

Northern Thai Buddhist monastic education systems with an emphasis on pedagogical methods, textual resources and educational structures, but also to place them in their dynamic economic, political and sociocultural contexts.

Monastic education in both countries has been through waxing and waning stages throughout its long history. McDaniel's emphases on 'continuity', 'from-below' and 'agency' of small people could raise some further questions. Some of them are methodological questions; many are concerned with conceptual thought. Are the social worlds of the Lao and the Thai well integrated as suggested in and seen through their monastic culture? How do Lao and Thai Buddhists make sense of their increasing differences due to their respective modern states' insistent claims over national borders, identities and nationalist attachments? How have monastic teachers, students and other members of Buddhist interpretative communities contended with the desires and tensions created by forces of global secular modernity? Is the coverage of five straight centuries too large and too long for a historiography project?

I cannot identify misspelling or mistakes in the transcription and transliteration of terminologies from other languages, but there are many errors in the transcription of Thai-language names and terms, especially in the Bibliography. The conversion from Buddhist Era to Common Era years in the Bibliography also contains many mistakes. The English translations of non-English titles should also be provided in the bibliographical list.

This book is McDaniel's first and it is definitely his career-defining publication. It is a milestone of remarkable scholarship in the fields of anthropology, Buddhist/religious studies, history, literature, post-colonial and Southeast Asian studies. It is a 'must-read' item for students, scholars and everybody who wishes to learn some critical aspects of how Buddhists have informally and institutionally educated other Buddhists and together created lasting interpretative communities through the turbulence of colonial domination, the modern nation-state's secular reforms and Western-style modernisation in the Theravada Buddhist worlds of mainland Southeast Asia.

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How to behave: Buddhism and modernity in colonial Cambodia 1860–1930

By ANNE RUTH HANSEN

Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007, Notes, Bibliography, Index, Photos.
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In *How to Behave*, Anne Hansen traces a shift in what Khmer Buddhist writers saw as the ethical and religious ideas most relevant to their time and place. In the mid-nineteenth century, the dominant form of Khmer religious imagination was of a morally constructed universe whose physical and temporal structures reflected 'cycles

of decline and regeneration that mirrored the contiguous decline and regeneration of adherence to the Dhamma among sentient beings' (p. 20). By the 1930s, this had shifted to 'a correct understanding of scripture ... demonstrated through moral conduct in religious ritual and orderly life' (pp. 1–2). This turn towards a rational, textual, everyday vision of Buddhist ethics was, Hansen argues, the result of the political and social upheavals of colonialism, growing links between Khmer Buddhists and the global Buddhist world, and the rise of print technologies and literacy in Cambodia. Hansen's study of the modernist movement in Khmer Buddhism thus explores how historical forces shaped and changed Khmer Buddhist ideas about the world and how best to exist in it.

This is an excellent book. Hansen's remarkable fluency in Theravada Buddhist thought and ideas is evident, and it gives her study a depth that is absent in many other historical approaches to religion in Southeast Asia. Hansen balances close readings of Buddhist texts with a careful consideration of their historical and intellectual trajectories, their social and technological modes of transmission and their ritual functions, all of which she rightly views as inseparable from the texts themselves. In this respect, Hansen employs a wide range of sources to complement Buddhist modernist texts. Particularly interesting are funeral biographies of Khmer monks, a genre that emerged in the 1920s, which give readers a clearer sense of the social side of this world of ideas. Hansen is also adept at critically reading French authors from the era, sidestepping the pitfalls of these texts to extract the rich ethnographic material that they contain.

A nuanced understanding of broader historical forces frames Hansen's arguments about texts and their meaning. The French colonial state had a strong influence on the Khmer Buddhist modernist movement both by regulating the movement of monks and the circulation of texts and also by supporting schools and institutes deemed compatible with colonial agendas. Hansen illuminates the French connection without falling prey to a common but misplaced argument about the colonial 'invention' of Southeast Asian religious modernity. She does so by considering the many transnational influences on Khmer Buddhism in this era, notably reforms in religious education and in the organisation and administration of the Sangha in Siam during the reigns of Mongkut and Chulalongkorn and the influences of these reforms on Khmer monks, both through the growing circulation of texts and through travel and study in Siam.

Hansen's study is a convincing picture of the 'intercultural mimesis between a translocal circulation of ideas drawn from the Buddhist modernization project taking place in Siam, French imperial ideologies and policies in Indochina, and Khmer religious intellectual absorption with the problem of how to live as a modern Buddhist in authentic Theravāda terms' (p. 111). Accordingly, this work's contributions to the study of colonial-era Southeast Asia are numerous. By demonstrating how Buddhism acted as a vehicle for understanding and responding to social change in colonial-era Cambodia, Hansen offers a powerful corrective to studies that approach the question of identity in modern Southeast Asia in primarily secular terms. This study is also an excellent model to approach the broader question of the production and circulation of ideas in colonial-era Southeast Asia, too often reduced to tensions between an *ex nihilo* Orientalism and indigenous responses. Hansen instead reveals

how complex and reciprocal exchanges between local, colonial and transnational forces shaped intellectual life in this time and place.

If the book has weaknesses, they stem from its strengths. Hansen ends her study in the 1930s, when Buddhist modernist ideas ‘would cease to function as a modernism in the sense of an opposing critique, ethos or movement but increasingly as the dominant religious discourse’ (p. 181). Buddhism’s place in Khmer nationalism is explicitly not Hansen’s research interest, but the book does end a bit abruptly, and some general reflections on the relationship between Khmer Buddhism and post-colonial Cambodia would have been welcome. Finally, the subtlety of Hansen’s picture of the intersections between Khmer Buddhism and the global trends and forces collectively referred to as ‘modernity’ makes her regular reference to theorists of this phenomenon who focus on the European context (notably David Harvey) a little puzzling. The theoretical parameters that this helps her to establish are diffuse, and they do not contribute much to the nuanced theoretical position that she ultimately constructs through her own case study. If anything, Hansen’s work is proof that studies of global modernity need not assume as a starting point theoretical literature grounded in European case studies.

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Malaysia

Houses in motion: The experience of place and the problem of belief in urban Malaysia

By RICHARD BAXSTROM

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Brickfields is unbelievable. According to *Houses in Motion*, the Tamil-Malaysian inhabitants of the Brickfields area of Kuala Lumpur are unable to ‘believe’ their place in the world and therefore lack a basis for action in the face of rapid and overbearing development in the first years of the twenty-first century. The book frames this problem by drawing on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and, to a lesser extent, other – primarily French – contemporary theorists (such as Henri Lefebvre). The author emphasises the shock and disillusionment of Brickfields residents as their neighbourhood is redeveloped. Their helplessness is due to their social, cultural and religious marginalisation within a Malay-Muslim-dominated nation and an aggressive modernist Islamic developmentalist state. Unfortunately, neither the ‘Malaysian case’ nor Deleuzian theory are deeply illuminated or transformed by their engagement in this text.

Chapters 1 and 2 present a traditional historical narrative that does not directly address the book’s framing analytic of place and belief; there is no attention paid, for