

Order, Nugroho established many museums; guidebooks, films, textbooks, re-enactments of past events and commemorative histories of the past were also published. This study provides a powerful insight into how history was politicised and mobilised by the New Order to create a modern post-Sukarno Indonesia. The official ideology of *Pancasila* (five principles), though originally enunciated by Sukarno in 1945, was only strongly promoted under the New Order, with any individual or organisation challenging it being labelled a threat to national security.

History in uniform also provides a useful mirror to understanding the role of the military in Indonesian politics, especially in the period following the abortive coup in 1965. It provides a useful glimpse of its internal politics and politicking, and largely explains the state of the military in Indonesia in the post-Suharto era. The author ends her study by showing how embedded the military and its ideology have become in Indonesia today. While Indonesia is emerging as the third largest democracy in the world, the importance of the military cannot be discounted, as is most evident in the unwillingness to totally disassociate with its past. The choice of a military general as the country's first directly elected president merely confirms this.

While the author's work provides an interesting illumination of the New Order's use of various events to legitimise itself, there is often a tendency to be extremely negative, indicating a somewhat *a priori* bias against the regime. This may be understandable from a Western pro-democracy stance, but unfortunately it somewhat mars the otherwise excellent work. While Suharto and his key lieutenants may have manipulated various events, especially the abortive coup, what cannot be denied is that it took place and there was a massive revulsion against it. Although Suharto's role in the event is not totally clear, it is undeniable that he emerged as 'saviour', and this largely explained the strong legitimacy he held until his regime collapse under pressure of the Asian financial crisis. The fact that Suharto is still held in high esteem in Indonesia, especially Java, merely confirms that though he may have his faults, he has remained a highly respected national figure. Otherwise, this is an excellent work that has contributed to a better understanding of how the New Order operated and sustained itself in Indonesia.

BILVEER SINGH

National University of Singapore

Thailand

New Buddhist movements in Thailand: Towards an understanding of Wat Phra Dhammakaya and Santi Asoke

By RORY MACKENZIE

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New Buddhist movements in Thailand provides comprehensive coverage of both Wat Phra Dhammakaya and Santi Asoke, which have emerged as the two most visible reformist Buddhist movements since the politically turbulent 1970s. Drawing on key

theorists on the new religious movements (Roy Willis, Bryan Wilson and Lance Cousins), Rory MacKenzie argues that Wat Phra Dhammakaya fits well with the highly progressive fundamentalist and millenarian typologies of such movements, whereas Santi Asoke is 'best described as an ascetic/prophetic, utopian movement with legalistic tendencies'. Wat Phra Dhammakaya and Santi Asoke reflect two possibly extreme forms of how Thai Buddhism has responded to the highly materialist and consumerist Thai society. The former represents a 'mega' form of prosperity Buddhism through its famous meditation technique and remarkable business organisation, while the latter emphasises a Buddhist 'anti-consumerist, anti-capitalist world view' (p. 187) and collective morality of self-sufficient communities through strict disciplinary works.

The author introduces a relatively fresh theoretical approach to the study of Thai Buddhism. With his phenomenological approach, he avoids the redundancy of submerging Buddhist movements under familiar themes like reformist or urban-middle-class religiosities, Sangha-state tensions, crises of authority and modernity, Thai constructions of gender or prosperity religion. However, what the author cannot avoid is his questionable positionality, shaped by emic-etic dualism, and rigid theoretical orientation traps (typological comparisons). For me, these two points are the most serious flaws of the book.

First of all, it is a nearly impossible mission to identify, separate and assume a full emic or etic stance, let alone a juxtaposition between the two with the author's assumed neutrality. In the academic discourses of the twenty-first century, the author's position as a value-free observer, distancing himself from the subject he studies while interpreting views from both insiders and outsiders, is questionable and insensitive. He cannot simply hide from his author/researcher's selfhood and prejudice. Moreover, the book's analytical mode, based on typological characterisation and comparison of the movements, fails to produce any nuanced or sophisticated narratives. The author obviously encountered a certain degree of difficulty in terms of getting access to the sources of information during his fieldwork, since both movements have survived their controversial histories by developing strict lines separating insiders and outsiders through their restrictive and cult-like mechanisms. His narrative is not structured by, or deeply embedded in, his experience in the field. Finally, the book does not critically engage with the current stage of the sociology of religion or the studies of Thai Buddhism. It confirms rather than advances existing conceptual understandings of new religious movements. The emphasis on questionnaires and secondary sources does not help to enhance his critical ethnographic inquiries.

There are some other critical shortcomings in this book. I found the author's usage of the terms '*amnat*' (power), '*ittipon*' (influence) and '*parami*' (moral stature or charisma) somewhat off the mark. I do not think that either the general Thai public or members of these movements would employ the first two terms to describe monks or their religious and spiritual leaders. These are sets of human qualities mostly reserved for and traditionally assigned to the realm of the mundane, especially politics and economy. To say that the abbot of Wat Phra Dhammakaya is a person with *amnat* and *itthiphon* (I follow the transcription rules established by Thailand's Royal Academy) is definitely a negative or derogatory statement. Of course, some critics of the movements do use these words, but they are at least not normative terms employed by members of these movements.

In addition, the author's elaboration of the Thai concept of 'community culture' (*watthanatham chumchon*) is inadequate. 'Community' and 'culture' mean vastly different things in that particular framework than they do in Santi Asoke's vision. The other key shortcoming is the book does not adopt a standard transcription system for Thai terminology. Spelling of Thai-language terms is very inconsistent. Finally, the book has not been thoroughly edited and thus requires further copy-editing and proof-reading.

This book is the revised version of the author's doctoral dissertation with some additional updates. Its style and prose are rather technical, and its organisation is constrained by the standard format of a dissertation. Nonetheless, the book has some merit in its systematic representations of two prominent new Buddhist movements in Thailand. It can be usefully included in reading lists for scholars and readers who are interested in the current state of Thai Buddhism as well as in Southeast Asia's new religious movements.

PATTANA KITIARSA

National University of Singapore

Spreading the Dhamma: Writing, orality, and textual transmission in Buddhist northern Thailand

By DANIEL M VEIDLINGER

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In the conclusion of his study of the emergence of writing in northern Thailand, Daniel Veidlinger states that he has attempted to 'see the strings' – 'the mechanism by which much of the literary wealth of Buddhism in northern Thailand has been created, sustained, and passed down' (p. 205). For those interested in the history of Buddhism in the region before the twentieth century, this study does just that. However, it also does much more, placing the history of writing in a small corner of the Buddhist world into the larger history of religious scriptoria in Europe and South Asia. He not only closely examines Pali manuscripts – including the marginalia, wooden covers, orthography, colophons and binding strings – but also the ways in which these manuscripts were circulated and stored. This study of the movement and place of texts within a community has much to say to those in medieval Catholic, Islamic and Taoist studies who are concerned with the interplay between medium and message in textual production.

Veidlinger's book is a considerable reworking and reframing of his 2002 University of Chicago Ph.D. dissertation. It is part of the 'Politics, Meaning, and Memory' series edited by David Chandler and Rita Smith Kipp which includes several provocative studies in Southeast Asian Buddhist Studies by Penny Edwards, Anne Hansen and Shawn McHale. This reviewer learned much from that dissertation and was happy to see Veidlinger expand his close study of the culture of Pali manuscript production to a more comparative and historically contextual study. He examines how palm leaf manuscripts were composed and transmitted, often orally, and shows how these