. They demarcated boundaries between the kingdom and neighboring British and French colonies, centralized the administration, and instituted mandatory primary education and military conscription across the country. The kingdom was molded into a nation-state with territorial sovereignty (Thongchai 1994), and parallel to this reformation, Buddhism was institutionalized and standardized. King Chulalongkorn enacted the Sangha Act of 1902 to incorporate local Sanghas into the unified Sangha organization of Siam.[2] Prince Wachirayan reformed the examination system of monastic schools in 1893 and established a standardized curriculum for nationwide monastic education in 1910 (Ishii 1975). Thus, Siamese leaders imagined "Thai Buddhism" as a state religion corresponding to the character of the newly molded nation-state[3]—a centralized structure covering the whole country and standardizing Buddhist teachings within the kingdom. The Sangha Acts organized monks and novices in the kingdom into a hierarchical framework that can be described as "State

2) Chinese and Annamese (Vietnamese) monks and monasteries were exempted from the Sangha Act, since they belonged to the Mahāyāna tradition; the Theravāda tradition is dominant in Thailand. There are also a small number of Theravāda Buddhist monasteries that do not belong to the State Sangha of Thailand, such as Burmese and Mon monasteries.

3) Even though the government of Thailand has never constitutionally defined Buddhism as a state religion, Theravāda Buddhism has been given special treatment as "the religion of the nation" (*satsana pracam chat*).



Map 1 Maehongson and Its Surrounding Area

Sangha": a unified, legally acknowledged Sangha organization—the only model permitted and supported by the central government.[4] Since this religious reformation, all monks and novices in Siam have been required to belong to the State Sangha and learn Buddhist doctrine under the standardized curriculum, at least in their formal monastic education.

Many researchers have focused on the institutionalization of the State Sangha and its impact on local Sanghas and Buddhist traditions in the peripheral regions of Thailand; some have examined the incorporation of local traditions into Thai Buddhism; and others have studied the disobedience or resistance to the authority of the State Sangha. Most researchers have limited the scope of their inquiry within the borders of the Thai state and have based their studies on the perspective of center-periphery relations. In contrast, this paper reviews the relationship between Buddhism and the territoriality of state using a case study on Buddhist practices among the Shan in Maehongson, a border area of Northern Thailand.

4) While the Sangha Acts have been revised and amended several times, the idea of a unified Sangha and standardized monastic education within the kingdom remains unchanged.

Maehongson may be viewed not as a peripheral region but as a borderland between modern nation-states, a social space where opposing momentums coexist: cross-border flows and the incorporation of local practices into national standards by the central authority.[5] Sometimes the two have a symbiotic relationship, which accounts for the rapid rise in the number of immigrants from Myanmar into Thailand since the 1990s. The economic and administrative incorporation of the borderland into each nation has created a disparity between the two sides of the border and spurred the migration of workers from Myanmar into Thailand. The accelerated migration of Myanmarese workers has prompted the Thai government to control and incorporate local practices more strictly. Thailand's reaction has widened the disparity between the two sides and led to a revision of relevant laws to suit the local situation. An example is the legalization of unskilled migrant labor from neighboring countries, which in turn has led to more migrant workers. In order to study Buddhist practices among the Shan in the borderland, this paper pays attention to the opposing momentums coexisting in the borderland: the incorporation by the central authority of local Buddhist practices into Thai Buddhism, and the transborder flow of Buddhist traditions, which enables the continuation of local Buddhist practices.

This research also focuses on the role of Buddhist laypeople's practices. As noted above, the religious reformation of Thailand involved the government's institutionalization of the State Sangha by exerting control over ordained and monastic education, though not Buddhism as a whole. It is worth noting that the principle of the imagined Thai Buddhism is represented by the unified organization of the State Sangha, which leaves the traditions and activities of lay Buddhists beyond the purview of the religious administration. The traditions seem to be regarded as part of the Buddhist culture of the kingdom in the eyes of religious administrators. This principle may be seen in the restructuring of government ministries and agencies in 2002: the former Department of Religious Affairs in the Ministry of Education was divided into the Office of National Buddhism under the direct control of the Office of the Prime Minister, and the renewed Department of Religious Affairs in the Ministry of Culture. The former is in charge of the administration and support of the State Sangha, while the latter controls and supports other religious organizations and activities within the kingdom—Protestant, Catholic, Islamic, Hindu, and Buddhist activities in the "cultural sphere," as well as Buddhist festivals and traditions at the national and local levels. This shows the division of Buddhism in the religious administration: the State Sangha, which represents unified Thai Buddhism; and Buddhist festivals and traditions, which are considered cultural activities and are sometimes lauded

5) For ethnographic studies on the borderland's situation in mainland Southeast Asia, see Walker (1999), Kato (2004), Hayashi (2004; 2009), and Horstmann and Wadley (2006).

as exemplifying the diverse cultural heritage of the kingdom. The Thai government has paid more attention to the administration of the State Sangha than to Buddhist traditions. The incorporation of local Buddhist practices in the borderland also reflects this division. On the one hand, the State Sangha rigidly controls and closely protects local Sanghas; on the other, local Buddhist traditions, especially lay Buddhist practices, draw much less interest from religious administrators. The administrators' lack of interest is not a bad thing, however, because lay Buddhists are allowed to practice their customs and traditions without government intervention. Due to the division of Buddhism in religious administration, local Sangha and lay Buddhist traditions of the Shan in Maehongson have experienced different processes and degrees of incorporation into Thai Buddhism.

This study will first examine the situation in the borderland of Maehongson, describing the process of incorporation of local Sangha, and then focus on lay Buddhist practices and the border crossing of lay intellectuals.

II Maehongson: The Borderland of Northern Thailand

Maehongson, one of Northern Thailand's provinces that shares a border with Myanmar (Burma), is located in a mountainous area in the Salween River basin. Around 80 percent of it is forestland. The province is the most thinly populated in Thailand, and the majority of its estimated 250,000 residents are rural folk, scattered along the hillsides and valleys. There is no statistical information on the ethnic composition of Maehongson's population, but this author estimates that one half of the rural population is Shan while the other half is composed of *chao khao* (mountain people of Thailand); Tibeto-Burmese speakers such as Karen, Lisu, and Lahu; and Meo-Yao speakers such as Hmong. The urban population consists mainly of Shan and people from other regions of Thailand, such as Thai Yuan (*khon mueang*), ethnic Thai (Siamese), Sino-Thai, and Isan (from Northeastern Thailand). With the exception of the urban area, the landscape and ethnic composition of Maehongson are more similar to those of the Shan State of Myanmar than to Thailand. Maehongson Province comprises five districts (*amphoe*) along the Thai-Burma border. This research deals with data from the central part of the province—Maehongson District (*amphoe mueang Maehongson*) and Khun Yuam District (*amphoe Khun Yuam*). The provincial capital is in Maehongson District.

Maehongson has a history of ceaseless movement and circulation of people, goods, and information. Before the nineteenth century, the mountainous area of Maehongson marked the frontier between the state of Lanna (Chiang Mai), the Shan principalities, and the Karenni (Kayah) chiefdom. It was remote from the Burmese kingdom in Upper

Burma and the Siamese kingdom in the Chaophraya Delta. There is little information available on this area before the nineteenth century; it is presumed that a few of its inhabitants were from the Karen, Kayah, Pa-o, and Shan ethnic groups. Over the years, Shan as well as members of other ethnic groups steadily migrated from neighboring areas into this low-population area. Thus, since the middle of the nineteenth century the population of the province, especially the Shan population, has been increasing.[6] Most Shan inhabitants have settled around the valleys.

At the end of the nineteenth century, national boundaries were drawn in this frontier area. The British, who seized all of Burma after fighting three Anglo-Burmese Wars, placed the neighboring Shan principalities under their protection in 1886. Siam (Thailand) had been trying to extend direct control over Lanna since the end of the nineteenth century. In 1894, Great Britain and Siam demarcated the boundary between the British-ruled Shan States and Lanna territory (Northern Thailand), and Maehongson was incorporated into Siam's territory (Thongchai 1994, 108). However, even after the demarcation of national boundaries, people continued to move freely across the border between Maehongson and the Shan States. Because the border runs through the mountains, neither of the two central governments could exert effective control over the area.

Since World War II and the independence of the Union of Burma (Myanmar) in 1948, the boundary has been recognized by the Union of Burma and Thailand. Because of incidents along the Thai-Myanmar border and Myanmar's seclusion policy since 1960, trade at the national border points stagnated. However, local trade and cross-border migration remained a common practice. Some people crossed the border in search of new fields for cultivation, others to visit relatives or marry their betrothed on the other side of the border. Not surprisingly, these were undocumented immigrants.

It has been difficult for Thailand and Myanmar to control border crossings in the mountainous region. Although Thailand enacted the Immigration Act and Nationality Act before World War II, the weak enforcement of laws gave immigrants the opportunity to acquire Thai nationality. Throughout its history, Maehongson has served as a gateway to many immigrants who have been absorbed into Thailand; most of the residents in the area are descendants of immigrants from various regions of the Shan States.

As well as gradual migration, there has been rapid and intensive migration into Maehongson because of battles between Myanmar government troops and antigovern-

6) According to Niti's overview, there are several reasons for the growth in the Shan population during this period: fighting and bandits in the southern Shan States, which drove the Shan into this area; Maehongson's location along the trade route between Lanna (Northern Thailand) and the Shan States or lower Burma; and the gathering up of the Shan population into settlements by the expedition team from Lanna in 1831 (Niti 2004, 12–23; also see Niti 2006).

ment ethnic forces along the Myanmar-Thai border. In the 1950s and 1960s, migration was seasonal. When battles escalated in the dry season, Karen and Shan asylum seekers crossed over to the Thai side, where they remained for a while. In the rainy season, when the fighting temporarily stopped, the Thai government would push the asylum seekers back home. However, in the 1970s the asylum seekers multiplied and most of them remained in Thailand because the Myanmar military had gained the upper hand against the antigovernment ethnic forces. To deal with this situation, the Thai government shifted its policy from "push them back" to "count and control." Asylum seekers from Myanmar and individuals whose nationality could not be determined were admitted in Thailand as temporary residents and issued identification cards specifying their status: "asylum seeker" (*phu lop ni khao muang cak phama*), "displaced person" (*phu phalat thin*), "highlander" (*bukkhon bon phuen thi sung*), etc. In this context, "temporary residents" meant "permanent residents" with permission to work within certain districts or provinces in Thailand.[7)]

When Thailand's economic growth accelerated in the late 1980s, the economic disparity between Thailand and Burma widened, and the number of undocumented immigrants from Myanmar swelled in Maehongson. The political turmoil in Myanmar after 1988 and the forced mass relocation of locals in the Shan State after 1996 hastened this trend (Grundy-Warr and Wong 2002). Since the 1990s, Thailand has opened its doors to unskilled workers from neighboring countries, a policy shift that has allowed most new immigrants to be registered as "foreign laborers."[8)] Nowadays, Maehongson's economy depends heavily on the labor of these immigrants, in the same way that the Thai economy depends on foreign workers from neighboring countries.

Although it was the shift in policy for hiring foreign labor in the 1990s that sped up migration from the Shan State, the mid-1970s was the turning point in the immigrants' gaining legal status in Thailand, when the government permitted temporary residence for immigrants and asylum seekers. Before the mid-1970s, it was easy for immigrants to acquire Thai nationality; because of the weak enforcement of registration for residents in the area, they were readily assimilated into the host society. After the mid-1970s, the

7) The ID cards have been issued at different times for different reasons. Their color varies according to the type: orange for "asylum seeker," pink for "displaced person," sky blue for "highlander," etc. (Krittaya 2005). Since 2004, the Thai government has issued new types of documents to holders of ID cards to standardize the design or prepare them for Thai citizenship. There are two types of documents: the *bai samkhan thin yu* (certificate of residence) issued by the district office and the *bai samkhan pracam tua khon tangdao* (alien identification paper) issued by the police. Both are called "passport" by local people.

8) A certain number of immigrants do not seek any legal status because of the high cost of registration. They are regarded as "illegal immigrants" who will be deported if arrested.

government tightened its border control and strictly enforced the registration of residents. When it became harder for immigrants to get Thai nationality, there was a social change in Maehongson. Settlers who had arrived before the mid-1970s were able to acquire Thai nationality. The same applied to their descendants, who were born and grew up on Thai soil, where they received higher education. As Thai citizens who have retained their Shan ethnicity, these early settlers and their descendants are better off than newcomers (those who arrived after the mid-1970s and their descendants), who are not granted Thai nationality. The latter are given only "temporary resident" status, and as "foreigners" or "aliens" (*khon tangdao*) they are at a disadvantage legally and economically. Without legal protection, they are paid lower wages than Thai citizens. Early settlers and their descendants hire newcomers to do agricultural and unskilled labor, while they themselves take on better-paying jobs outside their community or province (Tannenbaum 2009, 18). The Thai-born descendants of early settlers call the newcomers *Tai nok* (foreign Shan/Shan from outside), which has a negative connotation. Although Maehongson has a long history of Shan migration, Thailand's immigration laws and strict border control since the 1970s carved a cleft between the earlier settlers and newcomers among Shan in Maehongson.

It is necessary, however, to say that both groups still have an ethnic identity as Shan that bridges the cleavage. They live in the same villages and communities, share the same language in everyday communication, and follow the same religious practices in both Buddhist and spirit-worship traditions. They often use the ethnonym "Tai" to distinguish themselves from Thai (Siamese). Maehongson still offers a more hospitable environment for Shan immigrants than do other parts of Thailand.[9)]

III History of the Sangha and Monasteries in Maehongson[10)]

This section reviews the history of Sangha and monasteries in Maehongson, which was conceived as a borderland. To put it simply, this history is the gradual process of incorporating the local tradition of Shan Buddhism within Thai Buddhism, backed by the

9) For the situation of Shan immigrants and their communities in Chiang Mai province, see Amporn (2008), Aranya (2008), and Farrelly (2009).

10) This paper describes mainly the history of monasteries and sects of Sangha in Maehongson District and its neighboring area. This research does not cover the northern, northeastern, and southern districts (Pang Ma Pha, Pai, Mae La Noi, and Mae Sariang) because their histories and social backgrounds are different from the central part of the province. For the social history of Maehongson from the perspective of its incorporation into Thailand, see Niti (2004; 2006).

enforcement of the state. However, the incorporation was not straightforward and remains partial.

The Shan's Early Settlements and the Establishment of Monasteries in Maehongson

The Shan population of Maehongson has been increasing since the middle of the nineteenth century. The conflict between Mawk Mai and Moeng Nai (Shan principalities) in the southern Shan States circa the 1850s and 1860s triggered a mass Shan migration to Maehongson and neighboring villages (Wilson and Hanks 1985, 34–36). As the Shan increased in number, they formed new villages; Maehongson was one of them.[11] When villages were established, the Shan inhabitants constructed their monasteries in the same way as did other Theravāda Buddhists. The first Shan monastery in Maehongson, Wat Cong Kham, was established in the middle of the nineteenth century. During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, laypeople invited senior monks from the southern Shan States to be the abbots of the newly erected monasteries.[12] As most of the Shan in Maehongson were immigrants or the descendants of immigrants from the southern Shan States, the monks and monasteries of Maehongson were affiliated with the Sangha in the southern Shan States. This means that Maehongson shared a network of monks and monasteries as well as religious practices—such as methods of using texts, ways of chanting Pali stanzas, monastic education procedures, and Buddhist festivals—with the southern Shan States.

By the mid-nineteenth century, this area gained increasing attention from neighboring polities. The British had taken possession of lower Burma—including Moulmein (now Mawlamyine), a port city at the mouth of the Salween River—and were becoming interested in the timber resources of the upper Salween area. Lanna was also beginning to devote more attention to the British influence over the west. Since Lanna needed to establish its influence on the western frontier with the Shan States and Kayah territory, the ruler of Lanna nominated a local leader as the *cao mueang* (ruler of a *mueang*) and set up Mueang Maehongson as a *mueang na dan* (frontier state) in 1874.[13] Because of its subordination to Lanna as a tributary state, Maehongson came under Lanna cultural influence. The number of Thai Yuan people from Lanna who settled in Maehongson

11) It is said that Cao Kaeo Mueang Ma, the head of the expedition team from Lanna, named Maehongson in 1831. The expedition team from Chiang Mai captured and trained wild elephants there. "Maehongson" means "the river (*mae rong* or *mae hong*) of training or teaching (*son*)" (Samnak-ngan Watthanatham Cangwat Maehongson 2006)

12) See also Niti (2006, 32).

13) The first ruler of Maehongson was Chankale, who was given the name "Phraya Singharat" by the ruler of Lanna.

grew, and the Lanna tradition of Buddhism was introduced. The oldest Lanna monastery in Maehongson, Wat Muoi To, was established by the second ruler of Maehongson, Cao Nang Mia, in 1889. She invited a senior monk from a Lanna monastery in Mawk Mai in the southern Shan States to be the first abbot. After that, other Lanna monasteries were established in Maehongson, and abbots invited from the Lanna area presided over them.

From that time until World War II, the Shan and Lanna traditions of Buddhism coexisted in Maehongson. Monks and novices divided into two sects of Sangha that were independent of each other. The Shan sect was called *koeng tai* and the Lanna sect *koeng yon*.[14] The distinction between the Shan and Lanna sects lay in the way Buddhist practices were carried out. The Lanna sect used Pali scripture in the Tham script, while the Shan sect used the Burmese script. The difference in scripts resulted in a difference in the pronunciation of the Pali stanzas, making it impossible for monks and novices of the two sects to join in rituals and recite stanzas together. The names of the sects mentioned above do not reflect the ethnic affiliation of their members, as both had monks and novices from the Shan and Tai Yuan groups. It was quite common for Shan villages to have monks and novices from the Lanna sect in their monasteries and for Shan parents to send their sons to Lanna monasteries, and vice versa. The rulers (*cao mueng*) of Maehongson also gave their patronage to both sects of the Sangha.

Relationship between Shan and Lanna Sects after Demarcation of Boundary

The traditional tributary relationship between Lanna and Maehongson did not last long. Great Britain and Siam demarcated the boundary between the British-ruled Shan States and Lanna in 1894. Siam incorporated Maehongson into its territory on the grounds of the tributary relationship between Lanna and Maehongson. According to the Sangha Act (1902), the local Sangha of Lanna (Northern Thailand) was integrated into the State Sangha in 1910 (Keyes 1971, 556). Later, the provincial Sangha of Maehongson was formed, and the first chief monk (*cao khana cangwat maehongson*) was appointed in 1925.[15] The chief monk, Phra Khru Wiriyamongkhon Sangkhawaha (in office 1925–29), was a Shan who had been born in Maehongson and served in the office of the abbot of

14) *Koeng*, which means "religious sect," is a derivative of the Burmese "*gain*." *Yon* is the ethnonym by which the Shan call the Tai Yuan of Lanna. *Tai* is their ethnonym for themselves. In this context, *koeng* means a tradition of monks' practices.

15) The chief monk of Maehongson here refers to the provincial chief monk of *Maha-nikai*. The monastery of *Thammayut-nikai* had not yet been established in Maehongson at that time. During this author's research in 2005, there were only five monasteries (*wat*) and 15 hermitages (*samnak-song*) of *Thammayut-nikai* in this province. At the time of writing, they had not formed a provincial Sangha organization in Maehongson because of the small number of monks and monasteries. They were directly affiliated with the northern regional Sangha of *Thammayut-nikai*.

Table 1 Chief Monks of the Provincial Sangha of Maehongson

	Name	Term of Office	Monastery	Place of Origin (Ethnic Group)
1	Phra Khru Wiriyamongkhon Sangkhawaha (Khruba Kham Wiriyo)	1925–29	Wat Muoi To (Lanna)	Maehongson (Shan)
2	Phra Khru Wiriyamongkhon Satsanathada (Khruba Inta)	1930–33	Wat Muoi To (Lanna)	Maehongson (Shan)
3	Phra Khru Wiriyamongkon (Bunruea Tilakun)	1933–40	Wat Klang Thung (Lanna)	Maehongson (Shan)
4	Phra Ratchawirakon (Bunma Nyankhutto)	1941–67	Wat Muoi To	Yasothon (Thai Isan)
5	Phra Yanwirakhom (Kham-ai Wanno)	1967–89	Wat Don Cedi	Maehongson (Shan)
6	Phra Ratchawirakhom (Bunrak Supanyo)	1989–2010	Wat Kamko	Maehongson (Shan/Yuan)

Source: Samnak-ngan Watthanatham Cangwat Maehongson (2006), supplemented by author.

Wat Muoi To (see Table 1). From a legal perspective, the two sects of Buddhist Sangha were integrated into the State Sangha of Siam.

Even after the demarcation between Siam and the British-ruled Shan States established territorial sovereignty in the border area, the free flow of people across the border did not abate. Furthermore, at the end of the nineteenth century, the British Bombay-Burma Trading Company started logging operations in Maehongson. This led to Shan and Karen labor in-migration. Not only did the British create jobs, but they also provided local people with prime commodities from lower Burma via the Salween River route. In spite of its annexation to Siam, Maehongson enjoyed prosperity derived from the British colonial economy. While Maehongson was politically affiliated with Siam, it was economically linked to the British colony. The double affiliation was reflected in Maehongson's religious sphere.

The enforcement of the Sangha Act (1902) changed the coexistence of the two sects in their own names into an integrated provincial Sangha. However, the two sects remained distinct beneath the surface. The State Sangha at that time promoted monks of the Lanna sect to positions of responsibility in the organization. The abbots of Lanna monasteries were appointed as successors of provincial chief monks. This shows that in order to control the local Sangha, the State Sangha itself leveraged Lanna connections via Chiang Mai, which became the administrative center of Northern Thailand.[16] The Lanna sect had an advantage over the Shan sect in the provincial Sangha organization.

16) The Lanna sect and its monasteries were also the local delivery institutions of the primary education program. The first elementary school in Maehongson was established in Wat Muoi To in 1923, and the monks were involved in secular education as teachers at this early time.

Because the source of their predominance was Lanna connections with Chiang Mai, not Bangkok, Lanna monks did not abandon their Buddhist practices. On the other hand, the ceaseless migration of Shan people sustained ties between the Sangha and monasteries in Maehongson and the Shan States. Some monasteries in Maehongson town, and most of those in rural areas, observed Shan Buddhist traditions. Therefore, the practices of each sect remained untouched, and the religious traditions of both sects continued to coexist under the name of the provincial Sangha organization until World War II (Murakami 2009a). The standardization of the religious practices of monks and novices had yet to be achieved. Some elderly laypeople, especially those who had been monks or novices before World War II, could still identify the affiliation of monasteries, Lanna or Shan, in the old days.

Actual Integration of Local Sangha into the State Sangha

World War II drastically altered the political and economic landscape of Maehongson. British companies left, and economic ties with the Shan States were severed. The economic prosperity that had been achieved under British colonial rule dissipated. Former ties with the Shan States were not restored. Maehongson, which had enjoyed a crucial border position between Myanmar and Thailand, became the most remote area of Northern Thailand. The change of the religious order in Maehongson may be seen shortly before the economic and political change.

After the death of the third chief monk in 1940, the State Sangha appointed his disciple, a Maehongson-born Shan of the Lanna sect, as the candidate for the fourth chief monk. Unfortunately, the candidate fell ill and died during his trip to Chiang Mai for the installation ceremony in 1941.[17] The State Sangha then appointed a monk from Northeastern Thailand (Isan), who was not Shan, as the fourth chief monk. This monk was also made the abbot of Wat Muoi To, one of the most important monasteries in Maehongson. The fourth chief monk, Phra Ratchawirakon (Phra Bunma Nyankhutto), was born in 1902 in Yasothon Province, Northeastern Thailand, and was ordained as a monk there. After the ordination, he moved to Bangkok. He lived in Wat Prasatbunyawat and studied at the monastery school in Wat Bencamabophit, in Dusit District.[18] After his graduation,

17) Interview with the former chief monk, Phra Ratchawirakhom, at Wat Kamko in September 2005.

18) Phra Plot Kittisophon, the abbot of Wat Bencamabophit and chief monk of the Northern Precinct (*cao khana monthon phayap*), nominated Phra Ratchawirakon to be the chief monk of Maehongson (Keyes 1971, 556; Samnak-ngan Watthanatham Cangwat Maehongson 2006, 109–111). In 1954, Phra Ratchawirakon moved up to the position of *Sangkha-nayok*, or clerical prime minister, and in 1960 he was appointed as the *Sankharat* or Supreme Patriarch of the State Sangha (Jackson 1989, 96–97).

he was dispatched by the State Sangha to disseminate state monastic education in Northern Thailand. He taught at a monastery school in Phrae Province for one year and in Mae Sariang, in the southern town of Maehongson, for five years, until his accession to office.[19)]

Phra Ratchawirakon was committed to advancing state monastic education and prohibited monks and novices from learning or using texts of the Shan and Lanna traditions (Keyes 1971, 557). Thai became the language of instruction in all monasteries, and texts authorized by the State Sangha have been used in monastery schools since Phra Ratchawirakon's time. Examinations on the knowledge of Buddhist teachings (*nak tham*) and Pali (*parian*) are set in Thai. In this manner, the scripts and way of pronouncing Pali scripture in monastic education have been standardized in Maehongson. The State Sangha organization had a centralized and hierarchical structure corresponding to the Bangkok-centered administration system, and the Sangha of Maehongson fell into the bottom layer of this structure. Now, monks and novices who wish to advance through the ranks in the State Sangha organization move from local monasteries to monasteries in large cities such as Chiang Mai, Bangkok, etc., which have higher-education institutions. This setup discourages Shan monks and novices from acquiring Shan literary knowledge. As a consequence of the integration of local Sangha, Shan monasteries in Maehongson have been unable to fill the role of educational institutes for Shan literary knowledge. Even now, most boys are temporarily ordained as novices, but they are educated in Thai and learn to recite Pali with Thai pronunciation. Basic knowledge of the Shan scripts is hardly taught in Shan monasteries in Maehongson.

There is not enough space here to describe the situation of the Lanna sect of the Sangha in Maehongson, although it would be the same as that of the Shan sect as discussed above. Elderly lay followers recalled that the sects of the Sangha in Maehongson actually disappeared in the era of the fourth chief monk. The coexistence of the two sects ended, and the unified Sangha organization was effectively established in Maehongson (*ibid.*; Murakami 2009a).

Shan Buddhist Tradition without Institutional Support

With regard to monks and novices, the government's efforts since the early twentieth century seem to have succeeded in creating a unified organization in the State Sangha and standardizing the curriculum for monastic education in Maehongson after World War II. As a result, the Shan Buddhist tradition in Maehongson has lost institutional support. However, it has not been totally assimilated into Thai Buddhism and still maintains its

19) The biography of Phra Ratchawirakon here is based on the publication by the Provincial Office of Culture of Maehongson (Samnak-ngan Watthanatham Cangwat Maehongson 2006, 109–111).

unique style of practices in seasonal festivals, religious rites of passage, the usage of Shan manuscripts, Pali recitations, and monastery architecture. Following are two examples of Shan Buddhist tradition that are still observed in Maehongson today: the manner of Pali recitation using Shan pronunciation and the migration of monks from the Shan State to Maehongson.

Even though Pali recitation with Thai pronunciation has been standardized, Pali recitation with Shan pronunciation can still be heard in Buddhist rituals in Maehongson. When all lay attendees are Shan, monks often recite the phrase "Worship of Three Gems" and "Five Precepts" with Shan pronunciation. These phrases are recited by a lead monk at the beginning of all Buddhist rituals, and lay attendees repeat them after the monk. Usually, most lay attendees are old people who are familiar with the Shan pronunciation of Pali. Monks adjust their manner of Pali recitation to suit the lay attendees' preference. When monks recite the Pali stanzas as a group, they switch to Thai pronunciation in accordance with the standardization of the State Sangha. Because monks recite Pali phrases with Shan pronunciation only when lay attendees are involved in the recitation, the difference in pronunciation does not affect the group recitation of Pali stanzas by monks.[20] Even though the manner of Pali recitation has been standardized among Sangha members, the Shan Buddhist tradition of Pali recitation has been kept alive in the sphere of Buddhist practices among laypeople.[21]

While the relationship between the Sangha of Maehongson and the Shan State was severed after World War II, the flow of monks and novices from the Shan State to Maehongson continued without interruption, like the migration in the secular domain. As is well known, Theravāda Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia—Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Thailand—inherited the Lankawong tradition of Sinhala Buddhism and shares the same set of Pali scriptures and precepts for monks. Therefore, theoretically and practically, monks and novices who are properly ordained in each country are admitted to be "ordained" in the same Theravāda tradition. However, according to the framework of the Sangha organization in the modern nation-state, they are divided by national borders. Shan monks and novices who are ordained in the Shan State belong to the Sangha of Myanmar, and those who are ordained in Maehongson belong to the Sangha of Thailand. In principle, therefore, monks and novices from the Shan State are not legally

20) When laypeople from Shan and other groups are in attendance, monks recite all parts in Pali with Thai pronunciation and all lay attendees follow the manner of Pali recitation that the monks choose.

21) It is also interesting that most monks of the younger generation who have not learned the Shan scripts and the Shan pronunciation of Pali can recite the Pali phrases of "Worship of Three Gems" and "Five Precepts" with Shan pronunciation for laypeople. The monks surveyed said they learned them from what they heard in their youth—before their ordination.

admitted as members of the State Sangha of Thailand, but most of them assume such roles in Maehongson nevertheless.[22] Although monks and novices from the Shan State are legally defined as "foreign monks," they are commonly understood to be members of the local Sangha in Maehongson.

Recently, the number of monks and novices in Thailand, especially in rural areas, has been dwindling. The advancement and growing importance of secular education divert young males' interest away from monastic education. Meanwhile, experienced and ambitious monks and novices are inclined to migrate from rural areas to large cities for higher education.[23] This situation exists in Maehongson as well. While Maehongson is famous for its lavish novice ordination ceremonies—many young boys are ordained—novices rarely stay longer than a few weeks, except the children of immigrants from the Shan State. The depopulation of the ordained leaves room for Shan monks from the Shan State, who are invited to the vacant monasteries of Maehongson and perform duties for laypeople. Some novices from the Shan State have Maehongson-born Shan sponsors who provide material support for their ordination ceremony and monastic life.[24] However, if monks and novices from the Shan State wish to be members of the Sangha in Maehongson, they are required to learn Buddhist teachings in the Thai language. At a minimum, they have to learn the recitation of Pali with Thai pronunciation so they can participate in group recitation with other monks during Buddhist rituals.[25]

The above two examples show that Shan Buddhists continue to maintain certain unique practices even after the formal integration of the local Sangha into the State Sangha. The local borderland context allows the Shan to preserve their own Buddhist traditions in Maehongson. The two key factors in the preservation of the Buddhist tradition are: Buddhist practices in the lay domain and transborder migration. The next section focuses on lay intellectuals and the Buddhist manuscript culture among Shan in Maehongson.[26]

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22) If a monk wants to become an official member of the State Sangha of Thailand, he needs to be "re-ordained" according to the procedure prescribed by the Sangha Acts of Thailand. Some monks came to Maehongson as novices and were ordained in Thailand to become members of the State Sangha.

23) For research on the dynamics of the population of monks and novices in Thailand, see Channarong (2008).

24) The religious "parent-child" relationship between Maehongson-born Shan sponsors and the sons of immigrants from the Shan State has been analyzed (Murakami 1998).

25) After the age of the fourth chief monk, the succeeding chief monks did not officially prohibit the teaching and learning of Shan script and literary knowledge. Even now, there is no prohibition. However, there is an unspoken rule that monks and novices from the Shan State have to adopt the Thai style of recitation of Pali and that Thai should be used in formal monastic education.

26) Stephan C. Berkwitz *et al.* underline the significance of the research on the Buddhist manuscript culture and say that "these manuscripts as material culture and as ritual icons often lay at the center of elaborate socioreligious systems that developed around their production and use" (Berkwitz *et al.* 2009).

IV Lay Intellectuals and Manuscript Culture among Shan in Maehongson

Many researchers refer to the traditions of manuscript-offering and manuscript-recitation among Buddhist Tai peoples—the Tai Yuan in Lanna, Lao in Laos and Northeastern Thailand, and Southern Thai (Dhawat 1995; Suthiwong 1995; Iijima 2009). The Shan are also earnest donors of and listeners to the recitation of Buddhist manuscripts. The practices of manuscript-offering and manuscript-recitation for merit-making are widespread among Shan in the Shan State and Tai Noe in the Dehong area of Yunnan, China (T'ien 1986; Zhang 1992; Jotika 2009; Jotika and Crosby 2009; Cochrane 1910; Crosby and Jotika 2010). Manuscripts are offered and recited in some Buddhist rituals in Maehongson, too. The manuscripts offered to monasteries are reverently called *lik long* (great manuscripts) in Shan.[27)]

Lik long are commentaries on Buddhist texts and instructive stories adapted from Jataka tales. The *lik long* are written in verse, in vernacular Shan[28)] and Pali in Burmese script. Most *lik long* are in their original form—folded paper manuscripts (*phap sa*)—but some are printed as books today. Recently, ordinary laypeople have begun to substitute manuscripts with printed materials sold at market bookstalls or by book vendors, because of the high cost of transcribing the manuscripts. However, they never omit the offering and recitation of *lik long* in rituals. Pious and wealthy laypersons still offer *lik long* manuscripts to monasteries. In most other Tai Buddhist religious practices, laypeople offer the manuscripts and monks recite them before a lay audience. But in the case of the Shan, the donors, reciters, and audience are all laypeople.[29)]

For generations these manuscripts have been passed down among the Shan by transcription, as folded paper manuscripts decay easily. The transcribers of the manu-

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27) *Lik* means "scripts/letters" and all kinds of "the written." *Long* means "big/great." Barend J. Terwiel labeled Shan manuscripts written in verse and read to an audience as *lik ho* (Terwiel and Chaichuen 2003). He did not use the term *lik long*. Jotika and Crosby used the term *lik luong* or *lik long* (Jotika and Crosby 2009; Crosby and Jotika 2010).

28) Most *lik long* are written in "old" Shan script. In the mid-twentieth century, the government of the Shan State revised its script. The script used before the revision is still used in writing manuscripts and is called "old script." The new script is usually used for secular writings (cf. Sai Kam Mong 2005).

29) In central Thailand, there is the genre of performance by lay performers (ex-monks) called *suat kharuehat*. This style of performance was derived from *Phra Malai Klon Suat* beginning in the early Ratanakosin period (Brereton 1995, 129–132). However, *suat kharuehat* performers veered toward entertainment and the genre lost its religious value. Bonnie P. Brereton states that "their repertoire is overwhelmingly devoted to slapstick comedy and the subject of Phra Malai is little more than a vestige" (*ibid.*, 137).

scripts are lay intellectuals called *care* in Shan.[30] *Care* is not a profession and is not licensed by any voice of authority; it is the role of a layperson in Buddhist practice.[31] The transcription is done on the occasion of manuscript-offering to monasteries by pious laypeople, who pay a *care* to transcribe the old *lik long*. Monasteries stock these manuscripts in the stacks of their libraries; some laypeople also keep them in their houses. *Lik long* refers not only to the offering, but also to the act of reading aloud or reciting before an audience during rituals. The reciters of *lik long* are also called *care*. Listening to a *care*'s recitation of *lik long* or a monk's chant or sermon is also a merit-making process for laypeople.[32]

In Maehongson, manuscript-recitation is performed in Buddhist rituals along with manuscript-offering (see Tables 2 and 3). Of the Buddhist calendrical rituals, only two—*Poi Cati* (sand pagoda festival) and *Haengsom Koca* (merit-making for the dead)—include the recitation of *lik long*. However, non-calendrical rituals, such as funerals, ordination rites, and *Paritta* recitation rites for houses entail the recitation of *lik long*. During the 12 months of this author's intensive research, October 1995 to September 1996, Buddhist rituals with the recitation of *lik long* were observed 17 times: at funerals 12 times, at an ordination twice, at merit-making for the dead twice, and in a *Paritta* recitation rite for a house once. *Care* who are famous for their fluent tone recite *lik long* almost 60 times a year.[33] In addition to recitation in rituals, there is a tradition among male lay precept-holders (*po sin*) of reciting *lik long* on Uposata days (*wan sin*) during Lent. These recitations are done for personal reasons of the reciters themselves; sometimes reciters do it to study and practice the recitation of *lik long* by pious laypeople. While the practice of recitation on Uposata days is on its way out, recitations and manuscript-offering are never omitted in Buddhist rituals. Therefore, Shan in Maehongson have frequent opportunities to hear the recitation of *lik long*.

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30) The word *care* is derived from the Burmese word *saye*, which means "scribe," "clerk," or "secretary." This word may be transliterated as *cale*, *tsale*, *care*, or *zare*. Crosby and Jotika explain that *care* is the honorific term for poet-readers who compose, copy, or read *lik long*; it originally referred to the secretary of a *cao fa* (*sao pha*), a Shan ruler of a *moeng* (Shan principality), because of its meaning ("clerk" or "secretary") (Crosby and Jotika 2010, 2–3).

31) Most *care* cannot make a living from their remuneration. They usually work as farmers, menial workers, and so on. Some of them also use their literary knowledge to practice trades such as making talismans or amulets, tattooing, fortune-telling, herbalism, and affliction rites. Practitioners of these techniques are called *sara*. Some *care* earn their living as *sara* because of the higher remuneration for *sara* activities.

32) The recitation of *lik* is called *ho lik* in Shan. The monk's chant and sermon are called *ho tara*, which means "reciting *Thamma*" or "reciting Scriptures." *Ho* means "to read aloud or recite."

33) This figure is obtained from the author's September 2009 research on Maehongson *care*'s activities. Two famous *care* in Maehongson revealed that they had been invited to recite *lik long* in Buddhist rituals more than 60 times in the past year.

Table 2 Recitation by Monks and *Care* in Buddhist Calendrical Rituals

Lunar Calendar	Name of Ritual (Occasion)	Monk		*Care*	
		Chanting of Pali Texts	Sermon	Recitation of *Lik Long*	Offering of *Lik Long*
5th month	*Sangkyan* (new year festival)	○	○	–	–
	Kanto ("to pay homage")	○	–	–	–
6th month	*Mae Wan* ("to restore village")	○	–	–	–
	Wisaka Bucha	○	○	–	–
7th month	*Poi Cati* (sand pagoda festival)	○	○	○	–
8th month	*Khao Wa* (beginning of Lent)	○	○	–	–
9th month	*Tang Somto, Poi Caka* (rice-ball offering)	○	○	–	–
10th month	*Tang Somto Long* (great rice-ball offering)	○	○	–	–
	Haengsom Koca (merit-making for the dead)	○	○	○	○
11th month	*Ok Wa* (end of Lent)	○	○	–	–
	Kanto ("to pay homage")	○	–	–	–
	Poi Loen Sip-et (11th month festival)	○	○	–	–
12th month	*Poi Sangkhan* (robe-offering)	○	○	–	–
1st month					
2nd month					
3rd month	*Makha Bucha*	○	○	–	–
4th month					

Table 3 Recitation by Monks and *Care* in Other Buddhist Rituals

Name of Ritual (Occasion)	Monk		*Care*	
	Chanting of Pali Texts	Sermon	Recitation of *Lik Long*	Offering of *Lik Long*
Masa, *Lumla Sangkyo* (funeral)	○	○	○	○
Poi Sanglong (ordination)	○	○	○	○
Wan Parik (*Paritta* recitation rites for houses)	○	–	○	○

The Shan have used their script since early times. Their literary knowledge (before the introduction of general education in the Shan States in the early twentieth century) had been inherited by a limited number of literate people. Among the Shan, it is customary for young boys to spend time as *kapi kyong* ("monastery servants") and then be ordained as novices. Some are also ordained as monks. Because the Shan have used Pali Tripitaka in the Burmese script, since they were under the influence of Burmese Buddhism,[34] there are many loanwords from Pali and Burmese in Buddhist writings such

34) It was in the sixteenth century that Shan Buddhism came under Burmese influence (Sai Kam Mong 2005). In the 1950s the Shan State Sangha Organization (*Mukcum long sangkha cueng tai*) produced a new Shan script for Pali, which it recommended for the transliteration of Pali. However, this script is not widely used among laypeople. In most manuscripts and books, Pali is still written in the Burmese script.

as *lik long*. Therefore, Shan monastic students learn how to read and write the Shan script, Pali in the Burmese script, and Burmese loanwords. Their novitiate and monkhood vary in length from a couple of weeks to several years. It is normal for them to spend at least three months in "Buddhist Lent." Most learn enough basic knowledge of the Shan script to be literate in regular settings, but not enough to deal with *lik long*.

Because of the need to learn multiple languages—Shan, Burmese, and Pali—and acquire expert knowledge of Buddhism, the number of intellectuals who have enough skills to use Buddhist writings such as *lik long* is limited to a few eager and already literate learners. Shan people call these intellectuals *care*. As we have seen above, *care* are the scribes and reciters of *lik long*. In addition to literary capability, a *care* must also have the skill for reciting *lik long*, which are written in verse. When a *care* recites *lik long*, he has to read out the rhyme correctly and fluently in a "beautiful voice" for his audience. It is worth noting that a *care* should be a good reciter as well as a specialist in literary knowledge. The *care*'s literacy is important for oral performances of *lik long*.[35)]

Care and learned monks share a basic literary knowledge because both have invested the time to learn it in monastic orders. Some learned monks also have the skill to transcribe and recite *lik long* and teach their skill to disciples, both the ordained and laypeople. Monks are seldom engaged in the transcription and recitation of *lik long*; *care* (lay intellectuals) take charge of these activities. The usage of *lik long* and the activities of *care* may be described as another avenue for the transmission of Buddhist knowledge among the Shan.

In Shan manuscript culture, *Pali Tripitaka* are kept as articles of value in special monastery cabinets. They are not considered "articles of daily use." For this reason, *lik long* are more familiar to laypeople than are *Pali Tripitaka*. *Lik long* are offered to monasteries for several Buddhist rituals and are frequently read aloud by *care* for a lay audience. The Buddhist knowledge contained in *lik long* is transmitted and reproduced by written transcription and oral performance. It has been circulated widely in the Shan States and beyond. Shan consider *lik long* and *Pali Tripitaka* to be sources of merit. The practices of manuscript-offering and manuscript-recitation show that *lik long* is an excellent source of merit due to the intelligibility of its content presented as oral performance, not its authenticity as scripture. The Shan believe that the teachings of the Lord Buddha are passed on not only by the Sangha but also through manuscripts transcribed and recited by lay intellectuals. Notwithstanding the enduring importance of the Sangha and *Pali Tripitaka* in Shan Buddhism, the practice of lay intellectuals utilizing manuscripts written

35) For the relationship between orality and literacy in the Shan Buddhist tradition, see Murakami (2009b).

in verse in the Shan script is another line of transmission of Buddhist teachings and literary knowledge among the Shan.

V *Care* in Maehongson: Border Crossing and Persistence of Shan Literary Knowledge

The administration of the State Sangha and standardized monastic education, as we have seen, pervades all the monasteries in Maehongson. The State Sangha prescribes what monks and novices should learn. They have to learn Buddhist teachings in Thai and recite Pali stanzas in the Thai script pronounced according to Thai convention. Few monks or novices have the opportunity to acquire Shan knowledge in monasteries, since the Shan script and Shan literary knowledge are no longer taught in monasteries. Because literacy in the Shan language gives them no advantage in Thailand, younger Thai-born Shan tend to lose interest in the Shan script. The number of Shan-literate among Thai-born Shan is dwindling, so that it is getting hard to find successors to the role of *care*. However, since manuscript-offering and manuscript-recitation are important in the transmission of Buddhist teachings among the Shan, laypeople, especially from the older generations, constantly perform these practices when the occasion arises. They donate earnestly and listen to recitations of Buddhist manuscripts. *Care* are still asked to transcribe and recite *lik long* on these occasions.[36] Thus, although the activities of *care* are still in demand in Maehongson, the number of *care* has been decreasing.

In order to examine *care*'s activities and their influence on the transmission of traditional literary knowledge among the Shan, this author carried out a survey on *care* in Maehongson.[37] In this research, 60 well-known *care* were selected and their personal data was collected: age, sex, place of birth, nationality or residence status, occupation, experience of secular education, experience of ordination, monastery where they were ordained and resided, teachers from whom they gained Shan literary knowledge, ability

36) As manuscripts have been partially substituted by printed scripts, requests for the transcription of *lik long* are declining. However, devout and wealthy laypersons still offer *lik long* manuscripts. Some abbots also ask *care* for transcription to preserve old *lik long* kept in their monasteries (Jotika and Crosby 2009).

37) Sixty *care* in two districts, Maehongson and Khun Yuam, in the central part of the province, were interviewed with the assistance of Care Saw of Maehongson in August and September 2009. This research was carried out with the cooperation of Professor Kate Crosby and Jotika Khur-Yearn of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, who had already done research on the subject. For their research on *care* and *lik long*, see Jotika and Crosby (2009) and Crosby and Jotika (2010).

to use *lik long* (recitation, transcription, and writing), age at which they first undertook the role of *care*, frequency of manuscript-recitation in the last 12 months. Of the 60 *care*, 54 were male and six female. The average age was 66.5 years, and almost half the *care* (29) were in their 70s and 80s (see Fig. 1). It seems that *care* in Maehongson are confronted with the problem of aging, and the extinction of Shan literary knowledge is a real threat. Nearly half the *care* (28) had been born in the Shan State and moved to Maehongson. The percentage of migrant *care* was high compared with the percentage of migrants in the Shan population of this area. Most *care* from the Shan State had permission for temporary residence in Thailand.[38)]

Not all *care* had sufficient skills to both recite and transcribe *lik long*. All 60 *care* interviewed answered that they could recite *lik long*, but only 17 could transcribe it. This shows that the basic activity of an ordinary *care* is to recite, not transcribe, *lik long*. Most of the *care* had experience in reciting *lik long* in Buddhist rituals.[39)] Because the recitation of a volume of *lik long* takes too long for common Buddhist rites, it is rare for a *care* or a group of *care* to recite a whole volume at once.[40)] Normally, *care* recite part of a *lik long*; the length depends on the time allotted for it—an hour or two, on average. Several *care* take turns at recitation, about 15 minutes each. This is not a demanding task for an ordinary *care*. On the other hand, the transcription of *lik long* is carried out for whole volumes of a manuscript during a certain period of time upon the request of a client. Because transcription requires concentration and is more time-consuming than recitation, only 17 of the 60 *care* surveyed were proficient in the transcription of *lik long*.[41)]

If we consider the age at which those surveyed first undertook the role of *care* and

38) There were eight "highlander" cardholders, nine "passport" holders, one "asylum seeker," one "foreign worker," and four undocumented. Most of them cited oppression by the Myanmar government as the reason for their migration. Some stated that their itinerant trade or the selling of manuscripts to Maehongson had set off the migration.

39) The exceptions were monks and female *care*. Some monks are regarded as *care* because of their ability to recite *lik long*, but they seldom recite in Buddhist rites in Maehongson. Female *care* also seldom recite *lik long* in Buddhist rites. They recite *lik long* mainly for female precept-holders or for themselves on Uposata days at monastery rest houses.

40) It would take four to eight hours to recite an entire volume of *lik long*. For example, *Cintamaniyatana*, one of the most popular titles in medium-length *lik long* in Maehongson, consists of six chapters plus an introductory chapter. It takes 40–45 minutes to recite one chapter at normal speed, and four to five hours to recite the whole volume. However, funerals of high-status monks are regarded as special occasions, and the whole volume is recited at such times (Crosby and Jotika 2010, 5).

41) While proficient *care* can compose short writings such as verses, there are few *care* in Maehongson who can compose new writings as *lik long*. This could be the case outside Maehongson as well. Historically, great Shan writers who compose famous *lik long* have been few and are highly regarded as *khu mo lik tai* (masters in Shan literature) (Khun Maha 1970; 1998; Murakami 2009b).

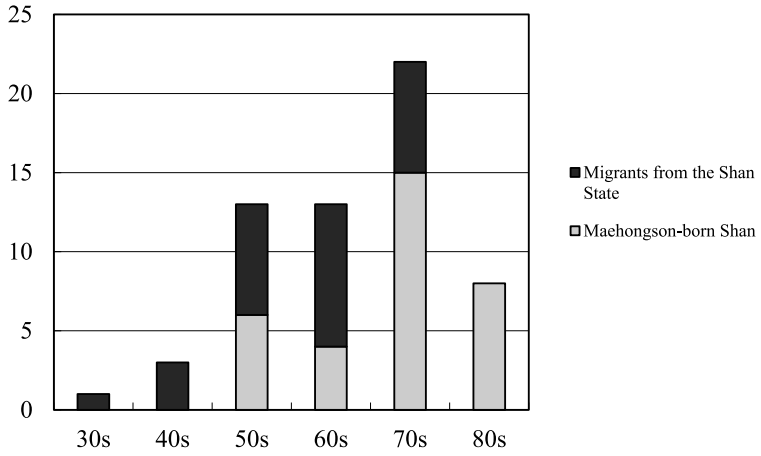

Fig. 1 Age Distribution of *Care* in Maehongson

migrated from the Shan State, a pattern emerges in their acquisition of literary knowledge. While most of the *care* undertook the role in their 40s, some started when they were 20–30 years old, and the youngest was 14 (see Fig. 2). Most of the *care* who started their careers in the 10–30 age bracket were ordained as novices for several years, and some were ordained as monks. They had a talent for recitation from a young age and had been trained by masters—both monks and *care*. When masters and people around them accepted their ability, they could start to undertake the role of *care*. After years of experience, they became seasoned and proficient *care* and served as teachers or masters for others. On the other hand, most of the *care* who took on the role when they were 40–60 had been ordained as novices at a young age but had left monastic student life after a short time. After spending years earning a livelihood for their families, they got interested in religious life and literary knowledge and started to learn how to recite *lik long* from proficient *care*. These people were also the elder precept-holders (*po sin mae sin*) on Uposata days. The levels of skill vary according to ability and dedication. *Care* may be divided into two types based on the age at which they first undertook the role: The first category, small in number, includes proficient *care* who took on the role while they were young (10–30 years old); the second type, the majority, consists of ordinary *care* who took on the role when they were 40–70 years old.

Of the 17 Shan *care* who did both recitation and transcription of *lik long*, 12 were migrants from the Shan State while 5 were born in Maehongson. Of the 12 migrants, 6 belonged to the first category of *care* (started young) and the remaining 6 to the second type (started when 40–70). All five Maehongson-born *care* who engaged in both recitation and transcription were classified into the second category. Considering that *care* learn

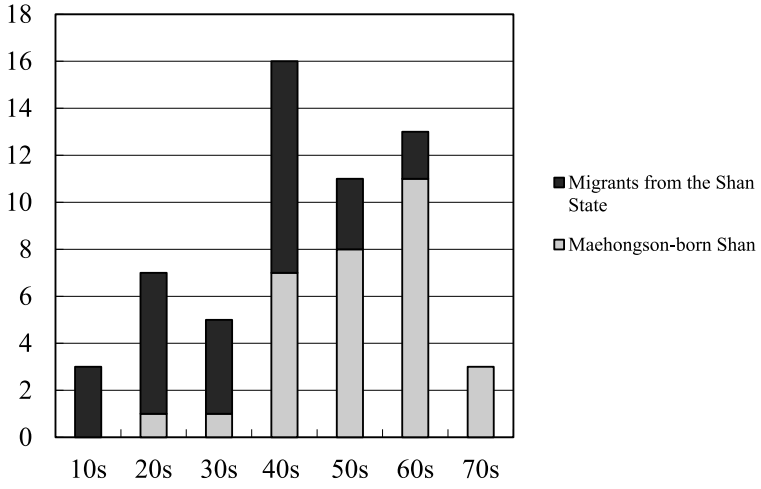

Fig. 2 Age at Which the Role of *Care* Was Undertaken

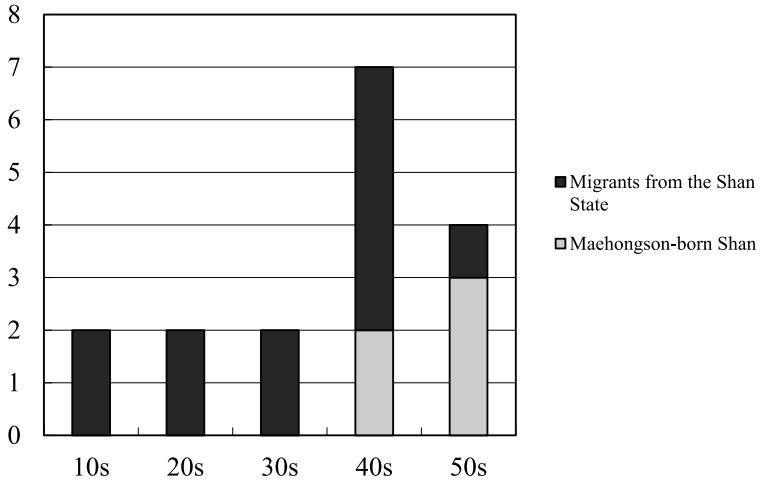

Fig. 3 Age at Which the Role of *Care* Who Do Both Recitation and Transcription Was Undertaken

recitation first and develop their transcription ability later, the second type of *care*'s transcription ability would not be as high as that of the first type. The six who entered the role while young and engaged in both recitation and transcription may be considered proficient *care*; all of them were migrants from the Shan State (see Fig. 3). This shows that migrants from the Shan State play an important role in the dissemination of Shan literary knowledge and Buddhist practices, such as manuscript-offering and manuscript-recitation, in a setting of a growing shortage of *care* among the Maehongson-born. Now-

adays, most of the famous *care* in Maehongson are migrants from the Shan State.[42)]

However, from the opposite perspective, it may be said that more than half the *care* were Maehongson-born Shan (32 of 60; 28 migrated from the Shan State). As we have seen, ordinary *care*—most of whom were born in Maehongson—started to learn the recitation of *lik long* when they were older (40–70 years). Since monks with sufficient skill to recite and transcribe manuscripts are disappearing in Maehongson, it is mainly proficient *care* from the Shan State who take on the role of teacher for Maehongson-born Shan who have an interest in Shan literary knowledge. We can see from the pattern of transmission of Shan literary knowledge that Shan State-born proficient *care*, who are small in number, take on the role of masters or teachers for ordinary *care*, who are the majority of Maehongson-born *care*. Notwithstanding the problem of aging among *care*, a certain number of *care* continue to exist among Maehongson-Shan because *care* from the Shan State offer them training.

This also points to the role of laypeople in the transmission of Shan literary knowledge outside of the monastery. Most of the male *care* (51 of 54) had been temporarily ordained as novices or monks and had acquired a basic level of Shan literary knowledge. For *care* from the Shan State, monasteries in their homeland still acted as the educational institutions for the passing on of Shan literary knowledge. *Care* who were ordained in Maehongson before the time of the fourth chief monk also had a chance to acquire Shan literary knowledge in monastic education. Even after the standardization of monastic education, they could learn privately from senior monks.[43)] However, when questioned about their training period, most *care* said that they acquired a basic knowledge of the Shan script while they were novices, but not enough for the recitation of *lik long*. They continued with their training and practiced recitation after leaving monastic life. Some *care* had embarked on journeys and learned from several teachers in various places as laypersons. Their training as *care* was not completed in their monastic education. In extreme cases, ordination and monastic education were not necessary to take on the role of *care*.

The six female *care* in the study, none of whom had a chance to get a monastic education, are notable examples.[44)] They acquired literary knowledge and recitation skills

42) Two famous *care* are Care Saw of Maehongson and Care Numtum Maana (aka Care Awn) of Haui Pha village. They had recited *lik long* more than 60 times in the 12 months before the survey.

43) There are some monasteries in rural areas of Maehongson where monks still teach the Shan script and literary knowledge (personal communication with Professor Nicola Tannenbaum, April 2010).

44) The exception was Pa Mule. She spent three months as a *yase* (female ascetic) in a monastery, where she had a chance to learn the recitation of *lik long* with a monk. For her brief biography, see Crosby and Jotika (2010, 8).

from their fathers or husbands, who were proficient *care*. Three male *care* in the study had not been ordained as novices or monks either. A 65-year-old Maehongson-born *care* who had not received a monastic or secular education said that he had learned the basic Shan script from his father and senior relatives at a young age. He started to train as a *care* when he was already pushing 60. The above cases show that a monastic education is not an absolute requirement to become a *care*. Unlike the "general literacy" taught in secular institutions of a modern nation-state, a *care*'s skill and knowledge are "limited knowledge." Such knowledge is acquired by a limited number of persons dedicated to its religious role and handed down from masters to students.[45] The masters are both monks and *care*. Regardless of status, be they monks or laypeople, those who have the proficiency to recite *lik long* are regarded as masters. This style of personal teaching does not require the institutions of Sangha and monastic education.

When the local Sangha in Maehongson were incorporated into the State Sangha, Shan literary knowledge was formally excluded from monastic education, as there was no room for Shan literary knowledge in the State Sangha. However, in spite of the lack of institutional support, Buddhist teachings and Shan literary knowledge have been passed on among the Shan outside monasteries and schools. The Buddhist practices of laypeople—manuscript-offering and manuscript-recitation—assume a significant role. Since the manuscripts, *lik long*, are written in vernacular Shan with Pali words, the audience can understand their contents and enjoy the rhyming compositions. *Care* are primarily specialists in the oral recitation of manuscripts. It may be said that the Shan manuscript culture depends upon the lay, vernacular, and oral character of lay activities (Crosby and Jotika 2010, 13). These practices are outside of the scope of the Sangha Act and the Thai government's religious administration.[46] This is how *care* who migrate across the border from the Shan State invigorate Buddhist practices in Maehongson.

VI Conclusion

Since the early twentieth century, the Thai government has passed laws to promote the

45) Crosby and Jotika describe the receiving of *Surasati*—the initiation for *care*. When a student raises the level of recitation to perform for an audience, the master gives them a slip of paper on which the letters *su-ra-sa-ti* are written and makes the student swallow it. *Surasati* is the Shan name of Goddess Saraswati (Crosby and Jotika 2010, 9–10).

46) Nowadays, these Buddhist practices by laypeople are defined and lauded as local culture or "local wisdom" (*phumi-panya thongthin*) by urban elites and Thai government officials, who are inclined to emphasize their cultural significance but not their religious aspect.

institutionalization and standardization of Buddhism in Thailand by exercising control over Sangha and the monastic education system. The concept of "Thai Buddhism" is represented by the unified organization of the State Sangha, the use of Pali scriptures written in the Thai script and read in Thai fashion, and the learning of Buddhist teachings from Thai-language texts. This idea of "Buddhism" emerges from the legislation of the Sangha-centric, Pali-centric, and literacy-centric scheme. It covers only Buddhist practices related mainly to the Sangha and the ordained; a huge portion of Buddhism—lay Buddhist practices—remains outside this scheme. The activities of *care* and the transmission of Shan literary knowledge in Maehongson remind us of the significance of lay Buddhist traditions.

As we have seen, local Sangha and lay Buddhist traditions have different extents of incorporation into the state's standard. While local Sangha have been gradually incorporated into the State Sangha over a century, local lay Buddhists are free to practice their religious traditions without government intervention. However, it is irrelevant to see this situation as a dichotomy: rigid control of the central government over the local Sangha versus free and vigorous activities of local lay Buddhists with the border crossing. The opposing momentums have a symbiotic relationship. The increasing incorporation of local Sangha is causing the depopulation of Maehongson-born Shan monks in rural areas, while the demand for monks crossing the border into Maehongson is growing. Because monastic education has lost its function as an educational institution for Shan literary knowledge, *care*, especially proficient ones, are decreasing in number and aging. However, the imbalance between supply and demand for *care* activities creates an opportunity for immigrants who have Shan literary knowledge from their upbringing in the Shan State: they can take on the role of leading *care* in Maehongson. The incorporation of local practices into national standards by the central authority does not impact the local movement of people across the border and vice versa. Even though they restrict each other, they have a symbiotic relationship.

We can see two forms of Buddhism in Maehongson: One is the Buddhism that is demarcated along national boundaries and is institutionalized and standardized by government legislation; the other is the lay Buddhist practice that is mainly passed on outside the Sangha and is invigorated by transborder migration. It would be a mistake to think that these two forms of Buddhism vie against each other or are in conflict. The former does not try to incorporate the latter as a whole. It does not prohibit the activities of *care* using *lik long* or the Shan manuscript culture. Since the legislators for Thai Buddhism give importance to the Sangha, Pali scriptures, and monastic education in Thai, they unintentionally leave room for lay Buddhist activities.

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Tai Buddhist Practices in Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan, China

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This paper will explore the religious practices of Theravada Buddhists in Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. The data presented were gathered by the author during a year of fieldwork in a village outside the city of Ruili. Dehong Prefecture is located on the China-Myanmar border. One of the main groups in this area is the Dai (Tǎi), who follow Theravada Buddhism. Buddhism was brought into Dehong mainly from Myanmar. Local religious practices have much in common with Buddhist practices in Southeast Asia, sharing the same Pali canon. However, this area differs from other Theravada Buddhist societies in that it has a relatively low number of monks and novices. Although all the villages in Dehong have a monastery, just as in the rest of Southeast Asia, most of the monasteries are uninhabited. One reason for this is the oppression of religion during the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution. But more important, the custom of ordaining is significantly less widespread in Dehong than in other Theravada Buddhist societies. Therefore, without resident monks, Buddhist rituals in Dehong are performed by virtue of the direct relationship between the lay community and their Buddhist texts, Buddha images, and pagodas. In particular, *holu* (experts in reciting Buddhist texts) and *xiŋ lai* (elderly people who go to the monastery during the rainy season retreat to keep eight precepts on special holy days) play important roles as mediators in this relationship.[1] It is laypeople, not monks, who play the central role in the practice of Buddhism in Dehong. In this situation, knowledge of Buddhism is transmitted mainly from laypeople to laypeople. Furthermore, a diversity of practices has been produced and reproduced by local Buddhists. These features of Buddhist practices in Dehong are in striking contrast to practices in other Theravada Buddhist societies, and suggest that there is a need to re-examine the models to understand the Theravada Buddhist societies that were developed upon the case of Central Thailand.

Keywords: Tǎi people, Shan, Theravada Buddhism, Dehong Prefecture, Yunnan Province, religious practice, lay Buddhists

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1) As a rule, the romanization of the Tai script follows Meng (2007). However, some words have been modified to make them more familiar to the reader.

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I Introduction

This paper will explore the religious practices of Tăi Theravada Buddhists in Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China. Dehong Prefecture is located in the border area between China and Myanmar. Ruili, the research site for this study, is located in close proximity to the border. One of the main ethnic groups in Dehong is Tăi, who are called Dai by the Han Chinese and are known as Shan in Myanmar. Tăi people typically live in the basin valley areas, called *məŋ* in the Tăi language. The Chinese side of Məŋ Mau belongs to Ruili city, and the Myanmar side consists of Muhse (Tăi: Mutse) and Nanhkan (Tăi: Lămxăm) Districts. Most of the Tăi people are Theravada Buddhist.

Theravada Buddhists are distributed widely across mainland Southeast Asia—Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and southern Vietnam. In these countries, a large number of the ethnic group are Buddhist and most of the men have had the experience of being monks or novices. There are monks inhabiting every monastery, with some monasteries having as many as tens or hundreds of monks.

Local religious practices in Dehong have many features in common with Buddhist practices in Southeast Asia, sharing the same Pali canon. However, Dehong differs from other Theravada Buddhist societies in its relatively low number of monks and novices. Although all the villages in the area have a monastery, as in other parts of Southeast Asia, most of the monasteries are uninhabited.

Furthermore, the basic context of Buddhism in Dehong is different from other Theravada Buddhist societies, where the majority of the population are Buddhist and governments provide support to Buddhism. In contrast, the percentage of Theravada Buddhists in China is less than 0.1 percent. Moreover, China is a socialist country, and the government has been more likely to suppress the religion than support it. When the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949, freedom of religion was secured by the government. But when religion was oppressed during the Great Leap Forward from 1958 to 1960, many laypeople and monks escaped to the Myanmar side or disrobed. When the Cultural Revolution started in 1966, many laypeople and monks escaped to the Myanmar side again. The Red Guards destroyed monasteries and pagodas, and all religious practice was discontinued. After the Cultural Revolution came to an end in 1976, Buddhist practices began to recover, more strongly from 1978 onward.

In this paper, the following questions are explored. First, why are there so few monks and novices in Dehong? Second, given this situation, how do Buddhists in Dehong practice their religion?

Previous Studies on Theravada Buddhist Societies

As mentioned above, in Theravada Buddhist societies Buddhists share the same Pali canon. According to the doctrine, an individual's goal is to attain self-salvation by becoming a member of the Sangha, the assembly of monks. Monks—above the age of 20—must obey 227 precepts; while novices—under the age of 20—strictly obey 10 precepts. Laypeople are required to keep five precepts in their everyday lives, and eight precepts on special Buddhist days.

The study of Theravada Buddhist texts had already started during the colonial period, but it was not until the 1960s and 1970s that the study of Theravada Buddhist societies started in earnest. During this period, anthropologists started fieldwork in the villages of Thailand and Myanmar. One of the main topics was the relation between Buddhism and the cult of spirits (ex. Spiro 1967; 1970; Tambiah 1970).

Another topic of study has been the relationship between the Sangha and laypeople. Ishii's explanation (1986 [1975]) has been influential. Ishii argues that members of the Sangha and laypeople are separated by the number of precepts they keep. At the same time, the Sangha and laypeople are linked in a dimension of continuity. First, joining the Sangha does not reflect an absolute commitment. An individual can ordain whenever he wishes, and can also go back to secular life when he wants to disrobe. Furthermore, the Sangha and laypeople depend on each other. The Sangha needs donations from laypeople to enable monks' and novices' ascetic life, and laypeople donate to the Sangha to make merit. Almost all men become members of the Sangha at least once in their lives to get merit for themselves or their parents. Merit is believed to have good effects in this life or the next. Monks and novices are usually invited by laypeople who make donations in rituals. Historically, among lay Buddhists it was the kings—being the greatest donors and benefactors—who protected Buddhism. However, the kings also drove out monks, who were regarded as heretics. These practices legitimated the Buddhist kings. In the process of nation building, the Sangha was institutionalized in each country, resulting in the standardization of Buddhist practices.

During the Cold War period, it was very difficult to carry out research in Theravada Buddhist societies except for Thailand. The influence of these studies on Thailand persists to this day in the models of Theravada Buddhist society, and the "Thai model" has been adapted to other social settings in the region.

After the Cold War finished in the 1990s, fieldworkers found that despite the increasing efforts of the nation-state to standardize Buddhist practices, there was still a rich diversity of local practices (ex. Tanabe 1993; Tannenbaum 1995; Hayashi 2003). With the opening of societies around the region and increased access to the field in recent years, scholars have started working in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Yunnan (Hayashi

Map 1 Yunnan, China

2009). Their studies focus on the relationship between local practices and the institution of Buddhism in each nation-state and suggest that there is a need to re-examine the central Thai models based on a wider social range of local practices.

This paper follows in the analytical vein of these studies, but the focus is on the local practices of Tăi people in Dehong, Yunnan. Although their number is much smaller than in Southeast Asia, Theravada Buddhists exist in Yunnan as well. Almost all of the Theravada Buddhists in Yunnan are Tăi people who live in the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture and Dehong Dai and Jingpo Autonomous Prefecture (Map 1). During the period of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, the religion was discontinued in both areas. Now the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commission and the Buddhist Association manage Buddhism in Yunnan under the guidance of the Communist Party (Zhang 1992).

The practices of Buddhism are different between Dehong and Xishuangbanna. The first point of difference is that the number of monks and novices is quite low in Dehong, in contrast to their increasing number in Xishuangbanna, where Buddhists also experienced the Cultural Revolution's impacts on their religion. Even compared with Cambodia, where Buddhist monks were murdered by the Pol Pot regime, the number of monks and novices in Dehong is much lower (Table 1).

Table 1 Number of Priests and Monasteries

	Monasteries	Monks	Monks per Monastery	Novices	Novices per Monastery	Year
Myanmar	56,839	242,891	4.3	305,875	5.4	2007
Thailand	35,244	258,163	7.3	70,081	1.9	2007
Laos	4,140	8,055	1.9	11,740	2.8	2007
Cambodia	4,237	24,929	5.9	32,421	7.7	2007
Xishuangbanna	577	828	1.4	3,998	6.9	2005
Dehong	602	90	0.1	101	0.2	2007

Source: The data were collected for Myanmar by Ryusuke Kuramoto, Thailand by Yukio Hayashi, Laos by Kayoko Yoshida, and Cambodia by Satoru Kobayashi. Xishuangbanna and Dehong data are from the author's interviews with the Buddhist association in each prefecture.

The second point of difference is the "sect." As explained above, Theravada Buddhists in Southeast Asia share a relatively homogeneous Pali canon. But the intonation used in their recital of texts, the practice of precepts, and the manner of rituals are a little different. These practices are passed down from master to disciple (Mendelson 1975).

In the case of Xishuangbanna, there is only the Yon sect, which entered via north Thailand from the end of the fifteenth century to the sixteenth century (Baba 1994).[2] In the process of religious revival after the Cultural Revolution, the sect's practices were restored due to the Yon's relationship with the Sangha in Northern Thailand (Hasegawa 1995). Because of this historical process, we find characteristics of Northern Thai Buddhism in Xishuangbanna as well.

Chinese scholars have pointed out that there are four sects, or *kəŋ* (Burmese: *gaing*), in Dehong (Jiang 1983; Yan 1986; Liu 1990; Zhang 1992). They presume that the Pɔitsɔŋ, Tsoti, and Tole sects came from Burma between the eleventh and nineteenth centuries and the Yon sect came from Northern Thailand in the fifteenth century.[3] Their studies also point out that while the Pɔitsɔŋ and Yon sects are relatively loose in keeping precepts, the Tole sect is stricter and the Tsoti sect is the strictest of all.

Any sect of Buddhism has the potential to split into an unlimited number of sects. Within these practices, the royal authority or nation-states have decided on the orthodoxy of the practice. For example, the Pɔitsɔŋ and Tsoti sects were originally based in the center of Myanmar, but after the Burmese king judged them as being heterodoxy they moved to Dehong (Yan 1986; Than Tun 1990). On the other hand, the traditional lords

2) The Yon sect mentioned here is known as Yuan in Thailand.
3) The period in which each sect spread into Dehong is indicated by Chinese scholars. Zhang (1992) presumes that the Pɔitsɔŋ sect entered during the eleventh century. But Japanese and Western scholars argue that Theravada Buddhism entered into Dehong in the sixteenth century (Daniels 1998; Iijima 1999).

of each basin in Dehong, *tsǎu fa*, did not exclude any specific sect but rather protected each sect (Hasegawa 2009). This situation allowed various sects to develop their own practices. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the institution of *tsǎu fa* was abolished and the Buddhist Association of Dehong started to manage Buddhism in 1957. But just one year later, the Great Leap Forward started and the Buddhist Association stopped functioning. After the Cultural Revolution, the Buddhism of Dehong was revived through connections with Shan Buddhists on the Myanmar side. As will be described later in this paper, Buddhist practices in Dehong show a strong influence from Shan and Burmese Buddhism.

In contrast to previous studies that assume monks play the main role in Theravada Buddhism, this study describes practices in which laypeople play the central role. Furthermore, while previous studies have tended to describe the practice of Buddhism as unique to each nation-state, this study investigates the dynamics of practice between nation-states by concentrating on the migration of local Buddhists who play a central role in religious practices.

Although there are some interesting aspects of Buddhist practices, not many field surveys were carried out in Dehong because of the difficult conditions. Research on Buddhist practices in Dehong was started by Chinese anthropologists. Jiang Yingliang started field surveys in the late 1930s (Jiang 2003; 2009 [1950]), and then Tian Rukang carried out fieldwork at the beginning of the 1940s. Tian researched the Tǎi village of Mangshi and wrote a monograph dealing with the relationship between rituals and the integration of the village (Tian 2008 [1946]; T'ien 1986). Although this is a representative work of the practice of Buddhism in Dehong, the influence from functionalism is too strong. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the government conducted "social and historical research" in the process of formulating a new national policy (Minzu Wenti Wuzhong Congshu Yunnansheng Bianji Weiyuanhui 1984a; 1984b; Yunnansheng Bianjizu 1987). But later, during the period of the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, research on Buddhism in Dehong completely stopped for around 20 years. After the 1990s, studies on religious institutions reappeared (Zhang 1992; Hasegawa 1996; 2009). Some foreign and Chinese scholars also started anthropological fieldwork in the late 1990s (Yos 2001; Chu 2005; Nagatani 2007), focusing mainly on the relationship between Theravada Buddhism and racial consciousness or social classes.

Some of these studies include data of value, but there are problems, too. First, there are few studies based on long-term field research using the local language. Second, the research area is limited to Luxi (Mangshi) city or Yingjiang County despite the multiplicity of practices in each area. Third, the studies analyze these practices from only a Chinese viewpoint.

Research Methodology

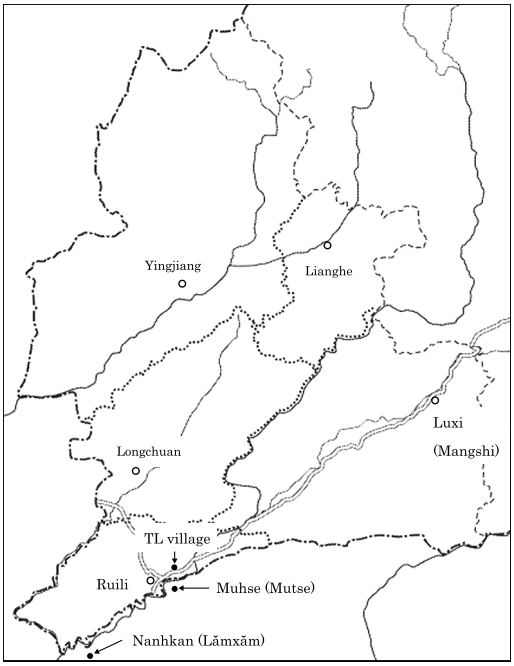
The data presented in this paper were gathered by the author during a yearlong period of fieldwork in a village outside the city of Ruili. The reason for choosing Ruili was that the city is situated on the border with Myanmar and is suitable for a comparative study with the Myanmar side.

The main research was conducted between October 2006 and November 2007, with some preliminary trips in 2005 and supplementary work from 2009 to 2012. The author stayed in the house of a farmer in TL village, in a suburb of Ruili. This is the first field research to be carried out in Ruili. Dehong Tăi was the primary language used in the fieldwork, in an effort to understand Buddhism from the locals' point of view; but the Burmese and Chinese languages were also used at times, depending on the situation.

II Research Field and Buddhism

This paper begins with an overview of the research site, Dehong and TL village in Ruili city. The main ethnic groups in Dehong are Han Chinese, Tăi, and Jingpo. Tăi people in Dehong are roughly divided into two groups: Tăi lə, which means "upper Tăi" or "northern Tăi"; and Tăi Mau, whose name is derived from the name of the basin they live in, Məŋ Mau. The former live in the northern part of Dehong, Luxi, Yingjiang, Longchuan, and Lianghe (Map 2). The culture in these areas bears a strong Chinese influence. Tăi lə call the latter group Tăi taɯ, which means "lower Tăi" or "southern Tăi." But the Tăi Mau do not call themselves Tăi taɯ, because they do not want to place themselves "lower." They live in Ruili, which faces the border with Myanmar and has a strong Shan or Burmese influence. The inhabitants of Ruili city include Tăi lə, who are immigrants from Luxi, Yingjiang, Longchuan, and Lianghe; but their numbers are less than the Tăi Mau.

There are several differences between the Tăi lə and Tăi Mau. For instance, the females dress differently: Tăi lə females traditionally wear a piece of cloth on the head, and a black skirt; Tăi Mau females do not wear a cloth on the head, and they wear brightly colored skirts made in Myanmar. The houses of Tăi lə are similar to Chinese houses—single-story buildings roofed with tiles and surrounded by walls. The houses of Tăi Mau in Ruili are similar to Shan houses—two-story buildings with tin roofs, and not surrounded by walls. The monasteries of Tăi lə are built in the style of Chinese temples—tile-roofed, with a circular entrance. The monasteries of Tăi Mau in Ruili show Burmese and Shan influences—tin-roofed, without a circular entrance. The above Tăi lə features were seen in the villages of Tăi lə in Ruili until the 1990s, but now the Tăi Mau style is more often observed.

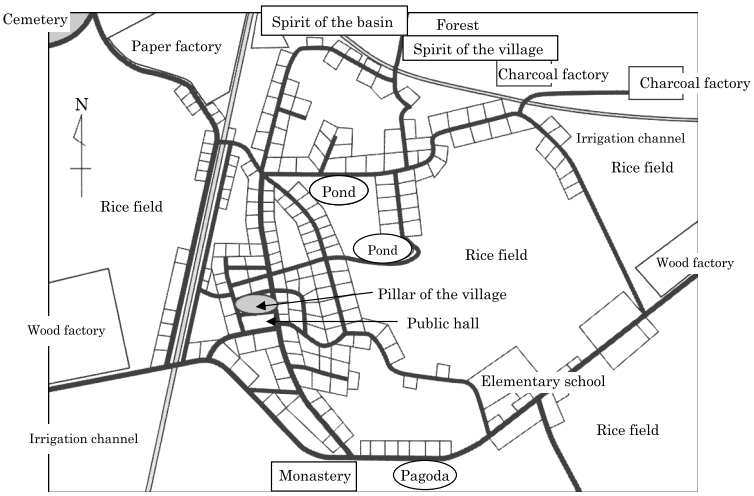


Map 2 Dehong

As explained above, the culture in Dehong has been influenced by Chinese, Shan, and Burmese cultures. One factor in the development of Dehong's unique culture is the existence of the trade route from China to Burma and India. Another factor is that *tsǎu fa* were under the influence of Chinese and Burmese dynasties. After the end of the nineteenth century, the Chin dynasty and British colonial rulers started the process of boundary demarcation. As a result, Məŋ Mau was divided and found itself between two countries: China and Myanmar.

The institution of *tsǎu fa* was abolished in 1955, after the founding of the People's Republic of China. The Great Leap Forward started in 1958, followed by the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Many villagers who disliked the agricultural collectivization policy fled to Myanmar. After the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, most of them returned from Myanmar. The growth in border trade between China and Myanmar after the 1990s and the political confusion in Myanmar accelerated the flow of immigrants from Myanmar to China.

TL village is 6 km from the center of Ruili and 1.5 km from the border, which is basically along the Lǎm Mau River. There were 970 villagers living in 218 households in 2007. Almost all the villagers were farmers, while some worked in factories near the



Map 3 TL Village

village. The ethnic composition of the village was Tai 92 percent (890 persons), Han Chinese 8 percent (75 persons), and others (1 Jingpo, 1 De'ang, 1 Burmese, and 2 others).[4)]

There is a monastery (*tsəŋ*) in TL village, as in other villages, except that one of the largest pagodas in Dehong is also located near the monastery. Village rituals are held in the shrine of the village spirit, *məŋ* spirit, and there is a shelf for Buddhist texts in every house (Map 3).

No monks or novices inhabit the monastery in TL village. There used to be monks and novices in the monastery, but the chief monk fled to Myanmar in 1958, the year the Great Leap Forward started. The monastery was destroyed by the Red Guards in 1966, at the start of the Cultural Revolution, and villagers rebuilt it in 1984. At first, villagers stayed in the monastery and took turns managing it. In 1996 two De'ang nuns (*lai xau*) moved from Nanhkan, Shan State, to a building on the premises, and they continue to manage the monastery.

The case of TL village is not unique in Dehong. According to this author's field survey in 2009, of the 118 religious buildings in Ruili—112 monasteries, three pagodas, and three footprints of Buddha—29 (25 percent) were inhabited by monks, novices, or nuns; and 89 (75 percent) were uninhabited.[5)] Of the 160 monks, novices, temple boys,

4) In Myanmar, Jingpo is called Kachin and De'ang is called Palaung.
5) This number excludes the monasteries in Wanding town.

Table 2 Buildings Inhabited by Monks, Novices, Temple Boys, and Nuns in Ruili City (August 2009)

Village	Type	Sect	Monks Total	From China	From Myanmar	Novices Total	From China	From Myanmar	Temple Boys Total	From China	From Myanmar	Nuns Total	From China	From Myanmar
VO	Monastery	Pɔitsɔŋ	1	0	1	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
VT	Monastery	Pɔitsɔŋ	3	1	2	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
PT	Monastery	Tole	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
ML	Lay house	Pɔitsɔŋ	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
TL	Monastery	Tole	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
TL	Pagoda		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
VM	Monastery	Tole	1	0	1	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
TK	Monastery	Tole	4	0	4	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
TN	Monastery	Tole	2	0	2	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
LA	Monastery	Tole	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
LN	Monastery	Tole	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
LH	Monastery	Tole	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
LH	Pagoda		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
TH	Monastery	Pɔitsɔŋ	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
VL	Monastery		1	0	1	24	2	22	19	9	10	0	0	0
HS	Monastery	Tole	5	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TT	Monastery	Pɔitsɔŋ	4	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
LS	Monastery	Tole	4	0	4	5	1	4	0	0	0	3	0	3
TX	Monastery	Tole	2	2	0	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
TO	Monastery	Tole	1	1	0	6	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
OL	Monastery	Tole	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
LX	Monastery	Tole	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
TS	Monastery	Pɔitsɔŋ	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
NT	Monastery	Tole	3	0	3	12	1	11	0	0	0	0	0	0
MA	Monastery	Tole	1	0	1	3	0	3	0	0	0	1	0	1
LT	Monastery	Pɔitsɔŋ	1	1	0	2	1	1	3	2	1	0	0	0
TS	Monastery	Tole	1	0	1	4	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0
LM	Monastery	Tole	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
TT	Footprint of the Buddha		1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total			38	8	30	78	11	67	24	12	12	20	4	16

Notes: The monastery of VT village used to be affiliated with the Yon sect. Now the abbot belongs to the Pɔitsɔŋ sect.
The nun of ML village does not live in the monastery but lives in the house of her son.
Pagodas and footprints of the Buddha do not belong to a sect. VL monastery does not belong to a sect because it was built by the Buddhist Association.

and nuns in Ruili, 35 (22 percent) were from China and 125 (78 percent) from Myanmar (Table 2). These figures raise the question of why the number of monks and novices is so much lower in Dehong than in other Theravada Buddhist societies. To answer this question we must look at men who are ordained as well as the villagers who accept them.

III Explaining the Small Number of Monks and Novices in Dehong

Who Is Ordained in Dehong?

The Chinese government in Dehong prefecture provides several reasons for the small number of novices and monks, largely related to policy impacts—the Great Leap Forward, the Cultural Revolution, the one-child policy in 1979, and the compulsory education law in 1986. After the institution of the one-child policy in 1979, Tǎi people have been allowed to have only two children. The law of compulsory education for nine years was enacted in 1986. These policies may have had some influence in reducing the number of young people ordained as novices. But some questions remain. If this explanation is correct, is it safe to conclude that the number of monks and novices is greater now than prior to the Great Leap Forward? Furthermore, why is the number of monks and novices in Xishuangbanna so much greater than in Dehong despite the application of the same policies?

To answer the first question, the data in Table 3 is helpful. This table shows the change in the number of monks and novices in Dehong. The number of monks and novices prior to the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution was higher than it is now, but it was still much lower than in other Theravada Buddhist societies. Jiang Yingliang, who carried out fieldwork at the end of the 1930s, described the reasons given by novices for their decision to ordain. First, in many cases the parents had died and there was no one to look after the boys. Second, the parents were poor and did not have enough money to bring up their sons. Finally, a fortune-teller had told the young men to become novices (Jiang 2003, 368). This author's interviews with elderly villagers confirmed the historical validity of these explanations.

Nowadays there are monks and novices in Dehong. Why were these men ordained? One novice (13 years old) who was born in Muhse, Shan State, but became a novice in

Table 3 Number of Monasteries and Priests in Dehong

	Monasteries	Monks	Monks per Monastery	Novices	Novices per Monastery	Nuns	Nuns per Monastery
1956 (Before the Great Leap Forward)	632	236	0.4	139	0.2	137	0.2
1966 (Before the Cultural Revolution)	644	171	0.3	120	0.2	47	0.1
1985 (After the Cultural Revolution)	445	42	0.1	44	0.1	41	0.1
1989	551	54	0.1	143	0.3	39	0.1
2007	602	90	0.1	101	0.2	41	0.1

Source: Data from 1956 to 1989 are from Zhang (1992, 125–130).
The data for 2007 are based on a survey of the Buddhist Association in Dehong.

Ruili said he wanted "to study Chinese language in a monastery on the Chinese side." His reason for wanting to study Chinese was that China's economy was improving and he would be able to use his Chinese language ability after disrobing. Another novice (15 years old) who was born in Lashio and became a novice in Ruili spoke of his intention "to evade conscription by the Myanmar Army or the Shan State Army." Because the wars between the Myanmar Army, the Shan State Army, and the Kachin Independence Army have continued, each army conscripts young men into service. Becoming a novice makes it possible for young men to escape that fate. Another monk (20 years old) who was born on the Chinese side explained, "Because I am physically handicapped." The precepts do not permit a handicapped person to become a monk, but this restriction is not applied to monks in Dehong. Other novices (12 years old) explained their family problems, for instance, "After my father died, my mother had to work and couldn't bring me up." According to this author's interviews, the main factor in ordination was difficulties in secular life.

The above reasons for becoming novices are common in other Buddhist societies. But the difference is that almost every man has the experience of becoming a monk or novice in other Theravada Buddhist societies. A historian (68 years old) who was familiar with the cultures of both Ruili and Xishuangbanna explained that the reason the number of monks and novices in Xishuangbanna increased again after the Cultural Revolution was that "they [people in Xishuangbanna] have the idea that every boy should become a novice. However, this idea didn't exist in Dehong, even before the Cultural Revolution." Previous studies state that it is believed in Xishuangbanna that boys should become novices in order to be considered adults (Zhongyang Dangxiao Minzu Zongjiao Lilunshi 1999, 453–454). From this evidence, we see that to become a novice is a kind of rite of passage in Xishuangbanna, as in other Buddhist societies. In Myanmar, for example, it is normal for parents to have their sons ordained as novices so that they acquire an understanding of moral standards in addition to making merit. Parents also make merit from having their sons ordained as novices.

In Dehong, however, one hardly hears of parents having their sons ordained in order to gain merit for the child or themselves. By no means does this signal that Buddhists of Dehong are not enthusiastic about making merit. For example, people actively maintain the cleanliness of monasteries even if there are no ordained clergy resident. They also participate enthusiastically in Buddhist rituals in order to accumulate merit. The basic thinking in Dehong regarding the accumulation of merit is quite different from other Theravada societies.

The Villagers' Reasons

Though there are few monks in Dehong, if the villagers require the services of a monk they can invite one from the Myanmar side. But why didn't the TL villagers invite monks after the Cultural Revolution? When TL villagers were asked this question, they gave responses such as the following: "To donate food to the monk every day is troublesome, *jap tsau*. It is an additional expense to donate things for the monk's everyday use as well. Nuns, *laixau*, are better than monks because they don't cost so much money and they cook by themselves." Because there is no custom in Dehong to ask for alms, the villagers must take turns bringing food for monks or share the food expenses. This makes the TL villagers view monks as a burden. Furthermore, some head monks of the monastery in Ruili have disrobed and married: "Even if we invite young monks to the monastery, they disrobe and marry using the donations of the villagers," said one villager. Another villager said, "Monks over 50 years old don't disrobe because their minds become calm. But monks over 50 years old are difficult to invite. Therefore, we had better not invite monks." Because of these reasons, TL villagers do not invite monks to live permanently in the monastery. This means that merit is made in different ways from other Theravada Buddhist societies.

The next question is whether or not the Dehong practices described above were the same before the Cultural Revolution. As will be explained later, practices vary by village; thus, this question will be explored focusing on the case of TL village.

Mr. J (75 years old), who was a novice from 1939 to 1949 in the TL village monastery, related his story. The abbot of TL village was from KL village in Nanhkan, because both villages belong to the Tole sect. But a few years later he went back to KL village due to disease, and he subsequently died there. Then one monk was invited from HS village in Ruili city, but he also died in TL village. After that, five novices—three of whom were invited from HS village and two of whom were natives of TL village—lived in the monastery.

Mr. Y (64 years old), who was a novice from 1950 to 1958 in the TL village monastery, recalled that when he became a novice there was no abbot in TL village. Therefore, TL villagers asked the abbot of TT village to send an abbot, since he had the longest experience as a monk. The abbot granted the villagers' request, and he sent Rev. S from TT to TL village. Rev. S had migrated from Məŋ Kəŋ in Shan State to TT village, where he had become a teacher in the monastery. In addition, there were four novices from TL village and two novices from other villages.

This evidence shows that there were monks and novices in TL village before the Great Leap Forward, but the number of novices was low. Because most novices disrobe before they can become abbots, it was difficult to find another abbot. The villagers asked

the most senior monk of the same sect (*kəŋ*) when an abbot was absent.

However, as has been noted, TL villagers do not want to invite abbots nowadays. Why have they changed their minds? An elderly villager (75 years old) explained, "Many villagers hoped to invite a monk before the Cultural Revolution, but the young generation born during or after the Cultural Revolution prefer not to invite monks."

This indicates that before the Great Leap Forward, TL village had practices similar to those of other Theravada Buddhist societies in that it needed monks and novices. The point of difference is that few boys in TL village became novices even before the Cultural Revolution. Therefore, TL villagers had to invite an abbot from another monastery of the same sect if the abbot was absent. But the interruption of the practice for around 20 years took away TL villagers' enthusiasm to invite abbots.

IV Theravada Buddhism Led by Laypeople

How, then, do Tai Buddhists in TL village practice their religion? This section deals with the places where village rituals are performed and the people who play an important role in village rituals.

The Places

Every house in TL village has a shelf for Buddhist texts (*seŋ tala*). Unlike in other Buddhist societies, there is no Buddha statue on the shelf. In its stead are three or five flowers, the Buddhist texts (*tala*), and paintings of the Buddha. It is believed that Buddha statues should be kept in the monastery, because deeds that are inappropriate in front of the Buddha—such as sexual intercourse—are carried out in laypeople's homes. The *tala* guard the family if they are kept in the *seŋ tala*. When there is a wedding, housewarming ceremony, funeral, or other auspicious event, family members offer *xǎu sɔm* (food offerings) to the *seŋ tala*. They offer *xǎu voi* (food distribution) to the spirits of ancestors as well. Through these good deeds, they make merit (*kuso*) and seek good results (*atso*). During the period of the Cultural Revolution, all the *tala*s were burned. Because they were transcribed again after the Cultural Revolution, there is now at least one *tala* in every house.

The monastery is at the end of the village. The Tai word for monastery, *tsɔŋ*, is derived from the Burmese *kyaung*. The Buddha statue in the monastery was donated by TL villagers and built by a sculptor of Buddhist images in Nanhkan. The monastery is the most important place where most collective rituals are held. The main purpose of village rituals is to make offerings to the Buddha statue, *phala*, in the monastery in order

to make merit for the whole village.

There is a pagoda (*kɔŋmu*) on the hill next to the monastery. The derivation of the word *kɔŋmu* is from the Burmese *kaung hmu*, which means "good deed." It is not clear in which year the pagoda was built, but it was destroyed by the Red Guards in 1967—during the period of the Cultural Revolution—and rebuilt with funds from the Chinese government and the attendance of Shan monks from the Myanmar side in 1983. One nun from Mangshi moved to the pagoda premises in 1991 and has lived there since. The committee of the pagoda in Mengmao town also manages the TL village pagoda. On important Buddhist occasions—the festival of the fourth month (*pɔi lən si*), the Water Festival (*pɔi sɔn lăm*), the end of the Buddhist holy three months (*ɔk va*), and so on—people from other villages come to the pagoda and make offerings, because this pagoda is related to the whole Məŋ Mau.

Below the hill outside TL village there is a shrine for the guardian spirit of the village (*tsău man*) and spirit of the basin (*tsău məŋ*). The spirit of TL village is that of a De'ang woman who first came to this village. The shrine existed before the Cultural Revolution, but the Red Guards destroyed it. The villagers rebuilt it in 1982. The spirit of the basin was a Yaŋ (Karen) soldier who lived in TL village but died in the early 1950s. Like most other villages, TL village did not have a *tsău məŋ*—but the shrine was built nonetheless in 1982.

Spirits are divided into two types: good spirits (*phi li phi ŋam*) and bad spirits (*phi hai*). The good spirits are the spirits of the village, basin, and ancestors. They are addressed with the honorific title *tsău*. By making offerings to the good spirits, people can ensure that the spirits will guard (*kum*) them. On the other hand, bad spirits are the spirits of bad death. It is believed that if they enter the body, they will bring disease or some other misfortune.

The People

Table 4 shows the attendees of rituals in TL village during the year the current research was conducted. As this table shows, the *holu* is indispensable in village rituals. The *holu* is the lay expert who recites Buddhist texts when rituals are held. *Ho* means "leader," and *lu* means "donation." In Ruili every monastery has one *holu*, and all of them are men.[6] In 2009, the *holu* of TL village lived in another village but came to TL village when rituals were held. Eighty-six percent of *holu* in Ruili were from other villages. The main role of the *holu* is to recite Buddhist texts when the villagers make an offering. When there is a ceremony, *holu* lead the villagers in reciting the five or eight precepts to the

6) Some villages in other areas of Dehong have multiple *holu*.

Table 4 Rituals Carried Out in TL Village (October 2006–November 2007)

<Annual Rituals>
Rituals participated in by the whole village

Name of Ritual	Dates		Place	Attendees								
	Date of Observation	Tai Calendar in Ruili		Monk, Novice	*Laixau*	*Holu*	*Sǎmmathi*	*Xiŋ lai*	*Polum*	*Melum*	*Mau*	*Sau*
Sɔt sum lo Making a pagoda of wood and burning it	Jan. 31, 2007	3/14	Open space near pagoda			○	○	○	○			
Pɔi lən si Festival of fourth month	Feb. 28, 2007–Mar. 2, 2007	4/13–4/15	Pagoda	○		○	○	○				
Pɔi sɔn lǎm Water Festival	Apr. 13, 2007–Apr. 17, 2007	5/27–6/2	Monastery, pagoda, and park			○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Jaþ man	May 22, 2007	7/7	Pillar of the village	○		○	○	○	○	○		
Me man			Shrine of the spirits						○			
Xǎu va Entering the period of Buddhist Lent	July 29, 2007	8/15	Monastery and pagoda		○	○	○	○				
Lɔn tsɔŋ Old people stay in the monastery	Buddhist days during Lent period (13 times)		Monastery and pagoda		○	○	○	○				
Soŋ pen Sending food to other monasteries	One day during Buddhist Lent		Monasteries in other villages			○	○	○	○	○		
Kaŋ va tsa le Middle of Buddhist Lent	Sept. 26, 2007	10/15	Monastery and pagoda		○	○	○	○				
ɔk va End of Buddhist Lent period	Oct. 26, 2007	11/15	Monastery and pagoda		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Pɔi sau sam Festival of 23rd day	Nov. 3, 2007	11/23	Pagodas			○	○	○	○	○		
Pɔi kan thin Donation of *kathina* robes to Buddha statue	Nov. 4, 2006	12/15	Monastery and pagoda			○	○	○				

Table 4–Continued

<Annual Rituals>
Rituals participated in by the whole village

Name of Ritual	Dates		Place	Attendees								
	Date of Observation	Tai Calendar in Ruili		Monk, Novice	*Laixau*	*Holu*	*Sämmathi*	*Xiŋ lai*	*Polum*	*Melum*	*Mau*	*Sau*
Rituals carried out separately												
Lən si Chinese New Year	Feb. 18, 2007	4/3	Lay house				○	○	○	○	○	○
Xɯn loŋ Visiting ancestors' graves	Apr. 5, 2007	5/19	Cemetery				○	○	○	○	○	○

<Irregular Rituals>
Rituals participated in by the whole village

Xɯn koŋ faŋ mɯu Ceremony of new public hall	Nov. 6, 2007	11/26	Public hall	○		○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Rituals carried out separately												
Xɯn hən mɯu Ceremony of new house	One day		Lay house			○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Xɛk Wedding ceremony	One day		Lay house and public hall			○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Ma sa Funeral	3–7 days after death		Lay house, cemetery, monastery		○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
Hɛn lu taŋ to Setting up a streamer for a dead person	One day during the period of Buddhist Lent		Lay house, monastery			○	○	○	○	○		
Xăɯ a sak Number of items donated depends on age	One day		Lay house or monastery		△	○	○	○	○	○		
Tso pak pɛt Donation of 108 things	One day		Lay house or monastery			○	○	○	○	○		
Sɔm mu tsa Donation when misfortune has occurred	One day		Lay house or monastery			○	○	○	○	○		
Jap hən Exorcism of evil spirits from the house	One day		Lay house	○		○	○	○	○	○		

Source: Author's surveys from 2006 to 2007.

Buddha statue in the monastery. In the case of a wedding ceremony, housewarming ceremony, funeral, or incident of misfortune, *holu* recite in front of the *seŋ tala* in each house. In the afternoon on the days of important ceremonies—such as the Water Festival, the festival to donate kathina robes (*pɔi kan thin*), and the special holy days (*van sin*) during the rainy season retreat (*va*)—*holu* recite *tala* for laypeople. The content of *tala* recited by the *holu* consists of stories of the Buddha's past lives (*tsat to*), precepts that should be upheld by Buddhists, the proper ways of making offerings, and the proper ways to live as *xiŋ lai*. These are recited first in short Pali verses, followed by Tai translation delivered in storytelling style, so as to make the content easily accessible to the people. People get an understanding of the Dhamma (*dănma*) and also gain merit from listening to these recitations. The recitation of texts is not done to exorcise evil spirits. When there are no rituals, *holu* copy the *tala* as requested by villagers. After *holu* recite the *tala* in the monastery, the villagers keep the actual texts in the *seŋ tala*. Most *holu* are farmers, but some of them have another job, for example, typing invitation letters in Tai.

Xiŋ lai are the elderly people who stay in the monastery during the rainy season retreat to keep the eight precepts on special holy days. *Xiŋ* are old men, and *lai* are old women. There were 102 *xiŋ lai* (16 *xiŋ* and 86 *lai*) who went to the TL village monastery in 2007. The purpose was to make merit (*kuso*) and prevent suffering (*tuk xa*) in the next life. After the youngest son or daughter has married and parents no longer need to worry about housework, at around the age of 50, these people go to the monastery. The villagers invite *xiŋ lai* when they carry out rituals.

The representative of the old people is the *sămmathi*. The derivation of *sămmathi* is the Pali *samādhi* or Burmese *thamadi*. Each village has one or two *sămmathi*, all of whom are men. In the case of TL village, two *sămmathi* are elected by village elders and approved at a village meeting. They manage the equipment and money of the monastery. When they are invited to rituals in other villages, they go and make donations as representatives of the village.

Women lay practioners who live on the premises of a monastery or pagoda are called *laixau*—or *lukxau* if they are young. The name *xau*, meaning "white," has its origin in the white clothing nuns wore in the past. Nowadays nuns in TL village wear pink clothing, which is the same as the style in Myanmar. During the time of the study, four women living as nuns in the monastery of TL village were from Myanmar. They shaved their heads and stayed on the monastery premises, but they were institutionally laypeople. They cleaned the monastery, and donated food in the morning and flowers in the afternoon to the Buddha statue. In addition, they recited Buddhist texts at villagers' funerals.

As Table 4 shows, during this author's year of fieldwork monks and novices were

invited only four times. Monks are invited every year at the time of *yap man*, the ritual to exorcise bad spirits, or *phi*. Two other times were to exorcise bad spirits from a house where a family member was sick, and from the public hall in the village. Monks and novices do exorcise evil spirits by reciting texts of protection (*palit*) and other chants like *kămpava* in Pali, but the people listening to the recitations do not understand the meaning. This is one of the major differences between *holu* recitations and monks' recitation of texts. The fourth occasion of monks and novices being invited was during the festival of the fourth month, *pɔi lən si*, when monks attend the pagoda to receive donations. They are not invited by the villagers, but by the committee managing the pagoda. Some villagers go to the monastery of other villages to see monks who do fortune-telling, exorcise bad spirits, give advice about business, and heal disease. Villagers can invite them from other villages as needed. Thus, it is not necessary for monks to live in the monastery.

Even for funerals, it is enough for the villagers if *holu* recite the Buddhist texts. Like in other local Theravada Buddhist societies, the kathina robe festival (*pɔi kan thin*) does exist, but the main purpose of the festival in Dehong is to put robes on the Buddha images in the temples on the 15th day of the 12th month of the Tăi calendar (about November of the Gregorian calendar). This is done because from this time on the weather in Dehong gets very cold, particularly in the mornings and evenings. The robes are left on until the April Water Festival (*pɔi sɔn lăm*). In some villages kathina robes are presented to monks, but this is rather rare. During the author's fieldwork at the end of the rainy season retreat in 2006, only 6 monasteries of the 118 in Ruili invited monks for the donation of kathina robes.

An old man (75 years old) told me, "The most important thing for the Buddhist is *phala*, the Buddha, because monks are also disciples of *phala*." He said that the Buddha relics in pagodas and the words of the Buddha written in the Buddhist texts were more important than monks. Therefore, the absence of the Buddha's disciples, the monks comprising the Sangha, is not problematic. This means that it is laypeople, not monks, who play the central role in the practice of Buddhism in Dehong.

There are certain places and persons that are important in the rituals of TL village. People pray before the texts (*tala*), recording the Buddha's teachings in their everyday practice. The main purpose of village rituals is to make offerings to the Buddha images in the monastery, which are direct symbols of the Buddha (*phala*). When important rituals are held, the villagers also go to pagoda (*kɔŋmu*) housing Buddhist relics to make offerings. In these practices, *holu* and *xiŋ lai* play an important role as mediators between the lay community and the sacred objects related to *phala*.

The common understanding of Buddhism is that the Triple Gem, consisting of the *buddha*, *dhamma*, and *sangha*, is the central object of people's respect. However, in

Dehong it can be said that the people place most importance on a "Double Gem" consisting of *buddha* and *dhamma*.

V *Holu* and Knowledge of Buddhism

As described above, *holu*—lay experts in reciting Buddhist texts—play an important role in village rituals. Previous studies have found lay experts in other Theravada Buddhist societies that resemble *holu*, for example, *phram* and *mo tham* in Northeastern Thailand, and *pho khru* in Northern Thailand (Tambiah 1970; Swearer 1976; Hayashi 2003). Tambiah (1970), in his research on Northeastern Thailand, pointed out how lay brahmans (*phram*) participated in ceremonies to strengthen people's spirit. On the other hand, Hayashi (2003) has mentioned *mo tham*, who exorcise evil spirits. The main difference between these individuals and *holu* is that most of the *holu* do not take part in exorcisms or spirit-calling ceremonies. There are some cases of *holu* who also perform the function of *sala*, lay practitioners specializing in spirit exorcism. But *holu* are basically specialists in the recitation of texts, with their main function being to represent the lay community in their merit-making activities.

Tambiah (1970) also pointed out that *phram* acquire literacy and knowledge of Buddhism in the monastery as novices or monks. After they have disrobed, they play an important role in Buddhist practices. How do the *holu* in Dehong acquire and transmit their knowledge of Buddhism? This question will be explored by comparing three cases of *holu* in TL village and pointing out the elements of change and continuity in their practice.

Three Cases of Holu in TL Village

The previous *holu* of TL village, Mr. J (75 years old), recalled: "Before the Great Leap Forward, more people in the village could become *holu* than now, because more people had the knowledge of reciting Buddhist texts compared to now. If there was not a suitable person to become a *holu* in the village, the villagers invited someone from another village." As will be explained later, even if a man has been a novice or monk, he cannot become a *holu* if he does not have a good voice for reciting Buddhist texts.

After the Cultural Revolution, Mr. J became a *holu* in TL village. Following is his personal story, focusing on his career as a ritual practitioner. Mr. J was born in TL village in 1932. When he was seven years old, he became a novice in TL monastery to study the Burmese scriptures, old Dehong Tai scriptures (*lik tho ŋɔk*), and new Dehong Tai scriptures (*lik to jau*). When he was 17 years old, he disrobed and got married in TL

village. After the Cultural Revolution, TL monastery was rebuilt in 1984. At the time, Mr. J was 52 years old. Because he had the experience of being a novice and his recitation voice was good, the villagers let him become a *holu*. He quit the practice in 1995 because his eyesight deteriorated.

The *holu* of TL village during the period of fieldwork was Mr. S (40 years old). Mr. S was born in 1967 in LX village in Muhse District, Shan State. He was the sixth of 13 children. The parents could not afford to bring him up because they had so many children. Therefore, he was sent to the monastery as a monastery boy (*kappi*) when he was nine years old. He studied the Shan scriptures and basic Buddhist scriptures, but his family did not have enough money to hold a novice initiation ceremony for him. After he went back to his home at the age of 13, he helped his family as a farmer. When he was 21 years old, he became the *holu* of LX village at the suggestion of the villagers. Because he did not know how to recite *tala*, he listened to the recitations of other *holu* and learned from them. In 1990 he was invited to KL village, on the Chinese side, as the previous *holu* had retired. In 1992 he married a woman who lived in KL village and took Chinese nationality. But he quit being the *holu* of KL village in 1995 because his relationship with the villagers had soured. At that time, the TL villagers invited him as a *holu* because the previous *holu* had retired. During the period of fieldwork, he lived in KL village and came to TL village when there was a Buddhist ritual.

TL village is an especially common case after the Great Leap Forward. This author's research in 2009 shows that out of the 112 *holu* in Ruili city, 80 (71 percent) were natives of the Myanmar side; there were only 32 (29 percent) *holu* from the Chinese side. Of the 112 *holu*, 96 (86 percent) were from other villages. Old people who have the ability to recite Buddhist texts were not able to continue as *holu* because of their advanced age. Replacing the old generation were young men who had had the experience of being monks and novices in Myanmar and then moved to the Chinese side. Especially after the 1990s, the economy has grown on the Chinese side, but conflict has continued and the economy is poor on the Myanmar side. Therefore, there has been an increase in the number of *holu* wanting to move to the Chinese side. The movement of *holu* is influenced by the dynamics of this area.

Change and Continuity of Practices

The migration of *holu* from the Myanmar side has changed the practices that involve Buddhist texts. Firstly, the Tăi phrases recited in rituals have been changed to Shan style. The phrases recited in the Pali language are basically the same in every Theravada Buddhist society, but the phrases in the local language are different in each area. Shan phrases were standardized in 1993 at the Shan monks' conference in Muhse. New *holu*

such as Mr. S learned the standardized forms; Mr. S brought them to TL village when he became *holu* in 1995. Moreover, the script of *tala* also changed from the old Dehong script to the Shan script because Mr. S was used to transcribing and reciting the Shan script.

On the other hand, the way of reciting Buddhist texts did not change. When Mr. S became *holu* of TL village, he recited Buddhist texts using Shan intonation (*seŋ kaloŋ pɛn*).[7] But later he learned the intonation of TL village (*seŋ Thuŋ Mau*)[8] and still uses this for his recitations. Why did the script of *tala* change, while the way of reciting did not?

To analyze these phenomena, we must understand the practices in which they occur. For the villagers, *tala* is not something to read but something to listen to or to recite in prayer. Moreover, most of the villagers cannot read the Shan script themselves, but they believe that if there is a *tala* in the *seŋ tala* of each house, the household will be safe and sound. Similar practices are seen with regard to the tattoo. Many Tăi men tattoo Buddhist scriptures (*gatha* and *aŋ*) on their legs or arms to protect themselves from bad spirits (*phi*). Monks also use Buddhist scriptures when they exorcise evil spirits. These scripts are unintelligible to villagers, but the latter believe that scripts they cannot understand have more sacred power.

On the other hand, why did Mr. S have to change his way of reciting? When asked about his reasons, he replied, "TL villagers were not used to the *seŋ kaloŋ pɛn* and requested me to recite using *seŋ Thuŋ Mau*." Listening to the recitation of *tala* by *holu* is an important practice in making merit for TL villagers. The Buddhism of TL villagers is woven into the story and recited melodiously by *holu*. Except for Mr. J, only three men have had the experience of being novices in TL village. They know the Shan scripts and how to recite them, but they cannot become *holu* because their voices are not good enough. This implies that the voice for reciting Buddhist texts is very important for the practices in Dehong. And important knowledge about Buddhism, such as the way of reciting Buddhist texts is not transmitted from monks to laypeople, but rather from laypeople to laypeople.

7) *Seŋ* means "sound," *kaloŋ* means "phoenix," and *pɛn* means "fly." *Seŋ kaloŋ pɛn* means a sound resembling that of a phoenix flying, with large rises and falls in tone.

8) *Thuŋ Mau* refers to the basin, including both the Chinese side and the Myanmar side. The Myanmar side also used *seŋ Thuŋ Mau* before, but they changed to *seŋ kaloŋ pɛn*.

VI Diversity in Buddhist Practices

Can the case of TL village, described above, be applied to other villages in Ruili city? What differences are there with the Myanmar side of Məŋ Mau? These questions will be explored in this section.

Diversity in Relationships with Monks

As stated above, the most important practice for making merit in TL village is to make offerings to the Buddha statue, pagoda, and *seŋ tala*, things that are directly related to the Buddha. If the other villages had the same practices as TL village, one would not expect to find monks and novices in Ruili. But, as noted above, 19 of the 118 monasteries in Ruili have needed the services of monks and novices. Why do these villages invite monks and novices?

A 52-year-old man in MA village explained, "When there are funerals or rituals for building new houses, we need to invite a monk. It is better to have a monk in our own monastery than to invite one from other monasteries when there is a ritual." A man (67 years old) from TX village said, "To donate food to the monks is a duty of laypeople. We don't mind taking turns to donate food one time every one or two months." In LP village, a monk (25 years old) explained the reason he was invited: "When many villagers and domestic animals died one after the other in the village, the villagers were very afraid and invited a monk from the Myanmar side. After he recited the Buddhist texts and exorcised the evil spirits, *phi hai*, the village became peaceful and quiet. Therefore, the villagers asked the monk to reside in the village and the monk agreed to it." In the case of VT village, a man (67 years old) explained, "If our village has some monks, we can show the wealth of the village and save face (*mi la ta*)."

As these examples show, there are various reasons for inviting monks to the village monastery. After villagers reach the decision to invite a monk, they get permission from the Buddhist Association, the Ethnic and Religious Affairs Commission in Ruili city, and then invite the monk from the monastery in Myanmar. The TL villagers did not report this unanimously, but some of them went to the monastery where the monks lived and donated many times. This shows that there is a large diversity of practices, depending on each village or individual.

Diversity of Practices of Precepts

Diversity can be seen in the practice of the precepts (*sin*), and there are some special practices in Dehong.

Buddhists in Myanmar generally keep precepts as detailed below. Laypeople keep

five precepts (Burmese: *thila*) every day and eight precepts on Buddhist days (Burmese: *upoknei*). Novices keep 10 precepts, and monks keep 227 precepts (Burmese: *wini*) (Iikuni 2010, 12). This is almost the same as in other Theravada Buddhist societies. Temple boys (Burmese: *kyaungtha*) do not wear robes until after the ceremony to become novices (Burmese: *shinpyu pwe*). They cannot take off the robes before they return to secular life, because the robes indicate their status as monks and novices.

In Dehong, however, something very different is observed. Sometimes novices (*saŋ*) take off their robes and temple boys (*kappi*) wear robes. At first, the boys who enter a monastery become temple boys. Temple boys do not wear robes, and they keep five or eight precepts at ordinary times. But during village rituals, they wear robes and keep 10 precepts. After they attend the ceremony (*pɔi xam saŋ*), they become novices. But because this ceremony is held only once every few years, many boys join in. As mentioned earlier, because there are so few boys who want to become novices, some novices must wait a few years until the next ceremony. After they become novices, they wear robes and keep 10 precepts during normal times. But when they go to buy something in the city, attend a festival (*pɔi*), or return to their hometown, they are allowed to take off their robes if they obtain permission from the abbot. When they take off the robes they keep the five precepts, like temple boys. After they have undergone the ordination ceremony to become monks (*pɔi xam mon*), they cannot take off their robes at any time.

In short, the common practice in Myanmar and Dehong is that temple boys keep 5 or 8 precepts as laypeople, and novices keep 10 precepts. But novices in Myanmar cannot take off their robes before they return to secular life, because the boundary between novices and temple boys is clear. On the other hand, in Dehong the boundary between temple boys and novices is obscure. Novices are not very clearly distinguished from laypeople but come and go, in the space between the laypeople and the Sangha. After becoming a monk, an individual is a regular member of the Sangha and distinguished from laypeople. Except for Dehong, this type of practice is not seen in Theravada Buddhist societies.

In Ruili we also find instances where the number of precepts kept is different. Four cases are briefly presented below.

Rev. N of HS monastery (33 years old, Tole sect) explained, "Laypeople keep 5 or 8 precepts, novices keep 10 precepts, and monks keep 227 precepts." This is almost the same as other Theravada Buddhist societies.

But Rev. V of LT monastery (39 years old, Pɔitsɔŋ sect) said, "Novices keep 10 precepts, but there were 108 precepts originally. Monks also keep 10 precepts, but there were 528 precepts originally." The number of precepts is more than Rev. N specified.

On the other hand, Rev. V mentioned, "Before, monks were allowed to drink, smoke opium, and have dinner, though these practices are reduced now."

Mr. S (43 years old), the *holu* of TP village, Tsoti sect, said, "Laypeople keep 5 or 8 precepts, novices keep 10 precepts, and monks keep 4 precepts." The reason laypeople keep more precepts than monks is that "laypeople need many precepts because they live in the secular world. The monks need fewer precepts because they can't go outside the monastery."

Mr. J (75 years old), the former *holu* of TL village, Tole sect, also explained that the monks kept four precepts but that "The precepts of monks are more than those of laypeople and novices because 227 details are included in the four precepts." That is, the number of precepts is the same as in the case of Mr. S, but the interpretation is different.

Religious Policies and Practices of the Myanmar Government

The diversity of practices in Ruili becomes clearer if we make a comparison with the situation in Məŋ Mau, on the Myanmar side.

Almost all the monasteries in Muhse and Nanhkan Districts are inhabited by monks. When villagers were asked about the number of precepts kept by Buddhists living in Muhse and Nanhkan Districts, the response was the same as those obtained in the center of Myanmar: "Laypeople keep 5 or 8 precepts, novices keep 10 precepts, and monks keep 227 precepts." Why are there differences within the Məŋ Mau basin, despite the shared historical and cultural heritage of Buddhists there?

The first reason is related to the religious policies of Myanmar and China. In Myanmar, the Sangha organization was established in 1980 on the initiative of the government and the Sangha committee. Because the Sangha organization recognized only nine major sects, the local sects in Məŋ Mau, Tsoti, Pɔitsɔŋ, and Yon were not recognized as official sects (Burmese: *gaing*) and were absorbed into the largest sect, Thudanma. Furthermore, the Sangha organization issued ID cards to monks and novices, opened a Sangha court, and reformed Sangha education. The government aimed to standardize local Buddhist practices through these efforts toward the institutionalization of religion. Especially after the 1990s, political authority could be exerted upon monks and novices if they violated their precepts (Kojima 2009). These policies affected the practice of the precepts in Myanmar.

According to a monk (58 years old) who was on the Nayaka committee in Muhse District, it was common to have monasteries uninhabited by monks in the 1980s. After the democracy movement in 1988, the Myanmar government took the stance that differences in religion was a factor obstructing the unity of the country. In 1991 the Ministry of Religious Affairs established the Department of Propagation of Buddhism, which tried

to unite the country by converting minority people to Buddhism. The Department of Propagation of Buddhism issued an order that all monasteries in Muhse and Nanhkan Districts were required to have abbots. The government further said that it would send Burmese abbots to take up residence in empty monasteries. Local villagers were not fond of Burmese monks and invited Tai (Shan) monks instead. For this reason, almost all monasteries on the Myanmar side are inhabited by monks.

Factors Producing Diversity in Practice

As discussed above, many sects (*kəŋ*) flowed into Dehong from the center of Myanmar or Northern Thailand. Existing studies explain that the Pɔitsɔŋ, Tsoti, and Tole sects are from the center of Myanmar and the Yon sect is from Northern Thailand. But as Jiang (2003, 376) has pointed out, the Tole sect has many subgroups, such as Mɛŋtso, Takoktaŋ, Tonphila, and Ovata.

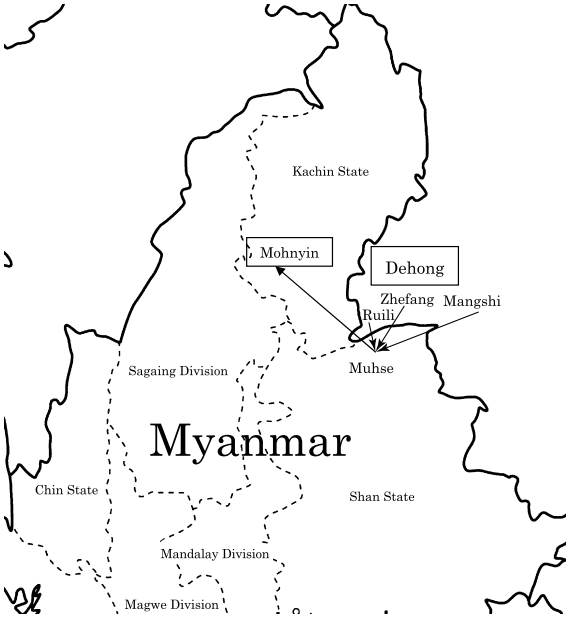
The Chinese government and the Buddhist Association of Dehong Prefecture tried to unite the various sects after 1982. According to Zhang (1992, 132), "because the prejudices between sects disappeared gradually, all sects were united and now respect each other." Rev. W (35 years old), the chief monk of the Buddhist Association in Ruili city, said that sects ceased to exist in Dehong after the sects were united in 1982. Furthermore, the Chinese government and the Buddhist Association of Dehong started registration in 1996 and requested monks to obey the laws of the government and contribute to the unity of the nation-state, as was the case in Myanmar. How does this translate into reality?

The pagoda of TL village was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, and a ceremony for its reconstruction was held in 1984. The leader of the reconstruction committee, Mr. K (71 years old), recalled, "It was troublesome because monks of different sects didn't want to sit together at that time. Now monks of different sects attend the ceremony together, because the sects have been united by the Buddhist Association." Thus, we can see that reconciliation has been achieved to a certain degree.

But this does not mean that sects have disappeared completely. The sects with which any monastery is associated have not fundamentally changed.[9] Each sect has its own practices, and thus the continuation of the sects has been a major force in producing diversity within local Buddhist society. This is illustrated with examples of two sects below.

The first example is the Tsoti sect. Zhang (1992) describes the features of the Tsoti

9) Because there are no monks from the Yon sect in Ruili city, the monastery of VT village, a former Yon sect monastery, invited the abbot of the Pɔitsɔŋ sect and subsequently became a monastery of the Pɔitsɔŋ sect. However, this is not a typical case.



Map 4 Movement of Laypeople and Donations in the Tsoti Sect between Dehong and Mohnyin

sect as follows. First, monks and novices are led by one abbot and live together in one monastery. The monastery where they live is not fixed. The most senior monk of the Tsoti sect at the time of the 2009 research lived in Mohnyin (Tăi: Məŋ Jaŋ). In fact, the monastery of the Tsoti sect in Dehong had not had a resident monk since 1915, when the most senior monk moved to Shan State. Second, monks and novices are required to obey the precepts very strictly. For example, they are not allowed to ride in cars but have to walk when they go out. Not only monks and novices, but also laypeople are requested to obey the precepts. For example, followers are not allowed to raise livestock, and they cannot eat meat if they have seen the slaughter of the animals. Furthermore, laypeople are prohibited from drinking alcohol.

According to this author's field surveys, villagers still adhered to these practices, except that some now raised livestock. There was no Tsoti monk in Dehong, but followers made donations to Mohnyin three times per year—during the Water Festival (*pɔi sɔn lăm*), the beginning of the rainy season retreat (*xău va*), and the end of the rainy season retreat (*ɔk va*). Donations from Dehong were collected at the Tsoti monastery in Muhse, and representatives took them to Mohnyin (Map 4). When the ordination ceremony is held in the central monastery of Mohnyin every three years, many villagers attend and some boys become novices as well.

In contrast to the Tsoti sect's strict following of the precepts, the practices of the Pɔitsɔŋ sect are relatively loose. *Pɔi* is derived from the Burmese word *pwe*, which means "festival," and *tsɔŋ* is derived from the Burmese *kyaung*, which means "monastery." Zhang (1992, 146) describes how the monasteries of the Pɔitsɔŋ sect are built in lively places in the village and hold many festivals. Jiang (2003, 373) recorded the situation in the 1930s thus: "The monks drink, smoke opium, and eat dinner. Their robes are made from wool, and they can ride in cars and on horseback. They can leave the monastery to talk freely with laypeople at their homes." According to Zhang (1992, 147), the reason the Pɔitsɔŋ sect became the major sect in Dehong is "because the precepts for the laypeople are loose and do not interfere in the laypeople's life so much. They can keep pigs and chickens in captivity."

To the best of this author's knowledge, even Pɔitsɔŋ monks are not allowed to smoke opium now, because it is prohibited by the Chinese government. In any case, the villagers would not permit it. Except opium, the way of keeping precepts is relatively loose until now. However, monks are not criticized by the villagers of Pɔitsɔŋ sect for these practices. On the contrary, the chief monk of the Pɔitsɔŋ sect, Rev. K, who stays in the monastery in Muhse township, is famous for his exorcism and fortune-telling skills and is worshipped not only by the villagers of the Pɔitsɔŋ sect but also by laypeople of the whole Məŋ Mau. All the monks of the Pɔitsɔŋ sect go to see Rev. K once a year.

From these facts, it is clear that although the Chinese government insists that it "united" the sects after 1982, in fact the government has not used its political power to standardize the practices of each sect. This may be because the Chinese government is not interested in the standardization of Buddhist practices. Since the government takes no special position on Buddhism, the policy of the Chinese government is significantly different from that in Theravada Buddhist countries in Southeast Asia. If Buddhists obey the authority and control of the government and are seen to be supportive of the policy, nothing more is required. This policy is one of the factors that have allowed the continuation of diversity in local practices.

As explained above, the existence of many sects produces diversity in religious practices. However, both Rev. N and Mr. J were ordained in the Tole monastery. This indicates that there are differences within sects that depend on the practices of each individual. To explain these differences one must take a closer look at the monks' personal stories.

Mr. J did not go to central Myanmar for his studies; he became a novice in the monastery of TL village and studied Buddhism with an abbot from Nanhkan township. One monk (77 years old) who became a novice before the Great Leap Forward recalled, "The monks who went to Mandalay were very few at that time, because the road conditions

Map 5 Route Taken by Rev. N

were bad and it took a long time to get there." *Ruili Shizhi*, the historical record of Ruili city, describes the system before the Great Leap Forward as follows: Novices are educated in the village monastery. After they become monks, they move to the monastery where the most senior monk lives and become educated as abbot candidates. If the monastery of the same sect lacks an abbot, the most senior monk dispatches a monk from among his disciples to the monastery (Ruili Shizhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui 1996, 698). Judging from this evidence, one can conclude that almost all the monks were educated in Məŋ Mau and that there were a limited number of monks who studied in central Myanmar. Moreover, it is likely that the level of differentiation in practice between sects was higher than it is now.

After the Cultural Revolution, many monks and novices of Dehong were educated in the central area of Myanmar. For example, Rev. N was born in Tangyan and became a novice in the monastery of his native village. Then he lived in Taunggyi for three years, Bago for two years, and Amarapura for four years (Map 5).

This author's interviews conducted with all the monks, novices, and nuns living in Ruili city show the same basic pattern as the case of Rev. N. Around 80 percent of monks, novices, and nuns were from Shan State. They became novices in the monastery of their native village, and then they went to central Myanmar to study Buddhist doctrines. After

finishing their studies, they moved to Ruili through personal connections with monks or laypeople.

One factor in this phenomenon has been the improvement of road conditions between Shan State and the central region of Myanmar. Another factor is the increase in the number of monks and novices who went to central Myanmar to study orthodox Buddhism. They brought back knowledge of Buddhism from the central part of Myanmar. This movement also produced diversity among local sects.

But this does not mean that the everyday practices of villagers simply are assimilated into those of central Myanmar, as has already been discussed. Monks and nuns sometimes advise villagers regarding their practices, but the practice is decided by the *xiŋ lai* (elders) who keep precepts. The *xiŋ lai* also discuss and decide themselves how the precepts will be kept and how merit will be made.

As described in Sections V and VI, influences of Burmese and Shan Buddhism on local practices have been stronger after the 1990s than before the Cultural Revolution. The immigration of *holu*, monks, and novices has contributed to this change. But this does not mean that the practices of Dehong are assimilated into Shan or Burmese practices. Rather, lay Buddhists in Dehong choose and establish their practices independently. The government does not interfere in this area of local autonomy, in contrast to the approach of the government in Myanmar. For these reasons, a rich diversity in Buddhist practices can be seen in Dehong.

VII Conclusion

Characteristics of Buddhism in Dehong

Previous studies on Theravada Buddhist society have pointed out that the ideal path for a Buddhist is to become a monk and attain salvation. Laypeople gain merit by making donations to the Sangha. In Dehong, however, the custom of ordaining is significantly less widespread than in other Theravada Buddhist societies, and most men have not experienced life as a monk or novice. For this reason, the number of monks and novices is very low. In fact, many monasteries do not have an abbot, but laypeople make merit and ask for protection by praying and making offerings to sacred objects related with the Buddha, including Buddhist texts, Buddha statues, and pagodas. Laypeople, particularly *holu* and *xiŋ lai*, play important roles as mediators in these prayers and offerings. Of course, this does not mean that the lay community does not need monks at all. During the period before the Cultural Revolution, monks were invited to reside in monasteries in more villages than we now find. However, the number of men who became monks

and novices was very small before the Cultural Revolution, too. This means that the way people in Dehong make merit is different from other Theravada Buddhist societies.

For practices led by laypeople, *holu* play the most important role. For more than 10 years during the Cultural Revolution, the activities of *holu* were stopped. After the Cultural Revolution, *holu* migrated from Shan State in Myanmar and played an important role in the revival of Buddhism in Dehong. As a result, the script used in the Buddhist texts (*tala*) changed to that of Shan State. On the other hand, the intonation used in reciting the *tala* was not allowed to change. This is because listening to the recital of *tala* is an important practice for lay Buddhists in Dehong. And important knowledge about Buddhism, such as the way of reciting *tala*, is transmitted from laypeople to laypeople.

Another characteristic of Buddhism in Dehong is that the practices are diverse depending on each village and individual. One factor in this diversity is that over time various sects flowed into Dehong from Myanmar and Northern Thailand. Even within the same sect, differences in education contribute to this diversity. Furthermore, because the Chinese government has not standardized Buddhist practice, various kinds of practice exist in Dehong. Thus, lay Buddhists independently establish the style of local practice.

Differences between Dehong Buddhism and Burmese and Shan Buddhism

Following is a summary of the differences between Dehong Buddhism, on the one hand, and Burmese and Shan Buddhism on the other. The most significant difference is that the number of ordained clergy in Dehong is dramatically lower, while the presence of "empty" monasteries is prevalent, as discussed in Section III. This is not a historical anomaly. In Muhse and Nanhkan Districts, on the Burmese side of the border, the situation was similar to that in Dehong until the 1980s. Here also, boys did not necessarily ordain as novices, and it was not rare to find empty monasteries. Since 1990, the government has required that all monasteries have ordained clergy resident, in order to achieve the target of converting ethnic minorities to Buddhism in the name of national integration. As a result, the number of empty monasteries in Muhse and Nanhkan Districts has been reduced. So, although a Dehong-type pattern of practice was observable until recent years, the current patterns of practice increasingly resemble those of central Myanmar.

When compared to Burmese and Shan Buddhism, Dehong Buddhism has one further distinct characteristic worthy of note. As shown in Section IV, lay *holu* play a much more important role than monks in village rituals. However, looking back in history, we see that before 1990 the situation in Muhse and Nanhkan Districts of Shan State was similar to Dehong, in that *holu* would recite Buddhist texts (*tala*) in story format and give sermons in the afternoons during the annual rainy season retreat. After 1990, it became increasingly common for monks to give sermons in the afternoon. Presently, in more

than half of the monasteries, *holu* have stopped giving sermons. Moreover, the material delivered in the monks' sermons now reflects what the monks have learned in central Myanmar educational monasteries, focusing mainly on the Tripitaka. Similar trends can be observed in other areas of Shan State, but *holu* do not exist in central Myanmar.

Nonetheless, the script used for copying texts (*tala*) and the language used in Buddhist rituals are the same in both Dehong and Shan State. Thus, although there has been a significant degree of standardization of practices in accordance with the Myanmar Sangha institution, as demonstrated above, the distinct practices of local ethnic groups have not been totally lost. Furthermore, as mentioned previously, there are some differences between the recitation styles in Dehong and Shan State, which still persist. Thus, while Dehong Buddhism has been influenced by both Burmese and Shan Buddhism, it continues to produce its own distinct practices.

One important reason for this is Dehong's location on the Shan plateau, far from the center of Burmese Buddhism. During the period of royal dynasties, the lack of transport infrastructure emphasized the Shan plateau's position on the periphery, separating it from the Burmese royalty (Mendelson 1975, 233). After the 1980s, government-directed Sangha institutions were established, while the national road network was improved. This has meant that the wave of standardized Buddhist practice emanating from central Myanmar is reaching Shan State. In Dehong, while the Chinese government does manage monasteries and ordained clergy, it does not try to manage the details of actual Buddhist practice. This means that local practices that differ from those of central Myanmar and Shan State can be observed.

Further Study

The preceding discussion has highlighted some of the local Buddhist practices in Dehong. The implication of this analysis is that some of our basic understandings and assumptions about Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia should be revisited. Some important questions remain.

First, why is there traditionally no custom of ordination in Dehong? One possible reason is that the relationship between the king of the basin, *tsǎu fa*, and the Sangha was different from relationships in other Theravada Buddhist societies; but further historical study is necessary to verify this.

The second question is whether the same creation and maintenance of diversity in practice explored here is found in other Buddhist societies. For example, the number of monks and novices in the Muhse and Nanhkan areas, on the Myanmar side of Ruili city, was also very low before the implementation of the Myanmar government's policy to spread Buddhism. One informant said, "The way in Məŋ Mau is a 'democratic' one. We

should not compel people to ordain. If they wish, they can ordain; if they don't wish to, they should not ordain. In the past, the custom across Myanmar was the same as in Məŋ Mau. It is in Thailand where everyone ordains." This potentially important assertion should be explored further in different areas.

The third question concerns the process of Buddhist reform in Cambodia and Xishuangbanna. Studies have been carried out in both of these societies, but there is a need for more comparative studies of these practices.

Finally, after the Congress of All Sects of Myanmar in 1980, how have local sects reconciled their practices with the centralized religious institutions in Myanmar? The Sangha organization was established in Myanmar in 1980, but it has approved only nine sects. The Tsoti, Pɔitsɔŋ, and Yon sects have been incorporated into the Thudanma sect. The Sangha organization issues ID cards to monks and novices, has established a Sangha court, and has reformed the examination system for Sangha education. All these measures were undertaken to standardize the Buddhist practice recognized by the Sangha nayaka committee (Kojima 2009). Nevertheless, as shown in this paper, these sects are still alive and should be examined further, particularly in places like Shan State and Kachin State.

As has been shown in this work, the practice of Buddhism in Dehong is different from what has been commonly understood from previous studies. Are these different practices exceptional or are they representative of more yet undescribed diversity across the region? As the case of Muhse and Nanhkan shows, the Buddhism practiced in Dehong may have been closer to the norm before the institutionalization of Buddhism by the nation-state. The models that underpin our basic understanding of Theravada Buddhist societies were developed upon the case of central Thailand, but the current study suggests that there is a need to re-examine these models based on a wider social range of local practices.

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Two Versions of Buddhist Karen History of the Late British Colonial Period in Burma: *Kayin Chronicle* (1929) and *Kuyin Great Chronicle* (1931)

Kazuto Ikeda*

The majority of the Karen people in Burma are in fact Buddhist, in spite of their widespread image as Christian, pro-British, anti-Burman, and separatist. In the last decade of British rule, two Buddhist interpretations of Karen history—virtually the first ethnic self-assertion by the Buddhist Karens—were published along with the first Christian version. Writing in Burmese for Burmese readers, the authors of these Buddhist versions sought to prove that the Karen were a legitimate people (*lumyo*) comparable to the Burman and Mon in the Buddhist world, with dynastic lineages of their own kingship (*min*) reaching back into the remote past, and a group faithful to their religious order (*thathana*). This linkage of ethnicity=kingship=religion was presented in order to persuade skeptical readers who believed that the Karen, lacking the tradition of Buddhist *min*, were too primitive to constitute an authentic *lumyo* of the *thathana* world. Analysis of these texts will shed light on the social formation of Karen identity among the Buddhists from the 1920s to the 1930s. This will also lead us to consider the historical processes whereby the *quasi*-ethnic idioms and logic innate to the Burmese-speaking world were transformed in the face of modern and Western notions of race and nation, and consequently the mutation of Burma into an ethnically articulated society.

Keywords: Karen, Burma (Myanmar), chronicle, historiography, ethnicity, kingship, Buddhism

I Introduction

The Karen people in Burma have handed down several versions of their own ethnic history since the beginning of the twentieth century. After Burma became independent, these history books have been reprinted by different publishers, sometimes under false authors, and as abridged versions in small leaflets or mimeographs distributed at Karen New Year festivals and other occasions. They were also photocopied and widely circu-

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lated as underground editions both inside and outside Burma among the Karen people.

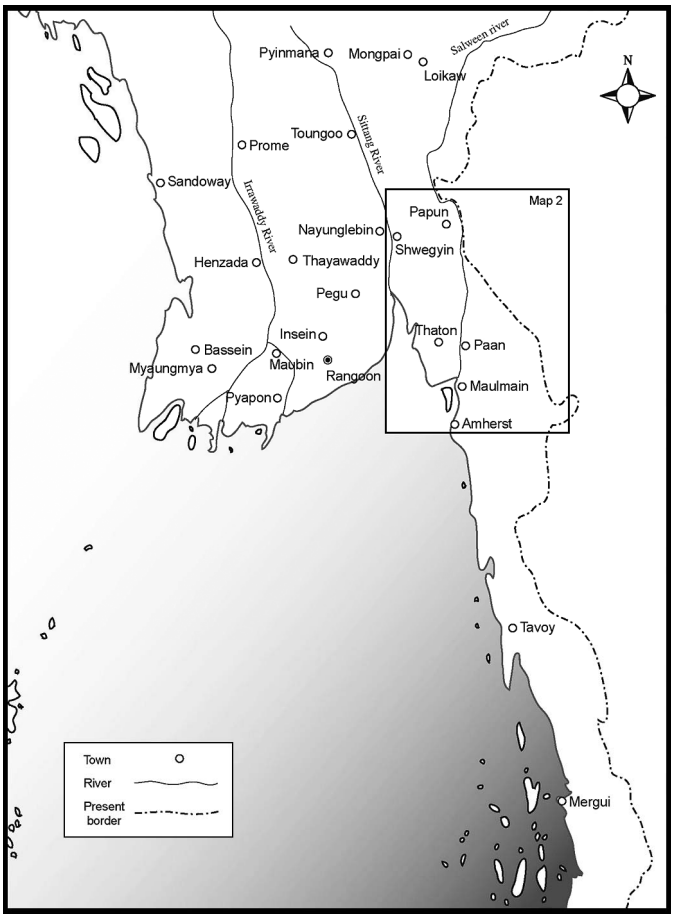
Attempts to trace these versions to their sources inevitably lead to one of the three following original editions, all of which were published in the last decade of the British colonial period: *Kayin Chronicle* (kayin yazawin) by U Pyinnya, published in 1929; *Kuyin Great Chronicle* (kùyin maha yazawin dojî) by U Saw in 1931; and *A History of the Pgakanyaw* (pgaMkaňô ali'M taLciFsoMtêsoM) by Saw Aung Hla in 1939. "Kayin (kayin)" and "Kuyin (kùyin)" mean Karen in the Burmese language, and "Pgakanyaw (pgaMkaňô)" refers to the Karen in the Sgaw Karen language. The first two works narrate the Buddhist history of the Karen and the third is a Christian version of Karen history.[1)]

The purpose of this paper is to examine the assertions and logic of the Buddhist versions of Karen history, in comparison with the Christian version, and the motives of these authors in composing the first Karen histories in the Burma of the 1920s.

As an ethnic minority, the Karen constituted the second largest population group after the Burman in the 1931 population census, and the third after the Shan in the 1983 census. The Karen are known for their large-scale conversion to Christianity by American Baptist missionaries in the nineteenth century. Along with the steady increase in the Christianized population and the development of religious networks, the Baptist Karen have also fostered a strong ethnic awareness. They formed the first ethnically oriented organization in Burma in 1881, probably in close association with the British colonial administrators. This organization preceded any of the other ethnic organizations in Burma by at least a quarter-century. Because of their intimate relationships with the Americans and the British, the Karen have been generally represented in Western writings as pro-colonialist during the British regime and anti-Burman after independence in 1948. The Karen National Union (KNU), a Christian-led Karen armed organization on the Burma-Thai border, has been singled out by observers outside Burma as a typical example of ethnic separatism.

Contrary to the widespread image of the Karen as Christian, anti-Burman, and separatist, it has been clear since the 1920s that the majority of the Karen was actually Buddhist. Yet, Buddhist Karen have received scant attention. *Kayin Chronicle* and *Kuyin Great Chronicle* are thus significant, as they constitute the first assertions by the Buddhist Karen as a unique ethnic group.

1) Burmese terms are transliterated according to the system in The Burma Research Group (The Burma Research Group 1987, 18) for the first appearance of each term, but will be mentioned in simplified form in italics without tonal symbols thereafter. For Sgaw Karen, the transliteration system by Yabu (Yabu 2011b, 526–531) will be used.



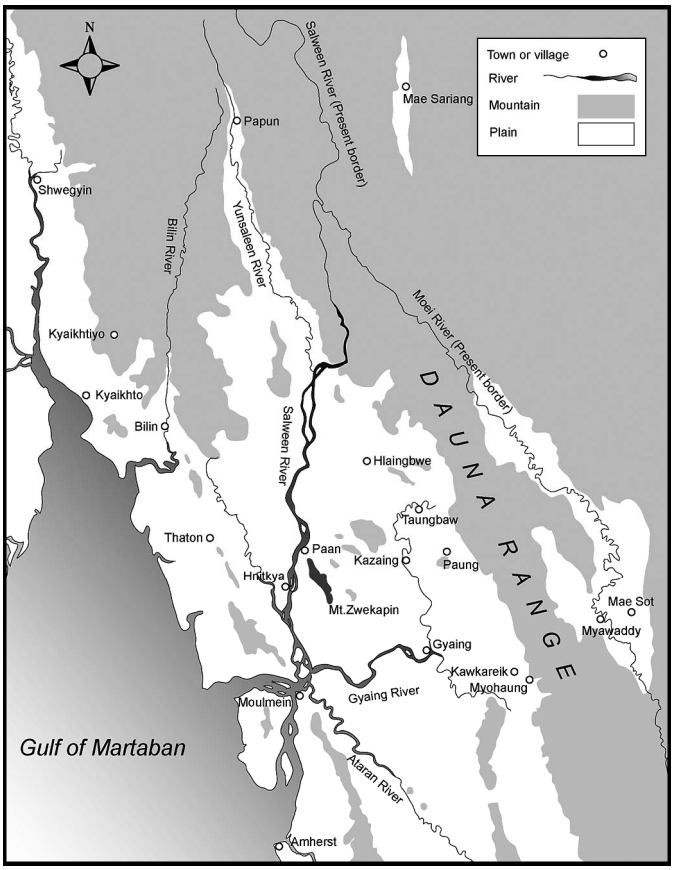
Map 1 Lower Burma

II Buddhism among the Karen

By the eighteenth century, a large part of the people later called Karen had already accepted Buddhism. Buddhism among the Karen came to the notice of the Baptist mission in the nineteenth century and the general impression of the Karen at that time was that they were in many ways already a Christianized people.

The Karen and Christianity

The rapid spread of Christianity among the Karen began with Ko Tha Byu, the first convert baptized in 1828, 15 years after Adoniram Judson arrived in Burma. In the begin-



Map 2 Southeastern Burma

ning, the American missionaries intended to teach the Karen the Burmese language as a medium of proselytization, but the legend of the "the lost book"[2] persuaded Jonathan Wade (1798–1872) to create the Sgaw Karen script in 1832, which was adapted from the Burmese script system. He also invented the Pwo Karen script soon after, though its orthography was delayed till as late as 1852.

The disputes over whether the Pwo[3] language was linguistically related to the Sgaw,

2) There are several versions of this legend, but its basic outline is as follows: When Ywa, the legendary god of the Karen, left them, he gave them a golden book, but it was lost. It is said that a "white brother" will come back with this book. In the early missionary work, missionaries were regarded as the "white brother" and the Bible or prayer books as "the lost book."

3) Pwo has eastern and western dialects. The differences between these dialects are so great that speakers from different groups are unable to communicate with each other when they first meet.

and whether these two languages should be categorized as a single language group were not settled until the 1840s (Womack 2005, 116). It was during this Tenasserim period from 1826 to 1852, when the British first colonized Burma, that the language was given its name "Karen" and in principle defined as centered in the vicinity of the Moulmein region and spoken by the people in the range of Lower Burma. The establishment of the two script systems by the missionaries generated the popular conception that Karen was a language or a people comprised of two major subgroups, Sgaw and Pwo.

Francis Mason (1799–1874) played a significant role in the formation of Karen ethnological knowledge. In 1833, only five years after missionary activity began among the Karen, he claimed to have discovered "a fragment of the descendants of the Hebrews" (Mason 1834, 382). In 1860, Mason published the second edition of his work on the natural history of British Burma, with one whole chapter dedicated to the Karen. It was, in fact, the first systematic attempt to describe the Karen as a race or nation, with a distinct language, history, and other elements (Mason 1860, 71–96).

Linguistic and ethnological understanding of the Karen was formed in the first half of the nineteenth century by the Baptists, and this provided a firm foundation upon which various aspects of knowledge and information were added and developed. The British colonialists, for example, came to have contact with the Karen as subjects of their rule only after the annexation of Lower Burma. In the earlier years, colonial officers such as McMahon (1876) and Smeaton (1887) were largely dependent on the knowledge produced by the American missionaries.

The British officers began to add some new knowledge to that formed by the American Baptists at the turn of the century, notably demographic data and an elaborately classified catalogue of the Karen language subgroups. This was one of the results of British colonization of the whole of Burma in 1886 and persistent attempts at an effective administration—of taxation in particular—over the people who came under their rule. After the linguistic survey of Burma in the 1910s, more "scientifically" categorized subgroups of the Karen, amounting to 16, with Sgaw and Pwo being the largest, appeared in the 1921 and 1931 censuses.

The 1921 census revealed for the first time with statistical precision that the majority (77.3 percent) of the Karen was actually Buddhist. The Buddhist population declined slightly to 76.74 percent in 1931. However, the ethnological details of this religious group have hardly been discussed as compared to the Christian (15.99 percent) and animist (7.23 percent) sections. Official and academic publications of the day, such as social surveys, gazetteers, and ethnographies, focused instead on the animist section of the Karen. This is presumably because the image of the animist Karen was more readily accepted as they were thought to be a more "original" and "purer" part of the tribe, a

large portion of whom were mountain dwellers. Christian Karen were already prominent politically and socially in colonial Burma. On the other hand, the Buddhists, the apparent majority in number, remained largely and unnaturally ignored until the end of British rule.

Baptist Karen were one of the first peoples to represent themselves socially as a modern race or nation in colonial Burma. The formation of the Karen National Association (KNA) in 1881 predated the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA), the first ethnic Burman organization, by a quarter-century. In the early twentieth century, the Karen members of parliament and politicians from the Christian community supported the British rulers, which caused great antagonism among the Burman nationalists. Karen troops in the colonial army were largely composed of Christian soldiers and were often sent to suppress peasant uprisings from the end of the nineteenth century. As Burman newspapers such as *Thuriya* [The Sun] published articles critical of the Christian Karen in the 1920s and 1930s, the Karen as a whole became perceived and labeled as supporters of British rule and as enjoying preferential treatment under the British administration. This impression was deeply rooted in the minds of the Burman nationalists and common people.

By the end of British rule in the 1940s, a vast amount of knowledge on the Karen had been gathered, principally by the American missionaries and the British colonialists. The British left Burma in 1948 when it achieved independence, and the Americans in the 1960s when General Ne Win took power. Numerous American and British accounts on the Karen have since attained the status of historical records never to be updated, and have become a precious record of the history of the Karen. They constituted quality and abundant historical sources for the Karen people, and since they were written in English, were also easily accessible for Western scholars and observers. However, these records rarely dealt with the Buddhist section of the Karen, focusing instead on animists, from an ethnological perspective, and on Christians as subjects of administration and enlightenment. The Karen people themselves also lost contact with the outside world for some time, after Burma shut its doors to foreigners following Ne Win's coup d'état. Political scientists and journalists in the West around this time started to publish theses and articles on nationalism, nation-building, and other popular topics of the time, using the Karen in Burma as examples. The Karen were inevitably represented as a Christian and pro-British element in the history of colonial and independent Burma, and in their taking up of arms for separation from the ruling Burman nation, made for a perfect prototype in these articles about ethno-nationalism and insurgency by the oppressed. These Christian, pro-British, insurgent, and separatist images of Karen remain dominant and need to be reexamined when studying the Buddhist Karen.

How, then, have the Buddhist Karen been referred to and how far can their tradition be traced back in Burmese history?

Karen History in Popular Ethnographies

After independence, many books on Karen Buddhism were published in the Burmese language, centering on the Paan area in southeastern Burma. Mahn Lin Myat Kyaw and Mahn Thin Naung are among the most famous eastern Pwo writers with works such as *Records of Kayin Culture* (Lin Myat Kyaw 1970), *Collections of Kayin Custom and Culture* (Lin Myat Kyaw 1980), *The Eastern Pwo Kayin* (Thin Naung 1978), *The Beautiful Kayin State* (Thin Naung 1981), and *The Paan City* (Thin Naung 1984). More recent publications include Saw Aung Chain's *A History of the Kayin Nation and Their State* (2003). There is also a group of books on the history of pagodas. The histories of pagodas and monasteries on Zwekapin, the holy mountain of the Karen, are well described in *The Pagoda History of Mt. Zwekapin* (Loung Khin 1965) and *A New History of Zwekapin Pagoda* (Zagara 1966). Most of the references on Karen Buddhism were published after the 1960s and it is difficult to find literature from before that time.[4)]

Rare are the books dating from the early twentieth century that treat the history of the Karen. There are two—three if Christian versions are included—lineages of publication on Karen history (see Table 1). The first originates from U Pyinnya's *Kayin Chronicle* published in 1929. The monk U Obatha published another *Kayin Chronicle* in 1961, claiming it as his own original work.[5)] In the same year, the monk U Pyinnya Thuta abridged the original *Kayin Chronicle*, and U Pyinnya's original edition was reprinted in 1965. The second lineage of Karen history descends from U Saw's *Kuyin Great Chronicle* of 1931. Based on this, Ashin Thuweizadara published an extracted version in 1963, and Mahn Tun Yin another in the 1960s. Both these seminal texts are written in Burmese for Burmese readers.[6)]

The third category of Karen history traces its origins from *A History of the Pgakanyaw*, a Christian version of Karen history written by Saw Aung Hla in 1939. There may have been many editions of this work, including the one by Saw Paw shown in Table 1. Pho-

4) Burmese- and Karen-language publications on the Karen, including Buddhism, are well represented in diploma theses such as Nilar Tin (1991) and Aung Thein (1999).

5) U Obatha acknowledges U Pyinnya as co-writer and his book has a totally different concluding remark, which corresponds exactly to two pages of U Pyinnya's original work. Apparently, the original text U Obatha based his work on lacked the final sheet containing the last two pages and he therefore invented a different ending.

6) *Slapatthutalinga* by U Parama (1942) was the only *peza* (palm leaf manuscript) categorized in the history section by Hpone Myint (Hpone Myint 1975). It was published as a printed book in 1957 and reprinted in 2003, but it seems not to contain any historical accounts of the Karen.

Table 1 Various Versions of Karen History Books

	①Title in English ②Transliterated Title ③Original Title ④Subtitle (original)	Author/Editor	Lineage	Date of Publication	Where Published/Publisher (Where Written)	Language
1	①Kayin Chronicle ②kayin yazawin ③ကရင်ရာဇဝင် ④A History of the Karen	Pyinnya, U ပညာ ၊ ဦး	A-original (1st ed.)	Oct 1929 ၁၉၉၁ သီတင်းကျွတ်လ	Rangoon/Thuriya သူရိယသတင်းစာတိုက် လီမိတက် (Thaton)	Burmese
2	①Kuyin Great Chronicle ②kùyin maha yazawin dojî ③ကုရင်မဟာရာဇဝင်တော်ကြီး	Saw, U စော ၊ ဦး	B-original (1st ed.)	Feb/Mar 1931 ၁၉၃၂ တပေါင်းလ	Rangoon/Amyodasa အမျိုးသားစာပုံနှိပ်တိုက် (Rangoon)	Burmese
3	①A History of the Pgakanyaw ②pgaMkañô ali'M taLciFsoMtêsoM ③ပုဂကညိအလံ်တာ်စံဉ်စီၤတဲ့စီၤ ④A History of the Karen	Aung Hla, Saw အိဉ်လး ၊ စီၤ	C-original (1st ed.)	Apr 1939 ၂၆ဂုဏ လါချဲ့	Bassein/Karen Magazine Press (Rangoon)	Sgaw
4	②Slapatthutalinga ③သူပတ်သုတလက်ာ	Parama, U ပရမ ၊ ဦး	A?-peza (manu-script)	(1942)	(Paan)	Eastern Pwo
5	②Slapatthutalinga ③သူပတ်သုတလက်ာ	Parama, U ပရမ ၊ ဦး	A?-1st ed.	1957	Rangoon ?/Myomeit မြို့မိတ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက် (Paan)	Eastern Pwo, Burmese
6	①Kuyin Chronicle Abridged ②kùyin yazawin acînjou' ③ကုရင်ရာဇဝင်အကျဉ်းချုပ်	Tun Yin, Mahn ထွန်းရင် ၊ မန်း	B	1960s?	Rangoon?/n.p (Rangoon or Maubin)	Burmese
7	①Kayin Chronicle ②kayin yazawin ③ကရင်ရာဇဝင်	Obatha, U (ed.) သြဘာသ ၊ ဦး (Pyinnya, U ပညာ ၊ ဦး) (Parama, U ပရမ ၊ ဦး)	A	Jul 1961 ၁၃၂၄ ဒုတိယဝါဆိုလ	Moulmein/Hlyitsit လျှပ်စစ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက်	Burmese
8	①Kayin People and Their Chronicle of Buddhist Culture ②kayin lumyôu hnîn bou'dà yincêhmu yazawin acînjou' ③ကရင်လူမျိုးနှင့်ဗုဒ္ဓယဉ်ကျေးမှုရာဇဝင်အကျဉ်းချုပ်	Pyinnya Thuta, U ပညာသုတ ၊ ဦး	A	Dec 21, 1961 ၁၃၂၃ နတ်တော်လဆန်း (၁၃)ရက်	Rangoon/Miba Mitta Shwezi မိဘမေတ္တာရွှေဆိပ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက် (ပုသိမ်ခရိုင် ကံကြီးဒေါင့်မြို့ သီရိမင်္ဂလာရာမကျောင်းတိုက် Near Bassein)	Burmese
9	①Kayin Chronicle ②kayin yazawin ③ကရင်ရာဇဝင် ④A History of the Karen	Thuweizadara, Ashin သုဝိဇ္ဇာဓရ ၊ အရှင်	B	Dec 1963? Jan 1964? ၁၃၂၆ သီတင်းကျွတ်လ	Rangoon/Tetluge Sape တက်လူ့ငယ်စာပေ ခေတ္တကွမ်းခြံကုန်းမြို့နယ် ၊ တောင်ကျောင်းကျေးရွာ ၊ ရွှေသယ်နီးပူကျောင်း (near Dedaye)	Burmese
10	①Kayin Chronicle ②kayin yazawin ③ကရင်ရာဇဝင်	Pyinnya, U ပညာ ၊ ဦး	A - 2nd ed.	Feb 1965 ၁၈–ကြိမ် ပြည်ထောင်စုနေ့	Rangoon/Zwe Sape ဖွဲ–စာပေရိပ်မြို့	Burmese
11	①The Roots of the Karen ②kayin î mulàzi'myi' ③ကရင်၏မူလဇစ်မြစ် ပထမပိုင်း ④The Roots of the Karen, Part 1	Paw, Thra Saw ဖေါ ၊ သရာစော	C	Jan 14, 1983 ၂၇၂၂ ကရင်အမျိုးသား နှစ်သစ်ကူးပွဲ တော်နေ့	Rangoon/Karen New Year Committee (၂၇၂၂ ခနှစ် ကရင်အမျိုးသားနှစ်သစ်ကူး ပွဲတော်ကျင်းပရေးဗဟိုကော်မတီ)	Burmese
12	②Slapatthutalinga ③သူပတ်သုတလက်ာ	Parama, U ပရမ ၊ ဦး	A?- 2nd ed.	2002	Rangoon/n.p. မြို့မိတ်ပုံနှိပ်တိုက် (Paan, Thaton Dist.)	Eastern Pwo, Burmese

tocopied and typed reproductions of Saw Aung Hla's work also circulated without legal authorization from the Burmese government both inside and outside Burma, especially in the Burma-Thai border area.

We may summarize that three versions of Karen history have been published in Burma and that all the first editions appeared between 1929 and 1939, virtually the last decade of British rule. Little scholarly reference or analysis has been made of these publications. Koenig merely mentioned the title of U Pyinnya's work in a footnote (Koenig 1990, 267). Than Tun completely rejected U Saw's history (Than Tun 2001, 76) and Renard thought little of Saw Aung Hla's historical account (Renard 1980, 42). These Karen accounts may not be reliable if one seeks a Karen history based on "historical facts." They are, however, significant because they were the first historical narratives and ethnic self-assertions made by the Karen themselves. Therefore one should question why all the first versions of these three lineages were published within such a short period of time, what historiographies they represented, and what conditions and motives made these publications possible. Before examining U Pyinnya's and U Saw's works, we need to look at the general state of affairs of Buddhism among the Karen in colonial times to situate the two books in the Buddhist context.

Two Kinds of Buddhism

Two theories exist regarding the origins of Buddhism among the Karen. One looks to the Buddhistic elements of the various cult movements that sprang up in the area stretching from the Yunsalin River valley to the Paan plain in southeastern Burma. The other turns to the Karen Buddhism based in the Paan area, which had a close relationship with the Buddhist orthodoxy centered in Ava and Mandalay, the royal capitals of the Burmese-speaking world, and their vicinities.

The earliest Baptist missionaries, such as Judson, Boardman, Wade, and Mason, encountered a number of religious movements during the course of their missionary work. Judson reported in his letter to the headquarters in America that the Karen in the Yunsalin valley had begged the missionaries for Christian preaching. They had a leader called "Areemady" with apparently Buddhistic features. In 1856, after the Second Anglo-Burmese War, the colonial army suppressed the "revolt" led by a *minlaung*, a pretender to the throne. These millenarian Buddhisitic aspects among the Karen were transformed and inherited by cults such as Leke (formed at Hnitkya village in Paan in 1860), Telakon (founded at almost the same time in Gyaing), Phu Paik San (1866), and others.[7)]

7) Leke and Telakon have been active in the same region of activity as "Karen Buddhism." The complexity of religious affairs in the Paan plain since the nineteenth century requires further study.

The other stream of Karen Buddhism can be grasped in its relationship with the orthodox Buddhism of the Burmese world. It is a common notion that the heart of Karen Buddhism is situated in the Paan area, and the origin of this ethnically defined Karen Buddhism is often ascribed to Phu Ta Maik, a legendary Pwo Karen monk of the eighteenth century said to have created the Pwo Karen monastic script.[8] This script had spread by the second half of the nineteenth century, and the Yetagun monastery, which was established in 1850 on the summit of the Karen holy mountain of Zwekapin, became the center of its propagation. Hpoun Myint studied Pwo Karen *parabaiks* (folded palm leaf manuscripts) in the late 1960s and collected 75 *parabaiks* dating from 1851. Of these, 52 are categorized as translations of Buddhist scriptures and commentaries, and 25 as astrology, tales, and history; 36 were translated from the Mon language, 21 from Burmese, and 4 from Pali sources.

Although Phu Ta Maik legends are related in the language of (Pwo) Karen nationalism, actual Buddhist writings in the Pwo script barely convey Karen nationalistic aspirations. This could lead us to suppose that the Pwo Karen script was in fact created to connect Pwo Karen speakers of the day with the more universal sphere of Buddhism, the texts of which were written and expressed in the Burmese language.

U Pyinnya and U Saw's Karen histories are situated in the context of the second stream of Karen Buddhism mentioned above. This is particularly true for U Pyinnya, who lived in the city of Thaton, one of the entrances to the Paan plain, and who made frequent visits there.

III Authors

The backgrounds of the two Buddhist Karen histories should first be examined. What was the relationship of the authors to Karen Buddhism? What kind of bibliographies and styles did they refer to in writing the history of their people?

U Pyinnya

Little is known about U Pyinnya except that he was a Buddhist, probably born in the 1860s,[9]

8) From a linguistic point of view, the Pwo Karen monastic script is strongly influenced by the Mon script, and is thought "to have been invented by the Mon monk who used to preach to eastern Pwo speakers, or by the eastern Pwo monk who studied the Mon language" (Yabu 2001a, 253). The Karen have other major scripts such as the Sgaw Karen mission script by J. Wade, the Pwo Karen mission script also by J. Wade, and the Sgaw Karen monastic script.

9) U Pyinnya states that in 1908 he went to Myohaung to visit a residing monk of Shan ethnicity, who was his childhood friend.

lived in Thaton and that he was relatively famous as a writer when he wrote *Kayin Chronicle*. He also published *Thaton Chronicle Collected and Abridged* (1926), based on Mon chronicles, and *A History of Shwemawdaw Pagoda*, a famous stupa in Thaton.[10] U Pyinnya's real name was U Myat Maung and he called himself Thaton U Myat Maung in a newspaper article (Thaton U Myat Maung 1929). It has always been common practice in Burma for minority people to adopt Burmese names and U Pyinnya seems to have belonged to one of the linguistic subgroups of the Karen—the Pwo, Sgaw, Pao, or others. "Pyinnya" means knowledge in Pali and is also quite a common name for a Buddhist monk. He was not, however, a monk when the book was published. The Pao people have a custom of keeping monkhood names even after they return to secular life. Therefore, U Pyinnya might have been a Pao.

The city of Thaton is located southeast of Yangon and was once a royal capital of the Mon kingdom. It is said that the region was the most prosperous Theravada land until the invasion by King Anawyatha of the Pagan dynasty in 1057. Mon Buddhism also occupies an important place in the history of Burmese Buddhism, one that precedes the Burman influence. Thaton is a city of Pao people, who can be found in the southern Shan States in the north, and in the Thaton area in the south. Most of the population (about 223,000 in the 1931 census) are Buddhist and have close relationships with the Mon, Pwo, and Sgaw Karen of the land. Based on linguistic similarity, the Pao have been grouped with the Sgaw and Pwo in social statistics. In the independence negotiation period, U Hla Pe, a famous Pao politician native to Thaton, was appointed vice-president of the newly born Karen National Union (KNU) in 1947 and he claimed that the Pao are one of the Karen groups.

U Pyinnya's principal source was a legendary "document of Kayin Yazawin written in the Pao language."[11] In 1908, when U Pyinnya visited a childhood friend of Shan origin, who was then a priest in the village monastery at Myohaung, near Kawkareik, he came across the document in the form of a folded *parabaik* made of Maingkhaing paper.[12] With the help of a Pao layman and others, including a friend who was proficient in Pali, Kayin, Shan, Mon, and Burmese, the document was translated into Burmese in three days. This episode shows that around the Thaton area in those days, the Pao were seen as a people so close to the Kayin that there was nothing strange about Kayin history being

10) Bibliographical details are not known.
11) No bibliographical information is available as this document is thought to have been "lost" since U Pyinnya's time.
12) The Maingkhaing brand of paper of the Shan State seems to have already been established by the 1920s. Paper was preferred to palm leaves in the Shan States in the nineteenth century (Iijima 2004, 119–120; 2007, 96).

written in the Pao language. Other references for U Pyinnya's book included Burmese written chronicles such as *Hmannan Yazawin* [Glass Palace Chronicle], Mon chronicles, and other scriptures translated from Mon.

As such, U Pyinnya's *Kayin Chronicle* is set mainly in the Paan region. Paan is, in short, where the original "document of Kayin Yazawin in Pao" was discovered, where Phu Ta Maik invented the Pao script, where numerous Pwo Buddhist scriptures were produced, and the home of Karen Buddhism. More importantly, eastern Karen, who surely inspired U Pyinnya's Karen history, interacted closely with other peoples like the Pao, Mon, Burman, Shan, and others, which provided U Pyinnya with abundant resources in writing his version of Kayin history.

U Saw

Biographical information on U Saw is similarly limited. On the cover of his book, it is stated that he was a Pali translator in the translation section of the Secretariat. However, his name is not in any of the volumes of the Civil List of Burma (Government of Burma 1930, etc.), so he might have been a non-gazetted officer. His dates of birth and death are unknown, but his middle-aged appearance in the photograph on the first page—if taken at the time of publication—gives us a hint that he may have been born between the late 1870s and early 1890s.

U Saw referred to the same major bibliographies as U Pyinnya, that is, the chronicles and pagoda histories in the Burman, Mon, and Shan scripts; scriptures; birth tales of Buddha; proverbs; and folklore. What is unusual is that U Saw also consulted a wide range of other sources such as "ancient manuscripts and scripts in India," "Greek and Italian classics,"[13] and contemporary publications of Indian history by Indian and Western authors. This shows that, as a native officer in the huge government organization of colonial Burma, he was exposed to a variety of data collected and brought to Burma by the British rulers. However, he seems not to have known about U Pyinnya's publication in October 1929, writing in the preface that, "It is surprising that no [Karen] chronicles have ever been published" (U Saw 1931, 1).

In U Saw's case, drawing on a multitude of sources for reconstructing Karen history imparted an unfocused and monotonous quality to his writing. This is especially striking when compared to U Pyinnya's lively, diversified, and elaborate version of Karen history. This difference stems evidently from U Pyinnya's use of the Pao-written Kayin chronicle. This begs the question why U Saw did not make use of this reference as well. This is because the Karen in the west, where U Saw came from, had fewer written resources

13) References to these "Greek and Italian classics" cannot, however, be found in U Saw's text.

containing historical memories than the eastern Karen. Even today, from the center of so-called Karen Buddhism in the Paan region, the western land is viewed as "a frontier where Karen Buddhist culture has rarely flourished" (Interview with Hsayadaw Pt, a Karen monk, in the Paan region in 2003).

If U Saw could not draw upon such unique sources as U Pyinnya, why did he not make use of the abundant materials of the Christian Karen, which were within easy reach of a civil servant like himself? He must have had access to the library of the Secretariat, the Government Book Depot on Judah Ezikiel Street, or the Bernard Free Library, which was reputed to have a Pali collection in its inventory. If he also had a good command of the English language, Lowis' *The Tribes of Burma* (1919) and Scott and Hardiman's *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States* (1900), and piles of other gazetteers should have been accessible. In addition, there was also a large amount of Baptist materials dealing with the Karen. He could have sieved through the Christian touches and added Buddhist flavors to those materials, just as Saw Aung Hla did. Why did he, as well as U Pyinnya, neglect Christian sources and use only Buddhist writings?

Modes of Historiography

There are two major modes of historical narratives in early twentieth-century Burma. One is *Thamaing* (thàmâin), a type of account of Buddhist history that has actually become a general term meaning history. The other is *Yazawin* (yazawin), a mode of historical narrative with the king as its sovereign being. Both U Pyinnya and U Saw were familiar with these two types of historical narratives and made use of Buddhist scriptures, their commentaries, and various chronicles in Burmese and Mon. Moreover, the titles of their works contained the term "*Yazawin*."

"*Yazawin*" is a term originating from the Pali words "raja" (rāja, king) and "vamsa" (vaṃsa, history), and is usually translated as "chronicle." Among the chronicles written in Burmese, the oldest is *Yazawin Gyaw*, which appeared in 1502. Since then, more than 20 versions, including *Toungoo Yazawin* (sixteenth century), *Maha Yazawin* (1724), *Maha Yazawin thi'* (1798), *Hmannan Yazawin* (1832), and *Konbaung Set Maha Yazawin-doji* (1905) have been compiled. Those chronicles are characterized by Buddhist ideas of time, space, and cosmology; frequent reference to commentaries of scriptures; and above all, descriptions of royal achievements of *min*s (mîn), or kings of the dynasty. The *min*s' ancestors are always the Shakya tribe of Buddha and Maha Thamada, the first worldly king of human beings. "The kings were the only subject dealt with in the Yazawin and others simply play supporting roles" (Ohno 1987, 19–20). *Min*s are definitely the sovereign being in the authorized version of *Yazawin*. *Yazawin* were therefore historical accounts recognizing the achievements of kings and dynasties and legitimizing their rules.

Both U Pyinnya and U Saw adopted the *Yazawin* style for their historical narratives of the Karen people. This leads us to question the meaning of history writing. When they published the two Karen *Yazawin*, kingship had already been extinguished with the conquest of the Kongbaung Dynasty by the British. Why did U Pyinnya and U Saw embrace the style of the royal narrative after the extinction of the dynasties? What did they intend to convey in composing a dynastical history of the Karen, who have ordinarily been considered a people without such a dynastic past? Moreover, why did they employ the Burmese language, not Karen, for their own history?

IV Histories

The texts by U Pyinnya and U Saw, as well as Saw Aung Hla, are full of stories never told to readers outside Burma; scholars have therefore not taken them seriously (for instance, Than Tun 2001, 76). It is generally considered that the history of the Karen people before the nineteenth century is fragmented because they lacked written sources of their own and the Burmese-speaking dynasty in upper Burma did not make much mention of the Karen. The "Kayin yazawin document in the Pao language" that forms the basis of U Pyinnya's vivid and detailed text has never been found by local researchers, and events in Pgakanyaw dynasties were thought to have concerned the other ethnic peoples. It is therefore very easy to dismiss these texts as spurious.

However, U Pyinnya said he spent more than 20 years on his work and Saw Aung Hla at least 7 years. If you ask any old Karen informant about the history of his people, you will surely be offered one of these three texts. These Karen history books contain some sort of ethnic aspiration shared by the people who claim to be Karen, which the authors channeled in their books. Expressed, for example, is the ideal and idealized image of the Karen's relationships with other peoples in the Burma region. Such images can be interpreted as the desires of the authors generated from negotiations in the society in which they lived. What is more, the authors were motivated enough to publicize their desires, and the first editions of the three books were all published between 1929 and 1939, which is, in a sense, a very short period of time. What were the social conditions that enabled and encouraged the authors to venture into the demanding labors of publication?

Let us begin with the authors' desires, which are expressed in images of the Karen. I will attempt to outline the contents of the two Buddhist versions of Karen history, which were hitherto unknown to the world outside Burma. The authors' desires are to be found in the details of their histories, which were described in close connection with Burman

dynastic history. They are embarrassingly detailed, subtle, and almost meaningless to outsiders, but readers should by the end be able to discern the indispensable elements of ethnicity, religion, and kingship lying behind these versions of Karen history.

Kayin Chronicle (1929)

U Pyinnya's *Kayin Chronicle* is composed of 3 parts and 77 sections.[14] The first part deals with the creation of the world, the 101 *lumyo*s (lumyôu) or people who lived there, an outline of Shan Kayin history, and the first royal lineage of the Mon Kayin (Zweya dynasty). The second part focuses on the second lineage of the Mon Kayin (Pa'awana dynasty), and the last part the history of Myanmar Kayin. U Pyinnya states that the Kayin people are divided into three subgroups, each prefixed with the name of other major peoples of Burma—the Shan, Mon, and Burman—and even claims that each Kayin originated from the people in question, and that in the beginning all the people of Burma had a single ancestry called the Byama (Brahman) *lumyo*.[15]

Dovetailing with this explanation is U Pyinnya's interesting etymology of the Kayin. He begins with the word "Kayin," which is supposed to be a Burmese word indicating Karen, not with Pgakanyaw in Sgaw or Phlong in Pwo, and outlines three theories regarding its etymology. The most elaborate one is that it derived from Karannaka, an old name for Thuwannabumi, the ancient capital of the legendary Mon kingdom. Those who lived in the plain of Karannaka became Mon, and those who dwelt in the forest became Kayin.[16]

Two lineages of the Mon Kayin dynasties, whose homeland is in the ancient Mon kingdom called Ramanya, are at the heart of U Pyinnya's history. Thaton has existed since the beginning of the world and was called Karannaka until 50 years before the birth of Buddha. The Zweya dynasty has its origin in the guardian town established by Teithatheika, king of the Mon after he drove out the rival state of Yodaya[17] in the east. A seven-month-long banquet was held at the military base set at the entrance of the only pass between the Mon kingdom and Yodaya. At the end of this feast, the king appointed a Kayin as general of the guard. This Kayin, named *Einda*, was well-known among the Lawa, Loe, Mon, and Kayin of the land, and was given five kinds of regalia, 100,000

14) There is some confusion in the numbering of the chapters and sections. U Pyinnya's book has in fact 70 sections.

15) Though it has gone out of fashion, the Sgaw are still sometimes called Myanmar (Bama) Kayin, and the Pwo, Mon (Talaing) Kayin in colloquial Burmese. However, the Karenni or Kayah, who have intimate historical relations with the Shans, are never referred to as Shan Kayin.

16) Karan and Kayin: the "r" and "y" sounds are interchangeable in Burmese.

17) Yodaya means Thailand or the Thai people in modern Burmese. Yodaya is not considered to be ancient, as described here, in the general understanding of Thai history.

Table 2 Karen Subgroups by U Pyinnya

	Category / Other names		Habitation	Origin
(1) Kayin ni (Red Karen)				
① Shan Kayin [shân kayin]	・Ngweitaung [ngweitaun] ・Naungpale [naunpùlê] ・Kyetbogyi [ce'bôujî] ・Kyetbokale [ce'bòukâle] ・Lweko [lweko]		Shan Country	Shan Lumyo
(2) Kayin hpyu (White Karen) or Kayin lemê (Black Neck Karen)				
	Hill Kayin [taunbô kayin]			
	Western Hill Kayin [ànau' taunbô kayin]	Eastern Hill Kayin [àshè taunbô kayin]	Plains Kayin [kwîn kayin]	
② Myanmar (Bama) Kayin [myanma (bàma) kayin]	"Savage Kayin" [àyâin kayin] ・Shaung [shaun] ・Pgakanyaw [pwakànyo] ・Bama Kayin [bàma kayin]		Hpathi Bama Kayin [hpàhtî bàma kayin] ・Yabein [yàbêin] ・Zabein [zàbêin] ・Kwe Kayin [kwè kayin]	West: From the west bank of the Irrawaddy river to Sandoway, 7 districts. East: The vicinity of the Toungoo Hills	Myanmar Lumyo
③ Talaing (Mon) Kayin [tàlain (mwûn) kayin]	"Civilized Kayin" [àyin kayin] ・Hahpaloung [hàhpàloun] ・Pwapo [pwapo] ・Talaing Kayin [tàlain kayin]		Mothi Talaing Kayin [môuhtî tàlain kayin]	Ramanya Country	Talaing Lumyo

Source: Pyinnya (1929, 14–17)

soldiers, power of taxation, the fiefdom of Zweya Myo, and the title of *Saw Banya Einda Thena Yaza*. Zweya Myo became independent together with six of the subordinated *myo*s,[18] Myawaddy, Mekalaung, Kyaik, Taungbaw, Paung, and Doungmwe, after the death of King Teithatheika. Subsequently each of the six *myo*s also obtained independence. Mekalaung and Doungmwe, the most easterly located, were later annexed by Yodaya. The author gives detailed descriptions of the origin and the rulers (*myosa*) of the other four *myo*s and Zweya, including 2 rulers in Myawaddy, 9 in Paung, 11 in Kyaik and 28 in Zweya. At the end of Part I, there is a section titled "Lesson," which briefly explains that the Zweya dynasty subsequently endured as part of the Myanmar dynasty and was incorporated into the British Empire through the 1825, 1852, and 1885 wars.

The history of the Pa'awana dynasty of the Mon Kayin is told in Part II. Pa'awana is the name of a forest at the foot of Zwekapin, which has existed for a long time, predating even Buddha's birth. In this forest there lived a hunter called Laswe, who presented game from the woods to the Mon king Teithatheika when he successfully defended the kingdom from the invasion of Yodaya. The king was so pleased that he offered the same rewards to Laswe as he did to Einda, and permitted him to clear the Pa'awana forest and

18) A *myo* was originally a fortified town or city, or simply a city or a town.

found a *myo*, or capital city. U Pyinnya insists that the history of the Pa'awana Myo began 14 years prior to Buddha's enlightenment and lasted until the reign of King Manuhari in the twelfth century. What is outstanding in the history of Pa'awana is the existence of Zwekapin, the Kayin holy mountain, and that the historical account of the pagoda on the top of Zwekapin includes Buddha's visit during the reign of Laswe.

The Pa'wana Myo was also independent with five surrounding *myo*s after the same Mon king passed away, and soon these *myo*s—Kyaing, Takyaing, Hlaingbwe, Kazaing, and Takwebo—also gained independence. Lists of the rulers of each *myo* are attached. There were 13 in Takyaing, 13 in Kyaing, and 7 in Kazaing, but that of Hlaingbwe is missing because of "damage to the pages in the original Kayin Chronicles in the Pao language."

Apart from these two lineages of the Mon Kayin, U Pyinnya also relates the history of the Shan Kayin and Myanmar Kayin based on the *Hmannan Yazawin* and other Burmese and Mon chronicles. Events related in the Myanmar Kayin section evidently correspond with Hanthawaddy history, including the famous story of Kwe Kayin, which U Pyinnya claims to have been Myanmar Kayin. When the Guardian General of the Hanthawaddy was assassinated, there emerged a *minlaung* among the Kwe Kayin. He was accepted by the people and succeeded the throne. He was called *Hsinkyashin*, or "Possessor of Tiger and Elephant." The description of the Shan and Myanmar Kayin and that of the Mon Kayin occur at different times. Whereas the former two Kayin histories are as recent as the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, the latter begins with the time of Buddha's birth and its heyday is illustrated up to the fall of the Mon kingdom in the eleventh or twelfth century. This information is apparently drawn from the references U Pyinnya made use of.

Kuyin Great Chronicle (1931)

U Saw's book contains 16 chapters with a short introduction and conclusion. The author presents his vision of history from the creation of the world, the rise and fall of the people in India, which is the homeland of all *lumyo*s in Burma, to migration to Burmese soil. In contrast to U Pyinnya, U Saw's historical construction does not follow a time line and is sometimes confusing. Moreover, he does not focus solely on Kuyin history but tends to dwell on pre-history before the migration to Burma.

Chapter 1 is entitled "On the foundation of the countries outside the Zabudeik Island (zanbudei' cwûn)" and elaborates on the origin of the world and the beginning of the worldly nations, concentrating on Myanmar and Mon countries. Among these stories of the time before the departure to Burma (Saw 1931, Chapter 4-A), that of King Inkura is important. Inkura hailed from a kingdom on the Ganges River and is considered the

ancestor of the Kuyin people. He arrived at the central plain of Myanmar and sailed down the Irrawaddy River to Dagon (dàgoun), where he established a *myo* called Athitinzana (àthìtinzànà). This *myo* later developed into the capital of the Ramanya country. This is usually considered to be an ancient name for the Mon kingdom, but U Saw insists that it was in fact a Kuyin name (*ibid.*, 38–39).

In Chapter 5, U Saw argues that the Kuyin (ကုရင်) name originated from King Inkura (အင်္ကာ), the first syllable (အင်) having been omitted. Thus it should be spelt as Kuyin with a *tachaungngin* (ု) "u" sound, and not the usual Kayin (ကရင်).[19] Despite their noble origins, the Kuyin gradually came to be seen as a savage and uncivilized *lumyo* as they declined contact with peoples of bad habits and retired to the mountains (*ibid.*, 46).

From Chapters 6–10, despite several references in the titles of some chapters, U Saw barely touches upon the Kuyin themselves, but provides ancient historical accounts of Shakya tribes and others.

In Chapter 11, U Saw turns his attention somewhat to the Kuyin. According to an explanation in a Mon chronicle, Mon living in the *myo*s called the people living in the forests and mountains *kari*, which later transformed into Kuyin *lumyo* (*ibid*., 99). Later in the same chapter, U Saw locates the remote ancestor of Kuyin in the Shakya lineage, which in time developed into the three states of Dewadaha, Koliya, and Kapila. After the fall of these states, the people migrated to Burma and were divided into three peoples known as Pyu, Kan'yan, and Thet. And it is from the Kan'yan that the Kuyin descends. However, U Saw does not give a consistent explanation of how Kolia and Kan'yan relate to Inkura.

Again, from Chapters 12–15, in spite of mentioning the Kuyin in some of the titles, U Saw gives no further accounts but simply repeats similar descriptions. When the author finally reaches the history of the Kuyin in the last chapter, entitled "To show how Kuyin *lumyo*s spread throughout the Myanmar country based on other prominent Hsayadaw's opinions," he reiterates the process of migration and promises to deliver the details in a second volume of the chronicle (*ibid.*, 183), but this did not materialize. Listing the dynasties and kingdoms that flourished in Burmese history, U Saw emphasizes that "there is no denying that within any of these big countries, any of the states under the umbrella of the kings, any *myo*s, any *ywa*s [villages], Kuyin *lumyo*s can be found as

19) However, Kuyin (ကုရင်) is thought to have been pronounced Kayin (ကရင်). It would remind any Burmese speaker of the word "*kùla*" (ကုလား), meaning Indian or foreigner. It is also pronounced *kala* despite its spelling with a "u" sound. This hints at why U Saw persisted in this spelling: he put much emphasis on representations of India, being the cradle of Buddhism and all the *lumyo*s of Myanmar. This therefore serves as a device to link the Karen with an authoritative representation of India.

offspring of the Koliya king's lineage. As Koliya-Shakya descendants, they have lived in the whole country, including islands, *kain* land [sandbank of rivers], and valleys" (*ibid.*, 184). He concludes his book by claiming that the Kuyin is a *lumyo* faithful to Buddha's teachings, and though they have been seen as a savage *lumyo* because they avoided contact with other *lumyo*s, they are no less excellent Buddhists than others.

Focuses

U Pyinnya and U Saw, in a sense, carved out what the Karen should be, rather than what they were, particularly in terms of their relationships with other Buddhist *lumyo*s and their dynastic pasts.

The Kayin people in U Pyinnya's *Kayin Chronicle* share the same ancestry as the Mon, Burman, and Shan, maintaining a firm belief in Buddhism and their own kingships since the very beginning. The three major subgroups of Karen—the Mon Kayin, Myanmar Kayin, and Shan Kayin—have their immediate origins in the people with whom their names have been associated, but the Mon are the most intimate with the Kayin as the word Kayin is etymologically ascribed to a Mon term, and historically they have close relations. Accounts of the Mon Kayin lineage are, consequently, the main concern of U Pyinnya.

U Saw's Kuyin are, on the other hand, not necessarily familiar with the Mon, but do share a single origin with other peoples in Burma. The Koliya people of ancient India were their lineal ancestors, going back to the Shakya tribe of Buddha. Upon reaching Burmese soil, the Koliya split into the three legendary peoples of Phyu, Kan'yan, and Thet. The Kan'yan were Kuyin and their name was inherited from Inkura, an ancient Indian king. Most of the elements in U Saw's Kuyin history derive from authoritative representations of India, the land of Buddha, and his version present the peoples in Burma as being ruled by faithful kings.

The Kayin and Kuyin as described by these two Buddhist authors are more distinctively characterized as compared to that of *A History of the Pgakanyaw* by Saw Aung Hla. This Christian author's focus is the narration of the Pgakanyaw's struggle against persistent Buddhist integration. He describes the Pgakanyaw as a lost tribe of Israelites and one of the earliest settlers of the uninhabited ancient Burma after having endured a long journey away from their biblical home. They possessed a unique language, script, culture, and kingship, and managed for many centuries to hold on to a monotheistic faith, which was to be later fulfilled as Christianity. They ran their own kingdoms, warded off severe oppression by the Mon and Burman, endured continuous pressures of forced conversion to Buddhism, and finally restored the glory of their people during the British colonial period.

These three Karen histories are similar in that they narrate the story of an ethnic

and sovereign people called Kayin, Kuyin, or Pgakanyaw, maintaining unique kingships based on a religion that embodies the principles of their respective worlds. In short, they have the indispensable elements of people or ethnicity, kingship, and religion. Naturally, people, or *lumyo*, are central to their narration because these are texts on the history of the Karen people. But the term "Karen people" is relatively new in the historiography of Burma, so careful consideration is required in this regard.

Having laid out the motivations and assertions of the authors, the logical structure with which they attempted to persuade readers is to be examined next. In order to present a convincing case that the Kayin/Kuyin are a legitimate *lumyo* in Burma, the authors had to employ a reason and logic acceptable to Burmese-speaking Buddhist readers. Therefore we should turn our attention to how the Kayin/Kuyin are embedded in this world accorded to the understandings regarding people (*lumyo*), kingship, and religion.

V Logic

What we are interested in here is not the structure or appearance of the worlds in which the Kayin and Kuyin were situated, but the existing concepts of people (or ethnicity), kingship, and religion that sustained the Kayin or Kuyin within these worlds.

In U Pyinnya and U Saw's histories, people (ethnicity) appeared as *lumyo* (lumyôu), meaning "human kind/seed," king as *min* (mîn), and royal lineage as *minzet* (mînze'), *minnwe* (mînnwe), and *nan-yo* (nân yô). It is, however, very difficult to find words referring to religion or Buddhism in their books. This is clearly different from Saw Aung Hla's Christian version of Karen history. Christianity is his preoccupation and is constantly evoked as *kharit ata bhutabhaa* (khari'L ataLbhuFtaLbhaa), whereas Buddhism is termed *so kotama bhuda ata bhutabhaa* (sô kôtama'Mbhu'Mda'M ataLbhuFtaLbhaa) or simply *bhuda ata bhaa* (taLbhuFtaLbhaa). Buddhism is described as a totally foreign religion to the Pgakanyaw people, forced on them by the Burman and the Mon. It is therefore elaborately and repeatedly examined and placed in the same category of *tabhutabhaa* (religion) as his own Christianity.

Thus far I have called somewhat carelessly U Pyinnya and U Saw's representation of religion "Buddhism," but in fact the word scarcely appears in either of the texts. Practically the only time the word appears is when the authors refer to Christianity. Not coincidentally these passages also contain the authors' assertion of the Kayin/Kuyin as an indispensable *lumyo* with a past history of kingship. We could infer that it is this "otherness" of Christianity that brings out, by contrast, the norms and worldviews of the Kayin/Kuyin.

U Pyinnya's Kayin

As shown above, the Kayin in U Pyinnya's history are a *lumyo* that share a single ancestor with the Mon, Burman, and Shan, and who have been devoted believers of Buddha's lessons since the beginning. U Pyinnya highlights in particular their relation with the Mon *lumyo*. Each *lumyo* has virtuous kings (*min*). U Pyinnya sought to prove that the Kayin were an authentic *lumyo* with a dynastic lineage of their own *min*, and faithful to their religious order. We need to take a closer look at this *lumyo*=*min*= religion scheme, examining in particular the paragraphs from section 72 at the end of Part II, entitled "Special Note," which summarizes U Pyinnya's ideas about the two lineages of Mon Kayin histories. Interestingly it is almost the only part that mentions Christianity.[20)]

He expounds his version of the history of *lumyo*. At the beginning, every *lumyo* had its own virtuous rulers and were self-governing, but influential *lumyo* with able rulers like the Burman gradually became dominant over other *lumyo* such as the Mon and Kayin. In the end, however, all these *lumyo*s in Burma were conquered by "diligent, wise" and "greedy" Europeans. U Pyinnya continues:

> Not a long time ago, there appeared "a Kayin script" invented by wise Christian (khari'yan badha) missionaries (thathana pyù dò). In this way, our unique literature and original knowledge were long lost, our learning tradition (athin acâ) also disappeared . . . so scriptures (sape pariya'), as well as old records such as chronicles (mînze' yazawin), tales (pounpyin), Buddha's birth stories (niba'), poems (gabya) and verses (linga) were gone. This has made people think that the Kayin people did not actually have their own scripts. Not knowing old books, knowledge, or chronicles . . . people have come to say that the Kayin didn't have their own kings in the past. Although it was said that the Scriptures were lost together with the preaching of Buddha (thahtana-do), precious words of the scriptures . . . were written on golden leaves and kept in the hands of *Alawaka*.[21)] Similarly, inscriptions, old records, or other books of chronicles and biography regarding Kayin kings must have been kept somewhere. As a matter of fact, this Kayin Chronicle you are now reading was restored from an old document written in the Pao-Taungthu language . . . .
>
> If there had been no "old documents of the Kayin chronicles" and no Kayin kings, it would be tantamount to saying that the people of Buddha (payâ lumyôu) are not Buddhist, that people of *arhan* (yàhanda lumyôu) are not *arhan*, or even that any people (lumyôu) are not human (lu). If one is trained enough to attain *paramita* to be a man of Buddha, or a man of *arhan*, then he is a man of Buddha or *arhan*. How on earth has the Kayin *lumyo* been able to survive without their own kings (mîn)? (Pyinnya 1929, 140–143)

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20) The other reference to Christianity occurs when U Pyinnya explains *ywun*, the olden name of the Thai people who lived in the eastern region of the Mon Kayin area, previously called *gyun*. He uses the English word "JESUS CHRIST" as an example: "It is transliterated as *ye su'-khari'* in Burmese"; The "y" sound in *ye su'* is interchangeable with the "j" (gy) sound in JESUS (Pyinnya 1929, 30).

21) *Alawaka* is *rāksasa* or a devil conquered by Buddha.

In this way, in summing up the most important part of the Mon Kayin chronicles, U Pyinnya argues for the lost Kayin literature and claims the unquestionable existence of Kayin kings in the past. Most interestingly, it can be inferred that U Pyinnya intentionally avoided writing about Christianity. On the contrary, he calls his own religion *thathana* and never uses the word *bouda batha* (Buddhism).[22] Secondly, the fundamental human unit in his world is the *lumyo*. It has, or should have, its own lineage of kingship as well as a unique written scripture (*batha sa*), literature (*sape*), and tradition of scholarship (*athin aca*). It is the *lumyo*, and not the *min*, that is the subject of his text.

These observations provoke further questions, which are similar to those raised by U Saw's text. Let us then first proceed to examine U Saw's history.

U Saw's Kuyin

U Saw's only reference to Christianity appears in Chapter 11: "To cite and show the assertion made by Hsayadaws of Mon Yazawin." This is located after the "Note (hma'hce')" section and is entitled "Special Note (ahtû hma'yan)." There are numbered "Notes (hma'hce' or hma'yan)" in U Saw's work making up for the shortage of descriptions or summarizing each section, but this is the only place where a "Special Note" appears, demonstrating U Saw's emphasis.

Prior to this "Special Note" section, U Saw summarizes again that the Koliya *lumyo* of India split into three ancient *lumyo*s after arriving in Burma. He then suddenly touches upon religion (*badha*) among the Kuyin:

> Special Note: In Myanmar country, there are many Kuyin *lumyo*s and two religious Kuyins—Buddhist Kuyin (bou'dà badha kùyin) and Christian Kuyin (khari'yan kùyin)—can be found among them. Now, let us put aside the Christian Kuyin for the time being[23] and think about the past, present, and future of the Buddhist Kuyin, and we will see the truth as found in the saying "the flow of a river may become choked with sand, but the flow of a people (lumyôu luyôu) can never be dammed." The Kuyin *lumyo*s originate in the Shakya tribe of Buddha (thàcathakìya), and hold a legitimate lineage to the Koliya kingship. They are Buddhist people (bou'dà badha lumyôu) and the lineage of Buddhist kings (bou'dà badha mîn nwe) and now attain the name of Kan'yan. However, the blood of Shakya never extinguishes, but is inherited from generation to generation and the genealogy of our people (amyôu anwe) will never cease. (Saw 1931, 106)

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22) It is likely that before the eighteenth century, the term *batha* in Burmese did not carry the meaning of "*religion*." *Batha* derives from the Pali word *bhāsā*, which means "speech, language" (Childers 1909, 83). All other words derived from this Pali word such as *phaasăa* in Thai, *bahasa* in Malay, and *basha* in Nepali are not associated with "religion." Also, when appearing in chronicles, scriptures, royal orders, and announcements of an official character, the term usually does not signify Buddhism. When Buddhism is referred to from an internal perspective, the term used is always *thathana*, not *batha*. The association of "religion" with the term *batha* seems to have materialized at the end of eighteenth century or at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

23) U Saw never comes back to Christianity after putting it aside "for the time being."

U Saw next examines the *mingando*, an article (or a part of a ceremony) used in a ritual conducted for the deceased member of a royal family, which is quite identical with that "presently [at the time of U Saw's publication]" used by Kuyin *lumyo* in *ayout-kaubwe*,[24] a traditional ceremony in one of their festivals. He concludes this "Special Note" section by remarking that the Kuyin are surely from the legitimate "Koliya lineage (koliyà nân yô)" (*ibid.*).

Three aspects of the above-mentioned section should be pointed out. Firstly, while U Pyinnya describes his religion as *thathana* or *taya* and Christianity as *badha*, U Saw calls both his own religion and Christianity *badha*. However, it should be pointed out that the usage of *bouda badha* is found only in this citation, and could have been employed for the purpose of comparison with other religions. U Saw is, in general, as vague as U Pyinnya when referring to religion. Both writers knew the usage of *badha* as religion, but U Pyinnya is more cautious and never applies the word *badha* to his own religion. Secondly, the saying "the flow of a river may become choked with sand, but the flow of a people (lumyôu luyôu) can never be dammed" is also cited on the first page (*ibid.*, i) and in the second paragraph to last in the final chapter (*ibid.*, 184). It is a leitmotif of his Kuyin history, articulating his assertion that the Kuyin are an ancient people that have survived. In this respect, in a similar way to U Pyinnya's writing, the subject of every sentence is the *lumyo*. Lastly, as the Kuyin are of the Shakya lineage, they are Buddhist people (bou'dà badha lumyôu) and of the Buddhist kings' lineage (bou'dà badha mîn nwe). Symbolically, in this expression, people (lumyôu) and kingship (mîn nwe) are connected only through the concept of Buddhism (bou'dà badha).

Religion, Kingship, and Ethnicity

For both U Pyinnya and U Saw, the Kayin/Kuyin are the *lumyo* (ethnicity) that have a history of kingship (*minzet*) faithful to the Buddhist order (*thathana*). They therefore share a similar logic in the conceptual relationship between religion, kingship, and ethnicity in order for their assertion to be persuasive to Burmese readers.

Firstly, with regards to the relation between religion and ethnicity, U Pyinnya and U Saw basically ignore Christianity, but are at the same time hardly conscious of their own religion, which is discernable through such terms as *thathana* and *taya* appearing sporadically in the texts. Saw Aung Hla, on the other hand, has a totally different attitude towards his own religion and the enemy's. What he fears most is the loss of Pgakanyaw as a nation. Without putting up a fight, the Pgakanyaw might have been deprived of their unique language, script, culture, and religion by Burman and Mon Buddhists. Thus Saw

24) U Pyinnya also mentions this in his book (Pyinnya 1929, 92).

Aung Hla is keenly aware of the religious factor. In other words, U Pyinnya and U Saw's Kayin/Kuyin live in a world that is absolutely and harmoniously ruled by a single prevailing principle called *thathana*, or Buddhism. The fundamental human unit in this world is *lumyo*, but this *lumyo* has a religious limit. Even though outsiders may consider the Christian Karen as Kayin *lumyo*, for these two authors the heathen Kayin are not counted in the world of *thathana* as a member *lumyo*.

A question should arise if we pay attention to this self-other relationship defined by ethnicity and religion. During the 1920s–30s in Burma, when their works were published, it was already well known, in the countryside as well as in the city, that there were many Christian believers among the Karen. Why, then, did the authors of Buddhist Karen histories intentionally disregard the Christian Karen and try to contain their ethnic world within Buddhism? Put it another way, why did the religious fellowship with the Burman and Mon have priority over ethnic brotherhood with the Christian Karen?

The second point concerns the relationship between kingship and ethnicity. U Pyinnya's work is full of descriptions regarding the four royal lineages of the Kayin and their branches. Yet the heroes are not individual kings but the Kayin *lumyo* itself. U Pyinnya confidently proclaims, "How on earth has the Kayin *lumyo* been able to survive without its own kings?" and U Saw persistently repeats, "the flow of a river may become choked with sand, but the flow of a people (lumyôu luyôu) can never be dammed." These are ethnic historical accounts in which the ethnic people themselves are the protagonists. The concept of kingship functions only to sustain the Kayin/Kuyin as a legitimate *lumyo*, which therefore guarantees them a place as a sovereign being in their worlds.

If this is so, further questions are raised with regard to their styles of narrative. Saw Aung Hla calls his book simply "a history book (*li tacisoteso*)" while U Pyinnya and U Saw added "chronicle" (*yazawin*) to their titles. As we have seen above, *yazawin* is a style of historical account that commemorates the achievements of kings in order to legitimize their rules. How, then, should we understand the gap between the declared *yazawin* style and the actual *lumyo*-centered contents? After the British colonization and complete destruction of the Burmese dynasty, why did the authors still choose to employ the *yazawin* style? And why did they write their Karen histories in Burmese?

The last point concerns the relation between kingship and religion. This is the linkage that both authors appear to be least concerned about. U Pyinnya argues the seven ranks of the kings, with Sekkya *min*, who embodies the rule of Dhamma (truth or law of the universe), as the supreme rank (Section 58). This is only mentioned, however, because he believes that the founders of both the Pa'awana and Zweya dynasties do not fit any of these seven categories, but should be categorized as *shin-bayin*, a higher type of king than any of those seven. Although U Saw writes about "*boudha badha minnwe*

(the Buddhist kings' lineage)," this expression makes sense only when the Kuyin are made the subject of the sentences. In the end, neither book talks much about the kingship-religion linkage.

So how is it possible for a *yazawin* history not to touch upon the connection between *min* and *thathana*? Ideally the *min* was supposed to be the guardian of the Sangha, in which *thathana* was the principal order of the world. In turn the Sangha granted the title of *dhamma raja*, King of the Dhamma, to the ruler. This is a well-known relationship in Theravada societies (Ishii 2003a [1975]; Okudaira 1994, 97), but U Pyinnya and U Saw's books appear not to be concerned with this.

All the concepts and ideas examined so far have their basis in the actual history of the Burmese-speaking world. For example, *thathana* and *badha* indicate religion; *min*, *minzet*, *minnwe*, and *nan'yo* indicate kingship; *pon*, *pyinnya*, *parami*, and *tanbara* indicate virtues of kings; and *lumyo* is the unit of man, along with Kayin, Myanmar, Mon, Shan, and others.

VI Conclusion

We have examined the backgrounds of two Buddhist authors of Karen history books, their assertions, and their logic. What they tried to convey through their publications was that the Kayin/Kuyin were a fully qualified and legitimate *lumyo* in the Burmese Buddhist world. This was justified by their claim that the Kayin/Kuyin had devoted Buddhist kings from the outset, as did other *lumyo* such as the Burman and Mon. Burmese readers of Kayin/Kuyin history would be persuaded by this reasoning as it is structured using *lumyo-min-thathana* elements. This in turn raised other questions regarding the authors' neglect of the Christian Karen, the gap between their style and content, and their indifference to the traditional relationship between kingship and religion.

The next task then is to place these two texts in the historical context of the Burmese-speaking world, particularly from the Kongbaung to the early colonial period (from the middle of the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century), and study how the fundamental concepts of *lumyo*, *min*, and *thathana* were nourished in the actual historical development. Then the microscopic social context, where the historical context and the texts meet, should be closely examined. It is in this context that the authors were actually motivated to write and publish their texts. This will provide us with a vivid and concrete picture of how the Buddhist Karen-speaking population felt that they were in fact Karen.

At the turn of twentieth century, a major change took place in the Burmese-speaking

world, what can be described as an "ethnocization" of Burmese society, due largely to the extinction of Burmese (or Burman) kingship and a crisis of *thathana*. This transformation is observable in the alteration of idiom employed in the multiple waves of peasant uprisings from the end of the nineteenth century to the third decade of the twentieth century (Ito 1994; 2003; Ino 1998). At first, the peasant uprisings were aimed at the restoration of the rule of the *min* and its strong ties with *thathana*, but in the 1930s these uprisings transformed into movements for Burman *lumyo* by Burman *lumyo* with obvious "Myanmar" representations. As a result of this process, at the beginning of the twentieth century, *lumyo* became the basic unit of social composition and political organization, a fundamental measurement of thought and historical understanding, and an element deemed sovereign and indispensable in Burma. The age-old concepts of *min* and *thathana* saw their functions change when *lumyo* became more central and important to the people. Therefore, it was crucial for both U Pyinnya and U Saw to define the Kayin/Kuyin within the structure of this *lumyo=thathana=min* scheme. The next question is why they needed to emphasize Kayin/Kuyin sentiments at this particular point of time.

This was due to the social context of colonial Burma in the 1920s. In his final chapter, U Pyinnya brings up an incident involving a controversial movie and an angry exchange of letters in the Burmese newspaper of the day. A reader of the newspaper had written in to complain about a recent movie that treated the Kayin as a savage *lumyo*. This dispute lasted for half a year with 35 or so letters by Karen and Burman readers being published. Analysis of the letters shows us how the Karen were perceived as a *lumyo* in Burma at that time and how the Buddhist Karen, as a *lumyo*, began to react against Burman criticism.

A study of the contexts in which the Buddhist versions of Karen history were written allows us to grasp the earliest stage of Karen identity formation among the Buddhist section of the people. This will inevitably urge us to modify the widespread image of the Karen in general, direct our attention towards the historiographical background behind the focus on Christian Karen, and in long run, lead us to consider the process of ethnocization of Burmese society. Changes in the concepts of *lumyo, thathana*, and *min* of the Burmese-speaking world cannot, of course, be observed through the Baptist missionary reports and the British administrative documents. Not only Karen, but also the earlier stage of Burman nationalism, should be reexamined in this light.

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Religion as Non-religion: The Place of Chinese Temples in Phuket, Southern Thailand

Tatsuki Kataoka*

This paper, based on a case study of Chinese temples in Phuket, aims to demonstrate the importance of religious activities lying outside "religion" in the so-called "Buddhist" societies in Thailand, as well as to question the category of "religion" itself.

In Thailand, most of the Chinese temples (called *sanchao* in Thai) are not recognized as "religious places" by the religious administration (namely the Department of Religious Affairs), since they come under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior. In Phuket, Chinese temples as "non-religious" places (of worship?) outnumber officially recognized Buddhist temples and they offer occasions for the worship of Buddhist deities. One of the unique features of the "Buddhist" activities of the Chinese temples in Phuket is that they are conducted without monks. Because the Chinese temples are placed outside the state protection of "religion," they are not institutionalized as belonging to any state-approved religion. This is beneficial to the Chinese temples as they do not have to compete with "state Buddhism"; in such temples indiscriminate syncretic worship is also latently sanctioned. In Phuket the functions of Chinese associations and charity foundations overlap with those of the Chinese temples, challenging the definition of religion in yet another way. Our discussion leads us to conclude that all these activities lying outside of "religion" actually occupy an important part of "Buddhism" in Thailand. Thus a reconsideration of the framework of "Buddhism" and "religion" in Thailand is necessary.

Keywords: Thailand, Chinese, Chinese temples, Buddhism, religion, Phuket

I Introduction

This paper aims to reconsider discussions on "Thai Buddhism" from its margins—from the perspective of Chinese temples. One of my motivations for presenting this paper is the existing debate on Thai Buddhism and Chinese societies in Thailand. There is a well-established model for approaching Thai Buddhism—one that stresses the impor-

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tance of the Sangha and how Buddhist society maintains its equilibrium through the merit-oriented practices of laypeople, which supplement the nirvana-oriented orthodoxy by monks (Ishii 1986). This model is very clear and consistent.

Of course, Sangha-centered Buddhism officially supported by the government is only one part of real Buddhism in Thailand, and ritual practices related to spirit worship are well documented and repeatedly discussed.[1] In my paper I extend this trend of academic attention to the margins of Buddhism, to question the very categories of Buddhism and religion. I refer to Chinese temples, which are supposed to form a large part of the religious activities of statistical Buddhists in Thailand, but which are not seriously argued.

Buddhism in Thailand is always presented as if it were a cultural tradition of the Thai, or even a synonym.[2] In actual fact, the composition of "Buddhist society" is far more complex and the Theravada school is but one of the religious traditions that appear as Buddhism in statistics. The Chinese of Thailand form an inseparable part of this complexity, but unfortunately, with only a few exceptions, discussions on the Chinese and their culture in Thailand seem to have paid little attention to this issue—Buddhism as viewed from the Chinese perspective.[3]

In this paper I will first review the development of the modern category of religion and government policies toward it, and show that Chinese temples have not been included in this system. Then I will turn my attention to the findings from my case study in Phuket, one of the regional cities that have been developed mainly by Chinese immigrants. An overview of the current situation of Chinese temples in Phuket will be presented before further discussions on the status of Chinese temples and related activities as "religion-as-non-religion." I will proceed to connect arguments on the anonymous nature of "Chinese Religion" to the unique allocation of religious discourse in Thailand, and demonstrate that it is this combination that leaves Chinese temples in Thailand in the domain of "non-religion." Finally I will show the possibilities for further comparative

1) Tambiah (1970) is representative of the pioneer works on this subject. In general, anthropologists working on Buddhism in Thailand tend more or less to stress the diversity of religious practices outside the Sangha.

2) "Thais believe themselves to be born Buddhists, that the words Thai and Buddhist are synonymous"(Ishii 1986, 39). For another example, see Keyes (1989).

3) Surprisingly enough, more attention has been paid to the role of the Chinese in Theravada Buddhism in Malaysia than in Thailand. It has been pointed out that in Kelantan, the Chinese and Thai maintain a symbiotic relationship in support of the Theravada Buddhist tradition there (Kershaw 1981; Mohamed Yusoff Ismail 1993). In Thailand, Boonsanong (1971) and Tobias (1977), for example, argued the Chinese acceptance of Thai Buddhism. However, the place of Chinese temples within "Thai Buddhism" as a system has not received sufficient attention from scholars in Thai studies.

studies of religions in Thailand in order to rethink the conventional understanding of religion in Southeast Asia.

II "Religion," Buddhism, and Chinese Temples

The Making of Religion

Prior to the administrative reform in the last half of the nineteenth century, the term *satsana*, which denotes religion in the present sense, was a synonym of Buddhism. Kings enjoyed the title of "the Supreme Defender of *Satsana*," with *satsana* denoting Buddhism exclusively in this context. As in other Asian countries, "religion" as a neutral term of comparative religion is a relatively recent invention in Thailand. Furthermore, a feature of Buddhism in pre-modern Thailand was the absence of nationwide monastic institutions. The vast majority of the land was dominated by semi-independent local crowns, and the King's direct rule was limited to royal temples around the capital. This situation changed dramatically after the Sangha Administration Act was introduced in 1902. This act brought about present-day Thai Buddhism as a uniform institution, which Ishii calls "State Buddhism" (1986, 59). It officialized and standardized a set of regulations on the doctrine taught in monasteries, as well as the status of ordained monks, and organized these monasteries and monks into a single bureaucratic pyramid officially sanctioned by the central government.

Extension of the coverage of the term *satsana* took place alongside the modernization of Theravada Buddhism. One of the first turning points was the "Edict of Religious Toleration" issued by King Chulalongkorn in 1878 (Wells 1958, 59–64). This royal edict was targeted at the evangelical works of Christian missionaries in Chiang Mai, the northern capital of present-day Thailand. This edict referred to Christianity as "*Satsana Phra Yesu*" or "*Satsana* of Jesus," and manifestly stated that one's *satsana* was a matter of freedom of faith (Prasit 1984, 169).

King Vajiravudh, the successor to Chulalongkorn who governed the kingdom in the early twentieth century, established and propagated the state ideology: "*chat, satsana, phramahakasat*" (nation, religion, monarchy). In this context *satsana* is Buddhism as the de facto state religion. According to Vella, this propagation of Buddhism was based on the king's assumption that the Thai people have historically selected Buddhism among religions of essentially equal standing: "Time after time the King pointed out the basic similarities of all religions. All religions taught their adherents a similar moral code; they taught men to do good, not to harm others" (Vella 1978, 220–221). For this young monarch, educated in England, Western-style religious pluralism was already a self-evident truth.

After the constitutional revolution in 1932, the king's title as "the Supreme Defender of *Satsana*" persisted with the introduction of the idea of "freedom of *satsana*" or "freedom of religion." These contradict each other so far as *satsana* is defined as Buddhism. The usage of *satsana* to denote religion in general can be traced to this period. The phrase "protection of *satsana*" in the constitution was translated in English as "protection of all religions professed by the Siamese people," and thus was established the system in which religions enjoyed equal status under royal patronage. "[I]n this light, the semantic expansion of *satsana* is probably best understood as an accommodation of the traditional values to the context of Western, European democracy" (Ishii 1986, 39).

In 1941, a Department of Religious Affairs (Krom Kansatsana) was created under the Ministry of Education to supervise all religions recognized by the state or all religions under royal patronage. It replaced the Krom Thammakan, which had formerly superintended violation of the Buddhist precepts by monks (Sutthiwong 2001).[4] In 2002, it was transferred to the newly created Ministry of Culture, while some of its functions relating to the administration of Buddhism were carved off for the equally new National Office of Buddhism. Religious organizations officially registered with the Department include Islam, Christianity (Catholic and Protestant as separate categories), Brahmanism, Hindu, and Sikh, as well as Buddhism. As for Buddhism, the Thai Sangha (Theravada) and two Mahayana sects ("Chinese" Chin Nikai and "Vietnamese" Annam Nikai, though both are actually Chinese) are listed in the religious statistics of the government (Thailand, Krom Kansatsana 1998).

This brief summary of the development of religious administration in Thailand shows that the traditional model of state administration for Buddhism has been extended to cover other religions as *satsana* has been redefined as a general term for religions. The consequence of this development is the concentration of the state's interests in the registration and control of ordained religious professionals and their facilities. Laypeople are left out of the scope of the religious administration, and the minimum requirement for laypeople is simply to select one religion on their ID cards. In addition, such self-declaration of one's religion does not require details of one's affiliation or allegiance to any sect or denomination. In other words, the exact number of Theravada and Mahayana lay followers among Buddhists is not known. It is also worth noting that Confucianism and Taoism are not listed among the officially recognized religions. The only choice offered by the state to the Chinese (with the exception of small numbers of Christians and Muslims) is Buddhism.

4) Tambiah (1976, 370–379) analyzes the role of the Department of Religious Affairs in the Sangha administration, although he hardly mentions the Department's control of non-Buddhist religions.

Chinese Temples and the Thai State

Where, then, is the place for Chinese temples within these officially recognized religious categories? The answer is that there is no place for them since Chinese temples register with the Ministry of the Interior, not the Department of Religious Affairs under the Ministry of Education (after 2002, the Ministry of Culture). The Chinese temple that I refer to in this paper is an English translation of *sanchao Chin*, which is strictly distinguished from ordinary Buddhist temples called *wat*. The Chinese temple must seek legitimacy on grounds other than the religious administration.

Legally speaking, government control of Chinese temples is based on an order issued by the Ministry of the Interior in 1920. This order was originally aimed at supplementing the shortcomings of the Local Administration Act (1913), especially Article 113 on the protection of property rights of public places for merit-making (*kusonsathan*). Article 2 of the ministry's order defines *sanchao* (Chinese temples and other shrines) as "places to have objects of worship and used for rituals according to doctrines (*latthi*) of the Chinese and other people." The Department of Local Administration has the duty of supervising Chinese temples listed in the *Directory of Chinese Temples in the Kingdom* published by the department (Thailand, Krom Kanpokkhrong 2000).

A comparative study of Chinese temples of Bangkok and Singapore by Pornpan and Mak (1994) presents unique data of the historical development of Chinese religions in Thailand. According to this study, the number of Chinese Buddhist temples in Bangkok is smaller than in Singapore. The authors suppose that this is because Buddhism is much better established and flourishing in Bangkok than it is in Singapore—Theravada monasteries were so scattered over the kingdom that the lack of Mahayana temples would cause no serious problem for Chinese immigrants.

Scholars have long agreed that the cultural distance between Chinese immigrants and host majorities is remarkably small in Thailand in the sense that both parties are more or less Buddhists in a broad sense. The case of Chinese immigrants who show no hesitation in claiming themselves to be Buddhists has been reported in many academic writings on Chinese in Thailand: "[O]bservers are impressed not so much by differences as religious similarities between the Thai and the Chinese minority," and "unlike the situation with respect to the Chinese in other countries of Southeast Asia, in Thailand religion does offer one base on which cultural compromise is being achieved" (Coughlin 1960, 92). Some Chinese folk traditions even contributed to such cultural compromise. As Skinner (1957, 129) points out, San Pao Kong (Sanbaogong 三保公), one of the popular Chinese deities, has another name Cheng Ho (Zheng He 鄭和, a leader of Ming China's maritime expedition), while his name also symbolizes the three essentials of Buddhist teaching, San Pao 三寶 (Three Treasures), since these two terms share the

same pronunciation. That cultural compromise between Chinese immigrants and the host Thai Buddhists was easily achieved partly explains the delayed introduction of Chinese Mahayana monasteries to Thailand, since Chinese temples of folk religion and Theravada monasteries filled the religious needs of the Chinese Buddhists.

In Bangkok, the first Chinese temple established in 1786 was dedicated to Pun Thao Kong 本頭公, a deity of locality worshipped in Southeast Asia (Pornpan and Mak 1994, 28–29, 137). All the Chinese temples built in the first half of the nineteenth century were temples of Taoism or local folk beliefs, while Chinese Mahayana Buddhist temples were introduced much later. The first Chinese Mahayana temple of Thailand was established in 1887 (*ibid.*, 29). Actually, only four Mahayana temples[5] in Bangkok were built before 1915 (*ibid.*, 140). All these facts indicate that Mahayana Buddhist temples were an absolute minority among the Chinese temples at the time of the legislation of the Sangha Act (1902) and the Interior Ministry's order (1920).

Another factor behind the legal status of Chinese temples is the government's policy towards Chinese immigrants. As Nipaporn (2012) argues, Chinese immigrants' activities in the public sphere were almost neglected by the Bangkok government in the initial period of modernization (late nineteenth to early twentieth century). Most of the infrastructure of public welfare for the Chinese settlements was initiated and provided by associations of speech groups (or coalitions of them), not the royal government, on a self-supporting basis (*ibid.*). Such welfare organizations have a tendency to overlap with Chinese temples. For example, the Cantonese Temple and Cantonese Hospital of Bangkok are located in the same compound as the Cantonese Association. Tianhua Hospital 天華醫院, which was jointly founded by five speech groups (Swatou, Canton, Hokkian, Hakka, and Hailam) in 1905, has a large Kuan Im 觀音 temple in its center. Po Tek Tung or Baode Shantang 報德善堂, founded in 1910, is the largest philanthropic association in the kingdom as well as a temple for the worship of Dafeng Zushi 大峰祖師, a former Mahayana monk in China famous for his devotion to public activities (issues on philanthropic associations will be discussed later). Also, this philanthropic association is the owner of Huachiao Hospital 華僑醫院. Such associations "provide the Chinese population with schools, community centers, hospitals, clinics, temples, cemeteries and recreational facilities" (Coughlin 1960, 33–34). Unlike Theravada monasteries, Chinese temples began in Thailand as a welfare center for this neglected community lying outside of government care.

Later, a series of government policies towards the Chinese was legislated during the reign of King Vajiravudh, for example, the Association Act (1914) and the Private

5) One such temple is a *samnaksong*, which has lesser status than an official monastery (*wat*).

School Act (1918). Although these legislations sound universal, they were actually targeted at gaining effective control of the Chinese immigrants (Vella 1978, 189–190). The Association Act was "aimed particularly at preventing the formation of Chinese associations reflecting the new political enthusiasms generated by events in China" (*ibid.*, 189), and "[w]hat the private school law of 1918 was supposed to do was facilitate the assimilation of Chinese" (*ibid.*, 190). Similarly, even though the Interior Ministry's order on *sanchao* under Vajiravudh's reign is a regulation measure on shrines in general (Chinese and non-Chinese alike), Article 2 (mentioned above) shows that its first target was actually Chinese temples. This ministry's order also forms a link in the chain of contemporary policies to enforce a strict policing of the Chinese by legitimizing their activities and organizations. According to Koizumi (2007, 33–44), Chinese community leaders in Bangkok initially tried to resist the legislation on Chinese temples and petitioned the government for amendment of the acts. The petitions presented to the government were finally rejected on the grounds that strict state regulation was necessary because Chinese temples might harbor secret societies and other illegal activities.

Since the "Chinese problem" was a matter of policing rather than purification of "State Buddhism," and since Mahayana monasteries were an absolute minority even among the Chinese temples, most of the Chinese religious facilities (temples and semi-religious associations) have been dropped from issues of religion and placed in the hands of the Ministry of the Interior. According to the government policy toward the Chinese immigrants, Chinese temples or related organizations might register as an association with no political intention or as a Chinese temple outside "religion" (unless it has no ordained monk). Chinese immigrants have been periodically victimized by the Bangkok government's nationalistic policy. In the early twentieth century they were suspected to be troublemakers instigated by Sun Yat-sen's republican ideology, and later they were viewed as potential communists in the Cold War period (Skinner 1957). Indeed, throughout the twentieth century, the Thai government did not offer a special category to Chinese religions to register as religions.

A good example is Dejiao 德教, which was introduced to Thailand from China in the early 1950s. This is a syncretic religious movement that originated in post-World War II China and spread to Southeast Asia. In spite of its unique tradition and the religious connotation of its name (*jiao* means religion), the official status of its branches in Thailand is "philanthropic foundations," and it has never been recognized as a religion. Since the beginnings of this religious movement in the 1950s, the Thai Government "severely controlled registration of new Chinese associations, especially those whose stated purpose involved religious activities" (Formoso 2010, 59–60).

Table 1 shows the number of followers and religious places of each officially recog-

Table 1 Religious Population and Religious Places Officially Recognized by the Government

Religion	Population	Number of Religious Places
Buddhism	57,357,862	30,685
Islam	2,977,434	3,109
Christianity	1,012,871	640 (Catholic) 213 (Protestant)
Brahmanism, Hinduism, Sikh	21,125	25
Others	96,886	
Total	61,466,178	

Source: Thailand, Krom Kansatsana (1998, 94)

Table 2 Number of Buddhist Temples According to Sects

Branch	Sect	Private	Royal	Total
Theravada	Mahanikai	28,982	199	29,181
	Thammayut	1,433	52	1,485
Mahayana	Chin (Chinese)	8	0	8
	Annam (Vietnamese)	11	0	11
Total		30,434	251	30,685

Source: Thailand, Krom Kansatsana (1998, 84)

nized religion. As mentioned above, the statistics are obtained from self-declaration. As for *satsanasathan*, or religious places, the official definition is "places that have ordained persons (*nak buat*) and used for religious rites" (Thailand, Samnak-ngan Khana Kammakan Kansuksa haeng Chat 2000, 5). Naturally, this definition does not include Chinese temples since, as I will argue later, rituals in Chinese temples tend to be carried out without ordained monks. That is why Chinese temples never appear in such lists of "religious places" in an official sense. The exceptions are Mahayana Buddhist temples with their own resident monks. The Mahayana School of Buddhism, together with the Mahanikai and Thammayut Theravada Schools, forms a part of official "State Buddhism."

Table 2 shows the number of Buddhist temples according to each sect, recognized by the Department of Religious Affairs (in 1998). Official data on Buddhist sects contain only temples and monks, and the number of laypeople is not disclosed. This reflects a state interest in religious affairs that is almost exclusively concentrated on the control of temples and ordained monks. As already mentioned above, in official statistics, laypeople are never classified according to sects.

Another remarkable feature of this data is the very small number of Mahayana temples (Chinese and Vietnamese). This is partly because similar facilities tend to reg-

ister with the Ministry of the Interior as *sanchao* or Chinese temples (and are thus non-religious places). Indeed, Chinese temples (657 temples nationwide) outnumber Mahayana temples, even though their number and the number of their followers are never listed in government statistics on religion. From these statistics, we can suppose that the Chinese people attending Chinese temples declare themselves as Buddhists (who make up 93.3 percent of the total population, see Table 1) in population statistics.

Throughout Thailand's modern history, the term "*satsana*" in the official sense has been transformed or extended from meaning "Buddhism" only to meaning "religions" in general. Nevertheless, large areas of religious activities (including public facilities for worship) are still left outside this extended concept of religion. Chinese temples are typical cases.[6)]

III Chinese Temples in Phuket

Phuket in Religious Statistics

Phuket has a unique history of the development of tin-mining through the introduction of Chinese immigrants from the British Straits Settlements during the modernization period.[7)] The majority of Phuket's population—72.6 percent—is Buddhist (see Table 3). Since attendants of Chinese temples are not officially categorized under the government's policy towards religion, they are included as Buddhists. Government statistics reveal an interesting characteristic of Buddhism in Phuket. Table 4, indicating the population per monk and Buddhist temple, shows us how low commitment to officially institutionalized Buddhism is in Phuket. In Phuket, one monk takes care of 1,541.37 people, while the average population per monk in Thailand is 326.08. The same tendency is found in the distribution of Buddhist temples. The population per temple in Phuket (7,458.26) is also much higher than the national equivalent of 2,003.13. Thus the density of Buddhist temples and ordained monks is surprisingly lower than that in other provinces, and leads us to suppose that Buddhists in Phuket maintain their commitment to Buddhism in ways

6) For a more nuanced understanding, I have to point out that the religious nature of Chinese temples has not always been neglected by the authorities. Article 12 of the ministry's order on *sanchao* states that managers of each *sanchao* shall include faith (*khaorop napthu*) in its teaching (*latthi*). As this statement shows, the government knows full well that the activities of Chinese temples are carried out according to religious belief. However, my point is that, even though the religious nature of Chinese temples is recognized by the government, they have no place in officially defined religion and are supervised in "secular channels" only.

7) For details of the modern history of Phuket and the role of the Chinese, see Phuwadon (1988) and Cushman (1989, 1991).

Table 3 Religious Population and Religious Places in Phuket Province

Religion	Population	Number of Religious Places
Buddhism	167,878	31
Islam	59,017	38
Christianity	2,874	3 (Catholic) 0 (Protestant)
Brahmanism, Hinduism, Sikh	1,437	2
Others	0	0
Total	231,206	

Source: Thailand, Krom Kansatsana (1998, 99)

Table 4 Population per *Wat* and per Monk

	Per *Wat*	Per Monk
Phuket	7,458.26	1,541.37
National average	2,003.13	326.08

Source: Thailand, Krom Kansatsana (1998, 79, 83)

other than those expected by institutionalized Thai Buddhism. The percentage of the population of Phuket province in the national total is 0.4 percent and that of Buddhist temples is much lower (0.1 percent), whereas that of Chinese temples is 1.5 percent (10 out of 657 state temples). These figures indicate that Chinese temples are more concentrated than Buddhist temples in Phuket.

Since Phuket province has no Mahayana Buddhist temple, all the Chinese temples in Phuket are non-religious places in the official sense. Their legal status falls into three categories: state, private, and non-registered. The difference between state and private temples lies in land ownership. Temples located on state-owned land are categorized as state temples, and those on private land are private temples. Currently there are 10 state Chinese temples, 14 private temples, and at least 18 non-registered temples in Phuket. Apart from Chinese temples, there are six temples dedicated to Muslim guardians of locality. As I will discuss later, these temples and the deities in them are closely connected to Chinese temples. All the Muslim guardian temples are non-registered.

The situation of the Chinese temples of Phuket tells us that non-registered temples are by no means exceptional. Many Chinese temples are excluded from the registration system of Chinese temples by the Ministry of the Interior, which is itself beyond the religious administration of the state (the Department of Religious Affairs). In fact, state control of religion based on the official definitions of *satsana* and *satsanasathan* has only a very partial hold on religious facilities.

Deities Worshipped

Which deities are worshipped in these "non-religious" places? According to Tables 5, 6, and 7, showing data on deities worshipped in the Chinese temples in Phuket, the most popular deities as owners of temples are Pun Thao Kong (Bentougong 本頭公 or Hude Zhengshen 福德正神, worshipped in six temples), Cho Su Kong (Qingshui Zushi 清水祖師, worshipped in four temples), and Kuan Wu (Guanyu 関羽, worshipped in four temples). These are followed by Lim Thai Su (Linfu Taishi 林府太師) and Kuan Im (Guanyin 觀音), each worshipped as an owner deity in three temples.

Taoism or Chinese popular religions outnumber Buddhism at the level of owner deities of temples. However, this does not mean that Buddhism is not important in Chinese temples. The vast majority of temples (26) have Mahayana Buddhist deities in their pantheon as lesser objects of worship. Of these 26 temples, all have Kuan Im, and some have an additional Mahayana Buddhist object of worship such as Mitreya 弥勒佛, Ti Chong Ong 地蔵王菩薩, and other Bodhisattvas. Some temples are more oriented to official Buddhist temples. A good example is Sam Se Chu Fut temple (No. 23 in Table 7). Although this temple is officially a non-registered *sanchao*, the structure of its pantheon is actually very Buddhist. Sam Se Chu Fut 三世諸佛 or the Three Buddhas of the Mahayana school are its owners, while the majority of its lesser deities are also Mahayana Buddhist deities. The difference between this kind of *sanchao* and Buddhist temples (*wat*) lies in the absence of ordained monks and daily chanting carried out by lay practitioners in the latter.

Worship of Buddha and Buddhist deities can be practiced in most of the Chinese temples, even though these temples are never recognized as Buddhist "religious places." These *sanchao*, or Chinese temples as non-religious places, offer alternatives for the practice of Buddhism outside state sanction. One could also worship deities of several religious traditions other than Mahayana Buddhism at these temples. Former Theravada monks constitute the objects of worship in the pantheons of Chinese temples in Phuket. The most prominent of these monks is Luangpho Chaem, who was active in the late nineteenth century and is purported to have supernatural powers. His picture is still worshipped all over the province, including in two Chinese temples (No. 4 and No. 13 in Table 7). In Lo Rong temple (No. 9), one can worship various images of former Theravada monks as well as other deities, Buddhist and non-Buddhist.

The structure of the pantheons of some Chinese temples is almost ecumenical. Lo Rong is an example of such a "department store" of religious amalgam. Yok Ong Song Te (Yuhuang Dadi 玉皇上帝), Nine Emperor God or Kiu Ong Tai Te (Jiuhuang Dadi 九皇大帝), Lao-tze (Taishang Laojun 太上老君), Ma Cho (Mazu 媽祖), Sam Tong Ong (Sanzhongwang 三忠王), Pun Thao Kong, Sakya Muni, Kuan Im, Mitreya, Ti Chong Ong,

ancestor gods of the Tan and Koi clans, Phra Phran (the Thai name for a god of Brahmanic or Hindu tradition), and other popular gods, in addition to the Theravada monks mentioned above, are all found in one single temple. Another example is a very small temple Hiap Thian (No. 40), dedicated to Kuan Wu, Kuan Im, Siva, and Uma Devi. The composition of its pantheon reflects the founders' intention to unite three Asian religions, namely Chinese popular religion, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

Islamic tradition is sometimes also invited into such mixed pantheons. Muslim guardian spirits of locality are worshipped as lesser deities in five Chinese temples. This custom stems from the belief that the founders (and, as such, guardians of locality) of the island of Phuket were Muslim. The Chinese, as newcomers, thus had to ask the founder spirits for permission to settle. Since then, these guardian spirits (called *to*) have been placed in Chinese temples in typical Muslim attire, including the Muslim costume and cap. Symbolized by a crescent and the color green, these spirits receive offerings (with prohibitions on pork and liquor) on Fridays, and are said to speak Arabic on occasions of possession. The Phuket Chinese see this custom as a way to pay respect to the local Muslim tradition, although the worship of images through the offering of joss sticks causes protests from some strict Muslim leaders.

Temples No. 43–48 in Table 7 are not regarded as Chinese temples, but temples of Muslim guardian spirits of locality. Nonetheless, they are closely related to the Chinese temples in the composition of their pantheons. They share the same deities as the Chinese temples; Chinese-style altars of Thi Kong 天公 (Heaven God, sometimes referred to as Yok Ong Song Te) are placed in front of the temples; images of Kuan Wu, Kuan Im, Mitreya, and Ho Ia (Huye 虎爺, a land spirit) appear in assistance of the Muslim guardians, which are themselves worshipped in some Chinese temples under the same names (To Sae, To Tami, To Saming, etc.).

According to Wee (1976, 171), who has studied religion in Singapore, Chinese Religion is "an empty bowl, which can variously be filled with the contents of institutionalized religions such as Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, the Chinese syncretic religions, or even Christianity (Catholic) and Hinduism." As such, "Sakyamuni Buddha is just another *shen* (Chinese deity); the Theravada and Mahayana temples are his temples, and the Theravada and Mahayana Buddhists are his group of devotees" (*ibid.*, 172–173). In Phuket, this "empty bowl" orientation of Chinese Religion is even extended to Muslim guardians.[8)]

8) Wee (1976, 173) states categorically that such extension is not applied to Islam and Protestant Christianity, since these religions do not have images. Nevertheless, the very existence of the Datuk Kong worship in Malaysia, which corresponds to the worship of *to* in Phuket, proves that some kinds of Islamic beliefs can be re-interpreted by and incorporated into Chinese Religion. For details of Datuk Kong worship see Cheu (1992).

Table 5 Main (Owner) Deities of the Chinese Temples in Phuket

Deities	Number of Temples to Worship
Taoism/Chinese popular religion	**38**
Pun Thao Kong 本頭公	6
Cho Su Kong 清水祖師	4
Kuan Wu 関羽/協天大帝	4
Lim Thai Su 林府太師	3
Koi Seng Ong 廣澤尊王/郭聖王	2
Ma Cho 媽祖/天上聖母	2
Ong Ia 王爺類	2
Thian Fu Nguan Soi 田府元帥	2
Yok Ong Song Te 玉皇上帝	2
Others	11
Mahayana Buddhism	**4**
Kuan Im 觀音	3
Sam Se Chu Fut 三世諸佛	1

Table 6 Lesser Deities of the Chinese Temples of Phuket Classified According to Religious Tradition

Composition of Pantheon	Number of Temples
Including Mahayana Buddhist deities	26
Including Theravada Buddhist deities	3
Including Muslim guardians of locality	5
Including Hindu-Brahman deities	2

Indeed, in Chinese temples we find deities from Theravada Buddhism, Mahayana Buddhism, Taoism, Hinduism, Islam, Chinese popular religion, and local spirits worshipped together in one place. However, this description may be misleading, since the pantheon of the Chinese temples in Phuket seems to reject the very demarcation of institutionalized religions. For outside observers, it is almost impossible to identify each temple's religious affiliation in institutionalized terms. This causes no problem, however, since these places are not officially recognized "religious places." Chinese temples are simply "non-religion" and there is thus no need for the identification of religious affiliation.

Buddhism without Monks

Another unique aspect of "Thai Buddhism" practiced by the Chinese in Phuket is that most of the ritual practices in Chinese temples are conducted without ordained monks. Ritual specialists are laypeople with various titles like *ajarn*, *shifu*, *songjingyuan* and so

Table 7 Status of Chinese Temples in Phuket

No.	Chinese Name	Thai Name	Location (District)	Main Deities	Registration			Foundation
					State	Private	No	
1	佛祖庵	Putcho	Muang	Kuan Im（觀音）	○			Chuitui
2	觀世音菩薩	Chao Mae Kuan Im	Muang	Kuan Im（觀音）			○	
3	天后宮	Mae Ya Nan	Muang	Ma Cho（媽祖／天上聖母）	○			
4	福元宮	Cho Su Kong	Muang	Cho Su Kong（清水祖師）		○		
5	勝德廟	Pho To Kong	Muang	Pun Thao Kong（本頭公／福德正神）	○			Phonmanisi
6	汾陽堂	Koi Seng Ong	Muang	Koi Seng Ong（廣澤尊王）			○	
7	網寮斗母宮	Bang Niao	Muang	Sam Tong Ong（三忠王）			○	Thep Rasi
8	水碓斗母宮	Chui Tui	Muang	Thian Fu Nguan Soi（田府元帥）		○		Chuitui
9	瑞文堂	Lo Rong	Muang	Cho Su Kong（清水祖師）			○	
10	青龍宮	Cheng Ong	Muang	Kang Fu Ong Ia（江府王爺）			○	
11	雲山宮	Sam Kong	Muang	Lim Thai Su（林府大師）	○			
12	玉溪宮	Yok Ke Keng	Muang	Cho Su Kong（清水祖師）		○		
13	太原堂	Cho Ong	Muang	Ong Clan Guardian（忠懿尊王）			○	
14	定光堂	Saen Tham	Muang	Tan Clan Guardian（開漳聖王）		○		
15	九龍堂（普吉林氏宗親會）	Kiu Leng Thong	Muang	Lim Clan Guardian（晋安尊王？）			○	
16	瓊州會館	Hailam	Muang	Shui Wei Sheng Niang（水尾聖娘）		○		
17	彤雲宮	Thungkha	Muang	Lim Thai Su（林府太師）	○			
18	鳳山寺	Hongsanshi	Muang	Koi Seng Ong（廣澤尊王）	○			
19	九天宮	Saphan Hin	Muang	Kiu Tian Hian Nu（九天玄女）		○		Chuitui
20	協天宮	Sapam	Muang	Kuan Wu（関羽）		○		
21	紫蓮宮	Nabon	Muang	Kuan Wu（関羽）		○		
22	三官大帝	Ban Khu	Muang	Sam Kuan Tai Te（三官大帝）			○	
23	三世諸佛	Sam Se Chu Fut	Muang	Sam Se Chu Fut（三世諸佛）			○	
24	七星娘娘	Chit Chiao	Muang	Chit Sae Niao（七星娘娘）		○		Chitsaeniao
25	福山宮	Hok San Keng	Muang	Pun Thao Kong（本頭公／福德正神）			○	
26	雲從庵	Nakha	Muang	Cho Su Kong（清水祖師）			○	
27	内杼斗母宮	Kathu	Kathu	Thian Fu Nguan Soi（田府元帥）			○	
28	忠勇祠	Tong Yong Su	Kathu	Tablets of the Dead	○			
29	福善堂	Hok Shian Thong	Kathu	Pun Thao Kong（本頭公／福德正神）	○			
30	源福宮	Nguan Hok Keng	Kathu	Pun Thao Kong（本頭公／福德正神）		○		
31	福生宮	Hok Se Keng/ Chao Pho Sua	Kathu	Pun Thao Kong（本頭公／福德正神）		○		
32	福善壇	Hok Sian Tua	Kathu	Pun Thao Kong（本頭公／福德正神）			○	
33	武當山玄天上帝	Thung Thong	Kathu	Hian Thian Song Te（玄天上帝）	○			

Table 7–Continued

No.	Chinese Name	Thai Name	Location (District)	Main Deities	Registration			Foundation
					State	Private	No	
34	福龍宮	Tha Rua	Thalang	Po Seng Tai Te (保生大帝)	○			
35	金士王宮	Ban Khon	Thalang	Kuan Im (觀音)		○		
36	三王府 (金飛殿)	Cheun Thale	Thalang	Sam Fu Ong Yia (三府王爺)		○		
37	雲山宮	Lim Thai Su	Thalang	Lim Thai Su (林府太師)		○		
38	紫連宮	Ban Pasak	Thalang	Kuan Wu (関羽)			○	
39	五顯大帝	Ban Kian	Thalang	Ngo Hian Tai Te (五顯大帝)			○	
40	協天大帝	Hiap Thian	Thalang	Kuan Wu (関羽)			○	
41	武當山	Pa Khrong Chip	Thalang	Yok Ong Song Te (玉皇上帝)			○	
42	靛罡壇	Thi Kong Thua	Muang	Yok Ong Song Te (玉皇上帝)			○	
Shrines of Muslim Locality Gods								
43		San Pho Ta To Se	Muang	To Sae			○	
44		San Pho Ta To Se	Muang	To Sae			○	
45		San To Hin Khao	Muang	To Hin Khao			○	
46	卓他米	Pho Ta To Sami	Muang	To Sami			○	
47		Ban To Yet	Kathu	To Yet, To Ya			○	
48		Ban To Se	Kathu	To Sae Daeng			○	
Others								
49	福建會館	Samakhom Hokkien (Hokkien Association)	Muang	Pun Thao Kong (本頭公／福德正神)			○	
50	清普洞	Kuson Tham	Muang	He Ye Yun (何野雲佛祖)			○	Kuson Tham

on.[9] They chant Chinese sutras in the Hokkien dialect, known locally in Hokkien Chinese as *songkeng* 誦經. Since Phuket has no Mahayana temple, there is no alternative of inviting Mahayana monks for *songkeng*. This *songkeng* is clearly distinguished from *suat mon*, which denotes the chanting of Pali sutras by Theravada monks.

One of the occasions for *songkeng* to take place publicly is *Pho To* (*Pudu* 普度),[10] a ritual widely practiced all over the island whereby offerings are made to the dead during the seventh lunar month. In Phuket City, *Pho To* is celebrated in eight places annually (Table 8)—four in Chinese temples, two in a former Chinese temple, and the remaining two on community streets. The *Pho To* ritual is based on the belief that dead persons come back to this world during the seventh lunar month. Those with descendants will go back to their homes while others with no place to go may eventually harm living people.

9) Currently, *daoshi*, the Taoist specialist is absent in Phuket (Cohen 2001, 186).
10) This ritual is also called the Hungry Ghost Festival (DeBernardi 1984).

Table 8 Schedule of *Pho To* Rituals in Phuket City (in Seventh Month of Chinese Lunar Calendar)

Date	Venue	Notes
13th	Former Thaihua School (presently Thaihua Museum)*	Tapo community
15th	Cho Su Kong Temple	
16th	Cho Ong Temple	
17th–18th	Municipal market	
19th	Pho To Kong Temple	
20th	Former Thaihua School*	Kian Tek Pho**
21st	Ao Ke community	
24th	Pho To Kong Temple	

Note: * The Thaihua School Campus was formerly a Chinese temple and the headquarters of the Kian Tek secret society.
** Propitiation ritual for deceased Kian Tek leaders.

For this reason the people of each community set aside a day for the collective feasting of these spirits by offering meals. Pho To Kong (Pudugong 普度公) is a leading figure of this ritual. Deemed the representative of hell, he is placed at the end of offering tables. A small image of Kuan Im is put on the head of Pho To Kong, after which *songkeng* is performed to start the ceremony. Then this bloodthirsty demon of hell is transferred to a subordinate or to another incarnation of Kuan Im, called Kuan Im Tai Su (Guanyin Dashi 觀音大士). Pho To Kong receives offerings on behalf of the dead and, in return, gives blessings to the living before he is finally burned and sent off from the coast at midnight.

Here is clearly manifested the main theme of universal salvation in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. Nevertheless this "Buddhist" annual ritual is conducted without ordained monks, with the exception of the *Pho To* ceremony held on the street in front of the municipal market, in which Theravada monks from nearby Buddhist temples are invited for chanting (*suat mon*). The presence of Theravada monks is not a necessary condition of the ritual; after all, there is no need to invite monks to "Buddhist" rituals as long as somebody can perform *songkeng*. Although knowledge of *songkeng* is passed down through apprenticeship, this network is formed on an informal basis without any institutionalized body. Officially speaking, in accordance with the state's definition of *satsana* and *satsanasathan*, chanting by laymen in "non-religious places" has nothing to do with religion. The fact that there is no ordained religious specialist means that the government has no control over those who conduct Chinese religious rituals. The absence of ordained monks in Chinese temples contributes to their invisibility in the context of religious administration targeting officially recognized monks and religious places.[11)]

11) The absence of resident monks in temples was not exceptional in traditional China. See Yang (1991, 309–310).

To question the relationship between religion and non-religion, finally we consider the concept of merit-making. *Thambun* is the Thai term for merit-making, and this has been argued to mean making contributions to the Sangha through conventional means in Thai Buddhism. However, the coverage of this term in daily usage in Phuket is much wider, referring to such activities as attending Chinese temples and making contributions to them, the *songkeng* ritual, the *suat mon* ritual of Theravada Buddhism, contributions to the Sangha, donations to philanthropic foundations, donations to the Red Cross, donations to native place associations (Hokkien, Hailam, etc.), and donations to Chinese schools. The names of donors are publicly listed during annual ritual occasions according to the amount contributed. The same arrangement is also employed in fund-raising initiatives by Chinese schools, native place associations, philanthropic associations as well as Chinese temples. Such donors lists also usually appear in the memorial publications of these organizations. Who contributes how much is widely publicized and remembered. The same local Chinese leaders always occupy the top spots on these lists and famous rich persons risk being gossiped about whenever their contributions are smaller than public expectations. These are the reasons why local Chinese leaders compete obsessively over donation or merit-making. Coughlin (1960, 57–58) writes of the Chinese society of Bangkok:

> Public recognition, community goodwill, and some fame can be gained by donating money to this [Tianhua Hospital] and other organizations in the Chinese community. . . . These are the customary ways by which the Chinese community recognizes beneficence. The reports of the Poh Tek Associations, for example, list all contributions, large and small alike, pointing out for special mention those who have given large sums. All Chinese hospitals and charitable associations, and even some dialect associations, honour benefactors by hanging their framed pictures in conspicuous places on the premises. This form of recognition shows the part that charity plays in attaining social prominence in the community.

Recognition of beneficence in Coughlin's term corresponds to *thambun* in Phuket. Both of them share the same coverage and function. In this regard, the Sangha (consisting of Buddhist temples and monks) is by no means the sole center of merit-making.

The wide range of occasions for *thambun* to take place may seem puzzling in its inclusion of apparently secular activities and facilities. However, when we recall that Chinese temples and related activities are placed outside of "religion," we realize that the distinction between "religion" and "non-religion" is already obscure. It makes no sense then to claim that Chinese temples can be centers of merit-making while other "secular" organizations may not. It is this blurring of the categories of "religion" and "non-religion" that should be examined instead of questioning the status of the "field of merit" of the Red Cross and other associations.

IV Boundaries of Religion

"Secular" Organizations for Practicing Chinese Religious Traditions

Chinese temples do not have a monopoly on the domain of "non-religious places" for practicing Chinese religious tradition. Other related facilities, whose functions overlap those of Chinese temples, also offer occasions for worshipping Chinese deities.

One example of the complexity of the issue is the boundary between temples and associations. A good example is the Hainanese Association (No. 16 in Table 7). Its Chinese name (Hainan Huiguan 海南會館/Kengjiu Huiguan 瓊州會館) gives the impression that it is nothing other than an association by place of origin. Interestingly though, its Thai name is Sanchao Hailam, meaning "Hainanese temple," and it is officially registered as a private temple. On the other hand, the Hokkien Association in Phuket is not a registered temple, but it contains a worship altar and claims Pun Thao Kong or Fude Zhengshen as owner of the association. Yet these two associations actually share the same functions as places of worship and care of descendants.

We can make the same observations of philanthropic foundations. Qing Pu Dong 清普洞 (No. 50) is a worship building of the Phuket branch of the Kuson Tham Foundation, one of the major Chinese philanthropic foundations in Thailand. This foundation has the character of a new religion worshipping He Ye Yun Fozu 何野雲佛祖, a former Mahayana monk in Mainland China, as its founding father, and the structure of the building is similar to that of other Chinese temples; yet Qing Pu Dong has never been registered as a religious place or a Chinese temple. Here we should note that some of the other Chinese temples in Phuket are also registered as philanthropic foundations. Temples No. 1, 5, 7, 8, 19, and 24 (Table 7) are such examples, and they run the gamut of Chinese temple categories, namely, state temple, private temple, and non-registered temple. In fact, there is no clear distinction between these non-registered Chinese temples and philanthropic foundations such as Kuson Tham.

The distinction between altars in private houses and Chinese temples is also obscure. Some private altars are open to outside visitors and may eventually become Chinese temples when the number of visitors increases. In fact, many Chinese temples evolved from shrines in private houses. This is the general tendency of development of Chinese temples. Tan (1990, 6) comments on Chinese temples of Malaysia that "[s]ometimes a community temple had its beginnings in a simple shrine, originally patronized only by a few families."

Formoso (1996, 255) points out that Chinese philanthropic associations in Thailand are less likely to officially declare themselves as religious organizations.

> Although the foundations keep alive in Thailand a Chinese religious tradition, this is not their official purpose. The objectives they present to the authorities include material assistance to the poor and emergency relief for victims of fires, flood, and other disasters, and they give maximum publicity to these activities.

This is why all their activities remain outside the official category of "religion" in Thailand. The most typical example of such a foundation-like religion officially registered as a secular body is Dejiao. As we have seen above, all the branches of this new religious movement are registered as philanthropic foundations. Hence their official names are *shantang* 善堂 (philanthropic association), not Dejiao, even though their activities are deeply motivated and guided by divine messages delivered from automatic writing.[12)]

Li Daoji (1999, 246), who based his research on 510 Chinese associations in Thailand that appeared in a local Chinese newspaper of 1988, highlights the fact that out of 78 associations engaged in religious activities, 73 are philanthropic associations. This figure demonstrates that such self-proclaimed "secular" philanthropic associations provide fields of religious activities to supplement Chinese temples as "non-religious places." As I have mentioned earlier, even more "secular" organizations such as Chinese-owned hospitals have overlapping functions with Chinese temples and semi-religious (but officially secular) associations as centers of worship of Chinese deities and of merit-making for Chinese statistical Buddhists.

"Chinese Religion" and Southeast Asian States

The blurred distinction between "religion" and "non-religion," and the obscure boundaries between each religion reflect the very nature of Chinese religious tradition. Tan (1995, 140) argues that:

> Chinese Religion is a religion of the Chinese civilization, and it is a religion which historically has become part and parcel of that civilization. As such, the Chinese have not found it necessary to have a special name for this complex system of beliefs and practices which are, after all, part and parcel of their way of life. In this respect, they are like many other peoples, such as the Orang Asli (aborigines of Peninsular Malaysia) and the Iban in Sarawak, who do not have specific names for that indigenous complex we call "religion."

Religious practices of the Chinese elude the modern categorization of religion and profanity, and the institutionalization of individual religions. In this respect, the term "Buddhism" for the Chinese has a different implication from the Thai state's official understanding. According to Tan again (*ibid.*, 139):

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12) Automatic writing is a way of divination popular among the Chinese in Southeast Asia. See Heinze (1983) for details.

> As part of the Chinese system, Chinese Buddhism is also closely associated with Chinese Religion, especially from the point of view of worshippers who do not draw an exclusive boundary between what is Buddhist and what is indigenous Chinese, or distinguish between what is Chinese Religion and "pure" Buddhism.

Chinese Buddhism, as a part of the anonymous Chinese Religion in a broader sense, forms a stark contrast to the Theravada Sangha protected by the state. This setting of Buddhism in Thailand, which detracts from the state Sangha as the sole organization representing Buddhism, further contributes to the in-between status of Chinese temples, resulting in a puzzling state in which Chinese temples are "non-religious" but their followers are Buddhists.

Yang's classical model of traditional Chinese religion seems to be applicable to the situation of the Chinese temples in Thailand. He employs the term "diffused religion" to explain the special character of traditional Chinese religion as compared to "institutionalized religion." Diffused religion in his sense is a religion scattered and embedded in various secular social institutions with no significant independent and separate existence (Yang 1991, 294–295).

> People visited a particular temple, worshipped a particular spirit, called on a particular priest, all in accordance with the practical function of religion for the particular occasion. To what religion a temple or a god belonged might be a puzzle to many academicians, but such questions had no functional significance in the religious life of the common people. (*ibid.*, 340)

"Chinese Religion" is likely to have operated outside state control since the imperial period of traditional China, where political authority paid little attention to theological issues of dissident sects. Actually, "some 84 percent of the temples in China in the seventeenth century were built without official permission, and this figure obviously did not include the numerous small shrines privately built" (*ibid.*, 214–215).

Such a "diffused" nature of Chinese religion might be advantageous in some respects when it is transplanted in Southeast Asian socio-political environments. For example, in Malaysia, where government concern in religious affairs is almost solely concentrated on Islam as a state religion, Chinese Religion enjoys relative freedom and flexibility in a diffused and syncretic form (Tan 1995, 154; Ackerman and Lee 1988, 52). Yang (1991) describes Chinese Buddhism as an example of "institutionalized religion"—an opposite counterpart of "diffused religion," since the former has a (relatively) more institutionalized monkhood and theology as compared to the latter. However, in some Southeast Asian countries, even such a religious tradition originally oriented to institutionalization has been incorporated into the syncretic amalgam of "diffused religion." One of the causes is the indifference of the local governments toward non-state religions. Thailand

is unique in its divide is between "State Buddhism" and others. The fact that Buddhism of the Theravada school is the de facto state religion has meant that most "Chinese Buddhism" is categorized as "Chinese Religion," and hence "non-religion" in official state administration.

Lim's recent case study of Yiguan Dao 一貫道 in Singapore demonstrates clearly that the status of non-religion is a possible alternative strategy for Chinese religious traditions to avoid state control and maintain a free hand: "[O]ne of the Yiguan Dao's most important proselytising efforts is not conducted in the public 'religious domain' as defined by the Singaporean state, hence overcoming certain restrictions faced by the other public religions" (Lim 2012, 21). Religion itself has been a major field of negotiation for Asian religious traditions. Such traditions have used various strategies to cope with—or "circumvent" (*ibid.*)—"religion" imposed by modernizing states.[13] Chinese temples and related organizations in Thailand show that these are synthetic compounds in the intersection of "Chinese religion" and Thai-style (Theravada Buddhist-oriented) interpretation and operation of Western concepts of "religion."

V Conclusions

In 1976, Wee (1976, 155) wrote of Buddhism in Singapore:

> Buddhism is generally considered to be one of the major religions, if not *the* major religion of multiracial Singapore. But on closer examination, one discovers that the word "Buddhism" is actually used as a religious label by a variety of people in Singapore whose religious practices and beliefs do not necessarily correspond to those prescribed by the Buddhist scriptures. . . . About 50 percent of Singapore's population declare themselves to be "Buddhists." But despite their usage of a single religious label, the "Buddhists" of Singapore do not in fact share a unitary religion. As we shall see, "Buddhism" of Singapore shows such a range of beliefs, practices and institutions that it can be structured analytically into distinct and separate religious systems.

Our overview of the state of Chinese temples in Thailand tells us that Thailand is not as far off from the Singaporean case as we would expect—at least in terms of the hybrid variety of Buddhism and related traditions. "Thai Buddhism" appears as a unitary religion simply because unorthodox Buddhism-related traditions are, with the exception of a very small number of Mahayana temples, practiced outside "religion." This ambiguous usage of "Buddhism" at the statistical level reflects a broader definition that encompasses the official structure of the government policy towards religion. Again, Wee's

13) See "Introduction" to this special issue.

following comment on Singaporean Buddhism can also be applied to Thailand.

> The Chinese syncretic religions practiced in Singapore are often referred to as "Buddhism" . . . . [F]or a significant proportion, if not the majority of "Buddhism" in Singapore, "Buddhism" is all-inclusive, embracing both Canonical Buddhism and the Chinese syncretic religions, and extending sometimes even to Hinduism.[14)]

For the Phuket case, as we have seen, we might add that "such all-inclusive Buddhism is extended even to Hinduism and some Islamic deities."

We commonly understand Thailand to be a Buddhist state (in this context, Buddhism denotes exclusively Theravada Buddhism), and through "common sense," we equate the worship of deities in Chinese temples with religion. Yet this "logical" understanding is only partially true. In the first place, statistical Buddhists encompass a very wide section (over 90 percent) of Thai society, and many religious traditions other than Theravada Buddhism have been incorporated into this "Buddhist" state. The second assumption also becomes questionable when we examine official religious discourse in Thailand—followers of Chinese temples are regarded as Buddhists, while the temples themselves have no room in the officially defined domain of religion.

Chinese temples as "religion-as-non-religion" are by-products of the formation of the "Buddhist ecclesia" (Ishii 1986) and the institutionalization of religion, two processes that are closely associated. As such, religion was re-defined to denote officially recognized institutions with doctrine and ordained specialists. The result is that this narrow concept of religion has left a very large residual domain. The case of the Chinese temples in Phuket shows that differentiation between religion and non-religion, and differentiation among institutionalized religions, remains minimal on the practical level. We have also seen how previous arguments on "Thai Buddhism" seem to have relied on this unrealistic definition of religion.

At the same time, the state of Chinese temples lying outside religion is beneficial to both institutionalized religions and Chinese temples. The state and institutionalized Buddhism can absorb the attendants of Chinese temples into the statistical category of Buddhism to maintain the uniform image of "Thai Buddhism." On the other hand, Chinese temples can enjoy freedom from state intervention without challenging the official claim of the purity of state Buddhism. Also, since they are not recognized as representing religion, they are not forced to select any one institutionalized religion through which to "purify" their pantheons. This contributes to the persistence of indiscriminative syncretism in the grassroots practices of Thai Buddhism.

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14) Actually some Hindu temples and shrines in Bangkok (for example, the so-called "Wat Khaek" at Silom) are full of Chinese worshippers who would claim to be Buddhists.

This brief case study of Chinese temples implies that many facilities for religious activities still remain outside "religion" and "religious places." Comparative studies on the worship facilities of self-claimed Buddhists in Thailand, such as the Chinese, the highlanders, and other ethnic minorities, as well as the Thai-speaking peoples, will disclose similar discrepancies between official categorization and actual religious practice. My hypothesis is that the vitality and energy of the religious landscape of Thailand originated from this very discrepancy, although a brief overview such as presented in this paper is only a first step toward proving it.

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A Study of the *Hồi giáo* Religion in Vietnam: With a Reference to Islamic Religious Practices of Cham Bani

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This paper examines *Hồi giáo*, a state-recognized religion translated as "Islam" in Vietnam, and will focus on the Islamic religious practices of the Cham Bani, one of two groups of Muslims in Vietnam. While it is recognized that diverse Islamic religious practices have taken root in various areas, there is a tendency to view religious practices such as the Quran recital, Ramadan, Salat, and so on, with a sweeping uniformity. As such, regardless of how "unorthodox" they are, the people who engage in such practices within society are regarded, or classified, as Muslim. The Cham Bani have also been described as an unorthodox Muslim sect, on the basis of its syncretic religious practices. However, the Cham Bani practitioners see themselves as neither Muslim nor members of the Islam community, and consider that they have experienced a different evolution of Islamic religious elements.

Is it possible to equate *Hồi giáo* with Islam and its followers with Muslim? This paper examines these questions through observations of the self-recognition, as well as the actual conditions of Islamic practices among the Cham Bani, especially the rituals that are observed during Ramadan. It reveals the possibility that Vietnam's state-recognized religious sect of "Islam" and its "Muslim" followers are polythetic in nature and differ from the conventional definitions of Islam and Muslim, based on a monothetic classification.

Keywords: Cham Bani, *Hồi giáo*, Islam, Vietnam, polythetic classes, religious practice

I Introduction

Since the Doi Moi policy, religion has been discussed actively in Vietnam so as to maintain national unification as well as to construct a national identity in the country's new period. In 2007, the *White Paper on Religion and Policies* was released with a special reference to the six state-recognized religions: Buddhism, Catholicism, Protestantism,

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Table 1 "Muslims" in Vietnam

	Islam (Cham Islam), New Islam	Bani (Cham Bani), Old Islam
Branch	Sunni	Bani
Place of living	An Giang province, Tay Ninh province, Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Nai province, Ninh Thuan province	Ninh Thuan province, Binh Thuan province (old territory of Panduranga-Champa)
Authorized organizations	Ho Chi Minh City Muslim Community Representative Committee (1992~) An Giang Muslim Community Representative Committee (2004~)	Bani Religious Leaders Council (2006~)
Population	25,000	41,000
Places of worship	41masjid, 19 *surao*	17 *thang mugik*
Religious clerics	288	407
Religious features	Islamic rules and rituals are fully observed; pilgrimages to Mecca; networks with Malaysia, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia	Strongly influenced by local, traditional customs and beliefs and incorporated elements of Brahmanism and matriarchy; no pilgrimages

Source: Vietnam, GCRA (2006)

Islam, Cao Dai, and Hoa Hao (Vietnam, Government Committee for Religious Affairs (GCRA) 2006).[1] In this paper, I examine the state-recognized Islam, *Hồi giáo*, in order to contribute to an understanding of a peripheral aspect of Muslim.

According to the official statistics in 2009, the number of "Muslims" in Vietnam is approximately 75,000, many of whom are part of the Cham ethnic group, believed to be the descendants of Champa.[2] They are divided into two main groups: one, the Muslims living in Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan provinces in south-central Vietnam, known as "the Old Islamic Group," "Cham Bani," or "Bani"; two, the Muslims living in An Giang, Tay Ninh, and Dong Nai provinces around the Mekong Delta, as well as in Ho Chi Minh City, known as "the New Islamic Group," "Cham Islam," or "Islam" (see Table 1). There are considerable differences between the two groups in terms of religious practices: the Cham Bani are strongly influenced by local and traditional customs and beliefs and have incorporated elements of Brahmanism and ancestor worship. They also have no contact with the wider Islamic world, while Cham Islam is Sunni Muslim and has maintained contact with the Islamic community through pilgrimages to Mecca or studies abroad in such countries as Malaysia, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia.[3]

1) The first statistics in 1999 identified six state-recognized religions; by 2011 there were 12 state-recognized religions, including Baha'i, Buu Son Ky Huong, etc.
2) Champa is one of the oldest kingdoms in Southeast Asia, having been established around the second century in what is today's central Vietnam.
3) The presence of two groups of Muslims is regarded as a result of differences in the process of Islamization. The Islamization of Champa is believed to have occurred through contact with Islamic ↗

Ever since the French colonial period, contemporary academia has researched the religious situation of Cham Bani. Records left by missionaries and colonial administrators indicate that the Cham Bani, or "les Chams musulmans du Sud-Annam," recite the Quran and believe in Allah, yet do not strictly follow the Islamic faith. They do not recite prayers five times a day; they believe in gods other than Allah; and during Ramadan, only monks fast. For these reasons, the Cham Bani are described variously as "Shiites" (Catabon 1901, 4; Durand 1903, 54) or ". . . musulmans, d'ailleurs peu orthodox" (Ner 1942, 154). The descriptions of the Cham Bani, based on the Western Christian concept of religion, have not changed greatly till today (Phan *et al.* 1991; Phan 1993; Phú 2004).

Indeed, not all of the people who are officially classified as "Islam" or *Hồi giáo* in Vietnam identify themselves as Muslim; the Cham Bani people especially do not have such self-identification. They usually say that they are the followers of *Hồi giáo* but not Islam; more specifically they identify themselves as *Hồi giáo* or Bani, but not as Muslims. This raises the question whether *Hồi giáo* can be translated as Muslim. Some of the Cham Bani villagers and intellectuals whom I approached claim that it is a mistake to view them as Muslims. As I will explore further below, they view Cham Bani as one branch of the "Cham religion," rather than of Islam. While Cham Islam and Cham Bani are both ethnic Cham, the former tends to regard the latter as non-Muslims, and many Cham Bani intellectuals think of themselves as non-Muslims as well.

How did such a gap between the official/scholarly discourse and the practitioners' perception emerge? Is *Hồi giáo*, a state-recognized religion translated as "Islam" in Vietnam, axiomatically the same as Islam, and are its followers Muslim? It should be noted that because of this gap, I differentiate between the Vietnamese state-recognized category of "Muslim" in this paper and Muslim as generally defined.

Perhaps this difference is caused by the method of classification of Islam or Muslim. In general, Islam and Muslim are defined in an essentialist way; indeed, faced with "the diversity of Islam," there is a tendency, as numerous previous ethnographic descriptions have made clear, to view such practices as the recitation of the Quran, the Islamic prayer (salat), or fasting of Ramadan as having uniform meanings for Muslims worldwide. In addition, there is a tendency to view the various religious practices of Muslims in local societies as "a variation of Islam," or else to categorically divide the local religious

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↘ Arab merchants and the Persians, from the ninth to eleventh century, and through the Malays, from the sixteenth to seventeenth century. The Cham Bani could have been a group of people who stayed behind even after the country was deprived of maritime trade with Islam. The Cham Islam might be a group of people who moved to Cambodia and then the Mekong Delta whose practice of Islam was intensified through contact with the Malays (Nakamura 2000).

elements into "Islamic" or "non-Islamic."[4] The Cham Bani have been classified as Islam because of the presence of Islamic elements such as prayers to Allah or recitations of the Quran.

Meanwhile, the practitioners themselves do not necessarily subscribe to such categorizations. Most of the villagers in Cham Bani society do not distinguish between the "Islamic" and "non-Islamic" elements of their religion. In other words, the villagers' Islamic religious practices are more similar to those of practical religion.[5] Moreover, in Cham Bani society, Islamic religious practices vary depending on gender or social stratum. In fact, most of the villagers do not recite the Quran, and they even eat pork outside the village. Despite these "ambiguous" practices, the religion has been described as "Muslim," and the religious elements have been described separately as Islamic/non-Islamic, or orthodox/non-orthodox in ethnographic writing or religious documents.

The conventional definition of Islam, or Muslim, is usually made on the assumption that the followers share certain practices or belief systems. However, among the Cham Bani, the Vietnamese "Muslim," it is unclear whether its followers have common Islamic practices or belief systems.

Wittgenstein has shown that such a definition based on the idea that a concept has one essential common feature is unrealistic and advocates instead the concept of "family resemblance" (Wittgenstein 1967). The anthropologist Rodney Needham has incorporated his concept into anthropology and insists that such anthropological concepts of "family" and "marriage" cannot apply to the whole society. Additionally, he borrowed two classifications from natural sciences: monothetic and polythetic. The monothetic classification is one in which an individual of a certain class possesses at least one common feature. In the polythetic classification, an individual of a class does not share even one feature as a whole (Needham 1975).

Shirakawa applied this polythetic classification to the study of religion. Mentioning the policy of separation of Shintoism and Buddhism implemented by the Meiji government, he focused on the historical regional expansion of *Jisha* and *Kenmitsu* as ambiguous classes and reconsidered the syncretic fusion of Shintoism and Buddhism in Japan from the perspective of polythetic class (Shirakawa 2007). Examining the religious discourse in modern Japan, he points out the importance of describing a religious situation that is "natural" for the people who live inside of it, not as a variation of religious syncretism.

Using Needham's polythetic classification and referring to Shirakawa's work, this

4) Other labels like "folk Islam" or "islam" in lowercase letters (Eickelman 1982; El-Zein 1977) have also emerged.

5) The meaning of practical religion here is that found in *Dialectic in Practical Religion* (1968) by Edmond Leach.

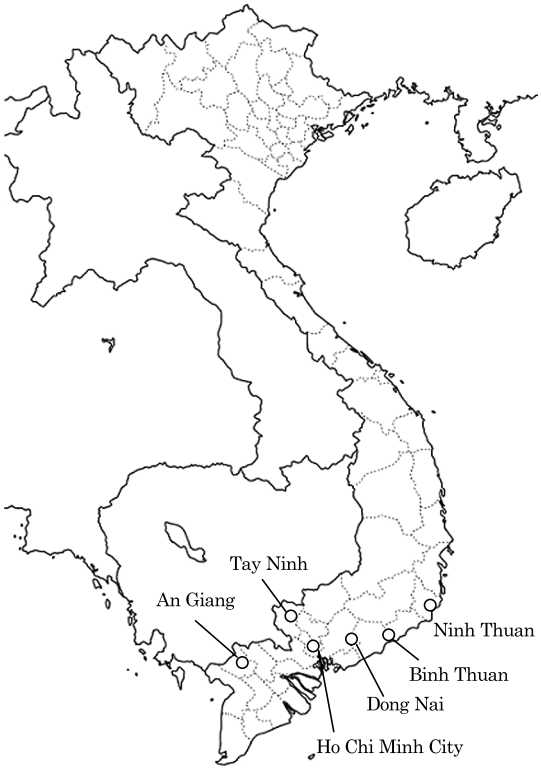
paper focuses on the dynamic evolution of Islamic religious practices that differ depending on gender or social strata among the Cham Bani. The paper then considers the possibility of understanding *Hồi giáo* or "Muslim" in Vietnam as a polythetic class.

II The Religious Situation in a Cham Bani Village

The Cham Bani live mainly in Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan provinces, in south-central Vietnam. These provinces are where Panduranga, part of the kingdom of Champa, was found. Another religious group of the Cham exists here, usually referred to by Vietnamese scholars and officials as Cham Balamon, the followers of *Bà la môn giáo*.[6] These two religious groups inhabit separate villages; intermarriage, although not explicitly forbidden, is rare and is, in fact, said to have been formerly taboo. The people of both groups are matrilineal and conform to the practice of matrilocal residence, with houses of the same descent group usually neighboring one another. The sphere dominated by members of the same descent group is called *laga*, and its members constitute fluid units on occasions of rituals, such as ancestor worshipping, while a unit of expenditure or the production of daily life is basically one household, which is composed of a husband, wife, and their children. Members of the same descent group recognize each other through the cemetery or gravesite of the group, and also through a lineage deity called *achiet atau*, who is worshipped in a basket and maintained by a woman called *po atau* (landlord of *atau*), of the descent group.

In the past, the Cham people of the region belonged to one of the two religious groups mentioned above; however, since the emergence of converts to Sunni Islam in the 1960s, another religious group has developed: Cham Islam. Cham Islam is usually described as followers of *Hồi giáo mới* in Vietnamese, which means "new Islam," or *Cham biraw* in Cham, which means "New Cham." According to previous studies, "New Islam" began to emerge in the 1960s, when some of the Cham Bani were exposed to the practice of Sunni Muslims in places such as Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City). Realizing that their own religious practices were not authentic, they began to aim for purer Islamic practices (Nguyễn 1974, 272; Nakamura 1999, 104). After their conversion, the converts abandoned ancestor worship and, with the aid of the Islam Community, built mosques in their villages (Dohamide 1965, 56; Yoshimoto 2010, 243).[7]

6) *Bà la môn giáo* has been described as indigenized Hinduism. For example, see Phan *et al.* (1991).
7) This caused clashes with other Cham Bani, who saw no contradictions with their traditional religious practices.



Map 1 "Muslim (*Hồi giáo*)" Residential Provinces and City in Vietnam

Today, there are approximately 100,000 Cham living in this region (see Table 2). As the table shows, the total population of the *Bà la môn giáo* is greater than that of the *Hồi giáo* ("Muslim"). The total "Muslim" population in both provinces is approximately 44,000. This number includes both the Cham Bani and Cham Islam; there are no statistics revealing the breakdown for each group. However, according to an official report in 2001, the population of the Cham Islam in Ninh Thuan province was 1,791, which counted four masjid. Thus the majority of the "Muslim" population in this region consists of the Cham Bani. The more than 40,000 Cham Bani of Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan provinces are scattered over 20 villages. Each village of Cham Bani usually has one masjid called *thang magik*.

This paper focuses on the Cham Bani religious situation and practices in Y Village, Bac Binh district, Binh Thuan province.[8] The village has approximately 3,800 inhabitants

8) My fieldwork was carried out mainly among the Cham communities in Bac Binh district, Binh Thuan province in 2001, 2002, and 2011.

Table 2 "Muslim" and *Bà la môn* Population in Vietnam

Province	Religion	Population		
		Both Sexes	Male	Female
Ninh Thuan	*Hồi giáo* "Muslim"	25,512	12,659	12,853
	Bà la môn	40,695	20,057	20,638
Binh Thuan	*Hồi giáo* "Muslim"	18,779	9,454	9,325
	Bà la môn	15,094	7,413	7,681

Source: Vietnam, Central Population and Housing Census Steering Committee (CPHCSC) (2010)

and most are of Cham Bani origin. The majority of the villagers earn their living by growing paddy rice; however, since harvests are irregular because of the dry climate and poor soil, many villagers work on the side—making charcoal, collecting firewood, weaving, working as a housemaid in town, etc.—in order to supplement their income.

Certain religious practices prevail in the village, such as worship of the village god called *po yang* or *po palei* at a place of worship called *bimon*; worship of *po Auluah* (Allah), which has roots in Islam, at the *thang magik* (masjid); worship of the dead such as ancestor worship, and worship of the lineage deity *achiet atau* as mentioned previously.

Until the middle of the twentieth century, villagers used to live on a hill at the foot of a mountain, but today they live on some flat land close to National Highway 1.[9] Although the hill area is no longer the site of daily activities, there remain graves, fields, and a religious building for *bimon* worshipping, the mausoleum of a Champa king or his servant, *Po Klong Sak*. On the flat land can be found paddy fields and buildings, including the village office, a clinic, a post office, an elementary school, and a *thang magik* for worshipping *po Auluah*.

Structurally, the Cham society in this region is made up of two categories: *hala Janan* (religious priests) and *ghiheh* (laity). I will set out the religious elements by focusing first on the types of religious priests. As shown in Table 3, there are different types of religious priests, who are, in turn, served by priests known as *acar* and *po acar*, and an elderly woman known as *muk buh*, who makes offerings in dishes for *acar* during the rituals. The main role of the *acar* is to oversee the worship of *po Auluah* and *muk kei* (ancestors), drawing on his knowledge of manuscripts, generically called *kura'an* (Quran), which are written in transformed Arabic letters called *akhar bini*.[10] Rituals in *thang magik*

9) According to the elders in the village, the villagers were forced to move under the Strategic Hamlet Program in 1959.

10) There are several types of *kura'an* in Cham Bani: *patar*, *murat*, *janreng*, *gar*, etc. In any of these *kura'an*, phonetic transcriptions and explanations, written using the traditional writing system called *akhar thrah*, are inserted.

Table 3 *Halau Janan* (Religious Priests) in the Cham Bani Village

Name	Sex	Main Roles	Induction Pattern of Knowledge	Number
Acar	Male	Prayers at *thang magik* (*vat*), recitation of *kura'an* for *po Auluah* and ancestors	*Akhar Bini*, *Akhar Thrah*	46
Muk buh	Female	Offerings for *acar*, *po Auluah*		1
On muduon	Male	Execution of *rija* and ritual worship of *po yang*	*Akhar Thrah*	3
On kaing	Male	Dance for *rija*	*Akhar Thrah*	1
Muk pajau	Female	Dance for *rija*		1
Muk rija	Female	Dance for *rija*, safeguarding of *achiet atau*		2

Source: Author's research at Y Village in 2003.

Table 4 Main Annual Rituals Held in the *Thang Magik*

Days (Lunar Calendar)	Event
1st Friday of the 1st month	*Suk Amuwan*
Every Friday for six weeks during the 6th–7th month (with each of the six *thang magik* taking turns)	*Suk Dang*
9th month	*Ramuwan*
10th day of the 12th month	*Waha*

Source: Author's research at Y Village in 2003.

are organized on set days according to the lunar calendar and seem to be the principal religious events for the villagers (see Table 4). The *acar* also leads rites of passage such as marriages, funerals, and so forth. In fact, the people do not consider the *acar* merely as the community's priest but also as a representative of each descent group, as I describe in the next section. *Bimon* and *achiet atau* rituals are led by a priest called *on muduon*, guided by manuscripts written in *akhar thrah*, the traditional writing system of the Cham. These rituals, called *rija*, are meant to serve deities or *po yang*. They are not conducted in *thang magik* and are held according to the traditional *sakawi* calendar.[11)]

In short, religious affairs are divided into two categories in the village. Rituals related to *po Auluah*, *thang magik*, as well as the rites of passage, are served by *acar* who have knowledge of *kura'an*; rituals for *po yang*, the village god, and lineage deities are led by *on muduon*. *Po Auluah* (Allah), *thang magik* (masjid), and *kura'an* are regarded as Islamic elements, having originated from Islam; however, they have been co-opted and

11) Villagers use the Western calendar and the Vietnamese lunisolar calendar on a daily basis while the traditional calendar, *sakawi*, is used for customary rituals. The *sakawi* plays no role in most people's lives; only religious priests and intellectuals consult it for information and guidance in organizing rituals and annual events (Yoshimoto 2011).

practiced quite differently in the Cham Bani society such that describing them simply as examples of "the diversity among commodities of Islam" is limiting and possibly inaccurate. In the next section, I describe how these elements are practiced in the region.

III Islamic Religious Practices in the Village

In this section, I will focus on three Islamic elements of the Cham Bani village: the *thang magik*, the recitation of the *kura'an*, and rituals conducted during Ramadan, called *Ramuwan*.

In both official and scholarly literature, *thang magik* has been translated as "mosque" and is considered to be one element that demonstrates the "Islam-ness" of Cham Bani because it is where people offer their prayers to Allah. Observations in situ reveal the interesting process of local acceptance of Islam, which might not be entirely captured in the translation.[12)]

Photo 1 shows the exterior of a *thang magik*. Its front wall is encased in concrete, it lacks towers like minarets, and it is painted with a variety of decorations and words. In the middle, towards the top of the front pillars, the number "1993" is written in Cham traditional letters, flanked on both sides by yin-yang figures. On the front side of the roof is a *honkan*, a symbolic figure of dualism in Cham society (see details in Section IV). Inside, one finds a wooden box-like pulpit called *minbar*, from which the *acar* recites the *kura'an* during the Friday prayer ritual (Photo 2). For the villagers, this pulpit should be placed to the west—"the direction of the *Maka* (Makkah)." The frame of the pulpit is painted red, with pictures of dragons that resemble the holy snake, *Naga*, as well as a *gai bhong*, a red rod wrapped in a white cloth. The red rod is considered to be a symbol of *po Mohamat*, Muhammad.

The *thang magik* is unlike the Islamic mosque—it is closed most of the time and people do not enter for prayers five times a day—but like other Islamic religious centers, it is regarded as the main communal setting for rituals, which are administered on Fridays of certain months of the lunar calendar (Table 4).

As mentioned above, the Cham society in this region is composed of two categories—religious priests and the laity—so participants and practices at *thang magik* are notably different. The villagers use different words for "pray": for example, the prayer

12) According to Aymonier's Cham-French dictionary, *magik* means "masjid" and *thang* means "house" (Aymonier 1906, 367).

Photo 1 Exterior of a *Thang Magik*

Photo 2 A *Minbar* inside a *Thang Magik*

by the *acar* for *po Auluah*, with recitations from the *kura'an* and accompanied by special body movements, is called *vat*. On the other hand, the laity's prayer, without any recitation, is described as *lancan* and *tampah*. These are dedicated to *po Auluah*, the

Photo 3 Textbook for Laypersons (Edited by Phuoc Nhon Village Doctrine Committee 1971)

village god and lineage deities. The laity can only connect to *po Auluah* or the deities through priests as their medium.[13)]

The *acar* carry out Islamic religious practices on behalf of the villagers, such as recitation of the *kura'an*, but they do not follow Muslim duties strictly, not even the requisite prayers five times a day. In fact, they are not considered by the villagers as simply priests but also as representatives of each descent group because of the important role they play, particularly in funeral rituals and ancestor worship. Therefore the motivation to become an *acar* is usually explained by a desire to serve the descendant group.

In the Cham Bani society, studying the *kura'an* is the right—and obligation—of male members, and is not reserved solely for the *acar*. Boys who reach the age of 12–13 years old must study Arabic text in the *kura'an* at the *thang magik*. When they are able to recite some phrases and pass an exam, they celebrate this rite of passage called *talaik kalem*,[14)] after which they are given the right to study the *kura'an*. Photo 3 shows a textbook for the laity that was edited by an *acar* living in Ninh Thuan province in 1971. Written in Vietnamese on the cover are the words: "the sacred phrases to serve your ancestors," and in the preface the sentence: "*akhar rah*, *akhar mukey*, *akhar ta-a*" (phrases

13) There are no differences in the laity's prayers no matter what rank. Laymen's prayers for *po Auluah* are also no different from that for *po yang*; *po Auluah* is positioned as one of the deities. In this respect, *po Auluah* is manifestly not the same as the Islamic god Allah.

14) *Talaik* (open) *kalem* (a brush) means "begin writing." This ritual consists mainly of boys reading aloud the Arabic alphabet called *akhar Bini* and *bismillah* (the phrase uttered before reciting each chapter of the Quran), following the *acar*'s direction.

Table 5 Main Events of *Ramuwan* in Y Village

Day (Date)		Events
Shaban 25	July 27	The *acar* organize *thao bah* and *thao het* for purification before *Ramuwan*.
26–28	July 28–30	*Nao ghur*: The *acar* lead villagers to graveyards for recitations from the *kura'an* to invite their ancestors home.
28–29	July 30–31	Members of the descent groups organize *mbeng muk kei*, where they make offerings to ancestral spirits. The *acar* of each descent group visits members' places of worship and recites the *kura'an*.
29	July 31	The *acar* shave their heads before leaving for the *thang magik*. *Peh thang magik*: opening the door of the *thang magik*. The *acar* enter with their baggage before the evening rituals. They change their clothes for the ritual *ricaow*, and the purification is carried out.
Ramadan 1–3	Aug 1	The *acar* stay at the *thang mugik* and do not leave. The *acar* and the villagers adhere to a vegetarian diet.
5	Aug 5	*Patrun gai bhong*: the depositing of the "red rod" is carried out in the morning. After this ceremony, the villagers can once again eat meat.
15	Aug 15	*Muk trun*: the advent of female deities and ancestors.
20	Aug 20	*On trun*: the advent of male deities and ancestors.
27	Aug 27	*Tuh barah*: offering of rice to elders and ancestors.
28	Aug 28	*Malau on*: seeing the deities and ancestors off.
30	Aug 30	*Parabha brah*: distribution of rice for the offering. *Trun gai bhong*: the depositing of "the red rod" for the ritual advancement of the *acar* on the following day.
Syawwal 1	Aug 31	*Talaihwak edao*: closing ceremony for *Ramuwan*. *Tagok madin:* ceremony of *acar* advancement.

Source: Author's research in July and August 2011.

of *rah*, phrases for ancestors, phrases for praying). These three phrases are effective in ancestor worship and must be studied by Bani males. The textbook also quotes four passages from the *kura'an* that the Cham Bani recite for ancestral service, when visiting a graveyard, and during a funeral. Thus it can be seen that in Cham Bani society, reciting from the *kura'an* serves as an offering to ancestral spirits and not as a Muslim duty.

Next I will describe the ritual process in Ramadan. For the villagers, Ramadan, which they call *Ramuwan*, is the most important season in their religious life. It is a sacred month because it is the time when ancestors return home, and the *acar* stay at the *thang magik* for one month and adhere to a vegetarian diet. Although *Ramuwan* has been described as a distorted version of the Muslim fasting month, the people do not actually fast.

Table 5 shows the main ritual processes of *Ramuwan*. As we can see, many of the rites are similar to a memorial service. Three days before the first day of the month of *Ramuwan*, people visit the graveyards of their matrilineal lineage and invite their ancestral spirits back to their houses. After the three-day graveyard visits, people make offerings to the ancestral spirits residing in their homes. First, they prepare a meal offering to every ancestral spirit, then they make individual offerings to descendant members

Table 6 Prayers during *Ramuwan* in Y Village

Time	Events
19:30	*Esa*: the main *vat*; laywomen bring offerings.
21:00	*Acar* have their evening meal.
07:30	*Sub hik*
10:30	*Wah rik*: after the *vat*, the *acar* eat a light meal and confectioneries.
14:00	*Essak rik*
15:00	*Grip bak*: after this *vat*, *acar* eat their daytime meal.

Source: Author's research in July and August 2011.

who have passed away. These offerings are made by male members who recite the *kura'an*, and who are usually *acar*; however, the oldest woman of the household usually has the responsibility of remembering the names of the deceased over a span of approximately seven generations.[15] After the offerings, a place for the ancestral spirits is set up in the house, and an individual is responsible for keeping this place clean at all times.

On the first day of Ramadan, after sunset, the *acar* enter the *thang magik*. This marks the beginning of the holy month of *Ramuwan*. During this month, they stay in the *thang magik*, away from their families to serve Allah five times a day; however, as Table 6 shows, the names and times of prayers are different from Muslim prayers. Laywomen and elderly men, all dressed in white, watch and participate in these prayers, but they do not recite the *kura'an*. The main function of the females is to bring sets of betel nuts for the ancestral spirits and to pray for blessings.

Women's participation in the religious ceremony is crucial and they play a significant role. The wife, or other female members of the descendant group, prepares special meals for the priests twice a day—before sunrise and after sunset. According to a woman of a house that I observed, the rice prepared by the women is eaten in the morning by the priests for ancestors, and in the evening, it is eaten for *po Auluah*.

While the priests fast for the first three days, laypeople do not observe the ritual of fasting at all; nevertheless, they are forbidden from eating meat for the first three days of the month, until the "red rod" is deposited.[16] Women make special offerings for female spirits on the 15th, and for male spirits on the 20th. Offerings continue to be made for ancestral spirits at the mosque until the 27th, when they return to their world.

15) In a house that I observed in 2010, in Ninh Thuan province, a woman around 52 years old said she invited about 50 spirits and members, both of matrilineal and patrilineal lineages. She said her deceased mother used to invite about 80 spirits and members, but she could not remember all of them so the number was reduced.

16) The length of abstention from meat depends on the area: for example, the Cham Bani in Ninh Thuan province are forbidden to eat meat for 15 days.

Photo 4 Offerings for Male Spirits in the *Thang Magik*

As I mentioned earlier, the *acar* and laypeople have different prayers. The prayers of the *acar* begin with a part called *vat* and finish with a section called *mroi*. *Vat* starts with ablutions, followed by a fixed sequence of movements: standing, prostrating, kneeling, and sitting, each conducted with a set reading from the *kura'an*, with the *acar* facing west all the time. After the *vat*, the *acar* sit up facing east and eat an offering for *po Auluah* or ancestors, then transition into the *mroi*, the closing ceremony that includes burning a piece of eagle wood.

The laity's prayers, called *lancan* and *tampah*, do not include reading from the *kura'an*; instead the people make individual wishes for health and prosperity—in short, worldly interests. They do not consume food offerings but bring some home as a food of grace.

As we have observed, people visit graveyards to bring ancestral spirits back home, make offerings to these spirits, and visit the *thang magik* with betel nuts offerings. They pray to *po Auluah*, but as we have seen, *Ramuwan* is mostly a month for memorial services and prayers for benefits.

IV The Cham Bani Discourse on Religion

As mentioned earlier, some argue that Cham Bani should not be considered as a form of Islam but as a branch or sect of a religious system. The ethnologist, Thanh Phan, who is of Cham Bani origin, explains Cham Bani as follows:

> Chams used to have two religious sects *Awal* and *Ahier*. . . . In colloquial language *Awal* is called Bani. Chams see *Awal* as symbolizing women and *Ahier* as symbolizing men. These two are diametrically opposed to each other in a sense, yet also cannot exist one without the other. . . . People of the Bani sect adopted Islamic thoughts and culture but they did not accept them passively or

Table 7 Examples of *Awal-Ahier* Attributions

Ahier (yang)	*Awal* (ying)
Balamon	Bani
Male	Female
1st–15th of the month Morning	16th–30th of the month Afternoon
On maduon *On Kaing* *Muk rija* *Po yang, Muk kei*	*Acar* *Po Aulouah* *Thang magik*
East	West

Source: Nakamura (1999) and author's research.

> mechanically; instead, by creatively and selectively adopting them, they assimilated the new religion into their own economic and cultural practices. This is why even today they do not worship only Allah but also other gods. (Thành 1996, 166)

According to this explanation, Bani is one sect of a people divided into *Awal* and *Ahier*. These words can be traced to the Arabic words meaning "last" and "first" respectively, and supplemented with a religious connotation of "woman" and "man."

Nakamura, based on her lengthy fieldwork, also traced the Cham religion from the perspective of *Awal-Ahier* (Nakamura 1999). According to Nakamura, all the phenomena of Cham society are constituted in the form of binary oppositions: for example, the relationship between Cham Balamon and Cham Bani achieves a harmony with the former belonging to *Awal* and the latter to *Ahier* sects. The religious elements in the Cham Bani village are drawn from a combination of *Awal* and *Ahier* elements (see Table 7).

Photo 5 is a *honcan*, a figure that illustrates the concept of *Awal-Ahier* dualism. As mentioned earlier, this figure, which resembles the Onkara of Balinese Hinduism, is painted on the roof of the *thang magik* in the village. Cham Bani is symbolized by the figure of the moon and the number 6 in traditional Cham letters, while Cham Balamon by the sun and the number 3. Together it demonstrates the fusion of the two.

Photo 5 A *Honcan*

This concept of *Awal-Ahier* is emphasized by Cham Bani intellectuals and ordained priests in discussions about Islam in Cham society, possibly as a means to validate the "authenticity" of the Cham Bani religion in the face of criticism by "orthodox" Islam and rejection of the indigenous elements within the Cham Bani religion. *Awal-Ahier* is understood as the syncretism that affirms the tolerance of Cham society. For these intellectuals, the Islamic religious practices of Cham Bani should be viewed through the *Awal-Ahier* perspective, rather than categorized as Islamic or non-Islamic. In my opinion, however, ordinary people are unfamiliar with these concepts and only understand that they are practicing their religion in the age-old, long-established manner.

V Conclusion

As mentioned in the first section, the Cham Bani have been considered as unorthodox Muslims because they recite the Quran and believe in Allah, yet do not strictly follow the Islamic faith. This perception is based on the idea that those who recite the Quran and fast during Ramadan are performing their Muslim duty and partake in the "commonality of Islam." This is a perception based on essentialism.

Such classification is unrealistic. As we have seen, Islamic religious practices among the Cham Bani differ widely depending on gender or social strata. Members of the Cham Bani do not have a single feature in common across the board. In other words, it can be said that the Cham Bani is a polythetic class.

Hồi giáo in Vietnam, regardless of the criteria used in the classification, is indeed a polythetic class, as opposed to the conventional classification of Muslim. On the question of self-recognition, not all of those officially classified as "Muslim" or *Hồi giáo* identify themselves as Muslim. Cham Bani people actually identify themselves as followers of *Hồi giáo*, calling themselves *tín đồ Hồi giáo* or *tín đồ đạo Hồi*. This does not, however, mean that they accept to be identified with Islam. They describe themselves as not of the Islam sect but Bani. In other words, they subscribe to a Vietnamese religious category that includes Cham Islam and Cham Bani, but not one where Islam is connected with the wider Islam community. To put it another way, the word "Islam" has two meanings in Vietnam: the first is Islam in a broad sense as the English translation of *Hồi giáo*; the second is Islam in a narrower sense as one of the groups of *Hồi giáo*—Cham Islam or Sunni Muslim.

This reality is not taken into account by the state and official classification is monothetic. Here I will discuss the state's stance towards syncretic religions such as Cham Bani. Since the beginning of the Doi Moi period, there has been much debate on religions

in Vietnam. The state has tended to consider cases such as Cham Bani, where foreign religion became "indigenized" (*dân tộc hóa*) as something positive.[17] We can see this quite clearly in an excerpt from a government white paper of 2006:

> Exogenous religions entering Vietnam have adapted to the cultural and religious complexions of the Vietnamese people. As a result, they have transformed from their original form; in other words, once these exogenous religions entered Vietnam, they were assimilated by Vietnamese culture. . . . Whether following exogenous or native religions, Vietnamese believers in general are influenced by polytheism, by a spirit of religious tolerance and of nationalism. (Vietnam, GCRA 2006, 9)

Incidentally, it has long used the term "religious syncretism" by anthropologists to explain the phenomenon in which a new or an exogenous religion, introduced to a specific society, either mixes or coexists with local religions as it is adopted. Within this framework, the debate was centered upon the question of whether the exogenous and local religions coexist without eliminating the border between them, or whether they blend together in a seamless form to create a new and coherent religious system. This idea, however, has been criticized from many directions (Leopold and Jensen 2004). For instance, some argued that all religions currently practiced are the products of syncretism, having incorporated elements from many different religious traditions. Others were concerned that because the idea of "authentic religion" is inherent in the idea of syncretism, it has imputed negative connotations such as "impure" and "inauthentic" to the real religious phenomena.

Anthropologists have focused on the discourses on syncretism or the processes through which different religions merge, examining how power is exercised in the process of legitimization or de-legitimization of certain religious practices (for example, Stewart and Shaw 1994). While some cultures embrace syncretism as evidence of their tolerance toward different cultures, others hold an "anti-syncretic" attitude, asserting their cultural "authenticity" by rejecting or erasing the "impure" cultural elements from their practices.

How then does religious assimilation occur in Vietnam? How does the foreign religion become "indigenized" (*dân tộc hóa*)? In the case of Cham Bani, this occurs by sustaining the worship of ancestors (*muk kei*) and deities (*yang*), including spirits of the members of each descendant group, village gods, and spirits of Champa kings or those who have served the kingdom. These are the local religious elements shared with the Cham Balamon, another religious group among the Cham. It is precisely in this way that Cham Bani differentiate themselves from Cham Islam by sustaining these elements.

17) For example, Đặng (2004).

From this perspective, it could be said that the Cham Bani might exist as Muslim only as recognized by the state. Perhaps, in a nation like Vietnam where a single religion does not constitute the glue of national unity, religious syncretism is linked to the idea of unique indigenous cultures that buttresses the image of a multi-ethnic Vietnam. It is precisely this religious syncretism that is held up as being "authentic."

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BOOK REVIEWS

CSEAS

Political Authority and Provincial Identity in Thailand: The Making of Banharn-buri

YOSHINORI NISHIZAKI

Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2011, xvii+254 p.

When Adhemar de Barros ran as candidate for the governor of São Paulo in the 1947, he anchored his campaign on the slogan "Rouba mas faz!" (roughly translated meant "He steals, but he gets things done!") De Barros went on to win the elections. He was a single termer and lost in the next round, but a decade later he reclaimed the post and became one of the most fascinating characters in Brazilian politics. Adhemar was a populist who won because of a solid electoral machine behind him (the Social Progressive Party dominated São Paulo politics in his time) and advocacy of social legislation and infrastructure development aimed at helping the poor. He was also perennially accused of corruption, although even his critics would qualify that in his days in office he did "get things done." The Thai politician Banharn Silpa-archa would have found a lot of things to talk about with Adhemar for the long-time boss of Suphanburi Province (slightly off the northwest side of Bangkok) would see in the Brazilian a kindred soul.

Why Suphanburians see Banharn differently from the way Bangkok and its "modern" elites and bevy of self-proclaimed democrats portray him is the subject of this excellent book by Yoshinori Nishizaki. Deploying a research methodology that combines social history, institutionalism and ethnography, Nishizaki proceeds to prove that, yes, Banharn is corrupt and the origins of his wealth are murky, but to his constituents he has singlehandedly brought modernity to their backwater communities. Yes, he colludes with dubious characters and keeps a firm control over state largesse for his benefit, yet his connections with powerful forces like the monarchy and with state bureaucrats also enabled him to bring development to his home province. And yes, he tends to amass power and sees no value in spreading "democracy" among his wards, but no matter, he has made "bad democracy" ("defective patrimonial democracy at the local level," as Nishizaki calls it) work in Suphanburi's favor.

This "false consciousness" can be traced back to a long history of neglect by "imperial" Bangkok. Nishizaki shows how Suphanburians have viewed the Thai state through time: an "unfeeling,"

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"crooked" and "ineffectual" state which had "belittled" the province for so long ("Suphanburi had been dumped [*thort thing*] by the state in a deep jungle, while other provinces from the north to the south prospered [at Suphanburi's expense]," complained on respondent). Banharn appeared on the scene just in time, the local hero awash in wealth from his construction company and then taking on the challenge of improving local welfare.

His personal donations (hospital wards, school buildings, welfare charities) started the development process, bringing not only prestige to Banharn but also laying the foundations for a political career that eventually propelled him to national prominence. Once in parliament, Banharn used state funds and maintained cozy relationships with critical agencies like the Department of Public Works to bring more bacon back to Suphanburi, to the delight of its citizens. Two of Nishizaki's best chapters discuss the relationship between infrastructure and the way it built political capital for Banharn (Chapter 4), and how roads and schools then became the institutional foundations for a provincial "imagined community" revolving around the old man's charisma (Chapter 6).

Suphanburians became Banharn's avid defenders when he was attacked in the capital for corruption. And as Suphanburi's landscape improved because of the spread of a modern road system and the expansion of schools and hospitals, Suphanburians also began to shed off their insecurities, taking pride in how their province had moved ahead of the others (and thumbing their noses at places like Chiangmai and Chiangrai). They then showed their gratitude to Banharn by littering Suphanburi with signboards paid for by communities, businessmen (and women?) and "ordinary" people, thanking the boss and asking him to attend one celebratory ceremony after another (Chapter 6).

How did Banharn ensure that state money was well spent? Nishizaki takes issue with the now popular view of local strongmen (*nakleng*) as violence-driven spoilsmen who act as Janus-faced mediators between state and community. Banharn, he argues, is less a *Mafiosi* and more like the ubiquitous provincial Chinese shop-owner, a *longju* (in Teochew) who is simultaneously meticulous and fuzzy about how things are done. This explains why Banharn was always visiting the province, checking on projects, demanding updates, nitpicking on reports, and berating local bureaucrats when their updates appear unreliable or incomplete.

And with Suphanburi's "relatively simple" social structure, Banharn "can enforce and maintain his [Foucauldian] panopticon control over civil servants directly and effectively, even at the lowest village level" (pp. 124–125). And *pace* critics who see these as mere showcases, Nishizaki argues that the sheer number of visits Banharn made to Suphanburi and the rigorous schedule he followed suggest the work ethic of a *longju*. The boss indeed took his responsibilities very, very seriously.

But this is also where one encounters a loose end. Nishizaki talks about secretly joining a journalist friend to watch Banharn preside over a meeting of the top directors of the 11 provincial public hospitals. He "observed in person" how the boss "had each director report to him how all

the budget items they had requested were justified and to what extent the funds allocated in the previous year were used in accordance with the original plan" (p. 122).

Yet, we do not get a sense of the tempo and temper of such a meeting and how these might explain Banharn's *longju* ethics. This should have been the part in the book where Nishizaki describes, in greater ethnographic detail, the tone of the meeting, the rise and fall in voices (and tempers?), and the ways in which the directors showed deference to the boss. Instead, we have his friend's vapid description of how things turned out: "This is like an oral examination at a university, and it's a grueling exam. It's not easy. But if you are a civil servant here, you must pass the exam" (p. 123).

This brings us to one of the book's puzzles. Nishizaki's portrait of the boss suggests someone who can be quite approachable, your typical small-town friendly *politico* as it were. The question then is why Nishizaki—who valued interviews (he listed down and described the sex, occupation, place of residence, dates of interviews and additional information about the 105 people he interviewed for his dissertation)—did not go straight to Banharn at that directors' meeting when he appeared to be just a couple of handshakes away from the boss? Why did he hesitate to ask for a one-on-one interview with the object of his curiosity? Perhaps Nishizaki feared that once "revealed" to the boss, his contacts would shy away from him after getting a warning from a Banharn wary of outsiders probing into his locale? But then if Banharn's panopticon was that good, then would he not know what people were telling Nishizaki and hence encourage them to tell him more good stories? This is one pathway where an elaborate Geertzian-like speculation was possible, but Nishizaki chose to keep his distance and just work the enamored crowd.

This gap inevitably raises another related point. Nishizaki argues that when it comes to Banharn's patrimonialism, "political scientists might try to examine the extent to which their narratives are objectively true. Such an exercise would be pointless, however, [as] Suphanburians' narratives have overlapping elements of reality, imagination, misrepresentation, exaggeration and (unintentional) distortion mixed into them" (p. 178). Indeed, his respondents produced varied explanations when it came to Banharn's corruption (from "we do not know" to accusing his critics of envy, to treating corruption as simply a "Thai custom"). But they remained unswerving in their support for him. Popular defense of the local despot is not unique here, as Nishizaki points out in his overview of comparative cases in East and Southeast Asia. Janus-faced politicians in Asia—and in still distant frontiers like the southern United States (oddly excluded by Nishizaki)—are known to shower their local constituents with development projects and promise provincial modernization, while reverting to their sleazy backroom and patronage deals to enrich themselves, their families and cronies once they are back in the capital.

Banharn's constituents know this and as long as "development" is constantly pouring into Suphanburi, they do not care if he is corrupt. They are perfectly happy with their boss. This is a point that Nishizaki repeatedly states in varying degrees of emphasis throughout the book, and it

stands on solid empirical *and* comparative grounds. But he fails to ask this crucial question to his respondents: have your lives improved considerably since the roads, schools and hospitals were built or improved? The book oddly says nothing about incomes and inequalities, content to rely on the vagueness of terms like development or improvement. We have no idea of how poor Suphanburi was before Banharn started pouring in infrastructure funds; neither are there any data on whether incomes had gone up after the modern highways were in use. Had this question been asked, it is possible that Nishizaki would have received more qualified responses. The admiration for Banharn may come mixed with apprehensions about the family's fortunes while the applause for what the Boss brought from Bangkok could be tempered by worries of a growing class disparity as the rice economy continues to evolve with the spread of high-yielding varieties and their attendant costs.

There is, in fact, very little political economy in this book and this lacuna is where Nishizaki is vulnerable to those who still see Banharn as the quintessential corrupt local boss. There are hints all over, especially when it comes to ascertaining why a certain construction firm got the contract for a particular road (cousins and cronies), but the overall picture of Banharn's corrupt enterprise remains sketchy (how much is Banharn worth? We do not know and his biographer does not tell us). Nishizaki may dither and say this is not what he was interested in, but at the end of the day, when you factor in the issue of whether Suphanburians' lives had improved after the roads were built, he must confront this major issue head on.

These are quibbles that perhaps this smart young scholar may wish to explore in his next book. As for now, let us enjoy this wonderful work, and especially delight in its idiosyncratic take on the "voices from below," where instead of opposition or quiet resistance against those in power, we hear approbations of what the strongman has done for them.

Somewhere in the netherworld Adhemar de Barros is smiling.

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Performing the Divine: Mediums, Markets and Modernity in Urban Vietnam

Kirsten W. Endres
Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2011, 244 p.

The resurgence of popular religion in Vietnam has attracted the attention of a large number of scholars, who have recently published works on the music (Norton 2009), hero worship (Phạm Quỳnh Phương 2009), transnational spread (Fjelstad and Nguyễn Thị Hiền 2011) and modernity (Taylor 2007) of the colorful rituals. Kirsten Endres' *Performing the Divine: Mediums, Markets and*

Modernity in Urban Vietnam takes its place among these other valuable studies, and advances a number of complex re-evaluations of contemporary theory in relation to new empirical studies.

Endres tells the story of how she discovered *lên đồng* rituals in 1998 while doing research on village festivals, observing a ceremony in a village that informants had told her was prohibited by the authorities and never performed. Eight years later, the capital city of Hanoi was full of private shrines dedicated to the Mother Goddess and the music from Four Palace ceremonies wafted down from the top floors of the narrow town houses in trendy, affluent neighborhoods as well as more popular ones. Her research took place in the increasingly public sphere of competing master mediums, folkloric performances and new ideas of spirit mediumship rituals as part of an "intangible cultural heritage" which defines Vietnamese identity.

The Four Palace rituals are sometimes described as a "religion of prosperity" in the "alternative modernity" of Vietnam's new market economy. Recently, they have gained legitimacy and a measure of official recognition through their description as the "Religion of the Mother Goddess" (Đạo Mẫu), seen as the indigenous religion of the Red River Delta, the homeland of Vietnamese tradition. Studies by folklorists like Ngô Đức Thịnh, Nguyễn Thị Hiền and Phạm Quỳnh Phương played an important part in both documenting these practices and arguing that they should be recognized as authentic local culture.

But, as Endres argues, this process of documentation is also a complex one, since it selectively emphasizes certain elements (performance and connections to business success) at the expense of others (healing and divination). It may also lead to a certain standardization of a pantheon once characterized by its fluidity, flexibility and openness to individual innovation.

The vital multiplicity of Vietnamese forms of spirit worship has been subject to some form of administrative control since imperial times, when particular deities were issued imperial certificates of investiture (*sặc phong*) and assigned ranks in official hierarchies. This rank did not necessarily correspond to the popularity or influence of the deity, however, since people thronged to the temples of deities perceived to be spiritually efficacious, whether or not they were sanctioned as historical heroes or heroines. Many of the most responsive deities were, in fact, women who had been wronged: who had been wrongly suspected of infidelity or immorality, who had died young and tragically, and whose cult had been neglected in official centers, only to resurface by possessing new spirit mediums and gaining attention through healings.

Spirit possession was for a long time a peripheral cult of "troubled women," condemned by communist authorities as a form of superstition and fraud. This profile is now changing, and while women still predominate as ordinary mediums, many if not most of the best-known urban mediums are now male. This transformation has effected what Endres calls the "various political and cultural agendas" that have been played out in the creation of Đạo Mẫu. Among those that she explores are the connections between Đạo Mẫu and commerce, the aesthetic values of performance, gender fluidity and what she calls the "heritagisation" of Four Palace mediumship in today's Vietnam.

Drawing on Victor Turner's theories of the ritual process and Bruce Kapferer's ideas of the dynamics of ritual performance, Endres analyzes a number of specific ceremonies to discern how "the symbolic system of the Four Palace religion is inscribed into the novice medium's body as lived experience" (p. 24). This process begins with ideas that certain persons have a "spirit root" (*căn đồng*) or a "destined aptitude for mediumship" based the idea of a karmic debt that can only be repaid by serving the spirits in this life. A personal crisis, a string of bad luck, disturbing dreams or a serious illness can all be symptoms of this "spirit root." Endres argues that to understand how a medium can benefit from becoming a medium we must pay attention both to the narratives they present about their pathway into mediumship and to the ritual process through which they come to feel newly empowered by the spirits.

Ritual performances themselves can be highly contested. They have changed significantly from the French colonial era through the period of suppression by the secular state to the present moment of efflorescence. The rise of a new consumer culture has transformed deities once seen as vengeful supernatural beings who punish even the slightest mistakes into more tolerant "exchange partners" willing to work with their mediums to conjure wealth and prosperity in this world. A female dominated cult has also become increasingly male led, with transgendered "celebrity mediums" emerging in recent years as Vietnamese society in general has become more open to gender fluidity.

In the past two decades, Four Palace spirit mediumship has been reborn as "Đạo Mẫu," at the impetus of a number of Vietnamese folklore scholars and anthropologists. Instead of seeing these rituals as a way of serving the gods and deities (in effect, an intense and more dramatic form of ancestor worship), these intellectuals have helped to re-define it as a religion, a pathway with its own implicit ideas and doctrines. Đạo Mẫu makes claims to embody a more authentic and ancient heritage in which the painful events of the twentieth century are completely absent—a telling sort of "historical amnesia" that elides an age of ideological conflict to take refuge in an imperial pantheon of heroes, highland ladies, princes, and princesses.

In this respect, the impetus to standardize and get recognition as "Vietnamese indigenous religion" is similar to the impetus that the leaders of the colonial era "new religion" Caodaism felt, when they moved to define a nation that did not yet exist in terms of a spiritual heritage that emerged from Vietnam's history and colonial experience. But while Caodaists embraced syncretism, and boldly encompassed Jesus Christ and many Christian themes into the overarching East Asian pantheon headed by the Jade Emperor, Đạo Mẫu advocates are moving in a different direction, asserting the modernity of cultural elements once relegated to the domain of rural folklore, tying the destiny of urban businessmen to remote temples scattered across the countryside.

The new Đạo Mẫu has been cleansed of its "superstitious" connections to fortune telling and other "unscientific" functions and recuperated as "an aestheticized performance of spiritual music and dance, worthy of being preserved as part of Vietnam's cultural heritage" (p. 184). In her final

chapter, Endres indicates some more recent aspects of these transformations—the ways in which ethnic minorities have been "hybridized" by their depictions in the performances, and the influence of overseas Vietnamese returning to their homeland to sponsor new rituals and introduce a more sudden, spontaneous form of possession. The old imperial deities have become "cosmopolitan travelers in the transethnic and transnational spiritscapes" (p. 199) inhabited by the newly mobile populations of those who worship them. Endres herself has proved an insightful and perceptive guide along these journeys.

This is an important book as much for the conceptual challenges it presents as the new ethnographic details. It is a theoretically sophisticated study that asks questions about the role of particular agents and power relations in resurrecting and reconstituting a once suppressed set of ritual practices. The answers that it provides will appeal to scholars of religion, ritual and Vietnamese studies.

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Natural Potency and Political Power: Forests and State Authority in Contemporary Laos

SARINDA SINGH

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012, 192 p.

"*Muang Metaphysics*"

The question of how the Lao state maintains legitimacy and authority in the countryside is a key topic of interest for both Lao studies scholars and development practitioners. With the development of a resource frontier, based on the development of hydropower, mining and forest-land concessions, the Lao state is increasingly making its full regulatory and extractive presence felt in

rural areas. How are local communities in Lao PDR (Laos) understanding and reacting to these sweeping changes of commodification and ecological modernization? While conservationists, Lao state officials, and local villagers each perceive forests and the extractive logging and hydropower development that are transforming these resources, are they truly "seeing" and understanding these processes in the same way?

With a new monograph, *Natural Potency and Political Power*, anthropologist Sarinda Singh makes a solid contribution to our understanding of tropical forests and wildlife as materialities, discourses, and most importantly, as potent socio-cultural objects and symbols. Singh has two key objectives in this book. She seeks to promote an understanding of forests and wildlife in Laos based upon a cultural studies approach to "symbolic meanings" (p. 4) (as opposed to, for example, political ecology's primary focus on the actors, institutions, and discourses governing forest access and livelihood). Secondly, Singh focuses our attention to how differing ideas of the wild forest (*pa*) and wildlife animals (*sat pa*), and ideas about clearing forests and consuming forest animals, are interwoven with issues of identity and the legitimacy of state rule in Laos. This represents an interesting avenue to proceed. Singh's research is nuanced and well grounded in Laos as a place and a cultural-political context—the author's dissertation fieldwork site in the Nakai Region of central Khammouane Province—and the themes engaged in the book make it of relevance to readers beyond the Lao studies/political ecology community.

The book proceeds in seven chapters. Chapter 1, "Peripheral Engagements," presents a useful review of the nature of contemporary state authority and political culture in Lao PDR. Singh forwards three key features of governance in Laos (p. 7): (i) An enduring divide between policy development and practical policy application, and an associated logic of policy as negotiation. This draws in part upon Peter Jackson (2004) on the Thai "regime of images" (a citation missing from the book's reference list); (ii) A logic of "state sanctioned, family based patronage" (p. 8); and (iii) The maintenance of secrecy, fear and uncertainty by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP), and an associated system of authority through illegibility (p. 9). Singh discusses forests and wildlife as key realms of symbolic meaning, based in large part on a classical *muang: pa* dialectic (civilized human settlement versus wild forests), which Singh argues are historically embedded in Tai-Buddhist culture. In this first chapter Singh also forwards an interpretive framework based around the terms "potency" and "potential" ("a power that is yet to be realized" p. 14) as alternative ways of understanding political power and symbolic authority in Laos. This section on understanding the cultural topologies of political power draws upon Theravada Buddhist studies, particularly Reynolds (2005).

The second chapter, "Comprehending Conservation," traces through foreign and Lao discourses and ideologies of forests as threatened natures. Singh argues that an internalized metaphysic of the *muang* and the *pa* is at work in relation to a generalized "antipathy to conservation" in Laos (p. 49); or, for example, when local Lao informants express desires for development as

opposed to forest preservation.

In two of the strongest chapters in the book, Singh turns towards "Appetites and Aspirations" (Chapter 3) to locate the symbolic potency of wildlife, and wildlife as social objects of consumption and meaning. Singh continues this line of argument with a discussion of "Ecopolitical Elephants" (Chapter 4), where elephants are interpreted as symbols of royalty, targets for poachers, and perhaps, occasional objects for local culinary consumption in Nakai Region. Singh argues convincingly that pachyderms are intimately bound up with power, potential, and legitimate state authority in rural Laos: "Elephants are emblematic of the potential of the *pa* that elites attempt to monopolize to support their authority over the *muang*" (p. 98).

Chapter 5 "Debating the Forest," examines the state of forest management in Laos. Here, Singh argues that it is not deforestation per se which destabilizes the notion of rightful state authority, but rather rampant deforestation without an appropriate sharing of benefits and prosperity. The case study is drawn from the powerful "Phonesack Group/Nancy" logging company, which has been engaged in extensive extractive logging in the Nam Theun 2 hydropower zone in Nakai Region, central Laos.

Chapter 6 "Concealing Forest Decline," focuses upon the inclination of the Lao government to obscure institutional authority over forests (invoking a situation Le Billon [2002] has called the "instrumentalization of disorder") and to blame swidden cultivators for forest decline. Singh argues that this strategy has the overall effect of destabilizing the legitimacy of state rule, for different people within Laos and international actors.

In the concluding chapter, Singh reflects upon a pervasive ambivalence amongst villagers, district residents and even local officials in Nakai Region regarding the overall "legitimacy" of state authority over forests. Singh writes: "Today, forest resources are declining in Laos, but prosperity for most is still to come" (p. 160). While legitimacy is difficult concept to pin down—not least in post-socialist authoritarian states—what seems more clear is that the cultural-politics of forests and development in Laos will continue to be unstable and contested well into the future.

This is an interesting book that advances our understanding of forest governance and political power in Laos. One might take issue with a small number of statements (on p. 37 Singh writes: ". . . the French colonial presence in Indochina did not lead to major conservations interventions or the imposition of scientific forestry.") However, Mark Cleary (e.g. 2005) shows that the French developed a significant range of legislation and policies to manage the forest according to colonial scientific models, although admittedly the interventions were much more limited in Laos than in Cambodia or Vietnam. Overall the book is based on a solid empirical understanding of the multi-scaled politics of forest governance in Laos.

Such a study on a complex research topic inevitably raises further questions. Singh is careful to note that culturally embedded ideas about the forest are not fixed (and here Hjorleifur Jonsson's [2005, 10] argument that "The idea of the forested wilderness is no longer diacritical for the clas-

sification of mountain peoples relative to Thai society" brings into question just how deeply embedded are cultural ideas of the forest). For me, this raises questions such as how historically mediated, Theravada-Buddhist understandings of *muang: pa* spatial-cultural diacritics are being reworked or indeed replaced by a new territoriality and technology of the environment in Laos—the *sampathan thi din*, or the "land concession"? Indeed, how are ideas of *muang* and *pa* understood by non-Tai ethnic minority groups in Laos, who are experiencing the blunt extractive side to resource development projects? There is also room for further conceptual work in Singh's tripartite logic of state governance in Laos, for instance on understanding the intersections between natural resources, patron-clientelism and family-based networks, and how this is changing with economic development. How does a paradoxical interpretation of state legitimacy through inscrutability and illegibility connect with the growing national and international media profile of certain members of the Lao leadership, or for instance, the emergence of a more engaged National Assembly?

As with any primary field site of ethnographic research there are advantages and limitations. One wonders if resource-dependent communities whose forest-lands and community forests are being enclosed and cleared for plantation agriculture without compensation would tend to agree with certain statements such as "exploitation of resources can be taken as a positive sign of development and the state's exertions of its due responsibilities to the nation" (p. 57), or, whether they would understand "forest clearance as a positive and civilizing action of righteous authority" (p. 157). Here one notes that Ian Baird (2008) has forwarded more critical interpretations of the extension of centralized state power into upland spaces and minority communities in Laos as a project of internal colonialism. Singh's reflections on potency and potential as alternative, Buddhist-inflected conceptions to state power could also have been discussed in relation to concepts such as Gramscian hegemony, or for example to geographer John Allen's relational, networked approach to power.

Nevertheless, in this book Sarinda Singh develops a well-crafted set of arguments and ideas around the place of forests and forest wildlife in Laos. It ably accomplishes what any scholarly study should aim for—stimulating the reader to reconsider both historical and contemporary understandings. For those studying the anthropology of nature and development, as well as forest policy and governance in Southeast Asia, *Natural Potency and Political Power* comes with this reviewer's positive recommendation.

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Islam and Politics in Southeast Asia

JOHAN SARAVANAMUTTU, ed.

London: Routledge, 2009, 188 p, with index.

The present volume seeks to understand "political Islam" which the editor, Johan Saravanamuttu, describes as "aspirations to political power and the remolding of state and society in accordance with Islamic teachings" (p. ix) in Southeast Asia. The project originated in 2004 and later adopted the notion of "authoritarian democracy" to serve as the contributors' common frame of analysis. This is a key concept and has been theorized by one of the book's contributors, Chaiwat Satha-Anand, as especially relevant to the study of Islam and governance in Southeast Asia. As presented, authoritarian democracy posits a ruling style that adopts a façade of democracy masking an inherently undemocratic regime that disadvantages the country's minorities. Thus, regime power wielders could be Muslim, Buddhist or Christian while Islam might be either privileged or oppressed. In using this rubric, the contributors aspire to address a number of questions relevant to Islam and the region's current political life.

The volume's nine chapters cover Islamic Southeast Asia geographically and its Muslim majority and minority states. In his introductory chapter, Saravanamuttu concisely summarizes each contributor's topics and major points of interpretation with sufficient detail to be of real value to the reader. The editor's hand is also apparent throughout much of the book as many of the contributors reference each other in their own chapters, thereby demonstrating a degree of coordination and intellectual cross-fertilization and making for a stronger and more useful text. Still, there are some contributions that are not as tightly integrated into the study as one might anticipate, which is unfortunate, but this does not seriously detract from this worthy contribution to the study

of Islam in Southeast Asia.

In her masterful opening chapter, emeritus anthropology professor Judith Nagata considers the complexity of "democracy" and Islam both of which come in a variety of forms and the equally complex relationship of "engaged Muslims" to the state. While her introductory sections consider examples from the region's Muslim majority and minority countries, her chapter's emphasis is on political Islam in Malaysia and Indonesia. After a survey of the Malaysian state's political-religious evolution under Mahathir and United Malays National Organization (UMNO), Nagata shifts her focus to alternative Islamic movements especially the revivalist dakwah movement Al Arqam which the government sharply curtailed in response to what appeared to be growing political aspirations. Indonesia's Nahdlatul Ulama provides a contrast as a well-established mainstream religious movement that accepts the country's religious pluralism ground rules and has done well on the post-Suharto Indonesian political landscape. The lesson Nagata draws is that political Islam is only possible if it adheres to the limits created by the democratic authoritarian nature of the state.

Jacques Bertrand's chapter on Indonesia presents a refreshingly positive assessment of the democratic role that Islam plays in the world's largest Muslim state. He notes, quite correctly, that politically engaged Muslims have remained democratic and reformist even after controls originally imposed by Sukarno and continued under Suharto were removed after 1998 and they have rejected the terrorism of fringe groups such as Jemaah Islamiyah. Bertrand further underscores his thesis by an insightful discussion of the secular Free Aceh Movement (GAM) where democratic authoritarianism focused on a secessionist rather than a religious threat. The principle problem was that for some time the country's leaders did not recognize that GAM's agenda was secular and that its strength only increased in response to horrific military atrocities. Once Jakarta addressed Acehnese secular demands peace returned and since then GAM has ruled Aceh democratically and extreme Islamic activities have been curtailed.

Another strong contribution is Maznah Mohamad's chapter on the Malaysian authoritarian state. The author states her case quite clearly by modifying the book's unifying notion of authoritarian democracy simply to that of the authoritarian state promoting an ethnic agenda in which Islam, race and entitlements provide the core. In support of her modified thesis, she reviews post-1969 Malaysian developments that have privileged the Malay "not-so-large" majority versus the country's non-Muslim "not-so-small" minority beginning with 1972's New Economic Policy that sought to adjust the country's economic imbalance, and soon expanded to other areas such as opening spaces for Malays in universities. However, the author's most important contribution is her discussion of the country's legal system wherein Islamic courts have used Sharia law to become hegemonic and usurp the authority of civilian tribunals by claiming religious grounds for matters that come before it. As a result, Islamic courts have created an Islamic "ring-fence" that excludes minorities and serves the authoritarian state.

Saravanamuttu follows with his chapter showing how Malaysia's statist political Islam works

at the local level where local functionaries act as religious and moral police against the country's large non-Muslim minority. The author's review of highly discriminatory legal cases and his discussion of the aborted Inter-Faith Commission of 2005 provide further evidence to support Maznah Mohamad's arguments as do the distinctions he draws between the statist policies of UMNO and the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (PAS) and serve a welcome function for the volume.

Chaiwat Satha-Anand's chapter on authoritarian democracy in Thailand is a highpoint in the volume. As a principle developer of the authoritarian democracy theoretical model, his contribution demonstrates its adaptability in a non-Muslim state where a Buddhist central authority suppresses Muslim minorities and protests. The author uses the story of the mysterious disappearance of Somchai Neelapaichit, a politically engaged Muslim defense lawyer, to demonstrate the pernicious nature of state power more effectively than within the framework of a purely theoretical discussion.

In contrast, the chapters on the Philippines and Singapore are not as strong. In the Philippine case, Carmen Abubakar incorrectly posits the real existence of a "Strong Republic" that President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo proclaimed in 2002, a statement that was roundly dismissed at the time and soon forgotten. This incorrect assumption leads Abubakar to overlook more systemic problems in the southern Philippines such as the role of locally prominent political leaders who have consistently undermined peace efforts. The article also loses focus by pursuing tangents such as controversies over Arroyo's executive orders, government policies and cases of grotesque extrajudicial killings that the author does not relate to the chapter topic. When the author does return to the chapter topic her discussion is limited and rushed and includes occasional errors such as the assertion that Islam came to the Philippines in the ninth century, hundreds of years too early.

Hussin Mutalib's thesis that the Singapore government is discriminatory against Muslims is not very strong. Of course, the government has been authoritarian since its founding, but its authoritarian nature is general and hardly more so for Muslims than others. In fact, the author acknowledges numerous instances where the government has gone out of its way to insure the effective integration of Muslims into Singaporean society and its political life. He even mentions the government instituted "team MPs" for elections to insure that outnumbered Muslim voters will get at least some of their candidates into office. This chapter which wanted to show the "plight" of Singapore's Muslims and their "restiveness" (p. 147) simply falls short of its objectives.

And finally, it is not clear why the concluding chapter by Syed Farid Alatas was included in this volume. His comparative chapter on the discourse of civil society in Indonesia and Malaysia would be a welcome addition if he used authoritarian democracy in his analysis. Instead, he presents an exercise in the sociology of knowledge based on very unique definitions of "ideology" and "utopia" put forward by Karl Mannheim in the 1930s and long ago dismissed as "vague and unconvincing" (p. 170). This chapter is similarly vague, such that the author can only conclude that any Islamic orientation can be either ideological or utopian.

Overall, this book is a welcome addition to the growing literature on Islam in Southeast Asia. Interpretative notions such as authoritarian democracy and engaged Muslims are intriguing and should promote discussion and analysis, as will other terms such as "ring-fencing." While some of the chapters might be assigned to undergraduate students in specialized upper division courses, the volume's principle audience will be graduate students and specialized scholars.

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Refiguring Women, Colonialism, and Modernity in Burma

Chie Ikeya

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011, 239 p.

Chie Ikeya's excellent book offers deep insights into Burma's social and cultural history under colonialism and modernity mainly through depictions of modern Burmese women. Based on archival research and a meticulous compilation of facts and figures taken from primary sources, the book makes a unique contribution to our understanding of the struggle and progress made by Burmese women in the early part of the twentieth century.

Chapter 1 offers a comprehensive overview of the social landscape of nineteenth-century colonial Burma, ranging from descriptions of the country's ethnic composition and economic specialization to those of its political situation and legal system (in the form of cases that garnered public attention). Ikeya examines the demographic changes incurred by waves of immigration, mainly Indian and Chinese, which resulted in a high rate of mixed marriages and an ethnically plural society that required an enforcement of a plural legal system by the state. In addition, she describes how the country saw the first expansion of modern education and development of printing and the press, which helped increase the literacy rate and created a discursive forum for public debate.

In Chapter 2, Ikeya draws our attention to the fact that although Burmese women were represented by colonialists and early Western scholars as having high social status, this was a tactic to discredit the British colonial project and demand greater political power for the Burmese people within the modernization process (p. 51). Ikeya examines the various legal positions of Burmese women—marriage, divorce, property ownership, inheritance—and states that, contrary to the prevailing image of women's relative high status, they in fact had to fight for political equality and improvement of their lives. Education became an essential issue in Burma's modernization process of catching up with the rest of the world, and ". . . debates concerning the education and progress of women were also about the empowerment and advancement of the nation" (p. 71). As a result,

Burma saw the expansion of a coeducational system in the early twentieth century and modern educated women started to play a more active role in public professions. The growth of popular print culture also played an important role in influencing the way young women understood their new affiliations and forged modern identities in the era depicted as *khit kala* (present era).

With the number of school and student enrolment continuing to grow throughout the early decades of the twentieth century, Chapter 3 offers an extensive discussion on modern public education. Modern education provided the necessary institutional structure, socio-economic channels, and enhanced greater opportunities for those who worked in the colonial administration. It also enabled the growth of Burmese women intellectuals and cultural intermediaries during this time (p. 38). Ikeya examines the influence of articles by and about women in newspapers and magazines, which emphasized the roles and duties of women as wives and mothers. However, women were increasingly mobilized for Burma's anti-colonial struggle and they were depicted as both feminists and patriots to serve the nationalist discourse in the 1920s and 1930s. Burmese women were also mobilized by the international feminist movement, but Ikeya shows that they forged strong connections especially with women in India and developed distinct priorities and interests that were integral to the nationalist developments in Burma (p. 91).

Chapter 4 focuses on the theme of "how to be a modern!" It examines the rise of consumer culture in the 1920s and 1930s in fashion, cinema, and advertisements, and looks at how women functioned as modern consumers reflecting their strong self-transformative aspirations. Here Ikeya juxtaposes two female role models: the youthful and unattached "fashionista" (as Ikeya calls it) on the one hand, and the domesticated housewife-and-mother on the other. Both occupy opposite ends of the spectrum, and Ikeya carefully examines their respective levels and modes of consumption (pp. 96–97). Nonetheless, the ways in which modern Burmese women dressed themselves showed their ambivalence as they adjusted themselves to the infiltration of foreign (European) values in opposition to their traditional norms. This chapter articulates how modernity implied self-improvement, self-fulfilment, and liberation to a certain extent, and consumption was a way to achieve modern refinement and upward social mobility, which everyone could be part of depending on their means.

Chapter 5 reveals that despite British policies of racial segregation, the mixed population grew rapidly as a result of intermarriages and "miscegenation." There was social stigma attached to Burmese women marrying foreigners: for these women, marrying a European signified upward marriage mobility whereas marrying an Indian meant downward marriage mobility. Intermarriages also reflected the nationalist climate at the time and a woman's spousal choice "served as an index for measuring her patriotism" (p. 140). It also tested the people's sense of national affiliation and contributed to the growing sense of what it meant to be a Burmese. "To colonialists and nationalists alike, sex and subversion were inextricably intertwined, and both sides of the colonial struggle deployed racialized senses of belonging and exclusion, which converged on the bodies of Burmese

women" (p. 141). Although their bodies were appropriated at many different levels, Ikeya depicts Burmese women as flexible and forthcoming in the ways they negotiated the constraints of the era, while Burmese men are seen as inactive and disempowered in the context of colonial modernity.

Chapter 6 picks up again on the theme of emasculation by examining the social and political meanings represented in bodily practices under colonialism. Ikeya describes how wives and mistresses of foreigners as well as *khit hsan thu* (fashionable modern women) became targets of public criticism through derogatory depictions in books and cartoons. Fashion-conscious modern women were seen as "a willing culprit of imperialist, capitalist, and Western modernity" (p. 145), and the politics of female dress were discussed in the context of nationalist discourse at that time. Despite being ridiculed at times, however, Burmese women explored every possibility to become "modern" through grooming, fashion, or writing, and actively engaged with the new era. In contrast, Ikeya emphasizes the "emasculated" image of Burmese men, subject not only to colonial subjugation and lack of socio-economic opportunities, but also constrained by their inability to take on modern challenges and assert their manliness. It seems to me, however, that such depiction overly dichotomizes the ways in which Burmese women and men experienced modernity. Moreover, it is doubtful if the nationalist movement could simply be reduced to an attempt to "remasculinize" Burmese men (p. 162), and if it was, it still does not answer the question of how gender relations in Burma were affected, since Burmese women (many of them spinsters) were also "masculinized" in their nationalist struggle.

Another criticism I have is the inconsistent manner in which Burmese terms were transcribed in the book. As different systems were used to transcribe the Burmese language, it was often difficult to decipher which vernacular term was implied in the transcription (especially in the footnotes). It would have helped immensely if the book had included a more detailed explanation of the systems for transcribing vernacular terms.

Overall, the book provides a fascinating social history of late-colonial Burma, providing insights into the strength and resilience of middle-class Burmese women who rose to the challenges of modernity and led the way toward self-fulfilment and advancement. It is also a valuable contribution to Burmese studies and modern colonial history in general, and gender and cultural studies in particular, and helps show modern Burma in a different light—open, dynamic, and resourceful.

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China and the Shaping of Indonesia, 1949–1965

HONG LIU

Singapore: NUS Press in association with Kyoto University Press, 2011, 310 p.

This is a long-awaited book on the interaction that took place between Indonesia and China in 1949–65. Based on his dissertation submitted to Ohio University, this book by Liu Hong, the leading academic in this field, maps out the perceptions of the People's Republic of China among the major Indonesian leaders and intellectuals of the period. This was a tumultuous period when the two newly independent Asian giants struggled to undertake nation-building and search for the best modes of government following a period of independence and civil wars.

Works on the Cold War historiography of diplomatic historians have observed how relations obtained between Beijing and Jakarta. The communist ties between China and Indonesia were a research topic in the field, supported by the opening of English/American archives. Jakarta needed China for their fight in West Papua and against Malaysia (Konfrontasi). Conversely, Beijing also needed Indonesia for their fight against Taiwan and strategy vis-à-vis Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and United States of America. The two newly independent states shared a wide range of common diplomatic goals at this time, but these were destroyed by the changes that followed the 30 September Movement (G30S) in Indonesia in 1965. With the establishment of an anti-communist regime in Indonesia and the Cultural Revolution gaining momentum in China, the two countries severed diplomatic ties in 1967 and it was not until 1990 that they resumed their relationship.

Taking this diplomatic historiography into account, Liu suggests an alternative frame of analysis in understanding the period between 1949 and 1965. He suggests that we should treat "China as something more than a communist state and an ethnic Chinese homeland and placing its changing and multifaceted constructions in postcolonial Southeast Asia," and "go beyond the conventional approach framed by the primacy of the nation state, diplomacy, ethnicity and the East-West binary" (p. 11).

In so doing, he questions what China meant for those Indonesians at the time. Through his nuanced analysis of writings and speeches of Indonesian leaders and intellectuals, he argues that "China served as an important and viable alternative to western dominant notions of the modernity project in Indonesia" (p. 271). And this modernity, he argues, derived from Indonesian's self-image and its frustration over the political turmoil in Indonesia. China thus presented an ideal image of what Indonesia wanted to achieve or should have accomplished. The author proposes a "China Metaphor" to articulate this point. "[T]he China metaphor reflected not only Indonesians' disillusionment about what had gone wrong at home but, more importantly, their aspirations for what could have been achieved" (p. 270).

The main figures among the broad selection of leaders and intellectuals who are highlighted in this book are Soekarno (Chapter 7) and Pramoedya Ananta Toer (Chapter 8). For Soekarno,

China was the place where he found his ideal form of governance, a form of "Guided Democracy." He was convinced by his visit to China in 1957 that social harmony and national integration could be accomplished without a democracy. For the writer Pramoedya, a visit to China in 1957 and correspondence with Chen Xiaru enabled him to assume his role as a political activist. In China, he was shocked to see the high status of professional writers and its active participation in politics. This led him to join Lembaga Kebudayaan Rakyat (LEKRA), an organization of artists and writers initiated by Partai Komunis Indonesia (PKI) leaders and mandated to create artistic forms of socialist realism, a fact that was instrumental in shaping the themes in his writings such as *Hoakiau di Indonesia* [The Overseas Chinese in Indonesia].

While the story of the above two figures are inarguably the most enjoyable chapters (7 and 8), I would like to stress another academic contribution of the book, namely, the author's findings on Mohammad Hatta and Sukiman Wirjosandjojo. While Soekarno and Pramoedya perfectly fit the mold of Indonesians who saw "modernity" in China, vice-President Hatta and the sixth Prime Minister Sukiman, the leader of the political party Masyumi (Council of Indonesian Muslim Associations), represented different perspectives. The two were seen as hard-core anti-communist or anti-China (or both) figures at the time.

The author introduces an episode concerning Hatta on his visit to China in 1957. In the meeting, he questioned Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai not only on the paths of economic development, but also on "how to nurture good discipline among the Chinese people who had been undisciplined in the past ("some people in Indonesia are crazy for independence just for the sake of being independent, thus having poor efficiency" remarked Hatta)" (p. 91). This confirms and enriches Hatta's view of China as cited in the US archives, in which Hatta observed that "Russians were first Communists and secondly Russians, Chinese were first Chinese and secondly Communists."[1)]

Another surprising figure, Sukiman who became the Prime Minister of Indonesia and was responsible for the notorious raid against the Chinese embassy in August 1951, was quoted as saying: "I sincerely hope that trade unions in our country should not stage strikes so frequently at will. You see, are there any strikes in the new China? All the people there are busy building their nation; we should learn from the new China's example" (p. 86).

The above remarks by the two figures who had hitherto been overlooked in studies that sought to understand the relationship between Indonesia and China perfectly strengthen the arguments of the book. "The core narrative of Indonesian intellectuals" was not just to differentiate China from Communists or from an overseas Chinese' homeland, but rather a way to seek an ideal mode of politics.

While the book offers a rich account of how Indonesians saw China and how their vision affected their careers, a slight difficulty may arise in comprehending the key terminology of the

1) The comments are dated August 1957. Department of State, Central Files, 756D.oo/8-3057. Secret.

book, the "China Metaphor." What is most fascinating about the author's work is that he has presented a wide range of perspectives on the way each person utilized China for his respective political agenda rather than subsume everything under a single/core idea about China as a metaphor of Modernity. Liu's work broadens our horizon for understanding China from the viewpoint of Indonesia, yet at the same time, he limits its horizon through the use of the China Metaphor to understand the idea of "Modernity."

Some readers who are familiar with the history in the book might be surprised at the absence of people like the Partai Komunis Indonesia leader DN Aidit, or the prominent ethnic Chinese journalist Liem Koen Hian. They are mentioned only in passing. Also missing are the military leaders. Moreover, the story abruptly ends on the eve of G30S, and leaves readers with the question of whether the idea of China as a source of Modernity rather than a communist icon was able to survive the anti-communist purge in Indonesia.

If these Communist leaders, ethnic Chinese intellectuals, and military leaders had been incorporated into the analysis, the argument of the China Metaphor could have been a more powerful one. It is not difficult to say that for all parties, China remained a central topic of discussion during the period concerned. If the above voices had been incorporated to the degree in which the analysis equally focuses on Sukarno and Aidit, it may well be possible to argue that China was much more a metaphor for all sides in Indonesia's political landscape of the period.

In this way, a continuum can be seen to exist in the idea of the China Metaphor from the Suharto period up until the present. China was not only a powerful metaphor to legitimize military action in the early Suharto period, but also a metaphor and a model for efficient economic development led by the industrial sector from the 1990s to the present.

Having said that, I must say the choices that the author has made must have been a tough one: to broaden the scope of a metaphor or to focus on a critical aspect of history which no one has documented. There are good reasons behind Liu's decision to limit the scope of the metaphor, since we can refer to other books to understand the other dimensions of Indonesia-China relationship.

This is a book by one of the first-generation Southeast Asianists from China in the post-Cultural Revolution era. It has its unique strengths compared to the work of Chinese Southeast Asianists from the pre-Cultural Revolution Period who tended to limit themselves to the study of overseas Chinese. Liu offers a perspective that is different from those who study Southeast Asia but originate from other areas of the world. Without an exceptional historian like him, who commands both Chinese and Indonesian and writes eloquently in English, it would not have been possible to illuminate this important part of history and derive lessons from it. This is a wonderful book that opens a window into a fascinating period.

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Illicit Flirtations: Labor, Migration, and Sex Trafficking in Tokyo

RHACEL SALAZAR PARREÑAS

Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011, 325 p.

Much has already been written about the sexual migration of female entertainers in Japan.[1] While the phenomenon has a fairly contemporary history, the multifarious layers of both the overall narrative and individual stories count for a plurality of interpretations, not least of which come from the entertainer themselves. On the other hand, getting the perspective of entertainers within their work context poses a dilemma for research methodologies as participant observation creates both strategic and organizational challenges. Thus we find earlier works employing alternative approaches. Ballescas (1992) offered the first pioneering study in the early 1990s. However, this study was flawed as female entertainers were interviewed prior to migrating to Japan, outside their clubs, and after their work contracts. Others such as Suzuki (2000; 2004) undertook to expand the analysis by examining the societal dimension of mainstream general consciousness with the presence of Filipina female entertainers as wives of Japanese males. Likewise, Suzuki examined how Japanese husbands imagined their wives, and in what ways the women negotiated their sense of self and identities.

These previous works have offered glimpses into the lives of migrant female entertainers in Japan as well as Japanese society's reception and perception to them. However, the precise context in which they physically inhabit the realm of providing commercial and sexual entertainment remains an open yet seemingly forbidden enclave. To overcome these practical dilemmas, Rhacel Parreñas conducted fieldwork studies in the heart of her research environment. Parreñas worked, quite literally, side by side with her subjects, as a hostess. This approach, not unlike that of an investigative journalist allowed her to conduct participant observation inside Tokyo's red light district.

The author embarked on this research largely to debunk the notion that all entertainers who came to Japan are victims of human trafficking as portrayed repeatedly by the US State Department.[2] Focusing on the narratives of the women themselves, the book offers a firsthand glimpse of their lives. Unflinching in its stark descriptions of day-to-day activities that transpire inside an entertainment club, the author detailed all the mundane and gritty matters of working as an entertainer in Japan.

The book is composed of eight chapters with an introduction and a conclusion. Some chapters are reiterations of previous points. For instance, chapter two describes in detail the labor system

1) For some of the earlier works, see Ballescas (1992), Osteria (1994). See Suzuki (2000; 2004), Satake (2004), Fuwa and Anderson (2006), and Faier (2009) for the more contemporary ones.
2) The 2005 Trafficking in Persons Report particularly influenced how Japan reformed its policy on granting visas to entertainers.

in hostess clubs, how entertainers are expected to pander to customer whims as well as bring in profit to club owners. The third chapter explores the various skills and capital hostesses have to possess to ensure that the masculine egos of their customers are constantly massaged. Yet, both chapters expound on the same point: hostess work demands sexual labor at varying scales (from flirting to intercourse) and this is driven by commercial supply and demand. However, chapter four and sections of chapter six are more vivid in highlighting the author's argument on how the women (and transgender Filipino hostesses) negotiate their lives regardless of their situation.

Chapter four "The Risky Business of Love" succinctly describes the uniqueness of labor entailed in working as an entertainer. Using both their minds and bodies as capital to make a living, entertainers negotiate with their customers the amount of money or goods in return for the attention and services they can provide. In so doing, these women must likewise manage their feelings toward customers, ensuring that at the end, they acquire material gains and not emotional pain. In simple terms, the hostesses follow a general rule that money and gifts are welcome but they must avoid any emotional attachments. In this respect, the author highlights that "in the moral world of hostesses, visceral pleasures that one grants men do not necessarily mean anything more" (p. 130). Indeed this awareness of their own limits, vulnerability, and particular situations, they are working women after all, provides the most compelling argument in support of the author's claim that the majority of the female migrant entertainers in Japan are not trafficked or forced to work against their will. In fact, their judgment is at its most sound in gauging the extent of how much or how little they earn from "falling in love" with their customers (p. 144).

Chapter six "Making Love for a Visa," expands on the implications introduced in chapter four where female entertainers enter into relationships with their male customers, the possibility of getting pregnant, and, at best, securing a marriage certificate. However, as the author pointed out, not a large percentage of entertainers end up marrying their Japanese customers (p. 179). The discussions put forward in this chapter on how clashes follow after marriage due to culture, differing expectations, societal pressures, and other external variables have already been discussed elsewhere.[3] Moreover, not all Japanese-Filipina marriages languish, as illustrated by Faier (2009). Lieba Faier interviewed couples and families from successful unions attributed to "Japanese" virtues extolled in Filipina women as wives in rural Japan. The latter part of this chapter, "The Sexual Citizenship of Transgender Hostesses," is most noteworthy as the case studies presented challenges to the limits set on intimacy as between opposite genders and that of citizenship as duties, rights and privileges of a natural born or naturalized person.

This section of the sixth chapter is unique particularly as it shows a side of Japan that is welcoming of a traditionally marginalized group, transgendered persons. For a country that is known to embrace many forms of gender, the stories of transgender entertainers and how they managed

3) See Constable (2005) or Hong-Zen and Hsin-Huang (2009).

to carve their niche in a competitive and discriminating world of sexual labor and commerce paint an altogether more nuanced picture of how the Japanese choose to accept the unwanted.

Parreñas stated that this was a project meant to criticize US policies on addressing issues on human trafficking and yet the entire book contains far more informed and substantive criticism of Philippine migration policies. By contrast, there are only vague references to US transgressions on laws regarding human trafficking.

Ironically, in trying to underscore her idea of indentured mobility among the Filipina hostesses in Japan, the author relies on the same pool of evidence used by US policymakers, and risks falling into the trap of typecasting Filipinos in Japan as perennial entertainers. Despite her claims to the contrary, there is still the feeling that she herself sees the Filipinos in the same light.

Because Parreñas' discussion of the settlement patterns of Filipina hostesses in Japan is narrowly focused on specific forms of vulnerability (p. 23), she fails to account for the dynamic changes that have taken place among the Filipino migrant population in Japan. No longer are Filipinos generally classified as entertainers. In their late-30s and mid-40s, they are clearly too old to be considered as hostesses. Despite their numbers, the Filipinos in Tokyo do not represent the Filipino population in Japan. The majority are now long-term and permanent residents.[4] In fact, the Philippines is among the top five[5] on the list of countries with registered foreign nationals in Japan. Their status and numbers have a potential impact that will, at the least, prove consequential to Japanese society.

The above observations notwithstanding, this book contributes on the literature on Filipinos in Japan as it enriches our knowledge of what particularly goes in the life of an entertainer.

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4) See 2011 Immigration Control Report, Japan, Ministry of Justice, http://www.moj.go.jp/nyuukokukanri/kouhou/nyuukokukanri06_00018.html.

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Glimpses of Freedom: Independent Cinema in Southeast Asia

May Adadol Ingawanij and Benjamin McKay, eds.
Ithaca: Cornell Southeast Asia Program Publications, 2012, viii+246 p.

The thrill of going over a volume on contemporary popular culture is compounded when the activity betokens a celebrity system whose members may be already enjoying a measure of popularity, and whose fame has the potential of reaching a wider public. The reader could casually drop a statement like "Oh, I knew that artist before she became a global household name" to admiring colleagues, and in effect replicate the outward spread of stardom whose processes new media have enabled and fast-tracked.

The original proponents of film auteurism, however, had more urgent concerns in mind, notably the dismantling of Classical Hollywood influence in the prestige productions of post-WWII pre-New Wave France (Truffaut 1976 [1954], 233–235).[1] No one begrudges these critics for achieving fame and fortune as filmmakers (and occasional performers), in light of the fact that the larger film movement that their aesthetic activism occasioned resulted in the demise of the Classical Hollywood system as well as the emergence of cinemas not just from Europe, but also from non-Western countries.

Glimpses of Freedom, a recent volume from Cornell University's Southeast Asia Program, attempts to provide an impression—a snapshot, as it were—of how a New Wave-inspired mode of practice has been reshaping film activity in the region. Fifteen articles from a mix of scholars and

1) Mistranslated as the "auteur theory" by the recently deceased American critic Andrew Sarris (1982 [1968]), the *politique des auteurs* (author policy) was the means by which a select circle of critics-turned-filmmakers, originally based at *Cahiers du Cinéma*, proposed to revaluate Classical Hollywood, by looking at movies in terms of directorial credit; the true auteurs, per their assertion, would exhibit certain stylistic markers that would serve as their "signatures." See Monaco (1976).

practitioners demonstrate a wide array of stylistic presentations—from autobiographical accounts to interviews to close textual analyses to empirical studies of such current hot-button topics as piracy, queer politics, and non-mainstream (independent, per the book's subtitle) production, with only a necessarily open-ended introduction providing an overview of the book's contents.

Certain problems can be predicted from this type of catch-as-catch-can approach. The most significant one would be the absence of contextualization—a more serious problem for this material, considering that any discussion of independent cinema would be twice removed, at the very least: from any country's mainstream film production, as well as from its audience's preferences (noting here, as Andrew Higson had reasonably prescribed, that any national cinema behooves its evaluators to take into account the presence of global film distribution [1989, 36–46]). The effect in this instance of isolating a phenomenon, no matter how laudatory its political intentions are, is to restore a great-man humanist system where the players may be less insidiously patriarchal, or even openly anti-patriarchal, but still hopeful of attaining a status of "greatness" nevertheless.

One's response to this self-congratulatory package will depend on one's tolerance for displays of performances calculated to maximize potential readers' admiration for individual cleverness and proximity to mainstream stardom (hidden from view, as already noted). Since my persuasion admittedly falls far outside the net of uncritical acceptance that would allow followers to be swept up in what we may term the indie-film crusade, the anthology's articles that have engaged me might be precisely the ones that indie-film fans might find lacking in terms of the auteurist "signatures" that the New Wave's proponents and followers upheld (Monaco 1976, 5–8). Benedict R. O'G. Anderson's "The Strange Story of a Strange Beast," as an example, makes no pretense of laying claim to possessing an analysis of and prescription for Thai cinema, but instead narrates its author's journey toward understanding local reception to an internationally celebrated release, Apichatpong Weerasethakul's *Sud pralad* [Tropical Malady] (2004).

More productive for a community of practitioners (although not necessarily for any specific filmmaker), the article by one of the editors, May Adadol Ingawanij, problematizes a non-mainstream showcase, the Thai Short Film and Video Festival, in relation to the issues of autonomy and containment. With a modicum of historical cues—the coup d'etat and the censorship of another Weerasethakul film, both occurring in the same year (2006)—the author succeeds in assessing the challenge posed by the festival to a mainstream presumably being endorsed and maintained by conservative social forces. Another article ("Independence and Indigenous Film"), by Angie Bexley, is even more impressive in articulating and explaining the urgency that film as modernizing force plays in a nation, Timor-Leste, recently making the painful transition to postcolonial independence while still reeling from the tragic upheavals wrought by European colonization and, even worse, by neighboring Indonesia's occupation.

What distinguishes these few essays is their avoidance of a disturbing trope that marks the rest (from my admittedly single reading of the entire volume). That trope, or more accurately

tendency, is manifested in the form of a championing of a player, whether an individual or an institution, subtly or openly, in the purported interest of upholding independent practice vis-à-vis mainstream lack or excess.[2] Although the larger dualities (of indie being preferable to mainstream as well as Euro-art films and events being superior to anything American) characterize the volume as a whole, and are probably inevitable given the scope of the project, the personality-based thinking that grips the region's critics and practitioners weakens, and sometimes completely hinders, the possibility of turning toward creative subversions from, say, the appropriation of mainstream prerogatives to the consideration of the potentials of regional cooperation.

In fact, the latter issue, which would require an actionable formulation of the qualities that constitute "Southeast Asian cinema," recalls an earlier historical project: that of the politicization of Latin American cinema, which had productive consequences for then-emergent Third Cinema theorizing. Whatever else one might think of the star potentials of the practitioners brought together by *Glimpses of Freedom*, a contribution on the order of Fernando Solanas and Octavio Getino's "Towards a Third Cinema" (1983 [1969], 17–27), much less the New Latin American Cinema's conceptualizations of hunger aesthetics and cannibalist production,[3] might as well belong on a different continent—which in fact is literally the case.

It may be argued that the moment for ground-breaking political activism has been superseded by technological transformation and convergence, with Asia now poised to wrest the lead from the West. Yet the Asian centers involved in technological innovation all lie (so far) not far from, but

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2) The individuals and/or institutions can already be gleaned from portions of some of the articles' titles: "Fourth Generation of Malaysian-Indian Filmmakers"; "Martyn See"; "Yasmin Ahmad"; "James Lee"; etc. Some of the collection's authors are themselves filmmakers, purportedly setting out to conduct well-meaning projects—John Torres using the film piracy "distribution" network to circulate his films, Chris Chong Chan Fui interviewing the organizer of a Muslim country's queer film festival (titled Q!FF). The fact that such attempts are destined either to fail in the first case or to partially succeed in the second provides a noteworthy record of struggle, yet also results in self-lionization—a replication of the heroic-individualist trope that marks Western media history, and that might have been tempered if a higher ideal (akin to the Third Cinema discourse to be presently brought up) had been articulated.

3) Third Cinema (cf. Pines and Willemen 1989) was meant to be distinct from (though derivative of and overlapping with) Third World Cinema; it stemmed from the observation that certain modes of Third World film production actually sought to replicate Hollywood themes and standards, as well as from the acknowledgment that even in the First World, certain forms of Third World-like or -inspired production could be found. Hunger aesthetics and cannibal production were prescriptions in Brazilian Third-Cinema practice: in hunger aesthetics (Rocha 1979, 9), low-budget and low-end productions (resulting in an impoverished look that implicitly critiqued the "developed" origin of the technology) were to be embraced as a means of countering the audience's tendency to be alienated from the medium's biases; cannibal (or anthropophagic) cinema (Stam and Xavier 1990, 281) was a response to the inevitable commercial prevalence of Hollywood, which tended to contain foreign film trends that it could not suppress—and which thereby justified the appropriation by local practitioners of the same strategies that Hollywood releases deployed.

definitely outside, the Southeast region. And more unnervingly, some of the most articulate contributors—partly owing to the official stature of English as one of their country's national languages—come from the Philippines, which, if Nobel-winning economist Paul Krugman is to be believed, shares more in common with Latin America's banana-republic economies than with the rest of Asia (Krugman *et al.* 1992, 1–78). Yet an earlier generation of local indie practitioners, names such as Lino Brocka and Ishmael Bernal (both deceased) now being constantly acknowledged by current film artists, behaved then as if they were aware of these contradictions, and took pains to ensure that they were consistently resolved in favor of the mass audience: foreign festivals provided them a means not of self-sufficiency but toward a way of legitimizing their film output prior to their final confrontations with censors, critics, and distributors.

While the argument that the current terms of film production and consumption have changed too radically to necessitate this requisite is inarguably valid, the assumption that mass responses are secondary at best is problematic and, in blunt terms, hypocritical for people who ride on the qualified stardom proffered by auteurist status. *Glimpses of Freedom* unwittingly illustrates this predicament in the prominence it gives to the late Filipino critic Alexis Tioseco (the entire volume is dedicated to him as well as to its co-editor, Benjamin McKay; another book, by renowned American critic Jonathan Rosenbaum [2010, v], had preceded the present tribute in being dedicated to Tioseco and his Slovenian girlfriend, Nika Bohinc). Administrator of a website popular among local indie practitioners and followers, Tioseco (having grown up in Canada) was a relatively recent returnee to the Philippines, and attained a higher level of recognition after he and his foreigner girlfriend were brutally murdered by people directly in his employ ("Fil-Canadian Film Critic" 2009, n.p.).

Tioseco's written output was largely in foreign outlets, and non-Filipino critics (as well as a small circle of Filipino netizens) hail him mostly for his championing of a select group of non-mainstream film personalities. Lost in the entire romanticization are certain realities that qualify his victimhood, of which two would be instructive: he had returned to handle the family business but was more distracted by his support for indie-film activities, including trips to foreign events (taken by his admirers as evidence of his dedication to their cause); and he had operated in serious negligence of personal security, despite the fact that the Philippines, like many developing countries, is rife with stories of violent class conflicts. The dialogical implication of his death—that the type of people who killed him were the ones that his type of people had been overlooking—could serve as an unnecessarily and excessively tragic illustration of what lies in store for popular-culture practitioners who prefer to defer the implications of what exactly "popular" means.

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* The author would like to acknowledge the helpful exchange of ideas with Mauro Feria Tumbocon, Jr., also a close observer of Philippine independent cinema, notwithstanding his farther distance from the country.

Linking an Asian Transregional Commerce in Tea: Overseas Chinese Merchants in the Fujian-Singapore Trade, 1920–1960

Jason Lim

Leiden: Brill NV, 2010, 252 p.

This book is a product of Jason Lim's research into Chinese newspapers in Singapore from 1880 to 1930, where he first learned of Anxi migrants' involvement in the tea trade between Fujian and

Singapore. Anxi had been a crucial tea-growing region in southern Fujian, a province in southeast China, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the 1920s, social unrest led to an exodus of people from Anxi county into Singapore. In the early twentieth century, Fujian's tea market shrank as a result of the trade competition in tea from Ceylon, India, Japan, and Taiwan. The market in Singapore between 1920 to 1960 played a compensatory role. Lim focuses his research on the relation between politics and the tea trade between Fujian and Singapore by devoting two chapters respectively to the periods 1932–47 and 1945–60, and three background chapters to either Fijian's tea production or the links between Singapore and Fujian.

Between 1920 and 1960, changes in the political regimes in both Fujian and Singapore had a subsequent effect on the location and types of archives Lim used. On the Fujian side, the ruling government was that of the Republic of China (ROC) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) respectively before and after 1949. The ROC moved archives from mainland China to Taiwan in 1949 while the PRC stored their archives in Fujian after 1949. Singapore, a British colony since 1819, was occupied by Japan in 1942–45, and turned from a British colony to a part of Malaya from 1945 before becoming independent in 1959 and breaking away from Malaysia in 1965. Through the use of archival and other related materials obtained from Singapore, Fujian, and Taiwan, as well as those collected in United Kingdom and Australia, Lim describes the Singapore-Fujian tea trade history in this book (which is a revised version of his doctoral dissertation). His clear and detailed account vividly reveals the interactions between the overseas Chinese cultural network and international politics.

The large influx of Anxi people into Singapore in the 1920s enabled these migrants to replace the Chaozhou group which had previously dominated Singapore's tea trade (pp. 28, 75). From 1920 to 1960, the tea merchants' association was formed and controlled by the Anxi group with some particular dialect (p. 95). Even though these migrants had left Anxi, they maintained connections to affiliates or lands in their native province thereby establishing a system to bring Anxi tea or other Fujian tea into Singapore. They represented the tea merchants in Singapore and sometimes coordinated with other tea merchants association in Southeast Asia to strengthen contacts with the Fujian provincial government for the purpose of improving the tea trade relating to quality control, exchange rate, and taxes (p. 97).

As the ROC's nationality law was based on blood (*jus sanguinis*), these Singapore-based Chinese still claimed themselves as Chinese before the 1960s. They kept asserting that Taiwan's tea was inferior to Fujianese tea because customers were used to the taste of the tea from their own native province. Tea from Taiwan, then a colony of Japan, was deemed an "enemy product" (p. 121). When Japan controlled Singapore and the coastal area of China, Anxi tea was still brought into Singapore, sometimes through Hong Kong (p. 139). Even though the Anxi people were in Singapore, they strongly continued to identify themselves with the motherland. They contributed money and directly participated in the war to help the ROC government resist Japan. They often

donated money for social welfare other than remittances to their own respective families. Thus, selling tea from Fujian became a form of patriotism aimed at promoting "national products" (p. 122). However, the Anxi migrants increasingly purchased tea from Taiwan by deeming it to be "essentially Chinese" (p. 172) after their estates on the Chinese mainland were nationalized by the PRC government and the ROC government moved to Taiwan maintained a private ownership system which was supported more by overseas Chinese.

In 1928, China was unified by the Nationalist Army and further attempts to improve tea quality were introduced. China was unsuccessful in adopting those plantation systems that were introduced in Ceylon and India. Instead, China set up experiment stations to test new tea plants within small land plots. As China was continually under threat of war between 1920 and 1949, revenues did not suffice for large-scale improvement. In particular, when the Sino-Japanese War and the Civil War between the communists and nationalists broke out, unfavorable exchange rates were levied against patriotic Anxi Singaporeans. While Singapore was occupied by Japan, some tea merchants purchased more tea from Taiwan (p. 98). Nevertheless, when the Communist government took over their home properties, these Chinese emigrants based in Singapore still tried to import tea from the homeland. However, Communist China more and more sold tea through a national company to countries within the Soviet bloc (p. 162). In the Republican period before 1949, Fujian tea was categorized and differentiated into tea for the domestic market, tea for the foreign market, and tea for "the overseas Chinese" market (pp. 131–133). In the 1960s, Anxi Singaporeans took citizenship in the newly independent Singapore and no longer laid claim to their former nationality (pp. 183–186).

There are a number of problems with this book. For example, the distinction between baozhong tea and wulong tea has been blurred (p. 75). Wulong tea is actually fermented more than baozhong tea. Furthermore, the book does not elaborate on some other aspects relating to overseas Chinese cultural networks and international politics.

Firstly, with regard to cultural networks, Lim points out that Anxi people only constituted 3 percent of Singapore's population, of which 75 percent was Chinese. Of these Chinese, Fujianese emigrants accounted for more than half (pp. 26, 189). Lim mentioned that in the 1930s, tea from Ceylon, India, Japan, and Taiwan competed with tea from Anxi in Singaporean shops (p. 114). Western firms were also importing other teas (p. 116). Lim did not describe the competition between Anxi tea and other teas for non-Anxi or non-Fujian consumers in Singapore. Lim mentions that Taiwan also had Anxi migrants (p. 27). In fact, these Anxi migrants were crucial for Taiwan's tea business, but Lim does not delve into the question of whether this group helped facilitate the tea trade between Taiwan and Singapore.

Secondly, in regards to international politics, Lim does not discuss in detail the interaction between the ruling Singaporean government and the Chinese government, nor does he compare it with other Southeast Asian governments in connection with the tea trade. The Japanese govern-

ment was active in soliciting the cooperation of the overseas Chinese in Java in the 1910s to persuade the Dutch government to continue purchasing tea from Taiwan, tea that was, in effect, a kind of Japanese tea (Lin 2001). Lim mentions that the Singaporean government kept surveillance over the overseas Chinese anti-Japanese boycott movement in the 1930s and the share of Taiwan tea in Singapore increased from 1925 to 1933 (pp. 114, 118). The governmental policy on the Singapore side needs more elaboration.

Notwithstanding the above issues, on the whole, this book helps us understand more about migration and identity, war and trade, the overseas Chinese, and intra-Asian trade.

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