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# Manuscripts in Central Thailand

## *Samut Khoi from Phetchaburi Province*

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IT IS NOT POSSIBLE to give a survey or an overview of manuscript collections in the temples of Thailand.<sup>1</sup> There has been no national survey, and there are no regional or provincial surveys or registers.<sup>2</sup> Manuscripts, sacred objects, antiquities—all are the property of the individual temple, and how they are kept is up to the abbot and the temple committee.<sup>3</sup> Often

1 In general, see Peter Skilling, “Reflections on the Pali Literature of Siam,” in Paul Harrison and Jens-Uwe Hartmann, eds., *From Birch Bark to Digital Data: Recent Advances in Buddhist Manuscript Research*, Papers Presented at the Conference Indic Buddhist Manuscripts: The State of the Field, Stanford University, 15–19 June 2009, *Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens*, 80, *Denkschriften der philosophisch-historischen Klasse*, 460 (Vienna: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2014), 347–66.

2 Some of the microfilm projects in the north have produced various types of catalogues, both published and unpublished. Catalogues of monastery collections done by the Fine Arts Department throughout the country are generally unpublished. Catalogues of single temples or institutions done as individual projects are sometimes published, but the publications are scattered and not easy to access. A master reference to the extant catalogues is a desideratum.

3 Artifacts registered by the Fine Arts Department are still kept in the temple, but are subject to certain restrictions.

the manuscripts are stored haphazardly, in cabinets or boxes. Sometimes they are not examined for years, and by the time they are, insects and rodents may have damaged them irreparably. Some temples establish museums to keep and display their manuscripts and other treasures, reformatting the temple's traditional role as repository of local history and knowledge. This is certainly better than neglect, although the monks or members of the community are rarely trained in museology or conservation. Examples of temple museums in the Central region that have interesting manuscripts on display include Wat Pho in Bangkok, Wat Muang and Wat Khonkharam in Ratchaburi, and Wat Paramaiyikawat in Nonthaburi. The last three are Mon temples.

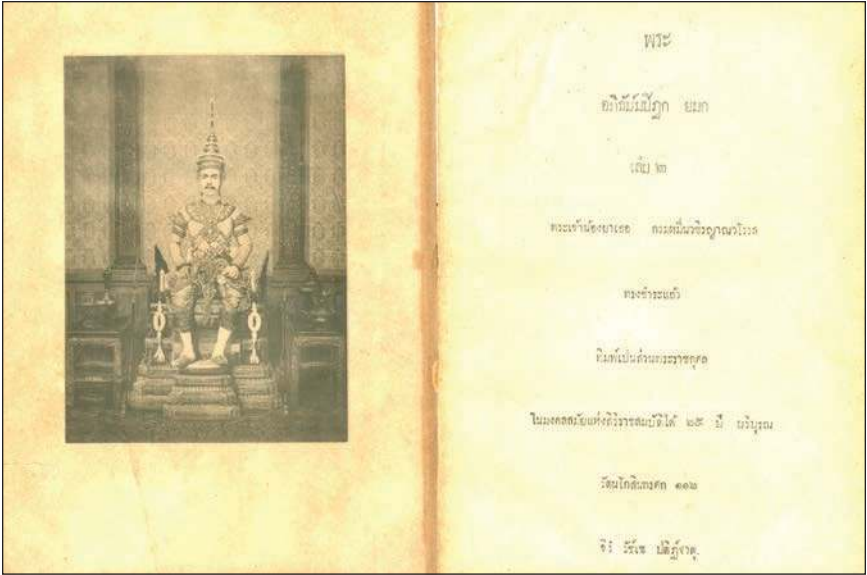
In Central Thailand, manuscripts were written in the Khom and the Thai scripts. “Khom” (ขอม) includes both “Khom Bali” (ขอมบาลี), used for writing the Pali language, and “Khom Thai” (ขอมไทย), used for writing the Thai language, especially for certain genres connected with Buddhism, such as vernacular versions of Buddhist texts.<sup>4</sup> The Thai script was mainly used for non-religious subjects: for medical manuscripts, chronicles, astrological, and literary or popular texts. Some manuscripts are biscriptual, with the main text in Thai in Khom Thai or Thai letters and Pali citations in Khom Bali. The royal manuscripts of the Three Seals Law Code (*Kotmai trasamduang*, กตหมายตราสามดวง), for example, are written in white-paper folding books in the Thai script with Pali quotations lettered in Khom Bali.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Pali began to be printed in the standard Thai script. The publication of the Rama V Tipiṭaka at the end of the nineteenth century (figs. 1 and 2) and the “Translated Chants, Vajirañña Library Edition,” in book form in CE 1910 (figs. 3 and 4) were significant steps in the shift in scripts.<sup>5</sup> Khom Thai was never adapted for printing, and

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4 The word “Pāli” is pronounced “Bālī” in Thai, hence the spelling of the Thai ขอมบาลี as “Khom Bali.”

5 For a monumental study of the Rama V Tipiṭaka, see Maechi Wimuttiya (Suphapan Na Bangchang), *Phra Traipidok chabab phabatsomdet Phra Chulachomklao Chaoyuhua* [The King Chulalongkorn Tipiṭaka] (Bangkok: Ho Phra Traipidok Nanachat, Khana Aksorasat, Chulalongkorn University, 2557 [2014]), แม่ชี วิมุตติยา (สุภาพรณ ณ บางช้าง), พระไตรปิฎก



Transliteration of the Siamese alphabet and signs as used in the Pali text of this book.

Vowels.

Initial.    ๐ or ๐๑ ๐๒ ๐๓ ๐๔ ๐๕ ๐๖ ๐๗ ๐๘ ๐๙ ๐๐.

                 ๐๑ ๐๒ ๐๓ ๐๔ ๐๕ ๐๖ ๐๗ ๐๘ ๐๙ ๐๐.

Medial & final.    ๐๑ ๐๒ ๐๓ ๐๔ ๐๕ ๐๖ ๐๗ ๐๘ ๐๙ ๐๐.

Place.                    over after over under    before    consonants.

Consonants.

ก	ข	ค	จ	ฉ	ช	ฎ	ฏ	ฐ	ถ	ด	ด
k	kh	g	gh	ā	c	ch	j	jh	n̄		
ฎ	ฏ	ฐ	ถ	ด	ด	ด	ด	ด	ด	ด	ด
t	th	ḍ	ḍh	n	t	th	ḍ	ḍh	n		
ม	ม	ม	ม	ม	ม	ม	ม	ม	ม	ม	ม
p	ph	b	bh	m	y	r	l	v	s	h	ṃ.

Example.

๐๐	๐๐๑	๐๐๒	๐๐๓	๐๐๔	๐๐๕	๐๐๖	๐๐๗	๐๐๘	๐๐๙	๐๐๐.
atha	atā	asā	iddhi	iddi	uju	urū	eks	ogho.		

FIGURES 1 (TOP) AND 2 (BOTTOM). Pages from the Rama V Tipiṭaka, in which the Pali language is printed in the standard Thai script, a practice that began toward the end of the nineteenth century.

as far as we know, no Khom Thai font was ever devised and no book was ever printed in Khom Thai.<sup>6</sup> In terms of print technology, the Thai language went from Khom Thai and handwritten Thai straight to the standard Thai script. As a result, Khom Thai has long been replaced by “standard Thai,” and today very few people can read manuscripts in Khom Thai, not even the title folios.

The case of the Mon script is similar. Formerly, the Mon and Pali languages were written in the same script, with some special signs for certain letters. In the early twentieth century, books were printed in both Pali and Mon in the Mon communities at Pak Lat (Samut Prakarn province: ปากลัด จ.สมุทรปราการ) just south of Bangkok. This included a Pali Tipiṭaka based on the Chulalongkorn Tipiṭaka. The spread of national education in the Thai language and the decline of spoken Mon led to a steady decline in Mon-script literacy by the middle of the twentieth century. Today, the Mon have for the most part become Thai speakers, but because the language and script are a part of their identity, some Mon communities make effort to preserve or revive their language. In both cases, Thai and Mon, the fundamental problem is that the manuscripts are no longer read or used, and are no longer seen to have meaning or value. The result is that too often manuscripts are neglected.

The situation in northern Thailand, the ancient kingdom of Lanna, is somewhat different. There the script used for Pali and the Lanna language has remained, increasingly precariously, in use, but there again the preservation of the script and Lanna literacy is important to community and cultural identity. The script goes under several names—for example, *tua tham* (ตัวธรรม), *akson tham* (อักษรธรรม), *tua muang* (ตัวเมือง), or *akson*

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ฉบับพระบาทสมเด็จพระจุลจอมเกล้าเจ้าอยู่หัว. กรุงเทพฯ: หอพระไตรปิฎกนานาชาติ คณะอักษรศาสตร์, จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย. The Translated Chants were recently reprinted in a facsimile edition: *Suat mon plae chabap ho phra samut wachirayan* (สวดมนต์แปลฉบับหอพระสมุดวชิรญาณ), reprinted for the royally sponsored cremation of Phra Mahārājamāṅgalatīlaka (Bunruan Puññako) and Phra Debavisuddhiñña (Ubon Nanthako) at Wat Thepsirin (Debaśirindrāvāsa), 25 December 2542 [CE 1999].

6 According to Henry Ginsburg, *Thai Art and Culture: Historic Manuscripts from Western Collections* (London: British Library, 2000), cat. no. 18, the first book printed in Thai in Thailand itself was a Christian tract published in 1837. Thai type was made by missionaries in Serampore in Bengal, and some earlier books in Thai were printed in Bengal and Singapore.

*lanna* (อักษรล้านนา). In the northeast the same script is called Tham Isan (ธรรมอีสาน)—essentially the same “Tham” writing system is used over a wide cultural zone in northern Southeast Asia, including some of the Shan areas of Burma, areas in southernmost Yunnan in China, and areas of Laos.

Given that manuscripts are not registered or, generally speaking, displayed, researchers can become aware of manuscript collections only through fieldwork or by word of mouth. Some manuscripts are famous and have been published. The cultural organization Muang Boran (เมืองโบราณ) has periodically brought attention to special manuscripts in the pages of its journal or publications.

Researchers have mainly been interested in the illustrations—the miniatures that accompany the text—rather than the texts themselves. One reason for this is that for the most part the texts are standard chants in the Pali language, or the “recitation version of Phra Malai” (*Phra malai khlon suat*, พระมาลัยกลอนสวด) in the Thai language.<sup>7</sup> However, not all of the Pali texts are well known, and it appears that in the past the selection of texts was more varied. For example, one long text, mainly in prose, the *Mahābuddhagūṇa* (Great compilation of texts on the eminent qualities of the Buddha) and the associated *Mahābuddhagūṇa-vaṇṇanā* has, as far as we know, never been published in the modern Thai script or in book format.<sup>8</sup> The *Uṇhissavijaya* has not been published in its longer Pali versions, or with its introductory and closing prose in vernaculars like Mon, Lanna Thai, or Thai.<sup>9</sup> These are two examples of texts that await proper edition and study. Both belong to textual families that consist of groups of cognate texts of which the relations and boundaries are not clear. The *Mahābuddhagūṇa* family throws further light

7 For an English translation of a *klon suat* version, see Bonnie Pacala Brereton, *Thai Tellings of Phra Malai: Texts and Rituals Concerning a Popular Buddhist Saint* (Tempe: Arizona State University, Program for Southeast Asian Studies, 1995).

8 For the *Mahābuddhagūṇa*, see Naomi Appleton, Sarah Shaw, and Toshiya Unebe, *Illuminating the Life of the Buddha: An Illustrated Chanting Book from Eighteenth-Century Siam* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, 2013), 105–6 and “Map of the manuscript,” xii–xiii. Sermon versions in Thai used to be published, but the use of the text seems to have declined by the first half of the twentieth century.

9 For the *Uṇhissavijaya*, see Appleton, Shaw, and Unebe, *Illuminating the Life of the Buddha*, 106–7.

on Ayutthaya-period Buddhology—in the sense of notions and understandings of the Buddha and Buddhahood—and on the use of the *Itipiso* formula, which is the backbone of not only the *Mahābuddhagūṇa* but also a host of textual and ritual practices. The *Uṇhissavijaya* family—in at least Pali, Thai, Lao, Mon, Lanna, and Khmer—is an example of central Southeast Asian participation in one of the most dynamic textual practices or cults to spread across Asia, centered on narratives, recitations, and healing and longevity rituals.

So far we do not know the social meaning of the texts brought together in the Phra Malai manuscripts, or the logic behind the choice and selection of texts and illustrations. There are many gaps in our knowledge. Why are the manuscripts often so beautiful? Who painted them, who commissioned them, and how were the artisans paid? It does not seem that the volume was read out at ceremonies as a general practice, though at the same time it was set up in a lacquered or decorated box or casket. The volumes contain the speech of the Buddha, carefully calligraphed. They contain paintings of his ten “Great Lives,” the ten long *jātakas* that are placed at the end of the Pali *jātaka* collection.<sup>10</sup> That is, the manuscripts contain ten past lives of Gotama, and, in the form of the vernacular recitation version and sometimes pictures, the story of Phra Malai, Māleyya Thera, who is the conduit for the promise of meeting the future Buddha, Maitreya. The chants are the Dharma, the legacy of the teaching of Gotama, the present Buddha. Thus a Phra Malai volume is a potent emblem of the past and present of Gotama and of his successor Maitreya.

It seems as if, like the chants, the subject matter of the pictures was formerly more varied. Non-narrative scenes are not “still lives” but instead they are vigorous “gamboling lives”: to depict animals amid bright flowers and trees was popular in the Ayutthaya period, along with “wondrous creatures of the forest,” as Henry Ginsburg called them—splendid hybrid creatures like winged goats, royal lions, and elephant-lions.<sup>11</sup> Popular also were deities (*deva*)

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10 Readers can now benefit from a new translation of the Great Lives: *The Ten Great Birth Stories of the Buddha: The Mahānīpāta of the Jātakatthavaṇṇanā*, trans. Naomi Appleton and Sarah Shaw, 2 vols. (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2015).

11 Henry Ginsburg, *Thai Manuscript Painting* (London: British Library, 1989), pl. 21, caption. For these beings, see Jean Boisselier and Khaisri Sri-Aroon, *Les Êtres de l'Himalaya: Un*

and hermits or “knowledge-bearers” (*vidyādhara*, วิทยาธรร), seated with hands raised respectfully to worship the Buddha. A perennial theme was a pair of monks seated on the chanting seat, often in distorted and comical poses, with lay people seated below, gambling or playing games. There are few narratives apart from the life of the Buddha (which is itself rare), the ten birth stories, and Phra Malai.<sup>12</sup> An unusual exception is the illustration of the story of Sowat (โสวัต) from the “Fifty *Jātaka*” collection, known in a single case, but note that, although Sowat was a narrative chant, the manuscript does not contain the story of Sowat at all, but rather the usual series of chants.<sup>13</sup> The contemplations of the repulsive or foul, a series in which a monk meditates in a cemetery on the progressive decomposition of the human corpse, were depicted with great delicacy and feeling.

In the Bangkok period, the selection of pictures became standardized, and the subjects were generally limited to the ten birth stories, deities, Phra Malai, and contemplation of the foul. Sometimes Phra Malai closed with scenes of the final eon of violence and mayhem, when good people retreat to mountain fastnesses to cultivate virtue.

The wide range of “non-religious” subjects calls for sustained analysis. There are “Manuals” (*Tamra*, ตำรา)—manuals for appraising cats; manuals for appraising dogs, horses, or elephants; dream, fortune telling, and divination manuals; medical and massage manuals, manuals for drawing magic diagrams; and military manuals on strategy and troop formation (*Phichai songkhrām/Bijaya Saṃgrāma*, พิชัยสงคราม).

With due caution, we can say that the main set of chants, including Phra Malai, constituted the liturgical canon for several centuries, from at least the late Ayutthaya period through the twentieth century. Today only some of the texts are chanted; liturgies keep up with the times. But there may be something circular about this argument: we know the liturgies from the manuscripts, which were widely produced. Might there not have been other

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*manuscript thai de la Bibliothèque du CESMEO* (Turin: Edizioni Dell’Orso, 1995).

12 See Appleton, Shaw, and Unebe, *Illuminating the Life of the Buddha*, for a manuscript from the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

13 For the *Khlon suat* version, see Sriwaraphot Buntuan, ed., *Sawat klon suat* (Bangkok: The Fine Arts Department, 2548 [2005] / บุญเดือน ศรีวรพจน์ (บรรณาธิการ), โสวัตกลอนสวด, กรุงเทพฯ: กรมศิลปากร, ๒๕๔๘).



liturgies for which there is less evidence? And is not liturgy a matter of memorization, carried in the memory and transmitted by rote? There are, in fact, liturgical or Paritta collections on palm-leaf manuscripts, like the *Chet tamnan* (เจ็ดตำนาน, Seven tamnan) and the *Sipsong tamnan* (สิบสองตำนาน, Twelve tamnan), the *Catubbāṇavāra* (Four recitations), and a wide range of individual texts like the *Jinapañjara-gāthā*, the *Sambuddhe-gāthā*, and so on. These are less represented in known manuscripts, and their history waits to be written. Almost nothing has been done since Prince Damrong's *Tamnan phra parit* (History of the Paritta).<sup>14</sup> The Wat Muang museum in Ratchaburi has a Mon-script *Chet tamnan* bearing the date Lesser Saka era 100, equivalent to CE 1638. We find the Paritta in palm-leaf manuscripts, but not nearly as often as the chants of the paper Phra Malai manuscripts. Does this necessarily translate into degrees of “popularity”?

Phra Malai manuscripts were highly prized. Most of the top-end illustrated paper manuscripts belong to the Phra Malai family. (The exceptions are the royal *Traibhūmi* manuscripts and the monastic *Sīma* manuscripts, but those are different genres with different uses.) Phra Malai was also transmitted in Pali on palm-leaf manuscripts, but these seem relatively rare, and, while the story is often published in Thai, we are not aware of any printed editions of the Pali in the Thai script.<sup>15</sup> Phra Malai was a ritual, not a curricular, text, or an object of scholarly attention. In addition, liturgical texts were sometimes written in a different format on short palm leaves, on ordinary paper folding books, and, especially in the north among the Tai Khoen, on sheets of paper stitched along the top to make something like a modern writing pad. Given the lack of catalogued collections, at present it is not possible to estimate to what extent liturgical texts were transmitted in these or other formats.

In the Thai *imaginaire*, Malai the thaumaturge came to be associated with Indra's heaven, the Heaven of the Thirty-Three Gods. When Indra's

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14 Prince Damrong Rajanubhab, *Tamnan phra parit* ตำนานพระปริตร (History of the Paritta) ฉบับพิมพ์แจกในงานปลงศพมารดาเจ้าพระยามหิธรประกอบกับบาลีราชปริตร เมื่อเดือนกรกฎาคม พ.ศ. ๒๔๗๒/1929.

15 For an edition of a Pali Phra Malai, see Eugène Denis, ed., “Braḥ Māleyyadevattheravattthum,” with introduction and English translation by Steven Collins, “The Story of the Elder Māleyya,” *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 18 (1993): 1–96.



FIGURE 3. A scene of Phra Malai and Indra sitting in front of the Cūḍāmaṇī Cetiya, with detail below.

heaven was depicted, most often the picture would show Phra Malai seated with Indra in front of the Cūḍāmaṇī Cetiya, waiting for Maitreya to descend from the Tusita heaven to worship the Buddha's crest relic (fig. 3). This is true not only of Phra Malai manuscripts: the narrative scene was carried over into mural paintings, wooden board paintings, and cosmological *Traibhūmi* manuscripts. Phra Malai's visit to heaven was a popular narrative with a life of its own. It offered a link between the devotees of the audience, the rituals and merits they could perform in their present lives, Samana Gotama's crest relic, and the coming Buddha Maitreya. This powerful coalition strongly influenced Thai ideology and thereby ritual, fine arts, architecture, and literature.

When they ceased to be read, the manuscripts were left to languish in cabinets, boxes, and storerooms. The Thai climate is not easy on paper or most other writing supports: they are quickly devoured by insects or rodents or attacked by dampness and mold. Bereft of social purpose, the manuscripts were ignored. Thai-script printed Phra Malai folding books and printed palm-leaf sermons continue to be produced and marketed, but it is hardly a flourishing business now that Phra Malai is no longer chanted.<sup>16</sup>

### *The Manuscript Collection of Wat Pak Khlong*

Located in Central Thailand, about 150 kilometers southwest of Bangkok, the old town of Phetchaburi (ancient Bajrapuri) is renowned for its arts and crafts, in particular stucco sculpture and wood carving. Several important manuscripts were found in Phetchaburi during the reign of King Rama V (1868–1910), including the classic royal treatise on cosmology *Traibhūmikathā* (Three worlds), originally composed in the Sukhothai period. Several illustrated *samut khoi* belong to the temples in the province, including Wat Lat, Wat Koh Kaew Suttharam, Wat Phra Rup, Wat Chi Prasoert, Wat Sala Khuean, and Wat Don Kok.

Wat Pak Khlong is located outside of the town at Ban Pak Khlong in Tambol Bang Khlok, Amphoe Ban Laem, Muang District, Phetchaburi province (วัดปากคลอง บ้านปากคลอง ตำบลบางครก อำเภอบ้านแหลม จังหวัดเพชรบุรี) (fig. 4). The temple is dated to the Ayutthaya period (1350–1767). When the Cetiya was repaired in 1970 (BE 2513), many stamped gilt bronze and stamped silver Buddhas (*phra bu phra ngern*, พระบุพระเงิน) in the Ayutthaya style were found within (and duly reinstalled in the renovated Cetiya). The ordination hall has been enlarged four times.

The temple community is Thai, but the neighborhood is ethnically diverse. Nearby is an old Mon community, centered on Wat Bang Lamphu, where Mon is still used for chanting and other ceremonies. There is a Lao Song (ลาวโซ่ง) community from the reign of King Rama III (1824–1851).

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16 For a Phra Malai printed by Luk S. Thammaphakdi in 1956, see *Illuminating the Life*, fig. 1.3.



FIGURE 4. Wat Pak Khlong in Phetchaburi province, Thailand.

During the same reign, Malays were brought from Saiburi in the south (ไทรบุรี, now the state of Kedah in Malaysia); today they form Thai-speaking Muslim communities with several mosques. Hainanese Chinese came as craftsmen, but they no longer form a distinct community.

Wat Pak Khlong lies on the interface of land and sea at the western end of the cosmopolitan Chao Phraya delta, a prosperous zone of agriculture, industry, trade, and cultural exchange that runs from Phetchaburi province in the west to Chachoengsao province in the east.

Wat Pak Khlong has an “organic” manuscript collection. By this I mean that it has formed naturally over the years. The manuscripts are all damaged. The Phra Malai manuscripts had already been vandalized and attacked by insects by the time photographs were taken for the book *Samut Khoi*, which was published in 1999.<sup>17</sup> None of them have any covers. Not many

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17 Maenmas Chawalit, ed., *Samut Khoi* (Bangkok: Khronkan suepsan moradok watthanatham Thai, 1999).

examples of covers have been published; those that have are usually of gilt lacquer on black, with ornamental *kranok* designs.

This particular collection is modest, but it includes several exceptional manuscripts. They include:

1. Miscellaneous chants, late Ayutthaya period. Illustrated with non-narrative paintings of animals, flowers, and birds.
2. Miscellaneous chants, early Bangkok period. Illustrated with divinities, including divine maidens, the story of Phra Malai, and “meditation on foulness” (*asubha-kammaṭṭhāna*), among other scenes.
3. Delineation of monastic boundaries, CE 1874. Color illustrations of the many configurations of monastic boundaries within which monastic rites (*saṃghakamma*) can be conducted, with text in Pali and Thai.
4. An astrological manuscript written in yellow pigment, early twentieth century. Text in Thai, accompanied by astrological charts.
5. *Phra Malai Klon Suat*, in Thai language, late Ayutthaya Khom script. No illustrations.

In this essay, we give sample illustrations of Nos. 1 to 4. Nos. 1 and 2 have been previously illustrated in *Samut Khoi*, *Moradok Thai*. Nos. 3 and 4 have not been published to date.

### *Miscellaneous Chants, Late Ayutthaya Period*

The manuscript is richly illustrated with non-narrative paintings of animals, flowers, and birds (figs. 5, 6). Flowers and oversized plants with big, bright blossoms dominate the compositions. The animals include squirrels, rabbits, deer, wild pigs, mongooses, lions, and elephants.<sup>18</sup> The texts include the *Mahābuddhagūṇa*, the condensed Tipiṭaka, the *Abhidhamma chet kamphi* (Seven books of the Abhidhamma), and the *Sabassanaya* (Thousandfold

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18 We are not entirely confident about some of the identifications—the bestiary of Ayutthaya illustrative art awaits further study.



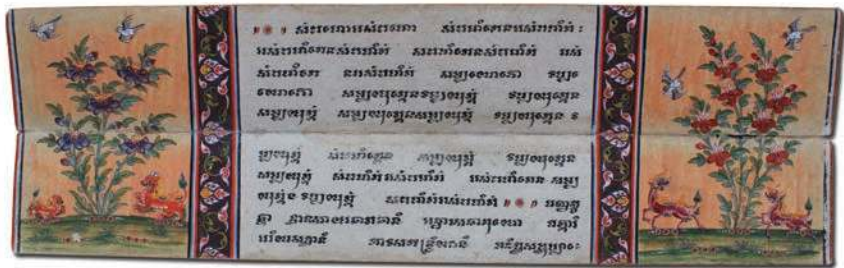


FIGURE 5. Birds and mythical animals.



FIGURE 6. Detail of the preceding.

analysis). Unfortunately, the manuscript has been damaged by the cutting off of some of the miniatures.<sup>19</sup>

Similar non-narrative paintings adorn an exceptionally handsome *khoi* manuscript from Wat Hua Krabeu in Bangkok.<sup>20</sup> According to a colophon written in the Thai Yo script, the manuscript was sponsored by Nai Bunkham

19 The manuscript is illustrated in Chawalit, *Samut Khoi*, 174–93, as Wat Pak Khlong No. 3 (สมุดภาพวัดปากคลอง จังหวัดเพชรบุรี เล่มที่ ๓).

20 See N. Na Paknam, *Khoi Manuscript Paintings of the Ayutthaya Period* (Bangkok: Muang Boran, 1985): 61–80; Chawalit, *Samut Khoi*, 319–55. No Na Pak Nam gives the name as Wat Sisa Krabeu (which means the same thing, “Wat Buffalo Head”).

in BE 2286 (CE 1743).<sup>21</sup> The donor lists the sections of the manuscript: “I, Nai Bunkham, have sponsored the *Buddhagūṇa*, 1 text; the *Vinaya*, 1 text, the *Sūtra*, 1 text, and the *Paramattha*, 1 text, completing the Tipiṭaka and the Abhidhamma—may this be cause and condition for the realization of Nibbāna by my father, my mother, and myself.”<sup>22</sup> The main series of illustrations depicts bright landscapes with rocks, trees, and flowers, inhabited by birds, rabbits, squirrels, deer, elephants, tigers, and lions. Other pages are flanked by deities or *vidyādhara*s in attitudes of homage.

### *Miscellaneous Chants, Late Ayutthaya/ Early Bangkok Period*

This manuscript contains the texts Phra Malai and the seven books of the Abhidhamma. An exceptional page depicts two dancing deities on the left, one with her back to the viewer, and three female musicians on the right (figs. 7, 8). Other pages have deities in homage (fig. 9), or depict the story of Phra Malai (figs. 10, 11). There are depictions of funeral chanting by monks on raised seats as well as by laymen, who are engaged in raucous recitations (*suat khareubhat*, สวดคฤหัสถ์) (figs. 12, 13).<sup>23</sup>

21 Chawalit, *Samut Khoi*, 321.

22 The editor interprets the colophon to say that Nai Bunkham sponsored four separate manuscripts, that the one preserved in Wat Hua Krabeu is only the *Buddhagūṇa*, and that the other three are lost. However, the photos show that the manuscript opens with the *Buddhagūṇa*, up to the colophon *phra mahābuddhagūṇaṃ niṭṭhitam* (p. 329), and contains the other three components of the Tipiṭaka in their usual abbreviated forms. For the *Vinaya*, see, for example, p. 331, bottom folio, last line: *phra vinaya* (พระวินัย), and p. 333, bottom folio, lines 3–4, *phra vineyyapakaraṇaṃ niṭṭhitam* (พระวินัยยปกรณ์ นิฎฐิต); for the texts of the Abhidhamma, see pp. 337–55. It is not possible to draw up a complete table of contents since, unfortunately, Chawalit, *Samut Khoi*, illustrates only sample folios, and does not present them in order.

23 Illustrated in Chawalit, *Samut Khoi*, 140–73, as Wat Pak Khlong No. 1 (สมุดภาพวัดปากคลอง จังหวัดเพชรบุรี เล่มที่ ๑).



FIGURE 7. Divine dancers and musicians.



FIGURE 8. Detail of the preceding.



FIGURE 9. Deities.





FIGURE 10. Opening of the Phra Malai story: a poor man collects lotuses in a pond.



FIGURE 11. Divine musicians.

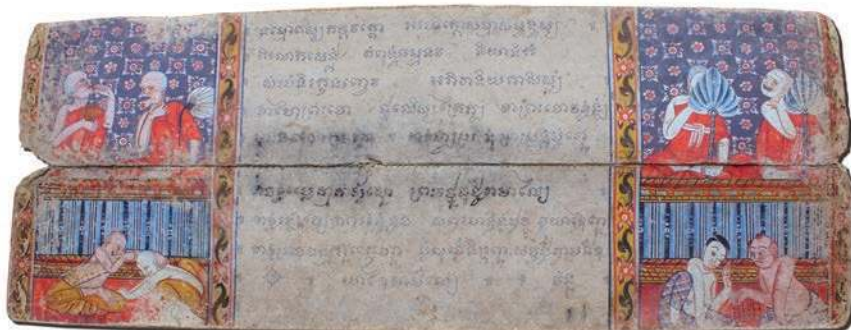


FIGURE 12. Funeral chanting: monks on ceremonial seat with lay people seated below.



FIGURE 13. Sketches showing lamps suspended from the ceiling and laymen satirizing ritual chanting.

## The Wat Pak Khlong Manuscript on Monastic Boundaries

### MONASTIC BOUNDARY MANUSCRIPTS

The culture of the monastic boundary (*ṣīmā*) is all-important in the history of the Theravādin *saṃgha*.<sup>24</sup> A genre of illustrated boundary manuals developed in Southeast Asia, it is still imperfectly known or understood. One complete “delineation of boundaries” manuscript has been published in Thailand. The manuscript is kept at Wat Suthat in Bangkok (Wat Suthat Thep Wararam, วัดสุทัศนเทพวราราม). The text is entirely in the Pali language written in Khom Bali script, with occasional interlinear comments, also in Pali.<sup>25</sup> A long section on *ṣīmās* opens the so-called Lanna cosmological manuscript.<sup>26</sup> The first eighteen folds of this elegant paper manuscript depict boundaries, with text in Tham Lanna in red ink and Khom Thai in black ink (fig. 14), as well as some notes in Thai script in pencil.

Sample pages from two other “delineation of boundaries” manuscripts have been published, but information regarding their origins or present locations is not available. Both are in Pali. One is written in the Tham Isan script; the other is written in the Khmer script.<sup>27</sup> The texts and illustrations of these two manuscripts are similar to those of the Central Thai manuscripts. Like the *Ṣīmākathā*, the Khmer-script manuscript has interlinear annotations. All of the examples mentioned so far are written in ink and painted in tempera (สีฝุ่น, *si fun*) on white-paper folding books. A Mon

24 See Peter Skilling, “Introduction,” in Peter Skilling, Jason A. Carbine, Claudio Cicuzza, and Santi Pakdeekham, eds., *How Theravāda Is Theravāda: Exploring Buddhist Identities* (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2012), xv–vii; see also front title page and its commentary, 575–77.

25 The text was transliterated into the modern Thai script by Buntuen Sriworaphot and translated into Thai by Banjob Bannaraji.

26 The Fine Arts Department, *Samut Phap Traibhūmi Chabap Aksorntham Lanna and Aksorn Khom* (Bangkok: Amarin Printing and Publishing, 2004).

27 Three folds of the first are illustrated in Thawat, *Silachareuk Isan / The Northeastern Thai Inscription: The Epigraphic and Historical Studies* (Bangkok: Khun Phin Aksorakit, n.d.), 206, 225, 447; four folds of the Khmer manuscript are illustrated in Jacqueline Nafliyan and Guy Nafilyan, *Peintures murales des monastères bouddhiques au Cambodge* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1997), fig. 18.

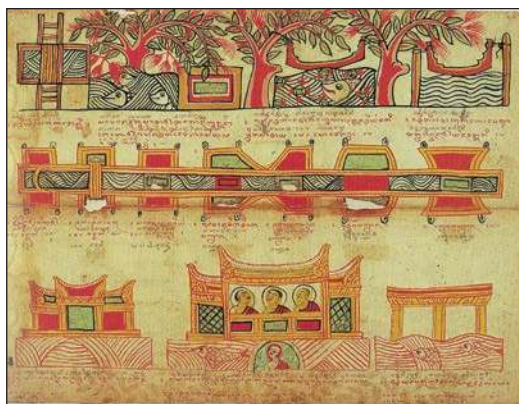


FIGURE 14. A manuscript depicting the delineations of monastic boundaries (*sīmā*) written in Tham Lanna and Khom Thai scripts.

manuscript from Pakkret in Thailand is, however, inscribed on palm leaf, with the illustrations etched delicately on the leaves and the text carefully lettered in Pali and Mon (figs. 15, 16, and 17). The same genre of texts was produced in Burma on palm-leaf manuscripts and black folding books (*parabaik*).<sup>28</sup>

In sum, “delineation of boundaries” manuscripts are known from Central Thailand (in both Thai and Mon), from Northern and Northeastern Thailand, and from Burma and Cambodia. They attest to a widely dispersed tradition of graphic illustration of the monastic boundaries that invokes a Pali text, with or without vernacular translations. The Lanna *Traibhūmi* is a fascinating example of a cross-cultural manuscript that attests to contact and conversation between Vinaya communities using three languages (Pali, Lanna, and Thai) and three scripts (Tham Lanna, Khom Thai, and Thai). The study of these *sīmā* manuscripts should further our understanding of monastic practice and cultural exchange among the *saṃghas* of mainland Southeast Asia.<sup>29</sup>

28 See Jason A. Carbine, “*Sāsanasuddhi/Sīmāsammuti*: Comments on a Spatial Basis of the Buddha’s Religion,” in Skilling et al., *How Theravāda Is Theravāda?*, fig. 5.

29 A note written in ink in a (relatively recent?) Thai hand points to one of the diagrams and remarks, “Thai, Mon, Lao, Burmese, Khmer use a *sīmā* like this.”

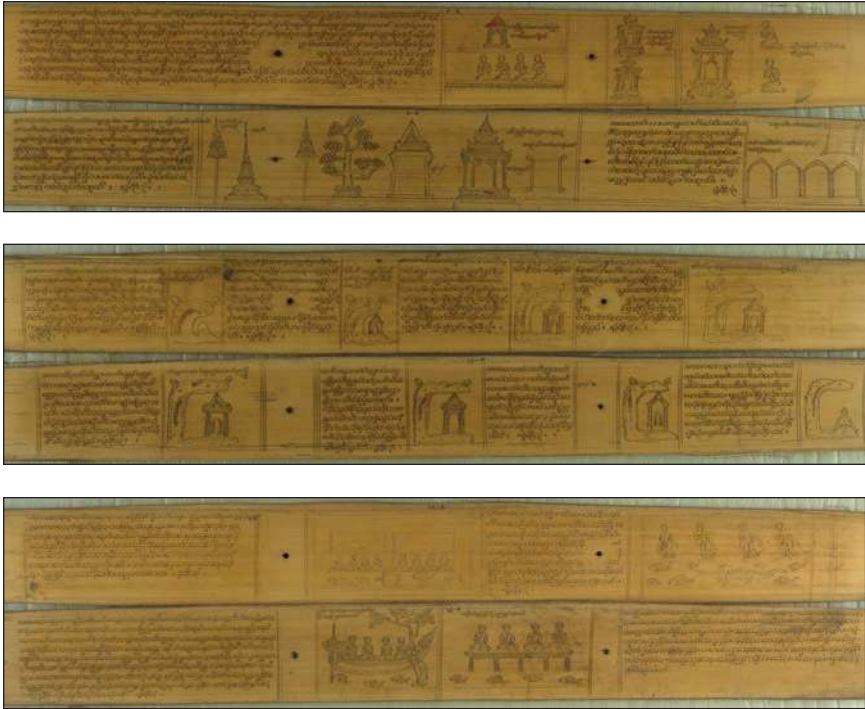


FIGURE 15 (TOP), 16 (MIDDLE), AND 17 (BOTTOM). A Mon palm-leaf manuscript from Pakkret, Thailand, depicting the delineations of monastic boundaries.

### THE WAT PAK KHLONG MONASTIC BOUNDARY MANUSCRIPT

The Wat Pak Khlong collection has one well-preserved manuscript on monastic boundaries. It is written on both sides of a folding book using forty folds of the front portion and seventeen folds of the back portion (the rest of the back portion is blank). The pages measure 38 × 12.5 centimeters. The upper page bears the illustrations, the lower page the text, usually seven lines per page. The text is in Khom Bali and Khom Thai.<sup>30</sup> The paintings are in tempera. The colophon states that the “[explanation of the procedures for] two-part resolutions for binding the *Sīmā*” (*ñattidutiyakamma*

30 The Pali uses “pa” (*peyyāla*) to indicate abbreviations in the text.



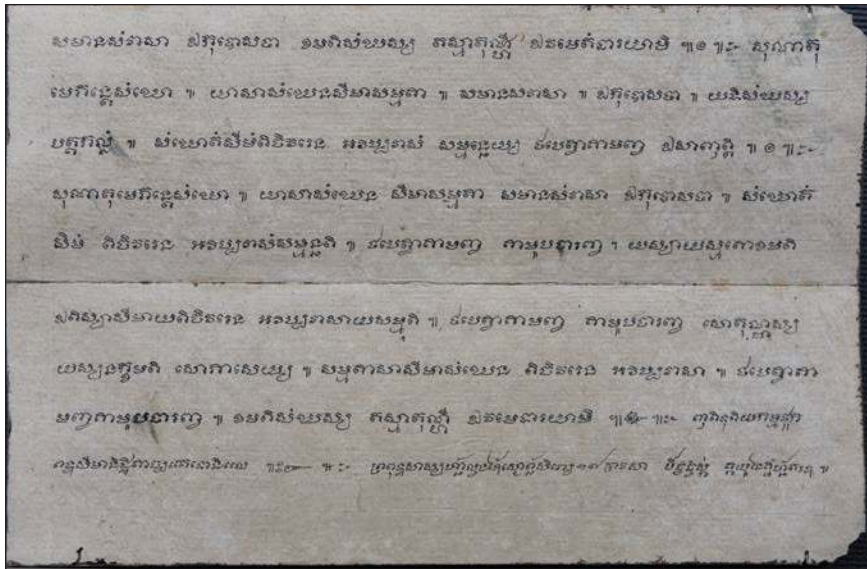


FIGURE 18. Colophon, written in 1874, of the monastic boundary manuscript held at Wat Pak Khlong in Phetchaburi, Thailand.

*phūk baddhasīmā*, ผูกพัทธสีมา) is finished, and that it was written in BE 2417, equivalent to CE 1874 (fig. 18). That date is consonant with the lettering and art style. We give here five examples.

1. The illustration in figure 19 shows an Uposatha hall, Bodhi tree shrines, and Cetiya. The first four lines of text are in Pali; the other three lines are in Thai written in Khom Thai. The passage explains that the Bodhi tree and the Cetiya are venerated by the people: they should be in open view, and should not be obstructed by the Uposatha hall.
2. In figure 20, the first three and a half lines are in Pali, the remainder in Thai. Pictures and text explain the establishment of *sīmās* on hill-tops. When the mountain is shaped like a dragon's mouth, for example, it is suitable for monks (*samaṇa*) to make an Uposatha hall.
3. The first four lines of figure 21 are in Pali; the remaining three lines are in Thai. Picture and text explain the “monastic boundary marked by the rite of throwing water” (*udakukkhepa-sīmā*).



FIGURE 19. Illustrations of an Uposatha hall, Bodhi tree shrines, and Cetiya, with text explaining that the Bodhi tree and Cetiya should be in open view to be venerated by the people. Monastic boundary manuscript, 1874. Wat Pak Khlong, Phetchaburi, Thailand.



FIGURE 20. Illustrations and text explain the establishment of *sīmas* on hilltops. Monastic boundary manuscript, 1874. Wat Pak Khlong, Phetchaburi, Thailand.



FIGURE 21. Monastic boundaries may also be defined by the rite of throwing water, as depicted here. Monastic boundary manuscript, 1874. Wat Pak Khlong, Phetchaburi, Thailand.

4. If a *simā* is in a boat, the boat should be tied to a post or a tree, or a building should be erected (fig. 22).
5. In figure 23, the first one and half lines are in Pali, the rest in Thai. The first picture explains that if a monk has magic powers and is in the water, it is the *simā*. If the *simā* is in the water, and trees grow up, it is still a *simā*. The very last line is in a stilted upright modern Thai hand.

### Golden Astrological Manuscript

The manuscript is written in the Thai language and script on black paper in yellow orpiment (หรดาล, *horadan*). The recto has thirty-seven folds, and the verso has thirty-five. The text is neatly written in a relatively modern hand and accompanied by carefully executed astrological and other birth charts. Subject headings are written sideways along the left edge of the page. The manuscript gives prescriptions for good and bad fortune according to the day of birth. Included is the birth chart of the







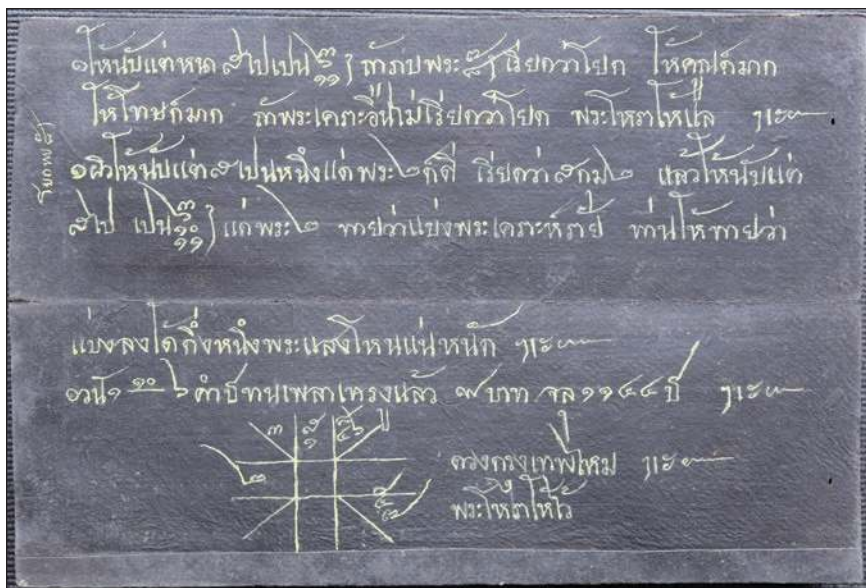


FIGURE 24. Birth chart for the “New City of Bangkok” in 1782. Astrological manuscript, 1782. Wat Pak Khlong, Phetchaburi, Thailand.

“New City of Bangkok” (กรุงเทพมหานคร, *krung thep mai*, fig. 24) in Saka Era 1144, equivalent to 1782—that is, the establishment of Bangkok by King Rama I. The manuscript was prepared with care and skill in lettering and formatting.

The Wat Pak Khlong collection is organic; it was not planned or developed as a comprehensive library. We do not know the history of the manuscripts, or even what role they have played in the community over the years. We cannot venture to say that the collection is representative of rural collections in Phetchaburi province or of the Central region. Many temples have much bigger collections of palm-leaf manuscripts in addition to Phra Malai and other paper manuscripts. We do not know why Wat Pak Khlong possesses several exceptionally fine paper manuscripts, true masterpieces of several genres of illustration. We can only be grateful that they have survived for future generations to study and to admire.

## *Acknowledgments*

We are indebted to the late and regretted Henry Ginsburg for the bequest that has enabled us to establish the Henry Ginsburg Fund and to develop digital archives of Thai murals, manuscripts, and monuments. It is our earnest wish to continue the work that he pioneered. We are thankful to the team that has taken repeated field trips over a period of several years, in particular to Somneuk Hongprayoon, Phongsathorn Buakhampan, Sommai Jaithong, Wisitthisak Sataphan, Minette Mangahas, and Natchapol Sirisawad. Laksana Janechang has deftly juggled the nuts and bolts as well as lent a hand in the field. We thank Bhikṣuṇī Dharmaḍinnā for her comments and corrections. We are grateful to the temples that have generously opened their doors and cabinets to us, and to the abbots, monks, and temple communities for their hospitality. Above all, we offer our thanks to Phra Khru Sophit Wachara Chot, abbot of Wat Pak Khlong, for his gentle humor and warm hospitality. May he stay forever young.

All photographs by Somneuk Hongprayoon, Phongsathorn Buakhampan, and Santi Pakdeekham 2014–16, courtesy Fragile Palm Leaves Foundation–Henry Ginsburg Project.

## *Temples Mentioned*

Wat Pho, Khet Phra Nakhon, Bangkok, วัดพระเชตุพนวิมลมังคลาราม อ.พระนคร จ.กรุงเทพฯ  
Wat Muang, Photharam Dist., Ratchaburi, วัดม่วง อ.โพธารามล จ.ราชบุรี  
Wat Khonkham, Photharam Dist., Ratchaburi, วัดคงคาราม อ.โพธาราม จ.ราชบุรี  
Wat Paramayikawat, Pakkret Dist., Pathum Thani, วัดปรมัยยิกาวาส อ.ปากเกร็ด จ.นนทบุรี  
Wat Hua Krabeu (Wat Sisa Krabeu), Bang Khun Thian Dist., Bangkok, วัดหัวกระบือ (วัด  
ศีรษะกระบือ) อ.บางขุนเทียน จ.กรุงเทพฯ

## *Temples in Phetchaburi Province with Samut Khoi Manuscripts*

Wat Bang Lamphu, Ban Laem Dist., วัดบางลำภู อ. บ้านแหลม  
Wat Lat, Meuang Dist., วัดลาด อ.เมือง

Wat Koh Kaew Suttharam, Meuang Dist., วัดเกาะแก้วสุทธาราม อ.เมือง

Wat Phra Rup, Meuang Dist., วัดพระรูป อ.เมือง

Wat Chi Prasert, Meuang Dist., วัดชีวะประเสริฐ อ.เมือง

Wat Sala Khuean, Ban Lat Dist. วัดศาลาเขื่อน, อ.บ้านลาด

Wat Don Kok, Ban Lat Dist., วัดดอนกก อ.บ้านลาด