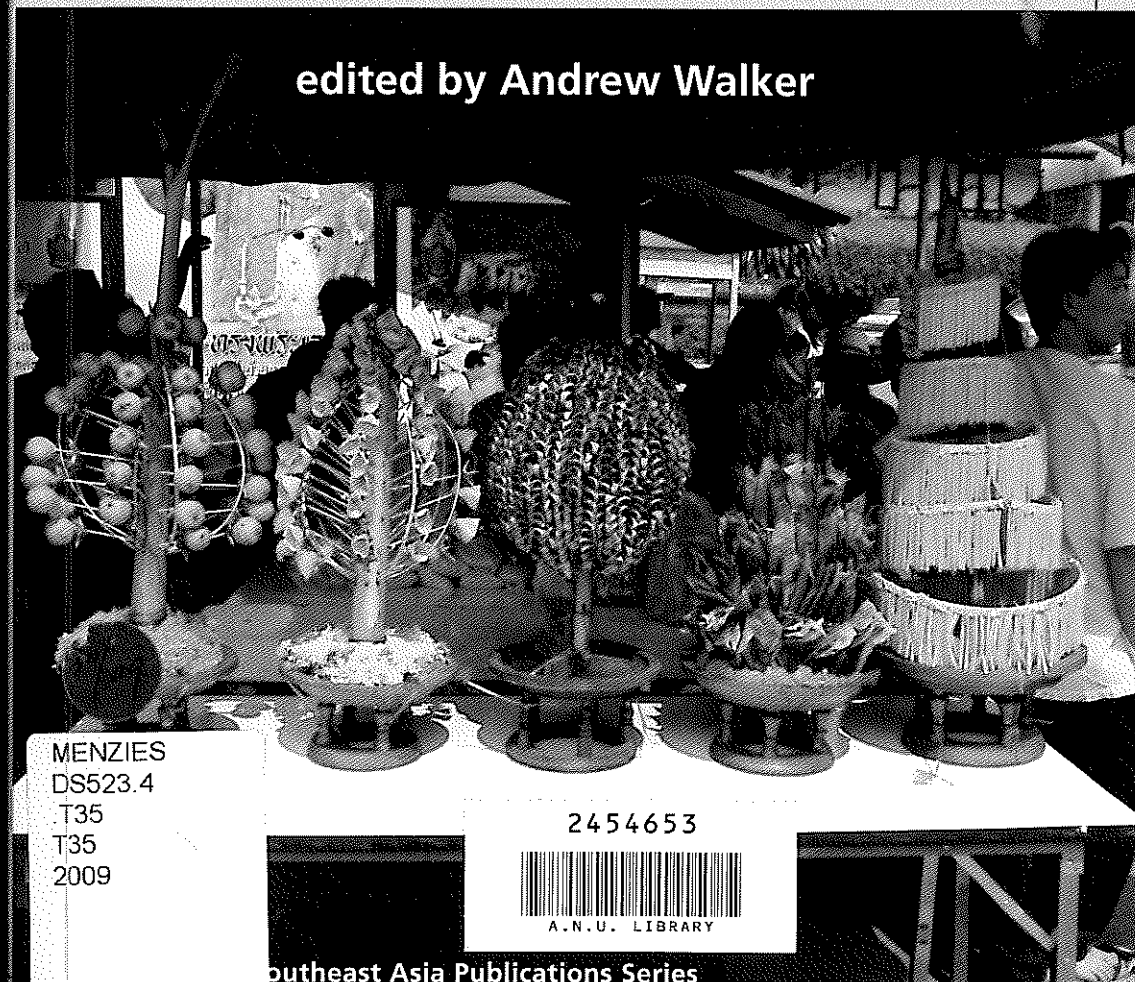


Tai Lands and Thailand

Community and State
in Southeast Asia

edited by Andrew Walker



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Andrew Walker is a Senior Fellow in The Australian National University's Resource Management in Asia-Pacific Program.

Studies of the Tai world often treat 'state' and 'community' as polar opposites: the state produces administrative uniformity and commercialization while community sustains tradition, local knowledge and subsistence economy. This assumption leads to the conclusion that the traditional community is undermined by the modern forces of state incorporation and market penetration. States rule and communities resist.

Tai Lands and Thailand takes a very different view. Using thematic and ethnographic studies from Thailand, Laos, Burma and southern China, the authors describe modern forms of community where state power intersects with markets, livelihoods and aspirations. Modern community is not easily created nor is it inevitable, but rapid social and economic change in the Tai world has provided many opportunities for new forms of communal belonging to emerge.

Tai Lands and Thailand opens up fresh perspectives on a region in transition, and the discussion promises to inform future studies of contemporary sociality in Southeast Asia.

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Cover: New Year offerings presented to a senior government official in northern Thailand. Photo by Andrew Walker.

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