USE OF THESES

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WAT PATHUMWIHAAN OF BAAN MAALAJ

A Study of Siamese and Chinese Buddhists in a Malay State

By

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A thesis submitted for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
at the Australian National University.

July 1987
Declaration

Except where otherwise indicated this thesis is my own work.

Mohamed Yusoff Ismail

July 1987
Whether the Tathāgathas appear or not, O Bhikkhus, it remains a fact, an established principle, a natural law that all conditioned things are transient (anicca), sorrowful (dukkha) and that everything is soulless (anatta). This fact the Tathagatha realizes, understands and when He has realized and understood it, announces, teaches, proclaims, establishes, discloses, analyses, and makes it clear, that all conditioned things are transient, sorrowful and that everything is soulless.

ANGUTTARA NIKA YA Part I, p. 286.¹

¹Quoted from Narada (1973:296).
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ABSTRACT

Theravada Buddhism is the religion of the Siamese of Kelantan, but it is also adhered to by the majority of the rural Chinese population of the state. This study establishes that it is through their identification with Buddhism that the Siamese have been able to assert their ethnic identity vis-à-vis other groups in the larger society, namely the majority Malays who are Muslims, and the Chinese.

Siamese conception of and commitment to the Buddhist religion differ considerably from that of the Chinese as demonstrated by the fact that on the whole Theravada Buddhism is perpetuated and maintained by an exclusively Siamese religious elite, consisting of monks, ex-monks and ritual specialists. Together they become the custodians of the sacred knowledge of the religion and the keepers of the Siamese Buddhist tradition.

Although the Chinese appear to be very supportive of the temple and monkhood they are not normally as fully committed to the religion as the Siamese are. This study examines the social organisation of a Buddhist temple in order to demonstrate the level of commitments and involvement of the Siamese in maintaining the continuity of a Theravada tradition. It concludes by showing that even though Buddhism finds support particularly among the rural Kelantan Chinese, it is among the Siamese that it flourishes and becomes crucial and meaningful because it underwrites the very basis of Siamese ethnic identity. The continuity of Theravada Buddhist tradition ensures such identity.
TRANSCRIPTION

A Note on the Spelling of Thai Words

Transcription of standard Thai words is based on Haas (1964) but with some modifications. Four special symbols used by Haas have been replaced by the combination of letters found on the English typewriter keyboard. These are ae, au, oe and ng and the first three are not diphthongs in the usual sense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Haas' Symbols</th>
<th>Substitute Symbols</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ae</td>
<td>ma</td>
<td>mae, mae, &quot;mother&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>au</td>
<td>ko</td>
<td>khau, kho, &quot;ask&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oe</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>doen, doen, &quot;walk&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ng</td>
<td>go</td>
<td>ngoan, goan, &quot;work&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Long sounds are indicated by doubled vowels, such as aa, ii and ee. For the sake of neatness, clusters of the vowels mentioned above, which replace Haas' special symbols, are not duplicated if they already have long sounds.

Final consonants ร, ง, จ, ฉ and ช are represented by 't'. The sound of the Thai alphabet ก is represented by k instead of g if it occurs at the end of the syllable. No glottal stop indicators are used.

Following Haas, j is pronounced more like y in the English "yell" if it is at the beginning of a syllable and similar to i if at the end of a diphthong.

Consonant ค is not aspirated unless followed by an h. Likewise all consonants preceding an h are aspirated. Hence, ph is aspirated while p is not.
Some words and place names have been spelt in styles other than that of Haas, such as bhikkhu (monk) (Haas: phigsu); bhikkhuni (female ascetic) (Haas: phigsunii) and baht (tical, monetary unit) (Haas: baad). I follow the former convention instead.

As Thai is written with no spacers between words, students of the language often encounter the initial problem of separating these words from each other. This problem is made even worse if one has to follow the same style in the transcription. For this reason I have taken the liberty of separating some terms which in the form of having no spacers prove quite difficult to pronounce. Hence, ton ngoen is written with a spacer instead of tonngoen; wan aasaalahabuuchaa instead of wanaasaalahabuuchaa; thaut phaa paa instead of thautphaapaa; phaa aabnaamfon instead of phaaabnaamfon; and Phra In instead of Phrain.

I have made no attempt to reproduce the exact phonology of the Siamese dialect of Kelantan, hence, no tonal marks are used.¹ Malay words are spelt according to the national spelling system currently in use, except where they occur in original quotations.

¹For more details on the local Thai dialect, see Kershaw (1966) and Golomb (1978).
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