

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Department of History
HISTORY 459
BUDDHISM AND SOCIETY IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN HISTORY
Spring 1993
Rm. 1131 Humanities Tuesday & Thursday 9:30-10:45
Thongchai Winichakul

Southeast Asia is comprised of basically two regions: the mainland which includes Burma, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam; and the island world which includes the Philippines, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore and Malaysia, although the last one is on the southern tip of the peninsula, not an island. The distinction is made not only by geography, but also to a great extent by their historical and cultural differences.

Except Vietnam, the mainland countries are distinctive not only to the region but to the world in that including Sri Lanka they are the homeland of Theravada Buddhism. Most people in the West who know Asia via China and Japan will encounter the Mahayana Buddhism which is now practiced in Vietnam as well. But to the rest of mainland Southeast Asia, over 120,000,000 people today, they have known, practiced, and historically lived under the influence of Theravada Buddhism for about a thousand years. With the modernization and secularization in those countries taken place less than 150 years ago, the influence of religious tradition is very high even among the so-called socialist countries like Laos and Cambodia. It is not overstated that it is impossible to know those countries and people without recognizing the role of Theravada Buddhism.

Amidst the courses on Chinese and Japanese or Tibetan Buddhism, this course introduces another Buddhism. It is not the aim of this course, however, to study the Theravada's tenet or philosophy in depth. As a history course, the theme will be the role of religion in the politics and cultures of those countries in history: the ideas and influence of Theravada Buddhism in shaping political and social institutions, the role of the monastic order in relation to the state and peasant, and the effects of and on the religion as the countries have gone through colonialism and modern industrialization since the mid-nineteenth century. The focus on Thailand and Burma is not arbitrary, since they are major force of the region's history and religious development, and they provide us with adequate examples to understand the entire region.

As an introduction to the culture students may not be familiar with, the course will explore major topics instead of a chronology, however. No previous knowledge is required; nor is the ability to memorize all the dates and unfamiliar terms and names. What is required is attention, enthusiasm, patience to learn about unfamiliar culture, plus imagination.

Class: Two 75-min. lectures a week. Questions are welcome any time in and/or at the end of the class.

Office Hours: Rm. 5211 Humanities ph. 263-8931
Wednesday and Thursday 2:00-3:00 and by appointment

Grading:

1. One mid-term take-home exam, probably in week 7 (20%). The question will be handed out at least a week in advance. The answer must not exceed 4 pages (double space).
2. One research paper about 10 pages, plus notes and references at the end. Due Thursday, April 15. (40%) (15-20 pages and 50% for graduate students).
3. Final exam (see the Time-table) 40% (30% for grad. students)

What is expected from students is not the ability to copy, or paraphrase the lecture or reading materials, but one's understanding, in her/his own words, of the topics; his/her ability to communicate in writing, the basic research skill like library search for relevant materials, and the ability to explain a question either by analysis or description. Originality, creativity and imagination will be bonus.

Required Textbooks:

Smith, Bardwell. *Religion and Legitimation of Power in Thailand Laos and Burma*
Spiro, Melford. *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and its Burmese Vicissitudes*
Tambiah, S.J. *World Conqueror and World Renouncer*
The Course-pack for History 459-Spring 1993 (available at the Copy Center of Humanities Building, Rm.1650 Humanities)

Recommended Textbooks:

Sarkisyanz, E. *Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution*. (This book is a classic one, very good for our class. Unfortunately it is old and out of print. There are many copies in the libraries, and in the reserves.)
Ishii, Yoneo. *Sangha, State and Society: Thai Buddhism in History*
Aung-Twin, Michael. *Pagan: the Origin of Modern Burma*
Jackson, Peter A. *Buddhism, Legitimation and Conflict: Urban Thai Buddhism*
Keyes, Charles F. *Thailand : Buddhist Kingdom as a Modern Nation-state*

Note on the List of Readings:

1. The books below with the * mark are required readings in each week. They are in either the required textbooks or in the coursepack (except the ones marked *!). The rest are recommended for anyone interested in particular topics.
2. The titles of many books will be in a shorten form after the first references. The number at the end of each item is page number.

WEEK 1 (Jan 19) Introduction: aims and objective of the course: business; assignments; expectation.
A general outline of history.
Reading: No.

EARLY HISTORY

WEEK 2 (Jan 26) A general outline of history (cont.)
Early religions before Theravada and introduction of Theravada to Southeast Asia; localization of Buddhism in Southeast Asia
Reading: * Hazra, Kanai Lal. History of Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia. chap.3-4 (49-82)
- Coedes, George. The Making of Southeast Asia. 10-87
- Than Tun. Essays on the History and Buddhism of Burma. 3-58

IDEAS

- WEEK 3 (Feb 2) Basic concepts: Nivarna, Karma, merit
Reading: * Spiro. Buddhism and Society, chap. 2, 4, 5 (31-65, 92-139)
- Spiro, Melford. Burmese Supernaturalism
- Aung-Thwin. Pagan, chap. 2 (30-47)
- WEEK 4 (Feb 9) Buddhism, Hinduism, animism; popular belief: the *Jataka*
Reading: * Kirsch, A, Thomas. "Complexity in the Thai Religious System." Journal of Asian Studies 36 (1977): 241-266
* Spiro. Buddhism and Society, chap. 6.7 (140-87)
* Keyes, Charles. "Merit Transference in the Kammic Theory of Popular Theravada Buddhism." in Karma: an Anthropological Inquiry, ed. Charles F. Keyes, pp. 261-86
- Spiro. Burmese Supernaturalism.
- Anuman Rajadhon. Popular Buddhism in Siam and Other Essays on Thai Studies. 25-68, 99-168
- Tambiah. S.J. Buddhism and the Spirit Cults in Northeast Thailand. chap 13-20 (223-366)
- Terwiel, B.J. Monks and Magic.
- Jones. John Garrett. Tales and Teachings of the Buddha: the Jataka Stories
- The Pali Text Society. Jataka Tales: Birth Stories of the Buddha

THE SANGHA (MONASTIC ORDER)

- WEEK 5 (Feb 16) The *sangha*
Reading: * Spiro. Buddhism and Society, chap. 12-13, 15, 17 (279-320, 351-77, 396-421)
* Tambiah. S.J. The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets, chap. 5 (53-77), "The forest-monk tradition"
- Ishii. Sangha, State and Society, chap 1 (3-33)
- Reynolds. Craig J. The Buddhist Monkhood in the Nineteenth Century Thailand, chap 2
- Lester, Robert C. Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia chap 5-7 (83-150)
- Wijayaratna, Mohan. Buddhist Monastic Life.
- Aung-Thwin. Pagan, passim.

COSMOLOGY AND SOCIAL ORDER

- WEEK 6 (Feb 23) Cosmology and social order
Reading: * Reynolds, Frank E. Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Thai Buddhist Cosmology, introduction pp. 5-37. The entire book is a translation of a thirteenth century Thai cosmographical text.
* Heine-Geldern. Robert. Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia
* Reynolds. Frank E. "Ritual and Social Hierarchy: An Aspect of Traditional Religion in Buddhist Laos," in Bardwell Smith ed. Religion and Legitimation of Power, 166-74.
* Reynolds. Craig J. "Buddhist Cosmography in Thai History, With Special Reference to Nineteenth Century Culture Change." Journal of Asian Studies 35 (1976): 203-220
* Keyes, Charles F. "Mother or Mistress but Never a Monk:

- Buddhist Notions of Female Gender in Rural Thailand." American Ethnologist 11 (1984): 223-41
- Keyes, Charles F. "Ambiguous Gender: Male Initiation in Buddhist Society." in New Perspective on Religion and Gender, ed. Caroline Bynum, Steven Harell, 1986
 - Van Esterik, Penny ed. Women of Southeast Asia. Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University, chap 2,4 (esp. the article by Kirsch, A. Thomas, "Buddhism, Sex-role and Thai Economy," pp. 16-41).
 - Khin Thitsa. Providence and Prostitution: Image and Reality for Women in Buddhist Thailand.
 - Sarkisyanz, E. Buddhist Background of the Burmese Revolution. chap.11.13 (68-74, 82-86)

BUDDHIST POLITY

- WEEK 7 (Mar 2) Merit and power, state, and kingship
- Reading: * Tambiah, S.J. World Conqueror and World Renouncer. chap.2. 4-7, (9-18, 32-131)
- Spiro. Buddhism and Society. chap.16 (378-395)
 - Reynolds, Frank E. "The Holy Emerald Jewel: Buddhist Symbolism and Political Legitimation in Thailand and Laos." In ed. Bardwell Smith. Religion and Legitimation of Power. 175-193
 - Ishii. Sangha, State and Society. chap.2-3 (34-66)
 - Aung-Thwin, Michael. Pagan. chap 3 (47-68)
 - Aung-Thwin, Michael. "Divinity, Spirit and Human: Conceptions of Classical Burmese Kingship," in Centers, Symbols and Hierarchy : Essays on Classical States in Southeast Asia. ed. Lorraine Gesick. 45-86
 - Aung-Thwin. "Kingship, the sangha and Society in Pagan," in Explorations in Early Southeast Asian Statecraft. eds. Kenneth Hall and John Whitmore. 205-256
 - Sarkisyanz, E. Buddhist Background of the Burmese Revolution. chap. 4-5,7-10,14-15 (26-36, 43-67, 87-97)
 - Hanks, Lucien M. "Merit and Power in Thai Social Order," American Anthropologist. 64 (1962), 1247-61.
 - Gesick, Lorraine. "The Rise and Fall of King Taksin: A Drama of a Buddhist Kingship," in Centers, Symbols and Hierarchies. ed. Lorraine Gesick. 87-105
 - Reynolds, Craig J. The Buddhist Monkhood in the Nineteenth Century Thailand. chap 1

WEEK 8

SPRING RECESS Mar 6-14

WEEK 9 (Mar 16) Religious reform and pre-modern politics:

- Reading:
- * Swearer, Donald and Premchit, Sommai. "The Relations Between the Religious and Political Order in Northern Thailand (14th-16th c.)." in ed. Bardwell Smith. Religion and Legitimation of Power. 20-33
 - * Butt, John W. "Thai Kingship and Religious Reform." in ibid. 34-51
 - * Wyatt, David K. "The Subtle Revolution of King Rama I of Siam." in Moral Order and the Question of Change. ed. David Wyatt and Alexander Woodside. pp 9-52
 - * Mendelsohn, E. Michael. Sangha and State in Burma: A Study of Monastic Sectarianism and Leadership. chap.1 (31-65)
 - Reynolds, Craig J. "Religious Historical Writing and the Legitimation of the First Bangkok Reign." in eds. David Marr and Anthony Reid. Perceptions of the Past in Southeast Asia. 90-107
 - Luce, G.H. and Pe Muang Tin. trans The Glass Palace. intro.

BUDDHIST ECONOMY

WEEK 10 (Mar 23) Two propositions on the Buddhist "Moral Economy"

- Reading:
- *! Scott, James C. The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia.
 - * Aung-Thwin, Michael. "The Role of *sasana* Reform in Burmese History: Economic Dimension of a Religious Purification." Journal of Asian Studies. 38 (1979): 671-88: OR Aung-Thwin. Pagan. chap.8-9
 - Victor Lieberman's argument against Aung-Thwin in the same journal 39 (1980) 753-69; and then Aung-Thwin's "A Reply to Lieberman" in the same journal 40 (1980/1): 87-9.
 - Evans, Grant. From Moral Economy to Remembered Village

PEASANT REBELLION

WEEK 11 (Mar 30) Peasant rebellions and the ideas of Utopia

- Reading:
- * Keyes, Charles F. "Millennialism, Theravada Buddhism and Thai Society," Journal of Asian Studies 36 (1977): 283-302
 - * Turton, Andrew and Tanabe, Shigeharu eds. History and Peasant Consciousness in South East Asia. see introduction, and the articles by Tanabe, Chatthip Nartsupha. 75-134
 - * Spiro. Buddhism and Society. 171-180
 - Ishii. Sangha, State and Society. chap.9 (171-187)
 - Ishii, Yoneo. "A Note on Millenarian Revolts in Northeastern Siam." Journal of Southeast Studies. 6:2, 121-126
 - Tambiah. Buddhist Saints of the Forest. chap.20 (293-320)
 - Sarkisyanz, E. Buddhist Background of the Burmese Revolution. chap. 21-22 (149-65)
 - Adas, Michael. "Bandits, Monks, and Pretender Kings: Pattern of Peasant Resistance and Protest in Colonial Burma, 1826-1941." in Power and Protest in the Countryside. ed. Robert P. Wellner and Scott E. Guggenheim. pp. 75-105

TRANSITION

WEEK 12 (Apr 6) Responses to the West (1) Siam: Modern Buddhist ideas and *sangha*. national integration

- Reading:
- * Kirsch, A. Thomas. "Modernizing Implications of Nineteenth Century Reforms in Thai Sangha," in Religion and Legitimation of Power. 52-65
 - * Tambiah, S.J. World Conqueror and World Renouncer. chap. 10-12 (179-261)
 - * Reynolds, Frank E.. "Sacral Kingship and National Development: The Case of Thailand." in Religion and Legitimation of Power. pp.100-110
 - Alabaster, Henry. The Modern Buddhist, Being the Views of a Siamese Minister of State on His Own and Other Religions.
 - Keyes, Charles F. "Buddhism and National Integration in Thailand." Journal of Asian Studies. 30 (1971): 551-568
 - Ishii. Sangha, State and Society. chap.8 (146-170)
 - Reynolds, Craig J. "Buddhist Cosmography in Thai History, With Special Reference to Nineteenth Century Culture Change." Journal of Asian Studies 35 (1976): 203-220
 - Reynolds, Craig J. The Buddhist Monkhood in Nineteenth Century Thailand. chap. 3-4

WEEK 13 (Apr 13) Response to the West (2) Burma: Buddhist movements for independence

- Reading:
- * Sarkisyanz, E. Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution. 110-179
 - * Ferguson, John P. "The Quest for Legitimation by Burmese Monks and Kings," In ed. Bardwell Smith. Religion and Legitimation. 66-86
 - Mendelsohn, E. Michael. Sangha and State. chap 4 (173-235)
 - Smith, Donald E. Religion and Politics in Burma. chap 3

BUDDHISM AND MODERN NATIONS

WEEK 14 (Apr 20) The sangha and state in recent history

- Reading:
1. Siam
 - * Tambiah, S.J. World Conqueror and World Renouncer. chap.18-19 (434-63. 472-514)
 - * Reynolds, Frank E. ""Legitimation and Rebellion," in Religion and Legitimation of Power. pp.134-146.
 - * Keyes, Charles F. "Political Crisis and Militant Buddhism," in ibid. 147-164
 - OR 2. Burma
 - * Tin Muang and Muang Than. "The *sangha* and *sasana* in Socialist Burma." SOJOURN: Social Issues in Southeast Asia. 3:1 (Feb. 1988). 26-61
 - * Sarkisyanz, E. Buddhist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution. chap 25-28 (192-236)
 - Ishii. Sangha, State and Society. chap. 4.6.7 (67-80. 100-145)
 - Mendelsohn, E. Michael. Sangha and State. chap.5 (236-298)
 - Smith, Donald E. Religion and Politics. chap.5.7

- WEEK 15 (Apr 27) Buddhism in the world of modern technology and capitalism
- Reading:
- Jackson, Peter A. Buddhism Legitimation and Conflict. section 2
 - Sulak Sivaraksa. Seeds of Peace
 - Sulak Sivaraksa. Siam in Crisis
 - Jackson, Peter A. "The Hupphasawan Movement: Millenarian Buddhism among Thai Political Elite." SOJOURN: Social Issues in Southeast Asia. 3:2, 134-170
 - Zehner, Edwin. "Reform Symbolism of a Thai Middle-class Sect: the Growth and Appeal of the Thammakai Movement." Journal of Southeast Asian Studies. 21:2. 402-426
 - Taylor, J.L. "Living on the Rim: Ecology and Forest Monks in Northeast Thailand," SOJOURN. 6:1. 106-125
 - Somboon Suksamran. Political Buddhism in Southeast Asia: the sangha in the Modernization of Thailand. chap.3.4

WEEK 16 (May 4) [Final remarks ?]

LIST OF MATERIALS IN THE COURSEPACK HISTORY 459/ SPRING 1993

1. Hazra. Kanai Lal. History of Theravada Buddhism in Southeast Asia. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, pp.49-82
2. Kirsch, A. Thomas. "Complexity in the Thai Religious System," Journal of Asian Studies 36 (1977). pp.241-66.
3. Keyes. Charles, "Merit Transference in the Kammic Theory of Popular Theravada Buddhism," in Karma: an Anthropological Inquiry, ed. Charles F. Keyes. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1983. pp. 261-86.
4. Tambiah. S.J. The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets. Cambridge. N.Y.: Cambridge University Press, 1984, chap. 5 (53-77).
5. Reynolds. Frank E. trans. and intro. Three Worlds According to King Ruang: A Thai Buddhist Cosmology. Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1982. pp. 5-37.
6. Heine-Geldern. Robert. Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia. Data Paper No.18, Cornell Southeast Asia Program, 7th printing, 1990.
7. Reynolds. Craig J. "Buddhist Cosmography in Thai History. With Special Reference to Nineteenth Century Culture Change." Journal of Asian Studies 35 (1976). pp. 203-220.
8. Keyes. Charles F. "Mother or Mistress but Never a Monk: Buddhist Notions of Female Gender in Rural Thailand." American Ethnologist 11 (1984). pp.223-41.
9. Wyatt. David K. "The Subtle Revolution of King Rama I of Siam." in Moral Order and the Question of Change: Essays on Southeast Asian Thought, ed. Wyatt and Woodside, Monograph Series no.24,. Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1982, pp.9-52 .
10. Mendelson. E. Michael Sangha and State in Burma: A Study of Monastic Sectarianism and Leadership. Ithaca. N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1975. chap.1 (31-65).
11. Aung-Thwin, Michael. "The Role of *sasana* Reform in Burmese History: Economic Dimension of a Religious Purification." Journal of Asian Studies 38 (1979), pp. 671-88.
12. Keyes. Charles F. "Millennialism, Theravada Buddhism and Thai Society," Journal of Asian Studies 36 (1977), pp.283-302.
13. Tanabe. Shigeharu. "Ideological Practice in Peasant Rebellions: Siam at the Turn of the Twentieth Century," in History and Peasant Consciousness in South East Asia, ed. Andrew Turton and Shigeharu Tanabe. Senri Ethnological Studies No.13. Osaka: National Museum of Ethnology, 1984. pp.75-110.
14. Chatthip Nartsupha, "The Ideology of Holy Men Revolts in North East Thailand." in ibid. pp.111-34.
15. Tin Muang and Muang Than. "The *sangha* and *sasana* in Socialist Burma." SOJOURN: Social Issues in Southeast Asia. 3:1 (1983). 26-61.
16. City Slave (pseu.) "The Spirits of the Yellow Leaves." (This is a material for the mid-term exam.)