

ไทยศึกษา ๑๓ THAI STUDIES
13th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
CHIANG MAI, 2017

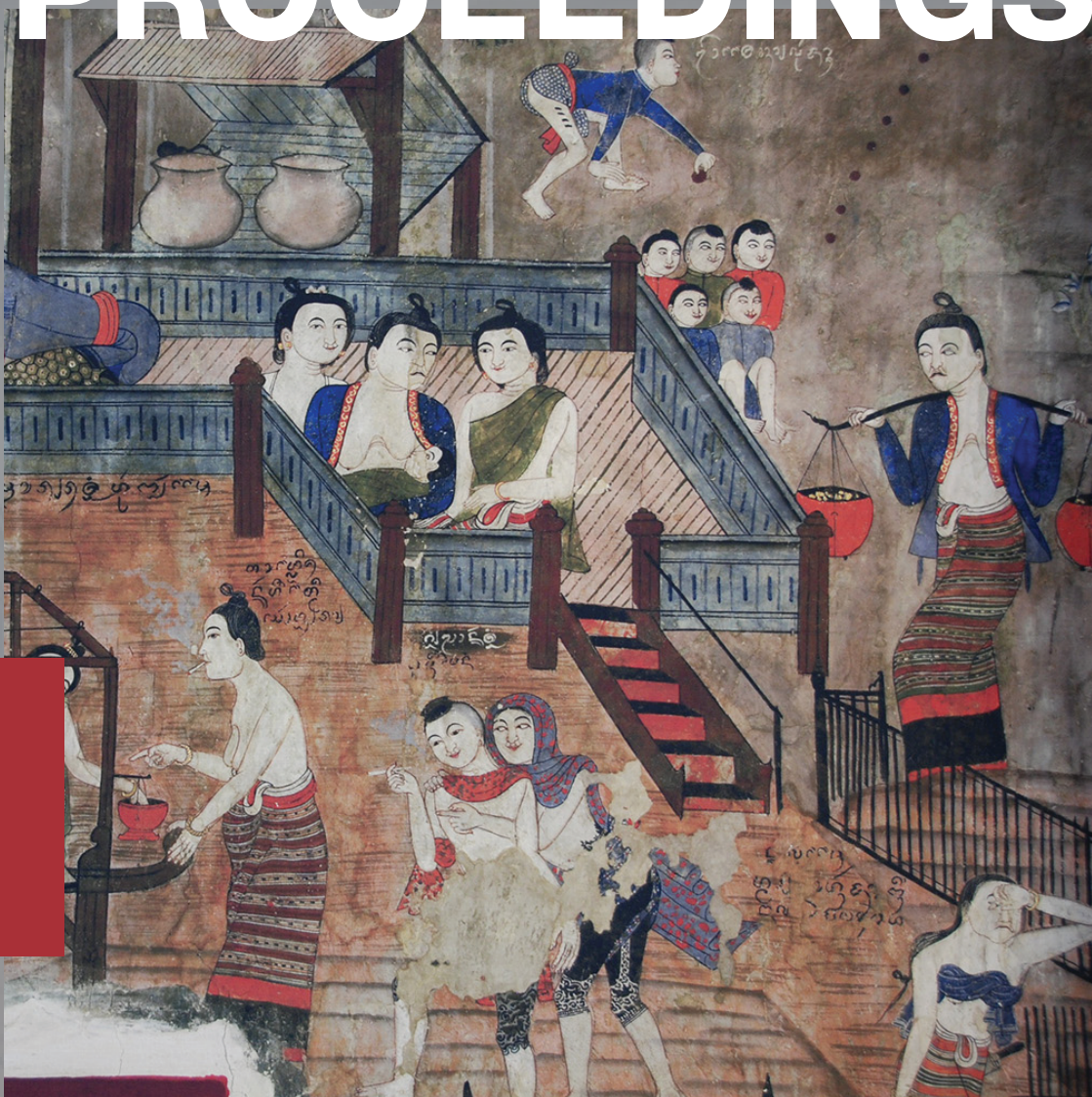
13th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON

THAI STUDIES

GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT,
AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES

15-18 JULY 2017 CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

PROCEEDINGS



Volume 1: A-G



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Chiang Mai University,
in collaboration with:



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Faculty of Social Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai, Thailand
Email: icts13.cm@gmail.com, rcsd@cmu.ac.th; Website: <http://www.icts13.chiangmai.cmu.ac.th/>

VOLUME 1: A-G

Volume 1: Table of Contents

FOREWORD.....	1
SEX WORKERS AT BETONG, YALA: THE INTERSECTION OF WOMEN, NEGOTIATION, RESOURCES, AND AGENCY	
Ajnarong, Surang.....	3
THE OTHER BURMESE CONNECTION: THE SILK INDUSTRY IN NORTHERN THAILAND FROM THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY	
Apiwong, Thanyarat	24
MODERN MOSQUE/MODERN MUSLIM: THE FOUNDATION OF ISLAMIC CENTRE OF THAILAND BY PAICHIT PONGPUNLUK	
Ardruga, Winyu	30
THE MEANING OF ‘HISTORY’ OR ‘PAST’ IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TAI-LUE CULTURAL REVIVAL MOVEMENT	
Baba, Yuji	58
THOSE STRANGE-LOOKING MONKS IN PHRA MALAI MANUSCRIPT PAINTINGS: VOICES OF THE TEXT	
Brereton, Bonnie Pacala	68
BEHAVIORS OF TOURISTS WHO LIVED IN NEIGHBORING PROVINCES AFFECTING EDUCATIONAL TOURISM IN MUSEUM OF PATHUM THANI, THAILAND	
Chaijan, Khunyarin	76
DIGITAL HUMANITIES RESEARCH APPROACH FOR ORGANIZING THE CONTENTS ON ETHNIC GROUPS IN THAILAND	
Chaikhambung, Juthatip & Tuamsuk, Kulthida	85

NAGA ART IN BUDDHIST TEMPLES OF MUEANG CHIANG MAI DISTRICT

Chang, Ya-Liang 98

**INFLUENCING FACTORS TOWARDS THAI ADOLESCENTS' DECISION MAKING ON
CONTRACEPTIVE USE: PRELIMINARY RESULTS**

Chanthasukh, Sansanee; Andajani, Sari; Fairbairn-Dunlop, Tagaloatele Peggy112

**THE ORIGIN MYTH OF NORA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOUTHERN THAILAND AND
MALAYSIAN VERSIONS**

Chaowalitprapan, Preeyarat.....130

ANCESTRAL BELIEFS AND SPATIAL ORGANIZATION OF TAI DAM HOUSES

Chaturawong, Chotima144

**IMPACT OF THERAWADA BUDDHISM IN THE TRADITIONAL BELIEF OF TAI KHAMTI
OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH, INDIA**

Chautang, Nang Sulina & Chaturvedi, Shivam162

AN ANALYSIS OF THAI FILM CULTURE TRANSMISSION IN CHINA

Chen, Hongyu174

**KHÂM SÓN CHRISTANG: A WITNESS OF THE FRENCH MISSIONNARIES' KNOWLEDGE
OF THAI LANGUAGE DURING THE AYUTTHAYA ERA OF SIAM (THAILAND)**

Chitkla, Kantaphong.....184

**YOUNG DESIGNERS AND SENIOR ARTISANS DEVELOPING WEAVING CRAFTS: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF A DESIGN WORKSHOP WITH MLABRI COMMUNITY IN NAN
AND HIGHLAND VILLAGES OF CHIANG MAI PROVINCE**

Chuenrudeemol, Woranooch; Boon La-Or, Nanthana & Tantinipankul, Worrasit.....197

**REMNANTS OF THE TSUNAMI IN TAKUAPA: MATERIAL OBJECTS, AFFECTIVE
REMEMBRANCES, AND TRACES OF THE WAVE**

Croteau, Chantal203

**THE CULTURAL INFLUENCE OF SIPSONG PANNA ON THAILAND SINCE THE 1980S: THE
CASE OF THE LUE LITERARY WORK *KHAM KHAP LANKA SIP HUA***

Dao, Sirui.....216

THAILAND'S BLEAK PROSPECTS FOR SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

Dayley, Robert241

**THAI YOUTH SEXUAL CULTURE: EXPLORING REPRESENTATIONS OF GENDER AND
SEXUALITY IN THE THAI CONTROVERSIAL SERIES, *HORMONES* (2013)**

Dejsupa, Tammarin264

CHANGING PRACTICES, CHANGING SELVES

Eberhardt, Nancy285

**CONCEPTUALIZING YOGA AS A COMPLEMENTARY THERAPEUTIC TOOL IN HEALING
CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (CSA) IN THAILAND**

Felix, Mark Stephan295

A SWAMP OF COBRAS: URBANIZATION AND HAZARDOUS SPACE IN THAILAND

Friend, Richard M.....309

**CUSTOMER KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT: CONNECTING CHINESE TOURISTS TO THE
DESTINATION OF THAILAND**

Fu, Jing; Mou, Lei; Thanalerdsopit, Paipan & Liu, Weiyi.....321

**RECONFIGURING LAN NA RELIGIOSITY: INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF RELIGIOUS
ACTORS THROUGH SPIRIT POSSESSION IN CHIANG MAI, NORTHERN THAILAND**

Fukuura, Kazuo336

TAI AHOM TRADITION AND CULTURE VIS- A -VIS THAI CULTURE: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

Gogoi, Hironmoni Borgohain347

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE DESIGN, PATTERNS AND DYING OF THE TEXTILES OF THE TAI GROUPS OF NORTH EAST INDIA WITH OTHER SE ASIAN TAI GROUPS

Gogoi, Pradip K.& Phukan, Chandra K360

AHOM ARISTOCRACY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: AN OVERVIEW

Gogoi, Sangeeta376

INTERPRETATION TOOLS AND VIEWS OF HERITAGE: SUKHOTHAI, AYUTTHAYA AND PHRA PATHOM CHEDI*

Gozzoli, Roberto B.; Chen, Ka Tat Nixon & Talawanich, Suwadee391

***ANISONG* THROUGH RELIGIOUS DONATIONS: THE CASE OF THE PHAYA SEKÔNG MANUSCRIPT FROM MŨANG SING (LAOS)**

Grabowsky, Volker410

FACTORS INFLUENCING ENTREPRENEURSHIP RATES FOR THAI WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN COMPARISON TO THEIR ASEAN COUNTERPARTS

Guelich, Ulrike435

Foreword

For many decades, the academic field of Thai studies has served as a platform offering many forms of challenging, conceptual, and critical knowledge to scholars working in different academic disciplines, yet who share the same interest in unveiling the complexity of Thai society. The field has allowed many scholars whose works are related to Thai society to engage in debate, to learn and exchange from one another, and, on many occasions, to produce ground-breaking conceptual and theoretical understandings about Thailand. Moreover, the intellectual output produced through this kind of cross-disciplinary engagement often benefits the production of new knowledge in disciplinary-based studies.

As Thailand changes, Thai studies also strives and takes on new angles, subjects, and intellectual paradigms that are crucial to the development of the country. Thailand no longer exists as a self-contained and autonomous social and cultural entity, especially so from the economic and technological development perspectives. Many new ideas and inventions emerging within Thai society in fact derive from complex interactions, negotiations, and integrations among various ethnic, social, and cultural beliefs and practices. The increasing liberalization of the economy of Southeast Asian nations also has the potential to drive Thailand to the crossroads of social, economic, and cultural transformation in the near future. As the world spins faster, this complex formation of the knowledge of “Thailand” will only keep changing.

The development of Thailand in connection with the Southeast Asian region and the world has continued not without conflicts and conundrums. Many forms of transformation that take place in the different geo-cultural spaces popularly thought of as “Thai” involve agents, organizations, and forms of power that, in fact, originally belong to various indigenous ethnic, cultural, or national groups, or even to the “global communities.” The Thai-self has been founded upon and thrived on the forces and dynamics within these various complex dimensions of connectivity. Most essentially, this complex “connected Thailand” posits critical questions to the traditional paradigmatic thinking about Thai society, particularly thinking that frames Thailand as a separate entity, unnecessary to require intellectual engagement with the rest of the world.

Against this backdrop, the 13th International Conference on Thai Studies (ICTS), “Transforming Societies: Contestations and Convergences in Asia and the Pacific”, was held in Chiang Mai from 15-18 July 2017 at Chiang Mai University. Among the nearly one thousand registered participants were prominent academics, research presenters, panel discussants, practitioners, artists, activists, and students. The conference was hosted by the Regional Center for Social Science and Sustainable Development (RCSD), Faculty of Social Science, Chiang Mai University, in the collaboration with the Thailand Research Fund (TRF), Chulalongkorn University, Mahidol University, Khon Kaen University, Thammasat University, Silpakorn University, the Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung, Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau (TCB), The Asia Foundation, the Indian Embassy Thailand, and the US Embassy Thailand.

A large part of the conference’s success was due to its dynamic organizing theme, ‘Globalized Thailand?: Connectivity, Conflict, and Conundrums of Thai Studies’. The event encouraged Thai and international scholars to reflect upon Thai society, politics, economics, culture, and environment in the context of

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globalization, including problems and conflicts arising from processes of development. The conference themes allowed participants to explore aspects of Thai society from different perspectives, as well as to broaden their understanding of Thai studies by avoiding a nationalist methodological approach. Thai studies scholars were able to expand their understanding and interest towards Thailand's connectivity with other countries and regions, as well as with other Tai-speaking groups residing in and outside of the kingdom. At the same time, the conference opened space for scholars to explore the state of knowledge in Thai Studies and to identify gaps and opportunities in the current knowledge base. In particular, the conference stimulated the interaction of research students and developing academics with the more established academic community to discuss newly emerging topics and promising directions for future research.

Conference Structure: Under the umbrella of the main theme "Globalized Thailand?: Connectivity, Conflict, and Conundrums of Thai Studies", 20 sub-themes were outlined to stimulate attendees' engagement and exchange of knowledge and ideas. The content and events of the conference were spread over four days. Each of the four days began with a keynote presentation by a prominent speaker. These were followed by panels of researchers presenting their work and roundtable discussions focused on specific themes. In total, the conference comprised 174 panels inclusive of 205 sessions and 598 papers aligned with the 20 sub-themes. The thematic areas were as follows, with each sub-theme's number of corresponding panels and research papers respectively in parentheses:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) Thailand and Its Connectivity in ASEAN (10 panels/41 papers); | 11) Literature, Media, and Language (10/33); |
| 2) Thai Economy and the Global Market (14/45); | 12) Culture, Heritage, Crafts, and Artisans (18/60); |
| 3) Religion and Modernity (12/46); | 13) Ethnicity and Identity (4/14); |
| 4) Crisis of Democracy, Politics, and Governance (17/58); | 14) Migrants, Stateless People, and Refugees (5/18); |
| 5) Border Studies and Special Economic Zones (SEZs) (15/60); | 15) Transnationality (3/15); |
| 6) Urbanization, Spatial Politics, and Public Space (5/20); | 16) Health and Health Care Systems (7/27); |
| 7) Land Governance (5/19); | 17) Education (8/30); |
| 8) History and Public Memory (23/48); | 18) Tai Homes and Architecture (2/6); |
| 9) Lanna and Tai Studies (8/30); | 19) Football and Politics (2/7); and |
| 10) Gender, Sexuality, and Social Equity (5/17); | 20) Spirits, Deities, Divas, and Divination: Emergence or Resurgence of Ritual? (1/3). |

In total, the 5 volumes of these proceedings contain 142 papers which were presented over the different conference sessions. Due to budget constraints, it was not feasible to have the proceedings edited as planned and therefore they appear with the same language and grammar formulations as when they were submitted.

Sex Workers at Betong, Yala: The Intersection of Women, Negotiation, Resources, and Agency

Ajnarong, Surang
Walailak University¹
Thailand

Abstract

This paper studies a group of female sex workers in the southern border town of Betong, Yala Province, Thailand, who have developed abilities to negotiate for better social and economic situations while working a trade that has conventionally been viewed as the domain of marginalized or exploited women. To understand the sex workers' capacity to negotiate their own agencies, the research investigated the complex interplays of choice, socioeconomic structural factors, and empowerment that influence the women's engagement in sex work.

This study's analysis focuses on reasons for being sex workers and staying in this work. The researcher conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with people participating in each of the aspects of this industry, and also with others in the local area who had been observing its development. The essay analyzes the contexts and tools that the women currently use for entering the sex trade and for bargaining with the various other participants in that trade. The researcher found that the women used the tools of learning clients' languages and creating multiple kinds of networks as means of negotiating relative power, freedom, and agency in the context of this town. Particularly over the past twenty-five years, these tools, combined with additional sets of behaviors, have given the women increased power and freedom in choosing and refusing particular kinds of customers, in negotiating the amount of income received for their services, in improving their economic situations, and in improving their social acceptance. The improved social esteem and self-confidence that can be observed in many of these women has become particularly noticeable to long-time observers such as the author, and the paper proposes that the women's improved social status in Betong is due to a combination of their business savvy, their economic contributions to the town, and their efforts to present themselves as "good" women through religious practice and warm interpersonal relationships.

Keywords: Power, female sex workers, Border town

¹ Ms. Surang Ajnarong is a Ph.D. candidate in Asian Studies, School of Liberal Arts, Walailak University, Tha Sala District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province, Thailand. This paper was translated and edited by Dr. Edwin Zehner, who is a Lecturer in the Ph.D. Program in Asian Studies, School of Liberal Arts, Walailak University. At the time of writing, Ms. Surang and Dr. Zehner had a generally collegial relationship, but Dr. Zehner was not a member of Surang's dissertation committee, and Surang was not one of Dr. Zehner's advisees. Their collaboration on the English version of this paper was therefore separate from Dr. Zehner's regular academic duties.

Introduction

The presence of women selling sexual services in Betong town (on Thailand's southern border) and in present-day Thailand more generally may have occurred for different lengths of time in history, but the generally negative social attitudes toward women selling sexual services have tended to be consistent over time. This paper employs concepts from feminist studies and from Michel Foucault's conceptualizations of how power works in society as it explores the practices of power and resistance used by women selling sexual services in Betong.

The area along Thailand's southern border might be imagined as a place with special economic circumstances. Yet Betong's position on one of the border gateways of the Thai state also makes it a center of travel into the country as people seek opportunities to work and make money. The area along the southern border has therefore become a gateway of commerce, communications, and tourism. The southern border towns are relatively prosperous, making them places of opportunity for investors who desire to buy property and to engage in all sorts of business enterprises, including the businesses related to the selling of sexual services. This, in turn, has led to an increase in the number of women selling sexual services in this area. Previously, the sexual services industry had been found mostly in larger towns and cities such as Hat Yai. But when border towns like Betong began functioning as gateways for tourism, the purveyors of prostitution also began doing business in the border towns as well. Consequently, women engaged in selling sexual services began establishing their lives and their identities in the diverse cultural environments of these towns.

It was approximately in the year BE 2443 (CE 1900) that women first began selling sexual services in the Betong area. The local sexual services industry has therefore existed in various forms for more than 100 years, all the way past the year BE 2557 (CE 2014), the last year of the author's most intensive fieldwork for this project. Throughout this long period of more than a century, the means and modes of selling sexual services in this area have been dynamically evolving, both in terms of the ethnic groups of the customers and service providers, the conditions and modes of work, and the life conditions of the women themselves, in the contexts of ever-changing geographical, economic, and social conditions.

The women's involvement in selling sexual services has made them an integral part of the town's "charms" attracting both Thai and foreign tourists searching for pleasure. The entry of large numbers of tourists caused the demand for sexual services to rise in parallel. Together, the rise in tourism and the increased availability of sexual services caused Betong town to develop rapidly, due to the increased flow of money into the town's economy. The magnitude of these increased inflows of tourists and tourism income can be seen in the following table of figures reported for Yala Province by Thailand's Department of Tourism for the period BE 2547 to 2558 (CE 2004 to 2015):²

² As noted above, Betong is located in Yala province, and it is possibly the primary tourism generator in that province. Certain details in the Department of Tourism site suggest that the Department was treating Betong as a proxy for Yala, and vice versa.

Table 1: Tourists and Tourism Income in Yala Province, BE 2547–2558 (CE 2009–2015)

Year	Number of Tourists			Tourism Income (millions of baht)		
	Thai	Foreign	Total	Thai	Non-Thai	Total
2547/2004	73,028	171,092	244,120,	136.25	553.98	690.23
2548/2005	57,179	163,427	220,606	84.01	486.34	570.35
2549/2006	51,030	224,071	282,463	76.79	688.31	765.11
2550/2007	45,297	224,071	269,368	63.46	599.60	663.06
2551/2008	69,463	242,249	311,712	97.44	629.27	726.71
2552/2009	50,438	250,132	300,670	140.97	963.74	1,104.71
2553/2010	101,876	271,393	373,269	211.49	1,108.50	1,319.99
2554/2011	97,039	238,929	335,968	271.57	1,057.21	1,328.78
2555/2012	110,299	318,745	429,044	336.68	1,422.56	1,759.24
2556/2013	115,650	448,121	563,771	362.59	2,057.80	2,420.39
2557/2014	122,740	466,913	589,653	388.95	2,130.74	2,519.69
2558/2015	130,007	492,369	622,376	434.14	2,295.14	2,729.28

Sources: Statistical tables in the website of Thailand's Department of Tourism (กรมการท่องเที่ยว).³

According to these statistics, the increasing number of tourists and the increasing income from tourism are positively related to each other, and have continued to increase steadily over the past decade or so. But understanding the selling of sexual services in this area requires more than just exploring the relationships between the income brought by the sexual services industry and the economic growth and development of the area, important as that relationship appears to be (we will indeed explore this relationship in later parts of the paper). It should also be noted, for example, that the selling of sexual services has a history of successive developments, processes, and relations of production that both constrain and express the negotiating power of the women in varying ways and degrees.

This article surveys the practices of power and agency used by and affecting the women selling sexual services in Betong. In so doing, it draws from the perspectives of certain streams of feminist theory that enable us to notice manifestations of individual liberty that the women selling sexual services are able to put into practice through the creation of conditions of “Equality of Opportunity.” These manifestations include the right or ability to choose or refuse particular clients, showing that they possess the basic elements needed for relative equality with men. The article also draws on the “Power Theory” of Michel Foucault. Foucault’s conceptions of the workings of power enable us to observe the interactions of power between actors. Foucault shows us that these varied types of interactions are not easily disentangled from each other. At the same time, Foucault’s approach suggests that within these interactions, those people who are acted upon also take actions towards those same others. Furthermore, “power” is not just the possession of just one group or social class, nor is it a “tool” that

³ More specifically, the figures were compiled from the “Internal Tourism (by Region and Province)” tables available in the “Visitor Statistics in Thailand” section of the “Statistics” section of the website of กรมการท่องเที่ยว [Department of Tourism, Thailand]. As of 28 May, 2017, the address of the “Visitor Statistics in Thailand” page was <http://newdot2.samartmultimedia.com/home/listcontent/11/221/276>. Provincial level figures for 2016 were not yet available at that time.

one specific individual can use however he or she wishes. Instead, the term refers to the various patterns and types of subordination in society. In other words, everywhere we look, we find an asymmetrical balance of forces. More specifically, in the work of selling sexual services we can see ongoing shifts in the women's levels of power and in the ways they use that power.

This article will focus on the history and dynamics of the sexual services industry in the town of Betong in order to show how the practices and institutions of selling sex have arisen, co-existed, and created value and perceived benefits in the area. This article is also concerned with exploring how the women in this industry have struggled and negotiated with the various other kinds of people with whom they interact in this line of work, both for their own sake and for the sake of the other women alongside whom they work. These practices will be analyzed in a manner that highlights the industry's historical dynamics and the dynamics of power and agency building that have occurred in the processes of personal and inter-group negotiation.

Historical Dynamics

In the history of sexual services in this area there can be seen a sequence of periodic changes in the ethnicities, modes of work, and various other parameters that have conditioned the manner and degree to which the women selling sexual services have been able to build relative bargaining power. These changes can be generally divided into three periods.

The first period extended from approximately BE 2443 (CE 1900) to BE 2499 (CE 1956). This period saw participation by women from two ethnic groups. The first group was known to the local people as "*chee-naa loo-kee*." A local interviewee whom I shall call Mr. Thira (not his real name) said that these were Chinese women from Hainan who had emigrated to the cities of Taiping and Ipoh in Malaysia, and then migrated north to sell sexual services in the Betong area.⁴ They could not speak Thai; they could only speak Chinese. They came to Betong to provide sexual services to Chinese laborers. When Chinese laborers came into the area, this group of women was also sent into the area to service the laborers. The second group of women were Malays. An interviewee named Bae Ae (fictional name) related the following:

In approximately the year BE 2484 (CE 1941) there were establishments a lot like restaurants, and nearby those places were rows of thatched-roof shacks available for rent.⁵ Malaysian women from the areas south of Thailand would come and rent these dwellings.... They would

⁴ The towns of Taiping and Ipoh are located in the state of Perak on the northwest coast of peninsular Malaysia. The two are less than 70 kilometers apart, and together they are approximately 180 kilometers directly south of Betong via today's roads.

⁵ December 1941 saw the opening of the East Asian Theater of World War II. It therefore probably served the interviewee as a handy reference date. It is not clear if the conditions reported here preceded or followed the arrival of the Japanese soldiers, and it may not matter. During the Japanese period, Thailand's southern border may have been less of a travel obstacle for Malay women crossing it from the south than would have been the case in the pre-war and post-war periods. Nevertheless, it is not clear to the translator whether this is a relevant detail or not.

come and rent them in small numbers, only about 10 [per building?], and some of them had also brought their children along, and the men would come in and use the women's services. The women dressed like common villagers. They would wear *pateh* skirts [perhaps meaning "chamois skirts" or "common Malay skirts"], and would not dress or do anything noticeably different from the other people in the area. This group of women provided services to meat vendors and to other people in the area.

In addition, an interviewee whom we will call Ko-yong (an assumed name) said the following:

The people who came into Betong from other places were comprised primarily of government officials and beef vendors. The entrance of the beef vendors led to the entry of Malay women to provide sexual services.... The women would work in the restaurants, and then when their workday ended they would bring the men home with them.

The second period extended from approximately BE 2500 (CE 1957) to BE 2520 (CE 1977). This period has become known as the "*yuk song pit*" (the era of the closed brothels). This was the period when girls from northern Thailand began to enter the border areas. They entered in three primary ways. In the first way, the mother would bring her own daughter to sell to the brothel. In the second way, a broker or go-between would go to procure the girls directly from their homes. In the third way, the girls were deceived into entering the trade and were then sold to brothels. All of this was being done to service the growing number of tourists coming into the area. The era of *song pit* (closed brothels) was a period of great difficulty for the women, as they were oppressed, mistreated, harassed, assaulted, and injured, while also lacking freedom and liberty in their conditions of work.

The third period extended from approximately BE 2520 (CE 1977) to BE 2557 (CE 2014), with the end of this era being the end of the most intensive period of fieldwork for this project. In this period the women selling sexual services came from a wide variety of ethnic groups. This was an era in which the women selling sexual services enjoyed increased negotiating power. In this period they emerged from the "closed brothels," and were released from the situation of being oppressed and of being treated as forced sex slaves. In this third period they had much greater freedom in their work conditions. The "negotiations" initially appeared in little things, such as refusing to follow orders. A woman whom we shall call "Nang" (an assumed name) reported as follows:

The madam [literally, "older sister"] would get fussy, over-particular, and finicky. There was always some kind of problem or other. This, that, and the other thing. She would say the same thing over and over. I/we didn't like having her repeat the same thing over and over. Just tell us once and we understand already! But she would just keep on talking and wouldn't stop. So I would finally just get up and walk away.

These small infractions gradually accumulated until in the end the women were able to negotiate on more important matters concerning their lives and economic situations.

The historical dynamic of sexual services in this location demonstrates the ability of relatively dominated social actors and forces to struggle against relatively dominant social actors and forces that could be found among the various groups involved in the selling of sexual services, in such a way that the relative levels and forces of domination have shifted back and forth over time. The relative bargaining power of women selling sexual services in Betong became much greater after the economic crisis of the year BE 2540 (CE 1997), as the presence of women selling sexual services had positive effects on the local economy. Sexual services was the only trade that was still clearly able to support itself, and in doing so it also supported the town's other economic sectors. Consequently, the women selling sexual services began to acquire a new image in the eyes of the townspeople, because they were starting to be viewed in terms of their economic contributions to the town during the economic crisis that everyone had gone through.

The economic crisis that stormed in over the area's tourist economy began in the year BE 2540 (CE 1997) and continued through the beginnings of the security crisis in Thailand's southernmost three provinces, a development that further reduced the confidence of both Thai and foreign tourists. Consequently, in the early years of this period business in the area became stagnant. Business establishments in the area lost money, and many hotels, guest houses, and restaurants had to close down.

Mr. Sing, a hotel owner,⁶ told of the town's economic situation at that time as follows:

How could we survive? We couldn't make ends meet. On a typical day we couldn't even fill 10 rooms. And out of this we somehow had to pay our water and electricity bills, and pay our staff, and this, that, and the other thing.... To stay open was just hurting ourselves to no purpose. But if I would try to sell [the business], nobody would be interested in buying. Anybody who came by to consider buying already knew they wouldn't be able to make a go of it. Things were really bad. I had to take income from other sources to be able to pay the mortgage.

But now it is starting to get better. It looks like tourism is picking up again. Even though it is not yet as good as it was before 1997, the rate of room reservations is starting to get better, and by this point about 30% of the rooms are reserved in advance.... Today most of the tourists are Malaysians and Singaporeans. About 70% are from these two groups, and the Thai are about 30%. (Mr. Sing, interviewed 30 January 2014)

In the years after the 1997 economic crisis, the government finally had to step in to help out. One of the measures that were finally taken was to expand the hours that the town's border crossing would be kept open. Previously the border crossing had been open only from 5 AM to 6 PM. However, beginning on 15 March 2552 (CE 2009), the border crossing hours were expanded to be open from 5 AM to 10 PM.⁷

⁶ The underlying term of address for Mr. Sing is *hia*, a Chinese-derived term meaning "older brother."

⁷ The decision to expand the border crossing hours was announced in the document รายงานการประชุมเทศบาลเมืองเบตง วันที่ 9 มีนาคม 2552 เรื่องการขยายเวลาเปิดปิดด่าน เป็งกาลันฮูลู [*raayngaan kaanprachum thesabaan mueang Betong wan thi 9 miinaakhom 2552 rueang kaankhayaaywelaa poet-pit daan Boeng Kalan Hulu* --Report of the Meeting of the Municipal Council of Betong Held on 9 March 2009 Concerning Expansion of the Border Crossing Hours at the Boeng Kalan Hulu Border Checkpoint].

Warawut (a pseudonym), a customs officer at Betong, reported as follows:

Back earlier, the border checkpoint closed early. At 6 PM we were already closed. The tourists had to get to the checkpoint before 5 PM because Malaysian time was faster than Thai time. And some people didn't want to stay overnight because they were low on money. Some people were also slipping away from their wives to come have their fun and then they wanted to go home [before they were missed]. In addition, the economy wasn't good. The value of the Malaysian currency was low. [So] the tourists started to come in smaller numbers. So we had to extend the checkpoint's closing hour to a later time so that the tourist with relatively little money would have more time to sing in the karaoke bars and to eat and drink. What was of special significance was that earlier they would come in [to Thailand] on Friday and go back on Sunday morning. But now, as soon as they finish work they can come on in because they have enough time to stay [and go back]. So [now] they come every day, stay for 3-4 hours, and then go back....

Betong without the tourists was really quiet. Its liveliness today is due to the tourists. Especially the Chinese tourists. They have a lot of money. They have the means to really buy things.... Every border checkpoint in this area has extended its hours, every checkpoint. Both Sungai-kolok, Betong, the outlying checkpoints, all have extended their hours so that we can survive [financially and economically]. Before the year BE 2540 [CE 1997], the tourists from Malaysia came to Betong on Friday, and traveled back on Sunday, spending three days and two nights in Betong. [At that time] the tourists had to spend around 10,000 to 20,000 baht [per visit]. This money would be spent on lodgings, food, and drink, also on transportation, on the cost of "booking" the women, the cost of gifts and other things bought for the women, and the costs of various other services. (Warawut, interviewed 7 August 2014)

Extending the border checkpoint hours enabled the economy of Betong—which had suffered first from the sluggish world economy and then from the unrest in the Far South—to be able to avoid being as impacted as greatly as other parts of the country, due to the continual flow of tourists entering the town of Betong. Many groups of tourists were able to come into Betong and spend larger amounts of money. For example, "Sun" (an assumed name), a lumber business owner who was one of the tourists seeking pleasure in Betong, reported the following:

When I come to Betong I need to bring at least 10,000 baht. If I bring less than that it is never enough. Even if I bring 20,000 baht I end up spending it all. The Thai women are good at talking, are good at pampering and ingratiating themselves with you, and before I know it my money is all gone. So I go back home to earn more money, and as soon as I have enough money I come back again. (Sun, interviewed 30 August 2014)

The tourists' role in creating economic benefits for the area reflects the changing power relationships between the women and the state in determining their public meaning and their status as one of the

tools in building hegemony for use in their negotiations within local society. The tourists' role in creating economic benefits has also caused cross-border tourism to be a space for the women to negotiate new meanings of being sexual service workers vis-à-vis the power of local government administrators.

Consequently, as women's roles in creating economic benefits have extended their roots down into the level of the local social cultures concerning the practices of daily life, and as they have extended their influence into the practices of reproducing the meanings of being female sexual service workers in this area, it has been inescapable that these developments should interrelate with the "power" relations among people in society. The women selling sexual services therefore became one of the tools in arrangements, administration, and management by the state, which manages certain socio-economic administrative structures that establish the directions of social currents.

The women selling sexual services therefore adapted themselves to create a lifestyle and a means of conducting their occupation that could function under the prevailing conditions for social acceptance. The importance and need for bargaining power in order to live in relationship with various groups in society, and to strengthen themselves, served to motivate the women to strengthen their bargaining power in setting prices, in increasing their incomes, and in establishing the terms under which they would interact with the various kinds of people with whom they must interact, including the owners of the establishments in which they worked, their customers, and the people who helped bring them business (*khon chia khaek*— คนเชียร์แขก). From the perspective of those who sell sexual services, theirs is an occupation that builds incomes, the same as any other occupation. Such a perspective differs from that of early feminist theorists and activists who saw sexual service workers as inherently oppressed. However, feminist theorists today look at these phenomena in a variety of ways. Many groups of feminists had initially seen the selling of sexual services as a status or institution of oppression and of exploitation of women in systems of patriarchy in which women are treated as sexual objects in order to satisfy the sexual desires of males (LeMoncheck 1997, p. 127). However, there are other groups of feminists who now see the selling of sexual services as a kind of "work" or "career" that, in the view of many of the women selling these services, is not distinctively different from other kinds of work. According to this second feminist perspective, women should have the right to choose this line of work if they want to, and the nation-state (as well as local governments) should provide the same protections, rights, and privileges to these women as are given to other types of laborers (O'Neill 2001, p. 82).

These women's attempts to re-articulate their relationships with other people in the area can be viewed analytically as an effort to re-construct themselves and improve their position in the area. Their importance in sustaining the local economy has given these women tools, or "interactive spaces," for strengthening their negotiating power and social status, so that their previous condition of being oppressed, disdained, and snubbed has been relaxed and improved. All sectors of society have begun paying more attention to and become more accepting of these women who support themselves by selling sexual services. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that the women selling sexual services have been playing an increasingly integral role in the town's economy. This picture of the role of the women selling sexual services in sustaining the local economy became inseparable from the picture of decline in the town's other economic sectors, as these divergent developments caused the image and role of sexual services, as a prospering economic niche, to become more outstanding, positive, and

notable against that background of more general decline.

Scholarly interest the study of women selling sexual services in Thai society is not new. In the past, there have been many studies studying many aspects of the phenomenon. Many of these studies have highlighted issues of identity, agency, and negotiations of power. One scholar whose work has become particularly well known in Thailand is Suleeman (Naruemon) Wongsuphap (2531 [1988]), who produced a study titled “นางงามตู้กระจก: การศึกษากระบวนการกลายเป็นหมอนวดไทย” (*Naang ngaam tuu krajok: kaansueksaa krabuankaan klaai pen maaunuat Thai*—“The Pretty Women Behind the Glass: A Study of the Processes of Becoming Thai Masseuses”) This study did not emphasize “identity” directly. However, the book indicated that the process of social refining and the interactions in the workplace are important processes that show the sense of self of the women selling sexual services. This study used the analytical approach known as “symbolic analysis” as it detailed the processes that stamped the women as “good women” or “bad women.” The thing that caused the study to receive special praise was its use of methods of study that attempted to enter “the insider’s perspective.”

The present study examines how the women in Betong have been creating negotiating power in relation to the various other social and economic actors in their town. The study highlights the techniques used to develop negotiating power, the points of strength used to increase their collective force, and their patterns of using negotiating power vis-à-vis the various people and groups with whom they interact in their work and in the practices of daily life. These matters will be outlined in the next several sections.

Building Points of Strength for Negotiation

The creation of points of strength by the women selling sexual services is a factor that helps the women to be able to devise and use negotiating tactics with the various others they encounter in the course of their occupation and daily lives. Two of the most important sets of tools and tactics are the women’s acquisition and uses of languages, and their creation and uses of social networks.

Learning Language(s)

One of the reasons why the women selling sexual services in this area have been able to enhance their practical bargaining power is because they have been doing a good job of learning all of the languages used by their clients, including English, Malay, and Chinese. Using these languages to communicate directly with the customers enables the women to enhance their negotiating power toward their clients, because they know, understand, and can engage in direct conversation with them. This ability with languages enables the women to negotiate for “tips” and other payments for extra services in addition to the basic price of the service for which they were hired. The women selling sexual services in this area therefore try to learn to speak the languages of the clients, or at least one of the languages commonly shared in the local businesses. Indeed, this is an ability that women selling sexual services in this area must try to acquire. The acquisition of languages often happens directly through the women’s interactions with their customers. English is the first language that they need to learn, because it is a *lingua franca* commonly used in the business of selling sexual services in this area. Consequently, women who want to have foreigners as their customers need to learn English in order to be able to communicate with them. In addition, the ability to use multiple languages can give the women

bargaining power in their dealings with the owners of the places where they work, because their language abilities expands the number of places where they are able to do the work.

Networking

The women selling sexual services in this area have also been working to build networks for mutual support and interaction. Creation of these networks has enabled them to build power, leverage, better standing, and better social and economic circumstances.

Joining together to build networks that increase their group leverage has brought these women not only greater *economic* bargaining power, but also greater *social* power that has caused them to be more accepted in local society. The tactics used in building greater power for themselves involve interaction with at least the following four kinds of networks: (1) the women's networks of relatives; (2) the networks of sexual service promoters (known in Thai as *khon chia khaek*—คนเชียร์แขก, or the people who bring in the customers by introducing them to the women); (3) the networks of owners of the places where sexual service transactions are conducted (*phu prakaupkan*—ผู้ประกอบการ); and (4) the networks of co-workers.

1. Networks of Relatives

The women's networking among relatives arises naturally (see สันธยา พลศรี, 2548 [2005], p. 257). Networks of family and relatives are one of the factors or means by which women enter the business of selling sexual services. In the course of fieldwork in Betong, the author discovered that some of the women who had entered the business of selling sexual services did so through the invitation and assistance of relatives and family members who had entered the business before them. Some of the women had aunts who had formerly worked in the business and who were now inviting their younger relatives to join in the same field of work. In other cases older sisters or cousins were inviting younger members of approximately the same generation. In all of these cases, whenever one member of the pair or group of relatives would change her place of business, the other relatives would join her at the new place. Indeed, it could be said that of the four kinds of "networks" being explored in the present subsection that the networks of relatives were the strongest and most important to the women. Furthermore, it seemed that it was this set of networks among relatives, cousins, sisters, and aunts and nieces that gave the women their strongest leverage against the owners of business and other establishments where these women worked.

2. Networks of the People Who Bring in the Customers

The women's networking with the people who are in the business of bringing them customers (the คนเชียร์แขก—*khon chia khaek*) arises from working relationships in the course of which the various parties have the kinds of interactions that cause them to learn of each other's feelings, needs, and desires, as they care for and help each other like relatives.⁸ In the past, the relationship between the women selling

⁸ In using phrases like "promoters of sexual services" and "people who bring in the customers," the translator is being deliberately vague about specific roles played, while also avoiding clearly derogatory terms like the American term "pimp." The underlying Thai term, "*khon chia khaek*" – คนเชียร์แขก, literally means "the people who 'cheer in' the customers" and the work done by people referred to with this term can range from the relatively low-status

services and the people who helped attract customers was like that between prisoners and prison guards. Today, however, the situation has changed for the better. One of the signals of this change is that the women now address these “promoters” in terms of address—such as “father,” “older brother or sister,” “younger aunt or uncle,” or “bung”—that are normally reserved for close friends and relatives.⁹ The “promoters” who bring in business for the women have a great influence on the amount of money the women are able to earn, due to their ability to steer specific customers toward or away from specific women in their circles of contacts. Not only do the promoters earn incomes for themselves through the women (normally by collecting a small commission on top of the fees earned by the women), but they can also affect individual women’s ability to attract customers. The promoters can boost a woman’s attractiveness in the eyes of one set of potential customers while making her seem less attractive to another set of customers. In this way they can cause particular customers to choose one woman over others.

The women selling sexual services must therefore find ways to reduce the power of these go-between promoters, by creating some bargaining power of their own that counteracts and “covers over” the tremendous power of the *khon chia khaek*. They have been doing so by drawing the promoters (*khon chia khaek*) into the women’s own promotional networks by means of clever stratagems—made possible by experiences gained in the course of their work—that the women selling sexual services call “benefits to both sides.” For example, the women do not want the effective price of their services to fall below the rates that they have established. Meanwhile, the “promoters” want to be able to collect “water charges” (a commission for their services) of more than the usual amount. At the time of the author’s fieldwork, the women operating in this fashion were setting their price no lower than 3,000 baht per encounter, and the “promoters” were adding on “water charges” of no less than 300 baht. Therefore, when the promoters would attract customers for this group of women they would try to receive no less than 3,000 baht each for the women, in addition to receiving 300-400 baht for their own “water usage fees.”

3. Relationships with the Owners of the Establishments Where the Women Work

The women’s relationships with the owners of the establishments in which they work involve networks that the women have set up in response to conflicts in the conduct of their business in the area, and also in response to the shortage of women selling sexual services. Therefore, at the time the author was doing her most intensive fieldwork, the women selling sexual services in Betong were creating networks for self-help and mutual aid and also self-advocacy groups for the purpose of interrelating with other groups. This was often done in a fairly uncomplicated manner, with the women simply relying on each other in their relations with the owners of the establishments where sexual services took place. The women would draw themselves together in groups as a means of establishing routes to the places of business. As a way of gaining leverage, the women would place themselves in affiliation with the owners of no less than three different places of business at a time, in order to

and low-power roles of merely distributing flyers on behalf their employers to the powerful (and less benign) kinds of roles suggested by the American term “pimp.” From the section’s details, it appears that most of the “*chia khaek*” people referred to by the author fall somewhere between these two extremes.

⁹ “Bung” is a borrowing from Malay that is an affectionate term for a close friend or brother.

enhance their economic opportunities by having more places where they could work. Whenever business was better elsewhere, they would move to new places where they had been able to establish affiliations. Women who had been able to create networks in more than three places were able to be even more mobile. Thus, they kept moving to the places where business was best, such as the places that were being frequented by tourists.

By networking relationships with multiple owners of these establishments, women enabled themselves to move around easily. Sometimes even when they did not yet feel like moving to a new place, the owner of another establishment that had a shortage of women would get in touch and urge them to move to the new place, and they would feel they had to move. From the perspective of the women, their contacts with the owners of these establishments were bringing them advantages, not disadvantages, because the owners of the establishments were effectively increasing the women's choices of places to do business. In so doing, the establishments enabled the women to encounter a greater variety of customers while also increasing and expanding the establishments' own networks among the female service workers that they wished to attract. Thus, even as the women were developing their own networks, both among themselves and with the owners of the establishments, the owners of the establishments were similarly developing informal networks with the women on which the owners of the establishments could draw when the establishments were experiencing shortages of women.

The benefit that the women received from this pattern of networking was that the owners counterbalanced each other in their mutual competition to attract women to their establishments. This competition to attract sex workers to the establishment enabled the women to place themselves over top of the power that the establishment owners might otherwise have enjoyed. The establishment owners similarly had to network among themselves in order to avoid resentments from over-competition among themselves. However, during the period studied, it was the women who had the greater range of choices, and for that reason the women were able to do pretty much as they pleased.

4. Networking among Co-workers

Networking among co-workers arose naturally from the women's living side-by-side with each other. Their relations with others in the same trade were very important to the women selling sexual services. Most of the women selling sexual services in the period after BE 2540 (CE 1997) had entered the trade through having been invited rather than through deception. This observation is especially true of the Thai women. Therefore, the first place where the women work tends to be a place where their friends or relatives are already working; only later do they move to a new place. Their friends and relatives are the ones who teach them the tricks of the trade, including how to dress, how to get the customers interested, how to satisfy them, how to watch after the women's own health, how to act toward others, how to set proper prices for their services, how to conduct the activities of daily life, and how to expand the range of places where the women can work both in Thailand and outside the country. Furthermore, it is important to have networks that help them develop good negotiating relationships with the establishments where sexual services are sold.

The women selling sexual services have networks both within the country and extending outside the

country. In addition to enabling the women to have more places to work, these networks and the attendant constant changes in the places where they women decide to work enables them to charge more for their services, because whenever they change to a new place, the women become a “new person” in the new place and therefore more desirable to the regular customers. In addition, the owners’ knowledge that the women have new places ready and waiting to receive them enables the women to be more successful in their dealings with the owners of the establishments.

Thus, the women’s creation of networks in the Betong area include (1) the creation and use of networks of family and relatives; (2) networks of and with the promoters of sexual services (*khon chia khaek*); (3) networking with the owners of the establishments in which the women ply their trade; and (4) networks with co-workers. These networks that the women establish and manage are an important element of their ability to build negotiating power in relation to each of the groups with whom they come in contact.

In creating these points of strength, the women have effectively pulled themselves up out of the relatively passive role they had once played. To borrow a characterization from Thai scholar Thirayuth Boonmee (2557 [2014], p. 182), they have changed from being docile bodies to being resistors, competitors, and active creators in the ways they manage their work.

Negotiating Power

Michel Foucault’s writings concerning “power” analyze this concept in terms of relationships between individuals. Furthermore, according to this line of thinking, wherever there is power, there is also likely to be resistance (Somsak Samakkitham, 2554 [2011], p. 94). This causes the networks of power to be unstable (Foucault, 1978, p. 95). As the observer seeks to answer the question of how the women selling sexual services in the border towns are able to negotiate for improved power relationships, Foucault’s writings (Foucault 1978) suggest that, according to his perspective, power is not a possession that any single person or group can monopolize for themselves. Rather, power rests in the strands of relationships within which are established knowledge, truth, status and social position. They are expressed in actions that guide, control, or have influence over the daily lives of people who act in accordance with the “technologies of power” that exert themselves through their operations on people’s bodies in their status as subjects or recipients of the effects of power. In the present analysis these Foucauldian concepts can be applied to the explanation of the forms and manner in which negotiating power is created or accumulated.

Negotiating Methods

When these concepts are applied to the case of women selling sexual services in contemporary Betong, it can be seen that the women possess or apply negotiating power in three primary ways:

1. Negotiations in which the women refuse to provide sexual services to ethnically Thai customers. This is a result of objectives and preferences that are shared between the women and the owners of the establishments. In their opinion, the Thai customers cause problems both for the women and for the owners of the establishments.

2. Negotiations by the women to be able to set their own prices for their services. In this matter the owners of the establishments can easily agree to the women's preferences, because no matter what the price is, the owners receive half of the income. In this case, what the establishment owners care about most is that the women should not set their prices too low.
3. Negotiations to be able to choose customers on their own. The owners of the establishments are no longer able to force the women to serve specific customers in the way that they used to. Consequently, the women selling sexual services are able to tell the sexual services promoters (the *khon chia khaek*) exactly which kinds of customers they prefer to serve, such as young Malay men, or young Chinese men, and so forth.

Each of these points will be discussed in the following sub-sections.

1. The Refusal of Thai Customers

Even though the public image of being "women who sell sexual services" is something that society determines or designates for these women, and even though this phrase and image carry a stigma that is used to define people's attitudes and actions toward the women, all of this is the sum of the social relations that this group of women have with other groups of people. Thus, society tries to determine the image of these women, while the women try to take control of their own image as they present themselves to others. However, the women claimed that the Thai male customers especially tended to insult and verbally abuse them. The expression of these behaviors dishonoring the women, and treating them as mere merchandise to be purchased, creates problems for the women providing the services.

2. Choosing their own Customers

The relationships between tourism and the selling of sexual services are not just matters of sexual oppression, and they are also not just matters of the men's assertion of greater power. Rather, the relationships that have become most apparent in this study are the relationships of power, the kinds of power that the tourists and the sellers of sexual services have in themselves and that they use to make themselves happy and to get both emotional and physical responses from others. Sex between the tourists and the women selling sexual services is not an outbreak of libido in exchange for money. It is equally an exchange of emotions and feelings of a kind that may be understood or defined as "friendship," "a relationship," "closeness," and "love." The bodies of the women selling sexual services are not just "sexual objects" that exist to be used as erotic merchandise. Rather, they are meaning-filled bodies used to impress the tourists. Consequently, their work experiences enable the women to learn the habits and characteristics of each ethnic group. The ability to choose their customers is therefore established by the women themselves. Their ability to demand the right to choose their own customers became apparent in this area beginning around BE 2525 (CE 1982), which was about the time when the women were emerging from their condition as sex slaves to being independent entrepreneurs. In this period the women began to free themselves of their debts. In addition, women who had been selling sexual services overseas began coming back home, and the "closed brothels" (*song pit*) gradually began closing themselves down. As a consequence, the women selling sexual services began having greater

freedom and independence in the practice of their occupations. Furthermore, in the year BE 2540 (CE 1997) the owners of the establishments where sexual services were offered began suffering the effects of the 1997 economic crisis. In the aftermath of this crisis the women were able to increase the scope of their freedoms, and were able to construct new workplace cultures for themselves.

The ability to choose their own customers has been an integral part of the women's quest for social justice and democracy. The attainment of these ideals has been just as much of a challenge for these women as it has been for everyone else. Nevertheless, the ability to choose their own customers has resulted in the creation of more positive identities for the women involved.

The practices involved in choosing the women's own customers fall into four groups: 1) choosing according to ethnicity, such as Malay, Chinese, or South Asian; 2) choosing according to body or facial type; 3) choosing according to age; and 4) choosing according to a combination of factors.

1) Choosing according to Ethnicity

Women choosing according to this criteria claimed that men from certain ethnic groups were more polite, accorded the women more respect, and gave bigger tips and presents.

2) Choosing according to Body or Facial type

Women choosing according to this criteria justified their preference by saying that they wanted to be able to spend a part of their lives with attractive men who would make them feel proud of themselves and fill them with hope for the future.

3) Choosing according to Age

Women choosing according to this criteria justified their preference by claiming that men of the preferred age group were kinder and more thoughtful, more polite and gallant, more respectful, and more likely to try to attend to the women's needs.

4) Choosing according to a Combination of Factors

This group claimed to be creating value for themselves by maximizing their freedom in choosing customers; however, in practice, they were actually not choosing at all, because their primary objective was purely economic.

3. The Negotiation of Prices

The selling of sexual services is one kind of labor market where women have always held power. Power, in this sense, means that the laborers selling sexual services have been able to be laborers who have more power in bargaining for the financial terms of their services. They have also been able to be more visible participants in their line of work than is true of women in other occupations. For example, in the financial and service sectors women are still greatly outnumbered by men, at least in the positions of greater power and influence. In these other sectors the top salaries of women are also much less than those of men.

Today, the selling of sexual services has great complexity, and takes place in many forms. It is important to understand how the women in this occupation are truly seen, the ways they use special skills, knowledges and expertise, and the ways they develop career paths, the same as in other occupations

such as medicine, teaching, journalism, and engineering.

Most people assume that the business of selling sexual services is an easy occupation that does not require much intelligence, since it seems to involve nothing more than having sexual relations with the people who come to use their services; outsiders therefore assume that it does not involve any special skills or expertise.

It is indeed true that those who sell sexual services do not need to have any advanced educational degrees. It is also not all that difficult for any individual woman to enter this profession. However, for a woman to become truly good in the profession of selling sexual services requires a fair amount of time accumulating experiences. This is especially so in markets—like Betong—where there are many sellers of these services, and where it is therefore especially important to develop the skills that will cause customers to be attracted and attached to particular women and that will make them want to come back. It is also important for these women to develop skills that will enable them to survive and escape in times of trouble, such as when a customer uses force with the woman or when he refuses to wear a condom.

The profession of selling sexual services is like engaging in a form of self-employment. To the same degree that other businesses and occupations are able to set prices, so, too, do those in the profession of selling sexual services. This profession is therefore an occupation requiring skill and specialized knowledge. Just as in the case of other occupations, it is factors such as these that enable the women to set their own prices.

This project's analysis of the relationships of power involved in the selling of sexual services has found that the women selling these services have different kinds of power in relation to each of the groups that they deal with. For example, on the one hand, the women have economic situations that give them bargaining power in relation to the owners of the places of business, the promoters of sexual services (*khon chia khaek*), and the general residents of the area. Yet in their interactions with the customers, the women exercise a different kind of power, one gained through their production of happiness, fun, and satisfaction with their services.

Being “Good Women” as a Source of Bargaining Power

The women selling sexual services in Betong have also been using a variety of tactics to enhance their esteem both in their own eyes and in the eyes of the town's populace. These tactics include (1) demonstrations of dutifulness and daughterly piety (กตัญญู--*katannuu*); (2) increasing their religious space; and (3) expanding their economic spaces.

1. Demonstrations of Dutifulness and Daughterly Piety – (กตัญญู - *katannuu*)

In Thailand, demonstrations of dutifulness and filial piety are performed differently by men and women. Thai Buddhist men are able to express their duties of filial piety by being ordained into the Buddhist monkhood, thereby repaying the meritorious favors that their mothers and fathers have bestowed on them by giving them birth and raising them. In general, Buddhist society places great value on this manner of meritorious repayment by receiving monastic ordination. As for women, their most

commonly expected way of repaying the good and grace of their parents is through providing care and sustenance to those parents.

These differences in expectations for good daughters (versus the expectations for sons) are constructed together with a set of duties and responsibilities in which daughters are expected to find ways to care for their parents and families materially and financially. This causes the women who sell sexual services to be diligent in sending money to their families regularly. In addition, they use “religion” and devoted religious practices as additional bases of making merit for their future lives and as a way of making merit in additional ways that show their grateful diligence toward their parents.

2. Increasing their “Religious Space”

In addition to the obligation to carry out their daughterly duties by providing material and financial support to their parents, the women must also undertake responsibilities to reduce existential suffering. One of the ways they do so is by making merit in a wide variety of ways, including making food offerings to monks and giving monastic robes to monks.



Even though their life choices and outcomes appear to be vastly different from those of other people, the women encountered in Betong still adhere to basic Thai Buddhist beliefs in merit and demerit and in the value of taking lesser ordination as *chii phraam* (lay religious devotees who observe only eight precepts and who do not shave their heads). The women do this to counter their situation of being socially beaten down and stigmatized, a situation that causes them to feel inferior, causes them to lack self-confidence, causes them to see themselves as having lives that lack worth, and causes them to feel that they are bad people who are despised by others in society. As for their attitudes toward their occupation, they often feel they are in a “low” occupation that is dishonorable, yet they feel they must buckle down and do their jobs anyway, because they need to earn money to support themselves and the people in their families. In these particular aspects, the lifestyles of the women selling sexual services may differ from those in other occupations. Yet from the standpoint of liberal feminism, these women still have and exercise their full human rights and abilities the same as men do, and using the same reasoning and choice-making abilities as anybody else, including the ability to rationally seek the best outcomes for themselves. People in other occupations use reasoning and rationality in their professions to earn money to support themselves and the other members of their families. In the same way, the

women who sell sexual services make rational decisions and choices in the conduct of their occupations. This is so because all people, whether male or female, have humanity in themselves. Consequently, everyone has the same ability to reason. This is the basis of the democratic system in which women and men must receive the same or equal treatment and opportunities. It is also believed that every person desires to create benefits for themselves and for others, and that they desire to improve their lives. Therefore, the monastic ordination as full novices and monks—which is a Buddhist practice that only boys and men can undertake as repayment for the grace and benevolence bestowed by the young man’s parents—can be paralleled by the women’s ability to undertake actions—including religious activities—that similarly build peace and happiness for themselves.

Some of the women who sell sexual services therefore set aside part of every year to take on ordination as *chii phraam* (see photograph), or white-robed lay female ordinands, observing the precepts, and practicing meditation, for periods of five to nine days at a time, while residing at monasteries (*wat*) located in their local communities. In addition to observing the precepts and undertaking meditation, these women take up all the other duties that they should normally do as female ordinands in the temple, whether it be sweeping the public areas, or cleaning the meditation



hall. As for the food that they receive from the neighboring villagers, the women first offer it to the monks, and then eat from what is left over after the monks have eaten. By means of these religious practices, new kinds of interrelationships are created between the women and the community. Thus, the culture of becoming “good people” through religious practices enables the women to have “spaces” that creatively add to their scope of personal and social freedom.

In the women’s own feelings, the ability to be able to receive ordination as *chii phraam* is a kind of self-transformation. Some of the women selling services have reported to this writer that their feelings about their work, and their internal reactions when servicing the men, have challenged them to find ways to step out of that abnormal standard of life and into a more normal standard. Religious practice gives them new ways of seeing themselves and presenting themselves to others, providing them a space for leading their lives in ways less concerned for the lifeways and discourses they had previously been experiencing, hoping instead to build a life and image of beauty and grace in the eyes of the community.

3. Expanding their Economic Spaces

Thailand’s southern border was at the time of research enjoying a state of economic revival built on cross-border trade. Furthermore, cooperative projects supporting expansion of local development had caused the normal strictures of the state’s borderline to expand and become more flexible in order to promote more commerce and to increase the collective benefits gained from that commerce. Stated another way, the southern borderland was being re-imagined as a significant base for commerce. At the same time, this area on edge of the state was becoming a center for cross-border travel in search of opportunities for work and other forms of earning income. The border areas around Betong were therefore becoming one of the state’s gateways for commerce, being a gateway for communications,

transportation, and tourism. Betong was consequently becoming a prosperous town, and this was causing the border towns and provinces to become areas of opportunity for investors to settle themselves in to all kinds of investments and commercial endeavors. This in turn led to an expansion of the numbers of women selling sexual services in this area. As noted above, the selling of sexual services had earlier been more common in the larger towns and cities. But once the border towns became the sites for the passage and overnight stays of tourists, they also become places for conducting the businesses of prostitution. The women selling sexual services used this area to ply their trade in order to earn income. Yet at the same time, their activities in servicing the growing tourist trade also brought increased incomes to the other sectors of the town's economy.

Even though the occupation of selling sexual services is an occupation that has been disparaged and despised, and even though the women involved in this profession have similarly been disparaged and despised, yet it must also be recognized that the profession of selling sexual services is an occupation that earns the women money, and that brings income into their families, the community, and the nation. Consequently, because they help create income for the community, even though the women selling sexual services have never risen up in an organized way to stand up for their rights as major contributors to the area's increased income, yet the economic prosperity they have collectively helped bring to the area has in itself been a form of power that manifested itself to the communities in a way that is generally recognized, and that consequently adds to these women's perceived value in the eyes of the community.

Conclusion

The women selling sexual services use their areas of operation to draw themselves out of the Disciplinary Society in order to establish their economic base through their practices of knowledge, their professional expertise, their building up of their strength through their uses of language, and their building and use of networks. These capabilities, processes, and practices have enabled the women to build bargaining power in relation to the other groups of people with whom they must interact, including (a) the owners of the places where the women provide sexual services, (b) the "sexual services promoters" (*khon chia khaek*), and (c) the clients and customers. Their bargaining interactions with the clients and customers include the ability to refuse ethnically Thai customers, the ability to choose which kinds of customers they want to accept, and their ability to set the rates charged for their services. In addition, the local communities provide "spaces of operation" for the women selling sexual services by being understanding and cognizant of the women's attempts to express their acts of dutiful gratitude toward family, society, and religion, and by accepting their religious practices and their social relations within the social frameworks of being "good women," a set of practices and relationships that are exhibited through their acts of filial piety toward family and society and through their religious practices as described above. The negative social reactions of the past have become transformed into positive reactions, in the sense of recognizing and acknowledging the women's importance and value. These behaviors and daily practices of the women selling sexual services have led to the construction of "mini-cultures" or "sub-cultures" that show themselves through the professional ideals shaping the logics of their practices in ways that "erase" the bad that they have done, that create new patterns of

daily practice, and that reward the women in the forms of monetary income and social acceptance. The women who sell sexual services are creating new selves through the processes of learning how to conduct their profession; by negating, denying, or refusing the type of supposedly “natural” femininity that has been constructed through patriarchal styles of thinking; by creating lifestyles marked by freedom, personal creativity, and choices; and by exhibiting freedoms in establishing the patterns by which they will conduct their business. They have also shown an ability to rise up and challenge the powers that seek to control them; and to reject, refuse, and negate the power of the discourses about themselves that had once prevailed in the area. In addition, they have shown an ability to create social spaces in which they have increasingly gained acceptance, respect, honor, self-confidence, and freedom, and an ability to determine their own futures. These things have enabled them to change themselves from the condition of passive subjects to active agents who are able to stand on their own feet to craft their own personal and collective histories.

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The Other Burmese Connection: The Silk Industry in Northern Thailand from the End of the Nineteenth Century

Apiwong, Thanyarat
Chiang Mai University
Thailand

Abstract

The silk industry represents one of the few 'traditional' industries that successfully found a modern market in the Thailand of the 'age of development'. Silk weaving has to some extent always been commercialized but in the late nineteenth century efforts were made to increase the amount being produced for markets and to recast it as the basis for potential modern industry. The perception of the silk industry as an example of Thailand's endogenous industrial development is tempting. In fact, historically, the emergence of the modern industry involved, in some places, significant external input. Overland entrepreneurial traders from Burma played a significant role in establishing a transnational and multi-ethnic zone of silk production and trade between Burma and Northern Siam in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. Raw silk was imported from Burma and carried to Northern Siam to be woven by locals, then re-exported to Burma. This transnational economic activity energized and pioneered the modern silk industry in Northern Siam and stimulated the emergence of local entrepreneurs, turning Chiang Mai into a recognized hub of Thai silk-weaving and trade, becoming a main source of manufactured silk for Burma. The case of the silk industry in Chiang Mai illustrates how non-state actors stimulated local industry and external inputs, and the movements of traders across the border, were as important as domestically-based resources in fashioning a modern silk industry in Chiang Mai.

Keywords: Burma/ Myanmar, Burmese traders, cross-border trade, Northern Siam/Thailand, silk industry

Introduction

Siam was unable to develop traditional silk production into a modern silk industry in the early twentieth century when such a development may have been possible. Ian Brown argued that the development of the silk industry in Siam was not successful because despite the introduction of modern techniques and increases in the quality and the productivity of the silkworm by the Siamese government failed to improve and local producers had no incentive to take them up. This was because no connections between the producers and the market were developed by the government at the same time (Brown, 1980).

The Siamese had traditionally produced silk cloth for domestic consumers. However, a small amount had probably been long exported. Officers of the Kingdom of Lanna derived an important source of their revenue from the sale of woven textiles, which included silk cloth. The Siamese government was interested in silk production in as far as it took the form of *suay*, and therefore a means of paying tax. The Siamese government hired Japanese sericulture experts, leading by Toyama Kametaro, to develop the silk industry in Bangkok and provincial areas in the northeast region, particularly Khorat (Onaka, 2010: 226-229). Brown pointed out that this initial program was not successful because the Japanese experts could not stimulate local silk producers to join the programme.

Brown's focus was on this particular programme and on the North-East. Because of this, his study overlooks developments in the north and how local people there, played an important and autonomous role, stimulated by market forces to develop the basis of a modern silk industry (Brown, 1980: 34-40). Catherine Bowie has already demonstrated that silk trade across border and the development methodology of domestic silk industry that produced by local entrepreneurs (Bowie, 1993: 180-199). But I would like to extend Bowie's excellent study to emphasize the importance of Burma in this particular trade. Burma was the main market for silk cloth from northern Siam. I also want to draw greater attention to the role of migrant entrepreneurs who came from Burma; both British Indian Burmese residents and indigenous inhabitants of Burma, on transaction of silk trade between northern Siam and Burma. Other migrant communities were instrumental from the Siamese end in Chiang Mai, Chinese and Yunnanese traders resident in Chiang Mai.

This paper examines how local entrepreneurs and migrant merchants played a significant role in developing domestic economy in provincial states and modern silk industry. Chiang Mai was an economic hub for trading across the border between Northern Siam and Burma. At the same time, it became a center for silk trade and smuggling from Siam to Burma.

I divide this paper into three parts. In the first part, I explore silk trade in Northern Siam. I emphasize local entrepreneurs who related to silk trade. In the second part, I examine British subjects who played a significant role in silk trade across the overland borders. In the final part, I discuss the emergence of silk smuggling which was conducted by British Indians and British Burmese.

Silk Trade in Northern Siam

In the second half of the nineteenth century, and early twentieth century, when opportunities for global trade and advisers and examples of successful industrial enterprise were available, the Siam government took no interest in the Northern trade, as they do not appear to have done anything to support or encourage Chiang Mai and the Northern provinces as a place for modern silk production.

However, Chiang Mai was the main production site of silk cloth for export to Burma. According to archival sources, the silk trade between Northern Siam and Burma constantly increased from 1890s – 1920s. The British Consular Report of 1925 indicated that the importation of raw silk valued 11,000 ponds while the exportation of silk cloth valued 8,000 ponds. This silk trade was significant enough to increase the value of overland trade between Northern Siam and Burma.

Prior to the late nineteenth century, British piecegoods and clothgoods, silk and cotton, were imported to Chiang Mai market by overland from Moulmein, Burma and by river from Bangkok. Haw oxen

caravans from Yunnan, China often carried silk, both raw and manufactured, to Chiang Mai market (Bowie, 1993: 189-190). This made Chiang Mai become one of the big markets for various kind of clothgoods. As Edwards, a British officer, mentioned that about 100 shops in Chiang Mai market and he noted, "These sheds display English cotton goods, flanel, Turkey red cloth, muslins, articles of native manufacture, both silk and cotton, also Bombay chowls"(Trade and Commerce, 1874: 18).

According to the Chiang Mai Consular Reports 1890-1903, Chiang Mai increasingly exported silk manufactured to Moulmein. It was mentioned that silk manufactured from Chiang Mai was beautiful and quite popular among European and Burmese (Stringer, 1892). Raw silk was imported from Burma by local Chiang Mai entrepreneurs and carried to Northern Siam to be woven by local women. They were skilled weavers but they were not engaged in rearing silkworms as they believed that killing silkworms was sinful (Naruemol, 1993: 19). They therefore had no experience in sericulture and no opportunity to improve it.

British subjects and local entrepreneurs played an important role in re-exporting silk cloth to Burma. These included groups of local, including locally-based Chinese traders but not excluding indigenous Northern peoples, British Indian and British Burmese entrepreneurial traders from Burma. Both groups resided in Chiang Mai where they carried out the trade from their shops. This made Chiang Mai a main source of manufactured silk for Burma and was recognized as a hub of Siamese silk weaving and silk trade.

Both archival sources and oral histories demonstrate that local traders in Sankampaeng, such as the Shinawatra family (Hakka), the Phromchana family and the Phiankuson family played an important role to link overland silk trade between Burma and northern Siam through their oxen caravan trade (Naruemol, 1993: 16). These entrepreneurs in Sankampaeng owned oxen caravans to carry goods to trade in Burma and purchased raw silk and manufactured goods on the way back home. The Shinawatra family played a crucial role in promoting silk-weaving in Sankampaeng. In 1910, Seng Shinawatra was a tax famer in Sankampaeng. His son, Chiang, conducted overland trade from Chiang Mai to Moulmein, and Chiang Mai to Kengtung. Chiang bought raw silk from Burma, then, hired local women to weave silk cloths, *pha-sin* or *sa-long*, in order to sell it in Burma (Pasuk & Baker, 2004: 26-32; Naruemol, 1993: 14-16; Prani, 1980: 200-203). This putting-out system combined with the market in Burma made Chiang one of the North's most successful silk wholesalers.

A railway connection in 1921 helped to expand these transactions from Chiang Mai to Bangkok. The silk cloth from Chiang Mai found a market among wealthy women in Bangkok. The Shinawatra family took advantage of the new connection and was able to steadily grow the Chiang Mai-Bangkok silk trade over the interwar period. This expansion was evidently successful enough to encourage Chiang Shinawatra to enter into direct production. In 1935, Chiang Shinawatra set up their weaving factory in Sankampaeng. This included weaving, dyeing, and even as far as tailoring ready-made silk cloth (Naruemol, 1993: 35).

Despite the clear lead given by the market and entrepreneurs in response to it, some state involvement was needed. After the 1932 revolution the government greater interest in industrialization and therefore wanted to offer support to the Shinawatra's factory project. As Thomas Bruce (2016) points out that in 1935, the government's Department of Industrial Promotion had the idea of providing quality control service, guaranteeing a high standard for the consumer, and therefore brought the factory under a form

of supervision of the Industrial Division of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. This effectively signified the government's attempt to control production and the market. This was in line with a general trend towards economic nationalism in this period. Another effect of this was to cement Chiang Mai's reputation as a place of quality silk production, even if the Industrial Division did not actually have much of a positive effect on the production quality of Shinawatra silk.

British Subjects and Silk Trade Across Borders

Apart from the well-known story of the Chinese middle-man, Burmese migrants also played a significant role as middlemen who travelled with caravans of local entrepreneurs into Burma. Indian entrepreneurs who resided in Chiang Mai also hired Burmese migrants in Chiang Mai to carry silk cloths entering into Burma borders via Kemapyu (Karenni state), Kengtung (Shan state) or Moulmein (Mon state).

There was a considerable number of British subjects who resided in Northern Siam from the late nineteenth century. The Vice-Consul in Chiang Mai reported that the number of British subjects came increasingly into Chiang Mai for the logging business and trade from the 1880s. The British Burmese subjects registered in 1884 was less than 100 persons. The number of these people increased over 3,000 persons in 1902 (IOR/LPS/10/96, 17 December 1903). It was believed that the Burmese were the major proportion of the community of British subjects in Northern Siam as they played an important role of middlemen in logging business and trade across border. British officers often reported that the Burmese were the majority and most influential section of British subject community, including European and Indian (Thanyarat, 2016: 79-82).

However, British Indian and British Burmese migrants in Chiang Mai played a significant role in textile business across the border from Northern Siam to Burma. These Chiang Mai-based entrepreneurs and their porters travelled back and forth between Northern Siam from production and wholesale center of Chiang Mai, and travelled through Chiang Rai or Mae Sot depending on the market destination. The journeys took around 15 days (British Consular Report, 27 May 1935). These trade routes were shorter than travelling from Bangkok to Burma, which took at least three months from Chiang Mai to Bangkok.

Indian entrepreneurs and Burmese employees who resided in Chiang Mai carried silk cloth from Chiang Mai crossed overland border to Burma. Baghwan Jedi Ji, for example, was one such Indian migrant. He was a cloth merchant in Chiang Mai and was associated with Moti Ram, who owned a well-known local cloth store in Chiang Mai. Baghwan Jedi Ji was the agent in Chiang Mai of the Bangkok firm of Hira Lal Maganlal, dealing in silk goods. Hiralal Maganlal was also a silk merchant with representation in Rangoon, Bangkok and Northern Siam. Baghwan Jedi Ji frequently travelled back and forth between Chiang Mai in Northern Siam and Kemapyu in the Karenni state. The goods were delivered to Taunggyi. From the Shan States, they attempted to dispatch the silk to their destination in Rangoon, the shop of Bagat or Bhakat Ji, Dalhousie Street.

Thus, the markets in Burma consisted of Moulmein via Mae Sot (or direct from Chiang Mai), Kentung (via Chiang Rai), Kemapyu (direct from Chiang Mai) and required three separate routes to reach them. From these markets they were delivered to Rangoon. Here they were purchased by wealthy Burmese consumers. These consumers were largely the product and beneficiaries of the new British trade and administration system but had continued to value traditional high-status articles, such as silk *longyis*.

The Emergence of Silk Smuggling

From the 1930s, considerable quantities of silk goods were exported into Burma by Indian entrepreneurs and Burmese traders. The introduction of customs duties at the border between Siam and British Burma in 1887, led inevitably to smuggling. Among the goods smuggled across the porous border was silk. Chiang Mai became a significant starting point for British Indian traders to smuggle silk cloth into Burma (British Consular Report, 18 May 1935). Chiang Mai effectively functioned as a borderland between British Burma and Siam. The treaty of 1925 included an agreement on the issue of control of overland trade that subjected the importation of silk and other dutiable goods from Siam into British Burma to British Customs duty. According to the agreement 1925, overland trade through the Siam-Burma frontier, silk goods were to be free of Siamese customs duties. But the goods were dutiable on passing within the frontier of Burma.

Traders across border sometimes made use of border regulations in order to avoid paying customs duties. Some areas in the borderlands were weakly controlled by the central government. Making connections with local people in the borderlands was of great use for smuggling goods across borders in order to avoid paying tax. As it was reported that:

agents at Chiengmai and in Burma, carrying on the importation of silk and other dutiable goods, probably of Japanese origin, from Siam into Burma without payment of British customs duty. The goods are said to be smuggled into Burma by one Baghwan Jedi Ji, a man of doubtful reputation who has been nominally resident in Chiengmai for the past three years. He makes frequent journeys between Chiengmai and Karenni and describes himself as a cloth merchant. (British Consular Report, 17 May 1935).

The Karenni state became a free zone for collecting tax because British Burma border regulations were not imposed in the Karenni state. For this reason, British Burmese subjects perceived that if goods were carried from Siam via Karenni state, they would be excluded from tax. The trade route from Chiang Mai in Northern Siam to Kemapyu in the Karenni state was often used by British subjects (Indians and Burmese). Thus, transactions in the silk trade from Northern Siam into Burma were a good example to understand how local traders dealt with state border regulations.

The legal status of being a British subject was made frequent use of for frictionless travel back and forth between Siam and Burma. Using this privileged status, British Indians and British Burmese, who actually lived in Chiang Mai, played a crucial role in conducting the silk smuggling trade from Siam into Kemapyu in Karenni state in order to pass the silk goods on to a market in Rangoon. British Indian entrepreneurs hired British Burmese migrants who were able to easily forge connections with local people in Chiang Mai and the Karenni state.

Conclusion

A confluence of several important factors gave Northern Siam a very different experience in silk production from the rest of the country, particularly the North East, Toyama and Ian Brown's focus of study. British Burma provided Chiang Mai's older established silk market with new and vibrant export markets. This created the sort of putting out system that was familiar in late eighteenth century Britain. British Burma also provided a number of transnational traders, who were able to exploit their legal status rather than let it be an obstacle. Finally, the presence of locally based Chinese, Indian, and Burmese entrepreneurs also provided the trade with an organizing, managerial type class. The movements of traders across the border not only increased the growth of local economy in Northern Thailand but also stimulated the emergence of a modern silk industry in Chiang Mai.

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Modern Mosque/Modern Muslim: The Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand by Paichit Pongpunluk

Ardrgsa, Winyu
Thammasat University
Thailand

Abstract

This paper investigates the design of the Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand (FICT) conceived in 1971 under the influence of architectural modernism. In contrast to other mosques of the Thai metropolis which increasingly appear with typical elements seen in traditional Islamic architecture, the facility designed by the Muslim architect Paichit Pongpunluk was an evidence of avant-garde experimentation. The significance of the mosque's exceptional design, however, goes beyond the establishment of a 'new' architectural style. Accordingly, the question of study is the roles of modern architecture as being applied into the Thai context in response to specific conditions as well as being employed in identity formation processes. The paper argues that the modernist mosque has become a form of representation centered to various constructions and projections of Muslim identities.

Keywords: Modern Architecture, Thailand, Mosque, Muslim, Identity

Introduction

The mosque is a very old architectural typology that is strongly tied with Muslim identity. It contains a set of functions arranged in a very specific order while also represents the presence of a religious community. However, the sacred program and rigid architectural composition allow the mosque to be frequently perceived as independent to variable specificities of place and society. Many researchers try to investigate the mosque for irreducible abstract qualities constituting Islamic identity. In this approach, the space that is essentially 'Muslim' is believed to be found.¹⁰ In another line of study, old mosques are primarily considered as physical 'monument'. Most significantly, the focus is the architectural style of historical mosques which undeniably should be documented and preserved. In relation to these forms of enquiries, new mosques are often considered only in their highly elaborated 'design'.

Between these diverging directions, an alternative discussion about the mosque should be formulated, one that is socially, historically, and architecturally grounded. Although Muslims relatively enjoy the high level of religious freedom in the Buddhist Kingdom, they are in fact a group of minority. With the recent

¹⁰ For example, *Making Muslim Space in North America and Europe* by Barbara Daly Metcalf (1996).

history of nationalist formation of 'Thailand', they constantly seek to assert their social identity in various forms. In this sense, the architecture of the mosque is also a medium. However, the mosque is rarely received a central focus as a historical evidence of this process of negotiation. In relation to this, the modernist mosque in Thailand is a topic of study that can rarely be found. Based on these situations, the modern architecture of the Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand (FICT), the central mosque, will be used as a case study. To be specific, this is an investigation on the intersection of programmatic conception, architectural design as well as the role of the mosque in representing Muslim identity.



Figure 1: The Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand (FICT) © art4d magazine/Ketsiree Wongwan

Modern Islamic Architecture

To investigate the architecture and the significance of the mosque of FICT, it is crucial to firstly look at existing histories of modern architecture and the mosque in Thailand. The historical importance of modernism as an architectural movement in Thailand is in fact recognized only by a small circle of architects and historians. These were mostly carried out in the forms of academic researches and publications. However, modern architecture is usually presented together with other architectural styles in a kind of general study of architectural development. For the mosque, it is unsurprising that there are far more little studies on this particular building type. In the context where Muslims live as a minority group, a mosque is a representative symbol of an Islamic enclave. Consequently, the role of the mosque within Muslim communities frequently becomes a topic of study more than the architecture of the facility.¹¹ In these circumstances, it is importance to situate modern Islamic architecture into the discussion.

¹¹ The particular example is the research Function of Mosque for Muslim Community in Central Thailand by Sawvane Jitmoud (1984).

Islamic Architecture in Histories of Modern Architecture in Thailand

It might be said that the most systematic research on the recent development of architectural style in Thailand is *The Development of Concept and Design in Architecture: Past, Present and Future* by Horayangkura, Intraravichit, Inpuntung and Chantivilasvong (1993). This research focuses on the period between 1932 and 1989 while also noted the beginning of architectural profession and education.¹² The formation of the Association of Siamese Architects under Royal Patronage (ASA) in 1934, the inauguration of modern architectural curriculum at Chulalongkorn University in 1951 and the launch of the Act of Architectural Profession in 1965 were important moments (Horayangkura, 1993, p. 42).¹³ In term of architectural characteristics, the research traced the development of modern architecture and categorized the style through specific conceptual approaches and physical appearances such as International Style, Neo-Plastic, Art-Deco, Brutalism, Brazilian, etc. This research is certainly a seminal work by Horayangkura and his team. The nature of the research, however, can be read as descriptive. The research aims to give a comprehensive overview of the development of architecture in Thailand rather than to investigate specific implications of modern architecture.

It was a historical moment when the first retrospective account on 'Modernist' architecture in Thailand was presented to the public in 2008. During the period between 12 June and 14 September of that year, the exhibition 'Keeping Up': Modern Thai Architecture 1967-1987 was organized by a progressive governmental unit, Thailand Creative and Design Centre (TCDC) in collaboration with ASA. The particular period of the late 1960s is declared as the time when "Thailand grappled with early industrialization" and "Thai architects returned from Western universities armed with concepts of modern architecture rooted in post-industrialized Europe" (TCDC, 2008, p. 60). Despite the fact that many aspects of modern architecture were systematically studied, only a limited selection of outstanding architectural projects was presented. Most are buildings designed by architects described as "overseas-educated" or "Thailand's outstanding architects" (TCDC, 2008, p. 55-58).¹⁴ Perhaps, this reflects the aim of the

¹² The research divides the architectural development in Thailand into four periods: 1932 – 1957, 1958 – 1972, 1973 – 1982 and 1983 – 1989. There are three categories of study which are public building, residential building and Thai architecture.

¹³ The architectural education in Thailand first started at Poh Chang College of Arts and Crafts in 1930 and subsequently at Chulalongkorn University in 1932. However, the curriculum based on modern architectural principles began later in 1951. Specifically, the period between 1958 and 1972 is called 'the golden era of architecture' due to economic growth.

¹⁴ There are 20 emphasized architectural projects in the exhibition and the proceeding book. These were Chulalongkorn Alumni Building by Jane Sakolthanaraksa (1968), Chokchai International Building by Rangsan Torsuwan (1969), Ambassador Hotel by Dan Wongprasat (1969), Kasemsan Mansion by Dan Wongprasat (1970), British Council Building by Sumet Jumsat Na Ayudhya (1970), Indra Hotel by Chira Silpakanok (1970), Building 9, Panabhandhu School by Ongard Satrabhandhu (1970), Samsen Railway Station by Abhai Phadoemchit (1970), Bangkok School for the Blind by Sumet Jumsai Na Ayudhya (1971), New Suan Amporn Pavillion by Krisda Arunvongse Na Ayudhya (1972), Siam Country Club Clubhouse by Sumet Jumsai Na Ayudhya (1972), Thai Military Bank Sanam Pao by Jane Sakolthanaraksa (1975), Fedder Building by Rifenberg and Associates Ltd. (1976), Thai Military Bank Sri Ayudhya Former Head Office by Design 103 International Ltd. (1978), Indian Embassy by ML Tri Devakul (1979), CMIC Office Building by Dan Wongprasat (1981), Bangkok Bank Head Office Silom by Krisda Arunvongse Na Ayudhya (1981), Thai Farmers Bank Head Office Phaholyothin by Rangsan Torsuwan (1981),

exhibition which was noted as the first step to promote an awareness and conservation of modern architectural heritages in the present days.¹⁵ As a consequence, only projects deemed to be historically importance were selected.

There was no building of Islamic community mentioned in these research and exhibition on modern architecture. It was not until January 2014, during the occasion to celebrate 100th year anniversary of Siam Cement Group (SCG), that the building of FICT was publicly presented.¹⁶ The central mosque was included in the list of '100 Amazing Architectures' which features interesting buildings and engineering structures built during a hundred-year period in Thailand. The list comprises of architecture of various styles, both historical and modern – they were all primarily constructed with concrete. However, this was just an online publication of three images on the photo sharing website Pinterest with a link provided on SCG's Facebook page (SCG, 2014). The description can be read as "the building of the Islamic Centre of Thailand, designed by Paichit Pongpunluk in 1984 [completion year], is another interesting piece of architecture which remains outstanding no matter how long it has been".¹⁷ In addition to SCG's architecture list, the central mosque is included in 'Art4d' a local popular art and architectural design magazine in June 2016. Under the theme 'Bangkok Brutualism' the center is included with other four architectural projects of the 1970s which the magazine considers as 'once-overlooked'.¹⁸ According to the writer, Wichit Horyingsawad (2016), what these projects have in common is the use of "concrete as the principle element". The material's potential is explored manifesting "the form of architectural creations and artisanal excellence that are intrinsically brutal and almost limitless". The article explains the necessity of modular system used in planning and design of the project. It seems that the limited space provided by the magazine does not allow the writer to study the background and implication of

National Science Museum by Sumet Jumsai Na Ayudhya (1982) and Thai Airways International Head Office by Krisda Arunvongse Na Ayudhya (1987).

¹⁵ According to Pongkwan Lassus, Chairman of the Working Committee of ASA, the event coincides with "an international trend of conservation of modern architectural heritages. This rising conscience has appeared amidst high risk of destruction of and threats to modern architectural heritages" which is also a result of "the inability of conservationists to see the value of modern architectural heritages". (TCDC, 2008, p. 7)

¹⁶ Siam Cement Group (SCG) is the leading cement company in Thailand. It was found in 1913 under the royal decree of King Rama VI.

¹⁷ It is important to note that there was an episode of a television variety program 'Nueng One Deaw Gun (Within A Day)' that presented 'The Architecture of Islamic Centre' for approximately half an hour. The architect Paichit Pongpunluk was also invited to explain his design and general knowledge on Islamic architecture. Nevertheless, the show was not really focus on architectural style but try to understand the elements and functions of the mosque. The program was broadcast on TBPS Channel in 2011, though the exact date cannot be confirmed. It was later uploaded on the video-sharing website Youtube (TPBS, 2011). In addition to this television program, the mosque is selected as one of Bangkok's 100 Hidden Places in the trendy A Day Magazine. The volume 191 was published on July 2016. The mosque was included as an example of such unknown places in the short list published online (A Day Magazine, 2016)

¹⁸ These five projects can be categorized into "Apartment building - Siri Apartment (1970) (originally named 'Kasemsan Mansion' designed by Dan Wongprasat. Religious building – The Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand (1971) designed by Paichit Pongpunluk. Institutional building – the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Head Office)(1972, 1987) designed by Angelo Pastore and Gianni Siciliano of Interproject in collaboration with Sittart Thachalupat, an architect from the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand. Residential building – Three-Column House (1975) by Nitt Charusorn and Boonnumsup House by Rangsan Torsuwan."

the project in relation to Islamic community, both at the time and in the present. Nevertheless, it could be said that this is the first time in which the center is featured in the media related to the architecture and design circle in Thailand.

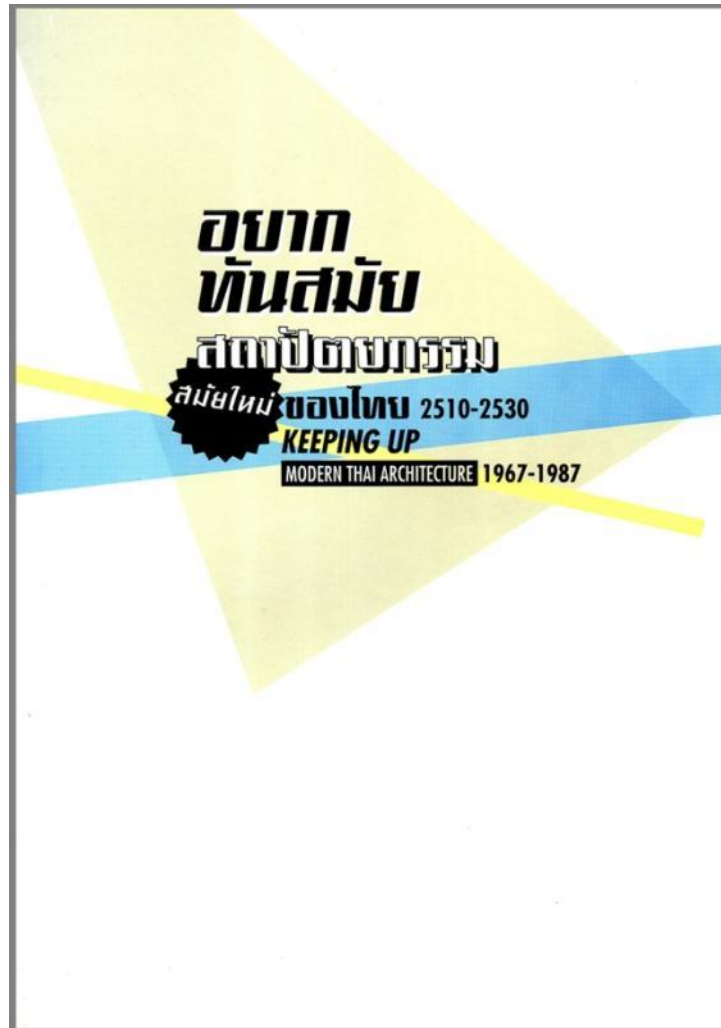


Figure 2: Cover of the proceedings of the exhibition *Keeping Up*

Modernist Mosques of Bangkok

Although the presence of Muslim minority in many parts of Thailand is generally well recognized, the academic investigation on their architecture is rather limited. In the book *Architecture of Thailand: A Guide to Traditional and Contemporary Forms* by Nithi Sthapitanonda, named as a National Artist in Contemporary Architecture by the Ministry of Culture in 2002, and Brian Mertens, a small section is dedicated to 'Mosques' (2006, p. 112 - 115). It notes that "some 13% of Thailand's populace is Muslim, and there are some 3,000 mosques in the country, yet Thai Islamic architecture has been almost entirely neglected in publishing". Despite this recognition, the book's generosity only covers some historically important mosques built in traditional forms expressing the Malay characteristics, especially those in the

deep Southern provinces, or the Colonial Style, particularly seen in Bangkok.¹⁹ The book concludes that the degrees of variety of architectural elements found in these mosques reflect the 'centuries-old Thai traditions of religious tolerance and multiculturalism'. Unfortunately, there is not enough space to critically discuss the issue further.

The relationship between the mosque as a building type and modernism as an architectural movement is infrequently problematized. The closest work, however, is a recently published book *The Mosque in Bangkok* by Adis Idris Raksamani (2014).²⁰ Besides explaining the religious concept of the mosque and the necessary elements of this building type, Raksamani also discusses the socio-economic roles the building plays within Muslim communities. Most importantly, this book attempts to systematically investigate the development of Bangkok's Mosques in four periods, from the found of the Thai capital in 1782 to the present. In the concluding chapter, Raksamani lists out eight concepts which chronologically have been influenced the designs of the mosque in Bangkok (2014, p. 307-319).²¹

Interestingly, one of the categories is related to the emergence of the 'modern' mosque. According to Raksamani, this is the 'Concept Opening towards International Culture – Modern Design' (2016, p. 316). The concept is placed as one of the approaches emerged during the reign of King Rama IX (1946 – present) (2016, p. 197-244). This specific timeframe set up by Raksamani in relation to the period of the late king is questionably as it is indeed long and seems to also cover other architectural styles. For example, there were mosques constructed expressing traditional and symbolic forms of Islamic architecture which reflects postmodern influence. Nevertheless, Raksamani argues that this was initially the period when Bangkok Muslims became more opened to modern education and urban lifestyle which led to the arrival of mosques designed and constructed considering modernist principles, new technology and local tropical climate (2016, p. 222). In term of terminology, these mosques were described by Raksamani using terms such as 'new design' or 'modern architecture'. The exemplary cases of mosque mentioned are Darul-Ehsan, Nurul-Islam, Yamiul-Islam and the Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand.

¹⁹ The mosques which are included in the section are Masjid Telok Manok in Narathiwat (1624), Kuddee Charoenpas Mosque in Bangkok (originally founded in 18th century), Tuk Khao Mosque in Bangkok (founded in 1870s), Wat Kao Mosque in Bangkok (late 18th century), Chakrapong Mosque in Bangkok (originally founded in 1779 before being rebuilt as concrete structure in 1966) and Takiaayokin Mosque in Ayutthaya (originally founded in 1620s).

²⁰ In addition to the mosque, there is an article by Winyu Ardruga (2016) on the Muslim prayer room of Bangkok. In the context of urban life, the room increasingly play significant role alongside the mosque.

²¹ These eight categories are 1) Concept Related to Local Condition – Vernacular Design, 2) Concept in Depending on Local Authority – Thai Traditional Design, 3) Concept in Constructing Identity based on Ethnicity – Foreign Traditional Design, 4) Concept Related to Nostalgic Feeling – Conservative Islamic Design, 5) Concept in Islamic Resurgence – Applied-Arabic Design, 6) Concepts of Rethinking – Rational Design, 7) Concept Opening towards International Culture – Modern Design and 7) Concept in Constructing New Identity – New Classic Design.

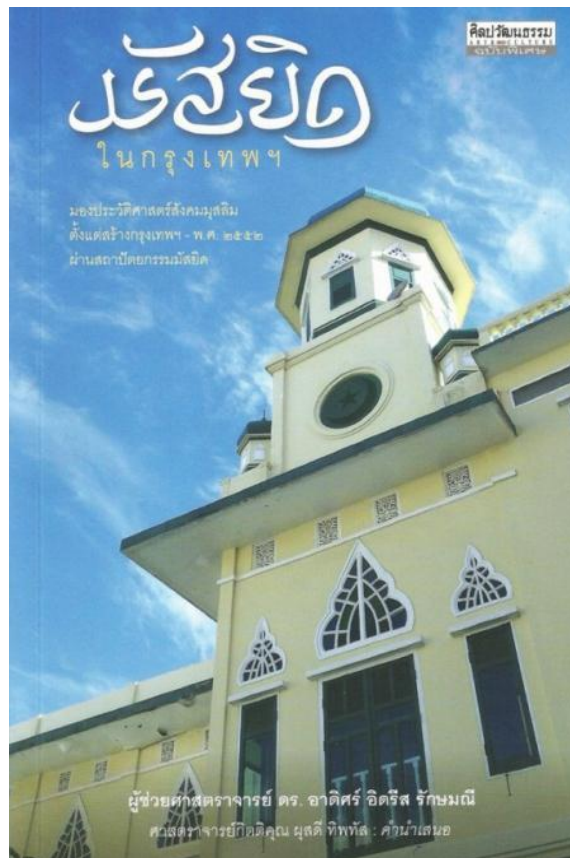


Figure 3: Cover of the book *Mosque in Bangkok*

Modern Islamic architecture is a subject of study which is not fully developed. Most studies of modern architecture in Thailand have been exclusively focusing on comprehensive overview or specifically based on conservation aspiration. In the case where the particular architectural category is included, it seems that only broad characteristics are mentioned. The connections or implications with the social context where Muslims live as minorities are not clearly brought forward. In relation to this, the article *The Mosque and the Metropolis* by Mark Crinson, which looks at the establishment of three London mosques, argues that it is impossible to find a typical mosque of Muslim minority.²² He suggests that we need to instead look at the multi-layering process of negotiations between the minority and the host society which results in particular architectural organizations, designs and elements. For Crinson, it is chiefly important to look at “the negotiations between local and global concerns, modern and traditional interests, dominant and subaltern loyalties” (2002, p. 81). Based on this notion, it is interesting to turn to the establishment of FICT as an organization and the design of the central mosque.


²² The case studies by Mark Crinson are Shah Jahan Mosque at Woking, the Central London Mosque at Regent’s Park and Mohammedi Park Masjid at Northolt. The cases reflect different forms of negotiation to establish the mosque and different forms of design conception.

Creating a Centre for Thai Muslims

Having discussed existing literatures on modern architecture in Thailand and modern mosque in Bangkok, the emerging concern here is a particular question which has been infrequently addressed – the relationship between the new type of architecture appeared during the 1960s – 1970s and identity formation of Thai Muslims. This is a question of how the modern design of FICT's place of worship is socially and technically formulated. Based on such question, this section will particularly investigate the creation of the central mosque through three interrelated topics. Firstly, the establishment of the center will be discussed as well as the commission given to the architect Paichit Pongpunluk. Secondly, the architectural programming and master planning of the project will be analyzed. Lastly, concepts of building design and construction will be brought forward.

Inception

ที่ว่าการพนมเปญ	ศาลากลางจังหวัดนครราชสีมา
เลขหมายทะเบียน	เลขที่ ๑๑๑
นามมูลนิธิ	"มูลนิธิเพื่อมัสยิดกลางแห่งประเทศไทย"
ที่ตั้งสำนักงานใหญ่	ศรีนครินทร์ ตำบลบ้านนา จังหวัดนครราชสีมา
วัตถุประสงค์โดยย่อ	เพื่อจัดสร้างมัสยิดกลางจังหวัดนครราชสีมา และเพื่อเป็นสถานที่ประกอบกิจกรรมทางศาสนาและสังคมของชาวมุสลิมในจังหวัดนครราชสีมา
นาม ที่อยู่ และอาชีพของผู้จัดการ	นายจิตร ศรีบุญเกิด มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏนครราชสีมา จ.นครราชสีมา
วัน เดือน ปี	๑ ตุลาคม ๒๕๕๗

(ลงนาม) 
(นายชัชวาลย์ วรรณกิจ)
พณธบดีกรมการปกครอง
กระทรวงมหาดไทย
ข้าราชการจังหวัดนครราชสีมา

เพื่อเป็นหลักฐานให้สืบค้นได้ (๑๑๑) (๑๑๑) (๑๑๑)

Figure 4: The registration document of the Foundation of Central Mosque of Thailand with Phranakhon Town Hall

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

The Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand is not an original name of the organization. It was in 1951 when a group of 14 Muslims and four Buddhists meet at the house of Mui Kreemaha on Sukhumvit 22 road and the idea of founding a center for Thai Muslim was established. The name which came up during the meeting was 'The Central Mosque of Thailand'.²³ The main purposes to set up this new organization were to be a center of ritual practice on important religious days, to support education for young Muslims, to help out the poor, to connect with foreign Muslim organizations and to be a place for Thai Muslims from all the regions. In the second meeting, it was an agreement that the mosque should be firstly formed as a foundation in working towards an establishment of the facility. In this moment, the meeting hall of Islamic Committee of Phra Nakhon Province was used as temporary office. On 1 October 1954, the foundation was officially registered under the name 'The Foundation for Central Mosque of Thailand'. To reflect the vision of founding not just a central mosque but a center for various activities, the committee agreed on 20 June 1964 to subsequently change the name to its current one which is 'The Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand' (FICT, 2016, p. 20-24).

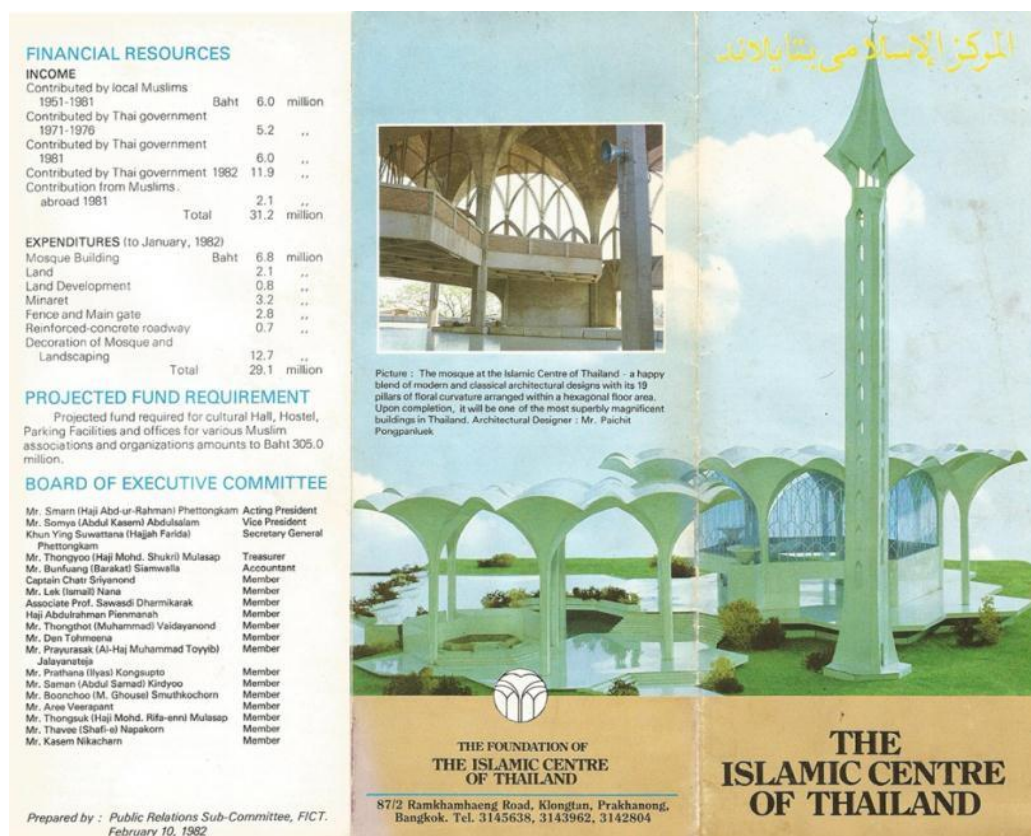


Figure 5: The brochure of FICT in 1982 which was partly produced for fund raising project.

As an official organization was established, the foundation sought to have the center built. With various negotiations with local Muslim landlords who own properties on the then Eastern suburb of Bangkok,

²³ In Thai this is 'Moonlaniti Pua Masjid Klang Hang Prathet Thai' or 'Mor Sor Aor Thor'.

the foundation finally acquired an approximate 17,000 square meters of land on Ramkamhaeng 2 Road or Mulasap Alley.²⁴

Although the land was ready for the project, the funding was not in its place. The foundation then was looking for an architect that could take responsibility for this important task. Indeed, a consolidated design proposal would greatly help the fund raising process. During the period when Lek Vanichangura became the second chairman of the foundation in 1968, an ‘architect of the new generation’ was commissioned to be the designer of the foundation – his name is Paichit Pongpunluk (FICT, 2016, p. 24).



Figure 6: The graduate Paichit Pongpunluk in Chulalongkorn University regalia.

The architect was in his early 30s. It is important to learn about the educational and professional background of Paichit Pongpunluk as he was not educated abroad like other celebrated architects of the same generation. Pongpunluk lived in Banglampoo when he was young. He went to the nearby Wat Bowonniwet School before continued his higher education at the Faculty of Architecture, Chulalongkorn University. He entered the university in 1957 which was the first year under the system of curriculum credit. He studied with many professors who graduated from Western universities such as Krisda Arunvongse Na Ayudhya and Chalerm Sutjarit. Pongpunluk recalled that Arunvongse always taught students to learn about new and inspiring construction techniques through the case studies of international master architects while Sutjarit taught subjects related to structure which gave high confidence to students in solving structural problems.

Pongpunluk also remembered learning about modern tropical architecture and ventilation in large building. In term of inspiration, he accepted to be motivated by the imaginative work of Antoni Gaudí, the organic architecture of Frank Lloyd Wright and the sculptural form of Le Corbusier. The list of the

²⁴ In the Thai unit, this is 10 rai, 2 ngan and 44 squarewa. It should be noted that the land was partly bought from and partly donated by Haji Thongyoo Mulasap and Haji Saman Kirdyoo.

master architects also includes Oscar Niemeyer and Kenzo Tange.

Pongpunluk was not unfamiliar with FICT and the project he was about to design. Besides studying, Pongpunluk was also an activist. He actively participated in activities of a Muslim volunteer club and later involved with FICT. His final project before graduation was in fact a new Muslim center located on a previous site of FICT in Ekamai area.



Figure 7: The architect Paichit Pongpunluk (the third from the left) during a congregational event when H.E. The Queen presided over

The architectural program of the project he proposed was actually similar to the one he later designed for FICT on Ramkhamhaeng site.

After graduation, Pongpunluk worked in the office of Jane Sakolthanaraksa, one of the leading architectural offices at the time.²⁵ As a young architect, he continued to voluntarily work with FICT and subsequently got to be acquainted with Lek Vanichangura, the head of the foundation. The chairman did not only give him an opportunity to design the project - he also allowed Pongpunluk to freely experiment with the program and the design of the new center.²⁶

²⁵ Paichit Pongpunluk recalled other leading architectural practices at the time such as the offices of Krisda Arunvongse Na Ayudhya, and Duang Taweesak Chaiya, (P. Pongpunluk, personal communication, December 16, 2016).

²⁶ Besides FICT, other mosques of Pongpunluk also appeared with modernistic design. The outstanding examples are Yamiul-Islam, Nurul-Islam and Aleah-Tisom. In this aspect, the building of the Thai Muslim Woman Association of Thailand should also be included. According to Adis Idris Raksamani, the younger generation of Muslim architects after Pongpunluk who also designed mosques in modern style includes Chaiya Kebboongerd, Apinan Buranapong, Manoj Phetthongkam and Kowit Hassanee (personal communication, October 10, 2016). One of interesting examples is Darul-Ehsan Mosque.

Programing and Planning

The task for the architect Pongpunluk was not just to design a new mosque – it was to conceive an architectural program relatively new to the Thai Muslims. Although the mosque was a familiar facility, there is no actual religious center of the minorities in Thailand.

Programmatically, Pongpunluk remembered that he did not receive a definite requirement of the new center at the time, except a vision to have a center for annually and daily religious practices for Thai Muslims. It must also be a large building to welcome a mass of visitors while having a distinctive and beautiful design, both in the present and for the coming future (Pongpunluk, 2016, p. 71). Based on his experience as a Muslim activist and his final project at Chulalongkorn University, Pongpunluk claims that he roughly knew the appropriate functions the Muslim community needed. He explains that it is important to firstly envision a large building to accommodate a variety of functions.²⁷

Although the most important building of FICT is the mosque, Pongpunluk prepared an overall master plan. Perhaps this was the first Islamic facility in Bangkok to be planned with a completed vision through a complete and phasing plan. As FICT aims to be more than just a ritual space - the different programs proposed by Pongpunluk involves a group of facilities. He explains that the overall layout of the site has the mosque at its center while culture hall, parking garage and hostel (accommodation for Muslim travelers) were located at the back.²⁸ From the master plan, the facilities were planned as four buildings. The mosque (with minaret), the hostel and the parking garage were located on existing land of FICT while the culture hall was located on the adjacent land as the second phase. The foundation, however, has not been able to acquire the land until today. In term of planning, the organization of the main buildings was distinctively modern as they were placed as freestanding objects in the landscape rather than forming an organic enclosure to public space. The importance was given to the visual and accessible approaches from the main road and adjacent street. The hostel and the parking garage were inevitably located at the back corner due to the limited size of the land.

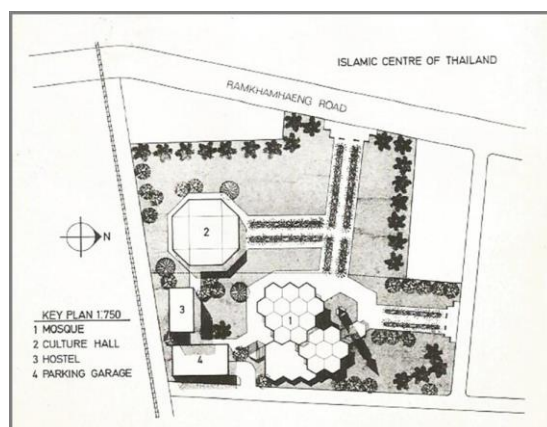


Figure 8: The original master plan of the Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand

²⁷ P. Pongpunluk (personal communication, December 16, 2016)

²⁸ P. Pongpunluk (personal communication, December 16, 2016). According to the FICT's objectives published in 1982, during which the mosque is 75% completed, the first object is to establish an Islamic center comprising a mosque, a cultural hall, a library, a hostel an Islamic educational institution. Although the meeting hall and library is currently provided under the mosque, the foundation aims to have these functions as separated buildings as provided in the master plan (FICT, 1982).

Building Design and Construction

Because of the inadequate funding, Pongpunluk decided to employ the modular system for its flexibility during design and construction. It was also his intention to avoid the cliché use of the 'dome' and instead turned to the 'arch' to express certain Islamic characteristic. Following this decision, Pongpunluk needed to find an appropriate geometry to shape up his design. Based on the concept of the modular system and thin-shell structure, he drew up a series of hexagonal-shaped roof structure which are interconnected.²⁹ Each of the structure is in itself a unit which looks like a flower composing of one stem and six petals – there are 19 units in total. Each of these units has the size of 12 meters in diameter. They stand on a raised platform which is also planned based on hexagonal grid. Consequently, the overall design of the plan looks like a honeycomb. Next to this roof structure, the architect also located the minaret as a symbolic element of the mosque. The plan of the tower also has the same shape as the main building while the top of the minaret has a similar design to the building.³⁰ In term of proportion, the architect did not leave it to chances as he carefully checked the sizes and scales of every element. Pongpunluk emphasized the importance of integrating architectural and engineering aspects. As he was working with the architect Jane Sakolthanaraksa, he consistently consulted with the office's engineers on issues related to geometry and structure.³¹

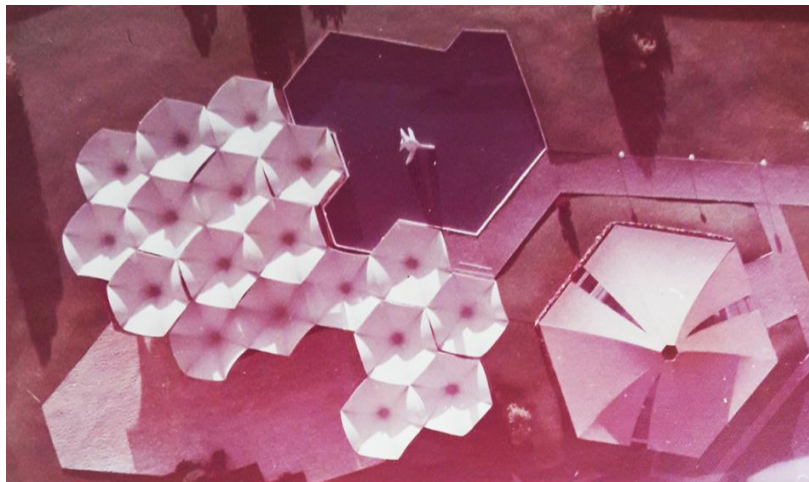


Figure 9: A schematic model of the mosque which also includes a conference hall.

²⁹ As a student, Pongpunluk remembered to be strongly inspired the trip visiting Kurusammanakarn building of Nakhonratchasima Technical College. The building, completed in 1960, was designed by the architects Watanyou Na Talang and Nakorn Srivijarn and the engineer M.R. Jatureesarn Chumpol. (P. Pongpunluk, personal communication, December 16, 2016)

³⁰ Three year after completion, the minaret was later demolished as it started to tilt. In the new proposal prepared by FICT and Pongpunluk, the new minaret is included within the perspective drawing as well as the multi-purpose hall at the back of the mosque. (P. Pongpunluk, personal communication, December 16, 2016)

³¹ P. Pongpunluk (personal communication, December 16, 2016).

In relation to the different functions of the building, the arrangement can be seen as logical. The principle massing organization composes of two separated groups of structural units. On the one hand, the bigger volume with twelve hexagonal units sitting on higher platform was assigned as the prayer hall. On the other hand, the smaller volume with seven hexagonal units sitting on lower platform was originally dedicated as an open pavilion. This space was, however, redesigned as a fully enclosed meeting hall since the building was completed. The roof structure has the height of 20 meters which is high enough to allow natural ventilation. The air would circulate from large opened doors up to ventilating grill and windows installed on the wall underneath the curved roof. The two main halls are connected with raised up terraces which are also used as extended praying space to accommodate a larger group of Muslim prayers. The mosque can accommodate up to 5,000 prayers. For the space under the prayer hall it is used as a large multi-purpose hall for 1,000 visitors. The space under the meeting hall is now used as a public library.³² Some corners of the space under these platforms are now used as bookshops, offices and canteens. The larger part of the area is still left as flexible space for a variety of activities.



Figure 10: The original model of the building which was organized as two main volumes: the prayer hall and the pavilion.

In term of decoration and ornament, what Pongpunluk envisioned truly reflects modernist ideal. He understood that the highly decorated space is the sign of the bygone eras. He wrote: "I have studied on Islamic architectural style worldwide...these are styles which are highly luxurious...It is the kind of beauty that we cannot copy nowadays. If we would like to do so, we must use skillful craftsmen and enormous budget (Pongpunluk, 2016, p. 71-72)." This was the reason that Pongpunluk seek to find beauty embedded within the structure through the use of modular system and the thin-shell structure. He described that:

³² The library was planned by the university professor and architect Adis Idris Raksamani.

When we look at the [mosque's] ceiling from the floor, we will see the beauty in the curvature of the structure. The arches give us a gentle appreciation. All the curved lines converge. There is no need for covering materials to additionally decorate [the structure] (Pongpunluk, 2016, p. 73).

Because the prayer can be actually carried out anywhere, it is not particularly required to perform at the mosque, the interior design and decoration of the prayer hall is intentionally planned close to emptiness. There is only a minbar, or the pulpit, appears in front of the Muslim prayers. (Pongpunluk, 2016, p. 77).

Nevertheless, Pongpunluk decided that the mosque should have some Islamic decorative elements. The architect used the Moresque and Arabian patterns particularly on the vertical elements such as wall, door and fence. For the external wall of the prayer hall, it is partly clad with specially designed clay tile, with the name of the prophet inscribed. The tiles were not varnished to expose its original color and texture. Within the prayer hall, Arabic verses from the Quran were carved in a circular form on 21 black marble panels emphasizing the Qibla direction. The meanings of these verses were also carved on a corner of the prayer hall, both in Thai and English. For Pongpunluk, decoration should be combined with function.³³

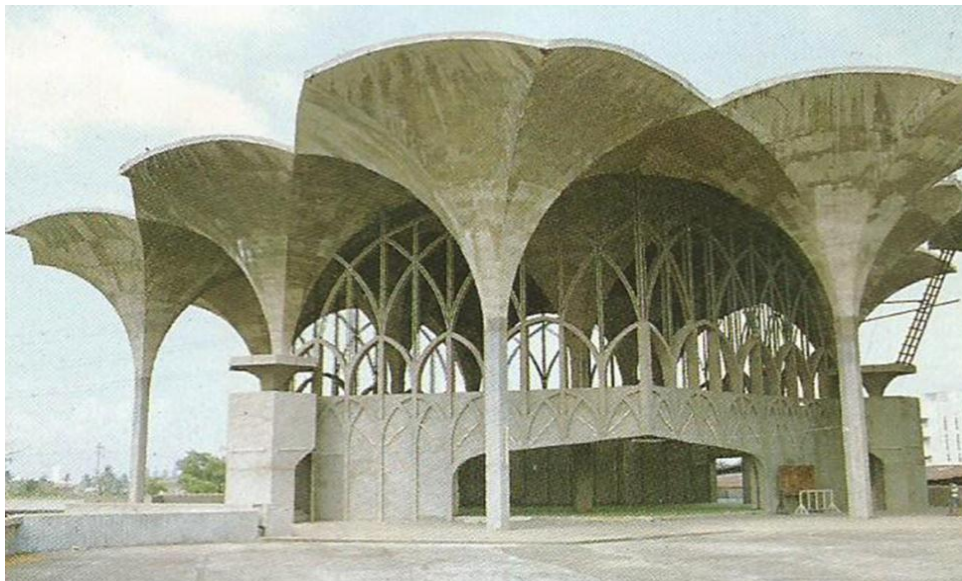


Figure 11: The exterior view of the mosque which shows the beauty of the structure.

³³ The verses were selected by Tawee (Safi'i) Napakorn, the Chief Imam of FICT while the calligraphy was designed by Isa Pooiam. (P. Pongpunluk, personal communication, December 16, 2016)



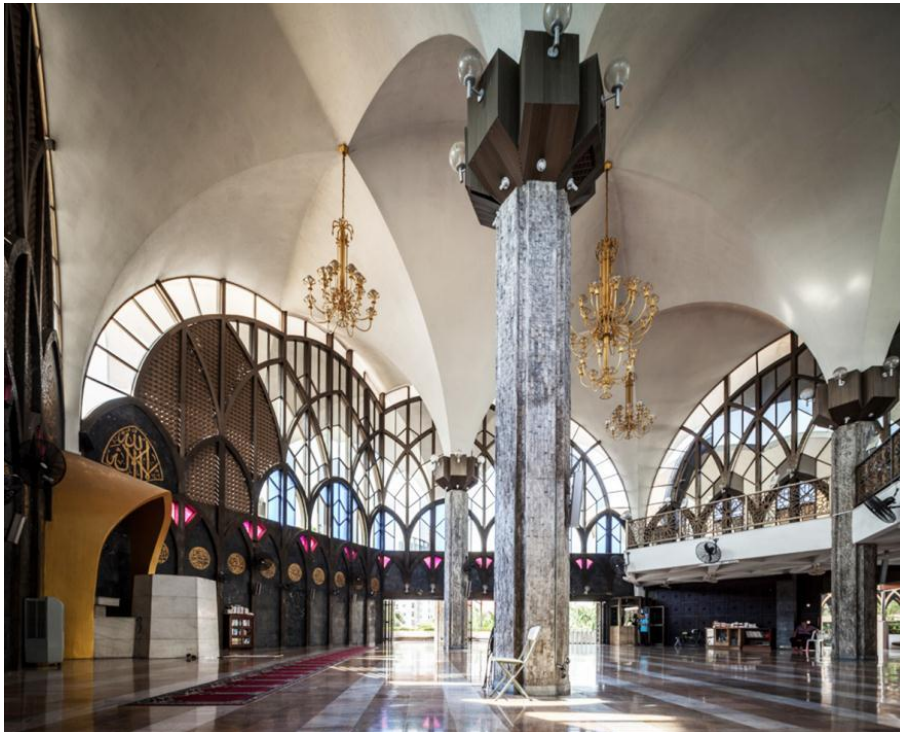
Figure 12: The building under construction with the 55-metre minaret.

Although Field Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn, the then prime minister, came to officially chair the ceremony to start the construction in 1971, the construction which was actually started one year earlier was to be completed 11 years later. This very long construction period was due to the limitation of the budget. Since the beginning, Pongpunluk was informed that the foundation only had several million baht of funding. The use of the modular system as a design and structural principle hence was proved to be appropriate. In relation to this, the modular system allowed the roof structure to be constructed unit by unit. According to Pongpunluk:

The structure of a unit is not connected to other units. It is possible to construct unit by unit depend on available budget until completing the total 19 units (Pongpunluk, 2016, p. 72-73).

During the actual construction phase, three structural units were completed at a time due to the limited availability of wooden formwork.³⁴ The architect explains about this process imagining that “if someone passed by Ramkhamhaeng Road which was at the time just an area of empty farmland, he would see a group of columns standing like they are waiting for something. It would take more than ten years that the hexagonal domes grew, several at a time, to its completion (Pongpunluk, 2016, p. 76).” The mosque was finally completed and ready to organize a prayer in 1982.

³⁴ P. Pongpunluk (personal communication, April 22, 2017).



*Figure 13: Pongpunluk's design of the prayer hall also includes the integrated mihrab-minbar.
© art4d magazine/Ketsiree Wongwan*



*Figure 14: The geometrical design on door, window and wall of the mosque.
© art4d magazine/Ketsiree Wongwan*

The modernist style of FICT building by Pongpunluk cannot be fully considered as functionalism or brutalism. The building was conceived in the later period of modern architecture when architects experimented with various possibilities, both in term of technology, interpretation and relationship with local context. According to a conclusion by Horayangkura, a group of buildings particularly built during the period 1958 and 1972 was influenced by the diversity of designs found in Brasília, the Federal Capital of Brazil. With the examples such as Kurusammanakarn (1960), Indoor Stadium Huamark (1966), Samsen Railway Station (1970) and New Suan Amporn Pavilion (1972) he called this 'Brazilian Style'. He noted that "these architectures have fashionable designs in the same ways as the architecture of Brasillia which has buildings of various styles. There are linear, curved and diagonal lines used in the designs (Horayangkura et al., 1993, p. 126)." Additionally, In the research Siamese Architects by Pussadee Tiptus, which focuses specifically on design solutions rather than dominant styles, the above mentioned projects were grouped under the topic 'the Design Expressing Progressive Technology' of the buildings built between 1958 and 1973 (1996, p. 774-775). Certainly, the mosque of FICT is contemporaneous to these buildings. It was designed based on modernist principles, with specific concerns on the local context. In term of form and structure, it was conceived through the then highly fashionable structure. Architecturally speaking, the mosque can be placed within these categories. The interesting question is how this architectural style can be socially related to the construction of Islamic identity of the Muslim minorities.



Figure 15: The mosque and the minaret near completion.

The Central Mosque and Thai Muslim Identities

This section particularly looks at the relationship between the mosque of the Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand (FICT) and constructions and projections of Muslim identity. Indeed, the central mosque did not only appear with a unique modern design, it was a physical evidence asserting the position and unification of the minorities. By this reason, it is important to put together documents and opinions related to stages of establishment, design and management of the organization to clarify the representative role of the mosque. The paper, however, does not directly examine the reception of the mosque within the Muslim community at large. Nonetheless, the information gathered below would also reveal the perceptions of the minorities at certain degrees. Particularly, they reflect the formations of Thai Muslim identities through the existence of a modern building.

The Establishment of the Organisation

เลขอนุญาต ที่ ๑๑๗/๒๕๐๗
เลขคำขอ ที่ ๑๓๑๘/๒๕๐๗

แบบ ว.ธ. ๓

ใบอนุญาตจากที่ประชุมหรือองค์การ

ตามที่ นายจตุร ศิริยานนท์

ได้ขออนุญาตจัดตั้ง มูลนิธิเพื่อสันติภาพและวัฒนธรรมแห่งประเทศไทย
โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์ เพื่อให้บริการแก่ชาวมุสลิมในราชอาณาจักร
ในประเทศไทย เพื่อให้บริการแก่ชาวมุสลิมในราชอาณาจักร
และให้บริการแก่ชาวมุสลิมในราชอาณาจักร

และเมื่อตั้งสำนักงานใหญ่ ณ กรุงเทพมหานคร
และเมื่อตั้งสำนักงานใหญ่ ณ กรุงเทพมหานคร

สภาวัฒนธรรมแห่งชาติได้พิจารณาแล้ว และอนุญาตให้ดำเนินการจัดตั้งต่อไป
และเมื่อได้จัดตั้งแล้ว ให้ปฏิบัติตามคำสั่ง และข้อบังคับของสภาวัฒนธรรมแห่งชาติ
โดยเคร่งครัด

อนุญาต ณ วันที่ ๒ กันยายน ๒๕๐๗ พัทธศักราช ๒๕๐๗

ลงชื่อ
เลขาธิการสภาวัฒนธรรมแห่งชาติ
เจ้าอาวาสวัดสุทัศน์เทพวรารามราชวรมหาวิหาร

Figure 16: The registration document of the Foundation of Central Mosque of Thailand with The National Council of Cultural Affairs. The person who requested for the permission is Mr. Chat Sriyanond. The date stamped was 2 September 1954.

Besides the intentions to have a center for religious practice purposely built, the document of registration to formulate the Foundation of the Central Mosque of Thailand also stated that it aims “to honor the Thai nation and the king” (FICT, 2016, p. 32). The phrase seems to be typical in establishing any Thai organization, both public and private. But under the period of nationalism of the Prime Minister Field Marshal Plaek Phibunsongkhram, who previously changed the country name from Siam to Thailand and issued various nationalist cultural mandates assimilating Muslim populations, this declaration cannot be regarded as apolitical. Additionally, the fact that a non-Muslim, Captain Chat Sriyanond, was chosen to be the first president is quite an uncommon consensus. Perhaps, the founder group believed that the then status of captain as the Secretary General of Thammasat University and the younger brother of General Phao Sriyanond, Director General of Royal Thai Police, would lead the way in seeking supports from the government and other organizations. Although the issue of expressing Islamic identity was not directly stated in the purpose of the foundation during the registration in 1954, it was clear that the construction of the central mosque would officially mark the presence of Muslim minorities in Thailand which had been previously marginalized.

The Conception, Design and Construction Stages

During the conception period, what the architect Pongpunluk had in mind was a strong opposition to the repetitively used elements of traditional Islamic architecture – especially the dome. He accepts that he antis the use of dome which he suggests that it was actually an influence from Ottoman architecture that can be seen throughout the Middle East. The architect did not want to follow the convention and wished to find an alternative solution. He finally referred to the ‘arch’ which he saw as an element creating Islamic atmosphere while does not overtly expressing traditional form and flexible to various design articulation.³⁵ In fact, Pongpunluk also pursued the concept of mosque without a dome as symbolic element at Yamiul-Islam mosque on Ramkhamhaeng 53 Road. In this project, he experimented with a series of concrete arch frame with cantilever beams. Within the prayer hall, the hyperbolic paraboloid ceiling was placed hidden and cannot be immediately seen from the outside. The small dome which can be seen above the roof was added to the building later. In recalling these attempts, He said that:

*In my mind, I am quite proud [of the design of the central mosque]. I did it this way to pioneer into the new territory. It is an architecture of the new era. I want the world to know that Islam is not always necessary to be associated with dome. It can be any design of contemporary architecture.*³⁶

In the book that officially celebrated the 60th anniversary of the foundation, Pongpunluk similarly declares that “I decided to revolutionize the design of [the mosque] to give the building a ‘modern-era’ roof” (2016, p. 72). According to these aspirations, it can be argued that Pongpunluk aims to reshape Islamic and Muslim identity through his architecture.

During the design and construction stages, the architecture of the central mosque by Pongpunluk can be

³⁵ P. Pongpunluk (personal communication, December 16, 2016).

³⁶ P. Pongpunluk (personal communication, December 16, 2016).

said as outstanding. When he initially received the commission from Lek Vanichangura, the chairman had no particular style to restrict the architect's design. Yet the result seems to be unexpected for everyone at the foundation. Pongpunluk remembered the hilarious moment when he first presented the design proposal, through a physical model, to the foundation's committee as there was no comment. He believed that they were all stunned by the unfamiliar appearance of the mosque and did not know how to response to.³⁷ Nevertheless, the design was later proved to be well accepted by the foundation. In an official brochure prepared by Public Relations Sub-Committee of FICT, in 1982, the project was proudly described as follow:

The mosque at the Islamic Centre of Thailand – a happy blend of modern and classical architectural designs with its 19 pillars of floral curvature arranged within a hexagonal floor area. Upon completion, it will be one of the most superbly magnificent buildings in Thailand (FICT, 1982).

This paragraph suggests that the design of the mosque is both 'modern' and 'Islamic'. The attempt of Pongpunluk in trying, on the one hand, to create architecture based on principles of modernism and, on another hand, to express Muslim identity, was well understood by the foundation.

In Relation to Reformist and Traditionalist Identities

Nowadays, it can be said that FICT is quite successful in acting as a central organization for Thai Muslims. It is a center of activities and information regardless of differences in ethnicity and fraction of the minorities. However, there is no evidence on the response of the general Thai Muslims in its early years, particularly on the appearance of the mosque.



Figure 17: Yamiul-Islam mosque which is originally designed without the dome.

³⁷ P. Pongpunluk (personal communication, December 16, 2016).

In relation to this, Pongpunluk explains that the Thai Muslims at the time did not know much about architecture. They hardly understand about the design of the mosque – people tended to have it built in a conventional style. In addition, there were not many Muslim students studying architecture. Nevertheless, he sees that there was a connection between the presence of the foundation and the conflict between the reformists (*Khana-Mai* or the new group) and the traditionalists (*Khana-Kao* or the old group). When the central mosque was recently completed, it was considered as the mosque of the reformists (a group strictly follows the form of religious practices inscribed in the Quran and the teaching of the prophet without integrating local traditions or innovations). Pongpunluk notes that

*There were many people who opposed the central mosque. As there were already a number of mosques in this area, they asked why building it here and why making it this big? After the completion, the old group did not regularly come here. They considered that it belongs to the new group. Those who pray here were considered as nonconformists.*³⁸

In relation to this, FICT has never been used as a place to organize the event ‘Mawlid Nabi’, the birthday celebration of the prophet.³⁹ The event is considered as invented tradition by the reformists. Although there was nothing particularly related with style, this was the moment when the unfamiliar appearance of the modern mosque become associated with the reformist Muslims, the relatively new and progressive group at the time.⁴⁰

The 60th Anniversary Celebration

It has been more than six decades since the organization was found in 1954 and to celebrate the 60th Anniversary FICT organized a commemorating event between 2 and 4 April 2016. They also published an official hardcover book to mark the occasion. In the opening section of the book, the messages from various important figures of the Thai society and Thai Muslim community were presented; among many, there are Thai Buddhists leaders such as General Prem Tinasulanonda (Head of the Privy Council), General Prayut Chan-o-cha (the Prime Minister). Besides the highly elaborated greeting messages from these figures, some leading Muslims give specific reflections on the architecture of the foundation and the current position of Thai Muslims (FICT, 2016, p. 7-17). These are, for examples:

*It has been more than half of a century that the building of the Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand, **contemporary Islamic architecture**, has stood in the middle of the metropolis expressing the identity of Siamese Muslims.*

(Sheikhul Arsis Pitakkumpol, Sheikhul Islam, the Leader of the Muslims in Thailand)

*I consider that the mosque is rather **elegant both in term of architectural art** and charity activities for the public benefit.*

³⁸ P. Pongpunluk (personal communication, December 16, 2016).

³⁹ P. Pongpunluk (personal communication, April 22, 2017).

⁴⁰ See further discussion on the conflict between the reformists and the traditionalists in relation to identities of the mosque and differentiated forms of religious practice in the chapter ‘Urban’ Mosques (Ardruga, 2012)

(Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Former General Secretary of ASEAN)

*The building of the foundation has the design of **contemporary Islamic architecture** which is outstanding and beautiful.*

(Arun Boonchom, President of the Islamic Council of Bangkok)

*Today the building of the Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand is still **outstanding and beautiful** through **contemporary architecture**...which is appreciated by the faithful Muslims both in and outside Thailand. This is what the **Thai Muslim brothers can be proud of.**"*

(Thawee Napakorn, the Chief Imam of FICT)

*This is a piece of Islamic architecture that is unique because of the effort and intention of the previous generations of patrons and supporters. It is still **outstanding and beautiful**, being renowned among important visitors from other countries. **This is the pride of all Thai Muslim brothers.***

(Samart Maluleem, the Chairman of FICT)

Most of these leading Muslim figures have been participating in activities or management of FICT. Besides their recognitions of the building as remarkably beautiful, the significant issues which can be read from these messages are the reception of the building's design as 'contemporary'. It seems to be clear that the exceptional design of the central mosque still significantly marks the pride and position of the Thai Muslim community.

The Future of the Central Mosque

The architect Pongpunluk expresses his worries about an appropriate development of the facilities of FICT in the future.⁴¹ On every Friday, Muslim visitors filled the prayer hall and terrace surrounding the mosque of FICT. On the days of Eid festival, the current building can barely handle the amount of prayers.

⁴¹ P. Pongpunluk (personal communication, April 22, 2017).

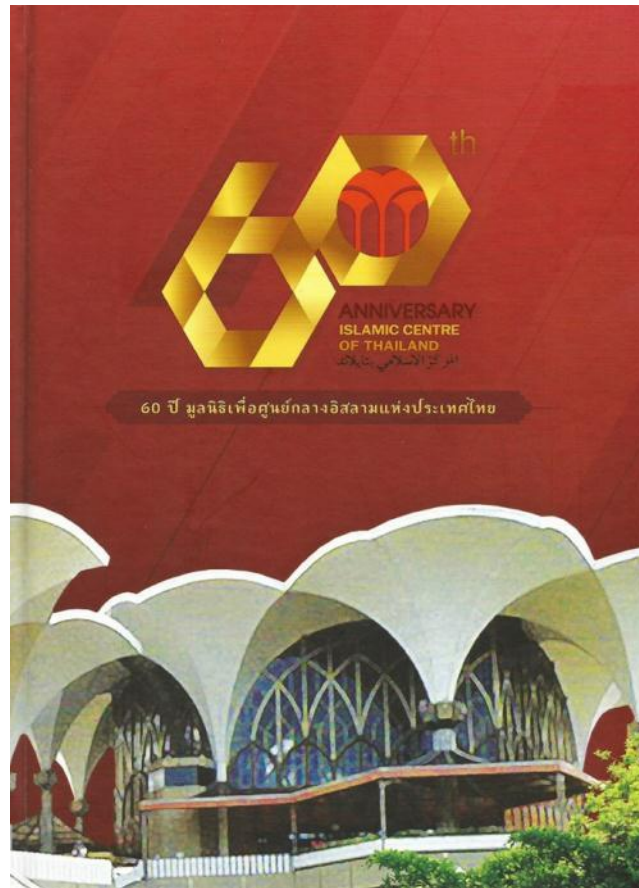


Figure 18: The book published marking the 60th Anniversary of FICT in 2016. The emblem of the event was designed resembling the plan of the mosque.

He recently proposes a development plan to FICT which includes the extension of the outdoor terrace to accommodate more prayers, a large multi-purpose building for cultural activities, and a new minaret to act as another iconic element of the foundation (Pongpunluk, n.d.). Aiming for a unity of appearance, the design of the dodecagon-roof minaret remarkably resembles the demolished tower while the design of the multi-purpose building can be seen as harmonious with the mosque's floral structure. Besides these additional buildings, Pongpunluk also assigned Raksamani and Prasert Sermsook as architects of the project, indeed his successors, to take this responsibility further.⁴² With the designs and with this intention, the new development proposal of this modern Islamic facility, which requires an estimated budget of 202 million baht to complete, is projected into the future to remain as a center for all Thai Muslims.

⁴² P. Pongpunluk (personal communication, April 22, 2017).

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Figure 19: The perspective of the future development of FICT proposed by Paichit Pongpunluk



Figure 20: The proposal of the expansion of FICT includes the construction of the new minaret and the conference center.

Conclusion

The mosque of the Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand (FICT) stands as one of a very few cases in which the image of 'modern' Islamic architecture can be referred to. This is especially true, in the current moment, when the ideology of Islamic resurgence movement is still highly influential and many new mosques correspondingly appear with traditional Islamic elements and forms. According to Raksamani, this is the rise of the 'New-Classical' style which reflects the direction he called the 'Concept in Constructing New Identity'. He pointed out that:

*The development in form and space as in the case of **modern architecture**, especially the mosque of the Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand, was not really further explored. Bangkok Muslim needs the kind of architectural identity that can be concretely recognized. Consequently, most mosques return to emphasize on strong symbolic form derived from the mosques in other countries, particularly the dome (Raksamani, 2014, p. 235).*

Nonetheless, the term 'modern' above, in the meaning of newness, might be seen as no longer a fitting tag name for the central mosque as the design ages close to 50 years old. Perhaps by this reason, and relative to other traditional mosques, some non-architect Muslims tend to consider it as a 'contemporary' design.

Although it is clear that Pongpunluk is a modernist architect, this concept of 'modern subjectivity' cannot be fully employed to conclude a shared identity of the Thai Muslim community, both now and during the time when the mosque was being conceived. There has been a discrepancy between the reformists and the traditionalists over forms of religious practices which consolidated sociopolitical identities of places of worship since around the 1930s (Scupin, 1978). Today, Thai Muslims are not only composed of various ethnic origins, opposing sects and different schools of thought but also lifestyle patterns and degrees of religious observance. In the context of the Thai Buddhist metropolis, some strictly maintain their Muslim practices while many only loosely adhere themselves to the identity. In this situation, the physical characteristic of the mosque of FICT cannot be considered to directly and wholly representing these specificities.

Perhaps, the specificity of the exceptional modern design of the central mosque can now be argued as existing in its unspecific relationship to diverse Muslim identities. The term 'contemporary' as being frequently used to describe the architecture of the mosque nowadays suggests that the modernistic appearance of the building is ceased to become obsolete and can be broadly applied to consider contemporary Muslim subjectivities. In an increasingly globalized world, it is common that a minority group seeks to refer to symbolic or traditional forms in representing their identity. Certainly, the conventional design of the mosque of the National Administration Center for Islamic Affairs, though not designed by a Muslim architect, has taken this role since 2001.⁴³ On the contrary, Paichit Pongpunluk's

⁴³ See a brief history of the National Administration Center for Islamic Affairs Chalerm Phrakiat by Sheikhul Islam Office (2011).

audacious design of the mosque of the Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand still stands signifying progressive thoughts. Since its initial conception in 1971, it just seems to take time, through the past decades, for the architecture to be specifically recognized in its design ingenuity and in its continually performative role representing modern images of Muslim minorities.

Figures

- Figure 1: Photograph courtesy of art4d magazine/Ketsiree Wongwan
- Figure 2: Thailand Creative & Design Center (TCDC). (2008). Keeping Up – Modern Thai Architecture 1967 – 1987. Bangkok: Urgent Tag. (Cover page)
- Figure 3: Raksamani, A. I., (2014). The Mosque in Bangkok. Bangkok: Matichon. (Cover page)
- Figure 4: The Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand (FICT). (2016). The 60th Anniversary Islamic Centre of Thailand. Bangkok. (Page 33)
- Figure 5: The Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand (FICT). (1982). The Islamic Centre of Thailand [Pamphlet]. Bangkok.
- Figure 6: Photograph courtesy of Paichit Pongpunluk
- Figure 7: Photograph courtesy of Paichit Pongpunluk
- Figure 8: The Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand (FICT). (1982). The Islamic Centre of Thailand [Pamphlet]. Bangkok.
- Figure 9: Photograph courtesy of Paichit Pongpunluk
- Figure 10: Photograph courtesy of Paichit Pongpunluk
- Figure 11: The Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand (FICT). (1982). The Islamic Centre of Thailand [Pamphlet]. Bangkok.
- Figure 12: The Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand (FICT). (1982). The Islamic Centre of Thailand [Pamphlet]. Bangkok.
- Figure 13: Photograph courtesy of art4d magazine/Ketsiree Wongwan
- Figure 14: Photograph courtesy of art4d magazine/Ketsiree Wongwan
- Figure 15: The Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand (FICT). (2016). 60th Anniversary Islamic Centre of Thailand. Bangkok. (Page 58)
- Figure 16: The Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand (FICT). (2016). 60th Anniversary Islamic Centre of Thailand. Bangkok. (Page 32)
- Figure 17: Photograph courtesy of Paichit Pongpunluk
- Figure 18: The Foundation of Islamic Centre of Thailand (FICT). (2016). 60th Anniversary Islamic Centre of Thailand. Bangkok. (Cover Page)
- Figure 19: Artist's Impression courtesy of Paichit Pongpunluk
- Figure 20: Artist's Impression courtesy of Paichit Pongpunluk

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The Meaning of ‘History’ or ‘Past’ in the Context of the Tai-Lue Cultural Revival Movement

Baba, Yuji
Kyoto Bunkyo University
Japan

Abstract

The three villages of Tai-Lue people in Thawanpha district, Nan province, migrated from Muang La, Sipsong Panna, Yunnan, China, around 200 years ago. They have celebrated their guardian spirit originating from their home place, Muang La, in Sipsong Panna, as a symbol of their historical memory of migration. In 90's, the enlargement of ritual as a local cultural revivalism caused the conflict between two of three villages. As both insisted on having a central role of the ritual by their own interpretation of their migration history, the ritual was split into two places in 1996 at last. In their recent cultural revival movement, the tradition of the Tai Lue culture is attempting to perpetuate especially in the Chao Luang Muang La ritual.

Recently BMT which is the group practicing Buddhistic austerities appeared near N village. Religious precepts are important to BMT which is a transcended time community without feelings toward “the past”, on the other hand, N village desire the perpetuity to the future while referring to the past. The “traditional culture” of the N village is out of interest for BMT so they criticize the life of N village itself as not based on religious precepts and do not accept its value. After conflict between N village and BMT, N village came to promote their Tai-Lue culture more than before.

Through these events that happened for the past more than 20 years or more, I will examine the meaning of ‘History’ or ‘Past’ in the context of the Tai-Lue Cultural Revival Movement.

Keywords: Tai-Lue, History, Past, Community, Revival Movement

1. Introduction

Until now, I have studied the culture and society of the Tai-Lue people, a branch of the Tai-speaking group, which is dispersed across mainland Southeast Asia. Tai-Lue formed the Sipsong Panna chiefdom in Southwestern China, now in Yunnan province. Most of the Tai-Lue in Northern Thailand migrated from Sipsong Panna, their original place, in the nineteenth century. Since the migration, they have assimilated with their neighboring Tai groups, especially the Tai-Yuan, the majority group of Northern Thailand, who share linguistic and cultural similarities.

I have continued to conduct research especially in three Tai-Lue villages (N, T and D) in Thawangpha

district, Nan province in Northern Thailand. The original place of the Tai-Lue of these villages is Muang La in Sipsong Panna. My main concern in researching Tai-Lue culture is the guardian spirit ritual, which is called *Chao Luang Muang La*. Since they migrated to Thawangpha, they have celebrated this ritual together for a period of three days every three years. At the ritual, they celebrate several guardian spirits who constitute the pantheon of *Chao Luang Muang La*, the chief spirits. It used to be held at the ritual site situated in N village.

In this paper, first I focus on the way of expression of their migration history in the changing process of the guardian spirit ritual in the 90's in these three Tai Lue villages, and then focus on the case of N village, I refer to the role of guardian spirit *Chao Luang Muang La* as their historical symbol in the mutual aid networks of the villagers living within and outside the village, and examine the meaning of their "History" or "Past" for maintaining their community ⁽¹⁾

2. Changing Ritual and the Way of Expression of "History"

This guardian spirit ritual in Tai-Lue villages has undergone changes, particularly since the Movement for Cultural Revival, connected with the rural development program started in the early 1990s.

In 1990, the ritual was enlarged to promote it amongst outsiders including tourists, and by school teachers who visited their origins, Muang La. But only N village, which led the enlargement of the ritual, benefited from it. Therefore, a psychological conflict occurred between N village and D village. D village could not benefit from the enlargement of the ritual even though the village plays an important role in the ritual: the descendants of the chief of their origins, Muang La, and many of the spirits comprising the pantheon of *Chao Luang Muang La*, live in D village. In 1996, the ritual site split into two separate places, N village and D village. T village joins the ritual held in N village.

Through the changing process of the ritual, various historical monuments have appeared, such as the statue of *Chao Luang Muang La* (N village, 1984), the spirit shrine of *Chao Luang Anu Pharp* (D village, 1991), the shrine of *Chao Luang Muang La* (D village, 1996), the portrait of *Chao Luang Anu Pharp* (D village, 1996), the statue of *Chao Luang Muang La* riding a horse (D village, 2000), the statue of *Chao Luang Anu Pharp* (D village, 2014) and the statue of *Don Phutom* (T village, 2011)⁽²⁾.

These monuments commemorate two historical heroes, *Chao Luang Muang La* and *Chao Luang Anupharp*. They do not appear in the old documents which describe historical events, but exist through memory in Tai Lue villages. *Chao Luang Munag La* is a guardian spirit for the three villages, and is said to be the chief of Muang La and to have died on the battlefield. *Chao Luang Anupharp* is said to have been the leader of the Tai Lue when they migrated to Thawangpha.

In 1984, the statue of *Chao Luang Muang La*, the chief spirit, was erected at the ritual site in N village, instead of the original spirit shrine with a red roof. At that time, a commemorative document was published. It includes the history of the Tai Lue migration translated from an old written document in Tai Lue script into modern Thai (Pechun 1994, pp.9-12). This old written document was found in N village and describes the migration history from Muang La, Sipsong Panna to Muang La. In this translated version, it is mentioned that N village was the first settlers' village. In the end, it mentions that D village and T village separated from N village, and that WP village (now in Chiang Kham district in Phayao province) also separated from N village. However, this part is not found in the old written document at

all. However, D villagers claim that D village was the first settlers' village for the following reason: the legend of *Chao Luang Anupharp*, who is said to have been the leader of the Tai Lue and who lived in D village when they migrated to Thawangpha, exists in D village. According to this legend, his residence was in the territory of D village and his lands were in D village and T village.

N village and D village both claim to be the first to be settled, and express their migration history each from their own standpoint.

The construction of *Chao Luang Muang La's* statue and the migration history translated into modern Thai in the commemorative publication are one of the claims of history by N village.

In addition, many historical monuments, which appeared one after another in D village, are part of their opposing movement.

The construction of the spirit shrine of *Chao Luang Anupharp* was D Village's first movement toward cultural independence from N village, using their own historical hero. After the ritual splitting, D villagers constructed the shrine and the statue of *Chao Luang Muang La*. Then, they succeeded in establishing their own historical hero separate from that of N village.

There is a story of *Chao Luang Anupharp* in D village. In olden times, *Chao Luang Anupharp* killed many villagers, so D village is not rich, and never will be so because of the effect of his karma. One day, one young boy of D village, who worked in Bangkok, said that a fortuneteller told him how to solve the poverty problem of D village. The fortuneteller said that a special shrine of *Chao Luang Anupharp* must be built to subdue his wandering soul.

Although the two heroes are Tai Lue historical heroes, this movement of constructing monuments through village-development competition shows the unity of building a village identity more than a Tai Lue identity.

Which is the first settler, N village or D village? What is the historical fact? Here, I try to examine the question using historical evidence.

D village may be the first settlers' village for the following reasons:

- (1) According to the legend of *Chao Luang Anupharp* in D village, his residence was in the territory of D village, and his lands were in D village and T village. There are villagers in D village who inherited the lands of *Chao Luang Anupharp*.
- (2) Before the Tai Lue settled in the Thawangpha basin, there were Burmese temples called Wat Man. The ruins of the temples were in T village and near D village. Before the Tai Lue migrated to Thawangpha, this area was ruled by the Burmese as were other parts of Northern Thailand. So it can be said that people had lived in the surroundings of D and T villages before the Tai Lue migrated to Thawangpha.
- (3) In the surrounding area of N village, the course of the Nan River winds among many swamps and traces of old watercourses. It shows that this area is floodable.

Taking into consideration the three points mentioned above, it is more likely that

N village was settled after D village.

This is the historical reconstruction of the Tai Lue migration from a historian's perspective, but the Tai Lue people themselves don't care and are not interested in such an explanation, and historical facts are

irrelevant to them. They claim another history that has been memorized, interpreted and passed on from their own standpoint as mentioned before ⁽³⁾.

3. Community Identity and “History”

Nowadays the culture of Tai-Lue villages is assimilated into the culture of the Tai-Yuan, the majority people of Northern Thailand, and influenced by the national culture. The villagers do not need to care whether they are Tai-Lue or not in their daily life. The purpose of stressing a special feature of the village is for differentiating it from other villages. “Being Lue” is no longer ethnic identity at the individual level in daily life, but a strategic label at the village level.

The meaning of the historical symbol of N village, *Chao Luang Muang La* has changed during recent decades. It was the symbol of historical memory of migration from Sipsong Panna, but now it is the symbol of a community label differentiating it from other villages in the context of rural development competition rather than the consciousness of connecting with their original place. Although they still keep the memory of their migration history, now they don’t care about Tai Lue authenticity such as expressed in the performance at the guardian spirit ritual (Baba 2011) ⁽⁴⁾, and don’t care about historical truth with evidence in the meaning of historical studies as mentioned before.

The pantheon of *Chao Lang Muang La* consists of many spirits under the control of the main spirit, *Chao Lang Muang La*. It recounts the story of the army troop who escaped from the original place. The villagers inherited some spirits of the pantheon as their ancestral spirits along both paternal and maternal lines, so each villager connected the spirit as a member of the imagined army troop which commemorates their migration history from Sipsong Panna. However, through the changing process of this ritual during the 90’s, young people were less particular about their own guardian spirit, and some of them do not even know their own spirit.

In the 1990s, the government promoted cultural decentralization as part of its broader policy of democratization, and declared that local wisdom was to be considered a significant part of the “National Culture.” Government officials and some intellectuals claimed that the disruption of traditional communities had led to a loss of their function of transmitting tradition ⁽⁵⁾.

Under these circumstances, village museum construction became a boom all over the country to transmit the traditional culture. Three Tai Lue villages built their own museums as well (Chart 1). Most of them are restored traditional style houses. The museum of N village was built earliest among them. Not only these Tai Lue villages but Tai Puan village (F village) and Keun village (NM village) in Pakha sub-district in Thawangpha built a village museum too ⁽⁶⁾. These are also movements of stressing community identity connected to the rural development policy. “Being Lue” as a strategic label at the village level is placed in this cultural revival movement ⁽⁷⁾.

Chart 1 Village Folk Museums in three Tai Lue villages in Thawangpa

	N		D		T	
1	1984~1992	Folk Musium	1999	Folk Musium and Guest House	1997	Folk Museum
2	2002~	Folk Musium	2008	Folk Musium and Guest House		
3	2007~	Folk Musium and Guest House				

Recently there are many migrants from N village who live in other provinces for work or schooling, and the guardian spirit ritual is one of the few occasions when villagers who live in other provinces come back to their birthplace. The villagers who live in other provinces make sure they are recognized as members of N village by joining the activities of the ritual.

The increase of migrants from N village made the networks of mutual aid via their relatedness (personalized and dispersed networks of family, friends and kin) (Carsten 1997) for the local people extend to outside the village as an administrative unit ⁽⁸⁾. Most of the villagers living both inside and outside of the village connecting these mutual aid networks feel a sense of belonging to the village and express communal sentiment by sharing the community symbol, the guardian spirit *Chao Luang Muang La*, which commemorates their original place. It forms the network community of N village ⁽⁹⁾.

It can be seen that the mutual aid networks have a vague outskirts. The ratio to come in contact with the village of the migrants from N village varies. Some migrants feel the sense of belonging to the village but some lack it, and there are some who don't contact N village so much, so their historical consciousness about Tai Lue migration also varies depending on the ratio to come in contact with the village.

On the other hand, the government tried to use family and community as an unofficial social protection mechanism to keep social security after the Economic Crisis. However, they ignored such mutual aid networks not only for villagers inside but also for those outside the village, who often returned to the village. It is beyond the community as a bounded territory and an administrative unit, and is a local inherent security system which is different from the security system encouraged by government policy. When they stress the community identity as rural development strategy, it is based on the village as an administrative unit.

In the 90's, each of the three Tai Lue villages stressed their traditional culture by cultural revivalism as rural development policy to differentiate from other villages as mentioned before. They perform Tai Lue cultural performance on many occasions such as the guardian spirit ritual. The label of Tai Lue indicates constructing community identity as they lose Tai Lue consciousness in daily life.

In the late 90's, in Nan province and Thawangpha district, the Cultural Counsel of Province and District tried to reform the culture through the movement of preserving local wisdom as mentioned before, and tried to seek the advice of the elderly familiar with traditional culture. Through this process, some selected elderly got a role for transmitting traditional knowledge to the next generation, but the ordinary elderly was marginalized ⁽¹⁰⁾.

Through the movement of cultural revivalism, the Tai Lue villagers constructed a community identity

using their migration history, but it is different from the historical consciousness of the individual. The ordinary people don't care about transmitting tradition to the next generation in daily life. *Chao Luang Muang La* who has the legend of migration gives the N villagers the communal sentiment in their mutual aid networks. For them, mutual aid networks are important in daily life, so they might feel the reality of history in *Chao Luang Muang La* as the pivot of the mutual aid networks, and by this, as far as it exists, they can keep the sentiment of belonging to the village. That's why without *Chao Luang Muang La*, the mutual aid networks cannot survive.

4. Friction between BMT and N village

To examine the relationship between village history and the characteristics of village further, I will describe the opposition between N village and the new religious group which appeared recently near N village.

This new religious group called BMT which built a pagoda and practices Buddhist austerities appeared on the hill behind N village from around 2010⁽¹¹⁾. Many believers who gather in these ascetic practice grounds are mainly from the big cities such as Bangkok or Chiang Mai. Most of them have a dissatisfaction with city life. The believers observe the five precepts of Buddhism, wear white clothing and routinely perform introspective meditation. In addition, the donation for huge pagoda construction is one of the important activities, mostly by believers from big cities such as Bangkok and Chiang Mai who belong to the relatively rich middle class.

More than 20 households of believers of BMT have established an original community inside N village. As for the land of this community which BMT borrowed from the government for ascetic practice ground for believers including the outside monks has not been registered because of the lack of an agreement formation with the local people that is necessary. Their borrowing land has been taken up as a problem, and opposition between BMT and N village continues now. As for this opposition, a problem of the land becomes the focus officially, but there is a true reason to make it an inveterate one.

BMT required the house number registration for making the believers to be the villagers of N village. Their house number registration was accepted by N village in the early days, but as the population ratio of the BMT believers in the N village became higher, N villagers began to fear for the possibility that the sovereignty of the village had been robbed by BMT. In the BMT community, a farm and a nursing facility were established apart from ascetic practices ground as if the independent village, and their life style and activity that are different from the life of the N village recall a rumor of water pollution. In addition, BMT does not accept the culture of the N village, particularly an animal sacrificial ceremony to be carried out in *Chao Luang Muang La* ritual because it is against their religious precepts of non-killing. BMT criticized the customs of N village as "we also violated religious precepts including drinking and the animal killing in the old days, but could stop it by ascetic practices". Their criticism made N villagers angry, and the negotiations broke down⁽¹²⁾

Most of the believers of BMT have several personal problems in their city life and might lose a place of belonging. On the other hand, the monk K who is vice-abbot of N temple, and is a high school principal for novices in T village, located on the opposite side of N village across the Nan River, began the original educational program mainly with organic farming from 2013 for the personnel training that could engage

in agriculture after laicization in this area. This educational program is an activity for helping people to establish a place of belonging in this area⁽¹³⁾. The monk K aims to make a system in which people can live enough inside of the village to evade the crisis of survival of the village. It is also a trial to secure a place of belonging for villagers.

The guardian spirit who expresses "the past", the history of their migration is the symbol of the network and plays a key role of connection. The tradition of the Tai Lue culture is attempting to perpetuate in their recent cultural revival movement but the desire to such future converts to uneasiness by crisis of continuation of the village caused by the decline of agriculture. The organic farming curriculum of the monk K is the trial that is going to break off this situation.

BMT is the community which transcended time without feelings toward a "past", which assume religious precepts and pagoda erection. The opposition with BMT and N village which refers to "the past" as traditional culture depends on the difference in characteristics of such a community. Religious precepts and a pagoda are important to BMT which is the transcended time community subsuming various people, so the "traditional culture" of N village is not within their interest. That is why they downplay "traditional culture" of the N village and do not accept it. Not only that, they criticize the life of N village itself as not based on religious precepts and do not accept its value.

Through the friction with BMT, the people of N village noticed again the importance of keeping their traditional culture. They continue to promote their traditional products such as clothes and dance and music actively in recent events held by the sub-district government.

The new religion that subsumed the people escaped from the city has caused trouble with N village. Their criticism of the ritual of *Chao Luang Muang La* gives a sense of impending crisis for the existence of the mutual aid networks for N villagers. At the same time as trial and error of the regional revitalization through agriculture is accomplished in order to prevent the city outflow of the villagers, and to subsume people to return to the farm. The present of the fluctuation of the people in the continuity of urban area and rural areas is reflected here.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I focused on the cases in which "history" or "past" become a subject.

Through the case of the conflict between N village and D village, I pointed out that there are different interpretations of their migration history depending on the village. It aims to establish community identity by narrating their migration history from their viewpoint.

Through the case of the friction between N village and BMT, I pointed out the difference of characteristic of community, the community which makes much account of the past to maintain the connection of villagers and the community which transcended time without feelings toward a past.

In the cases which I describe in this paper, there are many viewpoints of history or past: the historian's viewpoint vs. indigenous people's view point, villagers' viewpoint vs. official viewpoint.

Here I emphasize what is the reality of history or what is the role of consciousness of a past for villagers. The symbol of community, *Chao Luang Muang La* who has the legend of migration has meaning as the symbol of community; "village" as the administrative unit in the context of rural development, on the other hand, means the pivot of the mutual aid networks which give the villagers communal sentiment,

which can be called the network community.

For the villagers, the mutual aid networks are important in daily life, so they might feel the reality of history in *Chao Luang Muang La* as the pivot of the mutual aid networks, and by this, as far as it exists, they can keep the sentiment of belonging to the village.

Chao Luang Muang La with the several Tai Lue traditional cultures continues to exist by the cultural revivalism as the part of the rural development policy, and by this, continues to be the pivot of the mutual aid network functioning in an everyday life. In this way, their consciousness of the “past” is in the policy and daily life which cross each other.

In N village, the mutual aid networks beyond the “village” as an administrative unit are formed by the increase of villagers going out to other areas, including the city. While the guardian spirit *Chao Luang Muang La* brings the communal sentiment to villagers who attend these mutual aid networks, there are the people who are losing the Tai Lue consciousness and sentiment of belonging to N village at the periphery of these mutual aid networks. They don’t care about the history of migration from Sipsong Panna so much either and are losing such historical consciousness. This is also the fluctuation of the people in the continuity of urban area and rural area.

In the movement of transmitting the traditional culture to the next generation in the context of the cultural revival movement, the elderly tends to be more positive for the traditional succession than the young generation. The life of the individual is now different from olden times, and the movement of the next generation is not sure.

Note

- (1) This paper is based mainly on my former papers (Baba 2009, 2014, 2015).
- (2) *Don Phutom* is a guardian spirit for T village and its neighboring villages. He is the leader of another Tai Lue group who migrated from Pua area, situated in the north of Thawangpa. The construction of the statue of *Don Phutom* was performed in the original cultural revivalism of T village.
- (3) Nowadays, most people cannot understand the written documents of their history in Tai Lue script. In the changing process of the ritual, the new media such as translation into modern Thai and the historical monuments appeared, and the old written documents were marginalized. Through these media, it became easier for ordinary people to understand the knowledge of the ritual and the history of their migration. These new media planned by the leaders of rural development are the sources of history which have been interpreted in the context of rural development.
Chusak also pays attention to this event and focuses on the aspect of the natural resource struggle between N and D village and point outs “Politics of resources is politics of the culture” (Chusak 2003, p.164)
- (4) In the *Chao Luang Muang La* ritual. the elderly Northern Thai traditional music group and young people’s Northern Thai traditional music group play Northern Thai traditional music but not Tai-Lue traditional music. In the night stage show, several performing arts which are not related to tradition are performed. These express the idea that the performing arts in the guardian spirit ritual are never compelled to keep traditional Tai-Lue style (Baba 2011).
- (5) The Community Culture School led by Chattip Natsupha is based on this idea (Chattip 1991).
- (6) D village belongs to Siphum sub-district, Thawangpha district.
- (7) Some village museums are not only for transmitting traditional culture but also for providing a guest house for tourists (Chart 1).
- (8) People who contact these mutual aid networks are not limited to Tai Lue people because of increasing inter-marriage with non-Tai Lue people.

- (9) Walker proposes the concept of “Tai Modern Community”, which is relevant to the case of the Tai Lue in this paper. “Tai Modern Community” is not a bounded territorial unit but rather an unbounded network that has communal sentiment, and which is not opposed to state power and a market economy (Walker 2011).
- (10) In this process, in N village, the marginalized ordinary elderly found new activities in the ritual and other occasions in the village. Although the elderly, except the selected elderly by cultural policy, lost the role of transmitting the traditional way of life to the next generation, they got a new role and formed the culture of elderly separated from young generation. It might be a grassroots cultural revivalism which is different from official cultural revivalism.
- (11) Supreme God *Po Phu* is situated above Buddha, and the portraits of people with various powers including King *Naresuan*, King *Thaksin*, Rama the Fifth and the pictures of monks with fame such as *Budda Dasa* are put on the altar, and the Goddess of Mercy images are built in the precincts, and there is a display of photographs expressing supernatural phenomena. It appears to be an original religious world that differs from that of the ordinary Buddhist temple.
- (12) This event occurred at the meeting for the N villagers and the believers of BMT in 2015.3. I joined this meeting and observed this event directly.
- (13) However, because it was difficult to train a farmer immediately, he changed his education policy as follows: novice students learn for the ability of life including learning of organic farming methods; after graduation, each can choose their favorite occupation regardless of the inside and outside of the village, if in doing so, after getting old they can come back to the village to be farmers. Learning organic farming methods can apply various subjects such as mathematics, science, and culture at the same time, so if they learn farming methods, they can acquire the power for living.

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Those Strange-Looking Monks in Phra Malai Manuscript Paintings: Voices of The Text

Brereton, Bonnie Pacala

Center for Research on Plurality in the Mekong Region
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Khon Kaen University
Thailand

Abstract

One of the most popular texts written and illustrated on accordion-folded paper manuscripts (*samut khoi*) is *Phra Malai Klon Suat* (PMKS), the vernacular version of the story of the magical monk who travelled to hell and heaven. The miniature paintings in these manuscripts depict key scenes from the story as well as pairs of seated monks sometimes with legs crossed and a *talabat* in their hands, and others in very unusual postures with strange facial expressions. Several Western various scholars have offered interpretations of these monk figures based on a number of factors: art historical analysis of the paintings, the opinions of other Western scholars, and their own guesses and assumptions. This paper offers a different interpretation of the monks – one that draws on the writings of Thai scholars, interviews with monks, personal communications with people who have sponsored recitations for their deceased relatives, and my experiences of listening to the text being chanted. In addition, other factors include the historical context of the *klon suat* genre, specific features of the text, the text's function and usage, and the role of the monks and lay chanters.

Introduction

The story of Phra Malai is known to Buddhists throughout Thailand and exists in numerous versions or “tellings,” a term originally used by A.K. Ramanujan in reference to the many versions of the *Ramayana* (1991). While all Phra Malai tellings share the same basic sequence of events and are usually written as poetry, it is important to note that they differ in numerous ways, including language/dialect/region, ritual setting in which they are recited, poetic form, and literary style.

Key scenes and iconographic images from the narrative are depicted in various genres of painting and sculpture. This paper concerns accordion-folded manuscripts (*samut khoi*) from the late 18th and 19th centuries containing the popular *Phra Malai Klon Suat* (PMKS). This version was commonly performed in a variety of melodies and rhythms, originally by monks and later by laypeople at funeral wakes in central and south Thailand. PMKS manuscripts are known for their illustrated paintings of scenes from the narrative and sometimes from funeral wakes, including vignettes of laypeople playing board games and

monks who sometimes have strange facial expressions and are seated in unusual positions. Western scholars have been puzzled by these figures and referred to them in various negative ways, for example, as depictions of “naughty” monks (Igunma, 2016), as “laymen satirizing ritual chanting” (Skilling and Pakdeekham, 2017: 141), and as a way of contrasting “pious monks” with “lax ones” (Ginsburg 1989: 77). This paper argues that role of the chanters was and still is central to *PMKS*, as the text was written to be chanted or performed. It was the chanters – whether they were monks or laypeople – who brought the text to life. Rather than being criticized or satirized, the chanters were applauded and appreciated by those sponsoring the manuscripts and funeral wakes for they provided a much-needed service: entertaining and easing the grief of those attending the wake.

The Phra Malai Story⁴⁴

The gist of the story is as follows. Phra Malai was a saintly monk who lived long ago on the island of Lanka. Because of merit accrued in past lives, he had supernatural powers like those of the Buddha’s disciple Moggallana that enabled him to fly to the hells to relieve the sufferings of the beings there, and also to heaven. After his visits to the hells, he found the relatives of the suffering beings and asked them to make merit on their behalf so that they could be reborn in a better place.

One morning as he was going on his alms rounds, Phra Malai encountered a poor man who looked after his mother and made a living by cutting grass. The man went to bathe in a pond, where he picked eight lotuses and presented them to the monk, asking that he never again be born poor. After accepting the offering, Phra Malai flew to Tavatimsa Heaven to present the lotuses at the Culamani Cetiya, where the hair relic of the Buddha is enshrined. There he met the god Indra, who had built the cetiya, and witnessed the arrival of a series of deities coming to worship the cetiya each surrounded by progressively larger and larger retinues. In each case, Indra told Phra Malai how that deity had earned sufficient merit to be born in heaven. Each had practiced a specific act of *dana* (generosity), for example, giving food to a bird, presenting offerings to a monk, sponsoring cremations, planting bodhi trees, cleaning the temple grounds, etc.

Eventually the bodhisatta Metteyya arrived from his abode in Tusita Heaven to worship the reliquary. He asked Phra Malai about the characteristics of the inhabitants of the human realm (the Jambu continent or Chomphudvipa) and the monk replied that they lived in diverse circumstances and made merit in diverse ways, all in the hope of meeting Metteyya when he attained enlightenment as the next Buddha. The bodhisatta then gave Phra Malai the following message: those who wished to meet him should participate fully in the Vessantara Jataka festival in one day and one night, avoid sin and practice *dana*. Metteyya then described a series of tumultuous events that will precede his coming: the disappearance of Gotama Buddha’s teachings,⁴⁵ followed by the degeneration of morality and a period of violence in

⁴⁴ For a discussion of the sources upon which the basic Phra Malai texts are based see Brereton, 1992 and 1995; Collins, 1993; Denis, 1953 and 1965; and Supaporn Makchang, 1978 and 1981.

⁴⁵ The teachings are predicted to disappear after they had been in existence for five thousand years. This prophecy is mentioned in earlier sources, both the 14th century King Luethai of Sukhothai and earlier remarks by the great fifth century commentator Buddhaghosa (Coedes, 1957).

which the vast majority of people will kill each other. However, a small number will retreat into caves and emerge when the carnage is over to form a new society based on morality. Eventually the world will regenerate because of the gradual accumulation of merit made by virtuous people. A utopian age will follow, characterized by perfection in nature and human society. At that time Metteyya will accept the invitation of celestials to be born in the human realm, where he will become enlightened and preach the dhamma. The text ends with Phra Malai's return to the human realm to deliver this message to the people there.

Phra Malai Klon Suat as a Work of Literature

There are many versions of the Phra Malai story (Brereton, 1992 and 1995). The summary above is what I call the "classical" or unadorned version, as found in the Pali *Maleyyadevatthera-vatthu*, the Northern Thai *Malai Ton-Malai Plai* and the Lao *Malai Muen-Malai Saen*. The latter two paired texts are recited at annual *Vessantara Jataka* festivals in the north and northeast, respectively. They are inscribed on palm leaf manuscripts, without illustrations, and are read in a perfunctory manner before the recitation of the *Jataka*. This version is also found in the elaborate "royal version" (*Phra Malai Kham Luang*), attributed to Ayutthaya Prince Thammathibet. All of these versions of Phra Malai are straightforward and in fact rather unexciting, with no room for humor in either the way they are written or in their recitation, unlike *PMKS*.

PMKS – the version found in illustrated manuscripts – differs in that it contains greatly expanded descriptions of the hells, the sufferings of the hell beings, and the sins they committed which led to these karmic results. The *PMKS* texts vary little from one manuscript to another, with the only differences being in words or syllables (Priyawat Kuanpoonpol, 1995: 188).

It is important to emphasize that this version of Phra Malai was meant to be performed, that is, sung in a variety of melodies and rhythms. *PMKS* is written in three varieties of a verse form known as *kap*, which developed out of Cambodian forms based on Sanskrit models.

PMKS in Manuscript Paintings and the So-called "Naughty Monks"

PMKS began to appear in manuscripts in the late 18th century and became the prevalent theme in the 19th century (Ginsburg, 1989: 72). The text is written in the Thai language but in Cambodian letters. Paintings illustrating key scenes from the narrative, such as the poor man presenting the lotuses to Phra Malai, are found on either side of the text on roughly 5-10 percent of the pages. Another pair of paintings depicts two monks in each frame. In some paintings they are seated with legs crossed in the lotus position, holding a *talabat* in front of them. In others, however, they are seated with one knee raised, or less commonly, standing in what appears to be a comic pose of some sort (figs 1 & 2).

The latter illustrations and their meaning are the focus of a debate among a small group of scholars. Jana Igunma, the Henry Ginsburg curator at the British Library, in a recent article, referred to the monks as "naughty" and defined the issue as a question of whether the paintings of the monks "are a result of the introduction of artistic realism in Thai painting mirroring the real world, or whether they are evidence of growing freedom of artistic expression, or evidence of the use of manuscript art as propaganda." Her

mentor, the late Henry Ginsburg, who conducted pioneering work on Thai manuscripts at the British Library, first suggested that the scenes were used to contrast “pious monks” with “lax ones” (Ginsburg 1989: 77). Eleven years later, however, he referred to the latter as “false monks reciting the Phra Malai text when ordained monks were forbidden from doing so” (2000: 107). Ignuma believes that Ginsburg came to this conclusion after he had access to more Phra Malai manuscripts and realized that most of those “containing illustrations of the ‘naughty monks’ were created after the reforms of Rama I and Rama IV had been implemented” (2016:31).⁴⁶ The reforms she refers to specifically prohibited, not only eating at night, drinking alcohol, and watching entertainment, but also performing Phra Malai comically” in Cambodian, Chinese, Farang, and Mon melodies” (Virulrak, 1980: 38-43). As I noted earlier (Brereton, 1992 and 1995), comic performances such as these at funeral wakes are mentioned in the writings of numerous Thai scholars.⁴⁷ Montri Tramot described them as follows:

Early in the evening, chanting by four monks would take place at the home of the deceased, in front of the body. The monks would be seated on the floor, in a row, each holding a *talabat* in front of his face. After first chanting, somber excerpts from the Pali *abhidhamma*, they would shift to the catchy melodies of *Phra Malai* sparking a change in the ambiance. Sometimes the monks would even abandon the *Phra Malai* text completely and break into a comedy routine. Moving their *talabat* aside, they would reveal – to the delight of the funeral goers – made-up faces with false moustaches, glasses, and hats. They would then perform secular melodies lampooning the music of some of the foreign ethnic groups present in Siam at the time, such as Chinese, Malays, and *farang* (Westerners) (Virulrak, 1980: 38-43).

Igunma dismisses these details as “far-fetched” since there are no “historical eye-witness reports [by foreigners].”⁴⁸ Yet she includes such a scene of monks wearing false moustaches, hats and glasses and playing musical instruments (fig 2) in her article to conclude that:

The trend in 19th century Thai manuscript painting to include more frequently contrasting illustrations of “good” and “bad” monks within one manuscript may point toward an educational or propagandistic purpose of the paintings directed at monks and novices, which seems even more probable in the light of the Dhammayutika reform movement [of King Rama IV] that opposed older or local/ethnic Tai Buddhist traditions. (Igunma, 2016:48).

Another interpretation is that of Barend J. Terwiel who asserts that the monks were in a drug-induced state of trance in which “they travelled to the unseen worlds for their community (Terwiel, 2012: 12). Terwiel offers no evidence of drug use by monks, and Thai sources make no mention of it.

Historical Circumstances

While the date of *PMKS* is not known, the fact that comical recitation of it was first banned in the Three Seals Laws of King Rama I suggest that it had been popular during the Ayutthaya Period. The first is that, as we have seen from the translation of the epic tale, *Khun Chang Khun Phaen* by Chris Baker and Pasuk

⁴⁶ Perhaps this is the case, but it is also possible that Ginsburg got this idea from my 1995 book on Phra Malai, where I discuss in detail the change from recitations by monks to recitations by lay groups.

⁴⁷ See also Nandha Khunphakdee.

⁴⁸ I would suggest that these routines would not have been performed in the famous temples supported by royalty where foreigners are likely to have been escorted by their hosts.

Phongpaichit (2010), early Siamese society enjoyed a sense of humor that was much bawdier than that of today. Moreover, Katherine Bowie's new landmark book on humor in *Vessantara Jataka* recitations provides numerous examples of the use of earthy jokes and role-playing, especially concerning the character of Chuchok (Jujaka), the brahmin beggar (Bowie, 2017)

Moreover, even seven decades ago the lines between Sangha and laity were much less rigid than today. My 85-year-old friend and colleague, Ajan Sommai Premchit, who grew up in an Isan village, recalls that laymen who had been monks earlier in their lives would join monks in chanting if more voices were needed, and that monks would regularly put their robes aside and don sarongs to help their elders during the rice harvest. In short, practices and ideas of propriety change over time and space, depending on local contingencies. Thus, it is possible that in the late 18th century, when viewed from the ground-level perspective of local needs and tastes, the monks who performed comical chanting of *PMKS* were not so much "naughty" as trying to survive during hard times and providing a much-needed service to those experiencing the grieving that accompanies death.

Thai Scholars Talking and Writing about Phra Malai

Anthropologist and literary critic Cholthira Satyawadhna, like Igunma, sees the issue of the chanting monks as one involving differences between the strict Dhammayutika sect and the Mahanikaya sect, which allowed for more differences in local practice. But for Cholthira, who has researched a local *suat malai* group and organized a seminar and performances at Walailak University in Nakhon Si Thammarat, does not view the issue as one of "good" versus "bad" monks. Instead, she argues that *PMKS* is a play, "a Buddhist drama, and that theatre art should have poetic license for role-playing. Unfortunately, the Siam royal house did not have fun with this sort of folk theatre art, ruled by local monks and staged by monks" (email communication).

Thai literature scholar Trisilpa Boonkachorn also emphasizes the importance of entertainment and fun attached to the *klon suat* genre. In her epic 400-page book, *Klon Suat Phak Klang*, she explains that the term *klon suat* refers to poetic works that have melodies and are concerned with the wat and with Buddhism. Its main goals were to teach the dhamma while providing entertainment and fun. Themes relating sin and merit to the everyday life of villagers were most prevalent (Trisilpa, 2004:3). *Phra Malai Klon Suat*, the most famous *klon suat* work, was chanted far and wide at funeral wakes for the purpose of teaching about merit and demerit- reward and punishment while providing lively entertainment to assuage the grief and sorrow of those mourning the deceased (Trisilpa, 2004:5). The genre was popular from ancient times but began to become less popular at the time of King Rama IV, when Western civilization had a great impact on Thai culture.⁴⁹

Trisilpa writes that another kind of chanting was "*cham uat phra*," a comical chanting by monks in front of the deceased. Trisilpa (2004:7, citing Sathit Senanil, 2521:38-39) explains that following the death of a person, relatives would invite monks to chant the Abhidhamma. However, the sponsor of the wake would feel obligated to provide some entertainment to those who had come and therefore, after chanting the Abhidhamma the monks would perform comedy routines, often using double entendre

⁴⁹ Trisilpa Buunkachorn cites Phraya Uppakit Silapasan, 2507: 102 and 2452, Introduction.

expressions with obscene meanings. Thai scholars of literature and culture, including Dhanit Yupho, point out that the audience appreciated such performances.

After monks were prohibited from these performances, laymen who had been monks earlier in their lives replaced them as *suat kharuehat*, or “lay chanters” at wakes. To provide variety and prevent boredom, *suat kharuehat* groups also performed segments from famous works of Thai literature, including *Krai Thong* and *Phra Aphai Mani* among others. Similar statements appear in the writings of other experts, including Nandha Khunphakdee, retired professor of Thai language from Silapakorn University in Nakhon Pathom, and Anake Nawigamue, renowned writer on Thai culture who organized performances at the Bangkok Bank Musical Arts Center for 23 years.

PMKS Performances Today

Today, PMKS is still performed by monks at certain wats in the Bangkok area, including Wat Daowadueng and Wat Laksi Don Muang, as well as by laypeople’s groups in numerous villages in the central region and the south. Chulalongkorn University Thai language and folklore professor Poramin Jaruworn (1999) has written about current *kharuehat* practices in Ban Nong Khao, Tha Muang district, Kanchanaburi province. Phra Malai can also be found on Facebook, where it has an informative and richly illustrated page with pictures of a *kharuehat* group known as Khana Nai Kaew in Nakhon Si Thammarat and links to performances on YouTube (see links at the end of this article). The group consists of 12 people, some of them quite elderly, two of whom are women. In addition to singers, each with specific roles in the chanting chorus, there are musicians who play various instruments, including the *ramana* (drum), *saw* (spiked fiddle), *klui* (flute), and *ching* (finger cymbals). The group has received awards for its efforts to preserve local culture.

Performances by other *suat kharuehat* groups from villages in central region provinces, including Kanchanaburi, Chonburi, Nonthaburi, Ratburi, Phetburi and Suphanburi can also be found on YouTube. When I contacted a man who had uploaded one of the clips, he became my Face Book friend and explained in a message: “When my father died they prayed to achieve a sense of fun and a not-too quiet funeral. You can find chanting in many villages of Bang Lamung district, Chonburi province. This is our tradition. The chanting is not available to all of the old people who died, but only those who were respected in the village” (Facebook Messenger, May 17, 2017).

From what I have observed, *suat kharuehat* groups have several things in common. Members sit on the floor directly in front of the coffin and use as their text a modern folded paper facsimile. They usually begin with a *wai khru* ceremony of paying respect to their teacher and brief chanting of Pali scripture. While all the groups use lively melodies, and appear to be very earnest about their role as friends of the deceased, there are local variations in the melodies of the chants, the composition of the chanting groups, musical instruments accompanying the chanting.

Conclusion

Western scholars puzzled over the paintings of monks in *Phra Malai Klon Suat* manuscripts have tended to focus on the paintings and overlook the text, the context in which it was/is recited and the research of

Thai scholars. This paper has argued that a *PMKS* manuscript needs to be considered not only as a series of pictures on mulberry paper, but also as a text and script for performing songs in various melodies and rhythms. The key figures were the chanters/performers who made the text a lively source of entertainment. Rather than being criticized, satirized or made into examples of “good” and “bad,” they were appreciated for their ability to entertain those attending funeral wakes.

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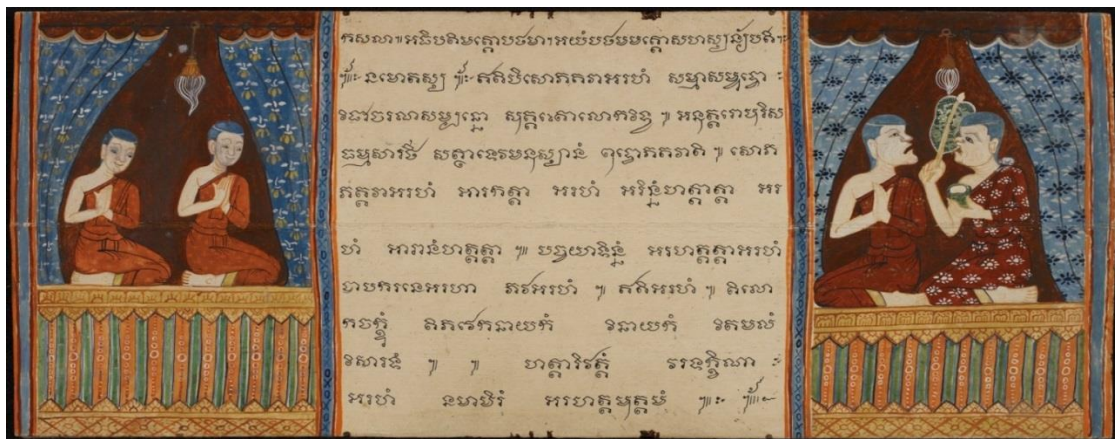


Fig. 1 – Left - Monks behaving properly; Right – possibly a monk (left) and a layperson (right)

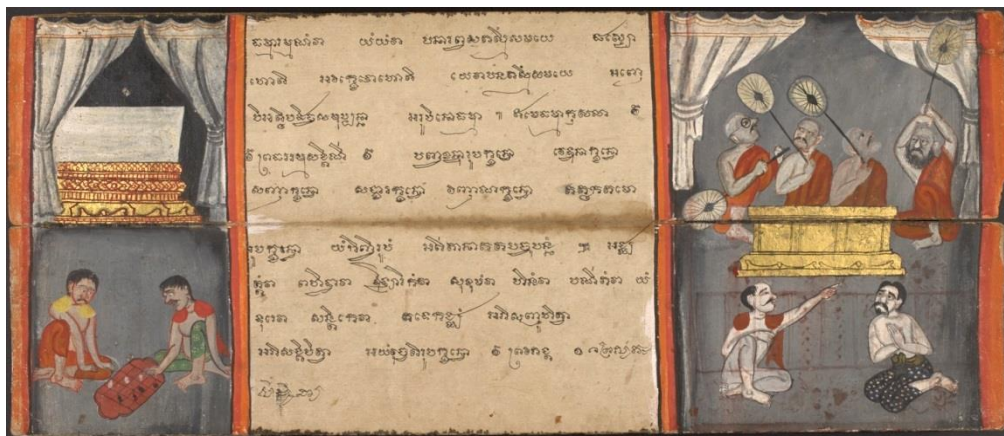


Fig 2 – Right- monks with eyeglasses, moustaches and beards, performing comedy routines at a funeral.
Both illustrations from Southeast Asia Library Group Newsletter No. 48 / Dec., 2016

Behaviors of Tourists Who Lived in Neighboring Provinces Affecting Educational Tourism in Museum of Pathum Thani, Thailand

Chaijan, Khunyarin

Thai Khadi Research Institute

Thammasat University

Thailand

Abstract

Determining the suggestions for the development of Affecting Educational Tourism in Pathumthani required research focused on the study of behaviors of tourists who lived in the neighboring provinces that affecting educational tourism in Pathum Thani. This research aimed to study the perception; attitude and behavior of the tourists live in neighboring provinces. The survey research used the questionnaire with the non-probability of tourists living in Bangkok, Nonthaburi Province and Ayutthaya Province with 400 samples size at a confidence level of 95 percent.

The main attractions for suitable tourism to Educational Tourism in Pathum Thani Province was the museums. In the past five years, more than half of tourist had visited museums in the country, on average about three times/year, due to the route are passes from other tourist attractions. Also, more than half had not received information about the museum in Pathum Thani. This has a requirement to disseminate information via the television. The most likely intention to travel the museum in the future. In addition, this study found that the differences education level influenced by the attitudes regarding educational tourism. The attitude about educational tourism was higher, travel behavior for learning was high as well with a statistical significant at the 0.05 level.

Keywords: perception, attitude, Educational Tourism, the museum in Pathumthani.

Introduction

Pathumthani is related to the city of Sam Khok where the Mon community migrated from Burma situated. The pieces of evidence evoked from the reign of King Narai the Great until the reign of His Majesty the King Rama I Napalai. Then His Majesty Rama I Napalai had named the new city of Sam Khok "Prathumthani City" during the Lent during the Lunar Year, 1815 (Department of Fine Arts, Committee on Documentation and Archives. Book of Honor His Majesty the King, 2001: 26 - 27).

Although Pathum Thani Province has an interesting history, there is also the area between Bangkok and Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, where considered as a major tourist destination in Thailand. Therefore, Pathum Thani Province seems to lack the image of being a tourist town. (Wiriyaorn Ngam, 2008: 383).

The tourism of Pathum Thani Province did not develop as it should be. There are several kinds of research on how to develop Pathumthani province as a tourist destination, such as promoting the community to tourism, with strengthen on waterfront tourism (Poolsin Ingwarat, 2006: 61) and improve the tourism image of the province, focusing on Mon culture tourism (Wiriyaporn Ungang, 2008: 392) etc., in line with the tourism development strategy of Pathumthani province. From 2010 to 2013 focused on promoting community-based businesses and eco-tourism. (Pathum Thani Province, 2011)

However, the waterfront tourism of Pathum Thani Province has a major weakness. The Mon community identity in Pathum Thani is not as prominent as the Mon Phra Pradaeng community. Mon life in Pathum Thani is not as clear as in Mon Koh Kret (Porntipkit Charoenpaisarn, 2010: 86). Mon people in Pathum Thani also have a habit of peace and serenity that do not want to develop the community as a tourist destination. (Poolsin Ingawat, 2006: 61). Thanyanaram (2004: 202) studied the tourist attractions in Pathum Thani province in 2004, the top five are Chalerm Phrakiet Agriculture Museum. The National Science Museum, Dream World, Wat Chedi Hoi and the Gallery of Artists, respectively. In the top five are three museums.

Currently, Thailand has 1,452 museums, most of which are in large and/or long-standing provinces such as Bangkok (244), Chiang Mai (115), Nakhon Pathom (47), Chiang Rai (39), Nakhon Ratchasima (34), Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya (34), Lampang (30), and Ratchaburi (30) respectively (Sirindhorn Anthropological Center, 2017). Pathum Thani is not even a province that is as large or has a long history the province, but it has 27 museums. (Sirindhorn Anthropological Center, 2017), including large museums such as the Jubilee National Museum, Chalerm Phrakiet Museum of Agriculture. His Majesty, Supreme Artist Hall, Science Museum of the National Center for Science Education, Rangsit. Military and historical buildings and museums. (National Monument) and so on.

Learning center is a resource that the society acknowledges and marks as the prosperity of the nation (Pravadevila, 2000: 3). The museum is one of the important sources of learning. Although it is not earning revenue, it may also be a marketing tool for related businesses (Fine Arts Department, National Museum, 2005: 270). Museums that can be a marketing tool for learning tourism, it must be unique in terms of exhibits and services, unlike other museums. Tourism is a type of tourism that is promoted under the National Tourism Development Plan 2012-2016 (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2011: 43).

For the mentioned reasons, Pathum Thani province may improve a museum-centered learning tourism. Considering further the behavior of tourists, most of them come from Bangkok or nearby provinces. Most of the tourists travel by themselves and do not stay overnight in Pathum Thani province (Poolsin Ingawat, 2006: 59; Porntipkit Charoenpaisarn, 2010: 123, 174; Wiriya Pornmuang, 2008: 370). In line with the national tourism development plan to create and brand image of tourism as a selling point of the province and the needs of tourists by creating new tourism activities (Ministry of Tourism and Sports, 2011: 32-33). It also complies with the national development strategy of the 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan, which states that the service sector should restructure the service sector by restoring and improving the quality of tourism in line with market demand.

From the benefits of learning resources, the "Museum" and the potential of Pathum Thani province can be developed into a tourist city. As for the tourist behavior, most of them come from Bangkok or nearby provinces which travel by themselves and do not stay overnight in Pathum Thani. This is the source of

the study on the attitude and behavior of museum tourist in Pathum Thani province of tourists who live in neighboring provinces. To be used as a guideline for the development of learning tourism activities using museums in Pathum Thani province as a future center.

Objective

To study tourism behavior of museums of tourists who live in neighboring provinces. (Nonthaburi Bangkok Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya) using a museum in Pathum Thani as a center for educational tourism.

Methodology

1. Documentary research by studying the concept of educational tourism (i.e. definition / meaning, type and activity of tourist participation based on educational tourism) from document source / research papers as well as collect the museum list / information in Pathum Thani by examining information from websites and research papers from both public and private agencies to comprehend the implementation in the next step.

2. Quantitative Research by using survey research techniques to study tourist behavior of museums of tourists living in neighboring provinces. (Nonthaburi, Bangkok, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya) exploiting a museum in Pathum Thani as a center for educational tourism. The population collected in this research were both male and female, residents / permanent residents in Nonthaburi, Bangkok, and Ayutthaya, totaled in 7,585,123 people (Department of Local Administration, 2011). Most of the people in the three neighboring provinces can travel within a day due to the short distance from Pathum Thani. The sample was selected using the Taro Yamane formula (1973) at a confidence level of 95%. The acceptable tolerance was not more than 5%. The sample size was 400 tourists and the sampling method was used Non-Probability Sampling. The study was also used the purposive sampling method, the sampling was conducted from all the three main areas that are Bangkok's suburbs, Nonthaburi, and Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province using the Quota Selection method. In the final step, the Accidental Selection was used to get the sample that meets the requirements. The respondents must be 15 years or older.

3. Provide guidelines/suggestions / plans in the complete research report to relevant organizations, both local and national public and private organizations/agencies. Organization of tourism promotion, both public and private, for the development of educational tourism by depleting the museum in Pathumthani province to be a center to meet the needs and travel behavior of the target group.

Literature Review

The Special Interest Tourism concept is a growing tourism model, as tourists are more likely to learn and experience different kinds of tourism, such as Education Tourism, Cultural Tourism (Charinya Charoenpanich and Suwat Jataporn, 2001, pp. 117-127). The concept of Educational Tourism: from the article "Educational Tourism: Understanding the Concept, Recognizing the Value" stated the essence of educational tourism as a change in the tourism market, with a growing diversity. The mix of tourism

resources includes places or activities that create learning experiences, professionals, planners and managers (Paul Williams, 2010).

Results

If one talk about "Pathum Thani Province", the most prominent tourist attraction is Wat (temple) follow by museum, amusement park, market, Mon community lifestyle, and various educational institutions. Therefore, the target groups of "Educational Tourism" are people of all ages, followed by students, teachers, academics, researchers, people of working age, and people of retirement age. Most of them think that "museum" is the best place to learn about tourism, followed by lifestyle, community living various festivals, botanical gardens, libraries, temples, archives, educational institutions, markets, technology information centers and amusement parks as shown in the table below.

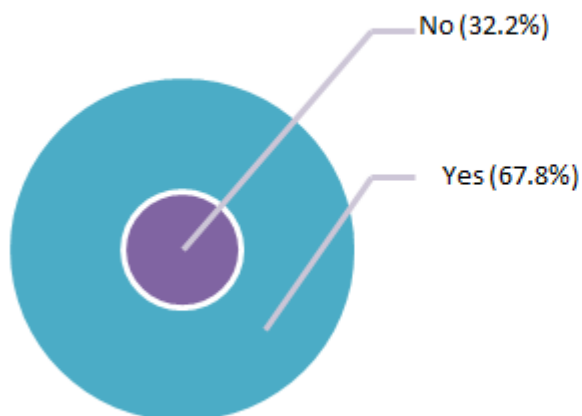
Table 1: The perception

		Percent (%)
Outstanding tourist attraction	Temple	22.5
	Museum	20.8
	Market	16.0
	amusement park	17.2
	Mon Community Lifestyle	12.0
	Educational Institutions	11.5
The right place for educational tourism	People of all ages	46.8
	Student	28.3
	Scholar, professor, researcher	11.5
	People of working ages	8.9
	People of retirement age	4.5
The right place for educational tourism	Museum	21.1
	Lifestyle of community	13.7
	Festivals	11.7
	Botanical Garden	9.5
	Library	7.0
	Temple	6.8
	Archives	6.6
	Educational Institutions	6.4
	Market	6.4
	Information Technology Center	6.1
	Amusement park	4.7

In the past 5 years, the tourist behavior who visited museums in Pathum Thani province showed that half of them visited museums in Thailand however, more than half of Pathum Thani museums have not been visited in the country in the past five years.

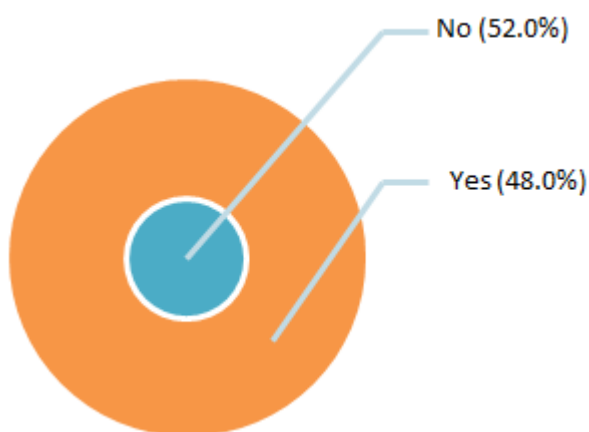
The main purpose to visit the museum as it is the most accessible route from the main tourist attractions (34.3%), followed by group visits (21.4%), special interest and learning (18.8%), children ask to take a trip

(12.9%), Parents take a trip (7.7%) and search the data for the study (4.8%).



Number of museum visited in Thailand (times/year)	(%)
2	37.3
1	33.9
3	11.4
5	10.0
4	3.3
6	1.1
10	1.0
7	0.4
8	0.4
15	0.4
20	0.4
30	0.4

Chart 1: Percent of the tourist who visited the local museums within 5 years



The number of visits to various museums. In Pathum Thani Province (times/year)	(%)
1	52.3
2	29.2
3	11.5
5	3.8
4	1.5
10	1.5

Chart 2: Percent of the tourist visited the various museums in Pathumthani province in 5 years.

The study also investigated the tourist's preparation for each visit to the museum by selecting the sort order according to the comments. The results showed that there were 6 steps for museum visiting preparation that are the first step is to study information about traveling from the media. Step 2: explore the route before visiting the museum. Step 3: Study history of the Museum as a basis for knowledge

before visiting. Step 4 Planning to spend money to visit the museum. Criteria for each step 5. Follow the rules of the place and listen to the advice of the officials leading visitors to step 6. Admission to all exhibitions and lecture from the official visit by any and all activities. And the last step is taking photos and taking notes from what's on display in the museum to take advantage.

As for the duration of visit, most of the museums visit take up to one to two hours, followed by more than two hours, and less than one hour, visited the National Science Museum in Pathum Thani province, followed by the Museum of Wat Chedi Hoi, the Museum of Agriculture Museum Honor His Majesty the King. National Museum of the Golden Jubilee, Ancient boat museum, Historical buildings, and military museums (National Monument), Rare Stone Museum, etc. In addition, the results revealed that the most favorite museum was the Museum of History and Archeology, followed by the Museum of Science, Museum of folk wisdom, Museum of Natural Science, Art museum, Museum of Buddhism, Museums of education, etc., which showed in the table as follows:

Table 2: Travel behavior for visiting museums in Pathum Than

		Percent (%)
Visits to the museum	National Science Museum	19.4
	Museum Chedi Hoi	13.3
	The supreme artist hall	8.9
	The Golden Jubilee Museum of Agriculture	6.6
	Golden Jubilee Museum	5.8
	Ancient boat museum	5.8
	Historical buildings and military museums (national monuments)	4.7
	Rare Stone Museum	4.4
	Lotus Museum	3.2
	Thammasat Chalermprakiat Museum	2.8
	Cultural Hall of Pathum Thani	2.8
	Local Museum of Wat Bang Luang and Thai Product Development Center	2.8
	Science Center for Education Rangsit	2.5
	Information Technology Museum	2.2
	Museum of Natural History	2.2
	Chokchai Museum	2.2
	Wat Sing Museum	2.2
	Local Cultural Information Center	2.2
	Southeast Asian Ceramics Museum	1.9

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		Percent (%)
	Wat Chan Kapo Chalerm Phrakiet Cultural Hall	1.9
	Pathumthani Cultural Center Rajamangala University of Technology	1.3
	Museum of government	0.9
Duration of visit	About 1-2 hours	64.6
	More than 2 hours	28.5
	Less than 1 hour	6.9
Favorite museum type	Museum of History and Archeology	42.1
	Science museum	12.2
	Museum of folk wisdom	12.0
	Museum of Natural Science	8.5
	Art museum	5.8
	Museum of Buddhism	4.0
	Educational museum	2.8
	Military museum	2.5
	Agricultural Museum	2.5
	Museum of Law and Corrections	1.8
	Museum of Communications and Transport	1.5
	Thai Cloth Museum	1.5
	Museum of person	1.0
	Museum of Medicine and Public Health	0.8
	Economic museum	0.8
	Museum of Anthropology	0.2

The attitude of the tourists from Bangkok, Nonthaburi, and Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Province to the museum was at the consensus level (mean 4.12). "There were strongly agreed on the statement. "The museum is a source of learning for people of all ages" (mean 4.37) and the statement "The Museum is a good source of knowledge about Thai history and culture" (mean 4.31). Follow by the statement "Museum to help instill. It gives rise to love, tenacious, and preservation of property in the nation. The statement "The museum is a source of imagination." creativity Including the vision of children and youth" (mean 4.28). The statement "proper museum for educational and research services" (mean 4.27) and the statement "websites or social media is one of the ways to get more information about museums" (mean 4.21). With the least agreeing attitude on the statement "The public and private sectors are encouraging and encouraging people to visit museums". The level of attitudes is at the

consensus level (3.82). Based on test hypothesis, the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient between the attitudes to educational tourism and the educational tourism behavior was statistically significant ($R=0.418$, $P\text{-Value} < 0.000$) which was considerably lower than statistic significance level (0.01). That is the attitudes toward educational tourism related with the tourist behavior for educational tourism. The correlation coefficient between attitude toward learning and behavioral learning is positively positive, that is, if the attitudes toward learning tourism are higher, the learning behavior of learning travel is positive, as shown in the table below:

*Table 3: The correlation coefficients between the attitudes to educational tourism
and the educational tourism behavior.*

the attitudes to educational tourism	the educational tourism behavior.	
	R	P – Value
	.418**	.000

** P-Value < 0.01

Conclusion

Although the findings in research on the most prominent tourist destinations of Pathum Thani Province that the tourists in the neighboring provinces, including Bangkok. Nonthaburi and Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya, were selected "temple" the most (22.5%), followed by the "museum" (20.8%), most of them still think that "museum" should be a tourist attraction (21.1%). The result close to the research conducted by Sansiri. Raviwat Worakul (2008:133) which was found that the potential of Pathum Thani Province in terms of travel and tourism activities, that the tourists rated as the highest, was to see the learning resources, including Poolsit Ingkaew (2006: 59). Porntip Kitcharoenpaisarn (2010: 123,174) Ripipon Kuang (2008: 370) found that most of the public, private and public sectors in Pathum Thani believe that Pathum Thani should be developed as a tourist destination for educational tourism. The finding also consistent with Thanyanavongse's research (2004: 202), that indicated the top five tourist attractions visited in 2004 were the Chaloem Phra Kiat Museum of Agriculture. Dream World, Wat Chedi Hoi and the Supreme Artist Hall, respectively, in which the research found that the museum in Pathum Thani is a tourist attraction to visit tourists. Fourth rank: Museum of National Science Museum (19.4%), Museum of Chedi Hoi Temple (13.3%), the Supreme Artist Hall (8.9%) and The Golden Jubilee Museum of Agriculture (6.6%)

Suggestions

1. Attitudes towards higher educational tourism is likely to be a good trend or a good signal for creating awareness and creating a flow for Thais to visit museums. Travel agencies can be used as a guide for tourism promotion planning. By building cooperation from all sectors related to tourism. Both national government and local organizations private sector agencies involved to encourage more educational tourism.

2. Departments responsible for museums should increase the level of activity with educational institutions at the elementary level up to the tertiary level, by organizing special events as incentives for museum trips. As well as plans to stimulate travel during the semester by motivating or organizing activities to promote more tourism.
3. Relevant agencies should take the factors that influence tourism decision making to consider in order to promote the development of new tourism activities in accordance with the interests of tourists, especially tourists interested in educational tourism.
4. Relevant agencies should use more online media. It is a channel to disseminate information on museum tourism in response to the target audience quickly.

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Digital Humanities Research Approach for Organizing the Contents on Ethnic Groups in Thailand

Chaikhambung, Juthatip

Information Studies Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Khon Kaen University
Thailand

Tuamsuk, Kulthida

Information and Communication Department, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Khon Kaen University
Thailand

Abstract

Thailand is a country made up of diverse ethnic groups. Knowledge of ethnicity is important not only for the research and studies, but also for the better understanding of the background, culture, belief, and way of life of the people. In most countries, the issues of ethnic groups have been the critical concerns of the governments in relations to the national security and harmony. In order to study on the knowledge of ethnic groups, the scholarly community needs effective tools to get access to the digitized information that are available in the databases and on the webs. This research, therefor, aimed at utilizing the digital humanities research approach to organize the knowledge of ethnic groups in Thailand in order for developing the scheme and tool for information access and retrieval. The study used qualitative research method by conducting content analysis of relevant information resources. The knowledge structure on ethnic groups was constructed using knowledge classification theory and then evaluated by the experts in ethnology via structured interviews. This article presents example of the results that derive from application of the digital humanities research approach in the organization of knowledge systems in Thai ethnic groups. The results are Knowledge structure and ontology that can be used as a tool for information access and retrieval systems of ethnic groups.

Keywords: Ethnic groups, Knowledge organization, Digital humanities, Content analysis

1. Introduction

Thailand is located in the heart of Southeast Asia. It is the land that marks a complex network of all races as well as people who speak different languages scattering and residing within it. Thailand is, therefore, the country which composes of multitude of people groups. Thus, conducting a study on diverse ethnic groups in order to understand them is integral. Such study can bring forth creation of manifold bodies of knowledge whether in economic, politics, society, ways of life, belief, or languages, etc. Furthermore, the

study can also bring about resolution to conflicts between these ethnic groups—whether large or small—within the country, which will eventually lead to sustainably development guideline in the country (Ratanakul et al., 2000; Srisantisuk, 2015). As a result, ‘Office of Ethnic Affairs’ (OEA) under the supervision of Department of Social Development and Welfare, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security was established. OEA oversees policies including manages body of knowledge and develops information technology concerning ethnic groups. All missions undertaken by the OEA is aiming at building understanding and creating harmony in accord to Master Plan for Ethnic Group Development in Thailand (2015-2017), which was written by Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (2015).

Thailand has been emphasizing on the studies of ethnic groups which had brought to pass many of research works and bodies of knowledge in many branches concerning main ethnic groups in Thailand; for example, studies on anthropology, sociology, political science, linguistics, psychology, history, etc. In addition, ‘Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Anthropology Centre (Public Organization)’, ‘Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia, Mahidol University’, ‘Centre of Ethnic Study and Development (CESD), Faculty of Social Study, Chiang Mai University’ and ‘Department of Cultural Promotion, Ministry of Culture’ are examples of units which were established to especially provide supports to the conduction of domestic ethnic study. The initial studies investigated into unique qualifications and identity of ethnic groups. Later, the studies looked into different contexts in relation to these people’s groups. The ethnic studies can be categorized into three paradigms: ‘primordialist views’, ‘instrumentalist approaches’, and ‘constructivist theories’ (Leepreecha, 2014). Such shows how the studies and the scope of the studies have progressed over the years.

The said ethnic studies led to numbers of bodies of knowledge, especially in anthropology, culture, history, and language. Nevertheless, categorizing these ethnic groups has been complex and problematic since one ethnic group can be called by many names and vice versa—sometimes one name can refer to many ethnic groups. Ethnic people mostly refer to themselves by using the word ‘kon’ (which mean man in English) in front of their tribes’ names while others including government call them by different names. Most of the name which are used by people outside from the tribes mostly have negative connotation and sounds offensive to the ethnic people (Ratanakul et al., 2000). Moreover, the fact that some researchers might not aware of the importance of calling ethnic tribes by the right name has posed some confusion to the general public. For this reason, a research work might conduct a comprehensive investigation into several people groups at once—Karen, hill tribes—or that study could focus on those groups separately. The study on ethnic groups will never cease since it is the study about people’s endless migration—both in and out of the country. This might be coupled with the fact that cultural adaptation and assimilation has somehow changed social structure and people’s way of life. This study will somehow bring about understanding towards the distinction each ethnic group holds. And once such knowledge is disseminated, public would gain more understanding while the ethnic people themselves will be more accepted to the outside world. The study on ethnic group had led to the conception of numerous research works that were published in books, articles, and Master’s and Doctoral dissertations, especially in those in the institutes of which locations are close to where the hill tribes are. For instance, Chiang Mai University where were found several studies on ethnic groups. Most found

research works, nevertheless, are in the form of printed media kept in the institutes' or organizations' libraries, which is quite difficult to access. Undeniably, such information is ought to be preserved and disseminated to public to let people—no matter which race they hold—learn and understand other ethnic people who live among them in the same country and the world.

Presently, studies on Digital Humanities are receiving worldwide attention. The study on Digital Humanities focuses on integrating information technology with the existing knowledge or content on humanities to facilitate in data storing, disseminating, and retrieval. Studies on Digital Humanities tend to increase as can be seen from topics that focus on Digital Humanities in several academic conferences since 1990. 'Alliance of Digital Humanities Organizations'(ADHO) is an organizer which mainly responsible in providing supports and dissemination of the research works on Digital Humanities as well as acting as a liaison between researchers to encourage exchange of knowledge. ADHO has members worldwide; for example, 'The European Association for Digital Humanities' (EADH) in England, 'Association for Computers and the Humanities' (ACH) in the United States, 'Canadian Society for Digital Humanities/Société Canadienne des Humanités Numériques' (CSDH/SCHN) in many countries such as Asia Pacific, Europe, North America, United Kingdom, and New Zealand; and Japanese Association for Digital Humanities (JADH) in Japan.

This research study aims at providing a prototype model in bringing in Digital Humanities to the knowledge management system of which content focuses on ethnic groups in Thailand. This model could be used in setting scope and knowledge structure of different people groups. It can even be further developed as a tool which could be used in keeping record and disseminating data, which would facilitate access to and retrieval of related information.

2. Literature Reviews

'Ethnic group' means groups of people who have their own names and similar religion, beliefs, traditions, rituals, culture, ways of life, habitation, and costumes. They also share the same history and conscious towards themselves as one united group who speak the same language. Each ethnic group possesses its own hierarchical system, which is usually different from other society within their vicinity (Cohen, 1974; Cashmore, 1996; Dictionary of Sociological Terms, 2006). Nevertheless, it is possible that within a group, diversity in language, traditions, religion, beliefs, etc. may exist, depending on the social structure, history, politics, economy, and culture within. Therefore, creating an understanding towards this complex network of ethnic groups requires time before every related issue can be comprehensively studied. The unique characteristic of the ethnic group is that the same group would descend from the same ancestry, either genetically and culturally. Therefore, members of the same ethnic group would share both genetic and cultural bond. These somehow reinforce identity of the individual and the group as well as encouraging unity between them. This is especially true if the same religion is shared between the members. Thus, an individual would not be referred to as someone who is from the same ethnic group unless he/she shares the same culture as the rest of the group do (Pongsapich, 1998).

Study on ethnic people has long been receiving interest domestically and internationally. Most people who dive into this topic are mostly anthropologists, sociologists, and economists. Anthropologists usually look into particular minority group whose habitat is located in a certain country, while sociologists

investigated into relationships between ethnic or minority groups. The economists, in contrast, would examine from the perspective where conflicts arose between ethnic groups which could affect state's security (Pongsapich, 1998). Before 1970, the studies on ethnic group would mostly aim at explaining the meaning of 'culture' rather than studying ethnic consciousness and behavior. Phenomenon and identity of ethnic group came into public interest since 1960 until early 1980. Branches which were investigated include anthropology, sociology, psychology, and political science with the basis of ethnicity or ethnic consciousness study method which may be sub-divided into different issues and aspects. Not until late 1990 to 2000 did the studies on ethnic group refer to these groups of people as 'marginalized people'. This term has been widely used in most society in general including Thailand. Trends of interest in studying ethnic group that was influenced by concept of ethnicity has brought about new research issues which became the main research study aspects: 'ethnic identification'—a process where the ethnic group were standardized in accord to the ethnic group's consciousness; 'ethnic relations'—the ethnic learning and expression which show their identity in different contexts, including distinctions between ethnic groups or between members of the same group, as well as ethnic knowledge and relationship; behavioral patterns between different ethnic groups; procedure used by ethnic people in conserving their territories to preserve identities between groups; roles and identity of ethnic groups; and process of change seen in ethnic groups. It can be seen that there are many concepts concerning ethnic groups; for example, ethnicity, ethnic boundary, ethnic identity, cultural assimilation, etc.

'Primordialist view' sees ethnic groups from 'essentialism' point of view. Each group contains certain social, cultural, and economic pattern which distinct them from other groups. However, this kind of study will not show any connection the group has with other society of other hill tribes within the vicinity. It does not look into changes in cultural patterns over the course of time. This kind of study, however, focuses on cultural patterns as well as the members' traits influenced by the culture, environment, and history of that particular group. It usually focuses on history, language, tradition, way of life, etc.

In light of 'instrumentalist approach', which was first introduced in the mid of 1950s, identity or unique characters of the ethnic group are seen as a tool or mechanism that invokes benefits obtained from their relationship with others living in a larger society. The most important thing of this concept is the specific context or situation in which ethnic group reacts was used to achieve political, social, as well as economic goal. Nevertheless, in such relationship, this concept does not see the identity of ethnic group as something that can be re-created. For example, the study of Moerman (1967) looks at ethnic group as a channel through which social status and roles were gained or achieved. Such was possible through cultural borrowing between 'Tai Lue' and 'Tai Yuan', depending on the context and situation—who they are reacting with and will there be any benefits in identifying themselves or not.

In contrast, 'Constructivist theory' sees ethnic identity as something which is diverse and dynamic, meaning that it can change over the course of time. Identity can, then, be re-created within the context in which certain relationship occurs. This concept came into conception in 1980. It closely related to nation state and globalization which are posing more and more influence on the ethnic groups. This constructivism theory places much importance on the re-creation of ethnic identity, not only among the group but also how the outside world perceives them as well. This concept also covers the relational

context the groups have with nation states including globalization. For example, a research paper conducted by Jatuporn Donsom (2012) examines the construction and adaptation of ethnic identity among Vietnamese Thais Ban Na Jok in Nongyat sub-district, Muang District, Nakhonphanom Province. The aim of the study was to understand ethnic group and different cultures through the identity creation, adaptation, and changes. It investigates stories were stripped down and re-created to depict certain history and intensify the sense of belonging to the group among Vietnamese Thais. Nevertheless, which ever concept was employed in the studies, most are still produced in a form of printed media.

Digital Humanities is a research branch which integrates between computer science and humanities to gain benefits from intangible cultural knowledge from humanities study through the use of information technology and its high communication capacity that can transform humanities knowledge in printed media into an easily-accessed-digitalized data. By this, one can learn quicker and is allowed to create dimensional definitions as well as comparison study, which can lead to the development in analytical thinking and more creativity.

Digital Humanities research covers content about compilation and systemization of knowledge—how to store and keep certain content in a form of digital data. This kind of study will be coupled with an index section that tells about *traditional methodology in humanities*; for instance, history, philosophy, language, art, music, etc. as well as *computational tools* such as digital archiving, ontology, semantic web, data mining, textanalysis, multi-media presentation, data visualization, etc.

Consequently, conceptual frameworks of digital humanities are to be divided into three groups: 1) organization, 2) retrieval and access, and 3) service. However, in most academic conferences on digital humanities, the conceptual frameworks could be divided into 4 aspects: foundation, infrastructure, contents, and services. In regard to the contents part of the research, the section would be about knowledge management in humanities; this could include other works and knowledge concerning humanities. For example, metadata schemas, digital archives, preservation and curation, knowledge organization, classification, 3D objects, text analysis, ontology, and collection of visual museum development, etc. (Tuamsuk, 2014). Examples of research works on digital humanities are; for instance, a study on ‘The Development of Website and Database on Antique: A Case of Ban Chiang National Museum’ (Rahupa, 2011)—which applied information technology with knowledge in humanities, or the paper conducted by Witsapat Chaichuay (2013) who developed metadata scheme for digitized inscription—which also integrated information technology science with knowledge in humanities science.

This research study integrated information science into ethnic knowledge management in Thailand. The concerned theories used within this research are as following.

‘Knowledge Organization System’ was used to make sure that all schemes related to information technology management and knowledge management promotion are covered. Knowledge management systems are composed of ‘Classification schemes’—which organize general information such as placing books on shelves; ‘subject heading’—which provides details that could be used to access or control the information technology such as names of authorized users, semantic network, and ontology. The knowledge management was, therefore, applied in organizing information system for retrieval as well as

collection management (Hodge, 2000). Knowledge management system is like a tool acting as an indexing language that helps in managing and accessing to the contents by using controlled vocabularies—which comprises ‘vocabularies/ terms’ composing of vocabularies (cc) and ‘syntax or rules’. Such was used to designate word forms and appropriate meaning of the terms (Broughton et al., 2005; Shiri, 2006; SKOS, 2008; Nuntapichai, 2011)

Knowledge classification involves two related theories (Kumar, 1985): 1) Grouping and ordering principle and 2) Library classification theory. The first theory can be applied as a fundamental principle in all kinds of classifications. Grouping that means to analyze ‘attribute’ and ‘value’ of the information. The principle of cluster analysis allows information to be categorized into different groups, depending on the concept used during analyzing and categorizing. For example, one might focus on the following concepts such as notion, procedure, physical feature, or meaning of terms.

The second theory—Library classification theory—can be divided into two groups (Hjørland & Pederson, 2005; Jones, 2005): a) ‘Positivism’ and b) ‘Pragmatism’. As for ‘positivism’, it is the categorization concept which applies to all kinds of body of knowledge existed in the world such as ‘Dewey decimal classification’. On the other hand, ‘pragmatism’ focuses more on detailed analysis of the body of knowledge including emulates the contents before categorizing them. Such can be done through Charles A Cutter’s ‘Expansive Classification System’ that emphasizes on contents in accord to pragmatic knowledge. Example where ‘Expansive’ concept is applied can be seen in ‘the Library of Congress classification system’. The system was used to sub-divide knowledge into groups. It can be noticed that both positivism and pragmatism use principle in ordering the knowledge. Most uses concepts or philosophy in classification academic knowledge as a fundamental principle. Furthermore, there are some other classification concepts available as well; for example, Synthesis Classification or Facet Classification which focuses on order and hierarchical relationship between main groupings and sub-groupings. It also looks at relationships with other elements such as Ranganathan’s Colon classification system and Universal classification system.

Organization of knowledge or Knowledge structure is an approach which presents ways how to control and form connections between relationships of the existing knowledge (Hill et al., 2002). Additionally, it also shows approaches in controlling and managing vocabularies, rules or syntax which designate connections between related vocabularies (Broughton, 2006).

The standardized principles in categorizing knowledge on ethnic group are, for example, Dewey decimal classification (DDC) and Library of Congress classification system (LC) which are the systems used mostly in libraries. Both systems employ different principle in categorizing knowledge. DDC divides ethnic groups in accord to their spoken languages. All ethnic groups are categorized in the social sciences section or class 300; sub-class 305 refers to people groups. Others are categorized based on spoken languages (Dewey, 2011). In contrast, LC bases their categorization concept on geographical habitats of different ethnic group. Ethnic groups are in the historical section called ‘DS’. Contents in the section are divided based on regions, geographical feature, country, and names of the tribes. All are placed in alphabetical order from A-Z (Library of Congress, 1998).

There are many concepts that can be used to categorize ethnic groups; for example, it can be based on

language, geography, history, race, or costumes. However, such principles still based their categorization from the general point of view. It did not depict distinct details each ethnic group holds. This research paper, nevertheless, begins by looking at which type of knowledge each ethnic group possesses. Thereafter, the study dives down into details of that particular knowledge.

3.1 Research Approach

Digital Humanities Approach for organizing knowledge on ethnic groups in Thailand comprises of 3 main steps as follows (Chaikhambung & Tuamsuk, 2007):

3.1 Identification of Information Resources on Ethnic Groups

The scope of knowledge of ethnic groups in Thailand is based on the information resources the contents of which are related to the ethnic groups living in Thailand. These resources, both in Thai and English, are published according to the research of the libraries of each university, as well as specific libraries, and may be accessible electronically. The information resources used and selection methods are as follows:

3.1.1 Reference books including the series of Encyclopedia of Ethnic Groups in Thailand, published by the Institute of Language and Cultural Research for Rural Development of Mahidol University, this set of compiles accounts of each ethnic group in nearly all aspects; Dictionary of Race and Ethnic Relations; Encyclopedia of Race and Ethnic Studies.

3.1.2 Books and textbooks that discuss ethnic groups or how to conduct a study of ethnic groups across different aspects such as history and background, subsistence and customs, dresses, and wisdom, etc. These books were written by writers known and accepted in the academic disciplines of ethnology, sociology, anthropology, or other related fields, or whose research was funded by governmental organizations such as the Ministry of Culture, the Office of Ethnic Affairs or relevant research centers.

3.1.3 Research reports and doctoral theses selected from well-known researchers or research studies supported by relevant organizations such as the Department of Cultural Promotion of the Ministry of Culture, the Office of Thailand Research Fund (TRF), the Center for Research on Plurality in the Mekong Region (CERP) at Khon Kaen University, the Institute of Language and Cultural Research for Rural Development at Mahidol University, and the Center for Ethnic Studies at Chiangmai University. Doctoral theses have also been collected from well-known and accepted universities in the country or abroad in the related fields.

3.1.4 Academic articles published in scholarly journals accepted in the country or abroad that appear in databases such as TCI, SCOPUS, ISI, etc., or on a journal's website.

3.1.5 Selected databases and digital libraries that contain research on ethnic groups including Ethnic Groups in Thailand, eHRAF World Cultures, and the World Digital Library.

3.1.6 Multimedia that presents aspects of ethnic groups including their identities, subsistence, traditions, cultures, beliefs, self-adaptation, or others, such as the “Phan Saeng Roong Program” and “Open the Legend with Paothong” broadcast on Thai PBS Television and PPTV Channel, and available on YouTube.

3.1.7 Other relevant documents such as the Master Plan for Ethnic Group Development in Thailand (2015–2017) by the Department of Ethnic Affairs, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

3.2 Knowledge Classification

3.2.1 Information analysis and extraction. The elements and contents of ethnic groups in Thailand were investigated from relevant information resources. The data were then analyzed in order to find correlations and then extracted by taking into account the essential parts of each aspect in order to identify the knowledge representations based on concepts and terms. This was done by reading and then recording onto a form with both the sources and details noted. The contents analyzed included titles, concepts, terms, definitions, and details of related terms of ethnic information resources. Then the knowledge structure and scope were determined and classified using the following steps.

3.2.2 Classification of data. From the contents analyzed and extracted, all results were classified by 2 steps including (1) Similar items were placed together and (2) Repetition was reduced. First step was to analyze the knowledge system and classify the knowledge by placing similar contents together and related contents close to one another according to knowledge management principles. Then the names of knowledge representatives were assigned to cover the contents classified in each group. Then, the new contents were placed in the sub-class and divisions based on knowledge management principles so that sub-classes under the same topic would be placed together. Then new sub-class contents were placed under each class and the contents under the divisions were placed under sub-classes, depending on the proportion of details. Finally, the following step was to remove the repetitive content. Once the content was combined, anything repetitive was identified and removed.

3.2.3 Knowledge structuring. To set the knowledge structure of ethnic groups in Thailand from the outcomes of content classification and develop a research tool for experts to use during the next step.

3.2.4 Expert’s examination process. A structured interview methodology was used to interview four ethnology experts in order to examine the accuracy of the information obtained from the content analysis. A snowball sampling technique was used. That is, a sample expert was selected first, and then this expert went on to select other experts until the number required was obtained (Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, 2015). In this way, the researchers obtained the names of the next experts from the previous ones, and the group of experts grew like a snowball rolling downhill. Informants or experts are academics or researchers who have produced outcomes, articles, or other works about ethnic groups that have been continuously disseminated until the present time, or

well-known persons in ethnic studies who are accepted nationally as well as internationally. If they are researchers, they should be working in an organization in this field.

After the informants' qualifications were stated, the first person who met the qualifications was contacted for the interview. The first informant then gave information about the second informant (or more), whom he or she knew and had the right required qualification. The researchers revised the results of the interview with the first expert and improved the content and recommended knowledge structure before interviewing the second expert. If there was any recommendation, it was taken into account and the structured interview improved before interviewing the next expert, until the information was saturate and unchangeable. Finally, the knowledge structure was summarized for the ethnic groups in Thailand.

3.3 Development of Ontology Concerning Knowledge on Ethnic Groups in Thailand

The knowledge structure of ethnic groups in Thailand above was used in order to develop ontology of knowledge about ethnic groups in Thailand. In developing the domain ontology, the author followed the approach of Ushold & King (1995) as the main development framework which comprises three steps. Those steps are 1) setting objectives of the ontology, 2) building ontology, and 3) assessing the ontology. 'Hozo Ontology Editor program', developed by Osaka University in Japan, was used as a tool in developing the ontology so as to make it easier to disseminate and store the body of knowledge in a form of ontology (National Electronics and Computer Technology Center [NECTEC], 2012). The aim is to use it as a channel which can provide access and retrieve information for semantic searching device as well as other related information system.

Examples of Knowledge Structure Obtained from Research Results

Classification of Thai Ethnic Groups

Scope of knowledge

To define the scope of the content to study each category of knowledge as the following example:

Class	Scope
Religion and beliefs	The religions and beliefs of the ethnic group, including what is concerned with the religion and beliefs that influence their subsistence; for example, beliefs in house construction, beliefs about health etc.
Customs and rituals	The customs and rituals inherited and continuously practiced by the ethnic group including activities that demonstrate their identity and outstanding characteristics

Knowledge Structure

The knowledge structure of the ethnic groups in Thailand comprises classes, sub-classes, and divisions. The class is defined as the group of knowledge in one topic with a clear scope. Each class of knowledge contains sub-classes of knowledge.

The sub-class is the group of knowledge under the class and relates in a hierarchical or parent-child

relationship. Each sub-class is composed of many divisions and relates hierarchically, or there may not be any division at all.

The division is a minor group of knowledge placed under divisions and relates hierarchically or a parent-child relationship, or relates with other divisions under the same division in parallel or in hierarchy.

For example, Art Works and Entertainment consists of four sub-classes: Literatures, Performances and Plays, Musical instruments, and Songs have the following knowledge structure:

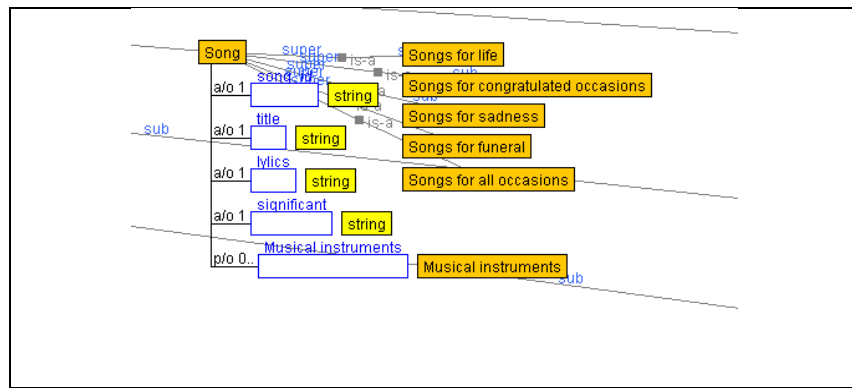
Class:	Art Works and Entertainment
Sub-class:	Literatures
Division:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tales Legends Riddles Poems Idiom and proverb
Sub-class:	Performances and plays
Sub-class:	Musical instruments
Sub-class:	Songs
Division:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Songs for life Songs for congratulated occasions Songs for sadness Songs for funeral Songs for all occasions

Ontology of Knowledge about Ethnic Groups in Thailand

Ontology of knowledge on ethnic groups in Thailand was developed in order to display knowledge set about ethnic groups residing in Thailand. This ontology is a result of the ontology design and development which was done based on engineering discipline. By this, it means that the knowledge structure on ethnic groups in Thailand mentioned before was used to classify based on ontology approach. Knowledge or contents which contain similar ideas and are related will be grouped together. Such group or concept was then given certain definitions and names. This definition or name is called 'classes'. Contents in each class were then divided into 'sub-classes'. The ontology which was designed and developed are then disseminated and used in a form of 'Ontology Web Language' or 'OWL File', which can be utilized as a fundamental tool in designing future semantic searching device or other related information system of which content is about ethnic groups.

Figure 1 and 2 display samples of 'class of song' and 'class of musical instruments' which both are related. The definition of 'class of song' is defined as string of words which composers compose or arrange. The (class of) song, therefore, consists of lyrics, tune, and rhythm to create melodious sound to the listeners. 'Class of song' has a 'Is-a' relationship pattern which can be referred to as 'Sub Class Of'. This shows a relationship between 'class of song' and other five sub-classes. The five sub-classes are: 1)

‘Songs for life’—which refers to songs that reflects the ethnic group’s way of life; 2) Songs for congratulated occasions—refers to songs used to express happy or joyful feeling; 3) ‘Songs for sadness’—refers to songs used to express feeling of sadness or being neglected or hurt; 4) ‘Songs for funeral’—refers to songs sang in funeral; 5) ‘Songs for all occasions’—refers to songs which can be generally used in all occasions. Moreover, ‘class of song’ also possesses a type of relationship which is different properties the class holds. For example, ‘Attribute-of’ or ‘Data type property’, is meaning that each song will be labeled using codes and names. The type of property called ‘Part-of’ is called ‘Object property’ which refers to its relationship with other classes; for instance, ‘class of song’ relates to ‘class of musical instruments’ used in playing music.



a/o = datatype property
 p/o = object property

Figure 1: Class of Song

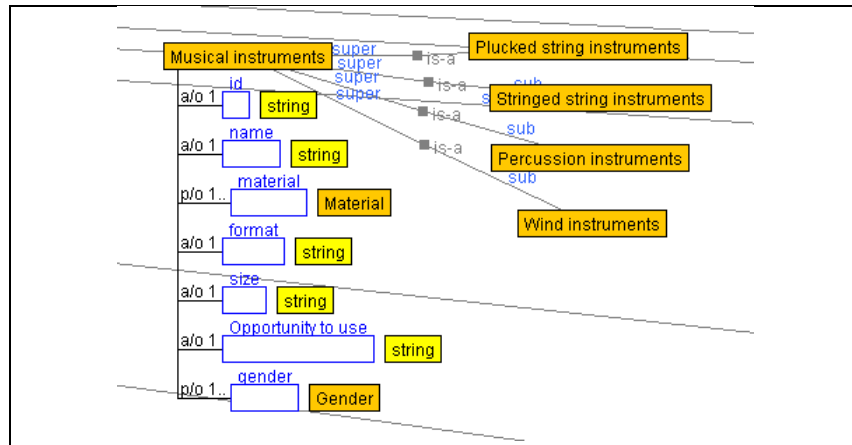


Figure 2: Class of Musical instruments

Nevertheless, definition of each class has to be clearly defined while the property of that particular class needs to be set, especially ‘Object property’. The reason is because ‘Object property’ can affect the relationship between classes in the ontology, which can be used in semantic searching device in other related information system.

4. Conclusion

This research work employs methodology of digital humanities in managing content by using 'classification theory', which is one of the information theory used to integrated with contents on humanities to help organize knowledge of ethnic groups in Thailand. Thereafter, the obtained data were then used in order to develop knowledge structure and ontology on knowledge of ethnic groups in Thailand so as to provide it as a tool gaining access to other related information system as well as used in semantic searching device. The employed methodology is qualitative approach as in most of the research works which follow the discipline of anthropological and sociological approaches. The difference of this research paper in comparison with other studies is that data analysis is based on the investigation into accessible information resources. This includes collecting data from experts in ethnic groups. The data are viewed from information scientist perspective, meaning that the author did not use in-depth study approach in the studied areas. For example, disguise oneself in order to observe or physically involve or participate in the community, which are the approaches mostly employed in the discipline of anthropology and sociology in their studies.

Body of knowledge gained from this research would somehow change the course of the past knowledge in information science discipline which focuses on location where information resource items are placed; for instance, DDC and LC classification systems. The outcome of the research may as well pose some influence on 'Thesaurus' system which only stresses on organization of collection of books and information resources kept in the library to provide access to users who which to use certain resources in the library. Yet, this study dived deeper into the contents on knowledge ethnic group possessed. This has results in a tool which capable of getting actual access to the content of the searched topic, not just list of information resource items kept in the library.

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13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

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Naga Art in Buddhist Temples of Mueang Chiang Mai District

Chang, Ya-Liang

Department of Southeast Asian Studies
National Chi Nan University
Taiwan

Abstract

Chiang Mai was the capital of the Lanna Kingdom from the 13th century, the city has many important Buddhist temples. This study involved field research, recording Naga arts in 34 Buddhist temples of the Mueang Chiang Mai District. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the characteristics of Naga art in northern Thailand. The results of this research are as follows: (a) in terms of motifs, the mom om nak motif is the most important characteristic of Naga art in northern Thailand; (b) in terms of shape elements, the Naga stair works of various historical periods represent different technical methods involving materials, shapes, lines, and colors, with the most obvious difference being the crest design; and (c) in terms of features, Naga works with horns and the use of the Lanna painting pattern in the chest pattern are unique in Northern Thailand. To sum up, the main characteristic of Naga art of northern Thailand was influenced by Lanna culture, as revealed by their motifs, shapes, patterns, etc.

Keywords: Buddhist art, Chiang Mai, Naga

Introduction

“Naga art” refers to the Naga-themed art forms that make use of materials such as clay, plaster, wood, gold, silver, or copper, which can often be molded in three dimensions. Although Naga art is popular in Thailand, Burma, Laos, Cambodia, etc., little research has been conducted on it. However, over the last decade, the Naga has gradually become a subject of research. The Naga is also important for Lanna culture. Lanna in northern Thailand, also known as the ancient Lanna Kingdom (13–20 A.D.), was not a country with sharply defined borders but rather a group of city-states that were ruled directly by Chiang Mai and its administration (Penth, 2004, p.81). The Lanna Kingdom was founded in the 13th century. Its first king, King Mangrai, chose Chiang Mai to be the capital of the Lanna Kingdom in 1296 A.D. There are many versions of Lanna's historical periods, such as those described by Wyatt (2003), Penth (2004) and the Chiang Mai National Museum. Generally speaking, the history of Lanna can be divided into four periods: the Lanna Kingdom (about 1259–1564 A.D.), Lanna under the ruling of Burma (about 1564–1774 A.D.), Chiang Mai Dynasty (about 1775–1939 A.D.), and Thailand Administration (1939–present A.D.) (Wyatt, 2003, pp.310–311).

The main religion of the Lanna Kingdom is Buddhism. Buddhist temples are important places for

observing Buddhist art. Chiang Mai has been the capital of Lanna for centuries, so the city has many important Buddhist temples. According to the data of the National Office of Buddhism, Chiang Mai has the highest number of Buddhist temples in northern Thailand, including those from the four historical Lanna periods. Additionally, more than 60% of the ancient temples built before the 17th century are preserved in Chiang Mai City (National Office of Buddhism, 2016). Therefore, research on Chiang Mai City can provide a representative understanding of Lanna art. The Mueang Chiang Mai District has 16 administrative regions and 122 Buddhist temples (Chiang Mai Municipality, 2016; National Office of Buddhism, 2016). The author travelled through the Mueang Chiang Mai District from October to November, 2015, and conducted field research, which included recording the instances of Naga arts in 34 Buddhist temples in Chiang Mai's old city (เมืองเก่าเชียงใหม่). The Buddhist temples of Thailand contain many buildings. This study focuses on the Buddha image halls (วิหาร, vihar). For basic information about temples, refer to Appendix 1.

The biggest limitation of this study is that the time of production of the Naga works is not certain, because they were not part of the main body of the temples. Moreover, since they were outside the main temple, they were not protected. Since many existing Naga works in ancient temples have been repaired, reconstructed, or remade, this study only lists the years when temples were built as a reference in Appendix 1. However, the methods of creating Naga art had fixed production modes. Though we cannot identify the date of manufacture of the Naga works, we can still explore Naga art works of different historical periods.

Literature Review

1.1 Where Did the Naga of Thailand Come From?

Where did the Naga of Thailand come from? Generally speaking, there are two schools of thought about the origin of the Naga: the Indianized school and the local school. The Indianized school suggests that the Naga came from Indian mythology, as argued by the following scholars: Sasanka Sekhar Panda (2004), Sumet Jumsai (1997), Siripot Laomanajarern (2003), and Ngaosrivathana and Ngaosrivathana (2009). Several studies in various disciplines have noted Thai-Indian cultural linkages through the Naga. Panda (2004) discusses Naga images in Indian literature and Naga sculptures in Indian temples as examples, and describes how Nagas have been presented in Indian culture through various forms, including the snake, half-human half-snake, and human images. From Panda's study, we know that the images of India's Nagas have the following characteristics: Nagas are the leaders of the oceans, live under the earth, bear a jewel on their heads, and some have an odd number (such as 3,5,7,9) of serpent hoods above their head (Panda, 2004, pp.17-18). The Indian Nagas are similar to those in Thailand. Because the Indian Naga appeared earlier, the Indianized school suggests that the prototype of Thailand's Naga came from India. However, the local school stresses indigenous serpent worship of Southeast Asia, and notes that serpent worship probably existed before Brahmanism and Theravada Buddhism came into Southeast Asia. Wongthes (2003, p.1) takes as evidence snake-wrapped graphics of archaeological artifacts, such as those at Ban Chiang, Udon Thani Province and Ban Kao, Kanchana Buri Province as evidence that serpent worship probably existed in prehistoric times in Southeast Asia. Wongthes explains, "Indigenous serpent

worship existed when Brahmanism and Theravada Buddhism came into Southeast Asia. Later, serpent worship combined with Indian religions and was transformed into new beliefs” (Wongthes, 2003, pp.5-6). Another proponent of the local school is Phan Anh Tu, who observes that serpent stories were very popular among the various ethnic groups in Thailand, Burma, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. That is, indigenous serpent worship has long existed in Southeast Asia. Buddhism peacefully fused with indigenous animism, integrated serpent worship and transformed it into Naga beliefs (Phan, 2007, p.2, 17). Yen (2005, pp.17-18) mentions Dvaravati (สมัยทวารวดี) as possibly the first area where Buddha appears in Southeast Asia in the mudra of Pang Nak Prok (ปางนาคปรก), that is, seated in meditation upon a coiled Naga whose hood protects him from the rain. This posture could relate to serpent worship at that time.

As mentioned above, Thailand’s Naga developed out of multiple sources, and is not fully Indianized. It must be noted that although the prototype of the Thai Naga comes from India, indigenous serpent worship has also long been present in Southeast Asia. Simply stated, Buddhism integrated serpent worship and transformed it into Naga belief. For example, Virapaksa (ท้าววิรุฬหก), one of the four great kings in Buddhism, was the leader of Nagas (Ngaosrivathana & Ngaosrivathana, 2009, p.1; Brahmagunabhorn, 2014, p.199; Laomanajarern, 2003, p.152).

1.2 Diversity of Naga Images

The word “Naga” came from Sanskrit and various dialects led to changes of the pronunciation of “Naga”. For example, the pronunciations *Ngan*, *Ngua*, *Nam Ngu Ak-ngu*, and *Namngum* can be found in Thailand and Laos (Ngaosrivathana & Ngaosrivathana, 2009, p.6). Nagas have a variety of images, such as the water Naga in Ahom, crocodile in Shan, water snake in White T’ai, dragon in Pa-yi, and serpent in Siamese (Davis, 1984, p.212). Therefore, the names, pronunciations and images of Nagas vary in different areas.

1.3 Naga Art Researches

The last decade has seen more research of Naga in Thailand. In Thai temple architectural ornaments, Naga art usually appears on gable boards, *hanghong*, temple roofs, brackets, stairs, etc. (fig. 1), but the data on Naga stairs is the largest, compared to data on other kinds of art works. Naga research has mainly focused on comparison of buildings, art history and case studies. However, few studies have discussed the characteristics of Naga art in particular regions.

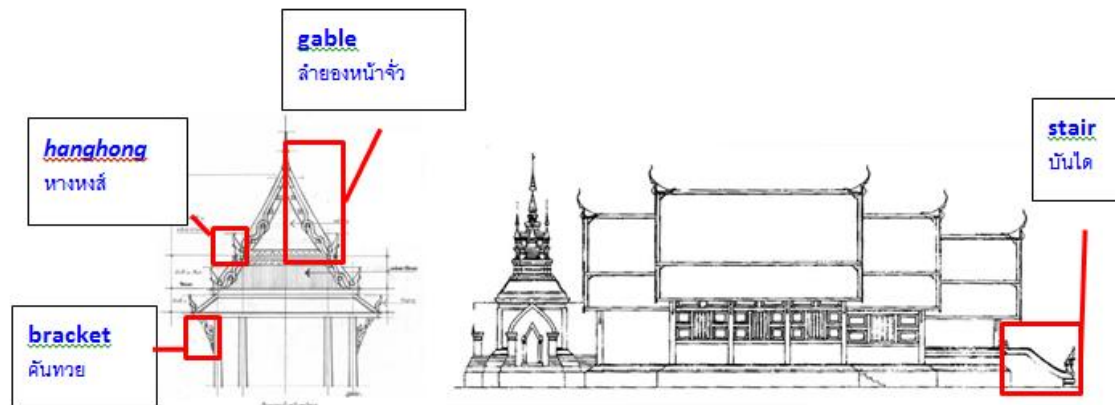


Figure 1: Naga in Thai temple architectural ornaments
 Reference source: The Royal Institute, 2007, p.523; Boonyasurat, 2000, p.192.

Naga art research in northern Thailand includes investigations of Pritasuwan (2014) in Nan Province and Phutamart (2013) in Lampang Province. These studies drew the following conclusions: (a) the Nagas usually appeared on gable boards, *hanghong*, along the tiers of temple roofs, on arches and stairs leading to the main shrine, and in temple architectural ornaments of northern Thailand (Phutamart, 2013: 5-6, 13), and (b) the basic features of the Naga comprised a snake's body, big eyes, and fish-like fins (Pritasuwan, 2014, p.3). Although Pritasuwan and Phutamart studied the Naga art of northern Thailand, relevant discussions on, for example, the relationship between the Naga and other mythological animals, have not been explored. Several mythological animals are similar to the Naga, including the *Makara* (มกร), *Hera* (เหรา), and dragon. If we want to study the various kinds of mythological animals, we can analyze the shapes, accessories, motifs, location, and the whole context of the art work. What is the relationship between the Naga and these mythological animals? Are there any special explanations of the shapes of these mythological animals? In fact, the most important characteristic style of Naga art in northern Thailand is the mom om nak motif (มอมอมนาค, fig. 2), depicting the Naga emanating from another mythological animal's mouth. Most of the Lanna people call the other mythological animal "Mom" (มอม). Mom is unique to northern Thailand. A few people also call this creature "Makara." However, neither Pritasuwan nor Phutamart mentioned this important mythological animal in their research.

As mentioned above, there are still several issues worth discussing, such as the relationship between the Naga and other mythological animals and the characteristics of Naga art in northern Thailand. Thus, these issues are the focal points of this study.



*Figure 2: Mom om nak motif, Wat Panping, Mueang Chiang Mai District.
Reference source: author unknown, age unknown, mixed material, photo by the author.*

1.4 Thai Painting Pattern

The Thai painting/line pattern (ลายไทย) makes use of curved lines and complex but symmetrical features. In describing the Thai painting pattern, Changchaya (2002, p.48) said: "It is a kind of soft line design, shown in a variety of technological designs." Changchaya explained it as a feature of Thai culture, depicted not only in paintings, but also in architecture, sculptures, embroidery, and other art works (2002, p.45). In fact, the prototype of the Thai painting pattern came from India. The ancient Thai accepted Indian Buddhism thousands of years ago, and assimilated the ancient Indian design style. Later, the Thai painting pattern was further developed and refined. Different styles were formed in the eras of Thailand's history. The Thai painting pattern is inspired by aspects of nature, such as flowers, waves, flames, and rice, and natural shapes develop into complex symmetrical patterns (Changchaya, 2002, p.37, 46). Clear norms appear in the Thai painting pattern with different materials and positioning. In the case of the Naga, craftsmen drew different Thai painting patterns according to the positions of Naga bodies, such as by drawing the head with the kanok pattern (ลายกนก, lai kano) or the chest with the prachamyam pattern (ลายประจักษ์, lai prachamyam). Most craftsmen complied with the norms of the Thai painting pattern. The Thai painting pattern is thus an important reference while observing Naga art.

Results

The research focused on Naga stairs due to Naga stairs is the largest, compared to data on other kinds of Naga art works. This study investigated Naga arts in 34 Buddhist temples of the Mueang Chiang Mai District and collected records on 29 Naga stair works to analyze the contents of the works. We analyzed elements including colors, motifs, crest shapes, number of heads, design lines, materials, body shapes, facial expressions, and patterns. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 1, which reveals several interesting points:

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Table 1: Elemental analysis of 29 Naga-ladder works

Element of Naga art Temple	motif	Crest shape	Number of heads	Head and body lines do or not form a line	Design focuses on the first half of the body	Does or does not use glass material	Does or does not have horns	Body shape is wavy	Have the chest pattern or not	Tail does or does not follow the Thai painting pattern
Wat Chedi Luang	N1	A	5	✓	✓	×	×	×	×	×
Wat Pra Singh	N1	B	1	✓	✓	×	✓	×	✓	×
Wat Phan Tao	N2	B	1	✓	✓	×	✓	×	✓	×
Wat Prasat	N2	B	1	✓	×	×	♂♀	×	✓	×
Wat Lam Chang	N1	C	1	×	×	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Wat Chiang Mun	N1	C	1	✓	×	×	×	✓	×	✓
Wat Pra Singh	N1	C	1	×	×	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Wat Chedi Luang	N1	C	1	✓	×	✓	✓	×	✓	×
Wat Phra That Doi Suthep	N1	C	7	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
Wat Rajamontean	N2	C	1	✓	×	×	×	✓	✓	×
Wat Muen Larn	N1	C	1	✓	×	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Wat Mor Kham Tuang	N1	C	1	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wat Panping	N1	C	1	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wat Fon Soi	N1	C	1	✓	×	✓	×	✓	✓	×
Wat Khuankha Ma	N1	C	1	✓	×	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Wat Pouck Chang	N3	C	1	✓	×	✓	♂♀	✓	✓	×
Wat Pouck Chang	N3	--	1	✓	×	×	×	×	✓	×
Wat Puag Taem	N1	C	1	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
Wat Saen MuangMa Luang	N3	C	1	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wat ChaiPhraKiat	N1	C	1	×	×	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Wat Sumpow	N1	C	1	×	×	✓	×	✓	✓	×
Wat Tung Yu	N1	C	1	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
Wat Saenfang	N1	C	1	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wat Dab Phai	N1	C	1	✓	×	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Wat Chang Taem	N1	C	1	×	×	✓	♂♀	✓	✓	×
Wat Upakut	N1	C	1	×	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	×
Wat Srikoed	N1	C	1	✓	×	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wat Phakhao	N1	C	1	✓	×	✓	×	✓	✓	✓
Wat Inthakhin	N2	C	1	×	×	✓	♂♀	×	✓	×

Meaning of symbols: 1. N1: mom om nak shape; N2: Naga shape; N3: mixed shape.

2. A: shield-shaped crest; B: acute angle triangle shaped crest; C: curved conical shaped crest.

3. ♂♀: Nagas are divided into male and female.

4. ✓: yes; ×: no.

5. --: *Elephant head, no crest; Reference source: collated by the author.*

2.1 The Characteristics of Naga Art in Northern Thailand

Table 1 shows that, in all historical periods, the mom om nak shape (N1, 22 pieces) accounted for 75% of the content; hence, the most important characteristic of Naga art is the mom om nak motif in northern Thailand. In addition, the number of single-head Nagas was the largest (27 pieces). The results of this survey are the same as those of Pritasuwan. However, the most important characteristic, the mom om nak motif, was not mentioned in Pritasuwan's research.

2.2 More Than Half of Naga Works Have Horns on the Heads

Nagas with horns on their heads accounted for over 50% (16 pieces) of all the works, while four pieces were categorized as male and female; the male nagas with horns were placed on the right side of the door and the female nagas with no horns were placed on the left side. The main image of Thai Nagas comes from Thai literature, especially the Himmapan forest (ป่าหิมพานต์). In the concept of the three worlds (ไตรภูมิ), people believe that the Himmapan forest is located at the foothills of the Sumi Mountain. A variety of magic animals reside there, and the Naga is one of them. According to this concept of the Thai people, the Naga image is that of a serpent with a crest (หงอน) (Phlainoi, 2009: 202). In other words, it is generally believed that a Naga does not have horns on its head. However, some Nagas have not only horns, but are also depicted as male and female in Chiang Mai temples. This distinction reveals a local feature of Naga art in northern Thailand.

2.3 Analyses of Naga Works

Although this article does not identify the manufacturing time of the Naga works, we still analyze them based on various elements such as the crests, materials, colors, patterns, and lines. Among the abovementioned elements, the most important is the Naga's crest, which is also its most distinctive characteristic, when compared with those of other mythological animals. Therefore, in Table 1, the crest shapes are divided into three types: shield, acute triangle, and curved conical-shaped, as shown below.

2.3.1 Shield-Shaped Crest (Table 1, type A)

The shield-shaped Naga crest works (Table 1, the short form is "type A") include those found on the Naga stairs of Wat Chedi Luang (see fig. 3), which are the oldest and largest Naga stairs in Chiang Mai's old city. The temple building is already more than six hundred years old. This kind of Naga has a shield-shaped crest, with a ferocious expression and complex patterns on the crest that are divided into several areas by straight lines. Different engraved patterns appear on each area of the crest, including whole flowers and ancient designs. Other features are the simple shape, monochrome, stone material with no glass, and a tail without the Thai painting pattern. Moreover, the design is focused on the front half of the body. Overall, these Naga bodies do not appear wavy, and the head-body lines look like straight lines.



Figure 3: The shield-shaped crest Naga work, at Wat Chedi Luang; Reference source: author unknown, built age about A.D.1370-1411, stone material, photo by the author, Mueang Chiang Mai District.

2.3.2 Acute Angle Triangle–Shaped Crest (Table 1, type B)

The acute angle triangle–shaped Naga crest works (Table 1, the short form is “type B”) are similar to type A Naga works. This kind of Naga has an acute angle triangle–shaped crest and a mellow expression. The patterns on the crest are divided into several areas by straight lines, with different patterns engraved on each area. The tail is curved into a hill shape (see fig. 4). Other features are similar to type A Naga works: simple shape, monochrome, stone material with no glass, a tail without the Thai painting pattern, and designs focused on the front half of the body. Overall, these Naga bodies do not appear wavy, and the head-body lines look like straight lines.



Figure 4: The acute angle triangle shaped crest Naga works, at Wat Prasat; Reference source: author unknown, age unknown, stone material, photo by the author, Mueang Chiang Mai District.

2.3.3 Curved Conical-Shaped Crest (Table 1, type C)

The curved conical-shaped Naga crest works (Table 1, the short form is “type C”) are clearly different from type A and type B works. The features of type C Naga works include the use of the Thai painting pattern, colored glass, and large curved lines. The crest of type C Naga works is usually sharp and thin, like a flame extending upward (see fig. 5). The crest is divided into several areas by straight lines, and engraved with different patterns on each area. However, the pattern changes are less noticeable than in the above two kinds of works. In particular, the Thai painting pattern covered almost the whole body, including the crest, mouth, body parts, scales, and tail. Overall, these Naga bodies appear wavy, and the head-body lines do not look like straight lines.



*Figure 5: The Curved conical shaped crest Naga works, at Wat Chang Taem
Reference source: author unknown, built age about A.D.2008, mixed material, photo by the author,
Mueang Chiang Mai District.*

The above three types of Naga works from different historical periods represent different technical methods involving materials, shapes, lines, and colors (Table 2). These elements are summarized as follows:

(1) Material

The materials used in the three types of works are different. The use of glass and cement are important clues to distinguish the types of Naga works. As shown in Table 1, although the time of production of type A and type B Naga works is not accurate, they can both be considered to be ancient works since they do not use glass material. Their main material is stone, which is hard, unlike cement, so type A and type B Naga works do not appear wavy. They are different from type C works, which use mostly glass and cement. The shapes of type C works are therefore obviously different from the first two categories.

(2) Shape

With regard to the “shape,” the biggest difference between the three types of Naga works is the change from straight lines to curved lines, that is, the use of the Thai painting pattern. In Naga art, the crest,

body, and tail are key parts that show the shape, especially the crest pattern. Type A and type B Naga works have single, fixed design patterns, but not Thai painting patterns. Hence, they do not appear wavy, and the head-body lines appear to be straight lines. In contrast, type C works are made in accordance with the Thai painting pattern, and both the body and head-body lines are curved.

(3) Line

Line patterns, density, and design positions are the focus when observing the lines. The shape of type A works are simple and the designs focus on the front half of the body, which has high-density lines and different patterns on the shield-shaped crest. Type B works are similar to type A, but the obvious difference is the tail shape. The tails of type B works are usually curved into a hill shape, with patterns engraved on it. Type C is different from the previous two types because the Thai painting pattern is used and the whole body is covered with curved lines.

(4) Color

In terms of “color,” the biggest difference between the three types is the change from monochrome to color. Type A and type B Naga works are stone materials, so the works are mostly monochrome. However, most Type C Naga works are colorful, owing to the use of colored glass, chemical pigments, and so on.

Table 2: Comparing the three types of Naga works; Reference source: collated by the author.

Type Element	Type A	Type B	Type C
Material	Main material is stone.	Main material is stone.	Most works use glass and cement.
Shape	The Naga body does not appear wavy, and the head-body lines look like a straight line.	Most Naga bodies do not appear wavy, and the head-body lines look like a straight line.	Most works use the Thai painting pattern, so both the bodies and the head-body lines are usually curved.
Line	The work is simple and the designs focus on the front half of the body.	Most works are simple and the designs focus on the front half of the body. The tails are usually curved into a hill shape.	The entire bodies of most works are covered with curves.
Color	The work is monochrome.	Most works are monochrome.	Most works are colorful.

2.4 The Chest Pattern

The Buddhist art of northern Thailand is influenced by Buddhist literature. Therefore, Buddhist thought is the basis of Buddhist art. Most Naga art works are based on the Tripitaka. The Tripitaka tells us that the Nagas wore Kaeo Mani (แก้วมณี) on their necks. This has become the main feature of Naga art design in northern Thailand. As shown in Table 1, 90% (27 pieces) of Naga works have a chest pattern. Different places have different views about whether this chest pattern represents Kaeo Mani or not. However, northern Thailand artisans deliberately enhance the chest pattern design to make it bright and dazzling. The diamond-shaped chest pattern appears in most Nagas of northern Thailand and resembles a bead on a cross, carved in the chest. The center of most chest patterns is circular, embellished by colorful glass to increase its brightness. In addition, the chest pattern particularly stresses curved lines. The locals call this the “Lanna painting pattern” (ลายล้านนา, lai lanna, fig. 6). This pattern is somewhat different from the Thai painting pattern.



*Figure 6: The chest pattern of Naga, at Wat Chedi Luang
Reference source: author unknown, age unknown, mixed material,
photo by the author, Mueang Chiang Mai District.*

To sum up, the characteristics of Naga art in northern Thailand are as follows:

1. In term of motifs, the *mom om nak* motif is the most important characteristic of Naga art in northern Thailand.
2. In terms of shape elements, the Naga stair works from various historical periods exhibit different technical methods involving materials, shape, lines, and colors. The most obvious difference lies in the crest designs.
3. In terms of features, Naga works with horns and chest patterns that make use of the Lanna painting pattern are unique in Northern Thailand.

Discussion

3.1 The Relationship between Lanna and Chinese Cultures

More than half of all Naga works have horns on the heads, which may be related to China's "dragon" culture, for the following reasons:

3.1.1 Interregional Cultural Communication

The Lanna Kingdom in Chinese history is known as the Eight Hundred Daughter-in-Law Kingdom (History of the Yuan, 1981, p.720). The large area of ancient Lanna, Chiang Hung (in Xishuangbanna, China), and Chiang Tung (in Myanmar) is referred to as "the cultural area of *tham* letters (or Buddhist script)" (Kang, 2009, p.19; Penth, 2004, pp.58–59) and as "Great Lanna" (Grabowsky, 2005, p.3). The ethnic groups, languages, and religions of this region have engaged in interregional cultural communication since ancient times. According to the record of Wat Panping in the Mueang Chiang Mai District, Chinese bricks, the temple's building materials, came from Yunnan, indicating that the ancient Lanna and Yunnan had been engaging in interregional cultural communication for a long time. The cultural communication of artisans and monks was common in the Great Lanna area, and therefore the shape of the dragon's horns could have been brought into Lanna through cultural communication, influencing the Naga shape.

3.1.2 The Evidence of the Twelve-Year Animal Cycle

The Lanna Twelve-Year Animal Cycle originated in India, but was also influenced by Chinese culture (Conway, 2014, pp.27–28). The Naga is fifth in the Lanna Twelve-Year Animal Cycle. In it, the Naga is referred to as *marong* (มะร็อง), which is neither from the Thai (มังกร) nor the Lanna dialects (นั้), but is similar to the pronunciation of the Chinese "long" (龍). Obviously, *marong* is a loanword. In the Thai language, loanwords usually retain the original sound, so *marong* likely came from the Chinese "long" sound. If that is the case, the image of the Chinese dragon might also have been imported from China into Lanna. This could be why most Naga works have horns on the heads.

In summary, Naga works have horns on the heads, which may be related to China's "dragon" culture and may have been imported through cultural communication between Lanna and China. Over a long period of time, the horns became the local characteristic of Lanna.

3.2 Influenced of Lanna Culture on Lanna Naga Art

The most important characteristic of Naga art in northern Thailand is the *mom om nak* motif, which depicts the Naga emanating from another mythological animal's mouth. Since most Lanna people call this mythological animal "*Mom*," it implies that *Mom* is local. In other words, *Mom* is *Mom* in Lanna, not the snake or dragon of China or the *Makara* of Indian mythology. *Mom* implies a local meaning and could point to the influence of Lanna culture on Lanna Naga art. In addition, the Lanna painting pattern belongs to Lanna culture. So, Naga art of northern Thailand were influenced by Lanna culture, as revealed by their motifs (such as *mom om nak*), shapes (such as Naga works with horns on the heads) and patterns (such as the Lanna painting pattern).

Conclusion

Designs of Buddhist temples in Thailand are based on Buddhist doctrine, mythology, and symbols. Nagas protect the Triratna, which is symbolically very significant in Theravada Buddhism. Therefore, Naga arts are seen particularly in the architectural decorations and ornaments of Buddhist temples. This paper analyzed Naga art in 34 Buddhist temples of the Mueang Chiang Mai District to explore its characteristics in greater detail. The results of this research are as follows: (a) in terms of motifs, the *mom om nak* motif is the most important characteristic of Naga art in northern Thailand; (b) in terms of shape elements, the Naga stair works of various historical periods represent different technical methods involving materials, shapes, lines, and colors, with the most obvious difference being the crest design; and (c) in terms of features, Naga works with horns and the use of the Lanna painting pattern in the chest pattern are unique in Northern Thailand. To sum up, the main characteristic of Naga art of northern Thailand was influenced by Lanna culture, as revealed by their motifs, shapes, patterns, etc.

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13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Appendix 1. Basic information of 34 temples in Mueang Chiang Mai District

Name of the temple	Year of building (A.D.)	Administrative area (ตำบล)
Wat Lam Chang	1296	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Chieng Mun	1296	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Umong	1367	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Duang Dee	1367	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Pra Singh	1377	พระสิงห์
Wat Chedi Luang	1411	พระสิงห์
Wat Phra That Doi Suthep	1419	สุเทพ
Wat Rajamontean	1431	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Muen Larn	1462	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Phan Tao	1467	พระสิงห์
Wat Mor Kham Tuang	1476	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Mondom	1478	พระสิงห์
Wat Panping	1482	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Fon Soi	1488	พระสิงห์
Wat Phabong	1492	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Prasat	1492	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Khuankha Ma	1492	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Pouck Chang	1497	หายยา
Wat Phan On	1501	พระสิงห์
Wat Puag Hong	1517	พระสิงห์
Wat Puag Taem	1517	พระสิงห์
Wat Saen Muang Ma Luang	1520	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Chai Phra Kiat	1545	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Sumpow	1570	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Tung Yu	1576	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Saenfang	1576	ช้างม่วย
Wat Dab Phai	1577	ศรีภูมิ
Wat Chang Taem	1757	พระสิงห์
Wat Upakut	1757	ช้างคลาน
Wat Srikoed	1796	พระสิงห์
Wat Phakhao	1848	พระสิงห์
Wat Cheatawan	1897	ช้างม่วย
Wat Jedlin	2004	พระสิงห์
Wat Inthakhin	2007	ศรีภูมิ

Reference source: collated by the author.

Influencing Factors towards Thai Adolescents' Decision Making on Contraceptive Use: Preliminary Results

Chanthasukh, Sansanee

Auckland University of Technology, Auckland
New Zealand

Sirindhorn College of Public Health, Khon Kaen
Thailand

Andajani, Sari

Fairbairn-Dunlop, Tagaloatele Peggy

Auckland University of Technology, Auckland
New Zealand

Abstract

Adolescent pregnancy has been a critical public health problem in Thailand since 2008. Contraceptive methods become a medical strategy to prevent unplanned pregnancies. Studies illustrate that contraceptive use rate among sexually active Thai adolescents, compared to adults, is relatively low. Studies also show that decisions on contraceptive use could be influenced by several factors. However, little is known what influence Thai adolescents' decision about contraceptive use. This qualitative study aims to explore influencing factors.

The researchers purposively recruited 38 adolescents aged 15–19 years from two schools in an urban area of Khon Kaen. Of 38 participants, 29 participated in five single-gender discussion groups. Discussion group participants were subsequently invited to in-depth interviews, and 11 of them responded. Other 9 participants were in in-depth interviews but did not join group discussions. Data collection was partially facilitated by a local youth advisory group. Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data.

Preliminary findings illustrate that fear associated with pregnancy steered young people to choose to use some kind of contraceptive method. Their fears originated from fear of negative consequences of pregnancy on parents; fear of physical and socio-economic difficulties to self; and fear of being unable to fulfill cultural expectations as the first female child in the family. Fears of HIV/AIDs and side effects of contraceptive pills led some sexually active participants to favor condoms. Female negotiation skills and seniority of the female in a relationship were likely to affect the decision to adopt condoms. Interestingly for one female participant, complicating factors consisted of cohabitation, male preference for contraceptive methods, and an allergy to hormone pills.

Based on preliminary results, numerous factors could influence Thai adolescents to choose certain kinds of contraceptive methods. To tackle sexual and reproductive health problems including adolescent pregnancy, these complex influencing factors should be considered thoroughly.

Keywords: decision making, contraceptive use, Thailand, influencing factors, adolescents

Introduction

Pregnancy and complications in childbearing are the second leading cause of death worldwide for adolescent girls aged 15–19 years (World Health Organization, 2015). Pregnancy during adolescence can place girls at increased risk of serious on-going health issues and death. Pregnant girls have a higher risk of mental health problems such as depression, compared to pregnant women of other age groups (Siegel & Brandon, 2014). They drop out of school, rarely return to school and are likely to end up in low-paid work (World Health Organization, 2012a). Studies have shown that they and their children struggle with social and financial problems and need additional provisions such as social support, healthcare subsidies and child welfare aid, which cost their families, communities and states must meet (Hoffman, 2006; World Health Organization, 2012a).

Adolescent pregnancy has become a global health dilemma. Globally, a total of 16 million adolescents aged 15–19 years give birth each year (United Nations Children's Fund, 2012; World Health Organization, 2012a). The global adolescent birth rate is currently at 49 per 1,000 female adolescents (World Health Organization, 2012a). Thailand, a country located in the Indochinese Peninsula, has also been confronted with adolescent pregnancy problems. In Thailand, the adolescent birth rate was 48 in 2015, just below the world average (Ministry of Public Health, 2012; United Nations Children's Fund, 2015b). Moreover, 70% of adolescent pregnancies in Thailand are unwanted (Hemachandra, Rungruxsirivorn, Taneepanichskul, & Pruksananonda, 2012).

Unfortunately, the severity of the problem in Thailand could remain underreported, because the number of miscarriages and illegal abortions has never been recorded. Tangmunkongvorakul, Banwell, Carmichael, Utomo, and Sleigh (2011) have reported that adolescent participants in their study may have sought to terminate unwanted pregnancies by taking abortifacient agents bought from the black market. In addition, approximately 90% of participants (aged 15–21 years) in another study sought illegal abortions (Manopaiboon et al., 2003).

Contraceptive use is a significant determinant of adolescent pregnancy worldwide (World Health Organization, 2012b). Contraceptive methods are techniques or devices mostly used in family planning programmes for individuals or couples to control the number, birth interval and dates of birth of children (World Health Organization, 2014). In the absence of effective contraceptive methods, unprotected sex has the potential to place adolescents at risk of unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion or other sexual and reproductive health problems (World Health Organization, 2012a).

Globally, adolescents aged 15–19 years have low rates of contraceptive use and high failure rates. Global contraceptive use among adolescents aged 15–19 years sits at 21%, compared to 38%, 52% and >60% among those aged 20–24, 25–29, and 30–44 years, respectively (United Nations Population Fund, 2013). Approximately 25% of adolescents (aged 15–19 years), mostly unmarried, do not want unplanned children, but they still do not use contraceptive methods (Blanc, Tsui, Croft, & Trevitt, 2009; Chandra-Mouli, McCarraher, Phillips, Williamson, & Hainsworth, 2014; United Nations Population Fund, 2013). In Thailand, contraceptive use among the larger group of females at reproductive age (15–49 years) is approximately 80%, whereas this rate is <75% among those aged 15–19 years (Ministry of Public Health, 2013). According to the Ministry of Public Health (Thailand), oral contraceptive pills, a modern

method, are widely used among female adolescents aged 15–19 years. Adolescents also tend to use traditional methods including withdrawal and abstinence, more than those aged 30–49 years (Ministry of Public Health, 2013).

Decisions about contraceptive use have potentially large impacts on the lives of the person using the contraceptive method and others close to them. A decision to use contraception may reduce female adolescents' health risks associated with unwanted pregnancy, and its social and financial consequences. According to the United Nations Population Fund (2006), females' decisions about sexual and reproductive health, including contraceptive use, can influence on not only own health and wellbeing, but also that of others in the family, community and even nation.

Hemachandra et al. (2012) found 60% of young Thai female respondents aged 12–19 years were the main decision makers in regards to contraceptive use, and that pills and condoms were common methods used to control birth. Hemachandra et al. (2012) also found that product-based reasons such as the effectiveness of contraceptive products, accessibility, ease of use and other users' suggestions affected users' decisions. Outside Thailand, Commendador (2003), Daley (2014) and Ogden (2012) proposed several other, less tangible but equally relevant factors influencing individuals' decision making on contraceptive use, including individuals' knowledge of contraception; gender roles and social expectations; religious beliefs; partners', peers' and parents' influence; accessibility to contraceptive methods/services; and laws/regulations on sexual and reproductive health and rights. However, none of these studies included Thai subjects. In Thailand, little is known about the primary factors influencing adolescents' decisions about contraceptives. In order to address adolescent pregnancy problems in Thailand and to increase the effectiveness of programmes that promote contraceptive use, our study aims to explore key influencing factors.

Methodology

To develop an in-depth understanding of which key factors most influence Thai adolescents' decisions about contraceptive use, we used a qualitative research approach. This qualitative approach is appropriate to gain in-depth knowledge of sensitive and taboo topics including sexual and reproductive health and contraceptive use (Allsop, 2013; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2013; Liamputtong, 2007).

Focus group discussion and in-depth interview methods were employed as the main data collection methods, from September 2015–January 2016 in Khon Kaen, a province in the northeast of Thailand (known as Isaan). Khon Kaen was purposively selected as it had the second highest number of births to adolescent mothers nationwide in 2012, and the highest rate within Isaan in 2015 (Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, 2012, 2015).

This study was approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTC) and met the requirements of the Ethics Committee of Sirindhorn College of Public Health in Khon Kaen. A total of four adolescents aged 15–18 years, from the Thai community in Auckland, were invited to pilot test research methodology and interview guidelines. Subsequently, eight more local Khon Kaen Thai youths and peer supporters were approached via the Office of Human Development and Security in Khon Kaen to form a local youth advisory group to help formulate the research process, research instruments and a recruitment plan. Five out of these eight youths then were trained to be facilitators for the focus group

discussion sessions.

The first author (Sansanee Chanthasukh), who was born and bred in Isaan and who speaks fluent Isaan dialect, approached a local secondary school and a vocational college to recruit subjects. Through her networks, she was introduced to a teacher from another secondary school, which led to a visit to the school leaders to introduce the study and to invite participation. Official letters, including the approval from AUTC and participant information sheets, were presented to school officials during this first introductory visit.

Participants

A total of 38 adolescents aged 15–19 years who have been considering about contraceptive use participated in this study. Of those 38, 29 joined one of five single-gender discussion groups (Table 1). Those subjects who participated in the discussion groups were subsequently invited to in-depth interviews, and 11 participants responded. A total of nine other subjects agreed to in-depth interviews only (Table 2).

Discuss. groups	MG1	MG2	MG3	FG1	FG2
Participants (pseudonym)	8 males: James, Allan, Gice, Boom, Orm, Ben, Noot, Baan	6 males: Koko, Kim, Fluk, Bass, Arom, Niwat	4 males from MG1 (unplanned): Allan, Gice, Boom, Orm	8 females: Fon, Tien, Num, Ney, Ying, Gaew, Fern, Ice	7 females: Yim, Pew, Pang, Nug, Katang, Fang, Om-am
Age	16–19	17–18	16–19	17–18	17–18
Self-reported experiences on contraceptive use (persons)	Yes (6), No (2)	No (6)	Yes (4)	Yes (4), No (4)	Yes (1), No (6)
Studying at	Vocational college	Secondary school	Vocational college	Vocational college	Secondary school
Living with (persons)	Parents (7) GP (1)	Parents (3) mother (1) GP (1) Uncle (1)	Parents (3), GP (1)	Parents (2) BFP (1) Mother (2) GP (2) Dormitory (1)	Parents (4) father (1) mother (1) GP (1)
Group formation	The class teacher engaged in	Voluntary	Voluntary/unplanned	The class teacher engaged in	Voluntary
Ice breaking method	Self-introduction	One introduced everyone else	None	One introduced everyone else	One introduced everyone else
Materials used for discussions	Paper (drawing)	None	None	Paper (writing/drawing)	None

Table 1: Demography of discussion groups. Abbreviation: MG = male group; FG = female group; GP = grandparents; BFP = Boyfriend's parents (Note: All names are pseudonyms to protect identity)

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

Table 2: Participants in in-depth interviews

Participant	Gender	Age	Living with	Studying in	Self-reported experiences of contraceptive use	Participated in focus group discussions before
Tey	Female	16	Parents	VC	N/A	Y (FG1)
James	Male	18	Father	VC	N	Y (MG1, MG3)
Allan	Male	18	Grandparents	VC	Y	Y (MG1, MG3)
Ice	Female	17	Parents	VC	Y	Y (FG1)
Tien	Female	17	Parents	VC	Y	Y (FG1)
Fon	Female	18	Boyfriend's parents	VC	Y	Y (FG1)
Ben	Male	18	Parents	VC	Y	Y (MG1)
Noot	Male	18	Parents	VC	Y	Y (MG1)
Ney	Female	17	Parents	VC	N/A	Y (FG1)
Num	Female	17	Parents	VC	Y	Y (FG1)
Mawin	Male	18	Parents	SS	N	N
Bee	Female	18	Grandparents	SS	N	N
Bew	Female	18	Parents	SS	Y	N
Honda	Gay	18	Parents	SS	N	N
Tong	Female	18	Parents	SS	N	N
Amie	Female	18	Parents	SS	N	N
Ong	Male	18	Parents	SS	Y	N
Max	Male	18	Parents	SS	N	N
Nut	Male	17	Parents	SS	N	N
Fluk	Male	18	Mother	SS	N	Y (MG2)

Abbreviation: Y= yes, N=No, and N/A= not applicable; VC = Vocational College; SS = Secondary School; MG = male group; FG = female group (Note: All names are pseudonyms to protect identity)

Each group discussion was conducted at school as school teachers suggested. In a separated room, the discussion began with a presentation of a short story about a teenaged couple aged 15-19 years old who had been in a sexual relationship and who wanted to prevent pregnancy. This story was used to stimulate discussion on adolescents' life, courtship and their lived experiences without directly asking questions about sexual relationships and contraceptive use. When appropriate, each group was introduced to how they might use drawings, mind mapping and other methods to express their opinions and views.

In-depth interviews occurred at a place chosen by participants, but with the first author consideration as a private and secure site. The interviews lasted from 20 to 45 minutes. In order to build rapport with participants who had never been in focus groups, the first author started in-depth interviews with general questions about subjects' experiences as teenagers in urban areas, and then followed the general discussion by asking semi-structured questions. The snowballing technique was also used to invite more participants to in-depth interviews, but the technique was not successful in recruiting large numbers of participants.

Data Collection

Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were audio-recorded with participants' permission. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim in Thai by the first author. Transcriptions were sent to the participants who requested a copy of the transcription. Transcripts were read several times before codes and themes were manually generated (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and NVivo software was used to organise data. A discussion about codes and themes was held among the three authors to further explore key themes and to identify discrepancies in interpretation.

Preliminary Findings

Participants in this study described a number of contraceptive methods they used to prevent unwanted pregnancy. Commonly used methods included *tungyang* or *tung* (male condoms), *tag nok* or *lung nok* (withdrawal methods), *ya kum chug chearn* (emergency contraceptive pills), and *ya kum* (daily contraceptive pills). *Huang* (intrauterine devices) were mentioned as a contraceptive device adolescents used only after legal abortion and with parental agreement. In this paper of preliminary findings, only condoms and contraceptive pills were mentioned.

Participants indicated adolescents could access free condoms from primary care units in urban areas of Khon Kean, from nursing units at schools, at school exhibitions and during any health promotion events for youth, e.g. drug prevention, stop adolescent pregnancy, stop violence on women and girls. Participants reported that, once collected from these campaigns, free condoms were frequently handed from one friend to another. Some adolescents chose to buy condoms from 24-hour convenience stores and condom vending machines. At pharmacies, adolescents bought not only condoms but also emergency contraceptive pills and daily contraceptive pills, purchases that required neither parental consent nor prescriptions.

In the present study, influencing factors on decisions about contraceptive use are presented in eight sections: 1) fear of negative consequences of pregnancy on parents; 2) fear of physical and socio-economic difficulties to self; 3) fear of being unable to fulfil cultural expectations as the first female child in the family; 4) fear of HIV/AIDS; 5) fear of contraceptive pill side effects; 6) female negotiation skills ; 7) seniority of females in a relationship; and 8) complicated factors associated with cohabitation circumstances, in conjunction with male preferences and an allergy to hormone pills.

Fear of Negative Consequences of Pregnancy on their Parents

In both discussion groups and in-depth interviews, participants expressed the pervasive fear that getting unplanned pregnant was the primary driver of their use of some kind of contraceptive method. Such fears were prominent among females and males because an unwanted pregnancy could cause shame, embarrassment and social stigma for parents. Moreover, having a baby could bring a burden to their parents.

Fear of Bringing Shame to Parents

Most participants in this study saw sexual activities in adolescents as *tammachat* (natural), *tamamda* or *pagati* (normal), and as *raung saun tua* (a private matter). However, for a few of them, "getting pregnant

out of the wedlock” was unacceptable. Hence, as explained by Bew and Tong (all names are pseudonyms to protect true identities), two female participants, “*it is normal for teens to have sex but they have to know how not to get pregnant*”, and “*having sex is normal, but they must prevent pregnancies*”. These two statements imply that sexual relationships can be very problematic when they involve pregnancies out of wedlock. Pregnancy during the teenage years is clearly taboo, shameful and a very serious and irreversible mistake that is nearly impossible to amend.

All participants were aware of the serious consequences of getting pregnant out of wedlock. They had learned from their own personal experiences, or experiences of other adolescents surrounding them. For example, two sexually active female participants, Tien and Fon, were able to recall the treatment received by female friends who got pregnant. Tien’s and Fon’s friends were hit and scolded after disclosing their pregnancy status. Therefore, for Tien and Fon, contraceptives including condoms and pills were very important as insurance against pregnancy. A similar account was also shared by one male participant, Bass. Although Bass have never had any sexual experiences, he felt that he would insist on condoms during sexual intercourse. Fear of being hit and scolded by parents was the main reason for his decision.

Clearly, participants felt adolescent pregnancy out of wedlock damaged a family’s reputation and relationships. As such, it also affected the Thai kinship system, a family’s social status and imposed economic burdens. Getting pregnant out of wedlock was seen as a critical mistake. Punishment for making this crucial mistake, therefore, seemed to lead male and female adolescents to adopt contraceptive methods.

Fear of Burdening Parents

Parents’ duties of taking care of their children had been seen by most participants as honorable duties and hard work. Thai children are expected to show their appreciation to *bunkhun* (gratitude) of their parents, particularly to the mother (Liamputtong, Yimyam, Parisunyakul, Baosoung, & Sansiriphun, 2004). Showing their appreciation has been called as “pay back” to their parents (Liamputtong et al., 2004). As stated by Tantiwiranond (1997), sons of Thai parents could pay back their parents’ *bunkhun* by being a monk: a supreme Buddhism merit. Prohibited by Buddhism-related Thai culture, daughters could not make a supreme merit by being a monk. Instead, Thai girls are expected to look after their parents in order to reach a highest religious merit. Sons are not expected to look after the parents.

As adolescents are still financially dependent on their parents, pregnancy and an additional child require greater financial sacrifice from a family. When a girl gets pregnant or a boy impregnates his girlfriend, it means that parents of both sides are required to look after not only their own children but also their grandchildren. These circumstances make it hard for adolescents pay back *bunkhun* to their parents. It is, therefore, likely that affected adolescents feel as if they are bad children because they are unable to fulfil their religious responsibilities.

In this study, many male and female participants were concerned about burdening their parents with an unplanned pregnancy. For instance, two female participants, Bee (who had never been in any intimate relationship) and Bew (who had been sexually active), shared a similar view on not wanting to heap burdens on their parents:

No jobs, no money... teens who have a baby have nothing to raise their babies. Finally, they will go back to their parents but... this this will put parents in the way of facing more difficulties. Instead of looking after their parents, these teenagers burden them ... more and more

—Bee (female, secondary school, in-depth interview)

That is ... we are young, aren't we? If we get pregnant, we will add more burdens to our parents' life, more and more. Parents have to look after us. They have to look after our children too."

—Bew (female, secondary school, in-depth interview)

A male participant, Orm, who was studying at a vocational college, also described in group participation (MG1) his fear of burdening his parents and being unable to continue his study if he were to impregnate his girlfriend. The dialogue with the facilitator was as follows:

Orm: If [our girlfriends get pregnant], we cannot continue our study. Really, we want a good future. We have to drop out of school to look after our baby.

Facilitator: Why don't you ask your parents to look after your baby instead and continue your schooling?

Orm: It will land my parents in more difficulties. They will be very tired from looking after the baby.

Fear of Physical and Socio-economic Difficulties to Self

Of particular interest, many female participants in this study believed pregnancy was particularly hard for adolescent mothers. In contrast, none of the male participants contemplated the difficulties of being an adolescent father. In one discussion group, Ying and Fang expressed their beliefs about being a disadvantage: *"girls get pregnant, but boys can't get pregnant"*. Pregnancies were believed to pose more burdens on the adolescent mother than on the adolescent father. The mother was seen as the one who carried through her pregnancy and who endured the pain of labour, and who dropped out of school to look after her baby at home. These burdens were not shared by males.

The social and financial burdens of looking after a young infant were also of serious concern to female subjects. Fon, who had been sexually active before the study, had learned from four of her close friends and a cousin. She acknowledged that pregnancies could cause difficulties to a teen mother who was financially dependent on her parents. Fon also talked at length about the burden of motherhood, which she saw involved looking after a young infant, being sleep-deprived and constantly feeling exhausted. Fon told the following stories:

"My friends kept on complaining about not having money because they didn't work. They had no idea about how to raise children without money. I am afraid of being in this difficult situation. My cousin also got pregnant when she was 14. She gave birth to

a baby girl. I asked her about her life after she had the baby. At night she could not get enough sleep because her baby cried all night long. I think it is exhausting [local Isaan dialect]."

— Fon (female, vocational college, in-depth interview)

Num, a sexually active female participant, recalled how badly treated her pregnant friend was by local villagers. Num did not want to be in such a situation. Moreover, she did not want to be in a situation where she had to raise her baby on her own without any help from the father. Num questioned males' fidelity and willingness to take responsibility as teen dads:

Num: I heard some boys say that if they had a baby, they would raise the baby. Sometimes ... I think boys only say it to gain trust from the girlfriend ... but in reality, they won't accept that responsibility. I have seen this in many cases.

Sansanee: Where did you see it?

Num: In my village, some boys impregnated their girlfriends. Then, they started a new relationship with a new girl. I saw many people surrounding me be like this. I am afraid ... so I always insist on my boyfriend using condoms.

Fear of being in social and financial difficulties by themselves thus appears to affect female adolescents' insistence on some kind of contraceptive method. This situation could be exacerbated by a lack of involvement of male adolescents in looking after a baby born out of wedlock and a lack of companionship between male and female adolescent parents.

Fear of Being Unable to Fulfil Cultural Expectation

As mentioned in the previous section, in Thailand society, girls are raised and expected to be a caregiver for their parents. Girls are also asked to keep an eye on her younger siblings and help domestic work (Fongkaew, 2002). This is seen as a way to show their gratitude to their parents.

In interviews, Ice and Num voiced the expectations put on them as the eldest daughter in the family. Interestingly, in this study, such views were not shared by any male participants who were also the first child of the family. As shown by the interview notes below, Ice believed if she were to get pregnant, she could fail her moral and filial duties as the eldest daughter. Additionally, it is apparent Ice believed pregnancy during her adolescence could stop her from fulfilling her responsibilities as a firstborn child:

Sansanee: Apart from seeing your friend having a baby, do your parents influence you?

Ice: Parents?

Sansanee: Have your parents said anything about a girl gets pregnant out of the wedlock?

Ice: There are no words from my dad and my mum. But ... How could I

explain? I think if I get pregnant during this time ... I would ... I am the first child of my family. Do you know? My mum ... would ... kind of. I think I should not have a baby.

Sansanee: You are the eldest, aren't you? Being the eldest what is expected from you?

Ice: I think ... I must look after my mother, and my sister is very young, only 5 years old.

Num realised her parents' expectation were for her to finish studying, get a job and look after her parents and two brothers. An unplanned pregnancy during adolescence obviously hinders Thai female adolescents in fulfilling their responsibilities as a daughter (Sa-ngiamsak, 2016). Num had asked her boyfriend use condoms, and frequently, she had to force her boyfriend to use condoms.

Num: If I get pregnant, I would have to drop out of school. Kind of.

Sansanee: Drop out of school?

Num: That is, at home ... I am the eldest My parents have a lot of expectations on me ... to look after them and my two younger brothers. So, I am afraid [of getting pregnancy].

Fear of HIV/AIDS

Thailand as a nation has been confronted with HIV/AIDS for two decades. Successful interventions have reduced the annual new infection rate from 143,000 in 1991 to 10,853 in 2010 (World Health Organization, 2017). While infection rate is decreasing, the number of young people who live with HIV/AIDs is not decreasing. Approximately 9,600 adolescents in Thailand are living with HIV/AIDS, and 22% of them endure HIV/AIDS-related social discrimination (United Nations Children's Fund, 2015a).

In this study, only Gice, a male participant, stated in an unplanned discussion group his fear of sexually transmitted diseases, particularly AIDS. Interestingly, none of the female participants mentioned the fear of sexually transmitted diseases. Gice had learned about HIV/AIDS from one of the *ponggun ya saeptid* (drug abuse campaign) events when he heard a story directly from someone who was HIV positive. In the unplanned discussion group (MG3), Gice explained that HIV/AIDS was a matter of life and death and unbearable social stigma and discrimination. For him, impregnating a girl was a much less critical issue. Gice used condoms at all times when he had sex with two girlfriends because of his fear of HIV/AIDS. Gice mentioned that he was also afraid of impregnating his girlfriends. However, his fear of an unplanned pregnancy was less than that of HIV/AIDS. Although Gice's reason for using condoms was not mainly for preventing unwanted pregnancies, his decision to use condoms allowed him to gain the dual benefits of HIV/AIDS and pregnancy prevention.

Fear of Contraceptive Pill Side Effects

Many females and a few of male participants were concerned about the contraceptive pill's possible side effects on the female body. For female participants, infertility was a very threatening side-effect. Fluk, a male participant, was concerned about the dangers of taking pills but failed to explain further.

Interestingly, in relation to side effects, condoms seemed to be regarded the safest option:

“No, I won’t take any pills. I only heard things ... I don’t know if it is correct or not. That is, if we take pills for a long time, here will be drug residues in our body. These residues could make us becoming infertile. I decided not to take those pills.”

— Ice (female, vocational college, in-depth interview)

Ask females to have pills? Pills are not good ... dangerous. If a girl has to take pills for a long period of time. We boys should prevent [pregnancy by using condoms] ... We are gentlemen.”

— Fluk (male, secondary school, in-depth interview)

Being afraid of the adverse effects of contraceptive pills on female bodies might arise from lack of knowledge about how contraceptive pills work. Young people might collect contraceptive information from wholesale social rumours (‘urban myths’) or from partially informed friends or people surrounding them. However, in this study, fear of adverse effects on reproductive abilities had positive effects, leading some young female adolescents to negotiate condom use.

Female Negotiation Skills

Females’ ability to negotiate the use of condoms could be a factor influencing adolescents to use condoms to prevent unwanted pregnancy. Three female participants from the selected vocational college shared their experiences and perceptions on sexual negotiation.

Ice, a sexually active female participant, accepted that her boyfriend requested no condoms. Negotiation started with a question. She asked her boyfriend to weigh up the benefits of greater sexual pleasure and the costs (negative consequences) pregnancy would have on their future:

“I told my boyfriend that ... choose!! That [sexual pleasure] and your future!! The whole of your life? I told him like this.”

— Ice (female, vocational college, in-depth interview)

Apart from considering her future, Ice might have also been concerned about her right to control her own body, e.g., to allow or prohibit her boyfriend from using her body for his sexual pleasure. The term *mai hai* (meaning to not allow, not give) that used by Ice could reflect this consideration. Ice used the term to convince her boyfriend to use condoms when her boyfriend wanted to have sex with her. Surprisingly and similarly to Ice, a sexually non-active female participant (Tey) would say “*mai hai*” if she was asked to engage in sexual activities. Their excerpts are presented below.

If you asked me whether he used to request for no condoms or not? My answer is that yes, he used to request. But I mai hai (not give) ... If he had no condoms, no sex.

— Ice (female, vocational college, in-depth interview)

"I mai hai (will not let) him, kind of, do anything with me [my body] if he has no condoms and doesn't use condoms."

— Tey (female, vocational college, in-depth interview)

Tien, a female sexually active participant, also negotiated with her boyfriend. To convince her boyfriend to use condoms, Tien used the life-threatening event a previous pregnancy instigated, which could be clearly observed by viewing scars on her body, to convince her boyfriend. Tien had once self-attempted abortion by mixing five sachets of *Tum Jai* (containing 650 mg of aspirin per sachet) and vodka. This attempt nearly cost her life. She was admitted at an emergency unit because of severe bleeding. Tien reminded her boyfriend about the dangers of self-attempted abortion and asked him to use condoms to prevent unwanted pregnancy. She described the situation in detail.

"He knew about my self-attempted abortion and my admission [because of bleeding from taking 5 sachets of aspirin and a half glass of vodka]. He knew. he was worried, and then he used condoms."

— Tien (female, vocational college, in-depth interview)

A few male participants talked indirectly about female negotiation and condom usage. In the unplanned discussion group (MG3), Gice and Orm did not talk about negotiation and condom usage. However, their behaviour in obeying their girlfriends could be a direct result of their girlfriends' negotiation skills. Similar to three other female participants, Gice's and Orm's girlfriends used body ownership to negotiate condom use.

"I have to follow her [to use condoms]. If I didn't follow her, she wouldn't allow me to have sex with her."

— Gice (male, vocational college, MG3)

"Sometimes, I asked for no condoms. But ... she didn't agree. She didn't allow. Then, I had to use condoms."

— Orm (male, vocational college, MG3)

From the testimonies of five participants in this study, it appears that if female adolescents actively think about the right to control their own reproduction, they are likely to use body ownership to negotiate condom usage. Moreover, negotiation by using examples of the negative consequences of pregnancy on future lives could be an influencing factor dictating both female and male adolescents' decision making.

Seniority of Females in a Relationship

The implication of having older girlfriends was mentioned in a discussion group (MG3) by four boys. Two of the participants used to have sexual relationships with female partners who were two years older than them. Only one male participant, Boom, was aware of the effect of having an older girlfriend on the way decisions were made about contraceptive options. Boom would fulfil the request of his older girlfriend to use condoms without argument. Boom reasoned that his girlfriend was older than him. He, therefore, had to listen to her.

- Sansanee: Older girlfriend? How's that?*
Gice: Um ... Boom, tell her your experience.
Boom: Talked with her first. If my girlfriend told me to use condoms, I would use condoms.
Sansanee: That means she would be the one making the decision on using condoms?
Boom: Yes. But, I first asked for no condoms. If she didn't let me have sex without condoms, I would go to buy condoms at a convenience store. [I was] lazy.
Sansanee: Why did you have to do that?
Boom: I don't know. She was in the higher class. She was older than me. We have to obey Pee [the senior in age].

In in-depth interviews, three sexually active male participants (Noot, Ben and Ong) also indicated that they used to have older girlfriends (older by a couple of years). Noot and Ben expanded the conversation by explaining they were more likely to listen and followed the ideas of their older girlfriends. According to their experiences, older girlfriends were more likely to advise using condoms, to pay for emergency contraceptive pills and were likely to know more about contraceptive pills.

"Condoms, I would be a condom seeker. But the older girlfriend ... for [emergency contraceptive] pills ... She would buy them. She paid for them herself. But with a younger one ... sometimes I had to pay."

— Ben (male, vocational college, in-depth interview)

"Comparing between older and young girlfriends, the older one knows more about how to prevent unwanted pregnancy and diseases. She suggested to me to use condoms, while the younger said nothing about prevention."

— Noot (male, vocational college, in-depth interview)

Ong, a sexually active male participant from a secondary school, had a girlfriend who was only one year older than him. He had observed that having an older girlfriend had no impacts on his ability to make decisions about contraceptive use. Unfortunately, he was unable or unwilling to explain further. Possibly, the one-year age difference was too small to have an impact on contraceptive decisions.

- Sansanee: How about having the older girlfriend and contraceptive use?*
Ong: Contraceptive use?
Sansanee: I heard from someone else that he had to obey and to use condoms because his older girlfriend advised him to use condoms. How about your situation?
Ong: Um ... um ... I don't think the age seniority of her affected me. She was only one year older than me.

As described above, cultural core values in Thai society include respecting the older person (*Pee*), which could affect decision making about contraceptive use, particularly in sexual relationships with older females. Interestingly, although many sexually active male participants in this study were older than their girlfriends, they had no concern for their own seniority in regards to contraceptive decisions.

Complicating Factors Associated with Cohabitation

Cohabitation before marriage is currently seen by Thai adolescents as a normal, private matter (Ounjit, 2015), and it is highly likely among undergraduate students. According to Behera and Insomboon (2014), approximately 30% and 60% of young people aged 18–19 and 20–22 years, respectively, reported pre-marital cohabitation with their sexual partners when they moved to live in dormitories close to their university. In cohabitation circumstances, the female in a sexual relationship might attempt to behave as a good Thai wife, as Ford and Kittisukasthit (1994) found in their study, which revealed that in a pre-marital sexual cohabitation relationship, females started to follow traditional gender scripts: being passive and following the ‘husband’, the primary decision maker. Moreover, the Ford and Kittisukasthit (1994) study also showed that contraception was considered to be a female responsibility.

Most participants in this study lived with their parents or their extended family, and premarital cohabitation was unexpected to see in the group of young people in a secondary school or a vocational college. Cohabitation was mentioned in an in-depth interview by Fon, a female participant, and Noot, a male participant, both recruited from the vocational college. Because Noot did not explain his cohabitation, merely Fon’s stories are expanded here.

According to Fon, cohabitation could influence ones’ decision-making about contraception. Under cohabitation circumstances, Fon said the frequency of sexual activity was likely to increase and could happen at any time. Emergency contraceptive pills might not be the best option due to their maximum dosage per month limitation. Condoms, therefore, could be considered a better option. However, Fon did not see condoms as the best option in her circumstances. Fon had considered a couple of factors before making a decision.

Being together, I am likely to use contraceptive pills ... because we live with each other every day if I didn’t live with him, I would use condoms. And ... my boyfriend didn’t like condoms. I tried many types of pills ... I had an allergy to emergency contraceptive pills and ... allergy to some pills I bought it 25 baht. I had to pay for 125 baht for PREME [pseudonym of a regime of low-dose hormonal contraceptive pills].

—Fon (female, vocational college, in-depth interview)

Without any evidence of negotiation, it appears Fon might be acknowledging her role as a ‘wife’ who has to take responsibility for her own birth control. She followed her boyfriend’s contraceptive preferences, avoided conflicts arising from negotiation to use condoms, tried to find a suitable hormonal contraceptive regimen, and paid for the pills.

Discussion and Recommendation

To tackle adolescent pregnancy by promoting contraceptive use, several factors influencing adolescents' decisions about contraceptives should be carefully considered by authorities. Preliminary findings from this study illustrate that several factors influence Thai adolescents' decisions. Similar to previous studies (Commendador, 2003; Daley, 2014; Bangpan & Operario, 2014), we found that parents could influence their adolescent children's decisions. Most male and female participants in our study underlined that fear of being a burden to their parents and fear of parental punishment, both verbal and physical, could lead Thai adolescents to choose various contraceptive methods to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Although these fears positively stimulated Thai adolescents to prevent unwanted pregnancies, the fears might be a barrier to parent-child communication regarding pregnancy prevention, including seeking advice about applying contraceptive methods.

Fear of negative consequences of unwanted pregnancy to self, particularly with females, could be a major factor evoking many female participants to consider contraceptive use. Learning about life difficulties from surrounding adolescent mothers could have provoked some female participants to decide to insist on contraception. Unexpected adverse reactions to hormone pills, which young people perceived as a risk from conversations within their social circles, could also have influenced female adolescents' decisions about contraceptive options. Interestingly, social discrimination and the death from HIV/AIDS led one male, sexually active participant to insist on condoms.

We believe unbiased information about the pros and cons of the contraceptive pill should be delivered to young people by health authorities. In our study, it seemed that misunderstandings about side effects could have affected decisions, making adolescents avoid taking contraceptive pills, when in fact 'the pill' might have been a good option. Similar to a report by the United Nations Children's Fund (2015b), in the current research, it appeared that Thai adolescents lacked sexual and reproductive health information, including objective advice about contraceptive methods. Instead of learning from surrounding people, young people should be widely educated about contraceptive pills at schools or through media young people can easily access, such as exhibitions, youth campaigns and social media.

In this study, we found two cultural factors that positively influenced Thai adolescents to decide to use contraceptive methods. Fulfilling cultural expectations as the firstborn female child of the family was the central concern of two female participants in preventing unwanted pregnancies, and resulted in them insisting on a contraceptive method. This result was echoed in a study by Sa-ngiamsak (2016), who found that adolescent pregnancy, which is seen as a fault, could hinder Thai adolescent mothers in fulfilling cultural expectations as a good daughter.

We also found the Thai core value of respecting elders (*Pee*) could, somewhat unpredictably, influence adolescents' decisions. Indeed, according to Pongsakornrunsilp (2011), seniority can affect work promotions in a workplace. However, previous studies show little evidence about influences of seniority on contraceptive decisions. Yet, our study indicates that between a male and a female in an intimate relationship, seniority of the female may influence decision making. Noticeably, in our study, although cultural factors may have affected young adolescents' decisions, values influencing decisions were mostly female-related social values. Therefore, we believe Thai society as a whole should consider,

re-consider and re-construct male-related social values, which could help prevent unwanted pregnancies.

Complicated factors may influence a female adolescent's decisions about contraceptive use, as seen in our study. Cohabitation also causes the female adolescent to play the role of 'wife', as Oppenheim and Smith (2000) also found; a 'wife' is expected to obey her husband's contraceptive preferences and to take responsibility for birth control. Additionally, decision-making about contraception might be more complicated when a female has an allergy to many hormonal contraceptive regimens. Although Hemachandra et al. (2012) found that only 2.6% of female respondents considered adverse effects before making decisions about contraceptive methods, allergies to some hormonal contraceptive pills could be life-threatening and could possibly lead a female adolescent with financial difficulties to spend more money on a suitable alternative.

Limitation of the Study

Our current study focused on Thai adolescents from two schools in an urban area of Khon Kaen and is therefore localised. It may not be possible to generalise preliminary results of this qualitative study, and it might not be possible to use our results to accurately predict other groups of adolescents' reactions or decisions, such as those who live in rural areas and those who are not at school (such as adolescent students enrolled in informal education or out-of-school, working individuals). Moreover, we focused on adolescent pregnancy prevention via contraceptive methods. Some Thai adolescents might use alternative strategies to prevent unwanted pregnancies, including oral/anal sex, mutual masturbation or having same-sex sexual relationships. Further research is needed to increase understanding of adolescents' sexual and reproductive health, and factors affecting their decisions about sex and contraception. Further study is also required to develop suitable sex education programmes for the young adult population in Thailand.

In terms of research methodology, the gender of researchers and research assistants was of concern, because an all-female research group could have affected data collection. Although male participants in this study seemed to willingly share their experiences and perceptions on contraceptive use with the first author, they may respond more openly in male-to-male dialogue situations with a male researcher/research assistant. Further studies regarding adolescents' contraceptive decisions and sexual and reproductive health may require male researchers to facilitate delving more deeply into the Thai male adolescent's psyche.

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The Origin Myth of Nora: A Comparative Study of Southern Thailand and Malaysian Versions

Chaowalitprapan, Preeyarat
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Thaksin University
Thailand

Abstract

The paper aims to study the various versions of the origin myth of Nora (both Nora performance and ritual) which are pervasively found in the southern provinces of Thailand and also in Malaysia. Folkloristic approach was used in the comparative analysis of the selected thirteen versions of the Nora myth e.g., motifs, tale-types, theory of tale transmission.

The preliminary study found that the versions of origin myth of Nora can be categorized in 4 tale types: first, Nang Nuan Samlee tale type, concerning her life story and her son who is the origin of Nora, second, Srimala tale type stating that Srimala is the origin of Nora, third, Thepsinghorn tale type indicating that a man named Thepsinghorn is the origin of Nora, and fourth, Thepsinghorn-Srimala tale type, in this tale type, Thepsinghorn and Srimala are husband and wife who are the origin of Nora. All the four tale types are found in southern Thailand while only the Srimala tale type is found in Malaysia. Regarding the motif analysis, the distinctive motifs often found in the Nora myth are: the motif of devada as a helper, the motif of floating the protagonist on a raft, the motif of hiding oneself and the motif of receiving a reward which is related to becoming a Nora.

As for the transmission of the stories, it is primarily hypothesized that the original myth of Nora was originated around Songkhla Lake and then was disseminated to other areas. When the story was transmitted to other areas, the details were adjusted to fit the local tastes while the substance and the distinctive motifs were still maintained.

Keywords: origin myth of Nora, Southern Thai Nora, Malaysian Nora, folklore

Introduction

The myth of *Nora* (ตำนานโนรา) is a narrative about the origin of Nora, a significant ritual and performance for southern Thai people. In the past, the myth of Nora was narrated and known among the family of Nora, not quite widely and publicly spread. The myth of Nora existed in the forms of both narratives and poems. The oral versions of Nora myth were based on memories of the narrators and contexts, such as surroundings, time duration, objectives of narration, etc. The well-known version is the myth of Nora of Khun Ouppathum Narakorn (Nora Phum Thewa) which was firstly compiled and published in Nora by

Pinyo Jittham. After that there were research towards the myths of Nora, such as 'The myth and background of Manora or Nora' (Wichien Na Nakorn, 1980), 'Nora' (Udom Nuthong, 1993), 'The Myth of Nora: Social and Cultural Relationships at the Areas of Songkhla Lake' (Pittaya Bussarat, 1996), etc.

Besides the myth of Nora narrated in the south of Thailand, there are also myth of Nora, central Thai versions which were brought by the Southern folks immigrating to the central region from Phatthalung, Songkhla and Nakhon Sri Thammarat in the reign of King Rama III. At that time these folks were really skillful of Nora performance; therefore, they widely performed Nora or called by central Thai as *Chattri* (ชาตรี). Later on, there is the Myth of Nora, the complied version by Thanit Yopho, published by the Fine Arts Department, and the history of Nora compiled by Mr. Phun Ruengnon, etc.

In addition, in the northern states of Malaysia, Kedah and Perlis, which have close relationship with the south of Thailand for long time, there are also narratives from Nora families as there were southern Siamese settled down at these states when they still belonged to Thailand.

The author compiled 13 versions of the myth of Nora in both Thailand and Malaysia to compare its plots and stories which can be categorized based on their origins as follows:

Myths of Nora at the Central Part of Thailand

1. "History of Nora Phun Ruengnon" compiled by Montree Tramote
2. "Myth of Nora-Chattri" of Thanit Yupho

Myths of Nora at the South of Thailand

1. Myth of Nora, version of Wad Janruang, in Manoranibat, Wat Matchimawas, Songkhla version.
2. Myth of Nora, version of Khun Ouppathum Narakorn, compiled by Pinyo Jittham (1976) from Nora, the book of Department of Thai Language, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Songkhla Teacher College
3. History of Nora, version of Son Siwayapram compiled from Nora poems from the book of Nora
4. Myth of Nora, Tha Kae version 1, compiled by Pittaya Bussararat (1992) from the thesis entitled *Nora Teachers at Tha Kae Subdistrict at Muang Phatthalung District in Phatthalung Province* of Master of Arts Program, Thai Studies at Srinakharinwirot University, Songkhla
5. Myth of Nora, Tha Kae version 2, compiled by Pittaya Bussararat (1992) from the thesis entitled *Nora Teachers at Tha Kae Subdistrict at Muang Phatthalung District in Phatthalung Province* of Master of Arts Program, Thai Studies at Srinakharinwirot University, Songkhla
6. Myth of Ta Yai Pramjan compiled by Wichai Inthawongse from the book, Trace of the Queen, Wat Tha Kura, Sathingpra District in Songkhla Province
7. Myth of Nora, version of Nora Srijan, a part of the research of Santichai Yammai (2013) entitled "Myth of Sexuality via Signs in Nora Teacher Ceremony", a thesis of Master of Arts, Prince of Songkla University
8. Myth of Nora, version of Nora Jerm Sethanarong, Ban Changthongtok Moo 6, Napakhau Subdistrict, Bang Kaew District in Phatthalung province, which Nora Bandasak Phithaksilp

compiled and presented on <http://krunora.blogspot.com> retrieved on 20th January 2017

9. History of Nora, version of Nora Sompong Sanehsilp at Chamuang Subdistrict, Ratthaphum District in Songkhla province retrieved from http://123.242.145.23/portal/script/test.php?pageID=103&table_d=performance&s_type= on 5th February 2017

Myths of Nora in Malaysia

1. Mesi Mala and the Thai Menora of Ah Perm, from the article of Tan Sooi-Beng (1988) entitled "The Thai Menora in Malaysia: Adapting to the Penang Chinese Community" published in Asian Folklore Studies, Vol. 47
2. A Kedah myth regarding the Origin of Nora Chatri compiled by Ghulam-SarwarYousof (1982) from the article of Nora Chatri in Kedah: A Preliminary Report published in the Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. Vol.5, No.1.

Episodes and Events in the Myth of Nora

The researcher will divide the Nora stories into 3 important episodes: Floating on a Raft, Being left on the Island and Returning Home.

Episode 1: Floating on a Raft

In most Nora versions, the characters are left to float on a raft (Except the case of Phun Ruengnon), but there are different content with different causes of being left. Some cases tell that the protagonist is a princess who is left on a raft because of getting pregnant without husband while some cases indicate that it is because she is enchanted with dancing and singing around the clock.

Episode 2: Being left on the Island

After being left to float on a raft, most myths tell that the raft arrives at an island. Some cases state that there is a god magically creates an accommodation while some cases say that the princess lives with a couple of elderly on the island. During staying on the island the pregnant princess gives a birth, the prince son, and the prince is brought up by his mom and skillful in dancing. Some cases state that the prince also practices dancing by watching his shadow on the water surface and is skillful in it. A case indicates that he sees the way of dance of *Kinnari*, half-bird half-woman; then he practiced it. Some cases say that the princess mother is not pregnant; she enjoys dancing on the island. Nevertheless, all cases tell that the princess establishes Nora troupe that widely performs and is finally well-known.

Episode 3: Returning Home

After performing Nora attracting the passerby, the news towards her dancing abilities is widespread. When the royal family knows it, they prefer to watch her dance and ask her to come to the palace to perform Nora in front of them. When the princess arrives the palace, the place she was born, most versions say the same that the princess performs Nora performance in front of the king, and the king likes it, gives her a reward and assigns her to be responsible for Nora Theater; then her son gets title of

Khun Krisattha. Differently, the case of Nora Jerm indicates that the princess is drown since the king wants to marry her and is angry when knowing that she is his daughter.

There are important events or motifs in each episode, thus the researcher will assign a letter for each motif (e.g., A,B,C...) and the motif's variations with sub letter (e.g., A1, A2, A3...) as follows:

I Floating on a Raft

A Dancing practice/playing music

A 1 Self-study

A 1.1 dancing practice

A 1.2 drumming practice

A 2 Teaching of god in dream

A 3 Dancing practice by experts

B Unusual pregnancy

B 1 Eating lotus's pollen then pregnant

B 2 Reincarnation of god

B 3 Reincarnation of Thepsinghon

B 4 Being pregnant but nobody knows

B 5 Having relationship with the royal page

B 6 Being pregnant without husband

C Punished by leaving to float on a raft

C 1 Being left due to fascination of dancing or playing music

C 2 Being left due to being pregnant without husband

II Being left on the Island

D Supporters

D 1 God

D 1.1 magically creating accommodation and food

D 1.2 magically creating a couple of elderly helpers

D 1.3 magically creating an assistant

D 1.4 magically creating a musical instrument

D 1.5 magically creating a merit hunter and golden hunter mask

D 2 A couple of elderly on the island as helpers

D 4 Prosecuted and exiled noblemen always come to the island and help the princess

E Giving a birth of the prince son

F Performance skill practices

F 1 dancing

F 2 watching performance shadow on the water surface

F 3 learning dancing from the god

F 4 remembering ways to dance from *kinnari*, mythical creature, half-human and half-bird

F 5 self-study

G performing and being well-known

III Returning home

H Travelling to town

H 1 The princess travels to several places until being back to hometown

H 2 The king assigns his noblemen going to pick the princess and supporters back to the palace

H 2.1 the princess comes back with the noblemen

H 2.2 the princess does not come back; then the king goes to pick her up

H 2.3 the king goes to pick her up himself

H 3 A merchant sends her back to the palace

H 4 The god magically creates a boat brining her back to the palace

J Rewarding and punishment

J 1 Console and Nora performance

J 2 Rewards

J 2.1 royal cloth

J 2.2 crown, heading decoration tools

J 2.3 title

J 2.4 Nora Theater

J 2.5 a half part of the whole land

J 2.6 tribute

J 2.7 a golden Buddha

J 3 Punishment

J 3.1 drowning

J 3.2 stopping performance

K Consequences after receiving the rewards

K 1 Nora performance is continuously performed.

K 2 Nora is brought to perform in Melayu cities, the origin of *Mayong* (มายอง)

K 3 The establishment of belief towards spirit of Srimala in the body of female Nora performer

K 4 Violent disease disappearance due to Nora performance

K 5 Arriving at Tha Kae and establishing the Teacher Training Theater at Khok Khun Tha

K 6 A ceremony of sending the queen, *Chao Mae Yu Hua* (เจ้าแม่อยู่หัว)

K 7 A tradition of tying red cloth at the center pillar of Nora Theater

Tale Types of the Myth of Nora

In order to categorize all versions of the myth of Nora into groups, the folklore methodology, *tale type*, will be used. In folklore studies, *tale type* is a conceptual tool consisted of the sequential plots and important motifs in a story. Accordingly, for example, the story belonging to Tale type 1 will be different from the story belonging to Tale type 2, etc. This then will enable the researcher to categorize similar tales in a designated tale type and different other tales in other different tale types.

Given the 13 Nora versions, it found that there are 4 tale types as follows:

1. Nang Nuan Samlee tale type is mostly found in the myth of Nora, 8 versions:

Khun Ouppathum Narakorn, Nora Plaek Chanaban, Phien Phetchyoi, Nora Wad, Janrueng, Fine Arts Department, Nora Srijan, Nora Sompong Sanehsilp and myth of Ta yai Pramjan compiled by Wichai Intawongse.

The main sequences of this tale type are A B C D E F G H J.

The tale type tells that the protagonist is a princess who loves dancing, and she always invites her followers to dance around the clock. Then she gets pregnant without husband, so she is punished by being floated on a raft. The raft goes to an island where there are helpers. She gives a birth of son and teaches her son to dance skillfully. After that they perform dancing, Nora, in any places, and their excellent dance is known by the king. The king then asks his soldiers to pick them up to perform dancing in the palace. When he knows that the princess's son is his grandchild, he gives a reward.

2. Srimala tale type consists of 3 versions: Nora Jerm Setnaraong and other two Malaysian myth: Ah Perm and a case compiled by Ghulam-Sarwar Yousof.

The main sequences of this tale type are A C D F G H J.

This tale type presents that the princess loves dancing and she always invites her followers to dance around the clock, which is similar to the first mentioned tale type. However this tale type does not present the story of her pregnancy. She is punished because her father, the king, feels embarrassed and angry that she spends all of her time dancing. She is then exiled to the island. She meets the helpers on the island. There is not any motif of giving a birth since there is not the motif of pregnancy and teaching her son dance. The princess dances herself and establishes the performance troupe to perform on the island until they are famous and the king asks his soldiers to come and pick them up to the palace. The case of Yousof tells the same story as the tale type of Nang Nuan Samlee, that is, the king watches the performance and knows that the protagonist is his daughter; she is then exiled.

The interesting point of this tale type is sequences of the version of Nora Jerm and Ah Perm. When the

king meets Srimala, he does not recognize and wants her to be his wife. In the case of Ah Perm, the king is told that Srimala is a princess of a king, he then gives her a reward while the case of Nora Jerm states that the governor of Phatthalung loves her and brings her to his place and has sexual relations with her. When the governor knows that she is his daughter, he is angry and asks the soldiers to drown her and all other people in the Nora troupe are arrested.

3. Thepsinghorn tale type is found in only a version, history of Nora of Son Siwayapram.

The main sequences of this tale type are A C D F H J.

This tale type states that the protagonist is a prince who loves dancing and performs dancing in any places, which makes his father, the king, gets angry because he is embarrassed. The king then asks to exile his son by floating him on a raft, and the raft goes to an island on which there are gods. Later, the merchants pick him up to the palace to perform dancing, and he gets a reward from her father.

4. Thepsinghorn-Srimala tale type is only found in the myth of Nora Phun Ruengnon.

The main functions of this tale type are G J.

This tale type is absolutely different from others because it mentions only the performance and reputation, punishment and supporter, which are the same with others. The main protagonists in this tale type are a couple. They are good in *Chattri* drama and perform in any places. The god and angels come to see their performance until forget to have an audience with God Siva. The Shiva then punishes them by destroying the Nora Theater but God Vissukarm comes to help them.

Tale Types based on the Myth of Nora

	I Floating on a Raft			II Being Dropped on the Island				III Returning home		
<div>Motif</div> <div>Versions</div>	A Dancing practice/ playing music	B Unusual pregnancy	C Punished by Floating on a raft	D Supporters	E Giving Birth of the Prince Son	F Performance of skill practices	G Performing and Being Well-known	H Traveling to Town	J Rewarding and Punishment	K Consequences after Receiving the Rewards
Tale type of Nang Nuan Samlee										
1. V. of Fine Arts Department		B2	C2	D1.1 D1.3 D1.5	E	F4+F3	G	H4	J2.1 J2.2 J2.6	
2. V. of Khun Ouppathum Narakorn	A2	B1	C2		E	F1	G	H1 H2.1	J1 J2.1 J2.2	
3. V. of Nora Wad	A1.1	B1	C1		E	F2	G	H2	J2.1 J2.2 J2.4	
4. V. of Nora Plaek	A2	B1+B3	C2	D1.2 D1.4	E	F1	G	H2	J1 J2.1 J2.2 J2.3	
5. V. of Mr. Phien	A2	B5+B1+B2	C2	D2	E	F1	G	H2.2	J1 J2.1 J2.2 J2.3 J2.4	K6
6. V. of Nora Srijan	A3	B3	C1	D1.3 D1.4	E	F2	G	H2.1	J2.1 J2.2	K2
7. V. of Nora Sompong	A3	B6	C2		E	F1	G	H2		K1
8. V. of Tayai Pramjan	A2	B4	C1	D2	E	F1		H2.2	J2.1 J2.7	
Tale type of Srimala										
9. V. of Nora Jerm	A1.1		C1	D4	E			H2.1	J3.1	
10. V. of Yousof	A1.2		C1	D1.1 D1.4		F5		H2.1	J2.1 J2.2 J2.5	K3 K4
11. V. of Ah Perm	A1.2		C1			F5	G	H2.1	J2.1 J2.2 J2.4 J2.5	
Tale type of Thepsihorn										
12.V. of Nai Son	A1.2		C1	D1				H3	J2.1	
Tale type of Thepsinghorn-Srimala										
13. V. of Nai Phun							G		J3.2	K7

Significant Motifs in the Myth of Nora

The significant motifs often appear in the myth of Nora are: punishment by being floated on a raft, devada as a helper, hiding oneself and receiving a reward.

Punishment by Floating on a Raft

The punishment by floating on a raft in Thai tale is often in the case of the punishment by royal family or noblemen such as the queen or the prince, which is the punishment replacing the execution since they do violent mistakes or misfortune action; for example, in the story of Sang Thong, Phra Sang is accused as a misfortune; he is punished by being floated on a raft while in the story of Kaki, after garuda brings Kaki back, the king Prommatat punishes her by floating on a raft.

In the myth of Nora, all cases also include the punishment by floating on a raft, but the mistakes are different, such as getting pregnant without husband or having fascination of dancing, except the version of Phun Ruengnon. The myth indicates that the fascination causes embarrassment; the most violent punishment is execution. The myth reflects values of royal family that being pregnant without husband and fascination of dancing are not accepted by the society.

Helpers

The important helpers in the myth of Nora are god and devadas playing roles in helping the protagonists. The important roles are teaching them dancing; for example, devada appears in Nang Nuan Samlee's dream to tell her 12 dancing acts before being exiled from the palace or teaching her son dance after being exiled to the island. Besides teaching dancing, the god plays a role of giving musical instruments to Nora. The myth of Nora, version of Fine Arts Department, tells that the god magically gives two organs named Namtatok (น้ำตาคอก) and Nokkhaokhan (นกเข้านั่น), a drum named Pherisuwannalok (เกร็ดสุวรรณโลก). The case of Tha Kae tells that the Shiva asks Vissanukam to create a horn made of Bambusa bamboos. As it is believed that the gods teaches dancing, the acts of Nora including musical instruments are highly respected.

Furthermore, Ta-Yai (ตายาย), a couple of elderly, is another character helping the protagonists in terms of accommodation. The Ta -Yai couple is usually found in Thai tales of all regions; for example, in Sang Thong, when Chantha gave a birth of conch, she is exiled and stays with a couple of Ta-Yai, in the story of Hong Hin, the queen is accused of giving a birth of dog, she is then exiled and stays with a couple of Ta-Yai, in the story of Nang Uthai, after Nang Uthai leaves the egg, she impersonates herself to be a toad and stays with Ta-Yai, etc. This indicates that Thai tale is an image of Thai warm family emphasizing the respects of senior people.

The case of Nora Jerm differently tells about the roles of helpers, that is, the helpers of Srimala when she is exiled, are noblemen who are sued and arrested on the island, such as Khun Sattha (ขุนศรีธธา), Phraya Thomnam (พระยาโถม่น้ำ), Phraya Luifai (พระยาลุยไฟ), etc. The narrator also includes Thai political situations when the government arrested political prisoners at Tarutao Island in the myth of Nora.

Hiding oneself

The exile to an island of protagonists since they are young has the same details with the camouflage of heroes in the tales, that is, they do it to study before presenting it later. The important life duration for success is from childhood to manhood because it is a duration that mostly supports learning and creating

good personality. Behaviors of leading actor hero in the tale reflect nature of learning (Aattagara, 1976). The son of Nang Nuan Samlee is also exiled to the island with his mother. He spends time to practice dancing there by starting with learning from his mother, learning by himself by imitating dancing acts of Kinnari (กิ้งก่า), half-bird half-woman, learning by himself by watching his acts on the water, and finally the god teaches him until he is skillful in Nora. His Nora performance is widely well-known causing being back to hometown to perform in the big place and finally be accepted.

Receiving a Reward

Most myths or folktales, especially fairy tales, after the leading character always proves his talent, he always receives the reward, a woman or occupying the kingdom after the king. However, the study of Nora myths reveals that rewards given to Nang Nuan Samlee's son after the performance are royal clothes. The most important part is the crown, a heading accessory and a sign of king. Instead of being constituted to be the king occupying the kingdom as other learning actors in the general folktale, he gets ownership of 9X11-metre Nora Theater and vagrantly survives by performing Nora in any places. It is a contrast in the motifs that is not found in other myths of tales.

When the King Rama VI was as a prince, he wrote the annals towards going to southern towns. A part of the annals mentioned on a Nora that, "a Nora is appointed to be village headman, but he resigns to be the Nora. This man tells the Prince Damrong Rajanubhab that being the headman is not as valuable as being a Nora. Even being a sheriff or governor, he does not want to be as it can be relieved. Differently, Nora cannot be relieved" (cited in Pramote, 1980: 11).

What this Nora told the Prince Damrong Rajanubhab presents arrogance of Nora that has freedom showing that they are in higher status than other noblemen. This attitude is continuously transmitted among Nora family since then. The myth of Nora presents that Nora is lofty (wearing the king's clothes) but loves freedom and independence (not occupy the kingdom but enjoy performing Nora vagrantly).

Transmission of the Myth of Nora

The transmission of tales causes popularity in any areas. The popularity causes changes in many ways. Siraporn Na Thalang (2009: 150-151) states six characteristics of transmission of tales: omission of details, changing the details, expanding the story, combining stories, altering the sequences and self-conservation of the story.

In studying the transmission of myth of Nora, the researcher will consider the most widespread tale type, that is Nang Nuan Samlee tale type as the main version, as if this is the original version and compare other versions in relation to this Nang Nuan Samlee tale type.

Changes in the Myth of Nora

1. Deleting Some Content or Detail

The tale type of Nang Naun Samlee presents crucial sequences: fascination of dance, being pregnant without husband, punishment by being floated on a raft, having supporters, giving a birth, dancing practice, performing Nora and having reputation, returning home, getting rewards and punishment. Deleting some sequences, pregnancy and giving birth, causes the changes of Nora plots to be as tale type of Srimala and Thepsinghorn. The protagonists are fascinated by dancing; they are thus punished by floating on a raft. When being dropped in the island, they practice dancing and perform dancing until being

famous. These two motifs have only one difference, the protagonist in motif of Srimala is female but the protagonist in motif of Thepsinghorn is male. In addition, when deleting the functions A-F, it becomes the tale type of Srimala-Thepsinghorn. It can conclude that each tale type of the myth of Nora has really the same plot and sequences, but the delete of some functions causes new plot.

2. Adding Events

The consideration of added events is based on episodes as follows:

Floating on a Raft

The added events are usually the situations at the beginning of story to explain background of characters; for example, the version of Nora Wat Janrueng, mentions the King Matthasilp (มัททสิลป์), the King of Pinja (ปีญจา) who gives 6 assistants to Chao Phraya Saifahfad (เจ้าพระยาสาขฟ้าฟาด) when ascending the throne. The six assistants play important roles at the ending part, that is, when the son of Nang Nuan Samlee, a daughter of Chao Phraya Saifahfad, returns home, she arranges teacher worship ceremony by inviting old teachers to watch the dance and eat the oblation and 6 Phraya to receive the oblation. When the prince or Thepsinghorn travels to perform dancing, the 4 Phraya follow him. The case of Nai Phien adds a situation at the beginning of story. The queen of Phatthalung governor named Intharakoranee (อินทรกรณี) having Indian lineage returns to the palace to give a birth conventionally, but she gives premature birth on the boat in the sea. The baby is named Sri Kongka (ศรีคงคา) that is later changed to Nuan Thong Samlee. The case of Nora Srijan adds the story of a man from Ayutthaya leading a team of dance to the south. Nang Nuan, the daughter of governor, watches the dance and imitates it. The case of Nora Sompong adds the situation that the Shiva prefers human to dance as same as Kinnari, he then finds a proper teacher teaching them. The Siva finds a man named Somwong; the Shiva takes his heart off, gives him Kinnari cloth and teaches him 12 dancing acts. Finally, Somwong remembers everything the Shiva taught, and he is finally well-known. Nuan Thong Samlee is amazed when seeing his dance, and she invites her mates to practice dancing Nora when she back to the palace.

Being Left on the Island

There are interesting added events. The version of Yousof tells that while Simala stays on the island, there are 2 Indian men named Pran Bun (พรานบุญ) and Khun Sattha (ขุนศรัทธา) come to the island to sell beads. When meeting troupe of Srimala, they asks to be a troupe member. Then they go back to India and get the crown from the Buddha for Srimala. Moreover, there are other added sequence in the kingdom of King Atit. There are disaster and diseases causing the death of a lot of people. The astrologer recommends Manora to eliminate the disaster. The case of Nora Jerm adds the situation that man noblemen are sued and arrested on the island; then they help Srimala floated on a raft to the island. These noblemen and Srimala establish a troupe of Manora, a name from recalling Srimala's former incarnation. The first life she was named Manora. This life is her 12th life and the last life.

Returning Home

The events are added at the end of the story. It is about the situation after the king finishes watching Nora performance and gives the rewards the Nora troupe. It mostly mention on transmission of beliefs, tradition and custom related to Nora until present; for instance, the version of Nai Pien mentions the son of Nang Nuang Samlee appointed to be Khun Sri Sattha who performs dancing and gets on a raft in front of a temple called Tha Phae, later called Tha Kae, and establishes the training house at Khok Khun Tha (Ban Tha

Kae, Tha Kae Subdistrict at Muang District in Phatthalung province at present). The case of Yousof tells that after the performance, the epidemic disappears. Simala is then praised to be a heroine. Moreover, Thaw Atit also helps to adjust the Nora Performance to be more elaborate and brings the tails of eagle to be a part of Mahora's cloth called Hanghong. After the death of Simala, her spirit backs to Kachang Island and it is believed that her spirit is still there until now. Simala is as the founder of Menora in the body of female Menora. The last part of the myth of Ta-Yai Pramjan presents that Ta-Yai arrange a ceremony to send the queen and the queen gives them a golden Buddha. When the queen goes back to the palace, Ta-Yai invites other villagers to send her as firstly arranged until it is as a tradition.

3.Adding Details in Some Episodes

The addition of details in some episodes is mostly the addition of characters, especially assistants of protagonists because these characters are Nora teachers in Nora Rongkhru ritual (พิธีกรรมโนราโรงครู), Nora Teacher Ceremony to worship the teachers of Nora and Nora family, including to make a votive offering; for example, in the myth of Chatri drama of the Fine Arts Department, the god enchants the Magnolia to be a wet nurse of Srimala, an assistant of Mae Phien (แม่เพียร), Mae Phao (แม่เภา), Pran Bun and enchants Khun Sattha to be Nora teacher. The version of Nora Wad tells that Nang Nuan Samlee has 4 assistants named Mae Khan Onn (แม่แขนอ่อน), Mae Mao Kleun (แม่แมกลั่น) and Mae Yod Tong (แม่ยอดทอง). While the version of Phien mentions on the name of Sri Kongka assistants such as Mae Nui (แม่น้อย), Mae Phao (แม่เภา), Mae Mao Klun (แม่แมกลั่น), Mae Siangkliang (แม่เสียงเกลี้ยง), Mae Siangwan (แม่เสียงหวาน), Mae Jaiwai (แม่ใจไว), etc. These names are all Nora teachers the villagers respect.

4.Integrating other Stories

The integration of other stories into the myth of Nora is found in the myth of Nora Wad Janrueng. In the last past, the story of Phra Suthon-Manora, the local version, is integrated and tells about Panja occupied by the governor named Thao Saeng-atit and his wife named Krissana. His son is Srisuthon and his daughter-in-law is Kanom. Srisuthon has a hunter named Boonyasit. Later Pran Bunyasit catches a Kinnari named Nora and offers her to Prince Srisuthon. Nora plans to escape back home, Srisuthon follows her and brings her back. After that Pran Boonyasit goes to meet Thepsinghorn and apply to be his assistant, a hunter. When Thepsinghorn is 25 years old, Chao Praya Saifahfad asks him to ordain. The ordaining ceremony includes cutting the tuft ceremony. Pran Bunyasit tells the story of Nora to others, adjusts it and puts in the performance since then. The scene of hooking Nora is called *Klonghong* (คล้องหงส์).



A sculpture of Khun Sri Sattha, the founder of Nora, Wat Thakae, Phatthalung Province

Conclusion

According to the comparative study of the 13 versions through Nora tale types, motifs and its transmission, it is found that the tale type mostly found is Nang Nuan Samlee tale type which states that her son later became Khun Satttha, the founder of Nora. This tale type is mostly widespread in both the south and the central of Thailand. *Therefore, in the researcher's opinion, Nang Nuan Samlee tale type is likely to be the origin myth of Nora and that the origin area of the myth of Nora is then likely to be around the Songkhla lake, Phattalung province, southern Thailand.*

Next to Nang Nuang Samlee tale type is Srimala tale type. This is the tale type that the protagonist is the princess called Srimala, the founder of Nora. This tale type is found in a version of Thai myth of Nora and 2 versions of Malaysian Nora. The interesting issue is that some versions in Nang Nuang Samlee tale type tells that Nang Nuan Samlee is the same person with Srimala. Some cases tell that Srimala is Nang Nuan Samlee's mother, or assistant while Srimala tale type does not mention about Nang Nuan Samlee. However, Nora Teacher Worship Ceremony includes Srimala into the teacher salutation and Nang Nuan Samlee appears only in the beginning of teacher salutation.

The motifs that are often found in the myth of Nora are: punishment by being floated on a raft, devada as a helper, hiding self, and receiving rewards which are related to becoming a Nora such as receiving the king cloth as Nora cloth. These motifs are found in most versions in Thailand and Malaysia. Although there are some changes in terms of content and details in some versions, the prominent motifs still remained.

The transmission of the myth of Nora presents the variation of the stories by deleting content, adding content, adding details in some sequences and integrating other stories. Such changes are made by narrators, listeners and contexts. Particularly, the myth of Nora of the south of Thailand usually mentions on the origin city of the protagonist, Muang Phatthalung, which is consistent with the beliefs of folks succeeding Nora in the areas of Songkhla Lake. It confirms that the origin of Nora is Muang Phatthalung. Some parts of Chatri drama of Fine Arts Department reveal that the town of protagonist is Ayutthaya, a capital city of Siam, and the version of Nora Srijan in Trang province tells that a man brings this performance from Ayutthaya to perform in the south of Thailand, too; therefore, Trang Nora does not believe that the origin of Nora is Phatthalung.

The myth of Nora in Malaysia, the version of Yousof is from Kedah state. It mentions two Indian men travelling to sell beads and attend Nora troupe with Srimala. It reflects the ways of life of people living at the coast of Muang Syburi in the past, in which there are trades between Malaysian and Indian. Moreover, the myth of Nora in each local area also explain background of beliefs, tradition and ceremonies related to Nora in the areas such as belief towards Nora teacher from characters in the myth, background and significance of Nora clothes, especially the crown believed that belongs to the king, the tradition of Nora theater establishment, day and time entering the theater and background of Nora Teacher Worship Ceremony, etc.

The comparative study of the myth of Nora through folklore methodology, i.e., tale types, motifs and the transmission of the tales enables the researcher to see more clearly the journey of the myth of Nora.

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Ancestral Beliefs and Spatial Organization of Tai Dam Houses⁵⁰

Chaturawong, Chotima
Faculty of Architecture
Silpakorn University
Thailand

Abstract

Tai Dam, or Black Tai, or Lao Song originated in Sip Song Chu Tai, northwestern part of Vietnam. They were seized to Thailand as war prisoners during Thonburi and Rattanakosin periods. This paper aims to compare ancestral beliefs and spatial organization of Tai Dam houses in northwest Vietnam and at Ban Mae Prachan Village, Petchaburi Province, Thailand. Tai Dams at Ban Mae Prachan become Buddhists but still practice animism, supernaturalism, and ancestor veneration. Their villages and houses have some similarities and differences from those in northwest Vietnam due to changes of physical, social, and socio-cultural contexts. Besides a village shrine and a graveyard, Ban Mae Prachan also included a Buddhist monastery. Tai Dams at Ban Mae Prachan dwelled as a nuclear family, houses of married sons were constructed surrounding that of their parents. Whereas Tai Dams in northwest Vietnam traditionally lived in a long house as an extended family with the eldest son of the patrilineal family was the leader of the household and to hold ancestor worship once a year. Traditional Tai Dam houses in these two areas had two staircases and entrances, one to the front and the other to the rear. In northwest Vietnam, one to the front, or *gwaan*, was reserved for men of the family and male guests and that to the rear, or *chan*, was for women and female guests. While at Ban Mae Prachan, one to the *gwaan* was for guests and the other to the *chan* was kept for family members. In later period, houses at Ban Mae Prachan had only a single staircase either outside or inside a house and a bedroom known as a room for ancestor spirits where the ancestor and the first erected pillars were kept.

Keywords: Tai Dam; Black Tai; Lao Song; Lao Song Dam; houses, Ban Mae Prachan, Petchaburi; ancestral beliefs; spatial organization

Tai Dam refers to Black Tai, Lao Song Dam, and Lao Song. The term *dam* [black] was taken from the color of their women's traditional cloth. "Black Tai" and "White Tai" were probably used to refer to these branches of the Tai race in the nineteenth century by the French. Their original home was Sip Song Chu Tai [the twelve cantons of the Tais] to the west of the Red River (Dang River) in the northwest Vietnam since the twelfth century. *Chu* likely came from the Vietnamese term *chau* referring to district or canton; Sip Song Chu Tai likely had more than twelve cantons, or towns, such as sixteen (Sawangpanyangkoon, 1991, p. 36).

⁵⁰ This paper is based on Inpuntung, Vira; Kasemsook, Apiradee; Panin, Tonkao; & Chaturawong, Chotima. (2006). *Black Thai: a comparative study on living environment between the Black Tais in Thailand and in Vietnam*. Bangkok; and Chaturawong, Chotima. (1997). *Black Tai houses: a case study in Petchaburi province, Thailand*. (Master's thesis). Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. The former was supported by The Thailand Research Fund (TRF) from 2003-2006 under the research series of TRF Senior Research Scholar, Professor Onsiri Panin.

Each ruled independently and some were relatives. These cantons were a settlement of the Black and White Tais. Tai Dams migrated to the northwest Vietnam after the White Tai (Tai Khao) and later had more power and replaced them at Mueang Lai by the end of the twelfth to the beginning of the thirteenth century. Before Tai Dam and Tai Khao moved into the area, northwest Vietnam was a settlement of Kha or Khamu, an indigenous inhabitation of mainland Southeast Asia whose language belongs to Austro-Asiatic family. Khamu later were forced to higher ground and became slaves of the Tais (Phornphen, 1989, p. 9).

Sip Song Chu Tai was surrounded by three major powers, namely Laos to the west, Vietnam to the south, and China to the north. When wars occurred among these kingdoms, people in this area migrated and were taken to the south, west, and north. Sip Song Chu Tai became under the protection of Luang Phrabang when Laos or Lanchang was divided into Luang Phrabang and Vientiane. However, in the Thonburi and Rattanakosin periods of Siam (eighteenth to nineteenth centuries), Siam gained power over Lanchang and Sip Song Chu Tai; however, Sip Song Chu Tai was allowed to rule themselves as an autonomous division.

Tai Dam in northwest Vietnam has been considered as one of the most primitive Tai since their religious beliefs based on animism, supernaturalism, and ancestor veneration without influence of Hinduism and Buddhism from India. Furthermore, their kinship system has been patrilineality which position of Tai Dam men is far superior to that of their women. They reflected in Tai Dam village layouts and spatial organization of their houses which provided examples of an ancient Tai civilization prior adoption of Buddhism and Hinduism.

Tai Dam Villages and Spatial Organization of Houses in Northwest Vietnam

In northwest Vietnam, Tai Dam villages have not had any Buddhist monasteries as it was in other Tai villages in Laos, Thailand, and Myanmar. Instead, every Tai Dam village had a shrine of *phi ban*, or a village god, who was their ancestor and a village guardian to ensure peace and prosperity. Not far from a village, there was a graveyard to bury the earthen jar of the ash after the death cremation.

Houses of Tai Dam have been built on piles on which the upper floor was living areas and the ground floor was used for sheltering animals, storing wood, working space, and pounding rice. They have been rectangular houses which usually contained extended family of ten to twenty family members (Schrock, Gosier, Marton, McKenzie, & Murfin, 1972, p. 52). Length of a house has often been auspicious odd numbers, such as three, five, seven, and nine bays; bay refers to space between two columns. In the past, they were nine and eleven bays long; however, in present they are seven to nine bays (Vallibhotama, 1991, p. 29; Budsara, 1979, p. 24). The living areas on the upper floor have been divided into three parts, namely the front covered verandah, the living space, and the rear covered verandah and an open balcony.

The front covered verandah was called *gwaan* where men sat to weave baskets, to make and repair weapons or just sat, smoked, and drank with his visitors (Schrock et al., 1972, p. 58). The rear covered verandah was called *chan* and the open balcony was known as *chandad*. They were considered space for women. The open balcony was used for washing purpose, hanging out the washing, and spreading out foodstuffs to dry in the sun, for example, gains and chili. At dusk or on overcast days, women would use it for spinning and sewing as it provided them better light.

The living space was a basic open floor plan and combined all functions within one room, namely, ancestral, sleeping, reception, eating, and cooking areas (See Figure 1). According to the horizontal axis line of a house, the living space can be divided into two parts, the upper and lower parts which the former was considered more important than the latter. The upper part consisted of ancestral and sleeping areas

while the lower part contained reception, eating, and cooking areas. The old style houses had no windows, the room was dimly lit by the light falling through the open doors or slipping through the cracks in the bamboo walls and gaps in the floor or by lamps and the fire at night. The ancestral area is around the ancestor pillar, the first pillar next to the front covered verandah, in the direction where heads of family members pointed toward when sleeping at night. It is a pillar where patrilineal ancestors dwell (see Plate 1).

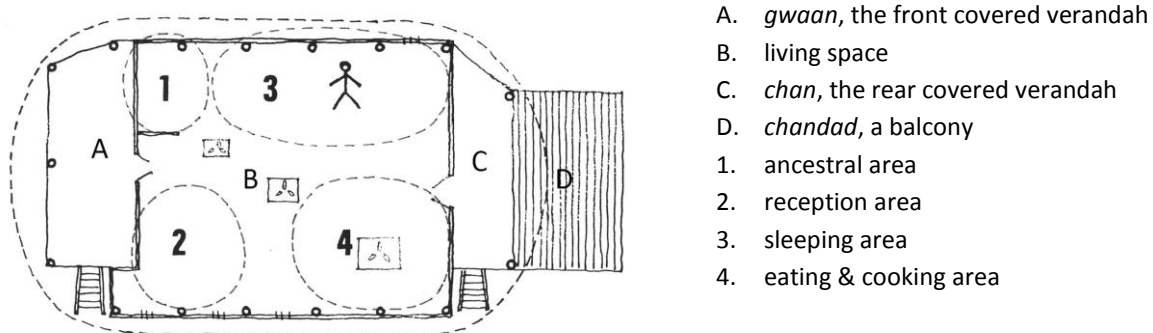


Figure 1: Spatial organization of a traditional Tai Dam house in Vietnam

The ancestral area has been reserved for ancestor worship which performed annual ceremony and periodically offered every five days for noble (*Phu thao*) and ten days for commoner (*phu noi*) families. Tai Dam society was divided into hierarchy of rulers or nobles (*phu thao*), priests (*mo*), commoners (*phu noi*), and slaves (*that*) who were Khamu or mixed Khamu. Priests were categorized as commoners. The ancestral area has often been protected by a low partition and prohibited other family members and women to enter, except wife of the house owner. The ancestor pillar was also a place where symbols of *khwan hua* of family members have been kept. *Khwan* refers to an invisible spirit that lives within each person. If this invisible spirit leaves the body and does not come back, it will cause sickness. There are many invisible spirits (*khwan*), such as thirty or eighty residing in several parts of the body. The most important one is *khwan hua* (the invisible spirit of the head) which dwells on one's head. Once one dies, these invisible spirits will divided into three groups for different destinations, namely, *khwan kok* [the invisible spirit of the body], *khwan hua* [the invisible spirit of the head], and *khwan plai* [shadow]. The first group will return to *mueang fa* [heaven town] where their ancestors and *Thaen*⁵¹, the supreme god, reside. Whereas the second and the third will reside at the ancestor pillar of the eldest son's house and a graveyard of a village, respectively (Pitiphat, 1980, p. 32, 1991, p. 47; Hickey, 1958, p. 149; Van, 1990, pp. 70-71).

⁵¹ According to Sumitr Pitiphat, there were many Thaens, namely Thaen Luang (the chief Thaen), Thaen Pua Ka La Vi, Thaen Chad, Thaen Naen, Thaen Boon, Thaen Kor, Thaen Sing, Thaen Sad, Thaen Hung Khao. See Pitiphat, Sumitr. (1980). The religion and beliefs of the Black Tai, and a note on the study of cultural origins. JSS 68.1 (January), 29-38.



Plate 1: An ancestral area and the ancestor pillar at a Tai Dam house in Vietnam. This house also includes a plough handle, an important instrument to plant rice, representing older relatives



Plate 2: Symbols of kwan hua at a current Tai Dam house in Vietnam

A symbol of *khwan hua* was made when every Tai Dam child was born and destroyed when one died. There were differences between male and female symbols, the former included a small fan, a crossbow, and a small bag or a small bamboo basket in a tube shape placing a small red cloth, silver, and gold for luck fortune. While the latter consisted of a small basket and a fan (Trong, interview, December 19, 2004) (see Plate 2). *Khwan hua* of family members are protected by their patrilineal ancestors at the ancestor pillar. At present northwest Vietnam, an ancestral area of some Tai Dam houses is located on the mezzanine to avoid contacting with outsiders and women. Underneath the mezzanine can be used as a storage area (Inpuntung, Kasemsook, Panin, & Chaturawong, 2006, p. 138). It has been considered necessary for outsiders or other family members to ask for permission from the patrilineal ancestors before entering the living space which consisted of the ancestor pillar. Otherwise, it would cause sickness or misfortune to the family members of the house.

Opposite the ancestral area was the reception area. It was a place to receive guests and for guest to sleep. The sleeping areas were situated next to the ancestral area. At night, sleeping mats of each family have been unrolled and laid in a parallel row, each with a black-colored mosquito net draped over it. As there were several nuclear families lived in a single house, a sleeping area for each family was within a bay and each might have its own individual fire-place. However, most houses had one central fire-place that all household members used for cooking (Schrock et al., 1972, p. 46). There were often separated fire-places for men and women. The fire-place near *gwaan* was reserved for men to boil water for tea and to warm themselves in winter whereas the one near *chan* was reserved for women to cook (Vallibhotama & Wongted, 1991, p. 30). The cooking and eating areas were at the rear of the living space, near *chan*, or the rear verandah.

Tai Dam had a system to arrange a sleeping sequence of household members based on patrilineal kinship with the eldest son as the head of a family household. The first bay of sleeping areas close to the ancestral area was reserved for grandparents or parents or the eldest son's family which only man was allowed to sleep next to the ancestral area. Following bays were sleeping areas of the second, third, fourth, and so on sons' family.

The fire-place where women cooked associated with the first pillar, although its position varied in different localities (Van, 1990, p. 76). The first pillar refers to the column firstly erected when a house was built. The

first erected pillar and a fire-place related to women and prosperity. In Petchaburi, Thailand, the first pillar of a Tai Dam house was erected by an older or younger brother of the house owner's wife. Furthermore, objects which were considered sacred were also hung at the first pillar, such as a tortoise shell and *taleo* (a symbol made from bamboo band weaving in a shape of a star) for protection against evil spirits (see Plates 3-4). It also included grass which was intended to be food of a tortoise as well as rice plant and cotton with desire for fertility (Trong, interview, December 19, 2004). According to an old Tai Dam myth, a tortoise taught Tai Dams a prayer to please *Thaen*, the supreme god, and to build a house on piles roofed with a tortoise shell-shaped circular gable. Tai Dams were very grateful to the tortoise and thereafter hung a tortoise shell at the first pillar and had a house roof in a form of the tortoise shell. (Dang Nghiem Van 1990) stated that a *linga* or *yon*i made of wood was also hung at the first pillar with wishes for a large family. All these things were tied together with bamboo band representing gold and silver strings, a symbol of prosperity and wealth pp. 76, 81-82).



*Plates 3-4: The first erected pillar at present Tai Dam houses in Vietnam. It hangs a tortoise shell and probably a taleo symbol at the top of the pillar (left) while the other one hangs a wooden tortoise and is covered with a case on its head (right).
Source: Inpuntung et al., 2006, p. 141.*

Tai Dam houses in northwest Vietnam have often had two external staircases, one to the front reserved for men of the family and male guests and the other to the rear for women and female guests. It probably aimed to protect adultery as a house lived several generations of family members. Houses were constructed with bamboo and wood and roofed with thatching in a shape of tortoise shell-shaped circular gable. A round gable was also considered as the primitive roof type of people in Southeast Asia, such as an ancient house with a round gable excavated at Ban Khao, Kanchanaburi Province, Thailand, dated around 1800-1300 BCE, Neolithic period. This kind of roof was likewise found in Yangshao culture (dated from around 5000 to 3000 BCE) along the Yellow River, and in Lungshan period (late Neolithic culture) of China (Henriksen, 1982). Houses of noble Tai Dams were characterized by crosses at both ends of the rooftop (Schrock et al., 1972, p. 46).

Cam Trong, a Tai Dam scholar, provided examples of architectural floor plans of small to large Tai Dam

houses in northwest Vietnam, for example, small to medium sized houses of Lo Wan Pan, Tue Hla, and Lueang Wan Ing; and a long house of Tong Wan Phang (Sawangpanyangkoon, 1996).

House of Lo Wan Pan was the most basic one as it was for a single family. The house had one staircase at the *chan* and three bays long of the living space with a single fire-place at the center (see Figure 2).

- A: ancestral area
- A': ancestor pillar
- B: sleeping area
- C: reception area
- D: fire-place
- E: gwaan
- F: *chan*
- G: chandad
- H: windows
- I: doors
- J: staircase
- H: window

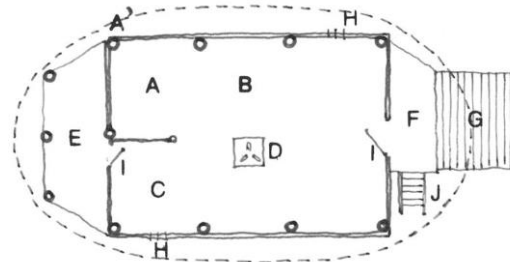


Figure 2: Upper floor plan of Lo Wan Pan's house
 Redrawn from Sawangpanyangkoon, 1996.

House of Tue Hla lived four nuclear families, namely grandparents, parents (house owner), the eldest son's family, and a daughter and son-in-law. It was an old tradition that so called son-in-law stayed at bride parents' house to assist their agricultural works for some time during volunteering period. The living space had five bays long which the upper part were arranged from the front to the rear in a sequence of an ancestral area and sleeping areas of grandparents, parents, the eldest son's family, and a daughter and son-in-law, respectively (See Figure 3). There were two staircases and two fire-places, one to the front reserved for men and male guests and the other to the rear for women and female guest. The fire-place to the rear was for women to cook.

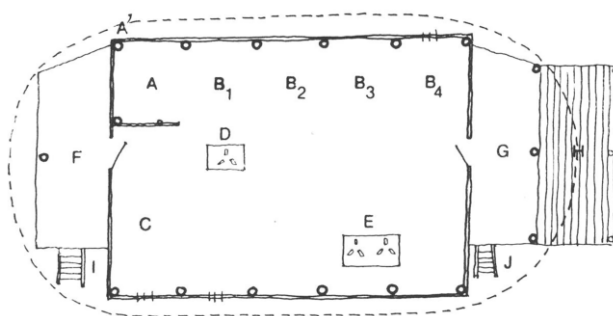


Figure 3: Upper floor plan of Tue Hla's house
 Redrawn from Sawangpanyangkoon, 1996.

- A: ancestral area
- A': ancestor pillar
- B1: room for grandparents
- B2: room for parents
- B3: room for the eldest son's family
- B4: room for daughter and son-in-law
- C: reception area
- D: fire-place for men
- E: fire-place for women
- F: *gwaan*
- G: *chan*
- H: *chandad*
- I: staircase for men
- J: staircase for women

House of Lueang Wan Ing lived five nuclear families, namely parents, the eldest son's family, the second son's family, the eldest son of the eldest son's family, and the youngest daughter and son-in-law. Although the living space was five bays long parallel to that of Tue Hla's house, arrangement of the sleeping areas rather differed from that of the former. The sleeping area of the youngest daughter and son-in-law was located on the opposite side, or the lower part, of that of her family members since after the volunteering period, the daughter and son-in-law would move to his family's house (see Figure 4). House of Lueng Wan Ing had two staircases, one to the front for men and male guests and the other to the rear for women and female guests. There were three fire-places inside a house, one close to the front was reserved for guests (men), another in the middle and the other close to the *chan* were for the family household.

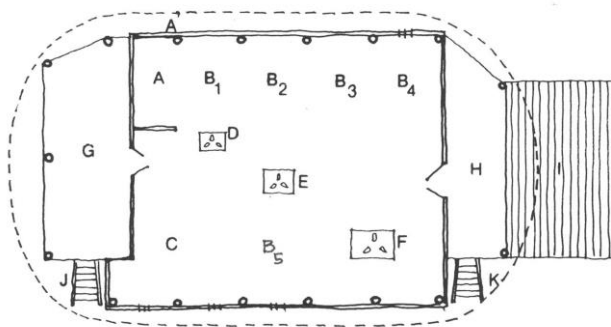
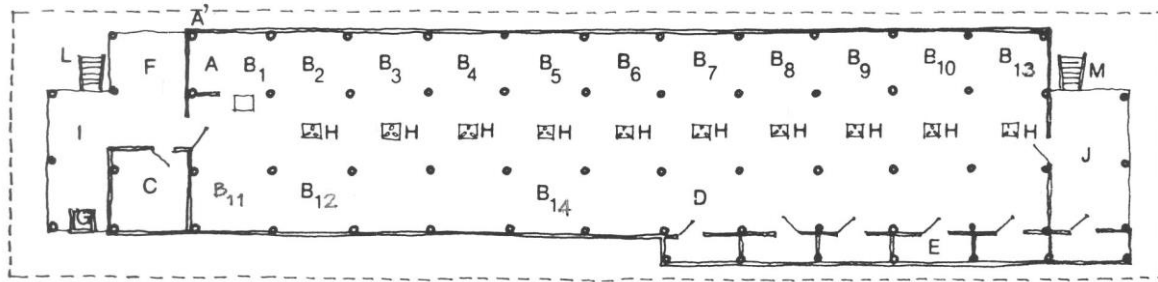


Figure 4: Upper floor plan of Lueang Wan Ing's house
 Redrawn from Sawangpanyangkoon, 1996.

- A: ancestral area
- A': ancestor pillar
- B1: room for parents
- B2: room for the eldest son's family
- B3: room for the second son's family
- B4: room for the eldest son of the eldest son's family
- B5: room for the youngest daughter and son-in-law
- C: reception area
- D: fire-place for men
- E, F: fire-places for family household
- G: gwaan
- H: chan
- I: chandad
- J: staircase for men
- K: staircase for women

House of Tong Wan Phang, surveyed in 1967, was a long house, ten meters wide and sixty meters long. Long houses were previously common in La - Son La district before revolution period in Vietnam. House of Tong Wan Phang had eleven bays long of the living space and lived three-generation household or eleven nuclear families, each slept within a bay and arranged as this following sequence; parents (younger brother lineal as the eldest brother passed away), the eldest son's family (eldest brother lineal), the second son's family (eldest brother lineal), the third son's family (eldest brother lineal), the eldest son of a younger brother's family (younger brother lineal), the second son of a younger brother's family (younger brother lineal), the eldest son of the eldest son's family (eldest brother lineal), the second son of the eldest son's family (eldest brother lineal), the eldest son's family (adopted child), the eldest son of the eldest son of a younger brother's family (younger brother lineal), and grandson of the eldest son's family (eldest brother lineal) (see Figure 5). Moreover, the house lived the youngest daughter of a younger brother's family and other single female members, namely a youngest daughter (eldest brother lineal) and a teenage granddaughter. They slept on the opposite side, or at the lower part, of the living space as they were expected to move out after agricultural volunteering period or getting married. The house had ten fire-places for each family and consisted of two external staircases, at the front verandah or *gwaan* for men and male guests and at the rear verandah or *chan* for women and female guests.



- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| A: ancestral area | C: sleeping area for male guests |
| A': ancestor pillar | D: sleeping area for female guests |
| B1: room for parents (younger brother lineal) – parents of B5, B6 | E: storage |
| B2: room for the eldest son's family (eldest brother lineal) | F: cultivated tool storage |
| B3: room for the second son's family (eldest brother lineal) | G: toilet for guests |
| B4: room for the third son's family (eldest brother lineal) | H: fire-place for each family |
| B5: room for the eldest son of a younger brother's family (younger brother lineal) – son of B1 | I: <i>gwaan</i> |
| B6: room for the second son of a younger brother's family (younger brother lineal) – son of B1 | J: <i>chan</i> |
| B7: room for the eldest son of the eldest son's family (eldest brother lineal) – son of B2 | L: staircase for men |
| B8: room for the second son of the eldest son's family (eldest brother lineal) – son of B2 | M: staircase for women |
| B9: room for the eldest son's family (adopted child) | |
| B10: room for the eldest son of the eldest son of a younger brother's family (younger brother lineal) – son of B5 | |
| B11: room for a youngest daughter (eldest brother lineal) | |
| B12: room for the youngest daughter of a younger brother's family – daughter of B1 | |
| B13: room for grandson of the eldest son's family (eldest brother lineal) – son of B7 | |
| B14: room for a teenage granddaughter | |

Figure 5: Upper floor plan of Tong Wan Phang's house
 Redrawn from Sawangpanyangkoon, 1996.

Tai Dams at Ban Mae Prachan Village, Petchaburi Province, Thailand

Ban Mae Prachan Village is located next to Mae Prachan River at Wang Khrai Sub-district, Thayang District, Petchaburi Province. Tai Dams were firstly taken as war prisoners from northwest Vietnam to Siam during Thonburi period (1768-1782) and later in the reigns of King Rama I (1782-1809), King Rama III (1824-1851), and King Rama V (1868-1910). Tai Dams at Ban Mae Prachan Village was chosen as a case study since the village contained a traditional Tai Dam house which was still alive and likely the last living one in Thailand. These Tai Dams were the group who came in the reign of King Rama III (1824-1851) and firstly settled at Ban Tha Laem Village, Khao Laem District which is not far from the seashore. Preferring mountainous area, they asked and received permission to settle at Ban Wang Tako Village. Thereafter, during the reign of King Rama IV (1851-1868), some Tai Dams at Ban Wang Tako decided to move to a new place at the current Ban Mae Prachan Village where it was more plentiful and located next to river (Chaturawong, 1997, p. 88).

Tai Dams in Thailand have had mixed culture between that of their ancestors in Vietnam and the new one of the central Thais. In Thailand, they have been known as Lao Song Dam or Lao Song, the Thais understood that Tai Dams were Lao since they and Lao people were taken to Siam or Thailand in parallel periods. Siam needed numerous workers to build up the country during Thonburi and Rattanakosin periods after Ayutthaya was sacked by the Burmese in 1767. The terms "song" means dress or came from

“suang” meaning pants, and *“dam”* refers to black color (Suli, 1976: 9-10). The first settlement of Tai Dams at Ban Mae Prachan followed their traditional pattern in Vietnam which houses were grouped as clusters according to families and surrounded by rice-fields. It had no Buddhist monastery instead, contained a village shrine, a small house built on piles, and a graveyard to the west of the village. Around 1978, the village extended to the west with another village shrine and a graveyard. In 1996, Ban Mae Prachan was divided into three small hamlets (Moo 9, 1, and 6), each had its own village shrine. One of the two graveyards became a school and a village Buddhist monastery (see Figure 6). In 1993, an ordination hall at the monastery was constructed with brick in a central Thai style (Chaturawong, 1997, pp. 89-92). Since the first settlement in the nineteenth century to 1968, Tai Dams at Ban Mae Prachan were a closed and isolated community and married among Tai Dams whose communities scattering in several villages in Petchaburi and other provinces in central Thailand. Once every year in April when they were free from agricultural works, it was a tradition in Lan Khuang Festival that Tai Dam men from one village traveled to other Tai Dam villages to play music and to dance at courtyards of house clusters. A Tai Dam village had many courtyards for threshing rice named after a female leader during the Lan Khuang Festival (Suli, 1976, pp. 163-164). This festival provided an opportunity for young Tai Dam men to meet with young Tai Dam women, then to fall in love, and later to get married. However, after 1981, Tai Dam women had more freedom to marry Thai and Chinese men; in 1996, ninety percent of population at Ban Mae Prachan was Tai Dams and ten percent was Thai and Chinese (Chaturawong, 1997, p. 91).

Tai Dams at Ban Mae Prachan currently practice not only ancestor veneration, animism, and supernaturalism but also Buddhism. In 1997, the village consisted village shrines, a graveyard, and a Buddhist monastery. Tai Dam houses at Ban Mae Prachan were similar to as well as differed from those in Vietnam due to shifting from one physical, social, and socio-cultural context in Vietnam to the other in Thailand. Tai Dam houses at Ban Mae Prachan can be divided into four types according to their building materials and construction periods, namely traditional Tai Dam house, developed traditional Tai Dam house built around 1937-1952, Influence of local Thai house dated around 1957-1967, and Influence of central Thai house. The former three style houses were built on piles while the latter were often constructed in two storeys. The traditional and developed traditional Tai Dam houses were built with natural wood, bamboo, and reed and thatched with blady grass. Influence of local houses were constructed with sawed timber and roofed with clay tiles whereas the influence of central Thai houses were often erected with brick on the ground floor and cut timber on the upper floor (Chaturawong, 1997, pp. 107-108). Although differing in material used, forms, and space arrangement; these four style houses still included the ancestor pillar associated with the patrilineal clan and the first erected pillar related to women and fertility.

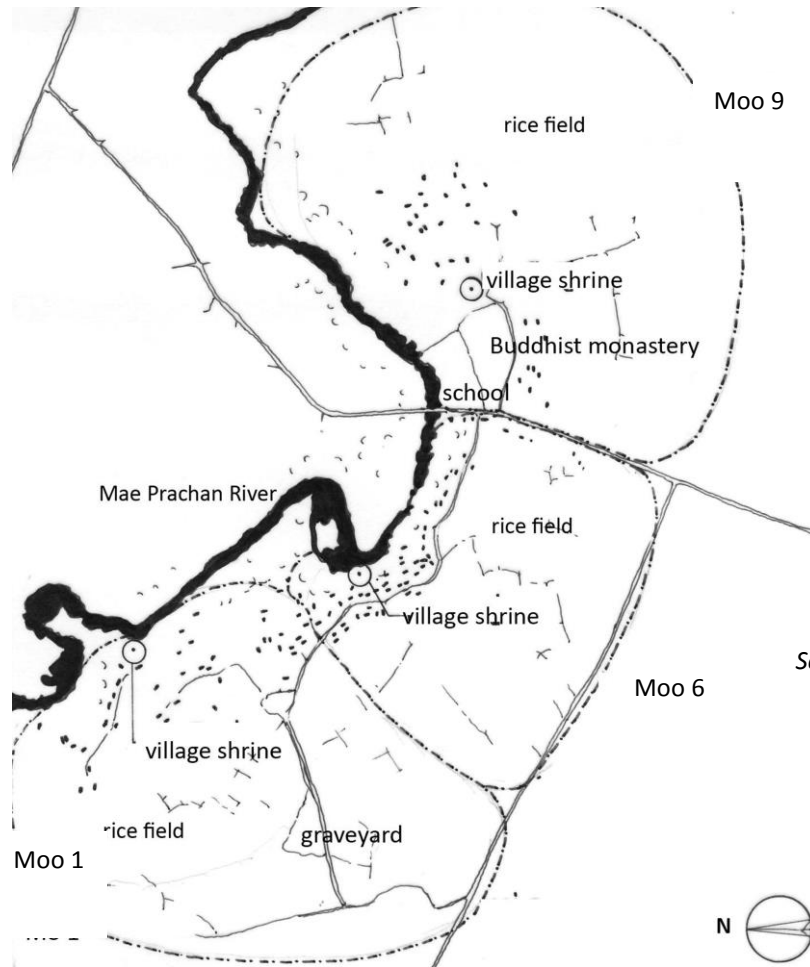


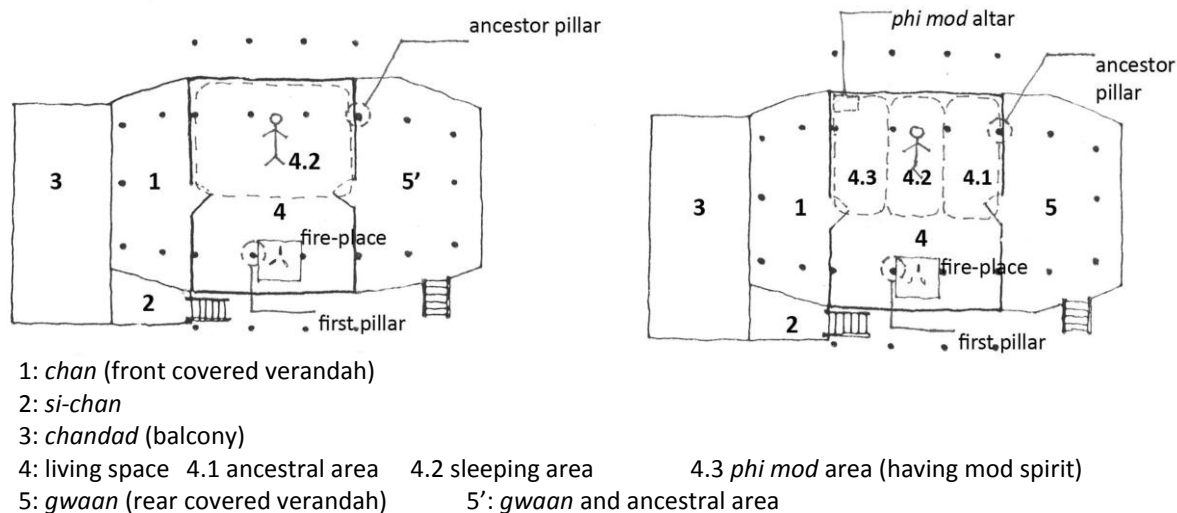
Figure 6: A village layout of
 Ban Mae Prachan in 1997
 Source: Chaturawong, 1997, p. 100.

Spatial Organization of Tai Dam Houses at Ban Mae Prachan Village

Traditional Tai Dam houses at Ban Mae Prachan were built on piles with natural materials and had a tortoise shell circular gable parallel to those in Vietnam. Furthermore, houses in these two areas had neither window nor partition and were built in a basic open floor plan. Their upper floor plan was divided into *gwaan*, *chan*, and the living space with a fire-place for cooking and warming. They also had two external staircases, one to the front and the other to the rear. However, traditional style houses at Ban Mae Prachan differed from those in Vietnam in size, staircase users, and spatial organization of the living space. Tai Dam houses at Ban Mae Prachan were smaller than those in Vietnam as they were usually built three bays long and lived a nuclear family. Two staircases of commoner (*phu noi*) houses at Ban Mae Prachan were no longer separated between men and women instead, one reserved for family members at the *chan* and the other saved for outsiders or other family members at the *gwaan*. Probably because Tai Dam communities were situated among those of the Thais or outsiders. In order to protect their ancestral area and the ancestor pillar from the outsiders, the reception area was placed at the *gwaan*, outside the living space of a house. The covered verandah of *chan* became the front while that of the *gwaan* was the rear and a reception area. It was also the sleeping area of a son-in-law during volunteering period. The location of the ancestral area differed between houses of noble families (*phu thao*) and commoner families (*phu noi*). In Petchaburi, *phu thao* refers to Lo Kham family and *phu noi* were families (*sing*) of Ru, Wi, Ka, Kwang, Rueang, Lo Noi [small Lo], Lang, and Tong (Pitiphat, 1978, p. 57). However, in Vietnam, Lo Kham

[Golden Lo], Lo, Lo Back [Silver Lo], and Kwang Kham [Golden Kwang] families were considered as nobles (*phu thao*), leaders, while the rest were commoners (*phu noi*), inferior. Noble families were considered privileged as they were rulers in Sip Song Chu Tai; however, they were not necessary to be leaders in Thailand. Furthermore, Tai Dam myths claimed that Lo Kham family was created by Thaen, the supreme god, to be a leader of Tai Dams and the only one who was not emerged from a bottle gourd. Whereas Kwang, Luang, and others were emerged from a bottle gourd as the first, second, and so on. Some myths added that Lo family was an assistant of Lo Kham family.

The ancestral area of a noble house was larger than that of a commoner house and situated at the *gwaan* where the ancestor pillar was placed (see Figure 7). While that of commoner houses, the ancestral area and ancestor pillar were located inside the living space (see Figure 8). Their difference was the position of the wall dividing *gwaan* and the living space. At *phu thao* houses, this wall was placed behind the ancestor pillar and made it situated at the *gwaan*, while at commoner houses, the wall covered the pillar which made it located inside the living space. Because the annual feast to the ancestors of nobles needed large space as they had larger offers with buffalo sacrifice whereas those of commoners were smaller with pig sacrifice. Furthermore, ancestors of the commoners were more frightening to outsiders than those of the nobles (Pitipat, Ondam, & Thammaphimuk, 1978, pp. 22, 79). Therefore the staircase at the *chan* of a noble house was used by both family members and outsiders. Their reception area could be held inside the living space. *Gwaan* where the ancestral area of the noble was placed could be a sleeping area of a son-in-law during volunteering period but not allow for a sleeping area of outsiders and women. Before entering to the *gwaan* of noble families, other family members and outsiders needed to ask permission from the ancestor spirits. However, during annual feast period of *phu thao*, other family members and outsiders were absolutely prohibited to enter the *gwaan*. The ancestor pillar normally kept symbols of the *khwan hua* of household members and a name list of the patrilineal ancestors.



Figures 7-8: Upper floor plan of traditional Tai Dam houses at Ban Mae Prachan, *phu thao* house (left) and *phu noi* house (right)

Source: Chaturawong, 1997, pp. 110-111.

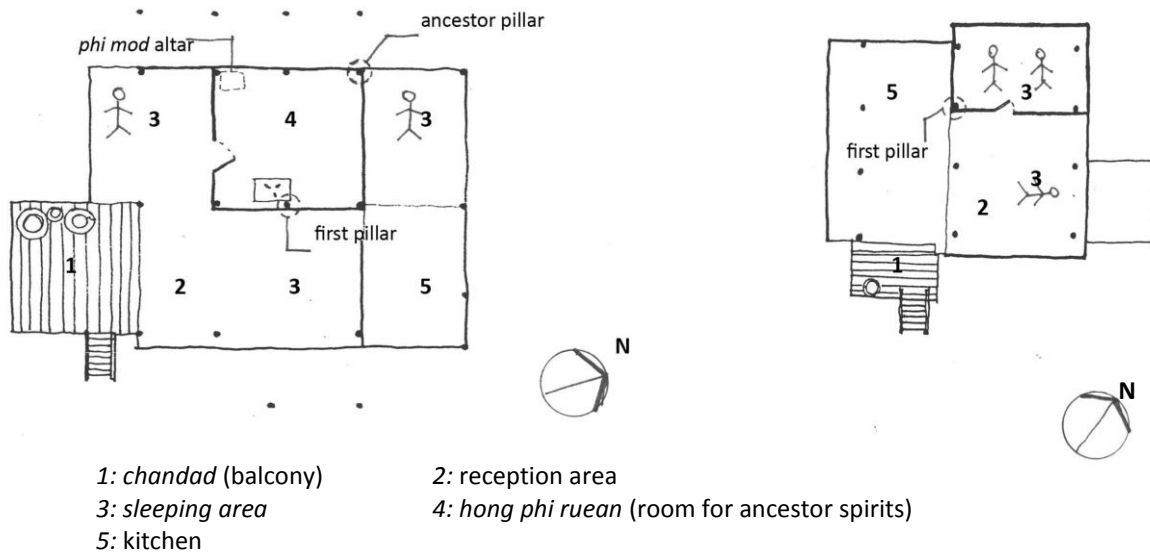
The living space of a commoner house (*phu noi*) consisted of ancestral, sleeping, eating, and cooking areas. If a house owner had lineal ancestors as *mod* (sorcerer), the living space would also contain *phi mod* (sorcerer spirit) area where *phi mod* altar was placed. *Phi mod* altar was normally placed at the bay next to the *chan* in the living space at the direction of ones' head when sleeping. *Phi mod* area was not allowed to sleep; thus in this case, sleeping area of this house with three bays long was left only at the middle bay. *Mod* was a person who could cure sickness and exorcise bad luck through performing a ritual. *Mod* could be male and female but he or she must have father or mother or relatives as *mod* and was chosen to be *mod* by a mod spirit (Pitiphat, 1980, p. 33). Every *phu noi* (commoner) house must have a *phi mod* altar, although they neither have lineal ancestors as *mod* nor contain a *phi mod* area. Since during an annual ceremony and feast for the ancestors, *phi mod* has also to be informed (Chaturawong, 1997, p. 111). Cooking area was around the fire-place inside the living space. The fire-place was located at the lower part of the living space between the two columns of the middle bay (see Plate 5). One of these columns was the first erected pillar which its head was covered with a case made of bamboo or rattan. The case aims to prevent the naga who lives under the earth pushing against the pillar (Chaturawong, 1997, p. 251). The pillar also hung a wooden tortoise or a tortoise shell and dried corn and chili for protection against evil spirits and with the wish for fertility, respectively (see Plate 6).



Plates 5-6: A fire-place at a traditional Tai Dam house at Ban Mae Prachan in 1997 (left) and its first erected pillar which the head was covered with a case and hung a wooden tortoise (right). Source: Chaturawong, 1997, p. 127.

Houses were changed to have a single external staircase at the *chan*, or the front covered verandah, in the developed traditional Tai Dam houses built around 1937-1952. The ancestor and first erected pillars became located inside a bedroom enclosed with bamboo walls (see Figures 9-10). Therefore house owners were no longer worried about outsiders to disturb their ancestors which could lead to sickness of family members. The bedroom which was one bay wide and one or two bays long was considered the most private one and reserved for parents, small children, and teenage daughters. Although a house, for instance, that of Nang Bao, still had a fire-place within this bedroom, it was no longer used. The house had separated cooking area to the rear. The first erected pillar at Nang Bao's house was situated next to the

fire-place. Its head was covered with a case made of rattan and hung a wooden tortoise as well as dried corn and chili (see Plate 7). The house of Nang Bao also had the *mod* spirit as her mother was a female *mod*. The *phi mod* altar was located inside the bedroom at the different bay of the ancestor pillar (see Plate 8). It was a rare case that son-in-law, or husband of Nang Bao, resided at his parent-in-law's house for the whole life since they did not have any sons. Son-in-law could build a small shrine for his ancestors outside parent-in-law house but was not allowed to sleep next to the ancestral area of his wife's ancestors as well as in the *phi mod* area inside the bedroom. After his parent-in-law passed away, the bedroom became vacant (see Figure 9). Another case is that of Nang At, the house did not have the ancestor pillar since she built a new house after her husband passed away. The bedroom was a sleeping area of a daughter and granddaughter and located only the first erected pillar (Chaturawong, 1997, p. 48) (see Figure 10).

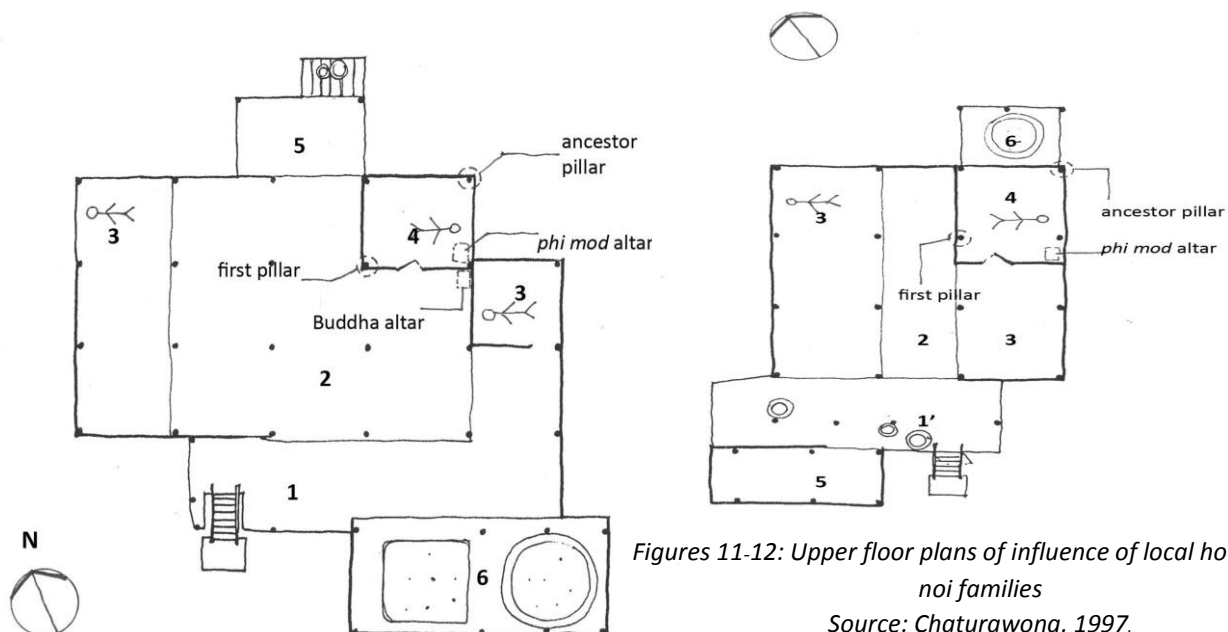


Figures 9-10: Upper floor plans of Nang Bao's house (left) and of Nang At's house (right) in 1997
 Source: Chaturawong, 1997.

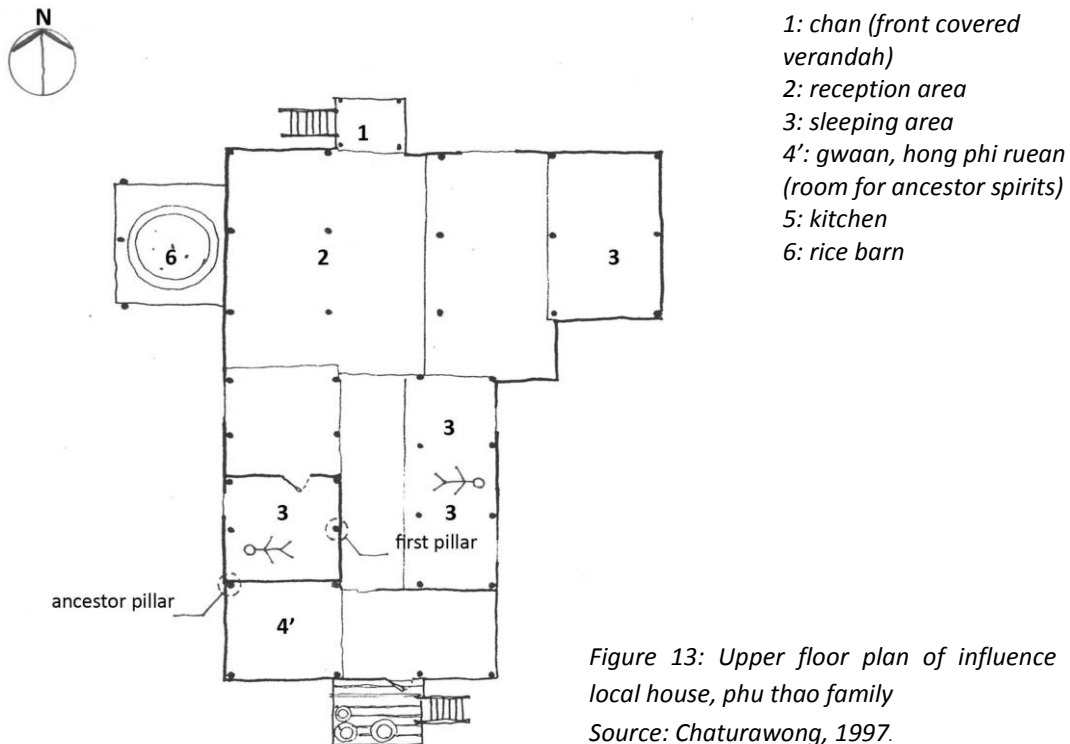


Plates 7-8: The first pillar hung a wooden tortoise and was covered with a case on its head (up) and a *phi mod* altar (right) at Nang Bao's house.
 Source: Chaturawong, 1997, p. 155.

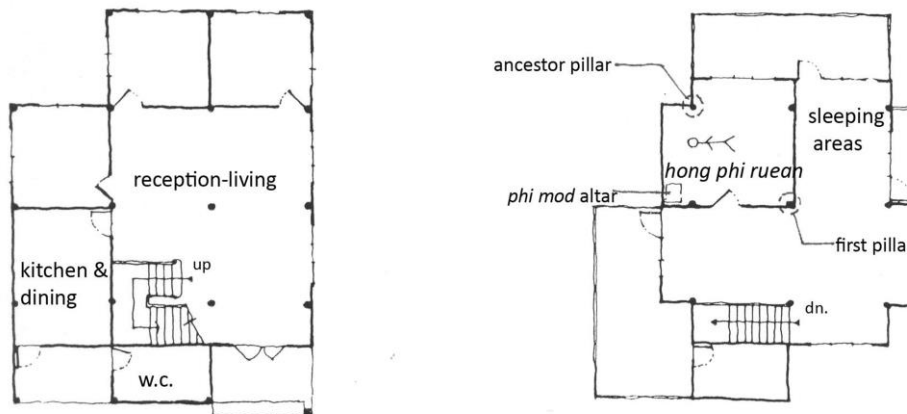
Influence of local houses (dated around 1957-1967) at Ban Mae Prachan shared similarities with local Thai houses in Petchaburi. This house type had gable or hip roofs and one external staircase at the *chan* corresponding to those of local people in Petchaburi. The living space on the upper floor of *phu noi* (commoner families) consisted of a bedroom called *hong phi ruean* [room of the ancestor spirits] and a kitchen as well as combined reception, living, sleeping, and storing areas. A kitchen and a bedroom were enclosed with walls separating from other areas. The bedroom with an ancestral area was one bay wide and one or two bays long and reserved for parents, small children, and teenage daughter. It contained both the ancestor and the first erected pillars (see Figures 11-12). While ancestral area and the ancestor pillar of *phu thao* (noble families) was located in the *gwaan* which became a storage area to the rear of the house. The bedroom of *phu thao* thus included only the first erected pillar (see Figure 13). Other sleeping areas scattered in several places of the living space and usually for sons, male relatives, and guests. As it was not enclosed with walls, other sleeping areas were cooler than the bedroom of parents. Direction of one's head when sleeping fixed toward the ancestor pillar only inside the bedroom or *hong phi ruean*. The first erected pillar inside *hong phi ruean* hung a basket made of bamboo parallel to the case covering the column head; however, the basket was sometimes not put on the column. It likewise included a simply wooden tortoise and dried corn and chili. Because of several house extensions, an upper floor plan of some houses became connected with that of a rice barn (see Figure 11). Normally a rice barn was considered superior to a house as it was where *phi kalom khao* (rice barn spirit) dwells. *Kalom* refers to a large basket storing rice grain which was made of bamboo and reed and plastered with mixed soil, buffalo dung, and paddy husk. A traditional rice barn was built separately from a house with higher floor at the direction of one's head when sleeping in the *hong phi ruean* and far enough that a house would not cast a shadow over a rice barn (Chaturawong, 1997, p. 251).



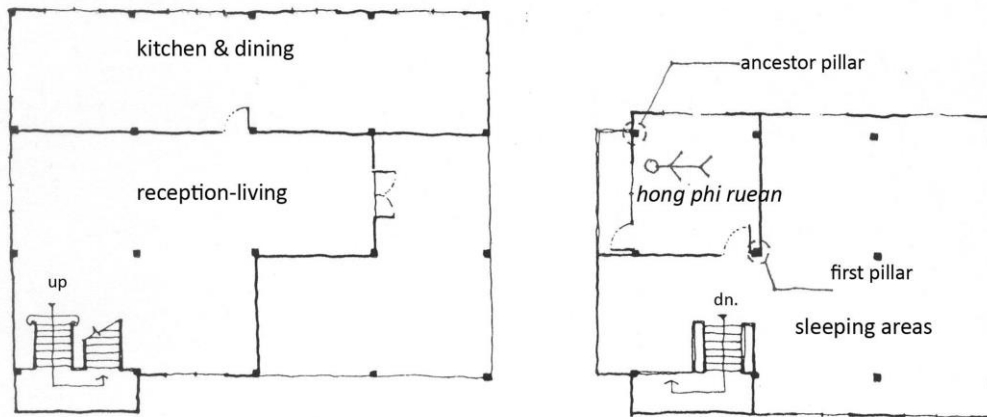
Figures 11-12: Upper floor plans of influence of local houses, *phu noi* families
 Source: Chaturawong, 1997.



Influence of the central Thai houses had two storeys which the ground floor was reception and living areas as well as included a bathroom, a kitchen-dining, and an internal staircase to the upper floor (see Figures 14, 16). The upper floor consisted of sleeping areas and a bedroom called *hong phi ruean* [room of the ancestor spirits]. *Hong phi ruean* was a sleeping place of parents and teenage daughters as well as an ancestral area for weekly offering and annual ceremony. It was one bay wide and long where the ancestor and the first erected pillars were placed. The former was situated at the direction of one's head when sleeping while the latter was oblique the former at the direction of one's feet (see Figures 15, 17). The first erected pillar hung a basket made of bamboo parallel to the case, a simply wooden tortoise, and dried corn and chili as well as was stuck with a red inscribed cloth influenced from the central Thais. It had no difference between *hong phi ruean* of *phu thao* [noble] and *phu noi* [commoner] families except that of the *phu thao* did not have a *phi mod* altar (Chaturawong, 1997, pp. 207-208).



Figures 14-15: Ground (left) and upper floor plans (right), influence of central Thai house, phu noi family
 Source: Chaturawong, 1997, p. 207.



Figures 16-17: Ground (left) and upper floor plans (right), influence of central Thai house, phu thao family
 Source: Chaturawong, 1997, p. 208.

Tai Dam or Black Tai is known as Lao Song Dam and Lao Song in Thailand. They moved from northwest Vietnam to Petchaburi Province, Thailand during the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. As their religious beliefs were not mixed Hinduism and Buddhism, they were considered as one of the most primitive Tai. Their religious beliefs reflected in their village layout and spatial organization of houses. Tai Dam houses at Ban Mae Prachan Village were chosen as case studies since the village contained a traditional Tai Dam house which was still alive. Tai Dam village layouts in Vietnam and at Ban Mae Prachan had a village shrine as a guardian, and a graveyard; however, one of the two graveyards at Ban Mae Prachan later became a school and a Buddhist monastery influenced from the Thais. Tai Dam houses at Ban Mae Prachan could be classified into four types, namely, traditional and developed traditional Tai Dam styles and influenced of local and central Thai styles. Although Tai Dams received influence from the Thai, their houses still included an ancestor and the first erected pillars according to their religious beliefs. Traditional Tai Dam houses at Ban Mae Prachan followed the design of old Tai Dam houses in Vietnam. They were built on piles with natural materials and roofed with a tortoise-shell circular gable. The living space was located on the upper floor and had neither partitions nor windows. The open floor plan of the living space combined an ancestral, reception, sleeping, eating, and cooking areas. The ancestral area was around the ancestor pillar,

where the patrilineal ancestors dwelled and was located in the direction of one's head when sleeping. Whereas the first erected pillar was on the opposite side to the direction of one's feet and associated with women and fertility. The houses had two external staircases to the front and to the rear. However, a traditional Tai Dam house at Ban Mae Prachan was smaller than that in Vietnam and their two staircase at commoner houses were no longer separated between men and women instead, one for family members and the other for outsiders or other family members. Houses could be classified into those of noble (phu thao) and commoner (phu noi) families where an ancestral area of the former was placed at the rear covered verandah (gwaan) and that of the latter was in the living space. Gwaan became a reception area of a commoner house. The developed traditional and influence of local style houses had a single external staircase and the ancestor and first erected pillars located inside a bedroom for parents, small children, and teenager daughters. A bedroom of the noble house included only the first pillar as the ancestor pillar was situated at the rear covered verandah which became a storage place. Influence of central Thai style houses were often built in two storeys with brick on the ground floor and cut wood on the second floor. It had a single internal staircase to the second floor where sleeping areas and a bedroom or a room of the ancestor spirits were placed. There were no differences between houses of nobles and commoners. Village layout and spatial organization of Tai Dam houses at Ban Mae Prachan, Petchaburi reflected their adaptation to new environment and society in Thailand where their traditional beliefs were still practiced and a new religion of Buddhism started to approach.

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Impact of Therawada Buddhism in the Traditional Belief of Tai Khamti of Arunachal Pradesh, India

Chautang, Nang Sulina

Chaturvedi, Shivam

Arunachal University of Studies

Namsai, Arunachal Pradesh

India

Abstract

The Khamti or Tai-Khamti as they are also known, are a sub- group of the Shan people found in the Sagaing division Hkamti district in northern Burma as well as Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh, India. The Khamti who inhabit the region around the Tengapani basin were descendents of Shan migrants who came during the 18th century from the Bor-Khamti region, mountainous valley of the Irrawaddy. The khamtis are a small tribe inhabiting the Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh, but they are an important tribe, as they are culturally far advance and have many special characteristics in compare to other tribes of the state. They can hardly be called a “hills tribes”, as they live entirely in the plain areas near Nao-Dihing and Tengapani rivers. Out of 28 major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, the Khamtis and the Monpas are the only tribes, which have their own sound literature. The Tai Khamti of Arunachal Pradesh profess the Therawada school of Buddhism. It is the oldest form of Buddhism and arose in India during the time of the historical Buddha and spread throughout south East Asia. Among the Khamti of Arunachal Pradesh side by side with the canonical Buddhist beliefs there is also a beliefs of phi (sprits). Gods of all kind. The culture, social, traditions and religious beliefs of Tai Khamti revolve in and around the phi. Teaching of Therawada Buddhism has influence this beliefs almost in all extent.

Keywords: Shan Migrant, Tai Khamti, Traditional beliefs, Buddhism, Impact

Shan or Tai

The Khamti or Tai-Khamti as they are also known, are a sub- group of the Shan people found in the Sagaing division Hkamti district in northern Burma as well as Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam, India. The Khamti who inhabit the region around the Tengapani basin were descendents of Shan migrants who came during the 18th century from the Bor-Khamti region, mountainous valley of the Irrawadi. The ‘Shan’ word is derived from the word ‘Siam’, which denotes to a group of mountainous people who migrated from Yunnan in the 6th century A.D. The literal meaning of the word is agriculture or cultivation. In Chinese the word ‘Shan’ means a mountain or highland, but by the Myanmar, the Shan are the people who had descended upon the plain of upper Myanmar from the Shan states of the southern highlands of Yunnan. The Myanmar divided the Shan into Myanmar Shan and Chinese Shan. The Khamtis are a sub type of Myanmar Shan.

The Shan call themselves Tai, which means free or freedom or free man. The Tai people are the inhabitant

of central Asia, presently China in or around BC 3000 before the Chinese arrived. According to the history of Tai people, they were attacked by many groups for centuries. Due to continuous attack by many groups, they started migrating towards various directions in search of peaceful and fertile land. The first migration of Shan was said to be taken place in 1st century BC when wars in central China drove out many Tai people from that region. Those people moved toward south and founded ancient Shan cities such as Muong Mao, Muong Nai, Hsenwi, Hsipaw. The second migration took place in 6th century A.D from the mountain of Yunnan. They followed Nam Mao River to the south. They settled down in the valleys and the areas surrounded by the river. Some continued toward west into Thailand. The third migration went north following the Brahmaputra River into north Assam, India. These three groups of Tai migrant were (i) Shan (Shan state) (ii) Siam (Thailand) and (iii) Tai Ahom (Assam). The Shan or Tai lives in India, Thailand, Burma, China, Laos, and Vietnam by different names, but they are always one and the same people in different countries. By whatever name they are known worldwide, the most important and common criterion of the group identity is that all Shan or Tai are Buddhist. A second common thing is that, all Tai settlements are associated with wet rice cultivation.

Tai Khamti

'Khamti' word is the combination of two words, 'Kham' and 'Ti'. Literally, Kham means gold and Ti means region or place. As a whole, the meaning of the word is the region or place of gold. According to another version, Kham means 'to adhere to' and Ti means 'a place or a country. It is so called because the country being protected all side by high hills except the Chau Kang pass. Traditions say that Chau Samlungpha had expelled a big Tibetan (Lama) army from their country and closed the pass with big rocks forever. In this way the residing Shan in this locked country came to be known as Khamti, for being adhere to it. Another third version put forwarded by E.C Leach is that, the word Khamti appeared to have been originally a title associated with the royal family of Moungh Kong. After the elimination of Moungh Kong as an independent political unit, it continued to serve as a description of those Shan principalities which had formally been political dependencies of Moungh Kong in a feudal sense.

The Khamti's are the sub type of Myanmarese Shan. In India, the tribe inhabiting in Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh, are an important tribe, as they are culturally far advance and have many special characteristics in compare to other tribes of the state. Arunachal Pradesh is the eastern most state of Indian sub-continent. Located in north east India, the state has an area of 83,743 Sq. kms. Characterized by lofty mountainous terrain, crisscrossed by a number of turbulent rivers and rivulets. Arunachal Pradesh borders the states of Assam and Nagaland to the south, and shares international borders with Bhutan in the west, Myanmar in the east and the People's Republic of China in the north. Arunachal Pradesh means 'Land of the Dawn lit Mountain'. Literally it means the 'land of rising sun', (in Sanskrit Arun means sun and Anchal means mountain valley) in reference to its position as the eastern most state of India. It is also known as the 'Orchid state of India' or the 'paradise of the Botanies'. A large number of migrant from various other parts of India and foreign lands have and have been affecting the state's population. There are 26 major tribes and more than 100 sub-tribes found in the state. Each tribe has their own distinct and colorful custom and tradition. The Tai Khamti's are recognized as one of the 26 major tribes of the state of Arunachal Pradesh. Out of all tribes reside in the state, the Tai Khamti and the Monpa tribes have their own script. They can hardly be called a "hills tribes", as they live entirely in the plain areas near Nao-Dihing and Tengapani rivers. Out of 26 major tribes of Arunachal Pradesh, the Khamtis and the Monpas are the only tribes, which have their own sound literature in compare to other residing tribes of the state. The Tai

Khamti of Arunachal Pradesh profess the Therawada school of Buddhism. It is the oldest form of Buddhism and arose in India during the time of the historical Buddha and spread throughout south East Asia. Among the Khamti of Arunachal Pradesh, side by side with the canonical Buddhist beliefs there is also a belief of *phi* (sprit). Gods of all kind. The culture, social, traditions and religious beliefs of Tai Khamti revolve in and around the *phi*. Teaching of Therawada Buddhism has an influence on these beliefs, almost in all extent. The Shan adopted the Buddhism since A D 71. Later Shan have adopted Therawada Buddhism.

Traditional History of the Tai Khamti

The history book of the Tai Khamti, Cha-Tiu and also others chronicles indicate that the Tai Khamti are the descendents of two celestials brothers- Chow Khun-Lu and Chow Khun-Lai, who were sent down to the earth by the celestials king Chow-Kun Sang to rule here. After successfully ruled for many year on this earth, out of these two brothers, Chow-Khun Lu went back to his celestial's palace. While Chow-Kunlai stay back on the earth and establish his kingdom. During the subsequent days, his successors built several principalities on the earth, such as MOUNG-PE, MOUNG-HON, MOUNG-HWANN, MOUNG-PAKKA-SO, and so on. It is believed that ancient kingdom of MOUNG HON is situated somewhere in the present day Nanchao of China. The Tai Khamtis are believed that their ancestors are related with the descendent of MOUNG YANG dynasty of upper Myanmar. One of their ancestor, the male is popularly known is Poo-Mon-Pha and the female Yaa-Mon-Kham. These progenitors of the Tai Khamtis are collectively known as Poo-Khay-Mey-Maan. According to the written records available about the Tai Khamti, one of the princesses of MOUNG HON had established a semi-independent principality known as MOUNG MANTALET. He had seven daughters. The younger daughter, NANG KING-YA being blind, the king left her to her destiny by sending her through a river on a raft. A celestials being in disguise of a white tiger married the blind princesses and from both of them three sons and four daughters were born. On attaining adulthood, the three sons namely, Chow Sukhampa, Chow Sulungpha and Chow Sukapha claimed for their ancestral properties from their maternal grandfather, the ruler of Mantalet. On recognizing them, the grandfather conferred upon them a generic name, 'Fan-Sou-Khou-Sang' which means tiger lineage and a celestial origin. These three princesses afterward established three principalities MOUNG-KONG, MOUNG-MIT WEIGN SOU and MOUNG YANG respectively towards the end of 12th century. Majority of the people of these three principalities were belonged to Tai (great Tai) and Tai NOI (little Tai) people. Because of descending from the tiger lineage, the Tai Khamti used the images of tiger as the mark of their identity.

The history of migration of Khamti is a history of long struggle from century to century which they had to Carry on against the powerful Chinese imperial pressure from north and against the powerful neighbors in the south resulting in a succession of glorious period of their supremacy in China, Burma, Laos, Assam, and Thailand. There have been a many views regarding the migration or original place of Khamti. It is said that they migrated to Assam from the BorKhamti near the Irrawadi River. The first batch of Khamti which left MOUNG Khamti made their first settlement on the Tengapani River, south of Sadiya with the permission of the ruling Ahom authorities. During the reign of Ahom king Gaurinath Singh, the Khamti pushed to Sadiya and ousted the Ahom Khowa Gohain. The Khamti were so sturdy and powerful that then Ahom and later the British acknowledged the Khamti Gohain.

Social Organization

The traditional society of the Tai Khamti is divided into social hierarchy. The chieftain family or clan lies the top of the hierarchy. The second higher layer of the hierarchy is occupied by the priestly class. It is a noble class respected and honored by all the other classes as it is concerned with the performance of indigenous ceremonies and rituals. The common people are considered as the bottom layer of the hierarchy. In the past, the slaves also constituted their own class in the society, but nowadays such classes are no more in existence. Today, the traditional society of the Tai Khamti has changed. On account of democratization and modernization, the system of superior and inferior clans disappeared. There is no class or clan prejudice which was used to be prevalent in their society. Today, they are in same platform. Thus, in this way, the traditional social pattern of the Tai Khamti seems to disappear providing rooms for democracy and equality. The Tai Khamti society has patriarchal and patrilineal in nature and character. Such tilting is generally seen during the distribution of parental property among the children.

Social Position of Women

In Tai Khamti society, the women accorded a higher status. Like the other tribes of the state, the child marriage system is not known to the Tai Khamti. The women are not treated as inferior to men. They enjoy various social, cultural and individual freedom in the society. They have the personal right to choose their life partner. Today, numbers of Tai Khamti talented lady personalities are coming up in administration, politics, education, business, technical domains, medical and so on. This indicates the liberal nature and character of their society. In Khamti society, the widows are also enjoy sufficient freedom. They are not hated, ignored or neglected by the society. They are permitted to remarry if they want to do so.

Dresses

The Khamti men and women can be identified by their dresses. The men commonly wear a tight fitting cotton Chyn (jacket) and a cotton or silk Fanoi (lungi). The lungi has a chequered pattern in a combination of colorful threads i.e. green, red, white, black, etc. They also put a white turban, which is known as Fa-Ho in their language. The female dresses consist of a Sein (black skirt), Chyn Khenyao (long sleeved jacket), Sai Sein (red color belt), Fa-Mai (white color scarf), Langwat (green waist cloth) and a white turban. The last two are generally worn by married women.

Arts and Culture

The Tai Khamti has a very rich culture equipped with magnificent arts and culture. The tribe has a preference for conventional attire, enriched by brilliant craft work, which command a huge market. The beautifully crafted sword known as Pha-Nap, Pheaan-Khao, Loong, Um-Pa, Saah, Pan-Mok-Yah, etc. which are made up of cane and bamboo in different shapes, size and design are very popular around the state. The Khamti makes embossed shield and are fond of mask, mainly of the horror type of colored cloth stretched on bamboo frames for use in ceremonial dances, which illustrate the temptation of the lord Buddha and other themes. Their finest work however, is in their carving of images of the lord Buddha. The khamti women have retained their skill in weaving and embroidery. They make finely woven belts known as sai-sin, sin, pha-noi, thong, pha-mai, etc. with colorful threads and design.

Literature

It is said that literature is the mirror of a sound and well-founded society. It reflects the culture and tradition of the society. A good literature nourishes and helps to improve the all-round development of a society. It molds the psychological and sociological aspects of a society and has a good hand in bringing the society to the track of popular civilization. The Tai Khampti has a rich and invaluable treasure in the form of literature which they call it "Lik-Lai-Pai-Pe". Their literature is generally written in ancient Tai- Khampti script. They have a very sound and rich literature which embraces every facet of human life. Their literature touches history, astrology and divination, omens and remedies, cosmology and cosmogony, invocation and prayers, worship and sacrifice manuals, religious scriptures, criminal codes and ethics, marriage manuals, legends and tradition, almanac and calendars, etc.

According to their nature and character, the vast literary works of the Tai Khampti can be broadly divided into two categories. Firstly, those literary works which deal only with specialized subject i.e. religion. Secondly, those literary works which deal with other secular subject. The Tai Khampti villages are laden with innumerable number of literary books. Those literary books and manuscript which deal with specialized subject i.e. religion, are being read and recited by them in melodious tune with pure heart and devotion. These books and manuscript are regularly recited and taught to the pupils at the monasteries. These books and manuscripts are rich in high quality teachings of truthfulness, wisdom, non-violence and so on. After completing the course of training and learning in the monastery, the pupils are converted into good and exemplary human beings in the world. They become fully conscious about their religion, religious practices and about the society from these religious books and manuscripts. This kind of literary works of the Tai Khamptis, which is mainly concerned with specialized subjects, are generally dealt with universal, temporal and ethical knowledge of the whole universe. In this category, mention may be given of the Buddha's teachings, jataka tales, fables, Chau-La-Maung (Ramayana), Thamma-Puktram (Mahabharata), and so on. Beside these, many more illustrated books such as 'Pha-Mahol' – a great epic of wise noble man, 'Chau-Khun-Hong' – a vivid account left by the Chinese traveler, Huen-Tsang during the 17th century A.D., 'Pe-Takat-Tusng-Pung' commonly known as Tripitaka, etc. are in the possession of the praiseworthy Tai Khampti. The numbers of literary works of Tai Khampti are so numerous that it is not an easy job to tell the exact number of the manuscripts and books.

The teachings of Lord Buddha are especially mentioned in the three illustrated manuscripts. They are – 'Ho-Tham' (Dhammasirsak), 'Lik-Puppa-Ho-Tham' (Adi Dhammasirsakkatha), and 'Lik-Ho-Tham-Chum' (illustrated religious scriptures). In this later scripture, the narration about how Chou Khun Hong and Pu-Lepling had brought the religious scripture from the Pha-Tong-Phati island.

Some of the other Buddhist scriptures which are written in Tai-Khampti script are 'Suk-Chilakahan', Suk-Mahawa', Suk-Patheya', Phung-Chin', etc. The Phung-Chin basically indicates and shows the heavenly abode of gods and the nature and character of its surroundings.

The second categories of their literary works are basically dealt with secular character. The 'Cha-Tiu', 'Paytang-Kanan' (astrology and astronomy), 'Paap-Mangan-Nay-Ya' (black magics and treaties on herbal medicines), 'Thamma-Satt' (customary jurisprudence), 'Sang-Waku', 'Pu-Shon-Lan', 'Loka-Niti', Loka-Pingya', 'Hitopadesa', 'Kem-Shon', 'Sasana-Tong-Pan', 'Chau-Lee-Chhi-Youn' (great tragedy novel), 'Yay-Khamko-Maw-Nong-Yong' (romantic tragedy novel), etc. fall in the category. The 'Loka-Samukthi' is also a literary book which is concerned with the procedures of disposal of dead. The book mentions about the different ways and procedures of funeral rites according to the nature of death. Such as, death of a pregnant woman, death by burning, death by drowning in the river, death of a child and so on. Moreover,

there are also such manuscript and books which deal with the guidance to good living, worldly knowledge and wisdom, songs of prayer and also of invocation and incantation. They are 'Kham-Poong' (the song or verses for dramatic performances), 'Kham- Pali' (manuscript which deals with love songs), 'Traa' (it's basically dealt with moral values of day-to-day life), 'Kham-Myok-Lang-Nin' (songs to praise the mother goddess), 'Kham-Phoy' (it deals with songs of dedication or donation), etc.

The 'Pe-Takat-Tsung-Pung' (Tripitaka) which has three division i.e., the VinayanaPitaka, the SuttaPitaka, and the AbhidhammaPitaka is the most authentic religious and sacred book of Tai-Khampti. The Tripitaka is the wheel around which all the structures of the Therawada school of Buddhism revolves. The Tai-Khampti also have great reverence and respect for the two great Indian epics- the Ramayana (Chau-La-Maung) and the Mahabharata (ThammaPuktram). Though the basic structures of the two epics of the Tai-Khamptis are same with the original one, they have depicted the stories with slight variations in order to suit them their expression and recitation.

All the important literary works of the Tai-khampti, excluding only a few, are basically compiled in scholarly poetic and rhyme style. They are very accurate and rich in resonance and alliteration. The quality of their works cannot be measured by words alone. In order to understand the quality of their literary works, one has to adjust and adapt himself with the very spirit and soul of the works. If a listener understands the true meaning and can analyze the various compositions of the songs of different occasions, he/she will simply have to accept their inner-lying quality. Some of the songs are so universal and meaningful that there becomes a straight communication between the songs and one's heart and mind. Beside this, they are so sweet and sublime that it is bound to provoke one's emotional thought.

Language and Script

The Tai Khamti has a script which is known as Lik Tai in their language. Their script and language are not of recent origin. Their literature is far advance in compare to the other tribe of the state. It is available in written form. The language of Tai Khamti is basically a branch of parental Tai language spoken in Southeast Asia, China and Myanmar. They had brought this distinct language with them when they had come into this part of the world during the first half of 18th century. They also brought with them, a popular script to write and keep their memorable events and other feelings safe. Now they are in the possession of such manuscript and books which were compiled or written before several hundred years. Their language is more akin to the language of the northern Shan language of Myanmar than the other Tais. Except some minor variation and differences in pronunciations between the Tai Khamti and the northern Shans of Myanmar, the basic and major sections are more or less the same. The language of the Tai Khamti is basically depends on sound. Emphasis is given by the speaker only to the nature of sound of a word. So, their language is tonal and monosyllabic in nature. In Tai Khamti language, each syllable or word has various speaking tones. The meaning of a same word changes according to the nature of tones. To changes the meaning of the same word, a speaker bring variations in his tone by pulling it longer or shorter or by pressing more at a particular syllable of the word. It is desirable to mention here that the Tai Khamti syllable or word has about five to eleven speaking tones. Due to this extraordinary feature, C.K. LONGKENG, an eminent scholar and Rtd. A D C, has called the language as 'Glottal'. Likewise, another eminent scholar and Ex MLA Chow Khoun Manpoong also named it as 'Sing-Song-Talk language' because of its peculiarity. Therefore, due to this reason, it is not an easy task for a non Khamti to speak and learn this language perfectly.

Festival

The Tai Khamti people traditionally follow the lunar year. All their socio religion ceremonies and social culture festivals are tie up with the cycle of the lunar months. April (Noun Haa) is the first month of the year. Sangken festival popularly known as water festival is celebrated on the last days of the old year lasting for two to three days. The lunar New Year begins on the following days just after the end of the Sangken festival. During festival, the statue of Buddha are brought out from the main monastery and placed in temporary made structure Kyong Fra, then ceremoniously washed with clean water on all days of the festival. Buddhist script (lik), Bodhi tree, Sang-Fa-Upuk, monks and elder citizen are also given symbolic wash with clean and scented water. In the month of May on the full moon day Buddha Purnima is celebrated. On this day lord Buddha attained enlightenment under Bodhi tree. In the month of July (Noun pet) from full moon day the three months rainy retreat (Khao-Wa) for monks start until the full moon day of October (Noun Siep-Eit). During rainy retreat the monk does not move out of monastery or travel. They do meditation, study and refresh their knowledge on Buddha, Dhamma and conduct the discourse to the devotes on thirteen Uposatha days. In September (Noun-Sip) full moon day is observed by offering honey, fruits, vegetable, etc. to the monk. Traditionally it is believed that on this day the monkey, elephant and other animal offered honey, fruits, etc. to the lord Buddha when he spent one such three months rainy retreat in a forest. In the same month, the dark moon day is celebrated with cleaning houses, granaries and taking bath early in the morning in the nearby river. In October (Noun-Siep-Eit) full moon day which mark the end of the three months rainy retreat for the monks. This day is celebrated with discourse on Buddha's teaching, paying homage to Lord Buddha, dhamma and offering gifts to the sangha. In the month of October- November (Noun Siep-Eit-Sipsong) Kathing festival is celebrated. In this festival the yellow robes are offered to the monk. Although yellow robes are offered to individual monks at any time by the faithful, but those robes which offered during the Kathing festival comes under special category. These are believed to be more precious and meritorious because they are prepared during the night beginning from plucking of cotton, spinning, weaving, stitching, dyeing before the day break and offered to an entire monks instead of individual monk. In the month of February (Noun-Sam) on full moon day Mai-Ko-Shumfai festival is celebrated. For which a high bamboo conical structure is made and filled up with dry wood and bamboo and burnt it in the early morning. This ceremony is followed by feasting with special cooked 'Khau-Ya-Ku, a mix of rice, sesame, yam, leafy vegetable. In the month of March (Noun-Si) on full moon day, 'Lu Kongmu' festival is celebrated. For the celebration of this festival the Kongmus, Shrines, Monuments are renovated, refurbished, new one built, illuminated with flowers and candle light. During each festival they pay homage to Lord Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha by offering food, flower, candle, incense stick in the monastery.

Traditional Beliefs

From the beginning of the civilization human beings beliefs and pay homage to that supernatural power who is the creator of this universe. Each civilization or races exist, at the beginning they were the worshiper of nature because their life is totally depend upon the nature. By the course of development and modernization, many religions have been coming up with their teaching and way of worship. The Shan or Tai also have their own traditional beliefs, which they still practice in this date of modernization. The Shan adopted the Buddhism since AD 71. Later they have adopted Therawada Buddhism. Almost all Shan are Buddhist. That is why they use to say that 'Shan are Buddhist'. Even though the Shan declared that

they are Buddhist, they also believe in many kind of spirit. Among the Khamti of Arunachal Pradesh, India with the canonical Buddhist beliefs there is also a traditional belief, which is known as 'Phis'. Phi is considered as gods of all kind. Good and helpful one and wicked, evil and harmful one. The Khamti beliefs that they live in a world inhabited not only by human beings but by spirit and gods of various kind. The world of spirit is thousand types and is larger than the human world. There are many spirits, both good and evils, everywhere in forest, trees, rivers, streams, ponds, villages, town, rice fields, animal, house, etc. Good things come from the good spirit. Diseases and sickness come from evil spirit. They believe that good spirit watch over fruits trees and crops but they are not as stronger as the evil spirit that destroys the crops. The most fearful spirit is 'Phi Houn' (spirit of house). The Phi Houn protect from all the evil spirit within the house. There are no spirit with the power to do both good and evil. Good spirits are altogether good and bad spirits are altogether bad. Although theoretically it is believe that a man or a women is rewarded for good deeds or suffers for the bad deeds of previous life. Still there is a strong feeling regarding the phi. The Phi MOUNG is propitiated once before stepping down into the rice fields and once before the harvesting. The offering to the phi is like giving a bribe, which may persuade the spirit to put off the evil. There is always a danger that they may offend one spirit or other at the some point because the worlds of Phis are invisible by the human beings. If is it so, the other ritual have to be performed in order to propitiate these spirit and seek for pardon for unknowingly offending them and seek relief from the misery caused by them. There is a strong belief in spirit among the Khamti, but there have been no attempts to made image form of a particular phi which exist in their mind. These spirits exist everywhere and they live among the human beings. It is believed that the phi can see the human world but human cannot see them. The acknowledgement of the phi is considered to belong to the profane world and is kept apart from Buddhist practice. The monastic order does not participate in these activities, because the spirit belong to profane world and the Buddhism is of sacred world. When the Phi MOUNG (spirit of the country) is being propitiated, at the collective level of the village, it occurs in the afternoon hours as they consider that the hours after 12 noon belong to the world of the profane. The villagers believe that the phi MOUNG is a good and helpful spirit who guards and watches over the village and the most powerful among all Phis. The Khamti characterize the Phi MOUNG as the king of the village. Everything within the boundary of the village is under his control. He is the lord of the mountain and lives on the top of the mountain from where he can see everything. All the fortunes and misfortunes of the village are under his control. According to their traditional belief that this guardian spirit must be propitiated collectively by them every year, otherwise, they feared that the village might become a land of disease, famine and death. Crops may go bad, cattle may die and the village may become a place of disunity and disharmony. They believe that if the Phi MOUNG is not propitiated he begins to eat everything up in the village. Thus, in the religion of Tai Khamti, there are two religious exist mutually, the traditional beliefs and the Buddhism.

Buddhism

Mahatma Buddha was the founder of Buddhism. His real name was Siddhartha, lived from about 566 to about 480 B.C. He was the prince of Sakya clan. The son of an Indian warrior king Gautama led a luxury life in his early years, enjoying the privileges of his cast. But eventually he tried of the affluence and ease, and set out what some might call a 'vision quest'. After encountering an old man, an ill man, a corpse and an ascetic, Gautama became convinced that suffering lay at the heart of all existence. He left his place leaving behind his beautiful wife, the lovely son and the worldly pleasure in search of enlightenment as he had perceived that there was constant misery and suffering in human right from birth to death.

At first, as per the then prevailing philosophy, especially Vedanta Darshan, he went in the forest in search of peace, did hard meditation up to a period of about twelve years. Thereafter he realized that the act of self-mortification is not the true course to achieve eternal peace. Then, at Bodh Gaya he sat calmly under a tree, which was later on called as Bodhi tree and got the light of knowledge and understood the real truth. He got enlightenment and was called enlightened. After being enlightened, Lord Buddha with a view to remove the suffering of mankind decided to impart his message to the public. Buddhism and Buddha philosophy flourished and got its hold first in India. Mahatma Buddha has not written any book. After he attained *Mahaparinirvana*, his disciples collected all those sermons and messages in Tripitaka. Tripitaka can be described as the original theory of Buddhism. The creation of Tripitaka is estimated to be 300 years B.C. Tripitaka is written in Pali language. Tri means three and Pitaka means box. Therefore the meaning of the Tripitaka as per the word is three boxes. Tripitaka is the three fine boxes consisting of the preaching of Mahatma Buddha. This three boxes are- Sutta Pitaka, Abhidhamma Pitaka and Vinaya Pitaka. In Sutta Pitaka, religion is dealt. Dhammapada is a portion of the Sutta Pitaka. Abhidhamma Pitaka is a collection of philosophical and psychological thought of Lord Buddha. In Vinaya Pitaka, description and statement regarding the ways of life of monk have been pointed out. The core beliefs of Buddhism are the four noble truths and the eight fold path.

The four noble truths of Lord Buddha explore human suffering. They are described as:-

- I) Dukkha:- Suffering
- II) Samudaya:- There is a cause of suffering
- III) Nirodha:- There is an end to suffering.
- IV) Magga:- there is a way to the end of suffering.

The eight fold path of lord Buddha consists of:-

- i) SAMMA DITTHI – Right understanding of the four noble Truths.
- ii) SAMMA SANKAPPO – Right thinking, following the right path in life.
- iii) SAMMA VACA – Right speech.
- iv) SAMMA KAMMANTA – Right conduct by following the five precepts.
- v) SAMMA AJIVA – Right livelihood.
- vi) SAMMA VAYAMA – Right effort.
- vii) SAMMA SATI – Right mindfulness.
- viii) SAMMA SAMADHI – Right concentration.

Like every religion on the earth the Buddhism is also divided into many sect. The two main sect of Buddhism are the Mahayana and the Hinayana. In Mahayana, the Buddha tends not to be viewed as merely human, but as the earthly projection of a beginningless and endless, omnipresent being beyond the range and reach of thought. Moreover, in some Mahayana sutras, the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha are viewed essentially as one. This entire three, are seen as the eternal Buddha himself. Hinayana is based upon the message of Lord Buddha. It is believed in the philosophy of Buddhism. Therefore it is called as the original and ancient religion. Hinayana does not accept the existence of god. The ideal of Hinayana is self-sufficiency and Sanyas. Their line is very hard and difficult to follow. They believed in self-sufficiency.

Therawada Buddhism

Therawada is a branch of Buddhism that uses the Buddha's teaching preserved in the Pali canon as its doctrine core. Therawada is a Pali word. The literal meaning of the word is 'school of the elder monk'. The Pali canon is the only complete Buddhist canon which is written in Pali language. Therawada tends to be very conservative about matters of doctrine and monastic discipline. As a distinct sect, Therawada Buddhism developed in Sri Lanka and spread to the rest of the world. Therawada Buddhism includes a rich diversity of traditions and practices that have developed over its long history of interaction with various cultures and communities. It is the main religion in the country like, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Thailand, and practiced by a groups in India, Nepal, China, Bangladesh, Vietnam, etc.

The name Therawada comes from the ancestral Sthaviriyā, early Buddhist schools. After unsuccessfully trying to modify the Vinaya, a small group of elderly monks broke away from the majority Mahāsāṃghika during second Buddhist council. According to its own account, the Therawada School is fundamentally derived from the Vibhajjavādai, 'doctrine of analysis' group, which was a division of the Sthaviriyā. The Therawada path starts with learning, to be followed by practices, culminating in the realization of nirvana. To attain nirvana is the ultimate goal of Therawadin. In Therawada Buddhism, the cause of human existence and suffering is identified as various defilements. These are believed to be deeply connected with the mind that created suffering and stress. In order to free from suffering and stress, these defilements need to be uprooted permanently through internal investigation, analyzing, experiencing and understanding the true nature of those defilements by following the four noble truths, Pañcāsīla and eight fold paths.

Therawada Buddhism among the Tai Khamti

The Tai Khamtis are one of the most advanced tribes of the north eastern region of India in the fields of culture and traditions. They profess the Therawada sect of Buddhism. They refer it as 'Tra Stratow'. Each village has a temple which is used as the common ground for community religious and social gathering. Every house of the Khamti has a prayer room and they pray every morning and evening by offering flowers (khao-tang-som, mok-ya, nam-taw-yongli). Therawada means doctrine of elder, where the elder refers to senior monks who are the preserver of traditions. Therawada Buddhism is a sect; instead, it would be more precisely defined as a denomination. Buddhist considers three jewels that define in their religion, namely the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha. All the rituals and religious ceremonies are always started by taking refuge in the three jewels three times. The Khamti refers the lord Buddha as chow Kotama or Phra-Pen-Chow. The Khamti believed that chow Kotama occupies the fourth position after Konna-koung, Ko-Kashan and Ka-Shappa, in the life of Buddhas and after five thousand years of his death he will be succeeded by Ari-Mitya, the fifth Buddha. The doctrine of the Dhamma is regarded as the truth and the law and both prescribes and describes. Taking refuge in the Sangha, a Buddhist primarily thinks of the monks (Gombrich, 1998). The Buddhist believes that if one lives by Dhamma, he/she will ultimately attain Nipaan (Nirvan). The Khamti's consider enlightenment to be a desirable goal and an end to suffering but they also believe that it is incredibly difficult to attain. For Tai Khamti, the monastery is a traditional school where the pupils learn about the ways of life and the teaching of Gautam Buddha. The monastery acts as a center for teaching and preaching Buddhism. The Tai Khamtis are very sincere and faithful towards their religious principles and practices. They are very much conscious and concern about their present and future life. So, it has become a habitual tradition to perform the act of *Dana* in any rituals,

festival and celebration in order to acquire merits. It is a belief among the community that the poverty and suffering in the present life is only due to cause of '*Kamma Dana*' in one's past life. For Tai Khamti Buddhism is not simply a religion, but a creed and a way of life. They are so conscious about it that they always try to avoid any kind of sin and always agar to acquire merits for the present and future life in order to avail peace, happiness and to attain Nirvana.

Therawada Buddhism and Traditional Belief

The Tai Khamti of Arunachal Pradesh, India, follows and practices the Therawada sect of Buddhism. They strictly follow the five precept of Buddhism. Influence of Therawada Buddhism can be seen in once daily life. The day of the Khamti start with the paying homage to the three jewels the Buddha, the Dhamma and the Sangha early in the morning. Along with the canonical Buddhist principles, they belief in Phi or spirit. The teaching of Lord Buddha and the phi co-exist mutually. The phi is definitely placed in subordination to the belief and practices that revolve around the Buddha's teaching. The spirit world is unavoidable that one must acknowledge since they have power over their fortunes and misfortunes. The belief in the Buddhism is related to metaphysical goals, the ultimate way to the attainment of nirvana. Despite this co-existence, they maintain a definite boundary between the two different religions.

Conclusion

The Tai Khamti inhabited in the Namsai district of Arunachal Pradesh, India, are a Buddhist group belonging to the greater Tai-Shan civilization. They migrated from the Moungh Khamti in the Irrawadi valley, Burma and settled around the Tegapani River in 1751. Later they occupied different place in and around Sadiya. The Tai Khamti profess the Therawada sect of Buddhism. They have distinct script, age old culture and tradition and the glorious history. Beside the canonical belief of Buddhism, they also belief in phi. One cannot deny the present of phi. According to them if the phi is not propitiated properly, there will be a lost in all ways. There will be disunity and dishonesty in the village. The Buddhist belief and practices are considered superior because it belongs to the sacred world. The belief in phi is regarded as profane. They kept apart the practices of phi from Buddhist belief and practices. The *Buddhist* religion practices and traditional belief of *phi* co-exist mutually in the Tai Khamti society of Arunachal Pradesh, India.

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An Analysis of Thai Film Culture Transmission in China

Chen, Hongyu

Sichuan Provincial Research Institute of Thai Studies
China

Abstract

A film is not only the container of culture, but also an important medium of spreading the culture. In recent years, Thai film, an instrument of Thailand's soft power, has been very popular in China, since the suitable expression of Thai cultural elements has been run through these Thai films, which have rapidly shown a strong attraction and great influence in China. Firstly this paper outlines three major stages of Thai film culture transmission in China: the transmission of Thai folk culture; the transmission of Thai pop culture; China-Thailand communication and cooperation in film culture. Then analyzes strategies adopted to promote the spread of Thai culture in China after the revival of Thai films in 2000s, that is, to consistently and vigorously stick to the characteristics of Thai national culture, to build the multi-cultural ideas, to accurately hold the latest market's trend, and to open excellent film resources. Next, the paper will briefly elaborate the reasons that make Thai film culture willingly accepted by Chinese audiences from the following three aspects: the common and regional culture between China and Thailand; the friendly diplomatic ties between China and Thailand; good quality of Thai films itself. Finally, severe challenges existing in the Thai film culture transmission will be pointed out, so as to provide more reflection and inspiration for Thailand's culture transmission in China.

Keywords: Thai films; culture transmission; strategies

1. Background

Harvard University professor Joseph Nye once define "soft power" as a directing, attracting and imitating force which derived mainly from intangible resources such as national cohesion, culture, ideology and influence an international institutions (Joseph S. Nye, 1990). He divides the comprehensive national strength into two forms: hard power and soft power, and also believes that the rise of a country, fundamentally speaking, lies in the overall upgrade of its comprehensive national strength. A country's comprehensive national strength includes both, the "hard power" such as the economy, science and technology, military strength etc., and the "soft power" as the culture, ideology, etc. (Joseph S. Nye, 2004). The promotion of the culture soft power has become increasingly important these days. Hence we get the conclusion: culture is the embodiment of a country's comprehensive national strength; a strong country must stronger its soft power of culture (Bates Gill and Yanzhong Huang, 2006). The tide of globalization makes the cultural output and competition more intense. Different ethnic groups transmit their cultures through a variety of media, and in a variety of ways, among which, the film is a favorite way for the public to accept; it is not only an entertainment tool, but also a carrier with its interpretation and impelling power of culture. The ideological elements of the film and its potential cultural structure make it an extraordinary

power in shaping contemporary social culture. Therefore, whoever wants to have more influence in international affairs should use national cultural strategy to produce and disseminate films in the process of international cultural transmission, and also to construct the "national image". From this point of view, today's film carries the mission of cultural transmission at the national level, and it also mirrors the political, economic, cultural changes in the fastest way directly.

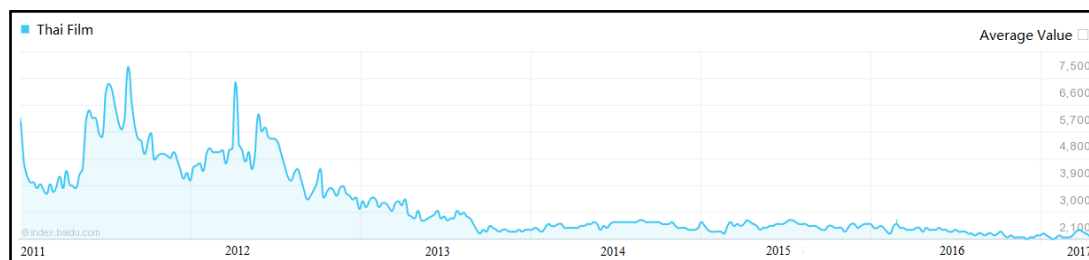
2. Thai Culture Transmission in China

After the economic crisis in Southeast Asia, the Thai film broke away from the impact of television, embarking on the road of revival, and began to step into a new development period. Thai horror film "Mae Nak" was the representative in 1999. Thus gradually formed an epic stage of development: horror film, action film, and youth film became a trend in the film and television industry. These unique Thai-style films won international awards for many times, and even caused another booming in China, which is followed by the popular culture of Japan and South Korea. From the content of cultural communication, the Thai culture of film industry is divided into three periods: the transmission of Thai folk culture; the transmission of Thai pop culture; and China-Thailand communication and cooperation in film culture.

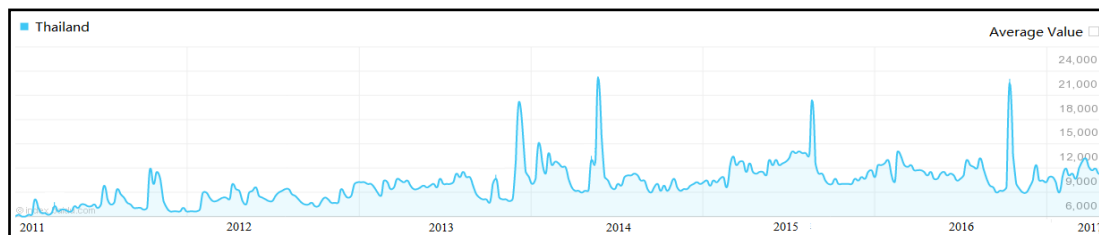
The first stage is the period when the Thai national culture spreads widely in China, and it is also the stage of China's comprehensive understanding of Thai traditional culture. National spirit is roundly presented through Thai heroic epic, causing widespread resonance. Films, such as "The Legend of Suriyothai", "Legend of the Village Warriors", "King Naresuan", dominated by historical themes, help recur the history of Thailand, and provide Chinese people a greater understanding of Thailand history. Thai martial arts film flourishes the traditional Thai boxing characteristics and its spirit. Thai film "ONG BAK", released in 2003, quickly swept the global box office. New presentation of kungfu refreshes the audience. In China, people compare Chinese martial arts with Thai boxing, launching a hot discussion on the two kinds of martial arts. Thai elements take an ever more prominent role in the sequel "ONG BAK 2", which exhibit Thai culture symbol-the elephant. In addition, myths, ghost and legends are used as materials of horror films as Thai religion is based on Hinayana Buddhism; "Mae Nak" and "Three: Going Home" are of this kind. Thai horror films have pronounced national color-fusion of Buddhist culture, which is different from Japan and South Korea horror films featured the dark depression, and also different from the Western's bloody horror films. Nowadays, the Thai horror film has a strong appeal in China, and also a strong reputation in the international market. In the French Cannes Film Festival, the copyright of Thai film "See Prang 2" is bought at a high price, 63 million baht Thai (RMB12.6 million), by a Chinese Hong Kong film company, the highest record ever of overseas sales in Thailand film industry (Chen Xiaoda, 2012).

The second stage is when Thai pop culture gets popular. Youthful love themed Thai films began to spread in China. Love stories and modern life are the theme of pop culture, and the audiences are mainly 20 to 30-year-old young people. The collective quickly raised one across the country to a big "wind". Colleges and universities also form a certain Thai learning boom. Pure love literary films, such as "The Love of Siam", "My Girl", "Bangkok Traffic Love Story", "First Love" etc., mainly describe ignorant love or innocent friendship between young men and women. Especially "Love of Siam", a romantic gay love film, released in Thailand in the summer of 2007, drawing a multifaceted friendship between two boys who held on to the dreams, meanwhile had the different emotional relationships to each other, which surprise and attracts the Chinese. The film achieves a roaring success because many difference existed from Chinese film stimulates Chinese people --different exotic scenery and atmosphere at the big screen brings a special feeling; different exotic music changed to match the tone of the story; different aesthetic images and

exotic tone appreciates the audience. Moreover, "Love of Siam" has taken deep roots in the heart of Chinese people, not only because it tells a pure love story between two boys, and the vivid plot and affecting person image, but the introduction of the longitudinal family emotional element, which makes the film rather abundant emotional connotation, exquisite and plain into the audience's heart, reaching its universal values that is not only exclusive to gay themed film. As a result, "Love of Siam" dominated Thailand's film awards season in 2007, winning the Best Picture category in all major events. In 2011, Thai film week was set up during the 14th Shanghai International Film Festival for the first time, during which the film "First Love" acted by super star Mario was sold out early during the presenting; Mario had been affixed to Thailand's first youth idol label since then.



Picture 1: Baidu index of "Thailand film"



Picture 2: Baidu index of "Thailand"

At the third stage, Thailand continues to promote the spread of Thai culture by opening geographical resources, communicating and cooperating in film culture with China. After 2013, the development of Thai film steps into a stable period. Although the number of films increased a lot compared to the previous, the lack of innovation and breakthrough does not cause a sensational film. Along with the trend of the culture wave, Thai film moves into a turning point in China. It can be seen from picture 1: the Baidu index of Thai film was pretty high before 2013, for the search volume once went up to 7000 per day, which shows the great influence of Thai film in China. Then, there comes a huge turning point: the amount of search volume drop sharply 2/3 times compared with the 2012 till now. However, comparing Baidu index of "Thai film" and "Thailand", according to picture 2, we can find that "Thai film" weakened, on the contrary, "Thailand" increased in 2013, which means that more and more people focus on Thailand rather than Thai film alone. Apart from Thai films, other Thai cultural elements, tourism, language, food, religion begin to catch Chinese attention. Therefore we can say that the soft power of Thailand increases. Reasons for this phenomenon might be multifaceted. From the perspective of the film, Thailand's opened and excellent geographical resource is one of the reasons. That is why many famous Chinese films shoot in Thailand, such as "Lost In Thailand", "Detective Chinatown" and the rest. These films arouse great repercussions in China. Chinese curiosity to Thailand rise, hence the booming of Thailand tourism for Chinese in recent years.

3. Strategies of Thai Film Culture Transmission in China

Thai films rise rapidly, which quickly drive the transmission of Thai culture. This happened not only because of exquisite production, romantic imagination and exotic images, but also because it's closely related to cultural transmission strategies, as Singaporean Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew once said, "Soft power is achieved only when other nations admire and want to emulate aspects of that nation's civilization." (Lam Pin Foo, 1996)

3.1 Adhere to the National Culture Characteristics

National culture, a country's image, represents the characteristics of the nation. It's a kernel of ethnic and national spirit, and also the source of the viability for a nation and country to maintain. In the globalization age, those countries who can stand out against the world must have its brilliant excellent national culture. Thai film's improvement depends on the development of national culture. It is because of its fully tap of the national culture, and unique packaging of Thai culture elements within the film, that Thailand find a way only belong to Thai culture characteristics. As the President of Thai Film and Television Entertainment Industry Association, senior filmmaker, Ba Maw said: we cannot copy western's creation of the plot and patterns in their movies, but create from our own cultural heritage to attract the audience (Wang Chunhua, 2013). Owing to such kind of strategies, Thai movies which contain distinct cultural characteristics—Thai boxing, Buddhist culture, elephants, transvestite culture and folk customs etc.—quickly get to know by Chinese audience and become the pronoun of Thailand. Thai epic films, for example, are mostly based on classical literature in Thailand. The basic narrative way is to feature maharajahs, and to defend against foreign invasion as the main line. The legendary love is the subordinate line. Temple incense and Buddhist atmosphere are often used as the background; on the other hand, Thai horror films, which tend to describe Thailand supernatural stories between ghosts and human beings, make people sense the a strong totem culture, mysterious witchcraft, Buddhist comeuppance theory and the traditional retributive view; as for action film in Thailand, it highlights Thai local culture elements of Thai boxing. Particularly the released Thai action "Qanba" in 2003 rolled up Thai violence aesthetics, becoming the new model of martial arts film after Hong Kong's. In short, Thai films, in the new period, are sticking to the rich Thai national culture and rooted in the local context, no matter what narrative ways or materials are used (Yao Zheng, 2010).

3.2 Build Multicultural Concept

The building of multivariate culture idea makes different cultures recognized through "universal values". That's why film culture can transmit in different culture background, accepted and recognized by different people. So, the diversity of culture is not some kind of cultural assimilation or assimilated, but seeking common ground while putting differences aside, and to make different cultural symbiosis. In the 1990s, Thailand film was not mature: technology and quality were relatively backward, and once on the brink of the stagnation of the industry. Luckily, some people with lofty ideals went abroad for further studies, in order to learn film productions from developed countries. Back home, they advocated learning film production from Hollywood. Since then, Thailand film began to adopt the western narrative style and audio-visual language. At the same time, they learned and introduced advanced photography from Hollywood, making Thai film more cultural diversity. Chatrichalerm Yukol is such a person. He once majored in cinema at the university of California in the United States. Later, he directed the film "The Legend of Suriyothai" with an international film crew, which was a huge success, not only at the Thailand

local box office record, but also won a great reputation in film industry all over the world. Moreover, Thai film "Tears of Black Tiger", directed by Wisit Sasanatieng, won the Dragons and Tigers Awards in the Annual Vancouver International Film Festival in 2000. Still, it is Thailand's first formal participation in Cannes. The film adopted post-modernism of the American Westerns and Pop art. Some typical American Westerns elements are shown in the set of contrasting and highlighted color. The melancholic romance love between the poor boy and rich young lady is full of oriental aesthetics. The film's soundtrack also featured Thailand's classic music forty years ago. We can see the integration of the East-West cultural and aesthetic ideas. "Tears of Black Tiger" not only get high box office in domestic market, but also successfully hit overseas market since its international distribution rights was bought by the United States Miramax Films (Chen Xiaoda, 2012). The huge revolution of Thailand's film industry lead Thai film onto the road of Renaissance; on the other hand, Thai film's culture diversities make the audience from different countries, with different cultures, more likely to accept Thai culture. Therefore the cross-cultural transmit of Thai movie can be more smoothly.

3.3 Accurately Grasp the Trend of Popular Culture

In recent years, Thai's teen romance film has become a popular culture after the tide of Japan and South Korea culture, lifting Thai culture a hurricane all over the world, which has played a key role in the spread of Thai culture. Teen romance film, originated in Japan, has a remarkable feature in the plot arrangement: poignant and beautiful atmosphere is built up with a disease, law or death to gain sympathy, and then resonate with audience. South Korea's teen romance films absorb the essence from Japanese teen romance films; then take the pop stars as a breakthrough, also leading Korean culture. Intelligently, following Japan and Korea, Thailand's teen romance film has its own innovation: subjecting on campus life rather than poignant one, thus accurately grasp market and prospects of teen romance film. These films show core elements such as sincere friendship, teen love and confusion of growth, which constitute an important stage of growth. So, Thai's teen romance film can cause strong repercussions in different age and countries. For instance, "The Love of Siam" occupies high box office for weeks in Thailand after releasing. In Mainland China, Douban (China's largest and most authoritative social networking service, allowing registered users to record information and makes comment) gives 8.6 scores; netizens published many posts and gave a lot of praise. At present, some scholars believe that popular culture is the culture of carnival, while others consider it as the transformation of mainstream culture. Both of them exist limitations in a certain amount of time. From the perspective of promoting national culture transmission, pop culture heritages much of its traditional mainstream culture to a large extent, and is also a transition way for Thailand's traditional and mainstream culture to transit to the globalization of culture. At least, Thailand accurately grasp the trend of the culture and promote the influence of culture, which is worthy of reference for the countries who are thinking of cultural transformation, and strengthening the cultural soft power in the era of globalization.

3.4 Open Excellent Film Resources

Thai film's rich resources--beautiful natural sceneries, unique humanistic amorous feelings, and perfect mature services, attract many foreign companies to cooperate in Thailand. This can not only help Thailand to earn a large amount of foreign exchange, but also introduce a new channel for Thai culture transmission, at the same time, promote the prosperity of Thai economy and the development of tourism. The shot of Chinese films in Thailand is firstly popular in Hong Kong film industry. Many police action films are filmed in Thailand. Because the Thai government vigorously develops the film industry, adheres to the

strategies of opening and cooperation, and encourages more Chinese excellent films to shot in Thailand. "Lost In Thailand", "Detective Chinatown", "The Man From Macau 2" etc. are all of these films owing much to the policy. All of the films contain rich Thai culture. When these films are released, people have a more profound understanding of Thailand, being eager to travel to Thailand to enjoy the local natural scenery and authentic Thai culture. Especially after the release of "Lost in Thailand" in 2013, according to the Thailand Tourism Authority, the number of the Chinese who visit to Thailand rises dramatically, from 2.7 million in 2012 to 2013 in 4.7 million, up 68% from a year earlier. Moreover, after the hit of "Detective China town" in 2015, the number of people to Thailand continues to surge to 5.3million, which means the year-on-year growth of 50% compared with 2014. So we can predict that the hit of films play an important role for Thailand's tourism development and the spread of culture. Now the government is actively promoting film and television production industry chain integration, and strive to make Thailand to be the new production center of film industry in Asia, which will not only promote the development of local film industry, but also will actively promote the transmit of Thai culture.

4. Reasons for Thai film Culture's Acceptation in China

The world culture spreads in a more rapid way as the spread of information technology and the Internet has broken the cultural barriers. Thai film culture quickly catches on around China, in addition to the help of innovation of Thai movie and its competitive competence; there are some reasons that make Thai culture acceptable by Chinese audiences.

4.1 The Common & Regional Culture of China and Thailand

Geographical environment, as the basis of human being's development, has an important influence on the development and communication of culture, which cannot be ignored. Baron de Montesquieu, the French philosopher, once systematically discusses the important influence of geographical environment on a nation's moral, fashion and law etc. in *The Spirit of the Laws*. Both China and Thailand lie in the southeast of Asia. The geographical adjacent makes frequent cultural exchanges between the two nations. More importantly, an affinity in the common and regional culture gradually formed. The origin and development of Chinese Confucian culture and Buddhism culture, Thai boxing and Chinese Kung Fu, and trade ties between the two countries, decided that both China and Thailand have shared cultural elements in common values and worldview, which make Chinese audience more easy to recognize the cultural psychology of the Thai film and television works, and accept the Thai culture finally. According to Cross-cultural communication theory: when people have similarities or general trend, the more they encountered in their mutual communication, the less communication difficulties or setbacks they will confront. Hence there is less possibility of misunderstanding, and vice versa. So the rising popularity of Thailand and its culture in China, in fact, reflects the shared culture in Asia, and the mutual infiltration and influence of each other. For example, Arnika Fuhrmann highlights the centrality of Buddhist representation to conceptualizations of sexual subjectivity in contemporary Thai film "Nang Nak". The paper, Ghost Wife: Desire, Embodiment, and Buddhist Melancholia in a Contemporary Thai Ghost Film, says that Nang Nak is a strong example of Buddhist-nationalist cultural recovery in the domain of sexuality. So we can see that Buddhism's vital role has not only been examined in the arena of nation building and official politics in the production of national modernity in Thailand (Arnika Fuhrmann, 2009), but also in the arena of Thai film culture.

4.2 Friendly Diplomatic Relations between China and Thailand

According to *Book of Han*, exchanges between China and Thailand have more than two thousand years. After the founding of new China, China and Thailand formally established diplomatic relations in July 1st, 1975. Since then the two sides have promoted a closer cooperation in political, economic and cultural exchanges. Thai princess Sirindhorn is the first to visit China in the Thai royal family. Later, she investigated and studied in China for many times. And she visits China the most times among the royal overseas friends. Thailand's President Kukrit Pramoj, an ethnic Chinese Thais with deep emotion for China, signed the diplomatic agreement between China and Thailand. On the other hand, China also attaches great importance to the cooperation with Thailand. Foreign minister Wang Yi once said, relationship between China and Thailand was of particularity, stability, and importance. Particularity means that it is a partner, friends, but also relatives between China and Thailand, "China and Thailand being the members of one family", has been a household name, and become the common aspirations of the two peoples. Stability refers to that friendship between China and Thailand will never be interrupted, and will always maintain the precious stable development, no matter what changes happened in domestic and external situation. Importance implies that both sides put relations of each other in an important position, making China-Thailand relations always in the forefront of China's relations with her neighbors, which has a demonstrative effect on promoting the development of China and ASEAN as a whole. China's national projects — "The Belt and Road" promoted in 2015. Thailand, the pivotal location of "the Maritime Silk Road", will undoubtedly bring the historic takeoff for China — Thailand cooperation in economy, politics and culture. The news conference for the foundation of China and Thailand Film cooperation and CIBN Film Company held in Bangkok in February of 2017. It was the first time that Thailand large-scale video conference was held by the production company, showing the depth cooperation and bright future for China-Thailand film and television culture. Thus it can be seen that China and Thailand friendly and stable diplomatic environment plays a vital role for the transmission of Thai film culture.

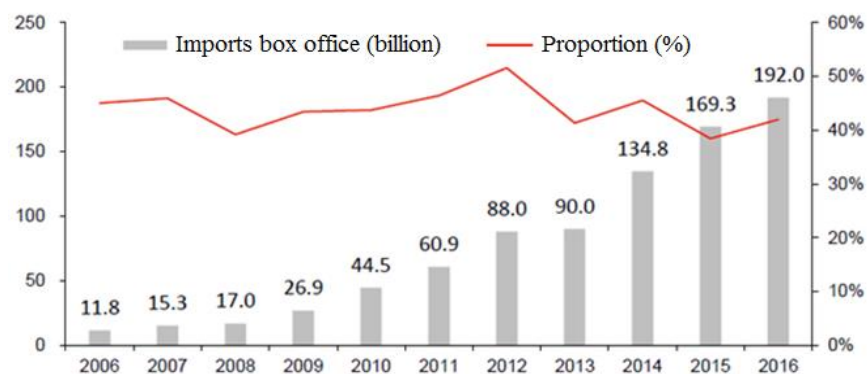
4.3 Good Qualities of Thai Films Itself

Thai film culture can be accepted by Chinese audience, apart from the common and regional culture of China and Thailand, and the friendly diplomatic relations between China and Thailand, good quality of Thai film itself is also a factor: such as a vivid story and plot, unique music and songs, excellent film stars, local cultural tradition etc. Yongyuth Thongkongtoon, Thai film director, producer and screenwriter, states that the Thai film should better conform to the criteria of quality filmmaking, which means that the object of the Thai film is particularly for the international market with vivid plot profound meaning, and affecting person image, which is a principle for a well-qualified producer. In this sense, he considers that the content of the movie must be universal and kept in mind that Thai movie positioning should be contemporary for international audiences (Tanyatorn Panyasopon, 2012). Good music and songs in Thai film is a blend of traditional and modern, multiple music styles and configurations, and the marvelous harmony of music and pictures, expressing the national emotion in a poetic way, to make contemporary Thai films present a unique national temperament and feminine with a reserved artistic style; And through the strong lyrical color and poetic character, Thailand's unique music find an effective protection in conflict and balance between the business and the art, helping Thai film gets a place in China's film market (Li Guo, 2011). In the late 90s, Thailand's film opened the overseas market with the help of foreign filmmakers and stars. Hong Kong director Peter Chan, Pang Brothers', and photographer Christopher Doyle have made a great contribution to Thai film transmission in China. Peter Chan, who spent his childhood in Bangkok, has been a producer of Thai films for many times. The horror serial film "Three: Going Home", directed by Peter

Chan, is a co-production in Korea, Hong Kong and Thailand. At the same time, Thai film stars, most of whom contract in Thailand with big television companies, are in high level education, and handsome in appearance, often traveling around in China, Japan and South Korea of southeast Asia, cooperating with Europe and Hollywood. These film stars give the wings of idol worship to promote the spread of Thailand film in China or Asia even all over the world (Zhang Caihong, 2012). In a word, Thai films in recent years, with the love, horror, action, epic cinematic stories leading film industry in Asia, are based on the combination with the local cultural tradition and narrative types to develop international audio-visual language and the building content of nationalization, and “shape” of film stars, successfully open the Chinese film market, bringing a new-look Thai film (Cui Ying, 2016).

5. Challenges of Thai Film Culture Transmission

Up to now, Thai films have a foothold in Asia, and gradually expand to the whole world. From the perspective of cultural transmission, cultural card has been created, which make the whole world have a deeper understanding of Thailand. The development is always a process with turns and twists in its development. Although the transmission of Thai film culture has made such a great achievement, the problems still existed. Only to face these problems, can the Thai film culture be transmitted in a stable and long way.



Picture 3: Box office of imported films & their proportion in China

5.1 Fierce Competition in Film Market

The World Trade Organization (WTO) points out: film and television industry is able to fulfill its sustainable development. The film and television industry of Asia-Pacific region occupies the important position in the international film market, which also makes the film and television market to develop in a number of countries.

As is shown in picture 3, China has a huge film market in recent years. The box office of imported films has accelerated each year, which has increased more than 16 times in number within ten years from 2006 to 2016. In addition, China's Intelligence Research Consulting released “2017-2022 China's Film Industry Development Status and Investment Strategy Research Report”, saying that the potential of Chinese film market is tremendous: box office of imported films is 1.18 billion Yuan in 2006, while 19.2 billion Yuan in 2016, surging almost 20 times. The Chinese film market has become the world's second largest one, a strategic position for the world film industry. The United States, Japan, South Korea and India are all powerful in the film and television industry, which occupy a certain influence in China. The meteoric rise of Thai films will inevitably face the fierce competition from the world's excellent movies. So it is a great challenge for Thai films to consider how to make full use of the advantages to remain its innovation and

competition. As a result, if the Thai film culture wants to keep its enormous impact in the future, it will inevitably encounter the cruel film market.

5.2 Unstable Political Situation

Political stability is the fundamental guarantee for the prosperity and progress of a country's culture, otherwise the development of culture is just like water without a source, or a tree without the root; and the development of culture is the inherent requirement and a driving force of political stability. Thailand's political situation has sometimes been in the unstable state since 2006, for demonstration happened frequently. Suvarnabhumi airport was closed again in 2008; Bangkok television continued to suffer bomb attacks in 2010; Military coup d'état in 2014. All these political events had a negative effect on Thailand's economic and cultural development. Fortunately, these did not seriously hinder the development of economy and culture in Thailand. Early in the development, Thailand's film industry cannot recover from the verge of bankruptcy to prosperity without government's support. Nowadays, Thai film, on the way to the development of globalization, needs more support from the government and a stable political environment.

5.3 Destruction & Deterioration of Ecological Environment

The beautiful tropical scenery is an essential part of Thai film; it is also a symbol of the elements of Thai film. Beautiful natural scenery attracted large cooperation between overseas films and Thai films, which expand the influence of Thai culture. However, with the development of tourism in Thailand, the number of tourists increases rapidly in recent years. Ecological environment began to be destroyed in Thailand, which, in return, restricts the development of Thai film industry to a certain extent. It is known that the research institution subordinated to Thai national parks and wildlife protection bureau investigated seven ocean parks, where the growth environment of coral reef has not been optimistic since 2009. Coral reefs' survival situation is very worrying. To prevent the coral reefs' living environment from further deteriorating, The Thai government authorities gradually shut down dive sites from 2010 to 2010, which has played a positive role in protecting the coral reefs. Thailand Wood Island (also known as the "virgin islands"), praised as the most beautiful islands in Thailand, was badly destroyed. Many tourists visit there, however, some of them do harm on the environment. As a result, island has already been closed indefinitely until it recovers. Visual esthetics is the key to the art of films, which will be affected by the environmental pollution, so protecting the environment has a higher positive significance for the aesthetic pursuit and the sustainable development of the Thai film.

6. Conclusion

Thai film is a dark horse, booming in Asia's film market, and promoting the spread of Thai culture to the world. China and Thailand being the members of one family", hence great progress has been made in Thai's culture transmission in China. Nowadays, Thailand has become a tourist destination for Chinese tourists. Thai culture has also been well known to Chinese people. Some cultural creative products are also popular in China. The industry of Thai food and Thai SPA etc. has developed rapidly in China. All of the impacts are inseparable from Thai film culture. In the future, the trend of globalization is irreversible. Culture will be further blended. If one wants to stand among worldly nationalities, she must strive to stronger a unique native culture influence. From this perspective, the experience of Thai film culture's transmission is worth our learning and using for reference.

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Khâm Són Christang: A Witness of the French Missionnaires' Knowledge of Thai Language During the Ayutthaya Era of Siam (Thailand)

Chitkla, Kantaphong
INALCO-Paris
France

Abstract

French missionaries of the Missions Etrangères de Paris arrived in Siam during King Narai's reign (1656-1688). They introduced there a new educational system, establishing schools. Their essential aim, however, was the spread of the Catholic faith. While working on the archives of the Missions Etrangères in Paris, we have noticed that these missionaries devoted themselves to the study of the Siamese language. Mgr Laneau, Apostolic Vicar in Siam, composed a teaching manual of the Siamese language and a dictionary. Although his dictionary has disappeared, his works on catechism had presented that he was expert in Thai language. The other document remains and proves the mastery of the Siamese language by these missionaries: "Khâm Són Christang", published in 1796. It is a Roman Catechism, in which Siamese language is romanized.

In this Roman Catechism, we can see the use of many Siamese words borrowed from the Pali, Sanskrit and Khmer languages, which were used in the poems of the Ayutthaya Era such as phrôm (Brahma), lôkbphiphop (Earth), qhantha (Groups of personality), anisong (Result of merit), and phiphacsa (Judgment). Moreover, a "royal vocabulary" exists in the Siamese language to speak to the king or with him, still used today. It is used in this Catechism to talk about God, such as phra hu'ru'thai (Heart) and sadet (Come or Go). Furthermore, the Catechism used P.O. (His Majesty), when referring to God, as He is the most powerful entity, according to the Catholic faith. Should we consider that French missionaries had the opportunity to study the classical Thai literature with the elites of the royal court? We also wish to evoke the influence that the romanization used in this Catechism may have had upon the pronunciation systems proposed in Mgr Pallegoix and Mgr Vey's dictionaries of the Siamese language (19th century).

Keywords: Thai language, Romanization, Catechism, French missionaries, Educational development

Introduction

If we would like to speak about the relations between France and Thailand, French missionaries should be mentioned: besides the evangelism, their role in the implementation of an educational system for all social classes, and social welfare has been very important. Another interesting issue is French missionaries' knowledge about the Thai language. These priests, who settled down in this country and had the power to administrate the Mission of Siam since the Ayutthaya period, were the missionaries of the Missions Etrangères de Paris (M.E.P.). They arrived at Siam the first time during the reign of King Narai the Great, and they wrote works about the Holy Scriptures and the Christian doctrine in the Thai language. Their manuscripts were kept in France. In the Rattanakosin period, a book of doctrine propagation "Khâm Són

Christang” appeared. It was written in the Romanized Siamese by Monseigneur Garnault (1786-1811), and it was published in 1796 during the reign of King Rama I. This book is the first printed matter which still remains until now. We should try to find where these missionaries learned the Thai language from, how much they could understand Thai, which level of the language they were able to master, whether “Khâm Són Christang” was copied from Mgr Laneau’s work, and whether this book, “Khâm Són Christang”, was used in the next period or not and in which pattern.

Monseigneur Garnault’s Life & his Works

Monseigneur Arnaud-Antoine Garnault, Bishop of Metellopolis, was in charge of Vicaire Apostolique after Mgr Coudé died. At that time, he had propagated Christianity in the Mission of Siam for 15 years under Mgr Le Bon’s leading. He was a good missionary and had a moderately good knowledge of the Thai language (Costet, 2002: 287). He then moved to Penang together with most of families who were from Kedah state in Melayu. That was the starting point of the Mission of Malaysia. Before that he had been in service of Church of Santa Cruz or Wat Kudi Chin on the Thonburi bank of the Chao Phraya river, and had administrated four Christian communities in the South of Thailand where 400 Christians lived. Mgr Garnault had stayed in the southern part of Siam for eight years when he moved back to Bangkok so that he would like to rehabilitate any missions in the south to be lively again. He assembled young Christian girls and set up the Lovers of the Holy Cross (*Amantes de la Croix*), and he opened a small school for instructing young boys to be priests while the stubborn and never friendly Portuguese still settled in Bangkok. (Costet, 2002: 288)

Mgr Garnault arrived in Bangkok in 1792. There was a native priest with two senior novices and some elder novices who lived with him. He opened the first Minor Seminary in Chanthaburi where Vietnamese novices took refuge, and after that he gradually opened the second one in Takua Thung district and the third one in Bangkok. In 1788, the Seminary in Chanthaburi had 6 novices; in 1792, the Seminary in Takua Thung had 9 novices, and the Seminary in Bangkok had 11 novices. The senior novices taught these junior novices, and they were looked after by the missionaries. When the Seminary in Bangkok had already been stable, Mgr Garnault moved all 23 novices from the three seminaries and assembled them in the one in Bangkok. Mgr Garnault was on duty in Bangkok around the end of 1795 together with one Siamese priest and two novices. Even if he tried to solve the problem about stubborn Portuguese Christians who slandered Siamese people who confessed Christianity (Costet, 2002: 288) he never abandoned his duty in preaching Christianity. He has been the first missionary who used printing in his propagation. In 1787, he published the doctrine in the Siamese language in Pondicherry, India; and he set up the small printing house in Penang. He asked a Chinese priest, with whom he had worked in Penang, to learn the job of printer. That’s why he set up the printing house at the Church of Santa Cruz when he was in active service there. C. Gunn Geoffrey (2003: 245) says: *“He was the publishing creator in Siam because he published the dialects by using Latin alphabets.”* Afterwards, this printing house has been neglected; so, in 1836, Protestant missionaries set up the printing house which is known as the Bradley Printing Press.

Mgr Garnault ordained eight native priests during the time he was in the position of Apostolic Vicar for 25 years. He ordained priests more than any bishops who entered into Siam since the Ayutthaya period. He had an audience with King Rama II of Chakri Dynasty. One year later, he got sick and very weak. He died on 4th March 1811. He had been a missionary in Siam during 40 years.

Characteristics of “Khâm Són Christang”

According to the history of the Catholic Church in Thailand, although “Khâm Són Christang” isn’t the first Roman Catholic text which has been written in the Thai language, it is the first text ever published in Thailand in 1796 by Mgr Garnault, Apostolic Vicar of the Mission in Siam (Mission de Siam). The press was situated in the area of Santa Cruz. This religious place was important because it remained together with the old Kudi Chin community which was located on the right bank of the Chao Phraya River. This church was situated near Wangderm Palace (Old Palace) in the Thonburi period (1767-1782). King Taksin the Great gave this land to Portuguese people because they helped him fighting against Burma until he won the war. That’s why this church was entitled in the Portuguese language which meant “The Holy Cross”.

We may claim that “Khâm Són Christang” was published in Siam for the first time by supposing from the kinds of papers, the alphabets, the publishing of some books which might be published in the same period, but we couldn’t find the year and the press as in this doctrine (Garnault, 1997: 5). So, the word “Saccarat tee thai xat manut 1796 pi” which was on the book cover could help us to confirm that proposal the best. At this time, we could find that the Thai language which was in this book was written in Latin alphabets, and it could be called the Romanized Siamese. It was like that because of 2 factors: one was the writing about the religion in Thai alphabets was forbidden, and the other was the piety along Mgr Goudé’s concept. He would like the Thai language to be the language of Mission, and it would be used for countering with the stubborn Portuguese (Costet, 2004: 293).

Information about the Printing

Khâm Són Christang which was used in this research was the edition of Bicentennial Celebrations of Assumption Printing Press. Roman alphabets were used for the pronunciation of the Thai language. There were 64 pages, and it hadn’t completed yet because the last texts in the original documents were “hai qhau” which was able to be interpreted “give him”. It showed that there had to be the next page. Moreover, “phắc ton” or “the beginning part” were identified in a page of this book; so, we could suppose that there should be the second part and the following parts, but we hadn’t discovered other parts so far. We thought that this book might have the mistake of the page number system in typesetting because Arabic numerals were used from the first page to the 24th page (1-24) while Roman numerals were used from the 25th page to the 69th page (XXV-XLIX). If we compared the page numbers with the digits in them, we would notice the difference between them. When we read each page, we would find that there weren’t XXVII and XXXVII; it might cause some parts of this book were lost. However, Father Surachai Chumsriphan (Garnault, 1997: 4) explained that it was the mistake from the page number printing because the texts between the page XXXVI and the page XXXIX had the concordance. We would like to give some examples for supporting this explanation.

XXXVI: *mi hai long duai qhong pheem din*, (มิให้หลงด้วยของแผ่นดิน), (Don’t be misled in the crown property)

XXXIX: *ha rac tee mu’uang savant hang nan* (ให้รักแต่ในเมืองสวรรค์ทั้งนั้น) (Do love everything in the heaven)

Although there were mistakes in the publishing, this book was the important evidence because it could show the publishing evolution in Thailand which was the starting point of the western technologies in Siam. When the administrative center of Mission Catholic was moved from Church of Santa Cruz to Assumption Cathedral, the press was moved also in 1837, during the age of Archbishop Couverzy. He assigned Rev. Clémenceau who was the treasurer and the instructor of the Seminary at this time to be in charge of the press at first, this press was called "Catholic Mission Press". In the present time, it was called "Assumption Press" (Larqué, 1998: Historique). Two years later, Monseigneur Pallegoix, the position at that time, published 2 doctrines: one was written in Thai, and the other was in Vietnamese. After that, he wrote the handbook both in Vietnamese and in Thai. In 1850, his grammatical book and his another book "Maha Kangwol" were published in Thai alphabets (Boonarunraksa, 2007: 270).

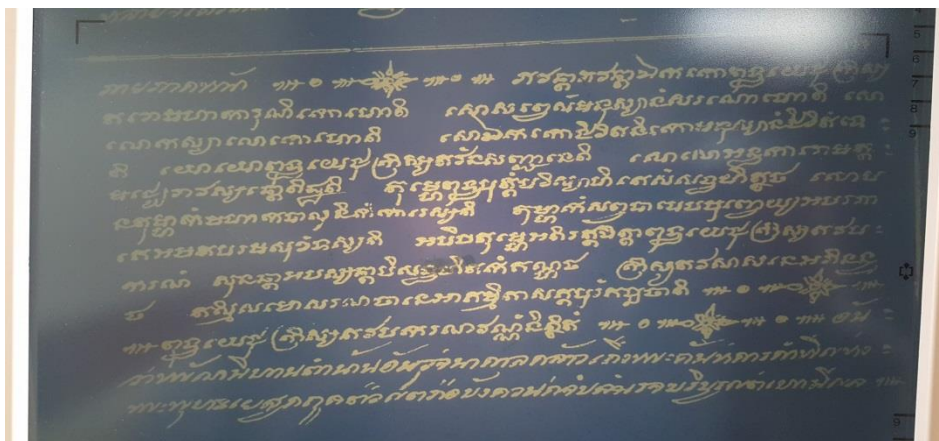
Rock Showing the Shame and the Prohibition of the Thai language

During the Ayutthaya period, all of doctrines and the prayers which were written by Mgr Laneau were in the Thai language. He used Thai alphabets because he was expert in Thai and intended Siamese to confess Christianity. "Why were the doctrines in the reign of King Rama I published in Latin alphabets?" We will be able to answer this question if we study the history of later Ayutthaya.

Around 1730, there was a boy whose name was "Teng". He was a son of Luang Krai Kosa and Mrs. Nun, a Cochinchinese Christian. He was pursued by his father's relatives at the catholic camp. When he was 10 years old, he received the baptism and studied in the seminary. During this time, after his father died, his father's relative banished his mother and him. When His Royal Highness Phorn knew this story, he commanded Teng to take off the priest's cloth and to put on the cloth like Siamese. He asked Teng why he confessed Christianity. Teng answered "I think that this is the good religion". His Royal Highness Phorn asked him again "Can your God help you to escape my power?" Teng replied "Sure, because he has the holiness." (Launay, 2000 b: 115). His Royal Highness Phorn beat Teng because he refused to step on the crucifix and to pay respect to the Buddha image. His Royal Highness Phorn accused that Teng was forced to confess Christianity by Mgr Tessier (1668-1736), but this priest told that Teng was Christian before he arrived in Siam. Later, Teng fled from Siam and lived in Cochinchina (Costet, 1996: 113).

Although it wasn't the first event which made the discordant crux between the royal court and the Catholic Church, His Royal Highness Phorn was unsatisfied. The situation simmered continuously, and it burst when Mgr Tessier gave some books composed by Mgr Laneau to any His or Her Royal Highness who were friendly with the missionaries. The book had contents which explained God's characteristics and said that metempsychosis doesn't exist. The oldest son received this book. The King knew this story, so it was the main issue argued in the royal court for several months. After that there was the Royal Command for Mgr Tessier to go to the court, and Chao Phraya Phrakhlung was the chief of this investigation. On 1st October 1731, Chao Phraya Phrakhlung ordered to put the stone at the entrance of Saint Joseph Catholic Church, Ayutthaya. There were 4 prohibitions carved on it.

1. Don't use Khmer alphabets (for the Pali language) and don't use Siamese alphabets for writing books about Christianity
2. Don't preach about Christianity in the Thai language
3. Siamese, Mon, and Laotian were forbidden to confess Christianity
4. Don't write any books which debated Siamese's religion



Since then, there weren't any religious works written in the Thai language in Mission of Siam until the period of Mgr Pallegoix (1841-1862) who composed many religious books in the Thai language even his dictionary in four languages "Sappa Pajana Pasa Thai" in which was the Thai orthography also.

Remarks of the Transcription

"Romanized Siamese Language" or "ภาษาไทยวัด" which was in this research was only the beginning of transcription working. So, there aren't any linguistic principles or regulations as present.

"banda dai rap qham son cha rung ru'ang thau samo' séeng thongfa, lee phu su'ng su'c son qhon pen an mac hàì thu' qhuam xop tham, nan lau co praduchdang dau dara chamro'n iau pennicha nirandon pai" (Garnault, 1997: 15)

We can pronounce this phrase as below.

"People who study the doctrines will be prosperous as the light in the sky. Many noblemen who teach people to hold the morality will be flourishing as stars all the time."

So, for the transcription in this period, Thai tone marks weren't specified for every tone. There were only two tones which had the intonation words: Falling tone and Rising tone. The words spelling was changeable, such as the word "คำ", it was spelled by "kham", but sometimes it was spelled by "qham". That's because Mgr Garnault didn't live long enough in Thailand, so he wasn't familiar with the Thai language and the transcription principles. Until this time, there still was nobody who analyzed the spelling form and the transcription of this book. We would like to summarize the transcription as the table below.

Initial Consonants of Romanized Siamese Language

Initial consonants	Romanized Siamese Language	Examples and transcription by Paul Xavier	Modern Thai language
ก [kh]	kh qh	Khâm / คำ qhon / คน	คำ [kham] คน[khon]
จ [c]	Ch	chà / จะ chamro'n / จำเริญ	จะ[caʔ] จำเริญ[camrɔ:n]
ช [ch]	X	xop/ ชอบ	ชอบ[chw:b]
ท [th], ฑ [th]	Th	hu'ru'thai / หือฤไทย tham/ธรรม	หือฤ[haʔru:tʰaj] ธรรม [tham]
ป [p]	P	praduch / ประจุ pai / ไป	ประจุ[pràʔdùt] ไป[paj]
พ [ph], ฝ [ph]	Ph	phon / พัน phu / ฝู	พัน[phón] ฝู [phú:]

Final Consonants of Romanized Siamese Language

Final consonants	Romanized Siamese Language	Examples and transcription by Paul Xavier	Modern language
ก [k]	c	Bangcoc / บางกอก	บางกอก [ba:ŋkò:k]
จ [t]	t	praduch / ประจุ	ประจุ [pràʔdùt]
ช [t]	t	xop / ชอบ	ชอบ[chw:p]
ท [t], ฑ [t]	t	phuthi / พุทธิ	พุทธิ [phútthíʔ]
ป [p]	p	bap / บาป	บาป[bà:p]
พ [p], ฝ [**]	p	ruthanuphap รัตนูปภาพ	รัตนูปภาพ [ríttha:núʔphá:p]

**** This alphabet was never used as the final consonant.**

Vowels in Romanized Siamese Language

Siamese Vowels / Phonetic Alphabets	Romanized Siamese	Examples and transcription by Paul Xavier	Modern words
อะ[aʔ]	à a:	chà / จะ traba: / ตระบะ	จะ[caʔ] ตบะ [tàʔbàʔ]
-า[a:]	a	sarapha / สารพา	สรรพ[sàppháʔ]
ุ[uʔ]	u	duch / ดุจ	ดุจ[dùt]
ู[u:]	u	phu / ฝู	ฝู [phú:]
เะ[eʔ]	e	pen / เป็น	เป็น[pen]
เะ[e:]	e	thevada/เทวดา	เทวดา[the:wáʔda:]

Usage the Diacritical Marks (Diacritic system)

Thai tone marks	Current sound	Examples and transcription by Paul Xavier	Modern words
ˊ	ˊ / ˊ Falling tone	kèe / แก่	แก๊ [kê:] ชั่ว [chûa] เรี่ยก [riak]
ˋ	-	xuà / ชั่ว	เป็น [pen] อูด [uʔdon] คำ [kham]
ˋ	ˋ / ˋ Rising tone	rièc / เรี่ยก	เห็น [hěn] สอน [sǎ:n]

The transcription in Khâm Són Christang was the beginning of Romanized Siamese Language usage of which the principles began to be used in the period of Mgr Pallegoix, a friend of King Rama IV.

The Evolution of Vocabularies from the Past to the Present

This book was useful for studying the etymology. We could find that the modern Thai has the contraction, the linking sound, the alphabet change, the vowel change from before. Maybe they were changed so much that they seemed to be the different word; or we might think that there never were these words in the Thai language.

<i>Romanized Siamese</i>	<i>Spell like sound</i>	<i>Modern Vocabularies</i>	<i>English</i>
Arupang	อรุปัง	อรุป [àʔroùp]	Abstract
Buqholla	บุคคละ	บุคคล [bùkkhon]	Person
Khampre	คำแปร	คำแปล [khampɛ:]	Meaning
Nieru'mit	เนี่ยมิต	นิรมิต [níʔráʔmít]	Transform by magic
Qhai qhai	ไค ไค	ใครๆ [khraj]	Anyone
Somkeb	สมเขป	สังเขป [sǎŋkhèp]	In brief
Ruthanuphap	รุทรานูป	ฤทธานุภาพ [ríttha:ʔnùʔphâ:p]	Power
Tamri	ตำริ	ตำริ [damriʔ]	Consider
Thatsa	ธาตุสะ	ธาตุ [thâ:t]	Element
Traba	ตระบะ	ตบะ [tàʔbàʔ]	Penance
Uprama	อุประมา	อุปมา [ʔùppàʔma:]	Metaphor
Vuanà	หัวหน้า	หัวหน้า [hǔaʔnâ:]	Chief
Xivitrthi	ชีวิตรตี	ชีวิตินทรีย์ [chi:ʔvíʔtinsi:]	Life

Neologism

Moranasan	มรณาสัญ	มรณะ/อาสัญ [mɔːrɑ̀nǎː / aːrǎn]	Death
Phuthisania	พุทธิสัญญา	พุทธิสัญญา [phútthíʔsǎnjaː]	Great agreement

Abbreviation Usage

Abbreviation	Thai language	English
K	แก้ [kêː]	Solve /Answer
P	พระ[phráʔ]	Monk
T	ถาม[thǎːm]	Ask
P. o.	พระองค์[phráʔ ʔon]	His/Her Majesty
P. r. than	พระราชทาน[phráʔraːtcháʔthaːn]	Give
T. m. t.	ท่านหาไถ่ [tháːn máʔhaːthàj]	Holy Redeemer

Khâm Són Christang and Heritage of the Thai Language in the Ayutthaya Period

The Primary Source of "Khâm Són Christang"

If we compare the duration when Mgr Garnault lived in Thailand with the book publishing, we will notice that he might not have enough time to study clearly the Thai language, but the language used in this book was more elegant than the common language which people used for communicating in the daily life. It was possible that he might study the Thai language before travelling to Mission Siam and might read the doctrines written by Mgr Laneau. Despite both priests lived in different periods, they came from Missions Etrangères de Paris. We presumed that Mgr Garnault used to do that because of one evidence, the Christianity doctrines of Mgr Laneau which were conserved in Archives des Missions Etrangères de Paris until the present time.

There were 3 books: *Premier livre d'Evangile de Monseigneur de Metellopolis en (16)84 - (16)85*, *Seconde livre où tout le reste de l'Evangile composée en siamois par Monseigneur de Metellopolis en 84*, and *Catechismo*. The first two books had the covers written in the French language. They were written in 1684, 4 years before the revolution by King Phet Raja which was known as Revolution 1688. From Darun Suksa Book composed by Brother Hilaire of The Brothers of Saint Gabriel, we could know that Monseigneur Laneau took those doctrines and the Christianity illustrations to present to King Narai the Great. Hilaire noted in the books *"The bishop takes Evangile Book and the photograph album which has the explanation in the Thai language. There are the pictures of churches or monasteries, of saints, of Saint Marty, and of the hell and heaven compared with the dharmic principle. They are given to King Narai so that the bishop's explanation will be simplified"* (Hilaire, 1922: 122). The cover of the last book was written in the Latin language. "Catechismo" was written in 1691. This doctrine was consisted of 139 pages, each page had 19 lines, and it could be separated in 39 parts. Unfortunately, it wasn't completed. the contents were about the short story about the creation of the World, the initial point of delusion, the history of Jewish people, the human-being existence, the life, the miracle, the forecasting, the doctrines, and the passion of Jesus Christ (Bruno, 1999).

There were the royal words, the Sanskrit language, and the Pali language in every line of those documents. The royal words showed that missionaries learned by reading the laud literatures and the books about the

traditions in the royal court while words in the Pali language in French missionaries' works made us believe that there was the knowledge exchange between priests and monks. Missionaries had the chance to study the language in literatures and Buddhism from the royal court and temples which was the educational center in the old days. The teaching and learning as this tradition was followed until the middle of the 19th century (Boontharm, 1976: 15-23). French missionaries needed to learn the Thai language because they had to write the doctrines or the religious books in the dialects as the second one of missionaries' regulations which were issued by Propagation de la Foi. This document was sent to Paris in 1659. Its meaning was *"Do adapt with the customs and the traditions of the terminal countries."* (Costet, 2002: 34). Although the working in each period had the different targets, the concept about the adaptation to each area wasn't restricted only in the group of French missionaries in the 17th century, it still continued until the 20th century as the case of the Thai Studies researcher, Geogre Cœdès (1886-1969) who said *"In the study of the history, the laws, the science, and the society of Indochinese Peninsular, the knowledge in the Thai language is necessary for reaching the direct sources, such as the chronicles, the annals, and every type of the code of contracts laws."* (Cœdès, 1948: 247).

The Level of Language and the Vocabularies in Mgr Laneau's Documents

From our article analysis, we could find that Mgr laneau used the official language and the high level vocabularies. He didn't use the common language as people used in the daily life. The research of Wilaiwan Khanittanan (2004: 337) discovered *"The Pali language and the royal words are in a part of the educational leader in Ayutthaya. The royal words began to be used in Khmer by high-class and well-educated noblemen. They could read and write both Siamese and Khmer"*. Mgr Laneau chose to "compose the articles" more than to "write the work pieces" for being compatible with the destinations of communication so that he would like to persuade the king and the royal court to confess Christianity.

"Tē rēk pathom phīphōph ān pradisathan hāi mi fa lē phēndin mi sakharāt dā 400 pi lē nai kala nan jang mi phra: maha krasat ōng nug [...]" This sentence appeared in the draft letter of Mgr Laneau to the king. In the present time, this letter was kept in Archives des Missions Etrangères de Paris. This sentence can be translated in English *"In the primary period, the world in which the sky and the land were placed for 400 years era. At that time, there is a king [...]"*. After we read the first line of this sentence, we could understand that the priests of MEP had the knowledge about the Sanskrit language in the moderate level. This language was usually used by people in the high society of Siam. Missionaries learned it by Sanskrit literatures integrated with Siamese literatures in the Ayutthaya period which were influenced by Indian epics like Rāmāyāna or Mahābhārata. The word "pradisathan" (install) and "Krasat" (King) were the good evidence for our hypothesis. As the idea of Emile Benveniste in India, Ksattriya, rājanya, meant Indian warriors. For Ksattriya, rājanya Ksattriya had the root from Ksattra, and it meant "power" (Benveniste, 1969: 286-287).

We analysed it by using the approach of etymology which was one field of the philology. When we considered a vocabulary, we could see its origin and its developments which were consisted of 3 types: Usage the words being the heritage, Usage the loan words, and creation the new words or "neologisms".

Words being the heritage: The royal language was an example. It meant that the Sanskrit language was used in the parts where were the pronunciation evolution, for example, "Krasat" in the Romanized Siamese and केसरी (Kesari) or "Ksattra" in the Sanskrit language, and "พระโอรส" [phráʔò: t] in the Thai language and ओष्ठ (oṣṭha) in the Sanskrit language. These words were in the letter and the book

“Evangile” of Mgr Laneau. He chose to use the royal words when he said about God, Jesus Christ, and Blessed Virgin Mary.

Loan words: We could find that there were the loan words from many languages in the book of propagation of Mgr Laneau and in the doctrines of Garnault. The words in Portuguese, Pali, and Khmer were written in the Thai alphabets and the Romanized Siamese.

Portuguese Language: "พระสปีริตสันตอ" [phráʔsàʔpìʔrìʔtuʔsantɔ:] (Espiritu Santo) and "มหาอังขอ" [máʔha: anjɔ:] (Anjo)

Pali Language: "พระมหากาญณีโก" [phráʔ máʔha: ka:runni:ko:] (royal grace) and "นิรันดรอ" [nírandɔ:n] (eternal)

Sanskrit Language: "หุ'รุ'ไถ" [hàʔruʔthaj] (heart), « phrom » [phrom] (name of one Hindu deity) and "Prathèt" [pràʔthê: t] (country)

Khmer Language: "เสวย" [sàʔvǎ:j] (eat) and « deun » [dɯ:n] (walk)

When we studied the article in the doctrines of Mgr Garnault and Mgr Laneau, we could find that these documents had the format and the content discordantly. It wasn't the transcription from Mgr Laneau's works, but we could presume that Mgr Garnault read and studied the books composed by Mgr Laneau, and sent a part of them to the original affiliation in Paris. Mgr Garnault chose the fine words and the sentences which had the grace of the of poetry, then he composed again in "Khâm Són Christang". There were many proofs which affirmed that Mgr Garnault chose the words and the writing style from Mgr Laneau, the patriarch in the Ayutthaya period. We would like to present some examples:

Advanced Vocabularies

Romanized Siamese

Caia Inthri

Thai

กายอินทรีย์

English

Body / Organic

Rithi Traba Deja

ฤทธิ์เดชะ

Supreme power

Arun Rangsi

อรุณรังศรี

Radius of sun

Royal Vocabulary

Romanized Siamese

Savoi maha borômmasuc

Thai

เสวยมหาบรมสุข

English

To be heavenly

Pronnibat tam nam p.hu'ru'thai

ปรนบัติตามน้ำพระหฤทัย

Follow the God's purpose

Assonance

Romanized Siamese

Lôp lopho moho thoso

Thai

โลภ โลภ โมห โทโส

English

Avaricious / Wrathful

Alliteration

Romanized Siamese

Màn meen thiang thee lee

Thai

มันมั่นเที่ยงแท้แล

English

Stable / Sure / Just

Thuron thurai camsab camsai

ทูลนทูลาย กำสับกำส่าย

Unbowed / Restless

Hyperbol

Phuthi lohit an praseut lee barami an jai lonlu'a na: thûc pra;can heeng P.o.

พุทธิโลหิตอันประเสริฐแลบารมีอันใหญ่คั่นเหลือทุกประการแห่งพระองค์

(With) the sublime blood and all of supreme virtues of the God

Khâm Són Christang with the Language Heritage in the 19th Century

The transcription in this book “Khâm Són Christang” was the beginning of usage the Romanized Siamese. There weren't many rules of transcription yet, but it was the honorable work for the patriarchs in the next period: Mgr Pallegoix, a friend of King Rama IV, and Mgr Vey (1875-1909), the honorary member of Siam Society. The first one formed the regulations of the Thai language transcription as information appeared in the four languages dictionary, “Sappa Pajana Pasa Thai” or “Dictionarium linguæ thaï, sive siamensis, interpretatione latina, gallica et anglica illustratum”. It was published by Imprimerie impériale in Paris in 1854. The second one improved the old dictionary of Mgr Pallegoix by adding the explanation about the Thai language usage and cutting of the translation in the Latin language. It was renamed “Sari Poj Pasa Thai” or in another name “Siamese French English Dictionary”. It was published by Assumption Press in 1896. From the table of pronunciation by Mgr Vey, it showed that he hold the pronunciation principles as Mgr Pallegoix set up. Moreover, there were some words which were used in “Khâm Són Christang” of Mgr Garnault. So, we could understand that Mgr Pallegoix would like foreigners understand the Thai language which was used in the communication in every situation. In this dictionary, he didn't start with the French language which was his mother language or the Latin language which was the main language of the propagation, but he chose to start with the Thai language, but they were the Thai words which transcribed the letter “A-Z” replaced “ก-ฮ”. The major and minor vocabularies were set up, and the pronunciation was written in the Latin alphabets together with the diacritical marks for every sound in the Thai language as the examples below.

<i>Thai</i>	<i>Pronunciation</i>	<i>English</i>
อะ	A:	Very short a., sometimes privative a.
เอะ อะ	E: A:	Tumult
ร็อง เอะ อะ	Rong E: A:	Confusing voices
บ่าย	BÃI	Afternoon
บ่าย คล้อย	BÃI KLŎI	To ben down, to turn towards the west
ตะวัน บ่าย	TÃVÃN BÃI	Towards evening, towards sunset
บอระมะ	BORŎMMA:	Excellent, perfect, there is no one like him
บอระมะ ราชา	BORŎMMA: RAXA	Supreme king
บอระมะ สุข	BORŎMMA: SŪKH	Perfect felicity
กายะ	KAJA:	Body, flock
กายะ อินทรี	KAJA: ĨNSI	All the senses of the body
กายะ กรรม	KAJA: KÃM	Physical activities

Conclusion

From the doctrines in the Ayutthaya period to the dictionaries in the Rattanakosin period, they showed the activeness, the diligence, and the dedication of the effort and the tenacity of French missionaries in the propagation so that Christianity would be insisted on Thailand. At first, they travelled to Siam by the necessity and the coincidence in the same time because their vessels faced up with the storms and the persecution Christian in Vietnam. That's why the first generation of missionaries, led by Mgr de La Motte (1660-1679), had to live temporarily in Ayutthaya in the reign of King Narai the Great. If we considered the dictionary of Mgr Vey which was published in 1896, we could find that Catholic Church permanently insisted on Thailand as we see in nowadays. Missionaries didn't dedicate in the religion only, they tried to study the Thai language and literatures also; and we couldn't refuse that they could do well as the language usage in the doctrines. If we thought that "Khâm Són Christang" was the doctrine writing or the religious literature, it wasn't the mistake. Besides the elegance in the language, the teaching about the law of cause and effect, the respect to mothers or fathers, and the love to fellowmen were the moral principle which weren't in contrast to Buddhism, and they could sustain the society to be more pleasant.

There were many dictionaries which were extensively used since the period of Siam Reform or in the reign of King Rama V until now because of the Thai language learning of French missionaries. From the literary work "Memory" of Prince Damrong Rajanupab (1963: 275-276) it presented that this dictionary was used for teaching and studying in Grand Palace. When students found the difficult vocabularies, they would use the dictionary "Sappa Pajana Pasa Thai" by Mgr Pallegoix. In the field of the study the French language, there was nobody who didn't know the dictionary by Phra Riem Virajaphak, the alumni of Assumption College which was established by Rev. Emile Colombet in 1875.

For the next study to point out the value of "Khâm Són Christang" as a religious literature, it is advisable to compare the ethical comparison with the Buddhist doctrine in Thai literature such as "Phra Malai Kham Luang", Sacred words of the monk Malai or "Trai Bhum Phra Luang", Sermon on the three Worlds.

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Young Designers and Senior Artisans Developing Weaving Crafts: a Comparative Study of a Design Workshop with Mlabri Community in Nan and Highland Villages of Chiang Mai Province

Chuenrudeemol, Woranooch

Boon La-Or, Nanthana

Tantinipankul, Worrasit

School of Architecture and Design

King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi

Thailand

Abstract

The northern region of Thailand has long been known for its rich natural resources for producing weaving arts and crafts. Local craftsmanship for producing tools from natural materials such as bamboo, rattan wood, grass and ivy has historically been integral in village life. However, the influx of modern goods and cheap plastic products throughout the mountainous area made local weaving crafts and tools diminish, as it took longer time to produce and was not attractive enough for modern usage. Only a few elderly people in the villages still produce woven baskets while younger generations focus on other works to generate more income. This research paper discusses the work of Industrial Design students and faculties from King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT) in three areas of study; the Mlabri community in Bor Kluea District, Nan Province, and two villages in Chiang Mai Province. The class of 16 students collaborated with 3 highland communities with the aim of developing weaving crafts by learning from and building partnerships with elder artisans. Seeing that a young generation of students from urban Bangkok valued the experience of learning to weave local products created a sense of pride in the community. Synchronously, young students also introduced local artists to new techniques and design suitable for modern lifestyle. As weaving crafts is a time-consuming process, it requires a healthy relationship between teachers and students to understand each other and compromise their expectations to complete the final products. With KMUTT's connection to new markets, newly designed weaving products could be the inspiration for artisans and other younger villagers to continue making crafts that represent local identity of the communities.

Keywords: weaving craft, craft design, artisan, highland community

Introduction

Handicrafts of hill tribe communities in northern Thailand represent their relationship with nature. With rich unique material resources in the forest such as bamboo, ivy, grass, palm and etc., communities in highland area demonstrated skill in transforming forest products into unique handicrafts for common usages in their everyday life practice of rural agriculture. However, with the consequence of Cold War

politics and the major economic development in Thailand starting at the beginning of 1960s, Thailand has transformed from agricultural to more industrialized society. Moreover, in context of northern Thailand that illegal opium cultivation was practice in the area of local hill tribe minorities, Thai government also stimulated more development into the mountainous region, the industrial goods therefore gradually replaced crafts products in everyday life activities of local communities.

On the other hand, the development program originated by Cold War politics and American's involvement in Vietnam War generated tourism business in Thailand. Crafts in Thailand has long been viewed as traditional practice of the past (Viboon 1981, Warren and Tettoni 1994) and commercialized as souvenirs for tourists (Cohen, 2002). Crafts could also be high potential to be revived as additional source of income for community. This research study focuses on the collaborative work between the group of young students, faculties and designers from King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi's Industrial Design Program and 3 local highland communities of Chiang Mai and Nan Provinces in developing weaving handicrafts.

In the first case of Bor Kluea District of Nan Province, Mlabri community demonstrated the high skill in making handicrafts from special ivy bark they collected from the forest and coloring products with natural color. Handicrafts of Mlabri also signify the symbiosis relationship between Mlabri and forest since Mlabri collected all materials from the natural environment with ecological concerns. However, Mlabri tribes had been push out of forest due to heavy deforestation since the turn of 20th century. Therefore the ivy handicrafts could be possibly developed as major source of income for the community and promote forest conservation. In order to develop weaving product, students and faculties are obligated learn how Mlabri craftswomen make thread and weave which is their unique skill related to their body motion. The second and third cases of the villages of Kai Noi in Mae Taeng District and Village of Mae Tha in Mae On District, in Chiang Mai, reveal how weaving artisan groups in communities had coped with the decline of the demand for weaving baskets since agricultural pattern changed and cheaper plastic products became available locally. The Royal Project Development Center at Mon Ngor and Mae Tha Nuea supported villagers 's weaving products by order baskets and trays as part of annual new year gifts to clients. The students observed and learnt from crafts makers how to weave bamboo and Khor bark stripes into baskets. They also designed new products made of Bamboo such as trays, bamboo chest set and bamboo stool. Students exchanged idea of the new design with crafts makers and they collaborated to invent new details for the products.

Lesson learn from making handicraft with Mlabri Community at (1) Phufah Phatthana Center, Bor Kluea, Nan Province, (2) Mae Ta Nue, Chiang Mai Province and (3) Kai Noi village, Chiang Mai Province

Lesson learnt and tacit knowledge are important for the development of new product that normally communities are not aware of the knowledge they possess or how it can be valuable to develop further (Goffin and Koners, 2011). Tacit knowledge is reflected as personal gift or talent that is difficult to elucidate vividly, standardize or share in an intangible arrangement (Sveiby, 1997). The handicraft makers possess their tacit knowledge to weave and compose stripes into specific form. However in order to develop the new design of weaving products, designers have to capture tacit knowledge of local craftsmen and women. The continuity of knowledge or successful transfer of tacit knowledge indicates the innovativeness and competitiveness of the working groups (Subramaniam and Venkatraman, 2001).

This paper is a reflection and lesson learnt from a craft making learning between industrial design students and crafts makers from three communities, one in Nan and another two in Chiang Mai. KMUTT has been working with distant and disadvantaged communities of Mlabri community at Phu Fah Development Center in Bor Kleu in Nan province and a highland community of Kai Noi Village under the Royal Project

Development Center at Mon Ngor in Mae Taeng, as well as craft community in Mae Ta Nue community, Chiang Mai. The craft making learning at the three different communities has taught us a deeper understanding of how one makes crafts and see the science behind it. For the Mlabri community, a collaborative work of Mlabri's ivy bark or Thapaed handicraft, with which we have conducted the first study is a unique experience. Since it was a craft making study, language was not our barrier, but instead it helped students and us to really involve ourselves in the materials and making process. So without any dialogue, Mlabri directly demonstrate the process of their handicraft making to us.

First, out of expectation, Mlabri crafts makers brought us to see the ivy plants in the forest nearby. They showed us the two different kinds of Thapaed ivy and selected the ones that were ready to use by color. This process signified the symbiosis relationship between Mlabri and their forest, the knowledge we feel we did not truly understand and need more time to go back and learn more from them. Once we collected enough ivy barks, we learned how to peel it by knife, get rid all the green chlorophyll and leave only the white bark and dry them under the sun. Once Thapaed barks are dried, Mlabri dyed them with all natural materials. For instance, they used "Throm" or Indigo leaves for grey color, fresh turmeric root for yellow, "Yor Pa" or fresh wild noni root for red, Teak leaves for brown, and Throm leaves mixed with turmeric root for green color. Mlabri demonstrated the process of coloring directly by pounding the "Throm" leaves, mixing with water and then rubbing these materials with Thapaed fibers. For red color, we can mix roots of "Yor Pa" and ash together. We remembered at that moment, we were so stunned and felt overwhelmed with such an effortful hand-made dyeing process. After dyeing fibers, Mlabri showed us how to spin 2 fiber strands into tougher thread. Mlabri craftswoman, Ms. Montha, worked on making thread by pressing 2 fiber strands on her shin then spinning down to her ankle swiftly. This process required special practice and skill for flexible torso while spinning 2 strands down on shin to complete a single thread. At first, it was so awkward and time consuming for us to learn and try to find our suitable and comfortable sitting position. To spin the thread, one needs to adjust his/her body posture and kinetic movement since everyone has different body dimension and muscle flexibility. After practicing making thread with Mlabri, we realize that employing the Biomechanic analysis method is one of the keys to understand Mlabri's thread making process – human anatomy, body posture, kinetic movement and hand weight are all related for making ivy craft. This became special technique of each craft maker or we can call it 'tacit knowledge'.

In order to produce handicraft, the crafts makers need to find the right sitting posture, know their body kinetic joint which will allow force to the spinning task. And since this craft making process is a repetitive task and need a consistent output, craftsman needs to really find their perfect and comfortable pose so they won't have to deal with pain or uneven thread. When our team achieved the first thread, everyone were eager to learn the next step of weaving a bag. With more background in industrial design, employing various machines to generate prototypes, with less patience, we all wished to complete this preparation process as fast as possible. We wanted to jump into the weaving right away, and this is probably the common mindset of other crafts learner that want to rush to see the result of their making.

But Mlabri crafts makers gave us the sign language to keep making the thread longer. With embarrassment, we kept continued making our own thread and gradually became fluent in this spinning process and gain more confidence with fundamental skill for this special handicraft. Mlabri demonstrated their natural habit of perseverance and hard-working ethic as their traditional value to us. Presumably, this is considered the best lesson taught to the designers who have been living in a readymade world to see the real value of any materials.

After everyone having enough ivy threads, the Mlabri craftswomen trained us to make the base part of the bag. The Mlabri craftswomen made their own special bamboo needles to hook and weave threads

together similar to crochet technique. The weaving process is the easiest step to learn since we can observe the knotting step by step and can trace back to see the path. Though the thread making is difficult to grasp but still can be learned by contributing more time for practicing.

Each Mlabri crafts makers has their own craft signature. Like P' Montha, her color scheme of the bag is brighter and softer than other in the groups. She knew which Yor Pha roots provide darker or lighter shades of orange-brown, and she has her own preference of how to mix and match colors. This tacit knowledge has inspired our students to experiment on the alternative design of ivy bags for Mlabri community. One of our students, Ms. Neerumporn Sirisongkon, she was impressed with Mlabri ways of life and inspired by Mlabri crafts makers' imagination. After learning process of making ivy weaving, she expanded more shapes of the bags by altering the numbers of hoops. From the original linear base, now Mlabri's ivy bags can be made from circle, ellipse and leaf bases. With more variety of forms, Mlabri can then create various kinds of bags with more functions in the future. One of our students, Ms. Neerumporn Sirisongkon, she was impressed with Mlabri ways of life and inspired by Mlabri crafts makers imagination. After learning process of making ivy weaving, she expanded more shapes of the bags by altering the numbers of hoops. From the original linear base, now Mlabri's ivy bags are in circle, ellipse and leaf bases. With more variety of forms, Mlabri can create various kinds of bags with more functions in the future. From Mlabri of Bor Kluea, Nan to the different materials of bamboo and Khor palm bark.

Village of Kai Noi is famous for weaving craft made from specific palm bark and bamboo. The weaving group at Kai Noi Village was led by Mae Luang Nee who's the wife of the village headman. When our team visited, Mae Luang started by showing us her signature craft products – a various sizes of Khor trays and boxes.

She started her demonstration by showing us how to weave the flat sheet for the bottom part of the tray first, with the plaited twilled weaving pattern. During Mae Luang demonstration, each of us started to graphically remember the step by step and we started our own weaving. Again, that was one of the Eu-re-ka moments when we spend enough time to figure out the logic of weaving ourselves. However, for some students they chose the shortcut way and asked Mae Luang for help. This is the challenging moment where we can choose whether we want to pressure ourselves and build our own tacit knowledge or we want to learn in a more explicit way where Mae Luang can show us hundreds times of step-by-step how to weave.

While students' challenges is to understand the physical material properties, learn the basic weaving, and experiment with the design they had in mind. Mae Luang's challenge is to be open-minded and help in actualize the new ideas. After students proposed their design, for instance an alternative pattern of tray or box for using as tea packaging for a nearby tea plantation, Rai Cha Lung Det, Mae Luang and student help each other to figure out the way to construct the new design and this is where the moment of a real co-creation dialogue took place. Mae Luang had proven to be one of the most open-minded artisans the team have met. Mae Luang never said 'no' but instead she always seems triggered by the design and details that we introduced and try her best to help out as much as she can.

The outputs from this collaboration results as the alternative designs for tea packages made of Khor palm bark with a mix of local identity of Mon Ngor and echoing Chinese window frame, designed by Ms. Phimphet and Mr. Thanat, the 3rd year students from industrial design program. We hope that the design can help boosting up the local business of Mon Ngor in the future.

For the collaboration with the 3rd community in Mae Tha Neau, Chiang Mai Province, our industrial design students had a chance to work closely with the senior artisans. When we first visited uncle Thong, after chitchatting for a while, we started to approach him with our new design. Uncle Thong at first seemed not

interested in the idea and kept saying that the design is not convincing and not strong enough to sit on. So we spent sometimes to talk with him, and to let him express what he thinks. Until uncle Thong gave us his suggestion that the design should be improved by adding a weaving seat so that the sitter would sit more comfortably. We went back to see uncle Thong, after a while, to show him the finished design. Uncle Thong is more than happy to see us more than seeing the designs. He told us that he could not produce any of this stools since he has no bending tools and perhaps he's now enjoying his retirement life. In a midst, suddenly uncle Thong's visitor showed up and once he saw the new design, he asked how many of the stools we want and perhaps he can try to make them. He's Phu Yai Deang, a neighbor village headman and happens to know 2-3 young craftsmen in his village. So we are now in the process of producing the first batch of order and hopefully Phu Yai Deang's community can find their market and earn supplementary incomes in the future.

Another interesting case is the bamboo chess game designed by Mr. Thanaphat Thatthanaturat, 4th year student of Industrial Design Program. Mr Thanaphat learned to weave with Ajarn Vassana, the bamboo craft master, and did not join in to work with any villager. Instead he spent his own time tried to master his skills and manipulate the folding bamboo stripes. Together with his passion in playing chess, he came up with the idea to make a bamboo chess set while combining modern materials. Right now he's expanding his idea to combining bamboo strips with wood bases and a box set container. When uncle Thong saw his chess set, he even said that he wants to try making this, just bring in the designer next time.

Here's another lesson learnt that perhaps sometimes working closely with villagers you gain lots of empathies and it is good to have empathy. But sometimes we need to be brave and add more vision, imagination and fresh ideas to share with the community and see if they will take them.

Key Learnings

There are 5 key-points to be concluded as follow:

1. When learning with craft, we need to give ourselves opportunity to do lots of mistakes and learn from them to build up our tacit knowledge.
2. Make a reflective writing and drawing of the craft making process – physical property of the materials, common technique learnt and our own techniques – how to control own body-kinetic, rhythm, hand weights, etc.
3. Be open-minded and balance well of everyone's motivation & incentives.
4. If we are to make craft for tourism, balance well between community identity, market, and craft material limitation & production.
5. Practice makes perfect!

Community Learning Outcome

1. Community got enthusiastic and realized the value of their local knowledge.
2. Community experienced new concept and design trends diffused from students and faculties, therefore become more open-minded and generated new idea through their practice of making crafts
3. While crafts makers developed new alternative form of products by coaching students who lacked of technique, questions and new ideas from students challenged local crafts makers to rethink their weaving methods, challenge them to develop new or alternative technique for weaving crafts and redesign appearance of products in the future.

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Remnants of the Tsunami in Takuapa: Material Objects, Affective Remembrances, and Traces of the Wave

Croteau, Chantal
University of Michigan
USA

Abstract

On the morning of December 26, 2004, a massive tsunami struck the western coast of Thailand. Powerful enough to carry a large fishing boat more than one kilometer inland, it significantly changed the physical and emotional landscapes of Thailand's Phang Nga province. Drawing on ethnographic data collected in the years of 2015 and 2016, the current paper seeks to make sense of the ways in which the Indian Ocean tsunami is remembered, forgotten, and "unforgotten" within the Takuapa district of Phang Nga (Stewart, 1996). Through an analysis of material tsunami remnants found throughout the region, this paper investigates the relationship between objects and tsunami memories. That is, this paper examines how tsunami objects, such as formal memorial structures, old concrete foundations scattered along the coast, and Buddha statues believed to have survived the wave unscratched, maintain, transmit, and, in some ways, generate new memories of the 2004 disaster. Observations of and interactions with these material remnants, participation in tsunami anniversary rituals conducted in the community, and interviews with Takuapa citizens reveal the ways that tsunami objects, as sites of embodied memory, both affect and become affected by members of the Takuapa community.

Keywords: Objects and memory, tsunami, affect

Introduction

On the morning of December 26, 2004, a massive tsunami struck the western coast of Thailand. The wave, powerful enough to carry a large boat more than one kilometer inland, claimed thousands of lives and significantly altered the social and emotional landscapes of Thailand's Phang Nga province. There is no easy way to quantify loss or damage, to sensitively depict the staggering numbers of lives taken, injuries suffered, or material destruction endured as a result of the wave. In Thailand, the tsunami claimed more than 5,000 lives, seventy percent of which came from the Takuapa district of Phang Nga.⁵² Within Takuapa, the fishing village of Nam Khem was the most severely affected town.

I first came to the Takuapa district in June 2012 and worked in the region as an English teacher until March 2014. Through my time in Takuapa, I began to see that though the tsunami is often depicted as a past event both in tsunami museums and at official commemorative sites, the tsunami has remained present

⁵² According to Monica Falk, in *Post-Tsunami Recovery in Thailand: Socio-Cultural Responses*, Phang Nga officially reports 4,225 persons dead, 1,696 persons missing, and 5,597 persons injured after the tsunami. A total of 3,808 of the deaths reported occurred in the Takuapa district (Falk, 2015, p. 12).

for those living in the Takuapa community. The wave is constantly referenced in daily speech, through jokes about the loudness of the sea on a particular evening and in stories of tsunami ghosts flagging down people driving home late at night, asking for a ride. The tsunami exists in objects, both old and new, in signs for evacuation routes dotting the rural highway Route 4, in imaginary lines of the water's height drawn across walls. It is there in houses, in forgotten canteens now overgrown with vines. It fills the pauses, the spaces, the gaps in conversation, sometimes tumbling out in the middle of parties, in accidental, haphazard, and chaotic ways.

The tsunami's ubiquitous presence in Takuapa has sparked the current paper. Beginning with the recounting of a rainy afternoon shared along the sands of Nam Khem's coast, this paper serves as an exploration into the ways that the tsunami is remembered, forgotten, and, as anthropologist Kathleen Stewart (1996) terms it, "unforgotten" in Takuapa today (p. 71). In *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an "Other" America*, Stewart employs the term unforgetting to mean the process of re-remembering the messy fragments of events, encounters, and experiences that fall outside of narrow cultural boxes and categories of signification. Through her ethnography of a rural community in West Virginia, United States, Stewart (1996) argues that individuals in the coal-mining region often "dwell in the space of alterity itself" (p. 88). By occupying the gap between "signifier and signified," Stewart (1996) maintains that her interlocutors open up the possibility for both disrupted hierarchies and rhetorical oppositions, creating a space for uncertain tensions and the latent possibilities of a lived cultural poetics (p. 88). She writes:

Here, finished concept and past event enter the contingencies of speech as a social act in the present, and everything becomes a subject of remembrance and exchange in the constant fits and starts of the effort to unforget (Stewart, 1996, p. 89).

Stewart's concept of unforgetting provides a useful framework through which to approach the myriad ways that the 2004 tsunami exists in Takuapa today. It allows for us to productively consider how the wave continues to exert its presence in the region, how objects become imbued with tsunami memories and thick with affective potentials, and how communities actively engage with the wave either through formal modes of remembrance or through a variety of accidental, informal, and vernacular methods of processing, packaging, and making sense of the wave. To unforget the wave is not only to re-attend to memories that were lost or actively forgotten, but also to remember the pieces and parts of the tsunami that do not fit into neatly bounded categories or linear narratives. It is to re-remember the fragments, the chaotic and convoluted temporalities, and the subtle material and affective remembrances of the wave. When I engage with the idea of affect, I mean to call attention to the non-verbal potentials, the pulses, tremors, and "shimmers" of capacities to "affect and be affected" (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010, p. 2). In this paper, affect is understood as a "felt bodily intensity" and "a domain, register... an emergent form" that moves, pushes, pulls, overwhelms, underwhelms, engulfs, and changes bodies, situations, and memories (Rutherford, 2016, p. 286; Stewart & Lewis, 2015, p. 237). In Takuapa, individuals, families, and communities are constantly moving between remembering, forgetting, and unforgetting the tsunami, negotiating different communal and personal desires and attachments, and navigating the difficult and often painful terrain of accepting a tragedy that continues to occupy the past, live in the present, and insert itself into the future. It is here, in the midst of messy temporalities and miniscule fragments, that this paper begins.

The current paper finds its roots in moments encountered while teaching in the Takuapa district and in

experiences conducting fieldwork in the region. From June to August 2015, I collected information through participant observation, informal interviews, and casual conversations about several different tsunami spaces scattered across the Takuapa district, including memorial parks, museums, and Buddhist temples. In late December 2015, I then returned to Takuapa to observe and participate in tsunami memorial ceremonies held throughout the region on the eleventh-year anniversary of the wave. During that time, I attended tsunami commemorative ceremonies in Nam Khem and Khao Lak, as well as an educational outreach program designed to teach high school students about disaster preparation and prevention, which was held at the Ban Nam Khem Tsunami Memorial Park. This article further draws on the experiences and encounters of a research visit to Takuapa made during the months of June and July 2016. Opening with the memory of a rainy afternoon and the slippery surface of a wooden fishing pier, this paper explicates a few of the multiple, and sometimes contradictory, ways that the tsunami is responded to and remembered in the Takuapa district. Through two case studies, the current paper traces how the material remnants left over after the wave come to maintain, transmit, and generate new memories of the disaster. Specifically, this paper explores the affective weight of objects, arguing that haphazard collections of concrete ruins and other materials that have come to be labeled or marked by the tsunami, in addition to formal ritual objects such as portraits of the deceased and Buddhist food offerings, influence how individuals in the district both remember and continue to relate to the wave itself and to the loved ones lost in its wake.

It is important to note that while the current paper emphasizes the connection of objects to memory, affect, and care, these objects do not exist in a vacuum, surrounded by only themselves. Rather, these objects are intimately connected to complicated and diverse social contexts, affected by narratives of the wave, formal rituals, and everyday practices. It is necessary to remember these emotional contexts and cultural landscapes while trying to make sense of the relationship of objects to modes of remembrance and forgetting. The location of the object, the social backdrop of a particular encounter with a particular object at a particular moment in time, and the publicness of the object all matter when thinking about and through an object's meaning, through an object's potential to affect and be affected.

Social contexts in Thailand are infinitely complex, contingent upon a multitude of variables that are constantly shifting – gender, socioeconomic class, seniority, and location, to name a few. These, what historian Tamara Loos (2016) describes as, “radically context-dependent” social landscapes can be best understood through the lens of *kalathesa* (p. 6). The word *kalathesa* literally means time (กาล, *kan*) and place (เทศ, *thesa*), but, as anthropologist Sophorntavy Vorng (2011) suggests, *kalathesa* is used in the vernacular to mean “appropriateness, balance, situation, and context” (p. 683). In Takuapa, ideas of *kalathesa* and notions of appropriate social behaviors deeply influence both the information that comes to be relayed at any given time and the ways in which that information is presented. Speech, behavior, and emotions are all impacted by the location of the conversation and the people present within that context. Responses to behaviors that fall outside of these context-dependent expectations are varied, ranging from critiques of the individual actor as not knowing the time or place, “*phit kalathesa*,” or to different forms and degrees of social censorship.

For example, over the course of my fieldwork, I observed how friends and colleagues who expressed an inappropriate fixation on a particular negative event, such as a breakup, were often teased by their friends as being crazy, “*ba*,” or censored by their friends, who would change the subject as soon as the event came up or, sometimes, ignore the comments made entirely. Furthermore, I noted that when someone expressed feelings of stress or nervousness, others would typically respond by saying “*ya khriat ya khit*

mak na” or “don’t be serious, don’t think too much.” These words, which are typically used in conjunction, function to regulate improper displays of emotionality and attachment to events, people, and situations. As Julia Cassaniti (2015) argues in her book on emotions in a Northern Thai community, being serious can be a sign of being unable to let a situation go, letting go one important signifier of proper emotionality in the Thai Buddhist social context.

Ideas of *kalathesa*, the social censorship of emotions, and notions of appropriate affective displays of loss influence how the tsunami is talked about in specific social contexts.⁵³ As a former colleague once confided to me, “We never talk about the tsunami here. It’s a pity. I think we should talk about it. But we don’t. We’re not supposed to.” Though this paper argues against that statement, maintaining that the tsunami is talked about often, in sensitive, affect-laden, and unexpected ways, my colleague’s perspective calls attention to the social pressure she feels to let the tsunami go, to not talk about it, to be able to accept what happened. In her statement, she exemplifies how Takuapa residents are constantly navigating a complicated emotional terrain. Her experience is reflected in the convoluted narratives of the wave that I encountered through my fieldwork, the shards of memory scattered across the Takuapa social landscape, and the myriad ways that tsunami memories are produced by and through the disaster’s material remnants.

The pages that follow are organized into two case studies that emphasize two distinct but interrelated contexts of tsunami remembrance. Opening with the recollection of a brief hour spent along the sands of Nam Khem’s coast, this paper begins with a discussion of the tsunami’s informal remnants and how these tsunami ruins maintain, transmit, and generate memories of the 2004 disaster differentially across social and temporal contexts. This section examines the connections between bodies and material ruins, between the context of an encounter with an object and the affective remembrances of the wave imprinted on and drawn out by that object. The second section, moving from the unofficial context of the near-empty beach described in the first part to the formal site of the eleventh-year anniversary memorial ceremony held at the Ban Nam Khem Tsunami Memorial Park, explores the link between memories of the tsunami and formal ritual objects. This section addresses the role that both portraits of the deceased and food offerings presented to Buddhist monks play in formal modes of tsunami commemoration, in shaping narratives and memories of the wave, and in upholding relationships of care for the deceased.

I. Concrete and Sand

The July air is heavy with the threat of afternoon rain. Phi Rin glances to the sky as her eight-year-old son Tawan skips through the family’s mechanic shop and towards the three-wheel motorbike parked in the empty lot across the street.⁵⁴ “It will rain,” she calls to him as he swings his legs up and over the edge of the cart. He plops down onto the wooden bench and shakes his head no in wide, exaggerated movements. Somewhere, not far from the open-air shop, is a tiny stretch of land along the coast where the young boy had recently gone fishing with his father and his father’s friends. For days, Tawan had chatted excitedly about the ample supply of sand crabs to be found at this particular site. Now, against the backdrop of gathering rain clouds, he stubbornly folds his arms across his chest and waits for us to join him.

⁵³ Phang Nga is a diverse province, with a significant Thai Muslim minority population. Future research will productively explore the connections between religion and notions of appropriate emotional expression and responses to loss. The current paper is limited in the sense that it draws primarily from encounters with and the relayed experiences of Thai Buddhists.

⁵⁴ All names in this paper have been changed.

Phi Rin looks at the sky again and then looks at Tawan. With a sigh, she relents and, grabbing a neon poncho from the seat of a plastic chair, she heads towards the motorbike. Her daughter, Min, and I follow, carefully sidestepping old motorbike tires and spare parts as we weave our way through the shop. The first raindrop falls as we climb into the cart. We all glance at Tawan, who shrugs.

The drive to the beach is a series of quick turns and sharp curves. Phi Rin expertly navigates the bulky motorbike cart around large puddles, packs of street dogs, and the obtrusive pick-up trucks parked along the road. Eventually, Tawan directs his mother into the back parking lot of what appears to be a scuba diving company. As the motorbike comes to a shuddering halt, Tawan leaps off the cart and eagerly runs towards the water, jumping down from the edge of the lot and disappearing from sight. "Careful!" Phi Rin shouts, but her only response is Tawan's giddy laughter.

The three of us follow, easing our way down the one and a half meter drop to the damp sand. Tawan has a stick in his hand and is chasing some crabs around the beach, his orange and blue jersey billowing as he runs. Min walks after him, climbing over a long, worn rope that extends from the trunk of a tree on the shore to the tall wooden post of the narrow fishing pier. It is low tide and the pier seems to tower over us in the water's absence.

A concrete wall, stained black by saltwater and sand, sits in front of us. Large and imposing, the wall serves as the beach's makeshift property marker, highlighting where we can and cannot go, where Tawan can race off to and where the sand crab hunting must come to a halt. I remember this wall, its textures and cracks, its layers. There is a memory of this wall, an image of the dry season sun setting over the ocean, of a lined face lit by soft golden rays, of twisted words and messy temporalities, of a narrative looping back inside of itself, coming out in bursts, followed by a long pause. Yes, I remember this wall. This wall was once a part of the Nam Khem harbor.

To our left is a small building that, at another time, might have been a home, but that is now unrecognizable as anything other than a building. An open concrete frame lays on the sand next to the building and a tree grows inside of the frame, the trunk nestled against the structure's worn surface.

These mismatched pieces of concrete, haphazardly strewn across the sand and entangled in the roots of heavy tropical trees, are remnants of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Preserved in a perpetual state of ruin, these structures evoke the distant recollection of the giant wave, its force and its destruction, its retreat, at once rapid and yet painfully slow. The concrete slabs contain within them the traces of a difficult loss, their cracked shells pulsing with vivid remembrances, memories of an old man climbing a tree, of a broken motorbike, a torn poster, a scrape, and swirls of gray blurry against a blue sky. These objects are part of the tsunami. They are intimately connected to the wave, linked to its past, its ongoing present, and its uncertain future in significant ways. And yet, as I watch Tawan climb onto one of the concrete blocks, laughing, it is evident that these objects have multiple meanings and significances, that as the years continue to pass and the saltwater continues to whittle away at hard facades, these objects have shifted for some from extraordinary to ordinary, becoming another part of the beach and the landscape, another part of the everyday.

The young boy races to the fishing pier, hoisting himself up with both arms, and beckons for us to follow. One by one, we hop onto the wooden stand and walk out in the direction of the sea. Tawan runs between the three of us, narrating a story about the fish he caught with his father the last time he was here. "It was this big!" he exclaims, throwing his hands apart. "That big, huh?" Min laughs as she ruffles his hair playfully. He ducks out from underneath her hand and sprints back to his mother. We stay on the pier, gazing out at the gray waters of the rainy season sea, until the raindrops start falling too quickly to be ignored. We then hurriedly retreat to the motorbike cart shivering and trace our route back along the

winding, narrow roads to the mechanic shop. "What did you think about the beach," I ask Min as we reach the store. She shrugs. "The rain was cold."

The vignette relayed above stands in stark contrast to my initial interaction with the Nam Khem harbor, raising questions about how objects differentially affect and incite memories of the wave and how the social and temporal contexts of the encounter with an object influence the textures, layers, and gradations of the memories felt, expressed, and transmitted through that encounter. The afternoon spent along the shore that rainy July day, Tawan's playful yet diligent hunt for sand crabs, and the feel of the moist, slippery wood on our hands as we climbed onto the fishing pier were all cloaked in the guise of normality, as if the contents of the beach were everyday, ordinary objects. However, as my first visit to that particular beach in January 2015 exemplifies, the meaning of the concrete foundations can shift depending on context, the ordinariness of the material remnants not readily translatable across distinct temporal and social moments.

On a sweltering dry season evening in early 2015, a friend's mother, Mae Di, and I decided to take a walk down to the coast from the family's one-story home to watch the sunset. As we gazed out towards the calm waters purple, red, and golden in the evening light, Mae Di began to relay the tiny beach's turbulent history. Pointing to the foundation behind us, Mae Di explained that the concrete structure had once belonged to the original Nam Khem harbor. The current harbor, she continued, was now located further down the coast, closer to the mouth of the Bang Muang River. Rotating a bit to her right, she gestured to a palm tree, expounding that an older foreign man, a white retiree, had climbed that tree when the tsunami came. "He climbed that tree and survived," she said. "Many could not do that." She paused for a moment and turned back to face the sea. I stood beside her quietly, tentatively waiting for her to continue or to turn back, feeling the tensions, the affective remembrances bubbling underneath the sand and in the air, the fragments collected over the years slowly sliding into focus, the little details like missing childhood photographs, a closed bridge, and the subtle, quiet reference to an absent father suddenly becoming clear. Pivoting back towards me, Mae Di continued, her dark eyes locking on mine.

"I was at work," she said. "A hotel in Khao Lak. There's a little girl. A *farang*. She has scrapes on her knees. Her knees bleeding, so bloody. She was crying. Her parents – I don't know. That girl, she has cuts, all on her legs. Her knees. She cried, cried, cried. I held her. I was to go to Takuapa that morning. My mother's at home. The girl was sobbing. I felt sorry. She's hurt. I wanted to go to Takuapa, by motorbike. The girl? I didn't know her father, her mother, where were they. I held her. Told her it's okay. I was in Khao Lak. Her knees, so many cuts. All on her knees."

She said all this without pausing for a breath, in a steady stream of narration. When she finished, she smiled at me and, without waiting for me to utter the only words that I could think of - "*sia jai duai kha*," a phrase similar to the American "I am so sorry for your loss," she told me that it was time to go because the sunset had finished and the beach was not beautiful in the dark. As we walked back along the muddy path, our conversation turned to food and my frustration at the absence of spicy dishes in American cuisine. The seriousness of the previous moment all but gone, its remnants having dispersed and retreated with the tide.

To this day, Mae Di's narrative haunts me. Her earnestness, the way her eyes searched mine as she spoke, the chaotic language, the details that were not mentioned and yet, in their absence, ever more conspicuous, her mother whom she addressed in passing, her husband who was not mentioned at all. Unlike the neatly packaged narratives that I more commonly encountered in formal and public settings, which often began with the retreating of the water from the shore and ended with a narrow escape, Mae Di's narrative began in the tumult of the wave's immediate aftermath. The rawness of her words and the

unrehearsed nature of her narrative reflect, I would argue, both the immense trauma caused by the tsunami and the unspoken social rules of *kalathesa* that discourage discussion of serious events in specific situations.

A Bangkok-based researcher, who had conducted interviews in Takuapa immediately after the wave, had once informed me that Thais from the district quickly accepted - *tham jai*, literally to make one's heart - the tsunami, whereas the foreigners affected by the wave remained stuck in their feelings of loss, anger, and confusion. However, through my own fieldwork, I have observed that the context in which an interview is conducted and a narrative emerges plays an important role in shaping the content of the conversation. As my colleague's comments relayed in the introduction and the coarseness of Mae Di's narrative exemplify, Takuapa locals experience a certain degree of social pressure to accept what happened or, at the very least, to publicly maintain that they have let go of the tragedy. Whereas it is acceptable to talk about the wave through a linear, coherent narrative of triumphant escape, narratives like Mae Di's do not have the space to be expressed in the more formal and public contexts of the workplace, interviews, memorial ceremonies, or even tsunami memorial parks and museums. These unbounded and unforgotten narratives, nonetheless, find ways to insert themselves into conversations, slipping into moments, a sudden and startling presence.

Moreover, the narrative shared along the sands of the coast, the affective remembrances pulsing, pushing, working in the evening light, communicated a certain connection between memories and objects. For Mae Di, the foundation of the former Nam Khem harbor was explicitly linked to the tsunami, its stained exterior marked, defined, and inscribed by the wave. The concrete wall both occupied her narrative of the disaster, inserting itself into the roll and push of her words, and was contained by the narrative, bounded and held by the gaps, the pauses, and the breaths in her speech. The beach's objects, the collection of ruins and the towering palm trees, evoked and were used to evoke her narrative. They pulled Mae Di's narrative towards us, teasing it out from the soft pink rays of the sunset and the lines of dried salt on the sand at the same time that her narrative called out the objects, latching onto the wall's rough surface, entangling the structure in her words. The remnants of the original Nam Khem harbor stood out against the backdrop of the dry season sunset, a memory and a producer of memories, a "testimonial object," to borrow trauma theorists Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer's term, that both carried "memory traces from the past" and embodied "the very process of its transmission" (Hirsch & Spitzer, 2006, p. 355).

As the two anecdotes relayed above elucidate, the link between the harbor's material remains and memories of the tsunami varies depending on personal backgrounds and the social and temporal circumstances of the encounter. The foundation figured prominently in Mae Di's narrative, operating as the starting point, the material beginning of her verbal recounting. However, in the specific moment of the quiet July afternoon with Phi Rin, Min, and Tawan, I would argue that the harbor's remaining wall functioned as merely a wall. Though the textures of the concrete foundation, the surface stains, and the bulky structure's vivid unbeautifulness articulated a certain connection to the tsunami, this connection appeared in that moment to be irrelevant. The link between the wall and the tsunami was seemingly unattended to, visible but somehow unimportant, unnecessary. In that particular context, the wall was a normal part of the beach, an ordinary everyday object filling in the gaps along the shore. In *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*, Marianne Hirsch (2012) expounds the various ways that memories infiltrate physical landscapes, becoming part of our everyday surroundings. In reference to photographer Lorie Novak's image "Postmemory," Hirsch explains that:

Memory is mediated, cultural, but it has also escaped through the open doorway in the

photograph to haunt the natural landscapes of the present. The ghosts have become part of our landscape, reconfiguring the domestic as well as the public spaces of the postgeneration. Despite these invasions, however, the woods themselves continue to replenish in the bright sunshine, the trees persist in reaching upward, indifferent witnesses to the layered connective histories projected onto them (Hirsch, 2012, p. 25).

Hirsch's sensitive analysis of Novak's image is especially relevant when considering how the objects scattered along the coast - the mismatched blocks of concrete, the last remains of the Nam Khem harbor, and the burgeoning trees - both affect and become affected by memories of the wave and the interactions that individuals have with those objects. Similar to the woods of "Postmemory" that advance skywards as "indifferent witnesses to the layered connective histories" (Hirsch, 2012, p. 25), the coastal landscape of Nam Khem continues to flourish in the aftermath of the wave. The trees swell and grow with each season, the flowers blooming pink and red, the roots expanding outwards, engulfing the concrete foundations, entangling the lone standing blocks. The coastal environment shifts and changes over time, reclaiming and regenerating, replenishing. The natural landscape is deeply connected to the wave both physically and through the memories of others, at the same time that the environment is indifferent to the tumultuous past in which the coastal objects - the sand, the trees, the shells - will be forever entwined.

In "Towards an Ecology of Materials," anthropologist Tim Ingold (2012) presents a framework that can help further our understanding of the numerous and varied ways that materials and bodies are linked, a framework that he argues is best represented by the term "meshwork." Ingold (2012) conceptualizes the meshwork as "the web of life itself," expounding that the meshwork is created by "entangled lines, of bodily movement and material flow" (p. 437). He writes:

Thanks to their entanglement in the meshwork, my seeing things is the way things see through me, my hearing them is the way they hear through me, my feeling them is the way they feel through me. By way of perception, the world "coils over" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, p. 140) upon itself: The sensible becomes sentient, and vice versa (Ingold, 2012, p. 437).

Here, Ingold posits a relationship between people and objects, between bodies and things, that is contingent upon perception. In Ingold's framework, we see, hear, and feel things as how things see, hear, and feel through us. And though I caution against relying too heavily on the idea that things experience through others, as materials and objects can also be understood as "vibrant matter" with their own sets of agencies, memories, and possibilities (Bennett, 2010), Ingold's meshwork enables us to think through the connections between the tsunami ruins, those objects that are both explicitly and implicitly tied to the wave, and the people and communities interacting with those material remnants. The foundation of the former Nam Khem harbor and the collection of trees growing around, under, and through the concrete ruins on the beaches in Takuapa are linked through affective remembrances, physical touches, sensations, and momentary passings to the tsunami, to memories of the tsunami, to the pasts, presents, and futures of the wave. By examining how individuals connect to and remember these coastal objects, as well as how these materials morph and change over time, we can productively explore the tsunami's varied, overlapping histories and its multiple futures.

Social anthropologist Yael Navaro-Yashin (2009), in her work on melancholic objects in Northern Cyprus, presents a framework of "the ruin" that can help us to think through the relationship between the informal

remnants of the tsunami, the leftover objects scattered along the coast, and memories of the disaster. For Navaro-Yashin, the ruin is both a vertical root, grounding the object in a particular temporal moment, and Deleuze and Guattari's horizontal rhizome and yet, at the same time, she maintains that the ruin is neither. She writes that the ruin "grows in uncontrollable and unforeseen ways" as a rhizome does, but the ruin is also rootlike in the sense that "is sited as a 'trace' of a historical event, it is remembered, it is kept, it is lamented, and cherished in the memory of those who left it behind, it is sited and noticed by those who uncannily live in it or in its vicinity, it leaves marks in the unconscious" (Navaro-Yashin, 2009, p. 14).

The constructed and natural remnants of the tsunami can be made sense of through the concept of the ruin. Like the melancholic objects described by Navaro-Yashin (2009), the tsunami remnants do not remain static. The concrete foundations crack, the salt builds up on the outer facing walls of old houses, and the trees stretch their roots out underneath the sand. The meanings of these objects also shift with the social context, affected and changed by the publicness of an encounter, the actors present within a moment, and the emotions attached to the object. Significantly, these objects are also rooted in the tsunami, the histories of these objects entwined in endless ways in the narratives and memories of the disaster. Ghostly, uncanny, the tsunami ruins both haunt and are haunted by remembrances of the wave.

Significantly, as the two memories recounted above suggest, the relationship between material ruins and bodies changes with the social landscape, expanding outwards in a network of tensions, possibilities, and affective remembrances. Just as anthropologist Matthew Engelke (2005) demonstrates how ordinary objects, such as jars of honey and small pebbles, become extraordinary materials imbued with spiritual and healing power in his work on the Masowe weChishanu Church in Zimbabwe, so too, as the trip to the beach with Phi Rin, Min, and Tawan exemplifies, can extraordinary objects - large concrete blocks scattered along the shore, a house's concrete frame tossed over onto its side - become ordinary, everyday objects, just another part of a landscape and environment. These constantly shifting connections and assemblages of memory are complicated by the individuals present within the particular temporal and social context of an encounter with an object, by the remembrances of and the ongoing relationships of care for the deceased, by the objects themselves that morph and develop over time, and by the past and future histories of the wave.

In the next section, I build on ideas of ongoing spiritual care for the deceased produced by and through tsunami objects and the impact of social landscapes on tsunami remembrances through a case study of the eleventh-year anniversary tsunami memorial ceremony held at the Ban Nam Khem Tsunami Memorial Park on December 26, 2015. This section examines the relationships between objects of ritual merit making and memories of the tsunami, assessing how objects situated within the more formal, and primarily Buddhist, setting of the tsunami memorial ceremony connect individuals across spiritual planes as well as how these objects maintain, transmit, and generate memories of the wave.

II. Memories, Merit, and Objects of Care

"*Mae*," Min called from the living room, a tiny open space that abuts her family's mechanical shop. The pounding on the bathroom door and the chorus of "Hurry up!" continued. Min raised her voice louder, "*Mae!*"

After a moment, her mother poked her head around the corner. "We'll go to the park first *na*," Min said. Phi Rin glanced at the clock and nodded. It was half past nine already. "Take the food with you," she instructed. Min grabbed the blue bag on the table, inside of which was a four-tiered stainless steel container filled with curries, a box of freshly made Thai sweets, and a large plastic water bottle. The

package was to be offered to the monks at the memorial ceremony. Phi Rin watched to make sure we had everything before returning to scold Tawan. Min and I then slipped on our sandals, picked our way carefully through the shop where her father was replacing a flat tire, and hopped onto my motorbike.

The drive from Min's house to the Ban Nam Khem Tsunami Memorial Park, Suan Ha (สวนห้า) as it is more commonly called, is less than one kilometer. By the time we arrived, however, the driveway leading to the park was overflowing with vehicles. I wedged my bike into a narrow spot between two cars before we hurriedly made our way to the courtyard, where a large group of people sat clustered under the shade of a pavilion tent. When we reached the tent, Min went to place the offerings her mother had prepared earlier that morning on a long table set up in front of the monks' platform. The table was already heavy under the weight of numerous travel containers, offerings made by members of the Nam Khem and surrounding communities.

The offerings presented at the memorial ceremony on December 26th are rooted in a larger Buddhist practice of ritual merit exchange. Religious studies scholar Donald K. Swearer (2010) describes merit making rituals as examples of "reciprocal exchange" (p. 19). He writes that:

A layperson-donor offers material gifts for the benefit of the monastic order. In return, the virtuous power of the sangha engenders a spiritual reward of merit (*puñña*), thereby enhancing the donor's balance of kamma/karma, which in turn, affects the status of the person's rebirth on the cosmic scale (Swearer, 2010, p. 19).

Swearer's explanation of merit reciprocal exchange can help to make sense of the role that the offering of food to monks plays in merit making and merit transference within Thailand. Thai Buddhists will often prepare food for monks on their birthday, which they maintain will help protect them in the upcoming year. Similarly, I observed friends and colleagues make offerings at temples when they wanted to offset a period of bad luck. For instance, in 2013, one colleague of mine began to make weekly offerings of fresh food, packages of instant spicy noodles, and milk cartons at a small temple on an island off of the coast of Nam Khem. She started this routine after a fortune-telling monk at that temple explained to her that increased temple participation and periods of vegetarianism would help her to find a spouse. In all of these examples, the object of food is the means for generating merit, both through the offering of food and the consumption of only certain kinds of food.

Anthropologist Patrice Ladwig (2012), writing about Theravada Buddhist ritual practices in Laos, suggests that food can be understood as a "container" for merit that enables merit to "be expressed in its materiality" (p. 134). In this way, food is a material object of ritual exchange through which merit can be generated and transferred to the deceased. Ladwig (2012) further argues that "food as an object is needed to reinscribe the relationship into the social – a capacity that the transfer of merit alone would hardly accomplish" (p. 135). In other words, the offering of food to monks and the subsequent consumption of that food, both by the monks and those who presented the food in offering, works to ground the relationship between the living, who are generating merit, and the dead, who are receiving the merit, in a social reality in which relationships of care between the living and dead continue despite material separation. Ladwig's discussion of feeding hungry ghosts in the *boun khau padab din* ritual, in which food is directly given to the spirits without the aid of monks as intermediaries, emphasizes this point most clearly. The action of feeding highlights the social relationship of care and exchange between the living and the dead.

This connection across different spiritual planes, manifested in patterns of food offering and consumption,

also exists among Theravada Buddhists in Thailand. In Phang Nga, there is a notion that food offerings prepared with the intention of transferring merit to the deceased should include food items that the deceased enjoyed when they were alive. For example, if, in life, the deceased had liked to eat *nam prik*, a spicy sauce made from shrimp paste and chilies, then loved ones might prepare *nam prik* to offer to the monks. It is believed that when food is being offered, the departed are receiving not only the merit but also the food itself. A colleague in the English department further elaborated on this point, explaining that it is important for family members to make and bring food for the deceased often. Otherwise the deceased will become hungry and start to visit relatives in their dreams, asking for food and drink. The numerous food offerings made at the 2015 tsunami memorial ceremony can also be understood within this social framework of ritual exchange and care taking.

The materiality of the food offered, while not inherently linked to the tsunami, becomes, through the process of preparation in the morning and the particular social context of the tsunami memorial ritual, part of the tsunami's continually expanding archive. The preparation of, for example, the commonly consumed spicy and sour fish curry as an offering for the monks changes the meaning of that curry; the maker's intentions affecting the curry, altering its properties and possibilities. The curry is no longer an everyday food item, but rather a container of merit and a powerful link between the spiritual world and the world of the living. Through the formal offering process, the fish curry's materiality is consumed by both the living and the dead, providing physical and spiritual nourishment, merit and biological nutrients. In this way, the food offerings become part of the tsunami's pasts, presents, and futures, the materiality of the food intimately entangled in memories of the deceased, in narratives of the wave, and in the ongoing relationships of care between those lost in the tsunami and those left behind.

When Min returned after carefully arranging the stainless-steel container and water bottle on the table, we went to find seats on the far side of the courtyard where a few red plastic chairs remained vacant. From this vantage point, I could see that the giant pavilion tents formed an L-shape along the outer edge of the space. The tents were organized by religion, with the Buddhist tent forming the largest section at the ceremony. In this area, several rows of chairs were set up to face the monks' elevated platform. Next to the platform was a table holding photos of the deceased, the pictures arranged in a wide circle and connected by a long strand of pirit thread. The monks held the end of the thin, white thread, so that the merit generated through their chanting could be transferred to those whom the tsunami had claimed. Small water bottles, with their caps twisted off and straws sticking out from the top, stood in front of the photographs.

The practice of bringing formal photographs of the deceased to a Buddhist ceremony is similarly rooted in a concept of merit transference. Photos of lost loved ones figure prominently at Thai Buddhist funerals, as well as at the ceremonies for making merit on the hundredth day of an individual's passing. In both of these rituals, the deceased's formal portrait functions as a material means through which to send merit to the deceased. However, as anthropologist Monica Falk (2010) suggests, photos of the deceased play an almost "sacral role for the mourners" in the formal and informal modes of tsunami commemoration practiced in Takuapa (p. 102). Writing about post-tsunami recovery processes in Phang Nga, Falk (2010) explains that at the time of her research in 2005, photographs of the dead or missing were displayed "on a special platform or beside the monks" during weekly temple ceremonies (p. 102). She further notes that family members would often carry photographs of their lost loved ones with them wherever they went (Falk, 2010).

Falk's observations help to elucidate the importance of the photographs displayed at the memorial ceremony eleven years after the event. As Falk suggests, photographs of the deceased can function as

both a physical means through which to transfer merit to the individual memorialized within the frame and a form of material remembrance. At the tsunami memorial ritual, I similarly observed how the formal school, university, and work portraits arranged on the table next to the monks operated as a means of merit transference. Situated within a Buddhist religious framework, these photographs served as a link between spiritual planes and enabled family members to transfer merit to their deceased loved ones.

However, it is important to note that the photographs displayed at the commemorative ritual were not the only photographs present at the memorial park that day, nor do these official photographs wholly constitute the vast archive of tsunami images, of photos marked by and intimately entwined in the memories, narratives, and experiences of the wave. The photographic archive of the tsunami includes the formal and informal photos of the deceased, the pictures of family gatherings found taped onto the tsunami memorial wall next to, and sometimes over, the weather-faded official portraits commemorated on the wall, as well as the photos of classrooms, festivals, holidays, and everyday life taken since the wave, those frames in which the individuals lost are not contained, in which the deceased remain a glaring absence, a haunting omission, a memory of what could have been different. These photographs, their contents and their omissions, their physical absence or presentness, are enmeshed in a process of remembrance. They both affect and become affected by narratives and memories of the wave. Through their images and materiality, they transmit stories and recollections. They merge temporalities, bringing the past into the present and the future, at the same time that they fragment the continuity of a moment, freezing a memory, a person into a particular temporal context, neatly framing an event and eliding evidence of how an existence, a time can extend out from the boundaries of a photo in an endless circuit of movements, pulses, possibilities, and vibrations.

Conclusion

The anecdotes, moments, and objects relayed and discussed within this paper serve as an exploration into the complicated social landscape of emotion and tsunami memories in Takuapa, Thailand. The instances recounted above of the vernacular and intimate tsunami memories scattered across the district, pressed into and contained by material remnants - concrete foundations, makeshift wooden signs for tsunami evacuation routes, photographs carefully placed on or conspicuously missing from a family altar, and imaginary lines of the water's height drawn on bare walls - and the memories produced by and through official commemorations exemplify the complex network of connections between tsunami memories and objects. This paper demonstrates how material objects affect and are affected by memories of the wave in an endless circuit of tensions, latent possibilities, and movements, the relationship of objects to narratives of the wave constantly shifting, changing with the context of an encounter, the specific social moment, the particular time and place. The memories contained within these pages highlight the significance of the social context in the construction of tsunami narratives, the role that notions of *kalathesa* play in how memories of the wave are remembered, forgotten, and unforgotten in Takuapa (Stewart, 1996), and the connections between objects and bodies, between ritual materials and ongoing spiritual care for lost loved ones, between ruins and affective remembrances of the wave.

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The Cultural Influence of Sipsong Panna on Thailand Since the 1980s: The Case of the Lue Literary Work *Kham Khap Lanka Sip Hua*⁵⁵

Dao, Sirui

University of Hamburg
Germany

Abstract

This paper studies Sipsong Panna's cultural influence on Thailand, especially Northern Thailand, since the 1980s, taking the reception of the Lue literary work *Kham Khap Lanka Sip Hua* as an example. After being revised on plot and language, this text, a localized poetic variation of the Indian epic *Ramayana*, is published in 1981 and 1983 in two volumes. The 1980s witnessed the reopening of Sipsong Panna to the outside world. Since then, Thai writings on Sipsong Panna reemerged. Books published in China are introduced to Thailand, among which is this literary text. This paper discusses the reception of this text from three dimensions. The first is academic reception and misreading, especially the comparison with Ramakien, and Charoen Malarochana (Mala Khamchan)'s research on the New Tai Lue script and the language in the text. The second is its influence on Mala Khamchan's novel *Chao Chan Phom Hom, Nirat Phra That Inkhwaen*, on the aspects of inter-textuality and language. The third is its adaptation into the drama *Lanka Sip Ho*, being discussed from the aspects of deconstruction and ethnic identity. Conclusions of this study are listed as follows: Firstly, international circumstance of the 1980s and its content of *Ramayana* resulted in the circulation of this text in Thailand. Secondly, the receptions of Sipsong Panna's texts and cultures in Thailand mostly depend on books published in China and on information provided by Chinese informants, so the misreadings in the Chinese context are easily transmitted into Thailand. Last but not least, the literature and culture of Sipsong Panna have been playing a significant role in the cultural revival and reconstruction of Northern Thailand, as well as in the cultural identity construction of the Lue people in Thailand, since the 1980s.

Keywords: *Ramayana*, literature reception, Lue, cultural construction, misreading

There is a long history of interaction between Sipsong Panna⁵⁶ and Thailand. Having diminished for decades during the mid-20th century, the interaction revives after 1975, the year the diplomatic relationship between the People's Republic of China and Thailand was established. Much has been discussed concerning the impact of Thailand on Sipsong Panna both in ancient times and in the contemporary period. But the influence of Sipsong Panna on Thailand, especially the contemporary period, lacks scholarly attention. This paper aims to discuss the influence of Sipsong Panna on Thailand since the 1980s, taking the reception of

⁵⁵ This paper is translated and revised from my Master thesis.

⁵⁶ Sipsong Panna, or "Xishuangbanna" according to the Chinese pronunciation, is now in the southern part of Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China.

the Lue⁵⁷ literary work *Kham Khap Lanka Sip Hua* (KKLSH) as an example. The circulation of Sipsong Panna Lue literature, especially in Thailand, is a topic lacking academic attention. It is not the reception of Chinese literature, the main literature in China, but ethnic minority literature of China, a rare phenomenon in the literary communication of China.

For historical reasons, for a long period, the texts received by Thailand have been books published in China. The revisions by editors during editing and publication have deeply influenced the reception of Thailand. In addition, the circulation of Sipsong Panna texts in Thailand is not merely text transmission, but circulation closely connected with cultural change and ethnic consciousness. Therefore, this paper will not only discuss the textual reception, but also the regional context. Without the context, it is difficult to understand the significance of the reception of KKLSH.

I. Background

This paper will discuss the reception of KKLSH from three dimensions: Firstly, literature researchers' studies; Secondly, the influence on Mala Khamchan's novel *Chao Chan Phom Hom, Nirat Phra That Inkhwaen* (CCPH); Thirdly, the adaptation of *Lanka Sip Ho* (LSH) by the Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University. These three dimensions correspond to three aspects of cultural influence of Sipsong Panna on Thailand. Before discussing, it is necessary to review the backgrounds which contributes to the reception, that is, the publication of this text in China, and the changes in the international relationship between China and Thailand since 1975.

1.1 The Compilation and Publication of *Kham Khap Lanka Sip Hua*

The published version of KKLSH is not the original folk literature text, but a text being revised by the compilers. Since these revisions will be reflected in and affect the reception, it is necessary to make a brief review of how this text was compiled and revised.

Kham khap, means song, and *lanka sip hua* refers to the character Phommachak, who is the king of Lanka Island and has ten heads (*sip hua*), known as Ravana in *Ramayana* and Thosakan in *Ramakien*. *Lanka Sip Hua* is a name covers different variations of the story of Ramayana, circulated in the areas of Lue and Shan. The text discussed here, KKLSH, a variation of *Lanka Sip Hua*, probably is adapted from the Buddhist literary work *Phrommachak Jataka* circulated in the Upper Mekong region.

Lanka Sip Hua was first reviewed by Bunchuai Srisawat as early as the 1950s. However before 1958, there is no record of *Lanka Sip Hua* in the Chinese world. It is in 1958 that this story was for the first time introduced into the Chinese world. Since 1981, there are several *Lanka Sip Hua* variations being translated into Chinese⁵⁸. The New Tai Lue script version, KKLSH, was published in two volumes, respectively in 1981

⁵⁷ Lue is the group of Tai people in Sipsong Panna and neighboring areas. They call themselves as "Lue" relative to the Tai people from other places, and as "Tai" relative to non-Tai people. Now the Lue, together with other Tai peoples in China, are officially categorised as Dai. However, in order to stress regional identity, this paper uses the word "Lue".

⁵⁸ *Lanka Sip Hua* was firstly found by the investigation team of Yunnan national folk literature (Sipsong Panna), organized by the Department of Chinese, Yunnan University. On July 17, 1958, *quanguo minjian wenxue gongzuozhe dahui* (national conference of folk literature researchers) was held at Beijing, in which the resolution to compile minority literature histories or overviews was passed (Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Yuan Shaoshu Minzu Wenxue Yanjiusuo, 1984, p. 1). Then, teams of investigation were set up at different areas to conduct surveys on minority folk literature. The journal *Wenxue pinglun* (Literature review), Volume 6, 1959, released an article on *Lanka Sip Hua*, written by the investigation team of Yunnan national folk literature (Sipsong Panna) (1959). In the beginning of 1959, Dao Xingping finished the translation of a version of *Lanka Sip Hua*, while it was not published. After 1978, the compilation and editing of folk literature, which had been suspended for a decade during the Great Cultural

and 1983.

The investigation and compilation of folk literature initiated by the government in the second half of the twentieth century, is not only exploring cultural heritage, but is also a method of political propaganda and cultural integration, to integrate the different ethnic cultural heritages inside the territory of China into the socialist cultural system. In the 1970s, revision and recreation of folk literature was thought to be correct by folk literature compilers, and was "the necessity of the development of folk literature" (Zhang Hong, 1978, p. 234). They did not conceal the political function of it. "Well-liked lyrics in Dai areas, like *He xin fang* [*khuen huean mai* in Tai] and others, through the effort of both professional and amateur literature compilers, were recreated into a long poem [sic] of exalting socialism, president Mao and the brilliant leadership of Chinese Communist Party. It [sic] plays an important role in assisting the central work of the Party and occupying the cultural battlefield in rural areas." (Wang Song, 1978, p. 34)

Though KKLSH was published at the early 1980s, it is a text being censored as well. Depictions and plots being incompatible with the official ethnicity policy, religion policy or literary taste were changed or deleted. The editors of KKLSH do not mention their revision in the preface. Three of the compilers have passed away, I interviewed with the last compiler Dao Wenxue in 2015. Since the compilation happened years ago, the compiler could not recollect the details of revision, while he mentioned that they revised the text according to the command from the superior (personal interview, March 1, 2015). Unfortunately, the manuscript(s) they based was lost. While a Chinese translated version, written by Sudawan, which seems to be based on the same manuscript with KKLSH, can be relied on to discuss the revisions in KKLSH. This translation is included in the collection *Yunnan shaoshu minzu wenxue ziliao* (Anthology of minority literature of Yunnan Province) and published in 1981. As the preface of it says that, "for being faithful to the original translation, except few incorrect characters and sentences, it is printed according to the translation" (Sudawan, Vol. 4, 1981), it can be employed as a reference book to analyze the revision of KKLSH. Another Chinese translated version also can be referred to discuss the compilation, for in the afterword, the translators and compilers of the 1981 Chinese version of *Lanka Sip Hua* mention the reasons of revision and cite some examples of the revision, some of which are identical to the revisions in KKLSH. It is helpful to review the afterword to explain the revision of KKLSH. As mentioned by the compilers, for the reason of ethnic policy, they used Phommachak to replace Prince Sulaman, who waited in a mountain to rob Sida who was on her way back to Thataratha city with Lamma:

Once more, is the necessary revision and simplification of some characters and plots. There are many characters in *Lanka Sip Hua*, and the major characters are vividly depicted. The majority of the characters in the manuscript is retained in the revision version. But in order

Revolution, were resumed. From 1978 to 1979, Gao Zhideng and Shang Zhonghao revised the translation of Dao Xingping. In 1980, Yan Wenbiang (Ai Unphaeng) and Wujun translated *Lanka Sip Hua* and published it in 1981 by Yunnan People's Publishing House (Dao Xingping et al., 1981, p.234). In 1981, the Institute of Yunnan Ethnic Literature of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the Institute of Ethnic Folk Literature of Yunnan Provincial Academy of Social Sciences, and the China Society for the Study of Folk Literature and Art (Branch of Yunnan) printed four versions of *Lanka Sip Hua*. One version included is translated from the manuscript written by Sudawan. The scribe is Pho Phra In from Ban Chang Liang, Mueang Chae., who finished the transcription on the sixth day, in the tenth month, CE 1312. This translated version was probably based on the same original manuscript(s) as KKLSH, for these two versions are considerably identical. A variation *Shi'er tou mowang* (The twelf-headed demon) or *Lanka Sipsong Hua*, translated by Yan Wen (Ai Un), Yan Feng (Ai Fong) and Wang Song, was published by Zhongguo Minjian Wenyi Chubanshe in 1990.

to maintain the *sixiang xing*⁵⁹, and to concentrate on the major characters, we revised few characters and plots. For example, there was a prince from mountain, Chao Sulaman, who robbed the bride, in the original manuscript. It contains the disdain for ethnic minorities in the mountainous areas. Besides, Chao Sulaman only appeared once and then never went on the stage. After repeated consideration, we retained this plot, but replaced the character by the Ten-headed King, who was not resigned to let Nang Sida get marry with the other one and wait for robbing her on their way back. This action completely conforms to the development of Phommachak's character, and this change more centrally depicts the Ten-headed King's arrogance and greed. (Dao Xingping et al, 1981, p. 236)

After being compared with the Sudawan version and the French translated version *Phommachak* (Lafont, 2003), it is safe to say that their reason for replacing Sulaman is untenable, for there is no evidence of disdain, implying that Sulaman comes from a hill tribe. This revision corresponds to the plot in KKLSH (Dao Jinxiang, Dao Xinping, Dao Zhida, & Dao Wenxue, 1981, pp. 208-212). Though variation is one of the characteristics of folk literature, it is hard to ascribe the disappearance of Sulaman in KKLSH to the natural change during literature communication. Besides, the trace of revision can also be confirmed by checking the rhyme, for the reason that *khap lue*⁶⁰ is poetry and the change of rhyming word can be detected. The last syllable in the first verse of "*ku ni pen chao thon thao ngao yai lang ka, hua chai han kham tao khom kla*" (I the noble originated king Lanka, endures the bold heart can endure the sharp edge of the hardened sword, Dao Jinxiang et al., 1981, p. 209) should have been *man* to rhyme with *han*, the third syllable of the second verse. Since *sulaman* was displaced by *langka*, these two verses become unrhyming. The similarity in this plot can be explained as the result of the shared considerations of the editors of these two works. Another aspect undergoing change is word form, caused by using the new Tai Lue script created in the 1950s. Excepting elementary school textbooks, the publications before the 1980s are mostly governmental papers⁶¹, propaganda materials⁶², translations of Seventeen-Year Literature⁶³, and political mobilization literature⁶⁴. For collecting and integrating folk literature, and for popularize the newly created script, an abundant of folk literary works and historical books are published since 1979. Creation of a new script is a part of the work of language standardization. But lacking knowledge of Tai language, the script reform

⁵⁹ *Sixiang xing* is a term used in Chinese literature criticism, meaning "thoughtful".

⁶⁰ *Khap lue* means Lue song. In this paper, *khap lue*, in most cases, refers to narrative folk song (*kham phai*).

⁶¹ Some of these books are: Dao, Jinxiang, & Dao Shide (Trans.). (1959). *Guanyu renmin gongshe ruogan wenti de jueyi: zhonggup gongchandang di ba jie zhongyang weiyuanhui di liu ci quanti huiyi tongguo, yi jiu wu ba nian shi'er yue shi ri* [Resolution to the problems of the People's commune]. Kunming: Yunnan Minzu Chubanshe. Yunnansheng Xishuangbanna Daiwen Fanyizu (Trans.). (1975). *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo di si jie quanguo renmin daibiao dahui di yi ci huiyi wenjian* [Documents of the first conference of the 14th National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China]. Kunming: Yunnan Minzu Chubanshe.

⁶² Some of these books are: Yunnan Renmin Chubanshe Bianjibu (Ed.). (1954). *Zhongguo gongchandang sanshi nian huace* [Illustrated book of the thirty years of the Chinese Communist Party]. Kunming: Yunnan Renmin Chubanshe. Yunnansheng Xishuangbanna Daiwen Fanyizu (Trans.). (1975). *Makesi, Engesi, liening lun wuchan jieji zhuanzheng* [Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and Lenin on dictatorship]. Kunming: Yunnan Renmin Chubanshe. Yunnan Minzu Xueyuan Minu Yuwen Ban (Trans.). (1976). *Weida de lingxiu he daoshi mao zezong zhuxi yongchui buxiu* [Eternal glory to Chairman Mao, the great leader and tutor]. Kunming: Yunnan Minzu Chubanshe.

⁶³ One of these books is: Miao, Ge (1958). *Lu* [Road]. Lin Chuan, & Dao Jinxiang (Trans.). Kunming: Yunnan Renmin Chubanshe.

⁶⁴ Some of these books are: Bo, Yuwen (Pho l'un) (1964). *Wucai yun* [Colorful cloud]. Kunming: Yunnan Minzu Chubanshe, 1964. Kanglang, Zhuai (Khanan Choi), & Dao Xinping (1979). *Yubang jiashi* [Family history of I Pang]. Kunming: Yunnan Minzu Chubanshe.

work group, under the lead of Fu Maoji, partly twisted the word form and the pronunciation of the Lue dialect. The new script is considered by some researchers as more conform to the local pronunciation than Tham script (Sonkanok, 1990, p. 20). However, it does not meet the reality. The changes caused by the introduction of the new script will affect the text reception. The Pali originated words underwent a great changed, both in word form and pronunciation.

Some consonants being majorly used in Sanskrit/Pali words, are deleted, and words being spelt by these consonants are replaced by the consonants having the same phoneme. The name of the king Thataratha *thataratha* is changed into *thatalatha*, the last two consonants are replaced. The name of Phommachak's first wife Suwanni *suwannī* is changed into *suwannī*, the consonant "n" is replaced by another one. Initial two-consonant clusters are reduced into single consonants, for instance, the antagonist of KKLSH, Phommachak, is written as *phummachak*, while in Tham script his name is *phommachak* or more standardly *phrohmachakka* (Brahmacakka), in which *phr* is replaced by *ph*. The final consonant in a syllable, which is followed by an initial consonant of the next syllable, is deleted in the new script. This change makes closed syllable became open syllable. The first "t" of the name of the princess of Lanka *kutti thidā* is deleted and changed into *kuti thidā*. The name of the monkey kingdom of *kissā* is written as *kīsā*, the name of the third wife of Thataratha *sumitta* is changed into *sumītā*. Sanskrit/Pali originated words, which have no tone mark when are written in Tham script, are added with tone mark, which is equal to *mai tho* in Thai, and short vowels are changed into long vowels. For instance, *ēkarāt* (supreme monarch) is changed into *ēkalāt* (a tone mark is added to *ē*), and *thidā* (daughter) is changed into *thīdā* (*i* is changed into *ī*, and a tone mark is added to it).

1.2 Thailand's Rediscovery of Sipsong Panna

Before 1953, Sipsong Panna has a long history of extensive interaction with Southeast Asia. From 1953 to 1975, this relation is diminished⁶⁵. After the year 1975, when the diplomatic relationship between the People's Republic of China and Thailand was established, Sipsong Panna is reopened to Thailand. After the Chinese Economic Reform of 1978, China encourages the development of international tourism. In 1982, Sipsong Panna was listed in the First Batch of the National-level Scenic and Historic Interest Area, and in 1984, Thailand encourages Sino-Thai tourism (Wang Heying, 1987, p. 121). From then on, Sipsong Panna is more accessible for Thai visitors, which comprise Thai royal members, politicians, scholars and ordinary people (Xiaoyuan, 1986, p. 33; Chen Lüfan, 2005, pp. 256-278; Xishuangbanna Daizu Zizhizhou Difang Zhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui, 2002, p. 937; Xu Zugen, 1986, p. 36; Xiaoyuan, 1986, p. 33; Bao Yiming, 1986, pp. 93-94; Ganlayana Watana gongzhu, 1990, p. 3; Yunnan Nianjian, 1996, p. 76; Ran Rong, 1985, p. 68; Ran Rong, 1991, p. 41), and many travel memoirs are published⁶⁶. At first, the Thai interest in Sipsong Panna centered on the origin of Thai people and the Nanzhao problem. For this reason, Dali is also a destination for Thai royal members and researchers in the 1980s. For a long time, it is believed that Thai people migrated from China and the Tai in Yunnan Province is the evidence of the migration. In pace with the

⁶⁵ According to *Xishuangbanna daizu zizhizhou difangzhi* (Gazetteers of Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture), a group of Thai journalists visited Sipsong Panna on April, 1957 (Xishuangbanna Daizu Zizhizhou Difang Zhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui 2002, p.937).

⁶⁶ Some of these articles are: Pitiphat, Sumitr (1983). Khon thai nai sipsongpanna [Thai people of Sipsongpanna]. *Warsan Thammasat* 12(1), 123-137. Vallibhotama, Srisakara (1989). Watthanatham sipsongpanna [Sipsong Panna culture]. *Silapa Watthanatham* 15(3), 27-42. Nartchamnong, Thongthaem (1989). Thinthan khong chao tai nai Sipsongpanna [The Land of the Tais(Dai) in Sipsong Panna]. *Silapa Watthanatham* 15(3), 50-65. No Na Paknam (1989). Thong daen Sipsongpanna, thin Thai thang tai khong chin [A tour of Sipsong Panna, Land of the Tais in Southern China]. *Silapa Watthanatham* 15(3), 102-108.

deepening of visit, articles, books and documentaries on Sipsong Panna were published⁶⁷. Manuscripts of Sipsong Panna were edited and published⁶⁸. Lue literary and historical books published in China were either transcribed or translated into Thai⁶⁹, and even some Chinese translated versions of Lue literature work and Chinese books on Dai people are translated⁷⁰.

Almost at the same time, Thai academic horizon was extended to other Tai areas outside Thailand, such as Yunnan Province of China, Eastern India, Shan State of Myanmar, Laos, and Northern Vietnam. The comparative study of the cultures of different Tai peoples increasingly gains popularity. Most of the research on the literature of Sipsong Panna also belongs to comparative study, such as Chutamas Sonkanok's "A comparative study of the Lanna, Sipsong Panna and Kengtung versions of the folktale: *Phra Suthon-Nang Mamora*"(1990), and Kasorn Swangwong's "A comparative study of a Lanna Thai, a Northeastern Thai and a Thai Lue versions of the *Nang Phom Hom*"(2005).

The 1980s is also an important period for the cultural revival in Northern Thailand. Many northern-based scholars released research works on Lanna in this period. Organizations for conserving and developing Northern culture were set up, for instance, Chiang Mai University set up the Center for the Promotion of Arts and Culture in 1985. The rediscovery of Sipsong Panna was coincident with this cultural revival trend, and since then on the culture of Sipsong Panna has been closely related to the Lanna renaissance. In the year 1984, the Three Kings Monument was set up in Chiang Mai, which is a typical event of the arise of regional consciousness. In the memorial handout of the ceremony, *Lanna Thai, Memorial Handout of the Royal Opening Ceremony of the Royal Three Kings Monument*⁷¹ (1984), there is a travelogue "Visiting Sipsong Panna"⁷² (Yiam Sipsongpanna) by Kraisi Nimmanahemin. On November 22-24th, 1986, the conference "Lan Na and Sipsong Pan Na: Studies in Cultural Relations, Continuity and Change" was held in Chiang Mai. When reviving and reconstructing the Northern culture, the Northern Thai not only recover local culture, but also borrow the culture from other Tai areas like Sipsong Panna, and Kengtung. In the past, the kingdom of Chiang Mai was closely related with Sipsong Panna, Kengtung, Luang Prabang and other neighboring states. Besides, there is a considerable amount of people in Northern Thailand whose roots can be traced back to Sipsong Panna, Kengtung and other neighboring Tai areas. It is understandable why the reconstruction of Lanna identity combines the cultural elements from these places, to dissimilate it from the major culture in Thailand. However, before the 1980s, the culture of Sipsong Panna also played a role in the cultural construction of Northern Thailand. In 1953, a modernized Northern Thai banquet was organized by Kraisri Nimmanhemmin and his wife. In order to express the identity of Northern Thai, guests were requested to wear the standard costume of *khon mueang* of Lanna Thai. Trousers, that the people (Khun⁷³ and Lue) in Kengtung and Sipsong Panna wear, was chosen to be one part of the male costume (Nimmanhemmin, 1984, pp. 122-123), because chong kraben, that the local Yuan⁷⁴ male wore, was not

⁶⁷ One of these articles is: Sathianrasut, Liang. (1982). Prawat khwaen Sipsongphanna [History of Sipsong Panna]. *Thalaeng ngan nrawattisat, ekka san boranna khadi* 12(1), 29-48.

⁶⁸ One of these books is: Swangpanyangkoon, Thawi (1986). *Tamnan phuen mueang sipsongphanna* [Chronicle of Sipsong Panna]. Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai Book Centre.

⁶⁹ One of these books is: Chanhom, Lamun (Ed.). (2002). *Suphasit thai lue* [Lue proverbs]. Chiang Mai: Samnak Sinlapa Watthanatham, Sathaban Ratchaphat Chiang Mai.

⁷⁰ One of these books is: Yian, Woenpian, & Choengphoeng (1992). *Nithan thai lue nai monthon yunnan* [Tai Lue folktales in Yunnan Province]. Trans. Suchat Phumiborirak. Krungthep: D.D. Books.

⁷¹ My translation.

⁷² My translation.

⁷³ Khun is the group of Tai people originating from or residing in Kengtung, Shan State, Myanmar.

⁷⁴ Yuan is the Tai people in Northern Thailand, and some parts of Myanmar and Laos.

appropriate for this occasion.

Nowadays, the elements of Sipsong Panna can be found in different types of Northern Thai arts. The traditional Lue costumes of Sipsong Panna, especially the female costume of Mueang U⁷⁵, are widely used in all kinds of activities in Northern Thailand. Hulusi, a musical instrument being widely accepted to be a symbol of the Dai people in China, is also introduced into Thailand. Hulusi⁷⁶ is the main instrument in the Northern Thai artist Khamla Thanyaporn's song "Sipsongpanna" (in *Lanna Symphony Orchestra*) and instrumental piece "Sib Shuang Banna" (in *Resonance of Lanna*). Direkchai Mahatdhanasin, former adviser for the Lanna Folk Club of Chiang Mai University, adapted the peacock dance in the dance drama *Peacock Princess*, which he watched in Sipsong Panna in 1986, into "Fon Nok Yung" (Peacock Dance). This adapted dance is categorised as "Adapted Lanna Dance" (*fon Lanna prayuk*) (Saensa, 2011, pp. 46, 50). Lue architecture of Sipsong Panna inspires modern Lanna architectural designs in the Northern Thailand. Adul Heranya, a famous Northern Thai architect, adapts the elements of Sipsong Panna architecture in his works, such as the Khum Nakorn Villa, the Sipsan Luxury Hotel, the Rawee Waree Luxury Hotel and etc. The wells in Lue villages of Sipsong Panna, which are usually added with a pagoda-style ground cover to guard the water, are also used to decorate the hotels in Chiang Mai, such as the Yaang Come Village Hotel (designed by Niwat Tantayanusorn), the Dhara Dhevi Chiang Mai, and the Rim Resort of Chiang Mai.

The rediscovery of Sipsong Panna also gives impetus to the identity construction of the Lue in Thailand. A large amount of Lue people lives in Northern Thailand, most of whom were obliged to migrate there during the early 19th century, for the restoration of Chiang Mai and Nan and other neighboring Tai states, and during the 20th century, for the political turmoil in Sipsong Panna and Laos.

The identity construction of Lue in Thailand, does not only preserve the existing culture, but also recover the ancient culture. Since Sipsong Panna and Mueang Yong⁷⁷ (Mong Yawng) are the hometowns for the majority of Lue in Thailand, the culture of these two places are thought to be the orthodox culture of Lue. From the 1980s onwards, for the development of international relationship, transportation and tourism, Sipsong Panna and Mueang Yong are never hard to visit. The culture there is easily transmitted to Thailand and is utilized as resources to reconstruct their identity. Costume, music, language, architecture, script and other things become elements to reconstruct cultural identity. The costumes of Sipsong Panna and Mueang Yong are imitated by some Lue communities. Traditional *khap lue* and modern songs from Sipsong Panna and Mueang Yong are played as background music for cultural activities or dance. Though Tham script is a widely-used script in Tai areas, but the Lue in Thailand prefer the font made by Kengtung or Sipsong Panna. Buddhist architecture is another thing being reproduced. Bamboo-shoot pagoda (*that no*) of Sipsong Panna are rebuilt in Ban Don Chai village, Tambon Silalaeng, Amphoe Pua, Changwat Nan in 2000, and Wat Thin Nai, Tambon Banthin, Amphoe Mueang, Changwat Phrae in 2015. Phra That Chom Yong, the most important pagoda in Mueang Yong, is also replicated in some Mueang Yong descendants communities.

For the reason of nation-building, Lue is now considered as an ethnic minority in Thailand. And partly due to the need of tourism and the consumption of otherness, the difference between Lue people and other Tai people in Northern Thailand is over-emphasised and exaggerated. When transplanting the culture of Sipsong Panna and Mueang Yong, the Lue in Thailand fails to notice culture change, especially the

⁷⁵ Now in Phongsaly Province of Laos.

⁷⁶ Actually, contrast to the widely accepted view, Hulusi (*pi lamtao* in Tai Nuea and *pi namtao* in Lue and Thai) is not a musical instrument of Sipsong Panna, but of Dehong.

⁷⁷ Now in Shan State of Myanmar. However, nowadays, most of the Lue descendants in Lamphun Province call themselves as Yong rather than Lue.

difference between the changes caused by endogenous and exogenous factors. And the newly constructed cultural traits or traits that influenced by the other are considered to be their own culture. Cultural identity is never fixed and homogeneous, but changeable. People from the same ethnic group may hold different cultural traits, while an individual can show different identities at different time and space. Through imitating of the culture in the homeland and other Lue areas and sharing the same cultural experience, the Lue in Thailand obtains a sense of belonging. They are not only belongs to their own local communities, but also a much larger Lue community.

It is in this period that the literary work KKLSH is introduced to Thailand.

II Literary Criticism

Thai literature researcher is not only the first recipient of KKLSH, but also the major recipient of it. Thai trend of travel to Sipsong Panna in the 1980s, is coincident with the publication of books printed in New Tai Lue script. Books sold at Sipsong Panna were brought back by those visitors. The two-volume KKLSH was only printed 15,000 copies in China, thus its circulation is limited. Besides, this text has never been fully transcribed or translated into Thai, those who read it are people having the knowledge of New Tai Lue script or Tham script. Thai critics' reception of this text can be divided into two kinds, the first is based on primary source, the original text (Phanthumetha, 1986; Malarochana, 1986; Sribusra, 1991; Nimmanhemmin, 2011; Khamchan, 2012), and the second is based on secondary source (Jeennoon, 2004, 2006; Damrhung & Khana Aksonsat, 2013; Damrhung, 2014).

2.1 The New Tai Lue Script

Charoen Malarochana, more well-known by the pseudonym Mala Khamchan, finished his Master thesis at Silpakorn University, under the supervision of Prasert Na Nakhon and Thawi Sawangpanyangkun. The later was studying the New Tai Lue script at that time, and used the first page of KKLSH as an illustration of the script in *Tamnan Mueang Yong* (Chronicle of Mueang Yong, 1984) and *Tamnan Phuen Mueang Sipsongphanna* (Chronicle of Sipsong Panna, 1986) (Swangpanyangkoon, 1984, p. 10; Swangpanyangkoon, 1986, pp.32-35). Malarochana assisted the research of *Tamnan Phuen Mueang Sipsongphanna*, and got KKLSH from Sawangpanyangkun (Khamchan, personal interview, February 7, 2015).

Malarochana's thesis "An Analytical Study of Khamkup Lanka Sip Hua a Thai Lue Literature" is the first monographic study on KKLSH, and his study on this text influenced his later work, CCPH, which will be discussed in the next section. This thesis consists of six chapters, that is, "Introduction", "Some Fundamental Knowledge about Thai Lue People" (introducing the geography and history of Sipsong Panna, and the manuscripts and books of Thai Lue literature), "Thai Lue Script System" (discussing the script and orthography of the New Tai Lue script), "Thai Lue Language in Kham Khap Lanka Sip Hua" (discussing common words in Thai and Thai Lue, Pali, Sanskrit and Khmer loanwords in Thai Lue, word formation, and language use), "Cultural Elements in *Kham Khap Lanka Sip Hua*", and "Conclusion and Suggestion" (discussing style, content, artistic tactics, social and cultural condition)⁷⁸. In the fifth chapter, he discusses the characteristics of rhyme, and the way to start and to end a canto in section one, the way of presenting love in speech (Malarochana, 1986, pp. 248-249), and onomatopoeia (Malarochana, 1986, p. 254), which helped Mala Khamchan to write *khap lue* in his later work CCPH.

Half of the thesis (Malarochana, 1986, pp. 41-179) focuses on the script and language in KKLSH. The New Tai Lue script used to print this text was put in use in 1955, before then Tham script and Fak Kham script

⁷⁸ My translation.

were the scripts used in Sipsong Panna. Even though the New Tai Lue script is based on Tham script, the orthography undergoes a great change. Besides, at that time, a large number of books published were printed in the New Tai Lue Script, which had never been studied in details by Thai scholars. Therefore, Malarochana devoted one chapter (Malarochana, 1986, pp. 41-75) to analyze the script. He mentioned that this study would publicize the knowledge of the New Tai Lue script and Lue languages, and can contribute to the later studies of other Lue documents (Malarochana, 1986, pp. 4, 7, 77, 179, 291). It is true that, some of the later studies on Lue language and literature do refer to this thesis (Sonkanok, 1990). Thai scholars certainly know the script reform in Sipsong Panna, but some of them consider the new script to be more corresponding to the actual pronunciation (Sribusra, 1991, preface). They seldomly mention the distortion of the text caused by the new script, that has been discussed above. With the exception of correcting *thīdā* (daughter) into *thidā*, Malarochana does not amend the other characters' names. Another scholar, Sribusra, follows all the spellings of the names in KKLSH, when he translates the text into Thai, in order to remain the literary style of the original text. He does not even correct the word *thīdā*, which is incorrect in Thai (Sribusra, 1991). When reviewing CCPH, Suphan Thongkhilai mentions that Mala Khanchan revises the names of the characters in KKLSH. He says that "if it is the real *khap lue*, *phrommachak* should be written as *phummachak*, *ram* or *rama* should be written as *lamma*" (Thongkhilai, 1992, p. 54). However, as what has been discussed above, most of the names in KKLSH has been misrepresented by the New Tai Lue script, and Phommachak should be written as *phommachak* (Brahmacakka). In CCPH, Mala Khamchan only revises the name from the Pali form to the Sanskrit form.

2.2 Ramakien

Since *Lanka Sip Hua* stories was introduced into Thailand, they had been closely related to *Ramakien*. *Ramakien* is the most famous literary work in Thailand, and probably for this reason, KKLSH becomes one of the most-discussed Lue literary works in Thailand. There are three chapters discussing the literature of Lue in Bunchuai Srisawat's *Lue, Khon Thai Nai Prathet Chin* (Lue, the Thai people in China, 1955), one of which introduces the story of *Lanka Sip Song Hua*, a variation of *Lanka Sip Hua*. The only literature review collected in *Yunnan* (1986), discussed KKLSH.

As what has been mentioned above that Thai academic horizon expanded to other Tai areas outside Thailand in the 1980s. Tai literatures in Kengtung, Sipsong Panna, Laos and other areas become the objects of the study of comparative local literature (*wanna kam thong thin priap thiap*). The research on KKLSH in Thailand is no exception. It centers on the comparison between KKLSH and other *Ramayana* stories in Thailand, such as *Ramakien*. Phatchalin Jeennoo's thesis "An Analysis of Hanuman in Various Versions of the *Ramakien*" (2004) and paper "The Degrees of Hanuman's Dignity in Various Versions of the *Ramakien*" (2006-2007) compare the character of Hanuman in KKLSH with other versions of *Ramakien*. Prakhong Nimmanhem's "Rama stories as Buddhist Literature"⁷⁹ (2011) discusses KKLSH and other *Ramayana* stories in the context of Buddhist literature. In the paper "*Lanka Sip Ho*: Recitation of Ethics of Tai-Lue *Ramayana*" (2014), Pornrat Damrung compares the character Phommachak in KKLSH with the character Ravana in *Uttara Kanda*, and compares KKLSH with other *Ramayana* stories in Northern Thailand, i.e., *Phommachak*, *Horaman* and *Prammahian*. Moreover, Pornrat Damrung and the students of the Faculty of Arts adapted KKLSH into a drama, which is a part of the drama project "*Ramakien*: Our Roots Right Now" (*Ramakien: kao na chak rak kaew*). The other three works, *Yok Rob*, *Femmes Fatales in Lanka* (*Nangrai nai Longka*), and *Ravanasura* (*Rapphanasun*), are also related to *Ramayana* stories. Some critics

⁷⁹ My translation.

of CCPH also consider the *khap lue Lanka Sip Hua* in CCPH as *Ramakien* (Jarungkidanan, 1992; Chitchamnong, 1992). Other writings, which are not monographs of comparative study, still discuss it together with other texts. Nawawan Phanthumetha's "The story of *Lanka Sip Hua*"⁸⁰ (1986) compares KKLSH and *Ramakien*, the version of the reign of Rama I, from three aspects. When paraphrasing the plot of KKLSH, Sribusra emphasizes the plots that are not found in *Ramakien* or the plots that are found in *Ramakien* but have subtle differences.

Reception context and expectation horizon effect the transnational reception of text. *Ramakien* is one of the most well-known literary works in Thailand, while few people knows *Lanka Sip Hua* and KKLSH. For the consideration of the audience's understanding, *Lanka Sip Hua* is often called as Lue version of *Ramakien*. Sribusra's work *Lanka Sip Hua: Tai Lue's Ramakien* (1991) uses the photo of the mask of Indra in the Khon drama as book cover. When reviewing CCPH, Wanich Jarungkidanan referred the story of Rama and Sida in the *khap lue Lanka Sip Hua* as *Ramakien*, not as *Lanka Sip Hua*. In addition, he used the name Nang Sida and Thotsakan in *Ramakien* instead of Sida and Phrommachak in the *khap lue* (1992, pp. 128-129). Later on, he used the proverb "Yaksha steals, monkey takes away" (*yak lak ma, ling pha pai*) to explain Mala Khamchan's intention for inserting the story of Rama (Jarungkidanan, 1992, p. 129). However, it is somehow over-interpretation.

2.3 Problems

Before being published, the texts of Sipsong Panna were carefully censored and revised (sometimes purified), due to the contemporary literary policy or non-normative editing. Not all the compilers mentioned their revision in the books they compiled, neither did the editors of KKLSH. As a result, KKLSH is accepted in Thailand as a Lue text that reflects the language and society of Sipsong Panna. Since the editors did not mention their revision of KKLSH in the foreword, it is impossible for Thai scholars to know that this text had undergone any great changes. For this reason, the plot of Sulaman, changed by the compilers, can be found in almost all the Thai reviews (Malarochana, 1986, pp. 193, 217; Phanthumetha, 1986, p. 196; Montri Sribusra, 1991, pp. 28-29; Jeennoon, 2004, p. 56; Rungruengsri, 2011, p. 73). Other texts printed in New Tai Lue script which are introduced to Thailand have also been more or less revised, for instance, the editor of *Kham Khap Mak Kok Tao Mueang Chae Lai Nong* (Lyrics of the Floating Gourd of Mueang Chae, 1980) based on a Chinese translated version and *khap lue* works to revise the text. Ai Phin edited the plots of *Kham Khap Khao Chao Suwat* (Song of Chao Suwat, 1988) according to the literary policy of the Chinese government. Only some Thai scholars discuss the editorial processes of the texts published in China (Renoo Wichasin, 2001; Renoo Wichasin et al., 2008).

Many problems exist with regard to Thailand's reception of Lue culture and literature. Misreading is unavoidable, especially in the international reception of culture. However, most of the misreadings in Thailand are already finished in China. The misreading in the Chinese context is easily transmitted to Thailand. Especially in the 1980s and 1990s, for the urgent need of getting knowledge of Sipsong Panna, some Chinese books were translated into Thai and published in Thailand⁸¹. Some of these books contains

⁸⁰ My translation.

⁸¹ Li, Fu Chi. (1985). *Ban thuek rueang sipsong phanna* [Records of Sipsong Panna]. Khanakammakan Suepkhon Prawatsat Thai kiaokap Chin nai Ekkasan Phasa Chin, Samnak Nayok Ratthamontri (Trans.). Krungthep: Samnak Nayok Ratthamontri. Chang, Kong Chin. (1987). *Chon chat thai nai prathet chin (tam lak than khong chin)* [Thai people in China (according to Chinese documents)]. Krungthep: Saksopha Kanphim. Chieang, Ing Liang. (1991). *Prawat chon chuea chat thai* [History of Tai people]. Khanakammakan Suepkhon Prawatsat Thai kiaokap Chin nai Ekkasan Phasa Chin, Samnak Nayok Ratthamontri (Trans.). Krungthep: Samnak Nayok Ratthamontri. Yian, Woenpian, & Choengphoeng. (1992). *Nithan thai lue nai monthon yunnan* [Tai Lue folktales in Yunnan Province]. Suchat

many misreading, like peacock is Tai people's symbol. These books, together with other information provided by Chinese informants, contribute to some misreadings that are widely accepted in Thailand, like, Nang Manora Princess is considered by Lue as peacock⁸², and the name of "elephant-foot drum"⁸³. Some foreign researchers challenged the peacock misreading (Davis, 2005: pp. 118-119). The Chinese misreading is transferred into Thailand and the Lue in Thailand also misunderstands peacock as their symbol, and peacock decorations are arranged in many cultural activities to stress the cultural identity⁸⁴.

The crux of the research on the Lue literature of Sipsong Panna is the access to the original manuscripts. Since Sipsong Panna has a long history of interaction with the other Tai areas, the manuscripts of Sipsong Panna must have been brought to the other regions. When Some manuscripts are brought to Thailand. Since the 1980s onwards, Thai scholars brought some manuscripts back to Thailand, and some of them were republished in Thailand. For instance, Somsak Suwaphap's book, *Praweani Mueang Luang* (1986), was transcribed from a manuscript found in Mueang Luang, Sipsong Panna, during a visit there in 1985 (Suwaphap, 1986). In the past decades, especially in the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, the culture of Sipsong Panna has been destroyed and many manuscripts have lost. Though the manuscript culture is rebuilt after 1978 and manuscripts were imported from Kengtung and other areas, published books are more available for short trip visitors. Thai research works on Sipsong Panna texts are mostly based on books published in China. From 1985 to 2015, twelve Thai theses studying the literature of Sipsong Panna were written, and all of them are based on books published in China⁸⁵. For example, Chutamas Sonkanok's

Phumiborirak (Trans.). Krungthep: D.D. Books. Hoskin, John & Geoffrey Walton. (Eds.). (1992). *Folk Tales and Legends of the Dai People: The Thai Lue in Yunnan, China*. Ying Yi (Trans.). Krungthep: D D Books, Chu, Liangwen. (1994). *Chon chat tai: sathapattayakam lae khanop thamniam prapheni tai nai Sipsongphanna* [The Dai or the Tai and their architecture and customs in South China]. Ngamphan Wetchachiwa (Trans.). Chiang Mai: Suriwong Buk Sentoe. Chu, Liang-wen. (1992). *The Dai, or the Tai and Their Architecture & Customs in South China*. Krungthep: D D Books. Chao, Soeng Chang & Chang Yuan Sing. (1997). *Chon chat thai* [Tai nation]. Khanakammakan Suepkhon Prawatsat Thai kiaokap Chin nai Ekkasan Phasa Chin, Samnak Nayok Ratthamontri (Trans.). Krungthep: Samnak Nayok Ratthamontri.

⁸² In the Lue literature of Sipsong Panna, Nang Manora is Kinnari, a half-human and half-bird creature in Buddhist mythology. But Nang Manora is misread by the Han Chinese as peacock.

⁸³ The drums of Tai is incorrectly called by the Han Chinese as *xiang jiao gu* (elephant-foot drum), which is later literally translated into Thai as *klong thao chang* or *klong tin chang*, while the Tai never call their drums like this.

⁸⁴ Peacock is misread by the Han Chinese as the symbol of the Dai people. Peacock picture was decorated on the stage background of the activity "Watch Bretschneidera bloom, carry on the tradition of Tai Lue in the Nan Province" (my translation of *pho dok chomphuphukha ban, san hit hoi, koi tai lue moeng nan*), which was held in Pua District, Nan Province, on February 28- March 2, 2014. A peacock statue was decorated on the stage background of the activity "Inherit Tai Lue Culture" (my translation of *ngan suepsan watthanatham tai lue*), which was held at Ban Mueang Luang Tai, Doi Saket District, Chiang Mai Province, on March 28-29, 2015.

⁸⁵ Malarochana, Charoen. (1986). *Wikhro wanna kam thai lue rueang lanka sip hua* [An analytical study of Khamkup Lanka Sip Hua a Thai Lue literature]. (Master's thesis, Silpakorn University). Sonkanok, Chutamas. (1990). *Kan sueksa priap thiap rueang phra suthon-nang namora samnuan thong thin lannna, sipsongphanna lae Chiang Tung* [A comparative study of the Lanna, Sipsong Panna and Kengtung versions of the folktale: Phra Suthon-Nang Mamora]. (Master's thesis, Silpakorn University). Khetta Wimol. (2000). *Phap phuen khiao chuea khrua chao saenwifa sipsong phanna: kan sueksa wikhro nuea ha prawat sat* [The manuscripts on genealogy of Chaosaenweefa Sipsongpanna an analytical study of historical subject matter]. (Master's thesis, Silpakorn University). Techasiriwan, Apiradee. (2003). *Phatthana khong akson lae akkhara withi nai ekka san thai lue* [Development of Tai-Lue scripts and orthography]. (Master's thesis, Chiang Mai University). Swangwong, Kasorn. (2005). *Kan sueksa priap thiap wanna kam rueang nang phom hom chabap lanna, isan lae thai lue* [A comparative study of a Lanna Thai, a Northeastern Thai and a Thai Lue versions of the Nang Phom Hom]. (Master's thesis, Silpakorn University). Sangpunya, Isariyaporn. (2006). *Suphasit thai lue: kan sueksa choeng wikhro* [An analytical study of Tai Lue proverbs]. (Master's thesis, Srinakharinwirot University). Jorntamon, Uamporn. (2009). *Kham si phayang nai phasa thai lue* [Four-syllable words in the Tai Lue language]. (Master's thesis, Chiang Mai University). Mitphraphan, Wakul. (2010). *Mahachat thai lue kan thi 1-7:*

Master thesis, "A Comparative Study of the Lanna, Sipsong Panna and Kengtung Versions of the Folktale: Phra Suthon-Nang Mamora" (1990), is based on the book *Kham Khap Khao Chao Suthon* (Song of Prince Suthon, 1985); Lamun Chanhom's *Comparative Study of Lanna Proverbs and Tai Lue Proverbs*⁸⁶ (1998) was based on the book, *Tai People's Proverbs*⁸⁷ (1990), edited by Gao Lishi. In addition, most of the works republished in Thailand are books which have been published in China⁸⁸. Traditionally, Lue literature of Sipsong Panna are handed down orally or in the form of manuscript, a large body of which have not yet been compiled and published. Compared with unpublished primary sources collected in personal, institutions and libraries (Thechasiwan, 2003, p. 175), publications are more accessible. Surveys and digitalization of manuscript are carried out at the turn of the twenty first century, a research programme on the manuscripts in Sipsong Panna was conducted by Kato Kumiko, and a report was published in 2001. From 2003 onwards, local researchers carried out manuscripts investigation in Sipsong Panna (Yu Kang, 2010, p. 3).

III *Chao Chan Phom Hom* and the Cultural Reconstruction of the Northern Thailand

As mentioned above that Mala Khamchan's Master thesis studies KKLSH and he assisted the study of the *Chronicle of Sipsong Panna*, these experiences has strong impact on his novel and other works. CCPH, like

konlawithi thang wannasin lae phap sathon sangkhom lae watthanatham [The Tai Lue Mahachat chapter 1-7: literary techniques and reflection of society and culture]. (Master's thesis, Chulalongkorn University). Petchaboon, Chatuporn. (2010). *Mahachat thai lue kan thi 8-13: konlawithi thang wannasin lae phap sathon sangkhom lae watthanatham* [The Tai Lue Mahachat chapter 8-13: literary techniques and reflection of society and culture]. (Master's thesis, Chulalongkorn University). Ruanjai, Rosarin. (2010). *Khong sang khong nithan thai lue* [Structures of Tai Lue Folktales]. (Master's thesis, Chiang Mai University). Ritpen, Supin. (2011). *Samlo nang u-piam lae chao suthon nang manora, khwam mai lae kan damrong yu nai boribot sangkhom khong chon chat thai* [Samlor - Nang Upiam and Chao Sudhon - Nang Manohra: the meaning and existence in the social context of Tai ethnic groups]. (Doctoral dissertation, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University). Thungsang, Wannida. (2013). *Tamnan kan sang lok khong chao thai lue: wichro chak khamphi boran khong sipsong panna (Satharanarat Prachachon Chin)* [The origin of the world in Tai Lue tradition: analyze from manuscripts of Sipsong Panna (PR.China)]. (Doctoral dissertation, Chiang Mai Rajabhat University).

⁸⁶ My translation.

⁸⁷ My translation.

⁸⁸ Swangpanyangkun, Thawi. (Ed.). (1986). *Roi paet kham boran thai lue* [One hundred and eight Tai Lue proverbs]. Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University. Wichasin, Renoo. (Ed.). (1987). *Tamra ya sipsongphanna* [Sipsong Panna materia medica]. Chiang Mai: Sathaban Wichai Sangkhom Mahawithayalai Chiang Mai. Wichasin, Renoo. (Ed.). (2001). *Chuea khrua chao saen wi sipsongphanna* [Chronicles of Sipsong Panna kings]. Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books. Chanhom, Lamun. (Ed.). (2002). *Suphasit thai lue* [Tai Lue proverbs]. Chiang Mai: Samnak Sinlapa Watthanatham, Sathaban Ratchaphat Chiang Mai. Nimmanhemmin, Prakhong. (Ed.). (2003). *Kham khap khao chao chueang han maha kap phuen thin thai lue* [*Chao Chueang Han* libretto: Tai Lue local epic]. Krungthep: Sathaban Thai Sueksa Chulalongkorn Mahawithayalai. Chanhom, Lamun. (Ed.). (2004). *Phap khao nithan kha si saen mon ma* [Legend of four hundred thousand saddles]. Chiang Mai: Rongphim Ming Mueang. Dokbuakaew, Phaithoon et al. (Eds.). (2008). *Tamra ya samunphrai khong thai lue nai chin* [Herbal pharmacopoeia of Tai Lue in China]. Chiang Mai: Rongphim ming mueang. Wichasin, Renoo et al. (Eds.). (2008). *Wanna kam Tai Lue mak kok tao mueang chae lai nong, tamnan khwam rak khwam tai* [A Study of Tai Lue Literature 'Ma:k Ko:k Tao Me:ng Cae Lai No:ng']. Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University. Nimmanhemmin, Prakhong. (Ed.). (2011). *Chao chueang han wira burut thai lue: tamnan maha kap phithi kam* [Tai Lue's hero Chao Chueang Han: legend, epic and worship]. Krungthep: Chulalongkorn University. Nimmanhemmin, Prakhong et al. (Eds.). (2011). *Kham khap luk on: phap chivit lae phum panya Thai Lue nai bot phleng samrap dek* [Children's songs: Tai Lue's life and wisdom in children's songs]. Krungthep: Chulalongkorn University Press. Premchit, Sommai et al. (Eds.). (2015). *Tamnan Mueang Lue: prawat sat phuen thin daen din Chiang Rung, Mueang Yong Mueang Sing* [Legend of Lue kingdom: local history of Chiang Rung, Mueang Yong and Mueang Singh]. Chiang Mai: Chiang Mai University.

the other works of Mala Khamchan, tells the story of the Northern Thai world, where regional history, local culture and native language intertwine. The sources of Sipsong Panna are weaved into this work to construct the regional world. CCPH won the Southeast Asian Writers Award of 1991, and is the most well-known work of him. Mala Khamchan plays a major role in the cultural revival of Lanna, and his adaption of KKLSH in CCPH will illustrate the role of the culture of Sipsong Panna plays in the cultural reconstruction in Northern Thailand.

Except the *khap lue* of *Lanka Sip Hua*, the trace of Sipsong Panna in CCPH can still be noticed in another aspect. Chao Chantha Yot Fa, the queen who proposes Chao Chan to pilgrim to the Phra That Inkhwaen (Kyaiktiyo Pagoda), is based on a text from Sipsong Panna. In CCPH, Chao Chantha Yot Fa is a queen who ruled Sipsong Panna two or three hundred years ago (Khamchan, 2012, p. 21), or three and four hundred years ago (Khamchan, 2012, p. 46). Mala Khamchan mentions that (Khamchan, personal interview, February 7, 2015), this character comes from *Tamnan Phuean Mueang Sipsong Phanna* (Swangpanyangkoon, 1986, p. 76). As what has been mentioned above that he assisted the study of this chronicle, and in his Master thesis, he also cites the king genealogy of Sipsong Panna, which includes Chao Chantha Yot Fa (Malarochana, 1986, pp. 15-17). Chao Chantha Yot Fa has two functions in CCPH, one is being the previous life of Chao Chan, and the other is inspiring Chao Chan to make a pilgrimage to Phra That Inkhwaen. Before Chao Chan's birth, her mother dreams that Chao Chantha Yot Fa appears at the court and gives her a gem, then her parents give her the name Chantha Kaew Yuen Fa, being named after the queen (Khamchan, 2012, p. 46). In addition, Chao Intha also compares Chao Chan to Chao Chantha Yot Fa, and says she is as beautiful as the queen (Khamchan, 2012, p. 43). The princess also considers herself as the afterlife of Chao Chantha Yot Fa, and worshipping the Phra That Inkhwaen can let her escape from the hand of Pho Liang (Khamchan, 2012, p. 81). At the age of sixteen, she gets a serious illness and her mother dreams of Chao Chantha Yot Fa again, who hints that the Phra That Inkhwaen can help Chao Chan. (Khamchan, 2012, p. 105). Because Chao Chantha Yot Fa cuts off her hair to worship the pagoda in Chiang Rung⁸⁹, she exempts herself from the fate of marrying a Chinese king.

Moreover, Mala Khamchan thinks that Sipsong Panna and Lanna have a close cultural connection, the culture of Sipsong Panna can complement the culture of the Northern Thailand. "Thai Yuan or *khon mueang* ("local people" or "people of the kingdom") has a close relationship with Thai Lue. Certain [things] disappeared in Lanna, are still preserved by Thai Lue brothers in Sipsong Panna"⁹⁰ (Khamchan, 2008, p. 131). For this reason, he adds the part concerning house spirit in Chia Yaenchong's "Sipsong Panna Tai Lue's house spirit, and village god and country god"⁹¹ (1994) to the chapter "House Spirit" (*phi huean*) in his work *Phi Nai Lanna* (The Spirits and Gods of Lanna, 2008). In the book compiled for the adolescent, *Tamnan Banphachon* (Ancestor's Legends, 1994), Mala Khamchan rewrites the story of Chao Bun Pan conquering Yaksha in the *Chronicle of Sipsong Panna*.

3.1 The Influence of *Khap Lue*

Though CCPH tells the story of the Chiang Mai princess Chao Chan's pilgrimage to the Phra That Inkhwaen, being accompanied by Pho Liang, it contains an abundance of *Khap Lue* elements. Except from what has been mentioned above that Mala Khamchan's Master thesis studies this text, he said that he had written too much Lanna poems and needed to extend his creative space, and *Lanka Sip Hua* and *khap lue* were unknown to most Thai (Khamchan, personal interview, February 7, 2015). As for the text itself, Pho Liang

⁸⁹ The capital of Sipsong Panna.

⁹⁰ My translation.

⁹¹ My translation.

appointed the singer to sing *khap lue*, the story of Lanka Sip Hua, for the princess, because “she has the lineage of Thai Lue of Sipsong Panna” (Khamchan & Kong Bannathikan Buk Riwiu, 1991, p. 85). The impact of KKLSH on Chao Chan Phom Hom will be discussed in four aspects, inter-textuality, the use of *khap lue*, expression, and style.

The first aspect is inter-textuality. KKLSH enters the text through the singer’s mouth. According to CCPH, the singer had fled to Sipsong Panna for twenty years to escape the danger caused by the Southerner, before he came back and asked for working under Pho Liang. For being weak and unfit for heavy work, he was appointed as a singer (Khamchan, 2012, p. 37). What the singer sings during their travel is the story of Lanka Sip Hua, the content of which is parallel to the process of their journey. Thirteen sections of the lyrics of Lanka Sip Hua are interweaved in the text, and the contents of them are as follows: the prelude (Khamchan, 2012, pp. 6-7); Sida is taken away by Phrommachak to Lanka Island (Khamchan, 2012, pp. 13-14); Phrommachak is fascinated by Sida and plans to bring her to Lanka (Khamchan, 2012, p. 26-7); the massive procession back to the city (Khamchan, 2012, p. 37); Sida is brought by the bird Kali to the forest and feels confused (Khamchan, 2012, pp. 41-42); Sida’s sorrowfulness for being taken to Lanka Island (Khamchan, 2012, pp. 44-45); Sida roams lonely in the forest after being driven away by Rama (Khamchan, 2012, p. 87); Sida deplores the massive death of Yakshas and fears that she is the cause of such a sin (Khamchan, 2012, pp. 113-114); the celebration scene for the victory over Phrommachak (Khamchan, 2012, p. 115). The last four sections relate how Sida steps into the burning flames (Khamchan, 2012, pp. 124, 125, 126-7, 137).

These sections of *khap lue* correspond to the process of Chao Chan’s journey, which is as follows: Pho Liang escorts Chao Chan to Phra That Inkhwaen; the move of elephants and the procession; Pho Liang is fascinated by Chao Chan and can not help looking back at her; heavy mist in the forest; Chao Chan feels despair for having to marry Pho Liang; monkeys play in the forest; the cruel fighting between the troop and Wa robbers; after the fighting, Pho Liang let his subordinates to bury the bodies of Wa to prevent them from being eaten by the tiger; they cut off the bushes to open up a path to Phra That Inkhwaen; and finally Chao Chan despairs and decides to live with Pho Liang. Besides, the characters in KKLSH are counterpointed with the characters in CCPM, i.e., Sida and Chao Chan, Rama and Chao Intha, Phommachak and Pho Liang, monkey troop and warriors of Pho Liang, Yaksha troop and Wa robbers. Moreover, the narrator uses “ghost Yaksha”(yak prai) to call Pho Liang (Khamchan, 2012, p. 83), and the story of Sida and Rama is mentioned by her mother to persuade her give up Chao Intha, for Rama has once deeply loved Sida, but at last drives her away (Khamchan, 2012, p. 88).

The second aspect is the use of the verses of KKLSH. Since the original verses in KKLSH do not completely meet the context of CCPH, most the sections of *khap lue* in CCPH are written by Mala Khamchan himself. In these thirteen sections of *khap lue*, one hundred and thirty five verses, only sixteen verses of two sections are borrowed directly from KKLSH. The fourth section uses two verses in KKLSH, which describes the procession back to Lanka Island. Only one word of the original text is deleted in CCPH, that is, “and” (*lae*) in the first verse.

KKLSH:

*yam nan yotha phrom sena lae amat
 khao ko okat chao nang chang hue khi lang
 phlai*⁹²

(Dao Jinxiang et al., 1981, p. 92)

CCPH:

*yam nan yotha phrom sena amat
 khao ko okat chao nang chang hue khi lang
 phlai*

(Khamchan, 2012, p. 37)

Translation:

That time, soldiers together with attendants
 and officials,
 let the elephant-riding king sit on the male
 elephant's back

Translation:

That time, soldiers together with attendants
 [and] officials,
 let the elephant-riding king sit on the male
 elephant's back

The seventh section is adapted from the verses in the nineteenth chapter of KKLSH, which describe that Sida is driven out from the palace and roams in the forest at a cold night. There are only a few revisions, i.e., four words are omitted ("this" (*ni*) in the fifth line, "this" (*ni*) and "is" (*pen*) in the sixth line, and "girl/princess" (*nang*) in the thirteenth line), and six words are changed ("to look" (*han*, used in Northern Thailand, Kengtung and Sipsong Panna) in the second line is replaced by "to look" (*hen*, Standard Thai), "mat" (*pha suea*) in the fourth line is changed into "cloth" (*pha suea*), "to be wetted [by the rain]" (*yam*) in the seventh line is changed into "to drizzle" (*phram*), "to gush out" (*thang*) in the thirteenth line is changed into "to flow" (*lang*), "till the daybreak" (*to laeng*) in the fourteenth line is changed into "till the red dawn" (trap rung daeng).

The critic Suphan Thongkhilai mentions that this whole section was from the original KKLSH (1992, p. 54). However, this view does not conform to the reality, for Mala Khamchan changed some words. In addition, some changes are not intentional, for instance, the change from "mat" (*pha suea*) to "cloth" (*pha suea*)⁹³. In his Master thesis, "mat" (*pha suea*) is also transcribed as "cloth" (*pha suea*) by mistake (Malarochana, 1986, p. 256).

⁹² For the reason of comparison, these verses are transliterated in accordance with Standard Thai pronunciation rather than Lue pronunciation.

⁹³ These two words are different in tone marks.

KKLSH:

*trong du lam lai fa mung bon chuet chuet
 mua muet dao pa mai bo ru thi han thang
 nang hak kat lae nao klueak non nuea ya
 pha suea la nang noi pen mak hin pha
 mon hua kaew sida ni pen rak mai kum
 pha hom la mae noi ni pen moei sathap
 mung mueang
 moei tok yam fuea tong thim ti nang kat san
 moei yan khlum pan ha fon san
 phlan chai ta bang kaew sida luk nang
 siang tak kung rong kaem rit maeng chon
 nang ni lap bo pen non king moeng thang
 chang
 chai king tang khu noi nao pin taloem kham
 song ta nang nam lai phang yoi thang
 nang ko nang yu tha thueng to laeng ma*
 (Dao Jinxiang et al., 1983, pp. 242-243)

Translation:

[Sida] watched the continuous and endless
 cloud roof above
 The dim and dark forest land could not see
 roads
 The princess felt chilly and slept rollingly
 above grass
 The mattress of the little princess is pebbles
 and cobbles
 The pillow of cherished Sida is the roots of
 sacred garlic pear
 The blanket of the little girl is the frost
 thronging around the whole land
 Fog drizzled the cluttered wide leaves, that
 poked the princess felt cold and trembled
 The murky enveloping fog looked like
 drizzling rain
 Destroyed-heart [and] slender eyes the
 cherished Sida got up and sat
 The buzz of giant crickets mingled with
 crickets and mole crickets
 This princess can not fall asleep, laying and
 pondering kingdom and elephant
 Mind thought over the little pair of stud
 earrings, bracelets, hair pin, and gold face
 shield
 [From the] two eyes of the princess water
 flows, falls, droops, and pours
 The princess sat and waited until the
 daybreak came

In other parts, Mala Khamchan creates his own verses. However, he does not always follow the pattern of

CCPH:

*trong du lam lai fa mung bon chuet chuet
 mua muet dao pa mai bo ru thi hen thang
 nang hak kat lae nao klueak non nuea ya
 pha suea la nang noi pen mak hin pha
 mon hua kaew sida pen rak mai kum
 pha hom la mae noi moei sathap mung
 mueang
 moei tok phram fuea tong thim ti nang kat
 san
 moei yan khlum pan ha fon san
 phlan chai ta bang kaew sida luk nang
 siang tak kung rong kaem rit maeng chon
 nang ni lap bo pen non king moeng thang
 chang
 chai king tang khu noi nao pin chaloem kham
 song ta nam lai phang yoi lang
 nang ko nang yu tha trap rung daeng ma*
 (Khamchan, 2012, p. 87)

Translation:

[Sida] watched the continuous and endless
 cloud roof above
 The dim and dark forest land could not see
 roads
 The princess felt chilly and slept rollingly
 above grass
 The clothing of the little princess is pebbles
 and cobbles
 The pillow of the cherished Sida is the roots
 of sacred garlic pear
 The blanket of the little girl [is] the frost
 thronging around the whole land
 Fog drizzled the cluttered wide leaves, that
 poked the princess felt cold and trembled
 The murky enveloping fog looked like
 drizzling rain
 Destroyed-heart [and] slender eyes the
 cherished Sida got up and sat
 The buzz of giant crickets mingled with
 crickets and mole crickets
 This princess can not fall asleep, laying and
 pondering kingdom and elephant
 Mind thought over the little pair of stud
 earrings, bracelets, hair pin, and gold face
 shield
 [From the] two eyes water flows, falls,
 droops, and pours
 The princess sat and waited until the red
 dawn came

khap lue. For example, for the word “give”, he alternately used Yuan and Lue word *hue* (Khamchan, 2012, p. 37) and Thai word *hai* (Khamchan, 2012, pp. 13, 124). Moreover, the modal particle *tho* is replaced by *thoe*, which is more common in Yuan dialect or Kham Mueang (Khamchan 2012, pp. 6, 45, 137).

The third aspect is expression. Though the other parts of the *khap lue* in CCPH are Mala Khamchan’s creation, they are still influenced by KKLSH. One of the most remarkable influences is the compound word modifying or referring to character, or using the names that Mala Khamchan uses in his Master thesis, “compound word of character’s name” (*kham prakop chue tua lakhon*) or “representative word of character’s name” (*kham thaen chue tua lakhon*). This kind of words are conventional phrases widely used in *khap lue*, and are used to modify characters or refer to characters. Some shared words, like “princess of high-descent” (*nang no kaew*) and “most-cherished princess” (*nang yot kaew*), can be found in the literature of Sipsong Panna, Northern Thailand and other areas. These words used in KKLSH are found in the *khap lue* of CCPH, “extensive-goodness Rama” (*rama bun yai*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 7), “cherished beautiful girl” (*kaew nang ngam*, Khamchan, 2012, pp. 13, 44), “gem-molded princess” (*chao kaew lo*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 26), “cherished noble beauty” (*kaew nat thai*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 27), “the highest king” (*chao yot thai*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 41), “majestic king” (*chom chak chao*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 42), “dearly loved husband” (*chom hua phua*, Khamchan, 2012, pp. 45, 124), “only-cherished princess” (*kaew nang diao*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 113), “cherished flower” (*kaew dok mai*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 125), “good-looking prince” (*chao chai ngam*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 137), “the highest king” (*chom phaen chao*, Khamchan, 2012, p.137), “ruler of the sky” (*chao phaen fa*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 137) can be found in KKLSH. Moreover, Mala Khamchan created new words. Some of these words are reorganized from the existing words in KKLSH, such as “cherished majestic little beauty Sida” (*kaew thep thai noi nat sida*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 6), “precious and cherished beauty” (*nang nat kaew kha choi*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 14), “gem-molded Sida princess” (*chao kaew lo sida*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 26), “wide-goodness king” (*chao bun kwang*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 37), “the crest of the sky” (*chom yot fa*, Khamchan, 2012, p.42), or are slightly modified from the words in KKLSH, for instance, “big iniquitous and asinine ruffian” (*chao phala ba bai atham yai*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 26). The widely use of these words in CCPH, reflecting the style of *khap lue*, owns much to Mala Khamchan’s analyse on this kind of modification in his Master thesis (Malarochana, 1986, pp. 158-61).

Except from using in *khap lue*, this kind of words are also found in non-*khap lue* parts. For instance, “extensive-goodness Rama” (*chao rama bun yai*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 45), and “cherished majestic princess” (*kaew thet thai*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 87) in the paragraphs describing the singer and the story of *Lanka Sip Hua*, and “precious cherished princess” (*kaew phaeng choi*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 60) in other part of the work. But more are Mala Khamchan’s creation, such as “extraordinary beautiful princess” (*chao nang ngam loet la*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 11) and “cherished little daughter little princess” (*kaew luk la nang noi*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 72). Some critic mentioned Mala Khamchan’s creation of words to modify woman, but did not mention KKLSH, and misread that “cherished beauty” (*nang nat kaew*) is also Mala Khamchan’s creation (Satchaphan, 1992, p. 74).

Words in KKLSH are also borrowed into CCPH. The first are the names of plants, such as *dok mu*⁹⁴ and *mak hai kham*⁹⁵. The former appeared five times, once in *khap lue* (Khamchan, 2012, p. 6), and other four times

⁹⁴ Mala Khamchan notes that *dok mu* is “the name of a flower in Thai Lue literature” (2012, p. 6) without further explanation. A botanic book recognizes *mai dok mu* as *Symplocos paniculata* (Thunb.) Miq. (Xu Zaifu et al., 2015, p. 167).

⁹⁵ *Mai hai kham* is *Ficus microcarpa* Linn. f. (Xu Zaifu et al., 2015, p. 127).

it was followed by *kaew* (cherished) to refer to Chao Chan. Early in the morning, when Chao Chan thinks about Chao Intha, her inner voice says, “My dear, [I] do not know how is your sick going, Kaew Dok Mu I beg you recover from illness quickly” (*chao phi no, puai khai pen yang dai pai laew bo ru, kaew dok mu nang ni kho phi phlan hai reo wan thoe chao*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 32). When Chao Chan hears that her parents let her marry Pho Liang rather than Chao Intha, the narrator describes her as “Kaew Dog Mu the princess felt uneasy and depressed” (*chao kaew dok mu uet at klat klum*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 72) and Chao Chan feels “like Kaew Dok Mu is an imprisoned sinner” (*muean kaew dok mu pen khon thot cham khang*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 72). When Pho Liang brings gold and silver to her, Chao Chan ponders that “do not think Kaew Dok Mu will be shaken at once” (*ya nuek wa kaew dok mu chak phlan wan wai*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 83). “Mak hai kham” appears twice, when the bird pecks fruits (Khamchan, 2012, pp. 49, 120). This fruit is written as *mak rai kham* in KKLSH, however Mala Khamchan here revises it as *mak hai kham*.

Then is onomatopoeia, such as *awum, awum*, the sound of tiger’s roar, in “Awum, awum, sounds of tiger echoed in the remote valley” (*awum, awum, siang suea rong kong hup klai hu*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 5). It is safe to say Mala Khamchan borrowed this word from KKLSH, for this word was employed as an example to analyze onomatopoeia of KKLSH in his Master’s thesis. Besides, the critic Kusuma Raksamani also mentioned that he found this word only in KKLSH and CCPH (1992, p. 48).

Lastly is the impact on style. Needless to say, the inserted *khap lue* sections follows the pattern of *khap lue*. Each canto of *khap lue* begins with the word “listen” (*fang tho*), addressing to the audience to hear the story. The *khap lue* sections in CCPH also begins like this to catch the audience’s attention, for example, “Hear me, high-flying Hongsa and walk-dancing peacock, little-sapphire-berry-like lithe little girl please listen carefully, now I will tell the poem of Lanka” (*fang thoe mae hongsa bin sung nang yung yang fon, la on aen dok mu noi khoi fang di thi, pang ni chai chak klao duai khao langka*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 6). Then are conjunctions between cantos, “that time” (*yam nan na*, Khamchan, 2012, pp. 44, 113, 115) and “that time” (*yam nan*, Khamchan, 2012, pp. 37, 124, 125, 126). In some verses, for the consideration of rhyme, Mala Khamchan wrote the word in Lue accent, in “trumpets of male elephants shook, horses galloped like water floods” (*hon hon rong hatthi plai saen, ma laen poi dang nam lai nong*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 38), the last word of the former verse *saen* (vibrate), should be written as *san*, but for rhyming with the word *laen* (run) in the next verse, he chose the Lue accent. These two verses are adapted from the verses in KKLSH, “thunders of male elephants shook, horses galloped and riding nobles darted” (*siang khang chang plai san rong saen, ma laen poi khun khi ao yot*, Dao Jinxiang et al., 1983, p. 328).

The impact of KKLSH is also reflected on the style of narration, especially the dialogues between characters, such as between Chao Chan and Chao Intha, and between Chao Chan and her parents. When addressing to the opposite side, the dialogues in KKLSH usually employ a set of words to modify the recipient. For example, when Piyasa arrives at Lanka Island, he uses “be-loved flower in my eyes” (*ngao dok mai kham rak nuai ta chai hoei*, Dao Jinxiang et al., 1981, p. 57) to address to a group of girls. This kind of expression can be found all over CCPH, for example, when Chao Chan’s father tells the history of Chiang Mai to her, he says “the cherished gem in father’s heart” (*chao kon kaew kae chai pho hoei*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 89) and “daughter, the most-beloved precious gem in father’s eyes” (*luk hoei, kaew yuen fa sut rak nuai ta khong pho*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 89). Especially when the voice of the narrator and the voice of Chao Chan converge.

Kusuma Raksamani provides an explanation as to how KKLSH impacted the atmosphere creating, that is, juxtaposing antonym, in CCPH (Raksamani, 1992, pp. 119-120). In the opening paragraph, Mala Khamchan employed eight pairs of antonyms to depict the environment, moon (*duean*) and star (*dao*), fall (*tok*) and compete (*khaeng*), big (*yai*) and small (*noi*), twinkling (*wup wap*) and sparkling (*wip wap*), near (*klai*) and

far (*klai*), cold still light (*saeng nao yen ning*) and blink brilliantly (*kaphrip phrang proi*), ripe white (*suk khao*) and aged gray (*kao mon*), young girl's eyes (*ta sao noi*) and old buried embers (*than fai mok thao*) (Raksamani, 1992, pp. 118-120).

The rhyme of Khup Lue might have impacted the narration of CCPH. This can be illustrated briefly by discussing the imaginary description of Phra That Inkhwaen. "Pagoda was decorated extremely gorgeous, carved flower patterns formed net and were entirely covered with gold, the whole and the entire body was decorated with gems from the heaven of Indra, extremely tall it looked like it would fly and slide to the sky, the giant tapered endpoint would pierce the breast of the sky, it stood eminently and challenged righteous people to find it" (*phra that chao a ong ngam nak, chalu chalak dok lai pen ta khai thong khlum thua, thang ton thang tua pradap laew duoi kaew mueang in, sung song dang cha bin loi luean khluan hao, sung yai plai riao rao cha siap ok fa, tang den tha khon bun pai ha*, Khamchan, 2012, p. 121). The syllables of each sentence are not equal, the first verse has seven syllables, the second ten, the third ten, the fourth nine, the fifth nine, the sixth seven. The last syllable of the first sentence *nak* (very) rhymes with the second syllable of the second sentence *chalak* (carve), the last syllable of the third sentence *in* (Indra) rhymes with the fifth syllable of the fourth sentence *bin* (fly), the last syllable of the fourth sentence *hao* (sky) rhymes with the fifth syllable of the fifth sentence *rao* (tapering), and the last syllable of the fifth sentence *fa* (sky) rhymes with the third syllable of the sixth sentence *tha* (to (issue a) challenge). However, this style of rhyme of *khap lue* is also found in other poetry in Northern Thailand and other areas, like *rai*.

IV Lanka Sip Ho and the Lue Identity Construction in Thailand

The third dimension of the cultural influence of Sipsong Panna on Thailand is connected with the identity reconstruction of the Lue community in Thailand. In 2012, KKLSH was adapted into the modern drama LSH, by Professor Pornrat Damrung and the students of the Art Faculty of Chulalongkorn University. Pornrat Damrung, a researcher and a playwright of applied theatre, writes drama to reflect social problems and emphasizes drama's function for the human development and social change. LSH, like other dramas she wrote, is an applied theatre. This drama was publicly played in the communities in Northern Thailand, especially in the Lue communities. The aims of this drama, as Pornrat Damrung says, are evoking ethical and moral reflection among Tai Lue audiences, and letting them "be proud of their own cultural root" (2014, p. 57).

4.1 From Kham Khap Lanka Sip Hua to Lanka Sip Ho

The drama LSH is not directly based on KKLSH, but on secondary source, i.e., Charoen Malarochana's Master thesis and Sribusra's work (Damrung, 2014), and is not an adaptation corresponding to the original text, but a text of deconstruction.

The destruction can be divided into two parts: One is the destruction of the plots. Firstly, the plots are destructed and only the plots of the promise of Phrom (Brahma), the return to Lanka Island, the Swayamvara of Sida, and the luring of the golden deer are employed. These plots are combined with the creation myth of Pu Sangkasa-Ya Sangkasi (grandpa Sangkasa-grandma Sangkasi), and the story of the young man Inpan in the modern society into a drama. The story of the creation myth introduces the key question of the whole drama, "in this world, the brightest is human's heart, and the darkest is also human's heart" (*nai lok ni sawang thi sut ko chai khon, dam thi sut ko chai khon*, Damrhung & Khana Aksonsat, 2013, p. 1), which is answered by the interaction between Phummachak and Inpan. Secondly,

the story of Phummachak happens in a modern city, according to the setting is Bangkok, Chiang Mai or other cities, while the original story happens in Himmaphan Forest, Lanka Island and other places. In the drama, Phummachak and his mother are new migrants in the big city. When playing the game hide-and-seek, Phummachak is bullied by other children. Later, his mother finds him and does not let him play outside. Finally, the story of Phummachak and the story of Inpan are juxtaposed in the same space-time. Phummachak and Inpan are clearly counterpointed to each other. Phummachak is a new migrant, while Inpan is a new transfer student. Both Phummachak and Inpan are facing challenges from the new environment, for Phummachak is bullied by other children when playing game, and Inpan is bogged down in a debate with other students; The other is the destruction of the characters. Firstly, Phummachak is infantilised and his childishness is shown at the beginning, for his entrance on the stage at Act II is the scene of playing hide-and-seek. Later Phummachak's mother comes to look for him. In their conversation, the identity of being "child" is constantly emphasized. Secondly is the irony of identity. In Act III, when Phummachak goes back to the island of Lanka as a prince, the derisive laughs of the maids behind him deconstructs the seriousness of the ceremony. And lastly, the identities of the characters undergo three phases of change. In Act II, Phummachak and In Pan were two independent persons. In Act III, when In Pan is put on the mask of Phummachak, he turns into Phummachak and experiences the following scenes in the name of Phummachak, that is, the promise of Phrom, the return to Lanka Island and the Swayamvara of Sida. In Act IV, Phummachak takes off the mask from Inpan, and Inpan changes back to himself. Phummachak tells Inpan that the scenes he has experienced before are illusion. After an intense debate, Phummachak tells Inpan that Phummachak is in his heart. At last, Phummachak is the incarnation of the darkness of Inpan's inner world.

The deconstruction serves the aims of the drama, that is, moral education and community development. Selecting modern city as the setting, rather than a place in the distant ancient, aims to reveal the problem of the society where the audience are. Choosing Inpan as the protagonist and infantilising Phummachak intend to make the characters more close to the audience both in age and mental status, which will be easy to strike a sympathetic chord among the audience. The plots of Inpan changes identities with Phummachak and comes to be himself again, and the discussions among students and the debate between Phummachak and Inpan, inform the audience that everyone has the choice to be good or to be evil. The story of Pu Sangkasa-Ya Sangkasi reveals the theme of the drama at the beginning, that is human's mind is the brightest and also the darkest. The author hopes this drama delivers the idea that "we should have bright mind in dark society" (Damrung, 2014, p. 68).

4.2 Identity Construction

Applied drama is usually performed for the audience of a certain group of people at a non-theatrical space. Since LSH is designed for the Lue audience (Damrhung 2016, p. 8) to develop community pride (Damrung, 2014, p. 70; 2016, p. 20), it is mainly performed at the common communities of Lampang Province and Phayao Province. The former are NANA Theatre Studio and the Lue village Ban Kluai Muang, and the latter are four temples in Chiang Kham, Wat Phra That Sop Waen, Wat Wiang Phra Kaew, Wat Sri Chum and Wat Nong Lue.

Creating drama based on the story of the target audience is a common technique of applied theatre. Adapting the familiar story or experience of the audience aims to evoke sympathetic response among them. LSH is formally performed at the communities in Lampang Province, Phayao Province and Bangkok, mainly at the Lue communities in Northern Thailand. In this case, the creator selected two works to write LSH. One is *Phathommakal*, and the other is KKLSH. Though KKLSH is not a local text of the Lue in Thailand,

both the adapter and the Lue people in Thailand regard it as a Lue ethnic literary text. Pornrat Damrhung considers *Lanka Sip Hua* as a Lue literary work, and wonders why the Lue people in Chiang Kham does not know this work (Thai Public Broadcasting Service, 2013). Pornrat Damrhung mentions that the drama has popularised the story of *Lanka Sip Hua* in the Lue communities (Damrhung, 2016, p. 20). The young men of Chiang Kham who joined the drama performance, also do not consider *Lanka Sip Hua* as a literary work of Sipsong Panna, but as a literary work of Lue people. Not only is this text viewed as a text belonging to the Lue ethnic group, but also the other local culture of Sipsong Panna is comprehended as ethnic culture. Since the 1980s, the culture of Sipsong Panna is introduced to the Northern Thailand, and to some extent, influences the identity reconstruction of the Lue communities.

The audience of Chiang Kham is also a part of the identity construction of the drama. When the drama was performed in Chiang Kham, the audience wore traditional Lue costumes to watch the drama, which is quite ritualistic for nowadays traditional costumes are not worn in daily life but in activities to express ethnic identity. In order to stimulate young Lue people to conserve their own culture, Lue people are invited to join the performance as well. During the performances in Chiang Kham District and then in Bangkok, a Lue music teacher was responsible for playing musical instruments, especially the Lue flute, and singing *khop lue*, and a group of young Lue men from Chiang Kham played musical instruments. Lue youth from Chiang Kham also joined to modify the drama. They advised to wear traditional Lue costumes of Chiang Kham and lent a female costume to the dancer of Sangkasi (Khamkaew, April 25, 2016). The Lue youth who took part in the performances in Chiang Kham and Bangkok also expressed that they are proud and excited to show the real Lue culture (Khamkaew, May 1, 2016).

To make the drama more ethnic, Lue cultural elements are collaged in it. This drama expresses Lue ethnic identity from different aspects: The first is literature, that is, KKLSH and the creation myth of Pu Sangkasa-Ya Sangkasi, the latter to emphasize the origin of the Lue. The second is clothing, which is one of the visual markers of ethnic identity. In the performance, male characters and genderless characters wear local style trousers, and female characters (Kuttithida, maids and Sida) wear tube skirts. For instance, in the performance at Wat Sri Chum, on October 19, 2012, Sida wore the Lue tube skirt of Ban Hat Bai, Chiang Khong District, Chiang Rai Province, and maids wore the Lue tube skirts of Chiang Kham District, Phayao Province. The third element is language. The name of this drama follows the Lue accent as *Lanka Sip Ho*, not Standard Thai *Lanka Sip Hua*. The name of the character Phommachak is Phummachak, according to the spelling of the name in KKLSH. The creation myth in the opening is recited in Lue dialect. The fourth is dance, the martial dance is mixed in the movement. For instance, the movement of the dance of Sangkasa and Sangkasi in the performance at Chulalongkorn University, January 2013, is mixed with the movements of traditional Lue martial dance (*fon choeng*). The fifth element is music. *Khop lue* and the music played Lue flute are used in the scenes of Inpan's meditation, of Rama's lift of the heart-bow (*kung duang jai*), and of the lure of the golden deer. Besides, traditional Lue musical instruments, such as drum-and-gong-set (*klong mong soeng*), are employed to play background music.

The development of this drama also reflects the increase of the signs and symbols of ethnic identity. In "*Lanka Sip Ho: Recitation of Ethics of Tai-Lue Ramayana*" (2014), Pornrat Damrhung introduced the background and the creation of the drama. She divided the development of the drama into three phases. The first phase is "the phase of trial performance and modification before performance in the community" (*chuang thotlong sadaeng lae prap bot kon sadaeng nai chumchon*). This drama debuted at Sodsai Pantoomkomol Centre for Dramatic Arts, on July 12-14, 2012. After the performance, several adjustments were made: using *khop lue*, the story of Sangkasa and Sangkasi, as the opening and to replace the part of the video of social news; use dance, use body to communicate; "employing Lue language to tell a legend;

adjusting the puppet, the mask, and the costumes to be proper to ethnicity”; “remove the narration of shadow puppetry in the beginning part, and introduce the role of mask”; and “beginning to discuss and trying to search for the use of light, audio mixing, and song in the show”; the new version is fifteen minutes longer than before. The second show took place in August, 2012, at Wat Pathum Wanaram School, Lanna People Society (*samakhom chao Lanna*), Wat Wachirathumsathit and the Department of Music and Performing Arts Activities of Burapha University. In September of the same year, this drama was performed at the 3rd Asia Pacific Bureau Theatre Schools Festival & Directors Conference, Taipei National University of the Arts (Damrung, 2014, pp. 71-72). The second phase is “the phase of work with young Tai Lue people” (*chuang poet sadaeng lae tham ngan ruam kap yaowachon thai lue*). The team went to “perform in the local communities in Mueang Lampang District, Lampang Province and Chiang Kham District, Phayao Province, six times in total.” In Chiang Kham District, the Lue in Chiang Kham joined the performance being responsible for music and singing (Damrung, 2014, pp. 72-73). The third phase is “Performance in Bangkok” (*kan sadaeng thi krungthet makrakhom*), that is the two performances at “The Research Forum & Festival on Thai/ASEAN Contemporary Theatre”, held at the Sodsai Pantomkomol Centre for Dramatic Arts, Chulalongkorn University, on January 2013. This drama is a part of the drama project “*Ramakien: Our Roots Right Now*” (*ramakien: kao na chak rak kaew*), together with other four versions of *Ramakien*’s adapted works. In these two performances, the dance of Sangkasa and Sangkasi was added, performed by a young man from Chiang Kham and an assistant researcher of Chulalongkorn University (Damrhung, 2014, pp. 72-74).

Lue cultural elements used in the drama continuously emphasis the identity of the Lue, which consists heterogeneous characteristics different from the dominant culture in Thailand. Pornrat Damrhung states that the character Phummachak in the drama is an “outsider” (*knon not klum*), the “Other” (*khon uen*), and “a person outside the society” (*khon nok sangkhom*), just like the Lue people are “newcomers” (*khon plaek thin*). In addition, the story of Phummachak reflects their conflicts with the natives and their adaptation to the society when Lue people migrated to the new place (i.e. Northern Thailand) (Damrung, 2014, pp. 66-67).

Conclusion

Since Sipsong Panna has been reopened to foreign countries in the 1980s, the cultural exchange between Sipsong Panna and Thailand becomes more and more frequent. The culture of Sipsong Panna has become a source for Thai academic research, Lanna renaissance, and Lue cultural identity construction. KKLSH is probably the most well-known Lue literary work in Thailand and its acceptance in Thailand is a typical example illustrating the major influences of the culture of Sipsong Panna in Thailand.

The literature books published in the 1980s, in new Tai Lue script and Tham script, are for popularizing the new script, and purifying culture and knowledge. Their circulation in foreign countries is not expected by the editors and publishers. However, being conscious of the Thai interest in the culture of Sipsong Panna, Chinese researchers and the local government of Sipsong Panna take advantage of Sipsong Panna to expand the influence of China on Thailand and other countries. English forewords are added to some books (Gao Lishi, 1990), and the bibliography of Chinese research works on the Dai people is translated into English as well (Guan Jian, 1992).

From 2003 to 2010, the local government of Sipsong Panna published the Complete Chinese Pattra Buddhist Scripture, in the preface and afterword of which the compilers state that one of the purposes of this publication is an international exchange and expanding the Chinese influence on Southeast Asia (Dao,

2003-2010; Hu, 2003-2010). Since the early 21st century, many Lue language music videos, produced by both the government or non-governmental organisations, are added with Thai subtitles, for facilitating the acceptance of people who can not read Tham or Chinese scripts.

However, some problems still exist. Because of the cultural destruction in the mid-20th century and the introduction of a new script, the literary culture of Sipsong Panna has been heavily changed. Many literary works are still waiting to be compiled, and professional editorial work is needed. Not only KKLSH, but also the receptions of other texts and cultures of Sipsong Panna in Thailand mostly depend on books published in China and on information provided by Chinese informants, so the misreadings in the Chinese context are easily transmitted to Thailand.

In the 1980s, the pastoral scene of Sipsong Panna aroused Thai visitors' nostalgic feelings. However, after entering the 21st century, the lack of cultural preservation consciousness, the development of tourism and economy, and the new migration trends of Han Chinese into Sipsong Panna have been significantly transforming the cultural landscape of Sipsong Panna. Sipsong Panna is now becoming an object to be deplored.

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Thailand's Bleak Prospects for Social Democracy

Dayley, Robert

The College of Idaho
USA

Abstract

Thailand's unending constitutional reconfigurations and persistent failures to consolidate democracy render Thai society's democratic future in doubt. In spite of its champions, liberal democracy has struggled mightily to root itself in Thailand due to a host of factors – factors that do not occupy the subject of this paper. Rather, this paper examines the prospects of social democracy as an alternative form of democracy for Thailand. It argues that socio-political and historical conditions in Thailand do not favor the development of social democracy any more than they have liberal democracy. Whether conceived as a political agenda or a system of political economy, social democracy is an unlikely path for democratic development in Thailand. Using an evidence-based theoretical approach developed by scholars of social democracy, the paper contrasts Thailand to countries outside of Europe where social democracy has indeed evolved. In particular, it argues that the single key factor of success in these countries—class compromise—remains an elusive possibility for Thailand's deeply polarized society. Comparative analysis reveals that successful social democratic regimes are, analytically speaking, the product of an empirically derived homology, or common causal history comprised of a favorable combination of structural, configurational, and conjunctural factors. As examined in the paper, such a combination of factors is not observable in Thailand's historical trajectory and do not appear likely to emerge in the immediate or distant future. Rather, comparative analysis further uncovers and explains Thailand's political trajectory toward conservative authoritarianism.

Keywords: political development, political cleavages, democracy, social democracy

Introduction

As a type of political regime, social democracy stands in stark contrast to liberal democracy, state socialism, and conservative authoritarian governance. Social democracy came to distinguish itself from other political systems following World War II when progressive party movements and mobilized citizens shaped political-economic institutions in the democratic regimes of Northern Europe. While Anglo-American liberal democracy, Soviet-style state socialism, and forms of conservative authoritarianism expanded elsewhere in the world, the peoples of Scandinavia fashioned an alternative regime type labeled variously as "social democracy," the "Nordic Model," and, more recently, "Viking economics" (Sandbrook et al. 2007; Kasting 2013; Lakey 2016). Today, social democratic regimes thrive in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, as well as in a handful of developing countries such as Costa Rica, Chile, Mauritius and Kerala State in India. Although social democracy varies in practice and outcome across the

societies that claim it, each harbors a commitment to social-democratic values: democratic governance, political freedom, civil liberties, market-based production, socio-economic equality, gender rights, and the universal provision of public goods (health care, eldercare, education, childcare, labor market protection, living wages, etc.).

As a regime type, social democracy has never been attempted in Thailand. In fact, although movements from the political left have surfaced in the past, Thai society has never experienced a broad-based social-democratic movement or political party of any enduring influence. Yet, what of its prospects? Might Thais favorable to democratic values and social justice find some hope in a new movement for social democracy? To what extent are its prospects any better than those of failed liberal democracy? What factors or requisites are needed for a social-democratic regime to evolve successfully in Thailand? Is social democracy the best hope for democracy in Thailand?

This paper argues that the prospects for social democracy in Thailand are not good, even bleak. Using comparative study of how social democracy took root and evolved in other developing countries, the analysis below demonstrates how far Thailand is from realizing a meaningful or consequential social-democratic movement, let alone a full-blown functioning social-democratic regime. Analytically grounded in established literature from the field of comparative political economy, the paper reveals the key structural, configurational, and conjunctural factors that have inhibited the evolution of social democracy in Thailand thus far and render its future prospects dubious. Thailand lacks any observable progress toward class compromise or other necessary conditions that have fostered social democracy elsewhere, such as a mobilized citizenry demanding social citizenship. Rather than create hope for would-be social democrats in Thailand, a comparative analysis of social democracies elsewhere in the world reveals that Thai society is a poor candidate for social democracy. Social democracy, alas, is no better suited than liberal democracy to overturn the entrenched conservative, authoritarian, and aristocratic influences that dominate Thai politics.

Social Democracy and Its Record of Success

An authoritative interdisciplinary study of social democracy defines social-democratic regimes as those comprising “a widely supported set of norms, institutions and rules constraining government to (a) be subject to democratic control, and (b) actively regulate market forces and otherwise intervene to enhance equality, social protection, and social cohesion, in addition to productivity” (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 25, n22). Where consolidated liberal democracies elsewhere may tolerate wide social inequalities generated by capitalist production, social democracies actively seek class compromise, economic security, and universal welfare for their citizens even as they embrace private markets. Successful social democracies capably reconcile “the needs of achieving growth through globalized markets with extensions of political, social, and economic rights” (Sandbrook et al. 2007, i).

As further defined by German theorist Thomas Meyer, social democracies promote positive rights (economic and social rights) as well as negative rights (basic civil liberties). They actively embed the market economy in democratic structures, create opportunity through social redistribution, and develop a wide-ranging system of social insurances (Kasting 2013, 19). By emphasizing both “pragmatism” and “adaptability,” the success of social democratic regimes depends on “state capacity, constant innovation, and an informed and mobilized citizenry” (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 253-254). Social democratic regimes evolve organically within states where mobilized citizens employ the institutions of democracy to demand social-democratic values, policies, and programs. Such regimes emerge from whole societies, not from the

politics of the elite. They grow from broad-based demands for social citizenship. Social democracy is made, not granted.

Distinguished from both Marxism and liberal-democratic capitalism, the intellectual tradition of social democracy dates to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when European intellectuals and politicians brought life to social-democratic ideas. Influential figures including Edward Bernstein, Jean Jaures, Friedrich Ebert, and various Swedish politicians emerged and powerfully articulated a justification and logic for social democracy. The political-economic assumptions of social democracy vigorously rejected the economic determinism of Marxism as well as the so-called “invisible hand” of laissez-faire capitalism. Rather, social democrats presumed the possibility of reconciling market production and state-led social welfare in a single governing system. Over time, numerous political movements and parties throughout Europe adopted social democracy and influenced how institutions and policy choices evolved across the region. Social democratic movements in Scandinavia broadened more fully into social democratic regimes. Even as social- democratic and conservative political parties alternated in power, mobilized citizenries in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden committed their polities to recognizing basic social-democratic goals regardless of changes in party control (Steinmo 2010; Lakey 2016). As a regime type, the social democracy project became more of a “common challenge and practical task” than some ethereal intellectual exercise or utopian ideology (Kasting 2013, 20).

The concrete record of social democracy is indeed admirable. In a manner superior to other regime types, social democracies have successfully fused market-based growth and international trade with societal commitments to equitable development (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 9-11; 234). From the earliest years of Bretton Woods to the expansion of trade during post-Cold War globalization, social democracies benefitted from their embrace of capitalism, economic openness, and ability to adapt to rising industries. Where socialist and protected states saw their economies flounder and technology stagnate, Nordic countries flourished in the new global economy. Rather than reject it, social democracies pro-actively adjusted to economic globalization creating new growth opportunities in finance, services, and information technology. As they did so, they also worked to ameliorate the most harmful distributional effects of trade liberalization and neoliberal internationalism (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 14-15).

Achieving a desirable balance between market-based growth, civil liberties, and public goods provision renders life in social democracies the envy of the world (Lakey 2016). Few people would argue that life in a successful social democratic regime is undesirable. Social democracies dominate global indices, rankings, and surveys that compare well-being across countries. With respect to the Human Development Index (HDI), for example, all five Nordic countries (Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway, and Sweden) rank consistently in the top twenty globally with “very high” human development. When factoring income distribution using Inequality-Adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI), these same five countries rank in the top ten (*Human Development Report* 2016). *The World Happiness Report*, a study submitted to the United Nations based on World Values Survey and Gallup Poll data, reveals striking levels of life satisfaction among those who actually reside in social democracies. Of the 155 countries listed in the *World Happiness Report 2017* rankings, five of the top ten are the Nordic social democracies. The highest-ranking post-colonial countries on the same list are, predictably, social democracies as well (*World Happiness Report 2017*, 20).⁹⁶

⁹⁶ The World Happiness Index is a composite measure of GDP per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, generosity, freedom to make life choices, and perceptions of corruption. The seven social democracies ranked in the

Desiring Social Democracy for Thailand

Given this record of success, it is wholly understandable why Thais desirous of equitable development and political freedom and might press for a social democratic movement. Thailand—often hailed for its “remarkable progress in socio and economic development”—actually retains one of East Asia’s most unequal societies (World Bank 2017). Of Thailand’s 68 million people, 7.1 million persist in poverty and another 6.7 million “remain vulnerable to falling back into poverty” (World Bank 2016). In other words, in spite of three decades of impressive economic growth, one in five Thais still live in poverty or on poverty’s edge. While the richest tenth of the population controls two-thirds of all titled land, a shocking twenty percent of rural Thais lack bank accounts (*The Economist* 2016). In human development terms, and when adjusting for inequality (IHD), Thailand (70th) ranks well below the world’s social democracies Costa Rica (43rd), Chile (50th), and Mauritius (57th), and just barely ahead of its far more populous ASEAN neighbors Indonesia (75th), Vietnam (77th), and the Philippines (79th) (*Human Development Report* 2016).

Thailand’s failed democracy and unequal society contrast markedly with more democratic and egalitarian social democracies. Costa Rica, Chile, and Mauritius all currently rated “free” by Freedom House and boast consolidated democracies (Freedom House 2016). The Bertelsmann Transformation Index, which uses twelve combined measures to compare political and economic freedoms in 128 developing countries and Eastern Europe, ranks Chile (8th), Costa Rica (12th), and Mauritius (13th) while Thailand (88th) languishes behind both Russia (81st) and China (84th) (BTI-project.org). As Thailand’s own democratic development lurches back and forth amidst the powerful tides of militarism, corruption, populism, socioeconomic inequality, and public cynicism, social democracy can indeed appear as oasis of hope on Thailand’s hazy political horizon.

In the political world, however, what is desirable may not always be what is achievable—an blurry oasis in the distance may turn out to be a hopeless mirage. Declaring the launch of a social democratic movement in Thailand—as occurred recently⁹⁷—may prove a futile exercise in the absence of broad-based structural, configurational, and conjunctural factors that reliably explain the success of social democratic movements elsewhere. Analytically, in the light of our knowledge of how social democracy tends to evolve, it is possible to conduct an objective examination of the prospects of social democracy in Thailand, a task conducted in the pages that follow.

Homologous Factors that Explain Social Democracy Success

Putting assumptions of desirability aside, how might we analyze the prospects of social democracy in Thailand? The analytical method adopted here is to examine the experiences of various cases outside of Europe where social democracy has succeeded and then to compare those experiences with Thailand’s own political evolution. More specifically, to control for Scandinavian history and political culture as possible variables that explain the “Nordic Model” regionally, the analysis here considers successful social

top twenty: Norway (1st), Denmark (2nd), Iceland (3rd), Finland (5th), Sweden (10th), Costa Rica (12th), and Chile (20) (*World Happiness Report* 2017).

⁹⁷ See, for example, John Draper and Kanchit Patanapoka, “Social Democracy Offers a Third Force,”

Bangkok Post, 6 March 2017,

<http://www.bangkokpost.com/archive/social-democracy-offers-a-third-force/1209473>; Stephan A Evans and Kanchit Patanapoka, “A Thai Social Democracy Party Becomes an Imperative”, *The Nation*, 7 March 2017, <http://www.nationmultimedia.com/news/opinion/30308127>; Draper John, “Social Democracy Project Opens Space for Political Discussions,” 23 March 2017, <http://prachatai.org/english/node/7026>

democracies that have no cultural or historical connections to Northern Europe. For if these countries, like Thailand, lack such a Scandinavian history or culture but proved capable of developing sustainable social democratic regimes, we must then consider Thailand as a non-Scandinavian candidate for social democracy as well. Our basic questions then become why social democracy succeeded in these countries and, correspondingly, the extent to which explanations for such success align as plausible causal factors in the case of Thailand.

As a framework for further analysis, I rely on an approach used by Richard Sandbrook, Marc Edelman, Patrick Heller, and Judith Teichman in their *tour de force* interdisciplinary study *Social Democracy in the Global Periphery: Origins, Challenges, and Prospects* (2007, Cambridge University Press). Their analytical approach reveals a common set of factors that explain the success of social democracy in four specific non-European cases (Costa Rica, Chile, Mauritius, and Kerala State in India). It also considered failed social democratic movements in other countries as well (Brazil, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, Uruguay, Venezuela, and West Bengal State in India).⁹⁸ Although their analysis reveals just how diverse social democratic regimes are in practice, they impressively distil the most crucial historical factors that observably influenced the ability of social democratic movements to take root and evolve into social democratic regimes.⁹⁹ The researchers carefully label these factors or patterns of development a “homology,” or a “common causal history.” This homology includes three categories of factors common to all four successful cases:

- (1) **structural factors**, i.e. an economic history of early penetration of capitalism, the commercialization of agriculture and, consequently, the formation of cross-class coalitions produced from the interacting politics of market capitalism and democratic consolidation;
- (2) **configurational factors**, i.e. favorable inter-class coordination with agrarian roots, the presence of organizational space (a robust civil society), and a rule-bound, high-capacity state with institutions responsive to subordinate rural and urban classes;
- (3) **conjunctural factors**, i.e. critical junctures when the actual mobilization of broader society on behalf of social democracy occurs, including the leading role of organized actors and political parties in this mobilization.

Combined, these factors contribute to the single most important causal factor of social democratic success among late developers: a class compromise (i.e., a social-democratic pact). The common pathway to a class compromise differs in the developing world than in the European experience. Social democracy in Europe resulted from a distinct class compromise between capital and labor, initiated by workers and brokered by a consolidated democratic state. It evolved over time through a distinct sequence of industrialization, democratization, and then social citizenship. By contrast, in the developing world,

⁹⁸ Although the application of their framework explains both successful and failed cases, the bulk of their analysis focuses on explaining successful cases. The authors briefly consider South Korea and Taiwan as cases where social-democratic policy trends have emerged following the consolidation of liberal democracy in the 1980s but they do not classify either country social democratic regimes. Consideration of social democracy in Thailand or other East or Southeast Asian countries remains unexamined in their comparative study.

⁹⁹ The successful social democracies Chile, Costa Rica, Mauritius, and Kerala State in India span a range of social democratic practice. Costa Rica and Mauritius represent more classic social democracies. Mauritius reflects a more radical social democracy and Chile’s path to “Third Way” social democracy proved less than linear than the other three cases (Sandbrook et al. 2007).

social-democratic pacts evolve through compressed and overlapping stages with organized workers playing a lesser role than agrarian classes. Costa Rica, Chile, Mauritius, and Kerala State in India all experienced class compromises led by loosely organized groups with strong agrarian roots. These groups came from (1) “poor classes and strata” (i.e. poor peasants, farm workers, informal sector hawkers, peddlers, and petty producers) and (2) “middle classes” (i.e. small farmers, middle peasants, white-collar employees, and small entrepreneurs) (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 21-22). The penetration of capitalism occurred early in these cases affecting the organic structure of class formation even as the overall material base remained initially weak. Class compromise and the social-democratic policies that followed this compromise were themselves yoked to increasing dynamic capitalist growth and the processes of democratic deepening (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 20).

Thus, in a forming social democracy, traditional norms in rural areas of reciprocity and mutual support erode with the rise of a capitalist social formation. Consequently, in response to changes in production, distribution, and income risk rural classes begin to demand a new agrarian politics—a conclusion famously drawn by Barrington Moore in his landmark study *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World* (Moore 1966). Focused only large Western and Asian countries,¹⁰⁰ Moore, however, argued that an urban bourgeoisie was necessary for the emergence of parliamentary democracy. In countries with weaker bourgeoisie classes and parliamentary institutions, he contended, rural classes provoked by capitalism would push demands upon the state leading to one of two possible outcomes: (1) states captured by rural classes outright (i.e., communist peasant revolution—China, Russia), or (2) states captured by capitalist elites in a reactionary backlash (i.e., fascist revolution from above—Germany, Japan). Given his limited cases, what Moore failed to appreciate were cases in which rural revolution occurs after sufficient democratic institutions have already taken root. Limited by case selection, and failing to distinguish liberal democracy and social democracy, Moore’s work is of limited utility in helping us explain how social democracy arises.¹⁰¹ This oversight, however, provides justification for Sandbrook et al.’s ambitious comparative study of how social democracy emerges.

“Sustainable class compromise,” observes Sandbrook’s research team, “falls within definite parameters” (2007, 22). Analytically speaking, all classes (capital, labor, rural and urban poor, and state elites) place and accept demands upon each other to allow a cross-class social democratic coalition to endure:

Capital [classes] will require acceptance of the capitalist system, private property, and a range of macroeconomic policies to aid competitiveness and profitability...Organized workers and the urban middle classes will demand favorable wages, job security, and good public health and educational services. The poor will expect governmental strategies to create jobs, redistribute land (where landownership is concentrated), and channel public

¹⁰⁰ Moore (1966) examines only England, France, the United States, India, Japan, and China (with some attention to Russia and Germany). Moore justifies these case selections over others based on his stated concern that these countries were, globally, “political leaders at different points in time in the first half of the twentieth century” (Moore 1966, xviii-xix). He confesses that India, his only case where democracy results without rural revolution, challenges his own theories and “stands apart from any theoretical scheme” (Moore 1966, 315; xxii). Although Moore admits that his study neglects Scandinavian democracies, and other smaller states in the industrialized and developing world, he offers no attempt to qualify his findings based on their own experiences (Moore 1966, xviii).

¹⁰¹ Subsequent challenges and refinements to Moore’s arguments from Jeffery Paige (1975), James Scott (1977), and Samuel Popkin (1979) seek to explain the presence or absence of communist revolution in developing country cases Moore overlooks. Like Moore, however, these studies do not consider “social democracy” as a possible outcome of agrarian politics.

expenditures into accessible public services, subsidies on necessities...[As] an ongoing process, the demands of the poor grow more insistent with keenly fought electoral contests, self-organization, and their representation in by nongovernmental organizations...[along with] political freedoms [that] deepen civil society. (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 22)

And, for their part,

State elites (elected officials and top bureaucrats) respond to redistributive demands from below because (a) they believe that free markets inevitably spawn inequity and inequality, and/or (b) they fear that, if they do not respond, they will be replaced in an electoral contest by the opposition. (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 22).

This sustainability can endure even in the face of external pressures and shocks. Having established social democratic regimes prior to the onslaught of post-Cold War neoliberalism, these countries proved capable of adapting to globalization rather than being a victim of its powerful economic pressures. In their findings, democracy, development, and government capacity “reinforce each other in a virtuous circle;” by achieving “growth with equity,” democratic institutions consolidate even as the capacity and legitimacy of government and regime is enhanced (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 23).

With respect to the failed cases of social democracy considered by Sandbrook et al., the homology they uncover holds true in the opposite manner. Countries such as Brazil, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, Uruguay, and Venezuela, all proved incapable of developing a sustainable social democracy in spite of attempts to do so. Lacking robust class compromise and a clear social-democratic pact, these countries succumbed variably to leftism, populism, corporatism, authoritarianism, and bureaucratic sclerosis. Tragically, in some cases, these very countries continue to experience ongoing class conflict and fall victim to the most severe pressures of the globalization era.

Why Thailand is Not a Social Democracy....and is Unlikely to Ever Be

Analyzing Sandbrook et al.’s homologous factors that explain social democratic success against the Thai case allows the prospects of social democracy in Thailand to reveal themselves. As uncovered in the pages below, Thailand to date has undeniably lacked the structural, configurational, and conjunctural factors, as well as the corresponding class compromise requisite for a social democratic movement to emerge and evolve. *The same factors that explain why Thailand has not experienced a major social democratic movement to date are the same factors that inhibit the future prospects of social democracy in Thailand.* Thailand has yet to experience a class compromise and appears unlikely to forge one in the immediate or distant future. The reasons for this are possible to explain using the analytical framework provided by Sandbrook and his research team.

I. Structural Factors

(a) Early Capitalist Social Formation Refashions the Siamese Aristocracy

As noted above, successful social democracies outside of Scandinavia did not emerge from strong labor movements or organized working classes. They emerged from organized rural classes. In the developing world, “the commercialization of agricultural matters for political trajectories because of the ways in which

it transforms agrarian classes” (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 179). Where an urban-oriented bourgeoisie may demand liberal democracy—i.e., “no bourgeoisie, no democracy” (Moore 1966)—the demands of agrarian interests provide the fuel that lead developing countries down a social democratic path (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 179).

Going beyond Barrington Moore, Sandbrook et al. discover that when emerging democratic institutions are captured by an organized rural coalition one possible outcome is a social democratic movement. Rule-based systems, new actors, and the social openness created by markets work together to reinforce social democratic movements. When bounded by the “rule of law,” they observe, “the creation of new markets stimulates new channels of communication outside those controlled by the royal court or the aristocracy” (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 179). Sandbrook’s research team documents this agrarian-led pattern in the cases of Costa Rica (coffee), Mauritius (sugar), and Kerala (tree crops).¹⁰² They observe a similar pattern in Sri Lanka (tea) before its own social democratic trajectory was disrupted by ethnic politics, a neoliberal turn, and protracted civil war (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 245-46). In Chile, where a strong mining sector produced militant politics alongside an agricultural sector of more docile wheat producers, the “agrarian class was slow to modernize” and the country experienced a more discontinuous path to social democracy. Nevertheless, a post-Pinochet bargain between business, labor, and agriculture help create a dynamic export platform spanning grain production, livestock, seafood, mining, and manufactures upon which social democracy formed (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 166; 173; 178-79).

In every successful case of social democracy examined by Sandbrook et al., “vulnerable producers...demanded social protections” when faced with “volatile and unpredictable market forces” (2007, 236). These demands resulted in a new politics where rural coalitions formed to pressure, weaken, and coopt dominant classes. Out leveraged by allied subordinate classes clamoring for economic and social protections, post-colonial elites eventually capitulated to class compromise. Crucially, the presence of consolidating democratic institutions and robust civil society allowed cross-class coordination to form. This social structure is significant the homology, or common causal history, they uncover across cases.

To evaluate the prospects of social democracy in Thailand, it is vital to first accept that “*social democracy is a response to capitalism: no capitalism, no social democracy*” (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 178, emphasis in original). Moreover, since agrarian class response to capitalism is determinative, Thailand’s history of relatively weak labor mobilization is not a significant factor explaining its historical lack of a social democratic movement. Given its early capitalist social formation centered largely on natural resources and agriculture exports, Thailand would appear to be a potential candidate for a social democratic trajectory. Like the country cases in Sandbrook et al., Thailand [Siam] experienced an early and deep penetration of capitalism. However, this formation did more to buttress the country’s aristocracy than mobilize rural classes.

Evidence for an early capitalism in Thai history is solid. Scholars as diverse as Chatthip Nartsupha (1984), Lindsay Falvey (2000), Suehiro Akira (1989), and Ji Giles Ungpakorn (2003) are among the many who have documented the early penetration of capitalism in Thailand. From the 1855 signing of the Bowring Treaty under King Mongkut, to King Chulalongkorn’s dismantling of the feudal *sakdina* system, though the rise of state-built agriculture infrastructure and importation of Chinese wage laborers, an elite-dominated capital formation evolved over time. Initially, the locus of much of this capital formation was in Siam’s natural resources and agrarian sectors, particularly the exporting of rice, sugar, teak, rubber, and tin (Falvey 2000). Eventually, state elites and their entrepreneurial cronies brought large domestic markets under royal

¹⁰² Kerala’s tree crops include coconuts, coir (coconut fiber), rubber, cashews, and others.

command, including lucrative liquor, opium, and gambling markets. These markets caused the crown's revenues to balloon by 3000% in 30 years, from 1.6 million baht in 1874 to over 56 million baht—"the seed capital of absolutism" (Pasuk and Baker 2014, 52).

Siam's first indigenous capital class of was thus composed of the absolute monarchy and its allies, Chinese capitalist merchants, and foreign capitalists (Suehiro 1989; Ungpakorn 2003, 11). As feudal arrangements transformed under the mantra of *siwilai*—the "civilization" project by Chakri kings to model Siam after the west—the Crown sought to increase tax income and revenues through expanded agricultural production, infrastructure investments, and global trade. To expand rice production, for example, Italian and Dutch advisors assisted the state in creating new canal works, such as the massive Rangsit project of the 1890s. Authorized European and Chinese entrepreneurs became the first to service small holders and landlords with credit schemes, forward contracts, and storage facilities in the development of modern agribusiness sector (Falvey 2000, 107-09). Ethnic Chinese merchants came to dominate rice mills and moneylending even as various Siamese elites came to form a landowning class based on royal grants and patronage (Chatthip 1984, 53-55). From the 1860s to the turn of the twentieth century, the kingdom's rice exports grew five times. Around 500,000 tons of rice was shipped away on western steamers per year (Pasuk and Baker 2014, 82). A form of state capitalism had emerged.

Private entrepreneurs with ties to the Thai state also arose during this early period of capitalism. Charoen Pokphand (CP Group), one of Asia's largest agribusinesses today and virtually a "quasi-arm of the government," dates its 1921 founding in Bangkok to this early period of capitalism (Falvey 2000, 127). The Crown Property Bureau (CPB), a tax-exempt vehicle for the royal family's personal investments, also came into existence around this time. Since its 1934 founding it has become the one of the country's largest conglomerates with massive assets in real estate, banking, and construction. The important point to emphasize is not only that capitalism arrived early in Thai history but that its first capital class did not spring from some Lockean society rich with private enterprise, natural rights, and civil government, but rather formed almost exclusively around royals and other state-tied elites. As a refashioned aristocracy, Siam's precapitalist feudal class essentially transformed itself into a class of state-sponsored capitalists. As society's leading economic agents, they generated massive capital returns from new enterprise investments as well as from collecting taxes and tariffs.

(b) Bounded Agrarian Politics

Social democracy must emerge within a "largely capitalist social formation" but it "cannot survive in the oppressive environment...of quasi-feudal relations presided over by a traditionalist landlord class or of a large dependent peasantry enmeshed in clientalistic relations" (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 30). Thus, in addition to its aristocratic capital formation, Thailand's hierarchal, clientalistic state looms large as a structural factor explaining the country's political trajectory and why it departs from the homology common to successful social democracies.

In Costa Rica, Mauritius, and Kerala, geographic, demographic, and post-colonial conditions generated different responses by farmers than witnessed in frontier-rich and monarchical Thailand. As early as the 1880s, Costa Rica's small holding coffee growers and wealthy processors, who dominated the agricultural sector, coalesced and successfully appealed to Europhile elites to provide economic and social protections in public health and education. The arrangement provided mutual economic benefits for all groups and found support in the country's nascent democratic institutions. In Kerala, agrarian interests first coalesced under the British who had "gradually conceded limited rights of association and opposition to its colonial subjects" (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 78). Post-independence, traditional rural clientalism loosened alongside

caste reform and a growing population generated a sizable new class of rural workers. Through associational activity, civil society, and leftist party politics, agricultural laborers maximized newly opened political space in India's favorable institutional environment to demand redress to labor grievances. As in Costa Rica, mutual interest among rural groups bought agrarian interests together.

Similarly, rural groups formed in Kerala, where a "green-orange" alliance of small producers and landless laborers emerged—a "proto-proletariat" (Sandbrook 2007, 77). In ethnically divided Mauritius, "a large class of smallholders and merchants, and an urban and rural proletariat" also combined in an effort to ameliorate ethnic cleavage and wealth inequalities. Unlike in Sri Lanka which saw its social democratic movement disrupted by overlapping class and ethnic conflict, Mauritians separated economic and political power through an "implicit bargain" guided by "Fabian-socialist ideas" championed by British-educated Hindus and Creole elites. Forging a class compromise, Mauritius evolved into a "postcolonial democratic-developmental state" (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 133-34). In each case, early capitalism and associational politics encouraged agrarian classes to form politically and seek coalitions capable of shaping economic and public policies in a social-democratic direction. In each case, elites complied with rural demands due to their own ideological commitments to democracy. This pattern is not observable in Thai history, which exhibits a bounded agrarian politics and repeated hijacking of democratic institutions by traditional elites.

In the Thai case, a frontier geography enabled state patronage networks and traditional clientism to entrench deeper and deeper over time. Control over state institutions and policies "remained the preserve of a small ruling elite" before and after the 1932 revolution (Falvey 2000, 116). At most, in subsequent decades, the system allowed for a bounded agrarian politics with limited opportunities for associational activity, even during periods of greater democratic freedom. Generally unthreatened by rural organization, Thailand's state-led aristocracy disregarded the sundry petitions of farmers and landless peasants from one economic downturn to the next. During the depressed global economy of the 1930s, for example, petitions to Thai King by peasant farmers and pro-poor policies proposed by leftist politician Pridi Banomyong were dismissed. In a pattern repeated many times later, smallholders invested in commercial production reverted to sufficiency farming (Falvey 2000, 116-17). Following the 1949 establishment of a communist regime in China, virtually any political activity by Thai peasant groups fell under suspicion as a leftist plot. Through propaganda and cooptation strategies, particularly during military rule from 1957-1973, the Thai state also cultivated nationalism and anti-communist fear in the countryside bringing many farmers to their side.

Even in the absence of military government, Thailand's democratic institutions proved too weak and of little benefit to legitimate the grievances and specific claims of farmers groups. In spite of a broad cultural consensus that Thailand's *chaona* (peasant-farmers) constituted "the backbone of the nation," elected members of parliament regularly ignored redress of rural grievances (Haberkorn 2011). Throughout the 1950s and 60s, at the expense of deforestation, the permitted expansion of smallholder farms additionally kept rural discontent at bay. Patronage allowed the allocation of more cultivable land, and clientistic networks aided in both expanding production and purchase of product. Beyond consorting with merchants to push smallholders into commercial farming, government policymakers never planned a "long-term vision for agriculture" itself (Falvey 2000, 113, 118). Dampening any embers of radical peasant politics during the Cold War became a policy goal of the Thai government in and of itself. Added to aggressive anti-communist policies, cultural and bureaucratic elites cultivated a "Thai agrarian myth" to keep the peasantry docile, a myth that equated agrarian self-sufficiency as an expression of cultural purity, or *khwampenthai* [Thai-ness] (Dayley 2011).

Over time, Thailand's ever-present praetorian military-bureaucracy and its anemic representative institutions revealed the country's weak, nominal democracy. Functioning as a "*de facto* welfare program," Thai agriculture absorbed both population growth and economic downturns even as it contributed significantly to overall economic growth (Falvey 2000, 118). Bounded politically, economically, and culturally, Thailand's large agrarian class before and after 1932 has had little opportunity to press for a social democratic response to the penetration of capitalism. Unlike in Costa Rica, Chile, Mauritius, and Kerala, capitalist penetration did not transform rural Thais into an organized political class in search of political allies to push for social citizenship. At least until the economic boom of the mid-1980s, Thailand's large rural peasantry remained structurally enmeshed in paternalistic and clientelistic dependency even as state-tied elites leveraged markets and power to maintain political control. Since that time, the commercialization of Thai agriculture has intensified and diversified greatly. As the rural economy experienced deep integration into private and international markets, the Thai agrarian class effectively atomized and the country's once recognizable peasantry disappeared (Attachak and Dayley 2016).

II. Configurational Factors

(a) A Coalesced Bureaucratic Aristocracy

Among late developers, the configuration of class power also matters in determining social democracy. While essential, rural mobilization is, nevertheless, insufficient to guarantee social democratic outcomes. The various configurations of class power and the sociopolitical opportunities that spring from those configurations can lead rural political movements down variable pathways. The trajectory that can lead societies to an enduring social democracy in the developing world has proven, alas, all too rare.

As powerfully documented by Sandbrook et al., the configuration of class forces influences social democratic trajectories only as a product the sociopolitical opportunities created by civil society. "Civil society looms large" in mobilizing populations toward social democracy because "it is the terrain on which social classes are formed" (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 183). In the absence of a robust civil society, subordinate classes find difficulty forming and articulating demands. Moreover, when power is concentrated in the hands of a narrow elite, political institutions tend to be "extractive" rather than "pluralistic and inclusive" (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012, 81). Extractive institutions then produce an internally strong feedback loop that serves elites by enabling them to choose economic policies with little constraint from subordinate classes. Thus, the "organizational density of civil society" must be sufficient to provide an effective counterweight to the overwhelming power of the state, especially when leaders remain unelected (Rueschemeyer, Stephens, and Stephens 1992, 77). In the Thai case, the configuration of class power has long favored state over society; no substantial counterbalance has persisted.

From 1932 to the present, Thailand's cultural and bureaucratic elites, oxymoronically, have embraced "democracy" so long as its institutions stayed sufficiently malleable to serve their interests. Thailand's traditional elites—comprised of royalists, the bureaucracy, the military, old wealth, and the upper-echelons of institutionalized Buddhism— have coalesced into a type of bureaucratic aristocracy. Whether through drafting and revising basic law, controlling executive powers and courts, reigning in political parties and elected parliaments, or managing the scope of political liberties and civil society, Thailand's bureaucratic aristocracy continually regenerates its own sociopolitical position from one generation to the next. With their strong preference for social stability and instinctual drive for self-preservation, Thai elites constantly push for a top-down political system governed by culturally virtuous governors, or "good people." By repeatedly dismissing elected governments, overturning

democratic institutions, and constraining civil society, Thai elites attempt to ensure such “good people” run the country relatively unconstrained by adverse social forces. Within such a vision, political participation is circumscribed and mass politics, including political party activity, is viewed skeptically. Championing the banners of “Thai-style democracy” and “political reform,” Thailand’s bureaucratic aristocracy today actively obstructs the institutionalization of democracy and the sociopolitical opportunities created by political openness. Evidence of this obstruction is found in the country’s tragic number of military coups, coup attempts, and extraconstitutional interventions at the hands of generals, the monarchy, and judges that have summarily overturn popularly elected governments and sitting constitutions.¹⁰³

Constitutionalism—the “political disease” of Thailand (McCargo 2015, 331)—remains an obsession of Thailand’s elites who repeatedly re-draft basic law to appear democratic but invariably act to serve the aristocracy’s interests. Thailand’s embarrassing *twenty* constitutions and charters (roughly two constitutions per decade since 1932) pathetically contrast to the stability of basic law in successful social democracies. Costa Rica’s 1949 constitution, for example, has endured for nearly seven decades. It emerged as a product of civil war and subsequent class compromise between agrarian producers, processors, urban elites, and pragmatic leftist organizations. Virtually all amendments made to it since its adoption have reinforced and clarified democratic rights and procedures. Similarly, social democracy in Mauritius persists today under a constitution dating to 1968. Challenged by stark ethnic heterogeneity, successive governments in democratic Mauritius have benefited from long-standing electoral rules enshrined in basic law that incentivize ethnic pluralism in democratic representation (Sandbrook et al., 2007 137). Unlike Thailand, where one set of ruling elites reverses the constitutional provisions established by a previous set of ruling elites, elected politicians in successful social democracies remain committed to basic law and foundational democratic procedures. Ever unwilling to cede control of state institutions to democratic processes, Thailand’s bureaucratic aristocracy prefers to “rule by law” than succumb to the “rule of law” (Dayley 2014).

(b) Dueling Civil Societies and Competitive Mobilization

The presence of organizational space in the form of a robust civil society is essential for the evolution of social democracy. Following Sandbrook et al., the analysis of Thailand here moves beyond a Tocquevillian view of civil society, which emphasizes apolitical and voluntary associations that fill the neglected governing space of a liberal. Rather, it adopts a more Gramscian political interpretation, viewing civil society as the arena in which associational activity organizes political demands, ranging from specific policy changes to systemic regime change. Such demands tend to come from subordinate classes.

Civil society has persisted in varying degrees through much of Thailand’s volatile political experience. It has even “existed, albeit in very limited forms, under highly authoritarian regimes” (Hewison 1997). At times, such as the mid-1970s and during most of the 1990s, Thai society was recognized as one of Asia’s most politically open, boasting press freedoms, grassroots advocacy, public demonstrations, and a vibrant NGO community. At other times, the very political freedoms and civil liberties that Thai citizens come to expect are suddenly curtailed (e.g. post-2014 coup). The lack of a stable and consistently open civil society has been harmful to the development of liberal democracy in Thailand generally, but it has especially inhibited the needed role for civil society to encourage a cross-class social democratic pact.

¹⁰³ Depending on how one defines each type of intervention, Thailand has arguably experienced over twenty military, bureaucratic, judicial, and royal interventions of an extra-constitutional nature since 1932.

In Thailand today, there are in fact dueling conceptions of civil society, neither of which support a push toward class compromise or a social democratic movement. One version of civil society in Thailand, stemming from the Red-shirt camp, views civil society primarily in mechanical terms, as a place to mobilize on behalf of populist policies and to secure electoral majorities. The other version, the Yellow shirt camp, employs civil society as organizational space to consolidate anti-democratic support for traditional structures of power. Thailand's past and present exhibits little of the homologous patterns of social-democratic associational activity observed in Chile, Costa Rica, Mauritius, or Kerala. Absent stable democratic institutions to justify and shore it up, civil society often becomes the instrument of powerful actors, not subordinate forces. The effect has produced what Sandbrook et al. describe as a "competitive mobilization" with a "ratcheting-up effect" in a "zero-sum confrontation" (2007, 187).

Civil society is an essential element of democracy but should not, in-and-of-itself, be assumed to be an unquestionable good. The experiences of social democratic movements elsewhere reveals that civil society sometimes serves as a tool of the elite to organize against the very rising demands for social citizenship coming from the poorer strata. Powerful reactionary elites can nurture support from civil society to mobilize allied political forces and inhibit the very class configurations and compromises needed for social democracy. To cultivate such alliances, elites often exploit urban and middle classes who may feel vaguely threatened by rural demands. Thus, antithetically, where associational activity is most broad it is also sometimes vulnerable to breeding "anti-democratic ideologies" and nurturing mass support for "paternalistic, hierarchical, and militarist traditions and social structures" (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 183). For evidence one need look no further than the rise of Nazism in Weimar Germany, fascism in post-War Spain, or, more recently, Hindu nationalism in secular India, Buddhist fundamentalism in Myanmar, and Islamic fundamentalism in insular Southeast Asia. One also finds this pattern recognizable in the Thai case, especially during the intense protests led by Yellow Shirts and the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) from 2005-2014 seeking to replace elected governments with appointed "good men."

Similarly, charismatic nationalist leaders might also use the political space of civil society for nativist and populist messaging in a way that undermines democracy. Populist leaders, in their attempt to create direct links with "the people," will often disregard governing norms, bypass constitutional limits, and fail "to set firm parameters to redistributive politics" (Sandbrook et al, 2007, 246). Feeding into polarization of society rather than seeking a class compromise, populist movements depend on an open civil society to organize a pro-populist policy agenda. Superficially resembling a social democratic movement on behalf of subordinate class interests, the political machines, clientelism, and personality cults of populism take societies off a social-democratic trajectory (Sandbrook et al. 2007 28). Leftist movements in Sri Lanka and Venezuela each experienced the harms of such populism. In the Thai case, the nationalist populism of Thaksin Shinawatra and the political polarization his premiership set in motion stand as evidence to an analogous trajectory.

The Sandbrook et al. analytical framework reveals a tendency for Thai civil society to polarize and divide rather than sustain itself as a political space for negotiation claims of social citizenship. One observes this pattern, for example, during the politically open period from 1973-1976 in which forces on the left and right polarized amidst weak and unresponsive parliamentary governance. In 1976, with communist peasant revolutions having already succeeded in neighboring countries, rising demands from peasant organizations, and increasing activity from leftist students, Thailand's traditional elites viciously organized a bloody crackdown and seizure of power by military coup. In the name of social order, associational freedom became restricted and democracy overturned. Later, following the return of broad-scale civil society in the late 1980s and most of the 1990s, the polarization of mass politics returned once again in the

2000s, with similar results. This polarization fostered the creation of dueling civil societies animated by Yellow and Red color politics which itself lead to two military coups by elite forces to ensure the bureaucratic aristocracy remained.

It is important to highlight the rural versus urban nature of these dueling civil societies and its roots. Prior to mobilization of Yellow Shirt and Red Shirt protesters in the 2000s, participation in Thailand's civil society was already found to be uneven between urban and rural areas. According to reliable survey data at the time, researched found that "the more urban...the lower the involvement in civil society" (Albritton and Thawilwadee 2002, 22). Where Bangkok's urbanites favored "isolation and anonymity" as well as "freedom...from the social forces that encourage civil society associations," rural residents readily engaged associational activity and relied on community-based interdependencies (Albritton and Thawilwadee 2002, 22). Anthropological fieldwork in rural Chiang Mai a decade later reproduced similar findings (Walker 2012). It found that "idioms of patronage" and "idiosyncratic and personal ties" mattered more in agrarian communities than did abstract notions of universal rights fundamental to standard conceptions of civil society (Walker 2012, 17, 22).

Although increased NGO activity, grassroots movements, and organized protests in rural areas in the 1990s fostered new avenues of sociopolitical organization, most of it was not anti-systemic but issue-oriented. Directed at detrimental agricultural policies, proposed dams, and environmental concerns, many new rural organizations formed in Thailand's North, Northeast, and West rural political participation increasing produced politically dramatic confrontations with state elites (Missingham 2003; Somchai 2006; Keyes 2014). Although not all rural demands were realized, certain state projects were scrapped and rural activists discovered the utility of collective action within a system of representative government. Arguably, by the end of the decade, and amidst the 1997 Asian Economic crisis, this sense of rural empowerment through active protest created an appetite for direct conflict.

In urban areas, over this same period of time, civil society was similarly preparing to take sides. A decade before colored-shirt politics surfaced, researchers concluded from survey data that "Thai civil society [in Bangkok] appears to have been domesticated as an integral part of the 'good governance' movement...captured by elite-led, if not state-led, leadership" (Albritton and Thawilwadee 2002, 21). Together with the Thai political class, urbanites came to develop an appetite for technocracy and expertise in governance (Anek 1995). A prominent Thai historian, Niddhi Eoseewong, criticized the Thai middle class for losing its bourgeoisie world outlook and favoring "wealth and power, divorced from any 'philosophical foundation'" (Girling 1996, 46). A new constitution fashioned in 1997 that introduced an electoral party list system was justified precisely on this premise. By seeking to move bureaucrats and foreign-trained Thais into the parliament directly, it was calculated, patronage from rural-based political parties would be reduced. Thai society began to reveal a growing rural-urban divide.

Consequently, within just a few years of Thaksin Shinawatra's 2001 election, civil society fully polarized into a zero-sum contest that overwhelmed the entire politics of the country. From associational activity, it formed through the competitive mobilization of Yellow vs. Red coalitions. As democratic values in Thailand took a beating by both the elected and military governments that followed, civil society in Thailand evolved into an area for absolutist politics, divisive mass protests, and angry recriminations, not a vehicle for the painful brokering of class compromise. Opposing Thaksin and his populist policies, traditional elites mobilized an anti-Thaksin coalition on one side through relentless mass protests that called for a disenfranchising of rural voters and supported the extraconstitutional removal of elected governments. "The urban middle class," argues one observer, became "every bit the pawn of the Bangkok elites" (Ferrara 2012, 39). For their part, rural and provincial interests, especially from the North and Northeast, coalesced

on the other side in favor of Thaksin and repeatedly used mass demonstrations in an attempt to bring down opposing governments. Recrimination politics became the natural partner of the zero-sum assumptions held by both camps. Drowned out has been any vision or measured arguments to forge common ground in a long-term compromise or social-democratic pact. Sadly, in today's politically polarized Thailand, "democracy" has become but a hallow platitude in a fight for "naked power," "a rhetorical bludgeon wielded by each side to score points against its rivals" (Ferrara 2010, 38).

In brief, civil society in Thailand has provided sociopolitical opportunities for self-organization. Unfortunately, a social democratic trajectory has not yet emerged from activity within Thai civil society. Unlike in Costa Rica, Chile, Mauritius, and India's Kerala State, where civil society provided fertile ground for inter-class coordination and compromise, civil society in Thailand serves as a battleground for highest levels of inter-class conflict, elite manipulation, competitive mobilization, and political polarization—i.e., dueling civil societies. Social democracy in Thailand will not emerge from endless political polarization. Neither can it spring from a state still captured by a bureaucratic aristocracy obsessed with pre-democratic authority structures rather than the democratic rule of law.

III. Conjunctural Factors

(a) Political Parties and Missed Opportunities for Class Compromise

The comparative research of Sandbrook et al. emphasizes that in order for social democratic movements to emerge, a reconfiguration of the class structure led by mobilized subordinate classes is essential. Qualifying this requirement, however, is the fact that "high levels of lower-class mobilization do not necessarily produce social-democratic politics. Indeed populism is the more common outcome" (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 186). As for what determines the difference between social-democratic and populist trajectories in particular cases, Sandbrook's research team identifies the crucial role of political parties. Well-led and organized political parties guide societies through political struggles and propel them down particular pathways (Sandbrook et al., 2007, 31). Historical events or moments create opportunities, or critical junctures, upon which parties can mobilize support for a political movement. "A precondition for social democracy," conclude Sandbrook et al., "is the existence of a party that can articulate a coherent vision of social transformation" (2007, 205). Such was the case in the experiences of Costa Rica, Mauritius, and Kerala where "left-of-center parties played a crucial role in articulating lower-class interests in a coherent and policy-relevant manner, without threatening dominant interests to the point triggering a reaction" (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 186).

Positive outcomes from subordinate class mobilization are not certain. Political parties representing the subordinate classes operate within delicate political space where many vulnerabilities exist. In particular, organizational fragmentation and succumbing to anti-capitalist rage have proven fatal to leftist movements in the past. Parties favoring social citizenship may also impatiently abandon class compromise in favor of populist temptation. In their cross-country analyses, Sandbrook et al. observe,

[Social democratic] parties or movements must be capable of maintaining control of their mass base; otherwise, redistributive rhetoric or undisciplined asset seizures will panic the capitalist classes, leading to a coup, a debilitating capital flight, or unsustainable populist demands. (2007, 32)

When leading an organized alliance of subordinate classes, political parties must also be vigilant to avoid

“a zero-sum confrontation with the dominant class and, consequently, an authoritarian reaction” (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 187). The politics is truly delicate. A lasting social-democratic class compromise requires a rebalancing of class forces with all sides willing to concede some of their own interests in favor of a grand bargain—that is, all sides must embrace a politically precarious Nash equilibrium of what is achievable (compromise) rather than hold out for what is impossible (total victory for their side).

In the temporal trajectories of political development, political and economic crises often serve as the critical junctures for change. As new events change the political context, both subordinate and dominant classes face opportunities and risks. During such critical junctures, it is important that radical popular movements and absolutist bourgeoisie elements moderate if social democracy is to be realized. In spite of pressures to do otherwise, subordinate class coalitions must develop a disciplined respect for private property and renounce revolutionary goals. Similarly, political parties tied to dominant classes must likewise abandon goals of full control, accept a compromise involving democratic constraints, and agree to the “political allocation of part of the economic surplus” (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 236). In successful cases, dominant groups have been constrained by internal weakness or an unsympathetic military. Hardened coalitions between political and military elites work the opposite direction, undermining elite incentives to capitulate to social-democratic imperatives. Ultimately, successful social pacts depend on the balance of class forces, the exigencies of crisis-driven political realignment, and organizational discipline within the party-led social-democratic movement (Sandbrook et al. 2007, 237).

In general, if we consider structural factors, the changing configuration of class power, and conjunctural factors that push trajectories toward or away from social democracy, we can derive from the preceding analysis four sequential schematics, or political pathways, common to agrarian-based late developers. Recognizing that each route or sequence represents rough and often overlapping phases rather than distinct stages, we can evaluate Thailand’s experience against these conjunctural schematics:

(1) Social Democracy

Traditional social formation (feudal/moral economy) → colonialism and penetration of capitalism → new agrarian politics within a post-colonial democratizing state → agrarian class mobilization amidst expanding civil society and progressive party politics → dominant class power overturned by class compromise between rural and urban proletariats, an enlightened bourgeoisie, and elected state elites → parliamentary democracy tied to social democratic values (or social democratic regime)

(2) Communism

Traditional social formation (feudal/moral economy) → colonialism and penetration of capitalism → new agrarian politics within a post-colonial bureaucratic state → rural discontent due to state exploitation and extraction → rural revolution led by communist party elites → politically-closed communist regime

(3) Populism

Traditional social formation (feudal/moral economy) → colonialism and penetration of capitalism → new agrarian politics within a corrupt post-colonial and military-dominant state → the development of political machines and state institutions serving populist military leaders → rural classes bought off with a patronage-oriented state, rent-seeking state revenues, and charismatic leadership → undemocratic praetorian bureaucratic regime (and polarized classes)

(4) Conservative Authoritarianism

Traditional social formation (feudal/moral economy) → colonialism and penetration of capitalism → new agrarian politics within post-colonial bureaucratic state → rural discontent due to state exploitation and natural resource extraction → rural revolution that threatens capitalist aristocracy → reactionary response by the bureaucratic capitalist aristocracy → conservative authoritarian governance (and polarized classes)

Given that class compromise is the *sine qua non* of social democracy, it is useful to note that three of the four schematic pathways above do not include it at all. Without an eventual class compromise, the trajectories of countries rooted in agrarian-centered capital formations are multiple; that is, contingent upon the structural, configurational, and conjunctural factors influencing each case.

Which conjunctural pathway does the Thai experience most closely approximate? Thailand indisputably did not experience a pathway toward social democracy or successful communist revolution. Moreover, while it experienced a populist movement in the 2000s under Thaksin Shinawatra, its ultimate path did not continue in a populist direction. However, considering the fourth schematic—and if we deem Siam indirectly colonized by Europe and Siam’s own elites (Thongchai 1994; Kisan 2001) and substitute “rural revolution” with “rural-based populism”—a Thai trajectory toward a conservative authoritarian regime becomes easy to derive analytically. More than any other schematic pathway above, Thailand’s trajectory most closely resembles that of conservative authoritarianism.

That class compromise is achieved only in countries that exhibit a robust civil society and stable democratic institutions helps explain Thailand’s historically absent social-democratic trajectory. The country’s cyclical democratic attempts and failures renders Thailand’s past opportunities for a genuine social democratic movement weak at best. Nevertheless, because the Thai experience includes various attempts to fashion a democratic constitution and regime, and because Thai civil society has persisted in varying degrees, it is incumbent to consider any missed opportunities during critical junctures in Thai history when a social-democratic movement may have had a chance to emerge. Arguably, the three greatest missed opportunities to push social democracy occurred (1) during the early years of constitutional monarchy after 1932, (2) during mid-1970s, and (3) in the years following the wrenching 1997 Asian Economic Crisis.

(1) Post-1932. Some might attempt to point to the eminent Pridi Banomyong, of the People’s Party in the 1930s, as representative of social-democratic expressions and ideals. Pridi and the People’s Party could possibly have served the key role of party leadership seen in the histories of successful social democracies. However, Pridi’s record indicates general alignment with Marxist assumptions rather than the intellectual traditions of social democracy. Pridi, for example, proposed to neuter capitalist markets in both agriculture and industry through voluntary transfers of all agriculture land and key industries to state control. While his motive was to wrest control of these productive sectors away from royals and aristocrats, he viewed private enterprise as “wasteful,” envisioned the entire agrarian class as “salaried civil servants,” and viewed most commerce and trade under collective state ownership (Girling 1994, 63; Pasuk and Baker 2014, 119-121). If not Marxist, Pridi’s ideals at least approximated Fabian socialism and its long-term, anti-capitalist goals of full state ownership of the means of production.

(2) Mid-1970s. Another critical juncture during the mid-1970s ushered in a brief era of democratic rule and lively party politics. After mass demonstrations overturned fifteen years of military rule in 1973, and political parties could legally organize, center-right parties led by various Bangkok elites and minor royals

dominated the party landscape. Relatively insignificant parties such as the Socialist Party of Thailand (SPT) led by the sociologist Boonsanong Punyodyana possibly stand as evidence of social democratic party activity during the 1970s. However, radical views in Thailand during this period were predominately sourced in a “Marxist lineage” (Reynolds and Hong 1983, 97-98), and little exists in the historical record where prominent Thai intellectuals or political figures explicitly cite any inspiration coming from the nuanced ideas of Edward Bernstein, Friedrich Ebert, or other European and Scandinavian social democrats. From the 1930s through the mid-1970s, no major social democratic parties emerged in Thailand unlike they did during critical junctures in Costa Rica, Chile, Mauritius, and Kerala.

During most of the Cold War, in fact, Thailand’s political left was poorly represented by any legal parties. Rather, the Maoist-oriented Communist Party of Thailand (CPT), which had taken up armed resistance in the 1960s, drew in the country’s uncompromising urban intellectuals and idealistic students, especially after the resumption of military rule in 1976. Seeking total victory, the CPT was an anti-systemic, illegal party headquartered in mountains and operated surreptitiously in many upcountry provinces. In addition to fledgling leftist parties, the Farmers’ Federation of Thailand (FFT) operated legally within civil society advocating rural social justice. As documented so well by Tyrell Haberkorn (2011), its progressive objectives were violently thwarted by reactionary elites incapable of acknowledging the legality and legitimacy of the FFT’s efforts. To preserve their economic interests, the Cold War environment at the time provided a convenient pretext for landlords to curry favor with anti-communist allies in the state bureaucracy. The FFT’s progressive goals may have too narrowly focused on land tenancy laws to represent a broad-based social democratic movement with complex objectives on par the kind of progressive coalitions, parties, and civil society associations found in successful social democracies. Of course, we may never fully know given that dozens of FFT leaders, as was SPT’s Boonsanong, became the victims of right-wing vigilante groups and para-military assassins (Haberkorn 2011).

(3) Post-1997 Asian Economic Crisis. The third major missed opportunity for a party-led social democratic movement in Thailand occurred in the wake of the 1997 Asian Economic Crisis. As I have argued elsewhere, this externally driven financial crisis provoked two competing anti-globalization responses that appealed to Thais suffering from economic dislocation (Dayley 2011). The first was King Bhumibol’s Sufficiency Economy initiative, a culturalist call for suffering rural areas to return to self-sufficient agriculture as protection from the vicissitudes of the global economy. Resonating with Thailand’s bureaucratic aristocracy and religious fundamentalists, Sufficiency Economy fit within a Thai agrarian myth that ensured rural Thais remained subordinate to non-farming Bangkok elites. Such a protectionist rural ideal is antithetical to social democracy and its progressive assumptions that embrace both competitive international capitalism and redistributive politics. Rejected by Thailand’s pragmatic rural producers in actual practice, social and legal pressure applied to any open criticism of royal initiative allows Sufficiency Economy Philosophy to persist in a utopian realm of cultural myth (Dayley 2011).

The other post-crisis vision, articulated by Thaksin Shinawatra’s Thai Rak Thai Party (TRT), advocated the country reverse its economic misfortunes by becoming the “kitchen of the world.” Doubling-down on the agricultural economy as engine to provincial economic growth, Thaksin’s message of export-oriented economic nationalism resonated with commercial-minded farmers and rural agri-business. As predicted by the Sandbrook et al. analytical framework, however, Thaksin’s party movement rapidly turned to populism. Lacking any history with social democracy, and in the absence of any serious ideological underpinnings, Thai Rak Thai operated opportunistically, as a creature of newly allied power networks. TRT viewed voters as consumers, replaced old patronage networks with new ones, and conducted state policy

as an extension of corporate and family business interests (McCargo and Ukrist 2005). Moreover, absent the structural or configurational pre-conditions that place rural political activity on a social-democratic trajectory, TRT's patronage-based, rent-seeking, marketing savvy economic nationalism pushed Thailand along a populist path in a manner similar to the third schematic identified above (minus the central role of military commonly found in populist alliances). This pathway later shifted, rather dramatically of course, to one of conservative authoritarian backlash against Thaksin led by the traditional aristocracy and its middle class allies.

In conjunctural terms, at a time of national economic crisis in Thailand, class interests ultimately triumphed over national interests and hijacked the country's party system. Thaksin's TRT party coalition—a movement that initially combined rural classes, corporate interests, media tycoons, Members of Parliament who had defected from other parties, as well as some hopeful state and intellectual elites—alas, succumbed to political hubris, pandered anti-elite populism, and fell into organizational fragmentation even as its provincial voting totals expanded. Among all of the many sins Thaksin committed as the country's most charismatic and powerful leader in decades, his greatest sin may be his failure to recognize Thailand's recovery from economic crisis (i.e. critical juncture) as an opportunity for a social-democratic pact. An implicit class compromise supported by TRT's initially broad-based coalition was at hand. A social-democratic pact was not inevitable at this critical juncture, but it was, arguably, very possible if led by proper understanding and visionary leadership. Yet, as predicted by the Sandbrook et al. analytical framework, Thaksin's populist turn caused key allies to defect, provoked and re-energized the bureaucratic aristocracy along with its sympathetic military allies, and ultimately led to the mobilization of an angry urban middle class. The results that followed are well-known facts.

(b) Embedded Conservatism

Lastly, of the configurational and conjunctural factors uncovered by Sandbrook et al. that explain social democracy, a temporal or evolutionary element proves critically important in pushing a movement toward success. Once movements begin, they can self-propel and self-reinforce from one political event to the next, building momentum in an organic, evolutionary manner. An ideological commitment to social democracy across the political spectrum and a robust rights-based discourse must be part of this momentum. As part of the homology of factors that explain successful cases, Sandbrook's research team concluded that,

...social democracy was the result of a continuous and ratcheting-up effect created by a political playing field that had four characteristics: (1) competitive political parties, (2) organized subordinate groups, (3) weak traditional elites that were delegitimized or divided elites who needed to appeal to subordinate groups, and (4) the ideological preeminence of a social-rights discourse. (2007, 206)

In the Thai case, not only have party politics and civil society lacked significant social democratic representation, but traditional elites have remained united, powerful, and self-legitimized through their own ideological commitment to conservatism. This embedded conservatism effectively overwhelms the development of a social-rights discourse or calls for social citizenship. At a deeply fundamental level, the embedded conservatism within the Thai polity has inhibited, and will continue to inhibit, a movement social democracy.

Conceptually, in any society, it is possible to imagine the configuration of class groups will favor the

preferences of dominant over subordinate classes in the absence of a class compromise or balance of class forces. Such a configuration, in turn, influences regime formation and regime durability. At a general level, dominant classes essentially determine political outcomes and the regime type. Where dominant classes *embrace liberal politics and embrace liberal economics*, liberal democratic regimes form. Where dominant classes *embrace liberal politics but oppose liberal economics*, we find social democratic regimes. When dominant classes *oppose both liberal politics and liberal economics*, we find fascism, economic nationalism, or forms of populism (left and right). Where dominant classes *oppose liberal politics but embrace liberal economics*, authoritarian conservatism prevails—a configuration that arguably describes the Thai case.

Although authoritarian conservatism in Thailand may stem to some degree from cultural notions of power, hierarchy, and religious and cosmological assumptions (Hanks 1979; Mulder 1994), it would be misguided to overlook that traditional elites worldwide, whatever their culture or religion, also prefer conservative authoritarianism. Kevin Hewison (1997), for example, using a political economy approach to examine the Thai monarchy, demonstrates how the long-held assumptions of philosophical conservatism, independent of Thai culture, can usefully explain the Thai monarchy's own political conservatism, a conservatism shared across the bureaucratic aristocracy. In this sense, it is more helpful to explain the embedded conservatism in Thai politics as a function of the configuration of class forces than of culture. While Thai cultural supports may be used in attempt to justify elite narratives and normative views defending their own conservative authoritarian regimes, comparative analysis demonstrates empirically that Thailand's embedded conservatism is the function of an unyielding class configuration. As elsewhere, when dominant classes oppose liberal politics and embrace liberal economics we find conservative regimes. Thus, until traditional elites are sufficiently weakened, delegitimized, or divided, attempts to launch social democratic movements face improbable success. The same conservative forces that have blocked liberal democracy in the past possess the same incentives to rally in opposition to social democracy in the future.

Unfortunately, dislodging embedded conservatism within the Thai political system seems an impossible task. It is wholly significant that elites in Costa Rica, Chile, Mauritius and Kerala State, like their counterparts in Scandinavia before them, came to accept and promote a social-rights discourse rather than oppose it or mitigate it. Due to ideological conversion, electoral pressures, or other factors, elite classes in social democracies chose willingly to compromise with subordinate classes. At the other end of the spectrum too, one could argue Thailand's subordinate classes have yet to make a discourse of social democracy ideologically preeminent. Rather, zero-sum political assumptions literally color opposing political coalitions, foster conflict, and justify recrimination. The appetite for total victory seems difficult to quench on either side of Thailand's dueling civil societies.

At each critical juncture in recent Thai history, the country experienced a re-combination of elite coalition power and polarized civil society. Embedded conservatism has yet to be dislodged. In the foreseeable future, the dominant conservative discourse of the Thai polity seems destined to focus on *law and order*, *authority*, *unity*, *discipline*, *nation*, *duty*, and the need for "*good men*" to govern. It is a discourse likely to prevail over liberal notions of *equity*, *individual freedom*, *human rights*, *social citizenship*, *decentralized power*, and *compromise* that are ideologically imperative for a broad-based social democratic movement to thrive.

Conclusion: No Class Compromise, No Social Democracy!

This coup has provided a political opening for the coalition of conservative forces in Thai society to assert their power to promote their interests and restructure the rules of the game in their favor. They will try to roll back the political gains of the popular sectors during the last decade, especially by redrafting the Constitution so as to retain their privileged position.

—Suthy Prasartset (1991)

In a short fifteen years from now, on 24 June 2032, Thailand will confront the one-hundred year anniversary of the 1932 overthrow of Siam's absolute monarchy. The likelihood that Thais will celebrate a robust and legitimate democracy on that inevitable day is low. The likelihood that they will be celebrating a young and promising social democracy is even lower. Following eight decades of cyclical military coups, political crises, self-appointed leaders, and constitutional re-dos, recent events render it far easier to imagine a 2032 Thailand led by a conservative authoritarian regime than functioning as a consolidated liberal democracy (such as Japan, South Korea, or Taiwan) or an admirable social democracy (such as Costa Rica, Mauritius or Chile). It would be wholly unsurprising if, fifteen years hence, Thai society is yet again experiencing yet another constitutional revision or military coup in support of "conservative forces" scheming to "retain their privileged position" over the "popular forces" of society—as timelessly articulated three coup cycles ago by the esteemed political economist Suthy Prasartset (1991, 38).

For those who promote democracy, civil rights, equity, distributive justice, and social citizenship, analyzing the Thai political experience against the social democracy homology uncovered by Richard Sandbrook and his colleagues produces depressing results. Summarizing the above findings, we can briefly outline the main structural, configurational, and conjunctural factors that explain Thailand's poor prospects for social democracy as follows:

- An early capital formation that refashioned the Siamese aristocracy
- An agrarian class historically bounded by politics, economics, culture
- A class figuration dominated by a bureaucratic aristocracy that persistently obstructs democratization
- Personalist, clientalist, and populist political parties and the absence of social democratic parties
- A polarized civil society that competitively mobilizes for total victory not compromise
- Multiple missed opportunities amidst political-economic crises to launch social democratic movements
- Unenlightened and uncompromising elites (embedded conservatism)
- A political trajectory supporting conservative authoritarian regime (or, at times, populism)

Combined, the above factors generate little analytical confidence that a social democratic movement in Thailand is likely to ever develop, evolve, or succeed. As stated earlier, *the same factors that explain why Thailand has yet to experience a major social democratic movement are the same factors that inhibit the future prospects of social democracy in Thailand.*

From their cross-case analyses, Sandbrook et al. conclude, "the state remains the only entity with the legitimacy and capacity to capture and redirect the wealth that society produces" (2007, 293). Since 1932, when claims of popular democracy found their first constitutional footing in Thailand, the Thai state has

invariably remained in the hands of conservative forces. Until Thailand's bureaucratic aristocracy calculates that a compromise with subordinate forces serves the greater interest of the country, Thailand's embedded conservatism will surely dominate politics. Even in the unlikely event of a subordinate class takeover, outcomes are uncertain. We do know, however, that social democracy is not the product of subordinate class overthrow of elite power. Such class configuration reversals might follow communist, fascist, nationalist, or populist revolutions, but not social democratic movements. For the latter, by definition, a social-democratic pact must be struck between dominant and subordinate classes: *no class compromise, no social democracy!*

Moreover, according to what we know empirically about the experiences of elite classes in Costa Rica, Chile, Mauritius, and Kerala State in India, until Thai elites are somehow weakened, delegitimized, or divided, few incentives exist for them to give in to any pressures for a class compromise. How that weakening, delegitimization, or division could ever occur in the absence of requisite homological factors identified above is, at this point, unknowable. Such an occurrence would be unprecedented in the global history of social democracy. Even if a new social democratic movement were to rise up in Thai society, given underlying conditions, it would more likely go the way of the failed social democratic movements in Argentina, Brazil, Jamaica, Sri Lanka, Uruguay, and Venezuela. These countries, like Thailand, have experienced political trajectories that depart from the observed social-democratic homology, the common causal history, uncovered by Sandbrook et al. Similarly, their political regimes fluctuate between weak democracy, military rule, authoritarian conservatism, and populism. Class compromise has remained elusive.

In the Thai case, a class compromise has yet to be seriously attempted. Class polarization, on the other hand, persists unabated. Lacking the requisite structural, configurational, and conjunctural factors that have fostered social democratic movements elsewhere, the logical conclusion is that Thailand's prospects for social democracy are bleak.

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Thai Youth Sexual Culture: Exploring Representations of Gender and Sexuality in the Thai Controversial Series, Hormones (2013)

Dejsupa, Tammarin

The London School of Economics
England

Abstract

This qualitative research carried out a cultural discourse analysis and visual discourse analysis of gender and sexuality depicted in the Thai controversial series, Hormones (2013). Three key areas of gender and sexuality were identified: 1) Heterosexuality, 2) Homosexuality and 3) [Premarital] Sex, where they were analyzed alongside five selected scenes obtained from the series. Findings show that Thai media still persists around dominant discourse of hegemony and patriarchy. Thai youths were predominantly portrayed within heterosexual terms, with rejection towards homosexuality (especially in the case of male homosexuality). Whilst femininity and homosexuality are viewed as sexual minorities, masculinity and heterosexuality thrives as the dominant discourse within Thai social context.

Keywords: Heterosexuality, Homosexuality, Sexuality, Premarital sex, Youth

1. Introduction

Within contemporary times, mass media serves as an informative and influential platform through its representational nature of reality. Following its development during periods of global economical and social change, a majority of countries today identify its community as “mass societies of the electronic age” (Metallinos, 2013, p.110). Many print and electronic media – particularly television- have become sources of entertainment and information. As a visual source of information, Gerbner (1980) states that the impact of televised images on viewers brings forward a societal cohesion. Television functions as a cultural facilitator, where it informs sets of ‘appropriate’ and ‘inappropriate’ social behaviors or forms of individual embodiment, that mirrors certain cultural values and beliefs (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan and Signorielli, 1980; Gerbner, 1980; Huston, 1998). Couldry (2003) supports this notion, claiming that influential mass media forms, namely, television, functions to provide a space for community members to exercise on ‘alternative’ perspectives and attitudes, as well as adopting a “sense of connection to other [community members] who are sharing a common experience” (Perse, 2001, p.62). Given its predominant role, television medium can serve to deploy, transmit and transform viewers’ understanding and perception towards social relations, or more specifically, sexual relations. Following this perspective, gender and sexuality poses as one of the many significant topics addressed by television. Today, within contemporary times, media holds an “unprecedented impact in shaping views about sexuality and gender.” Often, a media’s representation of gender and sexuality would prompt a stir amongst different cultures upon their gender identity and sexual conduct (Carrillo, 2002, p.156). According to Attwood and Smith (2014),

television plays a vital role in the way young people formulate their understanding towards gender identity and sexuality. Bragg et al (2014) further concludes on this notion, stating that youth generation prefer to acknowledge ideas of gender and sexuality through television, as the medium “best reflects” their identity (p.23).

Topics of youth generation and sexual practice within television have attracted an extensive amount of research for several decades in Western Europe. For example, studies on young people’s gender and sexual portrayal in television have been published in numerous journals and articles since late 1980s (Strouse and Buerkel-Rothfuss, 1987; Hein, 1980; Malamuth and Briere, 1986; Brown et al., 1990). Investigations into the research have also been studied in Asia, namely Indonesia (Holzner and Oetomo, 2004), India (Derne, 2005) and in Hong Kong (Davis et al., 1998).

As seen above, exploration into the issues have been touched upon in different countries, with the majority focused on Western countries. Although previous studies have been made in Asian countries, very few have been explored. Thus, it is in the interest of this research paper to explore media’s depiction of young people’s sexual practice in an attempt to uncover questions of future societal and sexual relations in this region.

In the case of Thailand, topics of gender identity and sexuality have always been entrenched in discrimination or cultural taboo. Thus, resulting in a lack of print, electronic media sources or literature on the matter. Moreover, studies into Thai youth sexual culture have often been overlooked by topics of orientalism, sex tourism and prostitution (Barme, 2002; Bishop, 1998).

For the interest of this research, the nature of young Thai’s gender and sexual practice will be examined through Thailand’s first televised sex-education series called *Hormones* (2013). Directed by Songyos Sugmakanan, the Thai series was heralded for its sexually explicit content – revolving around controversial teen issues from premarital sex to homosexuality (Hodal, 2013). The series spans over two seasons, as it follows the lives of Thai nine high school students throughout their adolescence. According to Musiket (2013), the media production can uncover ‘hidden’ insights or aspects of Thai youth sexual culture today. Despite controversies around *Hormones* (2013), no previous studies have been made on the program. Thus, it is in the interest of this research to explore mediated reality of Thai youth sexual culture through a reading of the series, as well as extend upon Thailand’s literature on gender and sexuality.

The project is framed by the following **research questions**:

- 1) What sociocultural framework of gender and sexuality is *Hormones* (2013) constructed in?
- 2) What knowledge gaps does *Hormones* (2013) (in its pervasive nature) contribute to understand the cultural shift in young Thai people’s sexual practices today?
- 3) What ideas of gender and sexuality does *Hormones* (2013) contribute as an informant of Thailand’s youth culture and wider societal relations?

In order to meet the objectives of this research, numerous key scenes from the series will be selected as the primary material for study. Each scene will be chosen for their relevancy to three key areas of gender and sexuality: 1) heterosexuality 2) homosexuality and 3) premarital sex. To further provide a better understanding of *Hormones* (2013) and young Thai’s sexual practice, further discussion will be made alongside Thailand’s youth sexual culture today, as well as the Thai culture’s wider societal relations.

2. Literature Review

The following section provides an examination and analytical foundation for the proposed research questions, as well as uncovering Thailand's cultural and ideological models today.

2.1 Gender and Sexuality

Research into the field of gender and sexuality reveals that its interdisciplinary nature makes it difficult for researchers to attend to its definition and meaning under different cultural contexts and time. As an interdisciplinary topic of study, its meaning is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated under various socio-cultural circumstances. According to Holland et al. (2001, p.336), sexuality can be defined as a set of behavioral concepts and worldview (i.e. sexual practice) deemed as culturally acceptable as a form of identity. Caplan (1987, p.10) further expands on the matter claiming that sexuality is socially constructed across various cultural contexts through its defined sex roles "as well as factors related to mating, production and parenthood." Gender, on the other hand, is defined by Manderson and Liamputtong (2002) as a form of experiential embodiment between men and women from sexual desires to relationships, including specific roles and behaviors that have been deemed as "accepted" or "forbidden" in a society (p.37). Generally speaking, one's gender is usually subsumed to be in relation to one's sex. Thus, resulting in one's biological sex to prescribe and define one's gender role. Nevertheless, after the wake of feminist political concerns during the 1960s, gender and sexuality became multifaceted with other social variables (class, ethnicity and religion) and relationships (politics, economics) (Vance, 1984; Weeks, 2007). Imbued with such social forces, early documents of gender and sexuality questioned sex, gender and sexuality as independent variables that are given meaning 'specifically' to different societies. As Orther and Whitehead (1981, p.1) both argue, the symbolism of sex and gender depends on "matters of interpretation" and other cultural factors to be understood within a larger conceptual context.

2.1.1 Gender and Sexuality in Asian Societies

Accounts of gender, sex and sexuality in Asian societies are often based on early anthropological representations of sex (Fung, 2005; Kennedy and Gorzalka, 2002; Manderson and Jolly, 1997). Most texts focus on "structural and institutional aspects of kinship" as opposed to sexual aspects or socio-cultural dimensions. In the case of Thailand, many scholars and papers from colonial countries, focus on aspects of Orientalism (Said, 1979, p.63; Ahmed, 1982). Another study by Manderson and Jolly (1997), which focused on the notion of Southeast Asian women as 'exotic' and 'eroticized', point towards the nation's difference to Western nations in "gender and sexual anomaly" under the presence of "eunuchs, trans sexuality, prostitution and transvetism" (p.90).

According to Nanda (2000) in *Gender Diversity*, she stresses on cultural variance within sex and gender, where some cultures do not differentiate the terms, 'sex' and 'gender', from one definition to the other. Specifically speaking in the case of Thailand, Nanda (2000) claims that sex plays an influential and deterministic role on an individual's gender identity and sexuality. Socially and culturally structured on the onset of heteronormativity and power relations of patriarchy, Thailand is believed to sanction discrimination and violence towards individuals of diverse gender identities or sexual orientation (Pipat; Rahman and Jackson, 2010; Jeffrey, 2002).

An extensive amount of study on gender and sexuality in Thailand has been conducted by the International Labor Organization from 2006 to 2015, which offered number of significant insights to lesbians, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) Thai employers faced with discrimination within the workforce or

institution. These studies have revealed that LGBT individuals are not “well presented” within public sectors of the modern Thai society. Furthermore, the report also concludes on prevailing views of some members of Thai community holding the perception towards LGBT individuals as those who “suffer from mental illnesses” (Cruz and Klinger, 2011, p.4; Jackson, 2011; Lewin and Leap, 2009).

2.2 Gender and Sexual Representation in Media

A considerable number of studies have emerged surrounding the representation of gender and sexuality in media since the 1930s in Western Europe (Couldry and Curran, 2003; Rubin 2010). Historically speaking, according to Brownell and Besnier (2013), themes of gender and sexuality became centralized in media following the major societal transformation of feminist political event during the 1960s. From a narrow discipline within anthropology, studies of gender and sexuality eventually expanded as an interdisciplinary form of study that's “engaged with power differences” (p.239).

Mass media continues to be understood as a means of reflecting society's view of its community members (Bartsch, Burnett, Diller and Rankin, Williams, 2000). Recent researches into the media in Southeast Asia have revealed an expansive amount of media content conferring to sex role stereotyping from modes of representation to gender roles (Furnham, Mak, and Tanidjojo, 2000). According to reports in the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Tiongsong (1999) claims that stereotypical characteristics of Asian men and women have always been consistently indifferent across the Asia region. Despite Southeast Asia's diversity and development in cultural, economical and political systems, representations of Thai men and women are still consistent to ‘traditional’ characteristics. For example, Thai women are depicted as “subservient and heterosexual” beings (Rich, 2014, p.67; Goldstein and Horowitz, 2003). On the other hand, Thai men are portrayed as the opposite: independent, active, domineering and authoritative. In light of these stereotypical images of Thai men and women in media, Lorraine Corner, Southeast Asia director of the United Nations Development Fund for women, claims that images are one of the many factors contributing to “huge problems in Thai gender relations” (Chant and Gutmann, 2000).

2.3 Representation of Youth in Television

Past researches into representation of youth in television emerged following the growth of mass media youth market during the 1950s and 1960s (Osgerby, 2014, p.59). Since the late 20th century, the rise of mass media alongside increasing debates on its causal link to “gang culture and gun crime” sanctioned the media market numerous negative critiques (Nayak and Kehily, 2013, p.90).

The growing contribution of feminist theories during the late 20th century recognized the role of television in the social construction of gender identity through its content (Lemish, 2010, p.103; Gorely et al., 2004; Wiecha et al. 2001). Representations of youth in television often serve to define for young audiences the ‘accepted’ or ‘rejected’ form of gender and sexual identification. According to Lemish (2010, p.104), representations of youth in television are based on heteronormative differences (masculinity/femininity). Young boys are often characterized with “doing” in the public sphere and associated to such features: “independence”, “high social status” and “rationality.” On the other hand, young females are characterized as passive figures and associated to such features as “weak”, “submissive” and “dependent.”

3. Theoretical and Analytical Perspectives

This section provides a brief explanation of theoretical frameworks and key concepts related to the research study.

3.1 Social Constructionism

According to Burr (2015), social constructionism can be conceived as a theoretical thought that provides alternative understandings towards social psychology and humanities - the ways in which humans think. In regard to television, social constructionism functions to deconstruct, as well as question the notion of the "objective self" (p.2). Parker (1998, p.45) asserts that the theory bears audiences with a "multiplicity of perspectives" and an array of alternative way of looking at reality. This idea also points to another idea of 'symbolic interactionism', where it helps audiences to "act towards things" on the "basis of the meanings they have for them." In turn, these meanings are then signified through a form of social interaction to others, where they are "made sense of" within their social 'worlds' (Snow, 2011, p.367). Following this perspective, the logic of symbolic interaction allows for the emergence of one's identity through the media construct (Reynolds and Herman-Kinney, 2003).

3.2 Media as a Social Construct

The mass media system can be described as a social force that plays an influential role in the everyday life. It is a site of power, where it offers "competing constructions of reality and construct meaning in ways that go beyond media imagery" (Gamson et al., 2002, p.373). As Hirsch and Silverstone states (2003), the significance of media lies in its influential nature towards the family system, cultural structure and patterns of behaviors within a particular society. It provides a basic understanding of appropriate and inappropriate gender conventional norms, as well as "conduct of behavior" (p.16). Lievrouw and Livingstone (2002) state that "the range of systems, contents, issues and settings" can shape and construct human's perception towards what is portrayed as the 'norm' (p.6).

4. Methodology

4.1 Rationale of Methods

To best study the objectives of this research, this study will be presented through qualitative methods. As mentioned earlier in the literature review, representation of youth in media, or more specifically speaking, Thai media, are often shaped accordingly to cultural values and norms that is 'expected' of a particular society (Lazier and Kendrick, 1993, p.300; Dejsupa, 2015, para.3). In other words, mass media functions to reflect and project specific historical and cultural societal realities. Thus, to best evaluate Thai media, as a cultural text, qualitative method of cultural discourse analysis need be used. More so, with the objectives of this study centralized around questions of media representation and content, method of visual discourse analysis will be adopted.

Thus, throughout the following research study, mixed qualitative methods of cultural discourse analysis and visual discourse analysis will be employed to examine sociocultural and sexual relations in young Thai's portrayed under three key areas of gender and sexuality (heterosexuality, homosexuality, sex) from *Hormones* (2013).

4.1.1 Cultural Discourse Analysis

The objective of this study lies on an evaluation of a local television series, as well as depicting sociocultural insights to how young Thai's perceive of sexual practices and representations. By using cultural analysis approach, the series will be understood through a means of cultural representation and conceptualization in the media discourse. Furthermore, this method of analysis will be used to reflect and inform of social conditions and discourses pertaining around Thailand's sexual knowledge - norms and values. As a cultural discourse analysis, it will incorporate relevant analytical methods (i.e. social

constructionism, media as a social construct) to meet the required objectives of study. Through an evaluation *Hormones* (2013), portrayal of gender and sexuality is centred on Thai culture. This research study will also find possible implications carried by Thailand's perception towards gender and sexuality.

4.1.2 Visual Discourse Analysis

In essence, *Hormones* (2013), as a visual text, will represent various visual "clues" or "cues" that portrays a form of "intuitive knowledge" of a particular culture (Gee, 2005, p. 105). According to Meyer and Whitmore (2011), visual discourse analysis enables for visual texts (or "units of analysis") to be analysed, such as the semantic (color, design), production and framing of visual texts in the media (p.192). As mentioned earlier, cultural discourse analysis will enact as the main method, where visual discourse analysis will only be utilized - provided that any visual aspect of the series contributes to the objectives of the study (i.e. camera angle, lighting, plot). Throughout this analysis, this study will take an active and critical stance towards the reading of *Hormones* (2013). The visual texts will then be interpreted and discussed on the meanings conveyed. Furthermore, this research will focus on potential intersecting factors that may come to affect the constructed framework of the production; ideological, social, cultural and political factors. Selection of scenes from the series will be based off of its relevance to the three key chosen areas of gender and sexuality (heterosexuality, homosexuality and sex).

4.2 Sampling

Scenes from *Hormones* (2013) were chosen for analysis through purposeful sampling. The selected type of purposeful sampling is maximum variation sampling, where the method aims to select from a wide range of sampling materials in accordance to the interest of study (Collins et al., 2006). Scenes are chosen under three key areas of gender and sexuality: 1) heterosexuality, homosexuality and [premarital] sex. In this research, as mentioned earlier, the primary focus lies on the analysis of selected scenes. The process of analysis will be focused on discussions made around the series, with particular focus on its critiques.

4.3 Structure of Analysis

The four selected scenes from *Hormones* (2013) will be structured accordingly:

- Summary of scene
- Analysis of selected scenes (largely based on Culture Discourse analysis, and Visual discourse analysis were appropriate)

5. Analysis

This section is split into three sections 1) Heterosexuality, 2) Homosexuality and lastly 3) Premarital sex. Each section gives a summary of selected scenes from the series, as well as an analysis using cultural discourse analysis and visual discourse analysis. Scenes are selected based off of its relevance and appropriateness to each key section.

5.1 Heterosexuality

Youth Masculinity

5.1.1 Summary

A scene in Season 2 Episode 4 depicts Sprite (Supassra Thanachat), a free-spirited girl known for her sexually liberated nature. Her fellow male schoolmates often come to her – seeking for casual sex. As time

goes on, she begins to reflect on her sexual history and outlook towards 'love'. In this particular scene, Sprite is stopped by a group of male students on her way home from school. "*Come home with us,*" says one of the male students, "*You've got quite a reputation.*" Frustrated by other people's perception towards her sexuality, Sprite denies the offer and tries to walk away. Surprised at the rejection, one of the male students tries to pull her back. Amidst the ongoing of this event, Phai (Thanapob Leeratanakajorn), a typical troubled teenager, who is often misunderstood by his school peers, spots Sprite trying to pull herself from the group of boys. Aggravated by what he sees, Phai enters the scene and tries to defend Sprite. The scene then turns into a chase, as Phai and Sprite runs away and escapes on a motorcycle from the male gang. It is from this very moment that Sprite begins to contemplate upon her sudden feeling of attraction towards Phai throughout the following episode.



Figure 1: Group of male students, Season 2 Episode 1, 2013



Figure 2: Phai trying to defend Sprite, Season 2 Episode 1, 2013

5.1.2 Analysis

Set in the heart of Bangkok's famous shopping district, 'Siam', this scene explicitly depicts stereotypical gender roles that lie within generic conventions of heteronormativity. The cause-effect plot relayed in the scene illustrates the male sex operating on power that comes with masculinity, as oppose to the vulnerability of the feminine victim. The scene starts off with Phai spotting Sprite in distress, as she tries to walk away from a group of boys standing in front of her. Their stance with their towering bodies endows the male students as implicitly 'possessing' in their inhabitation of the space setting. On the other hand, Sprite, as an individual that clearly does not hold necessary attributes to 'conquer' or inhabit the same space as the male students, is depicted as 'foreign' and incompatible as she is a female. As the sole female in this scene, she is depicted as weak and submissive. Regardless of her sexually liberated nature, this particular aspect is overturned upon her – condoning her as a victim of her supposed 'autonomous' nature

to the male figure. Although Gill (2007) claims that the act of sexual agency points to female empowerment, it does not apply to Sprite's position.

The episode continues to exercise this 'masculine' power when Phai escapes with Sprite on a motorcycle. According to the dominant discourse of masculinity and vehicles, motorcycles are usually associated to male consumption as a hyper-masculine image and typically depicted as a marker of a male's "modern masculinity" (Disko, 2011, p.135; Gittings, 2002). For Sprite to escape from the group of boys, she relies on Phai's 'masculine power' and 'masculine vehicle'. The portrayal of Sprite as the powerless, vulnerable female further connotes upon unequal power relations between males and females.

In addition to these factors, as mentioned earlier, the entire scene takes place within a well-known shopping site for young Thai adults. Known for its numerous cheap thrift stores and eateries, Siam is a popular, typical location for young Thai high school students. For the young Thai's, Siam symbolizes the "modern" and "urban" and are often used as key sites in Thai contemporary films (Brody, 2006, p.106). Siam is often recognized as a 'stereotypical' site that best represents the 'everyday' Thai way of life. Following this perspective, the scene's setting in Siam is implicitly built around the notion of heteronormativity in two revealing ways. First, the 'visual impact' of Siam – in its familiarity – sets the specific location as a mechanism of power. Perceived as a stereotypical site, the location upholds the definition of what is deemed as 'normal' or 'stereotypical'. Secondly, in relation to heteronormativity, the concept is being actively constructed into the cultural setting of Siam. Thus, further 'normalizing' the notion of heterosexuality above other sexual relations between male and female.

Youth Femininity

5.1.3 Summary

An introduction to the *Hormones* series (2013), Season 1 Episode 1 opens to the first day of school term as students file into classrooms. Toei (Sutatta Udomsilp), a quiet and friendly girl, looks around for a seat in class, before being beckon by a group of girls to sit with them. With a reluctant smile, Toei makes her way slowly to sit at a desk behind them. After class, the group of girls leaves for the toilet – encouraging for Toei to tag along too. In the toilet, the girls try applying makeup on Toei, to which she hesitates to but finally gives in. Although she is easy-going, Toei is known to get along better with her fellow male classmates than female classmates. She often finds herself questioning Thai ideological norms as a female, from putting on makeup to gossiping about other girls. Later, throughout the episode, due to her numerous friendships with various male students, she is bullied by her fellow female peers.



Figure 3: Sprite putting on makeup in a toilet with a group of girls, Season 1 Episode 1, 2013

5.1.4 Analysis

Similarly to the generic conventions of male heterosexuality portrayed above, Season 1 Episode 1 represents stereotypical ideas femininity within the Thai social context. The first apparent aspect of heteronormativity can be seen in the setting of the scene: the bathroom. The “cultural priming” of binary gender oppositions (i.e. signs on toilet doors –skirts for females, pants for males, toilet structure) creates an implicit effect on people’s cognitive perception towards gender differentiation (Richards and Barker, 2015, p.177), whereby individuals are only presented with two options: 1) Male’s toilet 2) Female’s toilet. The presentation of these two categories immediately naturalizes the gender categories of male and female as the universalized, standardized ‘benchmark’ of gender identity. In relation to the scene, the depiction of the Thai schoolgirls in the female’s toilet instantly points to heteronormativity in two ways. First, the presence of the schoolgirls in the female’s toilet already subsumes their identity as females. Thereby, secondly, the girls’ sex are immediately associated to female gender roles (i.e. putting on makeup and ‘fixing’ their appearance). For females, ‘beauty’ is marked as a key fundamental marker of ‘modernity’. Furthermore, the framing and angle of the camera functions to naturalize the female students’ act. Throughout the scene, the camera films the girls’ activity through their reflection in a mirror, as well as levelling the camera to the girls’ height. In this way, the camera orchestrates a gaze for spectators, where they are made to identify themselves with the girls. Following this perspective, the girls’ act of nurturing their appearance in the toilet ‘appears’ as a natural act to be fulfilled within the vicinity of the ‘feminized’ female’s toilet and underlying gender order of heteronormativity. Moreover, the camera and the image produce an attainable position for female spectators to identify themselves with the attributes of femininity within Thai socio-cultural context (Schatz, 2004).

5.2 Homosexuality

Male Homosexuality

5.2.1 Summary

Season 2 Episode 4 of *Hormones* (2013) follows Phu (Chutavuth Pattarakampol), a saxophonist from school marching band school that is confused with his sexual orientation. He was Toei's ex-boyfriend and longs to reestablish their love relationship. At the same time, he gradually develops affection towards Thee (Sedthawut Anusit), a fellow male classmate. For Thee, he deeply loves Phu and disregards any form of

shame or embarrassment for being a homosexual, despite the objections from his and Phu’s parents.



Figure 4 - Phu and Thee sleeping together at a sleepover, Season 2 Episode 4, 2013

Throughout the episode, Phu and Thee are seen going about their daily lives as high school students together, from doing their homework, to attending late-night parties after their exams. Amidst these daily routine acts, Phu and Thee's attraction towards one another slowly emerges from a steal of glances to kissing each other lightly on the lips at sleepovers. Nevertheless, despite these signs of attraction, Phu slowly pulls away from Thee after his family confronts him about his sexuality.



Figure 5: Phu and Thee kissing, Season 2 Episode 4, 2013

5.2.2 Analysis

The scenes exemplified in figures 4 and 5 both portray a homosexual relationship between two young male characters, Phu and Thee. Throughout these two scenes, the young boys enact their attraction for one another in secrecy. From holding hands under tables to kissing only within the confines of their bedrooms, Phu and Thee are conscious of the consequences and predicaments of their homosexual relation. The boys' awareness of the negative social stigma on homosexuality can also be seen in the visual setting of the scenes in figures 4 and 5. For example, both scenes are located inside the confines of a privatized space – the bedroom. Phu and Thee are free to express their attraction towards another (or homosexual status) away from the scrutinizing eye of the Thai public. These findings shed light on the idea of homosexuality as a 'forbidden' act that can only happen within the 'privatized' lives of homosexual individuals. From this perspective, the idea of homosexuality is perceived as 'unacceptable' – an act that only be 'developed' within the confines of one's home or private lives. This is clearly exemplified in both figures, where the camera's technical framework suggests that surveillance of young people within the private sphere is needed. This notion is further emphasized in figure 5, where the camera is positioned behind one part of a window frame. The obstruction of the window frame creates an illusion, where viewers are made to position themselves as 'intruders' or outsiders peering into the private lives of Phu and Thee – further emphasizing the boys' furtive relationship and negativity around homosexuality. The dark lighting and tone of the scene also points to this notion.

In various scenes throughout the episode, suspicions and skeptic thoughts on the two young boys' attraction were raised amongst their families and relatives. A majority of the parent's reaction was negative, from confiding to psychiatrists, to setting up blind dates [with the opposite sex] for their child. The furtiveness of their relationship further emphasizes upon the socio-cultural framework around the series, as well as signifying to young viewers the negativity pertaining around male homosexuality. In

which case, *Hormones* (2013) would display such activities as ‘immoral’ and “threat to normative sexual ideologies” (Lemish, 2010, p.34). According to Lemish (2010), representations of ‘inappropriate’ or controversial behaviors on young adults’ TV, alongside negative outcomes or consequences, can serve as factors to diminish or refrain viewers from enacting them out. This concept parallels to Foucault’s (1990; 1972) notion, which states that audiences are made to exercise and implement their culture’s ideological values and beliefs into how they regulate their gender identity and sexual orientation.

This notion is further complicated by specific characteristics of the background rock music used in the scenes of Figures 4 and 5. For rock music, it initially rose to popularity during the 1960s in North America. Popularly known for its heavy beat, sexual lyrics, and unconventional style and structural feature, rock music is largely associated to the image of the youth rebel. According to Tucker (2002), he claims that the genre could potentially purge immoral and vulgar behaviors in young people. In relation to *Hormones* (2013) – as seen in figures 4 and 5 – scenes of male homosexuality are often accompanied by rock music, suggesting that Phu’s and Thee’s homosexual acts should be regarded as an act of rebellion and resistance against the Thai conventional norms of gender identity. Following this perspective, the use of rock music further connotes that the two boy’s ‘inappropriate’ acts is simply just a part of their youth transition phase. In other words, it is regarded as a temporal phase that young people need to overcome during their teenage years. In this sense, no longer is homosexuality seen as another gender identity category, but rather, as a social conduct that can potentially obstruct a young Thai’s ‘growth’ towards adulthood [as a ‘proper’ Thai heterosexual].

Furthermore, the explicit illustration of ‘gay’ individuals kissing on a TV series for young adults can pose as an “emotionally laden issue”, where Thai filmmakers often incorporate a ‘warning’ caption for Thai viewers (‘เป็นการกระทำที่ไม่เหมาะสมกับเยาวชน ผู้ปกครองควรให้คำแนะนำ’) stating that young audiences should not try or follow the act of homosexual kissing at home (Lemish, 2010; *Hormones*, 2013). This can be seen in figure 5 where Phu and Thee are sleeping together in their boxers. These warning captions can be found strewn throughout each episode, whenever scenes of explicit sexual acts arise between two males. The need to include a warning caption in mainstream Thai media immediately brings up questions of 1) What form of mediated visual content is deemed as appropriate or inappropriate? and 2) What values and beliefs are Thai people expected to harness in their identity? It is clear from the representation of sexual minorities in figures 4 and 5, that explicit display of homosexuality between males is inappropriate in the Thai social context.

Female Homosexuality

5.2.3 Summary

Similarly to the male homosexuality scene, Season 2 Episode 4 also features homosexual attraction between individuals of the same sex. However, this time, it is portrayed between two young female students from the same school. Dao (Sananthachat Thanapatpisal), an innocent and naïve girl who aspires to be a romance novelist, finds herself kissing her best friend, Koi (Kemisara Paladesh), after she confides in her about losing her virginity to her [Dao’s] ex-boyfriend.

Having always been raised under the protective wings of her conservative parents, Dao has never been faced with any form of sexual encounter. Devastated and traumatized, Dao was left to deal with the aftermath alone. Her emotions of guilt and sadness further escalated when other students at school found out about her emergency contraception purchase. Unable to deal with the pressure, she talks about it with

her best friend, who reassures and kisses her.



Figure 4: Dao and Koi kissing, Season 2 Episode 4, 2013



Figure 5: Dao and Koi kissing, Season 2 Episode 4, 2013

5.2.4 Analysis

Similarly to figures 4 and 5's portrayal of male homosexuality, female homosexuality is depicted as a form of moral degradation and negativity. The scenes in both figures are set inside a bedroom, where the two girls are free to express their attraction [homosexual status] towards one another. They, too, like Phu and Thee, are conscious of the social stigma placed around homosexuality. Nevertheless, despite their attempt to pry away from the public eye, the visual content of Dao's pink bedroom gives a blatant reminder of the Thai culture's conventional gender norms. According to Koller (2008), the color pink serves as a visual marker of femininity within heterosexual terms (Social constructionism). Ultimately, the color referent functions as a 'reminder' for Thai female viewers, where they are made to "index" stereotypical feminine characteristics (p.1).

Aside from the use of color referent, the camera's visual framework does not further incorporate other

technical elements that may contribute to the negative connotations around homosexuality. For example, unlike male homosexuality (Figures 4 and 5), (Figures 6 and 7) female homosexuality is presented without the accompaniment of rock music. Instead, a soft piano love ballad can be heard – increasing in rhythm and intensity as the two girls kiss each other. Generally speaking, given a change in context, this type of background music can be potentially used in any typical Thai ‘love scene’ – that resides within the social framework of heterosexuality. The ballad does not depict any striking characteristic that may point to any negativity pertaining around the girls’ homosexual identity.

In figure 7, a caption can be seen accompanying the kissing scene (‘เป็นสถานการณ์เฉพาะบุคคล ผู้ปกครองควรให้คำแนะนำแก่เขา/เธอ’). Unlike the caption in figure 5, where it states that acts of male homosexuality should not be enacted at home, this caption claims that this scene should be watched under a parent’s guidance. Through the camera’s perspective, the level and nature of male homosexuality is depicted as an extremely negative notion that is prohibited in act. Although, female homosexuality is also portrayed as an unconventional norm within Thai social context, its restrictive nature only narrows down to parental guidance. The social guidance of young people in visual media content points to the level of ‘inappropriate’ TV images that may be consumed by young viewers (Bulck and Bergh, 2000). In the case of male homosexuality, with or without the presence of parental guidance, this particular behavior should not be carried under any circumstances within Thai social context. The rejection of male homosexuality (more so than female homosexuality) highlights two possible insights under Thai socio-cultural framework: 1) Unlike female homosexuality, male homosexuality poses as a threat to the Thai patriarchal order 2) Homosexuality and femininity can be transcribed as sexual minorities within Thai gender order. These two possible insights point to Thailand’s patriarchal ideology and categorization of sexual minorities. It is worth questioning the strong level of negativity pertaining around male homosexuality, more so than female homosexuality.

5.3 Sex and Sexuality

Premarital Sex

5.3.1 Summary

Scenes in figures 8 and 9 from Season 1 Episode 3 of *Hormones* (2013) feature a secret, sexual relationship between Sprite and Win (Pachara Chirathivat). Both characters are known for their free-spirited nature and sexually driven behavior. A womanizer and troublemaker, Win is dubbed as the most popular boy in school for his charming and daring personality. Out of the entire season and characters, scenes of premarital sex are seen predominantly between Win and Sprite. Following this particular scene, both characters can be seen walking out of the same toilet stall in school. Fearless and daring, both characters represent youth generation that defies against Thailand’s sexual conventional norms.



Figure 6 - Sprite and Win after sex, Season 1 Episode 3, 2013



Figure 7: Win buying contraceptives, Season 1 Episode 3, 2013

5.3.2 Analysis

In *Hormones* (2013), sex resides as the only predominant form of sexual act in the entire two seasons. Alternative sexual acts, such as oral sex or masturbation are not included or shown (should it be presumed as a part of casual sex). For instance, figure 9 exemplifies a casual set of events leading towards sexual intercourse (i.e. buying contraceptives in figure 9). It can be said that *Hormones* (2013) only serves to present the extremity of sexual acts to Thai viewers. Culturally speaking, sex or premarital sex is a subject of cultural taboo in Thailand. It is perceived as an intimate act that should only be enacted within a marriage. Following this perspective, *Hormones* (2013) serves to highlight on this understanding and represent premarital sex as 'forbidden' and inappropriate to young Thai audiences.

Furthermore, figures 8 and 9 also functions to emphasize upon Thailand's conventional gender norms (heterosexuality). For instance in figure 8, sex is only seen enacted between two individuals of the opposite sex, where males are often portrayed as holding the upper hand (i.e. buy contraceptives, initiating acts of sexual intercourse). Even in the case of Sprite as a sexually empowering character, female figures are

commonly represented as sexually submissive and weak. This notion further emphasizes upon Thailand's gender order and power relations between Thai male and female individuals.

6. Discussion & Implications

6.1 Sociocultural Framework of *Hormones* (2013)

For *Hormones* (2013), its entire production is based predominantly off of the patriarchal framework. Characters from each selected scene serve to either reinforce or add to existing Thailand's socio-cultural frameworks around gender and sexuality. Their actions point towards Thailand's underlying factors beneath its socio-cultural organization, where sexuality is presented as the "most susceptible form of [social] organization" (p.45). In other words, sexuality can only be underpinned through social forms (i.e. kinship, family) that are organized around sex (Manderson and Liamputtong, p.56). Conceptual relations of heterosexuality can be seen interwoven throughout the selected scenes. Each character's performance is culturally constructed around, as well as underscoring certain beliefs and values that lies within Thailand's conventional gender norms (Cultural relativism). From formations of heterosexual nuclear family to highlighting homosexual attraction as negative, *Hormones'* (2013) identification with the Thai culture immediately negates the power of heteronormativity through normalizing hegemonic meanings upon gender and social relations (Katz, 2007; Wright and Clarke, 1999). In turn, these beliefs and values become the basic grounding upon which *Hormones* (2013) bases its plot and production on.

6.2 *Hormones'* (2013) Representation of Young Thai's Gender and Sexuality

As mentioned earlier, the media (or specifically speaking, television) manifests masculine hegemony, where certain sets of ideologies and beliefs serve to prioritize males, more so than females (Raney and Bryant, 2009). This is clearly exemplified throughout the entirety of *Hormones* (2013), from its character production to plot development. The findings from each selected scene are similar to past studies (mainly in Western Europe) on the socialization of gender roles and power relations, where male characters are portrayed as the "natural leader" and female characters as mere "submissive followers" (Aubrey and Harrison, 2004, p.112). Although, in figure 8 (Sprite and Win), where a female character is depicted as sexually empowering (freedom in agency), she is also represented as passive and obedient when put alongside a male character. In addition to this, when it comes to sex, male characters are often given the upper hand. Unlike the female characters, they are portrayed as domineering and 'active' figures. The negative predicament that often pertains around premarital sex, are often reflected upon the female characters' part.

Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the presentation of female homosexuality in the series is seemingly more widely accepted than male homosexuality within the Thai social context. Although it is worth questioning the female characters' freedom in agency and sexual orientation, respect towards "differences in body satisfaction" between a heterosexual female and lesbian need be taken into account (Morrison M., T. Morrison and Sager, 2004, p.128). According to Adams (2013), she defines homosexuality and femininity as "an evolving concept" that relies on the "interconnection of body, performance and environment in shaping the meaning of disability" (p.54). Following this perspective, femininity can be categorized with homosexuality, where the body is central to the understanding of both terms. Thus, more susceptible to notions of sexism or discrimination. Unlike femininity, this notion does not apply to masculinity, where the concept is more closely linked to 'male' traits and characteristics. Understood as an internalized role, the concept [masculinity] was widely accepted as a reflection of dominant cultural norms

and beliefs. Referring back to femininity and homosexuality, it can be assumed that both concepts are categorized as sexual minorities within the heteronormative framework. Thus, as mentioned earlier in the analysis, female homosexuality may be more widely accepted than male homosexuality, considering that the identity concept does not pose as a threat to the patriarchal gender order. At the same time, this perspective connotes that patriarchal gender order *can* be threatened by the presence of male homosexuality, more so than female homosexuality. After all, male figures are known to progressively contribute to patriarchy for their domineering traits and characteristics. They are understood as the “basic disposition” of patriarchy and the gender order within it (Hearn, 2013, p.150; Sakall, 2001; Asiyanbola, 2005). Thus, it may be presumed that in the best interest of patriarchy, male homosexuality need be diminished, for the continuance of heterosexuality as the conventional gender norm.

Generally speaking, in reference back to *Hormones* (2013), issues of homosexuality are often touched upon as recurring themes throughout the series. It is often portrayed as an unspeakable topic – a taboo that cannot be openly discussed or talked about – more so, on the male gender. Furthermore, *Hormones* (2013) also points to homosexuality as an internalized ‘troubled’ psychological disposition that is predominant in youth behavior. In other words, homosexuality can be perceived as a common ‘behavioral’ aspect found within youth phase.

Based predominantly on this research, further justifications cannot be made on whether this belief is culturally-embedded within the Thai culture, or simply a strategic feature of the media (to further emphasize upon the series’ heteronormative framework).

6.3 Thailand’s Youth Culture and Societal Relations

From the above findings, it is evident that Thailand still persists largely around conceptual ideas of traditionalism and cultural conservatism. Even within contemporary times, the Thai society still finds itself positioned at the nexus of patriarchy and gender inequality. Although it can be state that globalization and industrialization has given rise to Thailand’s economic, cultural and political progress in recent decades, signs of hegemonic discourses still persist in the society’s everyday life. Socializing and gender patterns are such that Thai males hold dominant positions and power, as oppose to Thai females, where they are placed under gender subordination. As stated by Moghadam (2002), women are like “pawns in masculine power struggles” (p.593). In addition to this, sexual minorities, namely, homosexuals, are subjected to negativity and scrutiny within the Thai public eye.

Given the persisting, continuance of patriarchy and rejection towards homosexuality in Thai culture, this pattern can reflect future directions of Thai youth sexual culture. Nevertheless, future societal progress and development can be initiated within the youth generation. As addressed earlier in this research, Pearson (1983) claims that young generation are more “delinquent” than in the past. He further states that young people are often victimized as ‘trouble-makers’ during periods of societal change. Emotions of anxiety and concerns have often risen around young people’s behavior (e.g. “being out of control” and “moral degeneration”) (p.117). Perhaps such concerns towards the ‘unconventional acts’ of young people can signal possible future changes and development towards new strategies of gender expression.

Either way, it must be noted that the lack of support towards immediate change in Thailand’s current conventional gender norms would make future progresses towards unconventional gender patterns (gender equality, dissolving patriarchy) unsuccessful. To alter the gender order of Thailand would rob the nation of its ‘true’ culture. Clearly, the future development and progress of Thailand will always be conjoined to its culture.

7. Conclusion (Including Limitation and Suggestions for Further Studies)

This research has examined the media representation of gender and sexuality depicted within the socio-cultural framework of Thailand's controversial series' *Hormones* (2013). The mixed qualitative methods of cultural discourse analysis and visual discourse analysis were used to analyse three key areas of gender and sexuality, namely heterosexuality, homosexuality and sex. Various scenes from the series were selected to best illustrate the chosen key area of study. Findings from the study came to discover the socio-cultural frameworks (under which the series is constructed), gender stereotypes, premarital sex as well as the ways in which they shape patriarchal ideology. Furthermore, the study points out the ways in which unconventional gender norms are represented as inappropriate or 'forbidden' to viewers. Although findings from this study coincides with various other studies in Western Europe and Asia, the social construction of Thailand is found to be heavily embedded in cultural relativism and conservatism, thus, further explaining the ideological nature of the hegemonic male discourse in Thai society. This nature is further emphasized in *Hormones*' (2013), where male homosexuality is perceived as a threat to the male patriarchal order, as oppose to the presence of female homosexuality. In addition to this, when it comes to premarital sex, its negativity is often highlighted around the female figure, as oppose to the male figure. Generally speaking, various discourses are highlighted through the series. Nevertheless, this is done more so on dominant hegemonic discourse of masculinity, as oppose to the marginalization of other sexual minor discourses.

Despite the findings of this research, potential limitations to the research pertain around the small amount of samples for analysis, where a general picture of the Thai series cannot be made. Furthermore, this research's qualitative methodology can only speak for the sociocultural framework and ideologies that is represented throughout the series. Nevertheless, with that being said, the entire production of *Hormones* (2013) should be seen as a 'product' of its culture, where it would limit the research from providing a broader contextual picture of the Thai social context. Moreover, given the nature of this research, which requires translation between Thai and English, chances of inaccuracy and knowledge gaps during translation can contribute as another source of limitation.

For further studies of this research, an in-depth study into Thailand's history and culture would provide an interesting insight and understanding into the nature of *Hormones*' (2013) view towards Thai youth sexual culture. A detailed study into the key areas of gender and sexuality (heterosexuality, homosexuality, sex) should also bring an effective contribution to the overall study. To further extend the research, an examination into the young Thai's response towards *Hormones* (2013) (via online social media) and attitude towards gender and sexuality would further expose the research to other academic areas, as well as bringing in new knowledge and insights to the Thai culture today.

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Changing Practices, Changing Selves

Eberhardt, Nancy
Knox College
USA

Abstract

In this paper, I examine the role of Buddhist meditation and other ascetic practices in the lives of village elders in a rural Shan community in Mae Hong Son province, Thailand. My focus is not on the techniques used but rather on the larger social and cultural context in which the practice occurs. Traditionally, the taking on of ascetic practices by village elders has been associated with moral development and enhanced psychological and emotional well-being. I describe recent changes in these practices, including their differential significance for middle-aged women, and consider the implications of these changes for local understandings of the 'normal' course of human development.

Keywords: Buddhism, meditation, Shan, life span development, gender

Introduction

It is generally accepted by psychologists and others who study human development that both the stages of a person's life and their defining features bear only a tenuous relationship to matters of human biology. "Childhood," as we now understand it, is a relatively recent historical invention; "adolescence" and "middle age" are even newer. And while "old age" seems to be universally recognized, its meaning and social significance have varied markedly from one historical epoch to the next, as well as cross-culturally.

In the midst of this variability, I have long been interested in understanding how any particular community of individuals – especially those who call themselves "Buddhist" – think about and structure their lives. In my ongoing research in a rural Shan community in Mae Hong Son province, I have tried to determine: What, in local terms, counts as a normal life trajectory? How do people understand the changes that occur in any individual life over time? What sorts of changes are considered normal and psychologically healthy, and which are considered unhealthy or even dangerous?

In the course of working on this, I have been particularly struck by the way old age is structured in rural Shan communities. Early on in my fieldwork, it became apparent that the term for "old person" was being used interchangeably with the term "temple sleeper." "Temple sleeper" is the local phrase used to refer to the pious elders found in many Buddhist communities who take on additional austerities on "precept days" during *Vassa*, the three-month rainy season retreat (which began last week). In Shan communities, this usually entails staying overnight at the local temple. Since virtually all older adults in Shan villages eventually take up this practice, the terms for "old person" and "temple sleeper" have become functionally equivalent. I found this remarkable when I first encountered it, knowing that people in many other societies, such as my own, continually struggle to find a synonym for older adults that is not considered

patronizing or downright offensive. Here in Shan villages was a vibrant social institution open to everyone regardless of social rank or privilege, and commanding considerable respect from the rest of the community; it seemed to provide a model of what healthy aging might look like. Hence, I was alarmed when I thought the institution might be under threat.

This occurred during a visit some years ago in 2009, which also took place during the time of the rainy season retreat. As usual, the village elders remained at the temple after the weekly services in order to listen to additional readings of religious texts, practice meditation, and engage in other ascetic practices for the next 24 hours or so. These temple sleepers are generally a pretty quiet group, but this year there was open rebellion in the ranks. One older woman who had been a mainstay at temple activities for many years announced that she was going to “quit” being a temple sleeper due to new practices the village abbot had introduced, and she was being surprisingly vocal about it. Not long after that incident, I learned that a retired village schoolteacher who was now living in Mae Hong Son town had also decided to stop sleeping at her usual temple. In this case, though, it was because she wanted to support a young monk, new to the area, who had established a forest monastery in a rustic spot outside of town. To complicate matters further, I began to realize that a relatively new international meditation center in Mae Hong Son province that I thought catered primarily to foreign tourists was now, in fact, beginning to attract the attention of local Shan villagers as well.

What is going on in these departures from normal practice, and how are they linked to new expectations about the normal course of a life? In this paper, I will explore these changes and raise some issues about how to interpret their significance.¹⁰⁴ But first, a bit of background:

The Changing Socio-Economic Context

Like many parts of rural Thailand, this area has undergone tremendous changes in the span of a single generation. Older villagers with a fourth grade education who grew up without electricity or indoor plumbing now have grandchildren attending college in Chiang Mai and access to the internet. Households that previously relied on subsistence farming and cash crops now have more diverse sources of income, including wage labor and salaried jobs of various kinds. Women’s roles, in particular, have changed dramatically – perhaps more so than men’s – with village women now actively involved in local politics and public life, while still maintaining their traditional responsibilities as the major organizers of local Buddhist festivals and merit making rituals. Inequality has also increased, along with the individualism and aspirational striving it ignites, but the obligation to fulfill the local norms of reciprocity is still keenly felt. This is especially true of village-wide Buddhist festivals and merit making ceremonies, events where sponsors and organizers are forced to rely on the goodwill and volunteer labor of other village households. Meanwhile, improved roads and communication have made trips to Chiang Mai and other parts of Thailand more common than they used to be. This, in turn, has also made it easier for wandering Buddhist monks from other parts of Thailand to find their way out to Mae Hong Son. At the same time, the area’s proximity to the Burmese border has meant a dramatic increase in the number of Shan migrants who move through and often settle in this province, including a large number of monks and novices from the Shan State, who now populate the village temples of Mae Hong Son, often serving as abbots of local monasteries.

How has all this change and movement affected the practice of Buddhism? For most of the 40 years that I

¹⁰⁴ I view this research as still very much in a provisional and exploratory stage, and welcome feedback from readers.

have been studying Shan Buddhist practice, it has been organized around the village as the relevant social unit. That is, when people have been “practicing” Buddhism, they have been doing so, for the most part, not as individuals but as members of a congregation defined by their village. Although there have been differences in people’s levels of observance, most of these have not been idiosyncratic but, rather, have been structured by their relative age, gender, and social class. That is, old people are typically more involved than young people, women are usually more active than men, and wealthy households tend to sponsor more merit making rituals than poor households.

In this context, two of the more prominent features of Shan village Buddhism have been:

(1) regular village-wide rituals organized by major sponsors who shoulder most of the costs but in which every household participates; and (2) the village-wide practice of becoming a temple sleeper in old age – something that, at least until recently, was expected of everyone, regardless of differences in background or individual inclination. Although there is much that could be said about changes occurring in the organization and production of Buddhist ritual, today I want to restrict my comments to changes in the organization and production of ascetic practices, including temple sleeping, and what these might indicate about larger social changes in Shan society.

The Significance of Lay Devotees in the Maintenance and Reproduction of Shan Buddhism

When thinking about the institutions and practices that constitute and help sustain Buddhism, it is tempting to focus one’s attention on the activities of the *sangha* (the community of monks) or on dramatic ritual events, such as the elaborate novice ordinations for which Shan are justifiably famous. But part of the reason Shan Buddhism is as strong as it is, I would suggest, is because of the presence in each village of this sizeable cohort of lay devotees, usually elders, who are engaging in intensified Buddhist practice both during the period of the rainy season retreat and, to a lesser extent, throughout the year. The significance of this group for the maintenance and reproduction of Shan Buddhism (and, more broadly, Shan culture) has not received sufficient attention.

I have argued elsewhere (Eberhardt 2006) that village temple sleeping, viewed as a social institution, is a repository of many of the most valued aspects of Shan culture, a place where individuals dedicate themselves to ideals that are widely embraced by the larger Shan community, even if that larger community is not always able to follow them. These ideals are expressed in Buddhist terms (as locally understood) and include the cultivation of detachment, equanimity, compassion, and generosity. Through their embodiment of these qualities and their participation in other ascetic practices, the temple sleepers constitute an additional “field of merit” for the community and a reliable audience at various ritual events in a way that is understood to benefit the community as a whole, as well as each of them individually. In this respect, a village without temple sleepers – that is, a village without old people – is, in many important ways, an impoverished village.¹⁰⁵

Beyond this, the sorts of insights and emotional control that are thought to be the natural outcome of intensified Buddhist practice are associated with being “good” (in the sense of virtuous) and mentally well balanced (in the sense of being psychologically healthy). Hence, the normal aging process that culminates in the expected temple sleeping is understood as a kind long term moral development that simultaneously produces mental health.

¹⁰⁵ This is, in fact, the case for some urban migrant communities of Shan that consist mostly of young people engaged in various types of hard labor. For these communities bereft of old people, outside help must be sought in order to stage traditional Buddhist merit making events. See Eberhardt (2009) for a description of how this works.

Traditionally, Shan elders have decided for themselves when to commence the practice of temple sleeping but with the understanding that, once one begins, one shouldn't stop. It is treated as a serious commitment. In my interviews with temple sleepers about how they learned the routine, including the necessary prayers, chants and meditation techniques, they described learning not from monks but from other more experienced temple sleepers in a gradual process that began before they actually started sleeping at the temple and continued afterward. Many showed me the handwritten notebooks they used to copy down prayers that others had taught them. Some of these were Shan prayers that they transliterated into Thai.¹⁰⁶ Others, who didn't have the literacy skills to do this, said they simply memorized the prayers and chants they needed to know. All of them learned the meditation technique known locally as *mak nap*, or "counting beads," that uses a string of 108 prayer beads as an aid in concentration.

What has changed?

What happened in 2009 was that the abbot of the local temple (who is originally from the Shan State in Burma) introduced a printed notebook of chants that would become the standard for all temple sleepers to use. Instead of people bringing their own handwritten notebooks and saying whatever chants they had learned, everyone was now expected to recite in unison from the same book.¹⁰⁷

In addition, the abbot introduced more structured *vipassana* meditation sessions, to be done as a group and under his guidance. Instead of the 15 minute sessions of counting beads, done at their own pace and at an intensity of their own discretion, temple sleepers were now expected to spend a considerable amount of time meditating *together*, and for significantly longer periods at a time.¹⁰⁸

As I have already suggested, this new regime was too much for one of the oldest temple sleepers who decided to call it quits. She complained that it was too hard for her to sit in meditation for as long as the abbot was asking. From now on, she declared, she would just do it "at home, the regular way."

Eight days later, at the next service, the lay leader and the abbot gave a little speech to all the assembled temple sleepers aimed at heading off further defections: "You don't have to do everything," they said. "Just give it a try. If you are unable to do something, that's fine. Just do what you can." Later, however, in conversations with temple sleepers, they told me they would be embarrassed not to do what everyone else was doing. If they didn't think they could do it, they would simply stay home.¹⁰⁹

By the time of my next visit in 2014, a few more people *had* quit. According to the local *tsalei* (lay reader),

¹⁰⁶ Since Thai is the language of instruction in the public schools, most Shan born in Thailand are not literate in the Shan script.

¹⁰⁷ Although such booklets have been used in towns and urban areas for some time, they could not have been introduced to this village much earlier than the year the abbot chose; that is because only now is the village seeing a substantial number of temple sleepers who are sufficiently literate in Thai to be able to read them.

¹⁰⁸ Again, *vipassana* meditation had already been part of their routine for some time; I have a temple guidebook for MHS town printed in 1976 that provides instruction for both the prayer beads style and the *vipassana* style of meditation techniques. But learning to do it in a group – and for much longer sessions than in the past – was quite challenging for some temple sleepers.

¹⁰⁹ This is really just a new twist on an old problem. In the past, there would usually come a time when an old person could no longer handle the old style of temple sleeping, too – either because of mobility issues, cognitive impairment, or whatever – and would have to start doing whatever they could at home. What this new regime does is make that day come sooner, at least for those who are not used to it.

there was a further drop in the actual participation rate caused by people simply coming less often.¹¹⁰ It is too early to tell if this is the beginning of a trend but it prompted me to think about what might happen if more people began to drop out. Part of what made the institution of temple sleeping so important in the past, it seems to me, is the fact it was *not* an elite group but one that literally everyone was expected to join. In addition, it was a key part of the traditional cultural nexus that assumed a natural congruence between a person's moral development, the practice of Buddhist meditation and ascetic practices, and the achievement of mental health – all of which was positively associated with old people. If that “package” changes, how will it affect the way people experience (and regard) the process of aging?

The Meditation Retreat Center

Before pursuing that thought any further, I want to turn to the other, countervailing development, the increasing interest in freestanding centers of Buddhist activity that are not village-based temples. These include a range of sites, typically founded by monks from outside the area, whose practice approximates (to varying degrees) the *thudong* or forest tradition. For today, I will focus on just one of these sites, the meditation retreat center *Wat Paa Tham Wua* (or ‘*Wat Tham Wo*’ as the Shan call it). This place has functioned as an international retreat center for about 18 years, and was a meditation site for forest monks before that. The abbot is a Thai monk who has taught himself English from the steady stream of foreign visitors, as well as Shan from his interactions with the people in the surrounding villages.

As we know from Brooke Schedneck's excellent research (2014, 2015), most foreign visitors are looking for meditation centers that are placed in a beautiful natural setting, away from noisy urban areas – places that deemphasize merit making and other ritual aspects of lay Buddhism in favor of sustained instruction and practice in the techniques of Buddhist meditation – and this place fits the bill.

During an earlier trip to Mae Hong Son in 2009, I had briefly visited the meditation center with a group of villagers, but it was treated as more of a *thiaw* or “pleasure trip” than anything else. On that occasion, the only meditators who appeared to be staying there were foreigners, and the only Thai people I saw were a small group of bankers from town who had come to ask the abbot if he would like to open a bank account at the Mae Hong Son branch of Bangkok Bank. We made our offering, chatted with the abbot, and then headed on to the next stop on our excursion. At that point, the only Shan villagers I had heard of who had actually stayed to meditate at *Wat Tham Wua* were recent migrants from the Shan State in Burma. Instead, locals seemed to be treating it the way they treated other sites that had attracted monks from the forest tradition; that is, they made sure the monks had food on a daily basis and then showed up *en masse* with more elaborate offerings on special Buddhist holidays, but they normally did not spend the night, and showed little interest in studying their meditation techniques.

By the time of my 2014 visit, however, this situation had changed. References to the meditation center (and to other similar venues) came up more frequently in everyday conversation, and many more people said they had spent at least a night there, practicing meditation. In contrast to the growing disaffection for temple sleeping among at least some members of the older generation, then, there seemed to be increasing enthusiasm for this new option – a short stay at a meditation retreat. This was especially true among middle-aged women – that is, those without young children but who had not yet commenced temple sleeping.

¹¹⁰ During the three months of rainy season retreat, there are about 12 precept days. Some people, he said, attend only 5 or 6 times – at the beginning and end, and at the full moon days in between. However, it's not clear if this is really a new development related to the abbot's new regime.

How are we to interpret this? One possibility would be to view it as caused by the same constellation of factors that, according to some scholars (e.g., Jordt 2007; Cook 2010; Swearer 2010), have made meditation centers popular with urban Buddhists, namely, a growing dissatisfaction with a scandal-ridden sangha coupled with a desire for a modernist approach to Buddhism that gives relatively more emphasis to rational explanations and individual self-improvement and relatively less emphasis to what they now perceive as non-Buddhist supernaturalism and excessive ritual. However, a visit to the meditation center with Shan villagers quickly cast doubt on that interpretation.

This visit was prompted by an invitation from a woman who I will call Nang Kaew. Nang Kaew had visited the meditation center once before and was eager to go again. However, she didn't want to go by herself because, she explained, she was "afraid of spirits" – that is, afraid to sleep alone in the small, one-room dwellings (*kuti*) provided for meditators. After I agreed and others learned that we were planning to go, several women in the village expressed an interest in going with us, and many more told me about their own visits to the place. We set a date, gathered the necessary supplies and offering materials, and listened to other people's testimonials about their own experience at the meditation center. "It made me feel content," one woman said. "It's a good place," said another, "it makes your heart feel happy."

On the day before our trip, however, Nang Kaew consulted a Shan astrological calendar and realized we had chosen an inauspicious day for our departure – it was a day when the head of the subterranean *phi long* or "Great Naga" would be pointed directly at our path. Fearing calamity if we persisted with that plan, Nang Kaew called the other two women who were planning to join us and they agreed to delay our departure. The day we finally chose was a "precept day" on the Buddhist calendar (*wan sin* in Shan) and we left the village very early in the morning so as to arrive in time for temple services. After some initial confusion upon our arrival – as we dashed about, trying to find the preaching hall – we eventually learned that, unlike a village monastery, the meditation center does not mark these days with any special services for the laity, something my companions were apparently not aware of.

When we eventually joined the group of meditators for the first morning session, it quickly became apparent that the three women I accompanied constituted the only Shan party there, even though this meditation center is in a province dominated by Shan villages, including one nearby that provides much of the labor for cooking the meals and maintaining the beautiful grounds and buildings. There were four Thai meditators, but the rest of the approximately 55 guests were Europeans and North Americans. In line with this, the language of instruction for the first morning we were there was entirely in English, as were the explanatory booklets placed in front of each of us that provided transliterations of Pali chants into English. When I commented on this to my friends, and asked if it had been like this during their previous visits, they said that sometimes there were booklets in Thai available and, indeed, by the time of our afternoon meditation sessions, the Thai language booklets had magically appeared, along with some verbal instruction in Thai added after the English. But this was clearly an afterthought, an accommodation to the villagers' presence at a place that was not designed with them in mind.

None of this seemed to bother my Shan friends, though, who joined in the routine of the other meditators and, for the most part, did everything the same as the others. There were a few exceptions, however, that I think are revealing.

Unlike the international guests, the Shan party viewed this site as primarily an opportunity to make merit. With that in mind, they had brought their own set of food offerings to give to the monks when we arrived, as well as a separate set of offerings to place before a large Buddha image in one of the halls the following morning.

Before retiring for the night in our sleeping room, the Shan women also acknowledged the presence of

potentially troublesome place spirits by lighting candles and incense for them outside the building and reciting a short invocation, asking for their protection and permission to stay – a performance that garnered curious stares from the international meditators who happened upon it.

There were many other noticeable differences in style and sensibility that I do not have time to comment on here, but the overall point I want to make is that the villagers took this trip to a very modern meditation center and somehow managed to recast it into a context redolent with traditional concerns and practices. They treated the experience not as a “new” way of practicing Buddhism but, rather, as yet another site where they could do what they have always done at village temples – make merit and practice meditation – though perhaps in a more intense way. Unlike the other guests, who took on the role of “students” and who regarded the monks as “teachers,” the villagers adopted their normal role of lay donors and followers, and regarded the meditation-teaching monks as especially worthy “fields of merit.” In so doing, they successfully assimilated the meditation center into their pre-existing understandings of Buddhist practice. What *is* new about this, however, is: (1) the fact that the people involved are younger than one would expect, given that the practice of meditation has traditionally been reserved for older people; and (2) that they are not performing these actions at their “home” temple but are, instead, choosing to travel to a place that they regard as special or exemplary in some way.¹¹¹ In addition, unlike some pilgrimages to other Buddhist sites I have witnessed in the past, where a small group of people has gone and made offerings *as representatives of the village*, these women were making these trips *as individuals*, for their own purposes, and at their own discretion. It is the uptick in these sorts of self-initiated religious excursions that strikes me as new.

How are these two Developments in Buddhist Practice Connected?

At first I was worried that the “higher bar” being set for temple sleepers by the abbot would result in the end of temple sleeping as a village institution. That may yet happen but, at the moment, it appears to be surviving¹¹², perhaps as part of a larger generational shift in Buddhist practice. That is, although the oldest temple sleepers may struggle with the new routine, those in their 50s and 60s seem to be accepting the abbot’s innovations, and the growing interest in places like the meditation retreat center bodes well for a new generation of temple sleepers who are already familiar with this style of practice and who have embraced it for their own reasons.

Although some of the people who visited the meditation center and other similar sites were older women who were already temple sleepers, most were middle-aged women who had not yet started. When I asked them if they planned to join the group of temple sleepers in their village when they were older, they all said “yes” (though some answered more readily than others). “But this is different,” one of them added. “Once you start sleeping at the temple, it’s best not to stop.”¹¹³ These meditation centers are set up so that you can do it for short periods at a time,” she explained, “whenever you feel like it.”

The question that remains is why this generation of women would “feel like it” at all, when previous generations were content to simply wait until they were old enough to join the ranks of the village elders.

¹¹¹ In addition to the meditation center, there are other several other places outside of residential areas that are also attracting followers.

¹¹² I visited the village just before this conference (July 2017) and was there for the beginning of *Vassa*, so I can attest to the continued strength of the custom at this time.

¹¹³ For “stop,” she used the word *‘thak’* which could be translated as “defrock” – it’s the same word one would use when referring to leaving the *sangha*.

Clearly, they do not want to wait that long; nor do they want to commit prematurely to the more sustained ascetic demands of temple sleeping. What they want, it appears, is a temporary respite from the demands of everyday life.

This strikes me as a significant departure from the attitudes and concerns of previous generations of women their age, most of whom did not engage in any sort of meditation practice. Instead, they focused their religious energies almost exclusively on organizing and sponsoring merit making ceremonies – the size and frequency of which reflected and helped sustain their own social and economic status.

The current generation of women has not abandoned this pursuit, but it no longer seems to be sufficient. In addition to the clear desire to make merit, which they talk about repeatedly, they also speak glowingly of how being at the meditation center makes them *feel* – it makes them “content,” it makes them “forget about everything else,” it makes them “never want to leave.”¹¹⁴ These emotions are important, I think, and symptomatic of other important changes in their lives.

Here it might be useful to consider the work of those who study life span development for help in identifying the range of factors that can affect a person’s experience at different points in the life cycle. Many have pointed out that there is no single, universal model for “middle age” (e.g., Plath 1980; Kerns and Brown 1992; Shweder 1998; Lamb 2000). Its significance is culturally mediated and can take on a wide variety of valences. In addition, rather than being linked to chronological age, it is more often yoked to significant changes in the lives of other family members, especially one’s parents or children (Weisner and Bernheimer 1998).¹¹⁵ Finally, even within a given community with largely shared cultural values, historical and demographic factors can translate into very different experiences of midlife and old age. In a series of articles devoted to the U.S. “baby boomer” generation (Whitbourne and Willis 2006), for example, psychologists found important cohort distinctions in the subjective experience of midlife for those involved.

Something similar may be true for the cohort of rural Shan who reached midlife in the past two decades. As I alluded to earlier, this generation of villagers has experienced tremendous social, economic, and political changes over the course of their own lifetimes. Although the resulting mix of new challenges and opportunities has affected every household to some degree, it is my sense that those in the middle strata are currently being impacted rather more than the very wealthy (whose adjustments were made in a previous generation) or the very poor (who have few options, in any case). And within these middle strata households, it appears to be the middle-aged women – the ones who often function as the organizers of their extended families and the effective managers of their household livelihood strategies – who are being affected most dramatically.

Freed from the demands of caring for young children and, increasingly, no longer participating in agricultural exchange labor¹¹⁶, many are engaged in a combination of income-generating side ventures, village and *tambon* level political positions, and some surprisingly demanding clubs and voluntary

¹¹⁴ In her study of middle class aspirations in Bangkok, Sophornvay Vorng (2010) found similar reactions being expressed by the businesswomen who frequented expensive meditation retreats and workshops, as well as by the less well-off office workers who simply stopped in for a moment of quiet meditation at a downtown temple before heading off to work.

¹¹⁵ So, for example, in some societies, one might be considered “middle aged” when one’s parents retire, or when the last of one’s children has entered adolescence.

¹¹⁶ This is a longer story than I have space to tell here but, essentially, due to a combination of available migrant agricultural laborers and changes in the overall place of agricultural income in the household economy, native born middle-aged women in Mae Hong Son are spending less time engaged in agricultural labor than previous generations (Eberhardt 2007).

associations. They are also “on the go” a lot more than in the past – traveling back and forth to town more frequently, going on work-related group excursions with their co-workers, and making various trips around the region to visit family members who are working or attending school in another province.

At the same time, they are often tasked with juggling the competing demands of family members for a host of formerly optional expenses that have now become the new necessities – school fees, city-appropriate clothing, wages for hired agricultural help, money and petrol for a vehicle, computers and internet access, and so on. If, in the past, the stated goal for most households was to have “enough to eat, and enough to offer,” now there is pressure to keep up with the quickly shifting local standards of living and stay “up to date.”

In this regard, their situation is not unlike that of the rural-to-urban migrants whose economic predicament has been described so movingly by Andrew Johnson (2012), or the urban working class women in northeast Thailand whose religiosity has been insightfully analyzed by Pattana Kitiarsa (2005a, 2005b). For a host of reasons, everyday life has become more complicated, more hectic, and ultimately more stressful for all of these women.¹¹⁷

However, in a way that may be unique to this cohort, rural women of this particular generation are combining these new worries with more traditional obligations that stem from their ongoing commitment to the norms of village reciprocity. Unlike their mothers and grandmothers, who did not worry about staying up to date with the latest national trends in lifestyle and personal consumption, and unlike their daughters and granddaughters, who are more mobile and therefore less encumbered by local networks of ritual obligation, the middle-aged women I spoke with were deeply entangled in *both* sets of concerns. They worried about it all, displaying a particular kind of stress that I came to refer to in my fieldnotes as “the squeeze” – that is, the subjective experience that results from a commitment to conflicting but equally important priorities. This is a generation that tries to maintain (and is often judged by) communitarian values while living in an age of individual striving.

One consequence of all this may be a shift in both the timing of “old age” and its relationship to being “middle age.” Even before the abbot introduced more rigorous meditation techniques at the local temple, some people were talking about the need to postpone their entry into the status of temple sleeper until after their children had finished school, or after the truck was paid off, or the new house built. Renunciation would have to wait until their new family responsibilities had been met. But this postponement creates its own anxieties. Several middle-aged women confessed to being worried that they wouldn’t be able to be a temple sleeper for long enough to ensure a good rebirth, that they wouldn’t have time to make enough merit before they died.

It is not hard to imagine why women in this predicament would find a trip to the meditation center appealing, even as they expressed some doubt as to when they would ever be in a position to take up temple sleeping in the fully committed way of a traditional village elder. “Right now, too many bills to pay, too much to do,” they told me. In the meantime, they will have to be content with the occasional temporary reprieve, and I will have to be content to wait and see if the social institution of temple sleeping can survive not only the abbot’s innovations but also the more formidable pressures of modern life itself.

¹¹⁷ This is not to say that the men in these households are not also feeling the pinch but, for whatever reasons, they do not seem to be reacting in the same way. Some men are responding to the economic pressure by taking on new, riskier moneymaking adventures, a strategy which may channel their religious practices more toward obtaining amulets and other sorts of power-seeking of the sort described by Craig Reynolds (this panel), rather than a stint at the meditation center. In some cases, unfortunately, it has also led to alcohol abuse.

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Conceptualizing Yoga As A Complementary Therapeutic Tool in Healing Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) In Thailand

Felix, Mark Stephan

Department of Society and Health, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities
Mahidol University
Thailand

Abstract

Thailand is a transit point for children trafficked for sexual purposes from Lao PDR, China, Cambodia and Myanmar as well as is a supplier of children who are victimized sexually. Yoga, in past academic literature, proved to be efficacious as a complementary treatment of depression, anxiety disorders and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – outcomes common among victims of child sexual abuse. Based on these past findings, this concept paper proposes re-conceptualizing Yoga as a complementary therapeutic tool for managing the trauma of children victimized by sexual abuse. Yoga is conceptualized as a combination of *Asana* (postures), *Pranayama* (breathing) and *Dhyana* (meditation) and acts in a complementary capacity to counseling and appropriate medication for child victims of sexual abuse. In this conceptualization, Yoga is utilized as a tool that can facilitate the healing process as well as being utilized as a behavior management tool of victims of child sexual abuse.

This conceptualization is rooted in the concepts of health social science, where the focus is neither on the biological/virology aspect nor the public health aspect of an illness. Rather, the focus is on the human aspect of providing tools to manage and combat the source or outcomes of illness and disease by understanding the. It is in this perspective that Yoga as a therapeutic tool for healing child victims of sexual abuse will be proposed, and within the appropriate context, studied, researched and applied as a healing tool in the future. It is the hope of the author to add Yoga as a therapeutic tool to the available indigenous therapies in Thailand.

Keywords: Yoga, child sexual abuse, complementary therapy

Introduction

Complementary, indigenous and traditional forms of healing have been used widely within the cultural contexts of the Southeast Asian region. Thailand has its own stable of traditional healing (Chokevivat, 2005) that is in line with the late HM King Bhumibhol Adulyadej's (Bhumibhol Adulyadej, 1999) view of preserving the Kingdom's heritage of cultural treasures. Within this view of traditional healing, and in the present millennium, Yoga has gained popularity with the younger generation for fitness and well-being. However, this paper raises the question if Yoga can be used as more than as a tool for fitness and well-being? Could Yoga perhaps be a complementary therapy to heal survivors of the trauma of sexual abuse, specifically children who have suffered sexual abuse? This concept paper maps out a brief overview

of Yoga, the positive empirical findings of Yoga as well as the negative empirical findings of Yoga in the extant literature on the subject, looks at the use of Yoga as a complementary tool for healing from trauma, the outcomes of use of Yoga as complementary therapy, the trauma of sexual abuse on children and then specifically but briefly at the situation of child abuse in Thailand. This concept paper then raises questions that focus on the potentiality of using Yoga as a complementary therapeutic tool for children who have been victims of sexual abuse in the Kingdom.

Thailand at Present

A brief review of the English Language literature on sexual violence and sexuality in Thailand shows that focus has been given mainly to linkage between sexual abuse and addictive behaviors (e.g., Draucker & Mazurczyk, 2013), sexual health education (e.g., Sommart & Sota, 2013), specific sexual minorities (e.g., Patel et al., 2013) and risky sexual behavior among youth (e.g. Ruangkanchanasetr, Plotponkarnpim, Hetrakul, & Kongsakon, 2005). While this is not an extensive list, it does identify the general direction that the English Language literature has taken in Thailand. However, there is evidence of CSA documented by non-governmental organizations (NGO).

ECPAT (n.d.) and ECPAT (2011) both note that users of children for sexual gratification in Thailand include local men and visitors to the country. The NGO has noted that it is estimated that between 30,000 to 40,000 children below the age of 18 are exploited for sex work in Thailand. Children are often from Lao, China, Myanmar and Cambodia. Factors that make children vulnerable include poverty being coerced by family people, having a sense of filial duty to the family and being from marginalized groups such as the indigenous hill tribes. The offenders include wealthy tourists and foreign sex offenders. The issue of trafficking children for sexual gratification is large because Thailand continues to be a source as well as a transit point for the trafficking of children for sexual abuse, and while steps have been taken to protect Thai children, trafficked children who are non-Thai receive few protections. Although Thailand is actively involved in national, regional and international efforts against human trafficking but limited attention is given to child trafficking. However, child prostitution is treated as a criminal offence and is punishable by law, whether in terms of engaging a child for sexual acts or for procurement.

Sexual Abuse

Based on a study done in Kenya, Mwangi et al. (2015) assert that sexual abuse among young people (13 – 17 years of age) took two main forms – unwanted sexual touching (UST) and unwanted attempted sex (UAS). Gokten and Duman (2016) found that in female children, sexual abuse took the form of sexual touching, while in male children the type of sexual abuse that most commonly happened was anal penetration. Zhao et al. (2011) state that children from marginalized populations were more prone to child sexual abuse (CSA) and it has to be noted that CSA can be physical (touching, sexual acts) as well as non-physical such as being shown pornographic materials and being sexually harassed.

The perpetrators of CSA are often known to the victims such as close friends, relatives, friends of the family or neighbors (Mwangi et al., 2015) and could be male or female (Gokten & Duman, 2016; Timmerman & Schreuder, 2014). The perpetrators are often classified as pedophiles (Tozdan & Briken, 2015) but can also be intimate partners, co-residents in residential care and family members (Mwangi et al., 2015; Timmerman & Schreuder, 2014). Perpetrators of CSA engage in sexual abuse of children based on four main criteria. First, are formative factors (having had sexual acts perpetrated on them, social isolation due to restrictive parents or constant moving; abandonment and physical neglect; physical abuse by an adult; bullying or any form of emotional abuse); second is assimilation of formative factors (it is

suggested that childhood experiences may shape how they perceive, experience and interpret the world, in other words by assimilating sexual atmospheres and experience an individual may write a life script in which sexuality attached to children is developed. These included maladaptive perceptions (see themselves as weak, inferior and having low self-esteem), and activation of sexuality at an early age with the presence of pornography; third is the formulation of life theories (selfishness ingrained in self-entitlement e.g. being able to do as he pleased without sanction), malicious life theories where vengeance or other destructive behaviors towards others was experienced as pleasure, distorted life theories where self-superiority did not allow the individual to see that their behavior harmed others, entitlement theory due to inferiority or low self-esteem the individuals were unable to form social relationships, deceptive behavior and the development of controlling behaviors; and fourth motivation to engage in sex with children (sexual interest in children, personal affirmation during molestation that makes the perpetrator feel loved, enjoyment of power and control over the children) (Sullivan & Sheehan, 2016). There are several outcomes of CSA that leave a negative mark on the victims. Often, victims of CSA experience psychiatric disorders (Mwangi et al., 2015). They may also internalize their problems (Lewis, McElroy, Harlaar, Runyan, 2016) or leave themselves open to continued sexual abuse (Timmerman & Schreuder, 2014). Victims also exhibited behavioral problems, trauma symptoms, poorer quality of life, lower social functioning but higher school functioning (Zhao et al., 2011).

A Brief Overview of Yoga Practice

Yoga has a long and detailed journey that is centered around the subcontinent of India. However, for the sake of this research, what is noted are the various limbs of Yoga that contribute specifically to physical and mental well-being, while the spiritual aspects for most part are glossed over. Govindaraj, Karmani, Varambally and Gangadhar (2016), Khanna and Greeson (2013) and Varambally and Gangadhar (2012) give deep descriptions of the eight limbs of Yoga and their connection to the neuro, skeletal, muscular, lymphatic and psychological organs. These authors explain that Yoga is made out of eight limbs, namely *Yama* (ethical disciplines), *Niyamas* (individual observance), *Asana* (posture), *Pranayama* (breath control), *Pratyahara* (withdrawal of the senses), *Dharana* (concentration), *Dhyana* (meditation) and *Samadhi* (self-realization and enlightenment).

Gordon (2013) notes that Yoga is centered on mindfulness and states that the practice of Yoga has three stages: the first stage is one of mindfulness where thoughts are gathered into one specific point of focus; the second stage is where this point of focus is turned inwards and the person practicing Yoga becomes conscious of the present; and the third stage is where the practitioner is completely immersed in the practice and is deeply mentally involved. What is of special note is that it is the breathing that accompanies any Yoga practice that allows the practitioner to pull their mind from straying thoughts back to a center of being present and mindful. The author asserts that it is breathing that brings the practice of Yoga into its fullest physical function by allowing the practitioner to focus on the intention set for the Yoga practice. It is a practice that can be personalized to individual needs (Cramer, Lauche, Longhorst & Dobos, 2016).

Khanna and Greeson (2013) specifically state that mindfulness with the specific practice of Hatha Yoga may assist in the treatment of addiction and Liem (2011) stated that Pranayama may have the same medical effects as osteopathy. Riley and Park (2015) further explain the mechanics of Yoga reduces stress, including psychological mechanisms, biological mechanisms, automatic nervous system mechanism (impact on systolic and diastolic blood pressure, heart rate and heart pressure product), and inflammatory and endocrine responses (plasma cortisol and inflammation). However, this is not the focus of this concept paper, but rather healing from trauma, and as such (as further review of the literature will later show), that

it is specifically *Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Dharana* and *Dhyana* that potentially may assist in healing from trauma.

Before the idea of conceptualizing and reconceptualizing Yoga can be broached, the question that does arise is if Yoga can be studied from a scientific standpoint? True, while Yoga has ancient texts to back up its assertions, would Yoga be able to be studied in the contemporary world? George Salem, PhD; Associate Professor, Division of Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy, University of Southern California and Karen Sherman, Ph.D., M.P.H., Senior Scientific Investigator, Group Health Research Institute have found that Yoga movement can indeed be studied through focusing on the movement (kinesiology) of Yoga as well as how it may aid in the treatment of specific ailments such as lower back pain. This assertion shows that Yoga can be studied empirically and has a firm foundation in science in terms of the physical aspects. This suggests that Yoga can, and should be studied more, and possibly as more than just physical exercise (US Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Health & National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine).

Yoga in Healing: Biological, Physical, Mental/Emotional

The literature is replete with findings that support the positive impact that the practice of Yoga brings to the aspect of healing people. This portion of the manuscript will be divided into three subsections: healing from a biological perspective, healing from a physical perspective, and healing from a mental/emotional perspective. This route was taken in this manuscript, even though trauma has mainly physical and mental/emotional components to show the validity of Yoga as a potential complementary tool for healing trauma.

Biological

The literature reviewed showed that the regular practice of Yoga could bring changes to the biological and physiological condition of practitioners. For example, arterial stiffness is an independent and strong indicator of cardio vascular morbidity and mortality. Regular Yoga practice that combined *Asana*, *Pranayama* and *Dhyana* lowered the hardening of arterial wall stiffness in adults who had good bodily function better than regular brisk walking did (Patil, Aithala & Das, 2015). Regular Yoga practice also moved the body to utilize the parasympathetic nervous system instead of the sympathetic nervous system and bettered the biological cardio pulmonary process (Ross & Thomas, 2010). There was also evidence found that regular Yoga practice could assist dislipidemic functioning, lower a person's body mass index (BMI) and reduce micro-vascular complications (Hegde, Adhikari, Shetty, Manjrekar & D'Souza, 2013; Shantakumari, Sequira & El Deeb, 2013). Also reported were greater reduction of fasting glucose level (Kanaya et al., 2014), lowered aphasia (Mohapatra, Marshall & Laures-Gore, 2014) and better post-stroke bodily control and function (Lynton, Kligler & Shiflett, 2007).

Cell biologist Dr. Bruce Lipton stated that Yoga as a science has yet to be fully understood by western thought, that in fact it remains a mystery to much of the western hemisphere. This mystery is tinged by the esoterica surrounding Yoga and also the pop culture that pervades the practice through the commercialization of it in the physical fitness industry. However, he does state categorically, that at the level of cell biology, Yoga is able to actually enhance the functioning of the human body at the cellular level. Yoga is also able to enhance healing at the cellular level, although these assertions of Dr. Lipton have yet to be fully understood by western science. What does remain then are the reports and empirical evidence of the scholars in the preceding paragraph, and this stands as testament for the possible and potential research in the future on the subject.

Physical

The physical aspects of Yoga found in the literature leaned more towards the physical benefits of Yoga in terms of healing, pain management, disease management and energy levels. Ross, Friedmann, Bevans and Thomas (2013) found that individuals who practiced Yoga enjoyed a higher level of health, happiness, energy levels, improved sleep, interpersonal relationships, healthy weight, all after beginning a Yoga practice and adding more days of Yoga practice to their regimens; while findings by Ross (2010) point out that Yoga assisted in management of diabetes, menopause and insulin levels.

Yoga also assisted in pain management for chronic lower back pain (Keosaian et al, 2016; Tekur, Nagarathna, Chametcha, Hankey & Nagendra, 2012; Teut, Knili, Daus, Roll & Witt, 2016). Decreased bodily pain (Yagli & Ulger, 2015), increased glucose tolerance (Hunter et al., 2013) and better diabetes II management (Kumar et al., 2013) are outcomes of regular Yoga practice. Schmid, Miller, Van Pumbroek and DeBaun-Spague (2014) pointed out that regular Yoga practice builds muscle, creates better pain management, hip flexion and upper-extremity strength. In general, it can be said, based on the proof of these findings that Yoga brings good physical benefits.

Mental

As noted in the brief introduction to Yoga, there is a mind-body connection in the regular practice of Yoga. For those who are ill, the regular practice of Yoga was found to offer a route to alter a negative perception to a positive perspective of the illness as well as creating functional wellbeing in cancer survivors (Archer, Phillips, Montague, Bali & Sowter, 2015; Levine & Balk, 2012). Yoga also paved the way for more acceptance of an illness (Keosaian et al., 2016), management of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Rhodes, 2015), better management of depression (Gaswinkler & Unterrainer, 2016; Schuver & Lewis, 2016; Sharma, Barrett, Cucchiara, Gooneratne & Thase, 2016) and management of anxiety disorders and pathopsychology in schizophrenia (Varambally & Gangadhar, 2012).

Overall, the practice of Yoga can create eudaimonic (meaning of life) meaning for and higher levels of gratitude in practitioners (Iftzan & Papantoniou, 2014). Although there are social reasons for partaking of a Yoga practice that brings also good mental benefits (Kanaya et al., 2014) and higher quality of life to practitioners (Buttner, Brock, O'Hara, & Stuart, 2015).

Views of Yoga Practitioners and Scientific Scholars

Sat Bir Khalsa, Assistant Professor of Medicine of Harvard University in the USA is a Yoga practitioner aside from being an academic who practices and teaches western forms of medicine. He clearly states that Yoga assists with ".....self regulation. The ability to control our internal stress response, our internal emotional response. This is reflected as resilience and equanimity in the face of stress and this leads to psychological efficacy.....the cultivation of mind-body connection (through yoga) leads to mindfulness that can change behaviors in a positive way". The idea behind this sharing by Professor Khalsa is that Yoga, through constant and consistent practice may aid the individual to manage responses ignited by external or environmental factors. The physical practice of Yoga leads to a better connection with the self, by harmonizing the reaction of the body to cognitive impulse as well as managing cognitive impulse through control of the body. The outcome of the practice of Yoga for an individual then is being able to mindfully manage situations that the individual finds adverse (Jordan et al., 2016).

On a more scientific level, Yoga has shown to have a deep impact on the psychology of a person, for example in the case of social anxiety disorders where individuals suffer from such disorders are able to better manage themselves. Michael de Manicore, a psychologist at The Yoga Institute, stated categorically

that “.....research on social anxiety disorders showed a reduction of 33% of symptoms of social anxiety disorders between the experimental group and the control group....there was a significant reduction in scores for anxiety and overall psychological distress, an increase in the score for resilience, increase in the frequency of positive experiences and a reduction in the frequency of negative experiences.....the overall implication is that if people (are engaged in) activity (for as little as 12 minutes a day) that includes movement, breathing, mindful attention and relaxation (all found in Yoga), that they are better able to manage their conditions” (Jordan et al., 2016). This assertion suggests that Yoga is efficacious in managing symptoms of social anxiety disorder, a common by-product of CSA. Psychological distress from CSA, it is also suggested, can be better managed; resilience of survivors of CSA is increased thus leading to better quality of life, which then suggests a connection to making an orchestrated effort to view life more positively and less from the standpoint of having a martyr complex or playing the psychological role of the victim.

Breathing (or *Pranayama* as previously mentioned) is a core part of Yoga. Based on feedback from Dr. Mithu Storoni who is a Neuro Ophthalmologist, breathing is “..... the most powerful tool that everyone has within their reach to bring their stress response right under their control. Studies on *Pranayama* show that by lessening the number of breaths in a minute, blood pressure may be lowered; focusing of the mind can affect the sympathetic nervous system and this impacts the parasympathetic nervous system to manage breathing and therefore stress better”. The indication given by Dr. Storoni is that through the practice of *Pranayama* in Yoga, an individual may control their stress response better. Stress, a common condition found among victims of CSA, could then be better managed through the practice of Yoga. Additionally, breathing brings the mind into focus, creating yet another avenue for victims of CSA to take personal control of their stress responses, and becoming more aware and mindful of their immediate reaction to external stimuli that may trigger negative responses from them. This awareness and control of how to manage a stress response would be helpful to victims of CSA (Jordan et al., 2016).

Detractors

The literature reviewed also found that scholars contradicted the findings above. For example, Discipio (2016) asserts that it is not the practice of Yoga that brings positive benefits, but rather the cultural context in which Yoga is practiced. In other words, it is in a cultural context where Yoga is accepted and seen as bringing positive benefits that there is a positive outcome. If another cultural context accepted Reiki for example, it is Reiki and not Yoga that will bring positive benefits. Lauche, Langhorst, Lee, Dobos & Cramer (2016) found that there was no strong correlation between Yoga and weight loss for obese persons and Lindahl, Tilton, Eikholt and Ferguson-Stegall, (2016) stated that their findings showed that the practice of Yoga had no effect on blood pressure readings and no statistical significance in physical functioning. Yoga was also neither found to reduce cortisol in the body nor to have any significant impact on the nervous system of practitioners based on findings by Pascoe and Bauer (2016).

Yoga, Trauma and Outcomes

Despite the detracting facts regarding Yoga practice and its benefits stated in the previous section, there is evidence to show that the reach of the benefits of Yoga can be used in terms of practical application for healing individuals who have experienced severe trauma. Descilo et al. (2010) conducted a study on the use of Yoga for managing trauma among victims of the 2004 tsunami and found that Yoga breath intervention worked well with traumatic reduction exposure techniques in lowering scores of symptoms associated with PTSD and depression as well as increasing the overall health of the survivors.

Trauma comes in various aspects and work by Carter et al. (2013) showed that Yoga may be used as a complementary therapy for veterans who experience PTSD. The cohort of the study was veterans who experienced recurrent horror, helplessness, recurrent and intrusive recollections of the event, recurrent distressing dreams of the traumatic event and the feeling like the event was recurring (including re-enactment of the event). After the use of Yoga as a complementary therapy, the respondents found that they were better able to manage their PTSD. Cohen, Mannarino, Kliethermes and Murray (2012) noted that Yoga could be used in managing trauma by children who faced cognitive-behavioral challenges that included behavioral regulation. The study also found that the use of Yoga as a complementary therapy allowed youth to manage their behavior when engaging with members of the sex who perpetrated the trauma they experienced. Work by Hoffman et al. (2015) that Yoga can be used alongside cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) to manage general anxiety disorder caused by trauma.

Stress due to trauma may be managed through the practice of Yoga. In a study done among youth who reported "stress" due to anger, Dariotis et al. (2016), the practice of *Pranayama* contributed positively to impulse control, reduced negative behavioral reactions, refocusing attention to more prosocial behaviors, and higher rates of emotional regulation through cognitive control (realizing the explosiveness of the situation and moving away physically from the situation). In such a high tension situations induced by trauma, work by Mitchell et al. (2014) showed that regular Yoga practice could be used as an intervention tool to manage PTSD as well as managing triggers of trauma and traumatic stress symptoms (Rhodes, 2015). Overall, it would see that regular practice of Yoga contributed positively to better neurological functioning, management of psychiatric symptoms, disconnection from physical feelings associated with emotional reactions to past assault and overall self-management (van der Kolk et al, 2014).

The literature thus far strongly suggests that there is a strong connection between the practice of Yoga and the management of trauma. This signals the possibility that Yoga may create positive outcomes for victims of sexual abuse in terms of being a complementary therapy tool. While specific conditions need to be met in such a case, what is encouraging is that findings by Spinazzola, Rhodes, Emerson, Earle and Monroe (2011) bear out this possibility. It is essential then at this point to look deeper into the issue of sexual abuse as trauma and begin formulating a conceptual framework for the use of Yoga as a complementary tool for therapy of victims of sexual abuse.

Specific Aspects of Asana, Pranayama and Dhyana as Complementary Therapy

In conceptualizing Yoga as a complementary tool, it is important to note that Yoga is not merely a form of exercise. Rather it is a tool of creating mind/body connection that would put child victims of sexual abuse in touch with the reality of the sexual abuse; that it has the capacity to calm the mind; that it has the ability to create tools for managing anxiety due to being a victim of sexual abuse. Therefore, this section of the concept paper focuses on the specific Yoga practices that act as therapy for stress, anxiety and depression. The following set of *Asana* for managing trauma, stress and anxiety have been put forward by Freedman et al. (2005):

- *Adho Mukha Svanasana*
- *Adho Mukha Virasana*
- *Ardha Halasana*
- *Janusirasana*
- *Matsyasana*
- *Pascimottanasana*

- *Prasarita Padottasana*
- *Salamba Sarvangasana*
- *Sarvangasana*
- *Setu Bandha Sarvangasana*
- *Supta Baddhakonasana*
- *Supta Virasana*
- *Savasana*
- *Ustrasana*
- *Uttanasana I.*
- *Viparita Karani*
- *Virasana*

When practicing any of these *Asanas*, *Pranayama* is necessary. The basic premise of *Pranayama* is the control of breath to slow down the inhalation process and lengthen the exhalation process. This practice of breathing creates relaxation in the nervous system. Two types of breathing are recommended:

- *Viloma*, where the practitioner focuses on the muscles that are involved in the breathing process.
- *Anulom Viloma*, where breathing as per Viloma is practiced but inhalation and exhalation is done through alternating nostrils.

In terms of practicing *Pranayama*, Freedman et al. (2005) strongly urge practitioners to follow the following guidelines to maximize the therapeutic effects of the *Asanas*:

- Whether seated, kneeling, standing or lying down, the spine should be kept as stretched as possible to facilitate the expansion of the lungs and diaphragm.
- The breastplate should be lifted to also facilitate the work of the lungs.
- Inhalation and exhalation should be done only through the nostrils and never through the mouth.
- Breathing should be done slowly, and should breathlessness happen, revert to a normal breathing pace and when the nervous system has relaxed then resume *Pranayama*.

Ramacharaka (2005) asserts that if a serious practitioner of Yoga wants to create a healthy mind and body connection, there is much more to the breathing process than what is described above by Freedman et al. (2005). It becomes a necessity to practice breathing only through the nostrils and not through the mouth as the nasal passages are naturally fitted with a biological filtration device that cleanses the air and fills the body with more quality oxygen as opposed to mouth breathing. There is a specific type of breathing referred to Ramacharaka (2005) as Yogic Breathing, and it encapsulates high breathing (shallow breathing that only fills up the upper part of the lungs); mid breathing (shallow breathing that only fills up the middle part of the lungs); and low breathing (shallow breathing that only fills up the lower part of the lungs) – all into one to fully fill the lungs with oxygen. There are also other *Pranayama* practices advocated by Ramacharaka to cleanse and revitalize the body so that it may meet the purpose of housing a mind that is able to deal with trauma effectively.

Within the practice of *Asana* and *Pranayama*, focus of the mind becomes a natural outcome. It is in this focus of the mind that a person who has experienced trauma may begin to confront the anxiety, depression and behavioral impulses that are a result of the trauma. Although Freedman et al. (2005) and

Ramacharaka (2005) refer to this state of reflective meditation as *Dhyana*, this concept paper does not take *Dhyana* in its full meaning as stated by these authors. This is because *Dhyana* has strong religious denotations and this conceptualization chooses to remain secular so that it is applicable to a wide range of child victims of sexual abuse their religious affiliations notwithstanding. Therefore, by confronting the anxiety, depression and behavioral impulses that are a result of sexual abuse in a meditative state, the victims may begin to address the issues that stand in their way, and utilize Yoga as a complementary therapy towards healing.

Conceptualization

The present literature suggests that the contemporary conceptualization of Yoga as a complementary therapy is that Yoga is a component of complementary therapy in managing trauma. It works within a framework where Yoga works in tandem with appropriate medical care and counseling within the process of healing CSA through management of anxiety, depressing and behavioral impulse. However, closer scrutiny shows that Yoga is used separately from counseling and medical care – in gist these three healing techniques do not work holistically. These three healing techniques also do not work within a common framework of understanding each other and do not work in an inter-related fashion. The literature also suggests that the various components of Yoga are scattered and used individually instead of holistically or in conjunction with each other in the healing process of trauma due to CSA. Focus is given to the breathing aspect, the physical aspect or the mindfulness aspect separately, and not as a collective whole. The literature, rarely if ever, suggests that these three different aspects of Yoga are used in unison as a healing technique for dealing with managing CSA. The conceptualization of this form of the use of Yoga can be seen in Figure 1 below.

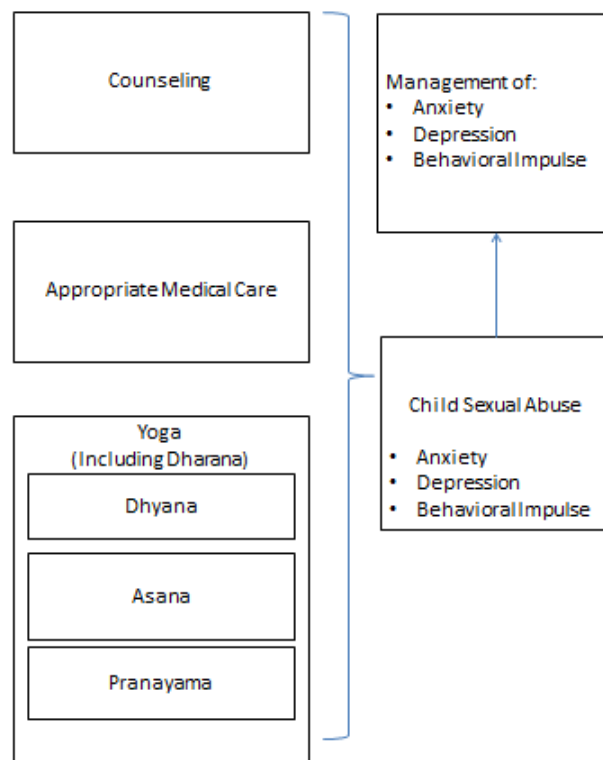


Figure 1: Present conceptualization of Yoga based on the literature reviewed.

This fragmentation of the use of Yoga, to the author, while having specific benefits does not fully bring to the fore the use of Yoga as a complementary therapy for CSA. In order for Yoga to be fully utilized, this author would like to put forward the idea that instead of having yoga be only a component of complementary therapy, it be the locus from which the complementary therapy emanates. This reconceptualization begins with placing *Pranayama*, *Asana* and *Dhyana* as the three innermost circles in a pattern of concentric circles. This is because, as the main focus of Yoga, *Pranayama* (breathing) is fundamental. Breath as understood as Yogic breathing forms the basis for which the complementary use of Yoga begins, and therefore the practice of *Pranayama* will be inculcated into this conceptualization as the first entry of practice into use as a complementary therapy towards healing. This is seen as the foundation, and the block upon which, other aspects of healing will be built upon.

The block upon which *Pranayama* will be built upon is *Asana*. As *Asana* is the way to stretch, extend and mobilize the body to manage anxiety, depression and behavioral impulse that are a result of child sexual abuse, it will be used in tandem with *Pranayama* as complementary therapy. The *Asanas* in this conceptualization are specific as outlined by Freedman et al. (2005) to specifically manage anxiety, stress and depression. By adding *Asana* to *Pranayama*, victims of CSA will be able to glean the combined benefits of both these aspects of Yoga. Additionally, this building block approach to adding *Asana* to *Pranayama* follows an organic flow of the human body in terms of basic human physiological response into physical movement, albeit in a more controlled motion that has specific aims in terms of physical manipulation, physical range and physical delimitations.

Upon this combination of *Pranayama* and *Asana*, *Dhyana* will be the focus (as mentioned above, *Dhyana* as reflective meditation is the result, not a religiously founded state of enlightenment). Through *Dhyana*, it is clarity of thought that it is hoped mental management of anxiety, depression and behavioral impulse is possible. Religious or spiritual enlightenment is not the end goal that is sought in this third block of this reconceptualization of Yoga. Rather, the focus is bringing together the benefits of *Pranayama* and *Asana* together to induce a state of mental clarity that leads to greater awareness of thoughts within an individual's mind. It is this mental clarity and greater awareness of thought within an individual's mind that, it is assumed, will allow for victims of CSA to be more aware of mental triggers of CSA, be cognizant of these mental triggers and to develop resilience and management skills for their behavior and responses to external stimuli.

It is in this combined use of *Pranayama*, *Asana* and *Dhyana* that Yoga is used as a complementary therapy. The term complementary here is meant to be specific, in that it is used in tandem with counseling by trained and professional counselors as well as appropriate medical care, which form the external two circles of the pattern. The conceptualization of both these latter variables is not gone into deeply in this manuscript as it is not within the purview of this potential research. However, what is within the purview of this research is to work in tandem with both these variables to have a positive impact on the effects of child sexual abuse, namely anxiety depression and behavioral issues.

Diagram 2 below illustrates the reconceptualization of Yoga as a complementary healing tool for managing trauma due to CSA:

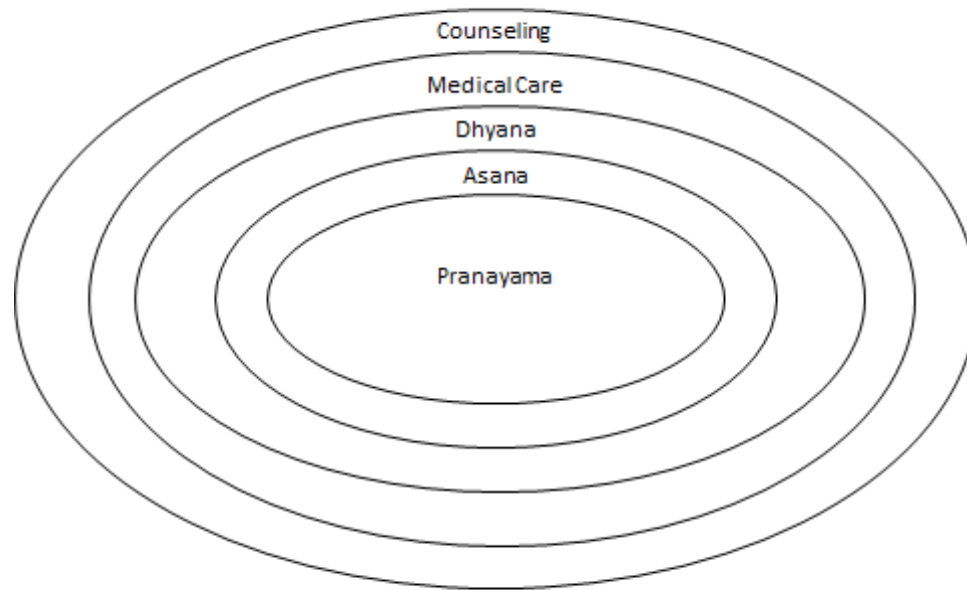


Diagram 2: Reconceptualization of Yoga as a complementary therapy for management of trauma due to CSA.

Potential Barriers

This reconceptualization is not unaware of the potential barriers that are present in the flow of thought within this manuscript. First, there is the issue of cultural context and the level to which Yoga is receptively accepted by victims of CSA. As mentioned by Discipio (2016), the level to which Yoga is effective as a complementary therapy is dependent on the culture. As Thailand has its own body of indigenous healing therapies and complementary therapies, the challenge of having Yoga accepted as a form of therapy may prove daunting as it could be viewed as intrusive and foreign. Additionally, Yoga could also be viewed as challenging the efficacy of indigenous healing and complementary therapies. These cultural barriers need to be taken into consideration and circumnavigated should Yoga be considered as a complementary therapy for victims of CSA.

Another potential barrier is the consistency of the Yoga practice. In all the studies cited, clinical conditions were used to control the consistency of the practice of Yoga. In cases where victims of CSA may be traumatized in the extreme, the consistency of practice may be compromised due to trauma. There is therefore a need for the presence of a counselor to recommend Yoga as a complementary therapy and for a trained Yoga instructor to show care and compassion for each individual victim of CSA who chooses to use Yoga as a complementary therapy for healing. It is a possibility that the combination of these two factors would create conditions where Yoga would be consistently practiced by victims of CSA. In return, this would potentially yield higher levels of healing among the victims of CSA.

The absorption of Yoga into pop culture has created an image of Yoga as either only a form of physical exercise that is trendy and cosmopolitan; or one where Yoga is meant only for adult women and men who are lithe, wealthy and in good physical condition. This forms another potential barrier for the acceptance of Yoga as a complementary therapy for the healing of victims of CSA. Because of the association of Yoga with pop culture that is taken as contemporary, it would be difficult to rewire this perception and to have it taken seriously as a holistic method of healing. Also, the perception that Yoga is meant only for adults

who have a certain body type or a certain level of fitness, there could be hesitation from all relevant stakeholders to apply this for victims of CSA who are hurt, who are not in the best physical condition and who do not fit the character stereotype portrayed by pop culture.

Concluding Thoughts

The anticipated and hoped for outcome is that child victims of sexual abuse in Thailand will be better able to manage stress, depression and behavioral issues that are outcomes of being victimized. It has to be made clear at this juncture that the practice of Yoga here is not meant to eradicate or to negate these behaviors, but to heal through management of the symptoms of CSA. It is unknown at this point if the cultural context of Thailand and the national origins of the victims of CSA will act as a barrier to healing or as a deterrent to the utilization of Yoga as complementary therapy. However, based on the literature it can be stated that Yoga can be used in various cultures as complementary therapy, and that Yoga has been successful in leading victims of sexual assault to cope better with the trauma of sexual assault.

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A Swamp of Cobras: Urbanization and Hazardous Space in Thailand

Friend, Richard M.

Environment Department
University of York
UK

Abstract

The transformation of wetlands and waterscapes is a feature of urbanization across Thailand and Southeast Asia. Despite the well-known risks it seems that such land conversion is more by design than by accident, and that space that is prone to flooding is actively targeted. This phenomenon goes against established thinking that suggests hazardous space is the last resort of the poor and marginalized. Yet critical national infrastructure such as airports are also constructed in such locations. This paper argues that underpinning such land conversion and investment is a fundamental clash of rationalities between capital and ecology.

Keywords: urbanization, wetlands; risk, capital, ecology, governance, Thailand

1. Introduction

Flying in to Thailand one is confronted with a concrete representation of how landscapes can be refashioned, not only in ways that create investment opportunities but also in creating new risks and vulnerabilities. Landing in Bangkok we are connected to a global economy of exchange, communications and transport networks that put our feet firmly on the ground in a swamp previously famous for its king cobra population. For *Nong Ngu Hao* (King Cobra Swamp), now Suvarnabhumi International Airport, is itself a remarkable story of the coming together of capital and entrenched political power that is being repeated at different scales across the country as Thailand urbanises and becomes increasingly linked to patterns of global capital and investment. The significance of King Cobra Swamp within the broader landscape of Greater Bangkok and the Chao Praya Basin was revealed graphically in 2011, with frantic efforts to protect the symbolic, economic and communications value of the airport against the natural flow of the floodwaters that were destined for the airport. Of course, the protection of the airport had implications for other areas in the flood-scape, as floodwaters were diverted elsewhere. Similarly, the impacts of the 2011 flood spread far and wide (Fuller, 2011), cascading through networks of capital, infrastructure and technology with a global reach, graphically illustrating the global significance of ecological and economic transformations in Thailand.

A common feature across this story of urbanisation in Thailand and indeed much of the region is that often the most sought after land for urban expansion and investment is marginal land; land that is not always 'land' but under water for much of the year. Patterns of seasonal flood and recession characterise much of the country and the region. Much of the land including the deltas, floodplains, rice fields and swamps can

be termed wetland; defined by the Ramsar Convention as being seasonally or permanently under water¹¹⁸. Most significantly in the context of global environmental change, these areas are considered exposed to the impacts of climate change. Reshaping such landscapes also reshapes climate vulnerability. It is also a pattern of creating new opportunities for capital accumulation out of such disaster, but with far-reaching implications beyond specific locations.

This paper is partly a personal reflection. Having spent many years working both in the sphere of wetlands and water resource management, and more recently in urban climate resilience it is also a personal attempt to consider why such efforts have had such limited success, and what the future might hold. In addressing why urbanisation across the country should specifically target wetland space for transformation despite the inevitable risks of flooding, the paper seeks to provide an exploratory foray into a theoretical approach that is founded on the concept of a fundamental clash of rationalities between the internal logic of capital and that of water and ecology. The focus of attention is on the ways in which processes of capital accumulation create climate-related vulnerabilities and accommodate risk. In doing so, it seeks to set out the constraints to urban futures that might be more connected to the waterscapes in which they are situated, and that recognises the inherently political nature of urban struggles.

2. Capital in the Cobra Swamp: Urbanisation and Hazardous Space

As the world passed the watershed of having over 50% of its population living in urban areas in 2008, there was also growing recognition that the most rapid and intense growth in urbanisation was occurring in the coasts, floodplains and deltas of the South, especially Asia. This trend of urbanisation means that the majority of the world's population and economic assets will be located in some of the most hazardous space on the planet, exposed to the impacts of storms and sea level rise that is most associated with climate change. Addressing the urban dimensions of global climate change resilience has taken a prominent place within the SDG global commitments to "making cities safe, resilient and sustainable", while also becoming a programmatic theme across the development and humanitarian worlds.

Within the debates on climate change cities are seen as being especially vulnerable. But cities are also especially well-placed to tackle climate change in ways that national governments are not, creating their own global networks of learning and influence, unencumbered by the political and institutional constraints facing national governments. This is a debate that is shaped by assumptions of the rationality of planning, with actions built around a combination of vulnerability assessment, capacity building and attracting private sector investment for climate resilient infrastructure. The positive business narrative of financing the 'infrastructure deficit' and the 'resilience dividend' (Rodin, 2014) represent a call to arms for the opportunities that future climate provides for the urban arena. But it is a debate that largely ignores the inherent political dimensions surrounding urbanisation and urban governance (Friend et al., 2014).

Addressing urban disasters and climate change adaptation is in part an institutional challenge that requires levels of cooperation and sectoral integration across ecological scales, and high degrees of flexibility and adaptive capacities (Lebel et al., 2011). There are also distributional dimensions to address the needs of people who are most vulnerable but often least influential in policy and decision making processes. However, where the focus is oriented towards 'practice', there is often relatively less attention on the politics of urbanisation and urban planning, with arguments tending to be more comfortable in assumptions of policy rationality. In the new urban climate agenda, the risks of current patterns of urban

¹¹⁸ In this paper, the term wetland is used as convenient short-hand for a range of permanently or seasonally inundated land types that characterise Thailand.

and industrial investment are recognised, but solutions remain framed in terms of further infrastructure investment to protect existing investments, and both the need and opportunity for financial investment. The positive narrative of business opportunities for urban climate adaptation and resilience dominates.

Yet there are deeply political underpinnings to patterns of urban climate vulnerability, and land use change. Urbanisation is characterised as a failure of governance, with planning processes informal in ways that allow for political benefits (Roy, 2009) and increasingly dominated by private sector interests (Shatkin, 2006). The global land grab that has targeted rural production space for food and biofuels, but also has an urban dimension, with land acquisition and displacement features of urbanisation across the South (Zoomer et al., 2017). While land use planning is central to urban policy and planning, it is an area that stands out for critical failures. Urban investments occur in the absence of land use plans that are often out of date, and easily circumnavigated. Basic information is rarely in the public domain and is itself a commodity for local government to trade (Ribiero, 2005). An important dimension in the story of urbanisation is the enormous political influence enjoyed by real estate companies, and the role that investment and speculation in land, often closely tied to local planning processes, plays in creating political power and influence. The apparent informality of much urban planning is itself a success that provides a malleability of the planning and legal process of political and economic benefit (Roy, 2009). Local government itself play contradictory roles of both the managerial and regulatory, but also the entrepreneurial role responsible for attracting investment (Harvey, 2006).

Climate change is itself also argued to have deeply political dimensions. A growing literature presents climate change as a direct consequence of global capitalism, arguing for the need for a new radicalism and social transformation (Pelling et al., 2012; Klein 2015). Capitalism's insatiable appetite for resources and the ability to treat environmental costs as economic externalities puts it in conflict with the needs for addressing global environmental change.

Across these bodies of literature there are similar concerns for the political drivers of change, and the pivotal role of capitalism in shaping urbanisation and global environmental change. Yet the experience of the global South, and the specifics of both the expansion and entrenchment of capitalism and urbanisation within much of the South has not been addressed directly. Urban theory remains largely grounded in the experience of the North (Parnell and Robinson, 2012), and even where it is focused on the South, often overlooks the significance of the ecological specifics of where urbanisation occurs, or the ecological and social consequences of changing patterns of climate vulnerability and risk.

Across Asia a similar phenomenon appears to be emerging. Critical public infrastructure is increasingly located in hazardous space, exposed to natural cycles of flooding, and thus to a series of vulnerabilities and risks that are projected to be exacerbated by climate change. Across Asian cities, wetlands and floodplains, often historically identified as vulnerable to flood in addition to providing important water sources, have been targeted for urban expansion.

The ecological context of where urbanisation is occurring, and the implications of land use change and land grabs across urbanising landscapes obliges us to consider the context of tropical ecosystems where land is often by nature water, and the ways in which vulnerabilities and risk are created, distributed and managed. While historically cities in Thailand and much of Asia were constructed on and around water, the current trajectory of urbanisation is very firmly one of converting waterscapes into landscapes. For in Thailand as in other parts of Asia, an essential precondition for capital accumulation is converting water into land.

The current pattern of urbanisation occurring in hazardous space in some ways appears counter-intuitive. There is a conventional wisdom in the climate vulnerability literature that poorer people tend to settle and

reside in marginal and hazardous locations. This is an explanation that is often offered for why poor people live in flood-prone, and hazardous locations that experience the kinds of events and stresses closely associated with climate change. Indeed, there are countless examples from around the world of poor urban people living in spaces that are, by their very 'nature' or the ways in which the urban landscape has been constructed, extremely hazardous. Yet the situation is not quite so straightforward. For what we now witness is that flood prone lands are not solely the location of the poor, but that critical public infrastructure with enormous economic value, has been purposively constructed in these hazardous places.

International airports are both symbols of modernity, and nodes in globalised transport networks that allow for rapid and distant exchange. Airports across the region, such as Jakarta and Bangkok, are located in areas that are identified in the vernacular as swamps (Jarvie and Friend, 2016). Suvarnabhumi International Airport stands out as a special case given its central importance in the national economy, and its long history of planning and construction. Built on 32 km² of land, planning began in 1960 but construction was only approved in May 1991 with the airport finally opening in 2006. That the site is by its nature vulnerable to flooding could never have been in any doubt. The original name of the site of the airport – King Cobra Swamp and its elevation at between 0.5 and 1.0 metres above sea level – clearly indicates its natural ecology and how it might be prone to flooding. Whereas the first international airport – Don Muang – was constructed on the higher ground (as its Thai name indicates) Suvarnabhumi is in one of the lowest lying locations in Greater Bangkok.

The technological challenges of locating such critical national infrastructure on flood-prone land were identified early. In a special edition of *Geotechnology* devoted to the engineering challenges confronting the airport's construction, Moh and Lin (2006), focus their attention on the engineering requirements of 'soil improvement and pile foundation' to protect the site on which the airport itself is located. Yet the flood risks associated with the airport go beyond the site itself, and bring in the implications of flood risk for the wider landscape, and the implications for surrounding areas of needing to protect such critical national economic infrastructure. Presciently Sutiprapa et al., (2008) argue the reduction of the flood retention area to the east of Bangkok as a result of the airport's construction posed the risk of a flood disaster for greater Bangkok. But the airport also opened up investment potential in the surrounding areas, with powerful elites influencing the amendment of land use regulations to allow for urban expansion (Roachanakanan, 2007).

This targeting of urban wetlands for such large-scale investment is not unique to Thailand. For example, Phnom Penh's Boeung Khak Lake has been a site of fierce conflict between local residents and an alliance of state and private sector investors intent on converting the 90 hectare lake into prime real estate, now called 'Phnom Penh City Centre ,the Pearl of Cambodia' (Baliga and Chakrya, 2017). Eventually this conflict was settled in favour of the investment, with the area now identified as witnessing the most rapid rises in land prices, as the full area of the lake is completely filled, and the eviction and resettlement of 4000 families (*ibid.*) For Doyle (2012, p. 148) filling the lake was necessary to overcome legal constraints on construction over waterways with a coalition of investors and government colluding to transform waterways "into land that is physically and legally suitable for construction". Perhaps more surprisingly is the case of Vientiane, where the That Luang wetlands that have enormous nationalist symbolism have been targeted for draining, filling and Chinese investment.

In secondary cities across Thailand similar trends can be found. In Udon Thani a large public wetland area has come under pressure with government plans to convert Nong Dae into an international conference and sports centre, all part of the ambitions for the province to have a role as a regional hub for business,

education and health service provision (Siriwattanaphaiboon, 2015). Similarly, in Khon Kaen, the floodplains surrounding the city are increasingly targeted for housing estates and factories (Inmuong et al., 2015).

This pattern begs the question as to why and how such hazardous spaces are also the locus of such investment, why such high-value investments should be made on these sites, and how such investments accommodate the risks associated with flooding.

3. Urbanisation, Capital Accumulation and the Spatial Fix in Wetlands

The relationship between capital and land, and the conversion of nature has been the focus of much debate within Marxian theory. The argument that by its nature capitalism generates the destruction of the natural world through its insatiable appetite for resources is well established. What Marx referred to as the 'annihilation of space through time' allows for the geographical restructuring of capitalist activity, that create new forms of uneven development and the shift in the geographical scale at which capitalism is organised.

Increasingly the implications of capitalism's commodification and refashioning of nature is applied as a means of explaining the ecological crises that the globe now faces (Moore, 2011).

Changing patterns of ownership and refashioning of land that allow for speculation and accumulation are central to the history of the decline of feudalism and the emergence of capitalism. For example, Polanyi (2001) talks about the 'commercialisation of the soil' – breaking man's relationship with the earth, thereby transforming social relations and through this contributing towards the end of feudalism.

The relationship between people and land goes beyond land as simply a factor of production. For Harvey (2001) the importance of land as physical space also appears as a way of dealing with the inevitable internal crises of capitalism, the phenomenon whereby surpluses of labour and capital are created but for which there are no opportunities to engage them in profitable use. Capital takes a range of responses to such over-accumulation, including the devaluation of factors of production (labour and capital) and means of exchange (markets), or the destruction of stock or labour to reduce surpluses. But historically crises of over-accumulation have also been associated with the export of capital, identifying fresh locations for investment and opportunities for physically restructuring - what he terms the 'spatial fix' – "*capitalism's insatiable drive to resolve its inner crisis tendencies by geographical expansion and geographical restructuring*" (Harvey, 2001, p. 24).

Harvey extends this concept of fixity, as being the tension between having to be grounded and being mobile; being grounded in order to generate further cycles of accumulation, and being mobile in order to relocate as opportunities and crises emerge.

This leads to one of the central contradictions of capital: that it has to build a fixed space (or "landscape") necessary for its own functioning at a certain point in its history only to have to destroy that space (and devalue much of the capital invested therein) at a later point in order to make way for a new "spatial fix" (openings for fresh accumulation in new spaces and territories) at a later point in its history.

(Harvey 2001, p.25)

The ability to profit from the destruction of space at future points in time, depends on the ability to reshape values, and to relocate capital if not the physical infrastructure itself. For Harvey, geographical

expansion is fundamental to capitalism's ability to endure. The ability, or and the reach of such expansion is itself related to technologies of transport and communication that stretch the reach, ease and pace of such expansion. Diversifying and spreading investments, whether they be focused on identifying new sources of labour or raw materials, or new markets, across spatial scales is thus a mechanism for expanding the reach of capital accumulation. But the spatial fix is also a means for dealing with crisis, and thus of accommodating risk. The reach of capital, and its ability to relocate with remarkably agility and speed is a characteristic of contemporary globalisation, and in the case of the Mekong, regionalisation.

The potential for such expansion of capital is constrained when of the land in question is water. The landscapes that predominate in monsoonal Asia present limitations for land speculation and investment. Landscapes that are dominated by water for at least a part of the year have limited potential for capital accumulation in their natural state. Water cannot easily be reshaped in ways that would allow for construction and investment. Land has to be reclaimed from water, with wetlands, coasts, floodplains and deltas drained or filled. This is the first round of investment that opens the potential for later cycles of refashioning and reshaping land; raising it further above the waterline.

A familiar pattern emerges of initial speculative investments generating significant financial returns, that then lead to cycles of refashioning the land, with further cycles of construction that allow for economic activities that create further opportunities for accumulation. Glassman (2007) refines this theory of spatial fix further in a discussion of Thailand, differentiating between low road and high road fixes, drawing a distinction between the first round of speculation and investment in land, with the further rounds of re-investment and refashioning of land. In the case of Thailand, there are historical differences in the political coalitions of these fixes, with the low road fixes of the 1970s and 1980s centred on an alliance of military leaders, bankers, and exporters, and post-1997 crash political and economic alliances of domestic and foreign capital.

Urbanisation has, and continues to play a central role in this drama of economic development. Recent concerns for the stalling of economic growth since 2008 and the apparent middle income plateau in its national development have reinvigorated the interest in accelerating and expanding urbanisation as a critical driver of growth. Spreading urbanisation outside of Bangkok is a means of 'fixing' the problem of the capital city (Siam Commercial Bank, 2011). Urbanisation is presented as the future, providing economic opportunities that are underpinned by the real estate and construction (and associated) industries through the creation of the physical space and architecture of the urban. But this is very much a cycle that creates more demand and more consumption, furthering cycles of further accumulation.

For Glassman, the high road fix is most associated with further transformation of urban space.

While the high-road fix is not inevitably tied to particular locations, it is a fix that frequently features further investment in already well-established sites of capital accumulation. Existing urban populations and production capacities serve as the basis for new investments that further transform urban space into the means for expanded reproduction and the longer-term restoration of profitability

Urbanisation, particularly outside of the Bangkok where it has formerly been concentrated is increasingly recognised as a means of shifting Thailand from its apparent middle income plateau. Indeed, the Siam Commercial Bank appears to fit directly with Glassman's analysis, highlighting the importance of investment in urban land and infrastructure while also creating new markets for high value consumer goods as keys to urban-led economic growth.

What we see now in Thailand is both the spatial fix of capital investing in land that occurs as both a combination of the low and high road. These are not separated historically, but colliding in the same space and at the same time. In the areas of the country where urbanisation is occurring most rapidly, most notably in the North East, it is both associated with 'low road' patterns of targeting marginal lands, as well as 'high road' transformation of existing urban spaces.

Central to our current discussion is the nature of these urban transformations, and the implications for changing patterns of flood vulnerability and risk. While the restructuring of space, and the pivotal role of the urban space has been central to the argument of the spatial fix, and the emergence of capitalism, this type of analysis has been less concerned with the specific ecological characteristics of the natural world that has been encountered, and how such characteristics influence the encounter with capital. Nature – and land and soil – have been seen writ large. There has been less attention on how capitalism's encounter with different ecologies, located in different histories and social realities, not only creates destruction and dispossession, but also reshapes vulnerabilities and risks to shocks and crises that in turn fuel further opportunities for capital accumulation.

Bringing the theory of the spatial fix to the specific ecology of tropical Asia draws attention to how the reshaping of nature allows us to move beyond a notion of a one-off or finite destruction, towards a continual cycle of destruction and creation that is characterised by the way in which opportunities for accumulation are offset against the creation of specific impacts, and how capital deals with risks that its own investments and creations might be responsible for creating.

4. Thailand's Urban Ecology – the Special Case of Deltaic Systems

The concept of 'spatial fix' and geographers concern with how space is produced but there has been less consideration of different types of space. That is to say, there has been little consideration of the specifics of the specific of different ecologies in influencing patterns of spatial fix. that are most apparent in tropical parts of the world such as South East Asia – where land is not *only* land, and not *always* land.

This line of discussion raises fundamental challenges for how to approach urbanisation as it encounters ecologies that are defined by processes of flood and recession across landscapes that are as much water as land. For it is this ecological context in which much of urbanisation in Thailand is occurring. The construction of housing on raised stilts is a clear and visible example of how natural flooding cycles have been incorporated into the design and construction of housing. The colonial encounter with Asian cities often reflected on Venice and its own structure around waterways. Pre-colonial, and pre-capitalist Asian cities were characterised by their close connections with water, yet current architectural design and land use change are disconnected from this cultural history.

It is significant that water, wetlands and broader waterscapes have been keen arenas of conflict in Thailand for several decades, from the emblematic struggles surrounding the Pak Mun river and the hydropower dam, to other areas of the North East such as the Songkhram River Basin, the blasting of reefs and rapids in the Upper Mekong, and transboundary conflicts around hydropower development in the Mekong and Salween rivers (Molle et al., 2009). In large part these struggles have been framed as being between traditional livelihoods and culture, and the pressures of state-led economic development (Blake et al., 2009). Such conflicts have entered the capital city, with the plans for riverfront development of Bangkok's Chao Praya becoming an arena for conflict between established riverine communities and traditional ways of life, and urban developers.

Wetland protection has been a key organising principle for Thai civil society. A central concern has been

how to address the transformation of ecological landscapes and indeed, waterscapes – the conversion of ecologically rich wetlands, and the ramifications of losses of habitats and biodiversity, but also of the broader ecological functions that wetlands provide, particularly around flood protection and maintaining water quality.

These arguments for wetland conservation have failed to hold sway in urban policy, planning and practice. Yet the implications of such development for flood risk have been widely articulated in public (Gray, 2011). Across the country, the impact of wetland conservation measures has been limited. The wetland conservation agenda has a history in Thailand and the region stretching back at least twenty years. As the global wetland conservation agenda emerged Thailand and tropical Asia became identified as areas at risk and opportunities for protection. With support from the Ramsar Convention, Global Environment Facility (GEF), IUCN, WWF and a host of donors and international organisations have undertaken a range of projects aiming to improve management practice, build capacity, conduct research and raise awareness of the public.

Initially wetland conservation strategies in Thailand focused attention on raising awareness of Thai people themselves. Underpinning this approach was an argument that wetlands were undervalued and targeted for conversion because their value was not understood. This general approach saw the launch of various public awareness campaigns and much soul-searching within the conservation community of why such efforts were not having the impacts that had been anticipated. Refinement of the basic strategy only went so far as addressing more effective communications, information and outreach. The core argument on which these strategies was based was rarely questioned.

Yet the limited success of these efforts cannot be explained solely by lack of awareness or institutional capacities. In fact, there is a rich understanding of wetlands and they have played an important part in the history of human settlement, and in rural livelihoods. Wetlands figure prominently in local place names whether in cities themselves, or in districts and neighbourhoods. Places such as Udon Thani were settled specifically because their wetland and floodplains provided sources of water, productive fishing and grazing grounds and fertile farming lands.

Wetlands in Thailand and the Mekong region are associated with livelihood strategies that are diversified and able to adapt to seasonal change, involving rice farming, fishing and harvesting aquatic resources, raising cattle and livestock, while also accessing a host of wild edible and medicinal plants. Complex property regimes have also emerged for dealing with the tensions between public and private ownership of resources that are at times submerged under water. This has given rise to different types of property regime that fluctuate between the public and the private. For example, rice fields are private property in dry periods of the year, but once flooded they become public property. These patterns of flooding and recession also influence rights of access to harvesting fisheries and aquatic resources, with access in the flood season defined by fishing gear, as opposed to the location of the gear as occurs in the dry season.

Large wetland areas were commons by default. In the gap that existed in lieu of clear private ownership, access and usufruct rights were public but shaped by the specifics of economic activity that occurred. For example, traditional access rights for fishing gear include those based on location for fixed gears, but other gears such as gill nets would move across the waters. Ownership, access and control switched across seasons, with the focus on the means of extracting economic benefit from the resource. While such property regimes might be in keeping with principles of sustainability and equity, the potential for further capital accumulation is limited.

A further dimension of changing patterns of ownership of resources can be seen in the commodification of soil itself as a resource to be utilised in the investment and transformation of land. In the face of flood

risks, current patterns of urbanisation is the market in soil, with the sale of soil from the land (that can remain owned) to be used in the filling of land for construction so that it is protected from flood (cf. Phuttharak and Dhiravisit, 2014); or at least, that there is an added value in the perception that this type of construction provides flood protection. The commodification of soil also contributes to a relocation of flood risk, as one part of the landscape is raised above the floodwaters through the filling of soil, so another location is firmly below the flood line, with the earth of the land removed.

The tropical ecology and complex hydrological landscapes of Thailand represent a hard ecological constraint to the expansion of capital. For the land on which capital accumulation is water – that offers limited potential for cycles of transformation through construction, production, destruction and recreation – unless water can be converted permanently to land. Once this conversion begins, a whole cycle of investment begins in reshaping both the land and the ways in which flood risks are managed. And it is this very process of conversion that creates patterns of vulnerability and risk related to flood, and thus, increasingly related to climate change. The encounter with wetland, floodplain and deltaic ecosystems requires innovation for capital to flow

5. Reshaping Investments and Risk

This discussion begs the question of how the vulnerabilities and risks associated with investing in, and refashioning hazardous space can be accommodated. In some ways, it would seem reasonable to assume that the harsh realities of floods and other shocks and disasters, would lead to patterns of investment that are more sensitive to environmental risk, and more in tune with natural ecologies.

The spatial fix argument reminds us that the flow of capital into Thailand was itself a response to shocks and crises in one particular geography. The opportunities for the spatial fix in Thailand (and similar countries) were themselves products of the globalised spatial fixes, and incorporation of Thailand into global capital alliances. Thailand benefited greatly as the investment location of choice during the era of US military intervention in the region, and the early 1980s – and the desperate need for capital expansion in Japan and the US. The large-scale investment in Thailand is thus a product of Japanese and US capital relocating as a response to crises of over-accumulation. Thailand itself has been the locus of a spatial fix that came from a crisis elsewhere, but which is now able to relocate even further afield.

Part of this is the ability for capital to move beyond the forces that might constrain its actions, be they external forces through strengthened environmental governance, or the location of risk associated with specific investments. The growing ability of capital to move across locations, and to spread investment portfolios around the region and ultimately the globe allows for a restructuring of risk. Indeed, the viability of a local scale investment is partly shaped by the global reach of diversification of the initial risk.

In this way, the initial risk associated with flooding of locating high levels of capital and physical investment can be offset both by the added cycles of investment in technological mitigation of risk that are fixed in the space of the investment, as well as the physical spread of investments across different locations and the ability to relocate.

The way in which such risk might be managed can be revealed in situations when things seem to go wrong, for example in significant flooding events. There is a widespread propensity for infrastructure solutions to addressing flood vulnerability (Lebel et al., 2011). There is a degree of path dependence in evidence here. Once large infrastructure investments are already established they are not easily replaced, leading to protective measures, such as flood defence walls, that essentially replicate the type of flood risk created by the investment in the first place. Significantly investment in protective infrastructure is invariably

underwritten by public funding, thereby reducing the direct financial liability and creating additional opportunities to profit from the large-scale public schemes. A whole new industry emerges around protection of physical investments that are by their nature high risk in the first place.

An interview with an international investor in Thailand provides some insight into the way in which such disaster capitalism might work. During the height of the 2011 floods when Ayuthaya province had already been heavily flooded for some time, I spoke with a western businessman who had invested heavily in warehouses and factories in the area. I remarked how calm he seemed given the stress of the circumstances. He sought to reassure me; there was no real need for alarm, as he (and his business partners) were confident that the government would invest to such a degree in the post-flood recovery that he would more than recoup his losses. Moreover, he had already begun to seize the opportunity of new business that the floods had opened, by exploring opportunities for investing in new technologies for flood defences for which there was now high demand. While admittedly anecdotal, this provides some insight into how capital can accommodate the shocks of floods (and similar disasters) into opportunities for further accumulation, and refashioning of land.

Relocation of investment provides other opportunities for dealing with shocks, all the more so when accumulated profits surpass the costs associated with the initial investment. As we have seen increasingly across the world, investments in physical infrastructure are time-bound, and certainly not life-time commitments. Increasingly the need for being able to relocate, where the spatial fix is not committed to a specific point in space, is driven by a range of forces from the price of labour to pressure of environmental legislation and now, the risks of climate-related shocks. What is common across these relocation strategies is the to offset localised pressures by relocating both capital and physical investments. The risks associated with the location of the initial investment and the impacts of specific events, can be 'fixed' simply by moving again, continuing Harvey's cycle of opening spaces for fresh accumulation in new territories.

It seems that we are confronted with two possible responses to climate risks that emerge from investing in hazardous space – to refashion again in ways that are more in tune with climate change concerns and notions of adaptation, or a pathway of disaster capitalism, where the risks of future disasters create a whole new set of investment opportunities.

6. Conclusion

Viewing the transformation of deltas, floodplains and wetlands as a clash of rationalities between capital and ecology provides a lens through which to consider why urbanisation in Thailand and other parts of Asia occurs in the way that it does, and how vulnerabilities and risks associated with floods and climate are both created and distributed. It is a perspective that is intended to add depth to the literature that frames the problem of urban climate vulnerabilities in institutional and capacity terms.

As much as it is necessary to understand the dynamics of capital accumulation in its own terms, it is also necessary to appreciate the significance of specific ecological characteristics of where such capital is invested. The case of Thailand obliges us to consider the specifics of wetland ecology, and the dramatic seasonal change between the dry and rainy seasons that characterises monsoonal Asia. Managing physical space between cycles of flood inundation and recession has a rich and diverse history in Thailand as in much of South East Asia, and is deeply entwined with traditional livelihoods, culture and landscapes. Yet arguments grounded in protecting natural hydrological cycles, wetland conservation or climate change adaptation are unlikely to be able to transform current trends and trajectories of urbanisation in Thailand. There is an argument within the climate change arena that ultimately current patterns of urbanisation that

target hazardous space will confront the constraints of nature, and that the experience of floods and other natural disasters will compel urbanisation towards a fundamental shift that takes on board ecological processes and values. But another more disturbing, and perhaps more likely scenario is that the forces of capital can both internalise and redistribute such shocks and through them create opportunities for further accumulation such that the overall global trajectory of refashioning land and water will continue unabated. The pressures to do so are even more likely to intensify in periods in which capital is in crisis. This is additionally troubling given the close connections between dispossession and displacement that have occurred alongside urbanisation.

It is from this perspective that we need to understand the limitations of being able to intervene around arguments of conservation or climate adaptation in situations where capital expands into land without the constraints of political or legal checks and balances. Indeed, this perspective adds further weight to an argument that deep structural forces are at play against urban policy, planning and design in Thailand, and it is the marriage of public political spheres with speculative investment in land that must be confronted.

Given the role of politics and business in Thailand, and the growing targeting of urbanisation and industrialisation for Thai and international capital, the question remains whether it is at all conceivable that an alternative urban future might be attainable. Even without considering broader issues of social justice, such as issues of housing, public space, clean environment and rights to shape urban futures, the chances appear slim. Yet as much as institutional and capacity constraints need to be resolved, addressing these challenges will require strong political, fiscal and legal mechanisms to check current patterns of investment and speculation that underpin patterns of land use change and urban expansion.

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Customer Knowledge Management: Connecting Chinese Tourists to the Destination of Thailand

Fu, Jing

Mou, Lei

Sichuan Provincial Research Institute of Thai Studies
China

Thanalerdsopit, Paipan

Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Arts,
Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna
Thailand

Liu, Weiyi

College of Languages and Cultures, Chengdu University
China

Abstract

This paper takes a holistic view at the changing needs of the Chinese new tourists, specifically towards Thailand which has been a primary destination for the Chinese outbound tourists. The research adopted a perspective from customer knowledge management, investigating a deeper understanding of the knowledge about, from and for the Chinese new tourists. An online survey in the Chinese language was conducted with a qualitative and quantitative nature. The research findings help to build a strategic understanding for the Thailand tourism sectors to prepare itself towards becoming a more active player in the Chinese tourism outbound market.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Customer Knowledge Management, Tourism, Chinese Tourists, Thailand

1. Introduction

Undoubtedly China has stepped into the second phase of its outbound tourism after its first move to Hong Kong mainly for a VFR purpose (visiting friends and relatives) in the 1980s (Dai et al., 2013). Till 2014, the Chinese government made 155 Approved Destination Status (ADS) available to its people based on the bilateral tourism agreements that China signed with each counterpart foreign country (CN Tour, 2015). As a result, the Chinese outbound travel boomed in both travelers' number and trip frequency. According to the latest data from the report of *Big Data for China Outbound Tourists* (2016), China continued to become the number one source market with a scale of 122 million people traveling abroad. Meanwhile, Chinese tourists have remained the leader buyers in the world with a record of more than USD 109.8 billion spent on international travels. Research of China Tourism Academy (2016) showed that, by the end of 2016, only 10% of China populations had experiences of traveling abroad, outbound tourism still has a vast potential. Different from China's first batch of outbound tourists, who travelled by package tour mainly for political and business purposes, the new Chinese tourists (Arlt, 2006) are more linguistically competent and

technologically capable, who prefer not to follow the rushed trips and intense itineraries as most of the tour groups do, but slow down to explore more specific regions and activities, who also favor self-organized travelling to niche and less-known destinations through researching and educating themselves about destinations online (Thraenhart et al., 2012), and they are fascinated with sharing their travelling diaries via a variety of social media.

On the other hand, Thailand has been an attraction for international visitors for the famed land of smiles with featuring Buddhist temples, exotic wildlife, food and massage as well as spectacular islands (Thailand Tourism Authority, 2016). Tourism is a main economic income of Thailand, directly contributing to 12 trillion baht (16%) to the nation's GDP. If the indirect income is included, it accounts for 20.2%, namely 2.4 trillion baht (Bank of Thailand, 2015).

Analyzing from travel destinations, seven of the top ten preferred destinations for Chinese tourists are located in Asia (*Big Data for China Outbound Tourists*, 2016). Thailand has been voted as the most popular destination for Chinese tourists in 2015 and 2016; on the other hand, Thai people had a continuous interest in China. During the years between 2011 and 2016, the number of Chinese tourists to Thailand dramatically increased, meanwhile, Thai visitors to China have already remained stable, as Table 1 illustrated below.

Years/ Ranking and No. of Tourists Arrivals	Chinese Tourists to Thailand		Thai Tourists to China	
	Ranking for International Arrivals in Thailand	No. of Chinese Tourists to Thailand (million persons)	Ranking for International Arrivals in China	No. of Thai Tourists to China (million persons)
2011	3	1.7	14	0.64
2012	2	2.7	13	0.65
2013	2	4.5	13	0.65
2014	2	4.6	14	0.61
2015	1	7.9	14	0.64
2016	1	8.8	/	/

*Table 1: Ranking and Number of Tourists Arrivals to Thailand and China
(2011-2016, elaborated by the authors)*

Resources: China National Tourism Administration and Bank of Thailand

It is obvious that Thailand has become one of the most popular tourism destinations for Chinese tourists. While Thailand appreciated the total expenses of 439.2 billion Thai Baht (85.6 billion yuan) from the Chinese tourists (Bank of Thailand, 2016), however, the understandings between the two countries and people fell behind the economic growth. On the one hand, Chinese tourists in Thailand are garnering negative attention and criticism recently both in Thailand; on the other hand, considerable Chinese tourists felt unsatisfactory during their traveling to Thailand. These problems may result from the information and knowledge gap between the customers (tourists) and the products/ services providers.

This research focuses on the changing needs of the Chinese tourists (customer knowledge), specifically towards Thailand. The paper contributes to the understanding of these new needs from a customer knowledge management (CKM) perspective.

Three research questions are addressed, which are:

- RQ1. Know what (knowledge about the customer).
- RQ2. Know why (knowledge from the customer).
- RQ3. Know how (knowledge for the customer).

The conducted research uses both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to illustrate how the Thai tourism authority could better understand the new needs of Chinese tourists by providing the right knowledge to the right people at the right time through the right forms.

The paper is structured as follows: the literature review in the next part introduces the theoretical background of customer knowledge management, which justifies the research methods followed. After analyzing the survey results with discussions, the authors expect that findings from the survey may help to provide a comprehensive understanding for the Thai tourism policy-decision makers, which include public, private sectors and government authorities.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Knowledge-based Economy (KBE)

Since the 1990s, there has been a clear shift from an information-based to a knowledge-based economy - KBE (Lyman, 2001). This shift means economic futures will be determined by people's ability to wisely use knowledge, as well as maintain and enhance their knowledge capital in order to innovate and improve their effectiveness (Psarras, 2006). The travel and tourism sector is one of first KBE service sectors to apply large-scale utilization of Information, Communication and Technologies (ICTs) for the improvement of its products and services (Mavri and Angelis, 2009), which contributed over 10% to global GDP, and generated 200 million jobs (WTTC, 2011).

2.2 The Reengineering of the Tourism Sector in the KBE

Developments in ICTs have changed both tourist behaviours, business strategies and structures (Porter, 2001), and enabled the tourism industry to expand business activities domestically and globally. ICTs have changed operational and strategic management in tourism and hospitality as well as re-engineered the way that suppliers interact with the information rich consumers in the marketplace (Law et al., 2014). Moreover, ICTs-empowered tourism provides significant possibilities and opportunities of earning foreign exchange, increasing employment, optimizing operating costs and supporting the delivery of customized products and services (Mavri and Angelis, 2009). The proper management of tourism business knowledge and ICT techniques is crucial to maintain market share and differentiate tourism products and services (Werthner and Klein, 1999) so as to better understand and meet the customers' needs.

2.3 The KM and Customer Knowledge

KM has been defined as the sum of information and capabilities that individuals use in arriving at solutions to problems (Probst, 1998). The main goal of KM is often to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness, while consistently using knowledge as a resource (Gurteen, 1998). Knowledge is not information, and information is not data (Davenport and Prusak, 1998). To distinguish data, information and knowledge, Davenport and Prusak (1998) suggested: thinking data as a set of objective facts; information as the data that make a difference; thinking knowledge as a broader, deeper and richer information from minds at work.

KM is recognized as a competitive and survival necessity for tourism firms as well as for improved performances (Cooper, 2006). The sector is becoming knowledge-intensive as a result of intensive use of technology, which is likely to gain benefits from KM activities and systems in respect to learning, knowledge sharing and development of knowledge networks among clusters of tourism enterprises.

The customer knowledge management (CKM) is *the management and exploitation of customer-related knowledge* (Rowley, 2002), which on the one hand focuses on the interactions between a company and its customers, and a shift from 'what we know' to 'what our customers know' on the other hand (Gibbert, Leibold and Probst, 2002). According to Gibbert *et al.* (2002), the CKM empowers customers from a passive role of receiving and consuming products to a more active and engaged way of knowledge provision.

The CKM can be categorized into three types (Davenport and Klahr, 1998), which are:

- *Knowledge about customer*, which includes customer characteristics and preferences that the company or organization obtains from accumulated experiences during long-term business operations;
- *Knowledge from customer*, that refers to the knowledge residents in customers, feedback contributed by the customers;
- *Knowledge for customer*, which a firm or organization purposively provides to its customers in order to facilitate better purchase or repetitive purchase of the products/services offered by the firm or organization.

Gibbert, Leibold and Probst (2002) differentiated CKM from traditional knowledge management (KM) and customer relationship management (CRM), claiming that unlike KM derived knowledge from the employees, team, company network, while CRM got knowledge from the company customer database, CKM obtains knowledge from the direct interactions with customers.

The tourism journey involves a pre-trip period of information searching, and decision making, the tourism experience (purchase) itself and the post-purchase experience of evaluation of satisfaction. The transfer of knowledge from the tourists to the organizations can be of particular importance in the study of knowledge transfers in tourism (Shaw and Williams, 2009; Scott, 2015).

Based on the theoretical background, the research hopes to generate a deeper understanding of the knowledge about, from and for the Chinese new tourists concerning the destination of Thailand in order to provide knowledge for them, namely turning the knowledge and ideas from tourists into business value (Dvir and Pasher, 2004). Based on these understandings, a knowledge framework is proposed to indicate the possible actions that can be taken by the Thailand tourism authorities. The methodological framework is outlined in the next part.

3. Methodology

For the achievement of the research goals, the authors conducted an investigation with both qualitative and quantitative nature. The survey focuses on the destination of Thailand, and is structured into three parts: knowledge about Chinese tourists, knowledge from Chinese tourists, and knowledge for Chinese tourists. An online survey was designed in the Chinese language and was employed via the biggest free on-line questionnaire platform of China (www.wenjuan.com).

The online questionnaire covers three parts, namely:

- Knowledge about the customer: the demographic features of the Chinese tourists concerning travelling to Thailand;
- Knowledge from the customer: the travel preferences and expectations of Chinese tourists towards tourism products and services of Thailand; and
- Knowledge for the customer: the information and knowledge that are purposively provided to Chinese tourists in order to facilitate better purchase or repetitive purchase of tourism products and services concerning travelling to Thailand.

The scope of the survey is the mainland of China (namely 31 provincial regions), in order to ensure sufficient representative samples. Samplings were adopted for the survey from emails and other seven channels, which are: QQ (the biggest instant message program in China), QQ blog/personal space (a web log and a discussion or informational site), *Sina or Tencent Weibo* (a micro-blogging service), *Youku* (an online video hosting service), *Renren* and *Facebook* (social networking websites), *LinkedIn* (a social networking website for tourism professionals), and *WeChat* (a mobile text and social message communicative service).

Since most of the Chinese netizens (internet citizens) communicate by QQ, the biggest instant message programme in China (iResearch Consulting Group, 2014), the associated e-mail addresses are based on their QQ number, e.g. 451738020@qq.com. Once accessing a QQ community, the e-mail addresses were obtained. Besides the e-mails that were sent to the groups of people described above, samples were adopted for the survey from other social media networks, which will be further explained in the part of 'Knowledge for the Chinese Tourists' below. Meanwhile, a Quick Response Code (a two-dimensional bar-code) of the questionnaire was also generated and distributed, so that the mobile users could get access to the questionnaire by a simple scan of the QR code with their smart phones at their convenience. In this way, the researchers believe the majority of the representative samples in China and Thailand could be reached.

4. Results

4.1 Confidence Level of the Research

From 817 responses of the on-line questionnaire, 817 are considered effective samples. According to the number of 817 (the collected samples), and the number of 8,800,000 (the number of Chinese tourists in Thailand in the year of 2016), the authors estimate 5% as a confidence interval which is stated at a 99% confidence level, then the population parameter is calculated as 666 samples, meaning that the collected 817 responses are considered sufficient in this research.

Automatic online search and data report (meta-statistics) was obtained. Then the statistics of the open-ended questions were coded and analyzed by a Microsoft Excel 2013 Statistical Packages and a Software Package for Statistics and Simulation (SPSS 22.0) in order to present descriptive ratios and bivariate correlations in this as well as the next sections.

4.2 Knowledge about the Chinese Tourists

In the present survey, eight questions were asked in the first part so as to understand the demographic features of the respondents, which are considered to be *knowledge about the customers* (Smith & McKeen, 2005), illustrating in Table 2.

Table 2: The demographic features of the respondents (Note: One Yuan is about 5 Thai Baht)

The Demographic features of the Respondents (N=817)	
Gender	• Male: 262 (32.07 %); Female: 555 (67.93 %)
Age	• 18-24 years: 379 (46.39%); 25-34 years: 274 (33.54%); • 35-44 years: 118 (14.44%); 45-54 years: 39 (4.77%); • 55-64 years: 7 (0.73%); more than 64 years: 1 (0.12%)
Work Place	• East China: 95 (11.63%); South China: 54 (6.61%) • Central China: 58 (7.10%); North China: 64 (7.83%) • North West: 10 (1.22%); North East: 17 (2.08%) • South West: 515 (63.04%); Overseas: 4 (0.49%)
Occupations	• Public sector: 234 (28.64%); Joint venture: 44 (5.39%); • The state-owned company: 65 (7.96%); Private sector: 227 (27.78%); • Domestic listed company: 25 (3.06%); Others: 222 (25.17%)
Highest education	• Junior school and under junior school: 12 (1.47%); • Senior school: 46 (5.63%); • College diploma: 104 (12.73 %); • Bachelor's degree: 466 (57.04 %); • Master's degree: 164 (20.07%); • Doctor's degree: 25 (3.06%)
Monthly income	• Less than 2,000 Yuan: 159 (19.46 %); • 2,001-5,000 Yuan: 425 (52.02 %); • 5,001-7,000 Yuan: 120 (14.69 %) • 7,001-10,000 Yuan: 50 (6.12 %); • More than 10,000 Yuan: 63 (7.71%)
Experiences of working or study abroad	• No experience: 700 (85.68%); • 1 year: 58 (7.10%); 2 years: 15 (1.84%) • 3 years: 13 (1.59%); More than 3 years: 31 (3.79%)
Language: varieties and proficiency	• English, competent for work: 274 (33.54%) • English, daily communication: 317 (38.80%) • English, a few words and simple sentences: 210 (25.70%) • Thai, competent for work: 23 (2.82%) • Thai, daily communication: 28 (3.43%) • Thai, a few words and simple sentences: 87 (10.65%) • Other languages: 230 (28.15%)

The Table 2 shows that the respondents are from all parts of China. Compared with the general traits included in the *White Paper of the Developmental Trends of China Online-Tourism Market 2012-2015* (CNTA, 2012), the new features acquired about the respondents for the destination of Thailand are the following:

- *Gender.* The population of female tourists covers 67.93% of the total samples, partly because the natural beauty, food and massage and romantic images of Thailand are more likely to attract women tourists.
- *Age.* 79.93% of the respondents are between 18-34. This is in accordance with the literature review that young people are more familiar with ICT tools and spend more time on the internet.
- *Workplaces.* 64.26% respondents are from the west part of China and showed great interests in

Thailand. Government policy of China West Development since the 2000s encouraged more than 70% of the affluent Chinese people are now accommodating in the western China (Thraehar et al., 2012). Furthermore, the lifestyle in the west China is much more relaxing than the east, and are more willing to travel.

- *Occupations.* People work in the public sector cover 28.64% and company employees are 44.19%, who are the major customers for short-distant travels.
- *Education.* 69.77% of the total samples have received a higher education; 20.07% obtained a Master's degree and 3.06% are PhD holders. This shows that the respondents are well-educated and are more capable to use ICT tools to search for information about destinations online.
- *Monthly income.* The monthly income between 2001-7000 Yuan covers the majority (66.71%) and the percentage of high income between 7001-10,000 Yuan, even more than 10,000 per month is 13.83%. According to the standard of the average wages in China, the majority of the survey samples belong to the middle, even high-income class (*China Statistical Yearbook*, 2016).
- *Experiences of working or studying abroad.* The majority of the respondents (85.68%) have no experiences of working or studying abroad, which indicates that to acquire an authentic understanding of tourism destination and foreign cultures is difficult.
- *Language Proficiency: varieties and proficiency.* 78.58% of the respondents can use English or Thai either as a working language or a tool for daily communication, which shows that the majority of the respondents have few language barriers when traveling to Thailand.

In summary, the demographic features indicate that the knowledge about the new Chinese tourists for the destination of Thailand depicts a young, affluent, well-educated segment with a tendency of female and western China residents.

4.3 Knowledge from the Chinese Tourists

Ten questions were asked in order to understand the ideas, thoughts, preferences and consumption experiences towards specific tourism products or services provided by Thailand. Among the 817 collected samples, 591 of which (72.34%) have never been to Thailand before, whose preferences and expectations are of great significance to the tourism products and services providers. This part of knowledge can help the destination to improve its current products and services and introduce new ones to better meet tourists' needs (Desouza & Awazu, 2005).

- *Group tour or individual travels:* 40.02% of the respondents would like to join a tour group, and 59.98% would like to design and travel independently by themselves or with friends and families. This result is in accordance with the report of *Big Data for China Outbound Tourists* (2016).
- *Planned time of travelling to Thailand.* When asking about the duration/ length of the visit in Thailand, half of the respondent (51.77%) would like to spend one week; 39.96% prefer to stay for 1-2 weeks; very few (8.57%) can stay for three weeks or one month (2.69%).
- *Budget of travelling to Thailand.* According to the length of stay, the expenditure varies. 59.85% of the respondents would like to prepare a less than 10,000 yuan weekly budget for their travel including air ticket, visa, accommodation and food. 29.38% would like to spend 10,000- 15,000 yuan, 7.1% for 15,000-20,000 yuan. Research conducted by World Tourism Cities Federation (2014) showed that among all the consumption of Chinese outbound tourists, 57.76% were spent on shopping with lodging (17.82%) and transport (10.88%) followed. The smallest expenditure

went for entertainment (3.72%) and tipping (0.13%).

- *Factors that influence decisions to travel to Thailand.* The beautiful islands and beaches, the exotic culture of southeast Asia and a variety of tropical fruits at low prices are the three top factors that influence the decisions to travel to Thailand. Thai food and low-cost shopping also attracted many respondents.
- *Ways of making purchase for independent travelers.* This question was asked to understand the major online-travel agencies that the respondents prefer to use when making purchases of tourism products and services. It is shown that Ctrip (Shanghai-based), Qunar (Beijing-based) and Booking (US-based) are the top three choices. The two Chinese companies have recently announced a share swap and are now dominating the Chinese online travel market.
- *Channels to search tourism information about Thailand.* Concerning searching information about Thailand, Chinese people have got used to the biggest Chinese-language search engine-‘Baidu’ (81.88%) instead of ‘Google’(17.14%), particularly after Google company quit offering a censored ‘Google.cn’ search engine to the Chinese market in 2010. Besides ‘Baidu’, the websites of travel agencies in China are also major information channels (35.99%) for the respondents.
- *Channels to share tourism information about travelling in Thailand.* When asking about the social media that the respondents usually use to share information, the most-often used tools/ platforms are Wechat (74.30%, a mobile text and voice messaging communication service), Weibo (54.71%, a Microblogging service) and Tencent QQ (53.12%, an instant messaging software service), which are all popular Chinese social media.
- *Services expected when traveling to Thailand:* when asking what tourism services are expected if traveling to Thailand, the top three wishes are the Chinese reminders of local culture and custom (56.06%), signs in Chinese language (55.81%) and Internet package of the Internet access with SIM cards (48.96%). The introduction of tourism products in the Chinese language (42.96%) and service providers (e.g. staff, waiters, drivers etc.) who can speak Chinese (44.55%) are believed important to bring pleasant experiences to Chinese tourists. Very few respondents (2.45%) are dependent on the tour guides.
- *Other destinations besides or within the same trip to Thailand:* The other ASEAN countries that the respondents would like to visit besides or within the same trip to Thailand. The top five countries are Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines and Brunei, which may bring fierce competition to Thailand.

Based on the results obtained above, the preferences and expectations of the respondents concerning travelling to the destination of Thailand (*knowledge from customer*) can be described in a form of a sample travelling plan as follows:

- To organize a trip independently and preferably travel with friends or families;
- To spend 1-2 weeks for the trip and pay 10,000-15,000 yuan for air tickets, hotels, visa and meals;
- To visit beautiful islands, experience culture of southeast Asia and enjoy Thai food as well as tropic fruits;
- To obtain tourism information mainly in Chinese language from Baidu and Chinese travel agencies;
- To share tourism information via Chinese social media e.g. Weichat, Weibo and QQ;
- To purchase tourism products and services online through China-based online travel agencies e.g. Ctrip and Qunar.

- To be provided with Chinese signs of 'dos and don'ts' as well as an access to the internet with smart phones;
- To make a stop in Thailand, if the trip is planned to or combined with other comparatively developed ASEAN countries e.g. Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

4.4 Knowledge for the Chinese Tourists

This part intends to purposively provides information and knowledge about tourism products and services of Thailand to the Chinese tourists (*knowledge for customer*) in order to facilitate the purchases or repetitive purchases. Aiming at building mutual trust, delimiting psychological and cultural barriers, as well as facilitating communication between the Chinese tourists and tourism products/ services providers in Thailand, six questions were asked.

- *The first impression of Thailand.* When asking about the first thing that is called to the minds when thinking of Thailand, the top five key elements are: lady boy show, a country of Buddhism, abundant tropical fruits, Thai food and beautiful islands and beaches. It is surprising that the key element ranked on the top is the lady boy show, which has never been the tourism marketing focus of the Thai tourism authorities. Some negative impressions were also mentioned e.g. riots and unstable politics. Table 3 listed the key elements and the corresponding ranks.

Ranking	Key elements called to mind	Ranking	Key elements called to mind
1	Lady boy show	7	Thai boxing
2	A country of Buddhism	8	Shopping paradise with low prices
3	Abundant tropical fruits	9	Thai rice
4	Thai food	10	A state of etiquette
5	Beautiful islands and beaches	11	Thai films and series
6	Land of smile	12	High quality of tourism services
13	Experience exotic culture of southeast Asia		
Others	Gay culture, Riots, Unstable politics, Thai massage, the first female prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra		

Table 3: The ranking of the first thing that is called to respondents' mind when thinking of Thailand

- *Perceptions of similarities or differences between Chinese and Thais:* when asking about whether the respondents think Thai people behave the same as the way that the Chinese do, the majority of the respondents believe that Thai people have the same body languages (41.62%) and facial expressions (26.35%) as the Chinese do. 34.76% believe that Thais keep the same extent of physical spaces as the Chinese do, and the way of eye contact (29.99%) as well as the extent of being polite (26.68%) are the same. A small portion of respondents notice that Thai people are different from Chinese in the way of dressing (17.74%) and physical contact (9.06%); and they also mentioned the speed (11.63%) and volume (13.83%) of speech are also different.
- *Perceptions of the cultural differences.* The respondents are asked about how they think about the cultural conflicts recently happened between Chinese tourists and Thai local businessmen and residents, 70.50% respondents believe that those Chinese tourists didn't mean to 'misbehave', for they do not know about Thai culture and custom; 42.59% believe language barrier is the major

reason that caused the misunderstanding. 29.13% claimed that those Chinese tourists brought their own habits to Thailand but didn't mean to behave improperly. 21.30% suggested more signs (preferably in Chinese) should be shown to remind tourists of 'don'ts'. Only few of the respondents consider that those misbehaviors are purposefully conducted.

- *Unacceptable issues about Thailand.* Mosquitoes (54.35%), hot weather (31.21%) and food that not match personal tastes (30.48%) are the top three issues that the respondents feel difficult to accept when/ if travelling to Thailand. 23.62% of the respondents believe that language is a barrier, and 13.83% can not accept a man dressing like women. It is noted that only 24.48% of the respondents feel no problem to accept any differences that they may encounter in Thailand.
- *Preparation before the trip to Thailand.* Considering the differences that may cause inconveniences and difficulties in a trip to Thailand, the respondents are asked about what measures they will take to prepare themselves. It is found that 77.85% of the respondents will learn about culture and custom of Thailand in advance. 75.40% of them will read articles written by professionals and experienced travelers and 56.30% will consult their friends who have been to Thailand before. 48.59% of the respondents will make a travel plan which includes a list of the tourism attractions. Concerning of money, to bring some Thai baht exchanged from the bank (46.65%) is more preferable for the respondents than taking Chinese yuan (37.33%) or credit cards (37.09%) with them. As for the language preparation, to learn some basic Thai is thought as more useful than English. Very few respondents (2.82%) will prepare nothing but follow the tour guides.
- *Who should take the responsibilities of communicating with tourists?* The top three sectors are believed to be responsible for communicating with Chinese tourists concerning travelling to Thailand, which are China National Tourism Administration (CNTA, 71.73%), Chinese travel agencies (63.16%) and Chinese tourists themselves (56.43%). On the other hand, tourism sectors such as The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT), Embassy and consulates of China in Thailand and Thai travel agencies are also expected to work together in helping Chinese tourists to know more about Thailand as well as its tourism products and services. 50.43% of the respondents argue that more signs (preferably in Chinese) should be put at the tourism attractions and more information should be communicated through various channels. 35.01% suggest that schools are important to introduce cultural differences and help people to overcome the cross-cultural difficulties.

5. Discussion

Based on the findings of the survey, a two-dimensional Pearson correlation analysis is made in order to further understand the strength of the association between two variables of the research (Bryman and Burgess, 1994). The variables are selected by the researchers in order to further explore the research questions.

- *Income of the respondents (Question 8) and their perceptions of Thailand (Question 10):* Table 4 shows that the variable Q8 is highly related with variables A3 and A13 of Q10, which means *the higher income of the respondents* has a more positive perception of Thailand being 'a state of etiquette' (A3) and 'land of smiles' (A13). On the other hand, the lower income of the respondents has a significant relationship with 'lady boy show' (A5) and extremely significant relationship with 'Thai films and series' (A11) as their first impression on Thailand.

Correlation Analysis		Q10_ A1	Q10_ A2	Q10_ A3	Q10_ A4	Q10_ A5	Q10_ A6	Q10_ A7	Q10_ A8	Q10_ A9	Q10_ A10	Q10_ A11	Q10_ A12	Q10_ A13	Q10_ A14
Q8	Pearson correlation(r)	.033	-.027	.105**	.074*	-.090*	.039	-.005	.019	-.050	-.052	-.144**	-.016	.096**	.022
	Significance (p)	.347	.446	.003	.035	.010	.269	.898	.581	.153	.135	.000	.639	.006	.530
**: p < 0.01: extremely significant *: p < 0.05: significant															

Table 4: The correlation analysis between the income of respondents and their perceptions of Thailand

- *Experience of visiting Thailand (Question 9) and the perceptions of Thailand (Question 10):* Table 5 indicates that the variable Q9 has a significant relationship with A10 and a highly significant relationship with A5 of Q10, which means the respondents who have not had an experience of visiting Thailand are relevant to lady boy shows (A5) and Thai boxing (A10) as the first impressions of Thailand. The items of A1, A3, A4, A6, A8, A13 of Q10 are extremely relevant to Q9, which can be explained that the respondents who have visited Thailand are more likely to perceive that the featuring elements of Thailand include a state of etiquette (A1), beautiful islands and beaches (A3), Thai food (A4), high quality of tourism services (A6), shopping paradise with low price (A8) and land of smiles (A13).

Correlation Analysis		Q10_ A1	Q10_ A2	Q10_ A3	Q10_ A4	Q10_ A5	Q10_ A6	Q10_ A7	Q10_ A8	Q10_ A9	Q10_ A10	Q10_ A11	Q10_ A12	Q10_ A13	Q10_ A14
Q9	Pearson correlation(r)	-.266**	-.032	-.147**	-.102**	.225**	-.272**	-.044	-.145**	.034	.088*	.036	-.005	-.386**	-.076*
	Significance (p)	.000	.360	.000	.003	.000	.000	.209	.000	.333	.012	.306	.895	.000	.029
**: p < 0.01: extremely significant *: p < 0.05: significant															

Table 5: The correlation analysis between respondents' experiences of visiting Thailand and their perceptions of Thailand

- *Level of education (Question 5) and recognition of cultural differences (Question 21):* from Table 6, it is found that the variable Q5 has an extremely negative relationship with A9 and a significantly negative relationship with A7, A8 of Q21, meaning that the respondents with higher level of education believe that the speed (A7) and volume of speech (A8) of Thai people as well as the extent of being polite (A9) in Thailand are more likely different from how Chinese people behave. This indicates that the level of education is significant relevant to the ability of recognizing cultural differences.

Correlation Analysis		Q21_ A1	Q21_ A2	Q21_ A3	Q21_ A4	Q21_ A5	Q21_ A6	Q21_ A7	Q21_ A8	Q21_ A9
Q5	Pearson correlation(r)	-.010	.009	.019	.082*	-.042	.027	-.072*	-.088*	-.097**
	Significance (p)	.771	.800	.597	.020	.229	.447	.039	.012	.006
**: p < 0.01: extremely significant *: p < 0.05: significant										

Table 6: The correlation analysis between the respondents' level of education and abilities of recognizing the differences

- Experience of visiting Thailand (Question 9) and the extent of accepting differences (Question 22). Table 7 shows that the variable Q9 has a high association with A4, A5 and A6 and is significantly relevant to A3 of Q22, which means that the respondents who have visited Thailand feel difficult to accept mosquitoes (A4), hot weather (A5) and food that do not match their personal tastes (A6). Language barrier (A3) is another obstacle for the respondents to understand the local culture and communicate with the local residents. It is noted that the variable A8 is negatively relevant to Q9, meaning that the respondents who have never been to Thailand tend to welcome all the differences.

Correlation Analysis		Q22_ A1	Q22_ A2	Q22_ A3	Q22_ A4	Q22_ A5	Q22_ A6	Q22_ A7	Q22_ A8
Q9	Pearson correlation(r)	.061	.045	.089*	.125**	.113**	.184**	-.023	-.158**
	Significance (p)	.083	.195	.011	.000	.001	.000	.510	.000
**: p < 0.01: extremely significant									
*: p < 0.05: significant									

Table 7: The correlation analysis between the experience of visiting Thailand and the extent of accepting differences

- Experience of visiting Thailand (Question 9) and opinions of the current issues of cultural conflict (Question 23): In Table 8, variables A1 and A3 of Q23 have an extremely significant relationship with Q9, and A6, A7 and A8 have a highly negative relationship, indicating that the respondents who have visited Thailand strongly believe that the cultural conflicts recently happened between Chinese tourists and Thai local businessmen and residents are caused by language barriers (A1) and an ignorance of the local culture and custom (A3), meanwhile the respondents do not agree that those Chinese tourists deliberately behaved improperly or disrespected the local culture (A6-8).

Correlation Analysis		Q23_ A1	Q23_ A2	Q23_ A3	Q23_ A4	Q23_ A5	Q23_ A6	Q23_ A7	Q23_ A8	Q23_ A9
Q9	Pearson correlation(r)	.120**	.044	.105**	.034	.013	-.155**	-.114**	-.135**	-.088*
	Significance (p)	.001	.206	.003	.338	.710	.000	.001	.000	.012
**: p < 0.01: extremely significant										
*: p < 0.05: significant										

Table 8: The correlation analysis between experience of visit Thailand and opinions of the current issues of cultural conflict

6. Conclusion

This research offers a further step to understand the demographic features, travel preferences and expectations of the Chinese outbound tourists concerning travelling to Thailand in order to maintain Thailand as a primary tourist destination in the Chinese outbound market. The research advances other literature from a perspective of customer knowledge management, which specifically focuses on the knowledge about customer, knowledge from customer and knowledge for customer.

Based on the uncovered issues from the findings, a comprehensive knowledge framework is proposed to

the Thai tourism industry and government authorities, as Figure 1 shows below:

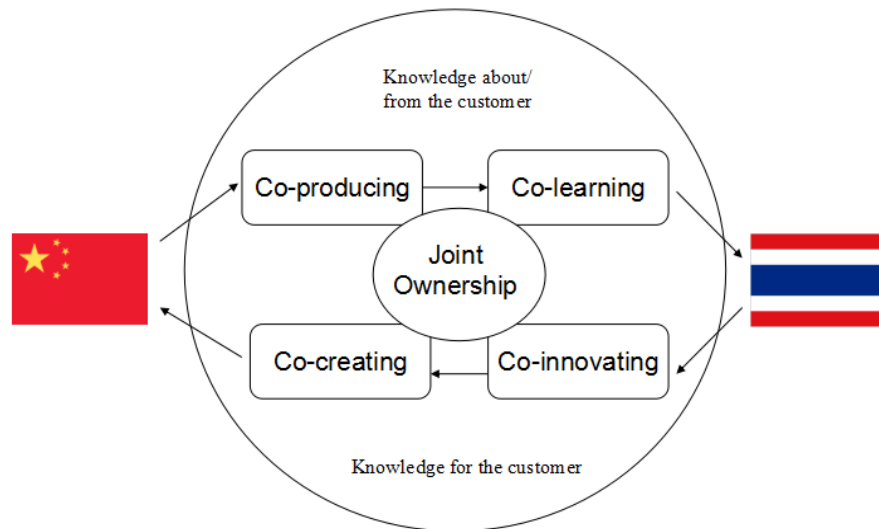


Figure 1: The strategic knowledge framework proposed to the Thai tourism sectors
(derived from Gibbert, Leibold and Probst, 2002)

As the Figure 1 shows, customer knowledge management can be used to provide knowledge sharing platforms and processes (Gibbert, Leibold and Probst, 2002) between Chinese tourists and Thai tourism sectors through five ways, which are:

- co-producing, which the customers are engaged into the process of making/ planning tourism products;
- co-learning, which the companies learn with and from the customers and co-create knowledge with customers;
- co-innovating, which the companies integrate tourists in innovating practices;
- co-creating, which the companies create new knowledge and values with customers;
- joint ownership, which the companies co-create future businesses and together.

Through these five ways, knowledge about and from the customers are not only dependent on the employees and the customer database of the companies, but is obtained from directly interacting with customers, and to provide for as well as co-create knowledge together with customers.

Other suggestions are put forward according to the findings of the survey:

- Cross-cultural communication is of great concern. The survey of Kim *et al.* (2005) indicated that top drivers that influence the visitors are local communities' hospitality and feeling of safety. It is suggested that government publicity via official media channels is necessary to pay attention to cultural conflicts and correct unfavorable images, which are greatly influenced by the efficiency and effectiveness of cross-cultural communication and language expressions.
- Although there is an increasing number of Chinese who can use English or Thai either as a working language or a tool for daily communication, Chinese language is much more preferred in searching, reading and sharing information. An understanding and respect of the Chinese culture and

tourists' habits can improve satisfactions: e.g. anti-mosquito oil, teapot for making a cup of Chinese tea in the room; hotel staffs who speak basic Chinese; some Chinese food (especially hot dishes) in the breakfast buffet, etc. Besides language, the internet connection and particularly the use of mobiles will facilitate developing better customer relationships. User-generated content linking a wide range of social media will bring Thailand to the playing field of word-of-mouth.

- From the survey, it is noticed that Chinese tourists do not have sufficient awareness about Thai culture nor are competent enough to accept the differences, which are believed as the major reason of cultural conflict or misunderstandings that influence purchases of tourism products.
- To work with the mainstream of the Chinese social media (e.g. Wechat, Weibo and QQ) will help to gain more interests in Thailand, meanwhile to facilitate communication. A strategic collaboration with the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) and the Chinese government will enhance the senses of confidence and security of Chinese tourists. A partnership with the banks of China will build trust and confidence of the Chinese tourists, which will largely facilitate purchases.

Further research is suggested to investigate how to manage the knowledge at the side of Thai local residents, which will help to extend and improve this study.

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Reconfiguring Lan Na Religiosity: Interconnectedness of Religious Actors through Spirit Possession in Chiang Mai, Northern Thailand

Fukuura, Kazuo

Toin University of Yokohama
Japan

Abstract

In historical Chiang Mai, the center of the Lan Na kingdom from the end of the thirteenth century until the beginning of the twentieth century, spirit worship, spirit mediumship, and Theravada Buddhism were major traditions of spirituality, together forming a loosely configured religious system. Though one hundred years has passed since its integration into Siam, the city's traditional religiosity still persists among the local people today.

This paper will explore two recent historical developments. First, since the end of the twentieth century, ethnographic scholarship has discussed the resurgence of matrilineal spirit cults and spirit mediumship in northern Thailand. While these two cults accompany spirit possession, basically they have been practiced independently. However, recent observations indicate that parts of these two types of major collective spirit possession rituals in Chiang Mai have tended to merge with each other into one totality. In fact, more and more mediums consider these two cults as indispensable elements which represent the religious tradition of Chiang Mai. The recent popularity of the annual "three kings ritual" and the formation of an assembly of spirit mediums illustrate such a viewpoint. Second, there are some indications that the importance of the above-mentioned traditional religiosity of the city has become more important for religious actors. In fact, recent observations about the relationship between spirit mediumship and Theravada Buddhism indicate that not only mediums but also some monks recognize the historical importance of spirit belief in Chiang Mai. By examining these two developments, this paper explores the heterogeneous and multifaceted relationships among the religious practitioners of spirit worship, spirit mediumship, and Theravada Buddhism in contemporary Northern Thailand.

Keywords: Chiang Mai, reconfiguration of traditional religiosity, spirit worship, spirit mediumship, Theravada Buddhism, interconnectedness

Introduction

In historical Chiang Mai, the center of the Lan Na kingdom from the end of the 13th century until the beginning of the 20th century, spirit worship, spirit mediumship, and Theravada Buddhism were major traditions of spirituality, together forming a loosely configured religious system. Although 100 years has passed since its integration into Siam, the city's traditional religiosity persists among the local people.

In the Lan Na society, a variant of Theravada Buddhism was practiced, referred to as the "Yuan cult." According to Keyes (1971), this local version of Theravada Buddhism differs from the variant found in Siam

proper in terms of the script used for the sacred literature, structure and content of rituals, and organization of the Buddhist clergy, or Sangha. While also found among Tai-speaking people in the Burmese Shan State, parts of northern Laos, and southern China, it probably originated from northern Thailand, where it developed elaborately in the 16th century (Keyes, 1971).

While Lan Na Buddhism was a major religion in the kingdom, spirit worship was also widely practiced. According to Anan (1999), successive kings of Chiang Mai strengthened the authenticity of their political power by syncretizing the belief in the ancient kings as their ancestor spirits and belief in a group of guardian spirits of the localities, and by controlling rituals for the guardian spirits of the traditional city-state (*mueang*). Belief in the guardian spirits of the city-state became an important base of political power for the kings of Chiang Mai (Anan, 1999).

During the Lan Na period, several calendrical rituals for the guardian spirits of Chiang Mai developed. Some are still practiced as part of the locality's cultural heritage. For example, a ritual is held to worship the god Indra's pillar (Sao Inthakhin), a tradition of treating grandfather Sae and grandmother Sae (Prapheni Liang Pu Sae Ya Sae), and a ritual to maintain the good fortune of Chiang Mai as a traditional city-state (Suep Chata Mueang). An important characteristic is that these rituals are syncretic, as all feature Buddhist chanting for the guardian spirits of the city in their ritual processes.

After the integration of Lan Na into Siam at the beginning of the 20th century, traditional spirit worship was strictly regulated, as it was directly tied to the former suzerainty. Since then, the belief had been quasi-obsolete. However, at the end of the 20th century, consequent to social development and urbanization, this tendency changed significantly. In the 1970s, while traditional spirit worship in rural areas started to decline based on the unequal development and modernization of social life in northern Thailand, spirit mediumship in urban areas was increasing, featuring the spirits of the kings in northern and central Thai history as loyal protectors of the polity against the threat of communism (Irvine, 1984). In the 1980s, newly invented spirits such as the kings in northern Thai myth, legend, or history, and the Hindu gods of central Thai origin emerged, reflecting the current urbanization and consumerism. The services of mediums included new services to realize individual desires such as consulting on business and divination of the winning numbers for the lottery draw, as well as traditional services such as divination and healing (Tanabe, 2002). The 1990s witnessed impressive scenes regarding spirit mediumship. While the local people employed the rites of cursing against the military junta and condominium construction, businessmen frequently visited mediums to secure success in their businesses (Morris, 2000).

My fieldwork at the beginning of the 21st century, which lasted more than a decade, showed that mediumship in Chiang Mai comprises all the features cited above, and that traditional spirit worship in rural areas has not significantly declined (Fukuura, 2016). Furthermore, some cases demonstrate that spirit mediums try to interconnect spirit possession rituals formerly considered independent of each other, insisting they belong to the same tradition. In addition, some Buddhist monks also respect spirit worship. They are closely tied with spirit mediums and sometimes seen during collective rituals of spirit mediumship in and around Chiang Mai.

This paper explores two recent historical developments. First, since the end of the 20th century, ethnographic scholarship has discussed the resurgence of matrilineal spirit cults and spirit mediumship in northern Thailand. While these two cults accompany spirit possession, they are independently practiced. However, the "Three Kings Ritual," the biggest collective ritual in Chiang Mai mediumship, successfully merges these two cults, and the recent establishment of an Assembly of Spirit Mediums for the annual ritual suggests that mediums consider this merge important in the locality's religious tradition. Furthermore, at the local community level, people often hold collective rituals comprising both. Second,

there is some indication that the above-mentioned traditional religiosity of the city has become more important for religious actors. Case studies on Buddhist monks who respect spirit worship to varying degrees demonstrate a peculiar relationship between spirit mediumship and Theravada Buddhism in northern Thailand. This should be understood as the merging of spirit mediumship and Theravada Buddhism in these monks, rather than a “cross-over between spirit mediumship and Theravada Buddhism” (Muecke, 1992). The relationship between these actors in northern Thailand is elucidated in this paper.

I. Merging the Two Types of Collective Spirit Possession Rituals in Chiang Mai

1. Special Types of Matrilineal Descent Cults and the Collective Ritual of Spirit Mediumship

Two types of religious traditions in northern Thailand feature collective spirit possession. One is the special types of matrilineal descent cults such as Phi Meng (Mon spirits) and Phi Mot (ant spirits)¹¹⁹. The other is the collective ritual of spirit mediumship. First, Phi Meng and Phi Mot are categorized as a special type of matrilineal lineage spirits called *phi pu ya* (ancestral spirits). According to Tanabe (1991), Phi Meng spirits can be found in the Mae Ping Valley between Chiang Mai and Lamphun, and in the Mae Wang Valley of Lampang. These special types of matrilineal descent groups normally consist of ten to sometimes a hundred households, and each group has specific foods for offering such as chicken, pork, or dried fish (Tanabe, 1991). Unlike other spirits, descent members of the Phi Meng family practice the collective ritual of spirit dance once every few years. These spirit dances are accompanied by several theatrical sequences. Descent groups of Phi Mot practice a similar collective ritual.

Second, the other type of religious tradition, which features collective spirit possession, encompasses various collective rituals of spirit mediumship. These have been held by spirit mediums in and around Chiang Mai at least since the 1970s. Along with daily trance séances with devotees, they constitute an indispensable part of their religious practices. Changing the host medium and ritual site, they perform these collective rituals almost every day of the year, except during the Buddhist Lent Retreat season. The most common form of such rituals is named *yok khu* (to worship deceased masters).

2. Comparison of Ritual Structures: Special Types of Matrilineal Descent Cults and the Collective Ritual of Mediumship

(1) Theatrical Sequences in Special Types of Matrilineal Descent Cults

In special types of matrilineal descent cults, many theatrical sequences are commonly performed. Examples include paying respect to the banana tree trunk (*wai ton khluai*) in the shrine, making merits to the Buddhist monk (*tham bun tak bat*), planting rice (*pluk khao*), pouring water in the Thai New Year (*rot nam pi mai*), taming elephants (*khlong chang*), and washing rafts (*phae*). During the rituals, a small traditional orchestra—called *phiphat Mon* or Mon-style orchestra—plays traditional songs in the background such as “Mon People in Chiang Saen” (*Mon Chiang Saen*), “Mon People in Lampang” (*Mon Lampang*), and “The Song of Burma” (*Phama*).

The origin of these spirits has been traced to the Mon people, who were migrants in the region in the earliest historical period of Lan Na¹²⁰, and these ritual sequences are often said to originate directly from

¹¹⁹ *Mot* or ant, generally means something that is dwarfish. Though descent groups that worship Phi Mot are regarded as slightly inferior to Phi Meng groups, they usually retain a good relationship with each other.

¹²⁰ See Irvine (1982) and Tanabe (1991). For example, Irvine (1982) estimates that Mon populations migrated into Thailand long before the arrival of other Mon groups from Southern Burma during the period of Burmese domination

the so-called *kalok* [=spirit] dance, an ancestral spirit ritual of the Mon people¹²¹. In fact, similar sequences are also found in the *kalok* dance: first, there is a sequence of “cutting the plantain tree.” In this occasion, the members throw some parched rice toward plantain stalks, which is similar to the “paying respect to the banana tree trunk.” Second, there is a sequence of “The *kalok* becomes a monk,” which evokes the sequence of “making merits to the Buddhist monk”. Furthermore, the dance contains a sequence of “catching the elephant,” and ends with “floating the canoe.” Consequently, it seems that special types of matrilineal descent rituals in northern Thailand have mostly been derived from the basic ritual structures of the Mon practices.

However, people in northern Thailand pay little attention to the origin of these special types of matrilineal descent cults. Furthermore, they insist that their rituals belong to them right from their origin, and the ritual sequences represent the historical social lives of the northern Thai people. In order to assess how “the prince and people in Lan Na came to regard it as an aspect of Thai-Yuan custom” (Irvine, 1982), we must understand meanings of the ritual sequences through the historical perspective of the locality. The first sequence is connected with the local economy of Chiang Mai in the 19th century (Bowie, 1988). In the past, the northern Thai economy was not self-sufficient, mostly consisting of participants deficient of rice. Land ownership was unequal, with villagers covering the spectrum from landless laborers to holders of very large plots of land. As such, the sequence of paying respect to the trunk could be regarded as a ritualized memory of the shortage of provisions previously faced by members of local communities. Other scenes feature theatrical portrayals of everyday life in the historical village setting. The precept-observing Buddhist monk is indispensable to Thai society, and the celebration of the Thai New Year is still as important in contemporary local communities. The ritual taming of elephants indicates that the elephants owned by the ancient royal family and nobility in Chiang Mai were a major source of wealth. In addition, the ritual washing of the raft in the river signifies the importance of the river rafters who transported various trade goods down the Ping River, which flows along the east side of the old city. Alternatively, some explain that the raft is for removing trash or something “rubbishy” from the altar or from the family, cleansing the entire descent group. Nonetheless, we must loosely interpret the chronology of these theatrical representations.

Many sequences could represent social actualities from as early as the 19th century until the middle of the 20th century, when urbanization first loomed in the city. Evidently, these ritual sequences represent historical social relations in Chiang Mai, as my fieldwork suggests there has been no change in Phi Meng or Phi Mot rituals for at least 100 years for several generations. Consequently, people in northern Thailand have conserved their own historical social memories by appropriating the ritual practices of the Mon people. From a socioeconomic viewpoint, the significance of the ritual for ancestral spirits is the conservation of historical actualities in local society.

(2) Collective Rituals of Professional Spirit Mediumship

On the other hand, the collective rituals of professional spirit mediumship have borrowed the basic mechanism of ritual representation from these matrilineal rituals. Different from the Phi Meng and Phi Mot rituals, the basic structure of professional mediumship comprises only a few sequences at best, and features instead spirit dances accompanied by lively music dedicated to the host spirit(s) of the day. While Irvine (1984) proposed two ritual scenarios—a subdued ceremony at dawn and raucous dance event in the

between the 16th and 18th centuries: the original Mon migrants, some of who have constituted significant populations in Haripunchai and have been totally assimilated, could well have introduced the possession feature into Lan Na.

¹²¹ As to the Mon Dance, see Halliday (2000 (1917)).

daytime—Wijeyewardene (1986) views the rituals as important insofar as they gain public recognition for the mediums and establish their practice as public and culturally sanctioned. Morris (2000) accurately described the multiplicity of spirits and the diversity of locations for rituals. Fukuura (2011) claimed that the rituals form a normal sequence of events for the mediums in a multilayered structure with the tutelary spirit of the city pillar of Chiang Mai at the top of the hierarchy, and that their participation in these collective events is crucial to the creation of their mobile communities. While these remarks concisely describe ethnographic accounts of the ritual space and the functional roles of the mediums, they do not address the loosely constructed sequences in the ritual.

The significance of the collective ritual of dance lies in the ritual representation of modern aspects of local society. Although the fixed style of the music and the lengthy, seamless performance of many songs provide the ritual with a homogeneous totality, the rich variety of ritual music interconnects the authenticity of the historical local society with the ordinary way of life in contemporary local society, thus providing the whole ritual with loose episodes. The music includes both traditional songs and Thai popular music, which are played on electric instruments by northern Thai local music bands (*dontri phuen mueang*). In this way, the heterogeneous background of the ritual is achieved through the intentional selection, arrangement, and repetition of the songs. Occasionally, a few ritual sequences are introduced, most based on local or religious traditions deemed important in the current local society. These sequences include Buddhist chanting, Hindu rituals, or sword dancing.

Notwithstanding, the most important sequences in the collective rituals of mediumship are spirit mediums themselves, or their concrete actions. They are possessed by various spirits and behaving at the will of these spirits. These spirits are diverse, ranging from the traditional—ancestor spirits, guardian spirits of villages, Buddhist temples, or the traditional city-state—to high-ranking spirits including Hindu deities, northern Thai historical and mythological figures, and personages from the Ayutthaya and Bangkok periods. Lively music is played in the background, but the pluralistic and heterogeneous realignment of the possessing spirits constitutes the center stage of these collective rituals.

There is interconnectedness between these two types of spirit possession rituals in terms of their ritual structures, meanings, and significance. While matrilineal descent members in the ancestral spirit cult perform ritual sequences depicting historical representations of the Lan Na period, spirit mediums with various types of possessing spirits gather and fulfill loose sequences in their collective rituals. Through the two cults, local people negotiate and survive the paradigm of modernity imposed upon their communities to produce alternative solidarity and create heterogeneous and transversal identities (Fukuura, 2014).

3. The Three Kings Ritual and Assembly of Spirit Mediums in Lan Na

The importance of these two cults is recognized by professional spirit mediums in and around Chiang Mai. Since 1996, a ritual has been held to celebrate *sam kasat*, or the three kings of 13th century northern Thailand¹²². The so-called Three Kings Ritual is a collective ritual including professional mediumship and two matrilineal ancestor spirit cults, namely Phi Meng and Phi Mot, and has become the biggest ritual of spirit mediumship in Chiang Mai (Fukuura, 2011; Johnson, 2011).

Accordingly, the enactment of the ritual contributed to creating a communality of mediumship, prompting making the group of spirit mediums more formal. This resulted in the formation of the “assembly that inherits the tradition of Mon spirits, ant spirits, and gods in Lan Na” (*chomrom suepsan tamnan Phaya Mot*

¹²² The three kings are Mangrai, Ram Khamhaeng, and Ngam Mueang.

Phaya Meng Thepphachao Lanna)¹²³. Though an important purpose of the assembly is to foster mutual aid among members¹²⁴, its main objective is to hold the Three Kings Ritual without problems. Notwithstanding, recent developments suggest that the attempts of the assembly have stagnated, as there has been opposition among mediums in Chiang Mai regarding the formality of the assembly. As such, opinions are divided as to whether they should be united formally or only for events such as important rituals at the traditional city-state level.

These events aside, a focus on their attempts clarifies that the mediums understand the importance of maintaining the spirit possession rituals as a cultural asset and of uniting to retain, albeit loosely, their communality. Furthermore, the name of the assembly is significant, as it represents both the matrilineal spirits (*Phaya Mot Phaya Meng*) and spirits of mediumship (*Thepphachao*). Previously, the descent spirit cults were considered provincial and not as elaborate as spirit mediumship. However, recent recognition from both sides has made it possible to integrate them into one entity, which now represents the religious tradition of northern Thailand.

4. Case Studies: Recent Merging of Matrilineal Ancestor Spirit Cults and Spirit Mediumship

While the Three Kings Ritual makes it possible for most of those engaged in spirit possession rituals to create a religious entity concerning the ancient suzerainty of Lan Na, my recent observations reveal a similar merging of the two rituals at the local community level.

(1) Phi Meng Ritual Held in the Old City Area of Chiang Mai in February 2002

In February 2002, near to Suan Prung Gate, a collective ritual was held by a male medium living nearby. The ritual included a regular collective ritual of mediumship (*yok khu*) and the matrilineal ancestor spirit cult ritual. It included approximately 300 participants. At the time, such a ritual was rare.

(2) Phi Meng Ritual Held in Saraphi District in February 2006 and 2013

In February 2006 and February 2013, I was allowed to observe a Phi Meng ritual held by the same descent group. In seven years, there had been significant change in the management of the ritual, and the number of male members had decreased. In 2006, male members were very visible. In 2013, while the number of female members had not significantly decreased, the number of those directly involved in the ritual sequences had decreased significantly. However, the number of spirit mediums involved considerably increased. While female members were dominant during the spirit dances, around 20 spirit mediums played the leading roles in most ritual sequences. During lunch, there were about 80 participants. The mediums were not related to this descent group by birth or marriage, and did not live in the same area as the group. However, they were acquainted with the chairperson of the descent group, who is also a spirit medium, through collective daily rituals of mediumship, and had become friends with this person.

(3) Phi Mot Ritual Held in Doi Saket District in March 2012

The changes became more evident in the Phi Mot ritual held in Doi Saket district in March 2012. While the host medium has Phi Mot and held a ritual for his matrilineal ancestor spirits, the lively atmosphere in the

¹²³ According to the regulation, regardless of the type of spirit, all mediums can apply for membership by submitting the necessary papers. A list with members' information indicates approximately 700 members in 2013. The assembly issues a membership card with a photograph. Members live in various places including Chiang Mai, Lamphun, Fang, and Chiang Dao. One core member explained that the assembly aims to mobilize all spirit mediums living in the former Lan Na areas. There is a committee of the assembly, and key posts include the chairman, vice chairman, and secretary. In addition, there are various other posts responsible for organizing the Three Kings Ritual.

¹²⁴ It is to raise funds for the family members of those deceased.

ritual place was similar to that in a regular collective ritual of spirit mediumship, and included around 180 participants. My recent observations suggest that it is taken for granted that spirit mediums can be involved in special types of matrilineal descent cults such as Phi Meng or Phi Mot. In such cases, mediums are pleased to play a part in lieu of the descent members. According to a member of the descent group, this group began to invite professional mediums for the first time around 20 years ago. Before then, they had invited only neighbors and members of other Phi Meng and Phi Mot groups with whom they were acquainted.

(4) The Phi Mot Ritual Held in Mae Rim District in February 2014

The Phi Mot ritual held in Mae Rim district in February 2014 substantiates the situation described above. Including around 300 participants, the ritual was similar to a collective ritual of professional mediumship, except it included several sequences. According to a member of the host descent group, the Phi Mot ritual is held every year. They have invited professional spirit mediums to the ritual for last five to seven years, and have welcomed all mediums. In this case, the major parts of the ritual were dominated by spirit mediums invited from outside the descent group, and most descent members watched the ritual from the periphery of the ritual place. Some members said that practicing the matrilineal ancestor spirit cult in this way was better, as they could hold a ritual fulfilling two objectives simultaneously. Essentially, they do not have to hold separate rituals of mediumship and for matrilineal ancestor spirits and can therefore save money.

4. Interconnectedness Between the Two Rituals Through Spirit Possession

So far, we have explored various cases of the merging of two types of collective spirit possession rituals: special types of matrilineal descent cults on the one hand, and the collective ritual of spirit mediumship on the other. Although formerly practiced independently, recent cases demonstrate that they are increasingly merging. While spirit mediums hold the Three Kings Ritual annually and founded the Assembly of Spirit Mediums in Lan Na, they often merge the two types of spirit possession rituals at the local community level. Thus, connecting these two cults, many consider the two rituals as indispensable elements representing the religious tradition of Chiang Mai. In short, those engaged in spirit possession in Chiang Mai are awakening to their own religio-cultural tradition.

II. Monks and Spirits

1. Traditional Religiosity in Chiang Mai

Throughout the history of the Lan Na kingdom, a variant of Theravada Buddhism dubbed the “Yuan cult” has been practiced. Furthermore, spirit worship has been practiced at various levels of society. A syncretic connection between these religions has formed a loosely configured religious system that functions as the religious authenticity of Chiang Mai as the traditional city-state.

This tradition remains an important domain in local society, as demonstrated by the local people’s periodic commitment to their matrilineal ancestor spirit cults or guardian spirit cults of their villages. Some of the large scale rituals are today becoming a religio-cultural tourism resource. Thus, the local people still accept and practice this syncretic religious tradition. While some Theravada Buddhist monks in Thailand reject the idea of spirit possession, the northerners generally do not tolerate such an attitude, as monks must respect the ordinary religious practices of the northern villagers in their parishes, such as a belief in village spirits or matrilineal ancestor spirits. Without such recognition, the monks would fail to command villagers’ respect.

Recognizing these contexts, we examine peculiar cases of the northern Thai Buddhist monks interconnected with northern Thai spirit worship and spirit mediumship.

2. Case Studies: Theravada Buddhist Monks and their Relationships with Spirit Worship and Spirit Mediumship

(1) Monk A Worships the Transcendent “Teacher”

Northern Thailand includes the religious tradition of worshipping *khu*, or the transcendent “teacher.” This spiritual being ensures the supernatural power of worshippers such as spirit mediums or traditional healers. This belief is widely observed in the domain of traditional handicrafts and skills as well, such as by silversmiths and traditional musicians. The most significant ritual item used in this worship is the *khan khu*, or the tray for the transcendent teacher on the altar. The teacher is said to dwell in these trays, and those involved in this tradition believe that the *khan khu* is the source of their magical power.

Monk A resided in Doi Saket district, Chiang Mai province in March 2017. He believes in his teacher and practices several types of magic in his temple. Aged in his 30s, in March 2017, he had been ordained for 13 years, and has worshipped the ritual tray of the supernatural being (*khruba achan*) for 20 years. Thanks to his teacher, he is able to continue his practice of making magic candles to purge bad luck (*sado kho (sado khro)*) and maintain good fortune (*suep chata*) and magic water (*nam mon*), which he gives to his devotees. He holds a ritual to present clothes to the monks (*pha pa*) once a year in the compound of his temple. At this occasion, he holds the *yok khu* (to worship deceased masters) ritual for his transcendent teacher. He made the tray, and his case differs from others in which master mediums prepare the trays, which disciples receive directly from their master.

Spirit mediums often visit his temple to give him a letter of invitation (*bat choen*) to collective rituals to be held in the near future, and monk A often joins in these. This is not deemed as deviant in Chiang Mai. On the contrary, other monks also practice in the domain of spirit worship.

(2) Monks B and C Were Possessed by Spirits Before Their Ordinations

(i) Monk B

Aged in his 30s, monk B resided in a Buddhist temple in Lamphun province in March 2017. At age 15 years, he felt a bad feeling (*bo sabai*), and consulted (a) a medical doctor and (b) a traditional healer and Buddhist monk. The traditional healer told him to become a spirit medium, which he accepted, becoming a medium. This was the Phi Mot spirit of his descent group. However, he did not have a master medium and constructed his altar on his own, using his knowledge about Phi Mot worship in his family. In this way, he obtained his ritual tray for his transcendent teacher (*hap khan*).

He then came to Chiang Mai to study at a university, at which time he first made contact with spirit mediums. Eventually, he joined in the collective rituals of mediumship in and around the city. After graduating, he worked for several years as a layman, and was then ordained. He has been a Buddhist monk for four years. After his ordination, the spirit stopped possessing him. While he often joins in the collective rituals of spirit mediumship, and even after being ordained, he believes in the existence of spirits. He explains, “In northern Thailand, spirits are within the Buddhist world. That is why Buddhist monks worship the various spirits of northern Thailand. Generally, monks in Chiang Mai worship spirits. It is normal for me to cooperate with spirit mediums in my ritual practices.”

(ii) Monk C

Monk C had similar experiences as monk B. Aged in his 30s, he resided in a temple in Lamphun province in

March 2017. He has been a spirit medium since age 13 years, and his master is a female medium. When he was in the first year of junior high school, he became a novice in a Buddhist temple to learn (*buat rian*). Then, at age 18, he experienced a second possession by the guardian spirit of the Buddhist temple (*suea wat*), which was confirmed by a spirit medium.

Nowadays, although his spirits never come to him, spirit mediums sometimes come to his temple to give him letters of invitation to collective rituals. Therefore, he sometimes leaves the temple to join the rituals of spirit mediumship. Last year, a ritual to present clothes to the monks was held in his temple, featuring the spirit dances of mediums.

Thus, the cases of monks B and C suggest that former spirit mediums retain their spirit worship even after being ordained, and recognize the importance of the belief. However, some monks go further to pursue their way of practicing spirit worship.

(3) Monks D, E, and F are De Facto Spirit Mediums

(i) Monk D

Aged in his 30s, monk D resided in a temple in Doi Saket district in March 2017. He has been ordained for more than a decade. A spirit first possessed him when he was 10 years old. He consulted a spirit medium, who told him to become a spirit medium. At age 13 years, he became a novice in a Buddhist temple. Therefore, it was not possible for him to practice spirit mediumship, although his possession by a spirit continued. When he was aged 20 years, he was ordained in a different district to that of his birthplace, because the spirit continued to harass him at his place of birth against his ordination.

He regards himself as a *sueng*, a Lan Na word meaning a person who is not a spirit medium, but feels that he/she has spirit(s). He has close ties with and is a disciple of a significant medium in Chiang Mai mediumship. Certainly, monk D is a Buddhist monk who can be possessed by spirits. In other words, he is a de facto spirit medium.

(ii) Monk E

Aged in his 50s, Monk E resided in a temple in Saraphi district in March 2017. He became a novice at age 12 years, and at age 21, he was officially ordained and became a Buddhist monk. At age 24, he became a *chao wat*, which holds the highest status in his temple. A few years later, the guardian spirit of his village (*pho ban*) possessed him. This possession significantly interrupted his meditation. For about 40 years, there were no spirit mediums for the one that possessed him. Eventually, he accepted becoming the medium for the spirit. Furthermore, he has a master medium. He says that he does not remember much about what happens during his possessions.

He explains there are many levels of *thep*, or gods, and their existence is confirmed in Theravada Buddhism¹²⁵. As such, spirit worship is not at all strange. He has never conducted a trance séance with devotees. For his spirit, he holds an annual ritual to which he invites many mediums to celebrate. He says that the villagers respect the guardian spirit of the village¹²⁶.

¹²⁵ He suggests the Buddhist cosmology of Three World. The three worlds are (1) *kāma bhūmi* or world of desire, which is made up of eleven realms including hell, the realm of the suffering ghosts, the realm of animals, the realm of the *asura*, the realm of humans, and six separate realms populated by six different kinds of *devatā*; (2) the *rūpa bhūmi* or world with only a remnant of material qualities, which is made up of sixteen realms that are related to the lower realms of jhanic attainment [=meditational attainment]; and (3) the *arūpa bhūmi* or world without material qualities, which is constituted by four realms each of which is related to one of the four higher realms of jhanic realization (Reynolds and Reynolds (trans.), 1982).

¹²⁶ I previously discussed Monk E. See Fukuura (2011).

(iii) Monk F

Aged in his 20s, Monk F resided in a temple in Saraphi district in November 2013. At the time of the interview, he was a second-year student at university. He first experienced a bad feeling (*bo sabai*) at age 12. Despite going to hospital, he did not recover. He then became a Buddhist novice, because he wanted to escape this bad feeling and obtain charisma (*barami*). At the same time, he felt something special, [an ability] which allowed him to tell fortunes, although he did not start practicing immediately. At the age of 17–18 years, he gradually accepted devotees who came to see him. During that time, he first consulted a powerful medium in Chiang Mai, who suggested that two spirits were possessing him. One was a high-ranking spirit that gives oracles, and the other a guardian spirit of his village, which had been the possessing spirit of his grandmother. He has since become a disciple of the medium.

Before becoming a Buddhist novice, he believed only in spirits. He explained, “In the Lan Na period, spirit worship persisted everywhere alongside Buddhism. King Mangrai, the first king of Lan Na, was correct in that both religions had been harmonious, and there had been no conflict between them during his reign. In Buddhist rituals, one must invite spirits (*phi*), Hindu gods such as Indra or Brahma, and Buddha to the ritual for blessing. Therefore, the belief in the existence of spirits is not wrong”¹²⁷.

He thinks that the knowledge of Buddhism comprises more than that. He chose Buddhism over spirit mediumship, because he thought he would obtain more charisma that way, and consequently, give this charisma [earned from practicing Buddhism] to his possessing spirits. He believes that his spirits have their age in this world, and that helping people through their supernatural power could contribute to their rebirth in a better world in Buddhist cosmology. When important collective rituals of mediumship are held, he normally joins them.

In November 2013, he experienced two important rituals. First, he held his own collective ritual for the first time. This ritual had two objectives: one was to present clothes to the monks (*pha pa*) in his house, and the other was a ritual to worship deceased masters. The ritual included two elements of the popular collective rituals of mediumship today. Striking is that the young Buddhist monk (on that day he was still novice) had his wrists tied with white thread by his master medium. This seemed unorthodox, as usually the former ties the wrists of the latter. The ritual gathered about 200 participants.

There was another important ritual for him in November 2013. Two days after the aforesaid ritual, a Buddhist ordination ritual (*buat*) for the then novice medium was held in a temple near his house. His master medium attended the ritual and donated food and drink, providing the young monk with moral support. He said that even after monk F was fully ordained, he was still his disciple. Monk F often joins collective rituals in and around Chiang Mai, where he associates with his group members. Here, even in his yellow robe, monk F is the disciple of his master medium when they attend the rituals of mediumship.

3. Interconnectedness of Theravada Buddhist Monks with Spirit Worship and Spirit Mediumship

These case studies on Buddhist monks demonstrate a peculiar relationship between spirit mediumship and Theravada Buddhism in Chiang Mai. The monks, who recognize the historical formation of the loosely configured religious system in the city and are conscious of its importance, are thus interconnected with spirit belief and spirit mediumship to varying degrees.

¹²⁷ This was done at his own ordination ritual in November 2013.

Conclusion

This paper explored two recent historical developments in the religious tradition in northern Thailand. First, both in the cases of the Three Kings Ritual and the Assembly of Spirit Mediums, and in the cases of the matrilineal descent cults at the local community level, matrilineal spirit cults and spirit mediumship merge into one entity. Second, as explored in the case studies on Buddhist monks who respect spirit worship to varying degrees, the importance of the traditional religiosity of Chiang Mai as a traditional city-state has been felt by a few conscious and practical Buddhist monks, and their close relationship with spirit mediumship embodies this traditional religiosity.

Thus, today, religious practitioners involved in spirit possession consciously and practically interconnect spirit worship, spirit mediumship, and Theravada Buddhism in and around Chiang Mai. Furthermore, the heterogeneity and multifaceted nature of their interconnectedness are creatively developing ritual communality in the area.

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Tai Ahom Tradition and Culture vis- a -vis Thai Culture: an In-depth Analysis

Gogoi, Hironmoni Borgohain
Namrup College, Dibrugarh University
Assam
India

Abstract

The Study is an attempt to understand some of the basic Tai traits and traditions interweaved in the lives of the Tai Ahom people in Assam, India and trying to relate them to the Thai culture which forms the essence of life in Thailand. The Tai Ahoms living in India and the Thais living in Thailand and all other Tai communities are the inheritors of the ancient Tai Culture and Civilization which could make an impress on world civilization almost five thousand years ago and persists till date. Because of migration to different parts of the world, occasioned by varied factors, they have been influenced by various social, cultural and religious factors in their new places of habitation - wherein they had adapted and assimilated themselves. Though they still carry with them their Tai cultural legacies, which are deeply embedded in their psyche and their way of life, they are not very aware of the underlying cultural and philosophical significances. Therefore, studies which attempt to identify and probe into these basic traits appear to be an urgent necessity for Tai/ Thai culture to be rediscovered, interpreted, understood, and analyzed to keep them alive, vibrant, and universal for contribution to the world of knowledge. The Methodology will be the Qualitative Approach and focus basically on the Primary Sources like religious rituals of birth, death, marriage, work culture, monuments, music and dance, manuscripts, interviews etc. Secondary sources include authoritative books, critical articles. Some of the salient findings are the understanding of the 'Humanism' inherent or interweaved into their culture, philosophy, way of life, and social relationships. It was this humanism that could set them apart from many other communities of the world where varied social discrimination existed. Uncovering this humanism would throw greater light on Tai/Thai Studies and Culture.

Keywords: humanism, tai traits, tai ahoms, underlying philosophy, Thai culture

For the humanist interested in art, literature, philosophy and religion, the ancient societies of China, Japan, Korea and Vietnam hold a mirror up to Western culture
(John K.Fairbank, 1998)

In reality the civilizations of the Occident and Orient are so interwoven that education built on the exclusion of one or the other can hardly be called education at all for it ignores half of human experience.

(Clyde & Beers, 1972)

Introduction

As is the case of all other ancient civilizations of the world, Tai culture and civilization began evolving and developing in its own characteristic manner influenced by environmental and social factors and the hard struggle and toil for survival of the people. One distinguishing feature of this culture is that this group of people inhabiting the eastern region of the world who were predominantly Mongolian in origin had remained comparatively isolated for a very long period of time from the remaining communities of the world. This happened because of their geographical isolation occasioned by the natural barriers (like the Himalayas, the Tibetan Plateau more than ten thousand feet high, the mountain chains radiating there – from, and the vast deserts and steppes of Central Asia and the rugged mountains and jungles of Southwest China and Southeast Asia) (John K.Fairbank, 1998).

The Tai Culture and Civilization which is the focal point of discussion forms one of the major foundations of the ancient Chinese civilization which in turn forms the basis for the cultures of the present day China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia (John K.Fairbank, 1998).

The study will be an attempt to understand the manifestation of Tai culture and civilization extant in the kingdom of Assam in North Eastern India which had been under the rule of the Tai Ahoms from 1228 AD to 1826 AD, a period spanning six hundred years. Efforts will be made to understand the underlying truths of culture and philosophy behind the massive stamps etched on the landscape in the form of vast sea-like ponds, hill- like pyramid –shaped burial mounds, palaces with underground tunnels, the solid stone bridges, the facts laden, objective historical records, the development of an organized system of governance, the relationships established with the neighboring kingdoms, the creation of human resources with versatile abilities, the withstanding of repeated Mughal invasions, the establishment of a self-sufficient economy etc.

Nartsupha and Wichasin (2007) observe that this group of Tai people had been able to carve the second largest Tai Kingdom in the world, next to Ayutthaya. Since the kingdom was independent for six centuries, it became the depository of a highly developed culture in the form of manuscripts, buildings, rituals and customs. The Ahoms did not have contact with other Tai groups over a long period. Therefore their historical documents reflect many archaic elements of the Tai community, which have been lost or obscured among other Tai groups. They did not have Buddhism and retained beliefs in natural and ancestral spirits. Their chronicles are supposed to be mines of knowledge of ancient Tai society and culture.

Lying in close proximity to medieval India, the Ahoms had to constantly withstand the attacks by the Mughals who had by then conquered almost the whole of India, except a very small handful of independent kingdoms. They were able to resist the Mughal Army seventeen times. There was only one time when they were defeated by the Mughals who tried to gain occupation of their land but this happened for a short period of time as the Ahom King, nobles and common men could not rest in peace until they were able to free their kingdom left to them by their ancestors. This bears evidence of their intense craving for freedom, valour, courage and deadly determination to triumph by virtue of their indomitable spirit no matter how strong and huge are the enemy forces.

When the first Tai Prince Choulung Siukapha arrived in the present day North Eastern Region of India, the land was inhabited by different indigenous communities belonging to the Mongolian stock and they had their chiefs and kings who ruled over them. He had set forth from Moung Mao Lung (located in present day Yunnan Province in South China) in 1215 AD accompanied by a huge band of nine thousand men folk comprising of nobles, queens (there are differences of opinion regarding this), priests, soldiers, the revered

deity Somdeo, their necessities of daily life, seeds of food grains etc. Moreover the Tai ruler had brought along with him Tai culture and civilization with which he would be working to carve a Tai Kingdom or Empire. It is recorded that his maternal grandmother had taken the initiative to send him to a different land to build a kingdom there. This strong hold of culture and civilization nourished and enriched with the lifeblood of 'humanism' would help him to win the hearts of the different communities residing in his new land who could recognize a sort of dignity and worth in the people. One of the attributes for the name of Assam appears to be interpreted as 'Asama' meaning 'unparalleled' or 'peerless' in Sanskrit (Devi, 1968).

Statement of the Problem

Strangely enough it is the word 'humanism' which appears silent in the books on history and culture dealing with the Tai Ahoms. History books appear to be concerned with the facts that had happened or occurred or 'what' happened and 'how' it happened. This paper would be an attempt to try to understand 'why' did the Tai people think in a certain line, behave in a certain manner. It would try to trace its origins and to see in what manner they differed from other cultures and civilizations.

Objectives

The study will be an attempt to understand:

- a) The salient aspects of Tai culture still visible in the form of historical records, architectural heritage, the rituals, customs and traditions practiced by the Tai Ahoms in their day to day lives and a glimpse into their personalities as shaped by this culture.
- b) To attempt to penetrate to the underlying philosophy of Tai culture which has been identified as the 'Humanism' predominant in the culture and civilization and to understand how this has manifested itself in the different aspects of life.
- c) To attempt to relate it to the Thai culture prevalent and practiced in Thailand.

Relevance of the Study

This study bears relevance in the context of the present day world as insightful studies which will help to understand the essence of Tai Culture and civilization and its contribution to the present day scenario where in amidst the boiling cauldron of globalization, the time has arrived for every culture and civilization to understand whether it is trekking the right direction in order that culture can thrive for the better. On the other hand if in the name of change or modernity or globalization it becomes perverted or distorted then it will not be able to achieve its organic growth which is the need of the hour and is the case with all other culture and civilizations. The flow of civilization can be compared to a flowing river which even when it meets a barrier it takes a new bend but it does not lose its essence.

This brings to mind the image of a fully grown plant with its roots penetrating deep down into the soil and the stems and branches spreading out into the air with its foliage. When the roots are well nourished and are strong the plant looks lively, lush and resplendent. However if the roots begin to dry and wither the tables are turned. Gradually a day arrives when the blooming plant has fallen to the ground.

Making use of the same analogy, a community of people who forgets his or her roots will topple to the ground or lose their distinctive identity altogether. No amount of colorful feathers will help them to achieve organic growth and the entire experience becomes mundane and superficial.

An organic growth creates internal growth and evolution begins from within. One becomes deeply aware of one's past which helps him to understand his present and consequently ensures a better future. This brings to mind T. S. Eliot's observation regarding the 'Presentness of the past and the pastness of the present.'

Study of one's culture, history and civilization has also become a necessity in view of the revisionary readings occasioned by the limitations, gaps, silences and omissions observed in the historical records, studies on culture etc. in the intellectual and academic scenario in Assam as according to a section of the caste Hindu intellectuals, Assam has become a part of the Hindu culture and there is no reason for studying them from the Ahom point of view. And here seem to lie the urgency and necessity of bringing to the fore all the silences which await to be heard.

Perhaps a vast ocean of revisionary studies await the study of cultures which have had to remain constricted, unexplored, subservient occasioned by factors such as historical, social, political, cultural and those in the periphery or marginalized areas writhe in pain and deprivation, seeking ways for legitimate expression.

Tai Ahom tradition and culture and Thai culture spring from the same fountain of Tai culture. They have core similarities which become apparent when a Tai Ahom and a Thai meet each other and address each other as 'Pinong'. When a Tai Ahom visits the cultural centers in Thailand he or she becomes enamored witnessing objects of cultivation (the paddy fields, like the plough, the bell on the neck of the buffalo), the weaving loom, the fishing equipments, the finely crafted woodwork, the canals or moats surrounding the palaces, the fortifications enclosing a city (e.g. in Chiang Mai), the worship of the ancestors performed in the village with chicken and country liquor, the food items like ant eggs, rice soaked in water, rice cooked in bamboo hollows, sticky rice being offered as a special item, the variety of herbs used as healthy food for the body, animals being tamed dexterously, one village producing one product, the people's allegiance to the royal family and the latter's obligation to the same, the smiling faces of people bearing the stamp of generations of 'humanism' flowing in their veins, one feels that 'Yes' we are the same, we belong to the same stock.

However as both the groups had been influenced by their respective historical, societal, religious and environmental conditions in their respective places of habitation, they have been subjected to tremendous changes. Nonetheless the basic essences of Tainess still help to recognize each other though living in different nations and it appears essential that this be retained in order that the roots are identified, facilitated to flourish so that Tai Culture and Civilization does not disappear and can continue contributing its due share to the Civilization of the world.

Methodology

The Methodology adopted for the study is primarily Qualitative and will be focusing on understanding the underlying reasons motivating Tai Ahom tradition and culture and Thai culture. The primary sources include manuscripts, authoritative books written from primary sources, self performance of rituals, witnessing and observance of rituals at home and on public occasions, active participation in discussion and meetings on Tai culture, interviews with learned persons, visits to cultural sites in Assam and Thailand etc. Secondary sources include reference books or authoritative books on Tai Ahom Culture.

Humanism as Revealed in History of the Tai Ahoms

After Choulung Siukapha had arrived in the new land (Earlier called Saumarpith, present day Assam, a name derived from the Ahoms) and wanted to know about the people living there he conveyed a message,

‘We come from the east and you are the sthalagiris (the original settlers of the land) and we are your guests. You should therefore come forward to meet us and acquaint us with the villages and inhabitants’ (Devi, 1968).

This was something unheard of by the local people from newcomers or strangers at a point of time when battles or conquests were the norm of the day.

In the relation of the Tai Ahoms with the local indigenous population like the Morans, Borahis, Chutiyas, Kacharis, Nagas, Khasis, Jaintias, Karbis or Mikirs and Koches, all of whom gradually accepted Ahom suzerainty, the essential traits of humanism which made this possible become apparent.

It is true that except for the Borahis who became assimilated with the Tai Ahoms very naturally and with simplicity, the other communities did not want to accept the dominance of the Ahom rule initially and there were many attacks by each of these communities.

The point of interest lies in how in spite of their revolts and attacks, they eventually extended hands of friendship and willingly accepted the suzerainty of the Tai Ahoms.

The relations of the Ahom Kings with all these people can be classified under two heads- relations with the plain tribes and relations with the hill tribes according to the policies that they adopted with regard to both kinds of people.

When Siukapha chose his chief cook from the Borahi community and employed them as woodcutters, valets, cooks, storekeepers, casket bearer, physician, poultry- keeper, the people confided among themselves, ‘Though this prince (i.e. Siukapha) and his followers have made us so many servitors yet we do not feel any resentment in our hearts ; on the other hand we long for serving and attending on them, and for meeting as frequently as possible. They are therefore men of divine origin and nobody is ‘sama’ or equal to them, and they can be designated as ‘asama’ or unparalleled’ (Devi, 1968).

Siukapha’s concept of MOUNG- DUN- SUN-KHAM (meaning Land of Golden Gardens) appear to specify a vision, a concept and an ideal to achieve which the kingdom adopted certain far sighted state policies and well thought out strategies for evolution of a unified MOUNG-DUN-SUN- KHAM nation. In this nation the Tais exercised dominating role while adequate space for growth through power sharing of for all others had been ensured. Broadly the kingdom had accepted a policy of not invading others countries on its own. On the other hand if any other country invades it, it will surely vanquish the invading country. The vanquished people will not be enslaved or oppressed but will be treated with affection and judiciousness (Dihingia, 2010).

This appears to be the policy of the Tai Ahom culture in dealing with the neighboring kingdoms and the humanistic note becomes apparent in the fact that they do not appear to interfere or encroach in the individual freedom of the people as a consequence of which the latter never felt suffocated and there was space for growth for every person.

Choulung Siukapha established his capital at Cheraidoi (Che-town, rai-shining, doi-mountains) after consultation with the local indigenous communities as it was a sacred place for them too. A remarkable relic which is an expression of Ahom humanism lies at ‘Amlokhi Deohal’ near Cheraidoi where the shrines of the different communities stand together and ‘Umpha Puja’ is performed collectively there.

Learning to respect and regard others faith appears to be one of the precious and rarest qualities as historical records account and is a critical issue in the present day world. Here appeared to be a wonderful illustration of the same by virtue of which all the indigenous communities gradually recognized something superior in them for which they acknowledged Ahom suzerainty.

About five hundred years later in the first half of the eighteenth century one Hindu Queen by the name of Phuleswari Devi (who came to power because Hindu astrologers predicted that her husband King Siva Singha's rule would come to an end very shortly and therefore he conferred 'kingship' on the queen) began imposing her own faith and religion on the priests of the Vaisnava sect and ordering them to come on the day of worship of Goddess Durga, ordered the Brahman priests to smear the blood of the sacrificed goats on the foreheads of the Vaishnava priests. This was something which was exactly the opposite of what the liberalism of Tai culture had been propitiating since the early thirteenth century under the leadership of the Ahom kings. This began laying the seeds of dissatisfaction and disintegration which would raise its head half a century later and would be one of the major factors for downfall of the Ahom rule (Gait, 2010).

The immunity to the caste prejudices (a distinctive characteristic of social discrimination in Hindu society) endeared the Ahom rulers to the original tribal settlers. The elderly Mikir tribesmen observed, 'These men eat the things we eat; they are therefore men of our fraternity'. They called the younger generations to come forward for negotiations and friendly relations were established and they placed themselves under the protection of the Ahom king and agreed to pay annual tribute (Devi, 1968).

It is of great interest to discern some of the quintessential elements of humanism which the Ahom rulers adopted and practiced most naturally to develop a unified society and a unified kingdom. Historical records vary with regard to whether the Ahoms had brought women along with them in their journey from Mounng Mao Lung to Saumarpith. However as they had arrived with the intention of establishing a Kingdom, they needed to increase their group for which beginning from Siukapha onwards there has been marriages with women who belonged to the nobility of the indigenous population. Siukapha himself married four princesses from the Moran and Borahi royal families (Devi, 1968).

These marriages served to establish diplomatic and family relations with the local communities which helped in intermingling and assimilation. Similar traditions were followed by Siukapha's successors too and therefore from the very beginning other tribes had been included into their own fold.

Another important feature was that the non-Ahom families who were assimilated into the Ahom fold were people who had performed some work of exceptional merit. For example there is the case of a Moran man by the name of Lanmakkhru who used to supply brinjal to the Ahom King Siukapha while he was residing in Tipam. In Ahom language brinjal is called 'makkhru'. This man showed unusual vigor in fighting with the Nagas along with the King's soldiers. Therefore, the King handed him over to Kang-gnan Borgohain and named him Lanmakkhru. There is the instance of descendants of another family brought by Siukapha from Tipam who were included into the Tingkhongia Hatimur of the Ahoms under the Borgohain during the reign of Siukhampha (1552-1603AD) on account of meritorious services.

It is mentioned that the records of these affiliated families were very carefully maintained and were checked in every reign. These non-Ahom families were thoroughly assimilated with the old Ahoms in course of time and they enjoyed equal social privileges like the original Ahoms, corresponding to the position to which they were entitled. (Devi, 1968)

The kind, equal, human treatment without an iota of discrimination by Siukapha to the Moran and Borahi communities and the intermarriages which followed led these communities to wholeheartedly accept the suzerainty of the Ahom Kings. In course of time the Borahis lost their identity as a separate tribe and were

totally assimilated to the Ahom fold (Devi, 1968).

Similar attributes of humanism, diplomacy, goodwill, understanding, brotherhood and cooperation were observed with regard to the treatment and relation meted out to the hill tribes. With their attributes of leadership and social responsibility they could trace the root causes behind the occasional raids by the hill men on the neighboring plains. The hills could not produce food grains in ratio to their population. They were in need of food crops and from the hills above they could see the paddy fields in the plains becoming yellow and ripened with luscious harvest. It was natural for the needy to find ways to get hold of the crops as they too needed food for sustenance.

Understanding their necessity the Ahom rulers introduced a system by means of which land and fishing waters were allotted to some of the tribes and 'paiks' (the most humble subjects of the Ahom Kingdom who were engaged in the public works and also had to fight in battles) were also allotted to them. This system was called the 'posa' system and once they got their share of crops and fishes, they were contented and promised not to raid the neighboring villages again.

With regard to the tribes such as the Mishmis and Jaintias who were in need of facilitation with regard to trading in the plains, the Ahom rulers provided them with the same and they readily accepted their over lordship and agreed to pay their annual tributes (Devi, 1968).

Such instances of humanitarian policies administered by the Ahom rulers bespeak of a strong undercurrent of humanism which seemed to run in their veins and which can never be the product of a moment but is the outcome and manifestation of generations and generations of learning about human relationships and human behavior.

The German philosopher Leibnitz had observed that the Emperor of China ought to send missionaries to Europe to teach human relations (Clyde & Beers, 1972). In the book *The Outline of Literature* (1962) John Drinkwater observes,

'The early literary and religious ideals of China took a very different form. We find here no priestly autocracy, controlling all intellectual activities and giving a revelation as to the nature of the universe, the requirements of the gods, and the obligations of men, obligations which have never failed to include the strictest obedience to the behests of the priests, the representatives of the gods. There are no court chronicles, dictated under royal supervision, and devoted not to the needs of the people but to the glorious achievements of the monarchs. Nor is there any great epic, commemorating the deeds of heroes and demigods. In place of this we find what may be called a practical system of applied ethics'.

Spirit of Humanism as Manifested in the Historical Records

Historical records account that Siukapha had asked his men to note down the details of his journey- how many men had come, how many had died etc. which was done accordingly. He appeared to have brought with him the distinctive Tai tradition of keeping records. Edward Gait in *A History of Assam* observes 'The science of history was unknown to the early inhabitants of Assam and it is not till the Ahom invasion in 1228 AD that we obtain anything approaching a connected account of the people and their rulers.'

These historical records constitute one of the major contributions to Indian Literature in the present day world by virtue of its factualities, preciseness, objectivity which was something not found in ancient Indian or Medieval Literature. Noted historian Dr. Suniti Kr. Chattopadhyay had observed, ' They had a sense of actualities – the historical sense, and they gave to Assam a unique thing in Indian literature, systematic chronicles of a country or dynasty or an episode in a series of history books written in Ahom and in Assamese, on the model of Ahom.' (Gogoi, 2002).

This brings to mind that the humanism inherent in the philosophy of Tai Culture might have contributed in the creation of historical literature which was noted for their allegiance to depiction of facts, without having to satisfy priests or rulers in the process. Since great importance was accorded to transmission of knowledge to posterity through history, deviance from the truth or any sort of exaggeration was avoided. One wonders in awe and admiration at the systematic manner, methodical manner and the high standards attempted to be maintained with regard to the writings. When a writer of history undertakes the task of writing he collects information from four sources:

- a) Direct written representation or description of someone who has seen it visually.
- b) From documents and records.
- c) information received orally
- d) from old histories

The historical writings can be classified into two groups-

- a) from the King's court or governmental
- b) individual

The Ahoms regarded historical knowledge to be an indispensable part of acquiring education and culture. Children and youth were imparted lessons from history in the guise of stories and the elderly had to listen to reading of history. In the performance of marriage ceremonies recital of histories was mandatory. In fact History was supposed to be a branch of learning which provides knowledge to the ignorant. The word 'buranji' which is extant to mean history in the Assamese language should be spelt bu-lan-ji which means storehouse of knowledge for the ignorant grandchildren. Another word earlier extant and still used today was pu-lan-chi meaning Grandfather's store of knowledge for his Grandchildren. It is important to mention here that this study of History has been struck off the curriculum of the schools in Assam, one reason perhaps being that a major portion of Assam History would be dealing with the Ahoms who have now become a smaller faction surrounded by a dominating and pervading culture called the Assamese culture which becomes part of the Hindu culture. Here lie the paradoxes, the ambiguities and the predicament faced by the Ahoms today who are aware of their roots but have to be very cautious in speaking and writing as it is difficult to call a spade a spade in an atmosphere of cultural domination.

It was the royal duty of kings to provide all possible facilitation for the writing of the histories. Therefore he had to appoint responsible officers for documentation and preservation of important events relating to the state.

These documents included details regarding battlefield provided by the Army General, the officers of the border areas providing information relating to the same, letters of the Royal Court, Judicial Decisions, Census Reports and Representation of all big events or small events, significant observations by ministers and officers and about significant nocturnal events if they occur. All these documents were preserved in the royal treasury known as 'gondhiya bhoral'. (Gogoi, 2002)

Revisionary Reading of History Books

What strikes one as one peruses the history of the six hundred year period of Ahom regime is a dichotomy, a duality, an ambivalence between two forces from the time Hindu religion and culture began infiltrating to the Ahom Royal court and at one point gradually almost superseded the Tai Ahom culture and attempted to take in elements of Ahom culture into its fold by giving it a demeaning position in the Hindu hierarchical scheme of things. Edward Gait observes that by taking the step to come under the fold of Hinduism they accepted an inferior status within the Hindu caste system and by modification of their food habits obeying the dictates of religion, they began losing their virility. When towards the fag end of the Ahom rule the King and nobility adopted Hinduism, the strong and firm fabric of work culture, love for the land, and commitment to royal duty gave way to obeisance before the gods in the name of religion. In the comparatively egalitarian and unified society, social discrimination brought about severe differences among the people. There was the lack of the liberal controlling figure like the secular Ahom rulers to provide the desired support and leadership.

For the first five hundred years of the Ahom regime, Tai Ahom Culture and tradition predominated the scenario which helped in the establishment and expansion of the kingdom. Some of the salient features noticed in the two cultures are –

Tai Ahom Culture- Allegiance towards the King, The King's commitment for the welfare of his people, commitment towards duty, work culture, love for the land, allegiance towards the collective will of the people, liberal attitude, no social discrimination, giving importance to the 'human world', 'human relationships', 'human affairs'.

Hindu Culture –Giving more importance to God, religion, more importance to spiritualism, to the 'other' world, social discrimination based on caste system, attempting to abuse powers in the name of religion.

The following narrative contains information on two particular periods ranging from the years 1667 to 1671 and the years between 1671 to 1680 wherein we witness two very contrasting turn of events. Perhaps one of the factors responsible for this was the difference in the value system of the two contrasting cultures.

The years between 1667 and 1671 is one of the golden periods of Ahom history as by virtue of the values and traditions of Tai culture, the Ahom Army was able to defeat the Great Mughals who had by then conquered almost the whole of India except a few princely states. Under the most efficient leadership of the great Ahom General Lachit Borphukan, the whole nation acted like one man. Dr. S.K. Bhuyan in his book *Lachit Barphukan and his Times* (1994) observes,

'The study of the life of Lachit Barphukan especially with reference to his conflict with the Mughals, enables us to know the qualities which make a successful general, whose main rallying point is not the vastness of his resources or the numerical superiority of his army, but grim determination and intrepid courage trusting less in system and policy than to the native spirit of the citizens'.

At the onset of the Battle of Saraighat when the General became terribly ill and the soldiers feeling demoralized wanted to flee, he plunged into the battle arena and exclaimed,

'His Majesty has given me the supreme command of the army here and placed at my disposal vast stores of provisions so that I may fight with the enemy. Should I now desert the fight and revert to the embraces of my wives and children?' (Bhuyan, 1994)

Such lines are reminiscent of Virginia Woolf's observation that a Shakespeare or a Jane Austen cannot be

born overnight. They are the outcome of generations of effort, of thinking by the body of the people whose whole effort is behind the single voice. Lachit Barphukan was perhaps such an epitome or culmination of an expression of Tai culture, tradition and civilization.

This brings to mind an idea of attempting to study about such Tai heroes who by virtue of their memorable feats have been able to acquire a place in the world scenario.

Witnessing Lachit Barphukan's heroism the enemy General Ram Singha exclaimed 'Glory to the king! Glory to the counsellors! Glory to the country! One single individual leads all the forces! Even I, Ram Singha, being personally on the spot, have not been able to find any loophole and opportunity ! (Bhuyan, 1994)

Hereafter follows a decade of chaos, confusion, thirst for power, greed and nightmarish events in the kingdom. It is a picture which is exactly the opposite of the earlier period. Many questions come to mind as to how such contrasting events could happen, immediately following such a glorious phase.

The first important factor appears to be that the Ahom Royal Court at Gargaon was peopled with men belonging to a comparatively lower social background and also a few nonAhom who had gained access to power all of a sudden because the mature and responsible personalities like the ministers, counsellors, administrators had to be stationed at Saraighat and Koliabor to keep a check on further invasions by the Mughals who were lurking around for the same.

In order to understand this gruesome period when seven kings sat on the throne and were deposed, it would be necessary to penetrate to the socio-political-religious scenario which was gaining ground in an insidious manner.

Here is an observation from the Tungkhungia Buranji (1990) (S.K.Bhuyan, 1990), 'The religious leaders exercised considerable influences upon the secular affairs of the country.'

Mention needs to be made of the chief priest of Dakshinpat Satra who played influential role in the political affairs of the kingdom.

Another major gruesome event which took place during this period is the killing of the princes Joymoti Konwori (wife of Godapani, a strong and able prince of the Tungkhungia clan), by inflicting the most inhuman tortures). This was caused by selfish, greedy officers and the young king by the name of Sulikpha (whom they had installed for gratification of their interests).

She was put to death on the pretext that she did not divulge the whereabouts of her husband whom they wanted to annihilate so that their rule could be prolonged.

The main persons who abused their power and created serious misrule in the kingdom performing the most gruesome and inhuman acts were one associated with the monastery of Dakshinpat, a Hazarika by the name of Lechai Debera who eventually became the chief administrator and killed four or five kings in a most foul manner and also killed many princess and nobles.

One wonders as to how an ordinary person, a commoner rising from an ordinary officer to a chief administrator dared to rise against the imposing Ahom rule and shake the core of the kingdom. The reasons behind these events are yet to be discovered and history appears silent regarding the 'why' of things. Therefore the socio-political-religious situation needs to be understood.

Following the reign of terror created by Debera Hazarika, similar atrocities were created by another ominous figure named Lalukhula Borphukan (another disciple of Dakshinpat Monastery). Events moved to such a gruesome extent that the elderly ministers and officials gathered together and vowed to restore peace and stability in the kingdom by putting an able King on the throne. This prince was none other than Godapani, the husband of Joymoti Konwori the princes who had to sacrifice herself for her land because of the misrule of persons with vested interests who appeared to forego Ahom culture and pay more heed to monasterial or religious culture. (Handique, 1982).

At the moment when all the ministers and nobles had gathered to recognize prince Gadapani as the king, the head priest of Dakshinpat Monastery came forward to persuade Bondor Borphukan (the General and brother-in-law of Gadapani who took the initiative to put Godapani on the throne) by saying ' Borphukan you are my disciple and the present king Sulikpha is also my disciple. Therefore it is almost like as if I am the King. You do not do such a thing. I beg this from you'. Hearing this the Borphukan replied with firmness 'The work of crowning a king cannot be done alone by me. Everyone together has made efforts to find a suitable king.' The priest replied ' I curse you. You will never have the post of Borphukan in your family'. Borphukan reciprocated ' in your house too there will never be the post of head priest'. (Handique, 1982) These conversations offer concrete examples of the difference in values, beliefs, traditions of Ahom culture versus Hindu Culture.

The erosion of Tai Ahom values and culture appears evident in Assam today which has been highlighted by the aforementioned illustration. Selfless patriotism, love for the land, work culture, liberalism have given way to vested interests, individualism and exploitation in the name of religion.

The Kingdom which was proclaimed by travelers and outsiders as one of the best in Asia for its grandeur, affluence, self-sufficiency have moved back to be one of the most backward areas of India.

Looking at the scenario of the western world in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and witnessing the Renaissance happening there, when after grappling with 'hell', 'heaven', 'sin' 'death', 'god' 'devil' 'purgatory' 'redemption' the people had awakened to the fact that they needed to turn away from theocentrism to anthropocentrism, one feels that the Tai culture of the East or the Eastern culture was rooted or grounded in 'humanism' from very early times. Therefore there appears to be the need to study the works of art, culture, literature, architecture of the eastern culture too so as to help one to attain a complementary knowledge about the world in totality.

Ethnic Festivals-Bihu and Poy Sangken

Mention needs to be made of the 'Bihu' of the Tai Ahoms which has close association with the 'Poy Sangken' of the Thais of Thailand. This folk festival essentially related to cultivation, mother earth and nature appears to be an invocation to mother earth for generation of fertility.

During the Bihu festival ancestors are worshipped by every family with primarily chicken and wine, rice and vegetables. The best food are kept aside to be offered to ancestors. People indulge in feasting and merry making and visit their parents, elders, relatives and friends. All debts are cleared and plans are made for a new year of prosperity and good harvest. The Bihu songs and dances are celebrations and invocations of the Spring season where in youth, beauty, nature, love and fertility are invoked, glorified, pronounced, suggestive of the focus on the Humanism inherent in the culture.

Here are translations from three Bihu songs:

a) When will the Bihu of the Spring season arrive ?

When will the cuckoo start crying?

When will you come and embrace me.....,

Taking me as your beloved.

b) I do not have cold rice in the morning

I do not have hot rice in the evening

When my peers ask me what will I say,

How will I swear to be true

c) What is the colour of the wine, sparkling or hazy

What is the colour can you say

If you do not know.....

Give us the bowl

Ancestor Worship-its Pivotal Philosophy

Ancestor Worship was the vital religion among the Tai Ahoms. The oft quoted proverbs extant among the people are -

If the household spirits desert some other spirits will get you and if they too desert, then evil spirits will devour you up.

The roof will not protect, walls will not protect nor the lords of the three worlds. If the spirits of our dead ancestors do not protect us, there is no one else to do so.

During this ceremony offerings are offered to ones ancestors who are our immediate dead like father or mother and our grandparents and our earlier ancestors. The members of the family gather together to offer prayers and offerings to the ancestors. The dead spirits are invoked to come and accept the offerings. The atmosphere becomes intense and the family feels good after expression of their intensity and sincerity.

Because there was no middle man involved in the ceremony, the society remained relatively free from religious abuses and bigotry (Clyde B. 1972)

In this eastern civilization the 'family' formed the nucleus of the society. The first obligations of an individual were not directed to himself, to his nation or to his government but to his family. Therefore the society or kingdom would be formed by a conglomeration of families and the King is the father who bears total responsibility for the welfare of his children.

Before any important occasion of the household 'ancestor worship' was performed, e.g. before the first sowing of seeds, before the first planting of paddy, before harvesting, during the time of the three Bihus, before a marriage ceremony, etc.

Conclusion

The study appears to have provided information on how ethnic cultures or indigenous cultures are gradually drawn into the purview of a dominant culture and it begins losing its distinctive individuality, identity and originality in the process. It might be the case that the social processes of assimilation might be difficult to be resisted in the long run. Nonetheless it is essential and desirable that the roots and essence of ethnicity be retained and maintained. However much a crow will paste the feathers of a peacock, its essence of a crow will not fade away. Vice versa is the case.

After all ethnic cultures are the outcome of thousands of years of evolution and struggle for survival and ignoring or erasing it without understanding its deeper implications is a great loss to the world of knowledge and culture.

If Tai Ahom culture or Thai culture have been able to play the note of 'humanism' (as evinced by history, culture, literature) in the lute of 'human civilization' then it would be very meaningful in the long run to allow this humanism to evolve, grow and flourish for the sake of humanity and never be overshadowed by the colors of a different religion or cultural domination.

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A Comparative Study of the Design, Patterns and Dying of the Textiles of the Tai Groups of North East India with Other SE Asian Tai Groups

Gogoi, Pradip K.

Department of Chemistry
Dibrugarh University, Assam
India

Phukan, Chandra K.

Ban-Ok-Pup-Lik-Mioug-Tai
Namrup, Dibrugarh, Assam
India

Abstract

The origin of the Tais (meaning *free*) has been conjectured to be in the Kiulung mountains, north of Setchuan and south of Shensi, in China proper. Over the last two millennia, due to various reasons, the Tai people migrated southwards, distributed in entire SE Asia with different ethnic identities but with a common cultural root. During last eight hundred years there was western migration of some Tai people resulting six Tai groups in North East India. Like language and food habits, the type of textiles woven and used by a particular community residing in a certain geographical location is a good indicator of the civilization, culture and sense of aesthetic of the people. Using the textile design, patterns of motifs, dying and weaving methods as a source of ethno-cultural identity, a comparative study of the textiles of these western Tais with those of SE Asian Tais are described. On analysis it was observed that there is remarkable similarity in all aspects of design, patterns of motifs and dying and weaving technology and end use of the textiles among the Tais of NE India with those of their SE Asian cousins, corroborating the hypothesis that there is cultural continuation, with minor local variation, among the western and SE Asian Tai groups; not only in terms of language, food habits, rural housing, use of bamboo, gender equality and anthropological features, but also in their ethnic textiles with innate beauty, skills and distinctive sense of aesthetic. There is good scope for further studies for understanding this mosaic of cultural cohesion among the Tais distributed in entire SE Asia.

Keywords: Western Tais, Textile design, SE Asian Tais, Comparative Study

1. Introduction

The origin of the Tais (meaning *free, noble*) has been conjectured to be Kiuling mountains, north of Setchuan and south of Shensi, in China proper (Colquhoun, 1885, p.IV). Over the last two millennia, due to pressure of the Chinese and Mongol invasion they move in successive waves towards the south and distributed in entire South East Asian region with different identities but with a common cultural root (Gogoi, 1999, p.3). During last eight hundred years there was gradual western migration of some Tai

people resulting six Tai groups in North East India. There are Tai Ahom (the earliest migrants, in 1228 AD), Tai Khamti, Tai Phake, Tai Khamiyang, Tai Aiton and Tai Turung. Other than Tai Ahoms the other groups are very small in numbers, not more than ten thousands in population. The Tai Ahom, over the time, took a dilute form of Hindu way of life, like the Shans of northern Myanmar adopted Burman way in dress, culture and habits (Gogoi, 1999, p.9). However, the later migrant Tai groups have preserved their culture and language more or less intact (Elias, 1876, p.32) and they adopted Theravadi Buddhism like their other South East Asian counterparts. Like language and food habits, the type of textiles woven and used by a particular community residing in a certain geographical location is a good indicator of the civilization, culture, sense of aesthetics and aspiration of the people. Therefore, using textile design, patterns of motifs, dying and weaving methods as source of ethno-cultural identity, as comparative study of the textiles of these western Tais with those of the SE Asian Tai groups is described in the present paper. We started our investigation with the following hypothesis.

2. Hypothesis

1. Textile design may be a source of ethno-culture identity.
2. Through the ages, due to western migration of the Tai group of people to North East India, Assam in particular, there are may be some minor local variations in the textile of the Tai groups in terms of design, patterns of motifs and weaving style.
3. There may be similarity in the use of various patterns, motifs, yarns, weaving style, dye making process among the Tais of the North eastern India with those of the others South East Asian Tais.
4. The actual end use of various textiles is similar, especially among women.
5. There is cultural continuation (with minor variations) among the Tais of North Eastern India with those of South East Asia- not only in terms of language, food habit and anthropological features, but also in textiles.

3. Methodology

For comparative study of the textiles of the western Tai group, we have conducted field studies the following Tai villages (Table-1), had personal interviews, photographic recording of actual textile samples, many of which are worn in day to day life. Except the Tai Ahoms, others Tai group of people are mostly clustered in rural areas, the Tai Ahoms and Tai Khamtis have visible political participations in state affairs while others groups are minority in terms of population.

Table 1: Village visited, Tai groups, location

Village	Tai groups	Location
Nam Phake	Tai Phake	Naharkatia, Dibrugarh district of Assam
Mulang Khamti	Tai phake and Tai Khamti	Ledo, Tinsukia district of Assam
Chola Pather	Tai Khamiyang	Chola Pather, Charideo district Assam
Rajapukhari Turung Village	Tai Aiton and Tai Turung	Sarupather Circle, Golaghat district, Assam
Mahmora Gohain Gaon	Tai Ahom	Mahmora, Charideo district, Assam

Among these the Tai Ahoms residing in urban areas have adopted western dress but those staying in rural areas are still using traditional textiles.

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Figure 1: Tai Turung and Tai Aiton people



Figure 2: Tai Khamiyang people



Figure 3: Tai Khamti Married people

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15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND



Figure 4: Tai Phake typical housing design



Figure 5: Tai Phake loom and weaver



Figure 6: Map of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh with location of Tai Villages

For textiles of South East Asian Tai groups we mostly relied on already published data, e.g., Thai textiles society website, books like 'Art of Southeast Asian Textiles' (McIntosh, 2012) and 'Thagzo: The textile weavers of Bhutan'(Dorji, 2013).

4. Discussion

During the field work we found the use of different natural fabrics, which are very strong, fine textured and can be dyed with natural vegetable dyes of most brilliant hues. Further the fabrics were most suitable for absorbent like cotton produced locally, Muga Silk Worm (*Antheraea Asama*), Mulberry (*Pat*) Silk Worm (*Bombyx Mori*) or Eri Silk Worm (*Philosomia Ricini*) Silk. Some wild variety silk were also used, as well as different blends of Muga and Mulberry Silk, Muga and Eri etc., producing unique character and consistency of the fabric. The rearing and production of mulberry silk was monopoly of the Tais and Chinese till the opening of the famous 'Silk Routes' around 1000 BC, after which some eggs were smuggled out of China along the southeastern silk route, may be by the descendents of the Tais from South West China, to upper Myanmar and the Brahmaputra Valley before 500 AD (Ghoshdastidar, 2013, Ray, 2013) of the various silk, the Muga Silk is as prized because of its strength, fine texture and brilliant golden hue. It is available mostly in Assam and some part of Myanmar and Yunnan.



Figure 7: Muga and Eri Cocoons

Since in all aspect of textile production women were solely involved, hence the variation of textiles available mostly pertains to women's dress. Now let us discuss the design elements of various skirt (*Pha*

Sin) of the western Tais and compare them with these of South East Asian counterparts.

Of the six Western Tai groups- the Ahom ladies uses golden Muga or Mulberry silk skirt with simple design elements, like floral motifs at the lower border or Kingkhap motifs, usually of red colour, sometimes sparsely dotted with flower buds motifs. The older ladies generally wear blank skirts of mulberry silk or simple fine cotton of light colour. The Khamiyang and Tai Aiton ladies uses deep indigo black colored skirt, sometimes decorated with simple flowery motifs for younger girls, while the Khamti, Turung and Tai Phake ladies uses colored silk skirt with beautiful horizontal bar motifs along with interspersed flower motifs (in Turung skirts). In Tai Phake skirts, mostly of Muga (*Antheraea Asama*) fabric, sometime blended with mulberry silk, there is generally no flower or animal motif, but there are horizontal colour band divisions with chequered patterns of different criss-cross colour combinations: yellow-black-green-red- indigo-blue is one example.



Figure 8: Tai Phake Pha Sin Figure 9: Tai Khamyang Pha Sin Figure 10: Tai Khamti Pha Sin



Figure 11: Tai Aiton Pha Sin Figure 12: Tai Ahom Pha Sin

In case of other South East Asian counterparts, we can see a verity of skirt design mostly in Chinese silk and cotton, many of which are very similar to the Tai Phake, Tai Khamti or Shan State (of Myanmar) design; some are in dark indigo-black colour, others are in brilliant red or crimson colour and sometimes multi-colored combination is used with a verity of very beautiful and intricate design elements.

Thai textiles designs	SE Asian textiles patterns
 <p>Skirt (<i>Sin Tiin Chok</i>) of Chang Mai Province, Thailand</p>	 <p>Skirt (<i>Sin Mai Kham</i>) of Shan States, Northern Burma or China</p>
 <p>Skirt (<i>Sin Kaam</i>) of Nam Province of Thailand</p>	 <p>Skirt (<i>Sin Chok</i>) of Champasak Province, Laos.</p>
 <p>Skirt (<i>Sin Mii Taa Tiin Chok</i>) of Ratchaburi Province, Thailand</p>	 <p>Skirt (<i>Sin Maan</i>) of NW Vietnam</p>

Figure 13: Comparison of Thai textile with SE Asian textile design

Such skirts are mostly used by Tais of North West Vietnam, North East Laos, North East Thailand, Tai Shan of Myanmar and Tais of Ratchaburi province of Thailand. The design elements include- floral medallions, bold geometric designs of blocks and diamond shapes, solid strip separated narrow bands of weft ikat patterns of delicate dots, sometime intertwining with zig-zag lines, the border being either wide or narrow. The dyes used are mostly organic vegetable dyes of most beautiful hues and permanent.




 <p>Floral medallions motifs</p>	 <p>Bold geometric design of block and diamond shapes,</p>	 <p>Solid strip separated narrow bands of weft ikat patterns of delicate dots</p>
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Figure 14: Various design elements SE Asian textile



Figure 15: Tai Phake, Tai Khamti and Tai Khamyang in traditional attire

Interestingly enough, we observed some striking similarity of motifs in Tai textiles with those of Bhutan, which is connected culturally more with Tibet. As an example we give below vertical striped designed skirt of Bhutan and Laos for comparison.





Textile designs of Bhutan	Tai Textile designs of SE Asia
 <p>Woman skirt (<i>kira</i>) of Bhutan</p>	 <p>Skirt of Laos with bold weft ikat blocks</p>
 <p>Woman skirt (<i>kira</i>) of Bhutan</p>	 <p>Skirt of Laos design</p>

Figure 16: Comparison of Bhutan textiles designs with SE Asian textiles

Another important part of Tai garments is the distinctive shoulder cloth. Each group has its own design. Both men and women wear a specially designed cloth over one shoulder in various rituals and sometimes casually wrapped around the head, neck or waist depending on the circumstances. The Tai Ahoms use shoulder cloth made either of silk or fine cotton with red borderlines and floral motifs in the horizontal end. The Tai khamyang uses mostly fine cotton fabric with chequered patterns with or without floral patterns at the end. However, the elderly women used shoulder cloth of white background with colored border and floral patterns at the end. The other South East Asian Tai shoulder cloths are different where there is riot of floral motifs and brilliant in colour-which are made of fine cotton or silk.



Figure 17: Shoulder Cloth of Tai Khamyang, Tai Phake, Tai Khamyang (female)

Women of all the six Tai groups used hip wrapper around the waist as part of their garment. The Tai Ahom Ladies used this piece made of Muga silk with a thin border of crimson red and a very small floral design at the end. Tai Phake and Tai Turung use chequered, colored cloth as hip wrappers, while the Khamti ladies use the green colored silk cotton with multicolored geometrical (rectangle) motifs inscribed between

horizontal strips in deep blue/violet background. The Tai Khamyangs use light (usually white or light cream colored) colored cloth either of cotton or silk with mild patterns at the end.

In comparison, the hip wrappers of Thailand and Myanmar Shans are usually dark colored with dense geometrical or floral patterns, made of silk.



Tai Khamyang Tai Phake



Tai Khamti Tai Turung / Aiton

Figure 18: Western Tai Lung wat /Nung wat

Regarding men's dress, except Tai Ahoms, who have more or less adopted pan-Indian dress codes, the other five western Tais uses sarongs (*Pha-Nung, Lungi*), which perhaps they adopted from the Burmans of Myanmar. The Shans generally was something like *pyjama* pant, not sarongs. Although all sarongs are multi-colored (usually five colors) chequered patterns, each community has distinctive patterns. The colour of the sarong changes with age of the wearer. Those with eight Buddhist vows, generally wear white sarongs with wide one colour chequered pattern. From the chequered pattern, their colour combination and the craftsmanship, one can guess to which community and age, the sarongs belong to. These are generally made of fine cotton and weaving is done with dyed yarns of different colour combinations.



Tai Aiton Pha-Lung Tai Khamyang Pha-Lung



Tai Phake Pha-Nung Tai Khamti Pha-Lung

Figure 19: Western Tai Pha Lung/Nung

5. Dyeing of Textile

From the manufacturing yarn (both cotton and silk), dyeing it with most brilliant locally available plant based dye to weaving with various design to exquisite finish is a long standing tradition of the Tais. As early as 1847 Major S.F. Hannay of light infantry battalion, and one of the most original enquirer and recorder of Tai people wrote “Handsome piece of silk, exceedingly rich, and of various cheque patterns, can also be had from the Shan state, and art of dyeing both cotton and silk seems to be very well understood by the North East Shans and the Cathay Shan or Manipoores (p.71)’ and regarding the art of dyeing by the Tai Phakes be recorded (Hannay, 1847). The Phake have also succeeded in dyeing the Muga silk thread into several fast colors, with which the fabricate very pretty imitations of the cheque silk Patsoes worn by Eastern brethren.

The black dye given to the cotton both in the piece and in the thread is good, and stands well. It is obtained by frequent immersions in a broth of the common indigo, and also in that of the *Rom* of Assam; but I think to make so deep colour they must add also the black obtained by boiling fruit of the ‘*Hilikha*’ or (*Tarminalia Citrins*) in an iron pan; I have not however been able to obtain so good a black to the Muga thread, but it is quite possible that this could be given to clean white silk, as the natural varnish, which seems to cover the former, is against brightening of any colour, but light blue, a red lilac, and olive yellow, there dye stuffs are

Lac Dye

Munjeet: Mungestta

Amotto: Bixina

Miseeme Teeta (yellow) Coptis Teeta
Khai Khan (greenish ditto)
Assoo Khat (brownish ditto), (pp.78)”

Another explorer, who has done original work on the Shans of Northern Myanmar, Sir Archibald R. Colquhoun (Colquhoun, 1885) recorded in 1885 AD as “Their dyes are of local manufacture, similar to those are used amongst the Burmese. Saffron is generally used for yellow; green is produced by dripping threads that have been dyed yellow in a boiling decoction of the leaves and twigs of the creeping *Marsdenia Tinctoria*. Indigo which, grows wild as well as in cultivated state, is used for blue, the mordant being bark of a kind of *Eugenia*. Stick-lac, the fruit of the tamarind and various woods, give red. The safflower yields yellow, and when mixed with other ingredients, red. Jack, the root of a species of *Garcinia*, the flower of the *Butea*, and the leaves of the *Memeclylon*, give different tint of yellow. Black is produced from the *Diospyros mollis*, *Terminalia Chebula*, and *Jatropha Cruetas*. Orange from the seeds of the “*Bixa Orrellana*”(p.129). As noted by S. F. Hannay above, similar method is adopted in making plant based dyes (Ghoshdastidar, 2013, Goswami, 1984) by the Tai group of people in North East India. The reported methods of making different plant based dyes are as follows

(a) Black- Blue Colour: The raw materials are

- (i) “Rom” leaves (*Strobilanthes Cusia*) of -1kg (wet)
- (ii) Fermented alcoholic rice-100gm
- (iii) Stem of locally available creeper *Tum Kaw*- 500gm

Procedure: The meshed rom leaves are kept immersed in 3 liter of water for 2 days till it get decomposed and fermented. It is then stirred by a wooden ladle forth come to the surface. The forth is removed and a decoction of fermented rice and pounded *Tum Kaw* is mixed with the fermented rom leave mixture. Thereafter an alkaline solution prepared from the rice husk ash is mixed with the mixed blend. This is filtered and the yarn to be dyed is immersed for 5/6 days. Once the blue-black colour is achieved, the yarn is washed and dried.

(b) Green Colour: The raw materials required are

- (i) Ram leaves
- (ii) Powdered Castor seed (*Ricinus Communis*)-100gm
- (iii) Fermented alcoholic rice -100gm
- (iv) Alkali solution (from ash)-100ltr.
- (v) Bark paste of Tepor Tenga (*Garcinia Mangostana*)-50gm
- (vi) Wild leaf of Mout-50gm

Procedure: A vessel is filled with *Rom* leaves, cooked rice and fermented for seven days. On completion of fermentation and separation of the fourths the mixture becomes thick and creamy. Now the powdered castor seed, alcoholic fermented rice is pounded to a paste and after stirring mixed with alkaline water (100ml).

Both mixtures are put together and allowed to stay for a week till the main colour mixture sediment settle down, the clear water is decocted out. Now the Muga or Silk yarn is boiled in the colorant. The yarn is let out to dry. Now a solution of the Tepor Tenga (*Garcinia Mangostana*) paste and Mout leaves are mixed and

the yarn is again immersed and boiled in the solution and kept in the immersed form for few days after which the Muga or cotton yarn turned dark green colored.


(c) Cobalt Blue Colour: The raw material

- (i) Tepor Tenga bark (*Garcinia Mangostana*)







Procedure: 100gm of the wet bark of above tree is pounded to a paste and mixed with a 250ml of water. The fabric to be dyed is dipped in the solution and boiled. After cooling to room temperature kept for two days after which is immersed in alkaline water for five hours. After washing and drying it developed a blue colour. Similarly the dark purple colour dye, which is frequently used by almost all the Tais can be prepared as; 500gm of *Rom* leaves are allowed to ferment in 500ml of water for four days. After complete the composition the mixture is filtered. The fabric is thus boiled in the filtrate for 20 minutes. This gives a purple colour. There after it is dipped in alkaline solution (mordant) extracted from ash followed by washing and drying.

It now appears that the dye making tradition of Western Tais were brought from the Shan culture of Myanmar and Yunnan.





6. Motifs

Types of Textiles	Selected Motifs	Source	Remarks
1. Skirt (silk) 	Head Body Foot	Tai Phuan and Lao	Plain weave were continuous supplementary weft pattern; vertical symmetric form

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

2. Shoulder (cotton) 	Cloth	Horizontal end Floral motif	Tai Khamyang design	Plain weaver with continuous supplementary weft patterns, symmetric alternate pattern.
3. Shoulder (cotton) 	Cloth	Horizontal end Floral motif	Tai Khamyang design	Plain weaver with continuous supplementary weft patterns, symmetric alternate pattern.
4. Skirt (silk) 		Foot of the Skirt	Thailand	Plain weave with continuous supplementary weft pattern, repetitive, symmetric, diamond & floral pattern.
5. Skirt (cotton) 		Whole Body	Bhutan	Weft pattern, complicated, animal, and floral pattern; and repetitive diamond.
6. Skirt (cotton) 		Foot of the Skirt	Thailand	Mixed/ Spared repetitive design.
7. Skirt (cotton) 		Foot of the Skirt	Tai Ahom, Assam	Humanoid from weft pattern continuous.

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

8. Skirt (cotton) 	Bottom/ Foot of the Skirt	Tai Ahom, Assam	Symmetric floral pattern, weft pattern, continuous.
9. Shoulder Cloth (cotton) 	Horizontal end	Tai Ahom, Assam	Weft, continuous pattern, tree and floral motif.
10. Skirt (cotton) 	Symmetric floral pattern	Tai Ahom/Tai Khamyang	Plain wave with continuous supplementary weft pattern.
11. Skirt 	Eight pointed star inside diamond. Multi-colored rectangular blocks represent rattan flower. Various colour alternations create rippling effect.	Tai Hua Phan provinces, Laos	Use of various colored yarns, symmetrical
12. Skirt 	Animal motif	Tai Hua Phan provinces, Laos	
13. Skirt (silk) 	Distinctive Tai Yuan Style; integral fringe motif, the border contains great hong mythical bird.	Tai Yuan Ratchaburi, Thailand	Midsection horizontal design configuration
14. Skirt 	Bright colour mid portion contains sprit bird, <i>nok phii</i>	NW Laos	Thorns is weft ikat frame in the middle fine silk.

On comparison of the motifs it was observed that the western Tai group textiles are strikingly similar to other South East Asian Tai group textiles, and Indian influence is almost nil which is quite natural as Indian textile motifs are too rudimentary without much aesthetic flavor. This similarity is not only in motifs, but in the whole long process of yarn making, dyeing, weaving, designing, types of textiles end use and texture of the fabric among the Tais of North East India with those of their South East Asian cousins, corroborating the hypothesis (cited earlier) there is cultural continuation, with minor local variation, among this Western and South East Asian Tai groups, not only in terms of language, food habits, rural housing, use of bamboo, gender equality and anthropological features but also in their ethnic textiles with innate beauty, skills and distinct sense of aesthetic. There is good scope for further study to understand the mosaic of cultural cohesion among the Tais distributed in entire South East Asia.

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Ahom Aristocracy in the Nineteenth Century: An Overview

Gogoi, Sangeeta

Department of History
Mangaldai College
Assam, India

Abstract

The Treaty of Yandabo, which ended the first Anglo Burmese war in 1826, sealed the fate of the independent Ahom kingdom founded in 1228 in the easternmost region of present day Assam and converted it into a principality of the British government. Initially, no alliance or negotiation was made with the Ahom royal family for the installation of a native prince to the throne of Assam, as they did in many other parts of India. The British introduced new policies that suited their colonial rule, adversely affecting the socio-economic and political status of the Ahoms. The British deprived the Ahom of every opportunity and privilege they previously enjoyed by dint of their social status. Introduction of new revenue systems, English education, abolition of slavery, and failure of a series of anti British movements were the factors which worsened the conditions of Ahom aristocracy. Socially, after losing their kingdom, the Ahoms began to be treated as outcastes and untouchables by the upper castes of the existing Assamese society. This social discrimination together with the ill treatment meted out to them compounded the grievances of the Ahoms. Deprived of all socio-economic and political power, the Ahoms organized themselves into a united community on the basis of their cultural identity by highlighting their ethno-political relationships with the Tai brethren living in Southeast Asia. In their endeavor to recover past glory and maintain distinct ethnic identity, they started a movement in the later part of nineteenth century to unite their community on the basis of ethno-cultural traits. In this paper an attempt has been made to discuss in short the condition of the Ahom aristocracy and the growth of Ahom political movement during the nineteenth century.

Keywords: Ahom, aristocracy, ethnic identity

Introduction

The Ahoms belong to the group of Tai-Yai (greater branch of Tai) people who migrated to the eastern extremity of the upper Brahmaputra valley of present day Assam in the second decade of thirteenth century and successfully established a kingdom of their own. The advent of the Ahoms under the leadership of Suo-Kaa-Faa in the early decades of the thirteenth century was the most significant historical event that changed the very trend of the political history of the Brahmaputra valley. As in the northern part of Mainland South-East Asia, the arrival of the Tai in the Middle Mekong Valley, the Upper Menam Valley and the Central Irrawady Valley had created entirely new power blocks, so also the arrival of Suo-Kaa-Faa caused a new alignment in power in the decadent but glorious Kamrupa kingdom (Phukon, J.N., 2004, pp. 7-8). It marks the beginning of an era leading to the establishment of non-Aryan hegemony ending the long period of struggle against the Aryan

domination (Barua, S.L., 1985, p. 223).

The Ahoms came with their own ideas and institutions in every field of polity, economy, language and literature, religion and society which were typical to the Tai people of the Upper Mekong and Upper Salween Valleys of south-western China in the last part of 11th century and first part of 12th century.

At the initial stage of their rule the Ahoms generally avoided unnecessary wars and conflicts. Suo-Kaa-Faa completed the first stage of Ahom state formation through a policy of '*Ahomisation*'. It is the process of subjugating the local autochthonous groups by a policy of appeasement and conciliation and gradually including them in the state managements and the new fold of Ahom through matrimonial alliances which have been termed by scholars like J.N. Phukan as *Ahomisation*. In this process, Suo-Kaa-Faa subjugated the local people of the Brahmaputra valley belonging to the Tibeto-Burman linguistic groups like the Borahis and Morans, whom he first encountered in the extreme extremity of the valley. Suo-Kaa-Faa's able successors in the sixteenth century enlarged the Ahom kingdom step by step in different directions particularly toward the west by a series of expansionist endeavours which subjugated almost all the local tribes and communities and brought them under one single political administration. The final expansion of the Ahom kingdom was made during the seventeenth century by defeating the Mughals in the battle of Itakhuli (1682) which extended the boundary of the Ahom kingdom from the region from Sadiya in the east to the river Manah in the west on both banks of Brahmaputra and remained unaltered till its occupation by the British in 1826 A. D. It was bounded on the north by the Bhutan hills, on the west by the Manah River and Habraghat Pargana, on the south by the Naga, Khasi, Mikir and Garo hills and on the east by the Mishimi, Singpho and Khamti ranges (Bhuyan, S.K., 1990, pp. xxvi-xxviii).

The political expansion of the Ahom kingdom resulted in the growth of resources and the inclusion of a population of many new ethnic communities who were either already formed sections of Hindu caste society under the early Kamarupa kingdom or in the process of Hinduisation. In the expanded kingdom the Ahoms of Tai origin were reduced to a minority while the vast majority of their subjects were Assamese speakers following the Hindu faith. To build a politically strong and long lasting Ahom state with the inclusion of the newly conquered territories they started to respond to the new social-cultural situation by liberal patronisation of different sects of Hinduism and adoption of Assamese language. Their own language, religious beliefs, rituals, dresses, food habits and socio-cultural institutions gradually underwent changes as a result of the natural fusion with the existing culture, language and different religious sects of the conquered people. Thus, the Ahoms facilitated the process of evolution of a new nationality and culture by bringing together various ethnic groups under one administration and thereby giving political unity and economic stability to the people of this region. It was partly by their policy of matrimonial alliances and partly by socio-cultural assimilation that the Ahom rulers paved the way for the growth of a composite nationality, which was later on recognised as the Assamese.

Gradual acceptance of Brahmanical religion placed the Ahoms at the bottom of the social ladder as Hindu neophytes although caste was never an inhibition in the Ahom social system. The entrance of caste system into the Ahom state slowly acted upon its early integration policy. Religious sectarianism gradually brought rift among the Hindu population as well as the Ahom themselves. The Moamoria rebellion (1789-1805) which shook the very foundation of the Ahom kingdom gave the first blow in the process of integration, and the society began to experience rift with the Brahmins and the other communities all seeking to establish their own place. The period from 1673 to 1681,

after the battle of Saraighat (1671) was a period of political instability, marked by court intrigues against the Ahom royal house by a number of nobles. Tungkhungia Buranji reveals that the Kings became mere puppets who were appointed, dismissed and killed according to the interest of the kingmakers. Ahom palace intrigue and political turmoil instigated the expansionist Burmese rulers of Ava to invade Assam and made it a tributary state. Consequently, British came in the wake of Burmese intrusions in the British territory in Bengal and occupied the Ahom kingdom in 1826. The Treaty of Yandabo (1826) sealed the fate of the independent Ahom kingdom forever.

Initially no alliance or arrangement was made by the British with the Ahom royal family regarding their restoration to the recovered state of Assam as they did in many other parts of India. It was the outbreak of the series of anti-British movements from 1828 to 1830 which compelled the British government to change their attitude toward this area and the Governor General consented for the restoration of the Ahom monarchy in the Upper Assam (Barpujari, H.K., 1999, pp. 18-28). For political exigency British restored Purandar Singha in Upper Assam in 1833 which was however resumed in 1838 on the pretext of tyranny and maladministration. It terminated the Ahom rule in Assam that had lasted for nearly six centuries and completed the British annexation of Assam in 1838.

Objective and Methodology

In this paper, an attempt has been made to examine the historical process of the fall of the Ahom monarchy and its immediate effects on its aristocratic section, who enjoyed all power and prerogatives during the Ahom rule. It also examines how the grievances of these upper classes resulted in the formation of the Ahom communal organizations in the late 19th and the first half of the 20th century.

The methodologies applied in this paper are descriptive and analytical methods.

Ahom Aristocracy under the Ahom Rule

To understand the situation of the aristocratic section of the Ahoms immediately after the loss of their kingdom it is important to know about the Ahom aristocracy and their socio-economic status during the Ahom rule.

The Ahoms ascribe divine origin to their Kings and believe that they are all heaven born people. Heaven-descend hereditary monarchy of the Ahoms is linked to *Lengdon*, (Ruler or Lord of heaven) and his two grandsons, *Khun-lung* and *Khun-laai*, a tradition common among the Tais of Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam which implies a mystical origin. The first Ahom king Chao Faa Chao Lung Suo-Kaa-Faa is said to have come with his associates belonging to seven noble families. These original Ahom families were termed as *Satgharia* Ahoms or Ahoms of the seven houses or clans of seven Ahom families and regarded as the most respectable people in the Ahom society who monopolised all important offices of the state. They formed the Ahom aristocracy. The first three houses comprised the royal families, the second two houses were of the ministerial clans, and the last four houses belonged to the priestly and astrologer families. Although the Ahoms were traditionally endogamous, *Satgharia* Ahom families were exogamous groups and each family is believed to derive from one common heavenly ancestor (Barua, G.C., 1930, pp. 10-18).

The Ahom state was an independent socio-economic organization with a fixed boundary and a hierarchically structured highly centralized government. Captain Welsh had observed that the Ahom

system of government was not an absolute monarchy, but it represented both 'monarchical' and 'aristocratical' system (Barpujari, H.K., 1988, p. 66; Bhuyan, S.K., 1990, p. 9). During the Ahom rule the upper classes had enjoyed the highest social status and all sorts of privileges. It was the aristocratic class of the Ahoms who played the most dominant role in running the state administration. Their belief in hereditary rights and their peculiar system of administration helped this section to grow politically strong and economically affluent.

The Economic Condition under the Ahoms

In the Ahom administration both land and its people were considered as property of the state and hence formed major source of revenue. Except the homesteads and gardens, the king was the sole owner of all the lands in the country. The land allotment system of the Ahoms was also based on a peculiar theory of inheritance of the blue blooded royals and the *Satgharia* Ahoms who treated the state-lands as their common property by dint of their ancestral participation in the conquest of Suo-Kaa-Faa in founding their own kingdom. Besides religious and charitable purposes, lands were assigned by the king to the state officials for their maintenance in lieu of pay beginning from the top cabinet ministers to the lower ranking officers. There were also a large number of *khats* or farms which were rent free and inheritable lands (Mackenzie, A., 1981, p. 6). The aristocracy was provided with these hereditary and rent free landed estates along with a large number of labours and thereby allowing them to lead a resourceful life and enviable social status. The king was the principal owner of largest number of *khats* and he maintained a network of royal stores all over the country (Guha, A., 1991, p. 51). Thus under the Ahom rule the ancestral land ownership rights enjoyed by the descendents of the blue blooded Ahom families were inalienable and permanent (Gogoi Nath, J., 2002, P. 45).

In recognition of this joint conquest, the descendents of Suo-Kaa-Faa, the great *Gohains* and the seven blue blooded Ahom families were entitled to enjoy hereditary rights to the Ahom crown and the other principal offices of state respectively. Moreover any appointment in the respectable positions of the state from outside these families was considered as serious dishonour by the aristocracy of the Ahom kingdom for which they did not dare to defy even the royal order at the most critical time when the kingdom was at the verge of a foreign invasion.

The traditional medieval society of Assam was based on natural economy with the complete population wholly or partially associated with land and cultivation which further stratified the society into a number of distinct classes. The economic system of the Ahom rule was based on the *Paik* system, a kind of compulsory labour which is said to be based on their ancient legacy that prevailed in many parts of the South East Asia. It was upon this *paik* system the whole administrative machinery and the social organization under the Ahoms actually rested (Barua, S.L., 1993, p. 16).

Ahoms in the Society of Assam

Historical evidence shows that the Ahom community had been formed in Assam in a complicated sociological process in which the incoming Tai-Mao element acted as the centripetal force. The term 'Ahom' does not mean a particular caste of tribe (*jat*) or race (*kula*). It implies a community or clan or group consisting of several families called as *phoids* (Barbarua, H., 1981, p. 504). Although the appellation 'Ahom' apparently identifies a particular community there exists sharp social divisions among its different classes since the beginning of the Ahom rule. It has been already stated that in

the Ahom society one's position was mainly determined by birth and all the highest offices of the state were exclusively reserved for the chief families or seven houses (*Sat-ghar*) constituting the Ahom aristocracy (Guha, A., 1991, p. 106). On the basis of social status the Ahoms can be divided into two boarder divisions as the *Satgharia* Ahoms and the common Ahoms. The descendants of the seven respectable families of royals, nobles and priests were designated as the *Satghariya* Ahoms or Ahoms of the seven houses or families or clans. On the other hand the common Ahoms were comprised of all other new entrants from different tribes and communities through matrimonial relations or otherwise. While all the high and respectable offices of the state were considered as the hereditary rights of the *Satgharia* Ahoms, the common Ahoms belonged mostly to the subject class of the state. However the subjects Ahoms were not shown any special favor on account of them belonging to the ruler's community. Thus the population under the Ahom state could be divided into three broad divisions. The aristocracy and the gentry consisted the first two categories which included the king and his family members, his relatives, the religious heads, all other high dignitaries and the office bearers who were normally recruited. In the third included the rest of the commoners consisting of the *paiks*, slaves and servants (Gogoi Nath, J., 2002, p. 118). The first two groups enjoyed land and labors allotted to them and were exempted from rendering compulsory personal service to the state. The number of slaves possessed by any official speaks about his political and social status in the society. In the true sense the very foundation of the socio-economic life of the Ahom aristocracy stood on the services of the *paiks* and the personal attendants, both male and female called as *laguas* and *likchows* which was enjoyed by them generation after generation. Thus social distinctions between the aristocracy and the common people and later on between the higher and lower castes were rigidly enforced during the entire period of the Ahom rule (Gait, E., 1992, p. 230).

British Administrative Policies after the Resumption of Upper Assam in 1838

The resumption of Purandar Singha's territory brought untold miseries to the members of the Ahom aristocracy who were reduced to utter destitution. The British started building an economic infrastructure suitable to their capitalistic setup. The new revenue policies of the British government fall too heavily on the members of the aristocratic class who were long accustomed to a life of ease and comfort and were reluctant to change their old habits so abruptly to take up professions that demanded manual labour (Guha, A., 1977, p. 2). The introduction of the Ryotwari system by abolishing the earlier *paik* system adversely affected the socio-economic status of the Ahoms (Mackenzie, A., 1981, p. 6). It brought two fold changes to the Ahom society. On the one hand it transformed the aristocratic section to a landless class and the other hand it made the *paiks* the real owners of the land as they were in possession of it. It had been reported by Jenkins that the moment the Government resumed the possession of the territory of Purandar Singha the *paiks* universally deserted their masters. Without land, labour and money the Ahom royalty and the nobility turned to be mere paupers. Captain Brodie, the Principal Assistant of Sibsagar has recorded the plight of two families, both descendents of Purnananda Buragohain who had suffered a great deal from the desertion of their slaves. He noted, '*The want of means has made their dependants forsake them and reduced them to beggary at once*' (Saikia, R., 2001, p. 26).

The British introduced a monetized economy which was hitherto unknown to the people of Assam. During the Ahom rule even the highest officers were paid in terms of land and labour. Under the new

system of revenue every subject was entitled to pay a poll tax of Rs. 3 per head besides land tax and that too in cash. The arbitrary subjection to taxation was an unbearable burden both for the gentry and the commoners. Moreover the crisis was doubled when the British government brought the revenue free *khats* and lands held by the members of aristocracy and nobility under regular assessment. The enhancement in the revenue of the *khats* to the extent of 50% hit the aristocracy so severely that most of them had to leave their respective lands fallow as the yield was not worth the price paid for (Barua, S.L., 1985, p. 477). The Census Report of 1921 shows that the Ahoms had only four *khats*. Their hardship became so acute that even the royal families like that of Juvaraj Kandarpeswar Singha had to sell a part of their property at Jorhut (Saikia, R., 2001, p. 17).

The condition of the upper classes became all the more deplorable on the abolition of slavery by ACT V in 1843 when they were pushed down to the level of ordinary *ryots* (peasants). This created confusion among the aristocracy who suddenly lost the services of their slaves and reduced to poverty (Dutta, K.N., 1998, p. 3). The upper class elites took the curtailment of their privileges as an insult to their age old tradition. Abolition of slavery can be considered as the first mortal shock received by the feudal gentry of Assam (Saikia, R., 2001, p. 33). It was not possible for the old aristocracy to resort to manual works by degrading their social status.

Captain Brodie, the Principal Assistant, Sibsagar, implemented the *Mauzdari* system in Upper Assam in 1840-41 (Mills, A.J.M., 1984, pp. 8-10) which real motive was to eradicate gradually the official hierarchy of the old aristocracy so that its members could be assimilated with the common people. But this 'levelling tendency' of the British Government was opposed by the men of rank who felt it beneath their dignity to work with those who had been till recently their subordinate (Barpujari, H.K. 1999, p. 63). To save themselves from further humiliation many aristocratic Ahom families choose to live in isolation in remote villages in poverty and penury. In the words Gait, '*That condition of the aristocracy ... had seriously deteriorated. Their slaves being emancipated and they had lost their services of their *liksues* or the *paiks*, formerly assigned to them; and being no longer able to cultivate their estates, they had either thrown them up, or allowed them to be sold for arrears of revenue or of debt. Some members of the late ruling family were in receipt of pensions from the British Government, and some other persons....held land, granted to them by former rulers, either rent free or half rates, but, with expectations the quondam nobles formed themselves deprived of their old sources of livelihood and had either to content themselves with small appointments under the British Government or to sink to the level of ordinary cultivator*' (Gait, E., 1992, p. 286). Even Moffat Mills, while visiting Assam was moved by the '*extreme distress which the Ahom gentry have been subjected to by the sudden emancipation of their slaves*' (Mills, A.J.M., 1984). The hardship and miseries faced by the men of rank and responsibility can be ascertained from the letter wrote by Kandarpeswar Singha, grandson of ex-king Purandar Singha to Commissioner Jenkins, in 1856.

Economic Breakdown of the Ahom Aristocracy

The fortune of the Ahoms changed after their kingdom was lost. Emancipation of the *paik* system together with abolition of personal slaves brought disastrous results to the economic status of the erstwhile nobility. The British did not take the Ahoms in confidence for being the earlier rulers of Assam and also because of their involvement in a series of anti-British movements (1828-1830). As a result the Ahoms were not recruited to any important offices in the administration. Moreover they did not come forward like other socially advanced communities to avail the opportunities of western

education. Because of their educational backwardness the Ahoms were deprived of getting entry in to jobs and offices in the new administration. As a result they lost all their previous power and positions to the people from Bengal and the newly emerged educated Assamese middle class. Besides, the British encouraged the emergence of a new middle class from the socially advanced communities whom they replaced in place of the Ahoms officials. Thus, the British policy of systematic pauperization totally crippled the Ahom aristocracy.

There are innumerable records of evidences which give the picture of downtrodden condition of the Ahom aristocracy as soon as their kingdom was lost. Most of the families of the old royal house and the nobility had to depend upon stipends, pensions and grants of lands from the British government for their survival. In some selected cases even the expenses of their pilgrimages, *sraddhas* and other ceremonies were borne by the government.

At the time of British conquest there were at least three Ahom princes asserting themselves to be the rightful claimants to the throne. Jogeswar Singha, the puppet king made by the Burmese settled himself at Jogighopa and died in 1825 leaving his wives, son and daughter (Barua, G. 2003, p.127). It was on the grant of pensions and eighty *pooras* of rent-free land in Parbatia mauza that the family had to survive. The Queen mother received Rs. 25, the three widows of Jogeswar Singha Rs. 30 (Rs. 10 each), Dhaniram Gohain (brother) Rs. 50 and Rs. 50 for his only son Dambarudhar Singha. An amount of Rs. 200 for each daughter of Jogeswar Singha was sanctioned to be spent in their marriage. The pension of the Queen mother was ceased after she went to Burma and died there. When Dambarudhar Singha died in August, 1863, government stopped his pension. Unable to face the economic hardship, Padmarekha Gabhoroo, the widow of Dambarudhar along with her two sons made a petition for financial assistance explaining their 'deplorable circumstances'. After proper survey of the 'impoverished circumstances' of Padmarekha's family, the Lt. Governor recommended life pension of Rs. 12 per month to each of the petitioners which was however less than the pension drawn by Dambarudhar Singha. But their request for the continuation of the rent-free land previously granted to Dambarudhar was turned down (Saikia, R., 2001, p. 23)

The last independent king of Assam, Chandrakanta Singha was removed to Kaliabar with a pension of Rs. 500 per month, one hundred *paiks* and rent free grants on the plea of his intriguing nature (Barua, G., 2003, p. 131). He was allowed to retain one hundred *paiks* and rent-free grants formally permitted to him by David Scott. The annual value of his estates in Upper Assam was Rs. 408-14-0. Chandrakanta Singha left behind him his three widows, three sons, Ghanakanta Singha Juvaraj, Hemakanta Singha Gohain and Lambodar Gohain and a daughter, Devajani Aideo. The economic condition of the ex-Raja was already sinking during his life time and he had incurred heavy arrears on account of his heavy expenditure as he had to maintain a big family with limited resources. Being sympathetic at the distressed condition of Chandrakanta's family the higher authorities of the Company's Government allowed a remission of the arrears payable by him. His annual pension of Rs. 500 was transferred to his elder son and successor Ghanakanta Singha (Barpujari, H.K., 1996, p. 171) The Government allowed Ghanakanta Singha to take the title '*Jubaraj*'. Hemakanta Gohain was allowed a pension of Rs. 100 till his death on July 3, 1857. Maju Aidew, elder sister of Chandrakanta Singha had lived with him at Gauhati received a monthly pension of Rs. 40 which was lapsed after her death. At the appeal of her only daughter Kindumati Aidew the Governor-General in Council approved a monthly pension of Rs. 20 as she had no private means of subsistence (Saikia, R., 2001, p. 24). Ghanakanta Singha had resigned his estate or *khat* at Kandoolemaree chaparee in Nowgoan district with an intension to take up land of equivalent area near his residence at Guwahati in the

Kamrup district. When he failed in his attempt Ghanakanta appealed for resumption of his previous *khats* at Kandoolemaree chaparee. The Government of Bengal allowed him resumption of the *khats* but did not allow any exemption of revenue. This seriously affected the economic condition of the Jubaraj. Ghanakanta Singha died at Gauhati on September 10, 1858, leaving his wife Padmarekha and a son Kesavakanta then aged ten years. Ghanakanta Singha, during his life time always kept the hope of regaining his father's lost status with the help of Maniram Dewan and Harakanta Barua Sadaramin. Being resolute to procure his share of fortune Ghanakanta Singha offered to give Maniram the only gold vase at his possession as his contribution (Bordoloi, K.C., 1960, p. 88-91).

After the death Ghanakanta Singha the family had to live in extreme distress. Due to extreme penury, Rani Padmarekha had to borrow an amount of Rs. 400 from Harakanta Sarma Barua Sadaramin, their family friend and adviser to perform the death ceremony (*Sraddha*) of Ghanakanta which Padmarekha duly returned after receiving the said amount from the government. Considering the acute financial problem faced by one of the former royal families, the provincial government granted an annual pension of Rs. 500 to Rani Padmarekha (Bordoloi, K.C., 1960, pp. 114-120). It is important to note that it was on the repeated persuasion of Harakanta Sarma Barua, Commissioner Jenkins appealed the Government to permit Kesabakanta Singha, son of Ghanakanta Singha to use the honorific title of *Jubaraj*. The family of Kesabakanta Singha possessed a very valuable necklace called *Satsari* used to wear by the royal ladies at their marriages (Devi, N., 1994, p. 22). But due to their dire economic condition the royal family had to mortgage that precious family jewellery (*Saatsari*) to a Marwari businessman named Ganesh Shyam Sharma from Jorhat to pay off the revenue of their ancestral property at Guwahati.

Purandar Singha who once succeeded in gaining the admiration of British officials to install to the restored Ahom throne in 1833 was dethroned by the same masters without showing the minimum justice and sympathy to his cause. Despite of a number of difficulties Purandar Singha had paid the tribute of nearly three years and he was in arrears to the extent of six months tribute only. He repeatedly represented the British authorities in Calcutta for a remission of the tribute on account of rapid fall of the state revenue owing to several causes. Instead of his expectation of getting sympathetic support and co-operation of the British; Purandar Singha became disillusioned to found himself neglected at every step of administration. With the permanent annexation of Upper Assam in 16 September 1838 the fate of Purandar Singha was sealed forever. The Government ordered for the resumption of the whole territory of Upper Assam and the assignment of a moderate pension of Rs. 1000 per month for Purandar Singha for his maintenance (Sharma, B., 2007, p. 61). The ex Raja was not given any opportunity to defend the charges against him. In the fragile hope of regaining his territory Purandar Singha refused to accept the monthly pension of Rs. 1000 and sincerely believed that a proper representation might motivate the Governor-General in Council for reconsideration of his claim. But the British authorities never gave any heed to any of his representation for restoration of his state. After being reduced to untold miseries, the ex Raja compelled to appeal to the Governor-General in July 1845 to confer on him the *Zamindarship* of Jorhut and a pension of Rs. 1500 with retrospective effect so that he can lead a dignified life along with his family and numerous dependents. But the Government agreed to give him only the earlier sanctioned amount of Rs.1000 with immediate effect (Dutta, A.K., 1990, p.121). Unable to challenge the British authority Purandar Singha had to bear all hardship and humiliation silently. However, the Governor-General in Council after proper enquiry about the financial position of the ex-Raja and his family finally sanctioned the pension in his favour. But before enjoying the benefit Purandar Singha breathed his last in October 1,

1846, at a very young age of about 46 years (Bhuyan, S.K., 1990, p. 217). Kameswar Singha, the son and successor of Purandar Singha did not possess the will or determination of his father to resume his family claims and remained contented with his false vanity and spent his days in idle pleasure. He was allowed to be styled as '*Maharaja*' by the Company Government in 1847. (Bhuyan, S.K., 1990, p. 217). Like his father Kameswar Singha too refused the monthly pension of Rs. 1,000 at the advice of Maniram Dewan, their family adviser as it would minimize his claim to restoration. Kameswar Singha is said to have sold away all the remaining pieces of gold and silver left by his father for him. He was reported to have quarrelled with the widows of the family compelling them to live at the mercy of the Government. Accordingly monthly pensions were allowed of Rs. 200 to Bor Rani *Rai Dangia*, Rs. 80 to *Purani Melia* Kuwari (both were his wives) and Rs. 80 to Umabati, the Queen mother of the late Raja respectively (Barpujari, H.K., 1996, p. 175). Kameswar Simha too died an early death in June, 1852, leaving behind three widows and his only son, Kandarpeswar Singha, a minor boy of eleven years. At a very early age Kandarpeswar Simha was burdened with a heavy debt and the responsibility of running a huge family with equally large number of dependents living on the income derived from the profits of their property. The royal family was resided at Jorhat in a penury condition.

On 5 June, 1853, when A.J. Moffat Mill, the Judge Sadar Diwani Adalat visited Assam, Kandarpeswar Singha submitted an appeal for restoration of Upper Assam to him on a tributary basis under the East India Company. However Mill discouraged the young prince from entertaining any such hope of restoration in future (Mills, A.J.M., 1984, p. 517). In July 1854, Kandarpeswar Singh hard pressed with accumulated debts submitted a memorial to the Lt. Governor of Bengal for reconsidering his demand. Explaining his acute financial difficulty Kandarpeswar Singha renewed his appeal in May 1856 and begged for a pension of Rs. 1000 with retrospective effect. He wrote to Jenkins in 1856: *these honourable families who had enjoyed likchoos, attendants and other means for support, have been constrained to pay rents (on) house, gardens etc. after having been deprived of the benefices mentioned above....Hence their miseries can be easily conceived than described, and it will, I fear, reflect eternal strain in your and my grandfather's generous career for failing to uphold the almost extinguishing name of the Rajah of the house of 'Indra and to provide for the poverty of the old and honourable* (Dutta, A.K., 1990, p. 140). He prayed for the *Zamindari* in Upper Assam which was out rightly turned down. The Governor-General in Council rejected Kandarpeswar's prayer on the ground that his all right to pension had been forfeited on the continuous refusal by his predecessors (Saikia, R., 2001, p. 16).

In 1857, Kandarpeswar Singha was convicted of anti-British activities during the time of Sepoy Mutiny. His palace was thoroughly searched, but no documents of any treasonable nature were found against him. After his arrest Kandarpeswar Singha was not brought to trial but detained in Alipore jail in Calcutta as a state prisoner in October, 1857. Kandarpeswar Singha submitted a 'memorial' on 11 August 1858 praying for the re-hearing of his case and opined that during his apprehension and investigation into the inner part of the royal house, made by the Principal Assistant Commissioner, no ammunition or warlike preparation were found there. The suspicion of the mutiny, with which he has been charged was not proved at all; but the charge brought against him was fabricated by the Principal Assistant Commissioner and the Police Darogha through an enmity against him, and established by the deposition of a set of mercenary perjures. On 22 November, 1858, the Lt. Governor issued an order pardoning Charing Raja, but directed him not to visit his native country, and take up his residence at Midnapore or Bhagalpore or Burdwan. The Raja

preferred to stay at Burdwan and renewed his prayer to Government to allow him to return to Assam.

However, in connection with the general amnesty declared by the Queen of England in November, 1860, the Government revised its earlier decision and permitted Kandarpeswar to return home only to live at Guwahati. This restriction on his free movement in his ancestral place was opposed by the Prince and he refused to go home (Saikia, R., 2001, p. 18). But due to economic hardship Kandarpeswar Singha could not continue his stay at Calcutta for a long time and after two years in 1862 decided to return to Assam. Kandarpeswar Singha suffered all sorts of indignities and humiliation during his period of detention. Capt. Holroyd went to the extreme of doing all sorts of mal-treatment and everything possible to disgrace him in the public eye. While he was at Burdwan the British government auctioned his personal property at Jorhat to pay off his debts against his wish. All throughout his life he was considered as political prisoner by the British Government and placed under surveillance at Guwahati. The treatment meted out to him went to extreme when he was made a witness in a suit for recovery of debt against his mother and compelled to appear in Court at Guwahati (Barthakur, A.K. 2007: 7). Even his prayer for the exemption of personal appearance was turned down by the Government. He was granted a pension by the Governor-General-in-Council from February 1863. Living in a state of destitution and utter penury Kandarpeswar Singha died in 1880 at Guwahati. With the death of Kandarpeswar Singha the last hope to claim the restoration of the Ahom monarchy came to end.

During the period of his absence, Kamalapriya, wife of Kandarpeswar Singha was forced to live a life of poverty and distress without any source of income with her minor daughter. When she placed her petition before the government, an amount of Rs. 25 per month, half of the allowance assigned to Kandarpeswar was paid to her till her husband's return to Guwahati. Kamalapriya even had to seek Company's permission to open the iron chests containing valuable goods belonging to her husband and her mother-in-law which were under the custody of Agency Treasury. Her case illustrates the extent to which the members of the royal families had to depend upon the mercy and good will of the Company's government for their survival. The *gabhoroomel* or the estate yielding a large sum of money enjoyed by Lakshmipriya Kuwari, the mother of Kandarpeswar Singha was confiscated along with her personal jewellery on account of her son's alleged involvement in the events of Sepoy mutiny in 1858. A pension of only Rs. 100 was sanctioned in her name from May, 1864 which she refused. She said that the jewellery she possessed might have been sufficient to support her for life, but at the time of the Mutiny, they were seized and confiscated (Saikia, R., 2001, p. 20). It is important to note here that the Government had assigned different amount of pensions to the members of Purandar Singha from the stipulated amount of pension fixed in his name. They did not agree to increase his pension on the ground that the Ex-Raja had incurred a large sum of arrears at the time of resumption from his account.

The sudden economic hardship that had fallen upon the Ahoms aristocracy compelled the ladies of respectable families to appeal the Government for financial assistance to give their daughters in marriage or for provision of livelihood (Baruah, S.L., 1985, p. 485). It was the Queen mother of the ex-king Rajeswar Singha (1751-1769) a highly respectable and extremely old lady, begging financial assistance for her granddaughter's marriage, had lamented before Commissioner Jenkins, in 1838, that she had been forced by her circumstances to make such a request to him in disregard of the time honoured traditions of the country (Dutta, A.K., 1990, p. 141). The condition of the erstwhile aristocracy became so deplorable that the Government had to grant them advances for repairing

their houses. The Queen mother of Purandar Singha was granted Rs. 100 in 1852 to repair her house before the rain. Rani Modumbika, known to be the wife of Raja Chandrakanta Singha and the mother of Lambodar Singha was granted an annual pension of Rs 480 from 1839. Rupanta Aideo, Chandrakanta's niece and wife of Bhakatram Gohain received a yearly pension of Rs. 48. Hemkanta Gohain, the second son of Raja Chandrakanta Singha was a pensioner. He applied to the government for a grant of Rs 1000 to meet the expenses of his proposed wedding and also for the construction of a new dwelling house, befitting to his 'rank and respectability'. Jenkins, Agent to the Governor General of India recommended a sum of Rs 500 for Hemkanta's marriage and a further sum of Rs 500 to be placed at the disposal of Jenkins himself for construction of a house. Besides that, few years later Hemkanta appealed for more financial help to pay off the debts incurred during his marriage on account of high interest. Jenkins paid an advance amount of Rs. 400 which was to be liquidated by instalment of Rs. 50 per month from his pension. In 1846 the widow of Malbhog Bargohain, one of the last Ahom minister received an annual pension of Rs. 100 only. Narayani Aideo, granddaughter of King Gaurinath Singha was granted an annual pension of Rs. 240 from 1848. Tarabati Aideo, the daughter of the last Ahom king Jogeswar Singha received Rs. 120 as annual pension in 1850; Sarupahi Aideo, Rs. 120 per year from 1852; Madhavi-Maju-kunwari, second consort of Raja Kameswar Singha, Padmahari Kunwari, grand-daughter of the Barbarua and wife of Kameswar Singha; Rupavati Khatania, concubine of Kameswar Singha; Binandini, aunt of Chandrakanta Singha received annual grant of Rs. 240 since 1841. Keteki Gabharu, wife of Narahari Rajkhowa, brother of Padmavati, Parvatia Queen of Chandrakanta Singha's was allowed Rs. 96 per year (Barbarua, H. 1981, pp. 338-357). Rani Surya Prava Kunwari, widow of Puddo Kunwar Singha received Rs. 100 only. In 1858, Khageswar Singha, the Charing Raja received an amount of Rs. 300 for the *Sraddha* of his deceased wife. Major W. Agnew, the then (officiating) Commissioner of Assam sanctioned the appeal of Narayan Gohain, a nephew of king Purandar Singha for financial assistance after coming across the wretched economic condition of Narayan Gohain when he personally visited his house. At his recommendation the Governor-General in Council had sanctioned an amount of Rs. 300 in a similar case of marriage of the grand-daughter of Giridhar Gohain Namrupia Raja (Saikia, R., 2001, p. 28-29). From the note of Major Agnew it can be understood that in spite of Government of India's instruction to the concerned officers not to receive any more appeals for financial grants from the old aristocracy in 1846, the British servants were compelled to continue such grants because of the extreme penury of this class.

These are a few cases which depicts the down trodden economic condition of the aristocracy after they lost their kingdom. However, the British were highly selective in granting pensions to the scions of the old nobility. They provided relief in terms of exemption of land revenue and money pension to the direct descendants of the Ahom kings. The pensions and stipends offered to them were meagre in comparison to their needs.

With the fall of the Ahom rule their royal palaces and tombs were also plundered and reduced to destruction. In their attempt to establish a profitable market of tea the British did not hesitate to destroy the ancient monuments of the old Ahom metropolis at Garhgoan for erecting the posts and buildings of Nazira tea factory. This was strongly resented by the Ahoms who considered it as a matter of dishonour to their former kings. Many of the tombs had been already been desecrated and plundered by the Government (Dutta, A.K., 1990, p. 129). Purander Singha protested against the destruction of the Ahom royal *moidams* at Cheraidew and the pulling down of the bricks from the royal palace at Garhgoan by the Assam Tea Company and made complaint to Captain T. Brodie, the

then Deputy Commissioner of Sibsagar. When Captain Brodie forwarded it to Francis Jenkins, the Agent to the Governor General, he considered the allegation of Purandar Singha of very little importance. Records thus give us ample examples to understand the changed destiny of the Ahom aristocracy.

Social Degradation of the Ahom Aristocracy

It was not only the British deliberate policy for the systematic marginalization and pauperization of the Ahom chieftains that changed the political fortunes of the Ahoms, but it was also “the emergence of the Caste Hindu bureaucracy” (Sharma, D., 2003, p. 86) that played the most significant role in social degradation of the Ahom community. After the end of the Ahom rule other caste Hindus established their supremacy in the social and political life of Assam (Bimal J.D. and D.K. Lahiri, 1984, p. 86). With the loss of previous power and position social outlook of the caste-Hindus towards the Ahom aristocratic section changed drastically. They started to look at the Ahom community with much contempt. Even in the *Satras* (Vaisnavite Monastries), which the Ahom kings had established and greatly patronized, the royal families and the aristocracy lost all former position and prestige soon after they lost their rule. There were innumerable cases of social oppressions by the upper class Hindus whom the Ahom kings once honoured and rewarded with extensive land grants, offices and titles. These people started treating the Ahom people as ‘untouchables’ making derogatory remarks upon their entity. A number of books were written giving new interpretation to the Sanskrit *slokas* selected from *Manu* and other *Samhitas* defaming the Ahom community as polluted class by some spiritual heads which found recognition from the *Satradhikars* (high Priests) of powerful *Satras* like *Auniati* and *Dakshinpat* (Bora, R., 1994, pp. 11-16). Here mention may be made of the publications like the *Ripunjoy Smriti* and the *Sarbagyan Manjuri* from Jorhat and Nowgoan respectively in which the authors tried to denigrate the Ahoms as untouchables under the categories of *mlechhas*, *antajyas*, *varna-sankaras* etc. (Bora, R., 1994, pp. 12). These incidents brought tremendous reaction to the Ahom society. It made them conscious of their actual position in a caste Hindu dominated society. They were greatly surprised to see the sudden changed behaviour of these religious leaders who were lavishly patronized by their rulers. The attitude of the newly emerged Assamese middle class was also equally hostile towards the Ahoms. In the writings of contemporary Assamese writers hatred and anger towards upcoming Ahom elites in particularly and the Ahom community in general were clearly reflected. The Ahoms had their grievances against the Assamese middle class elites who using the favourable positions of their government offices wrongly motivated the British Government to take anti-Ahom move at different important occasions. Maniram Dewan, Harkanta Barua Hadaramin, Kanak Lal Barua are a few among them. It was popularly believed that at the instance of Maniram Dewan the British opened the Ahom royal tombs (*Moi-dum*) at Cheraidew and took away all the treasures therein (Dutta, A.K., 1990, p. 105).

Consequences of the Economic Breakdown of the Ahom Aristocracy

The future of the Ahom aristocracy became extremely bleak owing to the new revenue measures, their educational backwardness, and decline of the *khel* system and abolition of their slaves. Emancipation of the *paik* system together with abolition of personal slaves brought disastrous results to the economic status of the erstwhile nobility. An observation of the events since the annexation of the Upper Assam makes it clear that the members of the old aristocracy had totally lost their former

vigour and spirit as the ruling class. In the real sense the fall of Ahom aristocracy started since the last decade of the eighteenth century. Nirode Kumar Barooah has rightly remarked that, "At the time of British take-over of the administration, the influence of the nobility was so reduced that in Assam, unlike other newly conquered territories in India, there was no immediate political need to conciliate or destroy them, for the safety of the British power" (Barooah, N.K., 1970, p. 136).

Deprived of all wealth and prestige the Ahom aristocracy became totally dependable upon the mercy of British officers or the newly emerged Assamese middle class. The names of Maniram Dewan and Harakanta Barua Sadaramin are worth mentioning in this connection. The failure of the conspiracy to overthrow the British rule from Assam brought the end of the last effort of the Ahom aristocracy for the restoration of the old regime under the Ahom monarchy. With the execution of Maniram and exile of Kandarpeswar Singha the dream for restoring the indigenous regime was lost forever (Barpujari, H.K., 2004, p. 128). Kandarpeswar Singha being confined as a prisoner at Burdwan and Ghanakanta Singha leading an idle life at Guwahati, no eligible Ahom prince was left to further the case of the Ahoms. Without their kings and nobles the Ahoms became leaderless. Their strained situations compelled them to seek the liberality of the company for provision of livelihood and many other domestic matters (Saikia, R., 2001, p. 16-28). It was the mercy of the British authority upon which the fate and future of the Ahom aristocracy was started to be determined. In many occasions even the highest dignitaries of the former dynasty had to suffer utter humiliation at the hands of arrogant British officers. Over dependence of Ghanakanta Singha and Kandarpeswar Singha on their respective advisers, Harakanta Barua Sadar Amin and Maniran Dewan for receiving any favour from the British government speaks a lot about the helpless condition of the former royal families. Both the princes were desperate to get back their original position at any cost. Kandarpeswar Singha in the fragile hope of recovering his lost estate gave whatever gold and silver he had in his possession (Dutta, A.K., 1990, p. 129). Thus even at the verge of penury the *Satgharia* Ahoms retained the grim hope of recovering their lost power and privileges. But neither the Ahom royal house nor the nobility had the collective wisdom to unite as a class and put pressure upon the government to realise their demands. Rather every member fought for their own selfish cause. Although the common Ahom people remained totally indifferent to the sudden changed situation of the Ahom ruling class, the fall of this class indirectly affected the community in the long run.

Growth of Ahom Unity since 1893

Since the last decade of the nineteenth century the emerging elites of the Ahoms began to feel that the community would never prosper unless they are organised on the basis of their distinct cultural traits. They could realize that for the socio-economic development of their community their political representation in the administration of the state machinery was equally important. In order to remove their backwardness the Ahom community must organize and get educated. Besides they apprehended that their interest would not be protected in an upper caste dominated Assamese society unless they share political power. Thus after a period of more than half century the Ahoms started a new journey in the political life of Assam. Towards the close of the nineteenth century a few Ahom elites came forward to organize themselves under the banner of an association called as Ahom Sabha to establish their community into a rightful place in the society of Assam. As a result of the utmost initiative of Padmanath Gohain Barua, an eminent Assamese litterateur, Ahom Sabha, the first Ahom organisation was formed on 13th May, 1893 which was consequently renamed as All

Assam Ahom Association in 1910.

It is important to note that most of the leaders of the Ahom community hailed from the aristocratic section of the Ahoms who became sharp competitors of the caste Hindu elites in every field. All the grievances of the Ahoms against the British at the beginning and the caste Hindus later on were generated mostly among the aristocratic section of the community. The anti-British uprisings (1828-1830) in Assam were planned and carried out by the disgruntled Ahom royals and nobility who being deprived of their former power tried to check British intrusion into their state. Similarly the leaders of the Ahom revival movement which was headed by the Ahom Sabha or the Ahom Association generally hailed from the economically affluent and educationally advanced section of the Ahom community. Rajkumar Chandra Narayan Singha, Raisaheb, Leela sen Gohain, Lokeswar Singha Buragohain, Padmanath Gohain Barua, Radha Kanta Handique, Mahendra Nath Gohain, District Commissioner Hideswar Gohain, Maujadar Dalat Gohain, Tea planter Purnachandra Konwar retired Suryakanta Barua, Tea planter and advocate Rameswar Bora, Hiteswar Barbarua, Surendranath Buragohain, Sachi Chandra Barbarua, Padmeswar Gogoi and many others represented the aristocratic class of the Ahoms. Their movement for upward mobility was a struggle of the community to secure a respectable social status, economic equality and political participation (Sharma, D., 2003, p. 87). In the pre-independent period the members of the Ahom Association tried to procure adequate constitutional protection to safeguard their distinct socio-cultural identity.

Conclusion

From the above analysis, we come to know that various factors were responsible for the social, and political, and economic breakdown of Ahom aristocracy. The loss of independence and the loss of political power, and their endeavour to procure constitutional protection etc. reflect clearly the changing scenario of Ahom aristocracy.

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Interpretation Tools and Views of Heritage: Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and Phra Pathom Chedi*

Gozzoli, Roberto B.

Chen, Ka Tat Nixon

Talawanich, Suwadee

Mahidol University International College
Thailand

Abstract

The words "interpretation" and "natural/cultural heritage" have been in vogue for the last half century. As Tilden was the actual "founder" of modern interpretation, he emphasized the need of interpretation as stimulation of someone's curiosity to learn deeply after having visited a cultural site. Therefore, the simple reception of information is excluded from such a process, but information is still the main level within Thai heritage sites. This paper aims to put together information material from three different sites: Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and Phra Pathom Chedi in Nakhon Pathom. The three sites share a common motive: the fact of being "capitals" of Thai culture. For Sukhothai and Ayutthaya, the political and historical imagery makes them as the previous political capitals before Krungthep/Bangkok. Phra Pathom Chedi was the first site of penetration of Buddhism into Suvarnabhumi, as arrival point of King Asoke's missionaries.

As it will be discussed in the paper, the various interpretation tools offer a monolithic view: for Sukhothai and Ayutthaya, the grandiosity of the monument, as well as the actual origins, if known, are the usual information given. The attention to the monumental aspect is against any alternative interpretations, such as the analysis of the urban fabric for Sukhothai, or the importance of different cultures in the last centuries for Ayutthaya. For Phra Pathom Chedi and Nakhon Pathom in general, the fact of being possibly the capital of the mythical Suvarnabhumi overshadows any alternative interpretations of sites and ruins.

As no alternative view are given, the interest over the cultural aspect of the sites result quite shallow, as a survey run at the site of Phra Pathom Chedi demonstrates.

Keywords: Interpretation, Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Phra Pathom Chedi

Cultural Heritage Management and Thailand

Cultural heritage management can be defined as such: "Heritage management is a growing field that is concerned with the identification, protection, and stewardship of cultural heritage in the public interest." Cultural heritage management in Thailand has been discussed in introductory studies (Lertcharnit, 2010; Lertcharnit, 2013) or it has been broadly included within a discussion of Thai heritage within nationalism (Peleggi, 1996; Peleggi, 2002b; Peleggi, 2004; Peleggi, 2011; Peleggi, 2013; Peleggi, 2015). In this context, interpretation is the issue here discussed, intended primarily as

the information given to the visitors to specific cultural sites. The paper is essentially a prime within Thai heritage studies, and a descriptive approach has been followed. In fact, researches about interpretation issues for foreign visitors visiting Thai cultural heritage sites – with Ayutthaya Historical Park as case study – have seen the light over the last decade or so (Saipradist, 2005; Saipradist & Staiff, 2007; Wetsuwan, 2014). This paper fills a specific gap, about the nature and forms of Thai interpretation material and its Thai visitors, as an element specifically exploited during 1980s (Gozzoli, 2016, pp. 214-215), when site interpretation was a way to shape the past is imagined at national level (Silberman, 1999).

In fact, a cultural object or site becomes timeless after its “discovery”, but its importance is strongly related to the cultural and historical period during which the object assumes a specific connotation or value. Just giving a case immediately outside Thai borders, Angkor Wat and its temples are symbol of modern Cambodia, as its presence in the national flag demonstrates.

A similar process also appears for Thailand, as heritage was part and parcel of a return to the good old values, lost through the process of modernization (Reynolds, 2006, pp. 266-268). The return to old good values was already a trend during early 1960s, as nostalgia of Thai upper classes toward the degeneration of the contemporary times appeared. Keeping old established traditions was even more relevant the end of 1970s, as response to the events happened on 6 October 1976 at Thammasat University and their aftermath (Connors, 2005, p. 530; Keyes, 1989, pp. 98-100; Evrard & Prasit, 2009, p. 244; Reynolds, 2002, p. 12; Reynolds, 2006, p. viii; van Esterik, 2000, p. 107).¹²⁸

In order to exemplify the present situation, the following cases will be here presented:

- (1) Sukhothai Historical Park and its satellite parks of Sri Sitchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet;
- (2) Ayutthaya Historical Park;
- (3) National Museum, Bangkok

The choice is not casual, as both Sukhothai and Ayutthaya are two of the registered UNESCO World Heritage cultural sites in Thailand and they are the sites more strictly imbued of a sense of nationalism as *les lieux de mémoire* (Pierre Nora).¹²⁹ As for the National Museum, the choice is dictated by the fact national museums are representative of national policies and nation-oriented views of art and archaeology (Thompson, 2012). There are instances pointing out the substantial immutability of Cultural Heritage Management (CHM) in Thailand, as the same traits as present at Sukhothai and Ayutthaya in the 1970s and 1980s appeared in Bangkok in 1990s and 2000s, as the cases of Mahakan Fort and Rattanakosin island gentrification aptly demonstrate (Herzfeld, 2016; Herzfeld, 2013; Prakitnonthakan, 2013).¹³⁰

* This paper represents a preliminary version of a much longer discussion about interpretation message within Thai context, which is in production.

¹²⁸ But as noted by Anderson (2006, pp. 181-183), heritage and nationalism were strongly related in the late 1960s and 1970s historical situations.

¹²⁹ Both Sukhothai with its satellite sites of Kamphaeng Phet and Sri Sitchanalai and Ayutthaya were registered in the UNESCO World Heritage list in 1991, while the third UNESCO World Heritage site in Thailand, is Ban Chiang, which was registered in 1992. The site itself is a prehistoric site, completely out of the concept of nation. While the singular nature of Ban Chiang in the Thai cultural horizon has been already discussed by Peleggi (2002a, pp. 47-48)

¹³⁰ See Chapman (2013, pp. 147-151) for a summary of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya historical parks implementation.

Message vs. Tool

Articles and books have been written at international level about interpretation, visitors' needs and interpretation tools (Young, 2005; Reino, Mitsche, & Frew, 2007; ICOMOS, 2008a; Littlefair & Buckley, 2008; Woodward, 2009; Adcock & Ballantyne, 2007; Autonomous Organism of European Educational Programmes, not given; Ballantyne & Uzzell, 1999; Beck & Cable, 2002; Binoy, 2011; Caroline & Catherine, 2008). While those topics are obviously noteworthy, approaches to interpretation in Thailand are still in its infancy. This statement is not a denial of the existence of a variety of interpretation tools in Thailand: QR codes (Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Ban Chiang), mobile applications (National Museum of Bangkok), interactive presentations (Siam Discovery Museum) certainly exist. Yesteryear— at least for younger generations – interpretation tools such as tourist guides (Temple of Emerald Buddha, Temple of Reclining Buddha, Sukhothai Historical Park) and bilingual guidebooks are present as well.

In this context however, the object of study are the classical interpretation boards as present on those sites. Usually in brown colour, they were originally created by the Fine Arts Department at the time of the opening of the park to the public.

Those boards are usually bilingual (Thai and English), with contents largely similar between the two versions, with some exceptions (Gozzoli, 2016). No photos or reconstructions are included, but some more recent boards have a bi-dimensional reconstruction of the temple, with each part mostly identified by a very short caption. Such reconstructions derive from the archaeological guidebooks of both sites, in which the photo of - usually - the temple in the actual conditions can be overlapped with an acetate having the original shape of the temple and its original reconstruction.¹³¹

Audio guides are also supplied at least for Ayutthaya, but they have in mind an international audience and they do not have a Thai version for instance. For the Thai visitors, the boards are the only interpretation tools they may look passing by, as placed everywhere in the parks, while other interpretation tools are less widespread.

It is fair to say that there is certainly a schism between what Fine Arts Department of Thailand (FAD) attempted to achieve for and what Thai visitors wanted to do in the park. In fact, only in recent times, Bangkok middle class interest toward cultural and natural heritage has discovered the importance of Thai heritage (King & Parnwell, 2011, pp. 389-391). Most Thai sightseers however do not visit their own heritage to feel the atmosphere of antiquity, but as part of a pilgrimage (King & Parnwell, 2011, p. 395). Looking in perspective, visitors coming to worship and FAD writing interpretation tools are certainly at odds. But as irrelevant interpretation material present on site might be to Thai visitors, certainly it is not irrelevant to the agencies setting it, as their aims were to depict monuments and their importance within Thai history and culture. Thus, the perspective of this paper is the agency perspective, not the visitors'.

The division between Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and National Museum will be maintained for sake of consistency. While boards can be found in all the various temples of both Sukhothai and Ayutthaya historical parks, no more than three of those boards are presented here, and no more than a couple for the National Museum.

As for the criteria of analysis, the most important concept is focused over the textual contents of those boards, mostly the classification and the original source of such information.

¹³¹ See for instance for Ayutthaya (Kanita, 2000; Ayutthaya Provincial Authority, 2012).

Sukhothai Interpretation Boards

The function of the archive is preponderant within Sukhothai Historical Park. The board from Noem Prasat employs three archives. The first archive is the simple information about the discovery of the inscription (tables 1-2). The original Thai version has been checked with the English counterpart as well.

Table 1: Noem Prasat, Sukhothai

Noem Prasat, Sukhothai, Interpretation board	Origin of the information
"To the east, adjacent to Wat Mahathat, the elevated base of the rectangular building is 27.50 m. wide x 51.50 m. long and 2.50 m. high, adorned with overturned and upturned lotus moulding. It has both front and back stairs.	Description
In 1833 A.D. Noen Prasat was a place where King Rama IV found the stone inscription No. 1 which is inscribed with the story of Sukhothai. He also found a dais where King Ramkhanhaeng once presided over his council of state or when he listened to the teachings of Buddhist monks.	Archive I: the discovery of the stone by the future king
The stone inscription also described the planting of the Palmyra palm of King Ramkhanhaeng.	Archive II: Event described in the inscription
Therefore, the Fine Arts Department has decided to grow this kind of palm in response to this stone inscription.	Gentrification based on the inscription
According to a theory of King Rama VI, Noen Prasat is the remains of the base of the palace of the Sukhothai kings."	Archive III: Authority of the proponent

Table 2: Noem Prasat sources

Archive I (Krairiksh, 1991, p. 260):	"It was set up as a seat beneath a tamarind tree at Wat Samoe Rai together with the stone pillar with an inscription in the Khmer alphabet that is in Wat Phra Sri Ratana Sasadaram and was brought back at the same time as the stone slab".
Archive II (Terwiel, 2010, p. 100):	"In 1214 saka, a year of the dragon [1292 A.D.], the Lord Ram Khamhaeng, chief of the state of Sisachanalai and Sukhothai, who had planted these sugar-palm trees fourteen years before, commanded his craftsmen to carve a slab of stone and place it in the midst of these sugar-palm trees".
Archive III (Phra Ratchaniphom Phrabat Somdet Phra Mongkhut Klaochaoyoohua, 1983, pp. 64-65)	"Even though the base in the east is assumed to be a temple, there should be some trace to notify it, but there is nothing. On the wall line, there are no pillar or collapsed pillar to be seen, not even a pile of laterite or brick, just an empty land. So it can be assumed, that this base is the palace base and that this palace is made out of wood, and used standing pillar not sticking into the ground, so there are no traces left. The eastern land that is in total of five <i>sen</i> and four <i>wa</i> wide (two hundred and eight meters) and seven <i>sen</i> long (two hundred and eighty meters) is the palace of the Sukhothai kings. If it is not the palace, what could it be?"

For Noem Prasat, the discovery of the temple is part of the archive – the kind of container the information generates from. In this case, the archive contains the description of the trip to the northern provinces and the relative “wonders” surrounding the then Prince Mongkut, as narrated in the *Accounts of Miraculous Manifestations*. Such account is a list of wondrous happenings between Prince Mongkut’s ordination in 1824 and his death in 1868 (Krairiksh, 1991, pp. 259-261). The text referring about the discovery serves to give the parallel between the past and the future king’s wisdom and prosperity, as the text was written at the time of King Mongkut’s death. Thus, while some embellishment should be considered about the depiction of the discovery, the *Accounts* state that stone and throne were found in this specific temple. Archive II is King Ramkhanhaeng’s inscription itself, as the sugar-palm trees are in the place where the stone was set (Terwiel, 2010, p. 100). This passage justifies the fact that the FAD planted the same plants in the same spot (gentrification process). As for Archive III, the theory of Prince Vajiravudh, later King Rama VI is given. Therefore, Noem Prasat board has three different textual sources. The importance and the authority of the proponents has a consequence that that no other interpretations are given. The second example from Wat Sorasak is very like Noem Prasat interpretation board, as the description is completely based on an inscription of the Sukhothai period (tables 3-4).

Table 3: Wat Sorasak, Sukhothai

Wat Sorasak, Sukhothai	Origin of the information
The temple is inside the city wall.	Description
<p>According to the stone inscription of Wat Sorasak, Nai Intha Sorasak was granted a piece of land by a Sukhothai governor, where he built a temple dedicated to him.</p> <p>After construction was completed, Venerable Mahathen Thammatrailok from Dao Khon, an uncle of the Sukhothai governor, was invited to reside at this temple.</p> <p>In 1416 A.D. Somdet Chao Phraya came as a young boy with his mother and aunt to Sukhothai for a religious ceremony. His aunt stayed at the palace in the west, close to Wat Sorasak.</p>	Archive I: textual authority
<p>This story indicated that the palace of the Sukhothai royalty was located there.</p> <p>The main bell-shaped chedi sits on a base of elephant sculptures. This concept is based on a belief that the elephant regarded as a beast of burden from the emperor, is a suitable to firmly uphold Buddhism throughout a period of 5,000 years.</p>	Academic information

Table 4: Wat Sorasak sources

Archive I, source A: Sukhothai inscription no. 49 (Griswold & na Nagara, 1968, p. 236)	“May it be of good omen! At the beginning of Sakaraja 1334, year of the Dragon, seven-seven-four Saka, Thursday the fifth day of the waxing moon of the fifth month, in the year of the Dragon, fourth of the decade, a certain gentleman named Nay Inda Sarasakti, being full of faith in the Buddhist religion, requested [title to] this piece of land which he owned-measuring 45 fathoms on the east and west, and 39 fathoms on the north and south-from the King Ok-ya Darmaraja who upholds the Traipitaka, saying that he intended to build a monastery on it and transfer the merit to the King.”
Archive I, source B: Sukhothai inscription no. 49 (Griswold & na Nagara, 1968, p. 238)	“When the Sakaraja increased to nine, in the year of the Monkey, ninth of the decade, King Paramarajadhipati Sri Mahucakrabarti- raja, with the Princess Mother and the Princess Aunt, came up to present a white elephant and a royal vehicle to the Sangha in each city, and to redeem them in the matter of course. When they came here the Princess Aunt came and stayed in the residence at the upper end of the Old Esplanade west of Vat Sarasakti. She came and affixed some gold leaf in the vihara, and gave the land of that residence as an endowment to the monastery.”

Compared with the information board from Noem Prasat, the only difference is the textual authority, in the specific case, Sukhothai inscription no. 49 (Griswold & na Nagara, 1968, pp. 231-242). The Fine Arts Department concluded the board with its own academic explanation of the temple building. The usual criticism would be that the Fine Arts Department is employing the same language used in their own academic textbooks, therefore completely forgetting the non-academic audience they are talking to. Hooper-Greenhill (1994, p. 116) says:

In some museums, the information given is so embedded in the curatorial code as to be incomprehensible to those who do not understand it [...] A viewer without the specialist knowledge and without an understanding of museum conventions is unable to make sense of this information". It is not the only possibility however, as the need of educating may require an elevated language as well.¹³²

Discussing Wat Mahathat, the major temple of Sukhothai, Staiff (2014, p. 145) notes: “Quite a depth of cultural and historical knowledge is assumed”. While Staiff was thinking about foreign visitors to Sukhothai, Thai visitors needs a deep knowledge as well.¹³³ The attention to the origin of a building,

¹³² It looks like similar to practices in early 1800s in America (Babcock, 1837, p. 557): “The practice of writing books for youth, in the household language of children, is proper and useful for those who are learning to read; but as soon as words of common use become familiar to the eye, children should leave the style of puerility, and read only or chiefly a more elevated language; or that which is used by well educated people in adult years.” While Thai educational methods may not go so back in time, the coincidence of the need of an elevated language is quite remarkable.

¹³³ The same authors also say (Staiff, 2014, pp. 146-147): “Western visitors are confronted with a landscape of architectural remnants that are overtly presented in a way that, firstly, defines what is exceptional about Sukhothai and, secondly, rhetorically binds the place to Thai nationalist history-making. This discourse

almost completely ignoring any other physical description of it is a quite common pattern in archaeology interpretation as well, as at most there is a summary of the origins of a building (Alexandri, 1995, pp. 57-58).

There is a difficulty of breaking with past traditions, as the authority of the archive prevents any further interpretation and creates stock visions of the monuments. As already remarked at the time of the restoration of Sukhothai Historical Park in mid 1980s, temples and monumentality in general were the most searched experiences, not their cultural context (Saraya, 1987, p. 41). While such a criticism pointed out the need to recording any kind of information coming from exploration and excavation, the same negative view can apply to the interpretative material. The monuments in its golden isolation are privileged, while any explanation of the religious ceremonies celebrated in them are completely ignored.

Ayutthaya Boards

Regarding Ayutthaya and its temples, for Wat Chai Wattanaram interpretation board (tables 5-6), the archive is both the Chronicle, as well as an inscription coming from inside the Buddha statue.¹³⁴

Table 5: Wat Chai Watthanaram, Ayutthaya

Wat Chai Wattanaram, Ayutthaya	
Wat Chai Wattanaram is located on the west of the Chaophraya river, outside the city of Phra Nakhon Sri Ayutthaya.	Description
According to the historical records, King Prasat Thong allowed the temple to be built in AD 1630, when he came to the throne. The temple was built to commemorate his mother's hometown and to celebrate his coronation.	Archive I: historical text
The temple may have taken 20 years to finish, since a golden inscribed sheet, found behind a Buddha object says that the first ceremony was in AD 1649.	Archive II: historical text
Important edifices are the main prang, surrounded by a number of minor prangat in eight directions. The ordination hall is located outside the minor prangs and had three protective walls. The temple's layout was perfect because of the balanced construction both in the horizontal and vertical. Kings after Prasat Thong used the temple for important blessings. Before Ayutthaya's fall, the temple was used as the frontline for fighting, as there are some evidences, such as guns and bullets.	Academic information

(particularism and nationalism) is built over only locally accumulated cultural capital and is not easily accessible to non-Thai visitors from Western countries".

¹³⁴ For all the text, the English version has been used within its discussion. A research assistant checked the consistency between the Thai and English versions.

Table 6: Wat Chai Wattanaram sources

Archive I: (Cushman, 2006, pp. 215 (42)-216 (2))	King Prasat thong Chronicle: "And at the house of the Supreme Holy Imperial Mother, the Holy-Lord-Omnipotent ordered the construction of a great chedi reliquary. It possessed holy porticos surrounding it and those holy porticos were fashioned into beautiful pagodas of the directions and beautiful pagodas at intervals. And it contained a holy recitation hall, a holy preaching hall, and a Buddhist academy, and dormitories were built and presented to the holy monks in great numbers. When it was finished it was given the name of the Monastery of the Victorious and Prosperous Temple. On its lord abbot, the King bestowed the holy name of the Victorious Senior Monk, Royal Abbot of the Forest Dwelling Sect, and on the monastery bestowed a steady consignment of food in perpetuity without cease in holy memory of His Mother.
Archive II: (Ayutthaya Provincial Authority, 2012, p. 50)	Wat Chaiwattanaram is situated on the western bank of Chao Phraya river outside the city. The royal chronicle mentions that King Prasatthong had it constructed in 1630, the year after his accession to the throne by conquest. The site was his original house and he had built in dedication to his mother as well to proclaim his honor. It appears that the construction may have taken 20 years to complete as a gold tablet buried behind an adorned Buddha image in a spired roof hall is inscribed: 'Auspicious occasion in 2192 (1649 A.D.) Maha Sakaraj 572, Wednesday of the 4 th month, 15 th day of the waxing moon, year of the Dog with number of two ending. Firstly established.'"

Wat Chaiwattanaram includes two levels of historical information. The first level is directly deriving from the Ayutthaya Chronicles (Archive I) and the various kings who become the points of reference in such description. The second historical information comes from an inscription on a golden foil (Archive II), with a long explanation about the origin of the temple. Then, the academic information is given, not differently from what has happened for Sukhothai. Wat Chaiwatthanaram temple was strategically important as it was built on the opposite side of the river, therefore being in the front line in case of enemy's attack. While such enemy is not named, the reference to the Burmese invaders destroying Ayutthaya in 1767 is certainly a not unknown event to any Thai visitors: historical books and movies have shaped Ayutthaya as the fighting capital.¹³⁵

The second example from Wat Mahathat may serve as a good instance about the usage of the archive (tables 7-8).

¹³⁵ This reference is certainly better expressed in a guidebook issued by Provincial Authority of Ayutthaya (Ayutthaya Provincial Authority, 2012, p. 50): "Before the defeat of Ayutthaya, Wat Chaiwattanaram may have been used as a stronghold as witnessed by the reinforcement of the walls and the surviving remains of cannons and cannon balls".

Wat Mahathat, Ayutthaya	
Wat Mahathat is situated to the east of the Royal Palace.	Description
In the Historical Records of the Royal Secretary, it is mentioned that after the completion of the battle in the North in 1927 BE, King Ramesuan had come back to the capital. He happened to see the wondrous Buddha relics further away from the east while he wondered at Mongkla Phisek throne hall. So suddenly went there to mark the position. After that he established Phra Mahathat with 19 wa (38 meters) height and 3 wa (6 meters) cornice and name the temple "Wat Mahathat"	Archive I: Historical information
As mentioned in the Historical Records of Luang Praset, it is noted that Wat Mahathat was built during the reign of King Borommarachathiraj I in 1917 BE. It is 23 was (46 meters) high building. The Prang (the cone-shaped tower) of this temple was built of laterite before it collapsed to the Garuda during the reign of King Songtham. It was not restored until the reign of King Phrasatthong in 2176 BE. This temple was then restored and extended the height to 25 was (50 meters) using bricks, timber and bolster. However, the cornice collapsed again. Nowadays all that remains is the porch base.	Archive II: Historical information
In 2499 BE, the Fine Arts Department excavated the evocative ruins at Wat Mahathat, and found a cache containing many antiques, precious stones and particularly the relics of Buddha which was well preserved in the silver and bronze Stupas. In the crystal Stupa, a small golden casket was found containing relics, precious stones, golden rings, golden Buddha images and other ornaments.	Academic information

Table 7: Wat Mahathat, Ayutthaya

Table 8: Wat Mahathat sources

Archive I: Historical information (Cushman, 2006, pp. 13 (39-45))	The King entered Phitsanulok to worship the Holy and Glorious Victor and the Holy King of Victory and used the royal provisions to prepare the good for the seven-day sacrificial offerings. Then the King descended to the Capital and ordered that hose Loa who had been driven down from Chiang Mai be sent on to be kept in the cities of Phatthalung, Songkhla, Nakhon Si Thammarat and Canthabun. Then the King went out to observe the precepts at Mankhalaphisek Hall. At ten <i>thum</i> he looked toward the east and saw a royal palanquin, he rode forth. He had stakes pounded into the ground to mark the spot. The great holy reliquary which he built there was nineteen <i>wa</i> high, with a nine-branched finial three <i>wa</i> high, and he named it the Maha That Monastery.
Archive II (Cushman, 2006, pp. 217 [24-26])	King Prasatthong' speech: "the original form was extremely squat Rebuild it so it is a sen and tqo wa high but retain the sky trident spyre so that together they equal one sen and five wa."

The Royal Chronicles of Ayutthaya perform the same function already established by the Ramkhanhaeng Inscription for Sukhothai, as the three passages come from the Chronicles (Cushman,

2006, pp. 13, 12 and 217). For Wat Mahathat, the information is purely from the Chronicles, giving their version of the story. The only integration to the Chronicles is relative to the treasure discovered in the temple, a too important discovery to be passed under silence.¹³⁶

At Wat Ratchaburana, the original board (Tables 9-10) has been substituted by new one sponsored by a Thai Bank (table 11).

Table 9: Wat Ratchaburana old board, Ayutthaya

Wat Ratchaburana (old board), Ayutthaya	
In 1424 A. D. King Intharachathirat passed away. His two sons, Chao Aye Phraya who reigned over Suphanburi, and Chao Yi Phraya who reigned over Sanburi, met in battle as each desired the throne. This took place at the approach to the Pa-than bridge and ended with the death of both sons. A third son, Cha Sam Phraya came down from Phitsanulok and acceded to the throne whereupon he declared his intention to organize a funeral for his father and his two brothers. Afterwards he ordered the building of a wat, namely Wat Ratchaburana, at the site of the cremation and at the place where his brothers fought and died he had two chedis created in which to keep their ashes.	Archive: Historical Information
In September of 1957 A.D. looters dug into a two-level crypt inside the main prang (Khmer-type tower) and stole a great quantity of valuable material. Police arrested some of these looters. The Fine Arts Department proceeded to excavate the site and found Buddha images and many artifacts made of gold. Among these were a large a number of votive tablets made of gold and lead. In 1958 A.D. the Fine Arts Department built a stairway so that one could go down into the crypt and look at the mural paintings which were also found there. Since the Buddha images and votive tablets discovered in the crypt were very numerous, the ministers of the government approved giving some of them to people who had contributed to the building of the Chao Sam Phraya National Museum, much of the collection in which was found at Wat Ratchaburana.	Historical information

¹³⁶ The treasure is one of the major items of the local Chao Sam Phraya museum.

Table 10: Wat Ratchaburana old board sources

Wat Ratchaburana, Archive Source (Cushman, 2006, pp. 15 (7-28))	In 780, a year of the dog, tenth of the decade, King Indaracha I passed away, having been on the royal throne for fifteen years, Prince Ai Phraya came and set himself up in the Municipality of Maphrao Forest at the Chai Pavilion. Prince Yi Ohraya came and set himself up at the Chaiyaphum Monastery so as to enter the city by way of the Chao Phrom Market. The chief elephants met and engaged each other at the foot of Than Forest Bridge. Both princes wielded war scythes and both had their throats torn open at the same time. The chief ministers went out to have an audience with Prince Sam Phraya and, informing him of the events whereby his older brothers had both had their necks slashed while fighting on elephants, invited him to enter the capital and ascent the royal throne. He took the royal title of King Boromracha II. He then had the bodies of Prince Ai Phraya and Prince Yi Phraya dug up and taken to be cremated. On the cremation site he had a monastery, with a great holy reliquary and a preaching hall, established and named it the Ratchaburana Monastery
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Of the old board, it can be said that the first part of the text is heavily dependent on the *Chronicles of the Kings of Ayutthaya*, as the corresponding source shows (Cushman, 2006, p. 15). More description was given to the treasure discovered in the crypt, and the circumstances leading to the discovery of the relative treasure. In a modern context, some issues can be raised about splitting Buddha statues and votive plaques among private donors.

Table 11: Wat Ratchaburana new board

Wat Ratchaburana	
Mural painting inside the crypt of the main prang at Wat Ratchaburana were found on the interior walls of both upper and lower sections.	Description
Gathering Devas were shown on the northern and southern walls of the upper section, their dressing styles and ornaments resembling Sukhothai arts. Chinese kings, warrior and their procession were depicted on the eastern and western walls. In the lower section of the crypt, the murals are divided into upper and lower parts. Twenty-four Previous Buddha were portrayed clockwise on the upper part, beginning with his reincarnation as a Bodhisattva and ending with his death.	Academic information
The murals date from the early Ayutthaya period, during the reign of King Borom Ratcha Thirat II, who constructed the temple in 1424."	Archive: historical information

Relatively to the new board, there is certainly a shift in contexts, from information about the origin toward a simple description of the paintings. While the new board simply describes the chronology time of the murals, it goes back to the academic jargon.

Moreover, the new board is placed at least one hundred meters from the place it describes, which is inside the main prang (tower) of Wat Ratchaburana. Therefore, the visitors have already forgotten its contents by the time they reach the crypt.

National Museum Bangkok

The National Museum in Bangkok represents the major museum in Thailand, and it codifies knowledge of Thai art. Established in the actual format in 1924, its collections were firstly discussed and described by Coed s (1928).¹³⁷ Reasons of space limits the discussion here given, but two interpretation boards are discussed here. The first one is about the Lopburi civilization:¹³⁸

‘The term ‘Lopburi’ derives from the town or state’s name ‘Lavapura’ or ‘Lavapuri’ that emerged in Thailand in the twelfth century BE. This term refers to a typical style of Hindu and Mahayana Buddhist sculptures and architectures found in central, east and northeast regions of Thailand during the twelfth to eighteenth century BE (800-1,400 years ago). *There had been long cultural relations and interaction between the ancient states of Thailand and those of Cambodia. The style was comparable with those styles of Khmer sculptures and architectures in Cambodia, therefore, ‘the Ancient Khmer Style of Thailand’ is used as an alternative form for ‘Lopburi Style’.* Nevertheless, the artworks of the ancient Cambodia and those of the regions had their own distinctive features.’¹³⁹

The first sentence in italic highlights the concept of state, at times, when Thailand and Cambodia were far from being national entities, but Khmer kings ruled over actual Cambodia and parts of Thailand. Thus, the second statement is whether Lopburi as style can be considered something different from the main Khmer arts, but the existence of regional arts becomes expression of independence from Khmer/Cambodian arts (Peleggi, 2007, p. 159). Yet, the information is simply not “informative”, as the characteristics of the Lopburi style are taken for granted, so there is no information about what Lopburi style is.

As for the second board, referring to Sukhothai:

‘Sukhothai, located in north-central Thailand, was one of the most important historic state in mainland Southeast Asia. It was at its zenith in the nineteenth till twenty-first century BE (500-700 years ago). Sukhothai is renowned for its Buddhist Theravada culture and art. The Sukhothai state followed its own artistic evolution and it absorbed influence of Lopburi tradition. The Sukhothai people embraced the Buddhist faith and tradition from Lanna, Lanka (the present-day Sri Lanka) and Bakan (in the present-day Myanmar). The rapid assimilation of all these elements forged what is known as the “Sukhothai style”. The Sukhothai style is regarded as a “golden era” of Thai art. Walking Buddha is a fine example from the heyday of Sukhothai style. It is considered to be an iconographic

¹³⁷ See also (Peleggi, 2013, pp. 1536-1545) for a history of the National Museum collections and its presentation.

¹³⁸ The same contents of the boards have been re-employed in a recent exhibition at the National Museum, cf. (Fine Arts Department, 2015b).

¹³⁹ *Italics* by the authors.

representation unique and specific to its time’.

It cannot be stressed enough the repletion of three concepts: the word state appears twice, as well the world religion, together with the concept of people as “nation”, going back to concepts already enunciated at the beginnings of twentieth century, yet leaving question marks relatively to what is Buddhist Theravada art, or even what Sukhothai style is, apart from the mention of the Walking Buddha.

Cultural Heritage Management and Archive in Thailand

In fact, at the beginnings of the twentieth century CE in Siam, attention to ancient sites and temples was essentially a royal family related activity until early 1930s. The earliest example was Prince Vajiravudh, future King Rama VI (1910-1925). As Prince and King, he was deeply imbued with the nationalism as going in Europe at the time, and making the past as a way to reinforce national identities (Vella, 1978, pp. 202-205; Zinoman, 2014, p. 52).

While Heritage policies continued for more than 50 years (Gozzoli, 2016), in late 1970s, the historical parks of Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Phimai and Phanom Rung historical parks were planned to be opened to the public (Peleggi, 2002b, p. 63). As Sukhothai Historical Park was completed, its restorations were strongly criticized (Rojpojchanarat, 1989, p. 105; Saraya, 1987, p. 39; Moore, Suriyavudh, & Stott, 1996, pp. 35-36; Gozzoli, 2016, p. 209; Peleggi, 2015, p. 93). The main critique was that those reconstructions were not archaeologically sound, as no fieldwork was ever done to confirm whether the extant remnants could confirm those restorations (Rojpojchanarat, 1989; Rojpojchanarat, 1986; Vuthisathira, 1988; Ishizawa, Kono, & Rojpojchanarat, 1988, p. 7). From the Thai Fine Arts Department perspective however, those reconstructions were philologically correct, as they were following Inscription no. 1 – the inscription ordered by King Ramkhanhaeng of Sukhothai, dated to 1292 AD and the cultural backbone of Thai culture and society (Terwiel, 2010). If not mentioned in Inscription no. 1, Prince Vajiravudh/King Rama VI’s identifications in his book (Phra Ratchaniphom Phrabat Somdet Phra Mongkhut Klaochaoyoochua, 1983; Peleggi, 2013, pp. 1529-1530) were considered as sufficient. The book itself therefore has become more than a simple travelogue to the ancient capital, but served as historical confirmation of the actual archaeological ruins, thanks to the authority of the proponent. Ramkhanhaneg Inscription and Prince Vajiravudh’s book contributed to an educational visual appearance of the park itself.¹⁴⁰

Regarding the other UNESCO site, Ayutthaya Historical Park, restoration as gentrification was again the pattern of the park itself, and it was only due the chronicle lack of funding that the “restoration excesses” of Sukhothai were never reached (Peleggi, 2002b, p. 45). Even more than for Sukhothai, Ayutthaya Tourist Master Plan had the word Education as one of the major concepts, which was devoted to Thai visitors (Chulalongkorn University Social Research Institute, 1988, pp. 3/6-7). While heritage as restoration of old values has been already discussed, the presence of a part devoted to Thai visitors education in the Ayutthaya Master Plan might be due to the academic dispute relative to dating of the Ramkhamhaeng inscription, whose initial dating to late thirteenth century was disputed and changed to early nineteenth century CE, a debate that shook one of the pillars of Thai society

¹⁴⁰ The royal origins of Sukhothai role within Siamese and Thai society have been acknowledged by Higham and Thosarat (2012, p. 256).

(1991; Kasetsiri, 2015, pp. 31-33; Gozzoli, 2016, p. 215).¹⁴¹ *A posteriori*, the link between education and academic disputes seems to indicate that better education should help avoiding these obnoxious ideas.

Interpretative Message and Foucault's Archive

Looking at those boards, the interpretative message, the contents on those boards and their relative sources is the major target. In fact, any message does not come out from nothing, but it is part of a codified set of procedures and rules, the *langue* in Saussurian concepts, through which any textual composition originates from. As noted by Pearce (1995, pp. 16-17), going back once more to Saussurian semiotics, the object as symbol of a social practice, is determined by the *langue*, which are the contents that the social categories let pass through. Therefore, this paper looked for the repository supplying the textual sources, which can be simply labeled as archive. As archive is mentioned, the major discussant about archive and society in recent times was the late Michel Foucault (1926-1984).¹⁴² Within the vast *opus* of this multidisciplinary author, one specific work in particular has been employed, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*.¹⁴³ In his book, Foucault did not intend archaeology with the usual meaning of study of the past, but as a derivation from archive (Foucault, 1972, p. 131):

This term (i.e. Archaeology) does not imply the search of a beginning; it does not relate analysis to geological excavation. It designates the general theme of a description that questions the already-said at the level of its existence: of the enunciative function that operates within it, of the discursive formation, and the general archive system to which it belongs. Archaeology describes discourses as practices specified in the element of the archive.

Within Thai cultural environment, archive as a physical repository of traditions may not exist formally or physically – the role of the Ministry of Culture should be considered anyway (Connors, 2005, pp. 532-533) in spite of the fact that it surely exists at the level of practices. For Foucault, archive was a repository that it could be changed depending on the different cultural environment, something inconsequential for this study, as Thai heritage archive did not change much in the last 80 years or so (Peleggi, 2004; Peleggi, 2015). As for the classes involved, archaeology as quest into the past was confined to specific Thai social groups and this social pattern has determined trends within heritage management (Connors, 2005, p. 541).¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ For the – somehow heated – discussion, still going on during 2000s, see (Reynolds, 2006, p. vii). The claims of modernity of Inscription No. One has been rejected (Terwiel, 2010, pp. 57-58; Terwiel, 2011).

¹⁴² While the French eclectic academic died more than three decades ago, his theories in fact have never been associated with Thai cultural heritage sites, at least from the preliminary researches as conducted by the present writers.

¹⁴³ Foucault (1972) for the English edition. One of the co-authors of this paper was very attracted by *Archaeology of Knowledge* more than 20 years ago, at the time of his PhD dissertation. While not applied at the time, it is right to note the book has become important in a completely different context.

¹⁴⁴ This case is not rare anyway: Hewison (1987, pp. 54-55) and Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge (2000, p. 42) note that for the English National Trust, heritage was confined to an élite.

Education vs. Interpretation

As the main aim of this paper is about the message of interpretation materials as present in Thailand, the starting point of any discussion goes back to Tilden's six golden rules. Among the six principles, three of them are directly discussed here (Tilden, 1957, pp. 34-35):

1. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile
2. Information, as such is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information. [...]
4. The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction but provocation [...]

Analyzing the application of the rules in Thai Cultural Heritage Management context, principle no. 1 is certainly accomplished: Buddha images are discussed to visitors having Buddhist religion and formation. Having noted that a Thai visitor may understand the reference, the issue is about the identification of this ideal Thai visitor as defined by such level of knowledge. In fact, as for the required knowledge, Thai visitors should have at least an archaeological degree. From a taxonomic point of view, if the classification of cultural tourist as described by Du Cros and McKercher (2014, p. Table 8.2) is employed, these Thai visitors should be purposeful tourists, the highest level of cultural tourists. But as noted, the Thai visitors usually go to historical parks more as merit making than really searching for historical knowledge. Thus, their understanding of such archaeological or artistic descriptions remains improbable.

About principle no. 2, the conclusion coming from the Thai sites is quite simple: informing about sites, temples or cultural periods is not enough. A temple, a tomb or a broken pot needs a contextualization, which simply means recreating the cultural environment an archaeological object was created for. By consequence, a temple needs to be described not simply or only about the physical aspect, but how it was part of the human fabric of the city - Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, wherever – and its relationship within the city landscape.

As for principle no. 4, interpretation serves to stimulate someone's intellect. Whoever the visitors might be, they should be startled enough to participate in the experience at the time of the visit and to know more about the site. In this regard, Sukhothai and Ayutthaya historical parks fall very short, as they highlight the concept of education, not interpretation. Therefore, whatever interpretation tool is offered for understanding more about the site, and in this respect, there is absolutely no difference between Thai and non-Thai visitors. There is passive reception of the information.

In this context principles 1.3 and 3.1 from ENAME Charter for interpretation (ICOMOS, 2008b) are relevant (Table 12).

Table 12: Ename Principles 1 and 3

Principle 1: Access and Understanding	Principle 3
3. Interpretation and presentation programmes should identify and assess their audiences demographically and culturally. Every effort should be made to communicate the site's value and significance to its varied audiences.	1. Interpretation should explore the significance of a site in its multi-faceted historical, political, spiritual, and artistic context. It should consider all aspects of the site's cultural, social, and environmental significance and values.

Principle 1.3 implies the knowledge of the cultural level of the visitors, as specific interpretation programmes should be created, with different information levels. Principle 3.1 instead highlights the importance of a comprehensive view and the possibility of alternative views as well. Within the ENAME Charter, the parks of Sukhothai and Ayutthaya fall undoubtedly short. Both parks have been opened in late 1980s, long time before the ENAME charter was issued or even thought, thus an objection might be raised that their interpretation boards may reflect old sort of information. But as for the case of Wat Ratchaburana, new boards are simply repeating old information patterns.

For the National Museum in Bangkok, the codified pattern is still there up to know. Such persistence of old established patterns for interpretation material in Thai context is again demonstrated by a recent exhibition about the 100 masterpieces from the National Museum of Bangkok, running in December 2015 and January 2016. The language and contents present on the extensive museum labels have academic jargon in each of those introductory panels, as well as a monolithic view of heritage (Fine Arts Department, 2015a). National may be synonym with nationalistic; alternative views should be possible.

Conclusions

Having reached the end of this paper, information and its sources have been given, also highlighting some of the issues connected with such information. From a historical perspective, Cultural Heritage Management in Thailand cannot break out from the sort of even-based history typical of Western studies up to 1950s. Event based histories remain a constant, which again leads to a presumed immutability of any study relative to history and arts (Krairiksh, 2014, p. 118).

While the importance of upper levels of society as leader of any interest about the past has been a common factor around the world, United Kingdom, Prussia and Germany, Italy (Hobsbawm, 1992, pp. 131-162)– just remaining between the end of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century CE – the major issue for interpretation in Thailand is the inability to move forward to other heritage narratives and the consequent impossibility to supplement royal chronicles with other sources of information.

While the majority of the Thai museums has a very limited vision whenever national past is actually re-enacted or represented, even for the much-praised Siam Discovery Museum (Staiff, 2014, pp. 12-13), breaking from such a mould is certainly possible. It is certainly worthy to point out that Ban Chiang National Museum presents the site and its discovery in innovative ways, with diorama of the times of the excavations, as well a full description of site discovery and tomb reconstructions. A possible path to follow for a more inclusive interpretation of Thai cultural sites, both from a social and cultural level.

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***Anisong* through Religious Donations: The Case of the Phaya Sekòng Manuscript from Müang Sing (Laos)**

Grabowsky, Volker

Asia-Africa Institute, Universität Hamburg
Germany

Abstract

Dāna or “almsgiving”, the virtue of generosity and charity, constitutes the first kind of meritorious activity. It is praised as the most precious of the ten perfections (pāramī) leading to Buddhahood in the Vessantara Jātaka, the story of Prince Vessantara, the last life of the Buddha prior to his incarnation as Siddhattha Gotama.¹⁴⁵ The offerings of food, robes and other necessities to monks and novices, when made out of noble intention and one’s own volition, is highly praised in all Buddhist countries of Southeast Asia as a fundamental virtue. The concept of dāna is deeply embedded in the religious practice of Buddhist laypeople and constitutes the key for understanding the symbiotic relationship between Sangha – the Buddhist monastic order – and Laity.¹⁴⁶ Donations of laywomen and laymen to the Sangha are seen as an essential means to improve one’s Karma and, after many lifetimes, finally escape saṃsāra, the cycle of rebirth. Such donations include the sponsoring of the casting of Buddha images and of the copying of manuscripts that contain Buddhist scriptures or other religious texts needed by the monks for performing Buddhist rituals and ceremonies. Sometimes laypeople assume responsibility for all expenses related to such ceremonies. In many cases laypeople donate money for the building or restoration of temple buildings such as sermon halls (L: *wihan*, P: *vihāra*), ordination halls (L: *ubosot*), monk’s dormitories (P: *kuṭi*), monastery libraries (L: *hò tham*), or drum shelters (*hò kòng*).

Keywords: Manuscript culture, Tai Lü, anisong (ānisaṃsa), religious donations.

Phaya Sekòng and Müang Sing

Visitors to Müang Sing, a small district of almost 40,000 inhabitants situated in the far northwest corner of Laos close to the borders to China and Burma (Myanmar), feel impressed by the many temple buildings that have been renovated only recently. As Wolfgang Korn, in his impressive study on the Buddhist monasteries in the valley of Müang Sing, observed in 2010, the sermon halls of at least 21 of the 27 monasteries in Müang Sing district have been renovated since the early 1990s. Donations from local villagers as well as from expatriates now living in the USA and other Western

¹⁴⁵ As for details of the Vessantara Jātaka and the Prince Vessantara festival, see Brereton 2010: 25–44, McClung 1975, and – most recently – Collins 2016. As for a more theoretical reflection on gift-giving and moral ambiguities in the Lao version of the Vessantara Jātaka, see the thought-provoking article by Ladwig (2009).

¹⁴⁶ The concept of dāna is thoroughly discussed by Findly 2003 and, more recently, Arthid 2010.

countries made this possible.¹⁴⁷ The amount of money donated to monasteries depends on the donor's economic well-being as well as his or her religious faith. As Souvansay Phetchanpheng could demonstrate in his groundbreaking study about the transmission of knowledge in Tai Lü monasteries in the plain of Müang Sing and two other Tai Lü inhabited areas in northwestern Laos, donations by laypeople still play an important role in religious ceremonies practiced among Tai Lü communities until present-day.¹⁴⁸

One of the most influential and generous donors in the history of Müang Sing was a man whose meritorious activities are still remembered by many people in the town and surrounding villages although he has already passed away more than three decades ago. A mulberry paper manuscript, currently kept by Nan Chai Saeng, the former curator of the district museum of Müang Sing, informs us about all the details of religious donations this remarkable man made over a period of fifty years until his death in 1982. The manuscript, classified by the Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts under the genre of *Anisong* (P: *Āṇisaṃsa*) bears the title *Kan tan phaya sekòng u-mao* (ก้านทานภยาเซกองอุ่ม้าว), "Records of donations of Phaya Sekòng [or] U Mao". Based on a transcription of this unique document into central Thai and an annotated English translation of the text, a number of questions are addressed: Who was this extraordinary man of modest background who was born in present-day Myanmar but later played a prominent role in the social life of Müang Sing? What does his manuscript reveal about religious donations in general and the sponsoring of the making of Buddhist manuscripts in particular, in the periphery of the Tai world during the twentieth century?

In a volume on the history of Müang Sing and the township's sacred stupa of That Chiang Tüng,¹⁴⁹ published in 2006 by members of the old town's local aristocracy now living in exile in the United States, the following short biography of Phaya Sekòng is provided:

Phaya Sekòng (U Mao) was a person who, when he was still a young child, lost his father and became a semi-orphan. Thus his family was hardly complete. However, he struggled hard to overcome all obstacles by earning his livelihood as a petty trader until he had grown older and become an affluent, wealthy man. His Majesty the King (Si Savang Vong) bestowed upon him the honorary title "Phaya Sekòng". He lent his ears to the needs of all the village and town people of

¹⁴⁷ See Korn 2010: 51. Indeed, when entering any monastery compound in Müang Sing, one will notice numerous writings on temple walls or inside the temple buildings recording the name of a donor and the amount of money spent for a certain item, such as the construction of (parts of a) building, the sponsoring of a painting, etc., and the donor's place of residence. The latter is frequently "U.S.A.", and the amount of money then given in US-Dollars.

¹⁴⁸ Souvanxay Phetchanpheng's dissertation, submitted to the University of Western Brittany at Brest in 2013, is primarily based on anthropological fieldwork but also makes substantial use of sermons and preachings recorded during numerous ceremonies attended by the researcher. As for the plain of Müang Sing, Souvanxay chooses Vat Chiang Chai or Vat Luang Ratchathan, the town's principal monastery, as a case study but does so by investigating its role as the center of a network of monasteries in the district of Müang Sing (pp. 341–430). Traditional palm-leaf and mulberry paper manuscripts as a crucial tool for the transmission of – predominantly religious – knowledge are briefly discussed but not critically examined in-depth (see pp. 107–119).

¹⁴⁹ The names That Chiang Tüng and That Chiang Tüm seem to be used alternatively by the local population but the present writer thinks that there is a preference for the name That Chiang Tüng. Lafont (1957: 14) refers to the reliquary as "That Xieng Tung" arguing that it was called so after the township of Xieng (Chiang) Tung on which the principality of Chiang Khaeng depended during the third quarter of the 19th century. As Cohen (1996: 2–3) convincingly argues there are neither local Buddhist texts nor oral traditions that would support an assumed connection between the reliquary and Chiang Tung. Cohen believes that the most plausible explanation is offered by a local source attributing the founding of That Chiang Tüng (or Tüm) to a princess of Chiang Khaeng who initiated an early resettlement of the plain of Müang Sing in the 1790s.

Müang Sing. At the end of this life, the [Lao] authorities established a new political system and appointed [Phaya Sekòng the representative of] the National Front for Reconstruction of Luang Namtha province. Phaya Sekòng was a devout believer and had a deep faith in the Teachings of the Buddha. We can clearly observe that he made his donations and givings in charity continuously and in large numbers. For example, he hosted ordination ceremonies [for monks and novices], consecration ceremonies for [senior] monks, and monk's robes offering (*kathin*) ceremonies; he sponsored the construction of the road linking the villages of Ban Tapao and Ban Dòn Pòi,¹⁵⁰ of monastery libraries, of temple pavilions, and of large Buddha statues. He initiated all these donations in the villages [of Müang Sing]. Furthermore, he also initiated the restoration work in the region, of temples and stupas. There is nothing which he did not donate and support. Finally, he donated his own private house to the public and [helped to] build a school for the young children. Nowadays, he has already passed away. Having lived from 1894 until 1983,¹⁵¹ he had reached the age of 89.¹⁵²

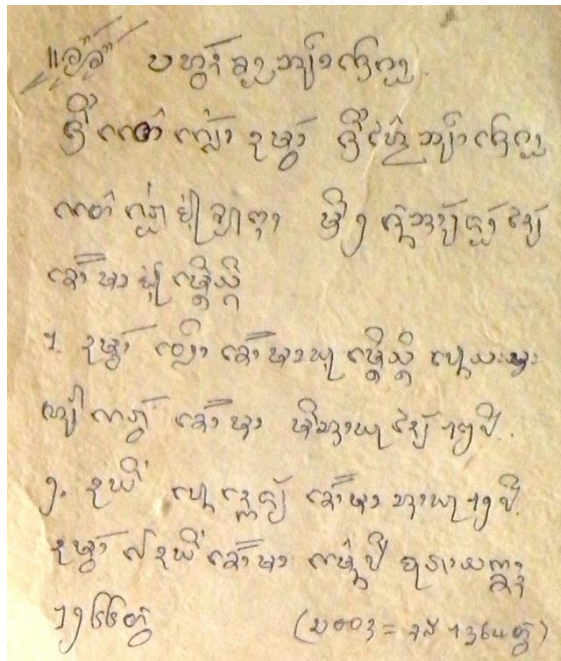
ພະຍາເຊກອງ (ອຸມ້າວ) ຍຸກຄົນຜູ້ໜຶ່ງເວລາຍັງນ້ອຍ ເພິ່ນເປັນລູກກຳພ້າພໍ່, ຄອບຄົວບໍ່ຄ່ອຍສົມບູນ ແຕ່ດ້ວຍຄວາມມານະອົດທົນ ຜ່ານຜ່າອຸປະສັກ ຊີວິດທຳມາຫາກິນຄ້າຂາຍເລັກໆນ້ອຍໆ ຈົນເຕີບໃຫຍ່ຂຶ້ນ ແລະຮຸ່ງມີເປັນດີ. ພະເຈົ້າມະຫາຊີວິດ ໄດ້ພະຣາຊະທານຍົດຖາບິນດາສັກໃຫ້ ຕັ້ງຊື່ວ່າ ພະຍາເຊກອງ ແລະເປັນທີ່ປຶກສາຫາລືກັບຊາວບ້ານຊາວເມືອງສິງ. ໃນບັນຍາຍຂອງຊີວິດຂອງເພິ່ນ, ທາງການຈັດຕັ້ງລະບອບໃໝ່ ໄດ້ມອບໝາຍໃຫ້ເພິ່ນເປັນແນວໂຮມແຂວງຫຼວງນ້ຳທາ, ພະຍາເຊກອງ ມີແນວຄິດເຊື່ອໝັ້ນໄປໃນທາງພະພຸດທະສາສະໜາ; ເຮົາຈະເຫັນໄດ້ວ່າການໃຫ້ທານ ແລະການສົງເຄາະແກ່ບ້ານເມືອງນັ້ນ ມີມາກມາຍ ແລະເປັນເນື່ອງນິດເຊັ່ນ ເພິ່ນເຮັດບຸນກອງບວດ, ກອງຫັດ, ກອງມະຫາກັນຖິນ, ສ້າງຖະໜົນ, ໄປບ້ານທ່າປ້າວ-ດອນປອຍ, ສ້າງສາລາ, ໂຮງທັມ, ທໍ່ແຈກ, ສ້າງພະພຸດທະເຈົ້າຫຼວງ, ໃຊ້ຕາມໃໝ່ບ້ານ ກໍ່ແມ່ນເພິ່ນເປັນເຄົ້າສັດທາ. ນອກຈາກນີ້ຍັງບູລະນະປະຕິສັງຂອນຂອບ, ວັດວາອາຣາມ, ພະທາດຫຼວງ, ບໍ່ມີສິ່ງໃດທີ່ເພິ່ນບໍ່ໄດ້ໃຫ້ທານ ແລະສົງເຄາະ ອີກຍັງໄດ້ອະນຸເຄາະເຮືອນສ່ວນຕົວ ໃຫ້ທາງຣາຊະການ ເຮັດໂຮງຮຽນສິດສອນເຍົາວະຊົນຄົນລຸ້ນຫຼັງອີກ. ປະຈຸບັນໄດ້ເສຍຊີວິດໄປແລ້ວລວມອາຍຸສັງຂານ ແຕ່ 1894–1983 ໄດ້ 89 ປີ.

These short biodata do not mention Phaya Sekòng's birthplace. His original name U Mao indicates that he was born in present-day Burma (Myanmar) because the honorific "U (B: ဦး)" preceding his personal name, Mao (Th: ม้า), is used in Burma for mature men or men in a senior position as well as for monks. In fact, Phaya Sekòng alias U Mao is remembered in Müang Sing to have come from the eastern Shan state of Chiang Tung (Kengtung). According to an entry in the final part of the manuscript "Records of donations of Phaya Sekòng [or] U Mao", the later Phaya Sekòng (who reportedly passed away on 19 Tuesday 1982, and not in 1983 as claimed in the quotation above) was born in 1894 in Chiang Tung which at that time had only recently come under British rule. Together with his three-years-younger brother he came to Müang Sing at the age of fifteen. In the manuscript (page 75), it is stated under the subheading "Biography of Phaya Sekòng" (Th. ประวัติของภยาเซกอง):

¹⁵⁰ The two neighboring villages of Ban Tapao and Ban Dòn Pòi are situated less than two kilometers to the northwest of the town quarter of Chiang Yün. The two villages share the same monastery which is in Ban Tapao. During the times of Chao Fa Sali Nò Kham (r. 1880/81–1901), the inhabitants of Ban Tapao and Ban Dòn Pòi worked in the service of both the *chao fa*'s and the viceroy's palace. See Grabowsky and Renoo 2008: 19.

¹⁵¹ According to other sources, such as the mulberry paper manuscript discussed by us, Phaya Sekòng died one year earlier, in 1982.

¹⁵² Houmphon Ratanavong et al. 2006: 117.



[Phò Thao Mao's] original name was U Mao, his new name was Phaya Sekòng. His original home was Chiang Tung; he came to Müang Sing together with his brother. U Mao came to Müang Sing as a novice at the age of fifteen. [His younger brother] U Yi was still a child of twelve when he arrived. U Mao and U Yi came [to Müang Sing] in the year CS 1266 (AD 1904/5).

Transcription:

[พ่อเถ้าม้าว] ... ชื่อแต่เคส้าอุม้าว ชื่อใหม่ภยาเซกอง แต่ก่อน (ก่อน) อยู่เชียงตุง มี 2 คน อ้ายน้องได้เข้ามาอยู่
เมืองสิง อุม้าว เวลาเข้ามาอยู่เมืองสิงเปน สะมะเถียรแล้ว (แล้ว) เข้ามา มีอายุ ได้ 15 ปี อูยี่ เปนเด็กน้อย เข้า มาอายุ 12
ปี อุม้าวแล อูยี่เข้า มาแม่นปี จุราสฤชาด 1266 ตัว (2003 = จศ 1364 ตัว)

This rather brief statement does not mention any of Phayao Sekòng's parents. Yet the rest of the text makes frequent mention his mother, along with his wives and mothers-in-law, as co-donor whereas it is completely silent of his father. Thus the oral tradition that the young U Mao arrived in Müang Sing in the company of his mother and younger brother seems to be plausible. Several informants told me that his mother died in Müang Sing at a very high age. As the text itself does not indicate U Mao's ethnic background, we may only speculate on this point. Most likely he belonged to the Tai Khün ethnic group. The few surviving photographs show the elderly Phaya Sekòng wearing a traditional Burmese-style turban or "head wrap" called *gaung baung* (B: ခေါင်းပေါင်း) in Burmese and *khen ho* in Shan (NT: *khian hua* เคียนหัว). This turban was also a quite common headdress for males in the Chiang Tung area whose Tai speaking population was mainly Tai Khün, along with Tai Lü and Shan communities. The French administrative official and later scholar, Pierre-Bernard Lafont, who had been living in Müang Sing from 1953 until 1960, mentions that half a dozen Tai Khün, monks and businessmen, were living in the town at that time. Phaya Sekòng and his family belonged to the latter group.¹⁵³

¹⁵³ Lafont 1973.

At the time of Phaya Sekòng's arrival (in 1909 or 1910), Müang Sing was a French protectorate ruled by an indigenous prince still bearing the traditional title of *chao fa* ("Lord of Heaven") whose name was Chao Mòmm Ong Kham. At that time people in Müang Sing still remembered the old days when the town was the capital of the small principality of Chiang Khaeng that once extended over both banks of the Mekong River but was divided by the French and British colonial powers when U Mao was only two years old. The Anglo-French agreement of 1896 stipulated that the right-bank territories of Chiang Khaeng were ceded to Chiang Tung and thus fell under British suzerainty while the areas on the left bank with the fertile plain of Müang Sing came under French protection.¹⁵⁴ A few years after U Mao had settled in Müang Sing he might have become witness of the *chao fa*'s failed uprising in December 1914 (encouraged by the false rumors that France was defeated and conquered by German armies). Chao Mòmm Ong Kham fled to neighboring Chiang Rung in the Chinese controlled Tai Lũ principality of Sipsòng Panna where he lived in exile until his death in 1924.¹⁵⁵ As a consequence, Müang Sing lost its autonomous status and became part of the province Haut-Mékong (Hua Khòng) with Luang Namtha as its administrative center. U Mao may also have witnessed the temporary occupation of the area by Chinese Kuomintang troops following the collapse of Japanese forces at the end of World War II; for several more than 50 Kuomintang troops were stationed near Müang Sing town until they were forced to withdraw by the returning French forces, supported by the local population.¹⁵⁶

In the early 1960s, Müang Sing turned into a battlefield when the Royal Lao Government (RLG) came under attack by pro-communist Pathet Lao troops who eventually conquered the town on 5 May 1962. During this attack the monastery of Chiang Yün, close to the French fortress, was destroyed. The forces loyal to the regime in Vientiane had to withdraw to Huai Sai on the Mekong opposite the Thai port of Chiang Khòng. An uprising launched in 1963 by conservative Yao (Mien) villagers in Müang Sing, who were frustrated of repressive policies of the Communists, pushed the Pathet Lao again into the defensive the more so since also members of other ethnic groups in Müang Sing joined the ranks of the Yao rebels. In early 1965, the Pathet Lao had lost control of most of the territory in the district. It took the revolutionary forces more than two years until they were able to break the enemy's resistance and restore their rule over Müang Sing, apart from a few isolated Tai Lũ villages on the left bank of the Mekong river, including Ban Siang (Chiang) Khaeng which remained under the control of the Royal Lao Government in Vientiane until the signing of the armistice agreement of Paris (1973) and the founding of a coalition government (1974).¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ The Anglo-French negotiations which led to the partition of Chiang Khaeng are not only documented in French and British archival sources but also in the "Chronicle of Chiang Khaeng", a Tai Lũ chronicle composed in 1905, less than ten years after the events that resulted in the disintegration of Chiang Khaeng as a largely independent polity. See Grabowsky 1999 and 2003; Grabowsky and Renoo 2008: 43–53.

¹⁵⁵ The uneasy relationship between Chao Mòmm Ong Kham who had succeeded his father, Chao Fa Sali Nò Kham in 1901, and his younger brother and viceroy, Chao Teppamani Kham escalated in March 1905 and resulted in the flight of the latter to Müang Yu, which lies on former "Western Chiang Khaeng" territory, now part of the British controlled Chiang Tung. The background and evolution of this conflict is recorded in the epilogue of the Wat Tapao version of the Chiang Khaeng Chronicle. See Grabowsky and Renoo 2008: 52–53 and 174–178.

¹⁵⁶ Grabowsky 2016: 448.

¹⁵⁷ See Grabowsky 2016: 451–52. Jean Deuve who has written the most detailed accounts of the war in Laos mentions briefly that the Americans and their Thai allies set up a base on Thai territory in Chiang Khong, just opposite of Huai Sai, to recruit and train Hmong, Yao (Mien), and Khmu soldiers in secret guerilla units against the pro-Communist forces (Deuve 1984: 242).

Over the years Phaya Sekòng alias U Mao become one of the richest traders in Müang Sing whose commercial relations extended to northern Thailand and his native town Chiang Tung in Burma. Phaya Sekòng's influence was not based on his business network alone but relied to a much larger extent on his "cultural capital" which he accumulated through numerous substantial donations to monasteries and public institutions. In 1947, for example, Phaya Sekòng handed over his spacious wooden house to the government to house a school there. He had once inherited this two-story building of eleven rooms from Chao Mòmm Teppamani Kham, the former viceroy of Müang Sing, when he went to settle permanently in Chiang Tung.¹⁵⁸ When the school later was transferred to a larger and more quiet site in Chiang Yün, Phaya Sekòng once again moved to his old house which was situated next to Müang Sing's main monastery Wat Luang Ratchathan in the town quarter of Chiang Chai.

Most of Phaya Sekòng's donations were made to the benefit of religious institutions, and only these donations are recorded in the mulberry-paper manuscript translated and analyzed by me. The monasteries that received donations from this Buddhist patron in the course of five decades are mostly situated in the plain of Müang Sing. Not surprisingly, Phaya Sekòng's home monastery, Wat Luang Ratchathan also known as Wat Chiang Chai got by far the largest share of all donations, followed by Wat Nam Kao Luang, the main monastery of the Tai Nüa ethnic group in Müang Sing.¹⁵⁹ Attention should also be drawn to the few donations given to monasteries outside the plain of Müang Sing. In 1966/67, Phaya Sekòng made two donations to Wat Foei Lung, an old monastery situated in the district of Moeng Long in the southeastern corner of Sipsòng Panna, Yunnan province, People's Republic of China. It was the time when the Chinese Cultural Revolution had just started and hundreds of Tai Lü people from that area had sought refuge in Müang Sing.¹⁶⁰ Thus these donations may be interpreted as a moral support for oppressed Tai Buddhists in the immediate neighborhood. Unlike many supporters of the royalist side, Phaya Sekòng alias U Mao did not leave Müang Sing after the Pathet Lao seized the town in the 1960s nor did he flee the country after the founding of the Lao P.D.R. in December 1975. On the contrary, he even became a representative of the Lao Front for National Construction (*Naeo Lao Sang Sat*) and continued his religious donations, such as sponsoring the copying of manuscripts and donating them to monasteries, or financially supporting the construction or restoration of stupas and Buddhist temple buildings, even in the economically difficult years of the late 1970s until his death in 1982. A note on page 75 of the manuscript, written in modern Lao script, states that after his death, "[the] house and the land of Phaya Sekòng were sold by Bun Wisai (Wichai, his son,) to the state [owned] Lan Xang Bank. Lan Xang Bank handed it over to the Cultural [Office]."¹⁶¹

Since the early 1990s at least, probably already some time earlier, Phaya Sekòng's former residence has been housing the (ethnographic) museum of Müang Sing which has a fine permanent exhibition of artifacts and handicraft from the major ethnic groups inhabiting the district of Müang Sing which in 2015 had a total population of roughly 32,000: Tai Lü (28 %), Tai Nüa (8 %), Akha (50 %), Hmong

¹⁵⁸ Houmphang Ratanavong et al. 2006: 26.

¹⁵⁹ According to local tradition, the Tai Nüa of Müang Sing originate from Chiang Ku and Müang Lò in the Szemao (Simao) district, which is situated to the north of Sipsòng Panna in southern Yunnan (Wityada 2003: 25).

¹⁶⁰ See Grabowsky 2016: 450.

¹⁶¹ ดินเฮือนพญาของขุนวิไชยให้ลัด (รัฐ) ทะนาคานล้านช้างทะนาคานล้านช้างมอบให้วัดพระนันทา.

(8 %), and Yao (4 %).¹⁶² Two rooms in the first floor also present reproductions of rare historical photographs from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, i.e., from the period when Müang Sing experienced the transition from semi-independent principality to French rule. Some of these photographs also show Phaya Sekòng and his family. Unfortunately, so far I was unable to trace any of Phaya Sekòng's descendants in Müang Sing. I was told by one informant that one of his grandchildren was still living in the town quarter of Chiang Chai and that his son Bun Wisai had moved to Luang Prabang while the places of residence of his other children and grandchildren were unknown. Future research is needed to get more first-hand information about the life and work of Phaya Sekòng from relatives, friends and persons who still remember this remarkable man. Thus, at this moment, only the leporello book listing his meritorious donations to religious institutions remains Phaya Sekòng's legacy.

Recording Phaya Sekòng's Donations

Description of the Manuscript

The manuscript is made of greyish mulberry paper called *chia sa* in Lao. It has a length of 16 cm and a width of 34 cm and is folded in leporello fashion. The text is written in the Tai Lũ variant of the Dhamma script from left to right. The manuscript consists of 54 folios glued together. However, only the first 76 out of 108 pages (not counting the two sides of the cover folio left blank) are inscribed. The text, written partly in black ink and partly with a blue ballpointpen, has a very good legibility, on several pages it is illustrated by rough sketches drawn by a blue ballpen. These drawings will be discussed further below in more detail. According to Nan Chai Saeng, Phaya Sekòng was the manuscript's original owner. After Phaya Sekòng's death in 1982 his heirs were not interested in this precious manuscript, which was thus donated to Wat Luang Chiang Chai Ratchathan. Later, Nan Chai Saeng recognized the importance of the manuscript and took it to his home which is situated in the immediate neighborhood of the monastery. In the mid-1990s the Preservation of Lao Manuscripts Programme (PLMP) carried out a survey of manuscripts in the plain of Müang Sing and inventorized the manuscript as "Records of donations of Phaya Sekòng [or] U Mao" under the PLPM code 03020206009_00 classifying it under the literary category "Anisong / Salòng / Sòng".

The Donations

Anisong is derived from Pali *ānisaṃsa* which means 'benefit, advantage, good result'. In the Buddhist context *Anisong* or *Salòng* (Lao, from Khmer: *chlañ*, "to dedicate", "to celebrate"¹⁶³) – often contracted to *Sòng* – are used for homiletic purposes, such as performing sermons and preaching. Those texts, generally rather short (rarely containing more than twenty folios), describe the rewards in terms of merit, or literally the "advantage" which a believer may expect from a particular religious deed. As Arthid Sheravanichkul has shown in his seminal study of gift-giving in the Thai and Lao world, the kind of gifts recommended in *Anisong* texts pertain to (a.) giving alms to the Sangha (food and medicine, robes and cloth, ritual offerings such as flowers and lamps, sponsoring the construction of temple buildings, copying of religious texts); (b.) producing objects of worship (images, stupas); (c.) constructing public works (bridges, roads, hospitals, schools) and (d.) giving gifts

¹⁶² See Grabowsky and Kaspar-Sickermann 1997: 126; Grabowsky 2016: 445 and 456.

¹⁶³ The primary meaning of the Khmer word ឆ្លង, however, is "to cross, to intersect", as is also the case in the infixed form *camlòng* (ຈຳລອງ) in Thai and then also means "to celebrate across" (f.e. the new year).

in ceremonies or festivals (celebrating a new house, funerals, the Buddhist New Year, etc.).¹⁶⁴

The “Records of Phaya Sekòngs donations” put in chronological order shows that the numerous donations which Phaya Sekòng alias U Mao made over half a century fit into Arthid’s scheme of gift-giving. Food, medicine, and other goods were regularly offered as well as monk’s robes, especially on the occasion of *kathina* festivals (see entries for 1957, 1961, and 1964) which come at the end of the three-month rainy season retreat and give laypeople the opportunity of offering robes and other necessities to the Buddhist Sangha. Other frequently donated goods comprise flowers, candles, drums and precious utensils such as gilded knives and silver caskets, betel bowls and umbrellas. But also monk’s pedestals (Th/L: *thaen song*) and praying wooden towers (*prasat mai*), decorated with black lacquer and gold, were occasionally donated. Phaya Sekòng sponsored regularly the renovation of temple buildings (P: *vihāra*) and stupas (L: *that*), the casting of Buddha images (1940, 1941, 1950, 1952, 1959, 1961–62, 1964–66) and, even more frequently, the realization of eye-opening ceremonies (Th: *boek phrachao*). Other ceremonies sponsored by Phaya Sekòng include ordination ceremonies for monks and novices whose preceptor he was, and funerals for high-ranking monks were sponsored as was done in 1966 (page 43):

Phò Mao, as the principal initiator, along with his wife Nang Kham Tip, sponsored the cremation ceremonies of Sawathi (Svādhi) [from] Ban Kom, the abbot of Chiang Yün and the abbot of Müang Yòng, who had passed away (*sang bun*). Their corpses were put on a hearse and dragged to the funeral pyre. Novice Mao and Tu Pò (abbot) Son [from] Ban Hua Khua were two other persons whose corpses were put on a hearse and dragged to the funeral pyre. [This support] shall bring me good results and benefits (*phala-ānisamsa*) for the future.

พ่อม้าว เป็นเคล้า ภริยานางคำทิบ ได้ชักกันได้ทาน ส่งสถานส{ว}า{หิ} บ้านกม 1 คน ทูลวงเชียงย่น ทูลวงเมียงของ ส้างบุณ ได้เอาต่างเหลิมเข้าสู่กองฟอน สมมุณเษชรภม้าว คน 1 ได้ต่าง เหลิมเข้าสู่กองฟอน ทูลอสน บ้านหัวข้าว คน 1 ได้ต่างเหลิมเข้าสู่กองฟอน จึงได้หมายไว้ขอเป็นผลอานิสงพายหน้า

Moreover, Phaya Sekòng sponsored the construction of monk’s living quarters (*kuṭi*), of new roads – such as a road leading to the village of Ban Yang Phiang (in 1943) or a road leading to the monastery of Wat Luang Ratchathan in the town of Müang Sing (in 1964) – and of bridges (*khua*) and several other public construction works.

The most frequent donations pertain to the sponsoring of the making of manuscripts. A number of manuscripts sponsored by Phaya Sekòng over the years bear *Anisong* as part of the title. Examples are *Anisong pitaka* (“On benefits gained from reading or copying the Pali canon”), *Anisong phawet* (“On benefits gained from the sponsoring of Vessantara recitations”), *Anisong khao sao met* (“On benefits gained from the donation of twenty rice corns”) or *Anisong sappathan* (“On benefits gained from all kinds of offerings”). Other manuscripts contain *Anisong* texts (without being so called), such as those manuscripts entitled *Unhatsawichai* (“The suppression of heat”).¹⁶⁵ The Phaya Sekòng manuscript, however, does not contain any homilistic text dealing with the merits a donor is expected

¹⁶⁴ See Arthid 2009 and 2010.

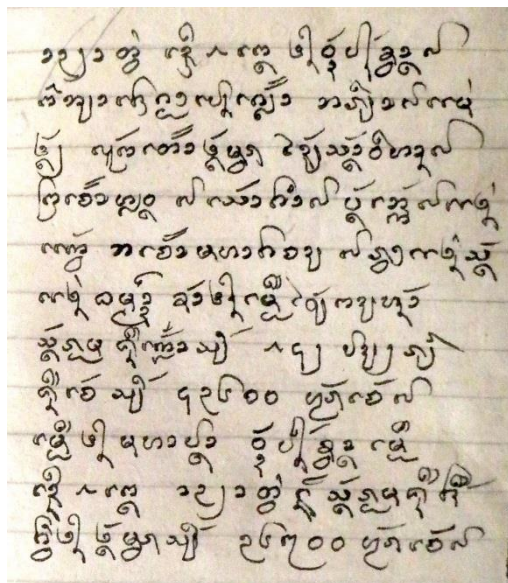
¹⁶⁵ *Unhatsawichai* (“The suppression of heat”) is primarily a protective magic incantation against a host of potential threats such as accidents, sickness, and natural disasters. It is chanted in company with other standard sacramental liturgies during Buddhist life-extension rituals (*phithi sūp chata*) in northern Thailand and Laos. The *unhatsawichai* entitled manuscripts are not liturgies but homiletic texts which are ordinarily preached by monks at the end of life-extension rituals.

to gain from his or her donation in view of a favorable rebirth. It looks rather like a documentation of religious donations resulting in *anison* for the donor. The vast majority of manuscripts donated by Phaya Sekòng contain religious texts ranging from canonical texts, Buddhist legends and chronicles to didactic literature (f.e., *Khadi lok khadi tham*) and kammavācā texts (set of questions and answers used in ordination ceremonies).

Who is the author of the manuscript? When and how has it been composed? Is it possible to reconstruct the production process? The text consists mainly of short paragraphs, running over 3–8 lines, which have the following structure:

- Date of donation* (year, lunar month, day of the waxing/waning moon phase, day of the week)
- + *names of donors* (princial donor or initator plus co-donors) activity leading to donation
- + *kind of donation* (objects and their function)
- + *amount of money* spent for the donation (indicating also the currency)

This may be exemplified by the following entry recording donations made in the year 1959:



Transcription: 1321 ตัว เดือน 8 เพง ทานวัดบ้านขวาง แล
 พอกยาเซ-ทองเปนเคล้า ภริยาแลแม่ทั้ง 2 ลูกเต้าทั้งมวล ได้สร้าง
 วิหาน แลพรเจ้าหลวง แลเสาคำ แลบังเอก แลแท่นแก้ว
 ภาจ้ามหา คจาย แลรวงแท่นสัง แท่นธมมาต ข้าทานเมอ
 ไ่วพายหน้า สักรอมเงินเกล้า เสียง 842 ปาย 2 เรียน เงิน เจ้เสียง
 43,600 หมันเจ้แล เมอทานมหาปางวัดบ้านขวาง เมอเดือน 8 เพง
 1321 ตัว นั้น สักรอมเงินซื้อคัวทาน ทั้งหมด ลีซง 36,700 หมันเจ้
 แล

In [CS] 1321, on the full-moon day of the eighth [lunar] month,¹⁶⁶ a donation was made at Wat Ban Khwang. Phò Phaya Sekòng, as the principal initiator, along with his wife/wives and [their] two mothers, and all their children, sponsored the construction work at a vihāra, the building of a great Buddha statue, a gilded pillar, the wall of a vihāra (*bang ek*), an altar for the Mahā Kaccāyana Buddha statue,¹⁶⁷ a pedestal for the monks, and an altar for preaching the Dhamma (Lü: *thaen thammamat*). I donated it for the benefit in my future [lives], spending a total of 842 old silver [piastres], 2 *rian*, and 43,600 paper piastres. Sponsoring a big festival at Wat Ban Khwang on the full-moon day of the eighth [lunar] month in [CS] 1321, the total amount of 36,700 “paper piastres” (Lü: *man che*) was spent for donation of gifts.

¹⁶⁶ 1321 Jyestha 15 = Saturday, 20 June 1959.

¹⁶⁷ Mahā Kaccāyana was one of the most eminent disciples of the Buddha. He was born at Ujjenī (Avanti) in the family of the chaplain of King Candappajjota, und was called Kaccāyana both because of his golden colour und because Kaccāna was the name of his lineage (Pali: gotta).

As principal donor always Phaya Sekòng himself is mentioned. He is referred to by various personal names which are – with few exceptions – used instead of the first or third person singular pronoun. These personal names are:

ข้าม้าว	I, U Mao (1st person)	(ผู้) ข้าภยาเซกอง	I, Phaya Sekòng
ข้าภเจ้าอุม้าว	I (formal), U Mao (1st person)	พ่อภยาเซกอง	Father (<i>phò</i>) Phaya Sekòng (1st person)
อุม้าว	U Mao (3rd person)	พ่อข้าภยาเซกอง	Father (<i>phò</i>), I, Phaya Sekòng (1st person)
พ่อม้าว	Father (<i>phò</i>) Mao (3rd person)	ภยาเซกอง	Phaya Sekòng (3rd person)

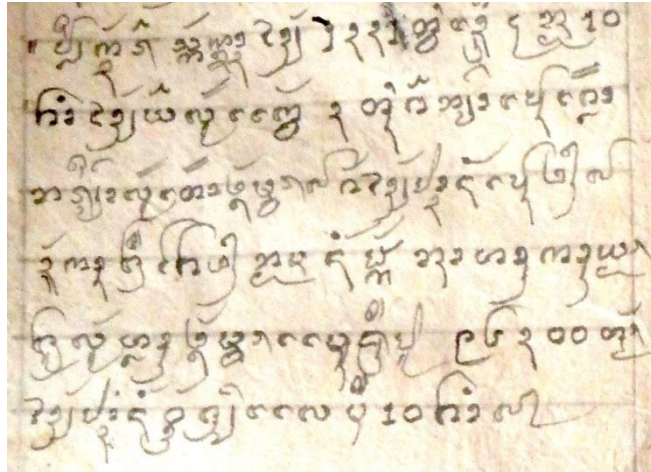
It is interesting to note that Phaya Sekòng mentions as co-donors his wives and children as well as his mother and mothers-in-law. But in general, wives, children, and mothers are mentioned not by their real names but as a collectivity, sometimes indicating their numbers, such as “two/three wives” or “two/three mothers”. Only occasionally their personal names are recorded. Phaya Sekòng’s first two wives were called Nang Tip (his principal wife) and Nang Cham Kham (his first minor wife). Their mothers were called Nang Oei Kaeo and Nang Chòi respectively (see first entry of 15 October 1932). In 1932, Phaya Sekòng had two daughters named Nang Thida (also Nang Kham Tip) and Nang Cham, and one son whose name was Chao Nò Chai. The names of children born after 1932, if there were any, are left unmentioned. An undated photograph shown in the permanent exhibition of the Müang Sing district museum shows Nang Nòi, Phaya Sekòng’s “little daughter” (Nang Cham?) with her husband Chao Thon and their six children.



Phaya Sekòng with his two wives, his daughter and a bodyguard in front of their house, which is now the museum.
Photo: District Museum of Müang Sing.

The entries for the first fifteen years, 1932–47, only mention U Mao as donor; the honorary title “Phaya Sekòng” appears for the first time in relation to a donation made in “CS 1309, on the first waxing day of the twelfth [lunar] month” (Sunday, 19 October 1947), which indicates that King Si Savang Vong (r. 1904–1959) bestowed this title upon U Mao probably in 1947 or slightly earlier. Thereafter, the entries call the donor mostly “Phaya Sekòng” although “U Mao” is still used from time to time. The last entry calling the donor “Phaya Sekòng” is dated “the *kat rao* year, [C]S 1331,

on the tenth waxing day of the fourth [lunar] month” (year of the cock, the first year of the decade, Monday, 16 February 1970).



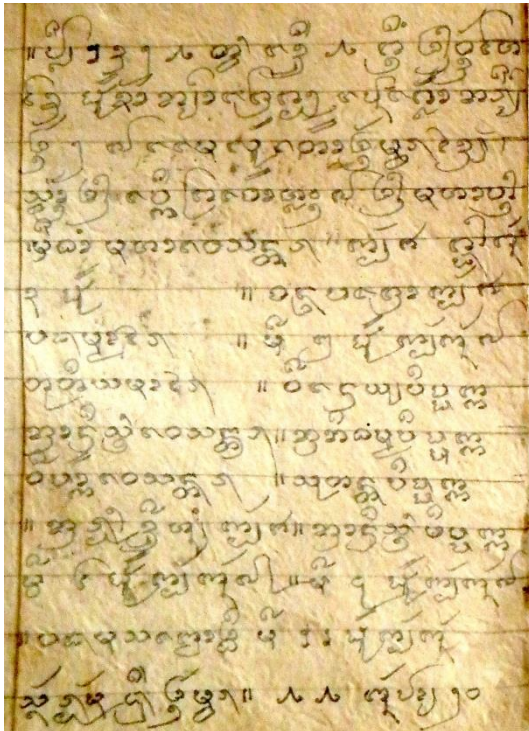
Transcription:

ปลื้มใจว่า สักกขาคได้ 1331 ตัว เงิน 4 ออก 10 คำ
ได้ขอ ลูกแก้ว 3 คน พ่อภรรยา เปน เกล้า ภริยา ลูก
เต้าทั้งมวลแล ก็ได้หยาดน้ำเปนทานแล ดังการซื้อ
โศกาน ก้อนน้ำผัก อาหาร การ ขอนชูลูกหลาน
ทั้งมวล แม่เงินอยู่ 96,300 หมัน ได้หยาดน้ำวัด
เชียงแล มี 10 คำ แล

In the *kat rao* year, [C]S 1331, on the tenth waxing day of the fourth [lunar] month (Monday, 16 February 1970) Phò Phaya Sekòng, as the principal initiator, along with his wives and all his children, was the preceptor in the ordination ceremony of three novices (Lü: *luk kaeo*). A consecration ceremony was performed. The purchase of offerings (Lü: *khua tan*) together with drinks and food amounted to 96,300 [paper] piastres. These offerings were done along with all my children and grandchildren. The consecration ceremony was performed at Wat Chiang Lae on the tenth [waxing] day.

From then on, the donor’s original name “U Mao”, respectively “Phò Mao”, is exclusively used once again. The reason for these frequent changes of personal names for one and the same individual are unclear. One is tempted to speculate that a honorific title bestowed by the King himself became increasingly unpopular in the Pathet Lao controlled zones to which Müang Sing belonged at least since 1968. After the founding of the Lao People’s Republic in December 1975, royally bestowed titles were completely banned from public use. This might have encouraged Phaya Sekòng to prefer his original name Mao (U Mao, Phò Mao) towards the end of his life.

Phaya Sekòng probably had meticulously kept record of his donations, short notes on the exact date, the donated objects, the recipient, and the amount of money spent. Some of these scattered notes were presumably very short, others listed the objects in considerable detail, as in the following example (page 42):



Transcription:

ปี 1328 ตัว เดือน 8 พิง ทานวัดโหโบ ผู้ข้าภยาเซกอง
เปนเคล้า ภริยาทั้ง 2 แลแม่ ลูกเต้าทั้งมวล ได้สร้างทาน
เบิกพรเจ้าหลวง แลทานมหาปาง มีธัมมาเวสนสูตร กับ 1
คถาพัน 3 ผูก จันทปโซ กับ 1 ปถมมาไร มี 5 ผูกกับ กันแล
ศุขิมาไร วินยปิฎกทุก อานิสงเวสนดาร อภิขมม
ปิฎกทุก วิบากเวสนดาร สุตตปิฎกทุก อรอนดินเหนียว
กับ 1 อานิสง ปิฎกทุกมี 6 ผูกกับกัน แล มี 4 ผูกกับกันแล
ปถมสมโพธิ มี 11 ผูกกับกัน สรรอมเงินทั้งมวล 88 พัน
ปาย 20 แลทานมหาปาง

In [CS] 1328, on the full-moon day of the eighth [lunar] month,¹⁶⁸ a donation took place at Wat Hua Khua. I, Phaya Sekòng, as the principal initiator, along with my two wives and mother(s) and all my children, sponsored and donated the eye-opening ceremony of a large Buddha statue and sponsored a large festival. The following manuscripts were donated:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Mahā Vessantara [Jāṭaka] | 1 manuscript bundle (<i>kap</i>); |
| 2. Gāthābala (<i>kathapan</i>) | 3 fascicles (<i>phuk</i>); |
| 3. Candapajo | 1 manuscript bundle; |
| 4. Paṭhama mālaya | 5 fascicles; |
| 5. Dutiya mālaya | 1 fascicle; |
| 6. Vinaya Piṭaka | 1 fascicle; |
| 7. Ānisaṃsa Vessantara [Jāṭaka] | 1 fascicle; |
| 8. Abhidhamma Piṭaka | 1 fascicle; |
| 9. Wibak Vessantara | 1 fascicle; |
| 10. Suttanta Piṭaka | 6 fascicles; |
| 11. <i>Alòng din niao</i> | 1 manuscript bundle; |
| 12. Ānisaṃsa Piṭaka | 6 fascicles; |
| 13. Paṭhama saṃbodhi | 11 fascicles. |

A total of 88,020 [paper] piastres was spent.

The donated manuscripts, in particular, seemed to have been of some importance for Phaya Sekòng as he mentions their titles and the number of fascicles (Th/L: *phuk*) of each manuscript. Regrettably, the text fails to mention whether the donated manuscripts were made of palm-leaf or mulberry paper. In Tai Lü manuscript culture religious texts were usually written on palm-leaf whereas mulberry paper was preferred as the writing support for secular literature. In the course of the twentieth century this changed and more and more texts originally written on palm-leaf were copied

¹⁶⁸ 1328 Jyestha 15 = Friday, 3 June 1966.

on easier accessible mulberry paper.¹⁶⁹ Sometimes a single-text palm-leaf manuscript comprising several fascicles were copied on mulberry paper by starting a new volume with each new fascicle. This procedure would end up in a multi-volume mulberry paper manuscript in leporello style with each (small) volume representing one *phuk*. Tai Lü mulberry paper manuscripts, however, have generally a “whirlwind” binding with the folios sown along one of the narrow sides and the sowing line is regarded as the upper part of the manuscript. Such a mulberry paper manuscript would not be divided by the scribe into several smaller codicological units, each corresponding to one palm-leaf fascicle of the source manuscript. The scribe would rather copy the whole text on one larger single mulberry paper manuscript by transforming the meaning of *phuk* from “fascicle” (codicological unit) to “chapter” (textual unit).

Further in-depth research is needed to locate and identify the manuscripts sponsored and donated by Phaya Sekòng over half a century by investigating the inventory lists kept by the Preservation of Lao Manuscripts Programme (PLMP) in the 1990s as well as the data bank of the Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts where parts of the manuscripts from Müang Sing – surveyed in 1997 – have now been made accessible as digitized images. A first survey of the PLMP inventory sheets (L: *bai samluat*) documenting almost 2,500 manuscripts comprising roughly 7,900 codicological units (fascicles or volumes) has led to the identification of only 18 manuscripts the making of which were sponsored by Phaya Sekòng. Of these manuscripts 17 were kept in Wat Luang Chiang Chai, Müang Sing’s main monastery situated just next to Phaya Sekòng’s house. Only one other extant manuscript, located at the village monastery of Wat Thong Mai, could be attributed to the sponsorship of Phaya Sekòng. The PLMP inventory sheets of Wat Luang Chiang Chai identify “Phò Mao” as the sponsor of two further manuscripts. Thus we arrive at a total of 20 manuscripts for which we can identify Phaya Sekòng alias U Mao or Phò Mao as sponsor and donor.

¹⁶⁹ The Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts (DLLM) comprises at total of 75 palm-leaf manuscripts from Luang Namtha province which are written in Tai Lü script of which only 15 are dated after 1950. This contrasts with 199 mulberry paper manuscript with half of them (84) dated later than 1950.

13TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THAI STUDIES
GLOBALIZED THAILAND? CONNECTIVITY, CONFLICT AND CONUNDRUMS OF THAI STUDIES
15-18 JULY 2017, CHIANG MAI, THAILAND

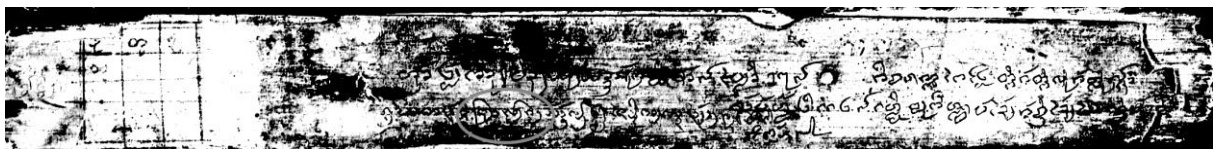
List of manuscripts sponsored and donated by Phaya Sekòng alias Phò Mao

<i>PLMP code no.</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>writing support</i>	<i>year of making</i>	<i>name of scribe</i>	<i>monastery</i>
03.02.01.02.001.15	Nipphanasut*	palm-leaf	CS 1334 21.09.1972	Thammawongsa	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.02.002.14	Maha Munlaniphan	palm-leaf	unknown	unknown	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.02.006.03	Maha Munlaniphan	mulberry paper	CS 1322	Bhikkhu Phomma	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.02.006.04	Maha Munlaniphan*	mulberry paper	CS 1334 21.09.1972	unknown	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.02.007.05	Maha Munlaniphan	mulberry paper	CS 1316	Pha Thung Kham	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.02.007.06	Maha Munlaniphan	mulberry paper	unknown	unknown	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.06.001.02	Chai Nòi	palm-leaf	unknown	unknown	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.06.001.08	Unhatsawichai*	palm-leaf	unknown 28.01.1945	unknown	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.06.001.12	Anisong Song Khao (Sàlòng Khao Chaek)	palm-leaf	CS 1323	unknown	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.07.002.02	Suchawannachak (Kuman)*	palm-leaf	CS 1329 13.10.1967	Nan Sai	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.07.002.03	Suchawannachak (Kuman)*	palm-leaf	CS 1306 28.01.1945	Bhikkhu Khamwong	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.07.002.04	Suwanna Kham Khak	palm-leaf	CS 1325	Nan Thamwong	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.07.006.08	Khathaphan / Gāthābala (Vessantara Jātaka)	palm-leaf	unknown	unknown	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.07.006.09	Khathaphan / Gāthābala (Vessantara Jātaka)*	palm-leaf	CS 1329 13.10.1967	unknown	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.07.007.01	Vessantara Jātaka	palm-leaf	CS 1307	Thu In Ai Chiang Dao	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.10.001.04	Pitaka Thang Sam	palm-leaf	CS 1326	Theratsachaidi	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.11.001.01	Uppakhut Luang*	palm-leaf	CS 1316 (CS 1317?) 27.01.1956	Bhikkhu Tham Phaya	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.13.001.00 6	Thantathat	palm-leaf	CS 1296	Bhikkhu Inwong	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.01.16.001.00	Akkhalasap*	palm-leaf	unknown 19.10.1947	Thu Saeng Müang	Wat Luang Chiang Chai
03.02.09.07.003.02	Rattana Saeng Phū*	palm-leaf	CS 1332 11.01.1971	unknown	Wat Thong Mai

Notes: *) Manuscripts which are documented in “Records of donations of Phaya Sekòng [or] U Mao”.

Less than half of these twenty manuscripts can be linked to one of the manuscripts recorded in the “Records of donations of Phaya Sekòng [or] U Mao”. It is also possible some other manuscripts listed above have changed their location in the time between their donation and the survey carried out by the PLMP. For example, Phaya Sekòng reportedly donated manuscripts to Wat Hua Khua, one of the oldest monasteries in Müang Sing situated just outside the old city walls, thrice: in 1940, 1941 and 1966. Yet this monastery has been in decay since the 1970s and at present no longer possesses a repository for manuscripts. Thus the *Kathapan* (Pali: Gāthābala, “Power of magic spells”) manuscript, recorded as being donated to Wat Hua Khua in June 1966 has possibly been moved to the nearby monastery of Wat Luang Chiang Chai.

Furthermore, it seems that not all data recorded in the PLMP inventory sheets are reliable. At least some of the manuscripts originally designated not to be microfilmed have in fact been microfilmed and are accessible at The Digital Library of Lao Manuscripts (DLLM). An untitled manuscript recording the Tai Lü version of Siao Savat, a masterpiece of classical (secular) Lao literature, is such a case in point. This slightly damaged, but mostly legible, palm-leaf manuscript (PLMP Code: 03.02.01.17.01.01) is dated CS 1296 (AD 1934/35). Located at Wat Luang [Ratchathan] Chiang Chai, the manuscript comprises seven fascicles. As the “Records of donations of Phaya Sekòng [or] U Mao” lists a manuscript of ten fascicles with the title Siao Savat as one of eleven manuscripts donated to Wat Luang Ratchathan “in [C]S 1296, on the full-moon day of the fourth [lunar] month” (Monday, 19 November 1934), I downloaded the above mentioned manuscript from the DLLM website and checked the last folio which, in contrast to the DLLM metadata, does indeed contain a colophon (fascicle 7, folio 17 recto) which mentions Phaya Sekòng as sponsor and donor of this manuscript in the *kap set* year, [CS] 1296 (พระยาเซกองสร้างเปนนานในปีกาบเสดได้ ๑๒๙๖ ตัวเด).

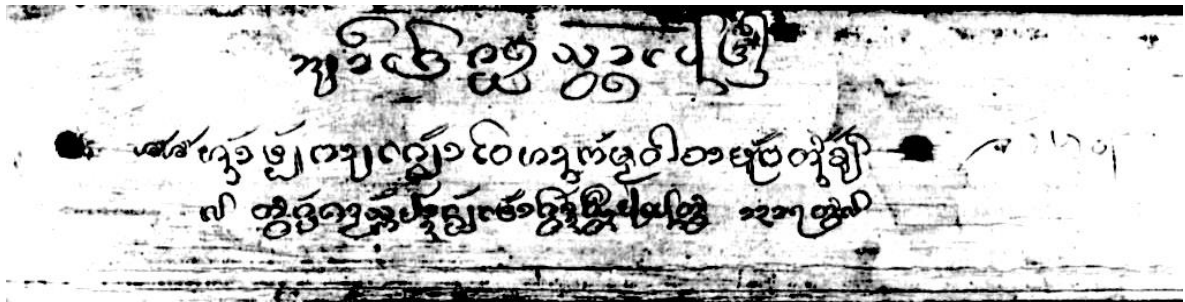


Another palm-leaf manuscript, entitled *Vohan Kammavacha* (Vohāra Kammavācā), which has also been inventoried at Wat Luang Chiang Chai (PLMP Code: 03.02.01.01.0001.04), has originally been designated not to be microfilmed but has been done so at a later stage and is now accessible at the DLLM as well. The colophon records the *ka met* year, [CS] 1317 (AD 1955/56), as the year when the manuscript was copied and mentions Chao Nan Thammawongsa Singhachaiya Latthabuli Moeng Sing as the scribe who had the intention to support Maha Khuba Luang Kham Saeng, the monastery’s abbot and highest-ranking monk in Müang Sing.¹⁷⁰ The latter was thus the beneficiary of the donation but not the sponsor as erroneously noted in the inventory sheet. This was nobody else than Phaya Sekòng as his name is clearly written in large-sized letters on the top of the cover folio (recto)

¹⁷⁰ The colophon reads: “I, whose name is Chao Nan Thammawongsa Singhachaiya Latthabuli Moeng Sing Chiang Khaeng Hò Kham, [wrote this manuscript] to support Maha Khru Luang Kham Saeng at Wat Luang Ratchathan Moeng Sing in the *ka met* year, [C]S 1317. May I be born at the time of Phra Si Ariya Metteyya. May I attain Arhantship, sever all defilements (kilesa), and then enter the crystal city, the summit of the great nibbāna within the sāsana of Lord Ariya Metteyya, forever.

[ผู้ข้าalikขตชื่อว่าเจ้าหนารัชมวงสาสิงหเชษฐบุลี เม็งสิงห์เชียงแขงหรือคำ คำชุมหา ครอบาหลวงคำแสงในวัด หลวงราชฐานเม็งสิงห์ โนปลีกคำเมตสชาติได้ ๑๓๑๗ ตัว ขอให้อู่ข้าได้เกิดมทน [วันพระศรี อริยมตเคยเจ้า หื้อได้ยถึงอร (หัน)ดาตนวิเสด ตัดกิเลียดแล้วได้เข้าสู่เวียงแก้วยอด มหานรพาร ในสำนักศาสนาพระเจ้า ศรีอริยะ เมตเคยแพ้น้อยแด่ บุรเลิย ฐว]

of the first of four fascicles (and thus confirming data provided on page 30 of the “Records of donations of Phaya Sekòng [or] U Mao”:



Phaya Sekòng sponsored the making [of the manuscript] as a donation.

Transcription: ภูเขาทองสร้างเป็นทาน

In the following two lines, written in smaller size letters, the scribe apologizes for his ugly and messy handwriting (ตัวที่บังามสักยาด นับเท่าทวดทวดอยู่เป็นตัว).

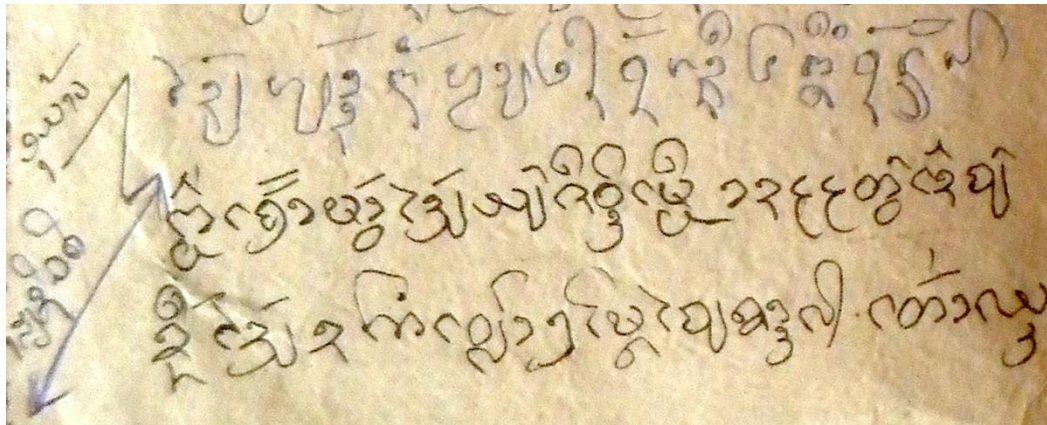
More research is needed to explain, for example, why hardly any manuscript donated by Phaya Sekòng to other monasteries in the plain of Müang Sing has been traced in the PLMP survey of 1997. The mention of Wat Foei Lung as a recipient of Phaya Sekòng’s donations – though of a Buddha statue and the sponsoring of an eye-opening consecration ceremony for this statue – is also mysterious since this monastery is situated in Moeng Long district of the autonomous prefecture of Sipsòng Panna on the Chinese side of the Laos-China border. The donation took place in 1966,¹⁷¹ in the year when the Chinese “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” had just started. Not much later, many Tai Lü people from Moeng Long had been seeking refuge in Müang Sing.

The Making of the Manuscript

It is rather unlikely that Phaya Sekòng intended this manuscript to be a notebook for recording all his merit-making donations cumulatively. The neat layout and the uniform handwriting –probably by one single hand – throughout the manuscript suggest that most of the text was written in one go. Although the entries are generally listed in chronological order, this is not always the case. The first entry (page 5) pertains to the year CS 1294 (AD 1932/33) and introduces Phaya Sekòng and his whole family. Thereafter Phaya Sekòng’s donations are recorded until CS 1309 (AD 1937/38). Between pages 17 and 20 the records no longer follow a chronological order, instead mixing donations which occurred between CS 1308 and CS 1319 (AD 1946/47–1957/58). Thereafter, a chronological order is resumed but again interrupted another four times. This is further evidence that Phaya Sekòng did not use his manuscript as a notebook over an extended period of half a century. It rather seems that the contents of this manuscript were collected from scattered notes some time before 11 January 1971 (page 58), as from that date onwards the chronological order is no longer interrupted and the ductus of the handwriting changes frequently. At this moment it is impossible to determine whether the

¹⁷¹ “Records of donations of Phaya Sekòng [or] U Mao” (page 43) states: “In [CS] 1328, on the seventh waning day of the eighth [lunar] month a consecration ceremony was performed. I, Phaya Sekòng, as the principal initiator, along with my two wives and mother(s), and all my children, sponsored the eye-opening ceremony for a large Buddha statue at Wat Foei Lung. This donation was made for the benefit in my future [lives]. The total amount of 49,900 paper piastres was donated.”

different handwritings can be attributed to Phaya Sekòng himself or to other persons such as family members and close associates. The entry for the last donation (page 74), dated “in the *kot san* year [C]S 1342, on the full-moon day of the sixth [lunar] month” (16 February 1981), is accompanied by the short statement:



Phò Thao Mao passed away in the *tao set* year, [CS] 1344, on the third waxing day of the first [lunar] month¹⁷² at five o'clock [in the afternoon] when his heart stopped to beat.

Transcription:

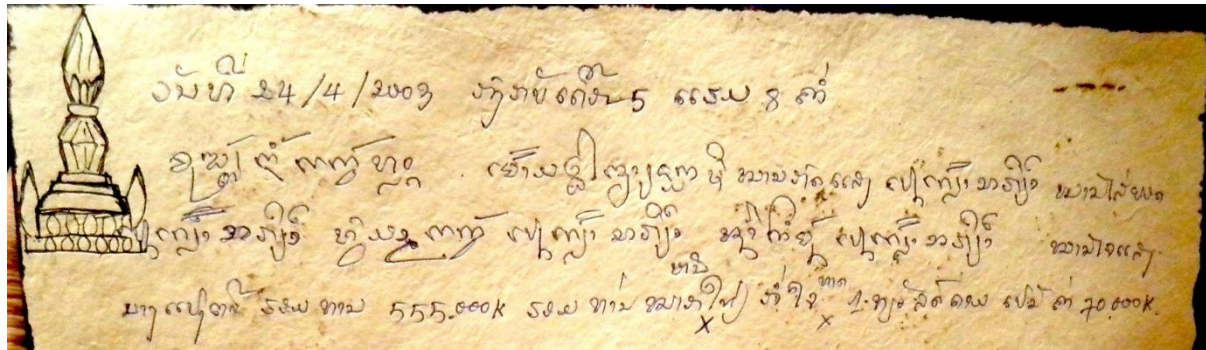
พ่อเจ้าม้าวได้เสด็จขึ้นสู่สวรรค์ (เมื่อ) 1344 ตัว เดือนเจียงขึ้นได้ 3 ค่ำ เวลา 5 โมง ใจขาด แล เต่าเสด

On the following page, this entry is followed by the posthumous biographical note of Phaya Sekòng already mentioned. The manuscript is concluded by an epilogue (pages 76 and 77) which is a sermon written in Pali like the prologue (pages 3 and 4) proceeding the main text. The last line of the epilogue (page 76, line 7) is succeeded by a very short colophon which stands out from the preceding text in its ductus. It reveals the scribe's identity: a former monk (*nan* นาน) named Chòm Chansi. Could it be possible that the manuscript was thus prepared to be donated to Phaya Sekòng's home monastery, Wat Luang Chiang Chai, on the occasion of Phaya Sekòng's funeral? The fact that the compilation of the deceased person's meritorious deeds introduced and concluded by sermons would fit well in the concept of a funeral volume. In any case, finally the curator of the district museum of Müang Sing, Nan Chai Saeng, took care of the manuscript keeping it at his home.

¹⁷² 1344 Karttika 3 = Tuesday, 19 October 1982.

The Manuscript's Second Life

Here the manuscript's second life begins. Following the colophon an entry, written partly in Tai Lü and partly in modern Lao script, records a substantial donation to the monastery of Wat Nam Kaeo Luang made in April 2003 by three couples, including Nan Chai Saeng, the manuscript's present owner, and his wife (page 78).



On 24 April 2003 which corresponds to the eighth waning day of the fifth [lunar] month,¹⁷³ a ceremony was performed at [Wat] Nam Kaeo Luang. The religious faithful from the outside, comprising Nan Kot Saeng along with his wife, Nan Sai Yòt along with his wife, Hua Sam Kaeo along with his wife, Nan Kham Chan along with his wife, Nan Chai Saeng and Nang Paeng Tip, donated altogether 555,000 Kip; furthermore they donated a huge stone worth of 70,000 Kip for building a stupa (P: cetiya).

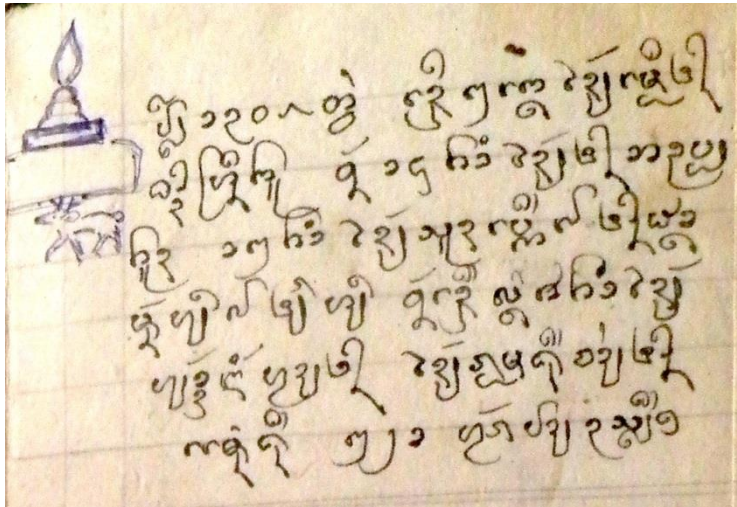
Transcription:

วันที่ 24 / 4 / 2003 ตรงกับเดือน 5 แรม 8 ค่ำ จุฬ... น้ำแก้วหลวง เจ้าสุทธาพาชนอกมี เจ้าสุทธาพาชนอกมี นาน
กตแสงแปนเคสักรียาหนานไส่ชดแปนเคสักรียา หัวสามแก้วแปนเคสักรียา นานคำจันแปนเคสักรียา นาน
ใจแสง นางแปงตีบหอมทาน 555,000 kip หอมทานหมากหินใหญ่ ก่อใจทาด 1 เทียวลดตาม เปนค่า 70,000 K

This entry is missing in the digitized version produced by the DLLM and shows the manuscript's recent "second life". This afterlife is also reflected in a number of rough sketches added by Nan Chai Saeng for various reasons. The sketch of the town plan of Müang Sing (page 79) was inspired by a map published in my monograph *Chronicles of Chiang Khaeng*,¹⁷⁴ as Nan Cai Saeng admitted to me when I visited him at home in February 2014. Other sketches, drawn with a blue ballpointpen, represent stupas, ordination halls, sermon halls or Buddha images (see pp. 15, 23, 31, and 36). These drawings were obviously drawn by the manuscript's present owner not only for the purpose of decoration but also as a device to visualize the corresponding donations. The first three entries show the visualization of a pilgrimage to the That Hin Fu stupa in the district of Müang Lòng (March 1947), the enshrining of precious objects into another stupa (April 1947) and finally the sponsoring of the construction of an ordination hall (*ubosot*) in Wat Luang Chiang Chai (October 1947):

¹⁷³ 24 April 2003 corresponds to 1365 Caitra 23 = the eighth waning day of the sixth lunar month according to the Tai Lü calendar or the eighth waning day of the fifth lunar month according to the Lao calendar. This means that this last paragraph, written in modern Lao script – probably by Nan Cai Saeng, the present owner – deviates from the rest of the manuscript as it follows the Lao dating system and no longer the Tai Lü calendar.

¹⁷⁴ Grabowsky and Renoo 2008.

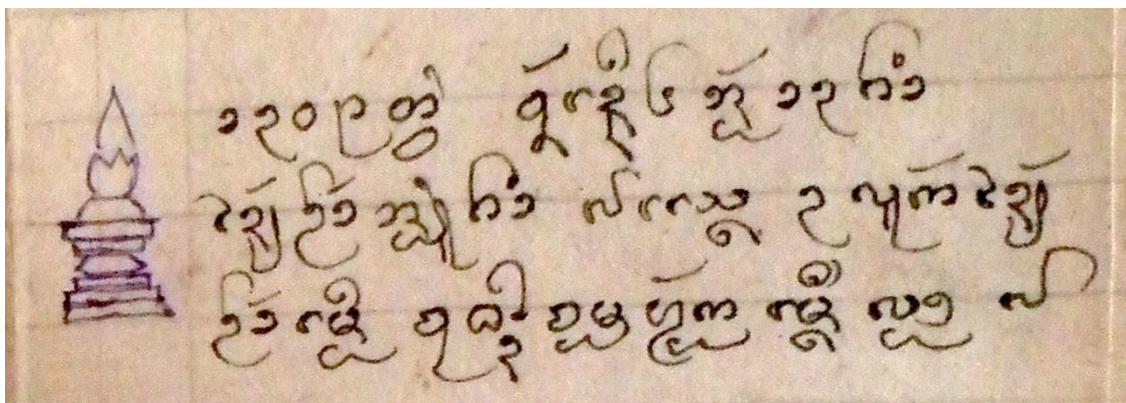


In the year [CS] 1308, on the full-moon day of the fifth [lunar] month,¹⁷⁵ [I] made a pilgrimage (to the That Hin Fu stupa).¹⁷⁶ On the fourteenth [waxing] day I donated a Pha Upakhut image. On the fifteenth [waxing] day, I donated a clay dish used for inflaming [objects] (Lü: *phang man hiang*) and candles (*thian hian*). On the first waning day,¹⁷⁷ I [sponsored] a water pouring ceremony. Altogether I spent 521 piastres and 3 *salüng* for the donations.

Transcription:

ปี 1308 ตัว (ค.ศ. 1946) เดือน 5 เพ็ง ได้มอทาน ชาดหริณฟู วัน 14 ค่ำ ได้ทานภอุปพฤต 15 ค่ำได้สด เบิก แลทาน ผางมันเหียง แลเทียนเหียง วันเดือนลง 1 ค่ำ ได้หยาดน้ำหมายทาน ได้รอมเงินจ่ายทาน แม่่น เงิน 521 หมั้น ปาย 3 สลึง

The enshrinement of a golden receptacle and three jewels at That Chòm Mòk, another stupa in Müang Lòng district, is visualized in a very similar fashion but its basement appears much smaller than in the first sketch.



¹⁷⁵ 1308 Phalguna 15 = Thursday, 6 March 1947.

¹⁷⁶ The stupa of That Hin Fu is situated in the present-day district of Müang Lòng, which originally belonged to the principality of Chiang Khaeng and was the destination of pilgrimages, including the *chao fa* and his entourage. See Grabowsky and Renoo 2008: 157, 176, and 201.

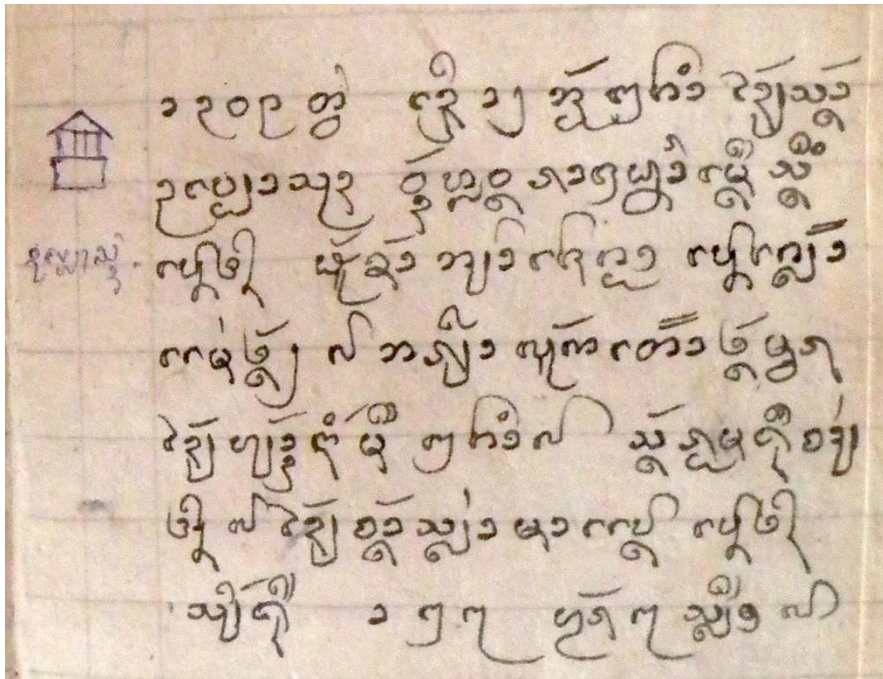
¹⁷⁷ 1308 Phalguna 16 = Friday, 7 March 1947.

In [CS] 1309, on the thirteenth waxing day of the sixth [lunar] month,¹⁷⁸ [I] took a golden receptacle and three jewels (*saeng*) and placed it inside the That Chòm Mòk stupa at Müang Lòng.

Transcription:

1309 ตัว วันเดิน 6 ออก 13 คำ ได้เอาอุบคำ แลแสง 3 ลูก ได้เอาเมอจุราดจอมหมอก เมืองลอง แล

An entry for a donation made in the same year (1947) is illustrated by the drawing an ordination hall under which a caption is written in the Dhamma script: อุโบสถ (Lü: *ubosot*).



In [CS] 1309, on the fifth waxing day of the twelfth [lunar] month,¹⁷⁹ [I] sponsored the construction of the ordination hall (*ubosot*) at Wat Luang Ratchathan of Müang Sing. I, Phaya Sekòng, as the principal monastic supporter (Lü: *pen kao*), along with my two mothers and wives and all my children performed a consecration ceremony on the fifth [waxing] day. Altogether I spent for the donation, including wages for the craftsmen, 157 piastres and 7 *salüng*.

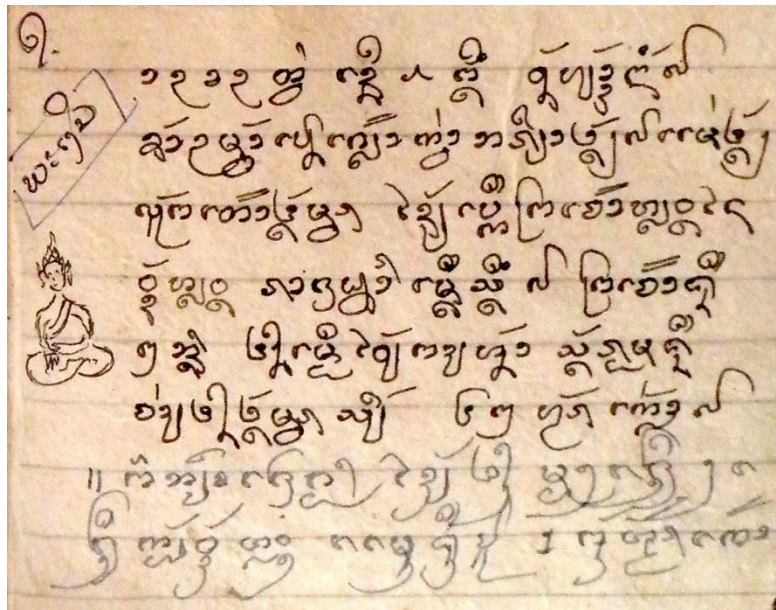
Transcription:

1309 ตัว เดิน 12 ออก 5 คำ ได้สร้างอุโบสถวัดหลวง ราชฐาน เมืองสิง เปนทาน ผู้ข้ากษะครองเปนเกล้า แม่ทั้ง 2 แลภริยา ลูกเต้าทั้งมวล ได้หยาดน้ำ มือ 5 คำแล สักรอมเงิน จ่ายทาน แลได้จ้างสล่ามาแปง เปนทาน เสียเงิน 157 หมั้น 7 สลึง แล

Another drawing illustrates the sponsoring of an eye-opening ceremony for the main Buddha statue at Wat Luang Ratchathan, Phaya Sekòng's home monastery, in June 1951. The later user of the manuscript, Nan Chai Saeng, writes above the Buddha image drawn by himself in modern Lao script the framed caption "a Buddha statue made of silver" (ພະເຈົ້າ) followed by a question mark.

¹⁷⁸ 1308 Caitra2 13 = Thursday, 3 April 1947.

¹⁷⁹ 1309 Asvina 5 = Sunday, 19 October 1947.

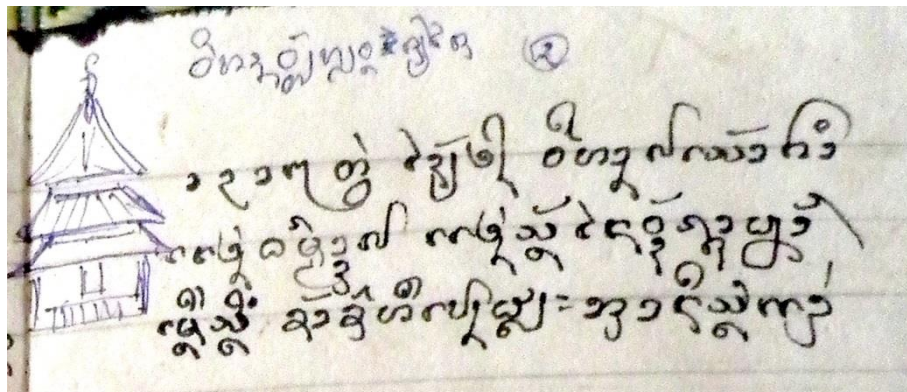


In [CS] 1313, on the full-moon day of the eighth [lunar] month,¹⁸⁰ which was a consecration day, I, U Mao, as the principal initiator, along with my two wives and [their] two mothers and all my children, sponsored the eye-opening ceremony for the great Buddha statue at Wat Luang Ratchathan of Mūang Sing and five silver Buddha statues. This donation was for the benefit in my future [lives]. A total amount of 65 old piastres was spent.

Transcription:

1313 ตัว เดือน 8 พิง เปนวันหยาดน้ำแล ข้าอุ่มว เปนเคล้า กว่กรียาทัง 2 แลแม่ทัง 2 ลูกเต้าทังมวต ได้เบิกพรเจ้าหลวง ในวัดหลวงราชฐาน เมิงสิง แลพรเจ้าเงิน 5 อง ทานเมอไว้ พายหน้า ตั้งรวมเงินจ่ายทานทังมวต เสีย 65 หมั้นเกล้าแล

The following drawing is slightly more elaborate than the previous ones. On the left margin next to an entry recording the donation of various objects to a sermon hall in 1955/56, the owner of the manuscript has drawn a sketch outlining the shape of a typical Tai Lü sermon hall. Above this sketch a caption written in the Dhamma script with a blue ballpen reads: Wihan Luang Wat Chiang Chai, “the great sermon hall of Wat Chiang Chai”.



¹⁸⁰ 1313 Jyestha 15 = Tuesday, 19 June 1951.

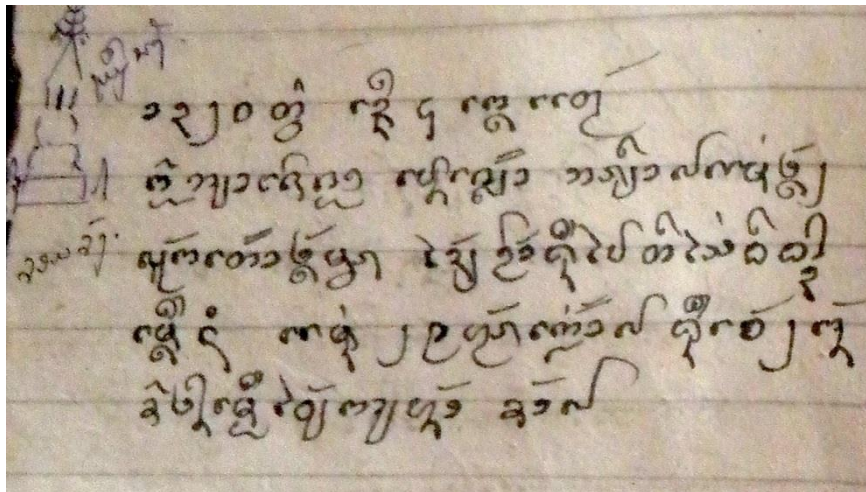
In [CS] 1317 (AD 1955/56), [I] made a donation to the vihāra – a gilded pillar, an altar for preaching the Dhamma (Lü: *thaen thammamat*) and a pedestal for the monks – at Wat [Luang] Ratchathan of Müang Sing. May bring this good results (P: *phala ānisaṃsa*) for me.

Transcription:

วิหารวัดหลวงเชียงไช

1317 ตัวได้ทานวิหารแลเสาคำ แทนธมฺมาด แลแทนสัง ในวัดราชฐาน เมืองสิง ขำขอหื้อเป็นผละอาณิสง แต่

The last drawing illustrates the donation to a stupa made in February 1959. The entry records the money, a mixture of French Indochinese piastre and Lao Kip, spent for this donation. Note that immediately to the left of the drawing representing the That Müang Nang stupa the words “Müang Nang” are written in modern Lao script. Below the sketch one finds – also written in modern Lao script – the words “Chòm Chong”, the colloquial name of the stupa which is situated in the commune of Müang Nang in Müang Lòng district.



In [CS] 1320, on the full-moon day of the fourth [lunar] month,¹⁸¹ Phò Phaya Sekòng, as the principal initiator, along with his wife/wives and [their] two mothers, and all their children, donated 29 old piastres and 2,000 paper money to the That Müang Nang stupa¹⁸² for the benefit in his future [lives].

Transcription:

1320 ตัว เค้น 4 เฟง แด้ม พ่อภยาเซกองเป่นเกล้า ภริยาแลแม่ทั้ง 2 ลูกเต้าทั้งมวล ได้เอาเงินไปตีใส่ที่ธาตุเมืองนัง (เมืองนัง) แม่ 29 หมั้นเกล้า แล เงินเจ้ 2 พัน ขอนทานเมอไว้พายหน้า ขำแล

¹⁸¹ 1320 Magha 15 = Sunday, 22 February 1959.

¹⁸² A stupa situated in Müang Nang, a commune situated in the district of Müang Lòng which belonged to the Chiang Khaeng polity before the arrival of the French.

Concluding Remarks

The mulberry paper folding book recording the religious donations of the wealthy merchant Phaya Sekòng alias U Mao to monasteries in the plain of Müang nicely demonstrates the close interaction between Sangha and laity at a local level. Phaya Sekòng's donations were made over an extended period of time, covering half a century, and happened almost without longer interruptions. Though the donor's home monastery – Wat Luang Ratchathan Chiang Chai – was the main beneficiary, other monasteries benefited from Phaya Sekòng's meritorious deeds, too. These comprised the renovation of temple buildings (P: vihāra) and stupas (L/Lü: *that*), the casting of Buddha images, the sponsoring of all kinds of religious festivals and ceremonies, notably of eye-opening ceremonies for newly casted Buddha images, of funerals, and of ceremonies for the ordination of monks and novices. Of greatest importance, however, was the regular sponsoring of the making of all kinds of religious manuscripts which were donated to the Sangha and kept in monastic repositories.

It is a fortunate coincidence that Phaya Sekòng took records not only of the titles and numbers of fascicles (*phuk*) of each manuscript but in many cases he also noted the amount of money which he spent for the donations. Different kinds of currencies are mentioned, ranging from the French Indochinese piastre (*man* or *man ngün*) to the various Kip banknotes the post-independence period, both before and after the founding of the Laos People's Democratic Republic (called *man che*, *ngün che*, or *ngün bai*). A thorough analysis of such prices, taking the financial and economic conditions of the respective periods into consideration, might shed more light on the economy of gift-giving in general and the sponsoring and production of manuscripts in particular. Though Phaya Sekòng was without doubt a very generous lay donor, we may assume that there were many more Buddhist laypeople in Müang Sing who made donations of that kind. An investigation of colophons of extant manuscripts from that region would provide a better understanding of networks of sponsors, donors and scribes contributing to the continuous production of manuscripts.

It is an encouraging sign that the mulberry manuscript entitled "Records of donations of Phaya Sekòng [or] U Mao" is by no means a unique historical document about the donations of one of Müang Sing's most prominent lay supporter of the Buddhist Sangha during the twentieth century. It is significant that its present owner uses this manuscript at his own pleasure, extending it by recording of his own meritorious deeds for the sake of phala-ānisaṃsa, rewards of benefits derived from gift-giving (dāna).

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Factors Influencing Entrepreneurship Rates for Thai Women Entrepreneurs in Comparison to their ASEAN Counterparts

Guelich, Ulrike

Bangkok University School of Entrepreneurship and Management
Thailand

Abstract

The main objective of this exploratory study is to examine factors influencing entrepreneurship rates for women entrepreneurship in Thailand and ASEAN. One of the region's outstanding features with regard to entrepreneurship is the existence of a high female to male TEA¹⁸³ ratio in at least five of its member countries: 1.3 in the Philippines and Vietnam, 1.2 in Thailand, and 1.0 in Indonesia and Malaysia (Kelley et al., 2016). Despite a high female participation in entrepreneurship, women in some ASEAN countries also experience some of the highest fear of failure rates in the world with Thai women entrepreneurs, where more than 50% fear to fail, spearheading the region. This study explores which factors impact female entrepreneurship rates in a comparison of Thailand to four ASEAN countries. Are perceptions of entrepreneurial skills and opportunities or networks to other entrepreneurs influencing factors? How do attributes towards entrepreneurs, such as entrepreneurship as a good career choice and media attention, contribute to entrepreneurship rates?

The exploratory finding that the high fear of failure rate in Thailand does not hinder women to start up and run their businesses has a positive connotation. Contrary to other ASEAN countries and their male counterparts, Thai women entrepreneurs tend to be influenced only by the perception of their own entrepreneurial skills set, not by opportunities, by media or knowing other entrepreneurs. These findings can help to improve framework conditions for female entrepreneurs and counteract the currently declining female entrepreneurship rates, both in start-ups as in established women entrepreneurs in Thailand.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, women entrepreneurs, Thailand, ASEAN, AEC, fear of failure, entrepreneurial skills, entrepreneurial opportunities, business networks

Introduction

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ILO & ADB) reached a major milestone in its regional agenda by implementing the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) at the end of 2015. The overall purpose of the AEC is to build a region with "sustained economic growth, accompanied by lasting peace, security and stability as well as shared prosperity and social progress" (ILO & ADB, 2014). ASEAN with its workforce of 400 million and consumer base of 626 million people is a strong

¹⁸³ Total early-stage entrepreneurial activity

performer in raising the living standards in its ten member countries. ASEAN is estimated to continuously grow and become the fifth biggest economy by 2020 (WEF, 2016). Both policy makers and academics agree that entrepreneurs and their businesses play a pivotal role in the development and well-being of their societies and the AEC brings particular challenges and opportunities especially to women entrepreneurs within the region.

According to the World Bank, 48.4 percent of the ASEAN population are women and the region is home to an estimated 61.3 million women entrepreneurs owning and operating businesses in the ten member countries Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, accounting for 9.8 percent of the total ASEAN population (Xavier, Sidin, Guelich, & Nawangpalupi, 2016). The participation of women in the ownership of firms is relatively high in the region, with 69 percent of firms in the Philippines having female participation in ownership, 59 percent in Vietnam and 43 percent in Indonesia (Schwab et al., 2016). Despite religious diversity in ASEAN, the high female entrepreneurship rates suggest common socially supportive cultures, which also relate to the overall levels and the quality of entrepreneurship (Stephan & Uhlaner, 2010).

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor or GEM project collects data on the coverage of successful entrepreneurs in the media, on attitudes, activities, aspirations and influencing factors in several countries and provides the only extant, substantial, quantitative data that exist for the empirical investigation of the relationships between attitudes, aspirations and entrepreneurship rates.

Women Entrepreneurship in ASEAN

Women entrepreneurship rates vary around the world which leads to a differing impact on job creation and innovation (Kelley, Brush, Greene, & Litovsky, 2013). In contrast to the average of the world, one of the ASEAN region's outstanding features with regard to entrepreneurship is the existence of a high female to male TEA¹⁸⁴ ratio in at least five of its member countries: 1.3 in the Philippines and Vietnam, 1.2 in Thailand, and 1.0 in Indonesia and Malaysia (Kelley et al., 2016). This leads to the high number of 61.3 million women entrepreneurs who own and operate their businesses in ASEAN (Xavier et al., 2016).

All entrepreneurs in the region, male and female, face both opportunities and challenges in the context of AEC. Challenges include internal constraining factors such as low levels of entrepreneurial skills as external factors with restricted access to finance, lack of market information, and the prevalence of general administrative procedures and regulations. However, women entrepreneurs are comparatively more affected than their male counterparts (AsiaPacificEconomicFoundation, 2013; Xavier, Guelich, Kew, Nawangpalupi, & Velasco, 2015). At all levels of economic activity, women are clustered in sectors that limit their mobility and restrict them to lower productivity, more often than men leading to operations in informal sectors (UNESCAP, 2017). Gender gaps in entrepreneurship and in labor force participation may lead to income losses for a country of up to 30 percent and an average loss of 17.5 percent in the long term (Teignier & Cuberes, 2014). On the other hand, various studies suggest that countries with greater levels of gender equality –as is the case in the five surveyed ASEAN countries- are generally more competitive and prosperous (Gonzales, Jain-Chandra, Kochhar, & Newiak, 2015; Razavi, 2012; WorldBank, 2011).

¹⁸⁴ Total early-stage entrepreneurial activity

The majority of women entrepreneurs in ASEAN is located in micro and small enterprises, mainly in retail and service activities, often in the informal sector. Male and female total early-stage entrepreneurial activity differ less in innovation-driven economies while female TEA rates are relatively higher in efficiency-driven economies. Thailand as an efficiency-driven economy is notable for the high and equitable share of female to male TEA. Women entrepreneurs are more likely to be involved in total early-stage entrepreneurial activities as nascent entrepreneurs in the start-up phase and as young entrepreneurs with a business up to 42 months after its foundation (Xavier et al., 2015). TEA rates in the five ASEAN countries Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam differ with Malaysia experiencing the lowest female TEA rates with 6.8 percent of the female population, Philippines 27.2 percent, Thailand 35.3 percent, Indonesia 36.3 percent and Vietnam 37.5 percent (Xavier et al., 2016).

Influencing Factors for Entrepreneurship

More than 50 percent of women entrepreneurs in developing countries are over-represented in the informal sector which limits their overall performance (Chen, 2001). A constrained performance of female entrepreneurs is influenced by the social-economic context which leads to their participation in less lucrative business sectors (Marlow & McAdam, 2013). It is well documented that education plays an important role in developing entrepreneurial opportunities by influencing the type of business, the size, growth expectations and degree of innovativeness (UNESCAP, 2017). However, many other factors play a role in fostering or constraining entrepreneurs in their startup phases.

Fear of Failure

Fear of failure can be seen as a motive to avoid disappointment (Carsrud & Brännback, 2011) and is a perceptual variable in the decision process influencing an individual's start-up decisions (Arenius & Minniti, 2005). It is closely related to uncertainty and risk-taking and therefore an important constraining factor for entrepreneurial activity, especially for start-ups (Caliendo, et al., 2009). In addition, fear of failure directly influences an individual's motivation on his achievements and aspirations (Burnstein, 1963) and his decisions on if to exploit a business opportunity or not (Welp, et al., 2012).

An entrepreneur's expectations about business failure act as incentive value –both for failure and for success. The fear to fail is perceived by self-evaluation and influences an individual's orientation towards goal achievement (Heckhausen & Baltes, 1991). For entrepreneurs, failure is connected to emotions such as shame or embarrassment in dependence on the difficulty of the problem or task: easier problems tend to increase feelings of shame, and the greater the shame, the greater the incentives to avoid failure (Carsrud, et al., 2009). The need to avoid failure due to cognitive dissonance (Cohen & Zimbardo, 1969) could explain why entrepreneurs often do anything to avoid business failure and why they show resilience and higher tenacity (Baum & Locke, 2004; Baum, et al., 2001). From a gender perspective, women in general and specifically in Thailand experience higher fear of failure rates than their male counterparts and tend to be deterred from growing their businesses by their fear (Guelich, 2014; Kelley et al., 2013). In Thailand, 54.8% of the TEA women entrepreneurs fear to fail compared to 38.9% of their male counterparts (Guelich, 2014). Both Thailand and Vietnam indicate the highest levels of fear of failure overall, both for male and female entrepreneurs (UNESCAP, 2017). Especially in Asia, the fear to "lose face" is a present constraint,

and failure is a stigma in many societies, reflecting socio-cultural attitudes, values and perceptions. In business, entrepreneurs who fear to fail might limit themselves to less innovativeness, lower growth expectations and fewer investments.

According to Deniz, Boz, and Ertosun (2011), fear is a strong emotion that can hinder progress toward goals' achievement and thus impacts innovativeness in products, services and processes. Positive and negative emotions significantly decrease time and resource allocation of entrepreneurs to exploit new opportunities and to innovate (Grichnik, 2008). Moreover, feeling threatened by potential failure is one of the reasons for actual business failure (Brun de Pontet, 2004), leading to a behavior of avoidance and inaction, finally resulting in failure.

The Role of Business Networks or Knowing Other Entrepreneurs

General agreement exists that network activities of entrepreneurs provide them with resources they need to establish and run their businesses (H. E. Aldrich & Martinez, 2001; Greve & Salaff, 2003; Renzulli, Aldrich, & Moody, 2000). Clearly, there is consensus about the importance of networks and of network heterogeneity for start-up firms and young businesses (Hite & Hesterly, 2001), and about gender-related differences in social networks (Ibarra, 1997). Challenges and requirements for entrepreneurs vary by the phase of their entrepreneurial activities. They differ for potential entrepreneurs, intending to start a business, over just starting up, to running a new and later an established enterprise. Entrepreneurs adapt their networks to meet those different challenges. Start-ups and new businesses have a more extended network due to the need for higher resources and for growth, whereas established entrepreneurs reduce the size of their social networks (Greve & Salaff, 2003).

Compliance exists that knowing an entrepreneur is related to opportunity recognition in the way that other entrepreneurs are important sources of information for potential entrepreneurs in the early phase of venture creation where they are searching for opportunities (Davidsson & Honig, 2003; Evald, Klyver, & Svendsen, 2006; Klyver & Hindle, 2007). For entrepreneurs in their young business phase knowing an entrepreneur is increasingly important (Hite & Hesterly, 2001; Klyver & Hindle, 2007; Larson & Starr, 1993). Potential and young entrepreneurs should especially make use of informal networks such as family, friends, and other entrepreneurs to search for information and filter opportunities. Since some individuals who intend to start up number entrepreneurs among their networks and others do not, and since knowing an entrepreneur increases the probability of becoming an entrepreneur, entrepreneurial networks in general and those who include entrepreneurs themselves specifically, are of high relevance in searching for information and advice.

Research in organizational learning suggests that organizational units can also be more innovative if they utilize networks that provide access to new knowledge developed by other units (Tsai, 2001). An entrepreneur's network connects to other stakeholders, people and organizations, thus complements their own personal resources (H. E. Aldrich & Martinez, 2001; Greve & Salaff, 2003). Entrepreneurs, especially small and medium-sized business owners, make use of their network resources by being in contact with other entrepreneurs, customers and even former employees as source of information (Chell & Baines, 2000; Sheehan, et al., 2013). Chell and Baines' study on 104 entrepreneurs in the UK found that entrepreneurs actively use business-related networking in further channels such as chambers of commerce, who provided access to relatively diverse sources of information.

In Asian countries and in Thailand specifically, social networking in order to access resources is an important business success factor (Chittithaworn, et al., 2011). Informal channels tend to be more

successful for knowledge transfer than official attempts of technology transfer resources (Belton, 2012). Networks of entrepreneurs change when constraints differ and firms strategically adapt their networks to receive access to resources and information which is relevant for their entrepreneurial progress and success (Greve & Salaff, 2003). Besides access to tangible resources like finance, entrepreneurial networks also provide access to intangible resources such as knowledge, advice and external skills, all of which add competency and thus reduce uncertainties for entrepreneurs which could help them overcome crisis situations in their businesses.

Gender affects the entrepreneur's access to a network, its composition and effectiveness (Blake & Hanson, 2005) and is less accessible for women entrepreneurs (H. Aldrich, Reese, & Dubini, 1989). Both men and women use their networks for opportunity recognition, but differ significantly in the process itself. For both male and female entrepreneurs, entrepreneurial challenges and thus an entrepreneur's network change through the phases of their "business life cycle", for start-ups to running a new and later an established enterprise (DeTienne & Chandler, 2007). Women entrepreneurs tend to have a lower proportion of men in their networks and larger social networks than their male counterparts. No gender differences prevail in entrepreneurial networks' density and proportion of kin, business relations, or proportion of emotional support relations (Klyver & Terjesen, 2007).

Regarding the influence of culture on social networks, opinions differ (Minniti & Naudé, 2010). A study from Vietnam shows that social capital at the micro family level in rural regions is an important source of information for female entrepreneurs in developing countries, but can also be a limiting factor, if social ties put strain on time and obligations for the female entrepreneur (Poon, Thai, & Naybor, 2012). Thai female entrepreneurs articulate, that being an entrepreneur deals with combining personal opportunity with responsibility for others, which in turn leads to a network on connections with staff, vendors, and other people that are attached to the business (Hatcher & Terjesen, 2007).

Entrepreneurial Opportunity Recognition and Skills

Arguments around the entrepreneurial process of information search and opportunity recognition emphasize the importance of networks, besides giving access to tangible resources like finance, they also provide access to intangible resources such as knowledge, advice and external skills, all of which add competency and thus reduce uncertainties for future entrepreneurs. These informal support sources derive from strong ties with frequent contacts and seem to be more important than support from weak formal sources. First-hand information from other recent start-ups helps to deliver a clearer picture of the until date uncertain future for the potential entrepreneur. The ability to identify and to access opportunities is regarded as an important entrepreneurial capability (DeTienne & Chandler, 2007; Hanson & Blake, 2009; Shane & Venkataraman, 2000). The perception of one's own entrepreneurial skills has a significant effect on entrepreneurial intentions with a more favorable own skills perception leading to higher entrepreneurial intentions (Linan, 2008).

Previous studies suggest that entrepreneurship may still be perceived as a "male" field, and that women may have lower entrepreneurial aspirations because of their own perceptions that they do not have the requisite entrepreneurial skills and abilities (Wilson, Kickul, & Marlino, 2007). This implies that entrepreneurship education is increasingly necessary to close this gap. On the other hand, other studies show that entrepreneurship educational programs do not have the intended effects to increase entrepreneurial intentions and activities (Oosterbeek, Van Praag, & Ijsselstein,

2010). The impact of educational efforts on the intention to become an entrepreneur is negative, more for women than for men. Both gender have lower entrepreneurial intentions after being exposed to the entrepreneurship education programs with a more prominent negative impact for women.

Gender differences prevail especially in an individual's perceptions, and more men than women believe to have sufficient knowledge, skills and experience to start a new business (Koellinger, Minniti, & Schade, 2013). This could stem from actually existing differences in entrepreneurial skills between men and women (Kepler & Shane, 2007) or from different cognitive styles (Bengtsson, Persson, & Willenhag, 2005; Correll, 2001; Frederick, 2005).

Media, Status and Respect – Influencers of the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem

Media reports on entrepreneurship are commonly regarded as a major influential factor on a wide range of entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors (Macnamara, 2003; McDonald, 2004; McQuail, 2005). Hindle and Klyver (2007) suggest that especially mass media communication might be able to foster entrepreneurial intentions, however individuals' perceptions are not altered or shaped through media. Part of the ecosystem is the media outreach about women entrepreneurs which consistently covers more male than female entrepreneurs (Baker, Aldrich, & Nina, 1997; Langowitz & Morgan, 2003). Women entrepreneurs in the Asian region are more regarded as "silent contributors" to the economy, being largely unnoticed by the public and the media (Dhaliwal, 1998).

Media reports, especially in mass media, are usually regarded as a major influential factor on a wide range of entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviors (Macnamara, 2003; McDonald, 2004; McQuail, 2005). Hindle and Klyver (2007) suggest that mass media might be able to foster entrepreneurial intentions, but cannot shape or alter an individuals' perceptions in this regard.

Methodology

Research Objective

This empirical study sought to answer the question which factors impact entrepreneurship rates in the ASEAN region and how Thailand differs from the other four investigated ASEAN countries Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Vietnam. Is it possible to find a regional pattern in the relationship between media prevalence on entrepreneurship, existing fear of failure, attitudes towards own entrepreneurial skills and opportunities and levels of national entrepreneurship participation in startups and young businesses?

Data: Relevant Variables from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor is an international research project collecting individual-level data on an annual basis. The research project tries to detect whether and to what extent entrepreneurial activity varies across countries and what makes a country entrepreneurial. Each participating GEM national research team undertakes the adult population survey APS along with the national expert survey NES. The APS questions, which include the variables used in this study, are answered by a random sample of a minimum of 2000 adults about their engagement in entrepreneurial activity and their attitudes towards entrepreneurship.

Utilizing GEM data from 2015 from the five countries, regression analysis is used to answer the question, which factors impact entrepreneurship rates and where Thailand differs from other ASEAN countries. The total number of the respondents was N=14,620 with Malaysia, Philippines and

Vietnam each N=2,000, Thailand N=3,000 and Indonesia N=5,620.

The dependent variable was the total early-stage entrepreneurial activity or TEA with the following independent variables

- (1) Fear of failure: Would fear of failure prevent you from starting a business?
- (2) Knowing another entrepreneur: Do you know someone personally who started a business in the area where you live?
- (3) Opportunities: In the next six months, will there be good opportunities for starting a business in the area where you live?
- (4) Skills: Do you have the knowledge, skill and experience required to start a new business?
- (5) Good career choice: In my country, most people consider starting a new business a desirable career choice.
- (6) Status of entrepreneurs: In my country, those successful at starting a new business have a high level of status and respect.
- (7) Media: In my country, you will often see stories in the public media and/or internet about successful new businesses.

Results

Frequencies of the dataset show that Thai women entrepreneurs experience the highest fear of failure rates compared both to their male counterparts as to their peers in the respective four other countries (Table 1). In all five countries, women fear more than men to fail in starting their businesses. Perceptions of the national ecosystem, such as entrepreneurship as a desirable career choice, high status for and media coverage entrepreneurs are generally perceived as excellent with Malaysia as the only exception. In a comparison between the five countries, Thai women entrepreneurs score poorly in three more categories: knowing another entrepreneur who started a businesses (female 30.9 percent versus male 35.8 percent); opportunity perception (female 39.8 percent versus male 44.0 percent) and entrepreneurial skill perception (female 42.5 percent versus male 50.9 percent).

Table 1: Prevalence of influencing factors for female and male TEA entrepreneurs in the five countries

	<i>Indonesia</i>		<i>Malaysia</i>		<i>Philippines</i>		<i>Thailand</i>		<i>Vietnam</i>	
	<i>female</i>	<i>male</i>	<i>female</i>	<i>male</i>	<i>female</i>	<i>male</i>	<i>female</i>	<i>male</i>	<i>female</i>	<i>Male</i>
desirable career choice	73.6%	73.8%	37.8%	40.1%	77.5%	73.1%	70.1%	71.1%	74.0%	72.6%
high level of status and respect	80.6%	81.4%	51.2%	49.8%	76.3%	76.9%	70.3%	68.0%	78.1%	73.3%
public media	79.7%	79.7%	62.2%	66.4%	86.3%	80.1%	73.3%	71.7%	73.3%	73.8%
Know another entrepreneur	68.5%	73.2%	31.9%	41.2%	44.4%	49.0%	30.9%	35.8%	64.3%	65.3%
opportunities	52.6%	50.6%	25.9%	29.2%	55.5%	54.3%	39.8%	44.0%	56.1%	57.5%
skills	64.9%	67.1%	25.4%	28.4%	70.2%	66.3%	42.5%	50.9%	54.7%	59.1%
fear of failure	52.6%	48.5%	32.6%	30.0%	39.4%	34.5%	55.6%	47.4%	53.1%	51.1%

Table 2 shows the significance of the different influencing factors on female TEA for the five ASEAN countries, whereas Table 3 displays them for their male counterparts. Thai female entrepreneurs are only positively influenced by their own skill perception (.162/.000), similar to Malaysian female entrepreneurs (.169/.000). However, as seen in Table 1, Thai women's skill perception in itself is only regarded as adequate by 39.8 percent of the women entrepreneurs, lower than in most other ASEAN countries and lower than for their male counterparts. Women entrepreneurs in the other three countries Indonesia, Philippines and Vietnam, are also positively influenced by their skills however also by business networks –knowing another entrepreneur- and by perceived opportunities. As the only country in the region, Vietnamese female entrepreneurs are slightly positively influenced by their fear to fail. However, male entrepreneurs in Indonesia experience a negative influence of their fear to fail on their total early-stage entrepreneurial activities.

Gender differences are prevalent, especially for Thai entrepreneurs. Women are only influenced by their skill perception, whereas male TEA entrepreneurs are also positively influenced by public media, entrepreneurial networks, and their own opportunity perception besides their entrepreneurial skills. Thailand is the only of the five countries, where public media coverage is positively related to total early-stage entrepreneurial activity, at least for male entrepreneurs.

*Table 2: Regression analysis of influencing factors on **female** TEA in the five ASEAN countries*

	Indonesia		Malaysia		Philippines		Thailand		Vietnam	
	Beta	Sig.	Beta	Sig.	Beta	Sig.	Beta	Sig.	Beta	Sig.
desirable career choice	.024	.287	.041	.243	-.029	.360	.015	.589	.019	.547
high level of status and respect	.027	.235	-.058	.119	.040	.202	.035	.217	.038	.226
public media	-.017	.456	.056	.111	-.003	.919	.022	.397	.049	.122
know another entrepreneur	.061	.008	.051	.139	.085	.011	.053	.059	.087	.006
opportunities	.108	.000	.036	.312	.205	.000	.044	.125	.093	.003
skills	.125	.000	.169	.000	.148	.000	.162	.000	.175	.000
fear of failure	-.031	.177	-.017	.621	-.002	.942	.012	.650	.069	.031

*Table 3: Regression analysis of influencing factors on **male** TEA in the five ASEAN countries*

	Indonesia		Malaysia		Philippines		Thailand		Vietnam	
	Beta	Sig.	Beta	Sig.	Beta	Sig.	Beta	Sig.	Beta	Sig.
desirable career choice	-.003	.912	.040	.219	.035	.371	.025	.373	-.017	.605
high level of status and respect	.039	.080	-.090	.007	.021	.592	-.007	.802	-.003	.919
public media	.030	.185	.022	.469	-.023	.547	.079	.003	-.004	.893
know another entrepreneur	.033	.149	.024	.452	.064	.128	.069	.013	.097	.004
opportunities	.097	.000	.060	.068	.218	.000	.089	.001	.065	.052
skills	.132	.000	.168	.000	.149	.000	.149	.000	.139	.000
fear of failure	-.050	.024	-.018	.569	-.037	.313	-.041	.130	-.047	.161

The R Square values in Table 4 exhibit that for all countries with the exception of the Philippines, little variance is accounted for by both female and male entrepreneurs with between 4.6 percent for female TEA in Thailand and 6,1 percent in Indonesia whereas 11.6 percent are accounted for in the Philippines. Similarly, the variance for male entrepreneurs is between 3.6 percent for Vietnam and 12.8 percent in the Philippines.

Table 4: Model summary of R Square for female and for male TEA in the five ASEAN countries

Model Summary		
Country	female: R Square	male: R Square
Indonesia	.061	.058
Malaysia	.053	.050
Philippines	.116	.128
Thailand	.046	.063
Vietnam	.059	.036

Conclusions and Implications

An important question is, whether women entrepreneurs face specific problems in setting up a business that are different from those faced by male entrepreneurs. Previous research indicates particular differing problems in mobilizing resources, including financial, social and human capital (McManus, 2001; Welter, 2004). The empirical results of this study highlight, that women entrepreneurs in Thailand need different support systems than their male counterparts and require slightly different attention from policy makers than their female counterparts in neighboring ASEAN countries. Apparently it is not enough that entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs perceive entrepreneurship as a positive cultural aspect with media attention for entrepreneurs, and entrepreneurship being regarded as a desirable career choice with high status and respect. This positive entrepreneurial culture can be a supportive element but it does not trigger start-up rates in the five ASEAN countries. Despite a relatively high fear of failure rate compared to other countries across the globe, the prevalent fear to fail does not hinder entrepreneurial start-up activities per se. The fear to fail, closely related to uncertainty and risk-taking (Caliendo et al., 2009) might however influence the way how entrepreneurs in the ASEAN region operate their businesses, their growth expectations, internationalization of businesses or the business sectors in which they chose to do business, confirming Burnstein (1963) and Welpé et al (2012).

Another approach to improve entrepreneurship for women is a focus on constraining barriers in starting up or operating businesses for women. As our findings suggest, a barrier-focused approach towards women female entrepreneurship “makes it seem as though the barriers women face are removable through individual action... what is needed, it is therefore suggested, is for women to train or educate themselves better, develop more appropriate networks and mentoring relationships, and re-assign domestic work” (Mirchandani, 1999). This approach shifts the attention of policy makers away from environment constraints towards the individual, hence the woman entrepreneur herself.

There seems to be a pattern in the ASEAN region that women entrepreneurs are positively influenced in their start-up activities by their own perceived skills, confirming previous findings of

DeTienne and Chandler (2007), Hanson and Blake (2009) and Shane and Venkataraman (2000). With reference to the high female TEA rates in the region, the influence of the skill perception however is only relatively small, thus not supporting Linan (2008), whose findings suggest that higher entrepreneurial intentions and start-up rates would result from a more favorable own skills perception. Especially in Thailand, women entrepreneurs have one of the lowest skill perception rates in the region, lower only for Malaysian entrepreneurs; however and despite this low perception rate, they are highly represented as TEA entrepreneurs in all five countries. Even though more men than women perceive to have the right skills, supporting the findings of Koellinger et al (2013), there is no significant difference in its positive influence on start-up and young business rates in the region. The case of Thailand for women entrepreneurs significantly differs from the findings in this study for male entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs in Thailand seem to be not influenced in their start-up rates by commonly influencing factors such as media attention, knowing other entrepreneurs or having business networks, and seeing opportunities, whereas all of these have a positive influence on start-up activities of male entrepreneurs in Thailand. In fact, the only influence is seen in skills perception, which indicates that an increase in their relatively low skill perception rate by developing entrepreneurial skills through training and education might positively influence the way they start up or operate their young businesses and have a positive impact on Thai women entrepreneurs.

The particular challenge to the empowerment of women entrepreneurs in Thailand as a vital part of the agenda of ASEAN seems to find the right supporting and influencing factors for TEA rates. Even though female participation in TEA and in established businesses is high, Thai women entrepreneurs are mostly concentrated in micro, small and partly medium-sized enterprises in low value-added, lower-skilled retail and service businesses, particularly at the micro level in the informal sector (Xavier et al., 2016). The measures laid out in the AEC Blueprint 2025 are expected to affect the prospects for small and medium-sized businesses and their growth in various ways. Best prospects are seen for those entrepreneurs who have good business networks and partnerships (Menon & Melendez, 2015), a field in which Thai female entrepreneurs underperform. Besides facing more constraints in general than men, women entrepreneurs in ASEAN lack both the opportunity to develop key business skills as the opportunity to access networks (UNESCAP, 2017). Projected changes in ASEAN as the result of the ASEAN Economic Community include high growth expectations for semi- to high-skilled occupations, which demands for further investment to improve skills and skills' perceptions of women entrepreneurs to meet this challenge. This requires policy makers and support organizations to have a clear focus on the specific requirements for successful entrepreneurship of women (ILO & ADB, 2014). Government bodies need to create adequate political and socio-economic framework conditions rather with more measures than just improvements for the business environment in order to facilitate access to resources (Welter, 2004). Measures in government social development policies play a vital role in the business environment in which women entrepreneurs start and develop their businesses. The right measures to facilitate quality entrepreneurship for women range from availability of childcare services to entrepreneurship education. As the Goldman Sachs *10,000 Women* initiative has shown, developing an entrepreneurial skillset through training and education will "positively affect emerging economies by increasing revenues and creating jobs, expanding women's contributions to their community and informing their leadership styles" (Brush, Balachandra, Davis, & Greene, 2011).

Limitations and Future Research

This empirical study is one of few to research women entrepreneurs in ASEAN with a focus on the individual entrepreneur and his or her attributes and aspirations. Limited data on ASEAN countries in this category are available with the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor as the main source of individual data level information. In 2015, only five out of ten ASEAN member countries participated in the global GEM study, leaving us with blank areas in Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Singapore (which participated in previous years). Certainly, entrepreneurial intentions and resulting start-up rates are influenced both by internal as by external factors. Besides an individual's entrepreneurial aspirations and attitudes, a country's ecosystem not only derives from cultural perceptions and attitudes, but also from government policies and regulatory decisions which cannot be made in isolation on whiteboards but need the interaction with the actors –the women entrepreneurs and their entrepreneurs' associations.

Future research should address the gap of knowledge that exists in “what makes women entrepreneurs in Thailand and ASEAN countries really tick” when it comes to entrepreneurship activities. Especially important is to gain knowledge about details on the entrepreneurial skills' perception of women: Why are perceptions lower than average in Thailand compared to the ASEAN region? Which skills do women entrepreneurs in Thailand perceive to have or not to have? Which measures might create higher positive significance for the entrepreneurial skill perception and thus lead to more quality entrepreneurship by participating in those business sectors that tend to benefit from AEC?

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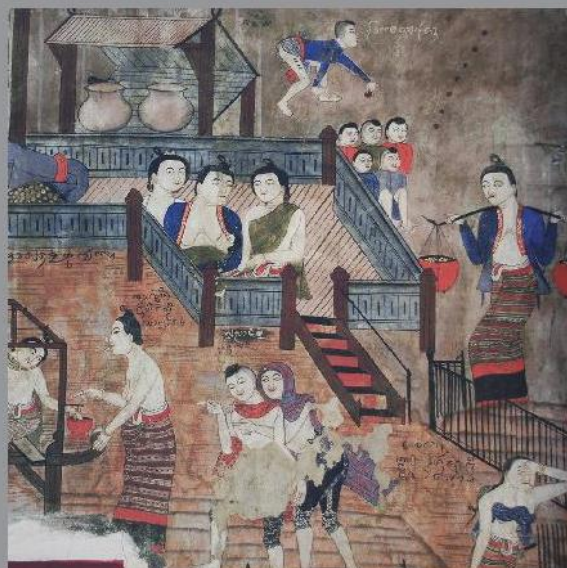


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