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Really Need a Temple? —

The Lue as Flexible Buddhists

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. Introduction

One cannot imagine that an anthropologist or a tourist who visits any Buddhist Tai world such as Thailand, Laos Shan State of Myanmar, Xishuangbanna (Sipsong Panna) and Dehong, Yunnan, China unconsciously neglects religious attention during the exciting journey. In other words, almost all academicians under long-term participant observation and visitors by their leisure or adventure purpose must pay strong interest to Buddhist things in contacting with Tai peoples. Except for some Tai-speaking animistically-oriented groups, e.g., the Zhuang, the Shui, the Buyi, and the Li in southern China, and Tai Dam and Tai Daeng in northern Laos, the majority of Tai peoples have been defined or well-stereotyped as a complete Buddhist world.

A common sense indicates that the Tai People are devout Buddhist. Four books emphasize such a point, and a valuable work entitled Religious Tradition among Tai Ethnic Groups edited by well-known anthropologist Shigeharu Tanabe in 1991 again reminds us abundant academic contributions on Theravada Buddhism having been in existence. Academic interests continue to be expanded at least into the following fields: Buddhism and gender (see e.g. Andaya 2002, Keyes 1984, Ockey 1999, Kirsch 1996, Mills 1995, Van Esterik 1996), Buddhists and nation-state (see e.g. Taylor 1993, Keyes 1995[1977]&1977, Cohen 1991), Buddhism and societal practice (see e.g. Jackson 1999, O' Connor 1993, Schober 1995), Buddhism vs alien belief (see e.g. Keyes 1993&1996), and analysis of phenomena of holy man (see e.g. Cohen 2001, Jackson 1999).

However, when we on the one hand celebrate the successful development of religious research in Tai world, and on the other hand comfortably accept common sense-liked description — “The Tai are Buddhists”, did we really think of how do a Tai Buddhist

“approve” himself as a true Buddhist? I am asking if a Tai Buddhist is still a Buddhist when he has been out of his homeland such as Thailand, Lao, or Sipsong Panna? More correctly to **euguire**, we, including scholars and tourists, find temples everywhere in Buddhist Tai world, then people may directly consider the crucial position of temple, a very splendid architecture in comparison to other common houses in neighborhood, in the process of practicing belief, but really no temple no Buddhist? Or whether a Tai Buddhist must stay nearly a temple in order to making himself be a full-time believer? In this paper, I am going to take the Tai-Lue people who live in Sipsong Panna, the homeland, Lao-Lue who settle in Seattle of Washington state, USA, and Burmese-Lue who immigrated to Taiwan, as three examples to discuss the relationships between Lue Buddhists and temple. I would argue that if there is a temple or net may not be a key element for a Lue Buddhist to approve his status of true believer.

. Temples re-opened: Buddhism resurgence among Sipsong Panna Lue

When the newly founded Chinese People’s Republic initiated a nation wide project of investigating non-Han minority peoples in late 50’s and earlier 60’s, religious sphere was always one of the objects that the socialist scholars focused on the most. The Communist investigators not only wished to know the religious expenses among commoners in daily life in order for finding out the condition of class oppression, but attempted to grasp the general phenomena of practicing supernatural belief. The Sipsong Panna Lue or Tai (Dai)-Lue without question attracted full attention by their evident Buddhist culture.

Yingliang Jiang, a famous historian on Tai-speaking groups who had now as active **wogistrate**, had mentioned (1984:529),

“The Tai call temple ‘vat’, or also known as ‘tsuang’ or ‘mianshi’ (Burmese temple). In Tai area, every village has temple, the bigger one may have several temples. Even for the tiny village where only 20 or 30 households exist, you still can find a temple inside territory.”

Counting the amount of temples and works might become preliminary duty among those socialist investigators when reaching Sipsong Panna if what Jiang observed was true. Some statistics thus had been proposed. Dao Yongming and Cao Chengchang said that according to statistics during the earlier time of national emancipation, there were 574 Buddhist temples, 41 high-ranking khubas, 889 abbots, and 5,560 monks in entire Sipsong Panna and almost all villages had their own temples (1962:115). Wang Yizhi had more detail information. For

easier understanding, I use a table to indicate his material of temples and monks in Sipsong-Panna (Xishuangbanna) is 1957 (1990:414)

| | Temples | Abbots | Monks |
|----------------------|---------|--------|-------|
| Menghai county | 269 | 470 | 2861 |
| Jinghong County | 208 | 321 | 2254 |
| Mengla County | 117 | 243 | 1531 |
| Entire Xishuangbanna | 594 | 1034 | 6561 |

The second number, i.e., totally 594 temples for example, is a little larger than the previous one, i.e., totally 574 temples. It may reflect the fact of continuing development of Theravada Buddhism in early years under Chinese Communist Party regime, especially for the time before Mao Zedong’s strict reform. However, my purpose is not to study religious change among the Lue under the first 10 years of CCP. I intend like to emphasize that almost all scholars who arrived in Sipsong Panna world try hard to express their reminding on the explicit cultural item of Buddhism. And the most critical evidence among there should be things like one village at least with one temple, huge number of temples and monks in the whole of Sipsong Panna territory. Temple is certainly very important in Lue people’s traditional life, so when Mao’s action of Cultural Revolution had been put in practice, those religious buildings were **ue?be** one target of being attacked.

Temples had been shut down, and become storage house for nearly 20 years. In earlier 80’s when the government began to change its policy toward the way of opening to the world under Deng Xiaoping’s leading ideology of de-Maoism, religion became acceptable. The priority of making themselves regain Buddhism among the Lue was to re-open the temple, re-build Buddha stature, and invite or arrange monks from neighboring Buddhist countries and from local community to recruit into temples. Georges Condominas points out that in Sipsong Panna Phannaa[Sipsong Panna] “The vat is both the symbol and the centre of the rural collectivity” ,(1987:448) therefore it is not surprise of seeing the Lue to build vat in vey fast speed everywhere within the territory of their petty kingdom. Condominas keeps on suggesting that “Of course there are some strictly religious motives in this rush for collective efforts of building temples,...But I think that the need to keep their ethnic identity had become at that time a **reecessity** for Dai Lu communities,...[B]uilding monasteries was a way of reinforcing in the most emphatic way what remained of their cultural identity” (ibid., P.449).

I had contended that Buddhism might not be the most significant symbol of Lue ethnicity due to the past that the Bulang, an Austroasiatic speaking group is Sipsong Panna,

are Buddhist too (Hsieh 1989). The critical ethnic remark, I maintain, should be exactly good old days memory of a longlasting historical Lue kingdom as Michael Moremen had discussed in his classical article entitled "Ethnic Identification in a Complex Civilization: Who are the Lue?"(1965). As for cultural identity, it expresses definitely meaningful position of vat or temple in the process of keeping Buddhism belief. In other words, cultural identity is exactly religious identity and what can be adopted to stand for Buddhism is temple or monastery. That is also the reason why the Lue eagerly looked forward to regain all lost function of temples.

It seems to me that what Condominas advocates is without temple without Lue, and no re-building vat no Lue culture and ethnicity having been persistent. However, how did the Lue preserve their Buddhism belief without temple under Mao's regime? Or did the Lue really need a temple to express cultural/religious identity? I like to unveil the puzzle.

. A temple has been established: Lao-Lue's lives in Seattle

In the same work conducted by Condominas mentioned above, other than reminding us about Lue's anxiety of constructing temple, creating Buddha statue, and recruiting monks, he emphasizes the Lao refugees in Western countries to establish new temples one by one in a few years after settling down in host cities. He indicates that there were at least 5 Lao vats in France in the end of 80's (1987:450). What he wishes to say is that the Tai-speaking peoples including the Lue and Lao really need temple wherever the situation is very difficult for seeking survival.

I believe that Condominas' interpretation on religious/cultural identity among Tai-speaking peoples under unusual environment, in cultural destruction or in alien countries, is correct. However, to me, the Lao refugees are never homogeneous in ethnic structure. My point is that there are quite a few Lue people moved out of refugee camps from Thailand forward US, France, and even Australia (cf. Fong ed, 2004, Haines ed, 1989, Souvannavong 1999, Waters 1990).

They however all are categorized into Lao. In order to clarify the religious life among the Lue out of homeland, i.e., home muang and villages in Laos, we have to find out where they are and what they do in dealing with three major elements of being Buddhist: temple, Buddha statue, and monk.

Jiang Yingliang, again a senior Tai culture expert in China whose book I cited in

previous section, had said,

“Sometimes Lue villagers might temporarily move to another place to stay owing to the threat of natural disaster or fierce war. They must found a simple and crude temple at new location. When the returning time was coming, people always renovated the original village temple, sent monks back first, then all went back. No matter what they needed to do, to build new temple or to renovate old one, everyone must devote oneself into such kinds of religious honorable works” (1984:529)

The Lue in Seattle, Washington state, one of the main cities in US where this particular ethnic group are distribution are exactly following the mode of religious resurgence Jiang

The Lue in Seattle mostly were from Muang Sing, Huayxay, and Luang Namtha, northern Laos. They founded Lao Lue Association of Washington State in 1980 even though both the state government and Americans in general have no idea about the people and always put them into the category lowland Laotians. At that time when the Association began to run, there was no Lue temple in Seattle area. They joined Lao to practice religious life at Lao temple. Afterwards Lao immigrants divided into two parts, and each one support a temple. Two Lao temple are called Vat yay, big temple, and Vat Noy, little temple. The Lue went much close to the latter.

It was till 1998, the Association that is composed of 69 families decide to own a Lue temple. People donated money, and searched for suitable location. A year later, the Association bought a house in southern Seattle with loan from local bank. The house has no temple-shaped appearance on account of its location inside residential area although there are full of huge trees in neighborhood, and it has been named Vat Paa, the forest temple. But you can find everything that is similar to the inner portion of a typical temple. There are three monks now, the abbot is a Lue who originally is from Laos, and got training by the most famous khuba Bunsung in Jachilek, northern Myanmar. The other two monks are Lao, but they feel more comfortable in there than in Lao temple.

Vat Paa belongs to the Lue beyond question. There are 5 groups in the Association. Each group consists of 12 families averagely, they take turn to provide for monks. People went to tham bun, i.e., make merits once a month, usually in the morning of Sunday, and had party through Saturday night. They say “Kin laew Than” i.e., “eat first, then go to worship”. The establishment of a temple makes the Lue become true Buddhist and complete Lue, one

thus may create such a concluding impression. But do the Lue Buddhists really need a temple? Taiwan's case challenges a probable positive answer whatsoever.

. No Temple at all: Burma-Lue's fifty years in Taiwan

At the time when the KMT (the Nationalist Party or Kuomintang) army had been utterly routed and fled from attack of the PLA (People's Liberation Army) alongside Yunnan-Burma borderland in early 1950's, the Kingdom of Sipsong Panna, a petty Tai-Lue state in southern Yunnan, was met her doom too. The newly established PRC founded Xishuangbanna Dai Nationality Autonomous Region in January 23, 1953. Quite a few KMT troops still stationed in northern Burma with strong anxiety to fight back to the Mainland. In 1953 and 1961, part of remnants of defeated KMT army had withdrew from Burma to Thailand, then flew to Taiwan (cf. Hsieh Shih-chung 1997; Sung Kwang-yu 1982).

The first group of KMT's Yunnan regular troop reached Taiwan in 1953. They had been arranged to garrison in a newly founded village named Chung-chen in Chung-li, Taoyuan County, northern plain of the island. The next arriving date for another lot of soldiers from northern Thailand was eight years later (1961).

The government had sent teachers to teach Chinese for those non-Han wives only for a short time. Several informants said that the learning program was too simple and actually very crude. Therefore almost all non-Han women indicated that they in the long run know how to speak Chinese, or more accurate Yunnanese Mandarin, were mainly on the foundation of experience of family lives instead of from formal class.

There were three hundred more soldiers being discharged eventually. Those who had spouse but without children were ordered to establish Po-wang New Village (PNV) in southern Chien-ching State Farm (CCSF). And people who already raised one child were responsible for founding Shou-ting New Village (SNV) where is located in northern CCSF whose elevation is 300 meters lower than PNV (2040 meters). The others were settled down in Chi-yang State Farm, Kaohsiung, southern Taiwan. As for the soldiers who were not willing to be discharged, and were recognized strong and young, the government set up another village Kan-cheng, Taoyuan near by Chung-chen for them, and retrained to be a parachute troop. The total number of families sent to CCSF were 79 which included 77 Han-Chinese discharged soldiers and 129 family members.

In 1974, half of the residents of SNV, through the way of drawing lots, moved to

Ting-yuan New Village (TNV), where is located in between PNV and SNV, for solving the bothersome problem of increasing population. In Ching-ching area people are accustomed to calling Yunnan's group, i.e. residents of PNV, SNV, and TNV, "yi-min" or "righteous people.

According to Sung, during the time he conducted fieldwork, i.e., May 1979, there were 4 Taiwan indigenes, 7 Han, and 62 non-Han immigrants among 73 yi-min's wives (1982:766). Sung identified ethnicity of the non-Han female immigrants as: 26 Paiyi (Tai-Lue or Dai Nationality [Daizu] in PRC's classification), 1 Guoluo Tai (a particular Tai speaking people distributed in the north of Chiangmai area, Thailand), 17 Luohe (Lahu), 8 Akha (Hani), 2 Lisu, 3 Khawa (Wa), 2 Puman (Bulang), and 3 Yaojia (Yao). In other words, the yi-min's new villages formed three mini-communities and probably one integrated larger multi-ethnic Yunnanese community.

Within the villages, everyone knows everyone. And all know well about the other party's ethnicity. The Paiyi publicly claim their identity, and keep a distinct memory about homeland. So do most other Tibetan-Burmese tribal members, such as Luohe, Akha, and Lisu, except for forgetting a couple of vocabularies of the mother tongues when asking them at a unprepared situation by an anthropologist like me. I believe that both Austroasiatic Khawa and Puman, and the others like Guoluo Tai and Yaojia play the similar pattern, although an advanced study ought to be proceeded for proving it.

Many second generation indicate their comprehension on Paiyi language. They at a high percentage have a well listening ability at least though being asked to speak out fluently is more or less not easy. Almost of all Han-Chinese or Yunnanese husbands say that they were able to speak many kinds of Paiyi and tribal languages when stationing in northern Burma in the 50's. Paiyi dialect in fact was a more popular one being used among these immigrants including Han soldiers and their tribal wives from northern Thailand in earlier time of arriving in Taiwan.

When the guerrilla army had critical mission to counter-attack the Communists from northern Burma in the 50's, soldiers were not allowed to get marry. After the first group of troop withdrew to Taiwan in 1953, the headquarter changed its policy. It was the time about one or two years before moving to Taiwan, lots of members of the second withdrawing group found wives from neighboring townships or villages. Therefore, most of the non-Han women who came with their husbands to Taiwan afterwards were originated from Burma. And they all have potentials to narrate a story about it. "Mien-tien" or Burma is usually the first answer to respond to any request of their homeland no matter what ethnic group they belong to.

Unless one continues to ask, or the conversation is proceeding well, the informant might not arise a motivation to tell the other party a China-Burma migration story of a particular ancestor in historical period.

Although children of three yi-min's new villages have been embedded in multi-ethnic living environment, and learned various kinds of cultural traits at the same time, a Han-Chinese directed ethnic/cultural hierarchy still deeply influences everybody. It means that Han-Chinese culture is at a higher position than all the others on a constructed ethnic status ladder. One of the most obvious evidence is that almost all non-Han wives become fluently in speaking Chinese or Yunnanese Mandarin after several decades living in Ching-ching, but to the contrary those soldier husbands who originally were good in using both Paiyi and tribal dialects now substantially forgot them except for keeping a limited memory about Paiyi vocabularies. A second generation informant told me that he was often scolded and punished by his father when he occasionally used Paiyi dialect to responded to parents' question.

In short, both ethnic boundary, i.e., Han-Chinese versus non-Han, or Paiyi versus tribal members, and sub-ethnic boundary, i.e., Chinese "Dai" versus Burmese "Paiyi", have been efficiently maintained within three yi-min's mini-communities. People may not know any information about every group's traditional culture, ethnohistory, major place of distribution, or original meaning of ethnonyms, but they exactly have distinct consciousness to distinguish one from the other. Experiences of living together in forty years made non-Han culture be obscure and overlooked, but identity for members of all groups are well-sustained. As for the second generation, they mostly have two identities without hesitations, even though the portion of Han-Chinese is stronger than the opposite non-Han ethnicity.

Chung Chen New Village (CCNV) was founded in 1954 and consisted of about four hundred households. Kan-cheng Wu Chun or Kan-cheng fifth village (KCFV) is located in a more remote area. CCNV and KCFV, the neglected village-isles passed over by the winds of economic development, have existed for about four decades. They are exotic ghettos. As a matter of fact, villagers have self-constructed a special life style. Their survival philosophy, historical consciousness, ethnic knowledge, and cultural theory are very profound. They do not merely stand as witnesses of a grand modern history related to the development of nationalisms in East Asia and ethnic-cultural syncretism in Taiwan, but also play a good game in negotiating or dialogizing with kin, neighbors, friends, military companions and other alien ethnic members.

The veterans of CCNV were discharged from the Nationalist government's regular army

stationed in Yunnan in the 1940's. Most of the soldiers were local Han people plus some Cantonese, with a few recruits "caught" from non-Han ethnic groups such as the Paiyi (Tai-Lue) and the Luohe (Lahu). Most were unmarried youngsters when they joined the army in their hometowns. They were marched far away from Han-Chinese settlements. Therefore, a majority of wives of the Yunnanese officers and soldiers were from non-Han groups, especially the Paiyi in Sipsong panna (Xishuangbanna) in Yunnan.

Multi-ethnic composition in Yunnan is a well-known regional feature. The same situation has been moved from there to Taiwan. In other words, we find many ethnic groups whose hierarchical relationships were evident in Yunnan have settled down in the same community. In CCNV, the highest amount of Paiyi female residents in the first immigrant generation numbered around forty, and twenty for some other hill peoples. The common language for the villagers is Yunnanese Mandarin and even the second or third generation and their spouses have an outstanding ability in speaking such an accentual language. They talked to me by standard Mandarin, but transferred to their own "mother-tongue" immediately when communicating with village members. Furthermore, Paiyi, a sort of Tai dialects, was also popular in earlier times. Husbands of Paiyi wives could at least understand what ethnic women said. The second generation whose age is about forty are ambivalent towards the usage of Paiyi. The listening comprehension of Paiyi among most of middle-aged villagers is fine despite the lack motivation and necessity in speaking it.

People within the village know the ethnic distribution. Many of them have a rich knowledge of the ethnic minorities, such as ethnonyms, exotic customs, physical features, "savagery", "timidity", "obedience" and "backwardness". People in the village chat each other in the evening in an open field near the village office. Ordinarily several mahjong tables are ready for the regular players from different houses at night. Those small vendors that offer Yunnanese/Tai food sporadically set in the village provide people's memory catching of homeland, and strengthen self-identity of culturally defined persona. More and more immigrants from Thailand have settled in the Taoyuan area lately. Thai cuisine is sold in one of the alleyways every Sunday morning. Residents call it "Little Bangkok". An Islamic mosque built in 1971 is located at the intersection of the business street and the main highway. About fifteen Muslim households meeting there. Furthermore, "playing song" (ta-ke), a kind of half-Han and half non-Han special folk song singing style, was a favorite among many residents from earlier times. In general, Yunnanese/Paiyi/Burmese restaurants, "Little Bangkok", the mosque, and the folk singing provides the bulk of the local color in the CCNV.

The average age of the older generation is more than seventy five. The village head who

belongs to the second generation told me she once went abroad for two weeks and three people died during the short period. Funerals follow Taiwanese custom in that ritual specialists hired to assist are all from native towns. However, several youngsters expressed an interesting finding about a special phenomena appearing only in the CCNV. Many relatives, neighbors and friends inside the village joined the mourning household to chat, eat and gamble every night before the day of burial. People regard this as a good custom. However, on the other hand, behavior of some of the younger generation really hurt parents' hearts deeply. Senior residents complained about their children's alcoholism, gambling addiction, unemployment and over-dependence. Everybody knows which boy or girl from particular households do drugs, or deal in drugs and prostitution. In short, a moral gap between two generations seems at first glance to be huge, but is in fact, superficial. The older generation has depended on the government their whole life. Now the new generation is dependent upon their parents. Also gambling among the older generation had become a common daily activity and the kids modeled their own behavior on it.

KCFV, compared to CCNV, is much more isolated from main society. So far as I know, the media have not shown any interest in the KCFV although its multi-ethnic social structure is more "colorful" than other military communities. There are only two Yunnanese/Paiyi/Burmese restaurants along a street close to main gate of KCFV, and one vendor owned by a Paiyi woman inside village. The commercial atmosphere is not so prosperous.

Most of the non-Han wives of veterans came from northern Burma or Thailand. They, unlike CCNV's Paiyi originated from Sipsong Panna, a frontier country within China. The story of their participation in the Chinese army was touching whenever one recalls their tragic history as refugees in northern southeast Asia in the 1950's. When part of KMT troops withdrew from Thailand to Taiwan in 1954, others were ordered by Chiang Kai-shek to stay. They became loosen-organized anti-Communists guerrillas. The soldiers were not allowed to get married on account of their uncertain future. It was not until 1960 that the second group received order concealed beneath a special military term called "Kuo-lei" (national thunder) which the villages used to name a new park in the village to retreat. Many soldiers went out to "plunder" wives from non-Chinese tribes or rural communities.

When the force arrived in Taiwan, the government temporarily found Cheng-kung base in Taichung for soldiers and their families. The non-Chinese "Burmese" or "Thai" (most of them were Paiyi, Akha, Lahu, Yao, Wa, Lisu and northern Thai) began to learn Chinese informally with part-time female teachers sent by the Ministry of Defense. The entire troop before long had been divided into three groups: the first discharged people going to

Chien-ching State Farm, Nantou, the second one dispatched to Chi-yang State Farm of Kaohsiung and Pingtung, and the youngest men kept in the army allocated to KCFV (cf. Sung Kuang-yu 1982; Hsieh Shih-chung 2001). From then on, all non-Han wives learned Yunnanese Mandarin from husbands and members within the newly founded villages.

It is no problem for non-Han women in KCFV to speak Mandarin. A good many residents like to tell their history of migration from Burma via Thailand to Taiwan. The listeners usually can relate a fully imagined story. Although there is nothing related to public performances in the expressive culture of local people in KCFV, there are some in personal situations. For instance, a Miao man always hums traditional tunes and one still has the chance to feel exoticism when coming into contact with villagers by conversing on themes of ethnicity or cultural life. People who returned to their homeland either in Burma and Thailand or Yunnan brought back ethnic clothes, religious stuffs, bags or toys with local decorations, and music tapes. They re-shape their self-identity and historical memory by traveling. The emergence of local color in KCFV thus is mainly on the foundations of an intensive interaction among residents of different ethnic backgrounds within such an isolated community.

In short, the Paiyi or Burmese Lue maintain ethnicity well after moving to Taiwan for more than 40 years. However they have never expressed motivation or intention to build a temple as Lao-Lue did in Seattle in neighborhood. The Lue, who traditionally are very religious in performing as real Buddhist, now in Taiwan seem to disappear since temple, Buddha statue, and monks are not in existence. Do the Burmese Lue in Taiwan lose their belief of Buddhism? My answer is “No, they didn’t!”

. Holy monks in hands: being a flexible but true Buddhist

I have described three Lue cases in Sipsong Panna, Seattle, and Taiwan on their religious life in relation to temple, Buddha statue, and monk. Although we find that both Sipsong Panna Lue and Lao-Lue were trying hard to recover the function of temple or build a new one, it should not be ignored that these two groups of Lue had “lost” temple for a long time under the Mao’s anti-religious policy and the process of fleeing from **chotie** home town and emigrating to other country. They were still Buddhists, so life with temples had re-appeared. But what and how did people do to be Buddhists without temple accompanied in daily life? We may be able to figure it out from fieldwork in Taiwan.

The Paiyi or Burmese Lue have not built any temple in Taiwan, but they own some

photos of famous monks at home. Many informants told me they asked friends beginning back from Burma or Thailand, and some have kept old black and white pictures since migrating to Taiwan. It is understandable that a typical Han-Chinese tablet of ancestor worship at guest hall inside the house due to the fact that head of household is Chinese husband. But it is very interesting that there are some Theravada monks photos being put besides the tablet. Chinese husband always told me that those photos are unmoveable treasure for his wife. One man pointed a Burmese monk photo, and said, "This is my wife's number one baby." The Paiyi informants described stories of magical ability including no necessity of food, predicting people's fortune, and even superman's flying power among the great monks in pictures.

The Paiyi do have holy man or great master of Buddhism well in hands, I suggest, and that should be the key symbol of being true Buddhist. No temple, no monks, and no Buddha statue are absolutely not conditions of depriving one's Buddhist position. A person who might miss to visit or lose for very long time, but one is still a true Lue as long as holy man is carefully worshipped always in the home.

In Seattle, almost all Lue household displays a bunch of monks' photos, especially for Bunsung, the greatest phuu mii bun or holy man by the Lue and many northerners in Mainland Southeast Asia at the corner or on the wall inside the living room. This is unusual in comparison to their relatives in Lue community in Laos. That is to say, in Laos it is very simple to furnish and decorate among the Lue for their house within. The religiosity or Buddhist feature inside house is somehow very limited. Then why do the Lue immigrants in Seattle transmit different ideology and perform another pattern of religious adornment? We should not forget that the Lao-Lue in Seattle had long time experience of losing temple. Before establishing their own Vat, the Seattle Lue went to Thai or Lao temple, or visited nowhere on the one hand, they collected monks photos and other relevant things at home on the other hand. Again as the Paiyi or Burmese Lue do in Taiwan, the Lao-Lue in Seattle group their holy man in hands and the critical emblem of Lue ethnicity and religious identity is right there.

As for the Sipsong Panna Lue, I believe that most of families photos of khuba somewhere at home during the Cultural Revolution, and it is powerful enough to approve people's true Buddhist identity. Another question is, then why both Sipsong Panna Lue and Lao-Lue immigrants in Seattle still showed their strong motive to recover or build temples, but not the same case among Paiyi or Burmese Lue in Taiwan? Almost all Paiyi are female, and those people who directed the establishment of temples in Sipsong Panna and Seattle are male. Main leaders of the Lue Association in Washington State are totally male, they also

control the temple. So I presume that **wascularity** must be related to any action of renovation and construction of temples. Temple drives people to unify together, and men have perfect opportunity to claim position of domination. Since Paiyi in Taiwan are female, they therefore have no cultural pressure to express gender status by means of the dynamic context of temple, monk, and Buddha statue.

. Conclusion

In this paper, I have discussed three Lue cases in Sipsong Panna, in Seattle, and in Taiwan, about the historical processes of expression of being Buddhists. It is true that temple with Buddha statue and monks inside is very important for the Lue. And that is the reason why we found these people urged on community members to regain a temple after dismissal of serious impacts from political or war influence. However, belief of existence of holy man or phuu mii bun should be the most critical element for a Lue to be true Buddhist. Holy man through the image on photos transmits his magical power to every family. People know that the holy man is living there in the Buddhist world, he is very close to believers. The Lue like to support some respectable abbots to promote to high khuba. It reflect a situation of trying to “create” a new holy man. The abbot of Vat Paa in Seattle recently became high ranking monk under strong **request** and expectation by people. The day when the promotion ritual was initiated, all Seattle Lue jointed there, and showed extreme happiness. Although the real holy man is a little far away in Myanmar, a precious master of the abbot of Vat Paa, a high ranking monk who has close relation to the holy man is good enough for the people, since they can imagine themselves to much closer to holy man indeed. The Paiyi in Taiwan take good care of photos of great monks. It is also a phenomenon of reflecting more crucial position of holy man worship compared to owning a temple in the performance of being a Theravada Buddhist. Based on my argument above, to search for what photos of monks people had hidden in Sipsong Panna from the 60’s to the 80’s will be an interesting academic theme. It may not merely re-approve what I maintain in this paper but construct a broad and deep holy man worship world in Lue world.

In short, the Lue are flexible Buddhist. They are survival as true Buddhist because of having realistic material, i.e., photo, to confirm themselves in religious life. Whenever temple was gone, the feature of flexibility appeared to serve as mechanism of ethnic/cultural identity.

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