

state known as Arakanistan. In that, they were lineal descendants of the Mujahadeen who fought the British in the Buthidaung, Maungdaw and Rathedaung regions in 1947 in an effort to be included in East Pakistan.

The large outflows of persons from northern Rakhine State into Bangladesh, in 1978 and again in the early 1990s, underscore the fluidity and tenuous nature of the majority of the Muslim population of Myanmar. However, as Dr Berlie discusses, many Muslims have been integrated into Burmese society for centuries. His appendices provide lengthy lists of the prayer halls and mosques found in many major cities. A full list would be much longer if it were to take in places of Islamic worship in smaller towns and cities from the north to the south of the country. The volume also discusses the presence of Muslims of Burmese or Han descent in both northern Myanmar and neighbouring Yunnan. Dr Berlie's volume touches on many important subjects and demonstrates how much is not known as well as what is known, if only imperfectly. The study of Islam in Myanmar, in all its varieties and complexities, has hardly begun. *The Burmanization of Myanmar's Muslims* is evidence that there is much to do. A census that all could accept might be a good place to start.

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Gathering leaves & lifting words: Histories of Buddhist monastic education in Laos and Thailand

By JUSTIN THOMAS MCDANIEL

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This book is an original study of the histories of Buddhist monastic education in Laos and Northern Thailand, covering the periods from the sixteenth century to the present. Justin McDaniel argues that individual Buddhist agents including laywomen, laymen, novices (*samanen*), nuns (*maechi*) and their interpretative communities make the complex histories of Buddhist monastic education in Laos and Northern Thailand. Over the centuries, they have actively cited, memorised, read, taught and altered Buddhist texts to fit their needs and changing circumstances. Studying the histories of Buddhism in mainland Southeast Asia through initiations and legacies of 'big men', such as kings, aristocrats or European colonists, is far from adequate. Along this line of argument, he seems to reject the fashionable notion of discontinuity or disjuncture between the past and the present due to the rise of the secular nation-state and the onslaught of modernisation and globalisation. The textual transmission of a Buddhist monastic curriculum and its flexible, informal pedagogical methods have convinced him that historical continuity and persistence have remained key concepts for understanding the dynamic historical processes and imaginations of Theravada

Buddhism in Laos and Thailand. Monastic learning and teaching have placed high value on following as well as negotiating certain textual and pedagogical traditions. He has shown throughout the book that 'the monastic students of the sixteenth century developed these traditions through copying, adapting, memorizing, reciting, questioning, and answering, just as students of the third millennium continue to do' (p. 6).

McDaniel's thesis on empowering Buddhist agents on the ground sounds not very much different from the current trend to return agency to small people, challenge the 'big man' theory, and turn the tables around by writing a vernacular history. However, his contributions are highly significant beyond the book's general argument. McDaniel is perhaps the first scholar to study the Buddhist monastic curriculum as living traditions in the Thai and Lao Buddhist worlds. He carried out his multi-sited fieldwork across the lower Mekong region. He affiliated himself with local lay and Buddhist monastic universities and major historical monasteries in places like Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Lampang, Phrae, Luang Prabang, Savannakhet and Vientiane. He is well equipped with multiple linguistic tools (French, Portuguese, Pali, Sanskrit, and the vernacular and premodern written languages of Northern Thailand and Laos), all of which are essential to guide his intellectual journeys into the premodern and modern worlds of mainland Southeast Asian Buddhists. Over a decade, he has successfully cultivated intensive networks of local and international scholars, many of whom have become his mentors, colleagues and key informants, in Laos, Thailand, the US and elsewhere. Indeed, the book's organising ideas of 'linguaging' and 'Buddhist monastic education as interpretative communities' can be taken as conceptual compasses to mirror actual research processes as well as well-connected life worlds, which McDaniel has consistently interwoven.

The aims of this book are two-fold. McDaniel's first aim is to discover and establish the Buddhist monastic curriculum as an interpretative category for the study of religion. He is interested in the questions of 'how knowledge locally referred to as "Buddhist" has been formed and transmitted. How has this living episteme been transmitted from teacher to student?' (p. 8). For McDaniel, a Buddhist monastic curriculum is 'a way of seeing texts and how they are used as "moveable bridges" that link orality, textuality, canon, commentary, lecture, sermon, and vernacular and classical texts' (p. 21). Instead of studying Buddhism through some technical aspects of context-less and life-less written texts in Laos and Northern Thailand, he has discovered that the realities and lives on the ground of pre-modern written genres, such as *nissaya*, *vohara* and *namasadda* are deeply 'intertextual' (p. 6) and 'polyvalent' (p. 8).

For his second aim, McDaniel strongly sets out to 'contest the scholarship that perceives a sharp difference between premodern and modern religious education in Northern Thailand and Laos based on the advent of the modern state' (p. 18). He argues that sets of dichotomies such as classical-vernacular, canonical-commentarial, liturgical-analytical and past-present, do not accurately represent the historical realities of change and persistence in the histories of Buddhist monastic education. In order to move beyond dichotomies, he turns to sets of conceptual ideas, most notably Alton Becker's distinction between 'language' and 'linguaging', David Biggs's and J.B. Jackson's concept of 'vernacular landscapes', and Michel de Certeau's 'strategies' and 'tactics'. He proceeds to not only piece together complex histories of the Lao and

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

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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