EXPLORATIONS

a graduate student journal of southeast asian studies

Volume 12 Fall 2014

EXPLORATIONS:

a graduate student journal of southeast asian studies

Volume 12 | Fall 2014

Dear Readers,

Welcome to **EXPLORATIONS: a graduate student journal of southeast asian studies.** This year, the editorial team is pleased to announce our journal theme,

Destabilizing Centers and Peripheries: Re-examining Approaches to the Study of Southeast Asia.

This issue of EXPLORATIONS re-examines established approaches to the study of Southeast Asia. The articles included in this issue all destabilize and problematize existing categories and approaches in light of contemporary research. In addition, a broad range of disciplines and areas of research are covered here, including maritime history in the Malay Peninsula, international relations in Southeast Asia, as well as landscape archaeology of the ancient Cham civilization. We hope that they will provide a starting point for readers to consider alternative ways of thinking about Southeast Asia, both past and present.

We are also pleased that we are able to publish the first English-language translations of Southeast Asian literature and manuscripts, including the works of Khamsing Srinawk and Djenar Maesa Ayu.

The 2014 editorial team is glad to be a part of this student-initiated platform to encourage and promote graduate scholarship in Southeast Asian studies, and we look forward to seeing further advancement of research in this area.

Aloha,

2014 EXPLORATIONS Editorial Team

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Contesting the Master-Narratives of Thai Historiography:
A Bibliographic Essay

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   Accounts of modern Thai history have traditionally often been influenced by two highly influential normative viewpoints, which are that the Thai monarchy (especially since the mid-nineteenth century) has been singularly responsible for guiding the course of Thailand's successful transformation into a modern nation-state, and that Thai Buddhism is something that can be wholly separated from socio-political life and any departure from this model represents a novel corruption. This essay serves as a critical examination of these two pervasive narratives within Thai historiography, with a particular emphasis on exploring the underlying discursive trends that led to the rise of these two dominant paradigms. Furthermore, the following discussion highlights attempts by a more recent generation of scholars to offer a critical re-assessment of these "master-narratives," thereby challenging the conclusions to which they lead.

   It is sometimes said within the field of philosophy of science that *all data is theory-laden*. If this is true – and there is a powerful argument to be made that it is – then the implication of this axiom for historiography is that there is probably no way of presenting historical information that is in all ways neutral and free from the influence of certain dominant discursive pressures. This is certainly true in the case of histories of Thailand. In the "Prologue" to his book, *Seditious Histories: Contesting Thai and Southeast Asian Pasts*, for example, Craig Reynolds asserts that, "in the Thai public square there is no such thing as disinterested history."[1] Within Thai historiography certain themes or "master-narratives" have traditionally served as organizing principles that dictate the manner in which information is presented in order to either implicitly or explicitly advance certain agendas. In this essay, several relatively recent monographs concerning Thai history, religion, society, and politics will be examined with an eye towards looking at how themes prominent within Thai studies are being re-assessed by scholars who have an interest in looking beyond history as it is *supposed to have been*, and finding new interpretive lenses with which to illuminate new and understudied aspects of the historical record. In particular, this discussion will focus on two "ideal forms" within Thai historiog-

raphy. The first is the notion that the operative agent in the formation of the modern Thai nation was the benevolent, Herculean, and enlightened leadership of Thai kings. The second is the idea of normative Thai Buddhism being a religious tradition unsullied by contact with the mundane world of politics. With respect to these two themes, it will be shown that although powerful forces exist within both of these areas that encourage specific kinds of histories to be written and certain interpretative angles to be employed, important work is being done to challenge the validity of some of the traditional master-narratives of Thai history and open up new avenues of interpretive hermeneutics from which there is much to be gained.

The Centrality of the Monarchy in the Emergence of the Modern Thai Nation

   One of the most obvious factors that sets the nation of Thailand apart from all other nations in Southeast Asia is the fact that it was never formally colonized by a European power, and thus the process of modernization in Thailand was not driven by a series of colonial viceroys ruling on behalf of a foreign government. Rather, the process was driven by forces from within.

Within traditional Thai histories, although a number of different factors are presented as converging to allow the modernization process to take place, it is very clearly the Thai monarchy that is given primary credit for masterminding a plan for the "native" modernization of Thailand and then carrying it to fruition. In particular, kings Mongkut and Chulalongkorn are singled out for the reform programs that they initiated, which not only allowed Thailand to begin to develop a semi-modern infrastructure and enter successfully into the international market economy, but also succeed in helping to navigate the Thai nation between the Scylla of French colonialist ambitions on the one side and the Charybdis of British imperial designs on the other. In *Thailand: A Short History*, David Wyatt describes the Kingdom of Siam's situation in the mid-nineteenth century in these terms:

> The kingdom thus confronted three issues: internal integration, external territorial losses, and the survival of an independent Siam. The outcome was a product of political developments centering around the Bangkok court. Everything depended on the two men who were kings of Siam during the years from 1851 to 1910, Mongkut and his son Chulalongkorn. It was on their shoulders that the burdens fell; it was they who had to make the difficult decisions.[2]

Broadly speaking, this type of description is fairly typical within traditional Thai historiography. Such narratives not only give a great deal of agency to Mongkut and (particularly) Chulalongkorn in actualizing the transformation that Siam underwent in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but also tend to present the Thai monarchs as being something akin to political geniuses whose singular prescience and wisdom allowed them to succeed against seemingly impossible odds where all other Southeast Asian monarchs had failed.

There is much about this particular interpretation of Thailand's development into a modern nation-state that might benefit from further scrutiny, as it would seem to be influenced by the employment of a pro-monarchy interpretive lens that seeks to valorize the role of the Chakri dynasty in achieving the successes that Thailand attained. Before beginning to deconstruct this narrative, however, it is important to note that although it is crucial to recognize and rethink the influence of the royalist "master-narrative" on the writing of Thai history, it is equally important not to

"throw the baby out with the bath water." Quite simply, any history of the development of modern Thailand that fails to include an account of the critical role that the monarchy played – or fails to note the remarkable achievements and influence of Mongkut and Chulalongkorn – would be patently absurd.

However, there may be a sense that accounts of Thai history painting modern members of the Chakri dynasty as being driven in all of their actions only by benevolence and selfless concern for the Thai nation may need to be amended in light of new evidence. Maurizio Peleggi argues that up until the last few decades, Western historians (he specifically mentions Wyatt) have been the unwitting heirs to a royalist historical narrative constructed by Prince Damrong, which lionizes the Thai monarchy's enlightened leadership in bringing about what is characterized as a unique case of indigenous modernization and nation-building.[3] Peleggi represents one among a new generation of scholars who question elements of this dominant master-narrative by looking at the evidence available using new interpretive lenses.

In *Lords of Things*, Peleggi draws attention to the fact that although figures like Mongkut and Chulalongkorn were certainly driven in part by the need to answer the myriad challenges presented by the Thai nation-state's entry into the world of international politics and economics in the late nineteenth century, this cannot be seen as the *only* motivation at play. In a compelling and rather convincing analysis, Peleggi argues that one factor key to understanding the behavior of the Thai royal family in this period is a shift in their own *self-image*. The essential argument runs along the lines that after gaining some degree of exposure to the royal families of Europe, members of the Thai royal family began to undergo a fundamental shift in identity. The consequence of this shift in identity was that they began to see themselves as members of a larger class of world monarchs (Peleggi uses the evocative phrase "Victorian ecumene") who were perhaps marked off from one another by differences of *degree* (for instance, differences in the amount of wealth and power enjoyed by each royal house), but were not fundamentally different from one another in *kind*. The most readily apparent result of this identity transformation involved *conspicuous consumption* – the Thai royal family noted the fact that royal dynasties in Europe

used public displays of opulent wealth as identity markers, and thus followed suit.

Peleggi notes that Chulalongkorn's visits to Europe, for example, while often portrayed as diplomatic expeditions wherein the king engaged in cagey political maneuvers designed to guarantee Siam's continued sovereignty, might also be portrayed as *shopping sprees*, wherein Chulalongkorn hoped to mimic the zest for material acquisition displayed by European royals, and hence join their ranks. Peleggi further notes that the royal family sought to project this new outward identity by commissioning photographs of itself wherein the Thai royals were depicted as a thoroughly "modern" family of individuals who were as much at home dressed in slightly altered suits of Western clothing as they were striking noble, vaguely Napoleonic poses for the camera. Peleggi's overall analysis takes nothing away from the fact that the royal family was crucial in the stewardship of Siam through a critical time in its history, but he does succeed in challenging the notion that the national interests of the nation-state were the only motivational factors at work in their actions, as certain elements of self-interest were certainly at play as well.

Other recent challenges to the dominant royalist paradigm of Thai historiography have come from different directions. Within this new, revisionist mode of historical analysis, a broad agreement seems to exist that the singular centrality of the Thai royal family in shaping the contours of what would become modern Thailand must be mitigated somewhat. Thongchai Winichakul's seminal work, *Siam Mapped*, for instance, demonstrates the degree to which the power of modern map-making and shifting ideas about the nature of political space aided in the development of modern Thailand into the "geo-body" that it is today.[4] Although Thongchai's work is certainly not an abject refutation of the notion that the royal family was pivotal in the construction of the Thai nation-state, he nevertheless does succeed in de-centering the central importance of the monarchy somewhat by demonstrating the discursive power that borders and margins (as indicated on maps) had in the development of Thai nationhood.

Along broadly similar lines, Tamara Loos' *Subject Siam* presents two major challenges to the aforementioned royalist master-narrative of Thai history.[5] First,

much as Thongchai focused on the conceptual influence of maps, Loos turns her attention toward the discursive power of laws in the formation of modern Thailand, and asserts that an analysis of the influence of the evolution of the Thai legal code presents a further challenge to the idea that the Thai monarchy somehow single-handedly dragged Siam into the modern world through the power of crafty political action and beneficent charisma alone. In essence, Loos argues that changes in the Thai legal tradition pertaining to family law had a pivotal role to play in the construction of what she describes as a distinctly Thai "alternative modernity."

More specifically, her second critique of the royalist master-narrative is that although Thai nationalists often take great pride in the fact that Siam/Thailand was never colonized by a European power, it would not be a true statement to assert that Thailand escaped the influence of European colonialism altogether. On the contrary, by focusing on the phenomenon of "plural" legal systems within a given political space, Loos demonstrates that – in truth – Siam was both the victim and the perpetrator of hegemonic imperialism. She argues that the success of numerous colonial powers in forcing Siam to accept certain extraterritoriality provisions (wherein citizens of various "powerful" nations were not subject to Thai laws) must be understood as something akin to a type of colonialism, albeit a variety wherein benefits accrue to a dozen different colonial powers rather than just one. Moreover, it is argued that these extraterritoriality claims were rhetorically predicated on the notion that Thai laws were barbaric and irrational, which, in turn, led to a drive to reform the Thai legal code in such a way that European powers would no longer feel uncomfortable allowing their citizens to be judged according the dictates of Thai law.

As a further move toward establishing some level of equality with European colonial powers, Loos argues that Siam itself engaged in a program of imperialistic expansionism in the Patani region of what is now southern Thailand. This was accomplished by bringing local leaders into Bangkok's sphere of influence through the threat of violent force, and subsequently subjecting the Muslim-Malay population to a "plural" legal system vaguely reminiscent of the one which European powers imposed on Thailand. Along similar lines with Peleggi's argument that the Thai monarchy

embarked on a program of extravagant *spending because that is what the "modern" (read: European) monarchs* – whose ranks they wished to join – *did*, Loos contends that Siam engaged in a variety of imperialistic expansionism *because that's the kind of thing that "modern" nations* – a group that Siam sought to join – *engaged in*. Although one could perhaps make an argument that Loos may overemphasize the influence of legal discourse when making her larger points about Siam's colonial status (that is, as coloniz*ed* and coloniz*er*), her book stands as an important addition to the growing corpus of critical studies of Thai history that challenge certain aspects of the prevailing royalist narrative.

Setting aside the self-consciously critical re-assessment of the royalist master-narrative of Thai history for a moment, there has also been some important work done on how the contemporary notion of Thai national identity (or "Thai-ness") emerged in the context of Thailand's development into a modern nation-state, and how this concept of "Thai-ness" has been deployed by different groups in the service of advancing certain agendas. As Charles Keyes notes:

> Since the reign of King Chulalongkorn...there has been a conscious effort on the part of the central government in Bangkok to bring all the diverse peoples living within the political boundaries of Thailand under its authority. The assertion of this authority has been exercised not primarily through the use of force.... Rather, it has been asserted by emphasizing a set of national symbols that hold a strong appeal for the vast majority of the populace. At the center of this lies the monarch (*phra maha kasat*), upon whom the legitimate power of the state is based.[6]

What Keyes points to here is the fact that even aside from any specific actions that the king takes, the office of the monarch itself is vested with a certain symbolism that has been used (along with Buddhism) in the integration of Thailand into a modern nation-state. There is thus an important sense in which the "imagined community" (to use Benedict Anderson's term) of Thailand has traditionally been oriented around the axial center of a conception of "Thai-ness" that prominently features the king at its core. This notion of "Thai-ness" has, in turn, been employed by elites in the discursive construction of the modern nation of Thailand.

Walter Vella's *Chaiyo!: King Vajiravudh and the Development of Thai Nationalism* is an interesting analysis of just this phenomenon.[7] Vella's account of the reign of King Vajiravudh cannot be characterized as containing as radical (or, to borrow Craig Reynolds' term, as "seditious") a re-interpretation of the historical record as can be found in the aforementioned books by Peleggi, Thongchai, and Loos. In part, this is because rather than dealing with the legendary figures of Mongkut and Chulalongkorn, the subject of Vella's book – Vajiravudh – is a man not always remembered in the fondest terms within traditional Thai historiography, so the stakes involved in portraying him as a human being acting out of eminently human motives are not quite so high. Nevertheless, Vella's analysis is interesting insofar as it portrays King Vajiravudh as a cunning pragmatist who recognized what he saw as the need for the development of a national *esprit* to unify the Thai nation, and then set about consciously constructing a nationalistic discourse that linked the three "pillars" of religion, nation, and monarchy together as the center of an essential "Thai-ness."

Vella argues that more than simply being a political leader and cultural icon, King Vajiravudh also functioned as a kind of "propagandist-in-chief" who sought to establish an emotional connection between the populace living within his kingdom and this feeling of "Thai-ness." Furthermore, Vajiravudh subsequently lionized militarism in defense of this "Thai-ness" as an inherent and commendable cultural value of the Thai people.[8] A cynic might point out that it would be hard not to suspect an explicitly self-interested motive for Vajiravudh's rhetorical elevation of Thai kingship to the very center of Thai national identity, given that he was the first Thai monarch of the modern era to have the legitimacy of his absolute rule seriously questioned (i.e. the failed coup of 1912), and thus had a personal stake in reinforcing the prestige of the office that he held.[9] On the whole, although the overall image of Vajiravudh that Vella presents does not represent a direct challenge to the historiographical master-narrative of enlightened Thai kingship, the picture that he presents of a talented yet plotting and reclusive human being attempting to willfully manipulate the Thai national character in order to meet certain nationalistic ends does not fit neatly within this royalist master-narrative either.

Finally, despite the success that figures like Vaji-ravudh achieved in constructing, deploying, and popularizing a Thai national identity to be used in the service of creating the imaged community of Thailand, some recent scholarship has called attention to apparent *failures* of the discourse of "Thai-ness" to function as a source of unity throughout the Thai nation. In *Tearing Apart the Land*, for instance, Duncan McCargo argues that one of the central problems involved in the recent rise of violence in the Malay Muslim-dominated southern region of Thailand is that sufficient effort was never expended to include the residents of southern Thailand within a communal Thai national identity.[10] McCargo argues that:

> Thai virtuous [monarchical] rule was predicated on the shibboleth "Nation, Religion, King," but Malay Muslims understood all three of these elements differently from Thai Buddhists. Mutuality between King and people did not work properly in the deep South. For this reason, virtuous rule did not provide a sustainable basis for the legitimacy of the Thai state in the Southern border region.[11]

As a consequence of this failure to construct a common national identity equally accommodating to ethnically Thai Buddhists and ethnically Malay Muslims, the legitimacy of the king (and, by extension, the rest of the Thai state bureaucracy) to rule over the land was never properly established in Patani, leading the region's Malay Muslim residents to resent what they see as political domination by an outside entity based in Bangkok. In fact, pressure exists within the Thai national discourse *not* to portray the ongoing violence in the south as evidence of an identity conflict over the failure of "Thai-ness" to be inclusive of all of the nation's residents. This is because – among other reasons – such a portrayal might constitute an implicit acknowledgement of the failure of the original progenitors of this notion of "Thai-ness" – the royal family – to articulate a sufficiently broad and inclusive conception of Thai national identity. There is thus a sense in which this unwillingness to see the trouble in Patani as a conflict over identity and political legitimacy can be viewed as a form of resistance to interpretations of Thai history and politics that are less than fully supportive of an interpretive hermeneutic that aggrandizes the universal, enlightened – indeed almost infallible – leadership of the Thai monarch.

The Role of Buddhism in Thai Socio-Political Life

Another prominent theme within the field of Thai studies involves controversy over the political role (or supposed lack thereof) of the Buddhist *sangha* within contemporary Thai society. Here again, one is confronted with certain dominant paradigms of thought concerning what Buddhism's role in society *ought* to be, which must then be reconciled with the reality of facts on-the-ground. For instance, within Western scholarship, a great deal of influence has been exerted by Max Weber's contention that in its purest, "ancient" form, Buddhism is a "specifically unpolitical and anti-political status religion, or more precisely, a religious 'technology' of wandering and of intellectually-schooled mendicant monks."[12] One of the consequences of Weber's influential formulation of normative Buddhism has been that cases of the Thai Buddhist *sangha* exerting political influence within Thailand have often been portrayed as marked departures from the original function that *true* Buddhism played within society, which was to provide a method of retreat from the realm of the here-and-now, and offer a means of moving toward the "other-worldly" ideal of *nibbana*. Therefore, without much effort being put into investigating the possibility that Buddhism in Thailand (as well as everywhere else) has always had a political dimension, a trend in scholarship emerged which emphasizes the *novelty* of the close association of the Buddhist *sangha* with the politics of the state. Moreover, even for a later generation of scholars who saw no inherent contradiction in the marriage of Buddhism and politics in the Thai context, an assumption has often persevered that only certain *kinds* of political involvement are appropriate for members of the *sangha*, and that anything that falls outside of these parameters must be viewed as an aberration.

As one example of the influence of the Weberian construction of Buddhism in the field of Thai studies, Yoneo Ishii's *Sangha, State, and Society: Thai Buddhism in History* takes Weber's construction of what Buddhism essentially *is* to be a given.[13] He argues that at its heart, Buddhism is a rationalistic tradition of renunciation geared toward elites and consisting of textually-derived doctrines. Moreover, he argues that this genuine Buddhism – which he calls "nibbanic Buddhism" – is little practiced in contemporary Thailand,

noting that "the orthodox doctrines of Buddhism, those oriented to the otherworldly realm, hold little interest for the majority of Thais."[14] What one is more likely to encounter in contemporary Thailand, Ishii argues, are forms of the tradition that he describes as "kammatic Buddhism" (which centers on the generation of positive merit in order to improve one's material conditions in future lives), "apotropaic Buddhism" (which is concerned with warding off evil through the performance of magical rites), and a "secular" subsystem of Buddhism (wherein members of the *sangha* involve themselves in the education and moral development of the laity). The implicit argument here is that any form of Buddhism that explicitly entails the involvement of the *sangha* in the socio-political world of lay people represents a departure from normative, doctrinal Buddhism. Although Ishii's contentions here are hardly uncommon for their time (Melford Spiro made very similar claims with regard to Burmese Buddhism, for instance), later generations of scholars would come to argue that although a neat cleavage between "this-worldly" Buddhism and "other-worldly" Buddhism may exist as a theoretical construct, in reality there was probably *never* a time in which this distinction was strictly maintained. Rather, it is probably the case that Buddhism has *always* had a significant role to play in the social and political life of individuals, which renders the idea of "doctrinal" or "nibbanic" Buddhism being the one "true Buddhism" profoundly unhelpful.

However, having said this, Ishii notes that regardless of whether or not the involvement of Buddhism in the socio-political sphere represents a novel departure from tradition, the fact that Buddhism has a significant role to play in modern Thai politics is self-evident. He notes that the history of twentieth century Thailand can be viewed as the history of the gradually growing alliance between the Thai state and the Buddhist *sangha*. Ishii argues that the Sangha Act of 1902 marks the beginning of what he calls "state Buddhism," wherein the secular government of Thailand gained control over the structure and function of the Thai *sangha*, and began to use it as a tool to be deployed in the service of integrating the territories under the control of the Bangkok government into a single, modern nation.[15] Specifically, Ishii notes how the reforms instituted by the first Sangha Act marked the beginning of a period during which the Thai *sangha* was integrated into a monolithic entity, and a Thai Theravada "orthodoxy" was established by virtue of the fact that standardized tests (with definitively "correct" and "incorrect" answers) were formulated for entrance into the higher ranks of the *sangha*. In this way, Ishii paints a picture of what he characterizes as a transition from plural Thai Buddh*isms* to a singular Thai Buddh*ism*.[16]

In many ways, Peter Jackson's *Buddhism, Legitimation, and Conflict* represents a continuation of Ishii's essential line of argumentation, except that he adds to Ishii's analysis of the *construction* of "state Buddhism" (or what Jackson refers to as "establishment Buddhism") by further delving into an analysis of what he sees as the *deconstruction* of this unitary, state-aligned Buddhism by certain reformist agents.[17] In effect, he argues that the stranglehold on official orthodoxy that the Thai Buddhist "establishment" once held has been fractured in recent years (especially since the 1970's) by the emergence of trends toward reform and factionalism. Whereas in the first part of the twentieth century, the Thai Buddhist "establishment" was the only religious institution capable of being seen as "legitimate" by the Thai populace, Jackson argues that this monopoly on legitimacy has been fractured in recent years by movements such as Santi Asok and Dhammakaya that challenge the singular authority of the establishment *sangha* and seek to find new ways to make Buddhism relevant to modern life and compatible with Thai middle-class values.

Jackson's analysis also represents an important departure from the aforementioned Weberian construction of an idealized, other-worldly Buddhism, insofar as he takes it to be a given that Buddhism and politics are inherently related to one another. He notes, for instance, that although it is traditional within academia for a wall of separation to exist between the academic fields of religious studies and political science,

> …the retention of this theoretical distinction when studying Thai political and religious life, in which notions of sacred and temporal power cannot be categorically distinguished, can lead to a failure to appreciate the significance of the real and continuing relationship between Theravada Buddhism and political activity in Thailand.[18]

Significantly, Jackson does not present this connection between Buddhism and politics as some sort of an aberrant departure from the normative tradition.

Rather, he argues that Buddhism has an inherently political role to play in Thailand, and to ignore this fact would inevitably lead to an impoverished understanding of both Thai Buddhism and Thai political life.

In *Buddhism and Politics in Thailand*, Somboon Suksamran makes arguments very similar to Jackson's insofar as he draws attention to the close relationship between the *sangha* and the politics of the Thai state.[19] However, Somboon identifies another source for the widespread misperception that Buddhism and politics do not mix (that is, aside from the aforementioned theoretical distinction between "this-worldly" affairs and "other-worldly" affairs that has been influential within the academy), which is, namely, the Thai *sangha* itself. Somboon asserts that because politics is seen as a "dirty business" in Thailand, the *sangha* has a vested interest in being perceived as holding itself "above the fray" of politics in order to preserve its own sense of legitimacy, and thus takes great pains to conceal the degree to which it is deeply involved in the political world of the here-and-now. Moreover, Somboon contends that the Thai state itself colludes with the *sangha* in the encouragement of this misperception that religion and politics do not mix in Thailand, because the reciprocal relationship between the *sangha* and state in Thailand is such that any perceived threat to the legitimacy of the *sangha* stemming from the revelation of its involvement in mundane, political affairs would have a deleterious effect on the legitimacy of the state as well.

Thus, a close examination of the literature on the political role of the Buddhist *sangha* within the Thai state reveals an interesting point of congruence wherein *both* the Weberian-influenced notion of normative Buddhism as being "other-worldly" in its ideal form, *and* a self-interested motive on the part of the *sangha* to conceal its involvement in political affairs so as not to tarnish its own image, have *together* produced a dominant master-narrative wherein Buddhism in Thailand is (wrongly) portrayed as being inherently apolitical, with exceptions to this rule being depicted as departures from the norm. This phenomenon can be seen as an example of what Charles Hallisey has called a productive "elective affinity" that exists "between the positive historiography of European Orientalism and some Buddhist styles of self-representation which shaped the manner in which research in Buddhist studies became organized...."[20] There is thus a sense in which the work of scholars like Jackson and Somboon

– both of whom highlight the inherently political aspect of Thai Buddhism in great detail – can be seen as a necessary and important corrective to misapprehensions concerning the actual relationship between Buddhism and politics in Thailand.

Finally, another master-narrative – alluded to above – concerning the Thai *sangha* that probably deserves more scrutiny than it has heretofore received is the notion that up until the late nineteenth century, it would be more appropriate to speak of multiple Thai Buddh*isms* than a single Buddh*ism* existing within Siam. In the wake of the reforms of the Sangha Act of 1902, the Thai *sangha* became integrated into a monolithic entity that has only begun to experience fractionalization in relatively recent times. Justin McDaniel's *Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words* represents a challenge to this dominant paradigm.[21] He argues that if one shifts attention away from the macrocosmic level of looking at the laws that were being written in Bangkok, and instead actually examines the microcosmic effect that these laws were having "on-the-ground" in monasteries around the country, it becomes clear that the nation-wide "integration" of the *sangha* into a unified entity marked by a single orthodoxy has been greatly exaggerated. By examining the textbooks used for monastic education in northern Thailand in the early twentieth century, McDaniel is able to show that most individual temples were little affected by the monastic reforms of 1902, and continued to retain their own idiosyncratic (one could even say "heterodox") systems of monastic education that did not fall in line with the new orthodoxy being promoted by the *sangha* establishment. McDaniel's analysis demonstrates that although the official, "institutional history" of the Thai *sangha* has the distinct advantage of producing an analytically "neat" model of the creation of a universally-accepted Thai Buddhist orthodoxy, there is a degree to which this portrayal represents an outright fiction. If McDaniel is correct – and his arguments are, indeed, quite persuasive – then the dominant model of a significant disjuncture between a "fractured" *sangha* pre-1902 and a "united" *sangha* post-1902 needs to be seriously re-examined in light of the fact that the Thai *sangha* was probably never as unified as the "institutional history" of the *sangha* has led us to believe.

Conclusion

As the Marxist-influenced analysis of Craig Reynolds reminds us, when examining the historiographical record, we must not only pay attention to *what* is being said in the histories that have been written about Thailand, but must also examine *why* it is being said. Certain socio-political entities (such as the Thai monarchy and the Thai Buddhist *sangha*) have a vested interest in history being written in certain ways. Perspectives that countervail the dominant paradigm are thus apt to encounter some degree of deep structural resistance. In this way, certain dominant paradigms of thought – which have here been described as "master-narratives" – become entrenched. Having said this, however, it is important to stress that although this essay has taken as its topic a critical re-assessment of some of the dominant master-narratives operative within traditional Thai historiography, it would be naïve to suggest that the new generation of scholars examined in this discussion are immune to the influence of certain dominant paradigms themselves. As stated at the outset of this essay, it is probably the case that when it comes to history, society, and politics in Thailand (or any country), utterly neutral presentations of facts devoid of underlying ideological agendas are a theoretical impossibility. Moreover, it might be argued that although one must be careful not to uncritically accept the truth of works of historical or political analysis written under the influence of various master-narratives, this does not mean that there is little to be learned from looking at the master-narratives themselves. On the contrary, by examining, for instance, the image that Thai royalists wish to present of the monarchy's role in the formation of the modern Thai nation, or the style of self-representation that the Thai *sangha* endeavors to communicate to the outside world, there is an important sense in which one places oneself in a position to understand and assess the underlying logic of the agendas which motivate these idiosyncratic presentations of history, and hence to better appreciate the cultural values operative in contemporary Thailand.

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[1] Craig J. Reynolds. *Seditious Histories: Contesting Thai and Southeast Asian Pasts*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), viii.

[2] David K. Wyatt. *Thailand: A Short History*. Second Edition. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 166.

[3] Maurizio Peleggi. *Lords of Things: The Fashioning of the Siamese Monarchy's Modern Image*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 5-7.

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[5] Tamara Loos. *Subject Siam: Family, Law, and Colonial Modernity in Thailand*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

[6] Charles F. Keyes. *Thailand: Buddhist Kingdom as Modern Nation-State*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987), 3.

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[8] As an aside, Craig Reynolds observes that a politically expedient linkage between the promotion of a certain brand of Thai national identity and a militaristic ethos did not end with the death of Vajiravudh. He notes that during the numerous times that military strongmen seized the reins of political power in Thailand, "the Thai military was assiduous, aggressive even, in promoting Thai national culture and national identity in an effort to enshroud itself with the trappings of authenticity and legitimacy. The genius of the military and the state security organizations lay in having nurtured a mentality in the bureaucracy and social institutions that embraces the very values the military cherishes." Reynolds, *Seditious Histories*, 272.

[9] Vella does, however, note that although his true internal motivations cannot be known, Vajiravudh's own writings suggest that he was driven less by self-interest than he was motivated by a Hobbesian view of human nature wherein human beings require the firm hand of a strong ruler to keep them from spiraling into chaos. Vella, *Chaiyo!,* 60-61.

[10] Duncan McCargo. *Tearing Apart the Land: Islam and Legitimacy in Southern Thailand.* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[11] McCargo, *Tearing Apart,* 16.

[12] Max Weber. *The Religion of India*, ed. and trans. Hans H. Gerth and Don Martindale. (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1958), p. 206.

[13] Yoneo Ishii. *Sangha, State, and Society: Thai Buddhism in History*, trans. Peter Hawkes. (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986).

[14] Ishii, *Sangha,* 14.

[15] This elevation of Buddhism as the Thai "national religion" and the promotion of the idea that "to be Thai is to be Buddhist" is another element of the discursive construction of "Thai-ness" discussed earlier.

[16] As will be noted below, this is a characterization that a newer generation of scholars – such as Justin McDaniel – eventually call into question.

[17] Peter A. Jackson. *Buddhism, Legitimation, and Conflict: The Political Functions of Urban Thai Buddhism*. (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1989).

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Interrelationships in South and Southeast Asian Art:

Cham Female Iconography, Buddhist Inscriptions and the Buddha Image

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The majority of archaeology in Champa consists of Hindu arts and architecture. Buddhism co-existed with Hinduism, but it was not the dominant religion. In 875 CE, Indravarman II was the first Cham ruler to actively support Buddhism with the construction of the Đồng Dương temple located in present-day Bình Định, Vietnam. An analysis of Sanskrit Buddhist inscriptions helps shed light on the role of Cham elite women. The inscriptions revealed that royal women and the king shared an interest in Buddhism. A rare seated Buddha statue with the legs pendant— a posture associated with female goddesses also intensified the importance of female power. In the 9th century, the female role in art and Buddhism was extraordinary in the Buddhist context. The seated Buddha with the legs pendant and narrative relief panels were a part of a larger corpus of Cham Buddhist visual arts that emphasized the female realm.

Introduction

The Chams are an Austronesian linguistic and ethnic group who occupied the central and southern part of present-day Vietnam.[1] In scholarship, this region of small coastal polities is known as Champa (Campa). The Vietnamese lived in the northern part of Vietnam under Chinese control during the Han period from 111 to 938 CE. The Chams however, were independent from the Vietnamese until the annexation of Champa in 1471.[2] Today a small community of Muslim Chams mostly resides on the coastal areas of Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand. Sanskrit and Cham inscriptions, historical sources and archaeology are used to reconstruct Cham history.

The archaeology of Champa consisted of a majority of Hindu arts and architecture. Buddhism co-existed with Hinduism, but it was not the dominant religion. Buddhism originated in South Asia and spread to Southeast Asia, Japan, Korea and China. Indravarman II (r. 875 – 899 CE) was the first Cham ruler to actively support Buddhism with the construction of the 9th century Đồng Dương temple located in present-day Bình Định, Vietnam. The architectural building was largely destroyed due to the bombings that took place during the Vietnam War. The only remnants of the temple consist of life-size sculptures, inscription steles and two altar pedestals with narrative reliefs. Most of the archaeological remains are now preserved in the Đa Nẵng Museum of Cham Sculpture.

The temple's ground plan from Henri Parmentier's *Inventaire Descriptif des Monuments Cams de l'Annam* was published in 1909. The two decorated altars with

narrative relief panels depicting life scenes of the Buddha and *Jatakas* are not conclusively identified. Also, it is not known for certain what images or architectural objects were placed in conjunction with the pedestals. The previous discourse on Cham Buddhist art has offered numerous interpretations about the visual imagery. There is, however, no scholarly consensus on the identity of some of the sculptures or which event is depicted on the narrative relief panels.

Fig. 1. Plan of Đồng Dương temple © Courtesy of Joanna Williams

This paper is an exploratory overview of the implications of 9th century Buddhist art and inscriptions of Đồng Dương within Champa, a region of predominately Hindu art and architecture. First, a brief background and literature review will be provided. Second, an analysis of Buddhist Sanskrit inscriptions shows that the Cham king and royal women had an interest in Buddhism. Third, a Cham sculpture of the Buddha with legs pendant, a pose popular for goddesses in the context of Indian art stressed the importance of a feminine worship. Finally, women figure prominently in the surviving two pedestal altars. I conclude that the arts from the Đồng Dương Buddhist temple emphasize the female realm, a body of associations that became attached to female representation. This raises a series of questions for further research.

Indravarman II built the Đồng Dương temple in 875 CE. The plan of the building has long hallways and rectangular enclosures (fig. 1). The brick temple has three sections: the first enclosure, a long hallway, and the main shrine.[3] A 4-foot Buddha bronze statue was discovered in the first enclosure. The Buddha wears a monastic robe and he performs the *vitarka mudra*, the gesture of teaching. The style of the sculpture is unique to Cham art and it was most likely imported from Sri Lanka before being placed in the temple.[4] Another large sculpture of the Buddha who sits with his legs pendant was found in the same enclosure. In addition, the seated Buddha's pedestal depicts life stories of the Buddha on narrative relief panels. An in-depth analysis of the seated Buddha with the legs pendant and the iconography on the narrative relief panels will be discussed later.

The second enclosure bridges the temple and the main shrine. Upon entering this space, two statues of protective deities, the *dharmapalas*, flanks the gateway into the enclosure.[5] The brick halls had doorways that opened to the east and west. This hallway was mostly used by monks for ceremonial preparations, as well as functioned as a space for ritual performances. This intermediary space prepared visitors to enter the principal sanctuary. This sanctuary, with nine smaller shrines that surrounded the central tower was the most important component of the temple.[6] A large stone pedestal with an altar sits at the end of the main sanctuary. Like the pedestal of the seated Buddha, the altar's pedestal displays *Jatakas* carved on the relief panels.

In the 9th century, there was intense warfare among the kings of Champa, China and Vietnam. The Vietnamese gained economic and political power in the northern area of present-day Vietnam and they ended Chinese domination in 938 CE.[7] In 982 CE, the Vietnamese king Lê Đại Hành attacked a region to the north of Champa. Scholars have agreed that the Đồng Dương complex was most likely devastated by the invasion. Excavations showed that the main sanctuary was looted and some of the temple walls were de-

stroyed by fire.[8] There is no indication that the Đồng Dương temple was rebuilt, which suggests that the site was used only for a short period of time. That being said, the incorporation of Buddhist beliefs into the court officially placed Champa within the elite Buddhist culture alongside other powerful regions of Asia such as India, China, Japan, Korea, and other areas of Southeast Asia. Indravarman II's alignment with Buddhism distinguished Champa as a prosperous region.

In the 1880s Etienne Aymonier and Abel Bergaigne translated and published Sanskrit inscriptions discovered in the Champa region. These inscriptions attracted the attention of French scholars. Louis Finot (1900-1930), Henri Parmentier (1909-1918), George Maspero (1928) and Jean Boisselier (1960) contributed survey books and articles on Cham art and architecture. In 1951, Pierre Dupont's article compared the arts of Đồng Dương with 7th century Chinese art from the Tang Dynasty. The difficulty of classifying the arts from this period is evident as Dupont attributes a possibility of influences from the Sino-Annamite or the Sino-Vietnamese.[9] He also suggested that there was local interest in the worship of female divinities and the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara in Champa and China. Dupont stated that "ce cas tout à fait insolité d'un personage féminin identifié au bodhisattva permet de se demander si l'on ne trouve pas ici un reflet du bouddhisme chinois où Avalokiteçvara a changé de sex pour devenir la Kouan-yin."[10] The goddess Quanyin was worshipped in China and her visual development can be traced to a gender switch of Avalokitesvara. Dupont's work showed that although the religious practices of the Chinese and the Chams were different, the arts of Đồng Dương had artistic connections to China.

In 2005, Trian Nguyen re-evaluated a bronze female statue discovered fifty meters from the temple's main sanctuary. The female statue is two armed and holds a conch in one hand and a lotus flower in the other. There is also evidence that a Mucalinda Buddha is used in her hair.[11] The bronze statue could be moved easily and there can be no certainties as to when the statue was placed, where it was recently found or how it was originally placed. In addition, Nguyen identified the figure as Laksmindra-Lokesvara, the female Avalokitesvara based on the name of this deity in a Sanskrit inscription that says it was King Indravarman II's personal deity. There is, however, no textual or visual de-

velopment that shows that the Chams changed the gender of Avalokitesvara to a female in the 9th century.

Some justification for identifying the Cham female image as Avalokitesvara comes from the Chinese practice of worshipping Quanyin, a female deity who was originally the male Avalokitesvara but in the 10th century became regarded as a female. While there is no direct connection between Quanyin and the Cham statue, the occurrence of Quanyin at about the same date as the Bronze sculpture could suggest that Avalokitesvara at that date may be regarded as female in gender. Nguyen also argues that the sculpture would have been placed on the main altar as it has a long tang on the bottom that fits into a hole on the top of the altar.[12] Regardless of where the Cham female statue was originally placed, it reveals the presence of the worship of female deities in the 9th century.

In 2006, Nantana Chutiwongs published an article on Buddhism in Champa in the exhibition catalogue, *Tresors d'art du Vietnam*. She analyzed terracotta votive plaques, stone icons, and bronzes from the 2nd century to the 14th century. Chutiwongs argued for the significance of female deities in Champa, suggesting, "le culte des divinitiés féminine's est l'announce, dans le bouddhisme, du développement des formes ésotériques d'enseignement, centres sur l'unité des contraries et sur la nature dualiste de tous les phénomènes."[13] She also noted the importance of the goddess Tara, who was considered the wife or *alter ego* of Avalokitesvara. There were a significant number of Cham female cult images as well as male sculptures such as Vajrapani and Avalokitesvara.

Trần Kỳ Phương and Rie Nakamura co-authored an article about the dualist cult of the Cham society. The work of the two scholars revealed that two sanctuaries, Mỹ Sơn and Po Nagar "reflect certain characteristics of the cosmological dualism."[14] This cosmological dualist cult is defined as a Cham male and female dichotomy. Inscriptions and icons found at the two sites suggest that Mỹ Son was dedicated to the God Bhadresvara (Siva) and Po Nagar was dedicated to the Goddess Bhagavati. Based on Cham legends, two clans, Areca, the male clan and Coconut, the female clan controlled Champa. Another Cham legend cites the division of *Ahier* and *Awal,* which translates from Arabic to English as *back* and *front.* Cham contemporary communities in Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận (Central Vietnam) have regarded *Ahier* as the male realm and *Awal* as the

female realm.[15] The authors conclude that Mỹ Son and Po Nagar represented the female and male realm, an integral emphasis of cosmological dualism.

This overview of literature on Đồng Dương suggests that female imagery was of importance. I will argue below that the power and presence of the female has been accentuated in the 9th century art at Đồng Dương and in the accompanying inscriptions. The cosmological beliefs about the existence of the Cham female realm are encoded in the visual arts. Buddhist inscriptions also show that Cham royal women participated in Buddhism. A Cham Buddha with legs pendant has associations to seated female goddesses in the Indian context. In addition, the depictions of women in narrative reliefs from two altar pedestals include Siddhartha's mother, Queen Maya, his wife, Yasodhara, and his grandmother, Queen Mahprajapati Gautami. I propose that 9th century arts from Đồng Dương and Buddhist inscriptions stressed the significance of the female world and the powers of femininity.

Buddhist Sanskrit Inscriptions

There are at least eight Cham Buddhist Sanskrit inscriptions discovered in Champa.[16] Dated to 797 CE, a Sanskrit inscription reveals that Indravarman II created the Đồng Dương temple for monks. The inscription reads, "for the sake of Dharma, and not for revenue, a monastery has been founded for the community of monks. I have placed all necessaries in the monastery for the enjoyment of the community of monks as well as other creatures. This monastery has been founded for the perpetual enjoyment of the community of monks. And not for the enjoyment of the king, nor as a permanent source of revenue. Those who will protect all these riches of the monks—the learned Brahmanas, ascetics, relations of the king—will, their friends and kindreds, attain the Buddhist Nirvana to which there is no parallel."[17]

The protection of the monks brings merit to the king, his friends and family to achieve Nirvana. Like the king who protects the monks, the deities reciprocate protection to the king. Furthermore, the inscription reveals how Indravarman II has given many things to the monks for the sake of Dharma. The inscription states, "Now the King Sri Indravarman has given these fields together with their corn, male and female slaves and other goods, such as gold, silver, bell-metal, iron, copper etc. to Lokesvara, for the enjoyment of the community of monks and the sake of the propagation of Dharma."[18] The inscription records Indravarman II as a devoted Buddhist. His donations will ensure his path to Nirvana.[19]

An inscription notes the significance of female goddesses as a protector for the king. The inscription states, "may the king, whose superior mind has been purified by successive births, followed by excellent men, protect you in order to rule the whole of beloved Champa. May the Goddess of Sovereignty in her turn always protect him."[20] Here, the king desires to seek protection from the Hindu goddess Laksmi commonly referred to as the Goddess of Sovereignty. Older Sanskrit inscriptions mention Hindu goddesses such as Uma and Laksmi, which suggest the prominent position goddesses held in the Hindu context.

Another stele, the Đồng Dương Inscription of Jayasimhavarman I, was found outside of the temple. The inscription documents the donation of a princess named Haradevi Rajakula, the younger sister of the king's mother. The inscription states, "King Jayasimhavarman has a maternal aunt (mother's sister) she is always skillful in virtuous work, endowed with exceptional qualities, and decorated by the increase of fortune, she takes delight in her fame and hopes; she is an asylum of pious thought formed in her mind, and she is very skillful in making perfumes and arranging flowers and clothes."[21] The details that outline her life, intellect, and skills suggest that she was an important figure in the royal court.

Furthermore, the inscription reveals, "she takes delight in her devotion to the feet of her dead husband; is well deposed towards the supreme truth; she makes the best use of her wealth according to religious precepts and her inborn qualities; she constantly makes gifts to Brahmanas, ascetics (*yati*) and virtuous people in the world, and she lives with the sole object of worshipping the feet of Siva. Her fame was purified by the praises of elderly relatives; she has united with fortune merely to cause unmixed delight to them; she was noble, she obtained dear and pure boons from the favour (of those elderly persons); her riches were produced by unshakable determination and her intelligence was without blemish."[22]

Haradevi increased the merit of the royal family with image installation and reinforced them with inscrip-

tions. For example, the same inscription states, "[an image]...has been installed in the city named Indrapura, the august goddess known as Haroma for increasing the religious merit of his mother's younger sister princess Ajna Pov Ku Lyan Sri Rajakula, also known as Haradevi. Sri Indraparamesvara was installed by princess Ajna Pov Ku Lyan Sri Rajakula, who is of virtuous mind and is a connoisseur of qualities... for the sake of religious merit of her own husband Sri Paramabuddhaloka."[23] Princess Haradevi Rajakula, the widow of Indravarman II had the power and responsibility to increase her late husband's merit. She also had the ability to commission statues for her father and mother.

The same inscription continues, "in the same Saka year the princess Ajna Pov Ku Lyan Sri Rajakula has installed the god Rudraparamesvara for increasing the religious merit of her father. And for increasing the religious merit of her mother, princess Ajna Pov Ku Lyan Sri Rajakula installed, with pious devotion, this goddess Sri Rudroma."[24] The inscription states, "victorious is the goddess Haromadevi, the great glory in the world, and a reflected image, as it were, of Haradevi Rajakula."[25] The image of the queen after her death reflected the goddess with characteristics similar to the deity. The image of the queen was in the form of a deity. The three inscriptions show the importance of honoring male and female ancestors and the power of one royal princess Haradevi to install cult images for her husband.[26] The Nhan-Bleu inscription of Indravarman III (833 CE) records "in the Skara year 833, he established, together with his eldest son (brother?), a monastery called Sri Vrdhalokesvara in the village Cikir."[27] Here, a Buddhist monastery was erected in honor of Jaya Simhavarman's wife, another royal woman who had tremendous power. A Buddhist monastery erected in honor of a deceased royal wife indicates that royal women had a special interest for Buddhism.

Indravarman II's construction of his temple for Buddhist monks was a declaration of his association with Buddhism. Inscriptions and image installations created merit for the king to reach Nirvana. At the same time, Indravarman II's wife had power to install cult images to honor her deceased husband, mother and father. This followed the tradition of past Cham rulers who continued this practice, which was recorded on stele inscriptions. Some of the images were used to honor both male and female ancestors, reflecting on the im-

portance of dual female and male realms. Royal women, particularly the wives of the Cham kings contributed to the cultural production of Buddhism.

The Seated Buddha with Two Legs Pendant

A 5-foot (at the neck) sandstone seated Buddha with the legs pendant was found at the Đồng Dương temple's first enclosure (fig. 2). The statue would have originally been placed on top of the pedestal carved with narrative relief panels. Archaeologists have rejoined the Buddha's head with the body, but the head is a disproportionate replacement and has gone through extensive modern repairs. The seated Buddha wears a heavy robe that has been compared to Chinese Buddhist art from the Sui period.[28] His enlarged hands and feet as well as the thick folds from his robe are stylistic different from the standing, imported Buddha also found in the first enclosure. The Cham Buddha is seat-

Fig. 2. Seated Buddha with the legs pendant © Courtesy of Joanna Williams

ed in a rare posture with his legs pendant.

In order to understand the significance of the seated Cham Buddha with the legs pendant in connection to the female realm, I will re-examine the meaning of this relatively rare seated posture in Buddhist and Hindu sculpture. The posture with the legs pendant is seen in a portrait sculpture of the Kushan King Vima, and in the postures of three deities, Kubera, Hariti, and the Buddha. Scholars have argued that this position is a royal posture. It is not, however, exclusively associated with royalty. There are examples of deities such as Hariti and Kubera seated in this position in a non-royal context, which suggest that this posture has multiple meanings. I argue that the posture itself does not have exclusive royal connections. The posture can be associated with feminine sources of power; but male fig-

Alfred Foucher (1849) identified the seated Buddha as "a l'europeenné" and scholars have used the English translation "European posture" to describe the seated Buddha with the legs pendant.[30] Ananda Coomaraswamy disagreed with this terminology and referred to this position as *pralambapadasana*, which means, "sitting posture with two legs pendant."[31] Scholars have continued to use either Foucher or Coomaraswamy's terminology. One scholar, Nicolas Revire has recently discussed the need to revise this terminology primarily because there is no textual support for the terms "European posture" and *pralambapadasana*.[32] In addition, he believes that the words do not convey royal symbolism that is associated with the seated position. Revire abandons the term "European posture" and *pralambapadasana*." Instead, he uses Buddha "in majesty" or *bhadrasana*, which translates as "auspicious sitting posture."[33] The use of different terminologies is problematic because there is no clear word in Sanskrit or Pali for this position and thus the current terminology is a modern creation.[34]

Similar to Revire, Chotima Chaturawong argues that the sitting pose has a royal and superior association.[35] While the posture is undoubtedly linked to royal figures, there are female deities sitting in this posture who do not have significant royal characteristics. One example is Hariti, a goddess associated with children and fertility. This posture may have multiple associations, including feminine, royal and divine power. The position serves as a seat for powerful figures such as Hariti and the Buddha that appear in various regions throughout India and Southeast Asia. Royal characteristics with the posture are evident but other interpretations are possible. The study of earlier examples of figures in this sitting position indicates that the posture is originally associated with feminine strength.

The earliest examples of figures seated in the legs pendant position come from representations of female deities on 1st century coins from the Kushan period in the reign of Kanishka and Huvishka.[36] Claudine Bautze-Picron explains that "'gods' and 'goddesses' could include royal aspects, making them ambivalently close to the human devotees on one hand (since they become more earthly) but also contributing to a more divine approach to the royal function."[37] In other words, the acquisition of royal attributes for the gods and goddesses places them on a more accessible approach to the human world than the divine world. Mad-

Fig. 3. The goddess Nana seated on a lion from a Kushan intaglio (after John M Rosenfield, Dynastic Arts of the Kushans. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967. p. 84)

ures, like the Buddha and Kubera are sometimes seated in legs-down posture. Thus, the posture has connections to royal, divine and feminine power.

Deities, including the Buddha, in Indian art are often shown seated in a wide variety of postures. One posture that is relatively rare is sitting in a chair with the legs pendant. While this seated posture is common in European art showing people sitting in a chair, in the Indian context, figures mostly sit cross-legged or stand on platforms. Only a handful of powerful figures are depicted in the seated position with the legs pendant, including King Vima, Kubera, Hariti and the Buddha.[29] The seated Buddha with legs pendant is circulated in different geographical regions including India, China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia. Current scholars study each region in isolation from each other while using a different terminology to describe the same posture. The form of Buddha seated in the legs pendant position spread across Asia through the Buddhism regions of the 9th century.

huvanti Ghose suggests that Kaniska received his kingship from a Mesopotamian goddess Nana who is also shown seated on a lion in an impression from a Kushan intaglio (fig. 3).[38] Thus kingship and divinity have a direct relationship in visual imagery. Some gods display royal iconography to enter the earthly world, while kings acquire more power on a divine level, separating them from the human population.

Tablets from the Temple of Marduk reveal that the goddess Nana is a powerful deity in the Mesopotamian culture. Inscribed tablets describe the goddess Nana as a "lady of ladies, goddess of goddesses, directress of mankind, mistress of the spirits of heaven, possessor of sovereign power, the light of heaven and earth, daughter of the Moon God, ruler of weapons, arbitress of battles, goddess of love, the power over princes and over scepters of kings."[39] This description indicates that whether or not the Kushans associated the goddess of Nana with all of these roles, she is nevertheless considered as more superior than a king. The Kushans adopted her image on coins and seals because of her high status.

One early example of a figure seated in a posture with legs pendant is an unidentified goddess from Gandhara from the 2nd century.[40] The goddess holds a bowl in her right hand and an animal head in her left hand. An unidentified animal that scholars have interpreted as either a lion, dog or jackal flanks both sides of her seat. This image is possibly related to the goddess Nana mentioned above. It has been argued that "Nana remained a dynastic cult goddess with esoteric practices which were never adopted by the masses. She was assimilated into the cults of local goddesses who shared certain aspects and attributes with her."[41] Nana and other female goddesses adopted this sitting posture as the seat of power.

Another example of a goddess seated in legs-down posture is an animal-headed goddess who holds a wine cup in her right hand.[42] The provenance and date is unknown. Scholars have interpreted the figure as a "goddess that may be associated with a child-protecting, animal-headed (goat) deity associated with the god, Skanda. Her face resembles a fox, bear, dog or goat with upright ears, angled eyes, and a small muzzle."[43] Various goddesses are also seated in the legs pendant posture with possible connections to a child-protecting, motherly figure. In her left hand, "the animal head held might be an innovation or variant

motif derived from the animal-headed cornucopias so common to the Gandharan goddesses of abundance."[44] Although the identity of the figure remains unknown, the posture is closely identical to the cornucopia-bearing Greek goddesses. The number of sculptures of female goddesses in this posture indicates the popularity of the worship of female deities.

In addition to sculpture, various Kanishka coins show the Persian goddess Ardokhsho seated with legs pendant while holding a cornucopia. Jennifer Rowan indicates that the "[cornucopia] has been associated with numerous goddesses from Mediterranean and Iranian cultures: Demeter, Roma, Fortuna, Tyche, Anahita and Ardokhsho. It is likely that the cornucopia was introduced into Gandhara by means of these goddesses whose similar characteristics and functions facilitated their eventual fusion with Hariti."[45] Greek or Ancient Near Eastern goddesses would be a likely source as a prototype for Hariti although which specific goddess is not important for this paper. My point is that the posture of legs pendant is taken by a number of important female deities in early South Asian art. The association of this posture with feminine power and identity, I argue, will influence how the King Vima, Kubera, Hariti and the Buddha are interpreted when they assume this position.

The Kushan emperor Vima preserved the image of female deities by popularizing the image on coins. He later adopted her posture for his portrait sculpture. Rare coins show the image of the king on one side and the reverse side depicting the goddess labeled, "NANASAO."[46] By linking his image with hers, the king believed the goddess Nana had great importance to his reign. King Vima's interest in the creation of coins with female deities seated with legs pendant intensifies the significance of feminine power with the emergence of his portrait in this same posture. One example is a monumental stone portrait statue of King Vima (fig. 4). The inscription reads, "Great King, King of Kings, Son of God, the Kusana Scion, the Sahi."[47] The king sits on a throne supported by two lions with his feet placed on a footstool. As far as I know, King Vima is the only Kushan king who takes this posture. This image was once placed at the center of a dynastic shrine at Mat and later Kushan kings worshipped the

sculpture.[48] The continuous worship of the sitting King Vima preserves his permanent royal power.

Kubera is the Lord of Wealth and has a royal role as king of the Yakshas. He is usually shown wearing fine and elaborate clothing and ornaments to indicate his wealth, and very often is placed with his consort Hariti, the goddess of wealth and fertility. One example shows Kubera wearing a *dhoti* with a long sash that falls in between his legs.[49] Based on the designs of the garments that are identical to the designs on a sculpture of Hariti, scholars have suggested that the original sculpture of Kubera was broken from his consort, Hariti. Kubera's seated position may represent

Fig. 4. Statue of King Vima Kadphises © Photograph by John C. Huntington, Courtesy of the Huntington Photographic Archive at The Ohio State University

his royal power as the king of the Yakshas. Since his consort is Hariti, visually, they are depicted seated together as king and queen of the Yakshas. Although royal aspects are linked with this posture, some sculptures of Kubera emphasize family and children that connects the posture to wealth.

Kubera and Hariti often sit next to each other with their legs pendant. As a couple, Hariti and Kubera represent auspiciousness. One sculpture dated to the 1st-2nd century shows Kubera and Hariti on a "throne-like chair."[50] Although we can interpret the couple as royal, more can be discerned from the sculpture. Hariti's extension of her hand to Kubera's lap suggests that love is shared between the couple. In addition, Kubera slants his head over to Hariti as she also turns her eyes towards him, which displays a strong connection be-

tween the two that is visible to the viewer. With the presence of Hariti and children, Kubera's role as father is emphasized, enhancing himself as a fertile and strong man. At the same time, Kubera's presence highlights Hariti's role as a mother. Hariti and Kubera symbolize wealth and children, bringing auspiciousness to the worshipper.

Hariti also sits in the seated position with the legs pendant without her consort, Kubera. The name "Hariti," comes from "Hri," which is translated as "to steal or kidnap." In Nepal, her name is translated as "stealing or taking away suffering and illness from children."[51] In Indian literature, originally Hariti is a demon that devours children. She converts to Buddhism when she meets the Buddha. Later, people worshipped Hariti as a fertility goddess and the protector of children.[52] In some texts, Hariti no longer devours children, leaving her own children unprotected. As a result, she relies on monks for the supervision of her children.[53] Based on the original stories of Hariti, she does not have any royal associations. In visual imagery, Hariti remains known for her role as a fertility goddess with royal attributes.

The lower half of a seated Hariti from Nagarjunakonda dates to the 3rd or 4th century.[54] Unfortunately, excavators have not discovered the upper portion of the limestone statue. Scholars have identified the sculpture as Hariti because it was discovered inside her shrine. The sculpture shows a figure seated in the asana pos-

ture with the legs pendant.[55] She wears numerous round anklets that are similar to the jewelry worn by the consorts of the universal king. The consorts are depicted on a limestone relief showing the Cakravartin (universal king) from the Great Stupa at Amaravati dated to the 2nd century. Hariti's royal regalia has strong connections to the universal king and his consorts.

Madhurika Maheshwari published a Gandharan image of Hariti that she describes as a "majestic seated Hariti."[56] While Hariti sits on an elaborate chair, a seat of power, there is no indication that she sits on an actual throne. Two children stand before her knees and two others flank her seat. A fifth child sits in her lap. Hariti nurtures the baby on her lap as a child protector. If one interprets her seat as a throne, her main role as a mother remains more important than her royal associations because she is depicted alone without her consort Kubera. In this particular sculpture, she carries a cornucopia, but in later images, she holds a baby, transforming herself into a mother goddess. Hariti assumes a strong position as the protector of children.

A standing sculpture of Hariti dated to 250-300 CE reveals a possible visual reference to the Buddha (fig. 5). The Buddha, which means "the enlightened one", is the central figure in Buddhism. The exact date of the existence of the earliest Buddha images in South Asia remains debatable, but in terms of the Buddha's iconography, "only one type of Buddha in anthropomorphic form was created in South Asia.[57] Viewers can recognize the Buddha in human form, either crossed legged, standing, or sitting in the 1st century. This becomes important for later, when interpreting the Buddha's posture because he is also shown seated in the leg pendant position in the 5th century.

Jennifer Rowan describes that "between [Hariti's] her feet, a fifth small figure sits on a cushion in [a] cross-legged pose and appears to be writing on a slate. Unlike the children, he is fully dressed, wears his hair in a bun (ushnisha?) and may be intended to invoke comparison with the Buddha."[58] This cross-legged figure is not an ordinary child. The artist chose to position him at the center of Hariti's feet, which visually separates him from the other children. Whether or not the artist chose to refer to the Buddha, his cross-legged pose and bun reminds the viewer of the Buddha.[59] Although the Buddha's image fully evolved in the 1st century, reference to the Buddha with the sculpture of

Hariti indicates the worshipper's close relationship to the Buddha and Hariti. If the child is not depicted to bring to mind the Buddha, Hariti's size and standing posture commands authority over the children.

In another standing sculpture of Hariti from the

Fig. 5. The Buddhist Goddess Hariti with Children © Courtesy of American Council for Southern Asian Art (ACSAA) Collection at The University of Michigan, ID Number 7422

Chandigarh Museum, she carries a baby near her chest.[60] Instead of Hariti being seated, two children sit on her shoulders with their legs pendant. The posture of the children suggests that the seat of power comes from Hariti's shoulders. Sitting in the legs down posture, the children also receive power from Hariti. This suggests that her power can be transferred to her children. Later worshippers created sculptures of the Buddha in both the cross-legged and legs pendant pos-

ture identical to the posture of the children that cling to Hariti. Perhaps the Buddha in the legs down posture reminded devotees of the significance of feminine power that derives from Hariti.

On the sculpture of Hariti itself, there is an inscription that reveals how people worshipped Hariti. The inscription states, "in the year two hundred ninety one, on day 22 of the month of Ashadha, let the tenth carry up to (a) bright fortnight. I remember (Hariti) for the protector of children." A second version of the translation reads, "in the 400th year less one (399) on the 22nd day of the month Ashadha. In heaven may she carry the tenth. I ask for the protection of children."[61] Another interpretation translates the date to 165 CE, when a smallpox epidemic occurred in the Roman Empire and reached Gandhara, and images of Hariti multiplied. A scholar, Ludwig Bachhafer has dated the text to 87 CE based on Hariti's drapery that is identical to the designs on the clothes of the worshippers on the Kanishka reliquary.[62] Nevertheless, the inscription and the statue suggest that during disaster, people venerated Hariti for her motherly protection.

As we have seen in numerous seated sculptures of Hariti, the Buddha is shown seated in the asana position with two legs pendant. In most cases, the Buddha is shown cross-legged or standing in human form. The Buddha seated in this position reserved for female deities can be interpreted in different ways. Supported by two royal lions, the Buddha sits on a throne performing the *dharmacakra mudra*, the gesture of preaching his doctrine, also associated with the turning the wheel of law. Another teaching gesture that is closely related to the Buddha from Thailand is the *vitarka mudra* that symbolizes intellectual argument and communication of the dharma. Besides royal connections, the seated Buddha image places an emphasis on the teaching of the Buddha.

The Buddha's strength and power becomes reflected by his posture and royal connections. Chaturawong explains, "as the Buddha is considered a superior man, a halo (*prabhamandala*), a symbol of the radiant splendor of the great man, is marked around the Buddha's head in Buddhist art and *pralambapadasana* became a posture of the Buddha."[63] The posture with association to royalty brings strength to a great man. Although the seat connects to royalty based on the lion throne, I emphasize that the posture of the king is secondary to the actual lion throne. The lion throne serves as the symbol that relates the image to royalty but not the posture itself. The lions with their royal context that are part of the throne on which the Buddha sits give to the Buddha a superior status. In addition to the Buddha's strength, his posture can be related to the power of femininity.

In 1986 during the second season of excavation at Ranigat, Pakistan (an ancient site in Gandhara), a 200 CE seated figure with a base of a goddess was discovered in Room 301 (figs. 6-7).[64] The excavation report describes the figure as "seated Buddha with pedestal."[65] Nakao Odani has identified the figure on the base as the goddess Nana.[66] The identity of the seated figure cannot be determined because the sculpture is damaged. However, other sculptures found in room 301 show the Buddha rendered in drapery identical to the drapery of the damaged seated figure. If the figure is indeed the Buddha, it is intriguing how the artist created a sculpture of a seated Buddha with a seated goddess with legs pendant, revealing the importance of collectively worshipping the Buddha and femininity. Odani suggests that the sculpture shows "valuable evidence of religious and cultural interaction in Gandhara." [67]Although scholars have focused on the interpretation of the base of the sculpture, the seated Buddha is also important to understanding the sculpture as a whole.[68] In Gandhara, at least for this sculpture, the Buddha and a goddess were worshipped together, showing the significance of femininity in representing power.

The worship of feminine power captivated the followers of Buddhism. Madhurika Maheshwari writes that "in Buddhism, Hariti worship started as a mother cult and her images introduced to an austere Buddhism a feminine face—full of love, compassion and generosity."[69] Previous scholars have written about the gender of the Buddha in various books and articles. Robert L.

Fig. 6 Seated figure with base of goddess © Courtesy of Nakao Odani (after Nakao Odani, "The Banquet Scene on the Base of A Seated Buddha in Gandhara" in Religion and Art Religion and Art: New Issues in Indian Iconography and Iconology. Ed. Claudine Bautze-Picron. London: The British Association for South Asian Studies, 2008, p. 31)

and spreads to Southeast Asia. Similarly, the worship of Hariti that began in India and created a strong, motherly figure, spread outside of India to China, Nepal, Indonesia, and Japan. This popularity that spread across Asia suggests the need for embracing feminine worship.

The ideal body in female and male form is a popular topic in the field, although not specifically limited to the Buddha. For example, Vidya Dehejia explains that "beautiful" could refer to both male and female physique."[72] In addition, "men frequently shared with women a set of established poetic tropes, such as faces that put the moon to shame, eyes that outdo the lotus, arched eyebrows, full red lips, and gleaming toenails."[73] The description indicates that physical beauty must evoke a viewer's response regardless of the gender of the figure. Despite biological differences, men and women had similar attributes of beauty. Western stereotypical feminine and masculine attributes are not applicable for Indian society. In the Buddhist world, feminine attributes were favorable. Alfred Foucher also argues, "the most universally attractive role will always revert to those figures which incarnate the maternal [...] grace of the eternal feminine."[74] Feminine beauty is favorable, possibly for

Brown discusses the feminization of 5th century Sarnath sculptures from the Gupta period. He suggests that there "appears to be a shift from a strongly masculine image toward a much less masculine (if not overly female) image."[70] John Powers agrees with Brown, concluding that "the images of masculinity [in his book] generally failed to resonate with Buddhists in other countries, so the Buddha was modified to fit different cultural norms."[71] This change in the Buddha figure occurs in the Gupta period

Fig. 7. Drawing of Seated figure with base of goddess © Courtesy of Nakao Odani (after Nakao Odani, "The Banquet Scene on the Base of A Seated Buddha in Gandhara" in Religion and Art Religion and Art: New Issues in Indian Iconography and Iconology. Ed. Claudine Bautze-Picron. London: The British Association for South Asian Studies, 2008, p. 31)

both male and female figures like the Buddha and Hariti in Southeast Asia and China.

Four figures, Hariti, King Vima, Kubera and the Buddha are represented in the seated position with the legs pendant. This posture is often interpreted as royal based on the specific objects rendered with the figure such as the Buddha's throne or Hariti's royal jewelry. Eventually Hariti became popular as a fertility goddess and a protector of children. She can be associated with royalty based on her jewelry or elaborate throne. However, we can also interpret her elaborate chair as a seat of power like the Buddha. The emergence of devotion to Hariti as a divine fertility goddess suggests that the mortality rates for children and mothers must have been very high. Rendered in sculpture alone, eventually Hariti emerged on her own, without her consort Kubera, the king of the Yakshas. Jennifer Rowan explains that "in China, Hariti was assimilated and effectively subordinated to the Chinese manifestation of Avalokitesvara under the designation of Songzi Guanyin."[75] She also indicates "Peri attributes the feminization of Avalokitesvara to rivalry between the cult of Guanyin and Hariti's popular cult in China."[76] There was a need for a feminine motherly worship, and perhaps this may explain the major shift in visual image of the Buddha from strongly masculine to feminine; after all, the worship of Kubera, the king of the Yakshas did not spread as widely as Hariti in Asia.

A feminized Buddha resonating with others parts of Asia developed during the Gupta period in India.[77] Other sculptures of the seated Buddha in pendant-legged position as well as the worship of Hariti have spread throughout Asia including China, Korea, Japan and Southeast Asia. This position echoes the female Mesopotamian and Greek goddesses also seated in this posture. Perhaps, themes of motherly worship of the Buddha along with Hariti created a profound impact throughout Asia including China, Korea, Japan, and Southeast Asia. These themes popularized the standard image of the feminine motherly Buddha relevant to worship for both men and women. Thus, in India, Southeast Asia and China, the seated posture with the legs pendant places King Vima, Kubera, Hariti and the Buddha on a seat of power that can be interpreted as feminine, royal or divine. The seated Cham Buddha with the legs pendant has original associations to powerful female goddesses. This association is magnified with the interest in motherly worship and the Buddha

in Southeast Asia. The seated Buddha with the legs pendant is part of a larger corpus of Cham Buddhist visual arts that emphasized the female realm. A larger analysis of the legs pendent Buddha images from Thailand and Java will determine the meaning of this posture within Southeast Asian contexts. However, this requires further research.

Images of Royal Women on Two Pedestals

The seated Buddha with legs pendant placed on top of a pedestal with narrative relief panels was discovered in the temple's first enclosure. There are two surviving pedestals from the Dồng Dương temple. The seated Buddha and the narrative relief panels also promote feminine power. The entire story on the pedestal remains difficult to reconstruct because many of the images are not well preserved or did not survive. The existing reliefs depict episodes of the life of the Buddha from the *Lalitavistara,* an Indian Buddhist literary text. The first panel on the Buddha's pedestal shows King Suddhodana and Queen Maya at the court. Queen Maya informs her husband about her auspicious dreams.[78] The next scene depicts Queen Maya in the Lumbini garden. At the garden, she holds a stylized tree branch and two smaller figures stand beside her. Chutiwongs describes that the "the baby had already emerged and is seen standing on the ground, escorted by a divinity who probably represents Indra, the king of gods, acting for all divinities who are said to be present at the moment of the Bodhisattva's birth."[79] Emmanuel Guillon indicates that the figures are two attendants "shown in the conventional diminutive scale."[80] Most likely the figures are not Queen Maya's attendants since the two figures are males. Regardless of the identity of the figures, Queen Maya is depicted larger than the two figures to show her power as the mother of the Buddha.

The next scene shows a seated figure who is worshipped by a group of people. There is no scholarly consensus about the identity of the figure. First, the panel has been interpreted as the Buddha in the heaven of the Tusita gods who venerate him and bow to his teaching. The worshippers are in the *anjalimudra*, a gesture of respect, with one knee touching the ground. Guillon suggests that the seated figure is Buddha.[81] Nandana Chutiwongs offers a different interpretation

explaining that "the upper panel depicts the rarely seen episode of Queen Maya attaining heaven after her demise, enthroned, surrounded by halo (prabhaman-dala) of divine radiance and being worshipped by the gods."[82] The upper panel was defaced before 1972 for unknown reasons, but the original condition of the panel can be found in photographs. Based on a photograph in Jean Boisselier's *La Statuaire du Champa*, the seated figure is rendered with breasts (fig. 8). This indicates that the figure is female. Chutiwongs uses literary texts such as the *Buddha-Charita* and the *Lalitavistara* to identify the seated figure as Queen Maya. If we accept that the seated figure is female, then the figure cannot be the Buddha. Without inscription accompanying the imagery, we do not know if the figure is Queen Maya.

In the *Lalitavistara,* the Sanskrit text tells the reader about the life of the Buddha from his birth to his Enlightenment. The text describes that after Queen Maya's death, she entered heaven. The English translation reads, "Thus O Bhiksus, when Bodhisattva had been born seven nights, his mother, Mayadevi, died. After death, she was born among the Trayastrimsa gods."[83] The story reveals that other gods possibly worshipped Queen Maya, but the text does not mention that she was enthroned. In another text, the *Buddha-Charita* reads, "But the queen Maya, having seen the great glory of her new-born son, like some Rishi of the gods, could not sustain the joy which it brought; and that she might not die [and that] she went to heaven."[84] The text suggests that Queen Maya entered heaven, but again, the text does not help to identify if the seated figure is Queen Maya.

The only section in the text that describes Queen Maya as seated states, "she was surrounded by women like divine maidens, bathed, anointed, clad in excellent clothes and ornamented, and accompanied by the melodious sounds and thousands of turyas [musical instruments], the Queen ascended and seated herself like a heavenly bride."[85] If we do accept that the seated figure is not the Buddha, the enthroned Queen Maya (or some other female goddess or female figure) is a rare depiction. There may have been a desire to worship female goddesses at the Đồng Dương monastery, in addition to worshipping the Buddha. This may not be surprising because royal women and female deities had a prominent status in Indravarman II's court. The

Lalitavistara enthrones Queen Maya to exhibit her status as a mother of the Buddha.

The scene below the seated figure shows a sorrowful woman with a child clinging on her knees. The figure has been identified as Mahaprajapati, Queen Maya's sister. The depiction of Queen Maya's sister indicates that the elites had an interest in the documenting of the emotions of the female court women and as well as showing their prominent status as royal court ladies. Two female attendants "hold up the parasol of honor (*chatta*) to indicate the royal rank of the lady, who has

Fig. 8. Photograph of seated figure (after Jean Boisselier, La Statuaire du Champa. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1963. fig. 59

now become the chief Queen of Kapilavastu."[86] The depiction of the parasol over the royal woman's head records her high status.

In a rare depiction, a relief shows a child holding his mother by the hand. Most likely, it is the Buddha's wife and their son, Rahula.[87] This perhaps demonstrates the compassionate nature of the Buddha's mother. This would be what the Buddha was leaving behind upon his departure. In the lower panel, Chutiwongs describes, "the last fragment known from this series contains the scene of Siddhartha looking at the sleeping women of his harem, and that his subsequent farewell to his wife

and new-born child."[88] While the reliefs show the life of the Buddha, a strong reference to women is embedded in the narratives.

At the main staircase, there are also narrative relief panels and figurative sculptures. The scene shows "the horde of Mara, namely Mara himself riding on the leading elephant, a prince representing Mara's thousand sons, and his three daughters who all play significant roles in the attack on the Buddha."[89] There have been other interpretations of the identity of the figure in this relief. Emmanuel Guillon argues the rider on the elephant is female.[90] Jean-Francois Hubert identifies the figure as "Indra, the god of war, atmosphere and lighting. His supporting animal is the elephant Airavata, on which he sits Indian style."[91] The different interpretations show that scholars are uncertain about the identity of some of the figures. It is most plausible that the rider is Mara with his daughters. The elites in the royal court were attracted to the female imagery and the power of femininity.

The narratives on a second pedestal from the main shrine in the temple's third enclosure also show narrative relief panels of the Buddha's life and *Jatakas* that emphasize the significance of women in flashback episodes. The narrative reliefs on the main pedestal have been labeled from A to O and scholars have followed this organization. Relief O begins the story of the Great Renunciation. Siddhartha sits on a horse with a charioteer, Chandaka and three deities. The scene above shows Siddhartha cutting his hair. The removal of Siddhartha's hair and his departure on a horse are common episodes rendered in the life story of the Buddha. Two registers above show the past lives of the Buddha, in a battle between king Kasi and Ksantivadin. The second register shows a battle between Prince Candakumara and Brahmin Khandahala.[92] On the third register, Siddhartha meets a group of women. The leader of the group has been identified as Queen Mahprajapati Gautami, the stepmother of Siddhartha (fig. 9).[93] The presence of royal court women on the reliefs includes Queen Maya, Queen of Kapilavastu, and Queen Mahaprajapati Gautami at the Đồng Dương temple.

The next scene depicts previous life events of Siddhartha's wife, Yasodhara. For example the reliefs show "two embracing ladies to the left of the lower register probably show Yasodhara saying farewell to her mother before proceeding to the new court."[94]

Panel L shows all females in the relief. Guillon explains that "as with quite a number of the pedestal panels, L shows a series of figures in three registers which are hard to assign to a specific episode in the life of the Buddha. In this case they are almost all female, and it is likely that they illustrate an edifying tale from the *Jataka*."[95] In the middle of the register, there is an image that has been interpreted as a reliquary in the form of a stupa. Chutiwongs argues that the relief does not depict a stupa, but a ceremonial vessel designated for the prince and princess. This vessel celebrates the marriage of Siddhartha and Yasodhara. In addition, the upper panel shows a group of court women. All the ladies are depicted with an elaborate headdress, revealing their feminine power.

The following episode shows the seated Buddha, receiving his last meal before Enlightenment with "lady Sujata and her retinue."[96] Another female kneels in worship before the Buddha. The scene below highlights "Siddhartha approaching and eventually assuming the seat under the Tree of Enlightenment. Below the prince is shown bending over a female figure, which seems to be half-emerging from the ground. The *Lalitavistara* tells us that on his way to the Tree of En-

Fig. 9. Relief of Queen Mahprajapati Gautami © Courtesy of Pierre Baptiste, Musée Guimet

lightenment, a naga princess who lived in the water of Nairangjana river, rose up from the earth to worship him and offer him a jeweled throne."[97] The reverent female figure stands before the bodhisattva.

The last scene tells the story of the attack of Mara with the presence of female figures. Chutiwongs sug-

gests that "the lower most level unfolds the attack by the forces by a troop of armed warriors, whose actions are repelled by a tiny female personage, seated cross-legged on the ground and raising her right arm only slightly to upset the advancing foes. The tiny female who appears to have been the cause of all the consternations would only be Mother Earth, the Supporter of all lives."[98] Females are prominently featured in the scene of the attack. Scholars have interpreted the female figures as Mara's daughters (fig. 10). The relief shows Mara's daughters carrying weapons. The depiction of women with weapons is rare in Southeast Asian art. In the *Lalitavistara,* Mara and his daughters retreat after failing to distract the Buddha's mind. The scene does not emphasize the seductive nature of women, but women as powerful warriors. Chutiwongs concludes that "all the unwholesome and dark powers of samsara are shown defeated and dispersed by the accumulated forces of Charity and Renunciation that has paved the way to final Enlightenment, as unfailingly unregistered and timely acclaimed by Mother Earth, the upholder of All lives, herself."[99] Her interpretation supports the idea that the power of femininity is a prominent theme in the narrative reliefs.

Conclusion

Extraordinary female iconography was a sacred world for the Cham Buddhist elites. This paper demonstrates that some Cham royal women such as Haradevi Rajakula and Lyan Vrddhakula were participants in Buddhism. Sanskrit inscriptions reveal that Haradevi Rajakula commissioned Buddhist images for the merit of her late husband. In addition, the Nhan-Bleu inscription of Indravarman III records that in the year 833, a Buddhist monastery of Avalokitesvara was erected in honor of their grandmother, the princess Lyan Vrddhakula (queen of Jaya Simhavarman I). Royal women's interest in Buddhism was recorded in inscriptions, which corresponds with the prominent presence of female imagery in the visual narratives. A seated Buddha with legs pendant was discovered in the Đồng Dương monastery. The seated posture originates from female goddesses, a position of feminine strength. Furthermore, the interest of Buddhism from Cham royal women along with the king created a presence of visual imagery that displays feminine powers.

The emphasis on the female realm in the visual form is unique in the context of Cham Buddhist art. Given

Fig. 10. Relief of Mara's Daughters © Courtesy of Pierre Baptiste, Musée Guimet

the hints supplied above that feminine worship played an important role in Cham religion and specifically in Buddhism in the 9th century, more questions arise. These questions include the following: What was the nature of Cham Buddhism in the 9th century? What was the significance of Indravarman II's personal deity that includes the worship of the female goddess Laksmi and the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara? What explains the radical visual change and incorporation of Buddhist beliefs in a predominately brahmanical society? What was the purpose of the prominent display of female imagery at the Đồng Dương temple?

This paper calls for a larger study on Cham Buddhism. Buddhism was practiced at other 9th century Buddhist sites in Vietnam such as the Phong Nha Caves and the Marble Mountains. A pedestal found at the Marble Mountains is identical in style and subject matter to the pedestal at Đồng Dương. In addition, various medallions found at the Phong Nha Caves depict images of male bodhisattvas and female deities. An in-depth study of the two sites has not been researched yet, but it is vital for understanding the nature of Cham Buddhism. I propose that the study of Buddhist arts in Champa will further our knowledge of Buddhism and its impact across Southeast Asia. In this paper, I argue that the Buddha with the legs pendant and narrative relief panels contributed to the visual display of the female realm. Further research can help shed light on

the nature of 9th century Cham Buddhism in the context of other cultures in India and Southeast Asia.

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EndNotes

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[1] This paper was first presented at the *4ᵗʰ Annual USC/UCLA Joint East Asian Studies Center Conference*–"Religion, Political Identities and Sacred Symbols in East Asia," at University of California, Los Angeles on November 15, 2013. A subsequent version was presented at the *Buddhist Studies Consortium Graduate Student Conference* at University of California, Santa Barbara on March 8-9, 2014. I am grateful to Robert L. Brown for his comments and guidance on this topic and the editors of *Explorations*. I thank Dell Upton, Hui-shu Lee and George E. Dutton for reading earlier drafts of the essay.

[2] Anne-Valerie Schweyer, *Ancient Vietnam: history, art and archaeology* (Bangkok: ACC Distribution, 2011) 9

[3] Trian Nguyen, "Laksmindralokesvara, Main Deity of the Đồng-Dương Monastery: A Masterpiece of Cham art and a New Interpretation," *Artibus Asiae,* (no 1, 2005) 13.

[4] Why the standing imported sculpture of the Buddha was found in Champa is beyond the scope of this paper.

[5] Nguyen 2005, 13.

[6] Ibid. 13.

[7] Kenneth R. Hall, "Competition of the East Coast of the Mainland: Early Champa and Vietnam Political Economies," *A History of Early Southeast Asia: Maritime Trade and Societal Development, 100-1500* (Rowman Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2011) 67.

[8] Nguyen 2005, 8.

[9] Pierre Dupont, "Les apports chinois dans le style bouddhique de Đồng-dương." *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extréme-Orient*. (Tome 44 N1, 1951) 273.

[10] Ibid. 274.

[11] Nguyen 2005, 33.

[12] Robert L. Brown, personal communication, 30 August 2011. It has also been suggested that the statue would have been too small to be placed at the center of the altar. Also, see Nguyen 2005: 33.

[13] Nandana Chutiwongs, "Le Bouddhisme du Champa," *Tresors d'art du Vietnam: la sculpture du Champa V-XV siècle.* Guimet musee national des arts asiatiques, 12 octobre 2005- 9 janvier (2006) 85.

[14] Trần Kỳ Phương & Rie Nakamura, "My Son and Po Nagar Nha Trang Sanctuaries: in regard to the cosmological dualist cult of Champa kingdom (Central Vietnam)," *Old Myths and New Approaches–Interpreting Ancient Religious* Sites in Southeast Asia. Ed. Alexandre Haende, (Monash Asia Institute, Monash University. 2012) 208.

[15] Ibid. 278.

[16] R.C. Majumdar, *Ancient Indian-Colonies in the Far East. Vol. I. Champa.* The Punjab Sanskrit Book Depot, Lahore. 1927, 208.

[17] Ibid. 88.

[18] Ibid. 88.

[19] Ian Mabbett suggests that the Khmer monarch Jayavarman VII (1181-1218) is the only Mahayana Buddhist ruler offering a close analogy using the patron divinity bodhisattva Lokesvara, a form of Avalokitesvara (Mabbett 1986: 298). Jayavarman VII conquered Cham by using the same patron deity as Indravarman II to legitimize his rule.

[20] Majumdar 1927, 86.

[21] Ibid. 90.

[22] Ibid. 103.

[23] Ibid. 104.

[24] Ibid. 104.

[25] Ibid. 104.

[26] In the discussion by Vincent Lefevre, in *Portraiture in Early India: Between Transience and Eternity*, he writes, "on this point, Southeast Asian epigraphy is often more explicit and straightforward than the Indian one. Thus, the famous stele K 806 describes the foundation in 961 CE of the Pre Rup temple, in Angkor: among the many image that king Rajendravarman installed there, we learn that Vishnu is called Rajendravisvarupa, probably in memory of one the king's ancestor Visvarupa, Parvati is also a representation of Jayadevi, Sri Harsadeva's mother and young sister of the king's mother and that his cousin Sri Harsavarman gave his features to Siva called Isvara Rajendravarmadevesvara" (Lefevre 2011: 43).

[27] Schweyer 2011, 130.

[28] Emmanuel Guillon, *Cham Art: Treasures from the Da Nang Museum, Vietnam.* (River books Ltd, Bangkok, 2001) 82.

[29] John Rosenfield writes that the posture with the legs pendant is also present on some deities placed on the ornamental Gavaksa windows: Yama and Indra. See John Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) 85.

[30] Nicolas Revire, "Some Reconsiderations on Pendant-Legged Buddhas in Dvaravati Artistic Tradition," *Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association 21* (2011) 45

[31] Ibid. 45.

[32] Ibid. 45.

[33] Ibid. 45.

[34] Ibid. 45.

[35] Chotima Chaturawong, "Indo-Thai Cultural Interaction: Buddha Images in Pralambapadasana," *Connectivity and Beyond: Indo-Thai Relations Through Ages,* Ed. Lipip Ghosh. (The Asiatic Society, Kolkata, 2009) 58

[36] John M. Rosenfield, *Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) 72

[37] Claudine Bautze-Picron, *The Bejeweled Buddha from India to Burma: New Considerations*, (New Delhi: Sanctum Books, 2010) 19.

[38] Madhurvanti Ghose, "Nana: The Original Goddess on the Lion," *Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology 1* (Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2006) 103.

[39] Bautze-Picron 2010, 19; Rosenfield 1967, 72.

[40] Ghose 2006, 103.

[41] Ibid. 103

[42] Wladimir Zwalf, *Buddhism: art and faith.* (London: The British Museum Press, 1985) fig. 440

[43] Jennifer Rowan, *Danger and Devotion: Hariti, Mother of Demons in the Stories and Stones of Gandhara: a Historiography and Catalogue of Images,* MA Thesis, (University of Oregon, 2002) 320.

[44] Ibid. 320.

[45] Ibid. 53.

[46] Ghose 2006, 103.

[47] Chaturawong 2009, 58.

[48] Susan L. Huntington, (with contributions by John C. Huntington). *The art of ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu Jain.* (New York: Weatherhill, 1985) 126 -130.

[49] Stanislaw J. Czuma, *Kushan sculpture: images from early India.* (Cleveland, Ohio: Indian University Press, 1985) 36.

[50] Madhurika Maheshwari, *From Ogress to Goddess. Hariti: A Buddhist Deity*, (Mumbai: IIRNS Publications, 2009) 143.

[51] Ibid. 11.

[52] Ibid. 11.

[53]Gregory Schopen, personal communication. 3 May 2011.

[54] Rowan 2002, 309.

[55] Maheshwari 2009, 63.

[56] Ibid. 181.

[57] Robert L. Brown, "The Walking Tilya Tepe Buddha: A Lost Prototype." *Bulletin of the Asia Institute 14,* (2000) 77.

[58] Rowan 2002, 309.

[59] Robert L. Brown points out that there are a number of Gandharan sculptures that show the child Buddha learning to write by sitting with a slate and stylus.

[60] Maheshwari 2009, 26.

[61] Ibid. 154.

[62] Ibid. 154.

[63] Chaturawong 2009, 73.

[64] *Kyoto University Scientific Expedition to Gandhara. Ranigat.* Vol. II. Plates, (Japan: Kyoto University Press, 1994), 353.

[65] Ibid. 353.

[66] Nakao Odani, "The Banquet Scene on the Base of A Seated Buddha in Gandhara" in *Religion and Art Religion and Art: New Issues in Indian Iconography and Iconology* 1. Ed. Claudine Bautze-Picron, (London: The British Association for South Asian Studies, 2008) 31.

[67] Ibid. 31.

[68] Ibid. 31.

[69] Maheshwari 2009, 77.

[70] Robert L. Brown. "The Feminization of the Sarnath Gupta-Period Images." *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, vol. 16: (2006), 165.

[71] John Powers. *A Bull of A Man: images of masculinity, sex, and the body in Indian Buddhism.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009, 232.

[72] Vidya Dehejia, *The Body Adorned: Dissolving the Boundaries Between Sacred and Profane in India's Art,*)New York: Columbia University Press, 2009) 46.

[73] Ibid. 46.

[74] Alfred Foucher, *Beginnings of Buddhist Art and other essays in Indian and Central-Asian Archaeology.* (Paris, P. Geuthner, 1917) 291.

[75] Rowan 2002, 100.

[76] Ibid. 100.

[77] Brown 2006, 165-179.

[78] Chutiwongs 2011, 14.

[79] Ibid. 11.

[80] Guillon 1997, 92.

[81] Ibid. 92.

[82] Chutiwongs 2011, 15.

[83] Bijoya Goswami, *Lalitavistara*. (Bibliotheca Indica Series, No. 320, March 2001) 96.

[84] Edward Cowell, *The Buddha-Charita or Life of the Buddha by Asvaghosta*. (Cosmo Publications, New Delhi, 1977) 19-20.

[85] Ibid. 50.

[86] Chutiwongs 2011, 15.

[87] Robert L. Brown, personal communication, 30 August 2013.

[88] Chutiwongs 2011, 15.

[89] Ibid. 16.

[90] Guillon 1997, 90

[91] Jean Francois Hubert. *The Art of Champa*. (New York: Parkstone International, 2012) 140.

[92] Ibid. 20.

[93] Ibid. 20.

[94] Ibid. 20.

[95] Guillon 1997, 100.

[96] Chutiwongs 2011, 24.

[97] Ibid. 24.

[98] Ibid. 24.

[99] Ibid. 24.

Asian Seafaring Communities and the Blood-Red Seas:

Maritime Violence and the Waters Surrounding the Malay Peninsula, 1825-1885

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Scott C. Abel is originally from New Jersey and became interested in maritime-related topics at a young age. He studied at Washington College in Chestertown, Maryland, which is a community proud of its maritime heritage. Later, he worked on his MA at Rutgers Newark and is currently working on his doctorate at Northern Illinois University. Scott's current project is to better understand the causes of economic transformation in seafaring communities during the 19th century in Malaya.

Throughout much of nineteenth century, seafarers sailing the waters off Malaya often experienced violence, as the era witnessed shifts in wealth and power. Although new technology and colonialism are associated with the pacification of the region in Southeast Asia's historiography, Asian seafarers in the region employed such forces for their own economic and political gain. Some Asians used institutions created supposedly to reinforce European power to conduct piracy, while others exerted influence on colonial structures to act within their interests by attacking their enemies and protecting their assets at sea

In the twilight of the golden age of Malay piracy, a court of law convicted five suspected pirates of capital murder in a case sensationalized by the Singaporean press. As they departed the courthouse for jail under heavy guard, a diverse crowd of people gazed upon them with great scrutiny. The court had convicted the pirates of attacking a *tongkang*, or a boat, and butchering the crew without mercy. One man had survived the fierce attack despite sustaining various injuries, losing his hands to the attacker's blade. The pirates had thrown the deceased crew overboard and left the handless man to die. Miraculously, he was saved from certain death by the crew of a steam launch under the command of Pilot Davies.

The murders so disgusted the pirates' fellow villagers that they handed them over to the colonial police to be tried in court. Such brutality had become unusual by the time of the trial in 1884, but this was hardly the case for much of that century.[1] This particular instance represented the end of an era dominated by maritime violence in the seas of Malaya as piracy became unacceptable to most seafaring communities there. The villages used the colonial justice system to dispose of the pirates using state-sanctioned violence so peaceful traders no longer needed to fear those pirates.

The seafaring communities along the coasts and rivers of Malaya have long depended on the sea for a critical means of communication and trade with the rest of the world. Maritime violence thrived during the nineteenth century as people of various backgrounds took to the seas in search of plunder, threatening the livelihoods of other seafaring communities. Malayan society, with its weak political centers during the mid-nineteenth century, provided opportunities for pirates[2] to attack vessels vulnerable at sea. They attacked vessels throughout the waterways off Malaya with little likelihood of punishment by the authorities. Although scholars often associate colonialism and new technology with piracy's decline, these forces also strengthened pirates' effectiveness. This study will show that particular seafaring communities in or near major British colonial ports of the Straits Settlements exploited the

changes caused by colonialism to achieve greater success in their use of maritime violence from the period 1825 to 1885.

The geographic and chronological parameters of this investigation include waterways that became increasingly important to European powers and traders during the period of 1825 to 1885. The Straits of Malacca were a critical waterway in the Malay World with extensive trade flowing between the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra. Another important waterway was the South China Sea of which the southwesterly part formed the shores of eastern Malaya. In Malaya, the British East India Company expanded first to Pulau Pinang or Penang in 1786 and later to Singapore in 1819, which placed the company in competition with Dutch interests in the region. The East India Company governed territory like a state but ultimately answered to the British government. This study examines maritime violence close to the shores of the states of Johor, Pahang, Terengganu, and Kelantan. The timeframe of this investigation commences after the consolidation of British authority over Singapore when no particular power controlled commerce in the aforementioned waterways. Although piracy in the waters off Malaya never ended, the year 1885 represents a time when piracy had already significantly declined. This work will focus particularly on instances of maritime violence related to the seaborne trades and vessels of the British Straits Settlements of Penang, Malacca, and Singapore from 1825 to 1885.

This study will examine how Southeast Asian seafarers employed aspects of colonialism and Western technology for their own gain mainly through anecdotal evidence. Tacit agreements allowed particular Malay leaders to conduct piratical raids on commerce, while the colonial governments protected them for political and strategic reasons. Singapore's high volume of trade attracted merchants from throughout the region, which in turn lured pirates who threatened the government's legitimacy. The development of a new passport system gave opportunities to local seafarers to gain wealth and prestige. Technology from the West enhanced local seafarers' abilities to act in their own interests that occasionally included attacking colonial assets. Overall, Southeast Asian seafarers were able to take advantage of colonial institutions not only to defeat their enemies but also to raise their status in society. The next section will examine the relationship between colonial authorities and local rulers in matters of maritime commerce and piracy.

Colonial Governments, Commerce, and Response to Piracy

Malay rulers, supposedly under the influence of British and Dutch colonial authorities at Singapore and Rhio-Lingga respectively, ignored piracy and in some cases, even participated in it. British officials questioned the promise by the Sultan of Lingga, a Dutch client, in 1831 to suppress piracy because a multitude of vessels sailed to Lingga with pirate booty and fitted out there for further expeditions. Witnesses alleged that the sultan's *perahu*, or sailing vessel, carrying his brother-in-law to Terengganu attacked a *sampan-pukat* or boat.[3] British authorities wrote to the Dutch resident of Rhio, contemporary Riau, about the possibility that the Sultan of Lingga had ordered unprovoked attacks on vessels despite his pledge to cease such activity. The resident accepted the possibility that the sultan and the populations of the archipelagos of Rhio and Lingga engaged in such attacks, but that such allegations lacked sufficient proof of their involvement.[4] Submitting to a colonial overlord thus meant protection from other powers in the region even if these local rulers disobeyed colonial policies regarding piracy during the early nineteenth century because of the weakness of European rule.

Malay leaders, including the *temenggong* in the British sphere of influence, also used the cosmopolitan port of Singapore as a base for their own piratical expeditions according to Dutch authorities. In response to the allegation that the Sultan of Lingga participated in piracy despite his promise to the contrary in 1831, the Dutch resident retorted that pirates hid in Singapore. The resident stated with certainty that the *temenggong*, residing at Telok Blangkah on the island of Singapore, engaged in piracy and ordered his associates in the Singapore harbor to gather intelligence for him on *perahu* departure times. His men attacked the particularly valuable vessels using gunpowder and shot purchased in Singapore. Having stolen the various cargoes, he sold the goods below market prices for funds to acquire more stores and to continue plundering the waterways of the region. The resident argued that piracy was more common near Singapore than his territory because the former enjoyed higher trade vol-

umes. He noted much of the islands' populace participated in piracy, which made its extermination quite challenging.5 Both the Dutch and British authorities knew of the complicity of their allies' involvement in piracy, but kept the relationships cordial for political reasons. Local rulers benefitted from piracy by allowing trade with them while acknowledging to the Europeans the evils of piracy as instructed. Piratical seafarers benefitted from the port of Singapore as it provided them with a unique concentration of weaponry and vulnerable prey relatively unprotected by local authorities.

A raja of Johor amassed a sizeable fleet and had material support from the merchants of Singapore despite the British government stance against the raja plundering vessels. Jadee, a mariner and warrior under a raja of Johor operating from a secret base near Cape Romania, recalled nostalgically from his time with the raja, "We were all then very rich-ah! such [sic] numbers of beautiful wives, and such feasting! but [sic], above all, we had a great many most holy men in our force!"6 The fleet of thirteen *perahu* bought weapons and supplies in Singapore, likely including brass cannons, and then attacked Chinese and Bugis vessels sailing throughout the archipelago.7 Plunderers of vessels at sea had a mutually beneficially relationship with the arms merchants who benefitted from the violence. Singapore profited from the sale of materials employed in attacks on shipping in the region despite attempts by the government to suppress piracy.

Societies such as Thian Tai Huey engaged in piracy near Singapore with near impunity because shipping converged on the port, which lacked sufficient protection for vessels outside its anchorage. For instance, a big group of Thian Tai Huey members assaulted a large Siamese vessel that was unable to reach the anchorage of Singapore and therefore remained in the straits off Tanjong Katong. During the night, the followers boarded the Siamese vessel by boat and slaughtered much of the crew. The Thian Tai Huey pirates loaded the cargo into their boats and retreated into the interior of the island with their plunder. Only four crewmen survived and reported the massacre to the police who investigated the vessel on orders of the magistrate. The stricken vessel had multiple decomposing bodies with various hack wounds lying on deck, while the culprits left much of the cargo scattered throughout the blood-drenched vessel. The police brought the vessel

to the anchorage and continued the investigation but failed in convicting anyone.8 The pirates gained from Singapore's commerce by attacking vulnerable vessels attempting to enter its anchorage. Groups such as the Thian Tai Huey ruthlessly exploited Singapore as a base for piracy to attack unsuspecting vessels in the vicinity.

Although piracy devastated the Chinese merchant community in Malaya, governments seemed incapable of effectively dealing with piracy, even when merchant vessels operated in convoys. In April 1833, pirates blockaded the harbor at the mouth of the Terengganu River. The Straits Settlements government responded inadequately even as reports emerged that pirates trapped four *sampan-pukat* loaded in total with $200,000 worth of cargo.9 Three of the vessels escaped unharmed but the fourth came under attack; pirates forced the fourth vessel into the Terengganu River after killing the commander and nine of the crew, along with wounding five more. The local government fired on the pirates to keep them away from the vessel. In response, forty Chinese merchants on May 4 petitioned the Straits Settlements governor to protect Asian merchants from piracy. Piracy had been increasing at an alarming rate, especially on the east coast of Malaya where trade valued one million Spanish dollars a year. The governor ordered the schooner *Zephyr* to investigate the seas, but the pirates disappeared.10 The merchants hoped to take advantage of the British colonial presence for the protection of their trading vessels through a naval campaign against the pirates. The failure to prevent pirates from capturing valuable cargoes threatened the legitimacy of the colonial state because it failed to protect its inhabitants and their property. The Chinese merchants of Singapore needed the British authorities to clear the seas of pirates, while the Britons needed the Chinese to make Singapore prosperous. The occurrence of piracy on the Malayan east coast was so prevalent that even Chinese convoys were vulnerable to pirate attack.

Singapore's Bugis community also requested help from the Straits Settlements government in defeating the pirates so that it could trade with less risk. The chief of the Bugis *kampong* or village in Singapore complained in 1831 to the government about the twenty-two piratical *perahu* lurking not far outside the harbor at Pulau Tinggi. Most of these vessels were double-banked with oars that carried one hundred or more

men onboard.   The pirates inhibited trade between Singapore and much of Southeast Asia with their attacks on seven trading vessels that sailed from as far away as Bali.   Losses included the vessels, gold dust, diamonds, tin, and sarongs.   Although three of the crews survived by swimming ashore once attacked, others perished or became slaves. The kampong chief criticized the British anti-piracy efforts as being inferior to the Dutch and threatened to leave Singapore for elsewhere if the government failed to act effectively.[11] Many merchants resided in particular ports because of their economic potential, such as the Bugis in Singapore, but losses from piracy became so bad that it threatened the economic viability of Singapore. If the situation failed to improve, Bugis merchants had the option of moving to Dutch territory, where the government was more vigorous in hunting down pirates. The issue of maritime violence posed such a great threat to various communities within Singapore dependent on maritime trade for survival that it pressed the government to place more effort in destroying piracy.   One such method colonial authorities developed in response to piracy was a new passport system.

Development of a Colonial and Sultanate Passport System

The British colonial state in the Straits Settlements commenced the distribution of passports to all trading vessels departing from its territories as a means to better detect and stop piracy in 1836. By this time, piracy plagued the Straits of Malacca with the disappearance of untold souls, cargoes, and vessels, with pirates from the old Johor kingdom proving the most troublesome in the area to British authorities.[12] British authorities and Malay rulers overseeing ports in the Straits of Malacca region thus established a pass system for maritime traders. This entailed paperwork that included information on the destination of the vessel, the type and quantity of cargo, and a description of the arms onboard. *Nakhoda*, or masters of Malay vessels, received such passes and presented them upon inspection by marine patrols. Various states along the Straits of Malacca, including that of the Straits Settlements of Penang, Malacca, and Singapore, required that all trading vessels departing the port obtain and carry passes. Failure in presenting a proper pass to the authorities or other suspicious activities justified the detention of the vessel.[13] The Straits Settlements enacted the passport

system as a means for tracing the legal ownership of cargoes, making pirates more vulnerable to naval patrols, which ultimately benefitted local seafarers and Malay sultanates. The passport system helped prevent piracy and apprehended suspected pirates by allowing for easier identification without excessively trampling on the rights of merchant vessels or extracting large fees from them in the Straits of Malacca and other waterways.

The new passports protected honest ship owners and their seafarers from accusations of piracy and saved the state time from unnecessarily determining the origin of cargoes. Passport systems gave an advantage to peaceful traders who had little to hide from British colonial authorities because the passes, in theory, prevented authorities from accusing merchants and crews of piracy without sufficient evidence. The rationale for the passport system concluded that if seafarers could not provide the correct passes, these seafarers had only themselves to blame for the detention of their vessel and cargo while authorities conducted an investigation.[14] The colonial authorities required that vessels, owned by Chinese, Malays, and other groups, to carry authentic passports and documents. Passport systems, although hardly new to the Straits of Malacca, permitted European and Malay governments in the region to better track maritime trade and investigate incidents of piracy rather than extort traders for their cargoes as the Portuguese had done in the 1500s. The passport system allowed government officials to detain vessels that were potentially engaged in illicit activity and saved officials' precious time by providing an efficient means of narrowing in on suspicious traders.

The colonial and local governments employed a combination of military force and civil administration, including the development of a passport system, to protect local seafarers from piracy during the nineteenth century because strategies based solely on killing or capturing pirates proved ineffective. In 1836, Captain Henry Ducie Chads of HMS *Andromache* joined the counter-piracy campaign in the Straits of Malacca in coordination with the local government.[15] Later that year and shortly after Captain Chads' campaign against the pirates, the Straits Settlements government initiated its passport program.[16] The successes of military action alone proved temporary as pirates simply returned to their old bases when European military presence decreased.[17]   Local governments re-

quired policies aside from military force for the prevention of piracy in part because the British government decided against permanently stationing a significant naval force in the Straits of Malacca. The deployment of a Royal Navy warship suggests the failure of colonial governments to protect shipping and coastal villages from piracy. Subduing pirates in the Straits of Malacca in the short term permitted colonial authorities to establish long-term institutional measures to prevent further occurrences of piracy and protect seafarers from their attacks.

The British and Indian colonial governments' passport system hence developed in the wake of an anti-piracy campaign as a follow-up policy to suppress piracy in the waterways of Malaya without incurring too high of a cost at a merchant's expense. Although the Indian government commissioners considered the issuance of passes unnecessary, Governor-General George Eden, the head of India's Supreme Government and Baron of Auckland,[18] insisted on the development of a pass system at the discretion of the Straits Settlements government. Importantly, the order gave colonial authorities the right to search vessels on the high seas for evidence of piracy. The governor-general also permitted the Malay authorities and Dutch authorities at Rhio to examine the passes to stop piracy. The Dutch governor-general in Batavia and various other Malay rulers approved similar measures.[19] The British Indian government persuaded various states and colonies in Maritime Southeast Asia to adopt the passport system with relative ease. Aside from making the task of identifying pirates easier for colonial officials, the passport system, when various states in the region cooperated, protected the rights and property of seafaring merchants.

The creation of an effective passport system frequently required international cooperation. One particular incident highlighting this necessity concerned the Sultan of Terengganu and a Chinese junk that supposedly carried a British colonial passport. The incident exposed the need to gain international cooperation for the creation of an effective passport system. Governor H. J. Butterworth of the Straits Settlements wrote to Sultan Omar of Terengganu concerning the sultan's dispensing of justice toward twelve seafarers with a passport from Singapore. The sultan's men arrested the twelve seafarers on suspicion of piracy and brought their sinking junk into the harbor. The local

government released them to the Chinese community in Terengganu who claimed to know them, while it inquired with Singapore about the vessel and her crew. According to Butterworth, "...people came from Lingga to Trengganu [sic] who said that they were wounded and (their houses) burnt by the pirates of a junk and asserted that the 12 men who were under guarantee were the people who wounded them...because of a mark on his [one of the Chinese sailors] arm." Sultan Omar executed all twelve Chinese seafarers on the accusations of the Lingga islanders to the displeasure of Gov. Butterworth and likely the Chinese merchant community.[20] The implementation of the passport system thus required the cooperation of foreign powers including the Dutch East Indies, Malay sultanates, and seafarers of various national backgrounds because the passports were mere pieces of paper without foreign governments respecting their authority. The rather hasty executions of British passport carriers showed one reason why the British colonial authorities wanted more influence over the Malay sultanates such as Terengganu.

Merchants in the region found advantages to operating from colonial Singapore because they received additional protection from the British government and, to an extent, from the relative unfairness of the Malay sultanates' judiciary through the passport system. Butterworth's letter to Sultan Omar criticized him by stating "...these passports are indeed respected by all those who know our customs." The governor suggested that the Chinese resisted the sultan's patrols because they feared that the Terengganu patrol vessels were pirates. He claimed that Chinese from Hainan, the place of origin of the twelve crewmen, were not known for piracy. Butterworth encouraged continued cooperation between the colonial and Terengganu governments.[21] The passport system offered merchant vessels a degree of legal protection from state naval patrols in the region. The sultanate likely executed subsequent crews convicted of piracy only after the local government waited for Singapore's response to passport inquiries, which benefitted those suspected of piracy. If masters of vessels received passports, they essentially took advantage of the British colonial system by seeking its protection from the arbitrariness of Malay governments' executions.

The differences between the judiciary of Terengganu and Singapore resulted in the latter needing to exert its

authority over the former to protect the interests and lives of merchants and seafarers. Governor Butterworth acknowledged to the sultan the existence of invalid passports, "...these passports are sometimes obtained from false sources..." and that the twelve Chinese seafarers executed for piracy likely carried false paperwork.[22] Butterworth criticized the executions because the sultan did not check with the British Resident Councilor Thomas Charles in Singapore whose duty was to investigate the validity of passports. Had the sultan's government completed a thorough investigation, the colonial government would not have complained about the issue.[23] The inadequate judicial review in Terengganu disturbed the colonial government of Singapore because of the vulnerability of local merchants' lives and property in its waters. The seemingly arbitrary execution of passport-wielding merchants required the colonial government to interfere with Malay legal systems. Whether by design or circumstance, the passport system, once enforced, gave the Straits Settlements a fair amount of political power over the various Malay states along the Straits of Malacca. The system incorporated the British legal system into these states, because colonial officials found their legal systems lacking. The passport system gave the British Straits Settlements reason to interfere with the judicial process in Terengganu and prevent unfair executions of British subjects.

The Terengganu Sultanate lost portions of their sovereignty during the implementation of the passport system but continued with the system because its rulers suffered from pirate attacks. Cooperation with European authorities allowed a degree of protection of their wealth. During June and July of 1851, the Sultan of Terengganu dispatched his war *perahu* on counter-piracy patrols to protect merchant vessels from pirate attacks, which eventually led to the sultan's confiscation of the aforementioned junk and the arrest of the twelve crewmen.[24] Furthermore, the sultans of Terengganu suffered the loss of their own trading vessels. In 1832, around thirty or forty piratical *perahu* attacked the sultan's vessel of eighty tons burthen carrying a valuable cargo of coffee, pepper, and tin near Pulau Tinggi while en route to Singapore. The pirates slaughtered the crew and took the prize to Kemaman on the eastern side of the Malay Peninsula.[25] The Sultan of Terengganu found British governance of the Straits Settlements potentially advantageous as the

colonial officials returned the sultan's lost vessel when his government provided the necessary paperwork proving his ownership in 1835.[26] The strength of colonial and European navies yielded benefits to Malay rulers when they cooperated with authorities in Singapore. The sultan found working within the passport system advantageous, as did other Malay rulers, because it provided an avenue for the return of their lost vessels and the protection of trade.

Simultaneously, the Straits Settlements employed Southeast Asian seafarers for naval patrols and protected them from external legal actions. In the Supreme Court of the Straits Settlements, a merchant named Lim Bee sued Jadee, the Malay commander of a British gunboat named *Emerald*, who had confiscated the former's boat and cargo during a counter-piracy patrol. Jadee had detained Lim Bee's vessel because he had an expired passport from another merchant. Sir William Norris, the Straits Recorder, made a judgment for the lawsuit regarding the vessel and its cargo in 1842.[27] Mr. Garling, the Resident Councilor and Chief Executive Authority of Penang, testified for the defense to maintain that Jadee had acted lawfully. The Sultanate of Perak, where Jadee had detained Lim Bee's vessel, had agreed to the adoption of the passport system a year earlier in 1841. Lim Bee departed Kurow, Perak while illegally carrying opium to Penang, some of which he attempted to throw overboard but which the crew recovered. The gunboat crew sent him to Mr. Ferrier, the local magistrate for his detention and eventual prosecution.[28]

With the backing of the colonial government, Jadee brushed off the legal challenge to his prize, or a captured vessel and cargo, earned lawfully as a naval patrol leader and hence benefitted from the British passport system by enforcing British law near Penang. The recorder decreed that Jadee had sufficient cause for detaining the vessel and ruled in his favor with expenses to be paid by the plaintiff. The only caveat was that the government had to return the seized arms to the plaintiff, but Jadee and his crew kept their prize.[29] Norris ruled that Jadee acted according to the orders of the Indian government that instructed "the Commanders of the Gun Boat forming part of the Marine Establishment... to examine the passes of Native boats and to detain them in cases of suspicion."[30]

Southeast Asian seafarers were important agents of the state during the early nineteenth century as they

filled critical roles necessary for the success of the colonies. The incentive of plunder lured experienced seafarers to the ranks of colonial establishment. Jadee used his position as a gunboat commander and the pass system to his advantage by confiscating the cargo whenever he apprehended smugglers. The colonial state, in turn, sanctioned the seizure because it needed people such as Jadee to enforce its authority. Additionally, the colonial state needed other advantages over local seafarers but a shortage of resources forced the government to rely on new technologies to increase its authority. In the next section, the study examines how colonial governments used such technology for their own gain and how local seafarers employed this same technology for the advancement of their interests.

Technology and Colonialism in British Malaya

Western technology played a vital role in strengthening the colonial mission in Malaya, but local seafarers also employed Western technology to their advantage. Steamboats played an important role in advancing British colonialism, but local seafarers also employed one for a piratical purpose in at least one incident. At the same time, Western firearms were so pervasive that colonial authorities had great difficulty in preventing local seafarers from obtaining them. Even fixed structures built to establish colonial authority such as lighthouses and police stations were exploitable by local seafarers.

Steam-powered vessels played an important role in nineteenth-century empires as Europeans made them available in East Asia where they not only defied the winds and currents, but also challenged established political structures. Technology played a vital role in the formation of the British Empire and the projection of its power overseas by using technologically sophisticated gunboats and other vessels powered by steam. Few technological innovations were more potent for the spread of European empire during the nineteenth century than the development of the steamboat.[31] The use of gunboats in Burma during the First Anglo-Burmese War between 1824 and 1826, along with the deployment of steam gunboats during the Opium War were critical because of their transport, communication, and combat abilities.[32] However, steamboats possessed no will of their own and there was no inher-

ent reason why Asians could not use them to their own advantage when acquired from their manufacturers through colonial ports.

In Malaya, one instance of an attack on a British police station revealed that local Chinese employed Western technology for their interests at the expense of the colonial authorities. Police stations maintained colonial law and order and therefore overrunning one armed with Western technology signified a serious challenge to British authority. According to a colonial report from the magistrate of Klang in Selangor, Chinese pirates from Pinang armed with revolvers and rifles assaulted "the police station at Kota Shah at the mouth of the Perak River... on Sunday morning the 11th at 2 am" with "$1500 taken together with one chest of opium valued at $900." [33] The Chinese gang's planned attack on the police station showed the usage of modern technology for their gain and to the determent of the British imperial rulers. The police station's vulnerability to attack also showed the limits of British expansion in Malaya as the maintenance of authority relied on isolated posts with little chance of reinforcement in the event of a sudden assault. Certain inhabitants of Malaya exploited such weaknesses by employing available Western technology. The report showed how the colonial bureaucracy maintained order in colonial territory by using information regarding imperial assets and communications technology to learn about those who opposed British authority. The colonial bureaucracy responded more effectively because it was able to collect and distribute knowledge concerning their adversaries to the relevant people. The Klang magistrate wrote about the material losses and pertinent details about the attackers such as their ethnicity, weaponry, and likely means of transportation. He assessed the attack on the police station by the amount of property stolen. Local Chinese employed Western technology acquired from a colonial territory to raid a British police station, which showed to colonial officials the vulnerability of colonial posts in Malaya to assault.

In response to the attack on the police station, colonial authorities alerted officials along the straits to the possible presence of a piratical steamer. Colonel A. J. Perks' letter to the resident wrote, "I sent the Abdul Samad [government steamboat] with Inspector Cross onboard to Kuala Selangor yesterday afternoon to give timely warning there...." It also requested the light-

house keep at Klang to watch for those responsible for the "very daring piece of piracy."[34] The government wanted to protect the coast against further depredations and apprehend the culprits by quickly alerting its agents in other states. The extent of British authority in Malaya often relied on the rapid delivery of intelligence about threats to its power, property, and people through magistrates and other officials separated by long distances with steamboats that quickly steamed from station to station.

The Indian government prevented the Straits Settlements government from sustaining firearm restrictions for commercial reasons, which allowed Southeast Asians to acquire Western weaponry. The accessibility of firearms allowed for groups, such as the group that attacked the police station in Kota Shah, to fight not only colonial authorities, but also local enemies throughout Malaya. Firearms become increasingly available in parts of Southeast Asia, especially in the major colonial ports such as Singapore, which discouraged the restriction of their distribution because of their importance to the local economy. During a Straits Settlements president's meeting in Singapore on 2 March 1830, the Straits Settlements government had initially "resolved that- no person shall be allowed to manufacture gun powder or line arms without a specific license" in Singapore. Furthermore, a license would be available only if the manufacturer could provide security for the facilities.[35] The export of firearms became illegal without the consent and a written explanation from the police.[36] However, the Indian government overruled the colony, because regulation seemed futile as French and American merchants sold firearms in the region. Malay pirates at the time more commonly used brass cannons over muskets as well.[37] It became politically difficult for the Straits Settlements to control the firearms trade because of the demand for weapons and related materials. A robust British arms trade proved as important to the supreme government as piracy suppression, because of its economic significance. In this way, arms became more easily available to seafarers in Southeast Asia.

Despite the economic incentive, colonial governments in Maritime Southeast Asia tried to clamp down on firearms in a concerted manner for fear of violence. By the mid-nineteenth century, both men and women in Malaya of various ethnicities became proficient in the use of firearms from America and Europe. Singa-

pore attempted a ban on arms exports in 1863 but it lasted only a short while because of the importance of the arms trade to the region and to Singapore itself. In 1873, the Dutch East Indies persuaded Governor Sir Harry Ord to ban the export of arms to North Sumatra, which significantly damaged the arms trade in Singapore. The ban on exports, designed to assist the Dutch colonial government embroiled in the Dutch-Aceh War by clamping down on the arms trade in Aceh, lasted until 1900 when the Dutch colonial state was finally strong enough to deal with unrest.[38] The ease of accessibility to European and American weapons showed that Southeast Asians had the potential to employ Industrial-Era technology for their own interests even if such interests ran counter to that of the colonial authorities. The colonial governments of the Dutch East Indies and British Malaya thus recognized the necessity of restricting firearms for the sake of political stability.

At the same time, Southeast Asians did not necessarily need to own or operate Western technology themselves in order to use them for their own end. Instead, they were able to petition colonial and Malay authorities to employ such technology to eliminate their enemies and recover property. Al Mushrifah wal Mukazamah wrote, "Chinese pirates have already started robbing [boats] sooner than last year... and... the English and all the Malay kings [will] try their very best to drown those Chinese pirates because they have caused a lot of doom and destruction ..." to trade. Mushrifah continued, "If the steamship Hooghly can be sent there at this time [for] this matter [of piracy suppression], [we] would then go ask Mr. Governor to go inspect the boat[s] [at sea] in case they already entered our friend's state." He continued, "...if the [pirates'] boats are no longer present in Terengganu...." Mushrifah and his associates planned to obtain passes for trade.[39] Malays in Singapore by the mid-century became more reliant on colonial authorities with their highly sophisticated technology. Malay sultanates also worked to reduce or eliminate pirate threats to shipping. The cooperation of the Malay and British authorities in the campaign against piracy benefitted many locals by securing waterways for trade by merchants who eventually needed less security than during the heyday of Malay piracy.

Lighthouses and other maritime infrastructure, often with benign appearances, strengthened the power of the colonial and provided economic benefits to seafar-

ers. Eric Tagliacozzo argued that lighthouses, buoys, and beacons played an important role in state development during the second half of the nineteenth century for British and Dutch colonies in Southeast Asia. They were important for an overall colonial strategy that employed maritime technology to improve their control over Insular Southeast Asia.[40] He argued that lighthouses provided the colonial states of the Dutch East Indies and British Malaya with observation points that lit up the archipelago and served as symbols of colonial authority.[41] Lighthouses provided for colonial development in regions difficult for the colonial capitals of Singapore and Batavia to control.[42] Maritime infrastructure provided a degree of security by allowing seafarers and the state to see potential threats such a pirates and environmental hazards.

Malaya's British colonial authorities embraced maritime infrastructure, such as lighthouses, as instruments of political power during the 19th century. The colonial response to the raid on the Kota Shah police station included a letter that stated, "I [A. J. Perks] have also sent to Klang lighthouse and instructed the light-keeper to send me word at once if he sees a strange steam launch hanging about the coast[.]"[43] Insular Southeast Asia posed challenges to seafarers navigating its critical waterways through natural obstructions such as shoals and rocks, but also people who plundered vessels sailing the waterways. The seemingly benign lighthouses along the shores of Malaya were the eyes of the state and important places for gathering information.

The isolation of maritime infrastructure in Malaya forced British colonial officials to focus on protecting these often-exposed assets from assault by pirates. For instance, during the early 1870s, Selangor, in western Malaya, was a hotbed of piracy especially around the mouths of the Jugra and Langkat rivers. Rumors abounded that the sultan's son, Raja Yaacob, was a pirate leader. The local geography well-suited pirates as the rivers, jungle, and marsh provided mazes for escaping colonial authorities. Against this backdrop, pirates, allegedly from Langkat, assaulted the Cape Rachado Lighthouse on 11 January 1874 at around 8:30 p.m. The offenders almost certainly planned the attack because the eleventh was the day when the lighthouse keeper and his assistant received their monthly pay. The attack struck fear into the crew of the boat that supplied a local lightship, who refused to victual the

lightship on 21 January of that year. Eventually, a larger vessel with a police guard sailed with supplies for the lightship crew. The inability or unwillingness of the Sultan of Selangor to deal with the pirates led to rumors that he was too addicted to opium or too old to be an effective leader. One rumor was that he even received a cut of the plunder.[44] The series of the lighthouses became significant to the peaceful navigation of the Straits of Malacca. Lighthouses, like other colonial structures, were often located away from colonial centers and were hence very much exposed to assault.

Lighthouses and police stations served as beacons of imperial British authority in Malaya during the nineteenth century but were vulnerable to attack by pirates. As symbols of colonial authority and institutions developed for the protection of life and property, lighthouses and police stations were critical assets developed at strategic points such as river mouths and other coastal points for maximum effect. Their positions along critical waterways allowed for resupply and communication with colonial political centers by steamboat. However, the infrastructure's locations along major waterways exposed them to attack. To the local people in Malaya, the structures were symbols of wealth that were vulnerable to plunder. Locals also saw them as symbols of foreign occupation. The isolation of such structures from reinforcements, the inability to communicate with other bases in an emergency, and the lack of defenses meant that these symbols of colonial authority were vulnerable to attack by pirates. Other institutions in colonial Singapore, such as weapon shops, actively aided pirates in their goals as well.

Straits Settlements Institutions and Piracy

Although suppressing piracy became one of the main goals of the Straits Settlements government, the Straits Settlements, especially Singapore, sustained maritime violence by supplying pirates with weapons, naval stores, and knowledge. Some merchants wanted the government to purge the seas of pirates to protect their assets and associates, but others benefitted from piracy through the sale of weapons to pirates. Even Singapore's education system allowed for social advancement within pirate societies. Straits Settlements institutions helped Southeast Asians use violence in their

own interests even if this was contrary to the institutions' original purpose.

Reports and survivor accounts stated that Singapore provided Asian pirates a port of call and a vital supply base for their operations along important waterways such as the Straits of Malacca. According to Indian government reports, Straits Settlements officials knew that a large quantity of military stores reached pirates through their distribution from Singapore, Malacca, and Penang. Officials concluded that pirate fleets fitted out in ports such as Singapore before stalking their prey. Although the Indian government granted the right to arrest Asian crews and to detain their vessels in port given the suspicion of piracy under Act XII of 1857 to the Straits Settlements government, its governor was unable to gain the authority to limit the sale of military stores.[45] A *nakhoda* reported pirates boarded his vessel in 1854 and stole some of the cargo. One of the pirates remarked that they had bought their guns right next door to where merchants sold the cargo on the vessel. The piracy caused the robbed Chinese vessel to return to Singapore and report the attack to authorities.[46] Despite repeated attempts by the Straits Settlements government to restrict access of firearms, gunpowder, and other military stores, it usually failed because of their importance to the local economy. These inabilities allowed pirates to purchase weaponry that they were unable to make themselves in Singapore. Such weaponry gave them an advantage in the various attacks on other craft in the waters of the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea as Western weaponry outgunned any locally produced arms. Contrary to the wishes of the Straits Settlements government during the years under British Indian rule, Singapore provided pirates with powerful weaponry through shops that were important to its economy.

Al Mushrifah wal Mukazamah, an inhabitant of Singapore, wanted the ability to trade peacefully with northern Malaya and relied on colonial institutions to bring about the necessary changes to protect maritime traders. The Chinese pirates off the waters of Malaya had dealt significant blows to seafarers and owners of maritime assets. Piracy's restricting effect on commerce clearly concerned Mushrifah. He desired that the British and Malay authorities defeat the pirates at sea and clear the waterways for commerce. The writer also seemed aware of the political circumstances in Malaya at the time in both British and Malay circles, as

he wrote, for instance, "...our Mr. Church, Resident Councilor who was made well susceptible at this time in the State of Singapore."[47] Such a statement appeared accurate with Church retiring in August 1856 after two stints in Singapore.[48] The author's awareness of the political and economic situation in Malaya showed that he had a vested interest in the political stability of the peninsula and political connections with both Malay and British officials.

The colonial port of Singapore was useful to pirates in the region for gathering intelligence and supplies according to reports on piracy. According to Inspector Blundell, piracy by the Chinese grew to a hitherto unprecedented level in the waters off the Malay Peninsula by the 1850s. Junks employed for the sole purpose of piracy frequently called at Singapore not only for refitting, but also to obtain intelligence on when other sailing vessels departed the port. In two reported instances when Blundell suspected vessels of piracy, he removed the rudders of the junks to prevent their departure. However, Blundell also cited the inability of the government to hunt down pirates and requested a low-draft steamer under the command of a Straits naval officer.[49] Gaining reliable information on other vessels allowed the pirates to attack without excessive searching and increased their odds of success, while also directing the pirates to the most profitable vessels to plunder. The need for a low-draft steamer suggests that the government had great difficulty in catching small yet fast boats that easily cleared sand banks and entered shallow waters such as rivers that were not deep enough for colonial patrol craft. Colonial ports conveniently gave pirates a place to gather information on their prey, along with obtaining the weapons for use in their attack.

Opportunistic seafarers who lived in Singapore resorted to piracy without permission of their investors or managers by attacking smaller and vulnerable craft along the vital waterways off Malaya. Born in 1832 as the son of a general dealer who owned two Malay *perahu*, Ah'moi committed his first act of piracy at the age of twelve while en route to Penang when the crew agreed to seize forcibly a smaller vessel. While the rest of the crew labored below the deck, he noticed a wounded old man who appeared be hiding something around his waist. Noticing nine gold bars, he snatched them, disposed of the man with a knife, and hid the gold from his father whom he feared would discover

that he pirated a vessel.[50] Regional governments thus lacked the means or desire to patrol the important waterways such as the Straits of Malacca for pirates effectively, which allowed opportunistic crews based in colonial ports such as Singapore to plunder other vessels if they had significant advantages in crew strength and weaponry. If Ah'moi's crew attacked a smaller vessel without consent from their employer in Singapore, it was likely many other opportunists operating out of major ports also engaged in such behavior.

People of means residing within the Straits Settlements had the opportunity to obtain a colonial education to further their own ends as well. This education, in turn, aided their ability in conducting maritime violence. At age sixteen, Ah'moi attended missionary school, which he continued for three and a half years until the school expelled him for a prolonged absence.[51] Ah'moi then joined the Taiping rebels who pillaged vessels in the South China Sea. He was able to gain status as an interpreter because of his knowledge of the English language that he had learned in Singapore as a student.[52] The colonial education system provided an English-language education in Southeast Asia to people who would have been unlikely to gain fluency otherwise. Ah'moi, a Singapore-born Chinese pirate, used the colonial Christian education system and his command of English to distinguish himself from other Chinese seafarers to gain advancement through the ranks of his crew.

The cosmopolitan economic system in colonial Singapore, where Chinese-speaking merchants often required English translators, provided opportunities for bilingual speakers such as Ah'moi to engage in illicit activities by exploiting global connections and his important position onboard his vessel. Ah'moi gained a position as a supercargo and interpreter on a British barque, a sailing vessel, owned by a Chinese trading house in Singapore on a voyage to Shanghai, China with his father's influence. He absconded with $800 worth of cargo. He joined Ching Ah'ling as an insurgent against the Qing dynasty and later became a pirate again.[53] Using, his knowledge of English and global networks, Ah'moi embezzled materials at sea for his own gain. Ah'moi thus used the skills he learned from a missionary school to act as a go-between for both British and Chinese societies. This opportunity was made available through the British colonial mission. He chose to employ his skills as a pirate, which allowed

him a degree of success because there were few places where Chinese people were able to study at British schools other than in Singapore at that time.

Conclusion

Local seafarers found opportunities in and around the Straits Settlements to prepare for and conduct violent operations at sea to extract material gain. Colonial authorities protected some Malay rulers to keep them as local allies despite their tendencies to attack commerce. Pirates operated near Singapore because of its commerce and even sailed into Singapore's harbor to gather intelligence and supplies for future attacks. The passport system allowed for seafarers in the employment of the East India Company to make a living as naval patrols against pirates and smugglers. Other locals used colonial institutions to clear their enemies from the seas or to gain rank through the colonial education system. Despite the wishes of the colonial government, local seafarers resorted to piracy with the assistance of colonial Singapore's various institutions.

As such, successful seafarers and merchants in Malaya, especially in Singapore, often harnessed colonial policies and institutions for their own interests by using maritime violence and remaining close to the centers of those forces such as Singapore. Seafarers of various backgrounds attempted to gain advantages over others through violence. When colonial authorities introduced new measures to suppress piracy, pirates often found countermeasures to continue their lifestyle, which in turn forced colonial officials to develop new measure to defeat pirates. Ultimately, the forces of economic competition, industrialization, and British colonialism proved too strong for old Malay maritime states. Although elements of the old system survived the colonial era, the Malay maritime kingdoms shattered irrevocably in part because of their inability to protect and earn income from maritime commerce.

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EndNotes

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[1] "The Piracy Case," *The Straits Times*, 23 July 1884.

[2] I do not necessarily consider all seafarers who used maritime violence to be pirates, but I am not adverse to using the term in reference to Southeast Asians.

[3] The translations from the Malay language are my own, and I am responsible for them.

[4] "The Piracy and Slave Trade of the Indian Archipelago," *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, 4 (1850): 157.

[5] Ibid., 157-158.

[6] Sherard Osborn, *A Midshipman's Exploits: The Blockade of Kedah in 1838 in Malayan Waters*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). 86.

[7] Ibid., 86-87.

[8] Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, "The Hikayat Abdullah," *Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 28, 3 (1955): 191.

[9] "The Piracy and Slave Trade of the Indian Archipelago," *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, 4 (1850): 149-151.

[10] Ibid., 149-151.

[11] Ibid., 145-146.

[12] Nicholas Tarling, *Piracy and Politics in the Malay World*, (Melbourne: F. W. Chesire, 1963), 21.

[13] Stephen Leicester, *Straits Law Reports- Being a Report of Cases Decided in the Supreme Court of the Straits Settlements*, (Penang: Heap Lee and Co., 1877), 42.

[14] Ibid., 42-43.

[15] Charles Burton Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore*, (Singapore: Fraiser and Nieve, 1902), 305.

[16] "H. M. Ship *Andromache*," *Singapore Chronicle*, 26 November 1836; Leicester, *Straits Law Reports*, 42.

[17] "The Piracy and Slave Trade of the Indian Archipelago," *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, 3 (1849), 581-583.

[18] Penderel Moon, *The British Conquest and Dominion of India*, London: Duckworth, 1989, 491.

[19] Leicester, *Straits Law Reports*, 47-8.

[20] Governor Butterworth to Sultan Omar, 6 September 1851, 2006/0035234, *Arkib Negara*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] "The Piracy and Slave Trade of the Indian Archipelago," *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, 4 (1850): 147-148.

[26] Ibid., 156, 161.

[27] Leicester, *Straits Law Reports*, 41-42.

[28] Ibid., 41-45.

[29] Ibid., 46-48.

[30] Ibid., 42.

[31] Daniel Headrick, *Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*, (New York: Oxford UP, 1981), 17.

[32] Ibid., 19-21.

[33] Magistrate of Klang, Selangor to British Resident, Malacca, 13 March 1883, 1957/0002227, *Arkib Negara*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

[34] A. J. Perks to Resident, March 1883, 1957/0002227, *Arkib Negara*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

[35] President's Meeting Minutes, 2 March 1830, 255 National Library, Singapore.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Letter to Governor of Straits Settlements, 255 National Library, Singapore.

[38] Eric Tagliacozzo, *Secret Trades, Porous Borders: Smuggling and States along a Southeast Asian Frontier, 1865-1915*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 262-263.

[39] Al Mushrifah wal Mukazamah to unknown, 4 May 1855, Document 47, Arkib Negara, Malaysia.

[40] Eric Tagliacozzo, "The Lit Archipelago: Coastal Lighting and the Imperial Optic in Insular Southeast Asia, 1860-1910," *Technology and Culture* 46, no. 2 (2005): 307.

[41] Ibid., 308.

[42] Ibid., 309.

[43] A. J. Perks to Resident, March 1883, 1957/0002227, *Arkib Negara*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

[44] "H.E. the Governor's Visit to Langkat," *The Straits Times*, 14 February 1874.

[45] Meeting No. 3, Governor-General of India in Council 1858, Political Department, NAB 1668, Singapore.

[46] *The Straits Times*, 4 April 1854.

[47] Al Mushrifah wal Mukazamah to unknown, 4 May 1855, Document 47, Arkib Negara, Malaysia.

[48] Justin Corfield, *Historical Dictionary of Singapore*, (Toronto: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 62, 63.

[49] Governor – General in Council, 28 January 1857, Political Department, NAB 1668, Singapore.

[50] Edward Brown, *Cochin-China, and My Experience of It*, (Taipei: Ch'eng Wen, 1971), 52-53.

[51] Ibid., 53-54.

[52] Ibid., 34, 52.

[53] Ibid., 54-55.

Pleasure of Abjection:
Cheap Thai Comics as Cultural Catharsis

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Cheap Thai comics (khatoon lem la baht) are an overlooked cultural product. In this paper, I argue that cheap Thai comics are cultural products with subaltern credentials due to their production process and the location of their distribution. Moreover, their status as an example of vernacular Thai culture segregates them from mainstream culture as they do not conform to official Thai cultural norms. The rigid and static interpretation of culture by the Thai state in its shaping of 'Thainess' (khwam-pen-thai) creates and supports patterns of cultural marginalization. The paper further adopts a psychoanalytical lens in its analysis of cheap Thai comics. Drawing on Julia Kristeva's notion of abjection, I argue that these comics serve the purpose of cultural catharsis by allowing vicarious experience to release repressed emotions. Despite their grotesque visuals and storylines, they are Buddhist didactic parables, conveying Buddhist messages such as morality and law of karma. Furthermore, cheap comics rely upon the aesthetics of horror and evidence an idiosyncratic artistic style.

Cheap Thai comics, commonly referred to by Thais as one-baht comics (*khatoon lem la baht*), are an example of an often overlooked cultural material. Though the price has now risen to between 5 baht and 15 baht, people still widely refer to them as one-baht comics. Cheap Thai comics are sold at small bookshops and convenience stores such as 7-Eleven. Interestingly, however, although the comics can be easily found in the Bangkok suburbs and in rural areas they are rarely to be seen in the city centre.

In this paper, I argue that cheap Thai comics are a subaltern cultural product for subaltern people. Firstly, I discuss its place in the Thai cultural realm categorized by Pracha Suveeranont as "vernacular Thai". "Vernacular Thai" or "*Thai-Thai*" pertains to everyday Thai culture situated at the margins of the cultural realm and is perceived to be of lower status in relation to mainstream culture.[1] Secondly, I propose that cheap comics have a cathartic function in that they help to release repressed emotions. I expand this argument by drawing on psychoanalytic theories and approaches in the analysis of one sample text. I draw largely on Julia Kristeva's notion of abjection and its cathartic function

to argue that cheap comics work as cultural catharsis. Furthermore, I argue that cheap comics also have a Buddhist didactic function. My objective here is to increase the visibility of the culture which is regarded as lowbrow and has subaltern status in Thai cultural realm. Rather than seeing it as trivial, I propose that it has cathartic function and opens up cultural space for subaltern people.

History
According to Chulasak Amornvej, a veteran cartoonist, cheap Thai comics emerged around 1977. Their history can be traced back to the one-baht illustrated novels in the 1950s such as the works of P. Intarapalit. Although cheap Thai comics came later, the size of the two are similar: 16 pages at 13 cm by 19cm. Both were also sold at the price of one baht although the value of the money had changed significantly between the two points of time.[2]

Chulasak proposes that the emergence of one-baht comics was due to certain market factors. Many newly established publishing houses were responding to the increasing number of literates in the population. The

new publishing houses used cheap pulp comics – with their low production cost – as a way to enter the publishing market.[3] However, the number of cartoonists was limited, hence, there were not enough works to publish. Publishing houses then printed the works of amateur cartoonists. The genre of comics most popular at the time was that of comedy. The printing cost of comedy comics and Japanese comics, however, were high.

At the height of the popularity of cheap Thai comics more than ten publishing houses were involved in the cheap comics business. Each month, more than one million copies of cheap comics were sold. However, many of the comics were of low quality as publishers opted to decrease the cost and time of production. Moreover, because each issue was short, the stories also had to be simple. Hence, their popularity declined. Cheap comics also came under criticism for their provocative visuals and old-fashioned and stories about the supernatural.[4] Nowadays, cheap comics are not popular. They are still available in the suburbs or in small rural bookshops and convenience stores, and are a source of entertainment among low-income people. Their popularity has decreased through time as there are many newer cultural products. Now people see them as lowbrow, out-dated, and marginal.

I argue that cheap comics are subaltern cultural products as they have been relegated to a low status in the Thai cultural realm, despite the fact that they are still relatively popular. Their affordability makes them more accessible to low-income readers. Also, their loose production process allows amateur artists to publish their works.[5] Their distribution system reaches grass-roots readers in particular locations. Their lowbrow aesthetics and stories based on local myths also attract rural readers.

Cheap Comics as Vernacular Thai Culture

Thai culture has its classifications and different cultural materials are assigned their corresponding value based on a perceived hierarchy. High-status culture revolves around Thainess. Thainess is believed to be the quality of being Thai and is regarded as the nation's cultural heritage. Its formation is inextricably linked to the nation-building projects of the Thai elite's 19th century centralization efforts and to the nationalism of Phibunsongkram's military regime during World War II. Thainess as the nation's cultural heritage is believed to be sacred and a reflection of the essence of the Thai people's national identity. However, identity cannot exist on its own; rather, it needs to

be compared with other aspects of culture. This leads to the process of comparing, contrasting, and classifying cultures within the cultural realm that creates a hierarchy of cultural expressions.

Thainess as the national identity emerged in response to the emergence of Siam/Thailand as a modern nation state in late 19th century. The geo-body incorporated the small kingdoms that were tributaries in indigenous polity of mandala which technically was the emboxment of *mueang* (literally a city-state).[6] The boundary drawn up by agreements between Siam and Britain and Siam and France disregarded the diversity of people under the indigenous polity and assimilated them into one bounded nation-state. The territory was bounded, enclosing diverse people with diverse cultures. The Siamese court, in the late 19th century, invented the term *chat*, according to Western notion that a nation was the political expression of race. The two overlapping concepts of defining the Thai race were at work. The first one was the people who spoke Thai language. The second one was the people who lived within the boundary. Thainess as the national identity was the cultural instrument to unify people along with centralization process in other aspects such as judiciary and bureaucracy aimed to tighten control over the people.[7] Hence, Thainess is coercive per se.

Thainess does not have a clear definition and does not function according to strict criteria. Nonetheless, it has led to a classification of cultural manifestations. The conservation of highly regarded cultural materials is of paramount importance, while those deemed as lowbrow are given lower status.[8] The classification is repressive. For example, Central Thai culture is regarded as the official Thai culture. Hence, it holds higher status than other local or regional cultures such as the Northeastern (*Isan*) culture or the Southern Thai culture. Official traditional culture is considered to have higher value than everyday popular culture. The official definition of the term culture or "*watthanatham*", coined under Phibusongkhram's military regime, pertains to the "qualities which indicate and promote social prosperity, orderliness, national unity and development, and morality of the people". This definition also creates a top-down and centralized vision of the state's culture. As the national narrative seizes the mainstream official position, popular culture is thrust to the margins of the cultural realm as subcultures, especially those that touch on taboos like sex, gambling, or magic, which contradict the definition of social prosperity.[9]

Thainess and Cultural Repression

Thainess (*khwam-pen-thai*) was constructed as a result of the elite's encounter with Western colonial powers in the late-nineteenth century. *Siwilai* is the cultural project, which selectively adopted Western cultural influences and fused them with traditional Thai culture to constitute a national cultural identity.

The *siwilai* project has been claimed as one of the survival tools which helped the country to preserve its sovereignty from Western colonial threats by weakening the colonisers' claim to "civilise" Siam/Thailand. However, it also had a crypto-colonial internal effect as a cultural hegemony that repressed other cultures that did not conform to it. The invention of Thainess as well as the concept of the Thai nation was associated with the project of centralization cobbled together by the Bangkok elite. Thainess is intimately connected with the distinction drawn by the Siamese elite between commoners and "good people" (*khon di*), which flourishes in popular discourse as "We, the included" (in Thainess) referring largely to the urban elite and the bourgeoisie, to the exclusion of the rural subaltern."[10]

Thai literature is an integral aspect of national pride, and is thus, heavily sanitised. This is echoed in Thanapol's study of "good books" in which he observes that, under Vajiraravudh's reign, any literature not conforming to the conventional criteria of the Royal Society of Literature would face devaluation, which he refers to as "dismissive criticism". Those literary materials were relegated "to the domain of irrationality, insanity, backwardness, uselessness, immorality, or vulgarity".[11] In the contemporary form of dismissive criticism, the failure of conforming to convention is equated to the "inability to attain a standard of authentic Thainess and was punished by cultural exclusion".[12]

Apart from literature, in the wider cultural realm, the process of sanitising culture was reflected in the Red Shirt protests in Bangkok in 2010. The Red Shirts were stereotyped based on their rural origins and were given the derogatory epithet of Red Buffaloes (*khwai daeng*), which connotes stupidity. The protests faced violent suppression by the Thai military resulting in the deaths of 92 people. This incident can be read as "emblematic of a process of cultural purification", expelling contamination of the capital by the rural subaltern. This was reconfirmed by the mass clean-up operation by organised by Bangkokians that followed the crackdown on the protests.[13]

In the official narrative, what is considered as authentic Thai culture should conform to Central Thai culture, court culture, and Thainess. Culture from
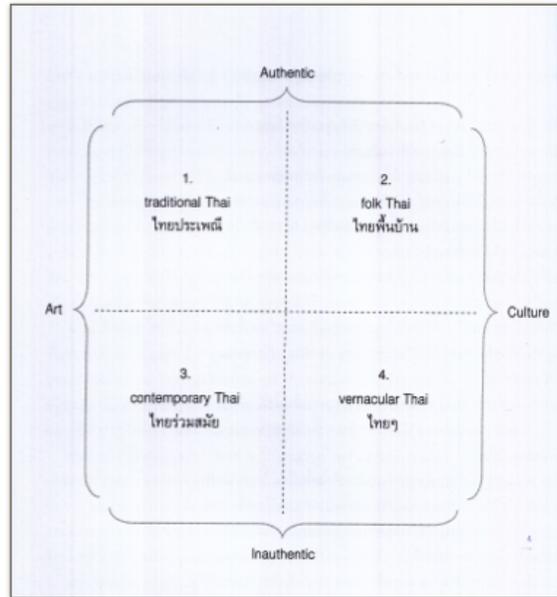

Fig. 1. Ethno-space of Thainess. From Pracha Suveeranont, "Ethno-space of Thainess," in Attaluk Thai: Chak Thai Soo Thai Thai [Thai Identity: From Thai to Thai-Thai] (Bangkok: Sameskybooks, 2011) 54.

other regions is considered to be folk culture. Popular culture seems not to be regarded as culture as it does not fit well with the official definition of "*watthanatham*". Thainess, therefore, is not only a question of national cultural identity, but also regulates cultural power relations. It represses and excludes what is Other from its canon. Cornwel-Smith raises the issue of everyday popular culture not being recognized as culture. He states: "Like other everyday popular culture, Modernising Thailand often treats anything 'street' as undeveloped, low-brow or kitsch. Public and official comments tend to gloss over the reality of local lifestyles, especially when they touch on taboos like sex, gambling or magic".[14]

I argue that cheap comics can be classified as "vernacular Thai". Their characteristics do not conform to official Thainess as they contain elements of vulgarity and are considered to be examples of lowbrow culture. Cheap comics are a cultural product excluded from mainstream culture. They represent the culture that has been expelled to the margins of cultural acceptability. Vernacular Thai is considered to be tasteless in Thai society as it connotes a sense of lower class and it can be seen as kitsch.

Vernacular Thai

In his analysis of Thai culture, Pracha Suveeranont applies James Clifford's semiotic squares to categorize dimensions of Thai cultural materials. Cheap Thai comics are categorized as vernacular Thai. Pracha coins the term "*Thai-Thai*" to refer to vernacular Thai culture. Citing Kasian Tejapira, he suggests that if a

Thai word is followed by the punctuation mark, "*mai yamok*", which denotes word repetition, its meaning is diluted. For example, the word "*daeng*" means red; however the word "*daeng-daeng*" means somewhat red. Hence, the meaning of "*Thai-Thai*" is a diluted sense of what it is to be Thai. *Thai-Thai* is culture of a lower status and is found in everyday life. It does not have any roots or reflect any essence of "approved" Thainess.[15]

According to Pracha Suveeranont, the trend of using something "*Thai-thai*", vernacular Thai or popular Thai culture to represent Thainess in the domain of art, design and advertising started in 1995. This trend was initially initiated when Bhanu Inkawat, an advertising creative director, wrote an essay called "Hotdog, Hamburger and Apple pie" in B.A.D. Awards' book. There, Bhanu states that Thai people needs to find their own "hotdog", a term being used as an allegory for something ordinary in everyday life. This essay was considered to be ground-breaking because it was the first time that the need to find new Thai identity was explicitly stated. In the same time, the essay also criticized existing Thai identity that it was limited to only official version of Thai culture.[16] Further, Pracha proposes that the trend of vernacular Thai emerged during the period of Thailand's economic boom when urban culture was expanding. In response to that, the sentiment of yearning for something simple and nostalgic, or to return to "community culture" emerged from the middleclass. In the same time, the state also launched campaigns to preserve Thai identity. Besides, this trend was also influenced by the global trend of postmodernist movement, which admired vernacular culture or culture of ordinary people.[17]

Here, I further argue that this trend was partly due to the 1997 economic crash, when national pride was damaged. As a result, the populist localism emerged as the reaction to this crisis. Nationalist sentiment expressed the disappointment with liberalization and market economics, while there was also a call for a return to rural, indigenous Thai roots.[18] Hence, arguably, vernacular Thai culture, which is a part of localism, emerged as the reaction against neoliberal globalization.

However, it is important to note that the trend of vernacular Thai is selective. While some parts? of the vernacular culture are being seen as organic, nostalgic and more Thai, some of them are still being seen as crude, out-dated and lowbrow. Only the sanitised ones are more acceptable and are more likely to be admired by the urban middle class. For example, the simplicity of rural lifestyle and nostalgic vintage stuffs have been popular and highly romanticized. Alas, some of the

vernacular culture with wild elements, that do not conform to the official Thai culture, such as superstitions and sexual elements, are still at the margins of cultural realm.

Vernacular Thai culture is essentially composed of cultural expressions that lack authenticity and do not have the qualities of being masterpieces. Vernacular Thai is marginal Thai culture. It can be found in public and private spaces of everyday culture. It contests both traditional Thainess and folk Thainess as it asks the questions: what is Thainess and what are the criteria of good taste?[19]

Based on Cornwel-Smith's illustration, Pracha provides examples of vernacular Thai culture found in everyday life, namely: Thai street lifestyles (*tuk-tuks*, street vendors), folk ritual (mediums and shamans, ghost stories, magical tattoos), local entertainments (temple fairs, beauty queens, *luk thung* and *mor lam*), etc.[20] These represent everyday life culture and regional culture. They are perceived to lack seriousness and sacredness which make them differ from the official Thai culture. Hence, they are not quite considered as "*watthanatham*".

Cheap Thai comics can be considered as examples of vernacular Thai and lowbrow popular Thai culture. I argue that the nature of Thai cheap comics is quite liberal and flexible and they have a loose production process compared to other cultural materials (although they are still subject to capitalist processes). They lack proper seriousness and are not conferred with the sacredness of official traditional Thai culture. Still, it can be said that they are not less Thai, only that they have lower status compared to other cultural materials. They contest folk Thainess as well because they do not have any authentic root.

Cheap Thai comics' visual aesthetic is also similar to other vernacular Thai. Examples are the vibrant contrasting colour scheme that can be seen in popular street culture such as motorcycle-taxi jackets, graphic art on buses and trucks, and other aspects of *Thai-Thai* visual culture.

With regard to the reception of cheap comics, I conducted two focus group discussions in Thailand, one in Bangkok and one in Roi-et, a province in Northeastern Thailand. I argue that because cheap comics have a low status in the cultural realm there should be a significant difference in how the comics are perceived between these two locations. In the two focus groups I conducted, some of the informants shared similar demographic characteristics. Mainly, my informants were people involved in local politics and bureaucracy such as village headmen or people who hold positions in

local administrative organizations. Mostly, they are from rural areas, not Bangkok.[21]

In Roi-et, my informants said that they used to read this kind of comic but now they are too busy working to have time to read. Two out of 10 of my informants still read cheap comics regularly. They say that in their locality, there are people who still read this kind of comic. However, in Bangkok, my informants see cheap comics as out-dated cultural products. They repeatedly compared cheap comics with what they regard as modern cultural products such as iPhone5, iPad, Facebook, or Siam Paragon (a luxurious department store in downtown Bangkok). They seemed uncomfortable answering my questions. One of my informants said that cheap comics are "*khatoon bannok*" (rustic cartoon). He further said that it is Thai but part of rural Thai culture which differs from present-day Thai culture.

Here I propose that because cheap comics are vernacular cultural products, the reception of them diverges clearly between the two groups of respondents in the different locations. People were more comfortable talking about them in Roi-et while informants in Bangkok tended to reject cheap comics and see them as out-moded cultural products.

Cheap comics have lower status and are devalued, as indicated by the awkwardness of the discussion in the metropolitan area or in the group in which people need to act or behave in modern ways.

Cheap Thai Comics as Cultural Catharsis

Through their mundane visuals and stories, comics help readers work through their maladies without really acting them out. However, in the wider context, they act as Buddhist parables that teach Buddhist beliefs and morals.

Stories

In general, cheap comics are horror tales. In an interview with Tode Kosumphisai, he said that he draws the ideas of the stories from the news and he then uses his imagination to complete the stories. For example, if he hears a tale about a *phi pop* (ogre), he would write a story about it. The horror genre is the most popular according to the record of the publishing house. Tode Kosumphisai said that ghost stories and supernatural beliefs are embedded in Thai society. He said he would never run out of *phi[22]* to write about because there are many different kinds such as the 32 kinds of *pret* (dead sinners who become hungry ghosts).[23]

Ghost stories have social function as they impart social messages. Pattana Kitiarsa cites Malinowski that experiences of encountering ghosts and ghostly presence are collective social phenomena and can be counted as a social idea.[24] Pattana proposes that ghostly haunting in horror films can be taken as a serious category of social analysis.[25] Waller puts that the horror-film genre "mirrors our changing fashions and tastes, our shifting fears and aspirations, and our sense of what constitutes the prime moral, social, and political problems facing us individually and collectively".[26] Conforming to them, I propose that this can be applied to the case of cheap comics as well.

In another study about popular religion in Thailand, Pattana argues that magic monks and spirit mediums, who provide clients spiritual and psychological services, have become popular due to the expansion of capitalist society as they are able to give material assurances in modern life.[27] Citing Peter Jackson, Pattana concludes that popular religion in Thailand reached its "boom-time" during the period of the economic boom because of "the break down of the village-based sense of community among the many recent rural immigrants to Bangkok".[28] "*Saiyaasaat*" (superstition) can provide "a more meaningful and immediately accessible means of expressing and dealing with the anxieties of life" than conventional Buddhism.[29] In the same manner of "*saiyasaat*," ghost stories also provide immediately accessible means in order to make sense out of the rapid shifting worldview caused by sudden change of immigration and fast expansion of modern capitalist society. Ghost stories fill up the gap between rural local worldview and modern worldview in order to help rural people making sense of rapid changing lives. They explain incomprehensible things according to rural worldview by using superstitious explanations.

Ghost stories in cheap comics can tackle a broad range of issues. The stories are social critiques and reflect society's anxieties and its repressed emotions. For example, one story, entitled "*Phi tang dao*", (literally "foreign ghosts") depicts the story of a Burmese couple who are in Thailand as illegal migrant workers for a Thai-Chinese businessman. The businessman has physical affections for the wife and tries to rape her. She resists him but the businessman accidentally kills her. Her spirit comes back to take revenge and kills him.

The issue of Burmese illegal migrants has been a concern in Thai society. Johnson elucidates that ghost and criminal stories in abandoned high-rise buildings and gated communities in Chiang Mai are linked to the anxiety towards illegal alien migrants from the Shan States who come to work as wage labourers. They are

viewed as *prachakon faeng* (lurking population) and are assumed to be capable of criminal and immoral acts.[30] One good example is provided by the 2010 film "*Laddaland*" which depicts the story of a family that suffers in a neighbourhood haunted by the ghost of a Burmese maid. Another is titled "*Thoh ha phi*", literally, "telephoning the ghost". It depicts the story of a man who wants to contact the owner of a piece of land in order to buy it but who ultimately finds out that the

cheap comics. However, these visuals also work as a form of catharsis in order to release repressed emotions. After letting readers imagine the catastrophic consequences of immoral acts, cheap comics teach Buddhist morals: that good acts beget rewards while bad acts beget punishments. Bad guys always get bad karma in the end. Therefore, I propose that cheap comics have double functions: one is to release repressed emotions, and the other is to teach Buddhist

Fig. 2. Covers of cheap comic booklets
From Mod Ant-art. "Cover of Phi tang dao," Phi tang dao, (Bangkok: Samdao Publishng, no date)
Wittaya Moolwan. "Cover of Thoh ha phi," Thoh ha phi, (Nontaburi: Bua Kaew Publishing, no date)

owner and his daughter are murderous ghosts. I argue that the story is a manifestation of the anxiety over the use of and encounter with modern technology, such as mobile phones, which have significantly altered rural lifestyles.

In general, the stories in cheap comics are quite clichéd. The storylines often involve the protagonist doing something bad, such as killing someone. The bad spirit then comes back to take revenge, or the protagonist faces bad karma as a consequence of his bad actions. I argue that they are Buddhist parables that teach people about morals, despite the provocative and abject visuals, which is always a point of criticism of the

morals. Hence, despite the grotesque and out-dated look of their visuals, they are moral parables.

Buddhism plays an important role in Thailand. It is the primary religion and around 93 percent of Thai people practice Buddhism.[31] Buddhist belief underlies Thai way of thinking and karmic law influences Thai logic in perceiving the world. Merit (*bun*) associates with power and justifies hierarchy in social order.[32] Lucien Hanks states;

"As good Buddhists, the Thai perceive that all living beings stand in a hierarchy of varying ability to make actions effective and of varying degrees of freedom from suffering. … This hierarchy depends

on a composite quality called "merit" (*bun*) or "virtue" (*khwaamdii*), or one may also speak of a graded series of penalties (*baap*)."[33]

By confirming the law of karma, in cheap comics, the order is restored not only the order of the reader's mind but also the social order in his perception. Hence, the reader would be able to cope with his reality again.

Theoretical Approach

As cheap comics often belong to the horror genre, I will draw on a psychoanalytic approach to analyse them. A psychoanalytic lens can be used to examine horror fiction because it incorporates such elements as dreams, nightmares, the supernatural, sex, violence etc. Freudian theories hold that Man retains remnants of his primal nature or the "beast within", along with Freud's latency myth which indicates that unexpressed emotions are kept "inside" until they are allowed to come out. Horror fiction is assumed to function as a mode of "cathartic purification" of the mind from the unconscious. It works as a "vicarious experience" that allows the repressed elements of the mind to safely come out without acting them out. Horror fiction articulates "repressed emotions", violent desires, terrors and repressed urges that are believed to be kept in the unconscious.[34] (Brottman 2005:113-114).

> "The horror text is often described as a failsafe vehicle for the articulation of these normally 'dangerous' and therefore 'repressed' unconscious desires, needs, and urges."[35]

Abjection

In this section of my paper, I draw on Julia Kristeva's notion of abjection. Psychoanalysis holds that subjectivity is constructed rather than arising at the time of birth. A person is born in oneness with the environment and the "I" must therefore be formed and developed by creating borders between the self and the other. Lacan argues that subjectivity arises from the mirror stage, when an infant has a glimpse of himself in the mirror. Reflecting Lacan, Kristeva argues that the mirror stage brings about a sense of unity of subject, but she thinks that even before that, the infant starts to separate itself from others, creating the borders between "I" and "Other". Kristeva proposes that the infant does this by a process of abjection. Abjection means, "the state of abjecting or rejecting what is other to oneself – and thereby creating borders of an always tenuous 'I'".[36] "The abject is what one spits out, rejects, almost violently excludes from oneself". It is at the periphery of one's existence and challenges the borders of selfhood.[37]

The abject can be experienced in many ways. One way relates to biological bodily functions. The other has been inscribed in a symbolic (religious) economy.[38] Bodily abjection may be exhibited in such behaviour as food loathing and in such processes as excretion of body waste. The abject is the object that the "I" does not assimilate. "I" expels it but it is not an "other" for "me". The body ejects these substances and extricates itself from them and the site where they fall in order that the body might continue to live. The extreme form is the cadaver. The cadaver is extremely abject because it is no longer "I" who expel; instead the "I" is expelled. The abject is what both threatens and creates the self's borders. According to Kristeva: "It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order".[39]

Abjection relates to religious structures and reappears in a new form at the time of their collapse. In the West, Kristeva proposes that abjection elicits more archaic resonances that are culturally prior to sin. It is defilement in primitive societies. It is in a world where the Other has collapsed. Kristeva also asserts that: "Through that experience, which is nevertheless managed by the Other, 'subject' and 'object' push each other away, confront each other, collapse and start again - inseparable, contaminated, condemned, at the boundary of what is assimilable, thinkable: abject". The abject is "the place where meaning collapses".[40]

In horror films, Barbara Creed distinguishes three categories of the typical imagery of abjection. The first one is the grossness of the physical body, the corpse being the extreme form both whole and mutilated, as well as bodily wastes such as blood, vomit, saliva, sweat, putrefying flesh, etc.[41] This category generates perverse pleasure by eliciting disgust and fear from spectators. The second category is the abject of the unstable state between human and inhuman. It is the state which is the border between "the clean and proper body"[42] and the abject body. A monster is constructed by crossing the border, for example the werewolf, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde etc. The third category is the abject as maternal figure. This stems from the archaic struggle of mother-child relation in which the child attempts to break away from the mother. The maternal body hence becomes a site of conflicting desires. This is "a precondition of narcissism".[43] The maternal figure is constructed as the monstrous-feminine.

Abjection and Literature

In Kristeva's view, literature helps the author and the reader to work through maladies that afflict their minds. It allows subjects to work through conflicts without acting them out. Literature can be cathartic.[44] I propose that cheap comics function the same way as literature.

> "By suggesting that literature is [abjection's] privileged signifier, I wish to point out that, far from being a minor, marginal activity in our culture, as a general consensus seems to have it, this kind of literature, or even literature as such represents the ultimate coding of our crises, of our most intimate and most serious apocalypses. Hence its nocturnal power." [45]

Kristeva proposes that religions create various means of purifying the abject – various catharses with the "catharsis par excellence" called art. Artistic experience which is rooted in the abject also has the same token of purification. She suggests that some literatures have this function.[46]

Creed argues that the ideological project of popular horror films is the purification of the abject through a "descent into the foundations of the symbolic construct".[47] Horror films bring about the confrontation with the abject to help eject the abject and redraw boundaries. It is a form of modern defilement rite. It attempts to separate the symbolic order from all that threatens its stability.[48] Conforming to Kristeva and Creed, I argue that cheap comics have the same function as literature for Kristeva and horror film for Creed. Cheap comics make extensive use of abject visuals such as rotten cadavers, entrails, and blood. Abject visuals are some of its idiosyncratic characteristics. The illustrations of blood, putrefying flesh, entrails, and the cadaver are normal images to be found in comics. I propose that these abject visuals have the cathartic function of nocturnal power proposed by Kristeva.

More than abject elements, cheap comics also contain visuals and stories regarded as immoral in Thai society, for example sexually provocative pictures, female nudity, immoral actions of protagonists, etc. Abject visuals and immoral stories disturb the proper/clean self. They disturb social order and symbolic order. They let out repressed unconscious emotions. I argue that these abject and immoral elements work as catharsis. They allow the subject to imagine bad things and work through conflicts, let out stress and repression. Order then is restored again through the way in which, at the end of the story, protagonists receive karma in the framework of Buddhist teachings. Abjec-

tion in cheap comics stirs and disturbs identity and order. However, the overall didactic storyline of Buddhist morality helps clean, purify, and restore order, leading to the reconciliation of the subject with the symbolic order.

This process is not only confined to cheap comics but also appears in other forms of popular culture such as films. Nonzee Nimitbutr's "Nang Nak" (1997) provides a good example of this process, one whereby the malevolent ghost disturbs order, which is then restored by Buddhist authority. I argue, in agreement with Creed, that this demonstrates the ideological project of horror texts in popular culture.

Aesthetics

According to Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, humans are instinctually aggressive creatures. The explicit nature of the horror texts demonstrates this point. It provides a graphic portrayal of human flesh that produces perverse pleasure in its viewers.

Brottman proposes that the visions of split and broken bodies represent graphic depictions of "subjects in process".[49] They create pleasure as they offer an implicit, subliminal depiction of the continuous division between Imaginary and Symbolic Orders which Lacan calls "glissage". The visual depiction of the body's inner organs spilling out into the world and becoming nothing but matter is horrifying because it destabilizes the self by blurring the division between Self and Others.[50] I believe that cheap comics contain a lot of visually broken bodies and organs which can be considered as abject imagery. They serve as a means to generate the "glissage" pleasure.

Cheap comics possess their own idiosyncratic visual style that are easily recognizable. The preferred style of illustration is not neat. The lines from the Chinese paintbrush are messy. The colour scheme is vibrant and intense with high contrast, similar to other everyday popular Thai cultural materials that one can easily see on a Thai street, such as colourful plastic wares, motorcycle taxi jackets, taxis, bus graphic art, etc..

In order to give an example of my analysis and argument, I have chosen to analyse one comic titled *Lai-tai* by Tode Kosumphisai, who is a veteran cartoonist of the genre.[51] I should mention that the exact print date of the *Lai-tai* is unknown. I located a copy in a bookshop in a Bangkok suburb in 2011.

"*Lai-tai*" is a syndrome with the medical term Sudden Unexplained Nocturnal Death (SUND) which Mills refers to as "nightmare deaths".[52] The syndrome results in the unexplained death of adolescents or adults during sleep. It is an Isan folk belief that this is

caused by an encounter with malevolent spirits. In 1990, there was an incident of a healthy Thai man working in Singapore who died from this syndrome. People in Isan believed that his death was caused by "widow ghosts" (*phi mae mai*). People used wooden penises and painted their nails with bright colours in order to protect men from widow ghosts. Mills argues that such mass belief and explanation is a by-product of the meeting of modernity and long-held folk beliefs within a society's collective experience.[53]

Lai-tai depicts the story of Diew Donklang, an orphan who rapes a woman and who then escapes to Bangkok to work at a construction site. In Bangkok, he dreams that a malevolent spirit in the form of a big strong man is attacking him. In reality, nothing happens. His colleague suggests that he should move the site where he sleeps. (It is a common folk belief that one can be haunted by a malevolent spirit if that person sleeps on a haunted site or where a person had died.) Distressed by the nightmare, he cries out loud, causing his next-door neighbours to get angry with him. They have a fight. His employer, Sia Kuang, who knows that he is the suspect in a rape case, likes Diew's aggressive character and asks him to join his illegal business. Diew moves to Sia Kuang's place but the malevolent spirit still follows him in his nightmares. The spirit tells Diew that she is the spirit of the woman he once raped. The spirit says that she has gained merit in her many past lives to be reincarnated as this woman who was about to become successful in life. This woman's life had to end because of Diew's lustful action. Diew works as a gunman for his employer, Sia Kuang. He meets Ded, chief gunman, and Jeab, who is the mistress of Sia Kuang. One night, Diew meets Jeab and is about to have an affair with her. Jeab tells him that every gunman would be killed after he finishes his job, which is why his boss has sent him here. It turns out that Jeab is the female malevolent spirit. Two spirits steal Diew's spirit. Diew dies because of Sudden Unexplained Nocturnal Death (*lai-tai*), as do Ded and his boss. At the end of the comics, the malevolent spirit talks to the reader, saying: "They think evil, do evil in various ways, but they die in similar ways. It is no surprise that in their past lives they all committed sin".[54]

The story is apparently intended to be a Buddhist parable. It is the story of a sinner who receives bad karma as reflected in the Buddhist belief: "Do good, receive good. Do evil, receive evil". Diew, who commits a crime, earns his bad karma through the vengeance of the malevolent spirit. Overall, the story teaches a moral lesson with the aim of preventing people from committing sin. However, throughout the story the illustrations contain many scenes considered

Fig. 3. Ending of "Lai-tai" From Tode Kosumphisai, "Scene from Lai-tai," Lai-tai, (Bangkok: Sam Dao Publishing, n.d.) 16

to be immoral in Buddhism, such as rape, murder and adultery. I argue that these elements of the comics function as catharsis. They allow readers to imagine bad things and let out repressed emotions; and the tragic conclusion is punctuated with the imparting of a moral lesson. It is clear from the ending that the story is intended to be a Buddhist parable. It teaches people about karma and how one would receive bad karma if he commits sin.

Mills posits that the belief in "nightmare deaths" is related to labour mobility.[55] From the storyline, Diew moves to Bangkok and dies of "nightmare death", caused by a malevolent spirit. The story also depicts anxiety over the health and welfare of wage labourers from the countryside who move into the city, a situation easily relatable for the target readers of cheap comics.

I further argue that this sample story of cheap comics also works similarly to that of Mill's mass hysteria case. Although the story is fictional, it is a localized version of a social event and uses folk myths such as superstitious beliefs, the law of karma etc. to explain things. In *Lai-tai*, the protagonist moves to the city with rapidly changing social condition as a wage labourer. The ghosts can be read as the myth that the protagonist creates to perceive the changes he could not understand from the local worldview. Also, the ghosts can be read as his anxiety toward the changes and the adverse living condition of wage labourers. In this manner, the ghost stories are related to reality. According to the interview with Tode Kosumphisai, current affairs found in newspapers serve as a basis for many plots in cheap comics. He then uses his imagina-
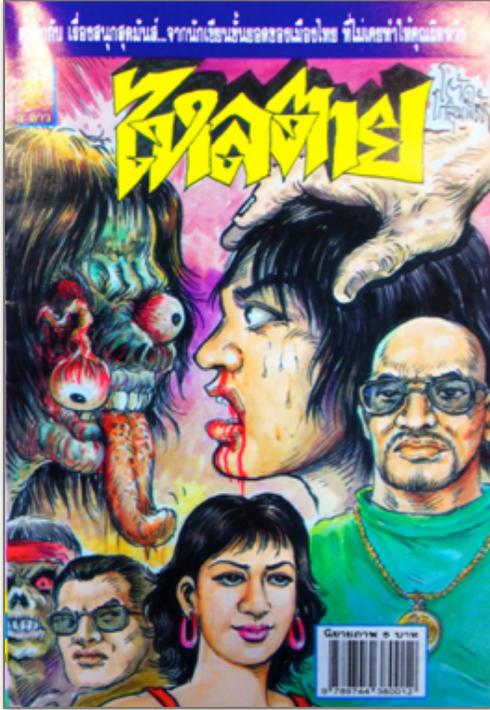
Fig. 4. Cover of "Lai-tai" From Tode Kosumphisai, "Cover of Lai-tai," Lai-tai, (Bangkok: Sam Dao Publishing, n.d.)

tion and folk myths to expand the story, linking up myths and social events.[56]

In terms of aesthetics, the cover of *Lai-tai* provides a good example of the use of abject visuals in cheap comics. The hand of the malevolent spirit turns the head of the protagonist to face the cadaver of the woman he once raped and killed. The victim's face has rotten skin, a drooping eyeball, and a protruding tongue.

The visual conforms to Kristeva's notion of abjection as it depicts the image of the cadaver. It abjects and horrifies spectators. What makes it more horrifying is the face-to-face encounter of the cadaver and the protagonist. It accentuates the confrontation with the abject. Moreover, drawing from Lacan's notion of glissage, the aesthetic of the visual generates pleasure from hor-

ror of the subject in process.

Above is the scene of Diew's nightmare. The malevolent ghost comes to him to explain his sin. In his dream he is brought to the site where he raped the woman and he is forced to confront her corpse. It is the confrontation of the most horrifying abject, the corpse of the protagonist to whom readers therefore relate. (I feel like this sections needs a step by step analysis of how the readers relate.) It also connotes the Buddhist belief in the corresponding consequences of one's actions as the man is forced to face his karma. The scene also conveys the ephemeral nature of the body – the once beautiful woman turns into an ugly corpse when she is dead.

Conclusion

Cheap comics are subaltern cultural products. They have comparatively low status in the Thai cultural realm and could be seen as lowbrow. Drawing from Pracha Suveeranont's categorization, I argue that Cheap Comics can be categorized as vernacular Thai culture. Cheap Comics sits at the margins of Thai culture because it is deemed to be severely lacking in authenticity, and is thus excluded from officially sanctioned Thainess. They contest official and traditional Thai culture by questioning the authenticity of Thainess and the criteria of good taste. They have their own idiosyncratic aesthetics of everyday popular Thai culture.

I propose that cheap comics posses a cathartic function. They help let out the repressed emotions of readers; they catalyse the confrontation with the abject. They use abjection to disturb order, which helps read-

Fig. 5. Nightmare scene of "Lai-tai" From Tode Kosumphisai, "Scene from Lai-tai," Lai-tai, (Bangkok: Sam Dao Publishing, n.d.) 8-9.

ers to work through their own maladies and conflicts without acting them out. Ultimately, the themes and storylines of cheap comics reflect the restoration of order through the invocation of Buddhist teachings such as morality and the law of karma. With these dual functions of cheap comics, I argue that they are cultural materials that uphold cultural space for subaltern people.

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Mainstream Theories in Southeast Asian International Relations:

Discourses and Limitations

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In their research on Southeast Asian international relations, many scholars have heavily applied two mainstream theories—realism and constructivism—to the task of explaining security issues in Southeast Asia. Unfortunately, the capacity of realism and constructivism to rigorously strengthen explorations of Southeast Asian security issues has diminished, owing to a discrepancy between the theories' discursive foundations and current Southeast Asian security culture. Given this diminishment in the theories' explanatory power, the emergence and promotion of new theories in Southeast Asian international relations may be necessary. The current study comprises two sections. The first section will explicate the foundations of the mainstream theories' discourses. The second section will explore the mainstream theories' gradually reduced capacity to facilitate analyses of Southeast Asian security issues.

Introduction

Realism and constructivism have become two mainstream theories among Southeast Asian international relations (IR) scholars. However, the capacity of realism and constructivism to facilitate rigorous explorations of Southeast Asian security issues has diminished over time. This diminishment stems from the discrepancy between the two theories' respective discursive foundations and current Southeast Asian security culture. In light of these trends, the creation and promotion of other IR theories may be necessary.

In this article, I explore these mainstream Southeast Asian IR theories in two sections. The first section will explicate the foundations of the realist and constructivist discourses. The second section will identify the factors constraining these two theories' capacity to facilitate analyses of Southeast Asian security issues.

Mainstream Theories in Southeast Asian IR: Realism and Constructivism

Realism and constructivism are two major mainstream theories used by Southeast Asian IR scholars. Realism dominated the analytical framework for studies about Southeast Asian security issues from the early Cold War period to around the early post-Cold War period. Constructivism overtook realism as the predominant theoretical approach to the Southeast Asian security phenomenon during the demise of the Cold War and the 2000s. In this section, I will briefly introduce realism and constructivism, including their respective discursive foundations and arguments. The analysis will in particular focus on Michael Leifer's and Amitav Acharya's writings, because these two individuals pioneered the use of realism and constructivism respectively.

Discourses and Arguments of Mainstream Theories

The Realist Approach: Michael Leifer

Realism has been the most durable theory in the IR field. Its primary characteristic has been the assumption that the world is anarchic. States are exposed to an atmosphere of mutual mistrust, where invasion by other states is probable if unmitigated cooperation is unlikely, unless two or more states are galvanized around common challenges or concerns. Therefore, in order to avoid being invaded, a state's first aim is not the improvement of its people's well-being, but national survival.[1] The most effective means of survival is for states to strengthen their internal material factors, such as defense capability, to the maximum capacity possible -- this is known as the doctrine of self-help.[2] However, when states over-enhance their material capabilities, a security dilemma among nations is ineluctable and can be managed only through a balance of power, a scenario that the theory predicts. Realism, put simply, posits that the anarchical nature of international society requires states to strengthen their material factors and seek a balance of power in order for survival.

In Southeast Asian IR studies, the best known realist thinker is Michael Leifer. Discussions about IR theories, however, are rare in Leifer's research essays, nor do the essays exemplify a direct application of realism theory to Southeast Asian security phenomena. Ralf Emmers, who gained his PhD under Leifer's supervision, stated that "Leifer was less trying to make a contribution to the IR theory debate than he was to making a contribution to the study of the international relations of Southeast Asia."[3] In fact, Leifer's research was dependent on participatory field studies within ASEAN-related circles and on informal interviews with officials and diplomats.[4] Even so, Amitav Acharya, whose theoretical stance stands in stark contrast to that of Leifer, has argued that Leifer's perspective was "never self-consciously theoretical" and called his analytical approach "classical" rather than "scientific".[5] However, Emmers did agree that Leifer was predominantly a realist.[6] In addition, Leifer is widely regarded as a realist amongst scholars who have devoted their work to the debate between realism and constructivism in Southeast Asian IR.[7] Leifer has been classified as a realist, then, because his writings are largely underpinned by realist notions, in particular the concept of the balance of power.

Unlikely Multilateral-Cooperation and the Balance of Power

Two realist concepts can be identified in Leifer's corpus. The first is that effective cooperation, especially multilateral cooperation, amongst Southeast Asian countries seems unlikely, owing to an absence of common strategic perspectives among regional states.[8] Like other realists, Leifer acknowledged not only the situation of international anarchy,[9] but also the salience of material factors.[10] At the same time, however, Leifer did not regard the absence of a common inter-state government or the presence of a security dilemma as the sole causes of difficulty in the cooperation between states. He seems to have believed that regional historical legacy, such as entrenched feuds[11] and long-running competition over territory[12] was the main factor in the divergence of views among member nations.[13] Additionally, in Leifer's analysis, most leaders of Southeast Asian countries believed that cooperation might lead a neighboring state to interfere in their own domestic affairs, which compounds the difficulty of cooperation.[14] Therefore, leaders unsurprisingly eschewed the adoption of multilateral cooperation in order to maintain complete sovereignty and autonomy. It is interesting to note that Leifer disagreed with David Mitrany's concept of functionalism. Functionalism dictates that states can cooperate on less sensitive issues at first, in areas like the economy and culture, before moving toward more serious issues, such as politics and security. This cooperation process is known as a "spill-over." In the case of Southeast Asia however, Leifer argued that regional states showed little willingness to cooperate on straightforward issues, let alone collaboration on more sensitive issues.[15]

Leifer's other realist notion is the balance of power. His use of the idea to explain Southeast Asian security issues, however, has drawn out both discussion and criticism.[16] According to Leifer's realist argument, given severe intra-regional differences, countries facing direct challenges or potential concerns are unlikely to embrace multilateral cooperation. Nevertheless, in the past, many regional states were badly in need of national stability, since they worried that the aggressiveness of any given states was a threat to their national survival. Insofar as multilateral-cooperation was

unlikely, bilateral cooperation based on the principle of balance of power became the primary option for regional states. Balance of power requires that all sides have shared goals or that they can achieve individual national interests through the proposed cooperation. In Leifer's series of Southeast Asian security texts, he used examples to prove that many countries in the region cooperated with neighboring countries or external powers using the principle of balance of power. For example, in the 1960s, Singapore and Malaysia as embryonic independent states believed that British presence on their territory was beneficial to their own national security and stability, since deployment of the British troops could mitigate potential concerns.[17] In January 1977, Malaysia and Thailand engaged in military cooperation because they faced a common threat from the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), which was supported by the Chinese Communist regime.[18] Indonesia's acceptance of the United States as an informal defence partner, and India as ASEAN's formal dialogue partner, exemplifies the Indonesian balance-of-power policy against the rising power of China.[19] By the same logic, Singapore's vulnerability in terms of natural resources and geographical proximity (Singapore being located between Malaysia and Indonesia) prompted the country's leadership to support the United States' influential presence in Southeast Asia.[20]

The Constructivism Approach: Amitav Acharya

Constructivism is the alternative to realism in IR theory. Unlike realism's claim that the world is essentially in a state of anarchy, constructivism argues that anarchy is not immutable but "what states make of it."[21] Under this theory, states' interactions fall into the categories of enmity, rivalry, and friendship, or Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian cultures.[22] Against this backdrop, hostility and cooperation can be seen in the interactions between countries. Therefore, studying states' behavior or national interests via material factors is insufficient. Also of importance are ideational factors, such as the creation of norms and identities, insofar as identity allows states to determine "who I am/ who we are", a determination that helps knit states together.[23] Moreover, common interests may reduce the likelihood of conflict and create a problem-solving mechanism for the realization of mutual benefits.[24]

Constructivism is the other important approach in Southeast Asian IR. The study of Southeast Asian security issues focuses specifically on ideational factors: norms and identities. Constructivism thus explains why ASEAN successfully managed the Cambodian conflict,[25] why Vietnam regarded ASEAN as anathema during the Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Cambodia but nonetheless participated in ASEAN in 1995,[26] and why ASEAN can be seen as a powerful regional organization.[27] It is reasonable to argue that Amitav Acharya, the prolific writer on Southeast Asian norms and identities, typifies the mainstream perspectives of constructivist researchers in the field of Southeast Asian IR.[28] In the context of Southeast Asian security research, Acharya's work is antithetical to that of Leifer, although both authors agree that intra-regional differences in both Southeast Asia[29] and East Asia[30] have resulted in unlikely multilateral cooperation. In addition, other states' aggressive policies and behaviors constitute the most pressing national-security concern.[31] However, in contrast to Leifer's distinct pessimism, Acharya argues that the foundation of optimism characterizing ASEAN can successfully counter seemingly insurmountable difficulties.[32]

The Concept of Norms and Identity

According to Acharya, "The ASEAN Way" exemplifies "a code of conduct for inter-state behaviours" and a "decision-making process."[33] The principles of the former can be found in the provisions of the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC), initially ratified by the original five ASEAN members in 1976.[34] The principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of an independent country and non-use of force constitute ASEAN's fundamental norms. The norms have guided ASEAN's handling of regional problems, in particular security and political issues. For example, in the 1980s, ASEAN's resolution on the Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Cambodia strictly adhered to ASEAN's non-interference and non-use of force principles.[35] The resolution publicly demanded Vietnam's withdrawal of forces from Cambodia, and created negotiatory premises like "Cocktail diplomacy," a by-product of the spirit of the "ASEAN Way," rather than the establishment of a military alliance against Vietnam. Similarly, when Western countries denounced ASEAN's acceptance of military-ruled Myanmar as a new member in 1997, ASEAN members

denounced Western countries' violation of the non-interference principle; in this way, "ASEAN did not depart from its non-interference doctrine in any significant way."[36]

The decision-making process has followed the principles of informality and consultation (*musyawarah*) and consensus (*mufakat*) stemming from the informal, relaxed discussion process of Javanese village society.[37] The purpose of informality is to create a comfortable meeting environment where member states can cooperate with one another. It is hardly surprising, then, that ASEAN members avoid both publicly identifying who is a threat or a concern[38] and discussing sensitive issues among fellow members.[39] From these facts, it is reasonable to imagine that a military alliance in Southeast Asia would be unlikely.[40] Under the model of consultation and consensus moreover, every state's interests are considered and each perspective expressed, since decision-making does not require unanimity.[41] More importantly, to achieve the lowest common denominator of agreement, ASEAN members usually negotiate before engaging with external powers on issues that are discussed within the forum. This tactic can influence divergent strategic perspectives among member nations and other states' aggressive policies and behaviors.[42]

In Acharya's analysis, adherence to regional norms and the operation of a unique model of decision-making prove that norms and identity do matter in Southeast Asia and provide advantages to ASEAN. First, the ASEAN Way increases the likelihood of multilateral cooperation. For example, ASEAN members were at pains to address the Cambodian conflict. Acharya argued that ASEAN's responses to the Cambodian conflicts enhanced its international status and intra-regional solidarity.[43] What is more, as a security framework, the ASEAN Way has kept regional conflicts and the intervention of external powers in check.[44] The ASEAN Way has, in fact, become the main operational principle of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the first security-negotiating forum in the Asia-Pacific region. Internationally, external powers such as the United States and China have accepted the ASEAN paradigm.[45]

The Two Theories' Gradually Reduced Capacity to Facilitate Analysis of Southeast Asian Security Issues

Realism and constructivism have become mainstream theories among Southeast Asian IR scholars. The issues they tackle include regional security affairs[46] and security relations with external powers (particularly the relationships between ASEAN and China).[47] These scholars' analyses of Southeast Asian security issues have provoked intense debates between realist and constructivist adherents.[48] However, the capacity of these two theories to facilitate rigorous explorations of security issues has come into question, because of discrepancies between each theory and actual Southeast Asian security culture. In this section, my analysis of the two theories' declining theoretical power will first address their relevance to Southeast Asian security culture in the previous eras.

Theoretical Discourse in Line with Security Culture in Southeast Asia

Realism and constructivism have successfully helped explain Southeast Asian security issues because each theory has been notably applicable to the region's security culture. From the Cold War period to the late 1990s, security culture in Southeast Asia was state-centric. During this time, regional states adopted a comprehensive security approach—particularly in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore.[49] According to basic assumptions about comprehensive security, national insecurities stem not only from the military development and aggressive policies of other states, but also from economic and social instability on the domestic front. States concluded that in order to achieve national stability, they must ensure economic and social development domestically, an objective known as national resilience (*ketahanan nasional*). At first glance, this concept seems people-oriented, because a region's nations would treat insecurities extending beyond the scope of military matters and into the realm of people's well-being and security. In fact, comprehensive security was still state-centric during this period, because regimes' leaders were concerned mainly with national-security threats involving other states' aggressive policies and behaviors. For example, original ASEAN members regarded China as a potential con-

cern, because the Chinese government showed sympathy for Southeast Asia's ethnic Chinese, many of whom had suffered unfair treatment at the hands of local governments.[50] In addition, the Chinese government had staked a claim to the oil-rich Spratlys Group of Islands.[51] These cases prompted ASEAN members to suspect the Chinese government of interfering in their domestic affairs and of challenging their national sovereignty. Thus, regional states unsurprisingly regarded territory and state sovereignty as paramount. A breach of national sovereignty would endanger individuals' lives. In other words, the principle came to declare that individuals' security is subordinate to national security. In addition, the principle declared that measures to countervail other states' aggressive behavior should lie in the hands of states. For example, ASEAN states established close military and political relationships with external powers and created regional norms and identities owing largely to Chinese aggression. In short, the concept of comprehensive security asserts that the state is necessary for human welfare.

Realist and constructivist discourses for analyses of Southeast Asian security issues were cogent during this period. In Leifer's analysis, states are the source of threats, and states deal with threats by enhancing their material capabilities and adopting a policy of balance of power. Leszek Buszynski also adopted a realist approach in explaining Southeast Asian security issues during the Cold War. According to Buszynski, ASEAN members regarded Vietnam as a potential threat to security and, consequently, used Chinese, Soviet, and American influences in Southeast Asia to countervail Vietnamese aggressiveness.[52]

Acharya's theoretical arguments have also been suitable for analyses of Southeast Asian security culture because, in his view of Southeast Asian IR issues, the primary source of threats is the state. The difference between Acharya and Leifer lies in their views on the methods that states adopt to address state-sourced threats. According to Acharya, states can counter other states' aggressions through the creation of norms and identities, in line with TAC and the ASEAN Way.[53] Like Acharya, many scholars have adopted this way of thinking to explore security issues. As noted by Samuel Sharpe, ASEAN's adoption of the principles of non-interference and non-use of force to deal with the Vietnamese military's occupation of Kampuchea was due to Vietnam's status as a source of potential concern for

the organization's members.[54] From Alice Ba's perspective, ASEAN's decision shifted the organization's members into a closer engagement with China: ASEAN's adopted measure was essentially an effort to create norms because ASEAN and China were suspicious of each other.[55]

Theoretical Discourse Out of Step with Security Culture in Southeast Asia

Security culture has gradually changed. The linchpin of change can be traced back to the 1997 financial meltdown, deadly terrorist attacks in the United States and Indonesia since 2001, the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003, and the Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004.[56] These crises led to crippling fiscal problems, greater income discrepancies, and widespread unemployment. These calamities severely affected individuals and countries. In Southeast Asia, state-level problems often surfaced in the form of political turbulence—a good example being the May 1998 overthrow of Suharto, which came about largely because of his incompetence in addressing the concurrent financial crisis. Many countries in Southeast Asia have been beset by transnational crimes, like drug trafficking, human trafficking, and serious environmental issues, which individually and cumulatively degraded people's quality of life. Therefore, with all of these myriad and untested stresses coming to bear, ASEAN members had to start paying attention to new security challenges that were qualitatively different from previous challenges insofar as human beings became a significant focus in the ASEAN agenda. A new language reflecting this concern for individuals is evident in many ASEAN declarations and documents, like *ASEAN Vision 2020*[57] and the ASEAN Charter.[58] By 2015, ASEAN planned to create the ASEAN Community (AC), resting on a people-oriented foundation. In short, security culture in Southeast Asia increasingly favored human security.

However, there was a discrepancy between each of the two dominant theories and the developing people-oriented Southeast Asian security culture. Threats in the new security culture ran the gamut from unpredictable phenomena, such as pandemic outbreaks and natural disasters, to intractable non-state human threats, such as religious fundamentalists, drug traffickers, and warlords, whose networks are typically supra-national. The diverse origins of these new

threats rocked the foundations of both realism and constructivism, which declare that threats arise only from states. In addition, in the new Southeast Asian security culture, states are not the only actor to address threats. Solving challenges beyond state borders necessitates cooperation with other actors, such as regional, international, and non-governmental organizations, because the negative effects of these new threats can spread across regions and indeed around the world. Therefore, individual states on their own cannot satisfactorily rise to these challenges. In short, Southeast Asia's new security culture is no longer state-centric.

The diverse origins of threats have rendered the two theories' methodological foundations essentially ineffective. In the realm of realism, material factors do not provide a feasible way of eradicating many related problems because countries now focus their attention on materially unpredictable phenomena. An increase in countries' material strength is by no means a guarantee that they can avoid the negative effects of pressing threats. Moreover, countries need not pursue a balance of power to countervail unpredictable phenomena. Instead, countries should cooperate more extensively with counterparts, particularly regarding exchanges of information and cross-border educational efforts. In the realm of constructivism, the establishment of norms and identities cannot adequately resolve threats of diverse origins either. When crises spread, most countries find themselves in a difficult situation where they must respond immediately and appropriately. The chief motivation underlying countries' cooperation with one another is the need for immediate action in response to critical, direct threats. Two examples of such threats were SARS, which struck Asian regions in mid-November 2002, and the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami. As an aside, it is important to note that ideational factors may sometimes compound problems because of the required period of lengthy consultation.[59] In cases involving crises, neither norms nor identities are necessary for cross-country cooperation, since the impetus is the problem's degree of urgency rather than ideational factors.

Conclusions: A Need for New Theories in Southeast Asian IR

Southeast Asian IR has been dominated by theories of realism and constructivism for decades. Even though researchers have adopted other international relations theories, such as those associated with critical theory, post-modernism, human security, and feminist theory, these kinds of approaches have drawn little attention from scholars in the field of Southeast Asian IR. These scholars more often than not continue to use and discuss realism and constructivism. Undoubtedly, realism and constructivism are suitable for the exploration of certain Southeast Asian security issues, like the dispute surrounding the South China Sea.[60] However, because security culture in Southeast Asia is shifting from state-centricity to human-centricity, this has diminished the mainstream theories' contributions to rigorous research exploring Southeast Asian security issues. As such, the creation and promotion of other theories in Southeast Asian IR appears to be advisable and perhaps even necessary.

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[53] In this writings, Acharya seems like an anti-state centrist scholar. Acharya and Richard Stubbs have argued that, although the "state is a first point of reference," it is not "the only or ultimately the most important actor." Acharya has suggested that, in the realm of Southeast Asian IR, we should pay more attention to the forest (i.e., a region) than to trees (i.e., states). Indeed, on the face of it, Acharya comes to across as a researcher who has promoted a holistic approach to Southeast Asian security issues. Furthermore, none of his works pay particular attention to the policies and strategies of individual states. However, this observation is not to say that states are insignificant in his works. Instead, states are desiderata. The ASEAN Way exemplifies the critical role played by states in his works. As discussed previously, the ASEAN Way reflects a set of principle underlying ASEAN's norms and identities—principles that arose from Indonesian village values and were accepted by ASEAN members as constituting the negotiation model optimal for addressing diverse security problems. This leads to the following question: if ASEAN members were to resist the ASEAN Way as the optimal model for negotiations, would the strength of ASEAN's norms and identities come into question? The answer is impossible to answer because states are the most basic building blocks in support of norm and identity creation. Without states' unanimous acceptance of a model, the development of norms and identities within Southeast Asia would necessarily fail. Therefore, despite Acharya's emphasis on regions, states remain the underpinning in his writings. Without states, Acharya's academic discourse on constructivism would likely never have taken shape. Amitav Acharya and Richard Stubbs,"Theorizing Southeast Asia Relations: an Introduction," *The Pacific Review* 19, no. 2 (2006):132; Acharya, "Do Norms and Identity Matter?," 106.

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Rediscovering Champa

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This article argues that there is mounting evidence to enable a reassessment of the ancient Cham civilization. The current paradigm can be destabilized to offer an alternate way of thinking using new forms of evidence once considered peripheral to the primarily art historical approach taken to ancient Vietnam. In particular, landscape archaeology reveals the likelihood that Cham 'cities' were low density agro-urban complexes; this will change not only how we understand past Cham society, but its cross-cultural interactions within Asia. Ultimately these insights will contribute to our understanding of the nature of the Cham state and its collapse.

Introduction

During the first millennium CE the people known as Cham dominated the coastal river systems of Vietnam, from the Mekong delta to the Gulf of Tonkin. Little is known for sure about the origins of the Cham: their society, like many of the other Bronze–Iron Age groups, remains about as clear to us as the murky Mekong.[1]

This work undertakes a somewhat ambitious task; it seeks to 'rediscover' the Cham. In this act of 'rediscovery' I will be offering a broad overview of the polity, or polities, known as Champa and its geographical region. I shall apply a low-density model to Champa's Thu Bon River complex. This new analysis will be considered in light of what we know of the nature of riverine and low-density cultures in order to arrive at firmer ideas regarding Cham society.

Once we have achieved a greater level of understanding about Champa, the next logical step is to consider how the Cham were integrated within a regional system. This requires us to understand Cham relations along the Vietnamese coastal plain, along with those of the Dai-Viet, Khmer, Chinese and the people of the Lao Mountains. Understanding relations between the Cham and the rest of mainland Southeast Asia should lead to a greater understanding of the Cham and the historico-civilisational processes at work.

A study of the internal make-up of cities, the social implications of material evidence and patterns as well as a reappraisal of international interactions will allow for a 'rediscovery of Champa'. Only by questioning deeply entrenched narratives can we fit together the jigsaw of evidence, allowing us to better understand Champa.

Broad Overview

The Cham occupy the central and southern Vietnamese coastal plain and are distinguished from other

groups through their own pattern of material culture. A string of sites make up this materio-cultural group.

Modern Vietnam is located along the eastern coastal margin of mainland Southeast Asia, falling within the East Asian monsoonal group.

This weather system connects Vietnam to the East Asian sphere: for half of the year the winds tend South West and then reverse trending North East.[2]

Spanning along the northern margin of mainland Southeast Asia are the foothills of the Himalayas, which cut mainland Southeast Asia off from southern China. Running south of these are the mountains of Laos and western Vietnam. To the west flows the Mekong River, and to the East sits the Vietnamese coastal plain and the South China Sea.[3]The coastal plain is punctuated by river basin valleys running down to the coast. These are important as sediment-rich alluvium travels from the mountain into the valleys and the coastal plain.

At the risk of venturing into the realms of environmental determinism we can presume that the nature of the local geography made this area attractive to hunter–farmers.[4] In the case of the coastal basins, soil moves down the mountain slopes by colluviation, and favours the smaller particles like clay. These clay particles have a greater charge for attracting nutrients and are richer in nutrients. The nutrients separately move down the slope in aqueous form. The soil that is formed at the base of slopes in this manner is called colluvium, and the entire structure called a catena.[5] This process, accompanied by a regular supply of fresh water from the mountains make the river basins ideal for wet rice-farming and other forms of intensive agriculture. In contrast, the soils of the sandy coastal plains formed in situ create low quality nutrient-poor soils with a high drainage speed and low water-holding capacity. This in turn, is manifestly unsuited to flood irrigation and wet rice crops.

As noted above, little is known for sure about the origins of the Cham. We know that monumental architecture is present from at the latest, the mid first millennium. Metalworking seems to precede this by several hundred years, first with bronze tools and then with iron around the first century C.E.

During the first half of the first millennium CE, the Champa developed polities, which would continue on until the fifteenth century CE. Their northern cities began to be lost to the advancing Dai-Viet from the 10th century. However, the southern section of the Cham, known as Vijaya, held out until the 12th and 13th centuries when counter-attacks by the Khmer, combined with Mongolian Chinese Yuan raids, are thought to have weakened the polity. This led to the Dai-Viet finally overwhelming southern Champa and taking possession of the entire coastal plain and much of the Mekong delta.

Prior Approaches to 'Cham'

In understanding Champa it is important to consider past scholarship, and to appreciate different theories and how they came to be. The main forms of evidence used were Chinese and Vietnamese texts, Cham stone inscriptions, art histories and architectural analysis of brick temple structures. The colonial French approach was to construct art-historical typologies that were made to complement incomplete textual chronologies[6] .This has come at the expense of other forms of intellectual inquiry such as cultural studies, network interaction analysis, and landscape archaeology. The focus on coherent art styles skewed past scholarship to view the Cham as a homogenous imperial entity.

Current debates fall between two schools: the orthodox argues that the Cham were a united ethno-cultural state, and the revisionist school seeks to argue that the Vietnamese coastal peoples shared cultural aspects but should not be considered a state actor in the modern sense.

It is striking that these approaches come out of traditions with rather different forms of enquiry. The orthodox group had a tendency to use Chinese bureaucratic texts, extrapolating actual societies and groups from their records, particularly in the case of 'Linyi', thus creating the popular non academic view of Champa. Scholars such as Georges Maspero attempted to use modern language groups and ancient inscriptions to create retrospective ethno-states along the lines of those that had emerged in Europe in the mid 19th century and post World War I period. [7] However, these narratives of statehood tend to be framed within the terms of a decadent east destroyed by more worthy, less self-indulgent opponents; an analytical trend also found across early 'orientalist' archaeology and art history.[8]
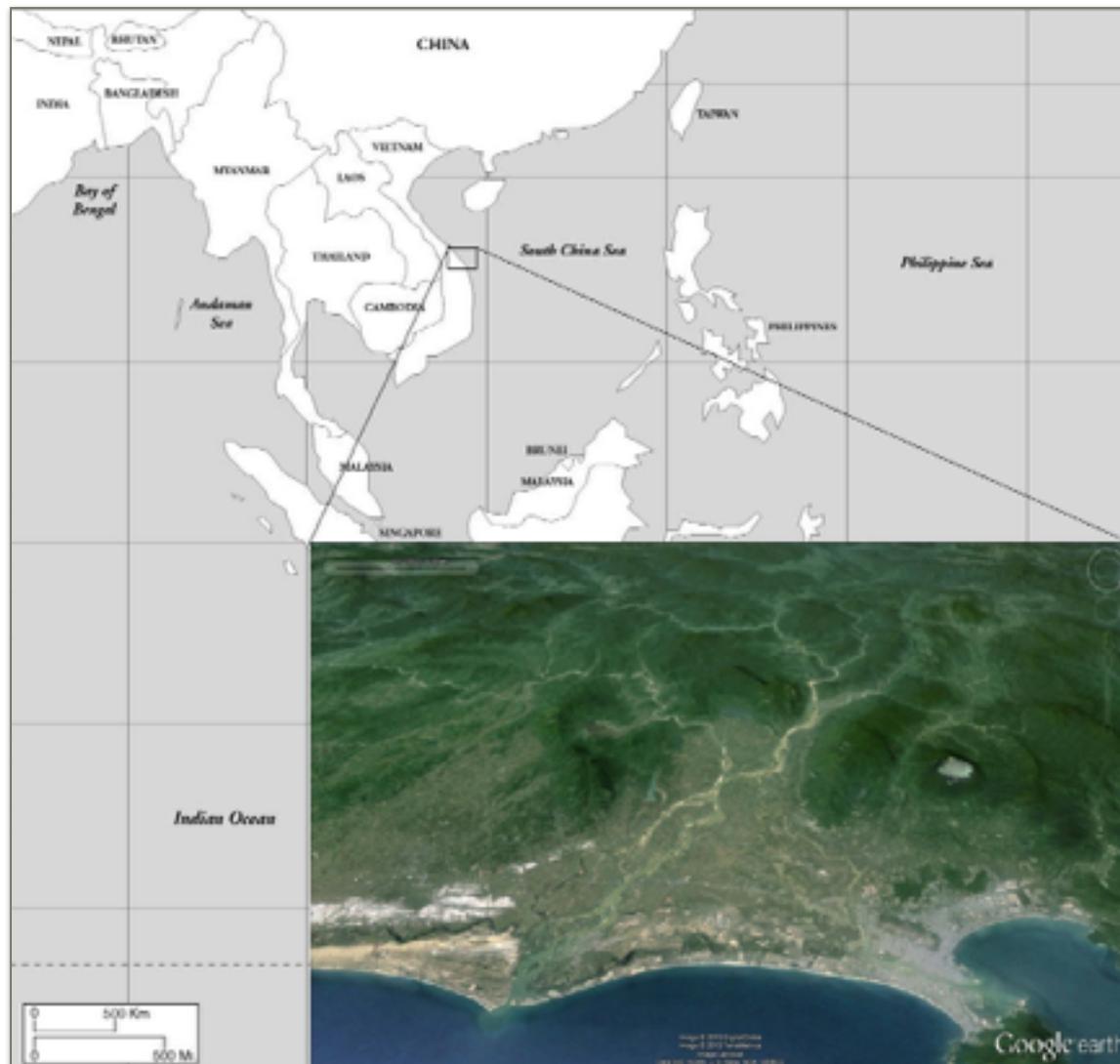
Figure 1 Map Thu Bon River Valley, Google Earth, modified M. P. Leadbetter.

The revisionist view meanwhile, deconstructs pre-conceived notions of 'the state' and nationhood.[9] This view tends to be conservative and is in some ways part of the middle range movement of postprocessual inquiry.[10] These views are insightful but offer little in the way of new knowledge or theory; they destroy an incorrect knowledge base but do not venture into telling us much more about 'Champa'.

A third approach is to take the concerns of the revisionists whilst applying new methods of inquiry, such as landscape archaeology, to our understanding of the communities of eastern mainland Southeast Asia. This third form not only gains from being mindful of narrative pitfalls but adds to our understanding in real terms. I argue that it is this approach that will allow us to 'rediscover' Champa.

Cham Settlement Pattern

This section will focus on the Thu Bon River complex of Vietnam (see Figure 1), which is made up of three key components: a trading delta, a fort, and temples. In this section, I shall examine the local topographical context, the three sites, and explain how their function has been previously understood. Then I shall reassess the sites in light of new data from mainland Southeast Asia and demonstrate the significance of the Thu Bon River Complex.

As stated in the previous section, Vietnam occupies a narrow stretch of plains and foothills stretching from Southern China down to the gulf of Thailand. Traditionally this coastline has been linked by land connections along the coastal plain and maritime traffic.

Much of the interior is mountainous, making overland traffic hard; thus rivers flowing from the mountainous West to the eastern coastal plain play a key role in linking the coast with the interior. During the first millennium CE, regional trade brought porcelain and other prestige goods up river, whilst jungle products (rhino horns, elephant tusks, feathers and timber), together with silk and other agricultural produce moved down the river to be integrated into the Indo-Chinese trade system .[11]

This is the backdrop to understanding the Thu Bon River complex. During the first millennium, building activity consisted of a trade settlement at the river delta (in the area of modern Hoi An), a fort to the west (Tra Kieu), controlling the convergent point of the river delta, and farther west up the river a collection of Hindu-esque temples known as My Son.

Earlier French scholars thought of these polities as a homogenous cultural entity, likely to be ruled by a single king. However academic thought emerging from the early 1990s identified Champa in terms of an 'archipelagically' defined cultural political space' where islands of land along the coastline were connected.[12] These small island communities were linked along the river valley by systems of trade and alliances.[13] In this way, each river valley may have controlled its own local geographical space.[14]

There are several ways the coastal–river spaces have been understood. The Bronson model is commonly used to create an understanding of river-based polities.[15] The primary focus of the Bronson model is the river mouth site such as 'A' (see figure 7) which is understood as the main internode between foreign markets and local resources. [16] 'A' is understood to be cut off from other 'A' centres and river systems by mountain ranges, forests, or other topographical buffers. Settlements such as 'B' and 'C' are located at primary and secondary river junctions. These were supply and distribution nodes for point 'A'. They may be controlled directly, or act as economic vassals. 'D' centres are more distant, lying at the periphery of the river basin, but are directly connected to 'A' through mech-

anisms of exchange: they can be understood as 'primary collection points' for 'A'. 'E' and 'F' are not directly linked to 'A' but may have some economic or representative relationship with intermediary actors such as 'D': these can be understood as distant hill-tribe persons and clans occupying more distant valleys-mountain regions. On the other end of the spectrum and scale is X, which is a well-established advanced economy, with a considerably larger consumer base then 'A'. It consumes the goods exported from 'A' and through this trade, elites at 'A' attain social status and are able to project power onto their own communities and communities upriver. This model is shown in the images below, first in its original form, then as applied to the Thu Bon River basin (see figures 2, 3 & 4).
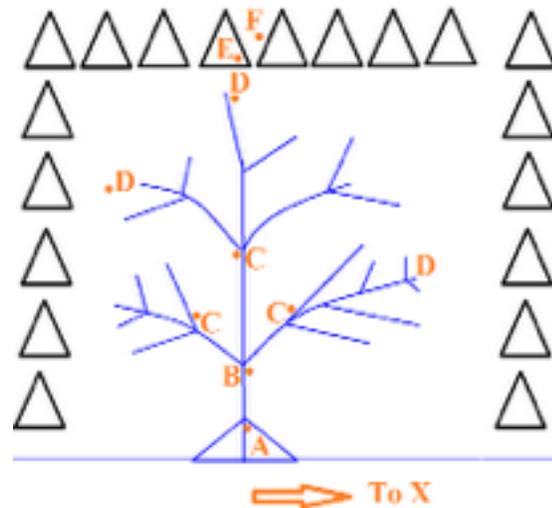
Figure 2 Bronson Model, M. P. Leadbetter 2013

In figure 7, the letter 'A' represents the coastal settlement, 'B' the fort at Tra Kieu and 'C' the My Son temple complex. 'D' indicates the culturally different groups amongst the foothills.
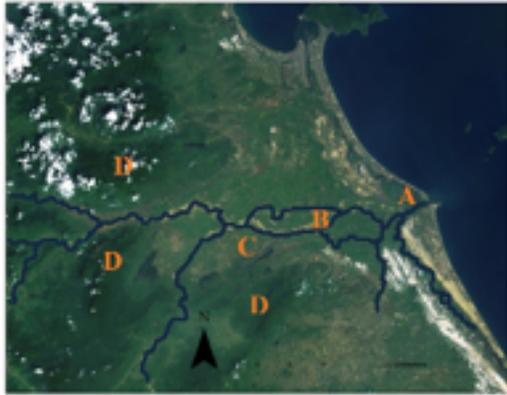
Figure 3 Bronson Model ARCGIS Overlay, M. P. Leadbetter 2013

It is thought that the key reasons for the development of fortified 'B' sites were due to coastal raids, the desire of elites for a secure space and a need to control the hinterland.[17] The theoretical connection system between these groups is shown below (see figure 4).
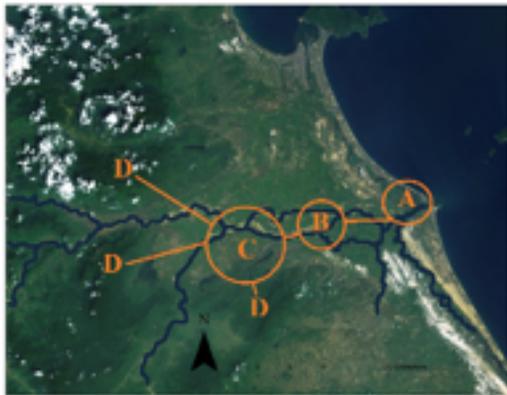
Figure 4 Bronson Model ARCGIS overlay showing connections, M. P. Leadbetter 2013

Whilst this model is the current predominant understanding of the Cham, it does not take account of the wet rice-farming methods that were being practiced in the area.[18] This means that the spaces between 'A', 'B', 'C' and 'D' were not a void, but were filled with different forms of land use. This would have led to a low density population required to tend the rice fields, creating an economic basis for trade with the neighbouring non-agrarian groups in 'D', as well as providing an economic and labour base for the construction of the My Son temples.

The settlement pattern thus corresponds with the alternative model shown below (see figure 5).
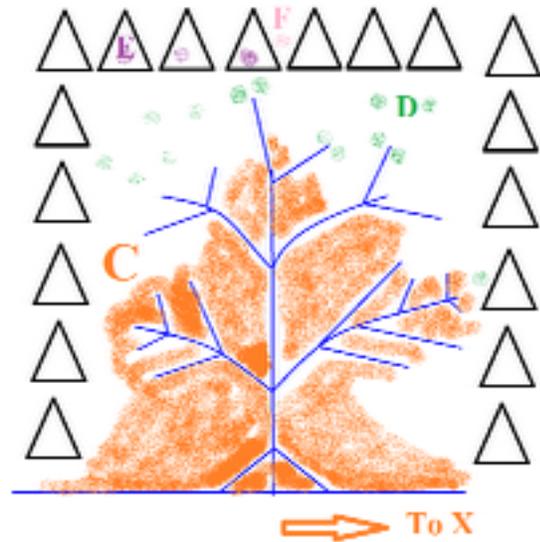
Figure 5 Alternative River Settlement Model, M. P. Leadbetter 2013

Here, 'X' represents trade with a highly developed market, in this case China, whilst 'C' is the settled basin occupied by low-density agro-urban sprawl, punctuated by areas of high density at the delta and river branches, and the Tra Kieu fort controls the key water junction. 'D' is represented in green as various communities at the upper reaches of the river system, whilst 'E' and 'F' are the communities geographically separated from the Thu Bon river complex but connected through exchanges in material commodities or prestige goods; however, they are not part of the complex per se.

The commonly accepted view of the Thu Bon River complex has been of a set of discrete entities connected across an empty landscape via systems of hierarchical linear trade and exchange. Attempts at tweaking the model have had little impact.[19] The idea of a single central entity exploiting its relationship with an economic hinterland for purposes of trade is highly Eurocentric. It originated in understandings of ancient Greek and Italian Renaissance city-states, before being canonized in the academic writings of Max Weber.

The Greater Angkor Project in Cambodia has demonstrated that applying the discrete centralised polity model to mainland Southeast Asia leads to a

complete misunderstanding of pre-modern societies.[20] This form of model can only exist if we continue to turn a blind eye to seemingly small, but vital pieces of evidence, such as the existence of wet rice farming. We need to understand that the Thu Bon valley is made up of multi-focal civic centres, (social, political, economic, religious, military) all contiguous with low density agro-urban sprawl. A suggested pattern is shown below (see figure 6).
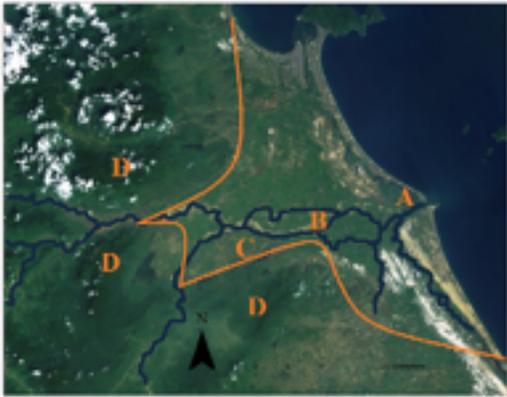
Figure 6 Possible agro urban basin, ARCGIS with overlay, M. P. Leadbetter 2013

Following this model we can conclude that the Thu Bon River valley was a large low-density city. If we accept the hypothesis that most available agricultural land along the plain and within the valley were used, the city would have extended 60 km North-South along the delta basin and up to 60 km inland. Given the tri-linear topographic structure of the agricultural plain, this gives us an estimated land area of just under 1800km²; an area that is similar to greater Sydney, stretching from Palm Beach to Sutherland Shire and inland as far as Penrith.

If this was true of the Thu Bon river complex, then it was also likely to be true for other riverine basin settlements such as the Binh Dinh which had not only a trade settlement at the delta mouth, a military structure at a major river fork and hinterland temples, but also kilns along the length of the river, indicating a local craft specialisation.[21]

The low density nature of such cities often means that it is difficult to uncover physical evidence of their existence. Only large stone structures (such as Tra Kiu and the My Son temples) may stand as markers of pre-

vious occupation. After depopulation, an agricultural basin would have been reused, as has happened at modern Angkor.[22] The Thu Bon River basin thus has a great deal more to tell us than it was initially thought.

Social Implications of Low Density

If these riverine sites were indeed connected to each other, then there are great implications for the way in which we understand how Cham society functioned in the first millennium. This is in part because the density of social groups directly affects how they function and operate.[23] Urban communities require forms of infrastructure, visual signalling such as writing and complex colour coding, as well as complex social organisation. The population would be significantly high with most people engaged in subsistence wet rice farming. These communities would have been entirely dependent on the regular flow of the rivers, around which they would be distributed, as well as the North-South trade route running along the coast. Any shifts in river flow, or development of overland trade/connections could have negatively affected these cities. Low-density cities are near impossible to *effectively* wall and defend. While the surrounding mountains and sea provide a natural rampart, should invaders such as the Dai-Viet penetrate the interior or move south along the coastal plain, then there would have been no way to defend the settlements along the river. The best option would be to evacuate into the hinterland valley networks, but with a large population and local tribes belonging to different cultural groups, this would not have been a likely option. Thus, a large low-density settlement of this kind may not be able to cope with unexpected challenges.[24]

Networks

It was noted above that large low-density urban spaces are dependent on a peripheral hinterland from which to extract resources[25]. Although low-density agrarian cities are capable of producing more food per civic meter than high density counterparts, the food production level would be relatively low as compared to intensive agriculture. Thus importing food and fuel would have been important.[26] Furthermore, as wealth and class differentiation are based on interaction with other cultural groups, the Thu Bon River Complex and other riverine polities would have been even more de-

pendent on trans-regional links than previously thought[27] (see figure 7).

Figure 7 Map showing river links between the Thu Bon River System (A), rivers of the Laos Highlands (B), the Mekong Trunk River (C) and the Tonle Sap and Angkorean centres (D). ARCGIS Map with overlay, M. P. Leadbetter 2013

Because of this, there would have been a high level of mutually dependent contact between the highland population and the Cham, not only for the exchange of prestige goods, but to facilitate trade in food and commodities on the Funan Khmer Plain of the Lower Mekong.

The mountains of modern Laos may seem to be a barrier to contact between the plain of the Southeast Asian basin and the coast of Vietnam, however the map in Figure 13 demonstrates navigable water systems in the region that connect the Thu Bon River region (A) to mountain rivers (B) that join the main Mekong trunk river (C) from where it connects to the Tonle Sap Lake and Angkor D.

The significance of this is that the highland population was not merely on the periphery of a complex system, but became the interlinking node for two complex systems, that of the Khmer and the Cham. Just as in the Bronson model where the Chinese used 'A' to access hinterland commodities and goods, [28] so the 'A'

centre, in this case the Cham, employed the highland regions to access resources along the Mekong River.

Meanwhile the most effective connection between civic polities along the Vietnamese coastal plain would have been via the sea. As the mountains sometimes cut across the plain, most contact between river-based communities such as the Amaravati and the Panduranga, would have been maritime in nature. These communities also competed with each other for hinterland resources.[29]

The relationship between the Cham and East Asia is vital to re-consider. Chinese maritime hubs are important to the Cham because they serve as markets for the latter's trade goods. However, the Cham, or rather polities that Chinese texts identify as the Cham, were involved in China's diplomatic tribute system.[30] The tribute role of the Cham polities intensified following the fragmentation of the Han empire. Different successor states such as the southern Wu in 230 C.E. attempted to integrate them within their own hierarchical diplomatic tribute system, but not without military resistance that would continue into the mid first millennium.[31]

The low-density nature of the Cham cities was a key factor in their fragmentation and decline in the late first millennium. As stated above, low density cities require stable access to resources.[32] Contemporary cities such as China's Chang'an were able to do this through militarily dominating the Chinese geographic heartland.[33] The cities of the Cham however, must have maintained their low-density urban complexes through complex economic networks as described above.[34] This dependence on economic networks put the Cham cities, such as the Thu Bon river valley, in a rather precarious position, as these networks began to collapse in the late first millennium.

The nature of these networks altered in a number of ways: the economic basis shifted to Canton in southern China under the Tang, military and economic conflict with the Khmer intensified and the Malay kingdoms increased coastal raids. This culminated in a major defeat of Cham forces at the hands of the Khmer in 1191. By the 13th century, the Cham polities successfully fought off a number of Mongolian invasion attempts. A period of climate instability at the end of the European Medieval Warm period would have severely damaged their already low subsistence agricultural output. This

decline continued until a major southern push by the Dai Viet in 1370 C.E who were reacting to Chinese expansion. This caused the abandonment of many Cham centres and Vietnamese domination of the coastal plain begun.

Conclusion

This work looked at the bigger picture of Cham society, analysing both natural and human landscapes, as well as diplomatic history. The findings of the study are hugely significant; changing how we understand the Cham polities. The findings are that it is likely that Cham cities were low-density urban complexes, this differs from the prior view of small high density walled and separate cities. These complexes, such as that of the Thu Bon River were entirely dependent on the stability of surrounding networks. When placed under extreme pressure, these centres collapsed, leading to the Vietnamese taking control of the coastal plain. This not only creates economic knowledge of the Cham in the Thu Bon valley, it challenges traditional South East Asian history and provides a new insight within the debate of how the Cham and other civilisations 'collapse'. These conclusions will allow us to 'rediscover' Champa.

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Burmese in Hawai'i:
"Voting with our Feet" and Speaking for the Silent

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Tani Sebro is a researcher and PhD candidate in the Department of Political Science at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Her most recent research centers on conceptions of space, aesthetic expression and the production counter-discourses to the nation by clandestine Burmese immigrants residing in Thailand. She has been working on issues related to refugees in the Thai-Burma border zone since 2005, and has worked as an Immigration Consultant to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Tani Sebro has conducted ethnographic research with exiled and expatriate Burmese individuals living in the United States, as well as Tai migrants now living in Northern Thailand. She is also an avid dance practitioner and is currently exploring how kin-aesthetic methodologies both disrupt and enhance traditional ethnographic methods.

Based on the collection of oral narratives and ethnographic fieldwork amongst Burmese and Sino-Burmese individuals in Hawai'i, this study brings to light their experiences as transnational migrants. The oral narrative approach taken in this study has the potential to pluralize 'official' versions of Burmese history by providing new insights into the events that spurred the Burmese diaspora. I argue that Burmese in Hawai'i are uniquely situated to evoke cultural and linguistic capital in order to achieve social and economic success within a political economy of Asian settlers in the Hawaiian Islands. As a "community of practice," Burmese in Hawai'i organize social and religious events to maintain a sense of common origin and a continued understanding of a shared past. This paper asserts that through the collection of oral narratives it is possible to map motivations for diasporic movements ethnographically. However, in the Burmese example, problems of self-censorship and fears of imparting the past pose serious challenges to the oral narrative methodology.

Official histories can never capture all of the diversity of individual experiences; the study of personal narratives, on the other hand, multiplies the voices that reach us from the past.

- Roxanna Waterson[1]

Even though we voted with our feet and left Burma many years ago, we still have emotional bond to the people of Burma and want to help.

- Mg Lu Lay[2]

There are manifold histories longing to be told about the Burmese[3] diaspora; some are about exile, war, and displacement, others are about hope, reconciliation and belonging. Most stories will never be told out of fear of imparting a painful past, or because there exists few avenues through which to talk about history, identity and the experience of being a migrant. This project began with the idea that life histories and historical narratives of Burmese refugees living in Hawai'i could be recounted and recorded by the ethnographer; that they would not be cloaked by the assumption that elaborate life narratives (akin to Paul Radin's Crashing Thunder)[4] would emerge in the ethnographic encounter. Rather, I was hopeful that I could bring to light what Ranajit Guha[5] has termed the "small voices of history". In the life narratives of Burmese émigrés in Hawai'i we find individual trajectories that are inextricably linked to the experience of carrying the Burmese past into the present. In considering a Burmese past mired by decades long colonial and military subjuga-

tion, interethnic tensions and the suppression of free speech, multiple complexities arise in the attempt to establish a Burmese identity in Hawai'i.

This study explores the veiled histories of Burmese and Sino-Burmese peoples, who in the aftermath of the military takeover of Burma in 1962 and student uprisings in 1988, immigrated to the United States. Burmese émigrés now residing in Hawai'i share a unique assemblage of historical narratives and embodied experiences that provide multi-vocal insights into the events that spurred the Burmese diaspora and the conditions they face as transnational migratory subjects in foreign arenas. This project is based on participant observation and interviews with the Burmese population in Honolulu, Hawai'i from 2009 to 2010. While the life narrative account may pluralize versions of history6, this paper deals with the many limitations of the oral narrative approach in interviews with Burmese living in Hawai'i.

In particular, I look at strategies for generating cultural capital, the organization of community events, the religious lives of diasporic Burmese, self-censorship in the interview encounter and how the structure of the American immigration system conditions the daily lives, aspirations and goals of Burmese in America. Aiwa Ong's notion of "flexible citizenship" informs this analysis as it neatly captures the intersubjective meanings enacted by the transnational flows and settlements of Burmese overseas.[7] As Thomas Hylland-Eriksen notes, "[t]he tension between diasporas and nations is obvious;" however the tension between diasporic identities and settler identities is not as obvious.[8] The narratives herein tell the stories of the unfolding histories that are taking place in America as an immigrant community of practice establishes its place in the multicultural milieus of Hawai'i.

The research scope of this project comprises the systematic collection of oral narratives obtained from eighteen Burmese research collaborators in Honolulu, Hawai'i and Daly City, California. The collection of these narratives was informed by fifteen months of participatory observation in private homes and in public spaces such as restaurants, cafes, shops, and cultural festivals. Comparable work on Southeast Asian diasporic groups residing in the United States has informed this study. Nancy Smith-Hefner's *Khmer American*,[9] a study of Cambodian refugees in Boston,

Waterson's collection of *Southeast Asian Lives*,[10] and Aihwa Ong's *Buddha is Hiding*,[11] which details her fieldwork with Khmer Americans in the Bay Area, have served as guides on doing research amongst Southeast Asian immigrants in the United States. Central to these studies are the themes of war, poverty and oppression in the context of the diasporic experience. Many Burmese live with the social memory or experience of violence, war and fear. These are themes for which further explication is sought in my research; as these embodied memories condition the daily lives of Burmese abroad.

Lila Abu-Lughod employs the life history approach in her writings on Egyptian Bedouin societies—an approach that destabilizes notions of cultures as fixed structural entities with established binary and archetypical categories.[12] Instead of using notions of culture as fixed or reified entities, she argues that anthropologists ought to "write against culture" by examining what it is like to *live culture*, as a dynamic process in which individuals must navigate and negotiate life worlds and events that become a "part of the history of the family, of the individual involved, and their relationships."[13] The life history interview, despite its problematic frame and scope, becomes an alternative to the *observed* versions of cultures by providing diachronic narratives.

Burma has a long and arduous past as a former British colony, and until very recently, suffered under a military regime, which exerted violent authority over its subjects. As Hanna Arendt relates in her discourse *On Violence,* "the loss of power becomes the temptation to substitute violence for power."[14] The military's system relies on a rationale based on *violence* to maintain its hegemonic role, and the Burmese State is but an extreme case of the standard rule for government's maintenance of illegitimate power over citizens.[15] An emphasis on suffering and victimhood arises from post-structuralist discourses on migration, violence and war.[16] This research however, primarily deals with middle-class Burmese citizens who have left Burma as economic refugees or to find opportunities for study abroad, and as a consequence, may not identify with many of the normative characterizations of the refugee experience as a process of victimization.

Following Aihwa Ong's work with re-settled Cambodian refugees in California, she describes the "latitudes of citizenship" embedded in the new economic

spaces of a global neoliberal logic of entrepreneurship and transnational labor.[17] According to Ong's model of citizenship formation, migratory groups organize laterally to provide "freedom from narrow limits (of nation-states and legal regimes) as well as the scope and flexibility to combine disparate combinations of rights, privileges and labor conditions in a geography of production."[18] However, characterizing the transnational migrant from Burma, Cambodia or elsewhere in the Global South, as entering into a lateral system of labor and access, masks the internal hierarchy of migratory subjects – where equal access to opportunity comes with groups who value entrepreneurship and move for the sake of profits and prestige and not only because they are fleeing war and oppression. These are so-called "economic refugees," and are seen to only be searching for "greener pastures" according to a research collaborator. The experience of exile conforms to an international hierarchy of identities, where individuals simultaneously belong to one or several nation-states - where they reside, where they work, where their families live - whilst concurrently belonging to a kin-group, ethnic-group, speech community, with additional political, social and economic affiliations *ad infinitum.*[19]

What follows is an attempt to situate the Overseas Burmese as settlers in the U.S.; they are minorities among minorities in Hawai'i and individuals with intersubjective longings, ideals and motivations. Following Luke Eric Lassiter's *The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography*, I refer to my informants as "research collaborators, " rather than informants and I provide them with the option to review and amend transcribed versions of interviews.[20] As a result, interviews take on new meanings in editing process, and research collaborators are given a greater degree of assurance that their words will not endanger them or their relatives in the future. I owe much gratitude to my research collaborators – I have strived to protect their identities through pseudonyms and have been careful not to disclose information that could be used to identify them.[21]

Changing Socioscapes : From Yangon to Honolulu

The late model Mercedes taxi cab sped through the streets of Yangon passing vendors, temples, school children, men clad in traditional *longyis* and billboards advertising Chinese goods. On this dimmed and grey afternoon, my first day in the sweltering heat of Burma's former capital city, I labored to absorb everything new that my body was sensing. The smell of golden *thanaka* – the apple wood bark paste used to protect one's skin from the sun, the cracked and aged leather of the taxi-cab, the fresh white ginger lei hanging from the rearview mirror, the cacophony of the motorized city, and the oppressive gray palette of the skies blending in with dilapidated buildings. Sudden flourishes of gold appeared in the city-scape, and as the car drew nearer I could see them taking the shape of magnificent *chedis* and pagodas. Everywhere the geospatial hierarchy of power is evidenced in the city, where the only well maintained buildings are Buddhist temples and government military complexes. The car downshifted to a slow crawl as we approached the Shwedagon Pagoda – the largest and most famous pagoda-complex in Burma. The golden bell-shaped pagoda dominates the skyline, and as I pressed my face against the window to get a better look, I saw a figure hurling towards me, a man banging his fists against the window where I was sitting. He wasn't much of a brute, but rather a slight figure dressed in rags and leaning on a crutch that was acting as a substitute for his missing leg. He held his free hand out towards me with a desperate gaze fixed on my face. I scrambled in my purse for cash, but couldn't make sense of the bills I had just exchanged at the airport. My tour guide instructed the taxi driver to drive off with haste before I could give the man a single *kyat*. Then the guide turned to me and said, "I am so sorry about that. We don't *really* have beggars in Yangon – he must have been crazy!" I looked back as the emaciated beggar-man hung his head and limped away.

The beggar-man, the protesting monk, the ethnic minority, the political activist or any other individual considered marginal in Burma must lay low to survive. They must not be visible in the 'socioscape,'[22] especially not when foreigners might see them and draw conclusions about the state of affairs in Burma. Modern day Burma is silently governed by a regime that habitually demands of the people forced labor, army recruits, supplies, money and compliance. Philippe Bourgois characterizes the "every-day" nature of this sort of structurally enabled violence as something that "runs rampant around us in a terrifying conspiracy of silence."[23] The banal character of violence and public

humiliation in Burma often manifests erratically, as one research collaborator explains:

> One incidence was while I was driving on the so-called highway in Burma and one of the, I think a colonel who was following from the back. I didn't know he was at the back of my car. I just kept on going and all of a sudden the guards come in front of my car stopped it and he was scolding at me: "Why you don't move or stop?" Like this, so I….. really make me upset and was so I… say you know "you can't do that to me".
>
> I was not aware of a military convoy escorting a colonel was at the back --- all the cars, etc must move to the side to make way for them --- I continued driving. Suddenly, the policemen, military personals all surrounded my car and shouted, screamed, scolded and about to beat me up for not moving to the side.[24]

People in Burma must be careful not to attract the watchful gaze of military personnel when entering the public realm. Michel Foucault notes that the panopticon, or the all seeing eye, when exercised by an institution of power, is the ultimate and most convenient form of control, it is "a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorisation to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself."[25] Foucault's concept of the panopticon is the internalization of an omnipresent gaze. It is that knowledge-complex which maintains the walls of the prison-state Burma has come to be: an interior prison, or an 'exit inwards' for Burmese people living on the margins. The above story, about military personnel claiming absolute right-of-way even on the public highway and punishing anyone insolent enough to be driving when a colonel approaches from behind, elucidates the kinds of everyday state-sanctioned bullying that occurs. As a submissive subject in the military state, you must at all times show compliance in the face of the all-seeing sovereign.

The violence in Burma can also be explicit, immediate and haunting. In a recounting of the theatre of violence that gripped the streets of Yangon in 1988, a research collaborator is witness to the crimes of the military, for which he still bears the burden of memory:

> In 1988 was the student uprising and the … I saw the military people… and I saw the military people killing all the students and the innocent people who were demonstrating peacefully. I mean just shouting … and they killed everybody.[26]

The streets of Yangon are on an average day deceptively tranquil, a slumbering public stopped in its momentum of promised prosperity, peace and development that never came. But beneath the surface lies a powerful tension between Burma's half a million military personnel and a civilian populace that overwhelmingly resents the autocratic rule of the Tatmadaw or the Myanmar Armed Forces[27]. In Burma, people are living with the social memory of violence following the protests of 8/8/88. An event, that proved through its terrifying spectacle of violence, that no matter how loud their voices cry, or how long they protest "the military would reassert its power.[28]"

To disrupt this image of the post-colonial come neo-militaristic frame of the Burmese city, the Burmese migrant, through the transnational flow of people in the Pacific, also known as the "Pacific shuttle", has made it to the Hawaiian Islands of the mid-Pacific.[29] As the world's most isolated archipelago, the Hawaiian Islands with its lush tropical landscape and strategic geographic position is a premier global tourist attraction as well as cosmopolitan hub for the trans-Pacific movement of people, goods and ideas. Hence, it is not surprising that among other South-, East- and Southeast Asian immigrants, Burmese are also settling here.

With approximately 75% of the population considered minorities, Hawai'i is the most diverse state in the U.S.[30] Compared to U.S. averages, where Asian-Americans are only 5.1% of the total population, in Hawai'i this group numbers at 38.3% of the population and when counting people with Asian ethnicity in combination with one or more ethnic "race", Asians in Hawai'i number at 55.3% of the total population.[31] The presence of peoples with Asian backgrounds in Honolulu, is evident in the city's various East and Southeast Asian cultural centers, Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist temples and a plethora of Asian culinary institutions that make up today's diverse cultural landscape on the island of O'ahu.

Burmese tend to create cultural enclaves and social spaces of 'ethnic' or national group interaction when living abroad, which is common amongst migrants everywhere. This is seen in Daly City, California, home to the largest grouping of Burmese outside of Burma and in Mae Sot, Thailand, a city principally comprised of Burmese refugees. However, mapping this ethnic landscape in Honolulu becomes problematic, as there are no institutions where one can go and encounter

Burmese, in contrast with other more dominant groups such as the Chinese, Japanese and Filipino community and cultural centers. My research collaborators estimate there being approximately 100-150 Burmese households in Honolulu and around 300 individuals of Burmese descent, but the exact numbers are difficult to obtain. Most of my research collaborators are of Burman (the dominant Burmese ethnic group) or Sino-Burman (Chinese) descent, but there are also some that report having mixed Shan, Mon and Karen ethnic lineage. Today Burmese émigrés in the United States total at about 100,200.[32] But the figures are believed to be much higher due to the significant number of Sino-Burmans who tend to identify themselves as Chinese or "other" in census reports.[33]

Ko ko Thett, writing for the online journal Burma Digest, explains that "Burmese living abroad can be divided into two major groups, exiles and expats."[34] Exile Burmese refers to those who emigrated in the wake of the 1988 student uprisings due to persecution by the military. Expatriate Burmese refers to those who resettled abroad during the Ne Win era to escape the hostile economic and social milieu, but also students who, as Kin-kin explains it, are "looking for greener pastures." Expatriate or overseas Burmese who have left Burma for economic reasons or to take advantage of educational opportunities in the United States are often highly educated and economically well-off. Most Burmese settlers in Hawai'i could be categorized as being a part of an "Asian settler colonialism," which according to Candice Fujikane, "implies being in possession of the political power to colonize." The following section details how Burmese and Sino-Burmese settlers in Hawai'i have come to occupy a bifocal status as (1) immigrants escaping the harsh conditions in Burma and (2) socio-economically successful Asian settlers.[35]

Evoking Cultural Capital: Making it on the Asian Settler Island

On a warm and clear Sunday morning during the fall of 2009, I set out to join an informal gathering of Burmese expatriates. I was invited to join gathering Burmese families at a public park for a picnic and in looking for the park I overlooked the signs pointing towards a hillside private gated community. Slightly bewildered, I turned around and found my turn, bring-

ing me to a large wrought iron gate with a manned security station at the foot of a grandiose hill with even more grandiose mansions atop it. "ID card please. Who are you here to visit?" I fumbled around my bag for my identification card and answered the security inspector nervously, "Uhm.. I am meeting some Burmese people in the park". The inspector did not look pleased, but after scanning my driver's license and taking note of my license plate number, he allowed me passage. As I drove up the hillside I passed splendid mansion after mansion until I reached the private park at the apex of the gated hillside community. A spectacular view overlooking the ocean, foot paths leading into the pleasant forest and a parking lot filled with top-line model cars made this seemingly casual picnic gathering in the manicured private hillside park a rather telling affair about the socio-economic status of many Burmese who have settled in Hawai'i.

Most literature on refugees and immigrants attends what Liisa Malkkii refers to as the "universal language of human suffering" by engaging in a refocuses on the psychological trauma of the itinerant individual.[36] This speaks to the many pitfalls of doing fieldwork amongst Burmese abroad, where the researcher imputes a socioeconomic status upon a group, not based on empirical evidence, but upon popular discourses which depict the Burmese person as poor and destitute. Although Asian Americans are the so-called American "model minority", according to Ong, one could easily assume that in comparison with business-savvy and entrepreneurial Chinese, Japanese and Koreans who have been living in Hawai'i for generations, the Burmese population would not be of comparable status.[37] However, contrary to exile Burmese on the mainland, Burmese expatriate research collaborators in Hawai'i occupy a comfortable socio-economic status where most are entrepreneurs, doctors, professors or business owners. This calls for an examination of how Burmese in Hawai'i have come to obtain a level of relative high socio-economic status despite the adversity they faced while living in Burma? Some research collaborators stress that living in Hawai'i is easy because the climate is similar and Burmese are not treated in the same way as on the mainland. In Hawai'i, Burmese blend in with other minorities like Filipinos, Vietnamese and Chinese. However, those who are able to stay in Hawai'i must have salient careers, be pursuing an education or have a supportive kin-network.

The majority of the expatriate Burmese that have settled in Hawai'i are of Chinese heritage from wealthy families in Burma, where they owned shops or traded goods with Chinese merchants. Much has been written about the Chinese business character and their astute ability for success in foreign business.[38] Ong makes the argument that we must be careful in pegging Chinese as operating solely in an Asian business mode, while recognizing their historic role in driving the mechanisms of late capitalism:

Indeed there may not be anything uniquely "Chinese" about flexible personal discipline, disposition, and orientation; rather, they are the expression of a habitus that is finely tuned to the turbulence of late capitalism."[39]

When General Ne Win came to power in 1962, he instated a discriminatory policy against all non-Burmans. This policy especially targeted wealthy Chinese merchants living in Yangon. Military officials set out destroy Chinese shops, shut down their schools and Mahayana Buddhist temples. This was done in the name of Gen. Ne Win's "Buddhist Socialism" programme, which initiated a hegemonic plan to reclaim Burma for Burmans. Most of the Sino-Burmans expatriates in Honolulu and elsewhere in the U.S. were victims of this discriminatory policy and it has been a major factor in the outflow of Sino-Burmans from Burma during the Ne Win period.

Two Sino-Burmans interviewed have been very successful after leaving Burma in the 70's. They left as a reaction to General Ne Win's 1962 military coup d'état and subsequent discrimination against Chinese or Sino-Burmans living in Burma as merchants. The Chinese in Burma were seen as elites and Ne Win's strategy for nationalizing the nation's assets, dramatically reduced Chinese economic and cultural influence – so much so, that many second generation Chinese or Sino-Burmans, who had been educated and brought up as elites, silently revolted and finally decided to leave Burma.

Mg Lu Lay was born and raised in Yangon. His family originally hailed from China and he had some minority Mon heritage. After the 1962 coup by General Ne Win, Mg Lu Lay decided that he and his wife needed to leave the country due to the difficult circumstances for Sino-Burmans. They were both studying medicine and saw no future for themselves had they stayed in Burma. So

they prepared to leave for Hong Kong. They were only allowed to leave with $5 and arrived in Hong Kong with barely enough provisions to survive. With some help, they were able to continue their medical studies in Hong Kong. In 1997, when Hong Kong was to be delivered back to China from Great Britain, Mg Lu Lay decided he did not wish stay there any longer. Meanwhile, his siblings and parents were granted residency status in the U.S., and he therefore applied for an immigrant visa and was eventually granted citizenship. He took up residency in Hawai'i, while his wife worked in Hong Kong and they are now reunified and are running a successful medical practice in Honolulu. The following is an excerpt of his personal narrative:

> Initially, the living conditions were really good [in Burma], we had a big house, chauffer, gardener. Everything was good. But then we look at outside, the people are getting poorer and poorer, there is no freedom of speech, assembly.
>
> […] they [the military] were very oppressive. When I graduated and decided to leave Burma. It took us about two years to leave Burma. We had to bribe every step to get a passport to leave Burma. So, in [the mid 70s] I left Burma to Hong Kong and started life. When I left, we were allowed to take only a very small amount. I think five US dollars only. And we start from five dollars until now. In [the 90s], I moved here to Hawai'i to escape from the Chinese takeover of Hong Kong.
>
> […] So, we voted with our feet and we left Burma. At that time we were young and aggressive, and there was no future for us because the education, medical facilities, everything was deteriorating. The time clock was stopped since 1962. Whereas the neighboring countries are slowly progressing, Burma is not making progress anymore.[40]

Candice, a middle aged mother from Yangon who lives in Daly City, California, says she came to America through a family reunification in her husband's family, but had nothing upon arrival. She worked in a garment factory in San Francisco in sweatshop conditions before she was able to find work in a Chinese bank. She could speak fluent Mandarin and some Cantonese, in addition to her English speaking skills, which gave her the proficiency required to work in one of San Francisco's banks that catered mostly to Chinese-Americans. She gives the following narration of her experience in a phone interview:

My parents, my mom and my dad they all emigrated from China. After Ne Win takeover, the business went down. And it went downhill and the government closed the businesses. The Burmese hated the Chinese – they would go to Chinese businesses and destroy them, they would come to your apartment and say "this is our house."

[…]My father envisioned living abroad and moving to the US. So, my father arranged for me to become engaged when I was 15 to a man whose family had plans to go to the US. At that time, my sister-in-law had already gone to the US and she petitioned to have the family come over.

So I lived with my brother-in-law's family and worked with my sister-in-law at a sewing factory in Chinatown. I was paid by the hour as a seamstress and by how many garments I made. I did not make much – about $100 dollars a month. I had Chinese speaking skills and had been taking night classes in accounting, so I went to a bank in Chinatown and they give me job – because I can speak Cantonese and Mandarin. A half year later I moved to another bank and after that I got a job with the [X company] for doing bookkeeping and accounting – I have been working in the [X position] for [X] years."[41]

The ascendancy of the Sino-Bumans in the United States and their ability to turn around an otherwise grim situation is not simply due to their capitalist habitus, but is owed primarily to their ability to use Chinese cultural and linguistic capital.[42] The reason behind the success of Burmese in Hawai'i is twofold. Firstly, Sino-Burmans have entered into a social semiotic arena where they represent "asianness" to some degree, which is a habitus of cultural capital in an Asian-dominated cultural and political immigrant economy. The example of Candice's life narrative is an apt illustration of this phenomenon; where she finds her way to the U.S through familial networks and gains access to jobs through her linguistic abilities in Mandarin and Cantonese. Sino-Burmans not only evoke the habitus of the modern Chinese merchant, but also the linguistic cultural capital required to ensure success. Thus, by seeking out members who share cultural, symbolic, linguistic, economic and political modes of exchange, the diasporic person finds herself "closer to home."

Secondly, Sino-Burmans are reenacting the cultivation of what has been termed *guanxi* networks and regimes that have for centuries been conjured at the edge of the Chinese empire.[43] These *guanxi* – or interpersonal and familial networks – have been instru-

mental in avoiding the othering and symbolic acts of violence against Chinese in Southeast Asia that have emerged as a reaction to the rise of the Chinese mer-

CINDY ELLEN RUSSELL / CRUSSELL@STARBULLETIN.COM
Ma Khin Tint paid respect to her elders yesterday at the Burmese in Hawaii Myanmar Thingyan celebration held at Wilson Elementary School.

Figure 1 Burmese New Year Celebration, 2008 (Photo by Honolulu Star Bulletin)

chant class. By organizing laterally through kin and personal networks, Sino-Burmans have been able to succeed through a "diasporan-Chinese modernity" in overseas semiotic systems, while retaining their Burmese identities, religion and language.[44] However, it is important to note that not everyone does as well as the Mg Lu lay and Candice. As one research collaborator notes, we must remember that Burmese in Hawai'i are very different form Burmese on the mainland as "Most of the Burmese that are here are doctors and well-off. But, on the mainland people are still struggling."

Thingyan: The Festival of Play and Renewal

My first encounter with the Burmese community in Honolulu came with an invitation to attend the annual Burmese New Year's Festival, *Thingyan*, also known as the Water Festival, which is celebrated throughout Theravāda Buddhist Southeast Asia. During the festival people normally honor their elders, eat together, dance, perform the *Than Gyat* (satire revue) and playfully sprinkle each other with water to "wash away any bad fortune of the past year and "transit" (*thingyan* in Burmese) to the New Year.[45]

There were approximately 50 participants at the gathering; most of whom had an organizational or ceremonial role in the events that followed. The festival began by having the younger generation pay homage to the elders by bowing to them and giving them gifts of water and shampoo. The theme of the festival is to give thanks for the harvest, but also to start the New Year by being cleansed by water and soap. As the festivities went on, there were traditional dances performed, as well as the customary *Than Gyat*, a row of unrestricted social and political satire. The *Than Gyat* was mostly performed in Burmese, but the whole room, including me, was roaring with laughter by the end.

After eating a hearty bowl of "mo-hinga", the Burmese national dish, made from fermented fish, onion and noodles, the water ceremony was set to begin. I had made friends with some young students sitting at my table and they convinced me to come outside with them to participate (which, I gladly did). Outside on the lawn, large barrels of water were standing ready and before I knew it I was soaking wet from head to toe. I ran, splashed, doused, spritzed and even plunged into the barrel of water with my new friends. For a moment I realized that all the older Burmese were still inside, watching the amusements outside on the lawn and I felt like this may spoil my chances of talking with some of them since I was now soaking wet and had been seen running after teenagers with water bottles like a mad woman. But they were exceedingly kind, and I made numerous new contacts and friends. Many of whom I stayed in touch with over the summer while I was in Thailand and visited Burma. They offered helpful advice about travelling alone in Burma and we scheduled meetings upon my return. For me, making an entrance into my field site meant shedding my research cloak and quite literally taking the plunge.

I returned a year later to participate in the annual *Thingyan* festival. This time, research collaborators displayed the same resounding warmth and hospitality that I experienced the first year, but after a year conducting interviews and attending social events with many of the *thingyan* attendees, my return was marked by a heightened feeling of inclusion and friendship. The *Thingyan* festival – is an organizing social event that promotes symbolic purification before the New Year, but it is also a way of accepting newcomers into the community and strengthening the social bond between Burmese in Hawai'i. Not all Burmese in Hawai'i

attend the *Thingyan* festival, but all are certainly expected and encouraged to come and participate. Most community members had a specific role to fill in the festivities such as making the food, performing dances, emceeing, ushering, cleaning etc. Non-Burmese are also welcomed to attend and to participate in the celebration. I had e-mailed one of the organizers to see if I could help with anything during the festival and he

Figure 2 Mo-hinga. Photo by Tani Sebro, 2010

wrote to me saying that I should perform one of the traditional Burmese dances. I was honored by the invitation, but terrified at the notion of learning a dance that I had no previous experience with on such short notice, so I declined. When the dance component of the festival program began, several research collaborators lamented that I was not dancing with them and promised that by next year's festival they would have me trained and ready to perform.

The *Than Gyat* is a kind of Burmese folk satire where the events of the past year are recapped with joy and laughter through music, poetry and story-telling to a drum beat. At the Thingyan festival, the performers along with festival participants went up on stage to take part in the *Than Gyat* that was lead by one of the Burmese uncles. The uncle puts on a silver makeshift hat and he proclaims that this is "the hat of a *bobo*, which means minister." He proceeds to make a series of jokes and jests, punctuated by the beating of a drum cymbal. Happily he likened the performers to a bowl of

mohynga: "Here we have noodles, egg, beans and fish mixed together in a bowl and together we have a *Than Gyat*."

As a subversive discursive genre, the *Than Gyat* is often used to lever cleverly disguised critiques at the Burmese military or about greater societal problems. For this reason, the *Than Gyat* is seen as a dangerous form of public "voicing" by the Military in Burma. The

"Buddhism is teachings": Burmese Diasporic Religious Engagement

The Burmese community in Honolulu is largely Theravada Buddhist, believing in the 'teachings of the elders' and adhering to the Buddhist acumen promulgated by the Pali Canon. Buddhism is deeply entrenched in Burmese cultural praxis and makes up much of the spiritual landscape of the nation, where

Figure 3 Than Gyat performance. Photo by Tani Sebro, 2010

famed dentist, cum public satirist Zarganar was banned from public performances after criticizing the military government for their oppression (Ko Thet 2006). In addition to banning Zarganar from the limelight, the military also disbanded public Than Gyat performance during future Thingyan festivals. Ko Thett (2006), writing for *Irawaddy* says that "*Than Gyat* scripts now have to undergo strict scrutiny by the censors, ensuring that the shows lose all their original sting." Many knew it was only a matter of time before the government would see this public form of mockery and "double-speak" be deemed as a potentially threatening arena, where the authority of the military could be undermined openly in the form of subversive jests.

over 85 per cent of the population in Theravada Buddhist.[46] The Buddhist institutions of merit-making and *kamma* (karma), account for the deep religiosity in Burma. In a country that for the past century has experienced harrowing violence, natural disasters, war and poverty – people seek refuge in the three jewels: the Buddha, the *Sangha* (monastic community) and the *Dhamma* (teachings). Buddhist practitioners in Burma told me that it is believed by many that the grim misfortunes of the nation are the result of *karma* accumulated in past lives. Making merit is the way to atone for misdeeds committed in past lives and to ensure an improved status at rebirth.

While most research participants I spoke with were Theravada Buddhists, some community members were Christian and some followed mixed Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist practices as a result of their Sino-Burman heritage. In Hawai'i, there is no Burmese style

Theravada Buddhist temple where the Burmese community members may come and practice their faith. Yet, there are Thai, Laotian and Khmer temples where practitioners go for special ceremonies. Most Burmese in Hawai'i simply practice at home, as this exchange with Kin-kin illustrates:

> Tani: Do you practice Buddhism?
>
> Kin-kin: I don't go to the temple or the pagoda… have a shrine in my house – why go out? Some people go to the temple once a week and they believe that if they are good one day it is ok to be bad another day.[47]

Kin-kin finds that Buddhism can be an inward experience and should be incorporated in everyday life. Ma Kyin Mi, who came to Hawai'i as a student, also feels that Buddhist practice is can be done at any instance and in the absence of religious institutions: "You know, you don't have to go to temple to practice – it is in your mind. My own belief is that as long as I have clean mind, do no harm to other and have self-conscience, I am religious enough."[48]

During my travels in Burma in 2009, I discussed with locals the issue of having a military regime that simultaneously uses violence to maintain power while adhering to Theravada Buddhist principles, within which non-violence is a central tenet. High-ranking military officials regularly erect pagodas and lavishly gild Buddha images with gold leaf for the accumulation of merit. A pagoda in Mandalay had images of the General Than Shwe, Burma's current military leader, prostrating before a Buddha image, during a ceremony where he donated large amounts of gold to be applied to the famous Maha Muni Buddha image. The event was widely advertised, but an informant told me that during the ceremony, no civilians were in attendance. This was partly out of fear and partly stemming from a deep sense of disagreement with the military's actions and their simultaneous adherence to Buddhist morality. Most Burmese do not believe that engaging in conspicuous gift-giving and public merit making will provide atonement in the afterlife for the kinds suffering the Burmese military has caused in the last decades.

Other research collaborators confirmed the trend towards practicing their faith in the privacy of their home, but expressed the desire to have a Burmese temple with Burmese monks where the community can go to observe rituals. There are some efforts underway

to make this happen and the Burmese Theravada Buddhists actively seek out opportunities for Burmese speakers to travel to Hawai'i to give "dhamma talks" about Buddhist teachings.

Dhamma Talk

In late fall of 2009, a research collaborator invited me via e-mail to join him and the Burmese community for a Dhamma talk on compassion and wisdom to be held at a Roosevelt High School in Honolulu. The talk was given by the Venerable Sitagu Sayadaw Ashin Nyanissara, who is a famous abbot from Sagaing, Burma with great repute throughout Burma and the Theravada Buddhist world. He is a well know socially engaged Buddhist, who has established numerous pagodas and hospitals as well as helping eradicate poverty and hunger in Burma. He recently sent 550 trucks with supplies to 3500 villages affected by Cyclone Nargis, in addition to rebuilding 5 High Schools, 12 Hospitals and 2300 monasteries in the area by his own account.

Figure 4 Gen. Than Shwe kneeling before Maha Muni Buddha statue, digital photo by Tani Sebro

The Venerable Sayadaw (chief monk or abbot), as he is referred to by the Burmese in Hawai'i is, however, most famous for his Dhamma talks, which can be found on YouTube and elsewhere online. To hear him speak in person is quite a rare and auspicious occasion. A research collaborator told me he was in Hawai'i for only two days in order to give the talk and collect donations, and he would be flying to the Big Island of Hawai'i after he gave his talk to see the spectacular geological activity at Volcanoes National Park. His sojourn in Hawai'i was a stopover on his way to a Theravada Buddhist monastery he has established in Texas.

Figure 5 A high-ranking military official applies gold leafs to the Maha Muni Buddha image, digital photo by Tani Sebro

The Hawai'i an based nonprofit Aloha Medical Mission assists the Venerable Sayadaw in his expansive charity work by sending medical teams to Burma along with equipment and monetary aid. Many of the doctors who assist with the Aloha Medical Mission's efforts were in attendance to hear the talk. Several of the Burmese doctors that live in Honolulu are affiliated with the Aloha Medical Mission and have taken several volunteer tours to Burma in order to provide relief for this impoverished or disaster stricken areas.

> Aloha Medical Mission goes to the third world country, to the developing country and then they treat the poor people so in Burma… mostly minor surgeries and they collect all the medicine equipment… and then they ship it to Burma and then they work for about five days and then they go back.[49]

In 2008, the team provided medical services to victims of Cyclone Nargis – being one of the only medical teams to finally be granted visas for entry on humanitarian grounds by the Myanmar Embassy in Washington DC, largely because of the Venerable Sayadaw's endorsement and support of the group.[50] My research collaborators informed me that there would be another mission to Saigaing in October of 2010 and that I should apply to join them to document their relief efforts.

The Roosevelt High School auditorium was well suited to host the *Dhamma* talk and the 40-50 visitors barely filled half the auditorium. The event was organized by several key figures in the Burmese community and attended by a diverse crowd of; mostly middle aged Burmese, but also some Westerners with seeming interests in Burma and Theravada Buddhism. In the context of not having a religious temple on island, the presence of this highly auspicious religious figure transformed the lackluster High School auditorium into a religious and social space. There was anticipation and excitement in the air as the Venerable Sayadaw was announced.

He entered from the back of the auditorium, coming down the stairway and making his way up to the stage where he was greeted with prostrations and honorific bows in the Burmese style. A few monks from the Thai-Laotian monastery were given seats to his far left. The Venerable Sayadaw himself wore a reddish-orange robe and entered with a commanding gait. He sat upon a gilded seat-throne atop the vast empty stage. Beauti-

ful flower decorations were arranged around him and he was handed a microphone. He took out a pocket watch and placed it on the small table beside him; he then began his talk by announcing:

> Good evening. [some members of the audience press their palms together and bow in reverence]. My name is Ashin Nyanissara. Ashin means reverend or venerable. Nyana – means wisdom. Issara – in Buddhist language also means king of wisdom. So you can call me the king of wisdom. This is my name. I am not going to say much about myself. I came here to share my knowledge, my experience with you. Buddhism is my life. Study for 50 years now. I am 73 years young, not old. Because my mind is always fresh, therefore I would like to say that my mind is fresh.[51]

The Venerable Sayadaw spoke eloquently and confidently, building his argument piece by piece, making apt illustrations and recounted anecdotes as he narrated. He spoke of how to keep a compassionate, yet wise mind and in line with the principle set forth by the doctrine of the middle path he promulgated that,

> Compassion and wisdom must be balanced. Sometimes someone has a good education, but does not have love and compassion in his heart. Educated man without compassion and wisdom is dangerous for the nation. A hard-hearted man is very dangerous for the nation. Brothers and sisters try to gain quality of the mind – wisdom. Quality of the heart – love and compassion. This is the essence of Buddhist teachings.[52]

He also claimed that Buddhism is not like other religions, because the Buddha is not a messenger of any God (unlike the messengers in the Abrahamanical religions) and because, as the Sayadaw puts it; "Buddhism is teachings, religion is beliefs."

The Venerable Sayadaw decided to take up residency at a hotel in Waikiki during his stay, even though members of the Burmese community offered to house him. During his talk the Venerable Sayadaw remarked that upon looking out at the crowds of beach-goers in Waikiki from his hotel-room window, it occurred to him that "people go to the beach to search for relaxation and to avoid tension and stress. But unsatisfaction is real suffering." Greed and the desire for more money make people so stressed that their only mode of relaxation is to lounge on the beach in Hawai'i. His advice was to look for this satisfaction within the teachings of the *dhamma*.

Figure 6 The Venerable Sitagu Sayadaw Ashin Nyanissa. Photo copyright Sitagu Buddhist Vihara

At the conclusion of the talk, the Venerable Sayadaw was asked to give more information about his charitable work in Burma. He stated that meditation and compassion are important for helping others, but in instances like Cyclone Nargis, "action must be taken to save the victims". Though the Sayadaw has lived for years in seclusion, for the purposes of mediation and fostering the 'right mind', he finds that "we cannot live alone – we must help others" and it is in this context that the Venerable Sayadaw founded and mobilized a missionary association to help thousands of Nargis victims. He ended on a pensive note stating that, "this is my donation. My charity is rooted in love, compassion and wisdom."

Socially Engaged Burmese

> Whenever I have a chance, I am not afraid to speak out for the silent majority of Burmese people suffering oppression.[53]

For many Burmese it is not a political choice to become engaged, but a moral/ethical principle on behalf of those who suffer under the current regime in Burma. 'Socially engaged Buddhism' is a concept derived from the Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh and encompasses the principles of "1) awareness in daily life, 2) social service, and 3) social activism."[54] It is a movement away from an inward-centered Buddhist practice and advocates the active use of Buddhist principles for the reduction of suffering in society and in nature. Some have argued that socially engaged Buddhism is based on a mixed set of principles, conflating

Western human rights regimes and environmental concerns with ancient Buddhist principles of non-harming (*Ibid*). Sulak Sivaraksa, a Thai scholar and socially engaged Buddhist explains that:

> Nonviolence is not only the absence of violence; its meaning is much deeper than that. If one stands by and allows an act of violence to occur without intervening in some way, from the Buddhist perspective this can be considered an act of violence.[55]

Socially engaged Buddhists are often lay people like Mg Lu Lay, who organizes fundraisers for the victims of Cyclone Nargis, helps refugees when they arrive in Honolulu and is trying to establish a Burmese Theravada Buddhist monastic community (*sangha*) in Hawai'i:

> Even though we voted with our feet and left Burma many years ago, we still have emotional bandage to the people of Burma and want to help. When we heard the Burmese government refused the foreign aids and many people were dying, I decided to call all my friends to help Burma, thus Cyclone Nargis funding raising was done. The real credit should go to the oversea Burmese and the people of Hawai'i who had dedicated their time, effort and generous donation to raise nearly one million dollars.[56]

The process of community formation for Burmese in Hawai'i involves a great deal of charitable work that is tied to the moral impetus of helping people in Burma that are suffering. Much of the organizing force behind the socially engaged activity of Burmese in Hawai'i stems from the Theravāda Buddhist model of Vipassana Hawai'i, a congregation that organizes regular mediation events and is committed to a number of charity projects in Southeast Asia.[57] Several expatriate Burmese, who have been in Hawai'i since the 70s, regularly attend Vipassana Hawai'i events such as their *dhamma* talks and meditation sessions. The *dhamma* for socially engaged Burmese in Hawai'i involves a crucial dimension of social engagement and compassion (metta) for others, and the organization serves to strengthen the social bond between overseas Burmese in Hawai'i with Buddhist practitioners and communities in Southeast Asia that receive their assistance.

A Karst Ethnography: Self-censorship and the Problem of Imparting the Past

While talking about the public's perception of the military, my research collaborator Ko Htin Aung, a slight man with an astute posture and keen intelligence, began turning in his chair while looking nervously at the recording device placed on the coffee table between us. "And what's the general perception of [X] as a person?" I asked him, wanting to know how high-ranking Burmese officials are percieved. His eyes flickered to the window and on the passersby outside before he fixed back on me. "My perception? Of *this*?" he stared at me in amazement. I realized that I had perhaps gone too far, dug too deep in my interview question. Ko Htin Aung hesitated for some time, as if searching for the right response before he smiled wide and replied: "My general comment will be that [X] is doing good for the country and for himself." This was not the response I expected. I was so puzzled by this that I qualified, "for the country and for *himself*?" He nodded and chuckled until I too smiled and we laughed together, as if we had just shared an inside joke I was not meant to understand. A few moments later he asserted, "But, how are you going to use this information? I'll be, I could be in trouble! Don't forget, I am going back."[58]

This was not an uncommon exchange in my interviews with Burmese research collaborators. Soliciting opinions about the Burmese government is entering into a dangerous discursive arena for Burmese abroad. It was my intention to take the life narrative approach by asking detailed questions about the life history of the interlocutor rather than focusing on a single theme in the semi-structured interview. However, it became clear during the course of my research that telling the life histories of my research collaborators is a dangerous task, due to fears of having their identities revealed. To give research collaborators a greater sense of security about how the interview text would be treated after the interview, I provided each of them with the option of editing transcribed versions of interviews. Most research collaborators opted for this and all agreed that this was the best way to ensure that nothing inflammatory was published that could be of potential harm to them or their families should the military ever discover the text and decipher who the speaker was.

The life history approach, which ideally involves the elaborate and contextualized telling of a person's life narratives over time, needs a wholly different approach in ethics amongst politically persecuted research collaborators.[59] In interviewing groups whose words are being followed and monitored by government agencies, the life history approach has the potential to harm the research collaborator more than it provides a vehicle that confers "dignity and recognition" of the individual's lived experience.[60] If the 'pure' version of the ethnographic text is envisioned as being as 'true' to what was actually said during the interview, one could visualize this as a metaphorical plane; a linear landscape without dents or imperfections. My interviews with diasporic Burmese however, took on a life of their own by first being filtered through the subjective lens of the researcher in the transcription process and later the intersubjective lens of the research collaborator, whose motives were primarily to ensure that no inflammatory quotes could be attributed to them, and second, to manage their own personal biography. In some interviews more than 60 per cent of the content was either erased or so drastically altered that it hardly resembled our original conversation. After innumerable edits and deletions, the landscape of my interviews began to increasingly resemble a karst topography.

Monique Skidmore writes about her experiences interviewing Burmese about their political activities when research participants "seemed to feel great personal pressure to tell their "open secrets" about military rule, despite the politically dangerous climate."[61] However, after interviews were concluded and the relief of the secret being told was over, the experience turned into dread over having the information lead back to the interlocutor, and Skidmore reports having to repeatedly destroy notes in front of interviewees who were afraid of military retaliation.[62] In another interview, a research collaborator, cognizant of the possible dangers and vigilance of the Burmese military apparatus, had me remove any mention of anti-military activity that involved family or friends in Burma. His opinions could get him or anyone affiliated with him in trouble:

> I don't have any affiliation to any political organizations, but just speaking on my own I want justice, I want freedom, I want people to come out of poverty and I want to help people as much as I can. But because I speak out and do the things for the people, poor people, I think the military government does not like it.[63]

Had I not been willing to share the transcribed version of my interview with the research collaborator and been open to changes to the transcript, I believe he would still be worried about my use of his narrations. Ethnographers need to pay close attention to the stakes involved in the ethnographic encounter for the research collaborator. Ultimately, it is better to omit some quotes and narratives from the ethnographic text if it is suspected that this information may lead to harmful consequences when made public.

Conclusion

This paper brings to light the historicity of diasporic Burmese narratives by exploring Burmese history through intersubjective interpretations of the past and present. By looking at the genealogy of transformation – from the daily lived experience in Yangon, to the experience of transnational migrations and itinerancy, and finally as a neo-colonial settler in Hawai'i – we see that the often harrowing memories of the 'past' have promoted an ethic of economic and educational success as immigrants in the United States. Organizing as a "community of practice," Burmese in Hawai'i engage in festival making, religious activities, charity events and social gatherings to reify their "common origin," as one research collaborator puts it. Despite the loss of ethnographic data in the editing and censoring process, the complete telling of life histories that underpin each anecdotal narrative has undoubtedly enriched this project. By taking the oral narrative approach, the ethnographer becomes intimately involved with the details of the research collaborator's life and can give a more nuanced holistic picture of the research community in the ethnographic text.

Burma scholars tend to end their reports on Burma on a solemn note. After decades of colonial malaise, military dictatorship, economic degradation and political isolationism there seems little cause for optimism when thinking about Burma's future. Thankfully however, after years of oppressive military rule, in 2010, Burma held its first elections in 20 years. International spectators widely condemned the elections as rigged and a sham – yet, conceding that these historical elections do signify some hope, albeit diminutive, in the possibility that Burma may have democratic rule in the

future. More importantly perhaps to the historiography of Burma – on November 13, 2010, the revered "Lady" of Burma, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was freed from the house arrest she endured for most of the last 21 years. These recent developments signal an emerging horizon for future ethnographic work on a more pluralized and democratized history of Burma. The role of overseas Burmese ought not be overlooked when understanding the changes that are now underway in Burma – changes that would not have come to pass without the activist work of exiled and expatriate Burmese.

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[1] Roxanna Waterson, "Introduction: Analyzing Personal Narratives," in *Southeast Asian Lives: personal narratives and historical experience*, ed. Roxanna Waterson (Singapore/Athens: NUS Press; Ohio University Press, 2007), 1-2.

[2] Mg Lu Lay, Personal Interview, October, 2009.

[3] When the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) illegally came to power in 1990, they changed the nation's name from Burma to the Union of Myanmar. Although many Burmese refer to their nation as Myanmar/Myanma (Eggli 2002:230), I choose to continue using Burma in line with Burmese activists and scholars such as Aung San Suu Kyi and Ardeth Maung Thawngh-mung. I do however, recognize that Myanmar is the ancient and perhaps more appropriate name for the nation. In my interviews with Overseas Burmese I found widespread disagreement amongst research collaborators about whether to use Myanmar or Burma in academic contexts.

[4] Paul Radin (ed.), *Crashing Thunder: the Autobiography of an American Indian* (New York/London: Appleton, 1962).

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[6] Waterson, Introduction: Analyzing Personal Narratives, 4.

[7] Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999).

[8] Thomas Hylland-Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London: Pluto Press, 2002) 152.

[9] Nancy Smith-Hefner, *Khmer American Identity and Moral Education in a Diasporic Community* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).

[10] Waterson, Introduction: Analyzing Personal Narratives, 3.

[11] Aihwa Ong, *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, and The New America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

[12] Lila Abu-Lughod, *Writing Women's Worlds: Bedouin Stories* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[13] Abu-Lughod *Writing Women's Worlds*, 14. As quoted in Waterson, Introduction: Analyzing Personal Narratives, 16.

[14] Hanna Arendt, "On Violence," in *Violence in War and Peace: an Anthology*, ed. Nancy Sheper- Hughes and Philippe Bourgo-is (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 35.

[15] Tani Sebro, "Burma: Reproductive Rights in a State of Violence," *San Francisco State University Treganza Museum Anthropology Papers: Human Rights in Global Light* I (2008): 101.

[16] For discussions of victimhood in wartime, see Liisa Malkki, "Commentary: The Politics of Trauma and Asylum: Universals and Their Effects." *ETHOS* 35, no. 3 (2007): 336-343, and Aihwa Ong, *Buddha is Hiding: Refugees, Citizenship, and The New America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), and Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Phillippe Bourgois, *Violence, War and Peace: an Anthology*, ed. Nancy Sheper- Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 2004).

[17] Ong, *Buddha is Hiding, 282*.

[18] *Ibid*

[19] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 2006), and Ailsa Henderson, Ailsa, *Hierarchies of belonging : national identity and political culture in Scotland and Quebec* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

[20] A major component of this study involves participant collaboration in the research process and final write-up stage. I adhere to The Chicago Guide to Collaborative Ethnography by committing to 1) ethical and moral responsibility to consultants; 2) honesty about the fieldwork process; 3) accessible and dialogic writing; and 4) collaborative reading, writing and co-interpretation of ethnographic texts with consultants (Lassiter, 2005). I see ethnography as a co-interpretive process whereby greater contextual-ization adds to the merits of research findings.

[21] A pseudonym is used for all research collaborators. With the exception of public figures such as the Burmese abbot the Vener-able Sitagu Sayadaw and names of individuals depicted in photos from local newspaper articles. Those individuals whose real names are credited in photos from newspaper articles have not necessarily been interviewed for this project.

[22] The concept of 'socioscape' constitutes the social topography of urban life in Chitra Sivakumar's "The Inner-City Socioscape: Seeking Selves and Wailing Silences." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2000) 35(38):3428-3434.

[23] Phillippe Bourgois, The Everyday Violence of Gang Rape. In *Violence, War and Peace: an Anthology*, ed. Nancy Sheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois (United Kingdom: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 344.

[24] Private interview, 2009.

[25] Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: selected interviews and other writings*, 1972-1977 (Brighton, Sussex: Harvester Press, 1980), 155.

[26] Private Interview, 2009.

[27] Burma is ranked 9th in the world for the number of military personnel on active duty per capita, according to a report published by International Institute for Strategic Studies; Hackett, James, The Military Balance (London: Routledge, (2010), all 492,000 of the armed forces personnel are considered to be on active duty. They also spend about $1.07 billion per year on the military sector, which is 2.1% of Burma's Gross Domestic Product.

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[28] Carolyn Wakeman and San San Tin, *No time for dreams: living in Burma under military rule*. (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 135.

[29] Ong, Flexible Citizenship, 1999.

[30] US Census Bureau, "Hawaii – State and County." (2012) Accessed May 25, 2014: http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/15000.html

[31] *Ibid*

[32] *Ibid*

[33] Zaw Oo, "Exit, Voice and Loyalty in Burma: The Role of Overseas Burmese in Democratizing their Homeland," in *Myanmar's long road to national reconciliation, ed.* Trevor Wilson (Canberra, A.C.T., Australia: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies; Asia Pacific Press, Australian National University, 2006).

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[36] Malkki, Liisa, "Commentary: The Politics of Trauma and Asylum: Universals and Their Effects." *ETHOS* 35:3(2007), 227.

[37] Aihwa Ong, *Buddha is Hiding*, 2003.

[38] Qinghuang Yan, *The Chinese in Southeast Asia and Beyond: Socioeconomic and Political Dimensions* (Hackensack, NJ: World Scientific Publishing, 2008).

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Mandi Sabun Mandi [Bath Soap]

A Short Story by Djenar Maesa Ayu

TRANSLATED BY JESSE CONRAD

Northern Illinois University

The snout of a luxury car with super dark windows turned slowly in the direction of the narrow drive with signposts reading IN. The drive shifted a bit and curved with orderly ranks of ironwood and thorn tree to the left and right. The luxury car stopped a moment in front of the receptionist's office. There was no sign that the owner of the luxury car would get out of the car. A uniformed man rushed out from inside the office clutching a ring of keys in his hand and signaling the driver of the luxury car to follow. Like a snail the luxury car moved to follow the man toward an open space in the garage. Deftly the uniformed man closed the rolling door just a moment after the luxury car sank into the garage. But in less than a minute, the rolling door opened a little. The body of the uniformed man exited in a deeply stooped manner and closed it again. He ran to the receptionist's office, switched keys, turned back to the garage, opened the rolling door, waited for the luxury car to exit the garage, and hurried to a bigger space. He stopped at a space on the second level. As before, he adroitly closed the rolling garage door within a heartbeat of its swallowing the luxury car and its shadow.

"You do this, knowing it's a nice car, and still you give it a standard space!" shouted his uniformed colleague a second after he came out the garage's door, all the while shoving a tip of tens of thousands of rupiah into his pocket.

"How would I know. Not every luxury car wants a VIP space. Especially if they take women from here, usually they rent a standard space."

"Yeah but these bitches aren't like the neighborhood girls around here, huh? Could you see? How was she, outrageous?"

"Not outrageous, more...like an angel. Like a movie star!"

"Yeah, movie star probably..."

"You're right too, probably a movie star. If there's a kid here who's hot like that, I'd let a month's salary go just for a taste."

They let loose a laugh, then ran immediately when they saw two other cars lined up in front of the office.

* * *

The mirror in the room was wet with condensation, same as the reflection of the human couple tight and wet on the disheveled bed. It became clear that the sweating woman gasped, "fuck me...!"

"They're definitely not married. Hey, Table, I'm not faking like I know. I do know. I'm the oldest thing in this room. Without me, this motel wouldn't be in demand. You know, Table, a motel without a mirror is so out of date! What? Variation? Could be. But variations like this aren't variations of marriage, Table. You don't believe it? Just look at the evidence later, my bet is the old man came outside. Ugh...it's impossible not to understand, see...? He came outside because he's afraid the woman will get pregnant. Condom? You're crazy, time has left you behind, you're such an antique thing. These days men are more scared of knocking a woman up than of coming down with a disease!"

The mirror then reflected the image of both of them. Their eyes were half open, their heads tilted upward, and their mouths panted passion. Their bodies wriggled awkwardly, incoherently.

"Oh Allah, he came inside her!"

"What? You didn't see it wrong? If it's like that, this time I lost my bet, Table. Turns out he's not scared of getting her pregnant. Maybe it's true, they're a husband and wife looking for a variation."

"You didn't lose the bet, you were right, Mirror."

"Huh, what do you mean, Table?"

"He didn't come in her vagina. He came in her mouth!"

* * *

The young girl looked indo,[1] white-skinned with those grasshopper legs, in the middle of checking herself out in the mirror in front of the sink. She brushed her thin lips with color. A middle-aged man, big-bellied, washed himself in the stream of hot water from the shower. The indo woman opened a packet of soap and handed it over to the man, who immediately shoved it back at her.

"What, Mas,[2] afraid your wife will find out if you smell like different soap?" the expression on the indo woman's face sullen.

"Not that, I get allergic if I use just any old soap."

"You are the smartest when it comes to finding excuses, Mas."

"I don't have a lot of excuses, in fact just one excuse, I'm allergic to cheap soap!" he said while shutting off the shower tap and straight away drying his body with a towel.

"Prove it if you're brave. I want to see if you really are allergic."

"Your proposal doesn't make sense. I'm already finished, but I'm ordered to shower again?"

"Love doesn't make sense, Mas, doesn't use reason. Let's go, prove it in the name of love!"

"Enough, Dear, don't be childish like that..." Si Mas hurried out of the bathroom to avoid the fight and the risk of being caught in a lie by his indo lover. The indo woman joined him from behind, still naked. Si Mas indifferently got into his clothes.

"What's the rush? You don't want some more?" with a sense of entitlement and affection the indo woman reopened Si Mas's fly.

"Sophie...!"

Sophie knew then that Si Mas was getting serious from the way he called her name without the sweet nothing Dear. But Sophie didn't want to give in. Instead she showered Mas with kisses.

"Sophie, careful, your lipstick'll rub off on my shirt, damn!" Mas started to get angry and pull away.

"Mas is a coward! It's true isn't it, you're still scared of your wife, you fake! Saying you already have separate beds, you're in the process of divorce, the proof..."

"I have a meeting, Sophie...it's uncomfortable and inappropriate for our arrangement to be seen!"

"FAKE!" Sophie shouted while grabbing the clothes scattered on the floor, then headed immediately to the bathroom and slammed the door hard. Si Mas sighed. He turned his cellphone back on. Immediately the phone rang. The phrase home calling blinked on and off. Mas ran to the garage, fired up his car's engine, then answered the phone.

"What, your cellphone was dead earlier?"

"I've been in a meeting since earlier, just now finished, and now I'm on the road." Si Mas faked it, honking the horn. Suddenly the rolling door was opened from the outside. Si Mas glared in the direction of the uniformed man who had opened the rolling door and gestured to indicate he should close it again.

"Your secretary said you were at lunch, which one's true?"

The uniformed man stood open-mouthed in the same place. Si Mas glared harder, silently mouthing the words CLOSE THE DOOR.

"Hey...meeting or lunch?"

"After the meeting straight to lunch. That's it, right, Ma,[3] the traffic is backed up..."

"Wait, you're driving yourself? Where's the driver?"

"When I was leaving the office earlier, I sent for a car from the car service that never showed up. Maybe he's having lunch too. Rather than be late, I drove myself. All right...?" Mas stopped talking and immediately shouted to the uniformed man, "Shut the door, moron!"

Sophie watched it all from behind the door of her room.

* * *

On the trip home Mas told the driver again and again to tell the Mrs. at home that earlier at eleven o'clock the driver hadn't been in his place because he was eating lunch. Clouds hung layered grey and red. The flicker of lights spangled the highway. Mas's mouth hummed his favorite song, which resounded from the CD, I don't like to sleep alone, stay with me don't go...

and immediately fell asleep with a faint smile on his lips.

Mas woke up when they arrived in front of the house. He loosened his tie and checked again for a compromising aroma still lingering on his body. After he was sure his situation was secure, Mas stepped with courage into the house.

"Where is the Mrs., Sum?" Mas asked the maid who now carried his briefcase.

"In your room, Sir," answered Sumiatun while bowing and edging slowly into the study.

Mas went straight for the master bedroom. His wife was reading in bed in a stimulating nightgown, but not enough to stimulate Si Mas, who suddenly felt his real age. Not like when he was by Sophie's side, he always felt far younger, strong and passionate. Si Mas unbuttoned his office clothes indifferently and asked his wife for his pajamas.

"No need to put clothes on yet, Pa...you look seriously tired, I'll massage you a little, yeah?"

Si Mas flung his body onto the pillowy, luxurious, king-sized bed and answered, "Just rub me with the coin, no need to massage me, Ma. I feel like I'm coming down with something."

His wife was dejected at being rejected so subtly. Nonetheless she remained obedient to her beloved husband.

"You have a coin, Pa?"

"Look in my pants pockets, Ma."

Mas closed his eyes as he indulged his nostalgia for Sophie.

The wife groped the pockets of her husband's pants piled on the floor. Her hand touched a small hard thing inside a pocket. She pulled it out. Her brow furrowed as she stared at the packaging in her hand that read, Soap – Beautiful Hill Inn, Bar, and Restaurant.

* * *

"Mirror, isn't that the woman who was here yesterday?"

"Yes, Table."

"But he's not the same man as yesterday."

"Table...Table...that's just how it is, no surprise. That guy is always switching partners here too."

"Wow...wow...in these modern times there is nothing extraordinary anymore, Mirror. Everything is super ordinary."

The couple huffed and puffed in bed. The woman's fingers clawed the sheets into disarray. The man's hand grasped the woman's hair tightly. After that they were quiet in their togetherness. The only thing to hear was the huffing of their breath, which gradually quieted down.

All at once the silence was broken by the sound of a ringing cellphone. The woman's hand sought her cellphone on top of the table while her body was still under her partner.

"Sophie! We have to talk!"

"I can't right now."

"Don't avoid it, this is important! I'll call you in half an hour after I get a room number!"

Sophie giggled in her heart, then smiled intimately and intently at the man.

"I have to go right now, there's some work I can't put off."

The man, who looked younger than Sophie, kissed her forehead as though he already understood what Sophie meant. Sophie moved to the bathroom. Under the shower's spray of hot water, Sophie giggled, imagining Si Mas's expression, which must be quite dejected just now. Then she finished her final rinse, without using bath soap.

Jakarta, 15 April 2001

dedicated to all my girlfriends

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EndNotes

[1] Of mixed parentage, White (historically Dutch) and Indonesian.

[2] Polite term of address for an unmarried young man but which also might be used by a wife to address her husband. Here, though, it is part of the character's proper name. His full name is Si Mas, and with *si* being a definite article, the character's name, if it weren't for the "hip" connotations, could be translated as *The Man* (except that translation would also maybe serve to conflate him with *sang pria* [which also translates as *the man*], another character at the story's end [don't worry, not a spoiler]). Given these complications, we're leaving the name intact as *Si Mas/Mas* in the story and dealing with the dual meaning here in the apparatus instead. Also, it's pronounced like *sea moss,* if you're interested.

[3] *Ma* (and, per later, *Pa*) are terms of endearment used by spouses in Indonesia.

Taibung Mipanlangi Wamgmada
[Beyond the Web of the Material World]

A Poem by Irom Sharmila

TRANSLATED BY SUMITRA THOIDINGJAM

Jamia Millia Islamia, India

Note on Manipur:

Manipur is one of the seven northeastern states of India. Politically it has been part of British India since 1891. Manipur was granted Independence by British along with India on 15 August 1947. It was merged into the Indian Union on 15 October 1949. Many still question the legitimacy of the merger agreement.[1]

Geographically, of the northeastern states of India fall under Southeast Asia. The ethnicity and culture of the people inhabiting these states exhibit affinity with Southeast Asia. The region shares a border of 1624 kilometers with northwestern Myanmar. Manipur is called India's "Gate way to Southeast Asia" owing to its geo-political location between India and Southeast Asia. It is home to 29 Government recognized Scheduled Tribes and a host of diverse communities. Each community has their own distinct traditions, culture and dialects. The lingua franca of the people living in Manipur is Meitelon, the language spoken by the majority ethnic group Meites. Meiteilon is a Tibeto-Burman language.

Irom Sharmila:

Irom Sharmila is a poet an activist who has been on 'fast-unto-death' since 5 November 2000 against the draconian Arms Forces Special Powers Acts, 1958 (AFSPA). As per provisions of the act a non-commissioned can shoot to kill, search, damage property, use force, arrest on the mere suspicion that someone has committed or was about to commit a cognizable offence. The Act further prohibits any legal or judicial proceedings against army personnel without the sanction of the Central Government. Thereby, endowing an impunity which makes more than sixty thousand military and paramilitary stationed in Manipur invincible to legal prosecution. There have been numerous cases of human rights violations, rape, murder, extra judicial killings, fake encounters, etc. Till date there has not been a single prosecution till date.

She began her non-violent resistance against the AFSPA after military personnel of the 8th Assam Rifles gunned down 10 innocent civilians waiting for a bus in Malom, Manipur, on 2 November 2000, following a bomb attack on an Assam Rifles convoy by insurgents. Irom Sharmila calls her struggle 'her bounden duty'.

The poem "Beyond the web of the Material world" is a reassertion of her faith in God and her struggle. It can be interpreted as a critique on the "gods," or those that wield authoritative and legislative power, who are responsible for the current social and political predicaments in Manipur. She remains steadfast on her duty to 'fast-unto-death' until the AFSPA is removed from the northeastern states and Kashmir. She was arrested on charges of 'attempt to commit suicide' under Section 309 of the Indian Penal Code and is kept in solitary confinement in the security ward of the JN Hospital in Imphal, Manipur.

Beyond the web of the material world

Beyond the web of the material world

Riding the royal boat of winds

I went to the world of the Gods.

Perhaps my Creator wishes to test me

And brought me to his land for that purpose

Impressed and yet, terrified

When my eyes met theirs

The gods in their cloud form

An astonishing avatar!

In the restlessness of the vacuum,

How at ease they appeared.

The memory sends a shiver down my spine.

Untethered to the cunning world,

Where souls congregate

There is no room for the human body

Where are their eyes, and ears?

What about legs and the hands?

I never thought Gods

Would be so different from humans

We have been told there are no differences

And accepted unquestioned

Perhaps, because no one compared us to them,

How and what is going on there?

How can one compare that to the human world?

Where birth or death is unknown

Is there an end to all these startling impossibilities?

I will report all that I know

Unopened eyes can see

Sealed ears can hear

About the human world

And every minute detail about the world's soul.

They are higher beings

They control the infinite space

They have no pride

Highs and lows do not exist.

Unlike our world, there is no greed

Therefore there is neither disheartenment nor dis-
content

And one does not garb all for oneself.

There is neither loss nor gain.

Nor burden in their hearts.

Being idle at all times is their duty.

Their speed is fast as speed can be

There is nothing they cannot accomplish or reach

Their truth is the only truth

Therefore, they scorn falsehood,

And chastise human misdeeds,

They will never pardon us from persecution.

EndNotes

[1] For example, one of the major insurgent groups, United National Liberation Front (UNLF), sees the Indian government as a colonial force and has demanded a plebiscite.

Lom Læng [The Dry Wind]

A Short Story by Lao Khamhawm

TRANSLATED BY JOSEPH RUBIN

University of Washington

The Dry Wind, was written by Khamsing Srinawk, pen name 'Lao Khamhawm', One of the goals in writing what he called his "folk tales" was to give a voice to the life experience of his people, the villagers of Northeast Thailand. His work is widely appreciated in Thailand and has been the subject of a number of critical studies. Additionally, his work has been translated into a number of languages, including Swedish, the language of the country that took him in after fleeing the political crackdown in 1976. Lao Khamhawm writes in a sparing evocative style that invites the reader to question and wonder about the lives of his subjects and the forces that drive their stories. I hope my translation has captured some of the sweet sadness of this beautiful story.

The Dry Wind

"Ooh, may you go with speed and be born again, go be born in a land that is prosperous where the gardens, fields, and jungle are broad and wide, where the earth is fertile, knowing not drought, knowing not famine. Be born again and may your body be healthy, knowing not pain, or pleading as in this life."

An emaciated old man, cheeks shrinking and sinking into his cheekbones until they curved right out to level of his nose, spoke while spreading his hands out to sweep ashes together into a ridge about the length of an arm and the width of a foot. The scrawny stalks of his arms and the lines of its sinews made both the hands that were moving on top of the dirt look like brooms.

"Now, we re-form the body... this is the head" he said, speaking while scooping with his hands the eastern side of a mound of earth making a round shape like a dried coconut. After that, he slid his hands lengthwise following the mound and continuing toward the west[1]. "These, the arms and the legs" he said, while using the edges of his palms to shape ridges of ashes into the form of arms and legs. After he was finished creating the crude figure, the old man swept the dust and ashes off his dark pants before he went together with the neighbors who were sitting and watching quietly. A few seconds after that, the husky sound of the robe prayer like the sound of a wild duck brayed out. The quietness of the jungle in the dry season brought out the chilling loneliness of the prayers.

In truth, it wasn't just one old monk saying the prayers alone. No, there was a novice monk[2] a little more than ten years old sitting beside him. The reason there was no sound of praying coming from his mouth was that he had just been ordained two days earlier, it was an ordination specifically for the funeral and the novice monk was the only son of the deceased.

When the ceremony of gathering the bones, done in abbreviated fashion, was over the monks and small group of friends got ready to go home. At that time the sound of a voice was heard, "What about the novice monk?" Possibly because the words mentioned were not directed toward anyone in particular the people who heard them did not know if it was a question or just a remark. So, nobody answered until it was asked again, "Who will the novice monk stay with or will he stay here with the old monk?"

When the question was directed straight to the old monk, whose skin on the top of his head withered down to the shape of his skull underneath, answered

indifferently "oh, it looks like they're saying family will take him in, why don't you just ask them yourself?"

The old monk spoke and at the same time glanced the way of the man from another village who was sitting amongst the group. At first he wasn't really noticed by anyone. Even though you would think he probably was family or a friend of the deceased it looked like nobody had given a thought about the relationship between the two.

Therefore, when the monk spoke up they all attentively examined the face of the man from another village and noticed the obtuse almost square shaped face, the rather thick lips, and the tuft of eyebrows. The features all spoke to the strong resemblance between him and the owner of the remains and ashes.

"Oh, so you're family of Gong."

"I'm his older brother", he replied simply.

When he noticed that the villagers' curiosity was still not satisfied he continued, adding

"I'm Gong's real brother[3], same mother and father".

"Oh, is that so?" Then, after a brief silence, "The truth is, brother Gong was a man of few words so we really don't have anyone who knew a lot about him".

"Myself, I never really could make it out for a visit", the person who said he was the brother spoke shamedly, "and my brother, he would only come out to visit once in a while."

"Where is your house uncle?"

"Starfruit Hill."

"Starfruit Hill where?"

"Old Starfruit near the town market."

"Oh, I see. I thought it was the Starfruit Hill a little ways into the jungle."

"So, what does uncle do for a living?"

"I farm rice, plant some vegetables, do some selling. I'm also a carpenter. During the dry season I get some construction work at the market."

"Probably enough to make a living, huh."

"Yes it's enough."

"I feel sorry for Gong, he was a good person, not some who drank and gambled.
He knew about saving money, loved his child and wife, he shouldn't have had such a short life."

"This is a matter of karma", the old monk interjected.

"Yes, he was some who had sinned before and had the karma to have had a wife who was a sickly person. He nursed her for many years. Lost a good part of his orchards and fields. After his wife died I thought he had got past the bad fortune but he was struck by this illness. It just grabbed him and got into him.

Walking out from the cemetery, the old monk and the novice monk led the way. The rays of the sun started to get stronger, but it was still cool and comfortable. The jungle trail was peaceful and quiet with only the sound of a bird interrupting every once in a while.

"At your home in Starfruit Hill Village you probably have some place to take care of a buffalo don't you?"

The old man who was the leader of the ceremony asked again as they traveled out from the edge of the jungle.

"Yes grandfather, we have room."   he answered, before they split up and went their separate ways.

The question and answer of the last part of the conversation was an emotional subject for both parties. The conversation abruptly ended. The people leaving the cemetery walked, following each other silently until they split up and went into the village.

The reason for what had just happened was rather widely known. So it wasn't strange at all that everyone became speechless. If you go back and think about it the truth is the story just started only a year ago or so. For people in communities of jungle villages who don't encounter complicated situations like this very often, most of them remember it well. Especially for old man Kamdee, it was like it just happened yesterday. The old man, as a neighbor who lived right next door, remembered one day when the individual for whom he just had performed the internment ceremony at the cemetery, got some advice that he should change his doctor and the medicine that he was taking. Soon after his wife died, with a gaunt and haggard face, he went to consult with his older neighbor. 'I have a something I'd like to discuss with you. Yesterday the teacher at the school recommended that I should change my doctor and my medicine. The reason is with the old doctor and the medicine he's been giving me I still haven't gotten better. Teacher said that some of his relatives who were sick with the same thing as me, once they changed their doctor and medicine they got better.'

"That sounds good brother, I think that you should give it a try." The old man examined his hopeless face inquisitively.

"But I'm afraid I would have to sell more of my land. I'm worried about Bun Gong, if I die I'm scared that he wouldn't have a place to make a living".

The old man remembered that he was speechless for a moment before answering,

'If you have to, you should sell the buffalo. The farm, keep it, you can think about it later on. It's probably a better idea.'

Now it was the turn of the man with the pallid face to be still for a bit before his colorless dry lips moved and faintly said,

'But I feel sorry for my son. He's taken care of it since he was small. He loves it. Last year I rented it out to plow fields. He still snuck off to and took care of it himself.'

'He probably loves his father just as much. How old is Bun Gong now?'

'He's coming up on ten years old already.'

'Probably old enough to talk about it and have him understand.' The old man gave a long sigh. 'The farm, keep it. Land is getting harder to come by every day. Buffalos die or can get stolen or killed by thieves.'

The old man still remembered the lifeless eyes that stared at him while he was speaking. Even though he didn't respond with anything, the elder thought that Gong probably agreed with him because three or four days after that, he heard Gong had sold the buffalo to the chief of the next village. But it looked like he sold it for only one day. The next morning he took his son and asked the chief to give it back because he couldn't stand feeling sorry for his son who had cried the whole time. He asked to exchange it and mortgaged his farm instead.

When they got to the crossroad between the village and the temple, the old man and the five or six of his neighbors split up and went back to the village. The uncle then went into the temple by himself. When he arrived he found his nephew had already taken off the monk's robe and was waiting there with a small package of clothes and some scraps of food leftover from the old monk's breakfast. Uncle and nephew paid respects to the old monk and left the village. The uncle walked, leading the way letting his nephew ride on the back of the buffalo following. It was a rather quiet journey. The entire way there was only the comforting sound bing beng bing beng that came out from the bells hung around the neck of the buffalo. The sound of the bells was unusual because normally they tend to have just one basic note. Around the middle of the day, when they stopped to have some food, the man who was uncle asked, "Bun Gong, your bell has a beautiful sound, who made it for you?"

"I made it myself, it wasn't hard at all."

When he took a closer look he saw that the sound was produced by puncturing holes in the bottom of two empty milk cans, tying them together with plastic cord, and then coiling up some large nails into a ball and hanging them inside. It became a bell that produced an uncommon sound.

The journey of the uncle and nephew ended with them getting home around nightfall. But it was still time before the aunt would return from the market. Bua Li and Bua Ly, older daughters who were becoming young ladies, daughters of the previous marriage of uncle's wife, were busy in the kitchen. There were only the younger children, two boys running and playing in the middle of the front yard that ran out to the gate to meet them. Bun Gong jumped off the back of the buffalo. Father called one of his sons to come take the rope and the lead the buffalo to tie it up to the house posts. The other boy ran over to get the package of clothes to keep it up inside the house. Both of the kids were full of excitement. They ran up and down the stairs many times. The faces of the two daughters appeared and they came out and greeted Bun Gong warmly.

"Younger brother is going to stay with us. If he needs something, help him o.k.?" Father turned and spoke with his daughters before turning around and sitting himself down on the porch.

Before he had a chance to sit and rest and still feeling uncomfortable not knowing where to set up a good place for the new person to sleep, just then he heard the sound of the minibus pulling up to park in front of the gate. Even though everybody already knew who was walking up to come into the house, they all lifted their heads to look.

"Father and Bun Gong got home already mom!"

"Bun Gong brought his buffalo too. Its name is Mudder."

The two sons raced each other to speak up from under the porch. But there was no sound of an answer

from the mother, only the intermittent bing beng ringing out.

A little after that, Bun Gong's relatives led him by the hand outside to the front yard.

Bua Ly, the second daughter, hurried down and took the bags off mother's shoulder. After returning the children's respects, the woman who was aunt stood and stared at the face of her nephew from the jungle village for a long couple of seconds before asking,

"Hey, are we a little shy here?"

Just as if he had the feelings in his heart called out by the questioner, the small new kid lost his confidence and his lips quivered as he answered,

"No, I'm not shy."

It was dusk, too dim for her eyes to make out the appearance and complexion of her nephew from the jungle village. But it looked like his answer would help change the way that the person who asked felt about him. The aunt raised her hand and swept the sweat from her face, then cleaned off with her sarong before reaching her hand out and putting it on top of the bald-head[4] of her nephew.

"Like that, it's fine. This consumption is a disease that eats up everything you have, but your aunt doesn't really have anything for it to eat so it doesn't matter."

The short greeting and the expression of the aunt was able to reduce the pressure inside the chest of the uncle, who was sitting and listening carefully up in the house, nervously watching over the meeting between aunt and nephew. The whole time he was sitting, heart beating with fear listening to the words of the conversation between aunt and nephew, the image of the pile of ashes that were swept up and shaped into the crude figure came up again. He felt like his heart was being squeezed, he wanted to speak, to release something out but couldn't say anything. When thinking back on the truth of his life, even though he had the status of husband, in the eyes of his neighbors and the occasional ridiculing words of his wife he was just a "coming

with empty pockets" kind of husband. That's what they said about him. Even though his wife was a widow with children and wasn't well off, she still had a home, a place to stay, had a small field to rent out and had a garden big enough to plant vegetables and sell them in the market. It was enough to make a living. As for himself, his work and trade was only that of a carpenter, one who learned from being an assistant. He had just enough skill to do this type of work. But during those stretches when couldn't find steady work for a long time, the husband "with empty pockets" would then become the "reliant husband", afraid of offending her no matter what he was doing.

Forcing himself to bring his orphan nephew along therefore became the most important decision that he ever made during the whole time they had lived together. But this matter, if you were to say that it was something he did without consulting his wife first, it probably wouldn't be exactly right. Because when people came over and gave them the news about the death of his brother he brought up the issue of his orphan nephew, hinting he might have to bring him back and take care of him. His wife's answer wasn't harsh as he thought it would be. She just said 'Now he'll bring this disease in and infect my kids.' It was because he wasn't brave enough to bring the issue up right at first that he was late for the cremation ceremony of his brother. But still, he considered it a good thing that he was able to get there in time for the ceremony to gather the bones the next day.

So when he saw nephew following close behind his aunt and both coming up the stairs, the uncle breathed a sigh of relief and spoke out telling them to move the package of clothes in to the same room with his two sons.

With what had developed not being as terrible as the scenario he had worried over, the uncle believed that the main reason was because his nephew had not come "empty handed" as his wife liked to sarcastically say when she was feeling bitter. After she found out that apart from having a buffalo Bun Gong also had rice at the old home, payment in kind for renting the buffalo, it looked like aunt had even more kindness in her heart toward the small boy from the jungle village. It wasn't only the uncle who breathed out a sigh of relief upon

seeing the heartful meeting between the aunt and nephew, even the kids couldn't help but be astonished.

Even though the reality was they knew full well about their blood relationship, but still, the distance between them during the time that had passed had made it so they barely knew each other's faces. This was despite the fact that father and mother had talked a little bit about Bun Gong's family. They weren't mentioned in a very flattering way, especially his mother. Usually she was talked about in a tone that covered up their dislike. They remembered well one time that uncle brought aunt to see a doctor at the market and they came by and stayed overnight because there wasn't a car going back to their village. That night their aunt laid down and coughed almost the whole night. When both left the next day, mother assembled them all and they did a big house cleaning. The mat that aunt slept on, mother ordered that they take it out and throw it away. There was the sound of a big to do with father and she forbid looking for trouble and this bringing disease in to the house and contaminating it. Later, another time two or three months after they got news that their aunt had died, the uncle went out from the jungle village to buy medicine in town. When the bus stopped to drop off and pick up some people at the village, uncle came to visit father, rest and drink some water for a short while. When he left, mother made them scrub down the place where uncle sat and take the bowl he used to drink with and wash and polish it for an hour. They thought that the family from the jungle village probably had heard some of these stories because at first when Bun Gong came to move in under the same roof he looked lonesome and reserved. They sometimes saw Bun Gong hiding and crying.

At first, he would usually go busy himself with his Mudder almost the whole day. Then later, when the rainy season came, a neighbor of uncle contacted him to rent Bun Gong's buffalo to plow his rice fields. This made him even more lonesome. The neighbor spoke with the boy and asked him to accompany him and take care of Mudder. But the aunt was a busybody and asked for higher rents. The renter didn't agree so they split up. Bun Gong then worked at helping his older relatives plant vegetables.

Anyways, even though the family relationship started from a point of estrangement, with the sense of blood relations Bun Gong and his brothers and sisters got used to and close to each other in a short time. Aside from helping Bua Li and Bua Ly planting vegetables, there were many times on the days when the village bus would leave mid-morning that he would help his older sister carry the vegetables to get them to the market around at dawn. The truth was the distance from Star-fruit Hill to the market was only six kilometer posts. The road from their village cut past the middle of the rice fields. It passed the row houses that were scattered about. Before entering the town, even though he felt a little excited, being a kid from a jungle village made him feel more scared of the activity and confusion of the people in the market than excited. More than that, he found the smell of the town and the rotten putrid smell of the market that wafted out almost half way to the village was like poison to his nose. It made him nauseous. But what brought him to the point of throwing up was the stinking bloody smell of the slaughterhouse located on the side of the road just outside town. At first the kid from the jungle village didn't know what that obscure building set on the edge of fields which usually had flocks of crows perched around it, was. Until one day when he asked his sisters.

"It's a place where they kill animals, Bun Gong."

"What animals?"

"All kinds of animals. Pigs, cows."

At the beginning of the season the rain poured down hard for many days in a row. It then gradually let up, and by the time they had reached the middle of the season everything had dried up. The buffalo was led back, and it was sent without any rental fees. Aunt looked more disappointed and sullen then everyone else. The lady started to complain sarcastically,

"If it's going to be like this, go ahead and die. Aside from the shit[5] under the house, I just don't see what benefit there is in it."

Everybody in the house knew well that Bun Gong's aunt was speaking of Mudder. Some days at dinner time when everyone was all together, after complaining about her troubles in making a living, the lady would finish up with the sentence that went "And...I have the problem... to go and look for food from somewhere to feed him...to feed both of them all year long."

Nobody knew if Bun Gong understood or felt anything from the constant complaining of his aunt. Only some times when he was helping water the vegetables during the afternoon, he would speak with his older sister in a simple sound, "Sister Bua Ly, around my village it rains really good. When I'm a little bit bigger I'm going to take Mudder back there and grow rice. Would Sister like to go back and plant rice with Gong?"

"Yes, I kind of would like to go."

This answer would draw a dull smile to his face. But not long after that there was an event that altered the way things were to go. Or to say, an event that caused a meeting up with the end of the line probably wouldn't be wrong. Because when two or three bombs coming from a group brawling in front of the music stage at the temple festival exploded, the result was dead and injured people scattered all over. Bun Gong and his two little brothers were in the group of people who were seriously injured. All three of them were urgently rushed to the hospital and they stayed there for a month taking in blood and intravenous fluid. After recovering from this shock, the constant complaining of the person who was aunt became even angrier, to the point of arguing. Each and every day things in the house were getting more serious. The suffering showed on the face of the uncle. He was running back and forth between the village and the hospital day after day. The more time passed by, as the condition of the patients was improving, the gloomier the face of the uncle. Finally, when finding out the day that they were going to get their patients back, the tension in the family reached the breaking point.

"I can't pay!" aunt shrieked out. "The bill for the blood, the medicine, all that. If you can't take care of it, just leave him there at the hospital. I'll pay just for my own kids."

"There's still some of his old rice and rent money from the buffalo left over. We can sell…"

"No, I won't allow it. If you sell it where do we go to get food for him to eat?"

The fighting and arguing was harsh and went on for a long time. It was the first time the husband had raised his voice in an argument. Alarmed, the two daughters fled and stayed outside the house until dark. When they came back inside they found both father and mother asleep with exhaustion. The next day the family was silent like they were in an abandoned house. Father disappeared before dawn. When he returned it was almost dusk. The standoff continued another two or three days. Father then invited his two daughters to go with him to get their brothers at the hospital without telling mother. He said it was a special job. After picking up a number of passengers, the old minibus then pulled out to go get the three sick people at the hospital. Even though they were skinny and pale, the two younger brothers looked strong enough to lean against the backrest. Just Bun Gong still had one of his legs in a cast. He couldn't sit down, so he had to lie down on the floor of the bus.

Leaving the hospital, the minibus drove back and parked near the pier for a long time. Late in the afternoon they started out from the market. They stopped and picked up and dropped off passengers continuously the whole way. The sick people and the people who came to get them sat leaning against each other quietly. The bus ran slowly. After a little while they got to the bend that would take them out of town. But before the driver was able to shift gears and increase speed, they saw another group of passengers with a big pile of their belongings. When he saw the big stack of luggage the driver turned of the engine. There was the sound of a few words asking about the fare, and then the passengers and the driver's assistant quietly transferred the stuff up into the bus.

But before the driver could start and get the bus moving again, like he just woke up from a sleep, Bun Gong opened his eyes raised his head and asked,

"Sister, are we home yet, Gong can hear…" He had yet to finish speaking when, out came the sound of him retching and throwing up.

The two young girls listened carefully. When they could catch the meaning of what Bun Gong was trying to say, both of them turned and stared at the face of father who was sitting with his eyes closed, leaning back as rigidly as a statue. The color of the afternoon sunlight smearing across the sheets of rice fields on both sides of the road came out a faded yellow. The wind from the fields blew a gust of hot air, blasting it into the bus. The two girls turned and looked back at the pale face of the owner of the question…there was no answer…except for letting the profusion of tears fall quietly onto the mounds of his cheeks.

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EndNotes

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[1] Thai culture associates the east, the direction from where the sun rises with birth and the setting sun of the west with death.

[2] In Thai Buddhism *novice monks* can be children or adults but it is understood as a temporary status where after the individual studies a certain period of time they may leave and live as laymen, or decide to commit to the monkhood. In addition to being the religious center, the temple serves as a social center from where charitable activities are organized as well. Orphans often became wards of the monks.

[3] The Thai pronouns for brothers and sisters mean literally, older or younger siblings. When talking in informal settings an older person maybe referred to as *older sibling,* and a younger person as *younger sibling*. Pronouns for most all relatives maybe used with people who are not family whenever the age relations between the conversants reproduce family relations.

[4] Novice monks traditionally have their heads shaved.

[5] Buffalo droppings are used as manure.

Explorations of Historicization and Oral Traditions:

A Translation of the *Dalikal Nao Magru*

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Despite their small population there has been a recent trend of academic interest in the Islamic influenced Awal minority of Vietnam. The Awal are commonly seen as being part of a symbiotic religious system that is dependent on both Awal and Brahmanist influenced Ahier elements. From the perspective of anthropologists of religion, the Awal community has received recent interest in the discussions of the nuances between 'syncretic' and 'polythetic' religious practices. Although these discussions have consistently referenced the importance of Cham manuscripts, studies rarely to introduce new source material along with a detailed review of the historical context for the manuscripts production. With this circumstance in mind this article introduces a historical contextualization, translation and analysis of the Cham manuscript: Dalakal Nao Mâgru. Through this study of the manuscript Dalakal Nao Mâgru this article argues the examination of a single manuscript can bring new angles to light.[1]

Introduction

The Cham manuscript Dalikal Nao Magru is an example of localized, Islamic-influenced literature and is a popular story amongst the Cham minority of Vietnam. Today the Austronesian Cham population totals nearly 167,000 individuals mostly in the provinces of Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan, Tay Ninh, An Giang and in the urban area of Ho Chi Minh City. In Vietnam, the Cham are largely divided into one of four religions: Ahier (Brahmanist influenced), Awal (Islamic influenced), Cham Islam (Shafi'i Sunni Muslims) and Cham Jat ('pure' ancestral worship).[2] Regardless, Cham cultural philosophy has been praised by members of the Cham community and outsiders alike for its concept of the eternal dualistic relationship between the Awal and the Ahier expressed through the symbol of the homkar. The homkar is not totally unique to the Cham culture, having been derived from the Hindu om symbol. Furthermore, localized forms of the homkar can be found in many other locations throughout Southeast Asia, in particular in the Hindu enclaves on the islands of Bali and Borneo. However, what is unique about the Cham philosophy of Awal and Ahier is that the relationship between Islamic influenced elements of culture and Hindu influenced elements of culture are gendered (female first; male second) and applied to all aspects of understanding life. Hence, the philosophy of Awal and Ahier can be applied to all societies as well, not simply Cham society. Regardless, it has generally been agreed upon by scholars researching the Cham that Cham manuscripts are to be studied in order to further elicit deeper understandings of Cham culture and history. With this in mind, research on Cham manuscripts has a reached a new peak recently through partnerships with the Ecole Francaise D'extreme Orient (EFEO) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and various Malaysian state-scholarly initiatives.[3]

An important historical detail when researching the Cham population is that the contemporary Cham Indic-influenced script, Akhar Thrah, seems to have origins in the seventeenth century. It is possible that the oldest sample of Akhar Thrah can be found on the door jam of the Po Rome tower in Palei Thuen (Hau Sanh, Ninh Thuan province).[4] However, the script originated at a time during which there were no clear boundaries between 'Southeast Asian polities' as we have between Southeast Asian states today – but rather individual power centers were nebulous mandala interlocked with each other.[5] Hence the Gulf of Thailand that now separates Malaysia, Vietnam and Cambodia was, during a

critical turning point in Cham cultural history: a connecting force. The Gulf brought the Cham and the Malay populations together into a single cultural zone that was strongly influenced by Islam. As a direct result some of the oldest forms of Cham literature are known as Akayet. Like the Malay Hikayat, the Cham word akayet comes from the Arabic word Hikayat meaning 'story.' Additionally, while the akayet in the Malay world proliferated through the parallel genres of the Sejarah histories, sisilah lineages and syair poetry written in classical Jawi – in the Cham world, the Indic influenced script of Akhar Thrah became the means to record the akayet as well as ariya poetry, damnuy hymnals and dalikal short stories.[6]

The contemporary project of researching Cham history and literature began to progress greatly both in light of and in spite of the political climate of Southeast Asia in the 1960s and the 1970s, particularly through the works of the French scholar Father Gerard Moussay, who partnered with local Cham scholars in Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan province. Father Moussay's projects were supported through the Center for Cham Culture (CCC) in Phan Rang, Ninh Thuan and a partnership with PB LaFont, then director at the EFEO. By the 1990s and 2000s this fruitful collaboration became the Cham literature project of the National Museum of Malaysia at Kuala Lumpur and the EFEO-Kuala Lumpur (KL). EFEO-KL research has suggested that two of the earliest Cham literatures to be recorded were the Akayet Inra Putra and the Akayet Dewa Mano – which appeared in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Undoubtedly the Ramayana and Mahabarata epochs influenced these texts – although the Cham also have their own Ramayana in the form of the five-page prose narrative: Akayet Pram Dit Pram Lak.[7] Meanwhile, Akayet Dewa Mano is also likely a localized version of the Laws of Manu – the Manusmriti or the Manarva Dharmasastra, despite the assertion by many scholars that this is a Ramayana/Mahabarata text.[8] Despite overt Indic influences, it appears that the explosion of Cham literary genres and the recording of classical and classic Cham literature from the early modern to the modern period would still be strongly influenced by Islamic tradition. Hence, in the manuscripts of Akayet Um Marup (dated to the sixteenth to seventeenth century) and the Nai Mai Mang Makah manuscript (dated to the eighteenth century – also known as Ariya Bini-Cam) Islamic tropes are more present.

Although turn of the century manuscripts certainly existed, the first collection of the Akayet Um Marup manuscript may have been by Paul Mus in the early 1930s (CAM 156). At least one version of this manuscript was copied by the Cham scholar Bố Thuận and presented to Paul Mus in November 1932 (CAM 152). The work of Bố Thuận was likely quite important to his son: Bố Xuân Hồ, who worked with the Cham Cultural Center's (CCC) project from 1968 to 1975. Two versions of Akayet Um Marup were preserved by this project: CAM Microfilm 16 and CAM Microfilm 20, which was copied by Bố Xuân Hồ (C: Mbok Swa Hok) for the CCC's project in 1974. CAM Microfilm 20 includes a genealogy of Cham princes (pp. 1-5) and Ariya [Akayet] Um Mârup: anâk patao rom mak nagar tho nhy ki [Akayet Um Mârup: the story of the Turkish prince] (pp. 6 – 33).[9] It was at this time that Akayet Um Marup began to appear to more international audiences through Gerard Moussay's 1975 dissertation, followed by a 1978 Vietnamese prose summary in Truyện Chăm Cổ before being reworked for a conference publication in 1991 and an EFEO publication in 2008.[10] Another version of this manuscript was studied by the Cham scholar Inrasara and then translated into both English and Russian.[11] However, the manuscript is critical to our understanding of Dalikal Nao Magru and therefore we summarize it here.

The Akayet Um Marup parallels the development of the Malay text, the Sejarah Melayu in that it begins with a conversion narrative. Although his father is not Muslim the princely hero, Um Marup, submits to Islam when the Prophet Mohammed appears to him in the form of the spirit of the earth called 'Po Nabi.' Po Nabi then meets with the four caliphs and Ali who appears in the form of the spirit of the sea 'Po Ali.' Po Ali assists Um Marup to the path of Allah called 'Po Awlah' in consultation with 'Po Debita.' Depending on the scholarly analysis, individuals have noted that Po Debita may have either derived from the Sanskrit term devatas or the Qu'ranic figure Debora. In this case, Debora seems to be a more convincing suggestion since all the other figures are Qu'ranic – although it is possible that in older versions of the text or in other contemporary variants there might be a more even split between Islamic and Indic figures. Other Islamic motifs in this manuscript include: the figures Umar, Abu Bakr, Uth-

man (Osman)/Sunnan and Ali; Al-janna paradise and a pond that may be seen as Al-Kawthar; the mention of haram impure practices; Yapak, which is taken to be a Cham word for the heavenly mountain; and an apparently localized Sunni version of the shahada profession of faith (Ar.: la ʻilaha illa i-lah Muhammadur rasulu i-lah).[12]

The assertion that this is a Sunni profession of faith is critical. It contrasts with the assertion that the Cham Awal were influenced by the Shiʼa – as evidence through their elevation of the figure of Ali.[13] The end of the manuscript is also critical. While Cham culture is no doubt influenced by Islam, the manuscript suggests that militant devotion only leads to disaster. And so, it is with the above concepts in mind—the Ahier-Awal relationship, potential Shiʼa and potential Sunni influence and a mind toward the value of maintaining peaceful relations—that we can now begin the reading of the manuscript Dalakal Nao Magru.

The Dalakal Magru manuscript was originally 123 lines and 13 pages (pp. 128-141) of an anonymous, undated manuscript from Gru Hajan's personal collection. While studying with Gru Hajan, a copy of the manuscript was presented to me by Dr. Mohammed Bin Abdul Effendy. The orthography of the manuscript suggests that it was mid- to late-twentieth century in origin. However, the story appears to be of older oral traditions, displaying Quʼranic references mixed with Israelyat local Cham traditions, such as the appearance of Vietnamese figures. It is important to remember that the Awal community that kept this manuscript has been targeted by dakwah purification efforts off and on since the 1960s – particularly influenced by Cam Biruw ('new Cham' Shafiʼi Sunni Muslims) from An Giang province. There seems to have been a brief reference to this manuscript in Inrasara's Văn Học Chăm I (1994) in Vietnamese, although it appears that no in depth analysis, nor translation has ever been offered. Hence a translation of the manuscript appears below, while typed Akhar Thrah text, Romanization and Vietnamese translation appear in the appendix.

[p. 128]: This is the Dalakal about the Akhar teacher who asked his student to offer up his wife to the teacher. There was once a ceremony in a Bani sang màgik where Po Ali created a danaok for the Imams. In the sang màgik there was a true Acar who studied da-a yang but remembered very little. If he read all of the Akhar he could not remember any of it. Therefore, the

Acar had very little security and everywhere that he went he always met with great burdens. So, the Acar was constantly frustrated with everyone. Even when his wife cooked for him, she was embarrassed. So, she spoke with her husband:

"You have been working as an Acar for almost twenty years now. The Kathin [errata.: Kadhar?] will not work for you. Also, when you study the Quʼran to invite the spirit in to you, you do not keep up with the others! [p. 129] Even the new Po Acar's cannot help you! I am so embarrassed! Now stop fasting [in the sang màgik] and go study the true form of writing again! Why are you fasting with such false notions of security? I can't even cook rice for the community anymore because I am so embarrassed!"

The Acar responded: "OK. I will stop fasting. However, if I continue to study I will need to find a teacher to teach me."

And his wife spoke again: "Why don't you go find a teacher then? Go! Find a teacher that is excellent so that you can study! Then you can complete your studies together."

So, the husband left the sang màgik to return home. His wife listened and put rice at the bottom of his bag above three bunches of bananas. The Acar took to the road and was silent for half a day before he met a single other traveler. He asked: "Do you know if there is a teacher who can [p. 130] teach Akhar?"

The person answered: "You will go straight a little bit more and find a person who has just become a teacher of Akhar to teach the prayer ceremonies. That person is the hands and the feet of Po Nabi brought down by the direction of the house of Po Nabi."

[Following these directions] the Acar continued straight on until he reached the house of Po Rasulak and Po Rasulak asked: "Why has this Acar arrived here?"

The Acar answered: "I have been working as an Acar for a long time already and as of now, when I look at the writing I cannot invite the spirit in and cannot remember it. The younger Acar's hold me in disdain and my wife is embarrassed. So, with bananas and rice in my bag I have come to find a good teacher in order to study the true forms of writing."

The teacher [Po Rasulak/Po Nabi] asked: "If this student really wants to learn, what gifts have they

brought to the ceremony to begin the terms of study?" [p. 131]

To begin with the Acar took out the bunches of bananas for the teacher. The teacher looked at the student and said: "Bring the bananas back home to your wife. Then, bring me back your wife! Then I will teach you."

The Acar picked up the bunches of bananas and went home to report what had passed to his wife: "The teacher will not eat the bananas. However, if I bring you to him, he promises me that he will teach."

His wife did not speak a word against this idea as she assumed that the Acar had already agreed to dedicate her to the teacher. But, she did open his bag to find two bunches of bananas missing! The Acar responded, claiming that neither he nor the teacher had eaten the bananas.

"This again!" his wife exclaimed [doubting his honesty and recounting her embarrassment]. Nevertheless, the two finished conversing with each other and travelled to the Acar's house.

When the teacher called, the wife of the Acar asked: "Husband you want to learn [p. 132] Akhar from the teacher, have you accepted his request or not?"

The Acar thought honestly to himself: Why was it so [easy] for her to be able to agree with the request of the teacher? [Almost hearing his thoughts]

She then quickly spoke: "Please, teacher [Po Rasulak], open up your heart and teach my husband so that he can remember all of the prayers for inviting spirits in."

The master then thought about how he could agree to such conditions.

After speaking together; during that night Po Rasulak led the wife into his room, as the Acar slept outside. For three days and three nights they lived like this. But each night the teacher slept in a different bed. Just the same, he made the wife not sleep and emit cries [ap... rep] as if they were sleeping together in the same bed! For three days and three nights this continued. Yet, the teacher found that the wife truly loved her husband and the Acar also truly loved and trusted his wife as, even after hearing all this, he still trusted the teacher with all of his heart as well! So the teacher brought her back to her house and the Acar then returned [p. 133]. Po Rasulak then began to write in a halagar notebook and lit up gahlau incense in order to invite the presence of Pa Samat Akhar, to breathe magic into the script. He then took to burning a candle and mixed the hot wax into a water glass and gave it to the Acar to drink. The teacher then went to get a spell to teach the reading of all of the prayer. Reading these words truly brightened the Acar's heart, as he could now read any character. If he wanted to learn a ritual, he could learn it! All of them! Po Rasulak thus finished teaching and the Acar then returned home to continue fasting.

[Afterward] the Acar arrived at the sang màgik and went in to sit at his place. He took part in the holy-water cleansing ritual with the rest of the Acar, Imam and Katip, just as before, but the Acar could not bear to take part [as he had before]! The Acar took the holy water before going to stand in the place of the Imam [p. 134] who was performing the ceremony. The Imam then took the water and went in to find the Acar who had taken his seat. Finding this, [the Imam] tried to chase the Acar away. But the Acar would not go. [The Imam] ordered the other Acar to drag him out of the sang màgik. But he still would not go. When the Imam and Katip spoke with Po Ali about this Acar, Po Ali pursued the Acar, but also could not remove him. Even though Po Ali kicked and slapped the Acar, he was still as a rock. Stubborn as a stone pillar. Po Ali was so upset that he took a piece of wood that was still on fire and struck the Acar. But still, he would not move.

Po Ali became so angry that he ordered the Acar to do all of the rituals for the Imams, as they were witting on the prayer mats when the Acar began to perform. Po Ali had ordered the Acar to perform all of the ceremonies, read all of the texts and read all of the prayers. However, [luckily] the teacher [Po Rasulak] had already taught him [these skills]. All of the texts were used to invite the spirit in and the Acar read with a phenomenal voice [p. 135]. Po Ali spoke 'so many' and the Acar read just that much. And so, Po Ali now felt shame in his own heart as in this sang màgik it was only the Acar alone who knew all of the prayers and the ceremonies. However, no one knew where the Acar learned how to read the prayers and the ceremonies like this and who had taught him, such that there was not even the slightest error in his reading.

Po Ali the [following the Acar's method] went out to find some way to continue to study and found only one person on his path to give directions to Kir Blah and the home of the teacher [Po Rasulak]. Po Ali went

straight to this place and straight on to the teacher's house. [However,] Po Rasulak was his father in law who had taught for the Acar. Po Ali then asked the father of his wife: "I am you son in law. Why hasn't my father in law taught me, but that stupid Acar!?! So, you do not consider me anything? Because you, Po Tama [Father in Law] have taught him, now, my sovereign, I have to come to study again [p. 136]. My sovereign, please teach me to read even better than him!"

[And so Po Rasulak responded]: "You must bring me your wife, then I will teach."

So Po Ali answered: "If you, my sovereign, my father in law, teach me, I still will never give my wife to you my sovereign"

[For Po Rasulak] these words were hard and strange to hear. One lives to teach their students, but had told their students to offer their wives to the teacher. So, Po Rasulak said again: "If you don't want to bring your wife to me, then fine! I won't teach anymore! Fine! I won't teach!"

Finding this Po Ali felt ashamed yet again. He did not return to the sang màgik [in that town] ever again. He [instead] went to the sang màgik in Màkah, while Po Rasulak returned to heaven as he had already been transformed.

While Po Ali was on the road [travelling] he met a young Vietnamese woman [p. 137]. She was burdened by oil (petrol) that she carried. She stumbled, spilled the oil and began to cry. Po [Ali] asked the young women [what she was doing] and she replied: "At my house there is one mother and one child. My mother is old already and so I go to sell oil to take care of my mother. Now the oil has spilled everywhere and so there is nothing left for me to sell for my mother. Po Ali! How can I get the oil back?"

Po [Ali] conjured the oil back from the ground to fill the jars of the young woman and she held them again. She then resealed the two receptacles, now, full as they were ever before. Po Ali then also spread some extra oil upon the belly of the young Vietnamese woman. The girl brought the jars home and then three months passed. She became pregnant and then gave birth to a boy. When the boy grew up he went to play with other peoples' children but argued with all of the other children that he played with. People scolded him saying: "This child does not have a father."

When Jabil [the child] [p. 138] found people scolding him like this, he returned home to ask his mother: Where is my father, mother?"

His mother answered. But her response was difficult to hear. [At this time] Po Ali went to a village of Cham Akaphier [Ahier]. He went to this village to ask for drinking water. The house he arrived at had one girl who took a cask to draw drinking water for Po [Ali] to drink. When Po [Ali] finished drinking the water, he gave her a màta ring. The water Po Ali drank remained in the cask [magically] and the girl also drank from it. Four months passed. The girl was pregnant and then she gave birth to a son. As the boy grew up, he went out to plant in the fields but argued with many people and so they scolded him: "You don't have a father!"

The son then returned home to ask his mother about his father and she answered him with words that were difficult to hear. He pleaded: "Mother, let me go find my father!"

So, he found his [p. 139] father in the sang màgik at Màkah. The father received the son and the son then received the father as the son was taken to follow the Bani path. This Vietnamese boy then went to inquire and found a well of water that Po Ali had taken to use for rituals [in the sang màgik]. He went to the well to draw up some water and sealed it [in a cask] and then the people took this cask and brought it for Po Ali to open.

However, he could not open it because it was sealed so tightly. So they [the followers] continued to speak to Po Ali and he went, frustrated to where the young man was sitting, scolding him: "Why have you dared to seal my vessels?"

He spoke, while instantly hitting and kicking the young man. The young man was supporting both sides so that no one would lose. When [Po Ali] stopped, the young man asked: "Po, are you Po Ali? [p. 140]. In the past, you drew up oil from the ground in order to give a young Vietnamese woman oil again."

Po Ali answered: "Yes, how do you know this?"

The young man asked: "for what? [what is it to you?] If you really are the person who drew up [the oil] then I am truly your son, po."

Po Ali then questioned the young man and the young man revealed his entire story. The father and son hugged each other and went into the sang màgik. Po

Nabi [then] spoke with the young man: "Don't the Vietnamese not follow the Bani path? Because they follow other paths?"

Upon hearing these words the young man felt ashamed, and suddenly left the sang màgik, causing confusion. Afterwards, Po Nabi then ordered two children of Po Ali, the two who followed Islam: "The person named Lii Than Lii will strike the young Vietnamese man."

However, the young Vietnamese man was obviously talented and the two struggled inconclusively. Finally, the young Vietnamese man [p. 141] slashed Po Lii Than on one of his shoulders and brought part [of his body] to make anraong offerings and force the people [of that land] into custody. At midnight, the Cham children made a mantra spell to return the shoulder to Po Lii Than. They began to read the Phun Phua prayer and replace the shoulder on Po Lii Than's body as before. When Po Nabi saw this, he called to the young man for his good behavior. Nabi named the young man Patao Nit Caleng Ka and so there was a new peace in the land. As Po Ali was discontent with the fact that Po Nabi had not required Patao Nit Caleng Ka to enter the path of Islam he disappeared without anyone knowing where he went."

Analysis

This sentence needs work. If scholars are to draw off of existing trends in the study of Malay literature for the study of Cham literature, then the analysis of Dalakal Nao Magru would assert that this is a local version of Israelyat literature – while attempting to draw out the Qur'anic elements of the manuscript in order to extrapolate 'how Islam works in a local context.' However, drawing off the context of Cham culture, it seems more important to ask: How do the Awal (female – Islamic) and the Ahier (male – Indic) elements of culture manifest themselves in this text? The direct mention of the Ahier community is completely absent. We have rather only the term akaphier, which is applied to a village where individuals may water. However, if we take the Ahier to be a symbolically male element of existence, then it is possible to see Ahier elements throughout the reading. The outside space, the space inside the mosque, and the actions of many of the characters are seen as being male – and hence,

symbolically Ahier. Nevertheless, the manuscript does have more overt Awal orientations.

Awal figures present in the Dalakal Nao Magru manuscript seem to reference all members of the Awal priest class: the Po Gru, Imam, Madhin, Katip and Acar. In Cham Awal society today, the Po Gru is the figure that directs the prayers in the Awal sang magik temple/mosque. In the Dalakal Nao Magru manuscript, the individual may be the figure Po Nabi (also referred as Po Rasulak). While in the Islamic world the combined notions of Nabi and Rasullah are generally used to refer to Mohammed, in both the Islamic in the Malay world a singular reference to Nabi may not be to Mohammed. Meanwhile, as evidenced by the reading of the manuscript Akayet Um Marup, the figure of Po Nabi is also 'the spirit of the earth.' Nevertheless, we do see that all of the Awal hierarchy is mentioned in the manuscript as studying Akhar or writing. It is important to note that traditionally the Cham Awal priesthood has been responsible for studying two forms of Akhar: 1) the Pallava-Grantha Indic influenced Akhar Thrah script that the Dalikal Nao Magru manuscript is written in and 2) the Al' Arabi influenced Akhar Bani script that is used to write passages from the Qu'ran in local Cham pronunciation. Akhar Bani appears to have a variance of roughly 10% from standard Al' Arabi, including the absence of certain characters.[14] Both scripts have been used for the versions of Kitap and Tapuk Cham Awal prayer books (called Do-a in the Malay world) that are kept in the private collections of the Awal priesthood for study at home (sang prasit), for recitation in kajang mobile temporary tents used for Cham-Awal ceremonies, and in the sang magik on Fridays and during the month of Ramadan.

The presence of the sang màgik in the manuscript is further evidence of Cham tradition. The word magik is derived from the Arabic word masjid, while sang[15] is the Cham word meaning house. Traditionally masjid in Southeast Asia were not permanent constructions. Wood masjid appeared throughout the Malay world and likely in Cham areas as well by the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, although records from late nineteenth-century Kampot in Cambodia suggest that even the Malay masjid were temporary. Meanwhile, by the nineteenth century in Vietnam, the Awal Ahier relationship had begun to incorporate elements of the Vietnamese concepts of âm dương – the Vietnamese version of Yin-Yang philosophy. Subsequently, the

sang màgik of the Cham living in Vietnam began to include the appearance of the âm dương symbol. Other important elements of an Awal sang magik are the minbar and the presence of badien candles (suggesting Islamic influence) while popularly many Cham refer to the sang màgik as a chùa (connoting Buddhist temple) rather than the official state term for mosques thánh đường (which is also a Hán Việt term for 'church').[16] It is possible that using the term sang magik in Cham while using the term chùa, meaning 'temple' in Vietnamese to simultaneously avoid debates about 'proper mosque construction' with Cham Muslim while promoting an understanding of Awal traditions to the larger Vietnamese community. Placing a careful balance between these relationships requires the knowledge of several languages – and hence this is a theme that we also find in the Dalakal Nao Magru manuscript along with the central theme of visiting a 'true teacher.' That this theme is repeated throughout the manuscript is likely not an error.

The repeated themes of visiting the teacher 'Po Rasulak/Po Nabi,' the magical birth of Po Ali's sons, as well as the reconciliation between father and son may be seen as literary 'hooks' or themes that allow the copiest/author to return to a well-known passage while creating variations upon the theme. Hence there is a musical relationship that is formed with the manuscript – between the orality of the performance of the tradition of dalakal manuscripts and the efforts of a literary class to preserve Cham culture. Through more deeply exploring these 'hooks' the Awal origins of the manuscript become clear. For example: Po Ali's sons derive their lineage in accordance with Cham, rather than Islamic or Vietnamese tradition. They become Vietnamese since their mother is Vietnamese. The term Màkah is another example. Although Cham has relative phonemes for the pronunciation of Al' Mec – the term Màkah is used. Màkah in Cham manuscripts has many meanings. Paul Mus thought that Makah was merely a symbolic location. However, the existing EFEO-KL interpretation is that Makah is a shorthand for the Cham 'Veranda of Mecca' – Kelantan, Malaysia.[17] Meanwhile, not all of the practices in the manuscript are understood to be adat awal or adat cam. The practice of offering wives to teachers, for example, is frequently seen as an Ahier practice – although neither the Ahier nor the Awal keep up this practice today. Additionally, the elements of anraong offerings, gahlau

– aloeswood or eaglewood incense – and the recitation of mantras for healing may all be seen as particularly Cham practices – shared by the Awal and the Ahier. The final narrative that one must consider for the analysis of this text is the accession of Po Lii Than to the title of Patao [A]nit Caleng Ka. Not surprisingly this title does not appear in the existing known historical record of Cham sovereigns and princes. This could be explained by the fact that these records generally only record the highest sovereigns, the Po. Meanwhile, the patao kingly tributaries to the Po are generally not recorded unless they become Po. This detail could be explained away through the 'a-historical religious' nature of the manuscript. However, historians should not too easily brush off the potential of religious manuscripts such as this, which can open up new historical understandings.

If the manuscript is viewed through a primarily religious oriented lens it is noteworthy that the figure of Po Ali does not appear to be elevated to the status of Po Nabi/Po Rasulak in this particular manuscript. Furthermore, he disappears entirely after Po Nabi/Po Rasulak does not require Patao Ni Caleng Ka to enter the 'path of Islam.' The manuscript emphasizes that the path of Islam could not be forced upon the half-Cham half-Vietnamese Patao Ni Caleng Ka – even though he received his titled from Po Nabi/Po Rasulak. Nevertheless, the manuscript suggests that both the Cham and the Vietnamese eventually became 'Bani' or Awal.

The circumstance of the Awal community in Vietnam has increasingly fascinated scholars of Southeast Asia as examinations of manuscripts such as Dalakal Nao Magru have become more widely available. However, based on the analysis of this manuscript it is possible to suggest that one cannot simply approach the Awal through localized traditions of Islam, but rather through a combined lens of Austronesian Cham, Islamic, Arabic, Malay, Sanskrit and Hindu influenced culture. Given this syncretism, it is no surprise that few of these manuscripts have been translated and researched to date. Nevertheless, it is through the analysis of the manuscripts of the Awal community that historians of Southeast Asia and scholars of literature and religion are most able to gain new insight into the complexities of cultural interchange along the shores of the South China Sea.

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Islamic Religious Practices of Cham Bani. Southeast
   Asian Studies 1, 3 (2012):487-505.

EndNotes

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[1] While he is not to be blamed for any of the errors present in this essay, thanks for the following discussion go to Dr. Bruce Lockhart of NUS who shared many good questions and insights with me upon my visit there to give a seminar on a related topic. This paper could not have been completed without the generous support of all of the professors, instructors and students from the following funding organizations: the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (University of Wisconsin-Madison), the Council of American Overseas Research Programs: Center for Khmer Studies (Phnom Penh, Cambodia) and the Department of History (University of Wisconsin-Madison). Special thanks also go to Dr. Thành Phần (Gru Hajan), Dr. Mohammed Bin Abdul Effendy and Sikhara. To those who know *anit lo.*

[2] Sakaya. *Tiếp Cận Một Số Vấn Đề Văn Hóa Champa [Approaching Some Problems of Cham Culture]* (Hồ Chí Minh City, Việt Nam: Tri Thức Press, 2013)

[3] Ibid. See also: Yasuko Yoshimoto. "A Study of the Hồi Giáo Religion in Vietnam: With a Reference to Islamic Religious Practices of Cham Bani." *Southeast Asian Studies* 1, no. 3: 487-505 ; Rie Nakamura. *Cham of Vietnam: The Dynamics of Ethnicity.* (PhD Dissertation, University of Washington, 1999). ; Abdul Karim, Gerard Moussay, and Po Dharma. *Nai Mai Mang Makah: Tuan Puteri dari Kelantan : La Princesse qui venait du Kelantan.* (Kuala Lumpur: Kesenian Dan Pelancongan Malaysia- Ecole française d'Extrème Orient (EFEO), 2000) ; Karim, A., Moussay, G. and Po Dharma. 1998. *Akayet Dowa Mano: Hikayat Dowa Mano : Epopée Dowa Mano* (Kuala Lumpur: Kesenian Dan Pelancongan Malaysia- Ecole française d'Extrème Orient (EFEO), 1998) ; Karim, A., Moussay, G. and Po Dharma. *Akayet Inra Patra: Hikayat Inra Patra: Epopée Dowa Mano.* (Kuala Lumpur: Kesenian Dan Pelancongan Malaysia- Ecole française d'Extrème Orient (EFEO), 1997)

[4] see also: Zakaria Ali. 1991. "Notes on the Islamic Art of Champa." *Actes de la Conférence Internationale sur le Campa et le Monde Malais.* (ACHPI : Paris, France, 1991) : 123-135

[5] Georges Coedes. *The Indianized States of Southeast Asia* (translated from English to French by Susan Brown Cowing. (Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawi'i Press, 1968) ; DGE Hall. *A History of Southeast Asia.* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970) ; DGE Hall. *A History of Southeast Asia* (4th. Edition). (London: Macmillan Press, 1994)

[6] Sakaya. *Tiếp Cận.* See also: Anonymous. nd. *Da Lakal Po Romé Angan Ja Saot [The Dalikal of Po Rome When He Was Called Ja Saot].* Manuscript from Dharbhan Po Dam's private collection. (Read: Fall, 2012) ; Anonymous. nd. *Dalikal Po Anit.* Manuscript from Dharbhan Po Dam's private collection. (Read: Fall, 2012) ; Anonymous. nd. *Dalakal Nao Magru.* Manuscript from Dharbhan Po Dam's private collection. (Read: Fall, 2012)

[7] Sakaya. *Tiếp Cận.* See also: Henri Chambert-Loir. "Notes sur les relataions historiques et litteraires entre Campa et Monde Malais." *Actes du Seminaire du Campa* at the University of Copenhagen May 23, 1987. (Paris, France: Center for History of the Indochinese Peninsula, 1988): 95 – 106 ; Abdul Rahman Al-Ahmadi. "Le Campa dans le Litterature Malaise." *Actes du Seminaire du Campa* at the University of Copenhagen May 23, 1987. (Paris, France: Center for History of the Indochinese Peninsula, 1988): 107 - 121; Inrasara 2006. *Ariya Cam: Trường Ca Chăm [Ariya Cam: Cham Lyrical Poetry].* (TP. Hồ Chí Minh, Việt Nam: Văn Nghệ [Arts Press], 2006). 50

[8] A similar adaptation also appeared in the Kingdom of Cambodia. According to a twentieth century legal study it was incorporated into Cambodian laws of the nineteenth century, although its origins and introduction into Cambodia were likely much earlier. See: Hoeffel, Ernest. (Doctoreur en Droit, Resident Superior of Indochina). *Du la Condition Juridique des Étrangers au Cambodge.* NOT DATED IN ARCHIVES: Actual Date: 1932. Imprimerie: Nguyen Van Cua, of Saigon. In National Archives of Cambodia Box 437. ID: 9.512. Old Code: P. 562. Formerly held in the Buddhist Institute of Cambodia. P 7

[9] Bố Xuân Hồ. *CAM Microfilm 20.* (Phan Rang, Vietnam: Cham Cultural Center, 1974)

[10] Gerard Moussay. "Um Mrup dans la literature cam" *Le Campa et Le Monde Malais [Campa and the Malay World].* (Paris, France: Center for the History and Civilizations of the Indochinese Peninsula, 1991): 95-108. According to Moussay the 1978 publication was produced under the title "Hoàng Tu Um Rúp và Cô Gái Chân Dề" in *Truyện Cổ Chàm.* (Hà Nội: Văn Hóa Dân Tộc, 1978): 197-259. Moussay (1991: 104-105) mentioned that he found the manuscript particularly in Bani Cham villages (villages of the Cham Awal). However, we have only found the manuscript in both Bani (Awal) and Balamon Cham (Ahier) villages. Good copies included the: *Akayet Um Márup di Ong Bao Hung* [UNESCO-Cham: Palei Cuah Patih 4] and *Akayet Um Márup di Ja Tu di Hamu Liman* [UNESCO-Cham: Palei Hamu Craok 6].

[11] Inrasara's version of this manuscript was 230 lines. His version was collected from Cụ Huỳnh Phụng (1947) and Ông Than Tiong (1902) manuscripts from Palei Caklaing (Mỹ Nghiệp). Only Moussay's version was 248 lines (Inrasara, 1994: 139-150) V. Atnahsev. Um Marup – A Folk Poem about the Beginning of Cham Islamization. *Manuscripts Orientalis* 11 (3 – September, 2005): 13-24

[12] Henri Chambert-Loir. 1988 "litteraires entre Campa et Monde Malais" 97-98; Atnahsev. 2005. Um Marup. 14

The Cham text here reads: *bih sah alla illah* or *sah bih alla illa* as well as *sah sa'alla illa* – and Atnahsev (2005: 24) believes that this is the Cham pronunciation of the universal *shahada*. However, the Cham version makes no mention of Mohammed, nor the Shi'a extension: *wa 'aliyyun waliyyu-llah*, elevating Ali to the position of "the friend of Allah."

[13] See also: Ba Trung Phu. The Cham Bani of Vietnam. *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 23:3 (2006) : 126-133 and Yasuko Yoshimoto. "A Study of the Hồi Giáo"

[14] We arrived at this analysis through the study of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century manuscripts: UNESCO-Cham Palei Cuah Patih 3: *Kitap di Ong Bao Hung*; UNESCO-Cham Palei Rem 1,2 and 3: *Kitap di Amu di Ong di Imam Du* (1), *Kitap di Palei Rem* (2) and *Kitap Ong Po Gru Nguyễn Lai di Palei Rem*.

[15] *Sang* is usually pronounced 'thang' with a hard '/th/' in spoken Cham in Ninh Thuan and Binh Thuan provinces.

[16] With thanks to Nguyễn Quốc Vinh for this detail.

[17] Abdul Karim, Gerard Moussay, and Po Dharma. *Nai Mai Mang Makah: Tuan Puteri dari Kelantan : La Princesse qui venait du Kelantan.* (Kuala Lumpur: Kesenian Dan Pelancongan Malaysia- Ecole française d'Extrème Orient (EFEO), 2000)

Review

Rifle Reports: A Story of Indonesian Independence by Mary Margaret Steedly
Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013

STEVE BEERS

University of Wisconsin-Madison

What did Indonesia's independence struggle look like at the "outskirts" of the nation? Mary Margaret Steedly's Rifle Reports: A Story of Indonesian Independence considers this question through an ethnographic history documenting the war experience of residents in the Karo highlands of Sumatra. Based on over 100 interviews with Karo residents–mostly of women–conducted between 1993 and 1995, Steedly attempts to de-center the male-centric and Java-centric history of Indonesian independence. While women are left out of most of the war's heroic narratives, Steedly finds a rich history of women contributing to the struggle. While Indonesia's periphery is often described as only tangentially effected by revolutionary events, Steedly finds the Karo highlands were a point of intense fighting and that the Karo people took up the nationalist cause with zeal. Through a synthesis of interview data with diverse secondary sources, including the song "Erkata Bedil" which inspired the book's title, Steedly effectively brings women's unrecognized war experiences into the nationalist narrative.

However, by highlighting the experiences of Karo women, Steedly is not simply attempting to spread nationalist glory more evenly or to insert new names and faces into a unified story of nationalist struggle. Instead, the book's strength is its treatment of the national project as contingent. The spread of the nationalist cause was not inevitable. Rather, it required articulation and interpretation of terms such as "independence" (merdeka) and came with misunderstandings, colorfully exemplified by the story of the old man so used to shouting "Merdeka!" ("Independence!") as a salute to soldiers in uniform that he yelled it at occupying Dutch troops and was immediately shot. More hauntingly, given later outbreaks of political violence in Indonesia's post-independence history, Steedly documents the internal violence of the revolution that was motivated by fears over internal collaborators, which has been under "narrative quarantine" from nationalist narratives.

Steedly's methods and writing create a rich poly-vocal history of the national project. The prose is well written and Steedly's weaving together of various sources begs readers to immerse themselves in the narratives rather than skim for arguments. Steedly is sensitive to her own role in the collection of narratives, but her informants remain the central focus and are written about with empathy. There is, however, a tension regarding whether the work is primarily about informants' war time experiences or their memory practices decades later. While Steedly succeeds in the former, readers may feel she has not fully leveraged her ethnographic experience to address the latter. In particular, given the unique timing of her interviews, conducted a few years before the fall of the Suharto in 1998 and written about with over a decade of hindsight, one might have expected more analysis of the impact of the authoritarian context on her informants' narrative and memory practices.

The Indonesian national project has served to stimulate a wide literature on the social construction of the nation and Steedly's work is a worthy contribution. Rifle Reports is empirically rich, well-crafted, and deserving of a wide readership among Southeast Asianists.
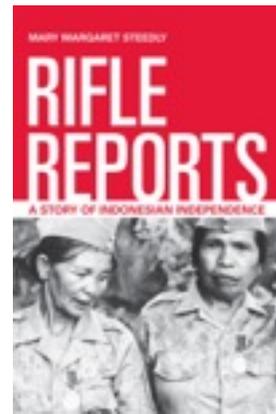
Review

*The Birth of Insight: Meditation, Modern Buddhism & Burmese Monk Ledi Sayadaw* by Erik Braun
Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013

WILLIAM B. NOSEWORTHY

University of Wisconsin - Madison

In *The Birth of Insight* Erik Braun provides a compassionate analysis of several aspects of the deep impact the Burmese Modernist meditation teacher Ledi Sayadaw had on Burma, greater Southeast Asia and the United States. At first Braun unpacks the sinews of the hagiography of the Burmese monk, delineating his lineage. Although in places this hagiography can only be traced through a means of suggestion based upon the available source material, Braun is able to demonstrate the ways in which Ledi Sayadaw became more of a teacher living by example, like the Buddha himself, rather than being concerned with individual words, prayers and publications. Nevertheless, the impressive biography of Ledi Sayadaw includes many fascinating narratives, such as inspiring one student monk to attempt to burn as many copies of his books as possible!

Braun has carefully compiled an analysis of at least 25 original works by the Burmese monk that unfold his own understandings about the potential for the popularization of lay meditation and lay movements. From here it is possible to measure the impact of Ledi Sayadaw through the discourses of the forest tradition and Buddhist modernism. Through the spread of these movements the impact of Ledi Sayadaw himself can be established. However, another theme that Eric Braun has offered—the demonstration of the impact of the Ledi Sayadaw School in Burma and Thailand specifically—indicates the global vision of the teacher, particularly as it impacted those "foreigners" who would appear as a result of American involvement in the region. While the impacts of this policy from a grand scale were devastating, the influence of the cultural interaction between certain American Peace Corps volunteers and Ledi Sayadaw's teachings were profoundly important for the study of Buddhism. Burmese Buddhist teachings and the emphasis on meditation and compassion reached a new form of global audience in the form of international academia. As such, Erik Braun's new study will be of interest to any students or scholars who are working on studies of Burma, Burmese history, Buddhism, Southeast Asian culture, meditation and even neuroscience and psychology. To that end, Erik Braun has offered one of the greatest contributions to the study of Buddhist modernism in recent years.
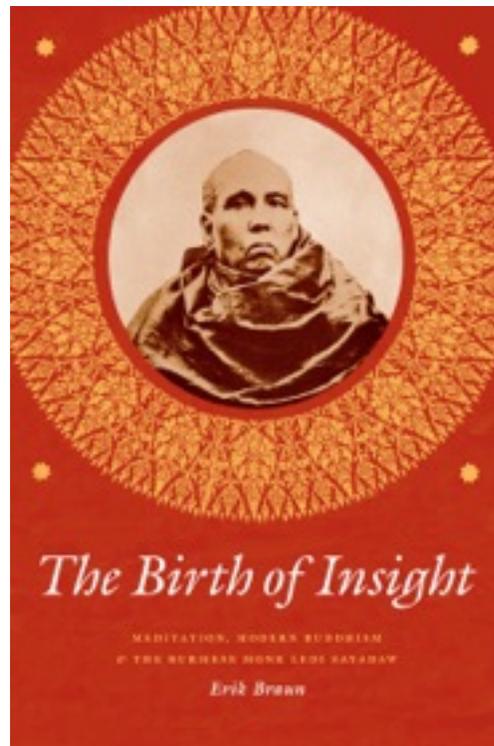
The Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Hawaiʻi at Mānoa