

Mahā Upāsikā, women's morality, and merit in Middle Cambodia

Dr. Trudy Jacobsen

QUESTIONS OF 'KINGSHIP' CONSTITUTED AN OBSESSION FOR MANY SCHOLARS of Cambodian history in the twentieth century. A similar interest in 'queenship,' however, never emerged. This reflects a general omission of women from the historical record in Cambodia. Only now are the roles women played in the past being articulated in more holistic his-and-her stories. For the most part, however, Cambodian women are represented as victims of misogynist religions and patriarchal power constructs. Nowhere is this more evident than in discussions of Middle Cambodia (1431–1860).¹ Sources for this period are few and far between. Foreigners' observations are rare; at a time when most of Southeast Asia was entering into an era designated 'early modern,' Cambodia remained obscure and unknown by all save a handful of traders and Jesuit priests. Historians must rely on sparse and irregularly maintained court records and the small corpus of traditional literature, supplemented by a mere handful of inscriptions, in order to analyse this particular piece of the Cambodian past. Yet reliance on these sources results in 'official' histories of Cambodia that may deviate significantly from reality. Moreover, the bias of nineteenth-century historians has occluded these sources from being interpreted from a gender equitable perspective. The very nature of *dharma* espouses a greater role for women within Cambodian Buddhism than previously voiced in scholarship. The advent of Buddhism did not result in any loss in social status for Cambodian women, nor preclude them from participating in religious life. The continued popularity of *Neang Kañhīn Preaḥ Dharaṇī*, the earth deity who emerges to assist the Buddha in vanquishing Māra by wringing a river of water and crocodiles from her hair,² is testament to the agency and autonomy of women in Cambodian Buddhism from this period. The role of Buddhist queens in maintaining and proselytising *dharma*, therefore, deserves a closer analysis.

Models for 'kingship' are discernible from the earliest historical period in Cambodia. As in classical India, the ruler was believed to be a *cakravartin*, a supreme sovereign whose personal *karma* acted as a barometer for the moral health of the kingdom. Similarly, the state of the kingdom reflected the character of the king. Kings that acted 'correctly' ensured peace and prosperity for their subjects.³ Would-be rulers were bolstered in their quest for legitimation by *brāhmaṇa*, who, through rituals, caused the aspirant to be perceived as an intermediary between the celestial and mundane planes. As well as acting as the representative of *dharma*, or correct action, the role of the sovereign was to regulate *dharma* in the secular sense, through the appointment of officials, the administration of justice, and the protection of the kingdom.

As Buddhism gained favour amongst the elite in Cambodia, the ruler as a *cakravartin* became supplemented by the concept of the ruler as *bodhisattva* – a future Buddha, or a person with enough merit to attain enlightenment and escape the cycle of *saṃsāra*. In Middle Cambodia *dharma* began to be perceived in the sense of 'the Law of the Buddha' and the ancillary body of

ethics with which it is associated, or the pursuit of individual morality through correct action.⁴ Many texts, known as *cbpab*, were written during this period, outlining correct action according to one's role in society. One *cbpab* described those "that have *dharma*, those that adhere to the texts" as "delicious fruit."⁵ Those that strayed from the path of *dharma*, on the other hand, would "be plunged into the fires of *niraye-narak* and experience suffering."⁶ Many of the *cbpab* seem to have been written for the guidance of kings:

"O majesty, revered protector, greater than all, of royal qualities, head of the land, king who is supreme, first, and unequalled! Use your wisdom, use your knowledge, in making your decisions. Be swift to reprimand the destructive, evil ones.⁷

O great king, first among all, powerful, with supernatural qualities, please follow, in the *cbpab gambir*, this collection of traditions. May you be so inclined!"⁸

Once Buddhism became the religion of the elite, legitimation of the ruler shifted to the *saṅgha*,⁹ upon whose word sovereigns were judged meritorious or not, particularly in rural areas, where the central administration often had little impact. At the same time, the *saṅgha* relied upon the king and the elite to construct monasteries, make donations of food, clothing, and materials for the translation of texts, and lead by example in encouraging young men to spend a certain amount of time in the order as novices. King Ang Chan, for example, established many new religious sites and Buddha images upon his accession to the throne after ousting a rival claimant. His political prowess was attributed in the records as directly due to his devotion to Buddhism and his observance of *dharma*.¹⁰ A Buddhist king, therefore, was charged with maintaining a high degree of personal merit through the accomplishment of pious activities, as this reflected the level of merit for the kingdom; observing his own *dharma* in the sense of correct behaviour, as deviation this would impact upon the level of merit of the kingdom; and maintaining secular *dharma* by reorienting those who had strayed from their course of correct action through punishment and rehabilitation.¹¹

Inherent to *dharma* in its meaning of 'order' is the notion of balance or complementarity. It seems very suspect, therefore, that the female complement to the king – that is, the woman of highest merit in the land, a queen – should be completely absent from discussions of Buddhist sovereignty. There is support for this argument in the *cbpab*. As is the case with early Buddhist texts in India, the *cbpab* contain a dual perspective on women, at times seeming to consider them forces for good, at others designating them corruptors of society. Some scholars have attributed this dichotomy in Buddhist literature in India to ambivalence towards women.¹² Alan Sponberg has argued, however, that early Buddhist literature in Indian carries "a multiplicity of voices, each expressing a different set of concerns current among the members of the early community."¹³ This is also the case where the *cbpab* are concerned, particularly the *cbpab chah*, 'old *cbpab*,' written before the end of the eighteenth century. *Cbpab* written after this period are known as *cbpab th'mei*, 'new *cbpab*,' and are usually compilations of earlier versions.¹⁴

Cbpab either address themselves to both women and men, or bespeak complementary albeit differing roles for both genders. One *cbpab* suggests that gender is immaterial: "Whether you are born men or women in this world, the sage says to follow your masters, to ensure that unclean substances do not touch you and contaminate you, and that you must endure the consequences

of your actions.”¹⁵ This indicates that Buddhism in Middle Cambodia reflected very early Buddhist practice in India, when women were not precluded from attaining the highest spiritual level of *arhat*.¹⁶ Significantly, *Cbpab Rājaneti* states that “the measure of a queen lies in her pious acts; the measure of a king lies in his military might.”¹⁷ The (Western) assumption would be that because the king is identified with military might, he is the more important; this would, however, be to dismiss the critical value of access to supernatural power, in addition to control over economic resources and military might, in Cambodia and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. This is not the case; rather, queens were required to observe a similar tripartite dharmic code.

The performance of good works by Buddhist queens is discernible as far back as the end of the classical period (802–1431). Jayarājadevī, queen of Jayavarman VII (r. 1181–c.1218), was described in her eulogy as having “performed many acts of devotion” during her life, including the erection of images of her relatives and teachers of Buddhism.¹⁸ One of the few inscriptions of Middle Cambodia, dated 1577, commemorates the pious acts of Mahākalyāṇavattī Śrī Sujātā, in the queen’s own words:

I here list my good deeds... I, the queen mother Mahākalyāṇavattī Śrī Sujātā, princess of noble birth, *mahā-ūpāsikā*. I prostrate myself at the noble lotuses that are the feet of the revered Triple Joy who is our lord, our supreme refuge... My heart full of *dharma*, I have regularly accomplished many pious acts, up until the present, the year of the Ox 1499 *śaka*.¹⁹



Fig. 1. Women at court in Middle Cambodia

These deeds included using her influence to convince her son the king Ang Chan to restore Angkor Wat.²⁰ Having meditated on the impermanence of existence and the physical form, she cut off her “luxuriant hair” and burned it, scattering the ashes over the statues of the Buddha.²¹ In 1684, a consort of king Jai Jeṭṭhā III (r. 1677-1695) erected gold, silver and leaden statues of the Buddha, had a banner and a dais made,

and caused five manuscripts to be copied, all of which she gave to a monastery. She also gave furniture, clothing, food, and utensils for the monks’ use. The merit accruing from these acts was directed to her husband, not her own personal merit, in itself a pious act.²² Other queens provided the means for the establishment of monasteries and pagodas. *Neak neang* Ut, the first wife of Ang Eng (r. 1779-1796) founded Wat Dhann Te.²³

Queens, like kings, were required to adhere to behaviour befitting their status as role models (see Fig. 1). Devotion to Buddhist tenets had to be demonstrated in private life as well as through public acts. Thus Indradevī, elder sister of Jayarājadevī mentioned above, “initiated [Jayarājadevī] into the peace and tranquillity of the teachings of the Buddha, away from the fire of torment.”²⁴ Jayarājadevī later successfully performed a ritual involving meditation upon a Buddha image, resulting in the ability to see a vision of her husband, Jayavarman, then in Champa. As we have seen, Mahākalyāṇavattī Śrī Sujātā meditated upon impermanence before sacrificing her hair.²⁵

Moral behaviour was also perceived as very important to personal *dharma*. According to the *cbpab*, “women who have lost their virtue” are unable to follow the path of Buddhism.²⁶

The saṅgha must devote themselves to the holy *vināy*,
Women should be devoted to a high standard of conduct,
People must always strive never to commit evil.²⁷

Yet queens and princesses seem to have frequently acted in a manner contrary to the chaste mores of the *cbpab chah*. One version of the Chronicles relates that Aṅg Cūv, widow of king Jai Jeṭṭhā II (r. 1618-1627), discovered an aphrodisiac commissioned by her husband. The potion resulted in an insatiable sexual appetite. “She chose men to come one by one, continuously.”²⁸ Princess Mae Yuor Vattī, daughter of Jai Jeṭṭhā II, deceived her husband, the *ubhayorāj* Paramarājā Udaiy, with her lover and half-brother Dhammarājā I (r. 1627-1632) at Udoñ. This immoral behaviour did not go unpunished, however; a war ensued in which Dhammarājā I was killed, and Portuguese mercenaries brought Mae Yuor Vattī back to her husband, whose *oknya* determined that she should be beaten to death as punishment for contravening her *dharma*.²⁹ Men, however, were also warned against immorality. One *cbpab* counselled readers not to dally with women, nor become familiar with them.³⁰ This was a sentiment to which Dhammarājā I could relate; in a speech allegedly made to Portuguese mercenaries fighting for his uncle, the *ubhayorāj* Paramarājā Udaiy, whose wife he had seduced, he lamented: “I am in a detestable state... Because of passion, I am now facing death. Better to go to my death, in order to once more know *dharma*!”³¹ Observance of personal *dharma* was therefore integral to both kingship and queenship in Middle Cambodia.

There are examples of Buddhist queens acting to maintain secular *dharma* through the reorienting of those who had strayed from their path. Jayarājadevī “took for her own daughters members of a group of girls who had been abandoned by their mothers... [and] entered them in the religious life with clothes and gifts, according to the prescribed rites.”³² The queen organised the girls to perform scenes from the *Jātaka* as a means of instruction for others.³³ Queen Devīkṣatrī, chief queen of Paramarājā I (r. 1556-c.1570), acted to remove her own grandson, *cau ponhea* Ńom, from the throne due to his failure to observe the tenets of kingship, complaining that he did not think of the affairs of the kingdom, abandoning honesty and justice, and did not heed the advice of his counsellors, that in the kingdom there was more and more unrest, and that brigands, assassins [were at large and] abductions of young girls... were carried out with impunity, without anyone reprimanding these deeds.³⁴

After consulting with the *oknya*, she sent a message to the Thai king, asking that her husband’s second son, Suriyobārṇa, be returned to Cambodia, as he would make a better king than the incumbent.³⁵ The Thai king complied and supported Suriyobārṇa in winning over the populace. The latter sent an envoy to Devīkṣatrī in order to inform her of his success. She “called all the ministers together and consulted with them... [then] stripped her grandson *cau ponhea* Ńom of sovereignty, gathered the royal family and the court, and offered the throne to Suriyobārṇa,” who reigned under the name Paramarājā IV (r. 1603-1618).³⁶ In 1659, Aṅg Cūv, the principal queen of king Jai Jeṭṭhā II (r. 1618-1627), who had “extraordinary powers, on the one hand a result of being the royal Vietnamese princess and on the other being the royal queen”³⁷ (in itself an indication of the general belief in the power of queens) called for Vietnamese troops to aid

two Cambodian princes in overthrowing the Muslim king Rāmādhipatī I.³⁸

Pious acts accomplished by Buddhist women emulating their queens included Mālinīratanalakkhī, whose task it was to maintain the royal jewels in King Śrindravarman's palace. Described as “a pious laywoman... gifted in deeds and other virtues,” she oversaw the renovation of a *vihāra* and the excavation of a ditch and a pond. In 1309 she erected a statue of the Buddha and donated slaves and goods, the merit accruing to the king.³⁹ Other inscriptions describe women, “their hearts replete with *dharma*,” accruing merit from the manumission of slaves.⁴⁰ The chronicles relate that the city of Phnom Penh was established as a consequence of an act of Buddhist piety by a woman named Penh, who lived on the banks of the confluence of the Tonlé Sap and Bassac rivers. One day, after the flood-waters had receded, she found four statues of the Buddha and one of Viṣṇu in a *koki* tree. She brought them to her house and established a shrine for them, exhorting the neighbouring people to construct a small hill (*phnom*) near her house and a sanctuary on top of it. She placed the four Buddha statues in the sanctuary, the statue of Viṣṇu at the foot of the hill, to the east, and invited monks to come and establish a monastery at the foot of the hill on the opposite side.⁴¹ A statue of *me* Penh is today honoured at the Wat Phnom (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Statue of *me* Penh

Neang Hiem, “inspired to accomplish good deeds,” invited monks to recite a particular prayer at Angkor Wat and furnished them with statues and other paraphernalia required. She also made offerings to monks including the *mahāsaṅgharāj*.⁴² *Neang Paen* had performed good deeds “from the age of sixteen to her present age of forty-four,” including the construction of seventeen statues and one painting of the Buddha in diverse materials; the making of nine banners, three platforms, and an umbrella;

the construction of over a thousand *stūpa*; the ordination of nine youths; the fabrication of five religious texts; the offering of five monks' robes and forty monks' *vatthabandh*, lengths of cloth worn over the robe; and providing candles and combustible materials for the use in temples and monasteries.⁴³ Husbands and wives performed good deeds in tandem; *Brah* Bijai Nāga and *anak me* Pān constructed a temple for monks, which came to be called *Vatta Me Pān* after the wife.⁴⁴ Abhayarāj and his wife, Dhamm, began construction on a monastery in 1566. They also manufactured a golden Buddha, five stone statues of the Buddha, one silver statue of the Buddha, restored a *cedī*, planted a grove of sacred trees, and commissioned copies of Buddhist texts.⁴⁵

Buddhist women also followed the examples of their queens in the observance of personal *dharma*. The thirteenth-century queen Indrudevī was appointed head of Nagendraturṅge, Tilakottare and Narendrāśrama, three ‘colleges’ that taught Buddhist doctrine and other *sāstra*. One of these, Narendrāśrama, may have been an educational community for women, including

those from elite families.⁴⁶ Madhyadeśā, who arranged flowers in the Cambodian royal palace in the fourteenth century, was apparently very diligent due to “her fear of the ocean of transmutations” and thus “was not guilty of any transgressions in the observance of her duty.”⁴⁷ Some women appear to have been particularly devoted to their spiritual progress; *anak me* Pān was described as “a slave” of Buddhism in the Chronicles.⁴⁸ *Jaṇḍāv* Kaññakesar accomplished meritorious deeds in order that the merit be transferred to her deceased husband and expressed a wish that she be reunited with her husband in each reincarnation until she obtained the level of *arhat* and was able to enter *nirvāṇa*.⁴⁹ The correct moral behaviour exhorted to queens was also observed by other women. King Paramarājā III (r. 1599-1600) attempted to seduce the wife of another by offering her wealth and status, and when these inducements failed, used physical force. She resisted, thinking “it is not proper to allow [a woman] to unite herself to a second man after a first, or she will not be a woman who is virtuous, grateful and faithful to her husband.”⁵⁰

Two important categories of agency for Buddhist women in Middle Cambodia are nuns and mothers. At the end of the thirteenth century, a Chinese observer remarked that there were no Buddhist nuns in the Cambodian capital.⁵¹ In Ayutthaya, however, elite women were the heads of religious foundations.⁵² The Thai chronicles speak of a Nak Chi, a Buddhist nun at the Thai court, who was originally of Cambodian extraction.⁵³ The inscriptions abound with references to women among the laity who witnessed the pious deeds of devout men and women.⁵⁴ These ‘secular nuns’ were present throughout Southeast Asia in the early modern period, teaching, meditating and participating in rituals at Buddhist temples.⁵⁵ There is a reference in middle Cambodian inscriptions to elite women joining a monastery in another capacity. Some time after 1747, an *oknya* and his wife, aunt, sister-in-law, and two nieces travelled to Angkor Wat, where they made donations to the monks. Then the women – but not the *oknya* – were “entered as *neang jī*.”⁵⁶ There is a distinct correlation between this practice and that of the *kantai kloñ* in preceding periods.⁵⁷ It seems that being ‘entered into religion,’ however temporarily, accrued a great deal of merit that could be directed towards anyone or any enterprise.

The special relationship between mothers and novices was reflected in the practice of entering ‘adopted’ sons into the monastic life. Six people, three men and three women, donated one golden and three silver statues of the Buddha and a banner to a temple. Then, “filled with sympathy and compassion,” they committed a young slave boy to the monastery. One of the three donatrices adopted him “as if he were a son of her own.”⁵⁸ Not only did merit accrue from the act of releasing a slave from bondage; the act of placing the boy in a monastery resulted in significant merit for the adoptive mother.⁵⁹ Eleven years later, the same woman travelled across the Tonlé Sap with her family in order to visit relatives living at Mahānagar, the ‘great city’ now known as Angkor. In addition to making donations of statues and banners, they placed two more children in the monastery in order to receive instructions as novices.⁶⁰ IMA 39 records that an *oknya* “gave his son Koñ to the Law” and then paid for his immediate release. The congregation was asked to record the merit of those that entered into religion.⁶²

Mothers were accorded special consideration in connection with novice monks. *Chpab Kram* advises novice monks to act in accordance with the rules of the *saṅgha* so that merit could be acquired by their *pādhyāy* (spiritual preceptor) “with your mothers as well as your fathers.”⁶² Novices were also admonished against arguing or contradicting their *pādhyāy* as “he is equal to your mother.”⁶³ In explaining the appeal of Theravāda Buddhism to Southeast Asian women,

Barbara Watson Andaya comments that the majority of scholars “agree that ceremonies associated with Theravāda accord mothers a special place.”⁶⁴ The *jātaka* stories reinforce this assertion. In *Nigrodhamiṅga-jātaka*, for example, the Buddha in his incarnation as a deer offers his life to spare that of a pregnant doe.⁶⁵

Queens of Middle Cambodia were accorded particular posthumous honour. Upon the death of the widow of the legendary king Cakrabartī, her son erected a pavilion in which her body lay in state for five days. After the cremation, the king took his mother’s ashes to the temple of Lolei, where they were interred.⁶⁶ Another version of the Chronicles relates that this king, “thinking of the merits of the royal lady his mother,” ordered that statues of the Buddha contemplating *nirvāṇa* and the king’s mother to be erected on a mountain, Phnom Rong. The name of the statue of the queen mother was “Śrī Grap’ Lakkh,” translated by Mak Phoeun as “Lady of Accomplishments.”⁶⁷ Devīkṣatrī, the chief queen of Paramarājā I (r. 1556-c. 1570), was accorded a funeral ceremony befitting her status and her remains placed in a royal *men*. The *Brah Śrī Kṣatr* monastery, named after the queen Devīkṣatrī, was constructed nearby.⁶⁸ Upon the death of the queen Sobhāvattī, her two sons held funeral ceremonies for her “in the popular tradition.”⁶⁹

Queenship in Middle Cambodia was predicated upon the performance of good works demonstrating fealty to Buddhist principles, the observance of personal *dharma* in terms of meditating upon and complying with Buddhist texts in addition to maintaining good moral character, and the management of secular order through the redress of social ills and the reorientation of lapsed individuals, both of which could threaten social harmony. There was thus very little difference between the responsibilities assumed by Buddhist queens and those of their male counterparts; each was charged with fulfilling a threefold agenda that would result in a peaceful and harmonious kingdom. Queens, particularly the queen mother or principle queen, served as role models for other women. Although literature from the period and paradigms elsewhere in the region imply that Buddhism served to oppress women, a critical reading of the available sources reveals that women in Middle Cambodia were active participants in their religion, donating land and goods, accruing and transferring merit, and providing new entrants for the *saṅgha*. The element of misogyny in some Middle Period texts seems to have been a weak voice in contemporaneous society. These activities earned the women performing them honour and respect evenly balanced with attitudes towards men who emulated their king in following *dharma*. The respect afforded deceased queens may be seen as a measure of the reverence with which queens, as the female complement to the king in his role as intermediary between the mundane and celestial worlds, were regarded in Middle Cambodia.

NOTES

1. The exception is Ashley Thompson, who looks beyond established paradigms in making the point that although the sources reveal little of women's experiences in Middle Cambodia, it is memories of women and their activities that permeate contemporary Cambodian memories of the past. See Ashley Thompson, "Introductory remarks between the lines: Writing histories of Middle Cambodia," in Barbara Watson Andaya (ed.), *Other pasts: Women, gender and history in early modern Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Hawai'i, 2000), p. 47.
2. For an excellent analysis of the earth deity across mainland Southeast Asia, see Elizabeth Guthrie, "Outside the sima," *Udaya: Journal of Khmer Studies* 2 (2001), pp. 7-18.
3. *Manusmṛti*, ed. Ganganath Jha, 2nd ed. (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1999), 8.22, v. 128.
4. Saveros Pou, "Dharma and *trivarga* in the Khmer language," in J.P. Sinha (ed.), *Ṛtam: Dr Babu Ram Saksena Felicitation Volume, XI-XV* (Lucknow: N.P., 1983), p. 289.
5. *Cbpap Koan Chao*, v. 17, in Saveros Pou and Philip N. Jenner, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » khmers III: *cpāp' kūn cau*," *Bulletin d'École Française d'Extrême-Orient* [hereafter *BEFEO*] 64 (1977), p. 184.
6. *Cbpap Koan Chao*, v. 63, in Pou and Jenner, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » khmers III: *cpāp' kūn cau*," p. 189.
7. *Cbpab Trīneti*, vv. 20-21, in Saveros Pou and Philip N. Jenner, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » khmers VI: *cpāp' Trīneti*," *BEFEO* 70 (1981), p. 160.
8. *Cbpab Trīneti*, v. 23, in Pou and Jenner, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » khmers VI: *Cpāp' Trīneti*," p. 160. At least one king of the middle period seems to have taken these admonitions to heart: In 1693 king Jai Jeṭṭhā III (r. 1677-1695), "profoundly afflicted by the sentiment of justice, wishing to avoid in the future all possible troubles, and desiring, above all, not to harm his people," composed a law code known as *Kram Srok* 'law code of the country' (précis to *Kram Srok*, in Adhémar Leclère, *Les Codes cambodgiens* [Paris: E. Leroux, 1898], vol 1, p. 89).
9. *Brāhmaṇa*, however, have continued to play an influential role at the Cambodian court to the present day.
10. Ashley Thompson, "The future of Cambodia's past: A messianic middle-period Cambodian royal cult," in John Marston and Elizabeth Guthrie (eds), *History, Buddhism, and new religious movements in Cambodia* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), p. 18.
11. For further comments on *dharma* and punishment, see Trudy Jacobsen, "Paying through the nose: Punishment in the Cambodian past and lessons for the present," *South East Asia Research* 2006 (forthcoming).
12. Cornelia Dimmit Church, "Temptress, housewife, nun: Women's role in early Buddhism," *Anima*, 2 (1975), p. 54; Nancy Auer Falk, "The case of the vanishing nuns: The fruits of ambivalence in ancient Indian Buddhism," in Nancy Auer Falk and Rita M. Gross (eds.), *Unspoken worlds: Women's religious lives in non-western cultures* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), pp. 207-24.
13. Alan Sponberg, "Attitudes toward women and the feminine in early Buddhism," in J.I. Cabeson (ed.), *Buddhism, Sexuality and Gender* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, n.d.), pp. 3-4.
14. Judith Jacob, *The traditional literature of Cambodia: A preliminary guide* (London: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 99; Khing Hoc Dy, *Contribution à l'histoire de la littérature khmère*, vol. 1: *L'Époque classique, XV^e-XIX^e siècle* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1990), p. 77.
15. Pou and Jenner, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » khmers III: *cpāp' kūn cau*," French translation, v. 40, p. 199.
16. Sponberg, "Attitudes towards women and the feminine in early Buddhism," p. 8.
17. *Cbpap Rājaneti*, v. 37, in Saveros Pou and Philip N. Jenner, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » khmers IV: *cpāp' rājaneti* ou *cpāp' brahḥ rājasambhār*," *BEFEO* 65 (1978), p. 381.
18. K. 485, *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, comp. and trans. George Cœdès (Paris; Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'École

- Française d'Extrême-Orient; Imprimerie Nationale; E. de Boccard, 1937-66), vol. 2, pp. 161-181.
19. IMA 2, lines 1-10, French translation, in Saveros Lewitz, "Textes en kmer moyen: Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 2 et 3," *Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient* 57(1970), pp. 103-104.
20. IMA 2, lines 16-21, in Lewitz, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 2 et 3," p. 103.
21. IMA 2, lines 8-9, in Lewitz, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 2 et 3," pp. 102-103.
22. IMA 30, lines 2, 11-16, in Saveros Lewitz, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33," *BEFEO* 60 (1973), pp. 216-217.
23. Justin J. Corfield, *The royal family of Cambodia*, 2nd ed. (Melbourne: The Khmer Language & Culture Centre, 1993), p. 16. The name should probably be read Vatt Dhammaker.
24. K. 485, v. 59.
25. IMA 2, lines 8-9, in Lewitz, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 2 et 3," pp. 102-103.
26. *Cbpab Trīneti*, v. 41, in Pou and Jenner, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » Khmers VI," p. 151.
27. *Cpbab Koan Cao*, v. 51, in Pou and Jenner, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » Khmers III," p. 179.
28. Mak Phoeun (trans. and ed.), *Chroniques royales du Cambodge*, vol. 3: *De 1594 à 1677* [hereafter *Chroniques* 3] (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1981), p. 423.
29. *Chroniques* 3, pp. 171, 176-177.
30. *Cbpab Rājaneti*, v. 4, in Pou and Jenner, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » khmers IV," p. 369.
31. *Chroniques* 3, p. 175.
32. K. 485, vv. 79-80.
33. K. 485, v. 73. The usual implication in translations of this inscription is that the girls concerned were prostitutes, although Hema Goonatilake refers to them simply as "destitute girls" ("Rediscovering Cambodian Buddhist women of the past," in Karma Lekshe Tsomo (ed.), *Innovative Buddhist women: Swimming against the stream* [London: Curzon, 2000], p. 85).
34. *Chroniques* 3, pp. 88-89.
35. *Chroniques* 3, pp. 82-84.
36. *Chroniques* 3, pp. 88-89.
37. *Chroniques* 3, p. 423.
38. *Chroniques* 3, p. 192.
39. K. 754, vv. 5-7, K. 754, vv. 5-7, in George Cœdès, "Études cambodgiennes 32 : La plus ancienne inscription en pâli du Cambodge," *BEFEO* 36 (1936), p. 16.
40. IMA16a, lines 11-12, in Saveros Lewitz, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 10-16c," *BEFEO* 59 (1972), p. 236; IMA 35, lines 11-14, in Saveros Pou, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 35, 36, 37 et 39," *BEFEO* 61 (1974), p. 302.
41. George Cœdès, "Études cambodgiennes 8 : La fondation de Phnom Peñ au XV^e siècle d'après la chronique cambodgienne," *BEFEO* 13, 3 (1913), p. 8.
42. IMA 26, lines 4-11, in Lewitz, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 26-33," p. 206.
43. IMA 32, lines 20-27, in Lewitz, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 26-33," p. 227.
44. Khin Sok (trans. and ed.), *Chroniques royales du Cambodge*, vol. 2: *De Bañā Yāt à la prise de Lanvaek (1417-1595)* [hereafter *Chroniques* 2] (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1988), p. 103.
45. IMA 4, A, lines 6-15, in Saveros Lewitz, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 4, 5, 6 et 7," *BEFEO* 58 (1971), p. 108.
46. K. 485, vv. 98-99.
47. K. 216, v. 4, *IC* 3, pp. 37-44.

48. *Chroniques* 2, pp. 102, 103, 104, 105.
49. IMA 37, lines 71-77, in Lewitz, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 35, 36, 37 et 39," p. 311.
50. *Chroniques* 3, p. 79.
51. Zhou Daguang, *The customs of Cambodia*, trans. J. Gilman d'Arcy Paul, 2nd ed. (Bangkok: The Siam Society, 1992), p. 11.
52. Barbara Watson Andaya, "Localising the universal: Women, motherhood and the appeal of early Theravada Buddhism," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 33, 1 (February 2002), p. 4.
53. Chadin Flood, *The dynastic chronicles: The Bangkok era – the first reign*, vol. 2: *Annotations & commentary* (Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, 1978), p. 103. This is obviously a transliteration of *neak jī*.
54. See for example IMA 19, lines 15-21, in Saveros Lewitz, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 17-25," *BEFEO* 60 (1973), p. 174; IMA 23, lines 12-15, in Lewitz, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 17-25," p. 184.
55. Andaya, "Localising the universal," p. 4.
56. IMA 39, lines 50-52, in Pou, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor, 35-39," p. 320.
57. See Trudy Jacobsen, "Threads in a *sampot*: A history of women and power in Cambodia" (PhD thesis, University of Queensland, 2004), chapters 2 and 3.
58. IMA 23, lines 8-12, in Lewitz, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 17-25," p. 184.
59. Andaya, "localising the universal," p. 4.
60. IMA 12, lines 4-11, in Lewitz, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 10-16c," p. 226.
61. IMA 39, lines 64-70, in Pou, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 35-39," p. 321.
62. *Cbpab Kram*, v. 10, in Saveros Pou and Philip N. Jenner, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » khmers V: *Cpāp' Kram*," *BEFEO* 66 (1979), p. 136.
63. *Cbpab Kram*, v. 16, in Pou and Jenner, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » khmers V," p. 137.
64. Andaya, "Localising the universal," p. 4.
65. *Nigrodhamiga-jātaka*, in *The jātaka, or stories of the Buddha's former births*, vol. I, trans. Robert Chalmers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), p. 40.
66. Mak Phoeun (trans. and ed.), *Chroniques royales du Cambodge*, vol. 1: *Des origines légendaires jusqu'à Paramarājā 1^{er}* [hereafter *Chroniques* I] (Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1984), p. 106.
67. *Chroniques* 1, p. 272 (57/8,c).
68. *Chroniques* 3, p. 118.
69. *Chroniques* 1, p. 242 (45/6).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ANDAYA, Barbara Watson, 2002, "Localising the universal: Women, motherhood and the appeal of early Theravada Buddhism," *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 33, 1: 1-30.
- CHURCH, Cornelia Dimmit, 1975, "Temptress, housewife, nun: Women's role in early Buddhism," *Anima* 1,2: 53-58.
- CEDES, George, 1913, "Études cambodgiennes 8 : La fondation de Phnom Peñ au XV^e siècle d'après la chronique cambodgienne," *BEFEO* 13, 3: 6-11.
- CEDES, George, 1936, "Études cambodgiennes 32 : La plus ancienne inscription en pâli du Cambodge," *BEFEO* 36 (2): 14-21.

- CORFIELD, Justin J., 1993, *The royal family of Cambodia*, 2nd ed., Melbourne: The Khmer Language & Culture Centre, 1993.
- FALK, Nancy Auer, 1980, "The case of the vanishing nuns: The fruits of ambivalence in ancient Indian Buddhism," in Nancy Auer Falk and Rita M. Gross (eds), *Unspoken worlds: Women's religious lives in non-western cultures*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 207-224.
- FLOOD, Chadin, 1978, *The dynastic chronicles: The Bangkok era – the first reign*, vol. 2: *Annotations & commentary*, Tokyo: The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies.
- GOONATILAKE, Hema, 2000, "Rediscovering Cambodian Buddhist women of the past," in Karma Lekshe Tsomo (ed.), *Innovative Buddhist women: Swimming against the stream*, London: Curzon, 84–90.
- GUTHRIE, Elizabeth, 2001, "Outside the sima," *Udaya: Journal of Khmer Studies* 2:7–18.
- 1937–1966. *Inscriptions du Cambodge*, comp. and trans. George Cœdès, 8 vols. Paris; Hanoi: Imprimerie de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient; Imprimerie Nationale; E. de Boccard.
- JACOB, Judith, 1996, *The traditional literature of Cambodia: A preliminary guide*, London: Oxford University Press.
- JACOBSEN, Trudy, 2004, "Threads in a *sampot*: A history of women and power in Cambodia," PhD thesis, University of Queensland.
- JACOBSEN, Trudy, 2006, "Paying through the nose: Punishment in the Cambodian past and lessons for the present," *South East Asia Research* (forthcoming).
- 1957, *The jātika, or stories of the Buddha's former births*, vol. 1, trans. Robert Chalmers, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- KHIN SOK, 1988, *Chroniques royales du Cambodge*, vol. 2: *De Bañā Yāt à la prise de Lañvaek (de 1417 à 1595)*, Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient.
- KHING HOC DY, 1990, *Contribution à l'histoire de la littérature khmère*, vol. 1: *L'Époque classique, XVe-XIXe siècle*, Paris: L'Harmattan.
- LECLÈRE, Adhémar, 1898, *Les Codes cambodgiens*, 2 vols, Paris: E. Leroux.
- LEWITZ, Saveros, 1970, "Textes en kmer moyen: Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 2 et 3," *BEFEO* 57: 99–126.
- LEWITZ, Saveros, 1972, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16a, 16b, et 16c," *BEFEO* 59:221–249.
- LEWITZ, Saveros, 1973, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 et 25," *BEFEO* 60: 163–203.
- LEWITZ, Saveros, 1973, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33," *BEFEO* 60: 204–242.
- MAK PHOEUN, 1981, *Chroniques royales du Cambodge*, vol. 3: *De 1594 à 1677*, Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient.
- MAK PHOEUN, 1984, *Chroniques royales du Cambodge*, vol. 1: *Des origines légendaires jusqu'à Paramarājā 1^{er}*, Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient.
- 1999, *Manusmṛti*, ed. Ganganath Jha, 2nd ed. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- POU, Saveros, 1971, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 4, 5, 6 et 7," *BEFEO* 58: 105-123.
- POU, Saveros, 1974, "Inscriptions modernes d'Angkor 35, 36, 37 et 39," *BEFEO* 61: 301–337.
- POU, Saveros, 1983, *Dharma and trivarga in the Khmer language*. In J.P. Sinha (ed), *Ṛtam: Dr Babu Ram Saksena Felicitation Volume, XI-XV*, Lucknow: n.p., 289-297.
- POU, Saveros and Philip N. JENNER, 1977, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » khmers III: *cpāp' kūn cau*," *BEFEO* 64: 167-215.
- POU, Saveros and Philip N. Jenner, 1978, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » khmers IV: *cpāp' rājaneti ou cpāp' brah rājasambhār*," *BEFEO*, 65: 361–402.
- POU, Saveros and Philip N. JENNER, 1979, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » khmers V: *cpāp' Kram*," *BEFEO*

66: 129-160.

POU, Saveros and Philip N. JENNER, 1981, "Les *cpāp'* ou « codes de conduite » khmers VI: *cpāp'* *Trīneti*," *BEFEO* 70: 135-193.

SPONBERG, Alan, n.d., "Attitudes toward women and the feminine in early Buddhism," in Jose Ignacio Cabezon (ed.), *Buddhism, sexuality and gender*, Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 3-36.

THOMPSON, Ashley, 2000, "Introductory remarks between the lines: Writing histories of Middle Cambodia," in Barbara Watson Andaya (ed.), *Other pasts: Women, gender and history in early modern Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: Center for Southeast Asian Studies, University of Hawaii, 47-68.

THOMPSON, Ashley, 2004, "The future of Cambodia's past: A messianic middle-period Cambodian royal cult," In John Marston and Elizabeth Guthrie (eds), *History, Buddhism, and new religious movements in Cambodia*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

ZHOU DAGUAN, 1992, *The customs of Cambodia*, trans. J. Gilman d'Arcy Paul, 2nd ed., Bangkok: The Siam Society.

fers from any identifiable group in Cambodia at present.

Nuns who come to live in the pagodas. Like the second group of Cambodian nuns discussed above, nuns in this group depend on the pagodas for accommodation and food, and do not study but work instead for the pagoda. Their jobs include working in the kitchen and other maintenance duties. Some nuns bring their families to stay with them. When they grow too old to work for the pagoda, the pagoda stops supporting them and they must return home. A minority are supported by richer *mae chees*.³²

Nuns belonging to the first and second groups are encouraged to develop themselves, although they are partially supported by the pagoda. They have an opportunity to upgrade their education by participating in either formal or informal *Dhamma* training programs. This enables them to network with other educated nuns, and allows them to strengthen their position within the community of nuns. These activities also strengthen links between themselves, the pagoda and the Buddhist community, and stimulates community support for their careers. Education also increases their stipend.³³

As Monica Lindberg Falk (2002: 3) points out, Thai nuns of the 20th century are trying to redefine their practice, upgrade their education and draw a distinct boundary between themselves and laity. One way in which they are doing so is through participation in social work that touches a range of contemporary issues in Thai society including poverty, education, gender, domestic violence, mental health, peace and security. These activities are carried out under the principle that *Dhamma* must be applied to social life since *Dhamma* is the medicine for mundane social diseases, and Buddhism is the spiritual foundation for social development.

Mae chee Sansanee, a prominent Thai Buddhist social leader, has been actively engaged in social works to develop herself as well as the Buddhist religious community, and to increase the recognition of the social value of nuns. "... *Mae chee* need to improve themselves also," she told me, and explained that they could improve themselves by "listening to *Dhamma* teaching, and apply[ing] it to daily life so that the result of the practices speaks for itself. Therefore, they can work together with the monks." She continued: "Some people who come to Sathira-Dhammasathan every week are ignorant too. They have questions in their minds—what is life for? Why do they come here? Therefore, we have to make them to understand at this moment [...] so the way we make them to understand or believe is to teach them *Dhamma* and encourage them to apply it to daily life. No matter how they have been educated before, the important thing is to make their hearts guided by *Dhamma*." (Sansanee Sthirasuta, author interview, 28 June, 2005).

Another example is *Mae chee* Sakao Rat of Wat Chana Songkhram Pagoda in Bangkok, who runs a summer class in Buddhist morality designed to guide Thai children in a Buddhist way of life. She also delivers seminars on Buddhist morality to university students. Some nunneries regularly offer *Dhamma* and occupational training sessions to poor children during the school break, or religious retreats for the elderly.³⁴ In response to perceptions by Thai women that social conflict resulting from individual disputes is the major problem in Thai society, some Thai *mae chees* have turned pagodas and nunneries into spaces for conflict resolution. Sathira-Dhammasathan, a nunnery in Bangkok provides support for victims of domestic violence.

Conclusion

In comparing social engagement among nuns in Thailand and Cambodia, most Cambodian nuns at present are drawn into social work by NGOs and civil society. By contrast, the more prominent nuns in Thailand manage to operate their social activities within their own institutions. Their success in doing so indicates both their higher educational qualifications and the support they are able to mobilize from the community. I have identified three factors accounting for the difference. First, the Institute of Thai nuns was established in 1969 (although the first official recognition of a similar organisation was in the 1890s at Samnak Santisook, and there are nowadays several organisations for nuns in Thailand³⁵) while the Institute of Cambodian nuns was only created in 1995 (each is supported by their country's Queen). Second, there are several colleges (higher education) for nuns in Thailand, but none in Cambodia. An outstanding *mae chee* can pursue her study at masters or doctoral level in Buddhist Philosophy, or Human Rights. *Mae chee* can also study Pāli and Buddhist history in *wats*, where Pāli study has gained public recognition since the *Saṅgha* now allow non-monks to sit exams in the first grade (*prayog*) to the ninth grade. Cambodian *don chees* study Buddhist history and *Dhamma* in *wat* with monks or lay people, and there are only a few places for the study of Pāli and *Abhidhamma*. Third, inferior living conditions in Cambodia curtail social action by *don chees*, even the wealthiest among whom tend not to have the same resources at their disposal as the most socially active Thai nuns.

While the search for calm and serenity were a common theme between Cambodia and Thailand, the search for enlightenment seemed to be a more significant factor in Thailand than in Cambodia. The Cambodian and Thai nuns who I interviewed were generally satisfied with their status and do not seek or support full ordination of *bhikkhunī*. However the status of *mae chee* and *don chee* are limited in both countries. Although the position of some "strong" *mae chee* in Thailand are recognized by educated middle-class women because of their social activities, but not by men or other sort of women. As with Cambodian nuns, for Thai *mae chees* the pagoda is the starting point and nucleus of all their work, however far it takes them from the pagoda.

Thai Buddhist nuns seem to be more advanced than Khmer nuns in their participation in social work. Although a few Cambodian nuns are trying to question the topic of mysticism versus rationalism in Buddhist practice, more efforts are needed to integrate such cultural considerations into the process of development. Notwithstanding, monks still enjoy a higher status and wider range of privileges than nuns, and many people in Thailand as in Cambodia prefer nuns to be a symbol of religion than social workers.

Another important difference is age. In Thailand, many young women are becoming nuns for study reasons. By contrast, in Cambodia, young *don chees* are a rarity, and generally perceived to have entered the religious life because of broken hearts. Literacy also tends to be higher among Thai nuns than Cambodian nuns.

Thailand has many institutions and organizations that work to promote women status in the context of Buddhism. My study shows that the more nuns participate in social activities that benefit communities, whether overtly religious (such as *Dhamma* studies) or social (such as domestic violence counseling) in orientation, the more they gain support from the community. Social engagement can thus generate symbolic value. There are thus indirect advantages to be gained by nuns participating in social work, as well as the direct benefits to the community and social health.

In these circumstances, *don chees* and *mae chees* should be flexible as they negotiate the transition to contemporary society and the effects of rapid modernization and globalization. Flexibility is also required in interpreting Buddhist teachings to the moment, in ways that can help people solve contemporary problems.

In addition, the Saṅgha and the supporting community, in Cambodia and Thailand, should re-think the roles and duties of nuns in society and support their social activities. They should provide nuns the chance to study *Dhamma* and Buddhist thought, but also with the option for education in social affairs. Skills and practical knowledge will enable nuns to work for society, so earning them more recognition and support from the community.

NOTES

* Research for this paper was conducted under the Rockefeller Foundation on Capacity Building in Cambodian Higher Education and Summer Junior Fellowship Program. My thanks to Professor Duncan McCargo; Dr. Leakthina Chaupech Ollier; Rev. Beth Goldring; Dr. Penny Edwards; Dr. Trudy Jacobsen, Dr. Monica Lindberg Falk, Dr. Justin McDaniel, Dr. Peter J. Hammer, Mr. Chean Men Rithy and Dr. Philippe Peycam. Thanks also to my many informants in Cambodia and Thailand, especially *mae chee* Khritsna Raksachom at Wat Mahathat, and to Ms. Surapee who helped me in Bangkok. Last but not least, my warm gratitude to Ham Samnom and to my research colleagues on Gender and Buddhism, and to Director Mr. Nguon Van Chanthly and Mr. Sor Sokny for their institutional support

1. Guthrie, Elizabeth, 2001, "Outside the sima," *Udaya: Journal of Khmer Studies* 2: 7-18.
2. Peter Harvey "Buddhist visions of the human predicament and its resolution," in P. Harvey (Ed) *Buddhism* (London and New York: Continuum, 2001) 64-94: 71.
3. Naurin Ahmad-Zaki, "Association of Nuns and Lay Women (ANLWC): Women, Morality and Reconciliation," www.hbfasia.org/southeastasia/thailand/projects/anlwc.htm, 2000-2003.
4. Chayanit Poonyarat, "Thai nuns fight for rights," *Asia Times*, www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/DI19Ae02.html, September 19, 2002.
5. For more on the term "*Chee*" (*jī*) see Bernon (1996).
6. On the term "*buos*" (*puos*) see Guthrie (2004: 144-148).
7. Interview, May 26, 2005, *don chee* Touch San, deputy chef of *don chee* at VTBC. Statements by other *don chees* in Wat Kol Totoeng support this claim.
8. Interview on May 26, 2005.
9. Interview on May 27, 2005 with *don chee* Srey Yean, the Chief of Kol Totoeng nuns.
10. Interview on July 16, 2005, with *don chee* Tan Chealy, Lumbini Udyān at Wat Damnak, Siem Reap.
11. Interview on June 10, 2005, Wat Mongkolvan.
12. Interview on June 10, 2005, Wat Mongkolvan.
13. Interview June 27, 2005, Wat Kol Totoeng.
14. "*Sin*" means "Buddhist precept" in Thai language (from Sanskrit *śīla*).
15. Editors' note: Dhammanandā's former name was Chatsumarn Kabilsingh and she was ordained in Sri Lanka to a *samāṇerī* in the Amarapurānikāya (originating from Burma) and then to a *bhikkhunī* in the Syāmanikāya (originating from Siam), both belonging to Theravāda. Her mother was Woramai Kabilsingh who was ordained Mahāyānist *bhikkhunī* in Taiwan. Before that, a Mr. Norin Phasit or Noring Klüeng who was a district chief in Chonburi province, then governor of Nakhon Nayok province, and who resigned from the civil service in 1909, became rich by concocting medicine. He had two daughters, the eldest named Sara and the youngest Jongdee, whom he ordained *bhikkhunī* and *samāṇerī*, without asking anyone, in a temple

he had built with his own funds under the name of Wat Nariwong (*Nārivaṅṅā* or feminine lineage). The news spread all over the country and six women came to get ordained too while all the newspapers were railing against him comparing him to Devadatta (a cousin and foe of the Buddha). Six years later, the government ordered a raid on Wat Nariwong, defrocked and put the women in jail on the charge of “subverting Buddhism.” See <http://www.geocities.com/siamintellect/intellec/narintara/biography.htm> and <http://biolaw.com.de/article/216> (in Thai).

16. *Yasodhara Newsletter*, June 23, 2005.
17. Justin McDaniel, personal communication.
18. Institute of Thai Nuns, report, 2001.
19. Justin McDaniel, personal communication.
20. *Mae chee* Bunsri, Wat Pa Wang Loeng, *Tambol* Tha Khorn Yang, Kantharawichai district, Mahasarakham Province, interviewed on June 26, 2005.
21. *Mae chee* Sisuk, Wat Pa Supamit Sitharam, *Tambol* Talat, Mahasarakham district and province, on June 27, 2005.
22. *Mae chee* Junlanee, interview on June 27, 2005, Wat Pa Yang Hua Chang.
23. Interview on June 26, 2005.
24. Interview on June 29 at Wat Pak Nam in Phasi Charoen, Bangkok.
25. *Don chee* Chan Sorn, interviewed on 23rd June 2005, Wat Nont Mony.
26. Interview on June 23, 2003, Wat Nont Mony.
27. *Don chee* Ouk Sinoun, interviewed on June 10, 2005, Wat Sampow Meas.
28. *Don chee* Thou Yeun, interviewed on June 10, 2005, Wat Sampow Meas.
29. Interview on 26 June 2005.
30. Justin McDaniel, personal communication.
31. Interview on 26 June 2005.
32. Interview on 26 June 2005.
33. Justin McDaniel, personal communication.
34. *Bangkok Post* Jan 15, 2002, p. 1.
35. Justin McDaniel, personal communication.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- BERNON, Olivier (de), 1996, “Chi (jī) un mot d’origine khmère en usage dans la langue thaïe, considéré à tort comme d’origine sanskrite,” in *Journal of The Siam Society* Vol. 84, Part 1, pp. 87-90.
- DELOUCHE, Gilles, 2003, “Le problème de l’intégration des moniales bouddhistes au *sangha* thaïlandais,” in *Religion et États en Indochine Contemporaine*, ed. G. Delouche, Paris, Publications du Centre d’Histoire et Civilisations de la Péninsule Indochinoise, pp. 9-29.
- EKACHAI, Sanitsuda, 2002 “We Care: Labour of Love,” in *Bangkok Post*, January 15, 2002.
- GOONATILAKE, Hema, and CHHY Kim Sov, 2004, “A Hospital without Medicine: A Nun’s Meditation Centre,” in *The 6th Socio-Cultural Research Congress on Cambodia 18-20 Nov. 2003*, Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- GUTHRIE, Elizabeth, 2001, “Outside the Sima,” *Udaya*, 2, pp. 7-18.
- GUTHRIE, Elizabeth, 2004, “Khmer Buddhism, Female Asceticism, and Salvation,” in *History, Buddhism and New Religious Movements in Cambodia*, Ed. By John Marston and Elizabeth Guthrie, University of Hawai’i

press, pp. 133-149.

HARVEY, Peter, 2001, "Buddhist visions of the human predicament and its resolution," in *Buddhism*, Ed. By P. Harvey, London and New York, Continuum, pp. 64-94.

JACOBSEN, Trudy, 2006-2007, "Mahā Upāsikā, women's morality, and merit in Middle Cambodia," *Sikṣācakra*, N. 8-9: 13-24.

KABILSINGH, Chatsumarn, 1991, *Thai Women in Buddhism*, Parallax Press, Berkeley, California.

LEDGERWOOD, J., 1990, *Changing Khmer Conceptions of Gender: women, stories, and the social order*, PhD. Dissertation, Anthropology Department, Cornell University.

LINDBERG FALK, Monica, 2002, *Making Field of Merit: Buddhist Nuns Challenge Gendered Orders in Thailand*, Göteborg (Sweden).

LÖSCHMANN, Heike, 2000, "The Revival of the Don Chee Movement in Cambodia," in *Innovative Buddhist Women*, Ed. by Karma Lekshe Tsomo, Curzon, pp. 91-95.

LÖSCHMANN, Heike, 2006-2007, "Buddhism and Social Development in Cambodia since the Overthrow of the Pol Pot Regime in 1979," *Sikṣācakra*, N. 8-9: 98-110.

SKILLING, Peter, 1995, "Female Renunciants (Nang Chi) in Siam According to Early Travelers' account in the Siam Society," in *Journal of The Siam Society* Vol. 83, pp. 55-62.

SOKROEUN Aing et al., *The Situation of Daun Chi in Cambodia*, Research Report on Buddhism and Gender, Buddhist Institute, Phnom Penh, 2006.

Internet Sources

Available at www.nexis.com issue on June 23, 2005 "Feel the Beauty of the Lotus: An Interview with Dhammananda" July 2001.

Available at www.sansanee.org issue on August, 2005 "Profile Mae Chee Sansanee Sthirasuta."