

Malaysian pop diva Siti's commercial success with religious songs was formally certified as *halal* (permissible). I wonder whether it would be possible to recognize a *halal* entertainer like Siti in stricter Islamic countries. How are Arab nations characterizing Umm Kulthum among increasingly fundamental Muslims today?

I am somewhat perplexed as to why the editors decided to include the last chapter, which focuses on Hatsune Miku, as this particular phenomenon has no subjectivity and is instead merely a software operated by those who purchase it. Although I agree that it is important for popular music studies to research the creation of virtual idols based on individual user preferences, we should introduce different perspectives to analyze this phenomenon. In particular, we should focus on those who operate Hatsune Miku. In this sense, the distinction that was made previously between idols and fans could be transformed into more ambiguous and multitiered relations mediated by an operable idol. The main themes of this book (female singers' subjectivities and agencies in Asia at the time of modernization) do not emerge from the software itself but through the operators, whose gender is not always recognized by the public. I think that this topic should have been treated as another project.

However, there can be no doubt that this book provides various ideas and inspirations for carrying out further projects on musical performance, gendered relations and Asian modernities.

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## Buddhist Law in Burma: A History of Dhammasattha Texts and Jurisprudence, 1250–1850

By D. Christian Lammert. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2018. 304pp. ISBN 9780824872601, URL: <https://uhpress.hawaii.edu/product/buddhist-law-in-burma-a-history-of-dhammasattha-texts-and-jurisprudence-1250-1850/>

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Burma (Myanmar) has retained more of its source materials on the traditional law, particularly *dhammasattha* (treatise on law) than other Southeast Asian countries, such as Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. These source materials mainly include *dhammasattha*, *rājasattha* (judicial decisions by the king), *praththon* (collection of judicial court decisions). Among these, as Lammerts asserts, *dhammasattha* has not been adequately investigated by scholarship, although it played a vital role in monastic and lay Buddhist intellectual, socio-legal, and textual practice.

This book is thematically divided into two parts: one (chapters 2–4) on “Sources” and the other (chapters 5 and 6) on “Revisions and Reasons” and is organized into six chapters including chapter 1 which is preceded by “Buddhist Law in Burma.”

According to Lammerts, although this book offers an account of the history and dynamic *dhammasattha* jurisprudence in premodern Burma (c. 1250–1850), it neither purports to provide a comprehensive history of the legal system of the period, nor any individual substantive law in it, but intends to serve as a sort of a preliminary discussion for future studies through his critical engagement with source materials of *dhammasattha* and related texts. In this sense, this book is the first critical

approach and challenge on the study on *dharmasattha* and its shifting textual repertoires and theoretical model.

Critically reviewing hitherto *dharmasattha* studies in and out of Burma, Lammerts argues that there were multiple, controversial modes on Burmese jurisprudence and legal authority and therefore that these must be assessed in the context of specific intellectual histories and also in relation to local textual and ritual practices. Focusing on the period between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, this book presupposes and substantiates that this approach to the study reveals significant shifts and reorientations in the legal discourse on law and Buddhism during this period. He questions against such view of the British colonialists who regarded precolonial Burmese legalism as the unchanging nature. He regards “Buddhist law” as a colonial terminology which is a new form of Burmese law, neglecting a living, dynamic and self-critical feature of *dharmasattha*. He asserts that *dharmasattha* constitutes a tradition of Burmese Buddhist law and jurisprudence so intermingled with Buddhism.

Lammerts aims at two goals: one is to map and describe the significance of the production, circulation, and transformation of *dharmasattha* in precolonial Burma and he gives importance to historical or philological work with the genre and urges scholars to extensively scrutinize such abundant and complex manuscript archive as a fundamental work. In this regard, he severely criticizes the attitude of colonialists who never really investigated the *dharmasattha* manuscripts scattered throughout the country: the other is to provide an account of the *dharmasattha* jurisprudence and complex manuscript archive so that we can examine how and why the precolonial Burmese jurisprudence changed toward the mid-nineteenth century.

Regarding Buddhism and law, Lammerts asserts that it is conspicuous mistake to characterize Buddhist law as mere monastic law, although monks were extremely concerned with writing and authorizing *dharmasattha*. While denying widespread literary in Sanskrit including *dharmasāstra* or Hindu code of law, Lammerts, through his survey of the textual evidence, totally rejects the late outstanding British jurist, Huxley’s such assumption that “Pali cultural package” (1990, p. 70), that is, the literary and intellectual resources of a trans-regional Pali or Theravāda Buddhism in Southeast Asia brought with it in the form of the *vinaya* for monks but no source of law for laity. Lammerts argues, through his careful study of the earliest surviving *dharmavilāsa dharmasattha* text that there is a gulf between “Pali cultural package” and the indigenous *dharmasattha* tradition, emphasizing that sources and repertoires of *dharmasattha* are more complex and more dynamics than Huxley’s analysis.

This book begins the history of *dharmasattha* with “proto-textual” period, examining epigraphic references of the early thirteenth century from Pagan, and demonstrating that *dharmasat* in vernacular may not yet have functioned as a genre. In the sixteenth century, however, number of vernacular poems dealt with *dharmasattha* as a genre of judicial guide for kings and ministers. Lammerts has made effort to elucidate the legal circumstances through reading them. He further develops, through evidential records on monastic legal disputes and *vinaya* decisions, the historical facts of interaction between *vinaya* and *dharmasattha* in the seventeenth century, and realizes that many cases involved ordinary monks and lay people.

Lammerts, then examines *dharmavilāsa dharmasattha* which, he regards as the earliest securely dated surviving *dharmasattha* (before 1637–1638), seemingly based upon Furnivall’s account (1940, p. 355). He selected *dharmavilāsa* because, in his opinion, it is a mirror reflecting a certain discursive state of affairs in the Burmese *dharmasattha*. He states that such a distinctive jurisprudence identified as *dharmasattha*, preserved at the boundary wall of the universe was transcribed therefrom and transmitted by preternatural seer Manu to King Mahāsammata, the first Buddhist ruler to make good use of his legal administration. The original *dharmavilāsa* goes back to the twelfth century Pagan by Forchhammer’s view (1885, p. 35) based on *Kalyānī* inscription (late 15c), but Furnivall casts a doubtful authenticity due to there being no support of the contemporary inscriptions (1940, p. 355). Lammerts expects future critical scholarship on the original *dhmmavilāsa*.

This book deals with two versions of *Manusāra-patha* (in Pali verse) and *nissaya* (word for word translation) composed by Tipitaka Lankaara and Kaingza Manuraaja in 1651–1652, although there are

considerable differences between them. In this regard, debatably showing objection against Forchhammer (1885, p.35) or Lingat's (1950, p.18) such view that *dharmmasattha* was compiled in Pali first and then translated into vernacular in nissaya style, Lammerts evidently points out that vernacular texts were sometimes compiled first and then translated into Pali so that Pali can explain more accurate, unambiguous and memorable. He gives importance to the two versions of *Manusāra* as the first *dharmmasattha* to declare a clear boundary separation between monastic and lay legal jurisdictions and he also significantly indicates that the compilers of *Manusāra* had begun to explicitly articulate the discrepancies between legitimate or illegitimate textual sources. In this regard, Lammerts declares that there are considerable variations between the account of both *Manusāra* and *dharmmavilāsa* in the story of legal origin. *Dharmmavilāsa* does not clearly recognize the identification of Mahāsammata and Manu, while *Manusāra* does recognize it.

In chapter 5 of this book, Lammerts demonstrates that the notion, status and authority should be evaluated in light of the *pitakat* or Pali scriptures, considering such several significant changes in *dharmmasattha* during the late-seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries. In Burma during eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, particularly the first years of Konbaung dynasty (1752–1760) only old *dharmmasattha* texts were redeployed and since then there appeared several distinguished indigenous monks, ministers, or writers on *dharmmasattha*, who took up various topics on *dharmmasattha* treatise. Among these intellectuals, Kemaacaara (Appendix I) Vannadhamma Kyaw Htin (Appendix II), Letwe Sundara (Appendix III), and Monywe Sayadaw (Appendix IV) provided useful information on chronological arrangement of previous *dharmmasattha*. Thus after writing about the works by precolonial Burmese jurists, Lammerts presumes that the *dharmmasattha* as written law was itself an avenue of critique and its historicization and also refers to “*Upade*” or a new type of written law with the large scale of issuance in the mid-nineteenth century Burma, which was parallelly existed with *dharmmasattha* until the fall of the Konbaung dynasty in 1885.

Lammerts has made painstaking effort to demonstrate that *dharmmasattha* during the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries Burma were utterly historical, dynamic, changeable, and even controversial phenomena. Nevertheless, through available evidence found in colophons of *dharmmasattha* authors, he came to certain general conclusion, that *dharmmasattha* has been characterized not as “moral law” but as “a legal instrument” intended for the benefit for both the judge and litigants; that is, the Judges should protect the wealth and prosperity of litigants to the final goal, the prosperity of Buddhists through their meritorious deeds and of Buddhism. This book conclusively asserts that law and Buddhism are mutually constitutive and inseparable.

Lammerts, eventually implies how much degree Paliization or Theravāda Buddhist-ization and its localization or regionalization occurred in the premodern mainland Southeast Asia. This book emphasizes the importance of not only reexamining primary sources of *dharmmasattha* texts, but also more widely unearthing of contemporary authentic sources. Furthermore, Lammerts offers valuable readings of primary sources, particularly both *Dharmmavilāsa* and *Manusāra*. His book also shows an exciting development in the scholarship of legal history of Burma, particularly of the *dharmmasattha* legalism and offers a new direction toward understanding it more accurately.

This book takes up various topics to be discussed with elaborate fullness of detail and ordinary readers without somewhat preliminary knowledge will be bewildered. For this commentator two point of issues are cast, although it seems a bit apart from the context of this book: one is that it seems more interesting for readers if this book discusses the relationship between “impermanence” or “law of cause and effect” in Buddhist terminology and transcending nature of the Burmese traditional law; the other is that it will be more concerned for readers to compare between Western concept of “legality” and Burmese tradition of “reasonableness” as a criterion of law.

However, this book is an indescribably valuable work for us to enrich our knowledge of the Burmese traditional legalism and it makes a significant contribution to the scholarship in this field of studies in the future.

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